

DREAMERS OF OUR PAST

DREAMERS *of our* PAST

SARASOTA COUNTY



May, 2000

To accompany "Dreamers of Our Past"
a traveling exhibition for the millennium



by Peg Russell

SARASOTA COUNTY
DREAMERS *of our* **PAST**

INTRODUCTION

"Dreamers of Our Past" is a project of Sarasota County Community Services - Historical Resources for "2000 Dreams," a program of the Sarasota County Millennial Commission for 2000. The project consists of a traveling exhibit, booklet, and internet site that are designed to complement each other, but can also stand alone. An advisory committee composed of Lillian Burns, Diana Harris, Dorothy Korwek, Stephen Latmann, Elizabeth Lindsay, and Ann Shank selected a limited number of dreamers. Criteria for consideration included a) the dream impacted the larger community, b) most of the dreamer's work was completed before 1960, c) the dreamer is deceased and was a resident of Sarasota County. The committee then considered geographical, chronological, and topical distribution as well as space limitations.

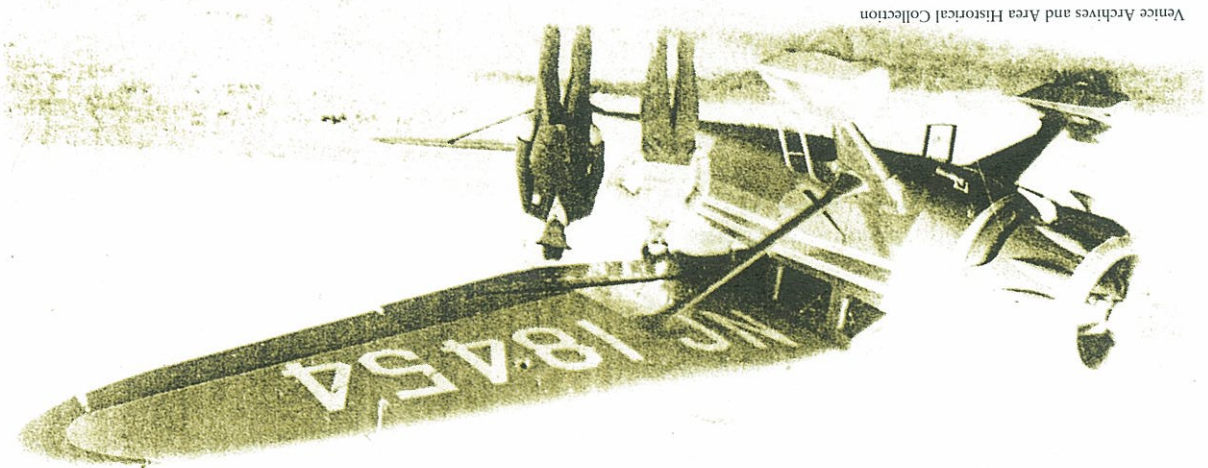
Some of the exhibited dreamers of our past are well known. Others have received less publicity over time. Many potential dreamers are not included. Viewers are invited to nominate additional dreamers for inclusion on the internet site. The nomination should include information about the dreamer and the dream (maximum of 300 words) and a photograph that can be scanned for the site. For further information, contact Sarasota County Historical Resources at (941) 316-1115 or ashank@co.sarasota.fl.us.

Ann Shank
Sarasota County Historical Resources

FRED ALBEE 1878-1945 "To improve the life of his patients; to establish his pearl city" When Dr. Fred Albee and his wife visited the Venice-Nokomis area in 1917, they liked it so much Albee

invented orthopedic tools, taught his techniques to surgeons worldwide, and was decorated by the governments of fourteen countries. * In 1933 he opened his Florida Medical Center in the former Park View Hotel in Venice. His patients ate nutritious food from his farms and groves. His dairy supplied two kinds of ice cream, one without sugar for diabetic patients. Albee had a plane he used to fly in patients. Patients had free heliotherapy (sunshine as an aid in healing), but salt glows were \$1 extra. The medical center closed in 1942 when the U.S. Army turned the building into a military hospital. * At his death, his 14,000 acres of property included Casey Key, the Venezia Hotel, fourteen houses, an inn, restaurant, docks and fishing center, and twelve houses for worker's quarters.

