



The Historical Society of Orange Park

December 2022 Newsletter

An active November, including a rare November hurricane, is behind us. We move into December and the Christmas season is in full swing.

This month features the annual Hometown Holiday event at Clarke House Park on the evenings of December 9 and 10. This event is an opportunity for families to come out and celebrate the holidays together. There will also be a Christmas gathering and meeting of the Historical Society at the Clarke House on Monday, December 12. Members of the Society can join together in a relaxed atmosphere to enjoy conversation and dessert while they celebrate the season.

We wish all our members and friends a heartfelt Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Event	Location
December 9 & 10, 2022	5:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Hometown Holiday	Clarke House Park
December 12, 2022	6:00 PM – 8:00 PM	HSOP Christmas Gathering	Clarke House
January 8, 2023	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Open House	Clarke House
February 6, 2023	5:30 PM – 7:00 PM	Member Meeting	Orange Park Library
February 12, 2023	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Open House	Clarke House

Additional information on these events and the activities described above can be found below.

Veterans Day Ceremony

Well, as many of you are aware, we had to cancel the Veterans Day ceremony due to Hurricane Nicole paying an untimely visit to our area. The Governor had declared a State of Emergency and we felt that the safest thing to do was to cancel this outdoor ceremony for the safety of all the participants. It was the first weather-related cancellation in the 12 years the ceremony has been held. We would still like to thank all of the people and organizations that worked so hard to prepare for the ceremony.

- The American Legion Post #250 Riders were prepared to do the opening and closing prayers, purchased the US and POW flags to replace the flags that have been flying for so long, and always close our ceremony with Taps.
- The OPHS NJROTC Color Guard who always begin the ceremony under the direction of LT. Williams.
- Miss Payten Tison of Fleming Island High School who had prepared to sing the Star-Spangled Banner and God Bless the USA for us again this year.
- The First Coast Highlanders who always do a tremendous performance.
- The Dreamland Squadron flyover team from Haller Field; always a highlight of the ceremony.
- Our program Speakers, Barbara Voi, Regent of the Sophia Fleming Chapter of the DAR, and CDR Selena Hernandez-Hayes (ret) our guest speaker and of course the Honorable Randy Anderson, Mayor of Orange Park.
- While we could not hear the Essay contest winners read their essays, we did honor them at our monthly meeting of the HSOP and posted their essays to our website.
- The members of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Woman's Club of Orange Park and the Historical Society of Orange Park who were preparing all of the refreshments and decorating Clarke House for participants and guests after the ceremony.
- Also, a very special thanks to the Garden Club of Orange Park for decorating the exterior of the Clarke House in preparation. They also provided the flower arrangements for the Veterans Memorial.



So, while we were all disappointed that the ceremony had to be cancelled, please plan for sunny weather on November 11, 2023 and we will see you then.

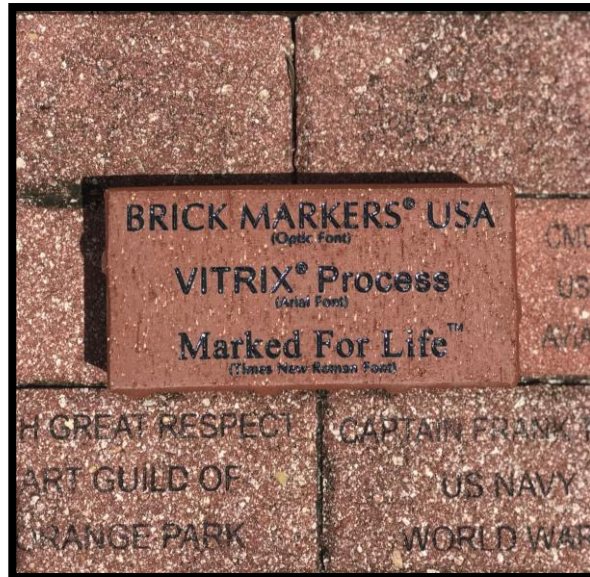
First Coast Honor Flight

Our guest speaker for the cancelled Veterans Day ceremony, CDR (ret) Selena Hernandez-Hayes, was going to focus on a program that truly pays tribute to our nation's veterans. She had served as President and is now President Emeritus of First Coast Honor Flight. First Coast Honor Flight was founded in 2019 to take senior veterans to Washington, DC to tour many of the service memorials such as the WWII Memorial, Korean War Memorial, Vietnam Wall and the Iwo Jima Memorial among others. This is an organization focused on the mission to allow veterans a chance to visit these memorials while their health permits. Priority is given to WW II veterans, then Korea, then Vietnam with age/health being a major factor. It should be noted that this is done at absolutely no cost to the Veteran. Each veteran participating in this trip will have a volunteer guardian to accompany them. The trip is one day, includes airfare, meals and escort service to all of the sites on the program. Honor Flight is planning its next flight on April 23, 2023. If you or anyone you know would like to get more information on this trip, please visit their website at: www.firstcoasthonorflight.org.



Veterans Memorial Paver Project

The final shipment of pavers is scheduled to arrive the first week of December. While we were all disappointed that the paver installation had to be delayed, we are happy that the pavers will finally be here and we can begin the final phase of the project: installation. Ed Ragland and Sons Landscaping has planned to do the installation so that it should be completed by December 15th. Let's all pray for great weather and no hurricanes or tropical storms. We hope that in the January issue of this newsletter we can include photos of the completed project at the Veterans Memorial. We continue to raise funds for the project and ask that all contributions be made directly to the HSOP. Mail checks to HSOP, PO Box 08, Orange Park FL 32067.



Veterans Day Essay Contest

Our annual Veterans Day Essay Contest was conducted and winning essays were selected. Unfortunately, the winning students could not be acknowledged and their essays could not be read due to the cancellation of this year's ceremony.

