

HISTORY CENTER TIMES

A NEWSLETTER



FRIENDS OF THE SARASOTA COUNTY HISTORY CENTER

FALL 2023

Note from the President

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FRIENDS OF THE
SARASOTA
COUNTY
HISTORY CENTER

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As always fall signals the start of the busy season in Sarasota County. That is certainly true with regard to the History Center and its community support group, the Friends of the History Center. Nothing better demonstrates the enthusiasm of everyone associated with the Center than the public open house on Saturday, September 16. Perhaps as many as 200 county residents turned out to inspect the new if somewhat temporary home of the History Center in Osprey. The Friends welcomed visitors, distributed literature (and candy!), and signed up an astonishing number of new members.

Our Development, Communications and Membership Committees have been very active. The outline for a resource development plan is taking shape as the Directors explore a wide range of fund-raising opportunities. History Center Manager Josh Goodman has provided lists of items he wishes to acquire to make the Center an even better institution. Meanwhile, Chair Kim Manning and the Membership Committee have organized an interesting members-only event on October 28 that she describes elsewhere in this issue.

I must inform you that this will be my last Note from the President as I shall not be seeking another term in that capacity. Fortunately, there is no shortage of qualified individuals to lead our organization into its next phase. Since arriving in Sarasota in 2007 I have had the honor of heading such groups as the Historical Commission, the History and Preservation Coalition, the Preservation Awards Committee, the 2021 Sarasota County Centennial Steering Committee, and the Friends of the History Center. It has been an exhilarating experience to work with many extraordinary people all over Sarasota County who share a belief that our history is really important, that we need to do more to preserve historically significant sites, artifacts and records, and that we must try harder to educate the public about the many ways the past shapes our community's present and future.

Dr. Frank A. Cassell, President

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SARASOTA
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Who are the Friends?

What do we do?

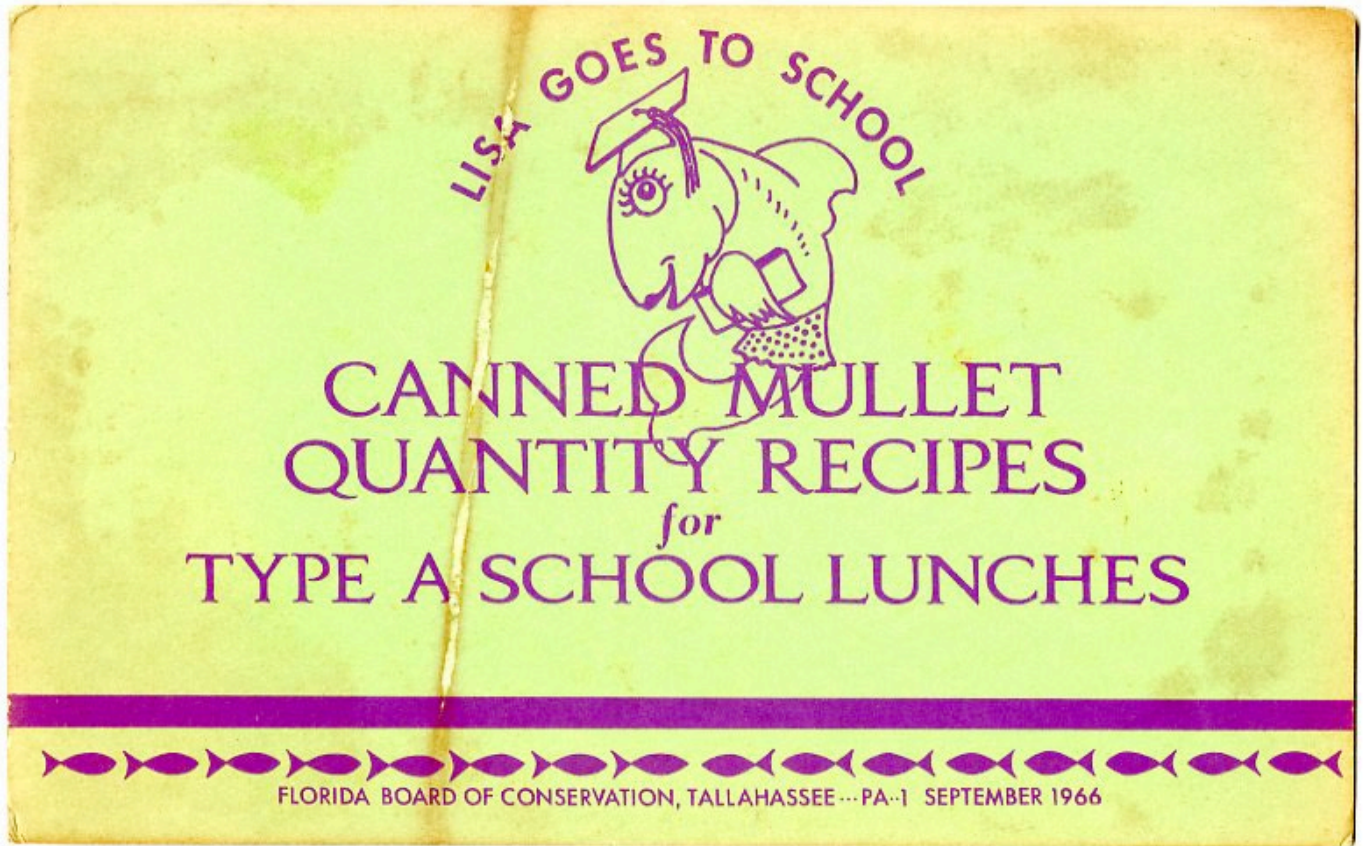
As a non-profit we can solicit donations. The county government cannot do this. The donations, sponsorships and dues we receive assist and support the History Center in many ways. One example of this is to providing extra funding for historical exhibits around the county.



