

The Historical Quarterly

of The St. Lucie Historical Society, Inc.

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Spring 2016

The St. Lucie County Fair is our future

By Rick Modine

It was 1965 when a group of citizens decided that the county needed a county fair, an American tradition of bringing the community together to exhibit its strength and purpose. The fair started out on the sixteen acres next to the airport on the north end of the county. There were twenty-one acres of parking across the street where the fire station is now located. Patrons walked in. John King was the fair's first president. Bluegrass Shows was in charge of the Midways thrills and amusements.

As the county grew, the fair had growing pains; it was time to plan for the future. On November 6, 1996, the fair association purchased 249.75 acres on Midway and Okeechobee Road. The new fair and the dream of new beginnings came true on February 11, 2003. The fair manager, Jeanne Keaton was there and has been with them for the last twenty-three years. She, along with a thirty-five member board of directors, has had the vision to bring us the best in entertainment, amusement, community involvement and those notorious "fair foods."

We now have trams pulled by tractors to bring visitors to the gates. The Sheriff's Explorer Post 400 helps find parking slots. Last year they parked 24,399 cars outside the gates while 119,117 people came through the turnstiles.

People come to be a part of an American and community event once a year. There are twenty-two committees that provide everything that is the fair. Three years ago there were 412 volunteers who donated 11,662 hours of their personal time.

The nine thousand square foot Home Arts building houses Women's World, Crafty Men, Art & Photography and Youth Entries. Last year there were over 550 entries from the locals. They also judge canned and baked goods. If visitors get tired,

they can sit a spell and listen to some guitar pickin'.

The school building and commercial buildings are six thousand square feet each. Local schools showcase themes from their students' ideas. Students proudly point out their contributions to their parents and friends. The commercial building offers displays representing local businesses and organizations from the community.

One of the biggest draws to the fair besides the Clydesdale horses, the weekend rodeo, the concerts or Murphy Amusements is our most important asset, our youth. FFA and 4-H rank as two of the best youth organizations that represent Small animals, swine, cattle America's best. and horses are purchased, tended and groomed. FFA and 4-H are sponsored by the community, businesses and citizens, who buy their animals to help children in these organizations save money for their college funds, future cars or other dreams. For over half a century, citizens have been there: Fair Queens and Gingham girls, tenders and their animals, vendors and their goods, and exhibitors and their creations. Business walls all across St. Lucie County display livestock purchased at the fair, some from three generations ago and sure to touch future generations.

We can be sure the next fifty years will offer the smell of food we only get to treat ourselves to on this special occasion. We can enjoy the music, the rides, the lights and the feeling of being a part of our community. The fair is all of us, parents and children, volunteers and vendors; it's the past and the future. For many, it is what St. Lucie County is all about. Δ

First Anniversary of the Bud Adams Cultural Center Pg. 6

Welcome

New Members

Sue Favorite, Membership Chairman

Joyce Smith, Carrie Sue Ray, Cathy & Bud Townsend, and Paul & Joann Berg.

The Historical Quarterly of The St. Lucie Historical Society, Inc.

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The President's Message

by Nancy Bennett

The last three months have been a busy time for the museum. As always, our volunteers have contributed immensely to the work we do in the community.

On February 13, Robyn Hutchinson manned our exhibit at Party in the Park. Community events like this provide an excellent venue for acquainting people with our presence and what we have to offer. I want to thank Jean Ellen Wilson, Jim Moses, and all of their hard working crew for the excellent work at the Cobb Store exhibit. They prepared a new exhibit named "Before and After" in time for the Cracker Trail Riders Parade on February 27. In addition, thanks to Joanne Carlton Humphreys for providing enlightening speeches at the center.

The schools will soon again increase their visits to the museum, I want to thank all of the docents who conduct the tours for these events. Jamie Colborn, who schedules and arranges the tours, keeps us organized and busy. Without her help, this valuable community service would not be possible.

We also owe a huge thank you to Mose Sanders for all he does for the museum. He wrote the precision cash register program for tracking admissions and store sales and the end of day bank deposits. He handles the finances, collecting from schools for the tours, handling the purchase of gift shop items, and keeping the ledgers among other tasks. He takes care of calculating the volunteer hours and helping to set up our new volunteers. He is also the one who puts the newsletter together every quarter.

