



DeSoto County Historical Society News

P.O. Box 1824 • Arcadia FL 34265 • 863-266-5774

www.historicdesoto.org

February 2024

This issue sponsored by - **René Collins** in memory of **Terry and Evelyn Collins.**

Celebrate February As Black History Month

Dr. Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950) founded the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History to include African-Americans and their accomplishments in educational curricula. In 1926, he established “Negro History Week” as the second week in Feb. to honor the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. Woodson believed that history was made by ordinary as well as prominent people, but he also knew the success of “Negro History Week” would be improved by scheduling it during the traditional celebrations of Lincoln’s birthday—held since 1865—and Douglass’s birthday honored since his death in 1895. The week-long observance was later extended to a month, and since 1976, the U.S. Government has recognized February as Black History Month.



Known as the “Father of Black History,” Dr. Carter G. Woodson established Negro History Week in 1926 that became Black History Month in 1976. *Photograph courtesy of the Carter G. Woodson Home*

February Meeting

Pastor Louis C. Anderson, Jr. will speak about the history of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, 304 W. Myrtle St., where he has served as pastor for 15 years. The son of Rachel Lane Anderson and Dr. Louis C. Anderson, Sr., Anderson Jr. attended the segregated Smith-Brown School while his father was principal and his mother a teacher until it closed in 1970. When Anderson, Jr., attended DeSoto Middle School, his father was principal and his mother was the librarian.

After graduating from DeSoto High School in 1978, he earned a bachelor’s degree in Sociology from Edwards Waters College—now University. He earned a second bachelor’s degree in Bible Studies from Berea College and a masters degree in theology from Southwest Florida Bible Institute. He is studying for his doctorate degree. After

working in various jobs and for several organizations, he entered the ministry in 2004.



Pastor Louis C. Anderson, Jr., stands beside the sign that marks the park on Martin Luther King Street named for his father, an educator, member of the School Board, and volunteer in the community. Pastor Anderson will share the history of his church at our February meeting. —Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.

Member Meeting:

Monday, Feb. 19

DeSoto Memorial Hospital -

McSwain Room

Room open at 11:30 a.m.

Meeting 12 noon

Pastor Louis C. Anderson, Jr. will speak about the history of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, 304 W. Myrtle St., where he has served as pastor for 15 years.

• If you are purchasing lunch, please arrive at 11:30 a.m. so you can go through the line ahead of the hospital employees.



Arcadia Tourist Camp Centennial Celebration Open House

Thanks to the City of Arcadia for joining with the Society and City Mobile Home Park Home Owners Association (CMHPhOA) to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the Arcadia Tourist Camp at the City Mobile Home Park from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Sat. Jan. 20. The event was the Society's January meeting.

We are grateful to the City for providing a shade canopy, portable toilets, tables, chairs, the food, and funding an ad about the event in the Peace River Shopper and the Arcadia Community Local (thanks to Carol Mahler for designing the ad).



We appreciate Vice-President Vernon Keen for giving the welcome and invocation, and to City Administrator Terry Stewart for singing the National Anthem. Thank you to Carol Mahler for doing the research and assembling a display of history about the property that the City purchased in Dec. 1923. In Jan. 1924, the Tin Can Tourists (TCT) (established in 1919) held their annual convention there—including a BBQ, of course—until 1931 when Sarasota convinced them to move the event to their tourist camp. However, the TCT continued to camp in Arcadia for their “Winter Homecoming” from 1932 until the group disbanded in 1989. (The TCT exists today as an all-make-and-model vintage trailer and motor coach club.)

Photo captions from top left—

DeSoto County Historical Society (DCHS) Vice President Vernon Keen welcomed the crowd and gave the invocation for the Arcadia Tourist Camp Centennial Celebration Open House.

City Manager Terry Stewart sang the National Anthem to open the Arcadia Tourist Camp Centennial Celebration Open House at the City Mobile Home Park.

DCHS Museum Coordinator Carol Mahler holds the Tin Can Tourists of the World Constitution and By-Laws that she scanned and printed from the Society's collection plus photographs—both copied and framed original prints—of the Arcadia Tourist Camp that she arranged in a display. —Photograph courtesy of Priscilla McDaniels.

