



# DeSoto County Historical Society News

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

[www.historicdesoto.org](http://www.historicdesoto.org)

October 2025

This issue sponsored by - **People for Protecting Peace River.**

## MEMBER MEETING NOTICE

### Letter from the President

Dear Members:

We would like to inform you that there will not be a membership meeting on Monday, October 20, 2025. This change is due to the recent Fifth Annual Florida Cracker Meal, held on October 4, 2025, at Pine Level Church. There will be a Board Meeting on Oct. 20—see page 3.

We are delighted to share that the Florida Cracker Meal was a tremendous success. It was truly heartwarming to see our community come together in celebration of our heritage. From the authentic flavors to the heartfelt storytelling, every detail reflected your commitment to preserving and sharing local history. Thank you for keeping tradition alive and making history feel so vibrant and welcoming.

Special thanks are extended to our membership, board of directors, Pine Level Church, Pine Level Youth, and the entire community for their dedication and support in making this year's Florida Cracker Meal such a memorable occasion.

Our next regular membership meeting will be held on **Monday, November 17, 2025 at noon in the McSwain Room at DMH.** We look forward to seeing you then as we continue our mission of preserving and sharing the rich history of DeSoto County.

Sincerely,

*Adrian H. Cline*

President, DeSoto County Historical Society

## RECENT EVENTS

### Fellowship Hall Filled for the 5th Annual Florida Cracker Meal



On Oct. 4, more than 100 people enjoyed the 5th Annual Florida Cracker Meal in the Pine Level Church Fellowship Hall. We thank Connie Bateman for her excellent presentation of the history of the Pine Level Church and the Town of Pine Level, with technical assistance from Pastor Ed Horne for her slideshow. We appreciate him also for giving the invocation and benediction.

We are grateful to Fussell Frozen Foods for donating the pork steaks and to Steve Fussell and the Fussell Realty team for preparing them to perfection. Thanks to all the members who prepared and donated the food: Kathy Apodaca, Adrian Cline and Jane Cline, Ruth Dunn, Cindy Ely, Linda Keen and Vernon Keen, Carol Mahler, Diane Wilson and Luke Wilson. We appreciate Jeff Griffis for supplying the iced tea and René Collins for her donation of \$50.00

Thanks to Kathy Apodaca and Linda Keen for serving as co-chairpeople of the event. We appreciate them and the others who helped set up for the dinner: Cindy McLeod Ely, Jeff Griffis, and Vernon Keen. We appreciate Kathy Bryce and



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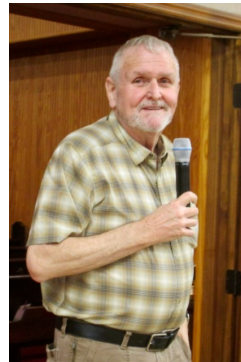
Carol Mahler for serving as greeters and to Kathy for also selling our books and postcards at the event. We are grateful to Adrian Cline for his welcome and closing remarks as well as serving as the event's emcee. Thanks to Luke Wilson for leading a sing-along of "Happy Birthday" for Jeff Griffis and "Amazing Grace" to close the event.



Congratulations to the winners of the Arcadia Albritton Coker Cake Contest: Chelsea Palmer who won for "most creative" and Linda Reesor who won for "most traditional" cakes. Each received \$25.00. We also appreciate everyone who baked cakes: Kathy Apodaca, Susie Catalano, Cindy McLeod Ely, and Amber Jones. We are grateful to Cindy Kinard for judging the contest and for donating her Swamp-Cabbage Chocolate Cake made from her grandmother's recipe. Thanks to Carol Mahler for organizing the contest and designing all the certificates presented at the event.

We appreciate the Pine Level Youth Group, under the supervision of Jami Horne and Leah Nickerson, for their assistance in plating the desserts, serving the food, clearing the tables, and helping to clean up: Abbygail Avant, Faith Carmargo, Octavion Dennis, Tranya Kirkland, Logan Kirsch, Kennedy Moore, Raegan Moore, and Rosemarie Smith. People generously donated more than \$400.00 in "tips" for the youth, and the Society will be donating that money to them.