Thank you to all who helped by volunteering at the fair. Between February 26 and March 6, we were fortunate to have the following people representing us at our exhibit: Mary Wilks, Rose Cassmer. John Cassmer, Norma McGuire, Patsy Nelson, Elizabeth Trachtman, Terri Sisson, John Bell, Richard Coffman, Marianne Coffman, Ellen Lynch, Richard Lynch, Robert Davis, Roberta Davis, Claudia Schneider, Mary

Pres Pg. 7

Legendary Sites of Saint T

Fort Pierce State Farmers Market **By Lucille Rights**



I came to Florida with my husband, Charlie, in 1951 to visit my Aunt Dorothy and Uncle George in Stuart. We had temporary jobs in Raleigh, North Carolina, and both of us had recently graduated from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. In the wintertime we would go

to work in the dark and come home in the dark.

We immediately fell in love with sunny, warm, bright and friendly southern Florida. Charlie got a job in Fort Pierce with the American Fruit Growers. I had always wanted to live in a small town even though I was born and grew up in Washington, D. C. Fort Pierce had a population of about 15,000 and St. Lucie County had around 30,000. There was one caution light between Ft. Pierce and Stuart, on two-lane U.S. 1 at Jensen Beach Boulevard, then called Commercial Street. A mango grove and restaurant-bar was on the west side. There was no Port St. Lucie or gated communities. Only ranches and groves were south and west of town and woods were everywhere.

Charlie worked as a buyer for the new company using telephone and teletype. No one knew what a computer was. The big crop grown around this town was tomatoes and buyers for all the big grocery chains like A&P, Piggly Wiggly, and Safeway etc. sent buyers to the auctions at the Ft. Pierce State Farmers Market that Mr. M. E. Williams, had started. The growers lived in Ft. Pierce and they planted several crops each vear. During the week ending in Dec. 15, 1945,

River Watch Overboard—Alone at Sea by Terry Howard



Falling overboard alone miles from land is terrifying. It happened to kingfish captain A. J. Brown one morning while he was fishing more than 20 miles off Cape Canaveral in the Atlantic Ocean. The following is as A. J. told it.

"That day it was cold and I had on my slickers, and I had

just bought a new pair of Croc fishing boots and, this is part of the story. They're real comfortable, and so I was proud of 'em. We're out there fishing. It wasn't that bad. It was a small ground swell that you would pop up over ever once in a while. There was a little lull, and I was on the north end of probably thirty or thirty-five boats and I was on the very north side of them in a circle catching fish. I sat down there on the back in the stern jerking the bug (a bug, also called a jig or feather, is a hook with a feather attached which is used as a type of lure) and I was just restin' a little bit. "Til this day, I'll never know why, but I turned to the side, and when I did, I took both feet off the bottom and popped up over one of them waves and did a flip. Went right over backwards. I thought there's so many boats here, there's nothing to worry about. I'll be all right. It was a hard north tide and my boat kept circling and going north. I was behind it, swimming or trying to; in fact a line came by me on my outrigger. My planer came out and I thought I grab it, but then thought better. A king mackerel was on it, and it came right at me.

I was yelling, you know, 'Help me, help me, help me, help me.' Everybody was catching fish and those diesel motors were loud. I mean, I wasn't seventy-five feet from some of them, but they couldn't hear me.

The Close-In War off North Hutchinson Island Part 2 of a 2 part series

By Charles D. Gibson

Excerpt from Part 1: From all appearances it seemed that Java Arrow, although well down in the water, was not going to sink.

Calling to his Second officer who was commanding #2 Lifeboat to come alongside, Hennechin transferred over some wounded men to the care of the Second Officer, instructing him to start for the shore. Hennechin then ordered his own #1 Lifeboat rowed to the stricken tanker where with four volunteers he reboarded the ship and moved to the bow. They released a brake on the anchor windlass, dropping the starboard anchor. Hennechin and the men with him then re-boarded their lifeboat and headed west toward the beach.

