

Alachua County Three-Minute History Presentations To the Alachua County Commission Table of Contents

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Introduction

Attached are the three-minute history presentations of the Alachua County Historical Commission. Through the end of calendar year 2026 the commission has produced and delivered to the Alachua County Commission Meetings 36 presentations representing unique histories that are a part of the county's history and heritage. What began with a motion by county commissioners to start the program at the end of 2013 has resulted in an impressive quantity of quality research, writing, and presentations. These written documents are only a part of the presentation. Videos and Power Point visuals, along with these documents can be found on the county Web site www.alachua.com. This program will continue with at least four three-minute history presentations annually by Alachua County Historical Commission members in future years.

The Origin of Hawthorne, Florida

Early in the sixteenth century, native Timucuan Indians were living in what is now called "Hawthorne" in southeastern Alachua County. These inhabitants died out during two hundred and fifty years of Spanish rule in Florida. Creek Indians from Georgia moved south for land and claimed what is now Alachua County in 1750. Creeks were given the name "Seminole," which was eventually applied to all Indians in Florida.

American settlers started coming to Florida for land and frequently clashed with Indians. The Seminole Wars forced settlers into large forts and towns. After the wars, settlers returned to their homes and grew crops.

According to Jess Davis, postmaster and historian, the beginning of what became Hawthorne was the establishment of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church after 1840. Daniel and Sarah Morrison from North Carolina bought land on Little Orange Creek in 1848, two miles east of present-day Hawthorne on SR 20. By the early 1850s, Daniel Morrison was operating a gristmill to grind corn for area residents. "Morrison's Mill" became the name of this developing settlement; as it was the center for making meal, socializing, picking up and delivering mail. It was not until 1854 that Morrison's Mill was established as an official post office.

James Madison Hawthorn (born 1811) settled in the Hawthorne area with a large land grant around 1850. Railroad construction brought train service from Fernandina to Gainesville in 1855. Railroads continued to lay tracks during the 1870s. With the proposal of free land donated by James Madison Hawthorn, railroad companies were encouraged to place their tracks to the west side of Town Lake. Appreciative area residents named the settlement "Jamestown" in his honor.

In 1880 during a town meeting, James Hawthorn said that if the town was to be named after him, he preferred "Hawthorn," and the town was so renamed. The name was misspelled on the original Union Station, which added an "e." Over the years, more residents adopted the final "e" as part of the spelling. The Post Office Department made the spelling official on January 1, 1950.

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Pat Moore
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
March 25, 2014

History of Hague, Florida

Hague is named after Archelaus Hague. On November 22, 1883, when Hague grew to post office size it seemed only natural to honor A. Hague, the first postmaster and county commissioner. Hague is located 11 miles north of Gainesville, along U.S. Highway 441. Hague was once one of the best farming communities in north central Florida. It was the largest shipping point of vegetables grown in Alachua County. Cattle farming was also popular in the Township of Hague. Since the 1880s, large families of the Hagues, Cellons, Dampiers, and Standleys operated large acreage farms in Hague.

The Florida Southern Railroad was built in July 1883. Train Travel began between Gainesville and Hague on September 8, 1883. (Passengers traveling 1st Class paid 50 cents and 2nd class paid 40 cents.

By May 26, 1887, The Baird Brothers were running their saw mill every day, according to The Alachua Advocate. August 1887, The Gainesville Daily Sun reported E.J. Baird has opened a Grist Mill. According to the August 27, 1890 edition of Gainesville Daily Sun, C.C. Worley has started a Cotton Gin and Grist Mill at Hague, and intended to add a saw mill in the future.

In the 1880s, local families donated the trees from their land to be cut at the saw mills for the lumber to construct a school and meeting house for the community. The building primarily consisted of heart pine lumber. When another school was built in 1890, the building was transferred to the Hague Methodist Church community, where it still stands to this day.

Agriculture and its industries played important roles in the growing economy and population of Alachua County at the turn of the century. The lumber boom began around the 1800s and was exhausted by 1930, when all the Virgin long leaf pine had been cut down.

The McKolskey Brothers, who came to Hague from Lake City in a horse and buggy, owned a turpentine still and commissary building about one-half mile east of the railroad depot. They offered the use of the commissary to residents for Sunday school and prayer services. On April 2, 1911, the locals gathered to transform the temporary preaching services into an active church. In 1927, a church was built which was originally known as the Bethel Baptist Church. In 1948, the name was changed to Hague Baptist Church.

Hague's connection with the past began diminishing with the decline of the railroad, and the relocation of the post office to Gainesville, in January 1929. The saw mills, grist mill, and cotton gin also disappeared. General Electric opened a battery plant in 1963, which became Hague's largest industry. The University of Florida currently has a dairy research site in Hague. Hague was recognized with the Rural Cluster designation by Alachua County in 1984. A Historical Structure Survey was performed by the County in 2000, which noted over 20 structures in Hague, with a variety of architectural styles.

