



DeSoto County Historical Society

PAST • PRESENT • FUTURE
ARCADIA, FLORIDA

DeSoto County Historical Society News

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

www.historicdesoto.org

April 2024

This issue sponsored by - **Arlene Conley** in loving memory of
my husband, **Warren Conley**, and my parents, **Leo**
and **Hazel Williams**.

Twenty years of Pioneer Day

This was our twentieth Pioneer Day, which means that the children who attended those first years are now likely parents with their own children. The smiles on the children's faces and the memories in their heads are the reason we keep doing this.

More pictures and a full Pioneer Day thank you and recap inside.



Member Meeting:

Monday, April 15

DeSoto Memorial Hospital -

McSwain Room

Room open at 11:30 a.m.

Meeting 12 noon

Our meetings are open to all. Join us for guest speaker **Peggy Jude**. Peggy serves as the VP, Projects and member of the board of the Manatee Genealogical Society (FL). She leads both the DNA and the Technology for Genealogy Special Interest Groups for the society. She holds a BS in Zoology from Iowa State University and an MBA from the University of Michigan. Peggy is a co-course coordinator for the Foundations in DNA course at the Institute for Genealogical and Historical Research (IGHR). She is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, the Genealogical Speakers Guild and a graduate of ProGen, and multiple advanced genealogical institutes.

Creating a Family History Legacy

Our guest, **Peggy Jude** is a speaker, educator and researcher who has been conducting genealogical research for over 40 years.



She specializes and teaches in five areas of genealogical interest: DNA, Genealogical Technology, Preserving Family History and Family Heirlooms, Genealogical Methods and Records, and Swedish Genealogy.

Mon., April 15

**McSwain Room of
DeSoto Memorial
Hospital**

Please arrive by 11:30 a.m. if you
plan to have lunch, meeting
begins at noon.



We Couldn't Have Done Pioneer Day ... Without Such Wonderful Volunteers!

Thank you to the volunteers who helped with the vendors and to Norma Banas for organizing all of the volunteers: Nancy "Eric" Erickson, Linda Keen, Marsha Kransdorf, Stella Parker, and Jean Vitali.

—Continued next page



—Photos previous page and this page by Daniel Sutphin and Karen Smoke

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We Couldn't Have Done Pioneer Day . . . Without Such Wonderful Volunteers!

We are grateful to Bruce Neveau and Dennis Tyson for driving from Georgia to work on parking for Pioneer Day! So many friends and acquaintances were pleased to see them again. Thanks to the DeSoto High School JROTC cadets who helped with parking— Yandel Avila, Jessenia Benitez, Anaysia Foreman, Kimberly Galindo, Nayeli Garcia, Wendy Garcia, Juan Mendoza, Zhimora Wicks—and Sgt. Robert Newell (U.S. Army, Retired). We also appreciate Linda and Vernon Keen for delivering the lunch to the volunteers working on parking.

We appreciate those who participated in the Pioneer Day Opening Ceremony: the Rev. Jerry Waters for praying the invocation, Terry Stewart for singing the National Anthem, and Society President Adrian Cline for giving the welcome. Serving as Color Guard, DeSoto High School JROTC Cadets presented the flag: from left, Regina Hudson, Kimberly Galindo, Anaysia Foreman, and Alyrika Bailey.



Following the ceremony was excellent entertainment— thanks to Luke Wilson—who invited the performers: John Bois, Leonard Delabruere, George Hausser, Erin Bryce Hoffer, Dennis Mader, Keith Mathys, Johnny Shannon, Vgo, and Rita Youngman. We are grateful to John, Leonard, Erin, Dennis, Keith, and Rita for donating their time and talents, and to Carol Mahler for serving as emcee. We also appreciate Milo Moreno for portraying his great-great-great grandfather James Mitchel “Acre-foot” Johnson and Claire Miller for impersonating Arcadia Matilda Albritton Coker.

