



DeSoto County Historical Society News

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

www.historicdesoto.org

July 2025

This issue sponsored by - Ruth Dunn in loving memory of her late husband, Rudolph Dunn.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MONTHLY MEETING NOTICE

A Message From The President

Dear Members and Friends:

We warmly invite you to attend our upcoming meeting of the DeSoto County Historical Society, taking place on Monday, July 21, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. in the McSwain Meeting Room at DeSoto Memorial Hospital. For those wishing to enjoy a meal beforehand, lunch will be available from the hospital cafeteria at 11:30 p.m.

This month, we are pleased to present the Legacy Writing Workshop, led by Mr. Christopher Parent, who will guide us through the art of preserving family stories, personal memoirs, and community history through writing. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn how your voice and memories can contribute to DeSoto County's rich historical tapestry.

In addition, we will be discussing exciting upcoming events, including the beloved Cracker Meal and the annual Holiday Tour of Historic Homes and Buildings. Your input and involvement are vital as we prepare these traditions that bring our heritage to life for the community.

We look forward to seeing you there and sharing in an afternoon of learning, storytelling, and camaraderie.

Warm regards,

Adrian H. Cline

President, DeSoto County Historical Society

Dedication of Coach Fred Carter Pavilion

You're invited to the dedication for the Coach Fred Carter Pavilion at **9:00 a.m.** on **Fri., July 25**, organized by City at the pavilion in the Smith-Brown Recreation Complex at 320 Martin Luther King, Jr., St.. The base of the pavilion is the tennis court where Carter taught the sport for so many years. The Carters have been faithful Society members. His widow, Charlotte Carter, and their four daughters will attend and share memories. Light refreshments will be served.



Everyone has a story...

Legacy Writing Workshop


Monday, July 21st | 12:15pm -1:00pm
Desoto County Historical Society Member Meeting
Desoto Memorial Hospital
McSwain Room
Guest speaker: Christopher Parent-Community Partnership Specialist

Have your adult children told you they don't want your stuff, antiques or possessions?

Family stories and values recorded in a legacy workbook are the perfect gifts to share with them, consumes little space and are free. You just need some help getting started. This workshop includes:

- Legacy guide and journal
- Legacy journaling
- Legacy letter writing
- How to get started
- Tips for improving your confidence as a writer
- Thought-provoking questions
- Storytelling

Materials will be provided.


EmpathHealth.org



—Photos by Carol Mahler.

JUNE WRAP UP

Arcadia Main Street Celebrates 40 Years

A version of this article by Carol Mahler was published in the May 22 issue of The Arcadia Community Local.

On May 6, Arcadia Main Street (AMS) celebrated its 40th anniversary at the Tree of Knowledge Park with a dinner and program that included the dedication of a replica of the “Bronco Buster,” a bronze statue by Fredrick Remington, donated to the City of Arcadia by John Arnold. Also recognized were on-going improvements in the Tree of Knowledge Park, funded—in part—by a grant from Hope DeSoto.

In 1985, Arcadia was chosen as one of five cities in Florida to start a “Main Street Program.” The Florida Dept. of State Division of Historic Resources, oversees Florida Main Street, “a technical assistance program with the goal of revitalizing historic downtowns and encouraging economic development within the context of historic preservation.” About 60 Florida cities now have Main Street Programs. <https://dos.fl.gov/historical/preservation/florida-main-street>

Founded in 1980 as the National Main Street Center, a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Main Street America “leads an inclusive, impact-driven movement dedicated to reenergizing and strengthening older and historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts through place-based economic development and community preservation.” <https://mainstreet.org/about/who-we-are>

Pam also thanked those who donated to the Park project, including Hope DeSoto, Animal Ark of Arcadia, John Arnold, Historical Society, DeSoto Nursery, Oak Tree Inn, Home Builders Construction, Sanchez Machine Shop, Superior Powder Coating, R. Benitz Hauling LLC, and Vision Ace Hardware.



Above—The new welcome sign greets visitors as they enter downtown Arcadia.

John Arnold donated the statue of the “Bronco Buster” now mounted on a pedestal at the Tree of Knowledge Park.

Entrance “arches” identify the location by name: Tree of Knowledge Park.

New signs stating the park rules are posted.

Animal Ark of Arcadia donated the dog waste stations for the Tree of Knowledge Park.

Left—Thanks to Carol Mahler for writing and designing a sign about the history of the Tree of Knowledge and to Arcadia Main Street for mounting it on a pole and placing it at the base of the tree.

—Photos by Carol Mahler



JUNE WRAP UP—Con't

“Stories That Connect Us” @ Your Library

On June 17, 18, and 19, the Society provided the 1:00 p.m. program for the DeSoto County Library’s Summer Reading Program with the theme “Stories That Connect Us.” We are grateful to

Carol Mahler for choosing and reading an appropriate story, plus sharing artifacts and information from the Museum. We appreciate Children’s Librarian Ama Burns for designing a craft with Carol and providing supplies. We are grateful to Karen Smoke for helping out at all three programs.

