



The Historical Society of Orange Park

July 2022 Newsletter

Welcome July and Happy Independence Day to everyone. Our nation is 246 years old and remains a beacon of hope to many people around the world. We have many things for which to be grateful. We might have disagreements over policy among ourselves but we are entitled to have that discussion and voice our opinions.



July will be fairly quiet month for the Society. We will host the Open House at the Clarke House on July 10 but other than that, we will be biding our time until our next General Meeting at the Orange Park Library on August 8. Cindy Cheatwood is working on the program for the August meeting and will announce the title of her presentation in a couple of weeks. We will get that information to you as soon as it is available. For now, please save the date and plan to join us at the Orange Park Library on August 8.

Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Event	Location
July 10, 2022	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Open House	Clarke House
August 8, 2022	5:30 PM – 7:00 PM	Member Meeting	Orange Park Library
August 14, 2022	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Open House	Clarke House

Additional information on these events can be found below.

Member Outing to the Penny Farms Historic Museum

On Tuesday, June 21, members of the Society traveled south to Penney Farms to visit their new historical museum. We were met by, Cathie Parrott, who graciously gave us a guided tour of the museum and explained each of its exhibits. The museum features exhibits of the early days of Penney Farms, including a number of maps and artifacts.

Penny Farms was established by James Cash Penny, founder of the JC Penny department store chain. The success of his department store chain allowed Mr. Penny to pursue other endeavors. One of these endeavors was Penny Farms. In 1922, Mr. Penny purchased 122,000 acres of land west of Green Cove Spring with the intent of creating a modern, model agricultural community. In addition to farming, Mr. Penny also created the J. C. Penney Foundation Memorial

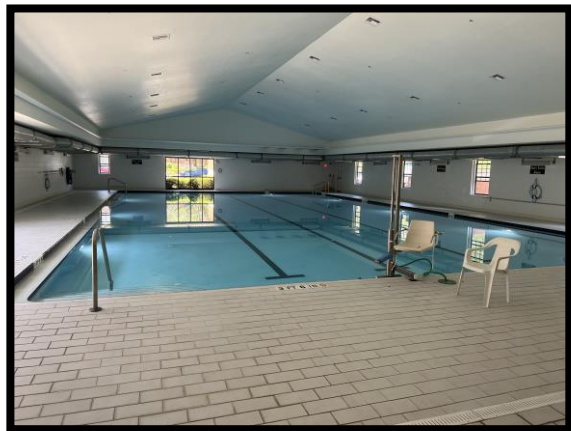


Community, a retirement community for retired ministers, missionaries and their spouses. The great Depression severely impacted the JC Penny department stores and the Penny farming community. Mr. Penny lost most of his personal wealth and had to sell most of the farmland but he was able preserve the retirement community. The retirement community eventually became the Penny Retirement Community in 1971.

After our tour of the museum, we were met by Regina Diller, of the Penny Retirement Community, who gave a tour of Penny Farms. Our first stop was the 95-year old chapel, a beautiful building with a high, wood ceiling. The chapel is non-denominational with a variety of denominations holding services there. We next visited a resident's cottage, which was modern, spacious and well-appointed. The homes within Penny Farms are owned by the Penny Retirement Community. Residents of the community pay an initial fee followed by a monthly fee for their homes, based on the size of the dwelling space. This fee covers building maintenance and includes use of all amenities at the site. Our next stop was the community garden where residents grow a variety of vegetables and flowers. We next visited the recreation center, which contained a fitness center, coffee shop, library and a large, indoor swimming pool. The Penny Retirement Community also features a on-site medical facility and on-call nurse that is available for residents. We concluded our visit with a delicious lunch in the Dining Hall.



All residents are encouraged to volunteer their time to serve others. The formula works very well. The residents of Penny Farms are uniformly friendly, helpful and happy. We enjoyed our time at Penny Farms. All of the residents were most gracious toward us, Their hospitality, and that of the staff, was very much appreciated.



Veterans Memorial Update

In the last few editions of this newsletter, we have described the ongoing project to make sure the Veterans Memorial remains well maintained and a place that truly represents our nations veterans. The last step in that process is to address the deteriorating state of the engraved pavers.