Upon reaching shore the Second Officer saw that the wounded were taken to hospital. When Hennechin's #1 boat arrived, the captain and fourteen of the crew were transported by automobile to the Fort Pierce Coast Guard Station. From there Hennechin called his company's office at New York asking that arrangements be made for tugs to rendezvous at the position where Java Arrow had been anchored. Hennechin was informed by his company that two tugs would be dispatched out of Port Everglades. Hennechin next requested that the Coast Guard take him and some of his men back out to the ship. Once underway aboard a Coast Guard picket boat, all wondered whether the tanker would still be afloat when they got there or whether since her abandonment she had been given a coup de grace by another U-boat, or, worse yet, whether she might again be attacked once they were back onboard. Nerves must have been on edge for all including one unnamed resident of Fort Pierce who had been talked into accompanying the salvage group. He was a welder who, by use of an acetylene cutting torch, was to cut the anchor chain. The Survivors' Report made no mention of the name of the welder so he remains an unsung hero of the Java Arrow story To the relief of all, the tanker was found to be still afloat and at the same level as when they had left her. Once on board, Hennechin, his men, and of course the welder, awaited the arrival of the tugs. Once they appeared, a tow hawser was passed up to the ship and the welder burned through the anchor chain. A slow hazardous tow then began toward Port Everglades. Arriving there safely, Java Arrow was eventually repaired and put back into service with a new name, Kerry Patch.

Java Arrow's survivors had been lucky that night in May in that their ship had not met the same fate as another tanker, SS W. D Anderson which had been torpedoed east of where the FPL nuclear power plant is now located. That had been during the previous February. When hit, W. D. Anderson had been loaded down with cargo which, ignited by the torpedo, burst into flame. With the exception of one man, her crew of 36 officers and men died with their ship.

The "happy time" as the German submariners described those first four months along the Eastern Sea frontier began losing its destructive momentum once the U.S. Navy inaugurated convoy scheduling and adequate naval escorts became available. With those improvements the "Happy Time" ended. Germany's Submarine Command would soon direct its U-boats to the Caribbean. Again, the primary targets would be the U.S. and Allied tanker fleets. The enemy's submarine offensive in the Western Hemisphere was directed against targets of opportunity, meaning all shipping; however the priority from the Germans viewpoint was the tanker fleet. As the Germans were clearly aware such ships were a prevalent target to be encountered both along the east coast as well as in the Caribbean. Δ

From Jan./Aug., 1942, German U-boats would sink freighters and oil tankers off the American Coast.

Out and About at the Museum By Mary Schrader

St. Lucie County has been an important agricultural center since the late 1800's, and the museum provides a wonderful selection of both pictures and equipment from that industry. Before visitors even enter the door, they can inspect a variety of small farming equipment in the shed outside. A corn shucker, grinder wheel, harnesses and various sickles, saws, and scythes remind one of life on a farm.

Throughout the history of St. Lucie County, pineapples, ranching, citrus, and farming have dominated the agricultural scene. Pineapples were first planted in the area in 1860 and flourished through 1895, but by 1920 the industry had declined and all but died. The Pineapple Patch area in the museum provides a picture of the industry from the growing through the shipping phases. Pineapples primarily stimulated the economy in the early 1900's The model of a pineapple shack depicts the lifestyle of the many Bahamian migrants who came here to work the fields. A pineapple cart, hoes, double yoke, and sand shoes join many pictures that complete the vision of the life of the pineapple grower. The array of shipping labels displayed completes the picture of the industry from field to customer.

The Cattle Hunters are represented by some of the equipment they used; spurs, the famous cracker whip, saddles, and stirrups. They employed the same fire making configuration as the Seminoles, and an example anchors the cow hunters' campsite. A large variety of local brands and of barbed wire, patented in 1867, complete the cow hunter display.

The citrus room uses pictures and equipment to depict that industry. Pictures of both the groves and the production of citrus follow the process of growing to marketing citrus. The fruit must be picked, measured, graded, and wrapped. Workers used wheelbarrows, citrus bags and ladders in the process. These items, as well as a dolly loaded with crates complete the display. In the old days, packers used oxen with carts to transport the produce to boats and trains for its trip to the north.

