

This cartoon appeared in the Tampa Tribune Heartland edition on November 16, 1977, to illustrate Andy Bowen's humorous feature story about Polk County place names. The cartoon was modified by Syble Young of Alturas for use in The

Quarterly.

The Polk County Historical Association thanks The Tribune for permission to use both the story (see Page 2) and the illustration.



## "MUNNVILLE" LOST OUT TO "LAKELAND"

By ANDY BOWEN  
Tribune Staff Writer

ROME CITY (Dec. 16, 1883) — The town fathers here last night voted unanimously to select the name Lakeland for this fair city, refusing to concede to elements proposing such nomers as Munnville or even its presently little-known title, which primarily emanates from the growing commercial district on Wire Lake: Rome City.

It has been learned that rumors of an attempt to name the village Keenville, in honor of one of its very first settlers 17 years ago, Jesse Keen and family, are unfounded.

Espoused by a few, the name Redbug stood not a chance.

With the selection of such a euphonious and representative title for this settlement abounding in lakes, it would seem the Englishmen at our nearby rival, Acton, have received their first setback. Another is in store for them next year, when Abraham G. Munn builds the beautiful railroad station here, making sure that the Iron Horse will stop at Lakeland — not Acton.

It is predicted that in years ahead, Acton, which lies a little to the east between Lakes Parker and Bonnie, will vanish. Some miscreants actually believed Acton eventually would outdo this settlement and reign supreme.

All of the recent concern over the choice of a proper name, which is certainly one of those things that will help ensure prosperity for the new town in the future, has prompted inquiries to try to determine for the reader how came the names of other towns here about in the midsection of this sunny state.

The Rev. J. W. Brandon, for whom the town of Brandon just south of Bartow is named, came forth in aid with much information to this end, and noted that the story of many of the names of the towns situated peripherally is indeed interesting, if not funny.

The honorable reverend, who also is the postmaster at Brandon, and his family, incidentally, have plans next year to move over into Hillsborough County near

the fishing village of Tampa, no doubt taking the town with them. He hopes the new Brandon will flourish there, although some are sure it will eventually be swallowed up by the coastal city.

Reverend Brandon said the most interesting story of all the city names in this county is probably found in the tale of one now, finally, to be called Lake Alfred.

It seems Fargo was the first choice of a name by those in that area, some being from that same town in northern Dakota territory. The U.S. Post Office objected, Brandon recalled, because too many letters bound for Fargo were ending up in Largo.

So, Brandon said, the town's name was changed to Chubb.

Whence that one came is a mystery. But it wasn't long until female citizens became irate at what they insisted was "not too danged pretty a name for any town."

Bartow Junction was tried next, but soon most of the community was up in arms at being considered suburbanites of

Bartow (which old timers used to call Fort Blount or Peas Creek).

At last, in honor of Alfred Parslow, an early settler, the name Lake Alfred was struck upon and all the quarreling seems to have subsided. Perhaps the new name, which town fathers say will not be officially observed until 1913, will keep.

Although he is a minister, Brandon said that the name Homeland better suits that quiet village (near present Brandon) that does its original Bethel, given by Methodists holding camp meetings there. Brandon says that a homesick Irishman suggested the new name, a most fitting one.

The collective hat must be tipped to the resourceful citizens of old Clay Cut. Pioneer ingenuity has indeed been exhibited by the people of that town, who have shown they are well versed in the adage: "One can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar."

For a long while now, Clay Cut has been courting the railroad, trying to entice it into constructing a station house there, but to no avail. It is not certain just

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This was the "beautiful railroad station" which Abraham G. Munn constructed at Lakeland in order to persuade officials of the South Florida Railroad to make that city its stop in this area, rather than nearby Acton. It was built in 1885. It worked, and Acton soon disappeared from the map.

### SCV Officers

Gen. E. M. Law Camp No. 1323, Sons of Confederate Veterans, elected officers at its current quarterly meeting.

They are Mark Hall of Lakeland, commander; Barney Whitman of Fort Meade, first lieutenant commander; F. M. Mack of Highland City, second lieutenant commander; Lionel Burch of Bartow, quartermaster; Philip Allen of Lakeland, judge-advocate, and W. H. Purcell of Lakeland, adjutant.

