

# HISTORY CENTER TIMES

A NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2026

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PUBLISHED BY  
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## FRIENDS OF THE SARASOTA COUNTY HISTORY CENTER

### *Celebrating 20 Years!*

The Friends Organization was founded in 2005 by Pete & Dianne Esthus.

#### NEW MARKERS!

### WILLIAM GOFF



The home of one of Englewood's founding pioneers, William Marvin Goff, was once located here. Goff was born in Dooly County, Georgia in 1845. After serving in the Civil War he married Elizabeth Williams and moved to the Tampa area. Goff captained a schooner that traveled between Tampa, Boca Grande and Key West. He first visited Lemon Bay around 1878 and decided to make it his home.

Elizabeth died around 1880, but William soon remarried to Rebecca Ann Wilson, a family friend. Their second child Eleanor was the first child of European descent to be born in what is now Englewood (September 14, 1885). The young family squatted at first, living briefly in a tent before building a log cabin near this spot. William Goff then bought the surrounding 60 acres of bayfront land from Joseph and Lucy Wear in 1885 for \$90.

The Goffs sold their land in 1890 to John W. Whidden and Charles Y. Crawford for \$1,500. William and Rebecca then purchased a new homesite a few miles east in what would become the Vineland settlement, located near today's Tringali Center.

SARASOTA COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION 2025

### TAMIAMI LODGE & ENGLEWOOD PARK

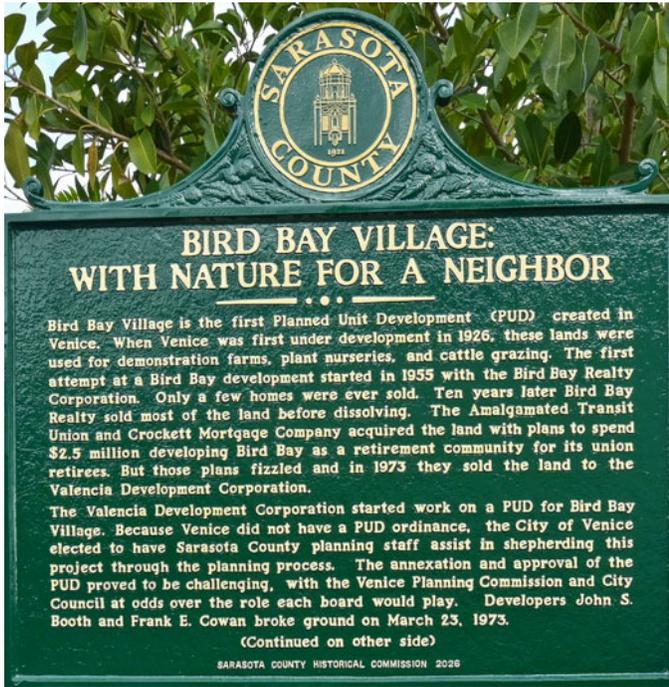


By 1896, John and Ellen Whidden and Charles Y. Crawford had passed this property on to the Whiddens' son, Robert. In 1897, the property was sold to Warren and Sophia Furbeck who built a two-story house near this spot before selling the land to Winifred Watson in 1911. Watson married A. Stanley Lampp shortly afterward, and together the couple upgraded the Furbeck house with modern plumbing and electric lights powered by a Delco generator. They named it the Tamiami Lodge. They also built two smaller houses nearby and operated them in conjunction with the lodge with nine bedrooms total.

In 1913, the Lampps partnered with Pete and Florence Buchan to establish Englewood Park, Englewood's second subdivision, which surrounded and included the lodge. The Lampps operated the Tamiami Lodge from 1914 to 1925, serving up to 30 people a night with dining and lodging for four to five months each year. Several families operated the lodge after 1925 until it was demolished in 1956 by developers. Today the site is open to the public as a county park.