“The Man with the Little Black Bag”

This exhibit tells the story of two prominent pioneer medical doctors in Sarasota: Dr. Furman Chairs Whitaker and Dr. Harper Elliot Whitaker. It is curated using material from the Whitaker Family Collection at the History Center, and features photographs and medical equipment used by both doctors in their daily practice, from the mundane to the macabre. **“The Man with the Little Black Bag” will be on view at the Osprey Library, 337 N Tamiami Trail, through the end of 2023.**

A fun way we support the History Center is to pay for refreshments at events. For the Grand Opening at the Historic Osprey School house on Saturday, September 16th we covered the cost of special custom-made cookies topped with an edible print of the schoolhouse. They were delicious.



“What’s Cookin’, Sarasota?”

Just in time for the holiday season, “What’s Cookin’, Sarasota?” is the newest exhibit to debut courtesy of the Sarasota County History Center. Coming late Fall 2023 to the Sarasota County Administration Building at 1660 Ringling Blvd., “What’s Cookin’, Sarasota?” celebrates the joy of food and cooking through the years in Sarasota County. Historical artifacts and photographs on display will tell a delectable tale of popular foods both at home and in schools, while highlighting the people who lovingly prepared them for their community.



News on the historical marker front:

The new historical marker for the Cherokee Park neighborhood in Sarasota has been received from the foundry and will be erected and dedicated in December 2023.

The Board of County Commissioners recently approved a new historical marker for Gillespie Park in Sarasota. The marker was proposed by the Gillespie Park Neighborhood Association, which is also sponsoring the fabrication of the new marker. The marker discusses both John Hamilton Gillespie (the park’s namesake) and Owen Burns, the developer who gave the city the land for the park. The marker is expected to be erected and dedicated in spring 2024.

The Sarasota County Historical Commission recently approved a new historical marker for Bird Bay Village in Venice. The marker was proposed by the Bird Bay Village Homeowners’ Association, which is also sponsoring the fabrication of the new marker. The marker discusses the history of Bird Bay Village as Venice’s first planned unit development (PUD). The historical marker now goes to the Board of County Commissioners for final approval. Pending the BCC’s approval, the marker will be erected and dedicated in 2024.

Notes from the FOSCHC Membership Committee

I am pleased to report that we now have 75 FOSCHC Members! In February 2022 we had 35 members.

