



DeSoto County Historical Society News

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

www.historicdesoto.org

June 2023

This issue sponsored by - Michelle, Dan, & Dow in loving memory of our parents, Eddie & Iris Garner

Society Awards Scholarship To Piper Phillips!

Congratulations to Piper Phillips, the winner of the Society's 2023 scholarship for DeSoto County residents who graduate this year from high school. A member of Calvary Baptist Church, she has worked in the church's after-school program during her high school years. She volunteered for Pioneer Day and also for our Suncoast Remake Learning Days event—Plants That The Pioneers Used. She will attend the University of North Florida, study to be a teacher, and plans to return to Arcadia. We wish her best success with her education!

In her essay on the importance of preserving local history, she appreciated downtown Arcadia, especially W. Oak St.: "... the history still stands strong." She wrote, "To erase local history would be to erase generations of blood, sweat, and tears. We must preserve history to preserve the roots holding our community together."



From left, Society President Norma Banas presents scholarship certificate to Piper Phillips while her Aunt Stella Parker looks on. Photograph courtesy of DeSoto High School.

Member Meeting:

NOW ON THIRD MONDAY

Monday, June 19

DeSoto Memorial Hospital -
McSwain Room

Room open at 11:30 a.m.

Meeting 12 noon

**Frank Langford will tell how his
"great" grandfather, in 1817, drove
cattle from Georgia to Florida, and
his family has been in the cattle
business ever since.**

- Please arrive early so you can go through the line ahead of the hospital employees.
- Parking is currently tight due to construction— please park where you find space available away from the hospital entrance if you are able to walk the distance.

“I Wonder . . .” Wednesday

- Thanks to Carol Mahler and Kathy Bryce for establishing and maintaining a weekly Wednesday post on the Society's Facebook page of an unidentified photo from the Howard and Velma Melton Historical Research Library. So far, at least three identifications have been made!
- Please share the post widely with your friends and family.

Celebrate Juneteenth in Arcadia!

Juneteenth is an elision of June 19, the day in 1865 when the Emancipation Proclamation was announced in Texas, the last of the Confederate States of America to learn that slavery was abolished. Also known as Juneteenth Independence Day, Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Liberation Day, and Emancipation Day, Juneteenth was first officially celebrated in 1866 in Texas and its observance spread across the United States from then to the present time.

On January 1, 1863, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States of America, had signed into law “The Emancipation Proclamation” stating, “. . . all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.” More than two years passed before U.S. Major General Gordon Granger and his regiment arrived in Galveston on June 19 and announced that Emancipation Proclamation.

In 2021, Juneteenth became a federal holiday, and this year, Building A Village will hold the 2nd Annual Juneteenth Celebration from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, June 17, at the park located on Martin Luther King, Jr., Street in Arcadia. Everyone is welcome!

Remember June As Pride Month

The LGBTQ History Museum of Central Florida, Inc. was established to preserve the GLBT History Project displays at Orlando’s first Come Out With Pride on Oct. 11, 2005. It has grown since, although it does not yet have a physical location. For more information, check online at <http://www.floridalgbtqmuseum.org>.

According to the Library of Congress, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Pride Month is an annual celebration during the month of June to commemorate the Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan. On June 28, 1969, the police raided the Stonewall Inn and “. . . thousands of homosexuals went to the streets to demonstrate against centuries of abuse . . . from government hostility to employment and housing discrimination, Mafia control of Gay bars, and anti-Homosexual laws.”

A year later, the first Pride march was held in New York City, and Gay Pride Day soon became a week-long and then a month-long celebration, including concerts, parades, parties, picnics, symposia, workshops, and more. (<https://www.loc.gov/lgbt-pride-month/about>).



Parades are a popular way to celebrate Juneteenth as shown in this 1908 Schluter’s Advertising & Souvenir Photograph of Martha Yates Jones and Pinkie Yates in a buggy decorated with flowers for a Juneteenth parade in Houston Texas. Photograph courtesy of <https://cdm17006.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p17006coll147/id/95/rec/1>

Mark the Summer Solstice on June 21

Some call the summer solstice the longest day of the year because the earth tilts as far as it can toward the sun. The word “solstice” derives from the Latin term “solstitium” from the words “sol” meaning “sun” and “sistere” meaning “to stand.” At 10:58 a.m. on June 21, 2023, the sun will be directly over the Tropic of Cancer and mark the official solstice or “midsummer,” an important milestone especially for agricultural communities in many societies. Does anyone know of any midsummer traditions or observances in DeSoto County?

Message from President Norma Banas

Summer is upon us with rainy season and threat of new hurricanes. As a community, we cannot help but be fearful this coming season. Some of us are still recovering from Hurricane Ian.

