



The Historical Society of Orange Park

March 2024 Newsletter

As we move into March, we welcome our first community event of the year, Carrie Clarke Day. This event has been a spring tradition for 20 years! Join us at Clarke House Park on Saturday, March 9, as we celebrate the life of a lady that did much for the Town of Orange Park.

Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Event	Location
March 9, 2024	11:00 AM – 4:00 PM	Carrie Clarke Day	Clarke House Park
March 10, 2024	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Open House	Clarke House
April 14, 2024	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Open House	Clarke House

Carrie Clarke Day

Join us on Saturday, March 9, at Clarke House Park between 11 AM and 4 PM for our annual Carrie Clarke Day celebration. Rain dampened last year's event, but we are looking for excellent weather this year. The Clarke House will be open to the public. We look forward to sharing the story of Carrie Clarke and her contributions to community life here in Orange Park. We are happy to note that we will be joined by the Art Guild of Orange Park and the Garden Club of Orange Park again this year. These two groups will jointly host an activity for children. Members of the Art Guild will help children decorate a small flowerpot in accordance with their own unique style. Following that, members of the Garden Club will help the children plant a small plant in their new flowerpot, which they can take home to grow or present as a gift. We look forward to a good day at the park as we celebrate the life of Carrie Clarke.



February Quarterly Meeting: Orange Park's African American Story

On February 5th, about three dozen gathered at the Orange Park branch library for a celebration of the African American history of Orange Park. Starting in the earliest days of the town of

Orange Park, there has continuously been a vibrant African American presence that added charm and character to Orange Park's history. Revolving around several key families in the area around McIntosh Avenue, grounded by the St. James AME Church and the St. John Missionary Baptist Church has hosted turpentine workers, farmers, railroad workers and business folks. Key among these were Joseph Green, the Filmores, Fennells, McDowers, Burroughs, and Floyds. Their story includes the Orange Park Normal School, TC Miller and her little school in the woods before desegregation, football player Dez White, military veterans and more.

Among those in attendance at the library presentation were representatives of the founding families and spokeswomen for the churches that sustained the generations.



Cindy Cheatwood presents her program on African American History in Orange Park



Cindy and Betty Demmons review a program for the 1958 dedication ceremony for the African American Elementary School in Orange Park.

Sharing Orange Park's History on the Road....Sorta

On January 25th, Cindy Cheatwood presented the history of Orange Park to a packed group at Club Continental. Members of the Club were genuinely curious about elements of the town's story. The integration of the Club's history with that of the town's history cannot be overstated. The Club and the Town grew up together, one could say. Among those in the audience were old friends and new. Several copies of Images of America: Orange Park were purchased and some in attendance came for the library talk less than two weeks later.



Orange Park Memories



ORANGE PARK, CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA, THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 1961 TELEPHONE DP-1-2425 PRICE TEN CENTS

PROPOSED NEW TOWN CHARTER DUE FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON TUESDAY

The Historical Society of Orange Park is celebrating the warm, rich, charming and sometimes quirky history of our town. Each month of 2024 we will post a vintage newspaper clip from *The Breeze* newspaper, which was published from 1959 to 1971. Check this newsletter each month for a flashback to earlier days. In the interest of civic engagement, this month's article was on the front page for March 2, 1961. As the old saying goes, the only constant in life is change. Change comes whether we want it to come or not. How does a community maintain the character and charm that make it a desirable place to live and still accommodate changes brought about by growth? Growth must be managed responsibly. A town charter defines the organization, powers, functions, and essential procedures of the town government that determines how growth is managed. The Town's current charter was not passed until 1975. Check out the accompanying editorial. Even though it was written 62 years ago, the concerns it describes are still with us today.

