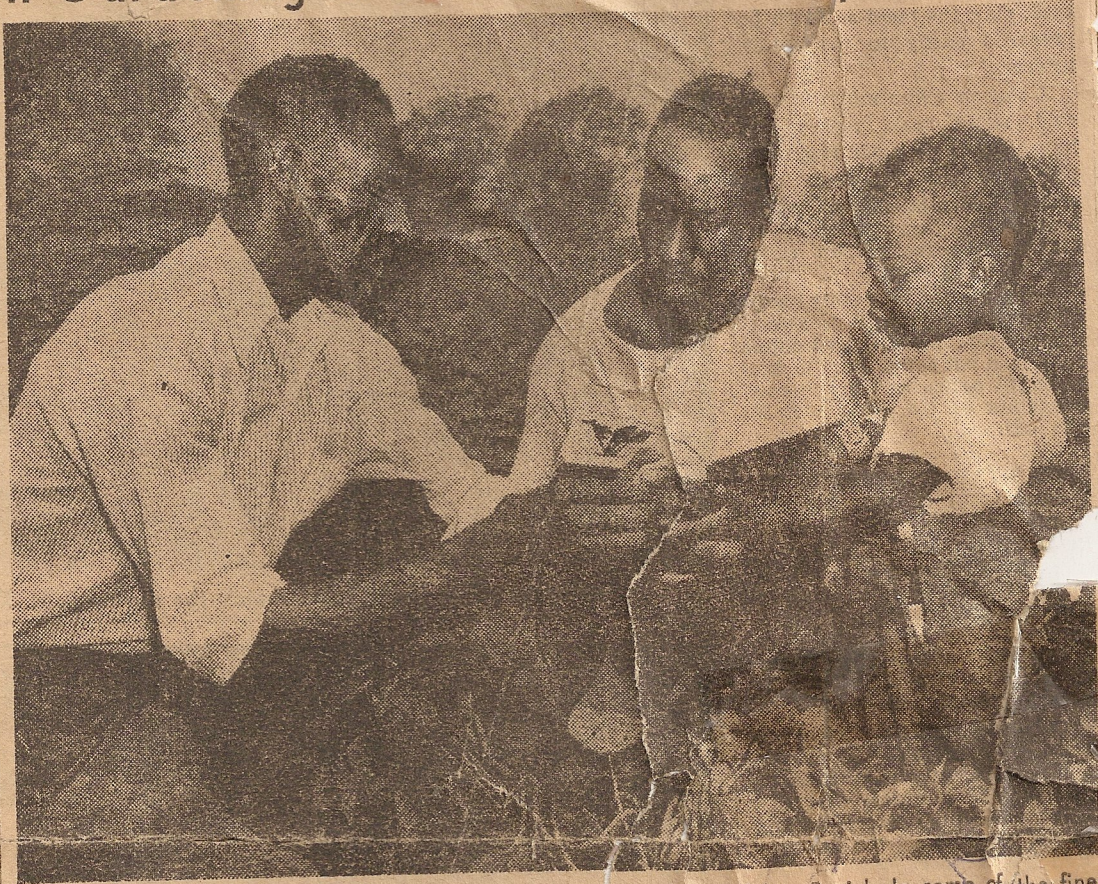


Gardening—

Local Veterans Taking GI Training Course In Gardening at Flanner House Project



Albert Moore, Flanner House's agricultural director, shows Walter Penick Jr. some of the finer points of gardening. Walter's son, Marvin, 2, looks in on the discussion at the Flanner House vegetable gardens on Kessler Blvd.

By MARGUERITE SMITH

IT'S A long way from roaring guns that smashed the beach heads into Okinawa and Ie Shima to the quiet Flanner House vegetable gardens on Kessler Blvd.

That's the path the GI Bill of Rights opened in late May for Walter Penick Jr., 167 Bright St. He and a limited number of other veterans will learn about tomatoes and lettuce. They may train for gardeners' jobs.

"At the very least," explains Albert Moore, Flanner's agricultural director, "Walter may raise a good garden for his family. With luck, he may be able to sell some vegetables later."

The trainees spend one-third

of their time in the class room, two-thirds in the garden. For you can't learn how to garden out of a book, says Mr. Moore.

"Walter is especially interesting," says his teacher. "He was born and reared in the city. So vegetables were to him just something that appeared on the table, full-grown. He didn't know, for instance, that in this climate we have to set out new tomato plants each spring. He's learning a new appreciation of nature."

Plant Fall Garden

"He studied in the book how to fertilize tomato plants with chemicals. Then I had him use some manure under another row so he could observe the difference. The weather was too hot and dry, but that's something he has to learn, too. He can't control the weather so he must learn to work with it."

"The program was approved too late for the class to plant an early garden. But they can raise a variety of vegetables even now. I'll have them set broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower plants to head up in the fall. We'll sow seeds of the early spring crops like lettuce and greens later to catch the cooler fall days. And they still

have time to sow seeds of crops like corn, cucumbers and beans."

Experimental Garden

A separate experimental garden teaches the difference between ground properly and improperly handled. Here one row of beans had humus added. It was cultivated after each rain. Another row, seeded at the same time was carelessly fertilized, cultivated once in a while. When a gardener asks "Why don't my beans do well," here's an object lesson for him, says Mr. Moore.

Flanner gardens cover more acreage this year than ever before. Some of the gardeners cultivate additional patches in their backyards.

Land for the Kessler section is donated rent free (and has been for years) by John H. Bookwalter. Mr. Bookwalter, like some other local citizens, sees the land raising vegetables instead of weeds, says Mr. Moore.

He sees it opening useful activity to teen-agers and to mothers with small children who can't easily get regular jobs. By their help in the gardens their families get healthier diets at lower cost.