

The Historical Quarterly

of The St. Lucie Historical Society, Inc.

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Carlton Cemetery holds history of one of St. Lucie County's pioneer families

By Rick Modine



Monuments and burial vaults repose under the ancient oaks at the Carlton family's cemetery. Memories of this area's pioneer ranching heritage are preserved here. Photo provided.

In the 1870's, **Elizabeth Carlton** purchased a piece of property near her family's homestead at Ten Mile. It is a spot with great oak trees that sit on 3.51 acres today. It was fenced off with lighter post and barbed wire to keep cattle out.

Today there are 69 people interred in the cemetery taking up the areas under the ancient oaks draped in Spanish moss and butterfly orchids. The first to be buried in the cemetery was Elizabeth and **Reuben's** son **Albert** who at 14 months was buried in 1882.

She would also bury another son, Dan, in 1915. **Dan Carlton** was the county Sheriff assassinated in downtown Fort Pierce. Elizabeth ended up using the vaults for her sons, so she had two more delivered. She buried her ex-husband Reuben in 1917 before she was laid to rest in 1918.

All the burials are facing the east for the resurrection when Christ returns, even though some of the monuments on the vaults with the names look like they are facing west. It is done so people can read the markers more easily.

“A cemetery is a history of people, a perpetual record of yesterday and sanctuary of peace and quiet today. A cemetery exists because every life is worth loving and remembering – always.”

Prime Minister William Gladstone 1890's

Elizabeth had two large granite vaults hauled to the cemetery by oxen when planning her and her husband Reuben's burial. Unfortunately, she buried her son **Reuben Jr.** in 1913 who had succumbed to tuberculosis. Reuben Jr. has a pedestal marker at the head of his vault with an open bible at the top. The face of the monument has an old English capital C and an inscription that reads; “A link that binds us to Heaven.” It is believed to be a bible reference.

There was a trench that led from Elizabeth's homestead back to the west that the women used when they would go and tend the graves that was also a possible escape route in case there was Indian trouble. After having Carlton men killed in the Third Seminole War at Fort Meade, a backup was necessary.

One such occasion was when the Carlton women went to tend the graves, they discovered an infant Seminole baby abandoned in the cemetery. Unsure

Welcome - New or Returning Members

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Bernie Gray, Sheila Parcell, Sylvia Parcell,
Malcolm and Jane Rowand, Michael Sumner and Kathy Mayden,
Charlie and Kathy Hayek

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The President's Message

by Nancy Bennett

This year so far has been an exciting time for our historical society. Following our highly successful History Festival in January, we quickly jumped into planning for this year's St. Lucie County Fair which drew crowds in late February and early March.

Our loyal volunteers again stepped up to greet fairgoers at our exhibit booth. Volunteers included **Bob and Carolyn Lloyd, Margi and Pete McLeod, Ann Healy, David Campbell, Mitch and Linda Smeykal, Sue Favorite, Robyn Hutchinson, Deb Billis, Maggie Summerlin, Ernie and Judy Merrill, Katy Purcell, Beverly Traub, Terry Howard, Norma McGuire, Tom Bailey, Bob Burdge, Vanessa Parker, Ellen and Richard Lynch, Adele Lowe, Roger Miller, Jeanne Buster Johansen, and John Honea.**

Some of our volunteers hosted shifts on several fair days, and we are extra thankful for their efforts. And as usual, **Harry Quatraro** prepared the society's exhibit. Our displays are popular attractions at each year's fair.

At this time each spring, many of our seasonal visitors return to their northern homes. We enjoy their participation in our activities and hope they all will come back and join us next winter. Some of our seasonal folks have pitched in as museum volunteers, so they must be replaced. Fresh volunteers are needed more than ever, so our society can continue serving our communities. 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).

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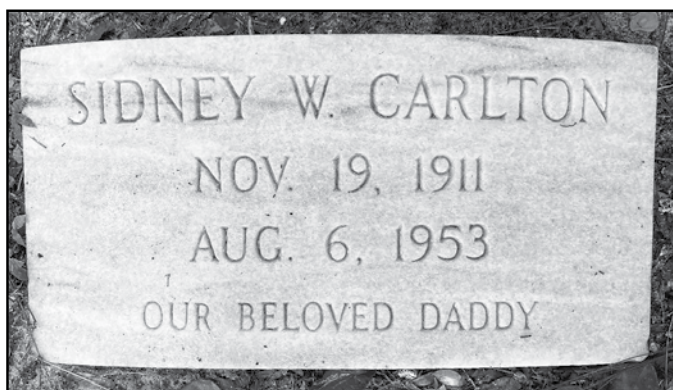
CARLTON CEMETERY... continued from page 1

of why it was left, they took it back with them. A few days later several Seminole Indians rode up to the house asking if they had the baby. They said they did and were told to give the infant back. When they refused, the Seminoles asked where the men were. Elizabeth told them they were out on a Cow Hunt. The Seminoles then told her they would wait until the men returned and made a camp nearby.

