

“How Osceola’s Name Came to Cranford”

The name of a famous Seminole Indian Chief is noted in town. Thomas Sperry, the Green Stamp founder, gave his home on the site of English Village that name and also named his large farm located on Raritan Road after the chief.

An attempt was made to continue the name in a housing development off Centennial Avenue on part of the former farm in the late 1930’s which included two of the largest subdivisions in Cranford. One was Sunny Acres; west of the river and the other was called Osceola Park, situated on Munsee Drive between the river and Centennial Avenue.

Osceola Park opened its first homes in 1938. It included 32 of the 200 acres of Sperry’s farm which had its barn on Raritan Road in what is now Winfield. Sperry’s son, also named Thomas, was involved in the development and the builder was Ben Smith. The plan was to build 200 homes in the park.

The homes were advertised for \$5,750 and up, including air conditioning which was unusual at that time.

The total development was not completed before World War II. Other streets in the area, such as Cayuga Road, were developed after the war. So was Park Village, the area that contains Hillside, Mendell and Crane Parkway. The Osceola Park name didn’t last. The Sperry family donated part of the former site of the farm on Raritan Road to the Osceola Presbyterians to build their church in 1943.

A Sperry ancestor, Peter, who claimed hand- to- hand combat with Chief Osceola in early 19th century battles in the South, later became a friend of his former adversary. The family took the Osceola name with them on their move to Tennessee, where Thomas Sperry’s father edited a newspaper during the Civil War.

Source:

1. Archives of the Cranford Historical Society.
2. *Cranford Chronicle*, Special Edition, 1983