



The Historical Society of Orange Park

August 2024 Newsletter

The dog days of August are upon us and while outdoor activities might slow down in the summer heat they never stop. This month features our monthly open house at the Clarke House and our Quarterly Member Meeting at the Orange Park Library. Please see below for more information about these events.

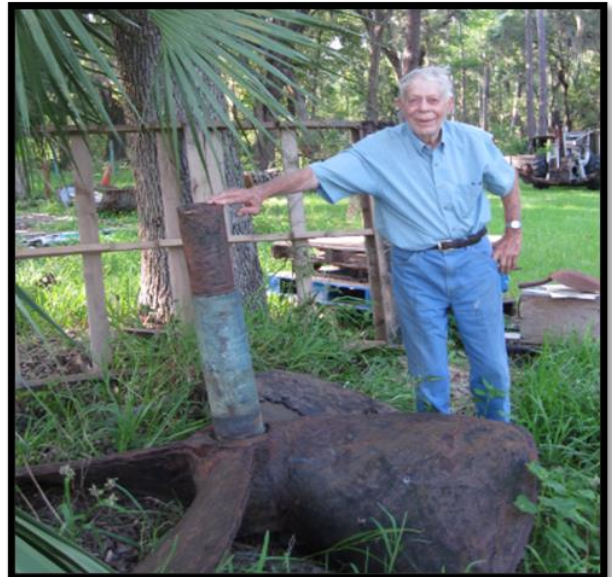
Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Event	Location
August 11, 2024	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Open House	Clarke House
August 26, 2024	5:30 PM – 7:00 PM	Quarterly Member Meeting	Orange Park Library
September 8, 2024	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Open House	Clarke House
October 13, 2024	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Open House	Clarke House
October 19 & 20, 2024	10:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Fall Festival	Town Hall Park

August Member Meeting: Hometown History- Nelson Point

Trying something new with the August 26th presentation of Nelson Point's story, video clips of Mr. John Nelson will be integrated into the program. The video snippets are from a 2011 oral history interview with Mr. Nelson, who owned the historic property for 70 years. Through these videos, John Nelson will help tell its story, a story of yesterday and tomorrow, woven with dreams and memories.

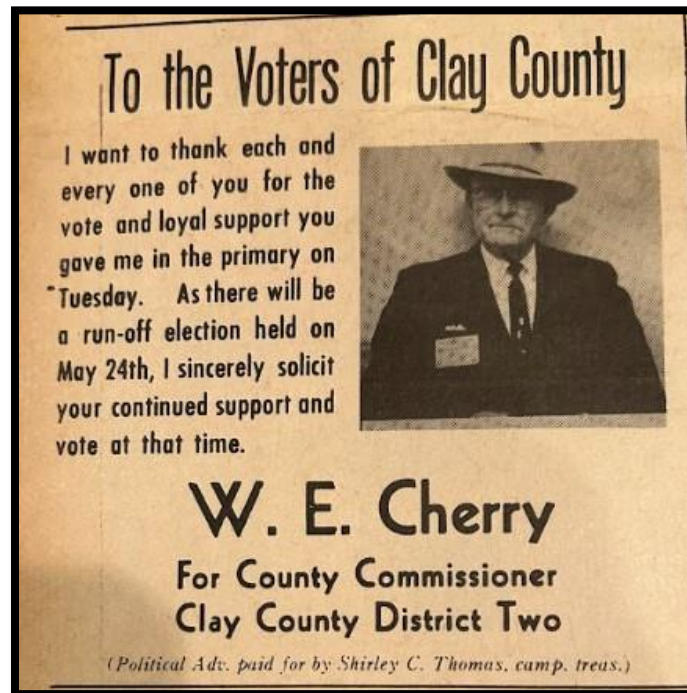
Join us at the Orange Park branch library at 5:30 pm on August 26th as we track the town's history through the people of Nelson Point. Cynthia Cheatwood will share a summarized version of many hours of research laying out the charm of the area now dubbed "Rob Bradley Park". (Note: there will some chuckles and 'ahhhs" along the way.)



John Nelson, July 2011, showing off 1860's era ship's propeller.

Orange Park Memories

The Historical Society of Orange Park is sharing vintage news stories each month of 2024, clipped from *The Breeze* newspaper (1959 to 1971). There was a lot of campaigning done through the pages of the *Breeze*. Candidates introduced themselves in the early stages, reminded citizens to vote later in the campaign and wrote little thank you notes to the public after the election, like this one from 1966. Charming! Yes, there is a local elementary school named for this particular candidate!



Veterans Memorial Update



The effort to install the two new medallions at the Veterans Memorial has moved slowly over the past month. We await an opening in the brick mason's schedule for the work to proceed. Once the work gets underway it should be quickly completed.

