

# HISTORY CENTER TIMES

A NEWSLETTER

SPRING/  
SUMMER 2025

FRIENDS OF THE  
SARASOTA  
COUNTY HISTORY  
CENTER

Kim Patton  
Manning,  
President

David Harper,  
Vice President

Don Bayley,  
Treasurer

Kathryn Chesley  
Secretary

BOARD  
MEMBERS:

Frank Cassell

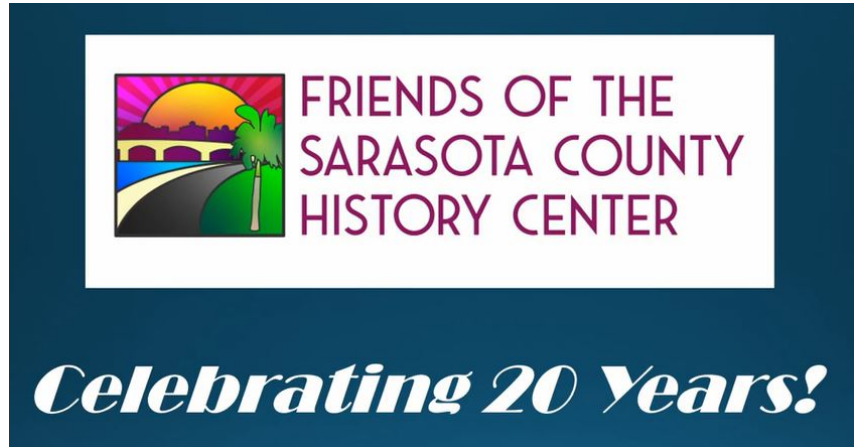
Andrew Littaur

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The Friends Organization was founded in 2005 by Pete & Dianne Esthus. Here's Pete with his incredible history collection that he donated to the History Center.



Pete Esthus, owner of Sarasota Lock & Key is shown with some of his collection of Sarasota's history. *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*

Below we see son Ken, wife Diane and our current president Kim Manning. Sadly, Pete is no longer with us. We honored him and Diane at our Annual Meeting in January.



### How It All Began

At the urging of David Baber, then manager of the Sarasota County History Center, a “Friends” steering committee was formed in July, 2005. The committee was composed of Diane and Pete Esthus, Kim Hart, Bill LaGasse, and Nat McCulloch. Also serving on the committee were David Baber, Jeff LaHurd, and Ann Shank, then members of the Sarasota County History Center.

On August 17, 2005, our Articles of Incorporation were filed with the Florida Department of State. Shortly thereafter, our 501-c-3 status was granted, our Bylaws were created, and we were on our way.



We also honored Betty Intagliata, a long-time member and past president of the Friends.



**Dr. Frank Cassell presenting Betty with a Special Recognition Award**



## PRESIDENT'S NOTE

**NOW MORE THAN EVER  
WE NEED TO SUPPORT OUR SARASOTA COUNTY HISTORY CENTER & LIBRARIES.**

**The Friends of the Sarasota County History Center has been busy this year!**

**Our annual meeting on January 25 was a mixture of business and celebration of 20 years of existence! Due to the generous sponsorship of our member Tom McArdle, we enjoyed a wonderful catered luncheon. We honored Diane Esthus. Diane and her husband Pete founded the FOSCHC, and she was our first President. We are pleased that their son Ken has now joined us as a member. We also honored Betty Intagliata. Betty has held almost every position in the FOSCHC for almost 20 years. They are both remarkable women have helped shape and guide the FOSCHC to this day. We are grateful. FOSCHC was part of the History Day (February 8, 2025) in The Park at the Phillippi Estate Park. We had an information table inside the mansion. Dr. Frank Cassell generously provided copies of his wonderful book "Creating Sarasota County" and donated all the proceeds to the Friends. Thank you, Frank!**



LEFT: History Center Manager Josh Goodman dances with Nettie Keith (played by our Kathryn Chesley).  
RIGHT: Phillippi Director Priscilla Brown, Selby Gardens V.P. Regional History John McCarthy, and our President Kim Manning at History Day in the Park