Purcell also serves as Brigade commander, Florida Division for recruitment.

Col. Edwin A. Law of Bartow, grandson of Brig. Gen. E. M. Law, C.S.A., is a new member. Colonel Law has retired from the USMC.

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who the great man is, but one town leader smartly suggested changing the name of Clay Cut to Haines City, in honor of Colonel Henry Haines, a high-ranking official with the railroad.

This day, in testimony to their proper thinking, a fine depot is being built at Haines City, and land speculators are flocking to the area, now on the verge of well-earned prosperity because of its well chosen new name!

We can only say we are happy Mr. W. D. Campbell chose Polk County as a settling-in place when he moved here last year from Waverly, N. Y., and homesteaded at Buffalo Ford. One of his first actions as a prominent leader in the Buffalo Ford community was to change the village's name to a more civilized-sounding Waverly.

The Yankees also appear to have won out in naming another city in this county. Medora on the Lakes, which some years ago changed its name to Sanitaria because of the grand hotel by that name that was built there, has been re-named Auburndale.

It is said that some influential citizens, formerly of Auburndale, Mass., the only other one in the nation, had much to do with the renaming because they felt Oliver Goldsmith's poem calling "Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain," applied here as well as in Massachusetts.

Alas, Sanitaria seems gone forever.

P. D. Eyclesheimer has what he says is the prettiest, most sonorous name he has ever heard for a town he is planning about 10 miles east of here. He hopes to have the town platted starting next year and ending the next, 1885.

Because he hopes it will become known affectionately as a sanctuary from the severities of northern climes, Mr. Eyclesheimer will call the new town Winter Haven. It will probably be one of the few in this region to have and to hold only one name.

Some live there already, but certainly not as many as Medulla, or old Springhill.

It will be recalled that several years ago (1881), Capt. Francis J. LeBaron discovered phosphate in abundance along the Peace River. Other discoveries have since been made, and the industry is growing by leaps.

Reports have it that a tiny settlement near where mining machinery and other materiel are put off the railroad freight cars might take on the name by which railroaders already know it: Mulberry.

A huge tree of that species is the most known natural landmark around, and to name a town from such a beauty is indeed befitting. There is no station house there

now, only a siding, but cargoes bound for that area often are simply marked "Put off at big mulberry tree."

Those in a position to know predict that the tiny community of Lake Hambleton, near a huge lake on an island in which Seminole Chief Chipco and his band lived recently, must surely change its name in the future to the more easily pronounced Lake Hamilton.

The U.S. Army's presence in this area during the wars with the Seminoles is best evidenced by the outpost that once was called Fort Clinch being changed in name to Fort Meade, Brandon says.

He recalls that the outpost was abandoned by the Army in 1849, and about three years later discovered again in dense wilderness by a General named Twigg. Because it was a second lieutenant in Twigg's company, George G. Meade, who actually led the general and company to the find, the general declared that the rebuilt fort would bear Meade's good name.

And lastly, cattlemen who, in search of a wintering-in place where they can graze their charges, are credited with recently naming the village of Frostproof. It seems the men insist that since frost never settles there, the locale might be ideal for others to do just that.

(It is widely rumored at this time that Bartow interests are hoping to develop a town in the future near the present site of Lake Wailes in the southeastern part of the county. Projections say, however, that a fully platted city encircling Lake Wailes — named for an early pioneer family — could not become a reality before the year 1911.)

Others of Polk County's present towns, some with and some without post offices in this year of 1883, have little



"Some people spell parlour—  
P-A-R-L-O-R."