We were part of the Open House for the Osprey Library and the History Center on Saturday, 16th of September (see photos on Page 14). We recruited 12 FOSCHC members at that event. We love having a table at events and hearing from people who are also interested in Sarasota historical past!

We hope all members will attend the **MEMBERS APPRECIATION GATHERING on Saturday morning, October 28th at 10:30 a.m. at the Osprey Library/School House, 337 N Tamiami Trail**. You will hear about our FOSCHC future, enjoy breakfast goodies provided by By the Bay Bistro of Osprey, try your knowledge at some Sarasota County trivia and everyone gets a prize!

We are planning FIELD TRIPS in 2024 to local areas that we may not have visited before. For example, a trip to Venice to see the Venice Museum, Lord-Higel House, and have lunch (of course). Also, a trip to Miakka to see the historic Old Miakka School House and the Crowley Museum. Watch for more details that will be coming.

We are just getting started and look forward to lots of fun delving into our Sarasota County history.

Hope to see you on Saturday, the 28th. If so, please let us know you are joining us!

Thanks,
Kim

Kim Patton Manning
Friends of Sarasota County History Center
Board of Directors & Membership Chair

**To become a member Email Kim Patton Manning at
FOSCHCmembership@gmail.com
and/or visit our Membership page:
<https://friendssarasotahistorycenter.org/membership/>**

—

Cora Heywood Burley Photographic Collection

Cora Heywood came to Sarasota in the spring of 1921 as a public health nurse sponsored by the local chapter of the American Red Cross. In those days, imperfect sanitation and limited access to medical care left local children vulnerable to roundworm, hookworm, trichinosis, underweight, and other maladies we wouldn't normally see very often today. To remedy this, Miss Heywood traveled all around what was then southern Manatee County with the county music teacher, Elizabeth Anderson.

Anderson taught the children patriotic songs and gave them lessons on rhythm and melody, while Heywood examined the children for medical issues and taught them about the importance of a wholesome diet and good hygiene. Valuable as these women's work was for the children of Manatee County at the time, local history lovers will be more impressed with the photographs they took. The two women took photos at many of the schoolhouses where they stopped, and in so doing created some of the only photos that exist of those schools and the surrounding area.

In 1998, Sherry Borza donated two photo albums of Heywood's photos to the Sarasota County History Center, where they are now open for research and enjoyment. History Center volunteer Martha recently scanned the entire collection, and the photos are already starting to pop up in some of the History Center's exhibits and public programs.



Print photograph of "Laurel colored school and 'old folks'... with the mothers and babies." Taken February 17, 1922. Names written on the reverse: Lela Franklin, Roosevelt Tyson, Roosevelt Bradford, Ruth Harris, Katie Jackson, George Bodiford, Malissa Thomas, John Harris, Robert Bodiford, Doretha Nichols, Leola Hall, Ella White, Ella Stafford, and Ike Tyson. Cora Heywood Burley Photographic Collection (MSS 389), Sarasota County History Center.



"A lesson in rhythm" showing Manatee County music teacher Elizabeth Anderson (left) standing next to a pitcher pump platform with a phonograph set upon it. The children of Bee Ridge School (East End) clap along with her. Taken February 14, 1922. Cora Heywood Burley Photographic Collection (MSS 389), Sarasota County History Center.



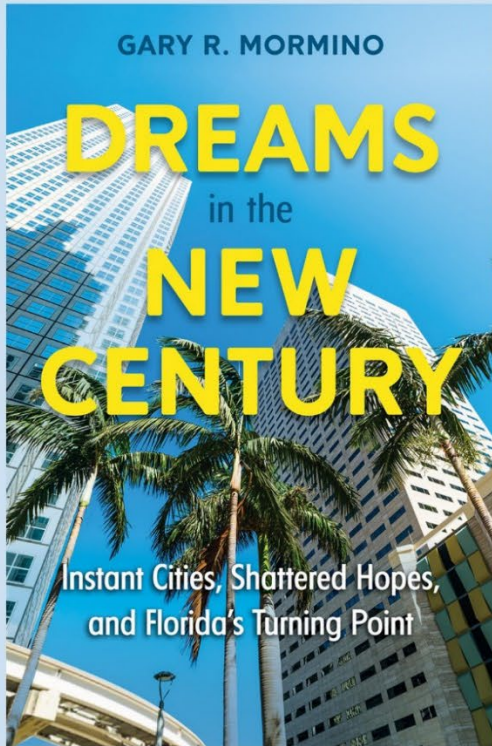
Print photograph of students and adults outside a one-room schoolhouse in Fruitville. Older students are shown holding up an American flag. Taken February 15, 1922. Cora Heywood Burley Photographic Collection (MSS 389), Sarasota County History Center.