Thanks to the individuals who sold tickets: Kathy Apodaca, Adrian Cline, Ruth Dunn, Jeff Griffis, Linda Keen and Vernon Keen, Carol Mahler, and Luke Wilson. We also appreciate the businesses who made tickets available to the public: Crews Bank and Trust, 2747 SW Highway 70, member FDIC; Radio Shack, 707 N. Brevard Ave.; Rosé Cafe and Bakery, 10 S. DeSoto Ave., and Sweet Magnolia Creamery and Confections, 203 W. Oak St. We are grateful to Carol Mahler for organizing the ticket sales and to Bonnie Molloy of Radio Shack for selling the most tickets for the event!



At far left—Participating in the Arcadia Albritton Coker Cake Contest were Ruth Barney (standing in for Linda Reesor), Cindy McLeod Ely, Kathy Apodaca, Amber Jones, Chelsea Palmer, and Susie Catalano with President Adrian Cline and Contest Judge Cindy Kinard.

Above—Accompanied by Luke Wilson on the guitar, Adrian Cline led the singing of "Happy Birthday" for Jeff Griffis who was born on Oct. 4. Pastor Ed Horne offered both the invocation and benediction and operated the slideshow for Connie Bateman's presentation.

Below—From left, President Adrian Cline recognizes the members of the Pine Level Youth Group: Logan Kirsch, Octavion Dennis, Raegan Moore, Tranya Kirkland, Faith Carmargo, Kennedy Moore, Rosemarie Smith, and Abbygail Avant.





### More Florida Cracker Meal photos

President Adrian Cline presented a certificate of appreciation to Connie Bateman for her excellent program about

the history of Pine Level Church and Town.

President Adrian Cline presented certificates of appreciation to co-chairpersons Linda Keen and Kathy Apodaca.



Kathy Bryce sold the Society's publications and served as the greeter along with Carol Mahler, not pictured.

—Photographs by Carol Mahler

### Make a Memorial Donation

The Society welcomes and appreciates memorial donations in memory of those we have lost this year, or any other Society member. Funds are used for the maintenance of the Museum and Society property. Donations may be made online at <https://historicdesoto.org/>.

To donate by mail, make your check payable to Desoto County Historical Society, Inc. and mail to: DeSoto County Historical Society, Inc. P.O. Box 1824, Arcadia, FL 34265. Please include a note with the purpose of your donation.

### 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.**

### Board of Directors Meeting:

Monday, Sept. 20

DeSoto Memorial Hospital -

McSwain Room

Meeting 12 noon

Members and Friends Welcome to Attend—No Program

### Contact Information

Editor: [dchsocietyfl@gmail.com](mailto:dchsocietyfl@gmail.com)

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President: President: Adrian Cline, 863-494-5758

[adriancline@outlook.com](mailto:adriancline@outlook.com)

## SEPTEMBER WRAP UP

### Four of Five Projects Completed

As reported in the Sept. newsletter, Gary Miller installed new latticework around the Museum's air conditioner and constructed a new outhouse. The Museum remained closed after the summer months of June, July, and August, instead of opening as usual in Sept., so that Miller could finish working on the handicap ramp and the south porch where it meets the ramp. Pending approval by the City's Historic Preservation Commission, Miller will construct a new set of back stairs "for show only."

While Miller was working on the ramp and porch, the City's Senior Code Enforcement Officer Naomi Lantz issued a "stop work" order because she felt a permit was required. However, Ron Jones met with the County's Building Dept. Director Lester Hornbake, and he said that no permit was needed, and work continued.

Miller pressure-washed both the ramp and the porch, and so removed the several coats of Thompson's Water Seal applied by Emmanuel Maldonado as part of his Eagle Scout project. Although the new boards blend in perfectly with the pressure-washed boards, the ramp and porch need to be sealed again. If you are able to help with this task, please contact Carol Mahler.

### Museum and Research Library Cleanup

Thanks to Carol Mahler for dusting and vacuuming the Museum and Research Library in preparation for reopening to the public on Thurs., Oct 2, and in preparation for hosting—with Kathy Bryce—Chrissy Haughwaut and Beth Faircloth, members of the Hollingsworth and Williams families on Sat., Sept. 27. We appreciate Carol for giving them a tour of the Museum as well as sharing historical photographs and information, and to Kathy for helping with the Hollingsworth family tree.

