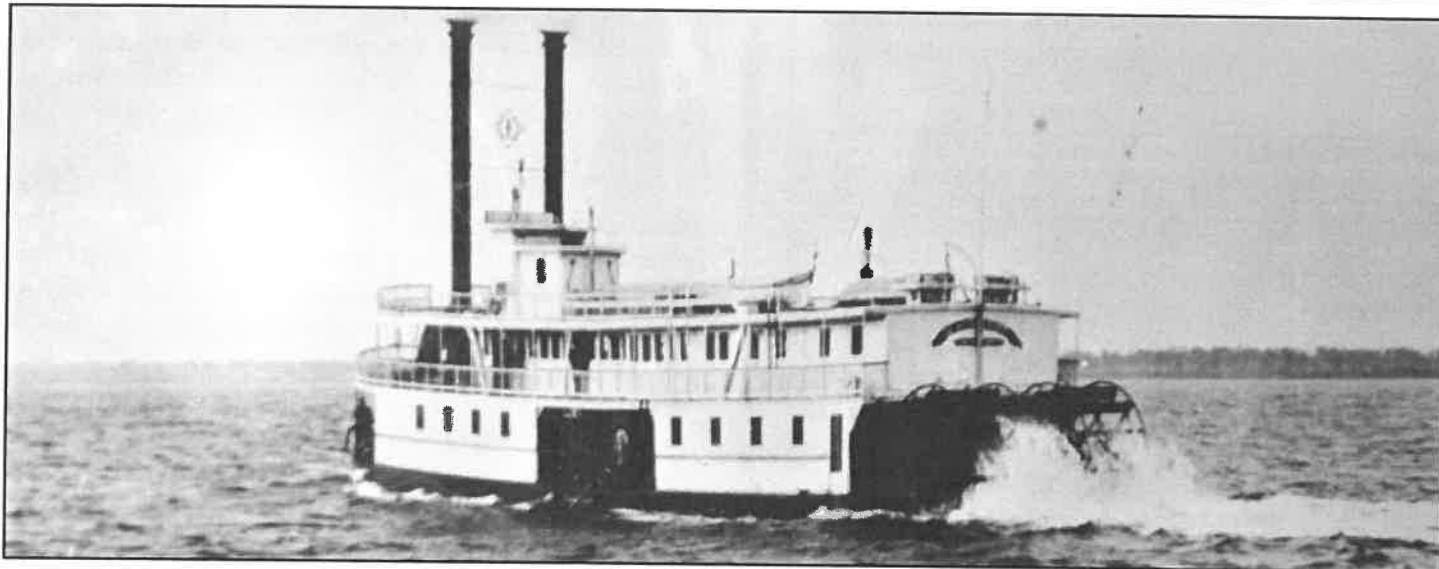




The Historical Quarterly of The St. Lucie Historical Society, Inc.

Vol. 38 No. 4

Fall 2020



The steamboat St. Lucie under way on the Indian River lagoon

Steamboat St. Lucie once was queen of commerce on our Indian River lagoon during late 1800s

A popular exhibit in the St. Lucie County Regional History Center depicts life along the Indian River during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Back then, the lagoon was a main highway because there were few roads — mostly sandy trails — on the land.

SLHS resumes planning for post-COVID activities

Despite this year's coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, the St. Lucie Historical Society is taking steps toward resuming at least some of its usual activities this coming fall and winter.

The SLHS board of directors met on Sept. 14 — outdoors on the museum grounds, wearing masks — and voted to schedule a dinner meeting on the third Thursday in November at the Fort Pierce Elks Lodge. In order to do this, we must maintain proper health precautions in the Elks dining room, meaning reduced attendance and fewer people seated at each table.

This would be the first SLHS dinner meeting since

... continued on page 4

The lagoon carried ever-increasing traffic — highlighted by steamboats that carried passengers and trade goods. Especially important were those sailing between Titusville and Jupiter. One of the most famous, the sternwheeler *St. Lucie*, is depicted in our museum with several photographs and a model on display.