Thanks to Nancy “Eric” Erikson for helping Carol transport and set up the display, and to Eric and Linda Keen for selling tickets for the BBQ. We also appreciate Stella Parker and René Collins for selling our books and postcards and sharing information about the Society with attendees. We are grateful to Eric, Stella, and Ruth Dunn for helping Carol with clean-up.

We are grateful to Doug Van Belois, President of the CMHPhOA, and members of the Association for helping with set up and clean up, and to those who baked the delicious desserts: Linda DeVillez, Nancy Hill, Ginny Hoffman, Casey Hudson, Priscilla McDaniels, Shirley Perkins, and Penny Watson.

Public Works Director Steve Underwood with the help of Angela Deluca and Mike Gibbins prepared the delicious BBQ and sides.

—All photos by Carol Mahler unless indicated otherwise.

More photos next page.



We appreciate Steve Underwood, Angela Deluca, and Mike Gibbins for preparing the delicious BBQ dinner,

and to Steve and Mike for set up and clean up. Thanks to Mayor Bob Heine, Jr., Deputy Mayor Keith Keene, and City Council Member Judy Wertz-Strickland for serving the BBQ meal, and to Cindy Keene for taking tickets.



Arcadia Tourist Camp

—con't from previous pg.

From left, City Council Member Judy Wertz-Strickland, Mayor Bob Heine, Jr., Public Works Director Steve Underwood, Deputy Mayor Keith Keene served the BBQ dinner to Margie Armstrong and others while Cindy Keene collected tickets.



Below—From left, City Mobile Park Homeowners Association President Doug Van Belois enjoyed the BBQ dinner with Penny Watson, Fred Wheatley, George Helmuth, Helen Nowland, Deb Hawley, and Dan Hawley.



—Photos by Carol Mahler

Tune In To Local History

Thanks to Mark Anderson for talking with Carol Mahler about local history—especially the Dixie Highway, Arcadia Tourist Camp, and the County Fair on Jan. 18—on the “Mark In The Morning” show on Classic County 104.5 FM, Arcadia’s only radio station. Tune in at 7:30 a.m. a.m. on Thurs., Feb. 15, as they discuss bygone years and more.



Celebrating Florida Arbor Day

Thanks to the Arcadia Garden Club for celebrating Florida Arbor Day on Jan 19 by giving away free trees, especially a Longleaf Pine (“Pinus palustris”) to the Society.

Although it looks like a clump of grass at this stage, it will soon grow into a classic pine sapling.

The buildings originally built in downtown Arcadia in the 1880s and 1890s were constructed of boards cut from Longleaf Pine and Bald Cypress. With a high resin content, the lumber is very flammable, so the downtown buildings burned hotly and quickly during the fire on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 30, 1905.



A Message From The President

Dear Members of the DeSoto County Historical Society:

You are cordially invited to join the DeSoto County Historical Society for the 20th Annual Pioneer Day, a celebration of our local heritage and history. The event will take place on March 23, 2024, at the Turner Agri-Civic Center, where you can enjoy exhibits, demonstrations, and activities that showcase the life and culture of our DeSoto Pioneers.

The Arcadia American Legion will also be a cosponsor of the event, and they will display an impressive collection of antique tractors, vintage cars, and hit-and-miss engines.

This is a great chance for our members and the community to learn from our past, understand our present, and plan for our future. We hope to see you there. Invite your friends from our community, and we welcome you to volunteer to assist with this wonderful history themed event.

Sincerely,

Adrian H. Cline, President

CLICK the button to email Volunteer Chairperson Norma Banas or call

863-558-6115.



Thanks To Our Pioneer Day Sponsors

Please sponsor the 20th Annual Pioneer Day & BBQ from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on March 23 at the Turner Agri-Civic Center, 2250 N.E. Roan St.! We have levels from Gold (\$2,500.00) to Friend of the Society (\$25.00), and we have a new sponsor level! For a donation of \$50.00, you can be a "Pioneer Friend of the Society," and thanks to Cindy McLeod Ely for being the first one to donate at that level.