OFF THE PAGE

Author Talk with Gary Mormino

Discussion of his book *Dreams in the New Century: Instant Cities, Shattered Hopes, and Florida's Turning Point*.



Monday, Nov. 13, 2023
at 3:00 p.m.

**Sarasota County History Center at
the Osprey Library
337 North Tamiami Trail,
Osprey, FL 34229**

Join us for a riveting afternoon as historian Dr. Gary Mormino discusses his book, which highlights the history of early twenty-first century Florida and its connections to some of the most significant events in contemporary American history.

A literary celebration featuring two plus weeks of author talks, writing workshops, book signings and more presented by Sarasota County Libraries and Historical Resources.



Learn more at OffThePageFL.org or call 311 or 941-861-1110. Join the conversation with [#OffThePageFL](https://twitter.com/OffThePageFL).



OFF THE PAGE

Local History and Book Discussion

with Ron Prouty and Peggy Donoho, authors of
Miguel's Bay: The Pioneer Tale of Miguel and Frederica Guerrero.



Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.

Sarasota County History Center at the Osprey Library

337 North Tamiami Trail, Osprey, FL 34229

Join us for a fascinating afternoon as Ron Prouty and Peggy Donoho discuss the research behind their book, which tells the story of immigrants Miguel Guerrero's and Frederica Kramer's enduring love through language barriers, war, and a fever epidemic in the 1800's.

A literary celebration featuring two plus weeks of author talks, writing workshops, book signings and more presented by Sarasota County Libraries and Historical Resources.



Learn more at OffThePageFL.org or call 311 or 941-861-1110. Join the conversation with [#OffThePageFL](https://twitter.com/OffThePageFL).



A new exhibit **"On Par: The John Hamilton Gillespie Golf Legacy"** is at the Fruitville Library, 100 Apex Rd, Sarasota.

Here the story of John Hamilton Gillespie's illustrious golf history in Sarasota is told. Gillespie arrived from Scotland in 1885 and brought his hickory golf sticks with him.

By May 1886 he had constructed a 2-hole golf course adjacent to his house on Links Avenue. In 1902 he created a formal 9 tee golf course in what is now downtown Sarasota. In 1913 he formed a golf club.

On display are a selection of historical objects that highlight Gillespie's illustrious golf career, including golf clubs, his personal golf bag, tournament trophies, and photographs.



"On Par The John Hamilton Gillespie Golf Legacy" will be on view through Spring 2024 at the Fruitville Library, 100 Apex Rd, Sarasota!

CULTURAL HERITAGE EXHIBIT

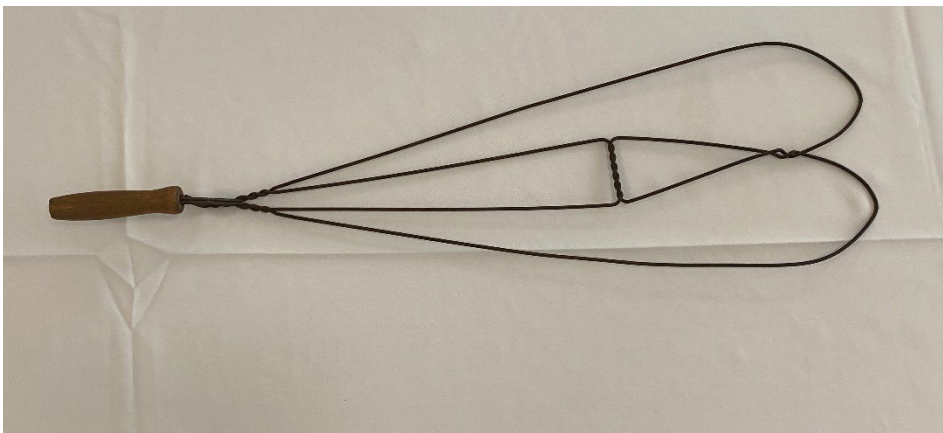


Open House and Lecture
Monday, October 23, 2023
5:30 p.m.
City Hall / Commission Chambers