The “golden age” of steamboating on the Indian River was relatively brief, roughly from 1880 to 1900, writes historian **Bob Bass** in his book *When Steamboats Reigned in Florida* (University Press of Florida, 2008). During that time dozens of steamboats operated on parts of the lagoon.

Almost every village along the lagoon had a long dock extending out far enough so passing vessels could load or unload. The Indian River is very shallow, so deep-draft vessels were useless. From Bass's book comes this reference to the vessel shown in our museum:

“Sometime in 1889 a new queen began her reign on the river under the Indian River Steamboat Company banner. She was the *St. Lucie*. The vessel was built in Wilmington, Delaware at a cost of \$30,000 and sailed under the command of **Captain Steve A. Bravo**. She had fourteen staterooms and a large hurricane deck,

... continued on page 3

Welcome - New Members

Sue Favorite, Membership Chairman

Mary Koblegard Kindred, Laura Ellen Koblegard,
Kristen Koblegard Cheyne, , Sara Brady Koblegard Lloyd,
Dr. Ali Koblegard Young, Mr. & Mrs. Frank H. Fee IV,
Ernie Messick, Guy Goulet family, Joyce Gillette,
James Sowinski, Stan & Jean Synkoski,
James Rouse, Jim Kelly

The Society is a Florida Corporation exempt from federal income tax under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code as an organization described in Section 501(c)(3). The Society is also classified as a public charity under 509(a)(2).

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

Officers and Board of Directors

President: Nancy Bennett

First Vice President: Terry Howard

Second Vice President: Sue Favorite

Secretary: Deborah Billis

Treasurer: Bob Burdge

Parliamentarian: Roger Miller

Nancy Bennett, Deborah Billis, Bob Burdge, Ted Burrows,
Richard Coffman, Bob Davis, Sue Favorite, Terry Howard,
Robyn Hutchinson, Ernie Merrill, Norma McGuire,
Roger Miller, Rick Modine, Jean Ellen Wilson, Jon Bell

The Historical Quarterly Staff

Editor: Ted Burrows

Staff: Sue Favorite, Katy Purcell, Mose Sanders,
Mary Schrader

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of The St. Lucie Historical Society, Inc., P O Box 578, Fort Pierce, FL 34954, Telephone (772) 461-8020, stluciehistoricalsociety.net

The President's Message

by Nancy Bennett

I want to thank all our St. Lucie Historical Society members for their patience and cooperation as we cope with this year's coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak. I know we all appreciate the dedication of our SLHS board of directors. They have carried on the society's essential business in recent months. Also we thank our devoted volunteers who keep the museum open.

We had an interesting board meeting on Sept. 14. For the first time ever, we gathered outdoors on the museum grounds, in the grass between the main building and the Gardner House. We all brought our own folding chairs and started planning for the coming season.

Treasurer **Bob Burdge** reported that the society's finances remain in good order. **Sue Favorite** expressed satisfaction at a significant number of new members, plus renewals. The Bulletin Booster fund for our Historical Quarterly also is getting solid support. **Robyn Hutchinson** reported she has several prospective speakers lined up, for the time when we can resume regular dinner meetings.

With that in mind, the board decided to hold a dinner in November. We are working with the Elks Lodge on how many people can safely attend, based on strict health precautions. It might only be half the usual number but the board thinks we must try to get back to our usual range of activities.

