

“Barefoot to Boots” chronicles Flint & Doyle beginnings, growth

As a “down to earth storyteller with three-quarters of a century of personal observations and tales not to be found in history books,” Charles William (Charlie) Flint chronicles the beginnings and growth of Florida’s largest and most successful structural moving company.

In his autobiography ‘Barefoot to Boots,’ as told to Barbara Oehlbeck, Flint “exhibits a raw honesty that is rare and refreshing, as well as highly entertaining.” He recounts his life from barefoot boy whose father early deserted the family to that of a widely respected and shrewd businessman, cattleman and landholder.



Moving the Labelle, Florida City Hall in 1949. Tom Doyle is in the left foreground with no shirt.



Business partners Charlie Flint and Tom Doyle in April, 1949.

In February of 1946, Charlie started his first business, a general store. Despite not having electricity, he added a gas pump, repaired automobiles and with his wife’s assistance sold milk, sandwiches, and other merchandise.

A frequent visitor to the store was Tommy Doyle, who was in the Army Air Corp. ferrying planes from Buckingham Army Air Base (the largest training center in the United States at that time) in Ft. Myer, FL to Altus, OK for storage. As time permitted, Charlie Flint and Tommy Doyle began working on jobs together.

When Doyle completed his military service, he and Charlie began a personal and professional relationship. Notice of an auction of surplus equipment and supplies at the Buckingham Air Base caught their attention. They entered a bid of \$35.00 and it was accepted. With the profit of the sale of the surplus equipment, they began



Charlie Flint and Tom Doyle moving an “up scale” property in 1949.

By JACK E. BRYMER, SR., Contributing Editor

buying buildings which they dismantled and sold the lumber.

Flint & Doyle's first moving job was a small tarpaper house measuring only 14' x 18'. They jacked the building up on drums using long pry poles. They couldn't get their truck under the building so they dug a hole and backed the truck under it. As business grew, they added a trailer, truck, jeep, jacks, timbers and a truck crane.

Increasing business forced Flint and Doyle to find a larger....

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Manny Flint cleaning the office in 1979.



Tom Doyle doing office work in 1974.



Some equipment in 1950.



20 years later the equipment has improved as shown here with Tom Doyle and Charlie Flint in 1970.



Tommy Doyle, III holding his daughter Lauren, Tommy Doyle, Jr. (with camera), aunt Rosemary (black blouse) and Lucille Doyle (right foreground) at a barging job in 1995.