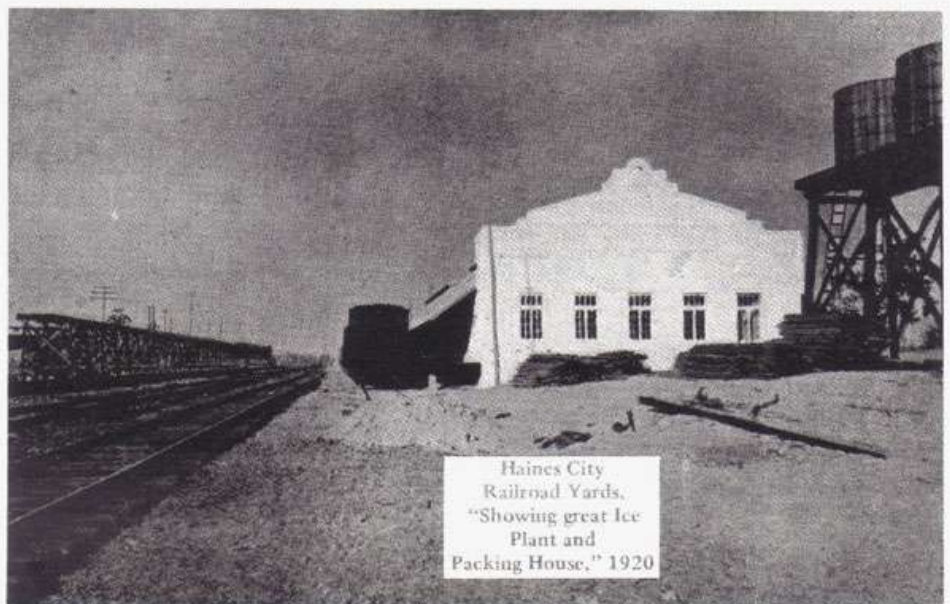
"Yes; but how much better it is  
with U in it."

1920

mystery or romance behind their names, but deserve mention.

They are Los Averill, Ridgewood, Winston, Raymond, Morse, Cumbee, Wilmott, Midland, Carter's Mill, Blanche, Fitzhugh, Horse Creek, Branchboro, Scott Lake, Keysville, Socrum and Foxtown.

Unless Mr. Shakespeare's question "What's in a name?" should play too large a part, all should flourish and add to the general prosperity of the county from now on, Brandon said.



Haines City  
Railroad Yards,  
"Showing great Ice  
Plant and  
Packing House," 1920



## POLK CITY DRUG STORE, 1928



Interior of one of the most attractive and best equipped drug stores in Florida

Polk City was planned in 1922 by Isaac Van Horn, a prominent Florida boom-time developer who dreamed of a model residential city, free of the bustling metropolis atmosphere. Though the well-planned city flourished during the late 1920s and early 1930s, Van Horn's dreams collapsed with the Depression when the city's largest economic asset, a sawmill, moved away.

The people gradually drifted away, the population dropping from nearly 600 in 1930 to 203 in 1960.

Unhampered by modesty in making their claims were the promoters of Polk City, north of Lakeland, in 1928, as noted in the descriptive line below this photo of the Polk City Drug Store. It was situated on the main highway into Polk County from the north.

Here are some excerpts from a monthly publication, *The Polk City Chronicle*, for December, 1928:

Here Polk City is being built, the center of all Northwest Polk County, the nearest town to the southwest being Lakeland, 17 miles away; the nearest town to the south being Auburndale, 12 miles distant; the nearest town to the southeast being Haines City, 17 miles

away, while there is no town north of here within a distance of 28 miles. Here is the one point to serve this vast section, its logical trading center.

Some idea of what the founding of Polk City at this particular point means to this section of Polk County can be gained from the improvements which have resulted from having a town here.

Unexcelled railroad service is now afforded over the main line of the Seaboard Air Line Railway from New York to Palm Beach and Miami, with New York but one night out from Polk City by train.

Here, too, centers one of the finest paved highway systems situated in any town in the state. Polk City is on the shortest route from the north and northwest into Central and Southern Florida, a route which within two or three weeks will be paved all the way north past the Georgia line.

Leading further south, southeast or southwest from here are other paved highways, each one affording a direct route to destinations in the southern part of the state. Over these main roads the farmers can bring their perishable produce to market without fearing that it will be ruined by rough riding before the market is reached, as was the case before these roads were built.

The strategic location of Polk City as

the center of this great area has made the securing of these improvements possible.