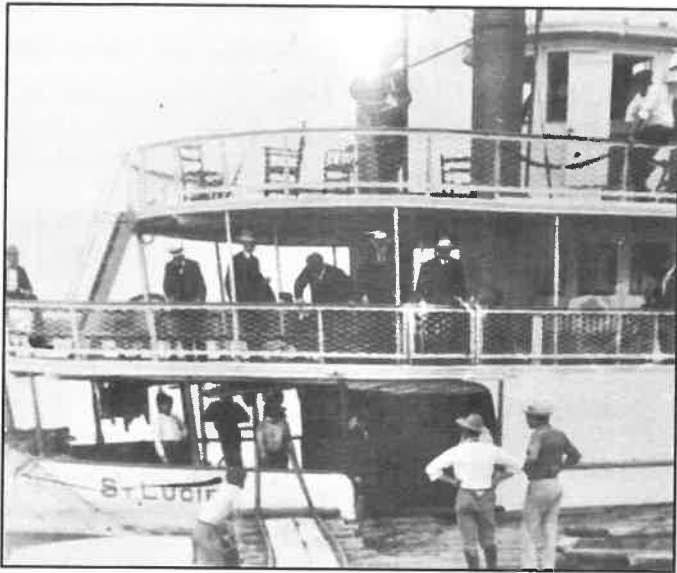
Thanks again for everyone's patience. Let's hope for better times ahead. Δ

Bulletin Boosters

Help support a lively and useful SLHS Historical Quarterly. A \$10 donation will add your name to the Bulletin Boosters roster for a full year of Quarterly editions. Please give your \$10 donation to Treasurer Bob Burdge. Many thanks. Names of current bulletin Boosters are listed below (with expiration month and year).

Harold & Mae Holtsberg	10/21	Grace Ann Scott	1/21	Terry Sisson	7/21	Jeanie & Dick Lattner	10/21
Cynthia Putnam	10/22	William & Fran Slat	1/21	Elizabeth Trachtman	7/21	Lindsay McClenny	10/21
Ed & Jackie Fischer	10/20	Ernie & Judy Merrill	1/21	Beth Stafford	7/21	Norma McGuire	10/21
Lynn Norvell	10/21	Bob Burdge	1/21	Roger Miller	10/22	Laura & Hoyt C. Murphy	10/21
Betty Hutchinson	10/20	Robyn Hutchinson	1/21	Adele Lowe	10/22	Jeff Priest	10/21
Jan Zahrlly	10/20	Richard & Marianne Coffman	1/21	Matt & Crystal Samuel	10/22	Ronald & Maggie Waites	10/21
Paul & Joann Berg	10/20	Bob Davis	1/21	Thomas Bailey	10/21	Peggy & Robert Allen	10/21
Ella & Jonathan Pruitt	10/20	Ted Burrows	1/21	Claude & Cindy Baker	10/21	Linda Hudson & John Bailey	10/21
Floyd & Gail Hope-Henschel	7/21	Richard & Nancy Sheets	4/21	Leonard & Peggy Berg	10/21	Tracy Curtis	10/21
Michelle Franklin	7/21	Linda Chastain	4/21	Frank H. & LeVan Fee	10/21	Pat Modine	10/21
Sally Frey	1/21	Pommie Hardie	4/22	Bill & Letha Fowler	10/21	Rick & Lisa Modine	10/21
Lelaine B. Rice	1/21	Craig & Pat Brewer	4/21	Richard & Priscilla Goff	10/21	Tyler Modine & Kristi Cardona	10/21
Mr. & Mrs. Robert J. Essay	7/31	Holly Theuns	4/21	Vern & Marie Gosney	10/21	Robert & Louise Summerhays	10/21
Deborah & Stephen Billis	4/21	James Midelis	4/21	Nels & Suzanne Hallstrom	10/21	Pam & Larry Blandford	10/21
Joyce Moody-McGraw	4/21	Noah & Bonnie Ludlum	4/22	Larry Hardie	10/21	J. Michael & Elaine Brennan	10/21
Jack & Sue Favorite	4/21	Victoria Bush	4/21	Charlie Hayek	10/21	Tom & Kathy Gladwin	10/22
Jerry & Carolyn McNeil	4/21	Ann Procino Healy	4/21	Carl & Kathryn Hensley	10/21	Rhonda Hilson Realty	10/22

Steamboat... continued from page 1



Activity on forward deck of the steamboat St. Lucie

and she could travel 10.5 knots over the water. The vessel drew only 35 inches of water and was able to travel almost anywhere in the Indian River lagoon. St. Lucie was 122 feet long and had a beam of 24 feet.