We also appreciate Ruth Dunn for being the first Event Sponsor by donating \$250.00, and Arcadia Printing for being an In-Kind Sponsor! All funds will be used to preserve and promote the history of DeSoto County for future generations.

All members may ask their friends and the businesses they patronize to sponsor Pioneer Day. You may use the sponsor form on the last page of this newsletter, or you may request a paper copy of the sponsor form from Arcadia Printing, 35 S. Monroe Ave., or a digital copy from desotocountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

Please contact Sponsor Chairperson René Collins at 239-633-8681 or fcracer@comcast.net so she may make sure that only one person is asking a business or individual to be a sponsor.

Volunteer For Pioneer Day

The old saying, "Many hands make light work," is true for Pioneer Day, so please volunteer! Please give an hour or two or more at the festival, so that everyone may work and have time to enjoy the event." No matter what your level of ability or stamina, we have a job for you.

Volunteers are needed on Friday, March 22, for set-up and for Saturday, March 23, for the event and clean-up. Please help! Sign up to volunteer by contacting Volunteer Chairperson Norma Banas at 863-558-6115 or sanctuaryofarcadia@gmail.com.



Thank you to Cindy McLeod Ely for being the first Pioneer Friend of the Society Sponsor for our 20th Annual Pioneer Day and BBQ! We are also grateful that she organizes and operates the butter churning for the Hands-On History area of the festival.

—Photograph courtesy of Daniel Sutphin.

In centennial commemoration of the Arcadia Tourist Camp
DeSoto County Historical Society's 20th Annual

Pioneer Day

with the Arcadia American Legion sponsored
Antique Tractor and Hit & Miss Engine Show



& BBQ!

9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
March 23, 2024
Turner Agri-Civic Center
2250 NE Roan St., Arcadia

- Delicious BBQ, Luscious Strawberry Shortcake, Traditional Florida Foods, and many other treats
- Classic Tractor and Hit & Miss Shows
- Demonstrations of Time-Honored Skills
- Florida Authors and Artists
- Florida Cracker Cow Camp & Whip Crackers
- Hands-On History Area with Fossil Dig and Old-Time Games
- Legendary Characters
- Musical entertainment & Much More!

James Mitchell "Anaxias" Johnson (1850-1908)
Nearly seven feet tall & 250 lbs... Anaxias' was named
for his age - 18 when he was making 18¢ when round-trip
to deliver the mail from Fort Taylor to Fort Meade.

Parking \$5.00 per vehicle. Like us on Facebook!
www.historicdesoto.org • 863-265-5774 • desotocountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Chocolate Beet Cake Bakers Needed!

Using organic farming techniques, Worden Farm in Punta Gorda is a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) growing delicious vegetables. In past years, Owners Chris Worden and Eva Worden have donated red beets to the Society, and Volunteer Claire Miller baked chocolate beet cake for Pioneer Day. (As you may know, red velvet cake was originally made with beets for sweetening and that—



rather than red food coloring—is what gave the cake its characteristic color.) Claire is no longer able to do the baking, but Worden Farm is still willing to donate the beets. If you would like to

bake some chocolate beet cakes, please contact Carol Mahler at your earliest convenience.

desotocountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

DeSoto History On Display At State Convention

Thanks to Property Appraiser David Williams for requesting and receiving permission from the Society's Board of Directors to place the historic long-carriage typewriter and calculator on display at the Property Appraisers Association of Florida (PAAF) Mid-Winter Conference in Ybor City from Jan. 24 to Jan. 26. Appraiser Arturo Sandate—who helped with the display—said it was very popular! This Remington typewriter has a 48 inch carriage that was first used to type the 1922 DeSoto County Tax Roll. It was designed to type the oversize pages in the ledger books once used to record both taxes and property deeds, and the calculator was mechanical—not an adding machine—but a true calculator. The machines were shared among the offices in the Courthouse until newer technology replaced them. They were first donated to the County Library and then to the Society where they are now on display in the Museum. We appreciate David Williams for including the Society's brochures in the display.