SARASOTA COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION 2025

## It's Been a Busy Winter!



The History Center erected new historical markers this winter, including “**Gillespie Park**” in Sarasota, “**Along These Shores**” describing the archaeological significance of Sarasota Bay, “**William Goff and Tamiami Lodge**” in Englewood (shown on page 1) and “**Bird Bay Village: With Nature for a Neighbor**” (shown here). This marker traces the story of Bird Bay Village, Venice's first planned unit development (PUD). It was proposed and made possible by the Bird Bay Village Homeowners' Association.

In addition, the History Center staff coordinated the refurbishment of existing historical markers, including “**Bee Ridge Community**,” “**Laurel Turpentine and Lumber Industry**,” “**Bee Ridge Turpentine Camp**,” and “**Circus in Venice**.”

Here at the dedication and unveiling of the “**William Goff and Tamiami Lodge**” marker in Englewood are **Betty Nugent**, President & Curator of the Englewood Museum; **Dr. Josh Goodman**, Manager of the History Center; and **Jim Christman**, who donated funds to produce the marker.

Jim is a nephew of Stanley Lampp who operated the Tamiami Lodge and built Englewood Park.

**Don Bayley**, Board member of the Friends, conducted the research for the marker.



## Acquisitions

The History Center received 55 new donations from a wide variety of sources, including the Sarasota Garden Club, historian Kim Cool, the Sarasota County Communication Department, the Sarasota County Department of Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources, the South Venice Civic Association, the National League of American Pen Women, the Miakka Community Club, the Out-of-Door Academy, the petticoat Painters of Sarasota and many individuals.

## Note From the President

The Friends of the Sarasota County History Center (FOSCHC) had quite a year in 2025 as we celebrated our 20th anniversary, having been created by **Pete and Diane Esthus** in 2005. We were especially honored that Diane Esthus and her son, Ken, attended our Annual Meeting last January. It meant a lot for Diane to see how FOSCHC has continued to thrive - especially after COVID and grown into such an active organization again.

Throughout the year, FOSCHC proudly brought our tent, table with logo cover, chairs, and literature to many community events. These events are not only enjoyable but also a great way to recruit new members and share our information about the Sarasota County History Center and all it offers. Some highlights include:

- **History Day in the Park** at Phillippi Estate on Saturday, February 7, 2026, an event we've participated in for several years.
- The **Florida Humanities Festival** at Selby Library in March, where we shared information about FOSCHC.
- Our first **Miakka Hootenanny** as a vendor in early October.
- the **Englewood Lemon Bay Cracker Fair** on Saturday, February 14, 2026.

In October, we held our second annual picnic, **FRIENDS FEST 2025**, at the Sarasota Farm Bureau property (over 10 acres). The event featured a live band, historical vendors, food trucks (or bring-your-own picnic), and the launch of our Storytelling of Sarasota project with several well-known Sarasota residents. We raised our highest funds ever and gained new members.

**Save the Date: FRIENDS FEST 2026 Sunday, November 15, 2026** (Location to be announced)

Thanks to our Membership Chair, **Ken Esthus**, we now regularly participate at the **Downtown Sarasota Farmers Market** whenever a free nonprofit tent space is available. This has been a wonderful way to spread the word about the Sarasota County History Center and to recruit new members. It's especially meaningful for **Long Timers** like Ken and myself to share memories and stories of Sarasota's past with others.

We also typically host a FOSCHC table at the History Center's presentations at the Osprey Library, which are offered throughout the year on fascinating topics about Sarasota County and beyond. These presentations are free but do require advance registration and often fill up quickly.

Another popular FOSCHC project is our **Sarasota County Auto Tours**, featuring nine areas throughout the county. From the comfort of your car (GPS required), you are guided by voice and provided wonderful historical information at each site. Be sure to check them out!

We are getting ready for the **GIVING CHALLENGE on APRIL 15, 2026**, which is one of our biggest fundraising events! All donations up to \$100 are matched by the Peterson Foundation!

We are thrilled to share:

FOSCHC now has 115 members

Long Timers of Sarasota County (LTSC) group - 46 members    Are you a Long Timer?  
(FOSCHC members who have lived in Sarasota County for over 30 years can join.)

FOSCHC yearly donations: 2025 was our most successful year ever for donations!