Celebrating Sarasota's architectural history with exhibits and remarks from the Sarasota County History Center and Architecture Sarasota

Sarasota Architecture Exhibit: City Hall, Monday, October 23rd at 5:30pm

Join us at Sarasota City Hall on Monday, October 23 at 5:30 p.m. for an open house featuring City Hall's newest cultural heritage exhibit celebrating Sarasota's architectural history. The exhibit features photographs, architectural drawings, and scale models from the collections of the Sarasota County History Center and Architecture Sarasota. Speakers will include Renee Di Pilato, Director of the Sarasota County Department of Libraries and Historical Resources; Josh Goodman, Manager of the Sarasota County History Center; and Morris Hylton, III, President of Architecture Sarasota.



Artifact Highlight: What do you think this odd-looking tool was used for? Making giant omelettes? Swatting giant mosquitoes? In reality, this wood and metal tool is a rug beater, a staple in Florida households back before vacuum cleaners became commonplace. Florida sand was just as hard to get out of rugs back then as it is now, and rug beaters were a

lighter, more efficient alternative to simply beating on the rug with a stick to shake the dirt loose. This rug beater came to the Sarasota County History Center as part of the Alice and Frederick Riegel Collection (2017.038). In addition to exhibits dealing with household life a century ago, this is also a favorite item in the History Center's "Show, Tell, and Touch" programs for kids and adults.

“I know I need a Job, but Rattlesnakes?!”

A short story of Roosevelt’s “Tree Army” and the Myakka River State Park

by John Manning

Some economic periods seem worse than others. Coming off of the unbridled optimism of the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression (1929-1939) was just that –greatly depressing.



Great Depression Scene - Getty images

In 1929 the Federal Reserve (aka “the Fed”) began contracting the US money supply & raising interest rates. The Fed was concerned that excessive stock speculation fueled by easy credit and margin purchases was out of control. The Fed’s clamp-down made investors nervous. They sold 12.9 million shares on “Black Thursday” (October 24, 1929) and another 16 million shares five days later on “Black Tuesday” (October 29, 1929). Millions of shares of stocks became worthless. Those who had purchased stocks on margin were completely wiped out. Consumer confidence was shaken. Spending contracted. Business production slowed. Wages fell & workers were fired.

Unemployment was in excess of 25% in 1933 (around 15 million people). People had to try use credit to buy basic necessities. Pessimism permeated the country.



Run at Bank - Getty images

People lost confidence in banks’ solvency. They demanded their deposits in cash. Banks were forced to liquidate loans, if they could, because of insufficient cash reserves. There were four bank runs: fall 1930, spring & fall 1931, and fall 1932. By 1933 thousands of banks had closed with depositors losing most of their deposits.

Farmers faced years of drought in the Southern Plains with high winds and dust that killed crops, livestock and people (i.e., “Dust Bowl”). Food prices fell so much that farmers couldn’t afford to harvest crops. Foreclosures and repossessions were rampant. Families split up and people migrated in search of any work.



Hooverville in Seattle - Getty images



EBay photo

Shantytowns (“Hoovervilles”) made of crates & abandoned cars sprang up across the nation. Charity-based “breadlines” and “soup kitchens” in cities attempted to feed the starving. Candy makers marketed their candy bars as cheap meal replacements with names such as “Chicken Dinner,” “Club Sandwich,” and “Pay Day.”

President Herbert Hoover (Republican) did not believe that government should directly intervene in the economy, create jobs, or provide relief to its citizens. He did sign into law another protectionist tariff (Smoot-Hawley Act – June 17, 1930). Not surprisingly, Hoover did not win re-election in 1932. Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) overwhelmingly did. And things were about to change.

