



# The Historical Society of Orange Park

## September 2022 Newsletter

September is here, which means summer is winding down and cooler weather is only a few weeks away. With the arrival of cooler weather, outdoor activities increase. The fall weather in our area is about as good as it gets.

In addition to our Open Houses at the Clarke House the second Sunday of each month, it will soon be time for the annual Orange Park Fall Festival and Moonlight on Magnolia, two very popular events in our community.

As promised, work continues at the Veterans Memorial to upgrade the engraved pavers. Please see below for more information on these improvements and how you can help. Also, let's not forget our annual Veterans Day Essay Contest for Clay County students. This is a terrific opportunity for our students to shine and share their thoughts on contributions made by our veterans.

### Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Event	Location
September 11, 2022	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Open House	Clarke House
October 9, 2022	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Open House	Clarke House
October 15 & 16, 2022	10:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Fall Festival	Town Hall Park
October 29, 2022	4:00 PM – 6:00 PM	Moonlight on Magnolia	Magnolia Cemetery
November 11, 2022	11:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Veterans Day Ceremony	Veterans Memorial
November 13, 2022	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Open House	Clarke House
November 14, 2022	5:30 PM – 7:00 PM	Member Meeting	Orange Park Library

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

### **Veterans Memorial Update**

First, we would like to report that the vandalism that occurred at the Memorial has now been resolved. The Town of Orange Park has been working with Jacksonville Memory Gardens to remediate the damage to the American Legion Post #250 Riders bench. The granite seat was damaged, a replacement was ordered and it has now been installed. The pictures below show the before and after.



We are also pleased to report that the Fundraiser we started on June 30 to fund the maintenance/readability issues with the pavers is making great progress...but we still need your help. You can help in any one of three ways:

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: Historical Society of Orange Park, 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)

Remember that we have a donor who will match your contribution dollar for dollar! We are hoping to fully fund this paver replacement project with donations from the community.

We also wanted to update everyone on the status of Phase One of the paver replacement project. The new pavers have been ordered and the expected delivery date is late in September. Once received we hope to have them installed in early October. We are still confident in the dates. Phase Two will begin after our Veterans Day Ceremony on November 11, 2022. Of course, we will keep you updated on progress in future newsletters.

Lastly, we wanted to remind everyone that our annual Veterans Day Ceremony will be held promptly at 11:00 AM on Friday, November 11, 2022. We invite and encourage you to attend and ask that you share this invitation with others. 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 essays by the student contest winners and a flyover by the Dreamland Squadron from Haller Field. Refreshments will be served at the Clarke House following the ceremony.

### **Veterans Memorial Essay Contest**

All Clay County students in grades 4 – 12 are invited to participate in the Historical Society's annual Veterans Day Essay Contest. As in previous years, students are asked to submit an essay on a veteran-related topic.

The topics are as follows:

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Word Limits:</u>	<u>Prize Offered</u>	<u>Prompt</u>
4th –6th	300-500	\$50	Why are veterans special?
7th –8th	400-700	\$75	Write about an American who served in the United States military who inspires you.
9th -12th	500-1000	\$100	Why are the words "Duty, Honor, Country" important today?

Essays must be received no later than September 30, 2022. The student submitting the winning essay in each category will receive a cash prize and be invited to present their essay at the Veterans Day Ceremony, 11 AM, Friday, November 11 at the Veterans Memorial in Magnolia Cemetery.





Entry forms and contest instructions can be downloaded by clicking the following link: [Veterans Day Essay Contest 2022.pdf \(wsimg.com\)](#) or from the Veterans Memorial page of our website, [Veterans Memorial \(ophistory.org\)](#).

### **Orange Park Fall Festival**

This October, the Town of Orange Park will host the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Festival. This year's festival will be held Saturday, October 15 and Sunday, October 16 at Town Hall Park. The event will be open from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM each day. This event has something for everyone from music, crafts, food and fun activities. The festival is always very well attended. Parking can be a challenge so the Town has arranged for parking at Moosehaven with a free shuttle to transport people to and from the festival.