As we have noted over the past few months, the end of July marked the deadline to order inscribed pavers for installation at the memorial by Veterans Day. An order for all paver orders received since last August is in process. We should have these pavers in-hand by late September and installed in October.

Veterans Day Essay Contest

All Clay County students are invited to participate in this year's Veterans Day Essay Contest. Each year we offer students an opportunity to submit an essay on a topic related to veterans or Veterans Day. Essay categories are separated by grade level as follows: 4th - 6th grade, 7th - 8th grade and 9th - 12th grade. Students submitting the winning essays will receive a cash prize and be invited to read their essays at this year's Veterans Day Ceremony on November 11. All essays are due no later than September 30, 2024. Detailed information regarding this year's essay contest can be downloaded by visiting the Veterans Memorial page of our website or by clicking [here](#).



Clay County July Historical Roundtable

On Friday July 27, history-based organizations from all over Clay County gathered in the Old Courthouse in the Historical Triangle in Green Cove Springs for a semi-annual Roundtable. Each group provided an update on current and upcoming activities as well as special projects that are in the works. Some of the highlights from the meeting were as follows:

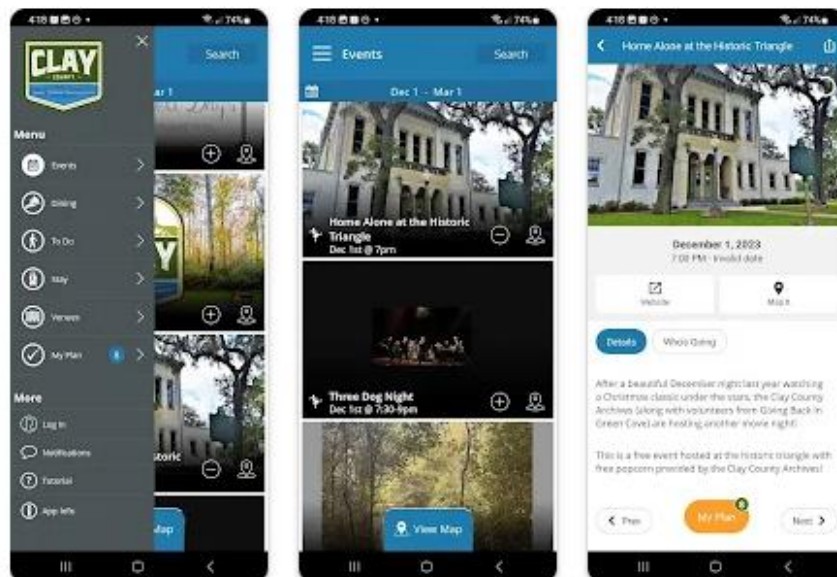
- The Clay County Archives has invested considerable time and effort to label and organize its various records and collections to enhance research efforts.
- The Clay County Historical Society recently received additional museum artifacts for their Slim Whitman and Lynyrd Skynyrd exhibits.
- Keystone Heights Heritage Commission noted that the year 2025 will mark the centennial of Keystone Heights. The city is planning a year-long celebration.
- Historical Society of Penney Farms continues to operate their museum and will resume monthly programs this fall.
- Clay County Tourism Office made a presentation on their marketing efforts and reported that they plan to open a Clay County Visitors Center on the 1st floor of the Clay County Administration Building in Green Cove Springs.
- Historical Society of Orange Park promoted the idea of a Youth Historical Society where students would visit the various historical societies in the county, aid in research efforts and earn community service hours.
- The Historic Preservation Board of Orange Park has completed their municipal preservation ordinance and is awaiting approval by Orange Park's Town Council.
- The Middleburg Museum has also invested time and effort in organizing their collections and is currently working to collect family histories in the Middleburg area.
- Clay County Historic Preservation Board is working with Maude Jackson to preserve the African American Schoolhouse located in the Hilltop Area of Middleburg.

These roundtables continue to generate interesting conversation and foster connections between the various historical groups in our county as we work to solve problems and promote history in Clay County.



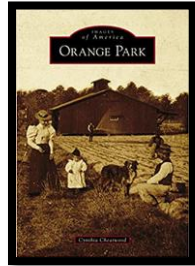
Explore Clay

If you have not seen it yet, the Clay County Tourism Office has developed an app for mobile phones called **Explore Clay**. The app provides a list of things to do in Clay County and features a Tours Section that includes an Orange Park History Tour and a Clay County History Passport Tour. The app does an excellent job of sharing all the wonderful things that Clay County has to offer. You can download the app from Apple's App Store or from Google Play.



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. 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 the upcoming Sunday afternoons of August 11, September 8 and October 13 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.

Look For Us on Online

Look for the Historical Society of Orange Park online via our website, 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](#)
- [Keystone Heights Heritage Commission](#)
- [Clay County Archives](#)

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