

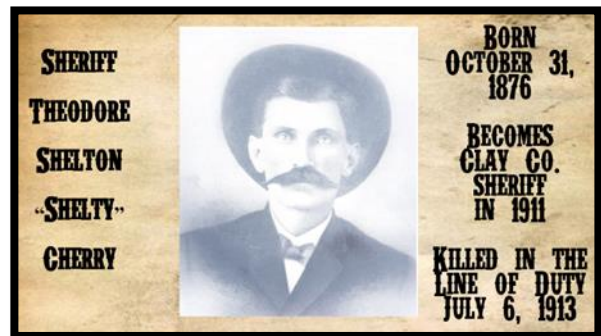
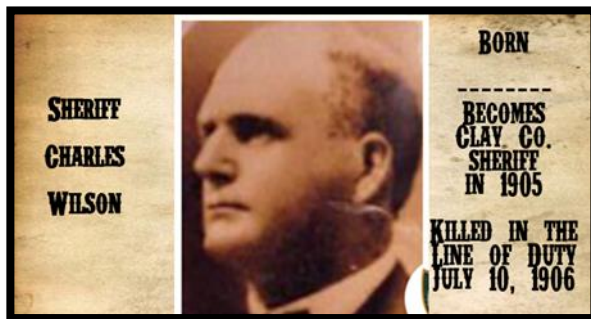


The Historical Society of Orange Park

July 2024 Newsletter

The end of June marks the mid-point of the year and the beginning of summer. We hope your summer is off to a good start.

Bob Scallan, HSOP Secretary, while researching a presentation, learned that two Clay County Sheriff's were killed in the line of duty during the month of July. This month, we remember these two dedicated public servants who gave their lives defending and protecting the lives of Clay County citizens.



Sheriff Wilson was attempting to arrest a man on a train in Palatka when he was shot and killed. Sheriff Cherry was questioning a suspect when he was shot and killed. In both cases, justice was served quickly. The perpetrators of these heinous crimes were shot and killed.

Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Event	Location
July 14, 2024	2:00 PM – 4: 00 PM	Open House	Clarke House
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

Visiting Kingsley Plantation



On Wednesday, June 12th, members of the Society visited Kingsley Plantation on Ft. George Island for a ranger-guided tour. The tour began at the garden with a full explanation of the things grown there today, their historical significance, and the role of Native American and Gullah slave traditions and labor in the agricultural aspects of the plantation. We then walked to the main house which had repair work underway, so we were confined to just a few areas for the tour. We stopped in the loom room where the ranger gave us a full explanation of turning cotton into woven fabric. We were shown cloth made by the rangers on site using the same techniques that Anna Kingsley would have used. An explanation of dyes for the very soft Sea Island cotton was very interesting. Part of the original wall was displayed under class to show the original lath work of the walls.

We were then shown the parlor area that included a large fireplace and windows on both sides to be able to catch the breezes from wherever they were offered. Ranger Luke explained the enslaved labor involved in the construction of the building and all the wood features inside the building including columns, flooring, trim, walls, etc. He detailed the patriarchal system of slavery that Kingsley employed and the power he exerted over those enslaved, including Anna Kingsley. While she was manumitted, she was still not completely free. She could not leave, the ranger explained, for if she did, she would be re-enslaved. The daily routine for Anna and the slaves she supervised was explained. The activities for some noteworthy slave families were also described. The weight of their plight was made abundantly clear.





After questions were asked and answered, we proceeded through a lattice-covered walkway to Anna's house. She had living quarters on the top floor and the bottom floor was used for a variety of household work activities. The ranger then explained more "daily life" information and discussed Anna's life after Zephaniah's death. His knowledge was a good reflection of his master's degree in history as well as his appreciation of the difficulties of the people involved.

We then walked back toward the entrance, hearing about the other structures on the plantation along the way as we went to the slave quarters. Details about the placement and construction of the huts were shared as we walked among the foundations of various cabin. The ranger shared the discovery of locks and keys that indicated the slaves would have had some private property. He explained that Laurel Grove Plantation would have had the same system and that these two locations were unique in this respect.

Cultural artifacts were unearthed during archaeological studies at the site that give us a picture of the various social and religious elements that the variety of enslaved people shared. The ranger explained that the fact that these slaves had private property makes archaeology of Kingsley locations more revealing than other plantations. The West African layout of the slave cabins is also unique. Kingsley's slaves were trained as militia to be able to defend the plantation.

The ranger led us to the site of a small graveyard and described the six people they found there as well as the manner of their burial. He explained that there were other burials on the property somewhere but those have not been located yet.



As we walked toward the visitor center, the ranger explained that several of the huts were removed because a later owner used that material to build a home for his daughter in 1850.

There are 25 structures still standing. Our short stop in the visitor's center gave us a chance to cool off and discuss our lunch plans. We left with a new outlook on Kingsley Plantation and Zephaniah Kingsley as well as a greater appreciation for the struggles involved with surviving slavery.

August Member Meeting

Join the Historical Society of Orange Park on Monday, August 26th at 5:30 PM in the Orange Park Branch Library meeting room for a presentation highlighting the historical significance of Nelson Point in Orange Park. Cynthia Cheatwood will present the story of what could easily be considered the most historically significant parcel of land in the Town of Orange Park. Come hear stories of challenges, enterprise and whimsy for centuries of people who have benefited from the location and its resources. Some fascinating people have owned the property which now belongs to the Town of Orange Park, designated as Rob Bradley Park. Our stories will make you laugh, sigh or just say, "huh?" All are welcome!



