



## It's a Family Affair

Sometimes we just don't know what prompts a family to move great distances. It might be for financial gain, perhaps a mere change of scenery or in the case of the Stearns family a window of opportunity. Over 100 years ago a young Earnest Stearns with his wife moved from the sleepy hamlet of Forestville New York to an ocean side city dubbed, "The world's Most Famous Beach", Daytona Beach, Florida. The building and financial boom of the early 1900's in Florida gave many a young man a glimpse at prosperity and the hope of wealth. So, Earnest began building homes around Daytona beach. A mason by trade Earnest made his own block by hand. Clearing away saw palmetto and digging down to the pure white sands Earnest was able to provide much of the raw material he needed and indeed built the very first motel on Ridgewood Avenue in Daytona.



*Robert & Scott*

Years later Earnest's son Robert expanded on his father's business after coming home from World War II. Robert's forte was terrazzo and tile and he built a business spanning 43 years, Stearns Tile and Carpet. Robert's son Scott also began his career by working at his dad's business, but by the mid 70's young Scott tired of the busy ocean side city and wanted to go off on his own.

Needing a change of scenery Scott took up his girlfriend's brother's offer of a job and traveled across the state to Southwest Florida's barrier island Useppa. There he found employment with Useppa Inn and Dock Company and learned multiple skills such as carpentry, electrical wiring and plumbing. A short time later Scott returned to Daytona and married his high school sweetheart Elsie and told her "I have found paradise." Scott and his new bride settled in on Useppa.

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