Book Review

By Mary Schrader

The third edition of *The Old Florida*, written by Alto "Bud" Adams, Jr., shares over seventy years of photographs and recounts the experiences he has had in ranching and protecting the ecosystem that surrounds him. The photography is artistic and covers a wide variety of subjects. Many pictures show the beauty of the land "from the hammocks to the cypress." Photography captures the beauty of the St. Lucie and the Lake Marian Ranches.

Another subject he photographed was the people and livestock that populate a working ranch. The cattle are pictured close-up and at a distance; the Adamses even employed a drone to take aerial photos. Many of the photographs capture people and events from his lifetime. One photo was taken by Bud Adams in 1937 and shows the first St. Lucie Cattlemen's Association. Pictures show the generations of Adams men and hired men who worked and are still working the land today. His wildlife photographs are stunning. They illustrate the huge variety of birds and animals that live here.

The photography is lovely, and the writing is equally good. He tells the story of his own life and the development of the family empire in an unembellished, straightforward way that is a pleasure to read. The narrative begins with his early years in the 1930's, continues to his marriage to Dot in 1947, explores his ranching experiences, and details the development of the Braford and later ABEEF breeds. He discusses the involvement of the Adams family members in the business, the role of hunting on the ranch, and his love of the land as evidenced by the chapter devoted to conservation. Hoping to maintain some of the land he leaves as ranchland, he placed it under easements to prevent urban development.

This book is an excellent source of photographs of our area and information about one of the early families in St. Lucie County and the development of their extensive agricultural operation. Mr. Adams provided wonderful photographs and text, and Robert Adams collected the photographs and put the book together.

O&A Pg. 8

First Anniversary of the Bud Adams Cultural Center By Jean Ellen Wilson

The Bud Adams Cultural Center in the Cobb Building had its first anniversary the last weekend in February. In 2015, 1,456 visitors viewed the exhibition of vintage photographs that allow glimpses into the rich history of the people of the Indian River.

Photographs depicting life "Along These Waters" form a background for the special exhibitions we have mounted such as Cattle and Cowboy Culture, 1715 Fleet, Hurricane History, Local Veterans of the Wars of the United States, the History of the P. P. Cobb Building, Trade Commerce, and the current work in progress, Then and Now.

Anne Sinnott was instrumental in getting the Center off to a good start, stressing professionalism and historical accuracy. She spent most of 2015 giving considerable time and effort and there would be no Cobb Center without her. Her dedication to preserving our valuable and unique local heritage is well-known.

O. C. Peterson has been with us from the start and never fails to answer a call for help. He assists in all kinds of ways—helping to mount photographs, acting as docent, providing lunch or doughnuts. He constructed three cases to securely display small articles and artifacts.

Jim Moses, retired head of the St. Lucie County Health Department, has given unstintingly of his time and, with his master's degree in history, his knowledge has enriched the experience of visiting the Cobb Center for many visitors. He has missed maybe a half dozen days the Center is open in the past year. He truly has a passion for history. Tom Baumker has added generously to our archive of photographs from his extensive collection. He has brought to the operation so much knowledge of the craft of framing and mounting the photographs and presenting the finished product so that the viewer can better understand the local historical background.

Lucille Rights wrote captions for our permanent exhibit and keeps us honest by periodically reviewing our material. She also acts

as a docent on the second Saturday of the month and never ignores our calls for help.

Jean Ellen Wilson does research, makes sure the supplies needed for reproduction and display of photographs are on hand, looks for ways to bring the Center to the attention of the public—and shows up.

Others have provided help and support: Jim Wilson, Harold Holtsberg, Richard Coffman, Robyn Hutchinson, Freddie Ebner, Buzz Smyth, and others.

Of course, there is always Nancy Bennett who provides leadership, advice, time as docent, and moral support. Δ

FHS Plans Ambitious Spring Schedule

By Ted Burrows



Florida Historical Society has announced plans for its Annual Meeting and Symposium, scheduled May 19-21 in Orlando. The event will be headquartered at the Embassy Suites downtown. The theme of this year's gathering is "Citrus Tourism to Tech: Visions of Paradise?" The theme

calls attention to several important developments in Central Florida's evolution from pioneer days to modern times. And note the question mark in the theme. It leads participants to ponder – and discuss -- whether our state's development has been favorable in every way.

