



DeSoto County Historical Society News

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

www.historicdesoto.org

December 2023

This issue sponsored by
The McLeod children in memory of
their Dad, Harold McLeod

January Member Meeting Will Celebrate the Centennial of the Arcadia Tourist Camp! 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., Sat., Jan. 20, 2024 at the City Mobile Home Park

Instead of meeting for lunch on the third Monday in January, the Society will join with the City Mobile Home Park Association and the City of Arcadia to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the Arcadia Tourist Camp! The construction of the “Dixie Highway” from Michigan to Miami in 1915 brought motorists to Florida. An east route and a west route was designated in the Midwest so that the highway intersected both Chicago and Detroit, and the same route duplication happened in Florida, and the west route bisected Arcadia! Soon tourists were camping in orange groves, pastures, and yards, so the City purchased land in 1923 and established the Arcadia Tourist Camp. City funds built latrines and a recreation hall, hired a pianist, and paid for many other improvements for the camp.

Established in 1919, the Tin Can Tourists was comprised of 22 camping “units”—mostly automobiles with adjoining canvas tents—gathered in Tampa at DeSoto Park, the State’s first public campground. In 1924, the Tin Can Tourists held their annual convention at the Arcadia Tourist Camp, and every subsequent year until 1931, when the City of Sarasota stole them away.

The Arcadia Tourist Camp remained the official location of their “Winter Homecoming” aka the holiday season. Some Arcadia residents—including Margaret Way’s parents—Amos Way and Amy Way—became members of the Tin Can Tourists in order to participate in the dances and other social gatherings. There’s more to the story that will be shared at the event.

The City and the City Mobile Home Owners Association will host a BBQ, and the Society will have a display of historic photographs, memorabilia, and more. Join us for some fun!



Member Meeting:

****NOW ON THIRD MONDAY****

Monday, December 18

DeSoto Memorial Hospital
900 N. Robert Ave.

McSwain Room opens at 11:30 a.m.
and you may purchase your lunch
in the hospital cafeteria.

Meeting will start at 12 noon.

Sheriff Jim Potter will install
the Society’s officers and directors.

Then the Society will celebrate the
Christmas season with some sweet treats!

Please bring a dessert of any kind
and a Christmas memory—of yours
or one passed down in your family—
to share at the meeting.



JROTC Cadets Walked with the Society in the Veterans Day Parade

Thanks to the students who walked with Carol Mahler and Pam Miller in the Veterans Day Parade on Nov. 13. Carol and Pam carried the Society's banner, and the cadets displayed the 38-star flag that was current when Arcadia incorporated as a town in 1886 and when DeSoto County was established in 1887.

They also held the signs that honored the veterans of the past. As they walked the parade route along Oak St., they chanted a short rhyme written by Carol.

Veterans—we appreciate!
Veterans—we celebrate.
Thank you for sacrifice
Thank you for your service.
Veterans—we appreciate!

