

A GUIDE TO THE STRANAHAN MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

Finding aid created by Susan Gillis

Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, Inc.

October 2002

Descriptive Summary

Provenance:	The Stranahan Manuscript Collection was left to the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society by Ivy Stranahan upon her death in 1971.
Title:	Stranahan Manuscript Collection
Dates:	1898-1971
Abstract:	Many important documents of local pioneers Frank and Ivy Stranahan; a record of the founding of many community institutions.
Extent:	190 linear feet
Accession:	1971.0001

Biographical/Historical Note

The modern community of Fort Lauderdale can trace its origins to the establishment of a ferry and trading post on New River in 1893. Proprietor Frank Stranahan married the town's first schoolteacher, Ivy Julia Cromartie, in 1900, and together they served as two of the most important founding members of the community. The trading post was replaced in 1901 by the riverfront home now known as Stranahan House. Mr. Stranahan's business moved west to the F.E.C. Railroad tracks and he continued to prosper from his many investments until the depression hit South Florida in 1926. Mrs. Stranahan became the prototypical community activist, devoting her time to important and timely political and social issues. Both were integral players in many of the key events in the development of the city and region.

Scope and Content

The Stranahan manuscript collection comprise letters, business records, miscellaneous documents, and ephemera detailing everything from the Seminole patrons of the trading post to the clients of the city's first African American hospital. The materials range in date from the 1880s to the 1970s. The information contained within this relatively small collection provides valuable insights into the everyday life of the region's early settlers, the changing Seminole culture, women's rights, and environmental issues.

Subjects

Seminole Indians: Folders 1-50; 56-58; 199-207; 226-227.

please note: Ivy Stranahan was a member of many organizations which supported the cause of Florida's Seminoles Indians. Much of her work "crossed over" and it is often difficult to tell if a document relates to the Friends of the Seminoles, e.g., or the Indian Welfare Committee of the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, etc.

For the Friends of the Seminoles (important Seminole support organization), see Folders 10-21, 200-207

Frank Stranahan's store ledgers and correspondence re the trading post and overnight camp also contain some important references to the local Indians, see Folders 34, 56-58, 226-227

Old Dillard School (The Colored School): Folders 108-112 (deeds & abstracts); 198.

Frank and Ivy Stranahan gave the property for this school which was constructed in ca. 1924. (Check for Tuskegee Park on legal descriptions). See his 1929 diary for "lumber for the school" entry.

Provident Hospital: Folders 63-64; 90-93; 208-211.

Ivy Stranahan was a member of the "Colored Medical Relief Board" which helped found the first hospital for the African American community, (Provident Hospital), and continued to be active on the hospital board into the 1940s. These folders contain items such as receipts and accounts ledgers which name all patients and their ailments—an important documentation of the traditionally under-documented African American community in Fort Lauderdale.

Welfare: see Seminoles; Provident Hospital; and Folders 62; 126; 132-133; 154; 157; 185-188; 222.

Ivy Stranahan served on the Broward County Welfare Board for many years and was active in many related organizations. (There is a lot of cross over with other folders here, as well.)

Women's suffrage: Folder 168

Ivy Stranahan was the Fort Lauderdale representative in the Florida Equal Suffrage Association.

Fort Lauderdale Woman's Club: Folders 169-170

Ivy Stranahan served as president and was very active in the parent organization, the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs and the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

Florida Federation of Women's Clubs: Folders 2; 154-155; 171-176

American Red Cross, Broward Chapter: Folder 165

Ivy was a long time member of the local A.R.C.

Daughters of the American Revolution: Folders 48; 167

Ivy Stranahan campaigned for the Seminole Indian cause through her D.A.R. affiliation.

Conservation: Folders 134-136; 155; 172

Ivy Stranahan was a long time member of the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs' Royal Palm State Park Committee; (the park which became Everglades National Park.) She also had a life long interest in bird protection.