But history is encouraging.... In the past 120 years there have only been 12 significant hurricanes affecting our area. In the past 50 years only four hurricanes: Andrew in 1992, Charley in 2004, Irma in 2017, and Ian in 2022.

Yes, the time between each occurrence seems to be shorter, but also we are more and more prepared. We have a wonderful community with support from agencies to friends. Be prepared but not fearful. God willing, this will be one of the quiet seasons.



Thanks to Society President Norma Banas for presenting a certificate of appreciation, historic photograph, and gift card to Cadet Jair Arellano at the JROTC Awards Dinner and Ceremony on April 28. He served in the color guard and parking crew for Pioneer Day. Photograph courtesy of JROTC.

June Begins Hurricane Season

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Hurricane Center explains that "the Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 to November 30. The Atlantic basin includes the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, and Gulf of Mexico.

Based on a 30-year climate period from 1991 to 2020, an average Atlantic hurricane season has 14 named storms, 7 hurricanes, and 3 major hurricanes (Category 3, 4, or 5 on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale).

The first named storm typically forms in mid to late June, the first hurricane tends to form in early to mid-August, and the first major hurricane forms in late August or early September."

Hurricanes Audrey in 1957, Agnes in 1972, Alberto in 1994, Allison in 2001, and Dennis in 2005 all began in June, but none of them hit Florida.

However, June is a good month to prepare for the hurricane season, so stock up on non-perishable food, bottled water, batteries, and other essentials—see a disaster supply checklist at www.floridadisaster.org.

Dear Members of the DeSoto County Historical Society,

Thanks to the DeSoto County Historical Society for honoring one of our cadets at our recent School Year 2022-23 JROTC Awards Ceremony. We appreciate Ms. Norma Banas for taking time out of her schedule to give our cadets the opportunity to be recognized for their actions and achievements.

In JROTC, the goal is to motivate young people to be better citizens, and our cadets exemplify such. With the awards presented, our cadets are encouraged to continue giving their time to serving the community. Thank You for being part of a special night of recognition. We hope to see you in years to come.

Sincerely,

JROTC Staff and Cadets

Congratulations to Our Sister Society: Southwest Florida Historical Society

Thanks to Carol Mahler for representing the DeSoto County Historical Society at the Southwest Florida Historical Society's centennial birthday party for "The Little Yellow House," 10091 McGregor Blvd.—their current home in Fort Myers, on Sat., June 3.

The Florida legislature established both DeSoto and Lee counties in 1887, and the two have many other ties including the Atlantic Coast Line Railway (1904) and later the Seaboard Air Line Railway (1926). Several SFHS members recalled football games between the Green Wave (Fort Myers High School) and the Bulldogs (DeSoto High School).

Chet Wallace of the Edison and Ford Winter Estates demonstrated an Edison Cylinder



Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.

Phonograph from the Museum during the event. It—and many other similar models—had no volume control, so folks stuffed a sock in the bell to lower the sound. Thus, the phrase that we use to tell someone to be quiet, "Oh, put a sock in it!"

MUSEUM AND RESEARCH LIBRARY CLOSED FOR THE SUMMER

The Museum and Research Library will be closed for the months of June, July, and August, so that our volunteers may clean and update the exhibits and research space. Research assistance and tours will be available by appointment only; please call Carol Mahler at 863-445-0789.

John Morgan Ingraham House Museum
300 N. Monroe Avenue

**The Howard and Velma Melton Historical
Research Library in the Ingraham Seed House**
120 W. Whidden Street

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

Editor: dchsocietyfl@gmail.com

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

President: Norma Banas, 863-558-6115
sanctuaryofarcadia@gmail.com

Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 Survey

Thanks to Carol Mahler for completing the Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6) survey designed to measure the impact of the arts and culture in the State of Florida. Commissioned by the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs, the survey was conducted Americans for the Arts, an independent research group that has conducted such studies for more than a quarter century. We'll let you know the results of the survey when they are revealed.

Why Is June the Month of Weddings?

The month of June was named for Juno, the Roman goddess of marriage, and she was believed to bestow prosperity and happiness on couples who married in her namesake month.

The Society's Property Maintenance

Thanks to Jeff Griffis for volunteering to mow the lawn at the museum and research library. We also appreciate that he will coordinate efforts to maintain the property and repair the slight damage the Museum suffered from Hurricane Ian.

New Member of the Board of Directors

Thanks to Stella Parker for volunteering to serve on the Society's Board of Directors to fill the position of Stuart Swanberg.

