



By Mike English (Jupiter Courier-Journal)

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From truck stop to boom town in 25 years

Jupiter was not much more than a few gas stations and a bridge to motorists traveling along U.S. 1 in the late 1950's. The bulk of the town was along Old Dixie Highway, Indiantown Rd. and Center Street. Most of the motorists, who used U.S. 1, were tourists or winter residents destined for places farther south and Jupiter was just a short stop for gas or a bite to eat.

The sparsely populated northern end of Palm Beach County had two other municipalities, Juno Beach, which had been incorporated in 1953 and Tequesta which was incorporated in 1957, with 24 houses and eight miles of roads. Tequesta initially included only the area around the country club but slowly moved its boundaries to the east. Juno Beach was much smaller than Jupiter, consisting of a motel strip, a gas station and some residences, and Tequesta was still being carved out of the wilderness on the north side of the Loxahatchee River.

Development had started in Jupiter Inlet Colony although the town would not become incorporated until 1959. The area's closest neighbor to the north was Hobe Sound, then a clutch of small businesses along the FEC Railway line and a fruit stand or two on U.S.1. The residents of posh Jupiter Island had recently incorporated but the town was populated only in the

winter, as it still is for the most part today.

Although there was appearance the area was a sleepy resort, big changes were brewing. Pratt & Whitney Aircraft just opened its Palm Beach County facility and the small community was experiencing a population boom. From a town of a few hundred the population dramatically risen to nearly 1,500 at the start of the 1960's. Between 1957 and 1958, 11 developments started in the community, three new churches were founded and 17 businesses opened. Two new housing developments had just opened, East Manor Estates and Penn Park, and developer Charlie Martyn was opening up Tequesta and Jupiter Inlet Colony.

In April 1958, Jupiter's the Town Commission decided to take a big step in forming a modern government and asked Glynn Mayo to form a full-time police department. Mayo, who had been appointed town constable by Gov. Leroy Collins in 1956, became a one-man department and his only office was his shirt pocket. If necessary, his older brother Beau served as his assistant.

With the population reaching the 1,000 mark, Jupiter began coping with modern times. In September 1959, the town employed Gail Sorensen as a town clerk on a part-time basis, working two hours a day, four days a week, replacing Mrs. F. W. Shively. In 1961 Irma Archer

was hired as an assistant to Mrs. Sorensen and to keep police records for Mayo. The clerk's office in the old Town Hall, when Mrs. Sorensen came on board, had a phone, an arm chair, a folding wooden chair, on cabinet, a safe that would not lock and a desk she suspected was full of termites. "The cabinet was just crammed with papers and Commissioner Bozeman came in one day and said, 'Let's buy Mrs. Sorensen a filing cabinet,'" She said.

Jupiter residents never had been big on keeping records before then, she noted. The town's budget in 1957 was about \$30,000.00 and the council kept track of it on monthly 9 x 11 inch reports filed by Mrs. Sorensen. In 1956, she recalled, the voter registration books were located in the grocery store on the corner of Center Street and Old Dixie Highway, under the supervision of Ruby McGeehee. Town Hall was a focal point of the community. Court was held in the building and Dr. John Prince had free clinics there.

The Jaycees put playground equipment and other recreation facilities in an adjoining park. Improvements to the Town Hall were made twice during Mrs. Sorensen's 12-year tenure. A new commission table, microphones, a police officer and small jail, central air condition, carpeting, shades, padded chairs and new ceiling lights were added through the years before the town moved into its \$1.4 million headquarters in 1981. The town employed only a few part-time people other than Mayo in the late 1950's, and one of the most important was handyman Denis Killane, who gradually was replaced over the years by a public works department. Now Jupiter employs 105 full-timers, including policemen.

In Tequesta, when Robert Harp first became village manager in June 1959, the Village Hall was in a storefront in the Village Square Shopping Center on U.S. 1. There were only 199 people in the community at the time, he remembered, and there were only four part-time employees. But Tequesta steadily filled out until today there are approximately 3,800 residents, Harp noted. The Village today has 3 full-time employees. Chief Mayo, who grew up in Jupiter, noted Tequesta's development spurred the whole area. One important step in the town's development was Jupiter's first traffic light, put up at the intersection of Indiantown Road and Loxahatchee Drive in the early 1960s. It was initially a Jaycees project, Mayo remembered, but the light was donated by the County Commission, wired by a volunteer from the county and erected by Florida

Power and Light Co. "We put it up mainly for the protection of children going to Jupiter Elementary," he said. Police business was just about the same then as it is now, the chief noted. As the population started picking up, Jupiter began expanding by annexing land east of the Intracoastal Waterway and south along the beach toward Juno Beach. In 1965 a new bridge was built across the Intracoastal Waterway at State Road 706 which later became an extension of Indiantown Road.

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The federal government carved U.S. 1 along its present route, four-laned it and built a new span crossing the Loxahatchee River in the late 1960's. A new high school was built for \$900,000 in 1965 on what was then Southwest 8th Avenue and it was that year that Publix and Food Fair, later to become Pantry Pride. That was to be followed in the early 1970's with Lighthouse Plaza in Tequesta and the Jupiter Mall and Concourse Village in Jupiter in the early 1980s. In the near future, the north county area is expected to blossom into one of the fastest growing spots in the state. With large developments opening up to the south and west, a population of 257,060 is projected by the year 2000.

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