When the men returned, they asked what was going on and why were there Seminole Indians camped on their homestead?! Elizabeth explained what transpired and the men went to speak to the Seminoles. A short while later the men came back inside and told Elizabeth the women had to return the baby to the Seminoles. The women cried the baby would surely die if returned to the Seminoles. Reuben reminded them that they had a good relationship with the Seminoles. **Billy Bowlegs II** used to visit with the Carlton family and bring the children rock candy. To keep the baby would harm that fragile relationship and could lead to real trouble. The baby was returned to the Seminoles who left immediately.

It is believed that the Seminoles knew of the cemetery and may have wanted the baby to die on a sacred Christian spot to be taken later for a Seminole burial. The only reason a child would be left to die was if the infant was born from a father that the clan couldn't accept.

Later, in the fifties, **W. W. Carlton** had a cinder block fence built around the cemetery to replace the barbed wire fence of the past. The cattle were all west of town in large pastures, and it gave the cemetery a more reverent and spiritual feeling. The masons built the wall with block cells exposed so storm winds would blow through them and not against the walls. The wall was capped, and the corners were built solid, with two metal gates added at the entrance for



A heartfelt remembrance in the Carlton family's cemetery.

Photo provided.

privacy.

Some of the original posts still stand outside the walls with barbed wire hanging from them.

Many cattlemen are laid to rest here as are all the original descendants to Elizabeth and Reuben Carlton. Being one of the original families to pioneer Fort Pierce and St. Lucie County it serves to remind the family of their historical role here. As well as cattlemen, there are veterans from World War I, World War II and the Vietnam War. **Thad Carlton** was a lawyer and State Representative who was instrumental in bringing the Adams to Fort Pierce. He also owned the property where G.D.C. started operations and became Port Saint Lucie. He and his kin are buried here.

"Rube" Carlton who was a B-29 pilot in Japan in World War II and a successful rancher whose family still carries on his legacy is laid to rest here. Lawyers, a judge, doctors and businessmen and women all lay with their families in a serene and sacred place. Thanks to Elizabeth and her foresight to pick such a spot for posterity and eternity. She was a woman of vision and determination.

There are 41 above ground vaults of granite and concrete with 1 double side to side vault. Above ground vaults are a prominent form of burial and long ago this was done to prevent the caskets from coming out of the ground. In the case where the water table from 10-mile creek and hurricanes may cause that to happen. This is a common practice in New Orleans.

There are only six graves that are not heirs of Elizabeth Carlton but were permitted burial because W. W. considered them family.

A book is being compiled with everyone in the cemetery having a biography written about them. Pictures and stories of everyone are being collected so that future generations will know the role their families played in our local heritage. It will hopefully put a face and story to each, and everyone buried in our piece of heaven. **Benjamin Franklin** once said, "Show me your cemeteries, and I will tell you what kind of people you have."

In the early years up until the sixties, the vaults were "whitewashed" because it was cheaper than paint. They days they are pressure cleaned and painted with an elastic latex paint for durability.

Inscriptions vary from "Where have all the Cowboys gone" to "Beloved Mother" or "Father," and even one that reads; "He who dies with the most toys wins"! Δ

Remembrances

Harold Holtsberg

The St. Lucie Historical Society recently lost one of our most admired and longest serving members, with the passing of **Harold Isidor Holtsberg**. He died March 1 at age 97 following several years of declining health.

His was a long and productive life of service to family, community and country. The Holtsbergs were among St. Lucie County's early residents, and the first Jewish family to settle in Fort Pierce. On arrival in 1912 his grandfather **Isidor Holtsberg** opened a store on Second street. Harold's father **Fred Holtsberg** was a mayor of Fort Pierce. Harold was born in 1927. Except for several years away in the U.S. Army and at the University of Florida, he made his home here, having a career in agricultural research and business.

For many years we enjoyed Harold's presence at our historical society dinner meetings. He served on the board of directors and was an enthusiastic supporter of our society's service activities. In addition, he served as president of Beth El Temple and was a leader in numerous civic organizations.

His survivors include **Mae Holtsberg**, his wife of almost 62 years; two sons, **Martin Holtsberg** and **Frederick Holtsberg**; a daughter, **Tiffini Gothard**; plus, eight grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

At the family's request, memorial contributions may be made to: St. Lucie Historical Society Inc., P.O. Box 578, Fort Pierce, FL 34954.

Jesse Porter

St. Lucie Historical Society member **Jesse Waymon Porter** died Feb. 1 at age 94. He was practically a lifelong local resident. Born in Louisville, KY, he came to Fort Pierce at age 3, with his parents **Jesse and Ivy Porter**.

He served in the U.S. Army, 1950-52, and then had a career in the Fort Pierce Fire Department, from which he retired as a lieutenant in 1960. He also was employed by Southern Bell, U.S. Postal Service and Fort Pierce Utilities Authority. He was a member of Fort Pierce Masonic Lodge No. 87.