Thanks to Kathy Bryce who organized the Society's information and merchandise table and to her daughter Erin Bryce Hoffer (who also performed on stage), René Collins, and Jeff Griffis. We appreciate Jeff for transporting the bottled water and making sure it was iced and in place to sell. We are grateful to Karen Smoke for designing and installing a display about Pioneer Day at the DeSoto County Library first and then at Joshua Citrus Grove Stand, the sponsor banner on the stage, and the nearly 50-foot timeline of the Arcadia Tourist Camp in the lobby of the Turner Center!

The “Hands-On History” area of Pioneer Day is one of the most labor-intensive, and we appreciate all the volunteers who gave their time and energy there: Greg Albritton, Ruth Dunn, Zane Dyal, Cindy McLeod Ely, Ken Gallt, Susie Gallt, Mark Gregoire, Alli Jane Griffin, Kathy Griffin, Jackie Hampton, Dave Hutchinson, Jahna Leonard, Claire Miller, Adria Niklas, Anne Niklas, Marie Niklas, Paul Niklas, Peter Niklas, Chelsea Palmer, Stella Parker, Sydalee Parker, Valerie Sciaretta, Karen Smoke, and Keith Wallace—plus Interact Club members: Aiyana Aris, Zuleyuma Barragan, Evelyn Barrera, Esmeralda Mondragon, and Rocio Nonez.

Thanks to the set-up and clean-up crew that included Adrian Cline, Ken Gallt, Jeff Griffis, Dave Hutchinson, Linda Keen, Vernon Keen, Jahna Leonard, Carol Mahler, Claire Miller, Chelsea Palmer, Karen Smoke, and Luke Wilson.

We are grateful to the DeSoto High School JROTC cadets who helped set up on Friday despite the wind and rain: Alyrika Bailey, Isabella Bates, Joel Camacho, Daniel Delgado, Anaysia Foreman, Kimberly Galindo, Anna Hernandez, Xander Heyne, Regina Hudson, Yobanni Lopez, Immanuel McKnight, Stephan Moreno, Maggie Mootispaw, Revel Rodriguez, Saria Saunders, Holly Wortkoetter, and Joy Zhang. We also appreciate those who cleaned up on Saturday: Yandel Avila, Jessenia Benitez, Nayeli Garcia, and Juan Mendoza.



Thanks to Carol Mahler and the DeSoto High School JROTC Cadets for working on Sat., March 30—some even after arriving home very late on March 29 from a field trip to Georgia—to clean and re-organize the Museum and shed: from left: Natalye Martinez, LTC Ron Baynes (U.S. Army, Retired), Selina Montes, Nicholas Casteel, Katherine Orozco, Juan Mendoza, Jessenia Benitez, and Maggie Mootispaw. We also appreciate Norma Banas, Kathy Bryce, Elizabeth Kenney, and Carol Mahler for cleaning, counting, sorting, organizing, and restoring the Pioneer Day supplies.

—Photos this page, above left Jahana Leonard, above right Carol Mahler.

Thank You to Our Pioneer Day Sponsors!

Bronze Sponsor: \$500

Millennium Physician Group
Peace River Electric Coop (PRECO)
Sevigny & Associates Eye Care

Event Sponsors: \$250

A+ Environmental Restoration
Adrian and Jane Cline
Arcadia Centennial Lions Club
Arcadia Stockyard
Co-Part
Cowpens, LLC
David Abraham
In Memory of John and Flora Reynolds
Kinards Tree Service
Kiwanis Club of Arcadia, Florida
Mid-Florida Credit Union
MyShelly's Kitchen
People for Protecting Peace River (3PR)
Performance Automotive
Rotary Club of Arcadia
Turner Realty

Entertainment Sponsor: \$100

Allen and Linda Reesor
Arcadia Abstract & Title Company
Bethel Farms
Crews Bank and Trust, Member FDIC
DeSoto County Republican Party
DeSoto County Democratic Executive Committee
E & I Family, LLC
Fender Auto Parts
Jean Vitali, Realtor at Collins Realty
Jerod Gross
Judy Schaefer
Linda and Vernon Keen
Keith Keene