Veterans Memorial Update

Preparations continue for the installation of the new medallions at the Veterans Memorial honoring the U.S. Space Force and our POW/MIA's. We again thank Mr. John Shipley of Jacksonville Memory Gardens for his generous donation of the two new engraved granite medallions. The remaining materials required for the installation of the medallions have been ordered and should arrive soon. We expect the work to install the medallions to be completed this month.

Reminder: This is the last month to order an inscribed paver honoring the veteran of your choice and have it installed this year. All pavers ordered by July 31, 2024, will be installed prior to this year's Veterans Day Ceremony in November. Paver order forms can be found on our website, www.ophistory.org and at the Veterans Memorial. What a wonderful way to honor those who have served!

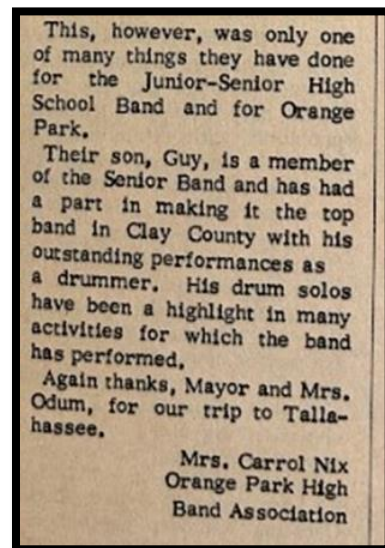
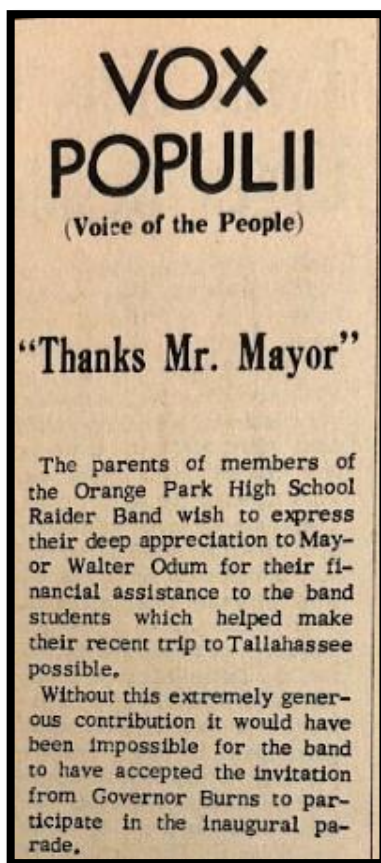
Riverside Plane Crash Tour

Early on the morning of July 20, 1944, two Army pilots on a training mission flew low over the Riverside area of Jacksonville. The planes flew so low they both clipped trees, causing both planes to crash, killing both pilots, damaging homes in the area and killing one person on the ground. On Thursday, July 25th, there will be a walking tour of the crash site led by Mr. Red Henry. Everyone is invited to attend. Those interested are to gather at 10 AM on the northwest corner of Post and King Streets in Riverside. From there, they will walk five blocks along Post Street to

Willow Branch Avenue, discussing what happened at each location as the walk proceeds. Please dress for an unhurried stroll in warm weather.

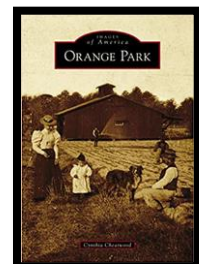
Orange Park Memories

“Thanks, Mr. Mayor”- that’s something we would love to see in our newspapers more often today. Check out this letter of appreciation printed in the 1965 *Breeze* newspaper. Each 1st day of the month during 2024, the Historical Society of Orange Park is sharing vintage newspaper items, clipped from *The Breeze* (1959 to 1971). The *Vox Populii* column ran regularly in the 1960s.



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.



Historical Presentation – Florida’s First Serial Killer

Bob Scallan, HSOP Secretary, will present, “The Murderous Reign of Edgar Watson, Florida’s First Serial Killer” on July 23rd at 6 PM in the Middleburg-Clay Hill Library, 2245 Aster Ave, Middleburg, FL 32068. Watson was a man with little regard for human life and took advantage of the Florida frontier to conceal his crimes. Join Bon on July 23rd to learn more about this remorseless killer.

**THE MURDEROUS REIGN
OF EDGAR WATSON**
FLORIDA’S FIRST SERIAL KILLER
at the Middleburg-Clay Hill Library
July 23 at 6 p.m.



Join us for this
historical true crime
talk presented by
Bob Scallan.

This program is
intended for adults
ages 18+.

Clarke Park Well-House Reconstruction

In 2007, Arthur Hall, one of the founding members of our historical society, constructed a well-house to accent the Clarke House and provide a visual reference for how water was collected in the days before community water systems. Over the years, weather took its toll on the well-house until it was in a state of disrepair. This year, Michael Maxfield of Boy Scout Troop 25, took on the task of rehabilitating the well-house as his Eagle Scout project. Michael procured the necessary materials, technical expertise and labor to complete the project last month. The Historical Society of Orange Park thanks Michael and his crew for their diligence and attention to detail. The well-house looks like new and will be enjoyed by visitors to Clarke House Park for years to come!



Well-house prior to rehabilitation



Well-house during rehabilitation



Completed well-house



Michael and his crew hard at work



HSOP Board members with Michael and his crew

Clarke House Tours



The Clarke House will be open to the public for tours on Sunday, July 14, 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 on July 14 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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