It will also make possible the development of the thousands of acres of fertile land near here for agricultural and horticultural purposes, enabling farmers here to grow strawberries and winter vegetables at a time when the prices for these products are at their highest peak in northern markets, easily accessible over the superb railroad service afforded at this point.

Profits secured from such agricultural ventures in the past few years by farmers in this section prove how well suited the land is for agriculture, and interest in this business is fast increasing.

"Here is the finest part of Florida," is a statement often made by the visitor coming into the Hill and Lake section of Central Florida, and in that section Polk City is located. Located at an altitude of over 200 feet above sea level, it is touched by breezes from both the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico, winds which temper the Summer days.

Destructive storms are unknown at Polk City, and weather conditions are practically always found most favorable to agriculture and similar pursuits. Here the radiant, health-giving Florida sunshine is at its best, and life in the open is a year-round pleasure.



## Bartow's First School

### Part 1 of 2 Parts

A tiny one-room log cabin built 120 years ago served as a school house for the children of Bartow and nearby settlements in an era when there were few schools of any kind in peninsular Florida. In the nearest sizable town — Orlando — the first school was not built until 1872, 14 years later.

The story of Bartow's little pioneer school is well told in a history written in 1935 by a group of Summerlin Institute students for their school newspaper, the *Yellow Jacket*. The group included Harold Roberts and Buck James, listed as writers; Rachel Overton, Mary Marchman, Edith Miller and Annie Louise McLeroy, all listed as comprising the information committee. Here is the introduction to the account, in their own words.

Back in 1858 the citizens of Fort Blount, as Bartow was then known, were faced with the problem of educating their children. Everyone agreed that a school must be established and maintained, but how?

The solution to their problem presented

itself in the efforts of R. R. Blount, a leading citizen of the community. Mr. Blount proposed to contribute the land, construct the building, and pay the instructor.

In return each pupil was to pay him (Mr. Blount) tuition for three months' schooling each year. This was unanimously agreed upon and plans begun for the building. The site chosen was located south of Fort Blount, on what is known (in 1935) as Mann's Pond.

(Note — "Mann's Pond" no longer exists. But according to a history written in 1944 by the late Miss Lillian Carpenter, this description places it just south of what is now Wildwood Cemetery. She noted that it was used for both school and church, and that it was abandoned when a larger building was erected on the corner of Summerlin street and Carpenter avenue. This latter building, known as the Old Assembly Hall or the Academy, served as school, church, Masonic Hall and community building.)

Resuming the student account:

Here, completely surrounded by

majestic oaks and tall slender pines, the school was erected from logs cut nearby. Dr. Daniel Waldron of Bartow was hired to teach, and he composed the faculty en masse.

When the last shingle was hammered down, and the last crack was chinked, the people gathered from town and surrounding districts to celebrate the occasion. There was food and drink for all; and the strains of "Turkey in the Straw," and "Old Black Joe," accompanied by the shuffling of feet and bursts of laughter, lasted far into the night.

The building consisted of one room, with rough-hewn logs serving the purpose of benches. A door in the rear served the purpose of both ventilation and lighting, while a small window on each side made feeble efforts to relieve the darkness of the interior.

In the center of the room sat a small pot-bellied stove. If you sat next to it you burned up, if you reposed in a corner you froze. So the students hit upon the idea of exchanging seats at intervals, thereby roasting and freezing by turns.

