



# The Historical Society of Orange Park

## November 2022 Newsletter

The month of October seemed to fly by. The past month featured some of the best weather of the year as well as a number of fun activities. As we move into November, the pace does not slow down. The weather remains good and there are more community events that provide opportunities to celebrate life in Orange Park and the surrounding area.

This month features our annual Veterans Day Ceremony at the Veterans Memorial in Magnolia Cemetery on November 11. We look forward to the opportunity to thank and honor our veterans on their special day. There will also be a meeting of the Historical Society at the Orange Park Library on Monday, November 14 where Cindy Cheatwood will share the origins of local street and place names.

Of course, Thanksgiving Day will be observed on Thursday, November 24. We wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and encourage you to unplug, slow down and take time to share your gratitude for the blessings of life with family and friends.



### Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Event	Location
November 11, 2022	11:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Veterans Day Ceremony	Veterans Memorial
November 14, 2022	5:30 PM – 7:00 PM	Member Meeting	Orange Park Library
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

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

### **Orange Park Fall Festival**

This year's Fall Festival was another success! The weather was outstanding and the crowds were large. This year's festival featured over 200 vendors and numerous entertainment acts. The Historical Society's booth welcomed many visitors interested in local history over the two days of the festival. Some visitors shared their stories of Orange Park while others were new to the area and looking to learn more about their new homes. We were happy to see everyone, share stories and talk about all the reasons why Orange Park is such a great place to live! Hats off to Emily Dockery and everyone at the Town of Orange Park for organizing the festival and making it run so smoothly. Town employees were a constant presence throughout the festival taking care of the many small tasks that made the weekend an enjoyable experience for all.



### **Moonlight on Magnolia**

It was a perfectly overcast day, the air thick with an almost ghostly ambiance...It was just the kind of day to take an educational stroll through a cemetery. The historical walks, called *Moonlight on Magnolia*, were once again conducted by the Historical Society, on Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>. Around 200 visitors came to hear the stories of old Orange Park. New among the tour highlights this year was Dr. Marcus Bergh, and his 100-year-old mother. We gratefully welcomed back Jana Kinder as Pauline Wylie, John Bowles as Leonidas Wade and Chuck Hall as Jackson Hall, his own ancestor. Vishi Garig joined the cast this year, telling the stories of the Horton family from the next-door neighbor's perspective.

Young Anabelle and Zachary Power told stories related to the Kessler and Allen families, while their grandfather, Van Hogan, stepped up to be a tour guide. Other guides included John and Ashlyn Rose, a father-daughter duo who have enjoyed the walks as visitors before taking the big job, and veteran guides, Cindy Cheatwood, Aya Osman, Asmaa Hassan, Abby Luck and Hope Miller. Newcomers this year included guide, Mackenzie Rocha, young Gabe Agnew, who played the role of Earl Harrington, and explained the Carnes story, and Lillian Hernandez, who shared the Clarke Family story. The sad story of Ruthie Temple was shared by Jenna Garcia and Halana

Sizemore and the McDowers story of African-American success was told by Dayra Castillo and her sister.

We were very happy to get the help of Richard Cheatwood, Sandra DiGiovanni (and her husband), Cathleen Kivett-Smith, Sarah Kirk and Kenny Radwanski who assisted in greeting guests and making the groupings work. Seventh grade runners Andreas Alvarez, Harry Zheng and Tung Thai made sure none of the participants lacked for water or snacks.

The evening was a great success with many smiling faces departing the gates at tours end. The Society was given over \$400 in donations and a few copies of *Images of America: Orange Park* were sold. We are grateful to the First Baptist Church of Orange Park for the parking spaces and to the Town for their help in preparing the cemetery grounds and providing police officers to oversee crowd activity.

*Moonlight on Magnolia* history walks were created in 2008 to inform the public of the many services and sacrifices of the people who made Orange Park a great town. This year the 20 mayors buried in Magnolia were recognized with orange markers at their plots to let folks know they mattered. It is good to remember, when we think things might not be easy for us, that the folks in Magnolia conquered some pretty impressive obstacles themselves. The Society thanks all who helped us bring this history alive on October 29<sup>th</sup>.

### Scenes from Moonlight on Magnolia



Dayra Castillo and her sister tell the story of the McDower family.



