



# The Historical Society of Orange Park

## August 2023 Newsletter

The Dog Days of summer are upon us. The technical reason for calling this time of year the “Dog Days” is that at this time of year, the Sun occupies the same part of the sky as the constellation, Canis Major, the Large Dog. Canis Major includes the star, Sirius, also known as the Dog Star. This concurrence lasts about a month in the hottest part of the summer. That might be all well and good but the first thing that comes to mind this time of year is a smart dog lying in the shade on the front porch. It’s just hot!

Just imagine summer life for early Orange Park residents. They had no air conditioning. Their homes were designed for ventilation and they often sat on their front porches to catch any available breeze. With more people outside, there were more opportunities for interaction with neighbors and passers-by. Air conditioning in Florida did not become prevalent until the advent of relatively inexpensive window air conditioners in the 1950’s followed by central heating and air conditioning systems in the 1960’s. This coincided with the popularity and availability of television, which induced all of us to retreat inside our homes. As a result, our front porches have become smaller and used less frequently. Our communities are becoming less tangible and more virtual. Something gained but something lost as well. We are certainly more comfortable but the personal connections forged while trying to beat the heat have fractured. Maybe a little discomfort is not such a bad thing.

This month’s newsletter includes information on our August quarterly meeting and our September outing as well as other happenings in our area.

### Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Event	Location
August 7, 2023	5:30 PM – 7:00 PM	Quarterly Meeting	Orange Park Library
August 13, 2023	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Open House	Clarke House
September 10, 2023	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Open House	Clarke House
September 16, 2023	9:30 AM – 3:00 PM	Outing	Florida Agricultural Museum
October 21 & 22, 2022	10:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Fall Festival	Town Hall Park
October 28, 2022	4:00 PM – 6:00 PM	Moonlight on Magnolia	Magnolia Cemetery

Read on for additional information on these events and other activities.

### **August Member Meeting – The History of Our Local Non-Profit Organizations**

On August 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM we will gather at the Orange Park branch library to celebrate the many altruistic organizations. From its earliest days, Orange Park has been buoyed by citizens who worked together to make the town safer, healthier and more connected. Join us as we present the story of groups like the Orange Park Woman's Club, the Rotary of Orange Park, the Art Guild, the Garden Club, Senior Center, Shepherd's Center, the James Boys, the Clothes Closet and more. You will be inspired by the pictures and stories that will be shared in this presentation. Good folks working together to make the town a better place-that's America! We hope you leave this presentation empowered and inspired by the examples you will see.

**Good Neighbors:**  
*Orange Park's History of Helping*

**A presentation of the Historical Society of Orange Park  
to recognize past efforts and inspire the future**

**Monday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 PM**  
Orange Park Branch Library,  
2054 Plainfield Ave, Orange Park  
Free and Open to the Public

### **ROAD TRIP!!! - Outing to the Florida Agricultural Museum**

Florida Agricultural Museum, here we come!

This outing, originally slated for July, has been rescheduled.

On September 16<sup>th</sup> we will gather in the parking lot of Town Hall at 9:30 AM to carpool to Palm Coast (or you can meet us there). Then, we're off to visit the Florida Agricultural Museum to tour buildings dating from 1880 to 1920 which all have been relocated to the Museum from areas across the state. The buildings include a fully stocked 1800's general store, five buildings from a citrus complex, a 1920's dairy



barn and a brief wagon ride to an authentic Florida Cracker Homestead built in 1880. Along the tour we will even encounter rare heritage Florida Cracker Livestock.

The tour is about 1.5 hours and costs \$12. After our tour we will find a good lunch spot and enjoy good conversation.



### **Orange Park Memories: August: 1980s**

To celebrate our 20th anniversary, the Historical Society of Orange Park is highlighting the town's history, decade by decade. This month we look at Orange Park in the 1980s.

The Town started Memorial Day ceremonies and became an official Tree City, USA in the early 80's. The population was 8,700 people and more community activities started happening. The first Orange Park Fall Festival was held in 1982 and has become a hugely popular staple. Frica Massee purchased the Winterbourne property in 1982, bringing it back into the Club Continental family.

