



The Historical Society of Orange Park

November 2025 Newsletter

November gets off to a fast start with two presentations given by Society members. The first presentation will be given by Society Vice President, Sandra DiGiovanni at 3 PM, Monday, November 3, at the Green Cove Springs Branch Library. Sandra will discuss the veterans buried in Magnolia Cemetery. At 6 PM, Wednesday, November 5, at the Orange Park Branch Library, Society Treasurer, Van Hogan, will tell the story of the development and construction of the Veterans Memorial at Magnolia Cemetery.

Last month's Pickin' in the Park was so well received we are bringing it back this month for our monthly open house at the Clarke House on November 9. Come out and join us for music and fun on a beautiful fall afternoon.

November also features our annual Veterans Day Ceremony. This year's ceremony will be held at 11 AM, Tuesday, November 11, at the Veterans Memorial at Magnolia Cemetery. Please join us in honoring our veterans on this special day.

Later this month we celebrate Thanksgiving. This is a truly wonderful day that is set aside for us to pause, reflect and be grateful for the many blessings that have been bestowed on us. May we all enjoy time with family and friends, share a delicious meal and give thanks to God for all he has provided.



We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Event	Location
November 3, 2025	3:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Presentation: Veterans - All in the Family	Green Cove Springs Library
November 5, 2025	6:00 PM – 7:00 PM	Presentation: The Veterans Memorial	Orange Park Library
November 9, 2025	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Open House/Pickin' in the Park	Clarke House
November 11, 2025	11:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Veterans Day Ceremony	Veterans Memorial

Date	Time	Event	Location
December 13, 2025	11:45 AM – 1:00 PM	Wreaths Across America	Veterans Memorial
December 12 & 13, 2025	5:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Hometown Holiday in the Park	Clarke House Park
January 11, 2026	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Open House	Clarke House

Special Open House Sunday, November 9th

Join us on Sunday, November 9th at the historic Clarke House, 1039 Kingsley Ave. for another special open house. Several of Orange Park's talented, home-grown musicians will be "pickin'" songs in Clarke House Park.

As always, the Clarke House will be open and available for a guided tour or slow exploration at your own pace.



**JOIN US FOR OLD-FASHIONED MUSIC IN THE PARK
NOV. 9TH, 2-4 pm- CLARKE HOUSE PARK, 1039 KINGSLEY AVE, ORANGE PARK**

The Historical Society of Orange Park hopes you will join us from 2-4 PM for our monthly Open House and enjoy Pickin'-in-the-Park. It's always great to enjoy good music, good conversation and a comfortable home on a Sunday afternoon.

Historical Society Presentations

This month, members of the Historical Society will give presentations in honor of Veterans Day. At 3:00 PM, Wednesday, November 3, at the Green Cove Springs Branch Library, 403 Ferris St. in Green Cove Springs, Sandra DiGiovanni will give a presentation entitled, “Veterans – All in the Family”. This presentation will highlight families in which multiple members served our nation in various branches of the military.

A second presentation entitled, “The Veterans Memorial at Magnolia Cemetery, How a Community Came Together to Honor Our Veterans,” will be presented at 6:00 PM, Wednesday, November 5, at the Orange Park Branch Library, 2054 Plainfield Ave. in Orange Park. This presentation will describe how a vision for a veterans memorial in Orange Park became a reality through the efforts of dedicated, generous members of this community.

Veterans Day Ceremony

The Historical Society of Orange Park and the Town of Orange Park invite you to join us at 11 AM, Tuesday, November 11 for our annual Veterans Day Ceremony to be held at the Orange Park Veterans Memorial, located just inside the gates of Magnolia Cemetery, 1040 Kingsley Avenue.

We welcome all to be a part of this moving, patriotic ceremony that pays tribute to those who bravely served our country.

The program for this year’s recognition will include a presentation of the colors by Boy Scout Troop 25, and musical performances by the Orange Park High School Choir, Pure Harmony and the First Coast Highlanders. The program features speeches from Chief Randy Case of the Orange Park Police Department, Carol Westerman with the Daughters of the American Revolution, and keynote speaker Dr. Victor Maquera, CDR USN, Ret., who served our nation around the world and now serves our community as a neurologist. Also featured will be local students who will present the winning essays in the 2025 Veterans Day Essay Contest, participation by the American Legion Post #250 Riders and a flyover by the Dreamland Squadron from Haller Airfield.