“On January 12, 1889 the Jacksonville Times-Union gave a glowing and detailed description of the St. Lucie: ‘She is built on the same plan as many Ohio River steamers, having three decks. She is a stern wheel vessel propelled by two high pressure

engines situated aft on the main deck. The forward part of this deck is occupied by the boiler and freight is stowed between.’

“By a flight of stairs the saloon is reached; the cabin extending almost the whole length of the boat. The forward and after parts of the cabin are pleasant sitting rooms, comfortably fitted with easy chairs and settees of rattan, and antique oak card tables. ... The staterooms are 6x6 and very comfortably fitted up. Each contains two berths with woven wire springs and soft, comfortable mattresses and pillows. The ceilings of the decks are lined with life preservers.”

The company soon added two sister ships, the St. Augustine and St. Sebastian, and the three did good business along the lagoon. It is easy to imagine the St. Lucie or one of her sisters at **Peter P. Cobb’s** dock letting off passengers and unloading merchandise for the store, or loading pineapples, fruits and processed fish headed for other markets.

By the early 1900s the steamboat era was ending as **Henry Flagler’s** railway and better roads between towns diverted shipping from the lagoon. The St. Sebastian carried soldiers and supplies in the Spanish-American War and became a ferry in Fernandina for a few years more. The St. Augustine eventually rusted away at a pier along the Loxahatchee River. The St. Lucie reportedly was destroyed by a hurricane in 1906. Δ

Devoted lawman Duval helped save Hurston artifacts



Patrick Duval

Treasure Coast residents owe a large debt to the late **Patrick Duval**, a person of real historical significance who died on July 31 in Fort Pierce at age 100. Not only did he become St. Lucie County’s first black deputy sheriff during the era of racial segregation, he also helped to preserve valuable artifacts relating to famed author **Zora Neale Hurston**.

Duval became a deputy in 1953 and served for more than 30 years. During his early years with the Sheriff’s Office, that era’s strict segregation rules barred him from arresting white suspects. He often had to call for a white deputy to make the formal arrest. Eventually, of course, the situation changed.

Duval served with distinction, earned great respect, and retired as a captain. A Sheriff’s Office substation is named in his honor.

Zora Neale Hurston, the noted Harlem Renaissance author of such works as *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *Dust Tracks on a Road*, *Mules and Men* and other books, died poverty-stricken in Fort Pierce in 1960. Shortly afterward, Duval saw a man burning trash behind the modest home the author had occupied. Realizing that many of Hurston’s belongings were about to go up in flames, Duval salvaged some of her manuscripts and other valuable memorabilia. These things – even the items partly charred – became very useful to historians and literary scholars.

Because of Duval’s prompt intervention, Americans have gained more knowledge and appreciation of Hurston’s life and work. Δ

SLHS donations made in Summerlin's memory

Several memorial donations have arrived, in honor of the late **Herman Roy Summerlin Sr.**, a prominent and much-admired local resident who died in March at age 81. Another recent donation is from **Sally Putnam Chapman**. Earlier donations were received from **Margaret Summerlin** and **Maxwell C. King**.

Also, **Adrian Strickland** has made a donation in memory of his late wife **Sandy Strickland**.

Memorial donations – in any amount – are welcome. All are used to help support activities and service projects of the St. Lucie Historical Society. The donors' generosity is much appreciated. Δ

COVID... continued from page 1

February. As the COVID-19 outbreak accelerated in Florida, we had to cancel dinners in March, April and May.

Along the Treasure Coast, the past eight months have been full of uncertainty, fear and frustration. Many of our usual activities have been disrupted, some of our favorite local businesses have closed, while others are still limping along. Regrettably, the toll of illness and death has risen since the onset last spring.

As of Sept. 21, as this edition was prepared for printing, the confirmed COVID-19 toll in St. Lucie County stood at 7,808 cases and 263 deaths; in Martin County 4,739 cases and 132 deaths; in Indian River County 3,087 cases and 110 deaths. The statewide total was 683,754 confirmed cases, with 13,276 deaths.