2023: \$2,000

2024: \$7,000

2025: Almost \$17,000

Warmly, Kim

Kim Patton Manning, President

# Annual Meeting

Our Annual Members' Meeting was held at the temporary History Center in the old Osprey School house on January 31st.



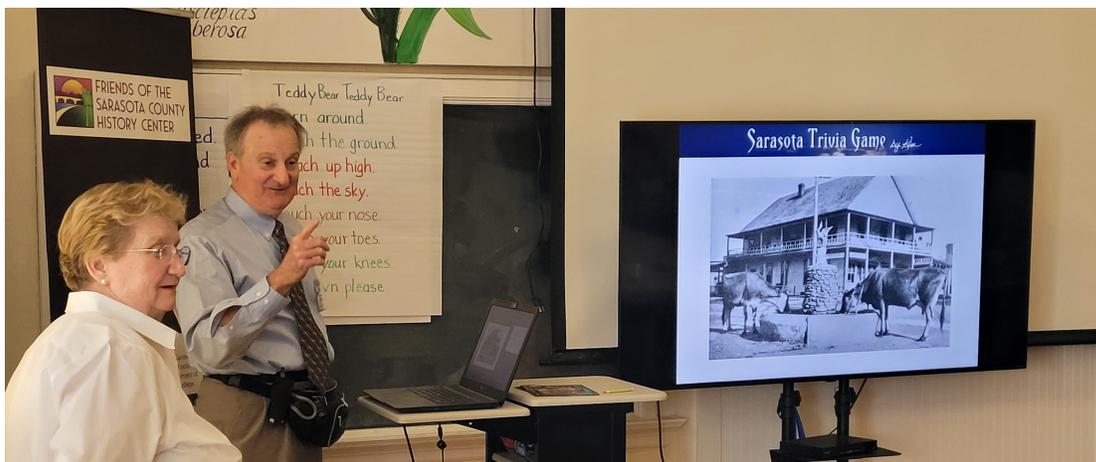
County Commissioner **Mark Smith** addressed the group and his wife **Esther** made a delicious dessert for all to enjoy!



**Josh Goodman** gave us updates on the new building and all the History Center going on, including new staff

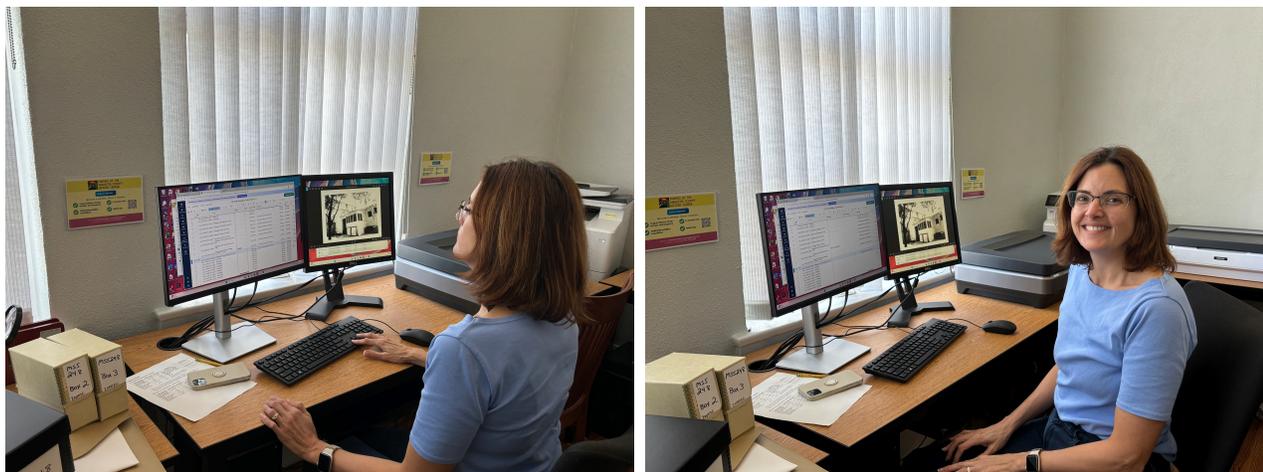


President **Kim Manning** surprised Treasurer **Don Bayley** with a Certificate of Appreciation Award



Everyone enjoyed playing "*Sarasota Trivia Game* by Kim," a new book and game researched & published by **Kim & John Manning**

## History Center Update



History Center staff and volunteers digitized and cataloged the City of Sarasota Photographic Collection, which contains more than 300 images, mainly aerial shots of the bay islands. Here **Susan Hartman** is scanning one of the many images.