From the Dec. 29, 1905, *DeSoto County News*

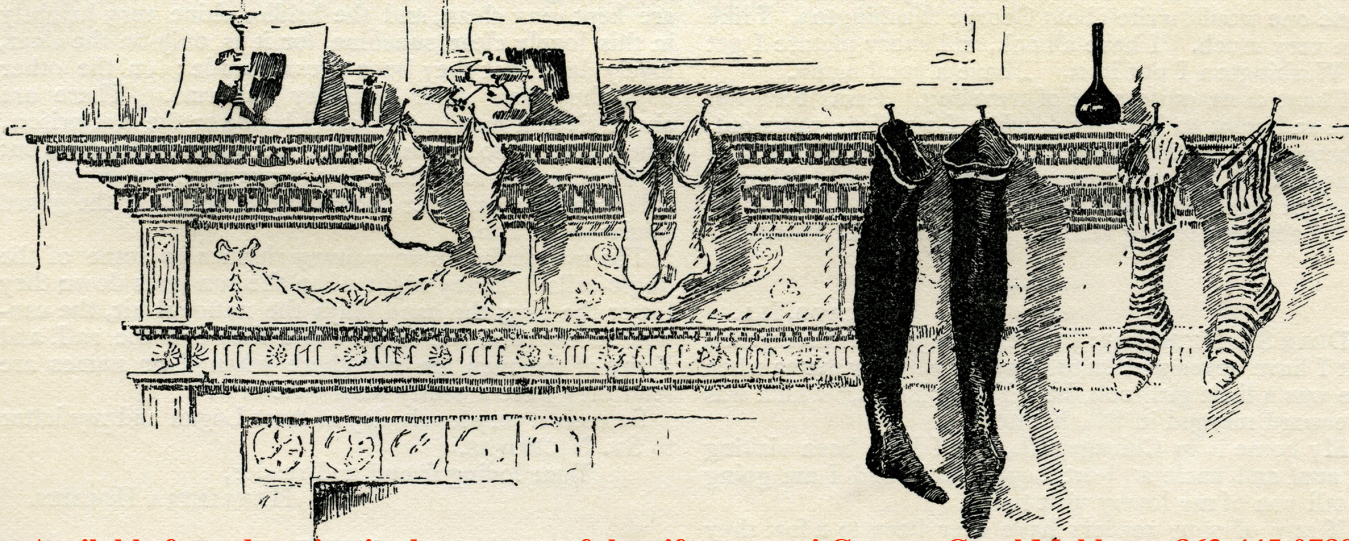
"G. P. Lamb of Lake City has moved to Arcadia and is now occupying one of R. E. Whidden's cottages in North Arcadia. Mr. Lamb has bought property north of town which he will improve at once and set out in an orange grove. . . .

"The Arcadia Music House has for the present located at Dishong Bros. store. All orders will be promptly filled. We are again building in the same old place and our stock is again replaced by receiving several [railroad] cars of new good since the fire."



The DeSoto High School JROTC Cadets who walked with the Society in the Veterans Day Parade: from left, Wendy Garcia, Isabella Ruiz, Anna Hernandez, Stefani Contreras, Natalye Martinez, Laura Hirschy, Yobanni Lopez, Selina Montes, Lexi Gallagher, Zowey Ponce, Gabriella Rios, and Zhimora Wicks.

Scholarship “Thank-You” Gifts Still Available . . . and they make great stocking stuffers!



Available for a donation in the amount of the gift or more! Contact Carol Mahler at 863-445-0789.

- Before & After Beauty Salon (Missy Fountain)
- \$25 gift certificate
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- \$25 gift certificate
- Before & After Beauty Salon (Judy Schaefer)
- \$25 gift certificate
- Advance Auto Parts - \$25 gift card
- Biggar & Biggar Antique Mall - \$50 gift card
- Blossoms Beauty & Boutique - \$20 gift certificate
- Radio Shack - \$25 gift certificate
- Treasure Alley - \$20 gift card



Thanks to the Society’s 2023 Officers and Directors for their Leadership & Service!

President Norma Banas, Vice-president Vernon Keen, Secretary Karen Smoke and Interim Secretary René Collins, Treasurer Nancy “Eric” Erickson, and Museum Coordinator Carol Mahler. Directors: Jeff Griffis, Ellen Hutson Stella Parker, Trudi Super, and Luke Wilson.

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 to 5 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.



Save the date!

20th Annual

DeSoto County Historical Society
Past • Present • Future
ARCADIA, FLORIDA

**In Centennial
Commemoration
of the Arcadia
Tourist Camp**

Pioneer Day

March 23, 2024

*with the Arcadia American Legion sponsored Antique Tractor,
Vintage Car and Hot & Miss Engine Show*

Turner Agri-Civic Center, 2250 NE Roan St., Arcadia
863-266-5776 * desotocountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com
www.historicdesoto.org * Like us on Facebook!

**Introducing and Welcoming the Society’s
Officers and Directors for 2024**

President Adrian Cline, Vice-president Vernon Keen, Secretary René Collins, Treasurer Nancy “Eric” Erickson, Museum Coordinator Carol Mahler, and Past President Norma Banas.
Directors: Ruth Dunn, Jeff Griffis, Ellen Hutson, Marsha Kransdorf, Stella Parker, and Luke Wilson.

The Society will have a display-only booth at the 2024 DeSoto County Fair, February 2 through Feb. 10, and we need help designing, assembling and setting it up. Please contact Carol Mahler to help.



John Morgan Ingraham House Museum
300 N Monroe Ave, parking at 120 W. Whidden St.

MUSEUM OPEN:

9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Thursdays.
9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays.

**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.

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

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