FDR had promised “a New Deal for the American people” if he was elected. On March 4, 1933 FDR put his New Deal into action. In his “First Hundred Days” he pushed through Congress fifteen major legislative actions designed to actively bring the US out of the Depression. He declared a four-day suspension of all banking transactions (“banking holiday” – March 5-9, 1933) to stop “bank runs.” He created new federal agencies intended to make the federal government an active partner with the American people, jump start the economy, and provide safeguards. One such agency was the Civilian Conservation Corp (“CCC” – April 5, 1933 to June 30, 1942) commonly known as Roosevelt’s Tree Army.



FDR with CCC - Getty images

The CCC was created to combat high unemployment by putting young unemployed men (18-25) in camps to work on environmental & conservation projects around the country. These corpsmen enlisted for a minimum of six months, lived in barracks, and were paid \$30 a month (\$25 of which had to be sent back to their families). By July 1, 1933 there were 1,433 camps with 300,000 young men enlisted in the CCC. The Army assisted in the smooth establishment of the CCC by providing transportation, medical & dental care, physical conditioning, basic education (some 57,000 men learned to read), vocational training, housing, orientation, food, clothing and discipline. Each camp was commanded by an Army officer. Each conservation project was supervised by a superintendent assisted by civilian foremen. The work was tough and often dangerous. The corpsmen fought forest fires, planted trees (3 billion), cleared & maintained access roads, re-seeded grazing lands, dug diversion ditches, implemented soil-erosion controls, restored historic battlefields, and cleared beaches and campgrounds. They built wildlife refuges, ponds, dams, fish-rearing facilities, water storage basins, animal shelters, trails, bridges, fire towers, and campground facilities.



Arthur B. Edwards, Courtesy Sarasota County History Center

Communities around the country wanted a CCC camp. Sarasota was no exception. Native son, two-time mayor, real estate salesman & developer, never-say-die “Mr. Sarasota” Arthur B. Edwards led the charge. Edwards loved the Myakka valley and wanted to preserve it before developers exploited it for commercial purposes. Edwards contacted Florida Congressman J. Hardin Peterson who wrote back to Edwards (April 1934) that if the property could be acquired a CCC camp could be attained. Unfortunately, federal expenditures were cut and the prospect of a national park dimmed.

Undaunted, Edwards contacted Florida State Forester Harry Lee Baker who was making final recommendations for CCC camp locations in Florida.

Baker made Edwards an offer. If by Monday, June 4, 1934 Edwards could state that sufficient lands would be deeded to the State of Florida Baker would recommend a camp. Edwards replied that the state had foreclosed on tax liens against 6,000 acres (Curry property) and title was with the Internal Improvement Fund. Edwards didn’t bring up the small matter that the property was entangled in legalities.