**We also had a table at the Florida Humanities Festival (March 22, 2025) which was held inside the Selby Library. It too was a great event. (more on this event on Page 6)**

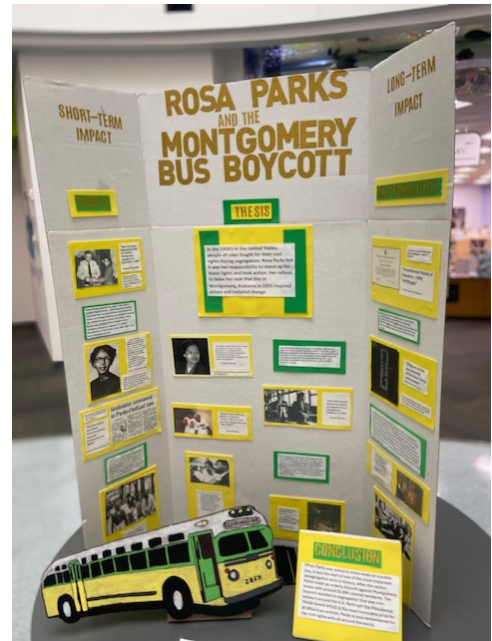
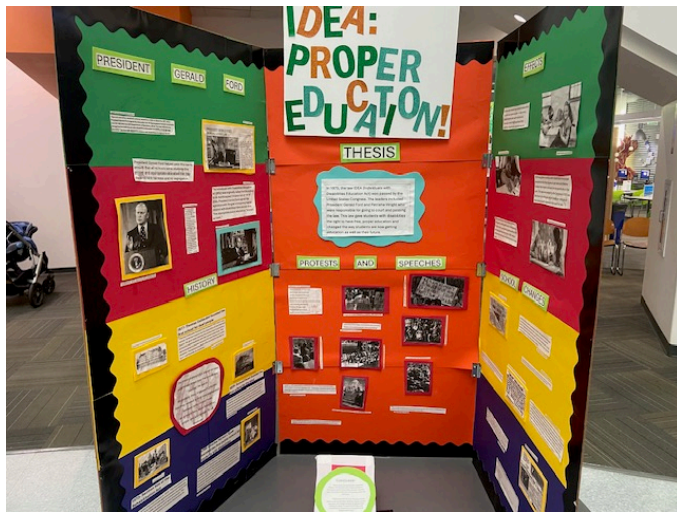
**We are always working at ways to get the word out about our wonderful Sarasota County History Center. We can always use ideas and help from our members.**

**If you have a received a notice about your FOSCHC membership dues being due, please renew. Our dues are very important, especially in an uncertain future budgetary climate. We rely upon and appreciate your support.**

**Thank you,**

**Kim**

**Kim Patton Maning  
President, Board of Directors  
Friends of the Sarasota County History Center**



February 22 was **History Day** at Selby Library. Middle and high school students presented projects as a part of a national competition. Our Dr. Cassell served as a judge. History Center Manager Dr. Josh Goodman and Assistant Manager Leah Lapszynski, were there as well.



On Friday, March 7, 2025, Sarasota County Libraries and Historical Resources proudly unveiled the **Gillespie Park Historical Marker** at the corner of Eighth Street and North Osprey Avenue! This new marker honors John Hamilton Gillespie, Sarasota's first mayor and a key figure in the city's early development, along with Owen Burns, whose contributions helped shape the community we know today.

March 22 was the day for the second annual Florida Humanities Festival exploring the rich depth of culture and history of the Florida Suncoast. Kim Manning, Frank Cassell and Don Bayley manned our table at the event.



## History Center News

### Presentations

- County Archaeologist Clay Bush presented “History of Indian Mound Park” at Elsie Quirk Library on February 6 and at the historic Green Street Church in Englewood on March 25th.
- Manager Josh Goodman presented “Horse and Chaise to Venice: A History” to the Venetian River Club on February 10th. There were over 100 participants.
- Guest speaker Krystin Miner presented “Mayhem in Manatee” as part of the Florida History Lecture Series at Osprey Library on February 12.
- Manager Josh Goodman presented “History of Manasota Key” at Jacaranda Library on February 18th

The History Center published a new handout titled “Local Historic Property Designation in Sarasota County.” This handout discusses the criteria for adding a property to the Sarasota County Register of Historic Places, as well as both the impact and benefits of designating a property historic.