The Sisterhood from Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church presented a “Juneteenth Walk” exhibit in the main room of the DeSoto County Library from noon until 2:00 p.m., and Sisterhood Member Janie Brazzell allowed Carol to borrow her large framed print of “Harriet Tubman’s Underground Railroad,” a painting by Paul Collins, to share with the children during the Society’s library program that also featured Harriet Tubman.



A mom works with her sons to make family trees during the Society’s program on June 17 at the DeSoto County Library.

Naomie Deak and Orion Deak stand near the community puzzle that the Society assembled on June 18: they and the other children each drew a puzzle piece showing how their family has fun.

On June 19, Liam Barnhill worked with Children’s Librarian Ama Burns to add sparkles and laminate his lantern craft during the Juneteenth story time presented by the Society.



History of DeSoto Memorial Hospital . . . Impromptu!

Thanks to Dylan Tindall for sharing a brief history of DeSoto Memorial Hospital with the Society at our last meeting. We appreciate that he offered to do so after President Adrian Cline announced that the speaker for our June meeting, Jerry Gaskins, had canceled because of his wife’s ill health. Gaskins has promised to reschedule his presentation—“The Contributions of the Gaskins’ Family to the History of DeSoto County.”

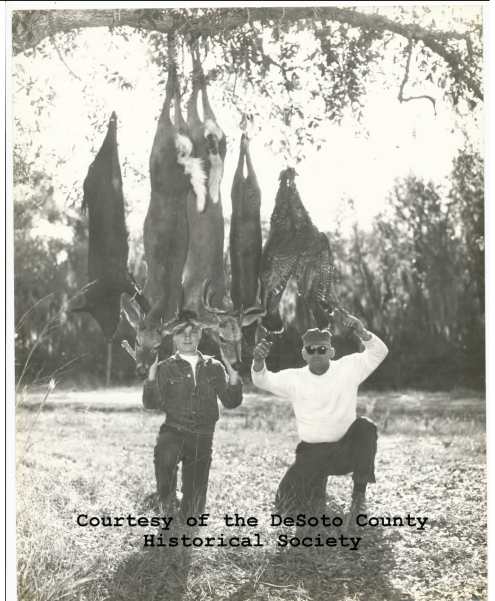


**CLICK TO
VISIT OUR
PAGE**

“I Wonder Wednesday” . . . On Facebook

Thanks to Carol Mahler for scanning the unknown photos and writing the narratives and to Kathy Bryce for selecting the photos and posting them and the narratives on the Society’s Facebook page as the “I Wonder Wednesday” feature.

The photo of a man and boy with what they killed during a hunting trip that we posted on May 21 was identified by Carolyn Foster Dyal and Cassie Dyal McHale (who said the photo was taken in 1965-1966), and Kathy McEvaine Dyal who said the photo was taken by Sonny Carlton. The man is Edward Earl “Ebie” Dyal and his son Keith Dyal.



Courtesy of the DeSoto County Historical Society

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Wanted: Saddle Rack

The Society would like to display the saddle of Jack Duncan, who was the All-Florida Championship Rodeo Cowboy five times, in the Museum. However, much of its wooden saddle rack is rotten, so it needs to be rebuilt or replaced. Please contact Carol Mahler to do the work or donate a saddle rack.



One board is missing; another is broken, and others are rotten on the saddle rack for Jack Duncan's saddle. It is 32.5" high and 30" long.

Volunteer Positions Open

Museum Guides: If you like to meet new people or talk with local residents, then you will enjoy giving tours of the Museum. Thanks to Carol Mahler, every item in the Museum has a card on display that identifies it, so the answers to many questions are easily found. In addition, notes on how to highlight a few items each room are available for you to use as you give tours and to keep with you. In-person training will be provided if desired. Please contact Carol Mahler now to help give tours when the Museum opens in September.

Museum Gift Shop and Local Business Coordinator: If you like to visit shops downtown and chat with the owners, then you will enjoy being the Coordinator who makes sure that our brochures and publications are in our local shops and restaurants. Most businesses already have brochure holders, so refilling the supply every few months is easy. The Society makes available eight publications plus a set of four reprinted historic postcards, so the Coordinator will invoice and deliver them to businesses as needed. The Museum Gift Shop is online, so the Coordinator only has to mail items ordered through our Website—every six to 12 months.

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 my 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.**



CLICK THE BUTTON TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT VOLUNTEERING.

Museum Shop Offerings

The Society's publications include the following: Howard Melton's volumes (Footprints and Landmarks: Arcadia and DeSoto County, Florida, and More Footprints and Landmarks: Arcadia and DeSoto County, Florida) plus the books the Society has produced and/or reprinted: Cracker Cures: A Compendium of Cures, Concoctions, Potions, Remedies, Magic, Old Wives' Tales, Omens, Luck Signs, and Talismans, History of the Smith-Brown School 1892-1950, and Recollections I-IV: A Collection of Historical Photographs, Documents, Letters, Diaries, Stories, Recipes, Sayings, and Other Memorabilia about Arcadia and DeSoto County, Florida. Our reprints of historic postcards include the ACL Train Depot, IOOF/WOW Building, Plaza Hotel, and Rosin Arcade (aka "Pink Building"). These items plus our Pioneer Day T-shirts, Society ball caps, and three lithographs by the late local resident Guy LaBree, known as "The Barefoot Artist of the Florida Seminoles" may be viewed online at <https://historicdesoto.org/museum-shop>