The weekend of the annual meeting will include tours of nearby historic sites, lectures and panel discussions featuring prominent scholars and authors, plus social gatherings. The state society will also present awards for the past year's outstanding contributions to Florida history, in various categories for research, publication and

Pres from Pg. 2

Schrader, Shelba Edwards, Bob Schrumpf, Ernie Merrill, Judy Merrill, Mose Sanders, Sandra Sanders, Ted Burrows, Katy Purcell, Robyn Hutchinson, Deb Billis, Maggie Summerlin, Sandra Sharples, Pat Brewer, Jack Favorite, Sue Favorite, Werner Baer, Virginia Baer, Fred Ebner, James Jaques, Roger Miller, and Joanne Holman.

If I have missed anyone, I want to apologize. All of your help is what makes our work a success. I want to thank **Harry Quatraro**, who once again prepared a wonderful museum display for the fair. His work is tops, and we are fortunate to have his talent. The exposure to the public helps to acquaint them with all we have to offer. We often hear that they didn't know we were here. These activities into the community help to make our presence known.

Be sure to your get tickets for the Seminole Doll Raffle. The winning ticket will be drawn at the May meeting. Tickets are \$2 each or three for \$5.

As always, if you would like to volunteer, please contact us. The volunteers keep us going, and we would love to have you join us. Δ

Market from Pg. 3

the Farmers Market shipped over \$48,701 worth of tomatoes, eggplant, squash and cucumbers. "Every effort is being made to build the market into an efficient and quick-action outlet for local produce." Trucks were used to transport the produce, but a railroad siding was soon installed.

In February 2016, Michael Brown, manager for six years, kindly showed me the new Farmers Market. Not one tomato was there. The buildings are still in good shape, some are new, and they are 100% occupied. Their total market revenue for 2014 was \$590,365.50.

Some of the tenants include a citrus packing company, Delicious Citrus, a citrus juice company, Freshco LTD, and a citrus processing company, Citrus Extracts LLC. K.S.S. Sales has installed a cooler to grow several types of mushrooms and the Mushroom Guy distributes mushrooms in central and south Florida. Good

smells come from Gielow Pickles. Some other tenants are K & M of the Treasure Coast, a grower/wholesaler of European cucumbers, Bimbo Bakeries USA, Ontario Potato Distributions Inc. (OPDIO), Division of Plant Industry and Division of Fruit and Vegetables, Division of Food Safety, Northeast Trading, a produce brokerage company, Poppy's Restaurant, and Lamar Advertising Billboard rental. Several of these businesses are expanding into additional units at the market.

The retail produce market which burned several years ago has finally been rebuilt and Mrs. Yun has returned to continue the business she shared with her late husband for 25 years.

The Fort Pierce Farmers Market is a big asset to our area. Many thanks to Mr. Brown and his staff. Δ

Alone from Pg. 3

I had all those rubbers and everything on and I was sinking and I had to try to get that off. So, I got my rubber top off, and then I pulled my, (laughs) I never will forget this. It was unbelievable, I pulled those Croc boots off. They were two black Croc boots. And I pulled them off. They came up and they stood straight up, just side-by-side each other, right on the top of the water and started going away from me. But I was having so much trouble, struggling to get this stuff off and stay afloat, that I was panicking. And that's the worst thing you can do when you're in the water, is panic. So I calmed down enough to get my rubber pants off, but I still had on a sweatshirt, jeans and socks. I was trying to get closer to the boats, but there was a north tide. I was pushed away from all the boats. My boat was a long, long ways further away from me.

I'd just gotten to the point where I said my prayers, and I knew what was going to come next, because that's what happens when you drown. You just take a gulp of water and that's it. It fills your lungs and you go down".

Finally another commercial kingfish boat working to the north spotted A. J.