PROGRESS IS NEVER EASY. IT HAS TO BE BROUGHT ABOUT OVER THE OBJECTIONS OF THOSE WHO ARE STILL LIVING IN THE "GOOD OLD DAYS". ALL OF WHICH WOULD BE HARMLESS ENOUGH IF THE PEOPLE AFFECTED WOULD JUST GO OFF SOMEPLACE WITH THEIR ROCKING CHAIRS AND CHEWING TOBACCO AND ENJOY LIFE ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN STANDARDS, BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, THEY WANT TO FORCE EVERYONE ELSE TO LIKE THE SAME THINGS.

SUCH FOLKS DON'T WANT THE STREETS PAVED BECAUSE THEY AREN'T GOING ANYWHERE; THEY DON'T WANT A NEW LIBRARY BECAUSE THE OLD ONE WAS GOOD ENOUGH FOR GRANDPA AND NOBODY IS BETTER THAN DEAR OLD GRAMPS; THEY DON'T WANT A NEW TOWN HALL BECAUSE THE OLD ONE HASN'T FALLEN DOWN YET.

THE CITY OF MIAMI IS IN A "MESS" BECAUSE OF JUST SUCH AS THIS. HALF THE CITY WANTS TO GO ONE DIRECTION; THE OTHER HALF WANTS TO GO THE OPPOSITE; NEITHER SIDE IS WILLING TO COMPROMISE; SO NOBODY IS GOING ANYWHERE. THE MAIN REASON THERE IS BECAUSE TOO MANY RESIDENTS IN INFLUENTIAL POSITIONS ARE WHAT MIGHT BE TERMED "PROFESSIONAL AGINNERS". THE ONLY WAY THESE PEOPLE CAN GET ANYBODY TO PAY ANY ATTENTION TO THEM IS TO BE "AGIN" THINGS; ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING.

UNFORTUNATELY, WE HAVE A FEW SUCH PEOPLE HERE IN ORANGE PARK.

FORTUNATELY, WE HAVE ONLY A FEW.

JUST THE SAME, EVERYBODY, INCLUDING ALL THE PROFESSIONAL "AGINNERS", ARE INVITED TO ATTEND AN OPEN HEARING AT THE TOWN HALL NEXT TUESDAY NIGHT AT WHICH A DRAFT OF A PROPOSED NEW TOWN CHARTER WILL BE PRESENTED. A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF WORK HAS GONE INTO PREPARING THIS DRAFT AND IT WILL PROVE A TREMENDOUS IMPROVEMENT OVER THE OLD CHARTER. AS A MATTER OF FACT, IF OUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT STUCK TO THE LETTER OF THE OLD CHARTER, THEY'D HAVE TO "CLOSE UP SHOP" RIGHT THIS MINUTE ANYWAY.

WE URGE, AND HOPE, THAT EVERYONE WILL GO TO THE MEETING, LISTEN CAREFULLY, AND MAKE SUCH CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS AS ARE POSSIBLE. WE FERVENTLY HOPE THAT THE PROFESSIONAL "AGINNERS" WILL NOT TAKE UP THE ENTIRE EVENING JUST SIMPLY BEING "AGIN" EVERYTHING THAT COMES UP!

The Breeze, March 2, 1961

Veterans Memorial Update

It is with sadness and deep appreciation that we announce Carolyn and Mike Day are stepping back from active oversight of the Veterans Memorial. Carolyn was instrumental in the conception, development and construction of the Veterans Memorial from 2010 to 2012. Carolyn also oversaw all sales and installation of inscribed pavers. In recent years, Mike has become more active, helping Carolyn with inscribed pavers and leading the effort to raise funds and oversee the renovation of the memorial. Mike's final project will be the procurement and installation of two new medallions to recognize the new US Space Force and our POW/MIA's at the memorial. The new medallions will be similar in appearance to the six existing medallions at the memorial. Mike is in the process of obtaining quotes with the intent of having this work completed later this year.



*Inscribed pavers are still available for purchase. 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.

The Arc Jacksonville Pays a Visit

On Thursday, February 29, residents of the Arc Jacksonville visited the Clarke House. Then Arc Jacksonville was founded in 1965 and provides a range of services and opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental differences to help them reach their full potential. Our 8 guests toured the Clarke House and learned about the Clarke family and their contributions to the community. The group was a delight to host, had a great time and we look forward to future visits.