For the year 2025 History Center staff assisted the public and other county agencies with 1,564 historical inquiries, including 923 email inquiries, 476 phone inquiries, and 165 inquiries received in person. Patrons accessed 949 aerial photographs and maps, 195 containers of manuscript archival material, 43 folders of ephemera, 339 folders of material from the History Center's Photo Vertical File, 148 folders from the A-Z Reference File, 99 architectural drawings, 651 publications, and 532 other sources.

### New Arrivals

We welcome **Brittany LaFollett** to the **Friends' Board**. A native Texan, Brittany moved to Sarasota County in 2021. She has family in North Port and Venice, and more back in Texas. She worked 8 years for "903 Brewers" in Texas as the National Brand Manager. "I handled all distributor management across 22 states (including Florida), all chain development, events and festivals, and on/off premise sales. In short, I sold a lot of beer!" Currently, she works for Robert Toale and Sons as a licensed Family Service Counselor. Prior non profit involvement: Downtown Sherman Preservation & Revitalization - board member and volunteer, Pink Boots Society of North Texas - co-chapter chair & member, All Faiths Food Bank - volunteer. Personal facts: She loves hiking our local trails and exploring all the great restaurants we have around Sarasota. Cat person with a dog. Movie lover - she says "you can find me at CineBistro at least once a month."

We welcome 2 new staffers to the **History Center**:

1. **Meg Lepak**, our new **Program and Outreach Specialist** tells us:

"I recently joined the Sarasota County History Center as its Program & Outreach Specialist, a newly created role focused on expanding public engagement and community partnerships. In this position, I create lectures, workshops, and collaborative programs that bring Sarasota's rich history to life through the Center's collections. I hold B.A.s in Art History and Public History from Flagler College and have professional experience in libraries, archives, special collections, historical societies, and museums. Having studied in St. Augustine, I gained a deep appreciation for Florida's layered and fascinating past. I am especially passionate about connecting archival materials to engaging, accessible experiences that invite the community to see themselves in local history. As we look ahead to the opening of the new History Center building, I'm excited to help grow awareness and build lasting connections throughout the county."

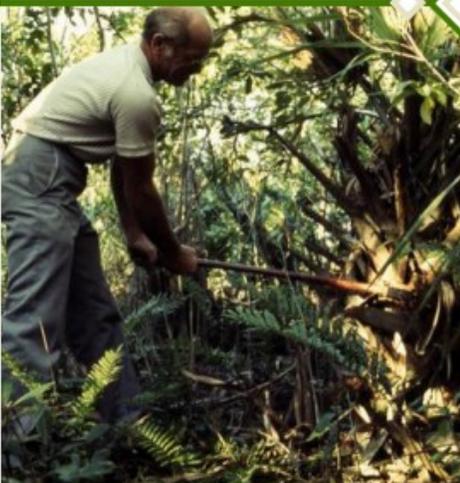
2. The **History Center** welcomes a new **Historic Preservation Specialist, Nicholas Dietz**, to the team. Nicholas comes to us from the University of Georgia, where he just completed a master's degree in historic preservation.

## Sarasota Trivia Game Wins Award!

Our **President Kim Patton Manning** and her husband **John** (author of our History Corner Tid-Bits) have been awarded the **2026 Sarasota County Heritage Award** in the category of Historical Research – Publications for their book *Sarasota Trivia Game* by Kim, recognized by the Awards Committee as “an outstanding contribution to the research, interpretation, and public understanding of Sarasota County’s history.”