His survivors include his wife, **Sallie W. Porter**, daughter **Cathie Bales**, stepdaughters **Christine Deason**, **Jennifer Bauer** and **Debbie Frazzetta**; also brother **Donald Porter**, plus grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Freddie L. Humphries

St. Lucie Historical Society member **Freddie Lewis Humphries** died March 22 at age 82. He was born in Fort Myers to **Alfred and Aquilla Humphries**. After high school he served in the U.S. Army Signal Corps and then had a varied career with Southern Bell, in several retail businesses and as a cattle rancher.

He was preceded in death by his wife **Joanne Carlton Humphries**, son **Clayton Humphries**, sister **Sarah Blakley**, also two brothers, **Chester Humphries** and **Dennis Humphries**.

His survivors include sons **Mark Humphries** and **Charles Stewart**; daughters **April Hall** and **Houston Rigel**; sisters **Jeannette Daniels**, **Jeri Langman** and **Carroll Derks**, also his first wife, **Jean Humphries**. Δ

Feedback

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

Matt & Audrey VerBeek, Hamilton, MI: *"Hidden gem!"*

Caroline & Yves St. Deris, Quebec, Canada: *"Beautiful, great history & Thank You."*

Walker Family, Fort Pierce: *"Amazing museum, very informational staff."*

Zimmer Family, Groliwend, Germany: *"I liked it!"*

Mary Grant, Thomson, GA: *"Wonderful exhibit."*

Jonnel Lican, Florence, Italy: *"Fantastic."*

Dahlquist Family, Babcock Ranch, FL: *"Great museum and stories."*

C. Edwards, Clemson, SC: *"Great hidden treasure."*

Beth Haser, Buck Hill Falls, PA: *"Wonderfully surprising."*

Judy Fowler, Fort Pierce: *"Lovely tour, very informative."*

Nadine Moser, Ludwigshafen, Germany: *"Very informative, thank you."*

Treasure hunting is most recent of Shannon's many adventures

By Terry Howard

Terry Shannon, our March dinner speaker, had several careers before settling in Melbourne Beach and taking up treasure hunting on Treasure Coast Beaches.

He was born in 1941 in Becker County, Minn. In 1979 he was elected sheriff of Becker County, in a rural area 30 miles east of Fargo, N. Dak. While there he said he had investigated several murders. "Becker County is situated in the heart of what is known as Park Region and is considered one of the state's most beautiful and versatile recreation areas.



Shannon's books offer treasure hunting tips. Available at the St. Lucie County Regional History Center, Mel Fisher's Treasure Museum in Sebastian and on Amazon.

The county contains more than 400 lakes and encompasses 11 communities including the county seat, Detroit Lakes.



Terry Shannon talks to SLHS members.

After serving two four-year terms, he left law enforcement and bought a fly-in fishing camp in northern Ontario. He had ten outpost camps that could only be reached by float plane. He was a licensed pilot in both the U.S. and Canada. The resort did well and he sold it and retired again after eight years. While retired he was offered a job as police chief in Perham, Minn. He loved the job and the people and was their chief for eight more years before retiring once again.

He then followed his dream of metal detecting on Florida's Treasure Coast. He said, "My wife and I have spent our winters on the Treasure Coast living in Melbourne Beach since 2005 and have developed a love of everything that Florida has to offer."

Anyone with the desire to find treasure can do so with a good metal detector and determination. Finding treasure on beaches using a hand-held metal detector is far cheaper and easier than using big boats and blowers. And walking beaches is a pleasant and healthy activity. Terry Shannon's informative books will give readers all the guidance they need to get started on their own quest for Florida treasure. Δ

SLHS participates in salute to Crayola inventor Edwin Binney

Our historical society participated in the gala "Color Fort Pierce Beautiful" event honoring the memory of Crayola crayon inventor **Edwin Binney** on March 30. The Fort Pierce Art Club, as the sponsoring organization, decorated the Riverwalk Center along Indian River Drive with dozens of artistic renderings shaped as the Crayola crayons familiar to generations of Americans.

For attendees there were hands-on activities for all ages, plus information about Binney's life and work. Binney, a chemical engineer and businessman, developed the Crayola crayon in 1903 and it became a huge commercial success. Originally marketed by the Binney and Smith Co., the crayon business was acquired by Hallmark in 1984.

Historical society volunteers hosted a delegation of

Hallmark executives at the museum to see displays depicting Binney's activities and interests as a seasonal resident of St. Lucie County. Binney's family maintained a home north of Fort Pierce and became active in local business and civic enterprises. Binney's investments contributed greatly to the seaport development and to various charities.



Edwin Binney

Those in the corporate group commented enthusiastically about their visit, stating that until now they had been unaware of Binney's impact on this area. They promised to return to participate in Crayola-related future events. Δ

St. Lucie Historical Society, Inc.
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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 _____

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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 Meetings 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 \$14.00 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.