



WALDO SEXTON 1885-1967

Eccentric, Eclectic, Enthusiastic, Entrepreneur, Entertainer, Educator
 Generous, Visionary, “The World’s Most Imaginative Liar,” Salesman, Architect,
 Builder, Horticulturist, Developer, Citrus Grower, Rancher, Dairyman, Art Lover,
 Real Estate Broker, Restaurant Owner, Hotel Owner, Antique collector, Scavenger,
 Nature lover, Carpenter, Furniture Designer, Publicist, Environmentalist, 1st Recycler

To survive the hardships, it was necessary to possess a stubborn tenacity or a sheer love of the land. Waldo possessed both. Innovative and practical, eccentric and lovable, he gave his all to Vero Beach. He saw beauty in everything and was determined to preserve all he could for future generations.
 “Waldo Sexton: Pioneer with a Purpose” undated source

TIMELINE

YEAR	AGE	EVENT
1885	0	Born Moral, Shelby County, Indiana - sixth child to Isaac Sexton and Sarah Buckingham
1906-08	21	Graduated from High School. Went to Indiana State University - studied medicine – changed his mind to study Agriculture.
1909-11	26	Purdue University graduated – degree in animal husbandry from School of Agriculture
1911-13	28	Worked for O. (Ohio) C. (Columbus) Barber of Barberton, Ohio
1913-14	28	Arrived October 1913 in Vero Beach to sell the “Spalding deep Tilling Machine” invented by Charles H. McKee. Waldo’s brother Bert and father Isaac invested in land. He was the sales agent for Indian River Farms Co. and manager of Cleveland, OH based office.
1915-16	30	Purchased large pieces of property on the beach and southwest Vero.
1916	31	Director & Supervisor of Real Estate – Live Oak Hotel – First on Orchid Island
1917	32	Moved into his bungalow on 12 th Street as a bachelor.
1918	33	Married Elsebeth Martens of Franklin Park, Illinois and they had 4 children (2 boys, 2 girls)
1919	34	Mary Jacqueline Sexton born Franklin Park, IL – Married Rev. Jack Daly



OSLO PACKING HOUSE

U. S. 1 & Oslo Road

1919	Nov 22 Barn dance celebration for grand opening. Built by Leonard Newman, architect/builder
1920s	February 7 - Officially open for business-shipped their first car of fruit – still in business today.

1920	County Engineer-cleared Orchid-Narrows road. President St Lucie County Fair Association
1921	Barbara Louise Sexton born Franklin Park – Married John R. Tripson
1923	Waldo builds first ice cream factory/parlor on Osceola Blvd (Hwy 60) Director and manager of the Royal Park Development Company
1924	Established and incorporated the Vero Beach Dairy which later became the Tripson Dairy.
1927	Ralph Waldo Sexton born Franklin Park – Married 1) Hildegard Herold, 2) Chris Dale
1929	Charles Randolph Sexton born Vero Beach – Married 1) Eleanor Graves, 2) Audrey Graves
1931	Waldo planted 25 banyan trees (Osceola and McAnsh Park) –He most likely planted the trees at McKee, and other places in IRC. Dr. W. H. Humiston home at the corner of Avalon and Hwy 60 has one of the largest trees. The home was torn down several years ago and a park is now desired.
1931	Director of the newly formed “Indian River Citrus Growers’ League” that included five counties from Volusia to Martin. A.B. Michael was president.
1942-47	Searched to save the guinea cow. Cross breeding became Waldo’s specialty.
1946	Tripson family home built next to Vero Beach Dairy and the Waldo Sexton family – The business became Tripson’s Dairy on Rosedale Boulevard (12 th Street)
1958	Nov 5 – Waldo Sexton Day
1967	Waldo Emerson Sexton died December 21 at age 82
1986	Elsebeth Martens Sexton died April 17 at age 96



MCKEE JUNGLE GARDENS

Hall of Giants

U. S. 1 & 4th Street

1919	Charles H. McKee purchased large tracts of land along Indian River. Died 1921
1929-30	Waldo turned his attention to “taming the jungle” of 1000 acres. Partnered with Arthur McKee, cousin to Charles McKee.
1932	Jan 1 – Officially opens to the public.
1940	Dec - New exhibits: New entrance foyer; cypress stump; 35 x 5 foot one-piece mahogany table with a new Jungle patio and museum building (Hall of Giants completed Feb 1941); over 40 Royal Palms planted; large addition to orchid collection; planting of “stump garden,” entrance gates from Henry Flagler home in Palm Beach, and collection of hundreds of pieces of wrought iron (church candelabra from Spain) and other art work. Huge party celebrated.
1954	Wild Animal Compound opened. Denice the Menace escapes from the elephant compound and locals “pursue the ponderous pachyderm.”
1976	Garden closed and the table was sold to Peter O’Malley, Los Angeles Dodgers. It reopened Nov 2001 and was renamed McKee Botanical Garden and the table was returned to the Hall of Giants 2004.



