



**Commentary  
for the  
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**Presented by Mimi Bruce  
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*“As late as the 1860’s the few roads in central Florida were little more than twisting, rutted military trails. The only highway was the river, the slowly flowing St. Johns.”*

Thus begins the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of Oviedo, Biography of a Town. This is a snapshot of the area in the late 1800’s. Through the next century Oviedo developed into a stable, agricultural community with a population of approximately 2,500. Being a small town, little attention, for instance, was paid to street names. Landmarks, such as “The Smith Place” were used instead. Everyone got their mail at the Post Office and until 1968, all twelve grades were housed in one school of about 300 students. It was located where Lawton Elementary is now.

However, with the establishment of the University of Central Florida just 5 miles South, all that changed. The people that moved here liked the family oriented community they found and steady growth ensued.

I grew up here and I like having so many shopping and eating choices now. We used to have to go to downtown Orlando for either of these. It was a real event when the Town House Restaurant opened in the early 60’s.

The Oviedo Historical Society was formed in 1973, by a group that began collecting items with the idea of a museum. Then in 1979, after several years of research and interviews, Oviedo residents Dr. Richard Adicks and Mrs. Donna Neely published the first edition of Oviedo, Biography of a Town, the proceeds from which have all gone to the Historical Society’s Museum Fund.

When the Chamber of Commerce vacated the Lawton House, the City offered it to the Historical Society. The Lawton family were pioneers here and so it seems fitting that the Historical Society is now housed in the family home on the main street of town. The Park’s Department has done a wonderful job of renovating it and we are very appreciative of this opportunity.

Recently, we had an Open House and fund raiser we called “Music Fest on the Green.” Central Floridians came to see our displays and enjoyed fellowship, music and lunch.

We are now looking forward to putting more of our collection on display and will have the house open on a scheduled basis. In addition, we expect to have more events, moving toward our goal of a museum that will be another asset to the City.

Because Oviedo’s history matters, this is Mimi Bruce.