### New Acquisitions:

- The Venice Library donated two DVDs containing digitized editions of the Gulf Coast Journal
- Robin Paton donated three city directories from the 1950s
- The Petticoat Painters of Sarasota donated about 1.5 cubic feet of meeting minutes, ephemera, press clippings and other records relating to the history of their organization

# Boats by Hand

## The Story of Master Craftsman George Luzier

Some teenagers spend their spare time playing sports or mastering a musical instrument. George Luzier? He built boats.

George Bardett Luzier was born in Sarasota in 1924 and lived there for virtually his entire life. By age 12, he had finished his first boat—a Moth-class sailboat with a cypress hull—and by 16 he had finished four more. After graduating from Sarasota High School, Luzier joined the United States Merchant Marine. He graduated from the Merchant Marine Academy in 1944 and served until 1950, when he returned to Sarasota.

At first, the young veteran spent his days working for local boatyards while pursuing his own projects in his spare time. An old barracks from the former Sarasota Army Air Base served as his workshop. In 1954, Luzier switched to building his own boats full-time. His best-seller was the “Pixie Pram,” a lightweight dinghy of his own design that was quick and easy to build.

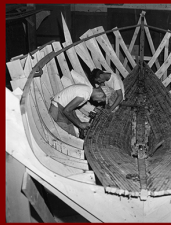
Homer Luzier, George’s younger brother, joined the boatbuilding business in the late 1940s, and in 1966 the entire operation relocated to a large new building on Princeton Street in Sarasota. This new space became the birthplace of hundreds of vessels, many of which are still in use today. Each Luzier boat was handcrafted from wood; George once said he could never build a boat from something that smelled as bad as fiberglass.

George Luzier continued his boatbuilding business well into the 21st century. By that time, he had developed a broad network of customers, friends and admirers, many of whom would stop by the Princeton Street workshop on Fridays for brown-bag lunches and long conversations. Luzier died in 2020, but his legacy as a master boat designer and builder is still strongly felt along our coast and beyond.

“Boats by Hand” features a small selection of the many plans, sketches, drawings, photographs, tools, patterns and other materials George Luzier donated to the Sarasota County History Center prior to his passing. These artifacts bear testimony to George’s masterful understanding of boatbuilding as both a science and an art.



George Luzier at the wheel of Herbert A. II, which he built circa 1960. Photo: George Luzier Collection (MSS 231), Sarasota County History Center.



Homer Luzier and Merle Lilly planing the hull of Herbert in 1955. Photo: George Luzier Collection (MSS 231), Sarasota County History Center.

## Recycling Our Past: The C.B. Wilson House

Historic preservation is inherently a “green” endeavor. A common phrase in historic preservation is that “the greenest building is the one that’s already built.”

Demolishing older buildings and replacing them with new ones uses far more energy and resources than simply recycling and rehabilitating existing ones. In 2010, Sarasota County successfully rehabilitated and repurposed the historic C. B. Wilson House. This panel exhibit traces the monumental and collaborative task of relocating and rehabilitating the historic building from its original location to Urfer Family Park.

First, it is important to understand how Sarasota County Government encourages historic preservation. In 1997, the Board of County Commissioners adopted a historic preservation ordinance, Chapter 66 of the Sarasota County Code. Chapter 66 governs historic preservation activities in the unincorporated areas of Sarasota County and establishes the Historic Preservation Board as an advisory board to the Board of County Commissioners. The chapter also guides the work of county staff on historic preservation matters. The Division of Historical Resources’ work has supported the preservation of dozens of significant historic buildings and sites throughout Sarasota County.



The historic C.B. Wilson House as it appears today at Urfer Family Park in Sarasota County. Depicted is the front facade of the building after relocation and an extensive rehabilitation that paid strict attention to the historic design.

Image courtesy of the Sarasota County History Center.