Seating is limited so attendees are encouraged to bring their own chairs. There will be NO parking in the cemetery. Parking is available in the First Baptist Church lot one block west of the cemetery at 1140 Kingsley Avenue. Refreshments will be provided on site by the Orange Park Woman’s Club, the Sophia Fleming Chapter of the DAR and the Historical Society of Orange Park.

Veterans' Corner: Wreaths Across America

Magnolia Cemetery is home to 265 veterans as of September 2025. This month we are highlighting all our veterans by reminding everyone about our Wreaths Across America event being held this year on December 13 at 11:45 AM.

This is our fourth year honoring our veterans in Magnolia & Moosehaven Cemeteries. In 2024, across 4,909 participating locations nationwide, millions of volunteers — a third of whom were children — remembered our nation's heroes as they said their names out loud, with the placement of over three million sponsored veterans' wreaths. Everyone should be proud to be included in this yearly event.

I would like to list the groups of young people that participate every year and make our day at Magnolia & Moosehaven Cemeteries so meaningful.

Boy Scout Troop 25
Cub Scout Pack 25

Black Creek Young Marines
Girl Scout Troop 31020

These four groups have had representatives every year since 2022. Once again, this year they will be taking part in our ceremony as well as placing wreaths. We are proud to add a new group of young people to our ensemble, 4-H Oakleaf Trailblazers will be joining us to make sure every veteran has a wreath and has his or her name spoken.

If you would like to come out and help honor our veterans, feel free to attend. Parking, as always, is courtesy of First Baptist Church of Orange Park.

Orange Park Memories

The Society is highlighting Orange Park businesses each first-of-the-month throughout 2025, one from the town's early days and one which will be recognizable to many locals. Our November choices are OB Nall's Hardware and Townsend's Pharmacy.

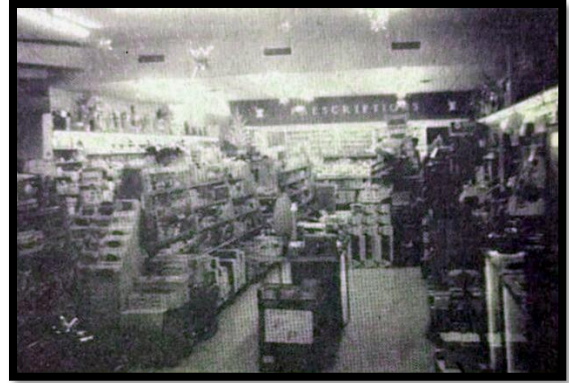
Nall Hardware was located at the corner of Park and Kinglsey, across from Town Hall. The shopping center, originally developed by the Massees of Club Continental, was replaced by the present Live Oak Shopping Center. Established in 1962, Ollie Bryan Nall's Hardware had a "little bit of everything" and so was a regular go-to for Orange Park residents. If you can share your memories, please do so here.

Located near Nall's was Townsend's Orange Park Pharmacy. In 1962 Townsends almost doubled the size of its store located at the corner of US 17 and Kingsley. "Doc" Townsend was a familiar face to generations of Orange Parkers. Both Townsends and Nall Hardware were, among several others, long-time supporters of Little League in OP. Do you have memories of these businesses? If so, please share them here!





OB Nall's Hardware



Townsend's Pharmacy

Orange Park Fall Festival

The Town of Orange Park hosted its 43rd Annual Orange Park Fall Festival on Saturday, October 18 and Sunday, October 19. The event was great fun and attended by large crowds on both days. Except for a rain shower late Sunday afternoon, the festival enjoyed outstanding weather. Visitors enjoyed a variety of food, crafts, activities and non-stop entertainment. The Society once again hosted a booth and was pleased to share Orange Park's history with our many visitors. It was good to see a lot of old friends and make some new ones too.



Moonlight on Magnolia

Magnolia Cemetery was once again the host for history walks on October 25th. Over 100 folks came out to hear stories, some from family members, and to stroll through the past. This year, Betty Demmons joined those telling stories. Her account of Joe Green and his historic home were given by a witness to that history as Betty tried to save the home from destruction. Chuck Hall joined us again to bring William Jackson Hall, his Confederate great-great grandfather's story, to a new generation.

Vishi Garig portrayed Julia Wilson, the nosy neighbor of the Harry Horton family, who shared stories about that colorful family. The tragic story of two drowned girls, Ruthie Temple and Virginia Lee, was shared by Ivy Carroll (for her second year) and Savannah Selvaggio. Jana Kinder reprised her role as storekeeper/trapeze artist, Pauline Wylie. We were also fortunate to have the talented John Bowles on hand to once again regale folks with the wonderful story of Leonidas Wade and his bottled water enterprise.