Visitors from The Arc Jacksonville at the Clarke House

History Day

On Thursday, February 22, three Orange Park schools participated in this year’s District History Day competition, supporting their research on projects reflecting the theme, “Turning Points in History”. There were website, exhibit and documentary entries from Orange Park Junior High, Orange Park High and Grace Episcopal. Eight delegates were selected to represent Clay County in the Florida History Day competition in Tallahassee held May 5-7, 2024. These include the following:

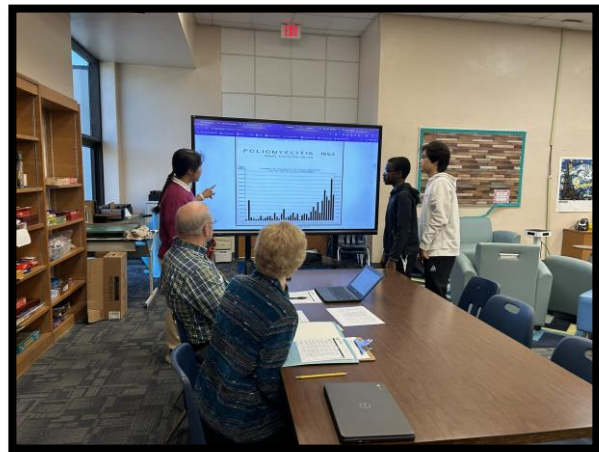
<i>Student Name/ School</i>	<i>Project Title</i>	<i>Category/ Place</i>
Reilly McInnis, Grace Episcopal Day School	How did the Allied Powers victory at D-Day change the outcome of World War II?	1st Place Jr. Individual Exhibit
Caitlin Garrett, Episcopal Day School	How did the Match Girl Strike of 1888 lead to improved working conditions for women?	2nd place Jr. Individual Exhibit
Sophie Aranaga Orange Park Jr.	The British Invasion: How the Beatles Revolutionized America	1st Place Jr. Individual Documentary
Amara Hassan, Sophia Pre, Tung Thai Orange Park Jr.	The Beginning of Medical Advancements: Jonas Salk and the Polio Vaccine	1st Place Group Website
Avery Schaefer, Dagny Smith Orange Park Sr.	Title IX: Turning Points in Women's Involvement	Senior Individual Website

In addition to Place medals, some students received special prizes. These included Caitlin Garrett, who won the Women's History Award and Reilly McInnis who was awarded the Creative Expression Award. Reilly was also the winner of the Art Hall Award, sponsored by the Historical Society of Orange Park. This award is given in honor of Society founder, Art Hall, and is presented to the best project in the competition that is focused on aviation or military history.

Many thanks to Van Hogan, Bob Scallan, Vishi Garig, Sandra DiGiovanni, Julie Smithers and Sarah Campbell for acting as judges and encouraging these young folks to continue to research history!



Exhibit Judging



Students present Poliomyelitis data during website judging



**Orange Park Junior High Category Winners (L-R)
Sophie Aranaga, Andreas Alvarez, Cameron Nixon,
Amara Hassan and Tung Thai. Absent: Sophia Pre**



**Grace Episcopal Day School Category Winners (L-R)
Garrett Dewey, Caitlin Garrett and Reilly McInnis**

Notable Women in Orange Park's History:

March is Women's History Month. Can you identify the role these ladies played in Orange Park's story?

- Mary Berry
- Carrie Clarke
- Barbara Davidson
- Edna Griffith Greenewalt
- Karrie Johnson
- Anna Kingsley
- Teresa Miller
- Madeline Moore
- Rebecca Pengree
- Pauline Wylie

The answers will be provided in our April newsletter.

Clarke House Tours



The monthly open house at the historic Clarke House will be held on Sunday, March 10, 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 March 10 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](#)