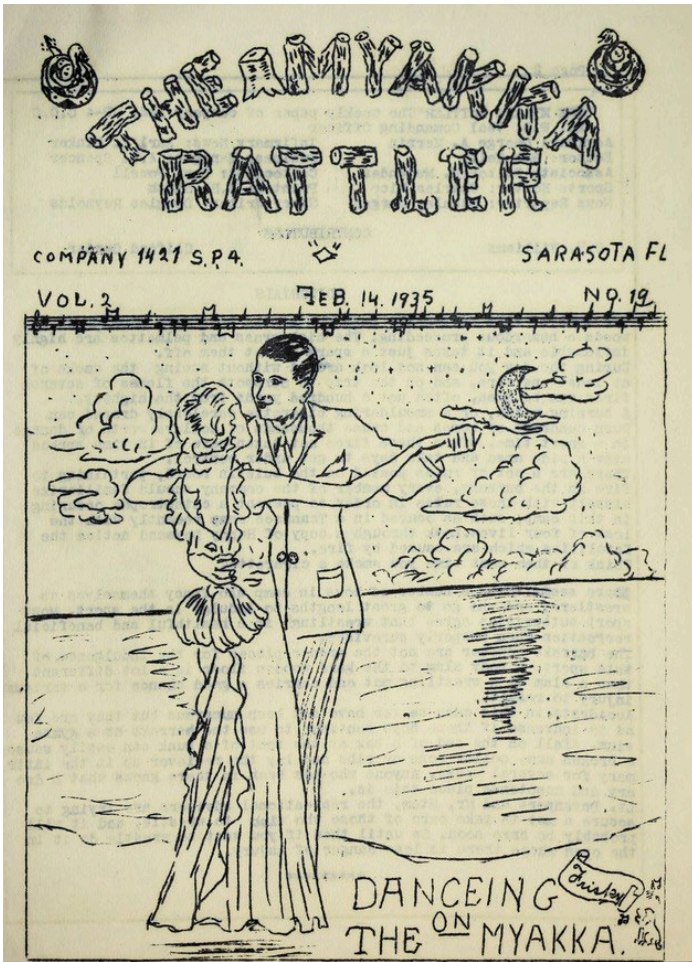
Edwards then approached the estate of the late Adrian C. Honoré who had inherited 17,000 acres including the Upper Myakka Lake from his late sister Bertha Honoré Palmer. The land was in receivership in 1934. So, Edwards negotiated a deal for the state to purchase the 17,000 acres for 35 cents an acre subject to accrued taxes. The deal was completed just before the June 4th deadline and Myakka made Baker’s recommendation list. In less than 2 months Edwards had done it.

But Edwards wasn’t finished. He learned that Mrs. Palmer’s sons would be willing to donate 1,920 beautiful acres called the “Old Picnic Grounds” as a memorial to their mother. Again, Edwards shepherded the deal. On October 3, 1934 the Palmers deeded the land to the state with the condition that it could only be used as a state park or game preserve.

An advance CCC party arrived October 17, 1934 to set up tents. The CCC Company 1421 main party arrived November 2, 1934. The young men were struck by the beauty of the land. They weren’t so thrilled about the outdoor kitchen, lack of floors, and finding rattlesnakes in the tents. They weren’t wild about the mosquitos or gators either. They even named their camp newsletter *The Myakka Rattler*. Some contracted malaria and



Myakka River State Park log cabin – State of Florida



CCC newsletter cover of the Myakka Rattler, published February 14th, 1935; Cartoonist: Carl Powell Source: InternetArchive.org

some deserted due to the primitive conditions. But they persevered, work got underway and portable barracks did arrive. And there were Saturday night dances with the local Sarasota girls.

Approximately 80% of the building materials came from the Myakka property. Cabins were designed to fit the natural landscape. A slight “hiccup” occurred in 1935 when the Army announced that the all-white corps would be replaced by an all-black corps at Myakka. A vocal Sarasota group protested. In response the Army shut down the camp and work stopped. Sarasota felt the economic loss and changed its tune. They accepted the Black corpsmen. The camp and work resumed. The log cabins, South Pavilion, Log Pavilion, park manager’s residence, visitor center, trails, bridges, roads, etc. built by the CCC are still in use today.

The Myakka River State Park was dedicated on February 28, 1941 with A.B. Edwards as an honored guest. It is a beautiful preserve with marshes, ponds, flatwoods and abundant wildlife. It is as close to how Florida was before the Spanish Europeans arrived centuries before.

700 state parks were established by the CCC program. The CCC shaped our modern national and state park system.

The CCC and the Great Depression ended with the beginning of World War II. During its nine years over 3 million men were in the CCC. More than



CCC corpsmen at Myakka State Park - State of Florida

Did I mention the Federal Emergency Relief Association (aka the “SheSheShe”) camps for women organized by FDR’s wife Eleanor Roosevelt? Well, that’s another story.

The Friends were delighted to host a table Saturday, September 16 at the History Center’s Open House at their new headquarters at the Historic Osprey School House. (The Center will be in Osprey for about 3 years until their new building is ready next to the Fruitville Library.)