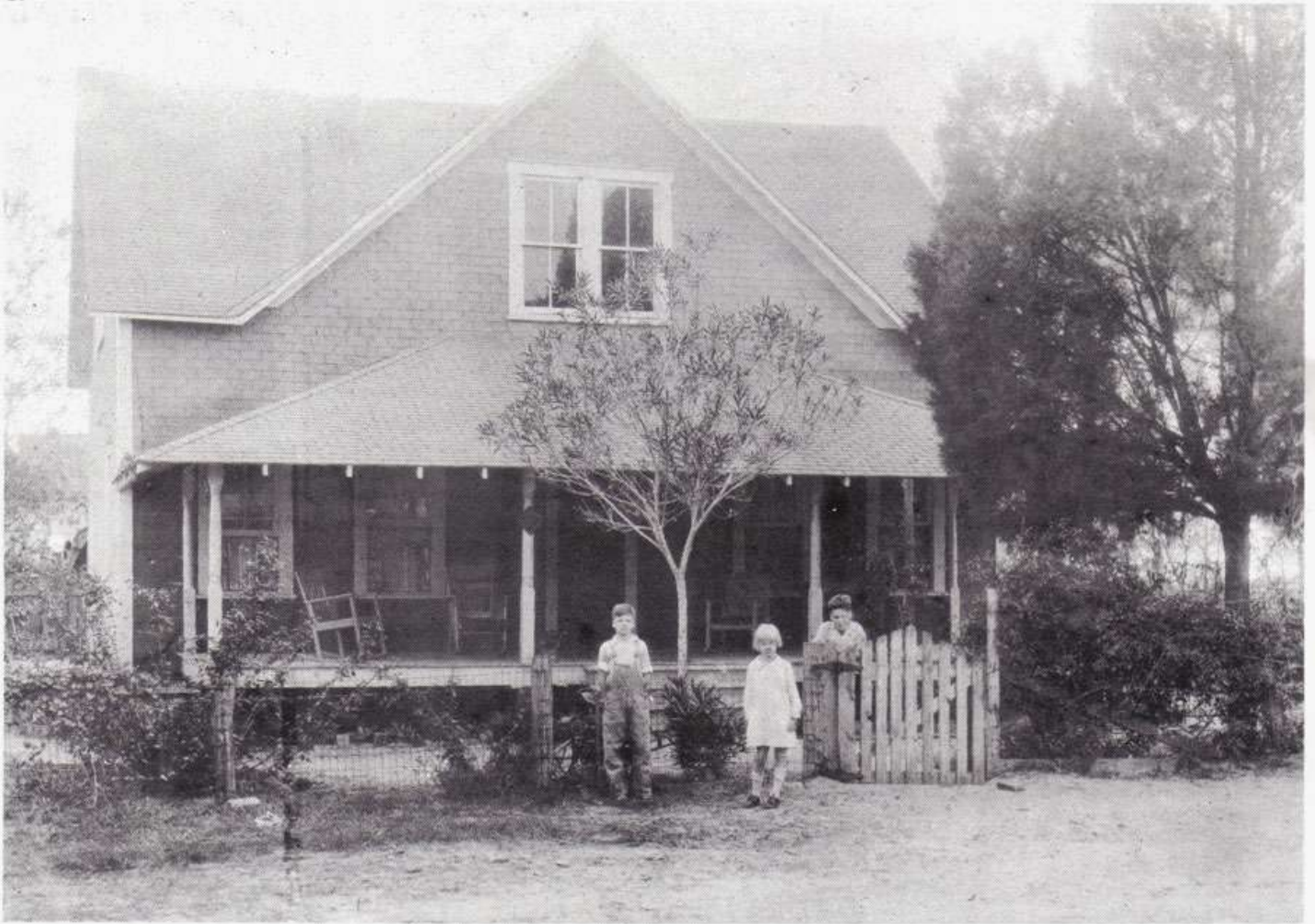
(To Be Continued)



This is an early artist's sketch of Bartow's first school house, built in 1858. Its pupils at the time of this drawing included N. S. Blount, J. I. Blount, Ben P. Blount, John P. Blount, James Blount, Sarah J. Blount, Z. Seward, Felix Seward, J. Seward, M. A. Wright, V. Rye, Lizzie Parker, S. Smith, Isaac Morgan,

Howren Pearce, Thomas Pearce, E. E. Mizelle, H. R. Sylvester, Nettie Blount, Ellen Harrison, Peter Brown, Fred Varn, Ed Wade, Andrew Wade, Owe (Owen?) Keel, Louisa Hollingsworth, Simeon Hollingsworth, William Blount, A. W. Hendry and Stephen Hooker. The teacher was Dr. Daniel Waldron.





The T. J. McLaulin home in Mulberry, about 1920. Mr. McLaulin was a foreman at International Agricultural Corporation, the immediate predecessor of International Minerals

and Chemical Corporation.