"They were commercial fishermen out of Salerno. His name is Delton Nail They called

Alone cont. Pg. 8

Alone from Pg. 7

another boat and got his son-in-law off the boat. He got on the bow of the other boat and got behind my boat and nudged up to the back and eased up on the bow and jumped onto my boat and got it out of gear.

They said, 'We'll take you in. We'll get him to drive your boat in.'

And I said, 'No, just give me a few minutes. Just put me back on my boat.'

And he said, 'By the way, you had three fish on when we stopped your boat.'"

Fort Pierce South Beach resident Captain A. J. Brown survived many perils at sea, including falling overboard alone only to succumb at a young age, to cancer. He died on December 24, 2009 at age 62. Fishermen from all over Florida came to his funeral to honor one of the greatest and most respected kingfish captains of his time.

Terry Howard L Howard is the author of Great Kingfish Captains and High Seas Wranglers. The above story was take from High Seas Wranglers. Δ

High Sea Wranglers and Great Kingfish Captains are on sale at the museum for \$20.00 each.

O&A from Pg. 5

In addition, St. Lucie County provided a source of honey produced from flowers on the mangrove trees, palmetto bushes and orange trees unknown to other areas. O. O. Poppleton and Harry Hill pioneered that enterprise. The Allapatah Vegetable Company farmed beans, eggplant, papaya, and sugar cane. After World War II, S and M Farms grew tomatoes for shipping.

As is so often the case, many of the people who promoted these ventures are pictured in the St. Lucie Families: Crafters of Local History There visitors can see many of our agricultural pioneers. Δ

Review from Pg 5

The Old Florida is available at the museum's Pineapple Patch Gift Shop and Bookstore, 414 Seaway Drive, Fort Pierce for \$15.00. Δ

FHS from Pg. 6

community outreach.

The Florida Historical Society, founded in 1856, is a statewide organization devoted to fostering historical knowledge. It is one of Florida's oldest cultural and educational institutions. Its headquarters is at 435 Brevard Avenue, Cocoa, FL 32922 in the Historical Cocoa Village neighborhood alongside the Indian River Lagoon. In addition to the society's offices, it houses the Library of Florida History, a repository of numerous publications, maps, photographs and other items of interest to scholarly researchers and general history enthusiasts. There is also a shop selling Florida-related books and memorabilia for adults and children.

The society also operates the nearby Brevard Museum of History and natural Science and the historic Rossetter House Museum. The popular FHS-produced "Florida Frontiers" programs are broadcast statewide on Florida's public radio and television stations. Λ

To find out more about Florida Historical Society activities, visit online at www. myfloridahistory.org. Δ

Feedback

Excerpts from the guest book at the St. Lucie County Regional History Center. Here's what some recent visitors said about our museum:

Margaret Waterson - Cambridge, NY: "I love this place. But I'll need to come back to complete it."

Mark and Sarah Norris - Kissimmee: "A Beautiful display."

Genevieve Lee - Islip, NY: "Wonderful - so much information."

Jeff and Susan Bass - Okeechobee: "Loved it."

Natalie Burkhard - Ventura CA: "Very enjoyable and interesting."

James and Mary Hill - Columbus, OH: "A small museum, big interest."

Cynthia Andrews - Rome, NY: "Family Room was like walking into a photograph album."

The St. Lucie Historical Society Membership List

A thoughtful St. Lucie Historical Society member has suggested publishing the entire membership roster in the Quarterly as a gesture of appreciation to all those who support and participate in the society's endeavors. It is a fine idea. The society's many public service programs and enjoyable activities would not be possible without such enthusiastic members. A hearty "thank you." Following is a full list of St. Lucie Historical Society members, current as of February 1, 2016.

Berger, Toombs, Elam, Gaines, & Frank

City of Fort Pierce Wipeout Pest Control Road Runner Travel Resort

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Lorena J. Bussey

Daniel Gardner

Mr. John Jones

O. C. Peterson

Lucille R. Rights

Jean Ellen Wilson

Handmade Seminole Indian Raffle

Tickets are \$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00.

Drawing will be held at the dinner meeting, Thursday, May 19, 2016. Need not be present to win.