THE DRIFTWOOD

“JUNKPILE BY THE SEA” or “THE MIZNER MUSEUM”

Ocean Drive

<http://www.verobeachdriftwood.com/>

1934	Wood from an old barn destroyed in 1933 by a hurricane at Waldo’s place was dragged over to build a 4-bedroom beach cottage for the family. All building plans were in Waldo’s head and he hired the Rivenbark family who were carpenters to build it. Referred to as the Breezeway because it was built with a 25 foot wide open area between the rooms. Similar to a Mizner building in West Palm Beach.
1936-39	North wing was added which included two oceanfront rooms. 1938-South wing was added which put the hotel at 14 total rooms available for guests. World’s largest driftwood washed ashore in 1939.
1939-53	Winfred (Winnie Driftwood) Harshbarger (m. Mary Langbehn) managed the hotel for many years.
1947	Acquired 100 ft. on north side. Used war surplus cottages from Army Demolition Camp at Porpoise Point. New dining room built into 2-story building – 25 ft. dining tables. Bathrooms added-carved doors were “once the property of the ex-king of Spain.
1968	Two-story building added that included 14 efficiency apartment units.
1970s	4-story building called the Cervantes Annex was built. Elsebeth Sexton lived on the 4 th floor. Sold in 1979 and converted much of the space into time share condominiums.
1994	Listed on the National Registry of Historic Places.



THE PATIO RESTAURANT

“FLEA MARKET”

AKA Orange Terrace, Orange Patio, El Toro, Royal Palm Development,
LaBelle Jones Gift Shop

U. S. 1 & 11th Ave.

1937-1953	The building was a combination real estate office for Waldo (Royal Park Development Corp), gift shop and fruit stand. The LaBelle Jones Gift Shop opened only in season and existed for over 15 years. It included a rental library. Lulu (Sexton) Sleeth, Waldo’s sister operated the fruit stand.
1946-1950	Opened as the “Orange Terrace” by R. J. Richmond and Frenchmen Monsieur Marandean. Includes Howard Johnson’s ice cream, orange juice, Cuban & Mexican novelties & cut flowers.
1948	Installed a patio and rock garden. Added sandwiches and coffee.
1951-1954	Gerald Cleary & John O’Haire purchased the Orange Terrace Sept 1951. Orange Terrace changed to the Orange Patio and finally became “The Patio” in 1952. Little Driftwood Gift Shop opened 1954.
1964	Jimmy & Eva Conits purchased the Patio Restaurant and sold it to Ralph & Hildie Sexton in 1969.



OCEAN GRILL

AKA “The Bucket”, Club Mac, Tropics Restaurant,
Ocean View Inn, Club 17
Ocean Drive at Sexton Plaza

1937-38	Waldo built hotdog stand. Leased it to F. Bertram Scent.
1940	Waldo used an architect from Biltmore, NC to create Ocean Grill, but used his own plans.
1941	Gus & Emma’s Ocean Grill opened and closed Oct 1942.
1943	Ocean Grill became Club Mac, operated by Alex MacWilliam – officer’s club for USNAS.
1947-52	Changed hands and name three times.
1965	Replogle family began management.
1984	Struck by a severe storm at Thanksgiving. Lost the floors and had a lot of structural damage.



WALDO’S MOUNTAIN

“PEARL OF THE COAST”
A-1-A across from Jaycee Park on the Indian River

1956	Waldo builds mountain 32 ft high, (46 ft to top of needle), 200 feet at the base.
1960	Vandalism of Waldo’s Mountain prompts him to offer a reward.
1973	Tropical Storm Gilda caused severe beach erosion around the Driftwood and it needed dirt quickly to shore it up. Ralph Sexton made the decision to move the Mountain to the Driftwood.



SZECHUAN PALACE

“PHANTASMAGORIA”
AKA The Turf Club, Caprino’s Italian Food, Coche Restaurant,
El Greco Restaurant, Don’s Hofbraus House, Szechuan Palace
1965 43rd Ave

1957	Waldo stopped the truck carrying the house that once owned by Ben Ard. Waldo told him to move it to the present location, which is across the street from where it originally stood. In July it became the Turf (semi-private) Club – Bought a cupola from the barn of Sea Biscuit in California. Disappeared.
1957	Oct – Vero Beach Art Club had a painting date at Waldo’s “Phantasmagoria!”
1959	Feb – Officially opened to serve meals specializing in steaks and pizza & all kinds of pies.
1989	Szechuan Palace opened.