The children, from left, are Douglas, Elizabeth Jamie, and Murphy McLaulin.



Interior, the Winter Haven Packing House, 1920.





A sample quarter-mile section of sand asphalt was laid in August, 1915, at Fort Meade, under supervision of the H. S. Jaudon Engineering Co. The asphalt was hand mixed with sand from nearby phosphate plants. The stretch shown at left is now part of U.S. Highway 17 (Spessard Holland Parkway).

These quite modern roads were nine feet wide.

The Lake Wales Citrus Growers Association building, 1920.



Residents of Frostproof had to wait until 1912 for rail service, but were rewarded with this handsome railway station.

Notice that the town name is lettered in two words -- Frost Proof.



## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### GOOD NEWS — OUR FOURTH BIRTHDAY PARTY IS COMING UP!

The fourth annual luncheon of the Polk County Historical Association will be held on Wednesday, June 28, at the Peace River Country Club in Bartow.

Old-timers who have lived in Polk County for 80 years will again be our special honored guests, as in past years.

The buffet line will open at 11:30 a.m. Tickets are \$4.00 each. Reservations may be made by writing to the Polk County Historical Library at Box 1719, Bartow 33830, or by calling the library at 533-5146. All interested persons will be welcome, whether they are members of the association or not. Reservations are recommended, since seating capacity is limited to about 200.

Since many of you have attended all of these previous memorable luncheons, we thought it would be fun to recall some of their highlights.

In 1975, 171 persons attended to hear 81-year-old former Congressman J. Hardin Peterson, Sr., the main speaker. Some of his recollections were:

— Polk County's "poor farm" was established in 1893 but discontinued 10 years later because there were just not enough poor folks in the county to justify its existence.

— Our county has produced three U.S. Senators, three Congressmen, two Governors, three Army Generals, three Navy Captains, and numerous national and state officials.

— Mud Lake was Polk's first county seat, followed by Jefferson, before Bartow was designated in 1867.

— The first voting precinct in what is now Lakeland was in Red Bug, where horse races, cock fights, and whiskey at 50¢ a drink were added attractions.

— In the 1850s, there were a dozen white families in what is now Polk County, in settlements at Medulla, Bartow, Fort Meade and Socrum.

— The County's population grew by 12 from 1870 to 1875.

— Stonewall Jackson served his last

military assignment at Fort Meade. "Mr. Pete" charmed all with his witty stories of his boyhood and varied career.

On June 23, 1976, some 200 members and friends of the PCHA crowded the Peace River Country Club to attend the second anniversary luncheon. Dr. Charles T. Thrift, Jr., was principal speaker, humorously describing the movement of churches into Florida.

"As churches spread into the frontier land of Florida, Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian congregations were formed. The Baptist preacher went, the Methodist preacher was sent and the Presbyterian preacher had to be called.

"That's why the Presbyterians lagged behind," he said, adding, tongue in cheek, "but they got ministers who could read and write."

Copies of two books by Dr. Thrift, "Through Three Decades" and "On the Trail of the Florida Circuit Rider," were given to each one present.

Hart McKillop of Winter Haven, native Polk Countian, was guest speaker at our

third birthday party, last June.

He thrilled those attending, including the honored "Old-timers," with stories of early escapades at Homeland, and the disdain of the "Crackers" for the aristocratic English "remittance men" who came to the Fort Meade area.

He continued through the critical "boom and bust" period of the 1920s, relating some of his experiences as an attorney in Winter Haven during that era of the knicker-clad "binder boy" real estate salesman.

Mark Twain was never better.

At all these luncheons the historic decorations were superb, and the appropriate entertainment included our county's very finest.

All people who love Polk County and its pioneer citizens are invited to our fourth birthday party on June 28. If you have 80-year Old-timers in your neighborhood who should be honored, let us know and we will send each of them a cordial invitation to come and have fun with us.

— GLENN HOOKER



BRICK FRUIT PACKING HOUSE AT HAINES CITY (1920)  
Which pays annually hundreds of thousands of dollars to the grove owners of Haines City.

POLK COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSN.  
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BARTOW, FLA. 33830

Address correction  
requested