Summer Tours of The Museum

Even though the Museum is closed for the summer, visitors still request tours, as on June 26, when four people from Englewood and North Port inquired about a tour of the Museum at the Research Library where Kathy Bryce, Elizabeth Kenney and Carol Mahler were working. Thanks to Carol Mahler for giving them a tour, and again later that afternoon, to group of five workers from the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches who were in Arcadia for the 2025 “Harmony In The Streets” Summer Camp hosted by the DeSoto County Sheriff’s Office in the Turner Agri-Civic Center. One of the workers remembered the tour that Carol gave the group last summer and contacted Carol earlier in the week to arrange the visit.



The Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches workers posed for a group photo after they enjoyed a tour of the Museum.
—Photo above and at right above by Carol Mahler.

The Great Library Cart Caper

Thanks to Claire Miller for finding a used library cart for sale through Facebook Marketplace. Claire drove to the school in Tampa that was selling the cart, and, when it wouldn’t fit in her car, lashed the cart to the roof of her car, and traveled to Fort Meade to meet Carol Mahler.

Carol met Claire in Fort Meade, paid for and transferred the cart into a truck and delivered the cart as a donation to the Research Library. It is a great addition for our reference materials—such as the city directories and the set of “South Florida Pioneers” magazines—that often need to be moved for research. Many thanks to both Carol and Claire for their efforts!



The city directories and “South Florida Pioneers” magazine are easily accessible and able to be moved on the library cart.

4th of July Parade

Thank you to Cindy McLeod Ely for organizing our entry, and walking in the parade with Charley Kerber, Karen Smoke and Jackie Hampton for cracking the whip. And to James Hampton for driving



the vehicle that pulled the wagon and Dakota Vargas.

—Photo above by Dylan Tindall, left by Cindy.

John Morgan Ingraham House Museum
300 N Monroe Avenue

MUSEUM OPEN:

9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Thursdays

and on the second and fourth Saturday of the month.

CLOSED May-June-July-August.

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

Moving Historic Records and Chairs

Thanks to Carol Mahler and Paul Niklas for cleaning up the shed and making space for about 40 boxes of historical records donated to the Society by the County. We appreciate Ron Jones for transporting the Society's South American dugout canoe and ornate lectern and placing them "on loan" at the Arcadia American Legion K-Post 11 Hall. We are also grateful to Carol, Paul, Peter Niklas, and Keith Wallace (who also used his truck) for moving the boxes—as well as five historical oak chairs from the County Courthouse—from the County's facilities building to the Society's shed.

Carol had previously sorted through one of the boxes and found records from the Works Progress Administration projects of the 1930s in Arcadia that fill in a significant gap in the Society's collection. She is hoping that the rest of the boxes yield other important history. Arcadia Main Street and the Oak Park Inn have agreed to each take two of the historic chairs "on loan" from the Society.



Above--From left, Keith Wallace, Paul Niklas, and Peter Niklas unload boxes of old documents donated to the Society by the County.

Left--Ron Jones moved the Society's South American dugout canoe and ornate lectern that will be on loan to the Arcadia American Legion K-Post 11.

MORE UPCOMING EVENTS

From Manatee Genealogical Society

Tuesday, August 5, 2025, 10 a.m. to 12: p.m.

FREE - To attend Zoom please register at least one day in advance by emailing: info@mgsfl.org. The Zoom meeting will open at 9:50 a.m. For more information, please visit the website at: <https://mgsfl.org/>.




Speaker: Maureen Taylor

"8 Steps to Organizing and Preserving Your Family Photographs – From daguerreotypes to digital imaging dilemmas"

Zoom Meeting

Tuesday, August 5, 2025 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. EST



This in-depth seminar covers everything a family photographer needs to know about caring for photographs. Topics include printing and sharing digital images, and how to safely label grandparents' pictures.

Maureen Taylor, The Photo Detective® helps clients with photo related genealogical problems. Her pioneering work in historic photo research has earned her the title "the nation's foremost historical photo detective" by The Wall Street Journal and appearances on The View, The Today Show, Pawn Stars, and others.

Get rid of those shoeboxes! This FREE seminar offers essential strategies for safeguarding your family's visual history!

Contact Information

Editor: dchsocietyfl@gmail.com

Historian: Carol Mahler, 863-445-0789
desotocountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

President: President: Adrian Cline, 863-494-5758
adriancline@outlook.com

Following the program and questions: There will be a moderated open discussion period relative to genealogical topics. Attendees are encouraged to ask questions on issues pertaining to the program.

For more information:

Email: info@mgsfl.org

MGS meetings are hybrid for November-May.

Internet website: www.mgsfl.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ManateeGenealogicalSociety

Monthly Membership Meetings: generally held first Tuesday of the month.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 9, 2025

USPS: Manatee Genealogical Society
 PO Box 1194, Bradenton, FL 3420