



The Historical Society of Orange Park

October 2023 Newsletter

Fall is finally here! The month of October features two big events for the Historical Society. On October 21 and 22, the Town of Orange Park will be hosting the 41st Annual Fall Festival. This event is extremely popular in the life of our town and is always well attended. The Society will be hosting a booth at this year's festival and we are looking forward to seeing everyone there.

Later this month, we will host Moonlight on Magnolia at Magnolia Cemetery. This event provides a fun, entertaining way to learn about the history of the town and some of the people who made their mark on our community.

You can learn more about each of these events below.

Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Event	Location
October 8, 2023	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Open House	Clarke House
October 21 & 22, 2023	10:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Fall Festival	Town Hall Park
October 28, 2023	4:00 PM – 7:00 PM	Moonlight on Magnolia	Magnolia Cemetery
November 11, 2023	11:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Veterans Day Ceremony	Veterans Memorial
November 12, 2023	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Open House	Clarke House
December 8 & 9, 2023	5:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Hometown Holiday	Clarke House Park

Orange Park Memories: October: 2000s

Every month in 2023, the Historical Society of Orange Park is highlighting the town's history, decade by decade. This month we look at Orange Park in the new millennium, the 2000s. During this decade, the town's population was just above 9,000 people.

The Historical Society of Orange Park was started in 2003, and by 2008 had its own website and 501(c3) status. The historic Clarke House was saved from the wrecking ball. The much-loved Carrie Clarke Day events began in 2004 and continue to be held each March. In conjunction with the St. Johns Water Management District, the Historical Society also hosted water conservation classes for young students at Clarke House during the 2000s. Other notable events in the 2000s included the opening of the Skate Park on Fromhart St. and Moosehaven beginning their annual chili cook-off events.

The 2000s saw the beginning of the Sofia Fleming Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the demise of the Sisters Tea Room. Poker rooms started at the Orange Park Kennel Club in 2008. That same year, the first Moonlight on Magnolia cemetery tours were offered by the Historical Society.

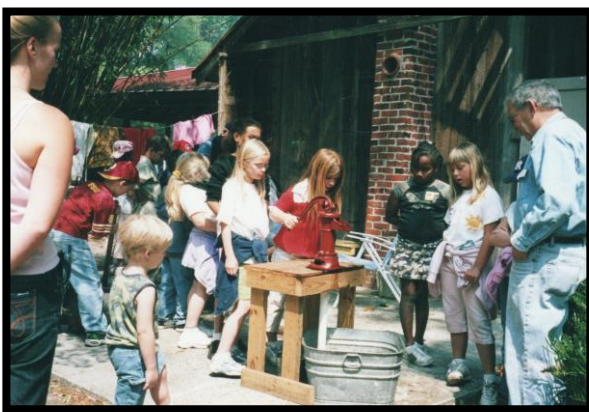
The year 2008 also marked Clay County's Sesquicentennial. The Historical Society sponsored a contest for kids to design a historical coloring book with our partners at the Art Guild of Orange Park. Interest in Orange Park's history grew over the decade.



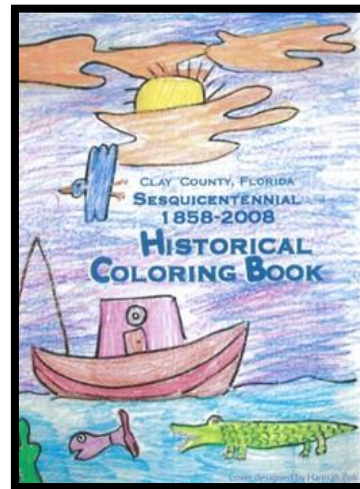
Inaugural Meeting of the Historical Society of Orange Park, 2003



Carrie Clarke Day Presentation



Students learn about water conservation



Clay County History Coloring Book

What is your favorite memory of Orange Park in the 2000s?

Florida Agricultural Museum Outing

On Saturday, September 16, members of the Historical Society traveled to the Florida Agricultural Museum near Palm Coast. It was a beautiful day for an outing. The museum featured a variety of original buildings moved to their present location from various locations around the state. Structures included a Florida Cracker home, cattle barn, mule barn and commissary. The buildings provided insight into the living and working conditions of the early days of Florida statehood. We are grateful to the staff at the museum. They were friendly, helpful and informative. Below are a few photos taken at the museum.