John Morgan Ingraham House Museum
300 N Monroe Avenue

MUSEUM OPEN:

9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Thursdays
9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the second and fourth Saturday of the month.

The Howard and Velma Melton Historical Research Library in the Ingraham Seed House
120 W Whidden Street
Open by appointment only:
Research assistance available. 863-266-5774

Contact Information

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adriancline@outlook.com

Historical Society Newsletter Sponsors

- Jan. - **Alvie Davidson** in memory of his parents, **Ollie & Mary Lee Davidson.**
- Feb. - **René Collins** in memory of **Terry and Evelyn Collins.**
- March - **Dale, Patty & Sue** in loving memory of our parents, **Howard & Velma Melton.**
- April - **Arlene Conley** in loving memory of my husband, **Warren Conley,** and his parents, **Leo and Hazel Williams.**
- May - **Marshall and Hazel Whidden** in memory of our parents, **Marshall and Barbara Whidden,** and our beloved son **Douglas Marshall Whidden**
- June - **Michelle, Dan, & Dow** in loving memory of our parents, **Eddie & Iris Garner**
- July - **Ruth Dunn** in loving memory of her late husband, **Rudolph Dunn**
- Aug. - **Charlotte Hill Carter** in loving memory of her husband, **Frederick Lawrence Carter**
- Sept. - **Marguerite & Tom Hankins** in memory of **Mr. & Mrs. T.J. Pipkin (Pip & Alison Pickard Pipkin)**
- Oct. - **People for Protecting Peace River**
- Nov. - **Betty Hall Wood** in memory of her late husband, **G. Pierce Wood, Jr.**
- Dec. - **The McLeod children** in memory of their Dad, **Harold McLeod**

Mark Your Calendars For May Day!

As part of the “bigger and better” 2024 Suncoast Remake Learning Days Festival, April 20 to May 4, the Society will hold a “Hands On History” event from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Wed., May 1, 2024, at the Arcadia Housing Authority, 7 Booker T. Washington Rd. in Arcadia. We’ll be dip-pen writing, typewriting, cane pole fishing, orange juicing, making a bucket brigade, and more! To join in the fun, please call or email Carol Mahler.





DeSoto County Historical Society, Inc.
 P.O. Box 1824, Arcadia, FL 34265
 863-266-5774
 desotocountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com
 www.historicdesoto.org
We're on Facebook, too!

20th Annual Pioneer Day

9 a.m. to 3 p.m., March 23, 2024, at the Turner Agri-Civic Center

with the Arcadia American Legion sponsored Antique Tractor and Hit & Miss Engine Show

Please support the DeSoto County Historical Society by sponsoring our 20th Annual Pioneer Day.
 For more information, please contact René Collins, sponsor chair, 239-633-8681 or fcracer@comcast.net.

The names of ALL SPONSORS will be listed . . .

- **in the Historical Society's Newsletter through April**
- **on the Society's Website for the year**
- **in a special feature on our Facebook page**
- **on the stage banner**
- **announced from the stage during the event.**

___ **Gold Sponsor - \$ 2,500.00**

- Listed on all flyers
- Listed in promotional materials and event program.
- Area of festival (fossil dig, for example) named for you

___ **Silver Sponsor - \$1,000.00**

- Listed in promotional materials and event program.
- Area of festival (fossil dig, for example) named for you

___ **Bronze Sponsor - \$500.00**

- Listed in event program.
- Area of festival (fossil dig, for example) named for you

___ **Event Sponsor - \$250.00**

- Area of festival (fossil dig, for example) named for you

___ **Entertainment Sponsor - \$100.00**

___ **Pioneer Friend of the Society Sponsor - \$50.00**

___ **Friend of the Society Sponsor - \$25.00**

___ **In-Kind Sponsor**

Sponsor Contact Information

Company name & contact person: _____

Telephone: _____ Email address: _____

Mailing address: _____

Amount or type of help offered: _____

Fill in the contact information and send check payable to the DeSoto County Historical Society
 with this form to P.O. Box 1824, Arcadia, FL 34265.