This year's guides included Sandra DiGiovanni, Van Hogan, Cindy Cheatwood, Emma Goslee and the team of Lyla Goddard and Katheryn Kuchler. In addition to traditional guided tours, a self-guided tour was offered with signs at 30 different stops around the cemetery. Some signs included QR codes connected to videos from Moonlight walks of the past couple of years. These stayed up through the weekend for anyone who might want to visit at a more leisurely pace.

Logistical support for the walks was vital. The Society is very grateful to Barry DiGiovanni for safeguarding the walkways with a good cleaning the morning before the walks. Barry also helped transport chairs and tables back to the Clarke House at the end of the walks and served as the visitor counter throughout. Logistical management at the start of the walks was provided by Mary Ellen DeMarco, Allyson Jarczyk, and Dick Cheatwood. Groups were ably arranged, and information was shared. Our runners for the evening were James Wisehart, Jae'anna Pollock and Nariah Pollock, grandchildren of Society members.

In addition to the walks, a large display was provided as well as Society scrapbooks and promotional materials. Everyone left contentedly and the evening was deemed a success. Thank you to all our helpers for a job well done!

Scenes from Moonlight on Magnolia



Pauline Wylie as portrayed by Jana Kinder



Ivy Carroll and Savannah Selvaggio tell the story of Ruthie Temple



Leonidas Wade as portrayed by John Bowles



Betty Demmons shares the story of Joseph Green



William Jackson Hall as portrayed by Chuck Hall



Julia Wilson as portrayed by Vishi Garig



Emma Goslee, Kathryn Kuchler and Lyla Goddard served as guides



Mary Ellen DeMarco, Dick Cheatwood and Barry DiGiovanni welcome visitors to Moonlight on Magnolia

Early Bird Special on Annual Memberships

As part of our membership drive for 2026, the Historical Society is offering a reduced rate for annual family memberships through the end of this year. Our Early Bird rates are as follows:

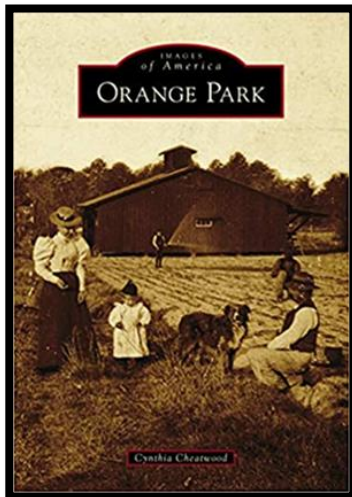
- Senior Family Membership \$15
- Family Membership \$30

We are also offering our Clarke House and Veterans Memorial wood Christmas ornaments, normally \$10 each, for the reduced rate of 2 for \$15. Take advantage of these prices while they last. The sale ends December 31!



Images of America: Orange Park

Images of America: Orange Park, authored by Historical Society President, Cynthia Cheatwood, is a wonderful way to learn about the history of Orange Park. This book shares the history of our town through archival photographs and stories collected from a variety of sources. The cost of the book is \$20 for members of our Society, \$25 for non-members and \$27 for online orders.



Clarke House Tours

The Clarke House will be open to the public for tours on Sunday afternoon, November 9 from 2 PM to 4 PM. The Clarke



House, built in 1912, served as the family home for William and Carrie Clarke for many years. It features hardwood floors, plastered walls and ceilings and large, spacious rooms with many windows for good ventilation. It was a comfortable home and the Clarke family shared many happy memories there. Stop by for a visit and make some memories of your own and feel free to share recollections that the house inspires.

Got pics?

The Society is looking for photographs to add to our resources. If you have long-time-ago images of people and/or places in Orange Park, please share them. In this increasingly visual world, there is a lot to learn from these glimpses of our past. You can share them through email at info@ophistory.org or through mail at P. O. Box 08, Orange Park, 32067. Originals will be returned after the Society makes a scan.



Look For Us Online

Look for the Historical Society of Orange Park online via our website, www.ophistory.org, our [Instagram](#) page or our [Facebook](#) page. Both sources provide updates on society news and activities.

Links to Local History

For more events and activities related to local history, please visit the following:

- [Clay County Historical Society](#)
- [Middleburg Museum](#)
- [Historical Society of Penny Farms](#)
- [Mandarin Museum and Historical Society](#)
- [Keystone Heights Heritage Commission](#)
- [Clay County Archives](#)

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