Save the Date: September 30 Third Annual Florida Cracker Meal

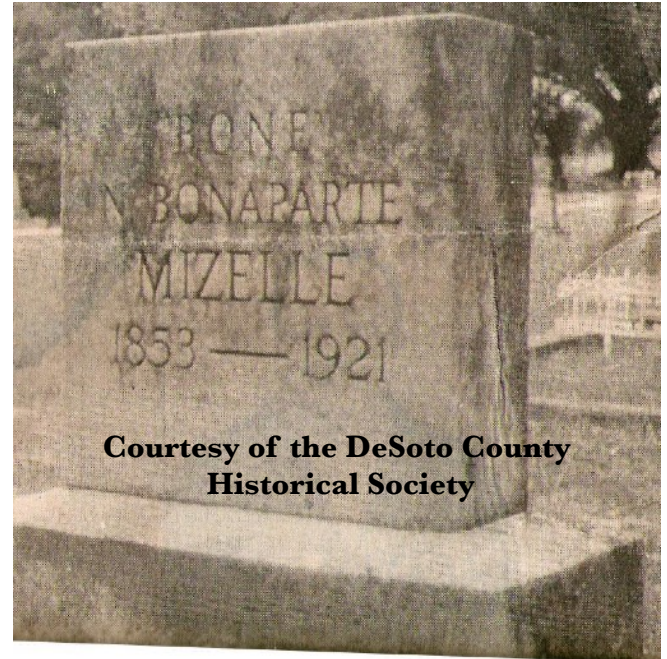
The Society has at least one evening meeting a year to give everyone a chance to attend, and this year's event will be the Third Annual Florida Cracker Meal on September 30 at Pine Level United Methodist Church.

The Society thanks the Church for their graciousness in allowing us to use their wonderful fellowship hall for our event. We are grateful for those who volunteered to serve on the organizing committee: Linda Keen, Vernon Keen, Stella Parker, and Trudi Super.

- **Arcadia Albritton Coker Cake Contest**
Riffle through your recipes or creatively concoct a cake because we will hold our Arcadia Albritton Coker Cake Baking Contest at the Florida Cracker Meal. After being judged, the cakes will be plated for dessert.
- **Auction To Fund High School Scholarship**
In addition, we'll have an auction for new or antique items to raise funds for the scholarship we present to a DeSoto County resident graduating from high school. Thanks to Dave Williams and Asena Mott for making cash donations to the scholarship fund. Please consider donating cash, a new or antique item, or a gift card.

For The Scholarship Auction:
a 14" x 23" black-and-white photograph—"Celebrating Ringling Golden Jubilee: Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Combined Circus Side Show," 1933. It is a late 20th century reproduction of a photograph taken by Edward Kelty of performers with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's sideshow. Thanks to Jennifer Lemmer Posey, Tibbals Curator of Circus, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art for helping us identify this treasure. Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.





**Courtesy of the DeSoto County
Historical Society**

Vandals stole the figure from the top and disfigured the tombstone of Morgan Bonaparte “Bone” Mizell in Joshua Creek Cemetery. Above, a 1984 newspaper photograph from the Howard and Velma Melton Historical Research reveals that the figure was not original to the monument. Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.

Volunteer for Terrific Tuesdays!

DeSoto County is celebrating July 4th with a Freedom Fest from noon to the fireworks show at 9:00 p.m. at the Turner Agri-Civic Center, 2250 NE Roan St., Arcadia. Fun for the whole family will include bounce houses, water slides, dunk tanks, mechanical bull and more provided by Wet And Wild Party Rentals.

Mark Anderson, host of “Mark in the Morning” show on Classic Country 104.5 FM, will host live music from regional country bands as well as an independent professional wrestling show. Food trucks and other vendors will be part of the event. More information is available at VisitDeSoto.com or [Facebook.com/DiscoverDesoto](https://www.facebook.com/DiscoverDesoto).

Inspired by the Freedom Fest, DeSoto County will host “Terrific Tuesdays” with family-fun activities from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Turner Center. The Society will offer old-fashioned games on July 11 and 25, and we need volunteers to assist. If you would like to help, please call Carol Mahler at 863-445-0789.

Society To Restore Grave Cover for Morgan Bonaparte “Bone” Mizell

**“DeSoto County’s Wag, Prairie Philosopher,
Cowboy Humorist, and Prankster”**

**—Florida Historical Marker in Pioneer
Park, Zolfo Springs, Hardee County**

Legendary character “Bone” Mizell is buried in Joshua Creek Cemetery, and about a year ago, his tombstone was vandalized. His kinsman Larry Johnston paid to have it professionally cleaned. Then he asked the Society to help in the restoration of the cracked grave cover.

Johnston’s son Walter has volunteered to build the forms for a two-inch or three-inch concrete cap for the grave cover. Thanks to Nancy Erickson for securing a donation from Mike Tyson for the concrete and to Tyson for donating the time and materials to pour and finish the concrete. The Society will not restore the cowboy figure as it was not original to the tombstone (see photo above). To learn more about the infamous Mizell, check out the book *Florida Cow Hunter: The Life and Times of Bone Mizell* by Jim Bob Tinsley.