“Boats by Hand: The Story of Master Craftsman George Luzier” and “Recycling Our Past” are on display at the Osprey Library/History Center.

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## SARASOTA HEALTH BATHS

Featuring  
**Dr. Mabel Woodhull, N. D.**

- PINE NEEDLE BATHS
- COLONIC IRRIGATIONS
- SWEDISH MASSAGE

Mira Mar Block

Phone 2706

## Sarasota Beauty Salon

Featuring  
**Pierre**  
HAIR STYLIST

Rainwater Shampoos  
Zotos Permanents

**“Exclusive But Not Expensive”**



“Self-Care in Sarasota a Century Ago” an online exhibit by Sarasota County History Center intern Anna Lazzara.

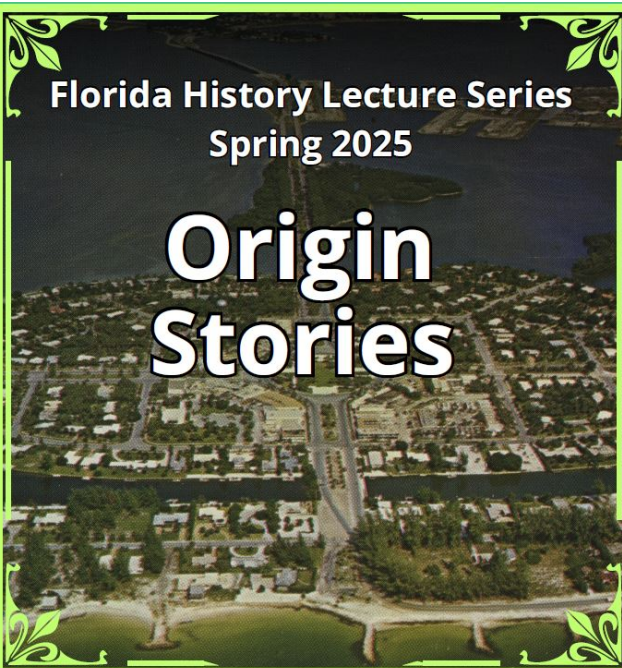
Have you ever wondered what Sarasotans a century ago did to unwind?

Anna took a look at some of the local places people went to feel rejuvenated.

[Here's a link to her post](#)

Florida History Lecture Series  
Spring 2025

# Origin Stories



Sarasota County History Center

Visit [SarasotaCountyHistory.org](http://SarasotaCountyHistory.org)  
or call 311 or 941-861-1110.



## Shaping the Islands of Sarasota Bay

Wednesday, April 9  
2-3 p.m.

Every square foot of Florida has an interesting story attached to it, and the islands of Sarasota Bay are no different. Early developers not only shaped the character, but also the very boundaries of the land to create the keys as we know them today. Join Dr. Josh Goodman for a deeper dive into the history of these patches of paradise.

Dr. Josh Goodman, Manager, Sarasota County History Center

All programs are free and open to the public.



## William Whitaker and the Settlement of Sarasota Bay

Tuesday, May 20  
2-3 p.m.

From the Seminole Wars in the 1840s and 1850s to the original platting of Sarasota in the 1880s, William Henry Whitaker witnessed (and helped shape) some of our region's most fascinating history. Join Dr. Josh Goodman for a closer look at this influential early Sarasotan and his family.

Dr. Josh Goodman, Manager, Sarasota County History Center

Registration required. Scan the code to register or visit [SarasotaCountyHistory.org](http://SarasotaCountyHistory.org).



## An Archaeological History of Fishing in Florida

Thursday, June 12  
2-3 p.m.

How do the methods of pre-contact coastal tribes compare to those of the modern fisherman? What kind of tools did the first fishers use, and are they really so different then the ones we use today? Join County Archaeologist Clay Bush as he explores the history of fishing as it appears in the archaeological record of the southeastern United States.

Clay Bush, County Archaeologist, Sarasota County History Center

Sarasota County Libraries and Historical Resources  
Sarasota County History Center  
337 N. Tamiami Trail, Osprey, FL 34229  
[SarasotaCountyLibraries.org](http://SarasotaCountyLibraries.org) | call 311 or 941-861-1110



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