The Historical Society will be hosting a booth at the festival. Volunteers are always appreciated at our booth to share the history of our town with visitors. Please contact us at [info@ophistory.org](mailto:info@ophistory.org) if you can help out for a few hours Saturday or Sunday.



Scenes from Fall Festival 2021

### **Moonlight on Magnolia returns October 29th!**

Plans are now underway for the next roll out of Moonlight on Magnolia tours through the Town's historic cemetery. Society members are encouraged to try their hands at acting as they share short stories about people buried in Magnolia Cemetery. If you are interested in participating,

[www.ophistory.org](http://www.ophistory.org)

please contact Cindy Cheatwood ([ckcheatwood@myoneclay.net](mailto:ckcheatwood@myoneclay.net)). Tours will begin at 4 PM and the last tour starts off at 6 PM, so we will arrive around 3:30 and conclude around 7 PM. One night only!



**Moonlight on Magnolia 2021**

### **Club Continental – Orange Park’s Castle**

A nice crowd gathered on August 8<sup>th</sup> at the Orange Park Branch Library to hear the story of the properties now under the umbrella of Club Continental. Beginning in 1878, soap company entrepreneur, B. J. Johnson’s family has been part of Orange Park’s story. First coming to Orange Park for the health of their daughter, Karrie, who suffered from tuberculosis, the family returned each winter for years, first renting and then buying the property they named Winterborne.



During the Roaring 20’s, the family constructed an Italian-villa style mansion which they named Mira Rio. Winterbourne was expanded and, along with Mira Rio, the properties and their owners became important to the culture and identity of Orange Park.

During the 1940’s Mira Rio, then owned by Margaret Massee, rented rooms to airmen in training for service in World War Two. For a few years, the name Azaleana Manor was used for this purpose.

In the 1960s, Fricka and Jon Masee, owners of Mira Rio, converted the property into a social club, renaming it Club Continental. It was a success and served as a local employer in the town. The family continued to contribute to and participate in the town's growth and improvement. In 1976, Fricka learned about a building that had been part of the golf club of the old Hibernia Plantation in Fleming Island. To save it from destruction, she bought the building, moved it Orange Park and refitted it for club use. It now it serves the community as the River House.

The Johnson/Fergusson/Masee family helped plant the iconic oaks that once lined the original Kingsley Ave. They contributed the first books to Orange Park's first public library. The organizational planning for the St. John's Country Day School was done at the Club. From the time Winterborne was purchased, local people have found employment on the property. It is safe to say that the town's most elegant property, nicknamed the Castle by locals, has literally grown with the town.

### **Local Historical Society News**

#### **Middleburg Museum**

The Middleburg Museum will be meeting at the Civic Center, 2102 Palmetto Street in Middleburg at 6:30 PM on Thursday, September 1. Dr. Cynthia Stone, their Curator, will be giving a talk on Clay County history. Meetings are held the first Thursday of each month.

#### **Historical Society of Penny Farms**

The Historical Society of Penny Farms will conduct their next meeting 7:00 PM, September 15 at the Penny Farms Historical Museum, 4100 Clark Avenue in Penny Farms. Mr. Jimmy Weeks will present the History of the Weeks Family.

#### **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](https://www.bellanotteart.com/).



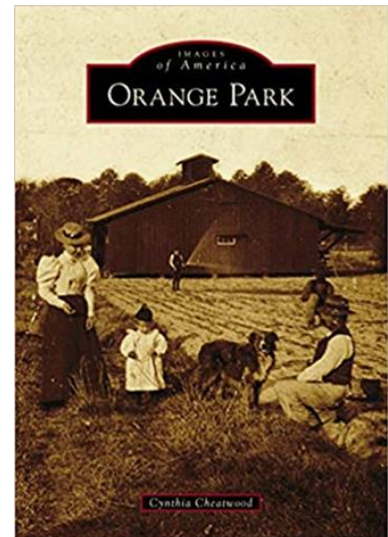


### **Images of America - Orange Park**

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**



The Clarke House is open for tours on the second Sunday of each month. This month, the house will be open Sunday, September 11 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.

### **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.