Entertainment Sponsor: \$100

Maassen Oil Company
Paul Bennett Seusy
Peace River Campground
Peace River Tax Services
René Collins
Robert W. Heine, Jr.
Sheriff Jim and Michelle Potter
United Country / Gulfand Real Estate
Wingman Aviation

Pioneer Friend of the Society: \$50.00

Cindy McLeod Ely
Glass, Antique or Not
Judy Wertz-Strickland
Karen Smoke
Susan Kuczenska
Williamson Group Realty

Friends of the Society: \$25

Arlene Conley
In Memory of Charles J. Mahler
Marshal Quinn Jones
Norma and Marsha

In Kind Donations

A+ Environmental Restoration
Arcadia Printing
Arcadia Computer
Bryan Farm Supply
Dakin Dairy
DeSoto Sign Company
Fussell Meats
Joshua Citrus
Peace River Shopper
Publix Market at the Arcadia Crossing



The DeSoto County High School class of 1958 has made a tradition of holding a mini-reunion at Pioneer Day. From left, Johnny Johnson, Tom Hankins, Patty Pattison, Marguerite Hankins, Ruth Dunn, John Maassen, and Sue Maassen.

—Photo by Daniel Sutphin

A Message From The President

Dear Members of the DeSoto County Historical Society,

We are immensely grateful for the enthusiastic participation and support of our members, volunteers, presenters, and vendors which led to the resounding success of Pioneer Day 2024. Your dedication and commitment to preserving and celebrating our history is truly commendable. The DeSoto County Historical Society extends its heartfelt thanks to each one of you for your valuable contributions. Your efforts not only made the event memorable but also strengthened the bonds within our community.

As we reflect on this successful event, we are reminded of the importance of our monthly society meetings. These gatherings are a cornerstone of our efforts to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of our rich heritage. We cordially invite you to continue this journey with us by attending our upcoming meetings. Your presence and input are vital as we endeavor to keep our history alive for future generations.

Sincerely,

Adrian H. Cline

President, DeSoto County Historical Society



A big thank you to the American Legion for partnering with us and managing their part of the show.

These boys are full of curiosity about the old flywheel engines.

—Photo by Daniel Sutphin

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.

Contact Information

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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

Leadership DeSoto Class Learns Local History

Thanks to Kathy Bryce and Carol Mahler for sharing information about the history of Arcadia and DeSoto County with the Leadership DeSoto Class on March 20. Carol met the class at the Chamber of Commerce office, and walked with them to McSwain Park, the Tree of Knowledge Park, and downtown, explaining the historical significance of various buildings and landmarks.

They walked to the Ingraham House Museum, where Kathy gave a tour to half the group while Carol played an artifact guessing game with the others. Then, they switched groups. Finally, Carol met the group at Lake Katherine to review the history of that park and the T-33 static display aircraft. We appreciate Stella Parker for working with Kathy to open the Museum before the group arrived and to close it after they left.

We appreciate Pine Level Church for hosting the class for lunch and a history lesson before they traveled to Owens School House. We are grateful to Luke Wilson for sharing the history of Owens School House and the Owens Community and Johnny Fugate for the history of King Park and the Fort Ogden Community.

First Annual Arcadia Main Street Golf Tournament

We are grateful to Carol Mahler for reinventing the display of the 102-Year-Old Arcadia Golf Course for the first annual Arcadia Main Street Golf Tournament on Sat. March 2. She made the first display for a commemoration of the course's centennial anniversary for the 18th Annual Pioneer Day, and after the event, the Society placed the exhibit at the Golf Course Clubhouse. It was lost in the clean-up of Hurricane Ian damage. Carol will shift the material into a large frame, so that it may be permanently displayed at the Clubhouse.