## Speaker Series

# Winter 2026



### Cigar City: The Story of Ybor City and West Tampa

**Monday, March 16 • 2 - 3:30 p.m.**

By 1885, the cigar industry had transformed Tampa from a sleepy fishing village of 700 people into a booming, multicultural city. How did this industry take root, grow and eventually decline? What effects has it had on modern Tampa? Join Krewe member Henry Valenti, a descendant of the first cigar makers, for an exploration into this fascinating history!

**Henry Valenti**, History Krewe Member, Tampa Bay History Center

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### From Palmetto to Plate: The History of Swamp Cabbage

**Wednesday, March 25 • 2 - 3:30 p.m.**

One particular type of "cabbage" has been at the "heart" of Florida's plate for centuries. Join local historian Frank Desguin for an in-depth look at the process of making "swamp cabbage" and ask the expert himself for insider tips on preparing your own version of this Florida delicacy! Guest historian Dr. Josh Goodman will provide historical commentary.

**Frank Desguin**, President of Board of Directors, Charlotte County Historical Society

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



Here are two of the Speaker Series lectures scheduled for this Winter at the History Center.

The Friends contribute honoraria for this series. We are also present at most of the lectures, setting up a table with information about the Friends. Stop by and say "Hello!"



**SAVE THE DATE:**  
**From noon to noon,**  
**April 15-16,**  
**All Donations Up To**  
**\$100 Will Be**  
**Matched!**  
For more info, visit  
[foschc.org](http://foschc.org)

# Friends Fest 2025!

## “OLD-TIME” PICNIC and FESTIVAL

honoring the *Long Timers of Sarasota County*  
(Sarasota County residents who have lived here for over  
30 years.)



- ◆ storytellers of Sarasota County
- ◆ contests,
- ◆ lawn games
- ◆ *Sarasota County History Center & historical organizations'*
- ◆ exhibits lots of entertainment surprises

# We Need the Police! Call the Streetlight

(Abridged)

By John Manning



Figure 1 Police Wooden Rattle (militariahub.com)

When the first sheriffs (combination word from “shire” (*district*) and “reeve” (*royal agent*)) appeared in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, England’s King Edward I introduced a neighborhood watch approach to policing. The Statute of Winchester (1285) required that a watchman be stationed at the entrance of each town (“watch and ward”). Anyone who witnessed a crime was to make a loud “hue and cry” to alert neighbors. Then all were to join in pursuit of the criminal or face fines. It

became obvious that hueing and crying may not be loud enough to get attention. So, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century wooden rattles were used to raise the alarm. A neighborhood posse shaking wooden rattles in pursuit to get a criminal to stop had to be a riveting experience.

Figure 2 Charlie Rouse - the last Night Watchman c 1850 (Journal of Art in Society)



When Florida became a territory in 1821 Governor Andrew Jackson appointed two sheriffs for the newly created counties of Escambia (west – “panhandle”) and St. Johns (east & everywhere south)<sup>1</sup>. St Johns eventually got carved up into Hillsborough, then Manatee counties. The first sheriff of Manatee County was, who else, William Whitaker (1855-1857). There weren’t many people in Manatee so the job mostly entailed serving legal documents, acting as a bailiff in court (if there was a court date), managing the jail & prisoners (if you had any), and collecting taxes. Besides, Bill had a lot going on being the first settler, having the first orange grove, first cattlemen, delivering mail, commercial fishing, et cetera.

The Sarasota district’s first known murders were in the community of Sara Sota (between Hudson Bayou and Phillippi Creek). “Carpetbaggers” from the north had started to move into the area after the Civil War and the Disston land deal. Tensions between the early settlers whose land was not always surveyed and those “Yankees” who were purchasing surveyed land intensified. In 1884, northerners Harrison Riley and then Postmaster Charles Abbe were murdered by members of the Sara Sota Vigilance Committee. Sheriff A.S. “Sandy” Watson knew who they suspects were, gathered a posse to arrest them, and take them to be jailed & tried in Pine Level (the county seat). The victims, suspects, murder details and trial were covered nationally by the New York Times which labeled the group



Figure 3 Sandy Watson c 1885 (Manatee Library)

<sup>1</sup> The first sheriffs of Florida were James Pendelton (Escambia County) and James R. Hanham (St. Johns County).

the “Sarasota Assassination Society.” In the end none of the convicted men spent more than 8 years in prison.