We wanted to give everyone an update on the status of the plan to identify the engraved pavers that must be replaced. The first step was to build a spreadsheet inventory that included all the engraved pavers. We then had to assign each of the pavers to a row and then a position in the row. We now have a document that will identify every paver's location. Lastly, we had to do an evaluation of each paver and prioritize it based on its condition using a 1, 2 or 3 scale with 3

assigned to any paver that was basically unreadable or approaching that. We are happy to report this phase of the project was completed on June 25.

We also spent the past few months reviewing paver suppliers. We identified two suppliers and contacted them to provide samples. We also requested references. After reviewing the samples and references we have decided on a supplier for all pavers as we move forward.

With those two significant milestones completed, we are now at a point where we need to begin the procurement process. Our hope is to have the order process completed by the end of July. We had previously reported in this newsletter that all new orders for pavers will remain as a donation of \$50 thru July 31, 2022. After that date, due to rising cost, new paver orders will be available for a donation of \$100.

We have also established a Go Fund Me site to help offset the cost of this needed update to the Veterans Memorial. Please visit [Fundraiser by Michael Day : Veterans Memorial Of Orange Park, FL \(gofundme.com\)](https://www.gofundme.com/f/fundraiser-by-michael-day-veterans-memorial-of-orange-park-fl) to make a donation or share this link if you know someone that might be interested in helping this cause. Donations can also be made by mail to the Historical Society at PO Box 8, Orange Park, FL 32067.

For a limited time, an anonymous donor will match all contributions up to \$6,000! This is an easy way to double your contribution to help a worthy cause.

We also wanted to make sure you are all aware of vandalism that occurred on the evening of June 10 at the Memorial. The attached photograph shows the American Legion Post 250 granite bench that had been the target. Vandals had kicked the back of the bench off and in doing so also broke the granite seat.



The Town of Orange Park was immediately involved. They have already replaced the back of the bench and a replacement for the broken seat is on order! While we do not yet know the expected delivery date of the granite seat, we feel assured that it will be here within the next few months.

We are thankful to the Town of Orange Park management and Vada Davis of the Public Works Department for being so responsive to this issue. We are also thankful to Mr. John Shipley of Jacksonville Memory Gardens for his assistance in procuring a replacement seat.



Repairs are underway!

Art Guild of Orange Park

The Art Guild of Orange Park will host Bella Notte, An Evening of Art, on September 15, 2022, from 6:00 PM until 10:00 PM at the Azaleana Manor Orange Park, Florida. For more information, please visit their website at [BELLA NOTTE - Art Guild of Orange Park](#).



World War II Plane Crash Site Tour

On July 20, 1944, two Army lieutenants took off from Pinellas County in P-51 Mustang fighters on a training mission. They deviated from their assigned flight plan to fly over the home of one of the pilots in the Riverside area of Jacksonville. As the pilots flew low over the neighborhood, one clipped a tree which resulted in both planes crashing, killing both pilots and one resident on the ground and damaging several homes. You can read a detailed account of the accident and see photographs of the aftermath in these July 21, 2012 Florida Times-Union articles, [Remembering Jacksonville plane crash that shook Post Street in 1944](#) and [Archives: Army pilot killed in 1944 plane crash while trying to greet mom \(jacksonville.com\)](#)

At 10:00 on the morning of Wednesday, July 20, local historian, Mr. Red Henry, will host a walk-through and discussion of the 1944 Post Street plane crash, starting at the northwest corner of Post and King Streets, and walking four blocks to Willow Branch Avenue. The public is invited, to tour the area and learn more about this dramatic and tragic event in Riverside history. Dress for hot sunny weather and be ready to walk four, long blocks.

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.

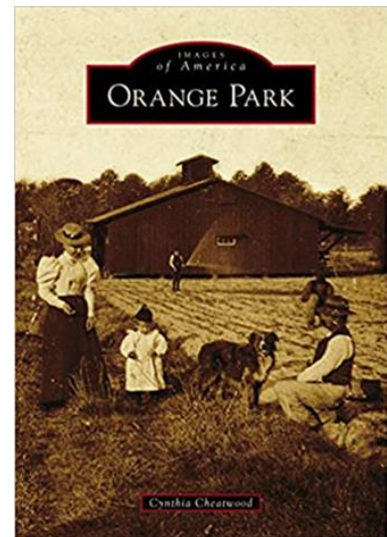


Images of America - Orange Park

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



The Clarke House is open for tours on the second Sunday of each month. This month, the house will be open Sunday, July 10 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.