

THE HISTORY OF "PARKS FARM"

"Parks Farm" is a beautiful subdivision, but have you ever wondered what it was and who lived here before The John Crosland Company bought and developed it?

About 10,000 B.C. the land occupied by this subdivision and much of the surrounding acreage, was an Indian reservation. Many artifacts have been found in this area to prove this. A large rock, which is believed to have been used by the Indians for ceremonial purposes, is located in Thornhill subdivision (off Elm Lane) down a pathway across from the Thornhill pool.

In the mid-1800's, two brothers, William and Lark Robinson settled in this area. William Robinson owned the country store, which stood in the same place as the "Quick Shoppe" which used to be on the land beside the gas station at Elm Lane and Blakeney Heath Road.

"Mr. Lark", as he was called, raised sheep and hogs, grew cotton and made wool and cotton right here on the land we live on. If you stand on Parks Farm Lane and face the house located at 11731, you will see an old magnolia tree in the front yard. This tree stood to the right of a big white house in which the Robinson family lived. The house was two stories high, and on each side there were two large fireplaces with long chimneys. On the front of the house was a porch. Going from the front porch, a path lined with beautiful English boxwoods led to two large stones, which were used to mount the carriages. Since there was no kitchen in the house, it was believed that there was a kitchen attached to the left side off the back of the house. The construction date of the house was estimated to have been before the Civil War. To the left of the kitchen stood a crypt, and barns were thought to be located behind the house, somewhere in the Duckbill Drive area of the subdivision. In the front of the house, near where Parks Farm Lane ends, were the fields and pasture. This is why there were originally no trees in the lower end of the subdivision. It is thought that in the area of Charnwood Court and Gamesford Drive (which was originally called "Parks Village") stood small cabins, which housed slaves. On the corner of Charnwood Court and Blakeney Heath Road, there is a graveyard where possibly slaves are buried.

Mrs. Robinson's maiden name was Park. In the early 1900's, her cousin bought the land from the Robinson's. Mr. Park was a salesman; the farm was his hobby. The house was the Park's country home. Farm hands took care of the farm for Mr. Park while he was away on business. As is obvious, our subdivision is named after the Park family.

The farm was later sold to Mr. Cal Mitchell who rented the house out to tenants. It was believed that no farming was actually done at that time. The house became run down and was eventually condemned and destroyed in the late 1960's. The John Crosland Company bought the farm from Mr. Mitchell and developed our beautiful subdivision.

This information was originally printed in the *Neighbors 'Round Raeburn* newsletter in September, 1990. Diane Pasciolla (a former resident of Raeburn) researched and wrote the original article.