Halana Sizemore as Ruthie Temple





**Annabelle Power as Bernice Kessler**



**Gabe Agnew tells the story of Jesse Carnes**



**Zachary Power shares the story of George CD Allen**



**Chuck Hall as Jackson Hall**



**Jana Kinder as Pauline Wylie**



**Lillian Hernandez tells the Clarke Family story**





Jenna Garcia as Ruthie Temple



Tour Guides John and Ashlyn Rosa



John Bowles as Leonidas Wade



Vishi Garig shares the story of the Horton family

### **Veterans Day Ceremony**

The Historical Society of Orange Park and the Town of Orange Park invite you to join us for the town's much beloved Veterans Day Ceremony to be held at the Orange Park Veterans Memorial on November 11, 2022, at 11 AM. The Memorial is located just inside the gates of the town's historic Magnolia Cemetery, directly across the street from Clarke House Park on Kingsley Avenue.

As part of this national holiday, this solemn ceremony honors America's veterans. As we gather on this date, set aside each year, we thank the men and women of our Armed Forces for their service.

The program for this year's recognition will include a wreath-laying by the mayor of Orange Park, presentation of the colors by the Orange Park High School NJROTC Color Guard and bagpipes of the First Coast Highlanders. Also included will be local students who have written winning essays in the 2022 Veterans Day Essay Contest, along with participation by the American Legion Post

#250 Riders and the Sofia Fleming Chapter of the DAR, as well as a flyover by the Dreamland Squadron from Haller Airfield.

This year's ceremony promises to be well-attended. Seating at the ceremony is limited therefore, it is recommended that visitors bring folding chairs. We will do our best to accommodate anyone with mobility issues. Parking for the ceremony will be at the First Baptist Church of Orange Park, 1140 Kingsley Avenue, a very short walk from the Memorial. The ceremony will begin promptly at 11 AM and last about an hour. At the conclusion of the ceremony, all participants and guests are invited to share refreshments at the historic Clarke House.



### **Veterans Memorial News**

We are pleased to report that the Fundraising effort started to fund the maintenance issues with the pavers on June 30 is making great progress...but we still need your help. You can help as follows:

1. Go to the HSOP GoFundMe site and make a contribution at : <https://www.gofundme.com/f/veterans-memorial-of-orange-park-fl?qid=a8c654f9a33ee6c7465f472a816acd47>.
2. Mail a contribution check directly to the Historical Society at: OPHS, PO Box 08, Orange Park, FL 32067.
3. Honor a Veteran by purchasing a new paver for installation. Paver purchase information is available on our website at: [www.ophistory.org](http://www.ophistory.org)

We received a significant contribution from the American Legion Post #250 Riders this past month that will really help in attaining our goal. The Post #250 Riders have been a supporter of the Memorial from its beginnings and have actively participated in the Groundbreaking



ceremony, the Dedication ceremony and every Veterans Day ceremony since. Our goal has always been to fully fund this paver replacement project with donations from the community.



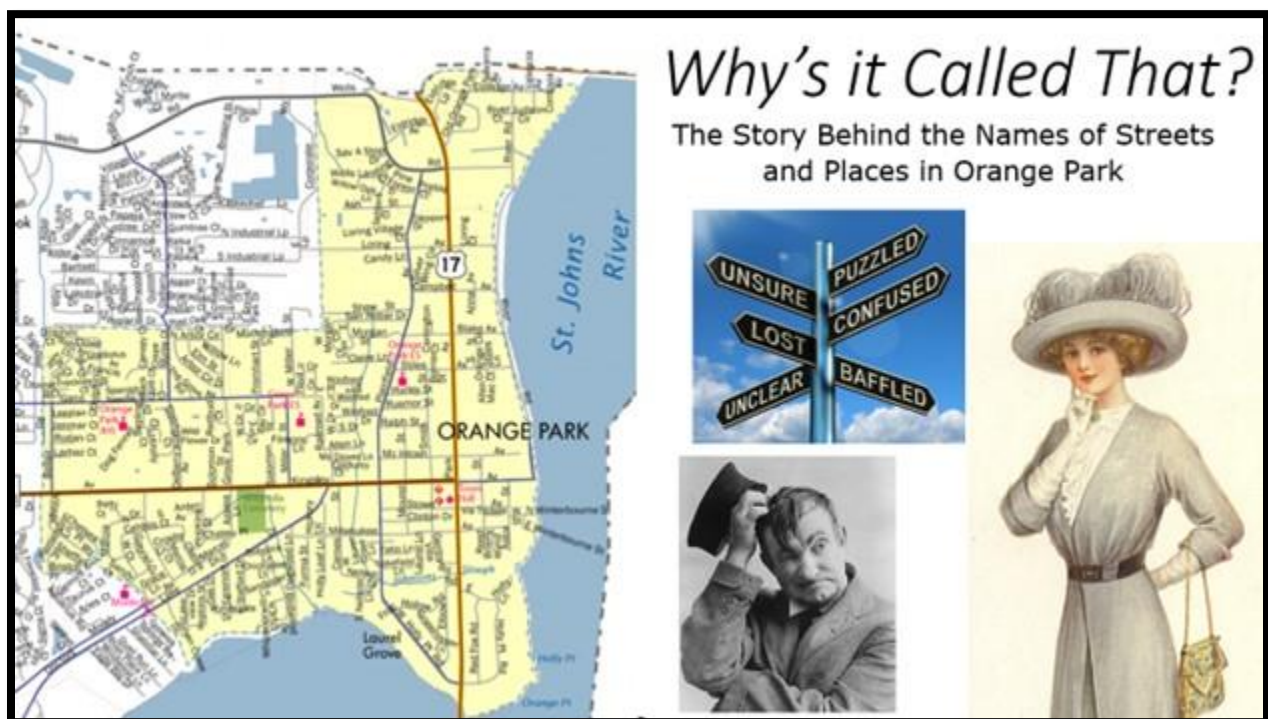
We also wanted to update everyone on the status of the paver replacement project. While we ran into an installation problem with the first paver order earlier this month, additional new pavers, which will completely finish this project, have been ordered and the expected delivery date is early December. We are disappointed that the initial install date had to slip past the Veterans Day Ceremony but we felt it was the correct decision. We will keep you updated on progress in future newsletters.