The students submitting the winning essays are as follows:

Elementary Division

Topic: *Why are veterans special?*

First Place: Daniel Truong, Orange Park Elementary, 6th Grade, \$50 Prize

Runners Up: Jayden Sparrow, Lake Asbury Elementary, 5th Grade, and Savanna Slonaker Orange Park Elementary, 5th Grade

Junior High Division

Topic: *Write about an American who served in the United States military who inspires you.*

First Place: Andelyn Caraway, Green Cove Springs Junior High, 7th Grade, \$75 Prize

Runners Up: Mills Weinstein, Green Cove Springs Junior High, 8th Grade, and Lyla Goddard, Orange Park Junior High, 7th Grade

Senior High Division

Topic: *Why are the words "Duty, Honor, Country" important today?*

First Place: Olivia Bain, Fleming Island High School, 11th grade

The winning essays have been posted to the Veterans Memorial page of our website and can be downloaded for your reading pleasure. You can find them at [Veterans Memorial \(ophistory.org\)](http://Veterans Memorial (ophistory.org)).



L to R: Andelyn Caraway, Daniel Truong, Savanna Slonaker, Olivia Bain and Cynthia Cheatwood



L to R: Jayden Sparrow and Cynthia Cheatwood

Hometown Holiday

The Town of Orange Park will host the 10th Annual Hometown Holiday celebration at Clarke House Park, 1039 Kingsley Avenue, from 5 PM to 9 PM, Friday, December 9 and Saturday, December 10. This event has become a very popular family event and a great way to get in the Christmas spirit. The Clarke House will be decorated for the season. Members of the Historical Society will be on hand to share the history of the house and the Clarke family as well as answer visitor's questions. There will also be many activities in the park such as music, a Christmas village for shopping, food, a trail ride featuring lighted holiday decorations and visits with Santa Claus! Come to Clarke House Park and celebrate the holidays with family and friends. For more information go to [Hometown Holiday in the Park • Town of Orange Park](#).



Christmas Gathering

On the evening of December 12th at 6 PM, there will be a Christmas Gathering and General Meeting of the Historical Society at the Clarke House, 1039 Kingsley Avenue in Clarke House Park. This meeting is open to members and friends of the Society as well as those interested in joining the Society. We look forward to seeing everyone. Come join us for music, news and fellowship as we celebrate the season and share good times. We will be collecting non-perishable food items to donate to those in need this holiday season. All donations will be delivered to the Clothes Closet for distribution in the Orange Park area.



Please bring a dessert to share with others if you are able.

February Member Meeting

The Historical Society will host a member meeting, 5:30 PM, Monday, February 6 at the Orange Park Library. The meeting will feature a discussion on the Patriot's Rebellion. In 1812, American citizens invaded East Florida with the intent of wresting control from Spain and making it an American territory. The discussion will focus on the causes of the conflict, its effects on North Florida and its aftermath.

Remembrance

We are sad to note the passing of Dorothy Patterson. To her friends in Orange Park, she was known affectionately as 'Dot'. Dot was one of the founding members of our Society and served as its President in its early years. Dot moved to Orange Park with her family in 1961. Dot had a real heart for community service. Dot was a member of the Orange Park Elementary PTA and the Orange Park Garden Club, serving as President of their Hummingbird Circle. She was also involved with the Lion's Club, serving as President of the Lionellas of that organization.



As if Dot's days weren't full enough, she served a generation of Orange Park girls as a Girl Scout leader for ten years from 1963 to 1973. She organized and led many outings to Camp Chowenwaw on Black Creek. Dot also loved to sew. She owned the Village Sewing Nook and taught sewing classes at Florida Junior College, now Florida State College at Jacksonville. The lessons and skills she passed on to her scouts and students will benefit them for a lifetime.

Dot's work for the Historical Society was critical in its early years. She led a young organization and shepherded a number of divergent voices into a unified group that moved forward to preserve the history of our community. Under her tenure as President, the Society transitioned

from a 501 (c) 4, social welfare organization to a 501 (c) 3, charitable organization, which allowed individuals to deduct charitable contributions. Our Society will soon celebrate its 20th anniversary due, in part, to Dot's leadership.

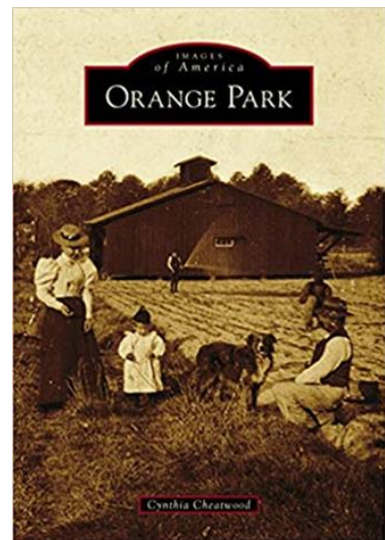
Most importantly, Dot was valued as a good person and a good friend. She loved her family and cared deeply for her friends, of whom there were many. She was there for others when times were tough. Dot's love for this community made it a better place to live. We are grateful for Dot's life and her impact on our lives.

Images of America - Orange Park

Would you like to learn more about the history of Orange Park? If so, 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. All author royalties for the sale of this book will go toward historical preservation in Orange Park.



Clarke House Tours



Due to Hometown Holiday on December 9 and 10, there will be no open house at the Clarke House in the month of December. The regularly scheduled open house at The Clarke House will resume on Sunday, January 8 from 2 PM to 4 PM. Of course, as noted above, the Clarke House will be open to guests during Hometown Holiday in December so please stop by if you can.

Look For Us on Online

Look for the Historical Society of Orange Park online via our website, www.ophistory.org, or the next time you visit Facebook. Check for updates on society news and activities.