**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.

**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

## Thank You For The Donation!

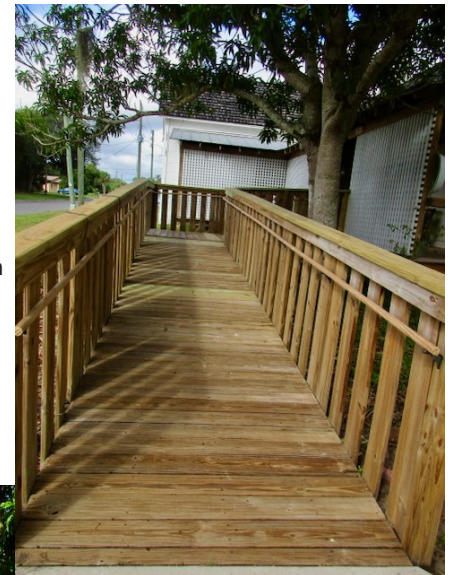
The Society has wanted to display the saddle of Jack Duncan, first five-time Arcadia Rodeo All-Around Cowboy, but its saddle rack had some rotten wood and needed repair. We asked for a volunteer to renovate the old rack or for someone to donate one.

We are grateful to Cecil Altman for donating a saddle rack welded of horse shoes! It makes a perfect complement to the historic saddle, and both are prominently displayed in the living room of the John Morgan Ingraham House Museum. Check it out the next time you visit.

—Photo by Cindy Ely



The repaired and pressure washed ramp and porch need to be sealed again with Thompson's Water Seal. Click the button to send an email to Carol to volunteer!



—Photos by Carol Mahler

### “I Wonder Wednesday” on Facebook

Thanks to Carol Mahler for scanning the photographs and writing the descriptions for the unknown photographs posted on the Society’s Facebook page every Wednesday. We also appreciate Kathy Bryce who works with Carol to select the photographs from the Society’s collection and then posts their digital images on the Society’s Facebook page. Each of these unknown photographs has been identified, and the Society is grateful for all responses.



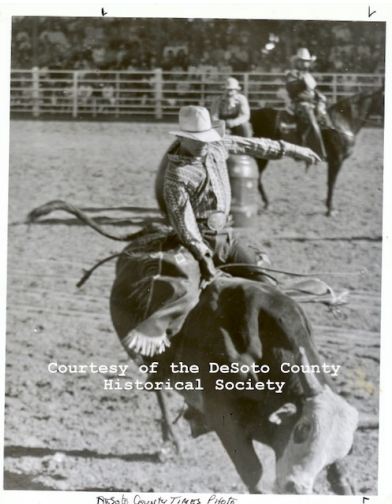
Posted on August 6 – A number of people identified the original building of the Calvary Baptist Church. Luke Wilson found a picture in the April 25, 1963, edition of *The Arcadian* newspaper which was taken at the same time.



Posted on August 13 – The house has been identified by Mary Stemm: “This was the original home of Alton Latimer at 719 Parkview Rd., built by Slim McAnly in the early 1960’s. None of the palm trees exist today. We are the second owners and have lived here for 24 years....”



Posted on July 2 – Jimmy Fussell identified the rider as Jack Duncan, and many others agreed.



Posted on July 9 – Kevin Shelfer identified the bull rider as Marty Stanearth and the announcer in the background as Johnny Pope.



Posted on September 9 – This home has been identified by Mary Stemm: “My parents’ home at 60 Rio Vista Road, Homer and Arlyn Whidden Christ. They built the home in 1956 or 1957. I was about 4 years old when we moved in. They lived there until they passed away in 2008 & 2009.” Mary thinks she is the little girl in the picture.



Posted on July 16 – Jimmy Fussell identified the clown as Mike Horton aka “Smurf.” He wrote, “I’m going to guess on the date and say 1985. Just for a little extra info the cowboy riding the horse with P brand is probably Donald Parrish and the other cowboy should be Homer Cannon, and I would bet Winnie Duncan took the picture.”

**In Memoriam:**  
Algie Didlaukies (1936-2025)

Longtime supporter of the Society and owner of the popular Glass, Antique or Not shop in downtown Arcadia, Algie Didlaukies passed away in August.