OPAA's 1987 *Cyclones* coached by John Davis and Dick Shipley won the Pop Warner Conference title, something no other Orange Park team did for the next fourteen years.

Town Council meetings were filled with actions revolving around roads and maintenance of the town's public swimming pool.



**The Town of Orange Park is recognized as a Tree City, USA**





The Town of Orange Park's Fall Festival



The OPAA Cyclones and their 1987 championship trophy

## **Veterans Memorial Updates**



### **New paver order to be submitted August 8:**

As mentioned in the past few newsletters, we will process the final paver order to the engraving company for all paver orders received by July 31 very soon. Since our quarterly meeting will be held on August 7, we wanted to give attendees one "LAST" opportunity to purchase a paver. We will submit our final order for pavers on August 8 to allow time for engraving, shipping and installation prior to Veterans Day, November 11, 2023. So come to the meeting and order the paver you have been thinking about!

### **Status of the Paver Renovation Project fundraising:**

Help! We need a boost. We are almost there. Our fundraising to pay for the paver renovation project needs \$555.58 to hit our \$15,000.00 goal of paying completely

for the project from funds donated by the community. Donations can be made to the Historical Society of Orange Park, PO Box 08, Orange Park, FL 32067. Please note that your contribution is to be used for the Veterans Memorial.

### **A Veteran's Story:**

The members of the Historical Society of Orange Park honor local Veterans that we learn about during the year by installing Memorial pavers for their sacrifice and devotion to their Country. Chief Hospital Corpsman Charles W Cannington joined the US Navy in 1947 and served for 22 years. He lived with his family on Grove Park Drive in Orange Park.

A Naval Board of inquiry reported that Chief Cannington was 1 of 11 men trapped below deck in a forward compartment when the USS Frank E. Evans collided with the Australian carrier Melbourne and was sunk in joint operations in the South China Sea off the coast of Vietnam in June 1969. Survivors reported that Chief Cannington lined his men up and helped them escape one at a time thru a hatch. He did not make it, and gave his life to save his fellow crew members. He was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for his selfless actions that night.

The Historical Society of Orange Park will place an engraved paver in his honor.

## **Veterans Day Essay Contest**

With the start of a new school year just a few days away, we want to take this opportunity to invite all Clay County students to participate in this year's Veterans Day Essay Contest. Clay

County students from 4<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to submit an essay on a topic related to Veterans Day.

The topics are as follows:

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Word Limits:</u>	<u>Prize Offered</u>	<u>Prompt</u>
4th –6th	300-500	\$50	What is Veterans Day?
7th –8th	400-700	\$75	Why do veterans deserve our support, respect and understanding?
9th -12th	500-1000	\$100	Why are the words “Duty, Honor, Country” important today?

Essays must be received no later than September 30, 2023. The student submitting the winning essay in each category will receive a cash prize and be invited to present their essay at the Veterans Day Ceremony, 11 AM, Friday, November 11 at the Veterans Memorial in Magnolia Cemetery.

Entry forms and contest instructions can be downloaded by clicking the following link: [Veterans Day Essay Contest 2023.pdf \(wsimg.com\)](#) or from the Veterans Memorial page of our website, [Veterans Memorial \(ophistory.org\)](#).

### **Moonlight on Magnolia**

Save the Date: Saturday, October 28, Moonlight on Magnolia returns! The Society will conduct tours through Magnolia Cemetery to share the town’s history with visitors. Along the way we will meet “former residents” of the town who will share stories of their time in Orange Park. Tours will begin at 4 PM and continue at regular intervals. The last tour will start at 6 PM.

Tours will follow the paved roads within the cemetery and take approximately 45 minutes so please plan accordingly. This is a free, community event. Donations are appreciated and will be used to further the work of our Society.

Volunteers are needed to make this event a success. If you are interested in participating, please contact us at [info@ophistory.org](mailto:info@ophistory.org).