Health: Folder 139; 177

Ivy was a member of the Battle Creek Sanitarium in Miami. There are also advertisements relating to prostrate care and other clinics (Frank suffered from prostrate cancer and depression near the end of his life.)

Religion: Folders 49; 137-138.

Raised as a Methodist, Ivy became a Seventh Day Adventist in the 1920s (?) or so, and became interested in subjects such as spiritualism, embraced by the Adventists in the early twentieth century. Her religious affiliation probably affected her dietary regimen as well, that is the prohibition against caffeine and alcohol and vegetarianism she followed most of her life.

Stranahan & Company: Folders 51; 53-61; 67-83; 88; 100; 189-192; 198; 213-218; 220; 225-227.

This encompasses most of the information regarding the trading post and store.

Stranahan Building Company and Stranahan Estate: Folders 54; 59-61; 69-83; 86-87; 94-99; 101-115; 145; 151; 153; 156; 159-160; 162; 164; 189-192; 194-195; 213-218; 220.

It is difficult to distinguish between the Stranahan Building Company's investments and projects and personal investments and projects. These folders include all the abstracts, deeds, tax receipts, and other real estate transactions before and after Frank's death.

Victoria Park: Folders 94-99; 106-114; 195

Look for transactions involving Alfred Kuhn, developer of Victoria Park.

Fort Lauderdale beach: Folders 94-99; 106-114; 162

Frank Stranahan did business for Senator Tom Watson, owner of the Las Olas Inn, as well as D.C. Alexander, who purchased Watson's land and developed Las Olas by the Sea (south part of Fort Lauderdale beach).

City of Fort Lauderdale business: Folders 84-87; 89 (?); 219

Frank Stranahan was a member of the Fort Lauderdale City Council in its early days.

Stranahan House: Folders 69-82; 94-99; 107-112; 116; 149; 153; 158; 159, 177.

The current Stranahan House was constructed in ca. 1901 and served as the trading post until the Stranahan Store was built on New River east of the F.E.C. tracks in 1906. The house was extensively remodeled and the second floor "finished" in ca. 1913-1915. These folders contain receipts for purchases for the house such as electrical and plumbing supplies and furnishings, as well as deeds and mortgages related to the property.

Everyday life in the 1910s-1920s: Folders 69-82; 117.

These folders contain an interesting assortment of advertisements for various products aimed at homeowners, farmers, and merchants in the early 20th C. (There are many great illustrations and graphics.)

Pioneer House restaurant: Folder 158

The Stranahan House was leased by the Blackwell family and served as the Pioneer House restaurant from 1939-1979.

Stranahan and Cromartie family history: Folders: 52; 65-68; 124-125; 149; 163; 182; 184; 212

Access or Use Restrictions

Access

Collection is **open for research**.

Please contact collections@fortlauderdalehistorycenter.org to schedule an appointment.

Related or Separated Material

Photographs and three-dimensional objects

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Stranahan Manuscript Collection, Fort Lauderdale Historical Society

Acquisition Information

Materials donated by Ivy Stranahan, 1971

Notes

The Stranahan manuscript collection was originally organized in ca. 1980 by a graduate intern to the Historical Society. In 2001, the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society and Stranahan House (funded in part by the Florida Local Historical Records Grant Program) launched a joint project to microfilm this collection and replace the inappropriate PVC plastic sleeves that housed most of the papers in the collection. The VC sleeves were removed, metal staples and clips were removed, and fragile papers were placed in new archival quality plastic sleeves. In addition, I took the opportunity to “tune up” the arrangement of the collection without completely reorganizing it (as many publications rely on the already established folder order for bibliographic citations.) I based my decisions on an intimate knowledge of the Stranahans and local history (as former long-time curator of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society and consultant to Stranahan House.) - Susan Gillis, Curatorial Consultant, Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, October 2002

The Fort Lauderdale Historical Society and Stranahan House thank the Florida State Historical Records Advisory Board for their generous assistance with this project.

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