In 1987 when she was third-ranked woman amateur bowler in Puerto Rico, she was injured in a fall while working for the Veterans Administration and could no longer bowl. So she started collecting Depression glass and sold it out of her home in San Juan, then in a shop in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1990, and in Miami, Florida, in 1992. She also owned shops in Shattuck, Oklahoma, and Marietta, Georgia.

After working 23 years as a civil servant, she retired in 1998 and worked full time in her shop in Dania, Florida. She was a member of the American Cut Glass Assoc., Heisey Glass Assoc., Cambridge Glass Club, and South Florida Depression Glass Club. For Channel 10 TV Antiques Road Show in Miami and Fort Lauderdale, she organized the glass and porcelain appraisers.

In 2003, she opened Glass, Antique or Not at 219 W. Oak St., and she and her husband Wolf Didlaukies moved here in 2005. They closed that the shop in 2013, and in 2014, they bought 127 W. Oak St., and reopened the shop! In 2023, they received the first “facade grant” from Arcadia Main Street, thanks to funding from T-Mobile, to repair damage from Hurricane Ian in 2022.

They had purchased the shop from Robert Reed, son of Stuart Reed and Teresa Reed, who operated Reed Jewelers after buying the building in 1955 from the Morqus family. The one-story shops from 121 W. Oak St. to 131 W. Oak St. were constructed in 1907 for Friedmond Morqus. After his son received his optics and ophthalmology degrees in 1914, Dr. James Morqus returned to Arcadia. They opened Morqus & Son Jewelers and Opticians. They also sold and repaired watches and clocks.



In 1921, an advertisement in the Enterprise newspaper reported the installation of new show cases and wall cases, and those century-old fixtures now display elegant glass, crystal, Depression glass, sterling silver, china, and pottery. Glass, Antique or Not also sells furniture and paintings, and Wolf offers furniture repair and restoration.

We send our deepest sympathy to Algie’s family. We also offer our condolences to her daughter and store manager Toni Badovinac as the shop will soon be closing.

Above—Algie with her daughter Toni Badovinac on the occasion of celebrating the completion of the work funded by the T-Mobile Facade Grant.

—Photograph by Carol Mahler

When someone unfamiliar with Florida asks where you’re from, how do you usually answer?

**Big Waters Land Trust** is conducting a brief **County Geographic Identification Survey** to better understand how our community partners describe their place in the region. Your input will help us:

- Reflect the way people naturally identify with their home areas,
- Strengthen how we communicate across counties, and
- Ensure our conservation work resonates with the communities we serve.



The survey takes just a few minutes to complete:  
[County Geographic Identification Survey](#)

## ELECTION NOTICE

DeSoto County Historical Society  
Officers and Board of Directors 2026

### NOMINATIONS

Adrian H. Cline	President
Vernon Keen	Vice President
Nancy Humphrey	Corresponding Secretary
Elizabeth Kenney <b>(Interim)</b>	Recording Secretary
Nancy Erickson	Treasurer
Carol Maher	Research Library Coordinator
<b>Open Position</b>	Museum Coordinator
Jeffery Griffis	Board Member
Luke Wilson	Board Member
Ruth Dunn	Board Member
Kathy Apodaca	Board Member
Ronald Jones	Board Member
Ellen Hutson	Board Member

Any nominations for an officer or board member position must be submitted by October 31, 2025, to Adrian H. Cline at the following email address: [adriancline@outlook.com](mailto:adriancline@outlook.com). If email is not an option, you may telephone the nomination to 863.558.1596. The Officers and the Board of Directors shall be elected at the November meeting and installed at the annual business meeting in December. If there is more than one nominee for any office, the election shall be by written ballot and a majority vote of members present shall elect. If there is only one nominee for any office, the election may be by voice vote.

## From Manatee Genealogical Society

Registration & Attendance Open to the public (no charge)  
Registration is required at least 24 hours in advance — please email [info@mgsfl.org](mailto:info@mgsfl.org) with the subject: Zoom Registration November meeting.

Zoom access link will be emailed. Details below.




