

Avon Park, the oldest of these villages, had been settled in 1886 by people from England. Being twenty miles from a R. R. the little village had remained very small, with only two general stores. There were no paved streets and sidewalks were made of boards. With the coming of the R. R. many new people moved in. Among the new residents were the Oscar Skipper and Walter Hart families.

There was no Baptist Church in Avon Park, but they soon found many other Baptist families, so they all became charter members of the First Baptist Church of Avon Park.

In January of 1914 Edith Hart Crews who had been a widow for three years, married Shade Williams, an old friend.

In the late summer of 1914 typhoid fever, which was a prevalent disease then, struck three members of the Walter Hart family, Walter, Helen and Mattie, the youngest daughter. Walter and Helen became critically ill, and on August 6, Helen passed away while Walter lay at death's door too ill to be told of her death.

The sisters, Anne, Edith and Nell all went to help with the nursing there and at the Oscar Skipper home where Bertha was critically ill following surgery. Bertha died on the 8th, two days after Helen. Helen was buried beside her little son and Bertha only a few feet away. Both of the families were now motherless.

In September of 1914 a second great-grandchild was welcomed into the Hart family. Elton, the first son of Harry and Nora Crews. Then in November 1914 another grandchild, Earl, the first child was born to Roy and Bessie Hart.

The Hart grandchildren now numbered twenty-two, nine grandsons and thirteen granddaughters. Counting the two great-grandsons, the boys were not greatly outnumbered. Two granddaughters married in 1917. Blanche Crews married Joe Scott from Jackson County in March of that year. She was the first one of the family to go to another part of the state to live. Clara Skipper married Mark Smith in September. He was the son of George Smith of the pioneer Smith family.

The war which had been going on in Europe since 1914 drew the U. S. into it in 1917. Only two grandsons and one grandson-in-law were involved. Clinton Skipper and Mark Smith went into the army and Lonnie Skipper into the navy. Harry Crews was a farmer with small children so he was exempt. Herman Skipper and Howe Crews were a year too young to be drafted.

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#### DE SOTO: JOSHUA CREEK CEMETERY

This cemetery record has been a group effort by many dedicated and historically minded individuals. It was originally copied and compiled by Stanley and Doris Nicholson of Arcadia in 1970 through 1974. The original manuscript was typed by Mrs. Mary C. Waters of Fort Myers who also prepared a map of the cemetery. Mrs. Virginia Creighton Westergard of Coronado, California provided family information not only on her Blount and Parker families but much additional help on all families and the format of presentation. Please see Issue #19/20 for a listing of printed sources used for additional info and individuals who contributed family information about relatives and friends.