## **Mandarin Museum and Historical Society**

The Mandarin Museum and Historical Society will host a grand re-opening of the Mandarin Museum on Saturday, August 5. The newly renovated and expanded museum will feature exhibits on the St. Johns River, the history of Black Mandarin, the artwork of Mandarin artists and an expanded exhibit on the Maple Leaf shipwreck. The museum has been closed to the public for some time but the renovations and new exhibits will make the closure worthwhile. The day's activities will begin at 10 AM and continue until 4 PM. The Mandarin Museum is located at 11964 Mandarin Road in Jacksonville.

Also in August, the Mandarin Museum and Historical Society and the Mandarin Community Club will host a Third Thursday Lecture at 7 PM on August 17. The lecture, held at the Mandarin Community Club, 12447 Mandarin Road in Jacksonville, will feature a presentation on the Murray/Sheldon family, former residents of Mandarin that lived on the grounds of what is now Walter Jones Park in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Greg Holbook, Executive Director of the New Smyrna Museum of History, will be the featured speaker.

For more information on these and other events, visit [Events \(mandarinmuseum.net\)](https://www.mandarinmuseum.net).

## **Sophia Fleming Chapter, DAR Promoting Constitution Week**

September 17<sup>th</sup> is a date set aside each year to recognize the anniversary of the US Constitution, the foundation of our very identity as a nation. We in the Historical Society encourage recognition of this holiday and all it represents.



Our friends at the DAR are striving to promote the education of and appreciation for the Constitution and invite our readers to assist. They intend to provide displays in the public libraries, request a proclamation from the Clay County Board of Commissioners, provide information in the schools, and have a bell ringing ceremony at 4 PM at the Orange Park Library on Sunday, September 17.

In addition to these things, they are asking local businesses to place Constitution Week dates on their digital signs. If you are affiliated with such a business or organization, they would like you to assist in promoting this effort. Also, if you are someone who dresses in period clothing and speaks to local groups, they would love to enlist you for this cause. Finally, if you have ideas about how our organization could assist the DAR Chapter to promote Constitution Week, please share those with us at [ophistory.org](https://ophistory.org).





### Clarke House Tours



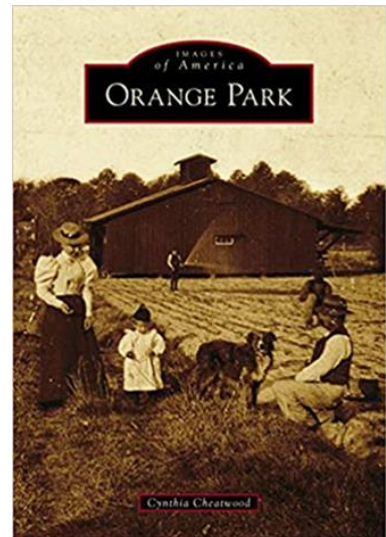
The Clarke House is open for tours on the second Sunday of each month from 2 PM to 4 PM. Our next open house will be held, Sunday, August 13. If you have not yet visited the house or, if it has just been a while, we invite you to stop by to look around. The slower pace of a Sunday afternoon provides an opportunity to tour the entire house, both upstairs and down. We hope to see you there!

### Images of America - Orange Park

If you would like to learn more about the history of Orange Park, please consider purchasing a copy of ***Images of America – Orange Park***. This book, written by Society President, Cynthia Cheatwood, shares the history of our town through archival photographs and stories collected from a variety of sources.

The Historical Society of Orange Park has copies for sale. Copies can be purchased through the Society for \$20 each (\$15 each for Society members). *This book is also available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, CVS or various other outlets online.*

For more information, please email us at [info@ophistory.org](mailto:info@ophistory.org). All author royalties for the sale of this book will go toward historical preservation in Orange Park.



### Look For Us on Online

Look for the Historical Society of Orange Park online via our website, [www.ophistory.org](http://www.ophistory.org), 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](#)
- [Clay County Archives](#)