Figure 4 Sarasota Jail c 1911 (Sarasota boys) County Historical Resources)

When the Town of Sarasota incorporated on October 14, 1902 Mayor J. Hamilton Gillespie and the council hired T.F. Blair to be town’s marshal, “infrastructure maintenance”, and sanitation inspector. Blair was required to remove dead carcasses, clean the outdoor “privies,” and not stay in any one location longer than 15 minutes. The marshal was to stop fighting (often between the cowboys and the “city” and move cattle off the streets. The marshal was also to enforce vagrancy, chastity, indecency & morality ordinances (e.g., drunkenness, loitering, being found in a “bawdy house,” etc.). There was a jail, but one could easily escape. Despite this being a dream job Marshal Blair was the first town employee to quit (March 10, 1903). He told the council that he could not afford to work at “starvation wages” having made \$14 in the month of February (\$10 a month base plus \$1 per arrest). D.S. McRae was the next marshal (1902-1908). The third marshal was Leon Davis Hodges (1908-1922). He patrolled Sarasota on horseback with only his badge and six-shooter to identify him as a lawman.

The first sheriff of the newly created Sarasota County (1921) was Burma Dale “Heinie” Levi appointed by Governor Hardee. Levi had no jail, staff or experience in law enforcement. He was given an office in the municipal building (Hover Arcade) on the City Pier. His first mystery was an incident of “bandits” on the single-lane, dirt Fruitville Road. The bandits were reputedly stopping cars and only letting them proceed if the driver knew the “password.” Levi went to investigate, but none of the motorists would “snitch.” Bandits and password



Figure 5 L.D. Hodges (spd.org)

were never identified. Levi convinced the Sarasota County Commissioners he needed assistance. So, they approved a bond and made Marshal L.D. Hodges a special deputy sheriff. After a year and a half as sheriff Levi decided to not run for office in 1922. Hodges ran and won the election.



Figure 6 Streetlight with callbox at Palmer Bank building c 1920s (Sarasota County History Center - MSS 235)

S. Tilden Davis became the Chief of Police. He arrived on the first Seaboard Air Line Railroad train into Sarasota on March 23, 1903. He also had no law enforcement experience. There was no application process for hiring officers. You got \$100 a month to work 12-hour shifts seven days a week. The Sarasota Police Department was in a 10’ x 10’ office in the Palmer Bank Building. When a telephone call came in the streetlight would flash. If you had an emergency and the on-duty officer was out of the office, you had to hope he would see the flashing streetlight. Good luck.

Sheriff Hodges had his hands full from the start. In mid-January 1922 Hodges spotted a schooner dropping off human cargo at Big Pass. Hodges enlisted Chief Davis and city officer Gillet and arrested seven illegal Italian immigrants having coffee and eating sandwiches on Main St and fifteen immigrants at McClellan Park. By the end of the day, they had arrested 45 men and put them in the small city jail. All the men had American money so Sarasota citizens began trading with the men through the jail windows. Capitalism shall not be halted by mere incarceration.

Sheriff Hodges also hired James "Rattlesnake" Allen the first African-American deputy in Sarasota and Florida history.

With the Florida Land Boom more people came. Prohibition saw the rise of illegal stills for moonshine & speakeasies. There was also a rise in violent crime. Badges and pistols were paid for by the officers themselves. Automobiles were their own. There was rudimentary fingerprinting technology, but that was about it. The times and the officers had to be tough.

Every one of us wants to feel safe & secure, have crimes prevented, hold accountable the convicted, keep the peace while respecting individual's rights, and get help in a crisis. We look to law enforcement officers to accomplish these things for us. But when they need our help join in and break out the wooden rattle.

## Friends' Community Outreach



Kim & John Manning at Englewood's Cracker Fair



Don Bayley, Linda Lester & Ken Esthus at History Day in the Park