Since last spring, there have been some improvements. Many stores, restaurants and bars have reopened, as have parks and beach areas. Some community organizations are now cautiously resuming activities previously canceled. Shortages of essential consumer goods seem to have eased following a springtime of panic shopping.

Most local people are still being very cautious, using sanitizers and masks, and avoiding large crowds, especially indoors. It may be some time before the COVID-19 outbreak tapers off. Meanwhile, the historical society will continue as many activities as can be done safely. Δ

Feedback

Here are some recent visitors' comments about the St. Lucie County Regional History Center, compiled from the guest book:

Susan Enns Stans, Atlanta, GA: "Terrific."

The Young Family, Ft. Pierce: "So educational! My kids loved the treasure hunt! Ms. Katy was so kind."

The Anderson Family, Silver Spring, MD: "Great museum for adults and kids. We loved the scavenger hunt."

Maria Tramuttola, Lima, Peru: "Thank you, wonderful exhibit."

Bjerk Family, Croatia: "Very nice exhibit! Thank you."

Jade Leech, England: "Loved it."

Brendan Quinn, Kihei, Hawaii: "Great historical walk through of Fort Pierce, two thumbs up."

The Hales, Glasgow, Scotland: "So interesting and educational."

The Hacketts, Sweden: "Great museum. Loved it!"

Laura Henderson, Sarasota: "Wonderful collection! Wonderful volunteers!"

Charlene & Steve Fugler, Frankston, TX: "Very interesting! Love the history!"

Guy & Johanne Boudreault, Gatineau, Quebec, Canada: "Bigger than we thought, nice."

Marguerite & Jeff Bellavance, Beachwood, NJ: "We love to learn the history of the places we visit. Well done!"

Lora N. Gray, Port St. Lucie: "Thank you for your help, Nancy!"

Linda Holloway, Minnetonka, MN: "Fabulous Museum!"

Himerio & Alina Argote, Port St. Lucie: "A treasure on the Treasure Coast."

The Denton Family, Florence, SC: "Thank you for this fabulous history lesson!"

Bob Franklin, Leeds, England: "Very interesting tour. A good value."

Lynda Neal, Sebring: "Wonderful & Informative."

Jackie Ernez, Sebastian: "Thank you for being here."

Chris & Melissa Hancock, New Market, AL: "We come every year and always enjoy!" Δ

Remembrances

James R. Turner

Longtime St. Lucie Historical Society member **James R. Turner** died July 23 following a long illness. His death came just a week past his 78th birthday. Jim Turner was born July 15, 1942 in Fort Pierce and was in the Dan McCarty High School graduating class of 1960. He earned a bachelor's degree in finance from Florida State University in 1964. He also served in the U.S. Army National Guard.

As a building contractor, he constructed local residences and commercial facilities. He also operated two businesses, Apple Machine and Supply Co. and Apple Industrial Hardware. He also designed and built innovative types of agricultural machinery, holding several patents.

Jim Turner was a generous supporter of our historical society. Until recently, when his health declined, he was a familiar presence at SLHS dinner meetings. His survivors include a sister, **Karen Enterline**, three daughters, **Darby M. Baird**, **Michelle T. Hicks** and **Christine E. Turner**, plus several grandchildren.

Edith Smith Mullins

Another longtime SLHS member, **Edith Smith Mullins**, died July 24 at age 94. She was born March 23, 1926 in Jewell Ridge, Va. and came to Fort Pierce in 1945 as the 19-year-old bride of **Douglas E. Mullins**. The two of them operated businesses Mullins, Inc. and Mullins Enterprises for six decades.

Edith Mullins' many interests – in addition to the St. Lucie Historical Society – included First Baptist Church, Junior Women's Club, Garden Club and PTA. She also was a volunteer "pink lady" at Lawnwood Regional Medical Center.