**Speaker: Peggy Jude**

**“My Cousin Vinny:  
DNA Case Studies in Identifying Matches”**

Hybrid Meeting-Zoom and in-person

**Tuesday, November 4, 2025**

**10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. EST**



Join us for an exploration of how DNA analysis can break through genealogical brick walls. Through real case studies, we'll examine different approaches to identifying and working with your DNA matches to extend your family tree.

**Peggy Jude** is a speaker, educator, and researcher for over 40 years, teaching in 5 areas: DNA, Genealogical Technology, Preserving Family History and Heirlooms, Methods and Records, and Swedish Genealogy. She is a co-course coordinator for Foundations in DNA course at the Institute for Genealogical and Historical Research (IGHR), a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, the Genealogical Speakers Guild, a graduate of ProGen, and multiple advanced genealogical institutes.

**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](mailto:info@mgsfl.org)

**In-person location:** Manatee Central Library,  
1301 Barcarota Blvd West, Bradenton, FL

**MGS meetings** are hybrid for November-May.

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

**Internet website:** [www.mgsfl.org](http://www.mgsfl.org)

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, December 2, 2025

**Facebook:**  
[www.facebook.com/ManateeGenealogicalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/ManateeGenealogicalSociety)

**USPS:** Manatee Genealogical Society  
PO Box 1194, Bradenton, FL 34206



## FLORIDA PIONEER FESTIVAL

NOVEMBER 7-8, 2025

Festival Hours: 9:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Merchandise Market & Food Court: Open all day, 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

231 Wilbur C King Blvd, Zolfo Springs, FL 33890

This event is a reimagining of the beloved Pioneer Park Days of Zolfo Springs, honoring our past while looking toward the future. The two-day festival blends tradition with innovation—featuring live music, hands-on workshops, and two full days of education with nationally recognized names like Joel Salatin, Laura Cox, Rachel Hester, and more.

For more information see:

<https://www.floridapioneerfestival.com/>

### Historic Home In The News

Pia Crone and Thomas Crone, owners of the John Lee Jones and Mourning Johnson Jones Home, shared that their house, built in 1892 with Queen Anne-style characteristics, was featured on Fox 4 News: <https://www.fox4now.com/arcadia/feels-like-home-family-turning-arcadia-landmark-into-bed-and-breakfast>



John L. Jones & Mourning Johnson Jones House, 601 W. Oak St.  
Courtesy of the DeSoto County Historical Society

### Help Wanted - Museum Coordinator

We are looking for a local history lover to take on this rewarding position. Welcome visitors and give tours of our museum. Placards describe the history of the items in each room, so all the answers to questions visitors might ask are there. Must commit to volunteering on most days that the museum is open and/or finding and training other docents to help out on open days. Historical dress encouraged. Learn the behind the scenes activities of curating and maintaining a collection. Enjoy summers off—as the museum is closed in summer—but expect to help out with cleaning and refreshing displays. This is not a paid position, but we guarantee you will find it a worthwhile commitment as you develop the skills and represent our community.



CLICK THE BUTTON TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT VOLUNTEERING.

Take the Mobile-Friendly,  
Online, Self-Guided  
Tour of Historic  
Downtown Arcadia



### Antique and Vintage Bottles Give Away

Two years ago, some antique and vintage bottles were donated to the Society, and Carol Mahler selected some of the collection for the Museum. Miss Patty's Consignment Shop, 120 W. Oak St., kindly agreed to try to sell the rest. From the sales, Miss Patty donated \$45.00 to the Society. Now the unsold bottles need to find good homes, so they were given away during the Discover Arcadia Vintage Market from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Oct. 11. Miss Patty has graciously agreed to put the bottles out next week until they are gone, so please stop by and take a bottle or a few home! Your donations are appreciated.



### From Punta Gorda Historical Society

Get Ready for Happy Howl-eeen!

Love to dress up your favorite pooch for Halloween? Head on down to the PGHS at History Park Sunday Market for its annual Halloween Dog Costume Contest on Sunday, October 26, from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 501 Shreve St (next to the PG public library). Enjoy a ghoulish stroll with doggie treats through the Sunday Market with a prize for the best dog costume. Hang out and listen to awesome live music while shopping for fresh produce, food truck goodies and handmade items at the Sunday Market and the shops at the Artisan Village.

It will surely be a spooky way to celebrate a Happy Howl-eeen!

<https://www.puntagordahistory.com>

