

**PROCLAMATION
OF THE
SEMINOLE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
PROCLAIMING THE CELEBRATION OF THE 100TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF
MIDWAY/CANAAN CITY IN SEMINOLE COUNTY**

WHEREAS, the Midway/Canaan area was residential as early as 1885-1890; and

WHEREAS, Midway/Canaan City was established for blacks during the celery boom of the 1920's; and

WHEREAS, initially the settlement was called "The Midway Point" because two artesian wells on Sipes Avenue were used to water livestock being driven from Cameron City to the Sanford Freight yards; and

WHEREAS, the name was shortened to Midway and a section of the Midway community became known as Canaan City. The name "Canaan Land" was derived from references mentioned in the Bible made by two itinerant preachers, Reverend Beatty and Father Owens; and

WHEREAS, the area of Midway/Canaan and Sanford was known as Celery City. Celery farm work built Midway/Canaan after the citrus trees died from the bitter freezes of 1894 and early 1895. Farmers turned to truck farming to harness the artesian wells and developed an underground irrigation system to grow celery; and

WHEREAS, much of Midway/Canaan was known as migrant areas, where farmers imported laborers from all over the region to plant and harvest their crops. Some migrant workers chose to stay in Midway/Canaan when harvest season ended; and

WHEREAS, those who stayed worked later in celery washhouses. Women graded the celery by size and the men packed celery into crates and loaded rail cars on the tracks along the side of the washhouses; and

WHEREAS, education began in the Midway/Canaan community in 1906 when Mrs. Mille Morgan, a graduate of Shaw University, started a private school in her home. Later a public school, grades one through 10, was established on Midway Avenue, where the present Battern Quarters is located; and

WHEREAS, Midway/Canaan entrepreneurs included Gordon Phillipe Sr. who ran his store from the front porch of his house on Sipes Avenue. Additionally, Governor "Mr. Man" Dixon ran the local movie theater. Midway/Canaan's Martin's Sundries, also called The Soda Fountain, drew in young people from Sanford's Georgetown and Goldsboro; and

WHEREAS, Midway/Canaan is proud of its citizens comprised of professional athletes, ranchers, ministers, doctors, lawyers, educators, and engineers. Notably from Midway/Canaan is George Stark Jr., the first black graduate from the University of Florida Law School, and Robert Thomas Jr., the first black elected official to the city government. Midway/Canaan's history is rich in their commitment to make the community one that shines in Seminole County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED that the Seminole County Board of County Commissioners does hereby designate November 14, 2020, as

**THE CELEBRATION OF THE 100TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF MIDWAY/CANAAN
CITY IN SEMINOLE COUNTY**

BE IT FUTHER PROCLAIMED by the Board of County Commissioners of Seminole County, Florida, that this Proclamation be spread upon the Official Minutes by the Clerk of the Circuit Court in and for the County of Seminole.

ADOPTED this November 10, 2020



Jay Zembower, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners