



# The Historical Society of Orange Park

## February 2022 Newsletter

With the arrival of February, we reach the time for our first general meeting in almost two years! While we have participated in several outdoor events and limited indoor events, we are ready to resume regular meetings to discuss topics of historical interest.

Our next meeting will be held 5:30 PM, Monday, February 7 at the Orange Park Library on Plainfield Avenue. At our meeting, we will share photos of the Orange Park Normal School taken by the Butcher family in 1901. Details of the meeting can be found later in this newsletter. We are looking forward to seeing everyone and sharing information about our town.

After a two-year hiatus, we will celebrate Carrie Clarke Day again on March 13. We look forward to celebrating the life of Mrs. Clarke and her contributions to the Town of Orange Park.

### Historical Society of Orange Park Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Event	Location
February 7, 2022	5:30 PM – 7:00 PM	General Meeting	Orange Park Library
February 13, 2022	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Open House	Clarke House
March 13, 2022	1:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Carrie Clarke Day	Clarke House Park

Additional information on these events can be found below.

### February Meeting – Orange Park Normal School

As we resume member meetings, we revisit an interesting and familiar topic – The Orange Park Normal School. The Normal School was a private school built in the early 1890's to educate black students and prepare them for teaching and industrial careers. In the days of segregation, not long after the end of Reconstruction, the school was sorely needed. The success of the school encouraged white students to attend, which attracted the wrath of the State of Florida. The ensuing attention and legal challenges weakened the school's position in the community and led to its eventual demise. While the story of the



Normal School is familiar to many of us, it is a story told at a distance. Fortunately, we now have been given the means to learn about the school, and life in Orange Park, on a more personal level.

Some time ago, before Covid, we were contacted by Ms. Charity Monroe, great-granddaughter of Mr. Stephen Butcher. Mr. Butcher served as President of the Normal School from 1900 to 1904. Ms. Monroe found an old family photo album containing a number of photographs taken by the Butcher family while they lived in Orange Park as well as several journal entries and letters written by the family. Ms. Monroe graciously shared this material with the Historical Society. The photographs illustrate life in Orange Park and transform the students and faculty of the school from faceless names into individuals. The journal entries describe some of the challenges faced by the Butcher family adapting to life in the South.

Please join us at 5:30 PM, February 7 at the Orange Park Library, when we will share these photos and personal reflections with the public.

### **Carrie Clarke Day**



The Society's Annual Carrie Clarke Day event will be held Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup> from 1 PM until 5 PM, back this year in person after two years of lockdown challenges! The historic Clarke House will be open for tours for the full four hours. Mrs. Clarke's contributions to the town will be shared with all who visit. The book, *Images of America: Orange Park*, will be on sale, along with Clarke House and Veterans Memorial ornaments.

We will also have a gardening activity for the younger set. The Art Guild of Orange Park will help children decorate small flowerpots into which they will plant flowers provided by the Hummingbird Circle of the Garden Club of Orange Park, something that surely would have made Mrs. Clarke's heart sing. The Clarke Park playground will be open and a good

time can be had by all.

Volunteers are needed to host the house tours and make visitors feel welcome. Please contact [info@ophistory.org](mailto:info@ophistory.org) for more information or to sign up to help.

### **Arbor Day**

On Friday, January 21, the Town of Orange Park hosted an Arbor Day Ceremony at the Kingsley East River Overlook. This year's ceremony honored former Councilman Steve Howard and the Town marked the occasion by planting a tree in his honor on the bank of the St. Johns River. A more appropriate spot could not be found to honor someone who appreciated the beauty of flowers and trees. We hope the citizens of Orange Park will enjoy this new tree for many years to come.



### **Never Forget Garden and Marker honoring the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier**

On November 11, 1921, The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was dedicated in Arlington National Cemetery by then President Warren G Harding.

Exactly 100 years later, on November 11, 2021, visitors to the Veterans Day Ceremony at the Orange Park Veterans Memorial at Magnolia Cemetery were able to see the dedication of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary “Never Forget Garden and Marker” to commemorate that historic event. Placed adjacent to the Memorial area near the Veterans Memorial, the formal dedication was presented by Regent Barbara Voi of the Sophia Fleming Chapter of the DAR.

Installation of this new Garden and Marker was spearheaded by Regent Barbara Voi and Mrs. Lynn Vernon also of the Sophia Fleming Chapter, DAR. The National DAR had an initiative to create “Never Forget Gardens and Markers” across the USA celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The DAR, who worked so closely with the Historical Society of Orange Park to build the Veterans Memorial in Magnolia Cemetery, approached the HSOP for assistance. Members of the HSOP helped to coordinate with Sarah Campbell of the Town of Orange Park, the Town’s Cemetery Committee and ultimately the Town Council for approval to place the centennial Marker. The TOP Maintenance team led by Vada Davis did a miraculous job in getting the site prepared and the Never Forget Garden and Marker installed so that it would be completed in time for dedication on November 11, 2021.

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery bears the inscription: “Here Rests In Honored Glory An American Soldier Known But To God”.

The Never Forget Garden and Marker was inspired by the sacred duty of the American people to never, ever forget or forsake all those who have served and sacrificed on behalf of America in times of war and armed conflict. Its message is to reflect upon the deeds of those who we owe a debt that can never be fully repaid; and to think about those immutable truths that define us as Americans secured by their measure of devotion.

We hope that you visit this new Memory Garden and Marker the next time you are in the area.



### **Middleburg Museum**

The Middleburg Museum is open Sundays from 2 PM to 4 PM. Monthly meetings are held at the museum on the first Thursday of each month starting at 6 PM. Dr. Cynthia Stone is available to open the museum for special tours as well. She can be contacted at (904) 860-0960 to make arrangements for your group.

The Middleburg Historical Society will also be participating in Middleburg's Spring Festival on March 19. Check their Facebook page ([The Middleburg Museum - Home | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/middleburgmuseum)) for more information on the festival or to learn more about the Middleburg Museum.

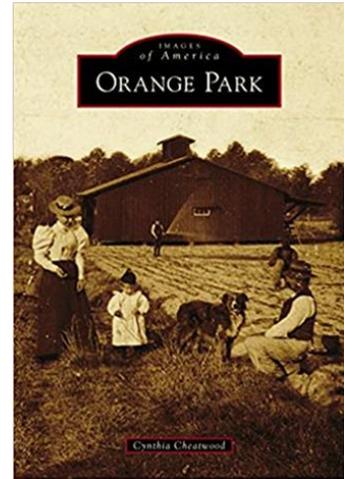


### **Images of America - Orange Park**

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 or various other outlets online.*

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



### **Orange Park Woman's Club**

The Orange Park Woman's Club has note cards for sale to benefit the children of W.E. Cherry and Grove Park Elementary Schools. President Kay Earhart will be giving one book to each teacher in each grade to add to the children's classroom libraries. This is the President's Choice fundraiser. The notecards are \$14 for a dozen cards and envelopes and are printed on fine linen. Contact Linda Fonferek at 803-4599 to order.



### **Clarke House Tours**



The Clarke House is open for tours on the second Sunday of each month. This month, the house will be open Sunday, February 13 from 2 PM to 4 PM. 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.

## **Archaeologist Discusses Research of Cliff Tombs in Peru**

The archaeological Institute of America-- Jacksonville Society will meet at noon on February 19, 2022 in Building 51 at the University of North Florida to hear a lecture by Dr. J. Marla Toyne, Associate Professor of Anthropology, at the University of Central Florida. The title of her lecture is "Where Condors Reign: Vertical Archaeology and Conservation in the Mountains of Peru." Bioarchaeological research of the cliff tombs in the Chachapoyas region of northeastern Peru is stymied by natural and technological challenges. Exploring these cemeteries



requires the innovation of "vertical archaeology" using rappelling and rope technology, and also the incorporation of 3-D photogrammetry and aerial drone photography. This presentation discusses the exploration of these cliff tombs and how and why the ancient Chachapoya people created and placed their ancestors in these spectacular landscapes between A.D. 900 and 1535. Yet, while these sites suffer from the ravages of both looting and natural destruction, it becomes vital to use archaeological knowledge in meaningful and accessible ways for both local and scientific communities to advance conservation. The lecture is free and open to the public. Complimentary refreshments will be served afterwards in the Physical Anthropology Lab. On Saturday, parking is free and the staff/faculty/vendor spaces are open to everyone. For more information, contact Melva Price at (904)241-9411 or [aijaxsoc@gmail.com](mailto:aijaxsoc@gmail.com).

## **Look For Us on Facebook**

Look for the Historical Society of Orange Park the next time you visit Facebook. Check our page for updates on society activities and updates on the Veterans Memorial. Don't forget to click "Like" on our page.

## **It's Membership Renewal Time!**

Annual memberships in the Historical Society of Orange Park are now due for renewal. Everyone should have received a renewal letter in the mail. For those of you that have not recently visited our website, we are happy to announce that we have upgraded our website's capabilities so that you can now renew your membership online at [www.ophistory.org](http://www.ophistory.org). Membership forms can also be downloaded from our website for those that prefer to renew via mail. We sincerely appreciate your support and hope to see everyone at a future meeting.