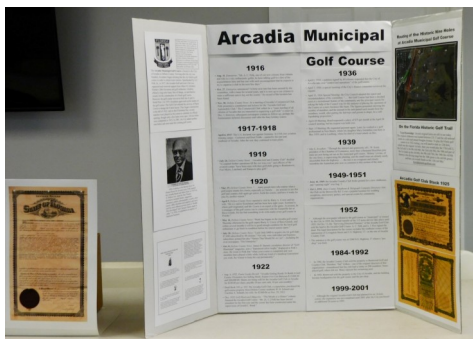


Photo credits this page—Above, Carol Mahler, Right, Cindy Ely

Covered Wagon and Whip Crackers In Rodeo Parade

Thanks to Cindy McLeod Ely for organizing the Society's entry for the Rodeo Parade on March 9. We appreciate her for decorating the covered wagon and to James Hampton for towing it with his truck. We are grateful to Jackie Hampton and Zane Dyal for demonstrating whip cracking along the route. Thanks to Carol Mahler and Valerie Sciarretta for carrying the banner and to Carol for her narrations.



Second Saturday Guided Tours of Downtown Arcadia

We appreciate that after the Rodeo Parade, Carol Mahler offered guided walking tours of downtown Arcadia, and three people accepted. We are grateful to Kathy Bryce and Nancy Humphrey for staffing the Museum and Research Library. Carol will offer guided walking tours of historic downtown Arcadia on Apr. 13.

Welcome to our newest members!

Parker Hall

Rita Schaefer

Vivian Stewart

Pioneer Day Signs and Banners

Thanks to DeSoto Signs for donating the cost to update our Pioneer Day banners and to Dave Hutchinson, Carol Mahler, and Keith Wallace for hanging them. We appreciate receiving permission from the following businesses and individuals to display our banners: Susan Baumel, Fender's Auto Parts, Maassen Oil, Peace River Campground, Radio Shack, Rogers Oil, Sevigny & Associates Eye Care, Turner Center, and Valerie's Auto Sales

We are grateful to Kathy Bryce, Nancy "Eric" Erickson, and Carol Mahler for placing our Pioneer Day yard signs, and to the following businesses and individuals for allowing us to use their locations: Arcadia Bed and Breakfast Inn; Crews Bank and Trust, Member FDIC; Elizabeth Missionary Baptist Church; Martin's Country Store; Peace River Campground; Performance Automotive; Sunnybreeze; and Marshall and Hazel Whidden.

We appreciate Jahna Leonard and Carol Mahler for taking down all the banners and signs on March 24!

Pioneer Day On The Air

We appreciate Carol Mahler for recording a Pioneer Day commercial that aired on WCXS, 104.5 FM Classic Country, Arcadia's only radio station, and WENG 98.1 FM, 107.5 FM & 1530AM during March. We are also grateful to Mark Anderson for hosting Carol to talk about Pioneer Day during the "Mark in the Morning Show" on March 7, 18, and 21. Tune into some local history when she talks with Mark at 7:30 a.m. on Apr. 11.



Display about Pioneer Day at the DeSoto County Library first and then at Joshua Citrus Grove Stand, designed by Karen Smoke.



Pioneer Day volunteers Stella Parker, Ruth Dunn, and Sydalee Parker--all eating strawberry shortcake before the crowd arrived.
—Photo by Carol Mahler



Pioneer Day entertainment included Vgo and George Hausser, top (Photo by Daniel Sutphin) and Erin Bryce Hoffer, bottom (Photo by Karen Smoke).

Mark Your Calendars For May Day!

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.

See the flyer for The 2024 Suncoast Remake Learning Days Festival, April 20 to May 4 on next page.



HANDS-ON HISTORY

**3 TO 5 P.M., WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, ARCADIA HOUSING AUTHORITY,
7 BOOKER T. WASHINGTON AVE.**



Learn history by
doing what people
did in the past!



Free fun and snacks!

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