Town of Orange Park Fall Festival

The Town of Orange Park will host the 41st Annual Orange Park Fall Festival on Saturday, October 21 and Sunday, October 22, from 10 AM to 5 PM each day! The event features two full days of music, food, fun, crafts, vendors, kid's activities and live entertainment! Admission is free! This event is extremely popular and parking is always a challenge. To facilitate access to the event, the Town has arranged for parking at Moosehaven with free shuttle service running throughout the day.



The Society will be hosting a booth at our usual location directly behind Town Hall across from the gazebo. We will share our local history through various artifacts and displays as well as spread the word about upcoming events such as Moonlight on Magnolia and the Veterans Day Ceremony.

Volunteers are needed to help us man the booth on Oct. 21st and 22nd. If you can spare a few hours to help out, please email us at info@ophistory.org and let us know the times and dates you are available.

Moonlight on Magnolia Returns October 28th!

Public interest in the annual historical guided walks through Magnolia Cemetery remains high. This year's event is scheduled for October 28th from 4-7 PM. Come join us for a liesurely walk around Magnolia Cemetery to learn more about our town's history. Along the way, you will meet some interesting "former" residents of Orange Park to hear stories of their time in Orange Park and how they contributed to community life. Tours will be conducted along the paved roads within the cemetery. Each tour lasts approximately 45 minutes so please be prepared to walk

and stand for that length of time. Also note that there are no restroom facilities in Magnolia Cemetery so plan accordingly. Magnolia Cemetery is located at 1040 Kingsley Avenue, directly across from Clarke House Park. Parking for this event is available at First Baptist Church of Orange Park, 1140 Kingsley Avenue, about a half block west of the cemetery gate.



We still need volunteers! There are acting parts available for those interested in presenting local characters to visitors. We also need folks to escort groups around as guides. There is a script to use as a guide and each guide can choose their outfit! We also need help with logistics- especially at the starting point where we need folks to man tables and help organize folks into equally populated groups.

Plans are being formed to create a slightly easier guiding experience this year. There are so many interesting people buried in Magnolia that telling all their stories to each tour group is just not practical. Therefore, we will have shorter scripted guided walks that will encourage visitors to make independent stops at some areas after their official tour concludes. Along the way, the tour guide will briefly point out personalities that might not be visited during the guided part of the tour. The guests can then get an idea as to which speaker they might want to return to at the end of their guided walk.

We are happy to share more details if you like. To learn more or to help with any of these activities, please send an email to info@ophistory.org letting us know what you can help with. Please include your preferred activity, the time you are available and your contact information. Thank you for considering this!



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, 2023, at 11 AM. The Memorial is located just inside the gates of the town's historic Magnolia Cemetery, 1040 Kingsley Avenue, directly across the street from Clarke House Park.

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 Randy Anderson, Mayor of Orange Park, a presentation of the colors by the Orange Park High School NJROTC Color Guard, and a performance by the First Coast Highlanders. The Keynote Speaker this year will be Capt. Ed Turner, Executive Director of the National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum at Cecil Field. Also

included will be local students who have written winning essays in the 2023 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. Wanda Dillaberry will perform the National Anthem and God Bless the USA.

This year's ceremony promises to be well attended. Because there will be limited seating available, it is recommended that visitors bring folding chairs. We will do our best to accommodate anyone with mobility issues. Parking for the ceremony is available at the First Baptist Church of Orange Park at 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.



Clarke House Tours



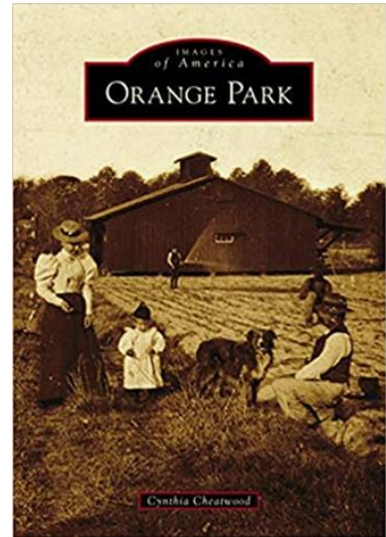
The Clarke House is open for tours on the second Sunday of each month from 2 PM to 4 PM. Our next open house will be held, Sunday, October 8. If you have not yet visited the house or, if it has just been a while, we invite you to stop by to look around. The slower pace of a Sunday afternoon provides an opportunity to tour the entire house, both upstairs and down. We hope to see you there!

Images of America - Orange Park

If you would like to learn more about the history of Orange Park, 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.



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](#)
- [Clay County Archives](#)