Survivors include a daughter, **Sharman Mullins** of Fort Pierce; sisters **Katherine Richardson** and **Ann Shreve** of Jewell Ridge, Va., **Princess Casey** of Richlands, Va. and **Bonnie Agner** of Kingsport, Tenn. Another daughter, **Corliss "Corky" Mullins Jeffries**, died Aug. 21 at age 73, having survived her mother for less than one month.

David M. Fee

David M. Fee, member of a prominent St. Lucie County family and well-remembered from his boyhood in Fort Pierce, died July 12 in Wilton Manors. He was 80 years old. His sisters **Letha Fowler** and **Bonnie Ludlum** both are longtime historical society members.

David Fee was born in Hollywood and came to Fort Pierce as a boy. He was a 1957 graduate of Dan McCarty High School, an outstanding student and star athlete. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Florida, then became a teacher and football coach at high schools in Fort Lauderdale. Seeking a career change, he earned a law degree from Nova University and became an attorney. In later years he taught history and political science courses at Palm Beach State College.

In addition to his wife **Ann Fee**, other survivors include two daughters, **Kimberly Pomar** of Jacksonville and **Patty Fee** of Fort Lauderdale. He was predeceased by a son, **David M. Fee III**. Δ

Florida Facts

On April 14, 1528, Spanish explorer **Panfilo de Narvaez** landed at Tampa Bay with 400 men and 80 horses, intending to seek gold and silver in the interior of Florida. He found no valuables, and hostile Indians exacted a heavy toll on the Spaniards. Narvaez perished and only a few of his men returned to Mexico after several years in the wilderness.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas, whose 1947 book "Everglades: River of Grass" reshaped the public perception of the Everglades from a useless swamp to a vital part of the ecosystem, was born April 7, 1890. She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1993 and died in 1998 at age 108.

At Daytona Beach on March 7, 1935, Englishman **Sir Malcolm Campbell** set a new world record speed of 276.8 mph on the hard-paced beach sand. His car, the Bluebird, produced 2,500 horsepower and cost about \$200,000.

Rollins College, Florida's oldest private institution of higher learning, was established April 18, 1885 in Sanford, named for its benefactor, **Alonzo Rollins** of Chicago. However, when classes began in November of that year they were held in Winter Park, where the college remained.

St. Lucie Historical Society, Inc.
P O Box 578
Fort Pierce, Florida 34954

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
Fort Pierce, Fl
Permit No 422

Or Current Resident

3495395153 0054



Membership Application
St. Lucie Historical Society, Inc.

Please join us in preserving our local heritage for future generations.

Name _____

Spouse's Name _____

Names and ages of minor children:

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home Telephone _____

Business Telephone _____

Cell _____

Email _____

I/We wish to join the Society at the level indicated below.
Membership is from September through August.

New Renewal Individual (\$20.00)

Family (\$25.00) Business (\$50.00)

Please make checks payable to:

St. Lucie Historical Society, Inc

P O Box 578

Fort Pierce, Florida 34954-0578

For Information telephone: (772) 461-8020

General Meeting are held at:

The Elks Lodge

635 South 5th Street

Fort Pierce, Florida 34950

Society General Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of the month, from September through May. A meal is provided before the meeting at the price of \$12.00 per person. Reservations must be made for these meals no later than two days in advance of the meeting. To make reservations telephone (772) 461-8020 and leave a message. Reservations and your RSVP information by e-mail to: dinner@stluciehistoricalsociety.net. Dinner begins at 5:30 P.M. and the General Meeting Starts at 6:00 P.M.

Volunteers are Needed

If you have 3 1/2 hours that you can give once a week either in the morning or afternoon, please consider volunteering at the Museum.

Admission, to the museum, for St. Lucie Historical Society members is FREE. So come and take a tour.

The latest exhibit is St Lucie Families-Crafters of Local History.

The Pineapple Patch Gift Shop has a large selection of books of Florida historical value, cards, handmade Seminole Indian dolls, and baubles made by volunteers.

Museum Hours:

Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.