Lastly, we wanted to remind everyone that our annual Veterans Day Wreath Laying ceremony will be held promptly at 11 AM on Friday, November 11, 2022. We invite and encourage you to attend. We will have the Orange Park High School NJROTC Color Guard, a wreath laying by the Mayor, the First Coast Highlanders, a reading of the Veterans Day essay contest winners by the students, and a flyover by the Dreamland Squadron from Haller Field.

Please remember to bring chairs as seating is limited. Parking is available at the Baptist Church. Refreshments will be served at the Clarke House following the ceremony.

### **November Meeting: Why's It Called That?**

Join us on November 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM in the meeting room of the Orange Park Branch Library as we explore the stories behind the names of places you find on the map of Orange Park. It's a story of history and a reflection of changes over time. Cynthia Cheatwood will present some curiosities and interesting information gained from recently chronicled research. You are sure to leave with a new view of our town's history!



### **Mandarin Winter Celebration**

The Mandarin Museum and Historical Society will host their Winter Celebration on Saturday, December 3 from 11 AM to 4 PM at Walter Jones Park located at 11964 Mandarin Road across the river in, where else but Mandarin. The Historical Society of Orange Park will have a display at the Celebration and we are looking forward to a good time at this event. This free, family event was not held the past two years due to the Covid pandemic so this year's celebration will be a homecoming of sorts. While the Mandarin Museum will not be open due to ongoing renovations, the related historical buildings in Walter Jones Park will be open to the public. Parking is available at Mandarin Presbyterian Church located across the street from the park. For more information about this event, please visit [Annual Winter Celebration \(mandarinmuseum.net\)](http://www.mandarinmuseum.net).



### **Hometown Holiday**

The Town of Orange Park will host the 10<sup>th</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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.

\*Bring a dessert to share with others if you are able.\*

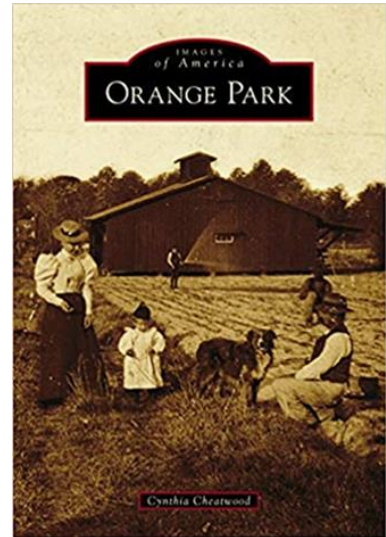


### **Images of America - Orange Park**

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](mailto: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 the the Veterans Day Ceremony on November 11 and Hometown Holiday on December 9 and 10, there will be no open house at the Clarke House in the months of November and 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 following the the Veterans Day Ceremony and 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](http://www.ophistory.org), or the next time you visit Facebook. Check for updates on society news and activities.