SEXTON PLAZA

WALDO SEXTON DAY – NOVEMBER 5, 1958
Ocean Drive

1915	Waldo purchased beach property that is today Sexton Plaza and Ocean Grill.
1958	Sexton Plaza and Waldo Sexton day was official on Nov 5 – Over 3000 people showed up and they celebrated all day with parades and other events.
2008	Nov – Renovations were completed.

THE OCEAN GRILL

January 16, 1942 – Vero Beach Press Journal

The building is finished, the carpenters gone, we are left on the ocean front ringing the gong, so the sawdust gravy that you've heard about, ran slowly away as the saws moved out.

We just hung the signs in glittering hue, Gus and Emma's Ocean Grill is welcoming you.

A business man's luncheon we serve every day, our coffee is hot our salads are gay. Sandwiches delicious, hotdogs that talk, there's no sand on us we have a board walk.

Our dinners are ready from 6 until 9; and later if it pleases just call us in time.

This Little Place by a Genius was planned, with Vision that knows no rest. A Collector of values that never die, and assembled for your happiness.

Now if you are looking for some place to go, drop in and see us, if just a hello, for we are beginning a venture that's new, and we're learned to love it and you'll love it too.

A table of Rosewood, carved by strong hands, Odd pieces of grill work from far distant lands, our own native cypress, polished so high you'll even for-get there's a moon in the sky.

It is restful to know as on marches time, that God made the ocean more restless than mind, these things I say proves to be true, when you sit at our tables and gaze at the view.

Experts in casting poetical phrases have been by the beaches inspired, but Vero we know, with its peoples so free, was made by a poet and laid by the sea.

“WORK WITH NATURE” - Waldo Sexton, 1920s

“My only regret is that I had not come to Vero Beach sooner.” - Waldo Sexton

“Don't let the truth get in the way of a good story.” - Waldo Sexton

“You need not ruin the environment of Florida by development.
You could preserve it all, enhance even, if you only knew how.” - Addison Mizer

“Sexton has perfected a technique for creating wonders from useless items.” – VBPJ 1941

“Mr. Sexton is a man of broad vision who does big things in a big way.”
A. M. Saunders, March 7, 1930, Vero Beach Press Journal.

“Although I saw many beautiful places and numerous evidences of prosperity and success I did not come across any section that has the possibilities of our country here around Vero. If any of you are not satisfied here I would advise you to take a trip over the state and see how well off you are.” Waldo Sexton - 1927, *Vero Beach Press Journal*

WALDO'S FIRST TEN YEARS IN INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

1914	Vero Realty Company, President
1915-16	Indian River Farms Company
1916 Jun	Vero Beach Company aka Geo. H. Burrows Development Company
1916 Nov	Indian River Fruit and Vegetable Company
1917 Jan	Vero-Indian River Growers' Association
1917 Jul	Seminole Building Corporation
1917 Jul	Drainage Commissioners of the Vero Drainage District
1918	Credit Men's Organization, President
1919	Indian River Products, President
1920	Oslo Packing Company, President
1920	Oslo Citrus Growers Association, President
1920	Gem Island Nurseries, Vice-President
1920	St Lucie County Fair Association, President
1921	Indian River Farms Drainage District, President, Chairman
1922	First National Bank of Vero Beach, Director
1922	Sexton Groves, President
1922	Quay Bridge District, Commissioner and Chairman
1922	Press Printing Company, Vice-President (Dissolved Vero Press)
1922	McKee-Sexton Land Company, Vice-President
1923	Vero Bank and Trust Company, Director
1923	Blue Heron Ice Cream Company, Owner
1923	Sexton Dairy, Owner - Changed to the Vero Dairy (Vero Beach Dairy after 1925)
1923	Royal Park Company, Vice-President
1925	Indian River County Fair Association
1925	Vero Homesite Company, Vice President

CLUB MEMBER:

1917	St. Lucie County Motor Club
1919	St Lucie County Milk Club
1919	Friday Evening Club
1919	Commercial Club, Vice President

OTHER (SELECTED) ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Developed three varieties of Avocado, one of which was named "Sexton."
- Helped to organize the Indian River Citrus League in 1931
- Pioneer in cross-breeding the Florida Guinea cow with Brahman
- Had the 1st Florida orange analyzed which developed an analysis that is still being used today.
- During the depression, helped form the Florida Production Credit Association to make crop loans to farmers.
- He initiated his own program in planting trees. Believed trees would make the greatest difference in landscape. He planted: 1) water oaks east side of 14th ave. & 21st St. 2) Indian Laurels along 21st St from 15th Ave west to McAnsh Park; 3) Royal Palm trees along Royal Palm Boulevard and Royal Palm Place; 4) Royal Palm trees at McKee Jungle Gardens; 5) Banyan trees, most likely any and all of them.
- Selected the vistas for the first nine holes of the Royal Park Golf Course – now Vero Beach Country Club.