The Osprey Library and Sarasota County History Center is located at 337 N. Tamiami Trail, in Osprey. The 96th anniversary of the historic Osprey Library building was commemorated by Sarasota County Libraries, which also hosted the official opening of the county History Center and unveiled a new mobile Pop-Up Library, on Saturday, Sept. 16, 2023. For more information visit, scgov.net/library or call 311 or 941-861-1110.

THOMAS BENDER/HERALD-TRIBUNE



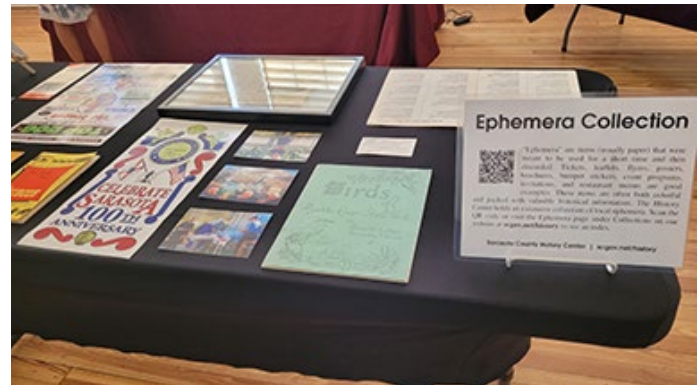
Members of the 'Friends of the Sarasota County History Center' Don Bayley and Kim Patton Manning. The 96th anniversary of the historic Osprey Library building was commemorated by Sarasota County Libraries, which also hosted the official opening of the county History Center and unveiled a new mobile Pop-Up Library, on Saturday, Sept. 16, 2023. For more information visit, scgov.net/library or call 311 or 941-861-1110.

THOMAS BENDER/HERALD-TRIBUNE



Sarasota County Archaeologist Steven Koski shows off a mastodon fossil jaw (mandible) fragment with in-place some molars. He was part of the mammoth-themed story time that unveiled a huge molar artifact that was uncovered during local digs in Sarasota County. The 96th anniversary of the historic Osprey Library building was commemorated by Sarasota County Libraries, which also hosted the official opening of the county History Center and unveiled a new mobile Pop-Up Library, on Saturday, Sept. 16, 2023. For more information visit, scgov.net/library or call 311 or 941-861-1110.

THOMAS BENDER/HERALD-TRIBUNE



All kinds of Sarasota memorabilia was on display including the circus, Pinecraft and boxer China Smith. The 96th anniversary of the historic Osprey Library building was commemorated by Sarasota County Libraries, which also hosted the official opening of the county History Center and unveiled a new mobile Pop-Up Library, on Saturday, Sept. 16, 2023. For more information visit, scgov.net/library or call 311 or 941-861-1110.

THOMAS BENDER/HERALD-TRIBUNE





The History Center Team

Front from left: Jorge Danta Spector (Historic Preservation Specialist), Elisabeth Jimenez (Archivist), Renee Di Pilato (Director of LHR), Emily McLoughlin (Summer 2023 Intern), Josh Goodman (History Center Manager)

Back from left: Leah Lapszynski (Assistant Manager of History Center), Steve Koski (County Archaeologist)



Join Us!

What can members do?

1. Join a Friends' committee:
 - **Membership:** Help with recruitment, membership communications, activities, promotions, etc. Email Kim Patton Manning: foschcmembership@gmail.com.
 - **Programs:** Organize presentations by historians, authors, History Center staff, et al for community outreach and fundraising
 - **Communications:** Assist with newsletter and social media outreach. Design, computer and writing skills highly desirable. Email Don Bayley at friendsschistorycenter@gmail.com.
 - **Development:** Assist director in seeking gifts and grants.
2. Assist the History Center with tours, information, talks and exhibits.
3. Become a speaker on behalf of the Friends and the History Center before civic clubs and homeowner associations. Awareness of the History Center is needed and the staff will provide outlines and talking points.
4. Make a donation to the Friends to support educational programs and additions to the collections. No physical volunteering needed.
5. Consider becoming a member of the Board of Directors.

**To become a member Email Kim Patton Manning at
FOSCHCmembership@gmail.com
and/or visit our Membership page:
<https://friendssarasotahistorycenter.org/membership/>**