bought large parcels of land. By May 1924, he owned Bay Point, most of Venice, and more than twenty-five miles of waterfront property. * Albee hired the famous city planner, John Nolen. Buildings were to be "Northern Italian" design, with sloping roofs and exteriors of smooth white stucco. Advertisements called Nokomis "The White City" and "Pearl City" because of the white stucco. * He founded the Venice-Nokomis Bank, the only boom period bank in the area to remain open during the Great Depression. Albee donated land for the Venice-Nokomis Methodist Church and the Nokomis school. * Albee was an eminent orthopedic surgeon who had pioneered work in bone grafting (patterned after his grandfather's tree grafting) and reportedly performed almost half of all bone grafts during World War I. He

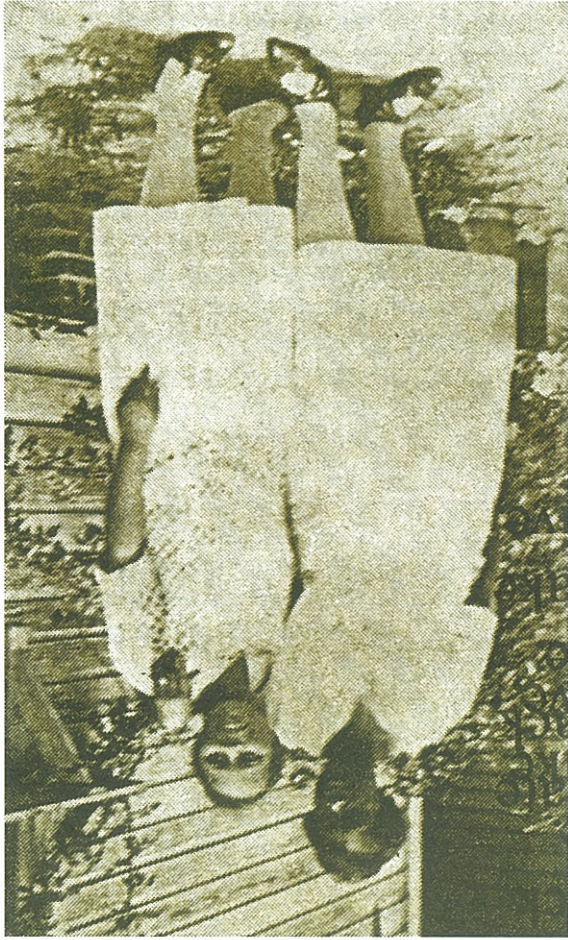


Venice Archives and Area Historical Collection

EMMA E. BENTON BOOKER 1886-1939

“To prepare African American children for the opportunities beyond limitations confronting them in Sarasota County” Florida schools were

segregated when Emma E. Booker began teaching at the age of fourteen in a one-room school, earning \$25 a month. In 1918, she came to teach at the Sarasota Grammar School, and earned \$30 a month. It was the only black school in the area, with pupils from Myakka and Tallvass. Classes were held in rented rooms, and students used books discarded from white schools. * In 1923, Booker was promoted to principal. She raised funds for a permanent school site and with the help of the Rosenwald Fund, a building for Sarasota Grammar School was completed in 1925. According to *Renaissance Connection News*, May 1990, children made their desks out of orange crates. * The school board refused to add a ninth grade to the school or to allow Booker's students to attend the all-white high school. In 1923, the superintendent remarked, "An eighth grade education is enough for any Negro." Students who could afford to attend Dunbar High School in Ft. Myers, Negro League baseball star John "Buck" O'Neil said he "stayed in elementary school for three more years for private tutoring from Miss Emma E. Booker." * "Emma Booker persevered, personally encouraging students, underwriting their continued education and pressuring intransigent administrators to provide for blacks the same educational opportunities available to whites", read an editorial when Emma E. Booker Elementary School was named in her honor. * Booker herself spent every summer for twenty years going to school. She finished high school and earned a B.S. degree before she died. * James Robert Dixon was the organizing principal when Booker High School graduated its first class of four in 1935.



From *But Your World and My World* by Annie M. McElroy