The Commissary, built in late 1800s was demolished in 2013, yet the oldest Methodist and Baptist Churches still stand to this day. The Hague Community Cemetery is a tranquil and peaceful site. When you walk the grounds of this cemetery you feel you're

transported back into time. All the men and women who built and nurtured Hague are resting in this cemetery. Fallen soldiers from every war as well as native Americans are laid to rest in this sacred site. Also here is Pedro Villa Fernandez, a beloved University of Florida professor who published several books, most notable is his translation of the children's book by H.A. Rey, *Curious George* in 1976.

Lynn Coullias
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
June 10, 2014

History and Origin of the Naming of Gainesville

On September 6, 1854, the Alachua County Board of Commissioners, presided over by Asia Minor Caston, authorized the layout of a new county seat on recently purchased land a few miles north of Paynes Prairie. The action represented the Commission's first officially recorded mention of an entirely new town, "the place to be named Gainsville," with "Gainsville" underlined for emphasis and gravitas.

Since the county was founded in 1824, the seat of government had resided in Newnansville, a town a few miles northeast of present-day Alachua. In 1852, with news that the Florida Railroad was to run through the area just north of the Prairie, residents there solicited the state legislature to authorize a referendum on possibly moving the county seat closer to the rail line. At some point thereafter, in September 1853, by most accounts, Alachua County residents met at Boulware Springs for a barbecue, picnic, and most importantly, a vote.

Residents were sharply divided and tempers ran high that day until a compromise of sorts was reached. William Lewis, a wealthy planter and Major James Bailey, a large landholder in what would become Gainesville, each held substantial influence with their fellow voters. According to their bargain, a new town would be incorporated a few miles from the north rim of the Prairie, but it would be known as Lewisville unless residents also voted to move the county seat there, a potentially expensive proposition that Lewis did not believe would ever pass. However, before the vote, builder and sawmill operator Tilman Ingram offered to help expedite construction of a new county building at a cost almost too good to be true. In the subsequent vote, Newnansville lost the county seat and Lewis forfeited the right to have the new town bear his name.

Bitter Newnansville residents would refer to the new seat as Hog Wallow, but cooler heads opted for the more benign name Gainesville, a decision most often attributed to the contributions of General Edmund Gaines in the Second Seminole War. However, some have questioned whether Gaines was in fact the town's eponym. From the initial underlined recording until 1859, county minutes referred to the town as "Gainsville" with

no "E." Moreover, in 1882, the editor of the Gainesville Sun and Bee wrote that the town's name should be changed to Alachua. His reasoning was that four other southern states had towns named Gainesville (with an E) and that it was confusing for mail and telegraph purposes. He added, "There is no historical significance or association in the name Gainesville. The only argument in its favor is that we have become accustomed to it." Accustomed they apparently were, however, and, in any event, the name stuck.

In December 1856, in a two-story, white clapboard building, Gainesville held its first session of the Circuit Court and its future as county seat was secure. Meanwhile, Newnansville began a slow decay until the 1880s, when the Savannah, Florida and Western Railroad was built about a mile to the south and residents relocated to a new town, which would take the name Alachua in 1884.

Tom Berson
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
September 9, 2014

Civil War Battles in Gainesville

Florida voted to secede from the United States at a convention in Tallahassee in January 1861, and in February 1864 the War arrived in Gainesville. A larger and more well-known battle took place in Gainesville in August 1864. This year marks the 150th anniversary of these battles.

The first skirmish in Gainesville took place five days before the Battle of Olustee. A raiding party of 49 men from the 40th Massachusetts Calvary entered the city on February 14, 1864 at 2:00 a.m. They took possession of the Suwannee Hotel located on the northwest corner of University Avenue and Main Street. Members of the 2nd Florida Calvary had just left Gainesville and were on their way to Lake City. Upon notification in Newnansville that Federals occupied Gainesville, 130 to 150 soldiers returned to Gainesville from the west down University Avenue, and from the north past James Bailey's home on Northwest 6th Street, and then south on Main Street. The two platoons from West University Avenue charged the breastworks erected by the Federals out of cotton bales on Main Street and University Avenue. The horses easily jumped over the bales into the secured area. According to an account written by two Confederate soldiers "The Yankees fought well. They were armed with 16 repeater rifles. They poured shot into our men, who retired." The Confederates withdrew to the Stewart plantation, but returned the next morning and learned that the Federals had left the previous night.

The Union account of the skirmish indicated that 49 men captured and held Gainesville for 56 hours, receiving and repulsing an attack from more than double their forces. Their estimate of the number of Confederate soldiers in the battle was basically

correct, but they also believed they withstood the company commanded by Captain J. J. Dickison, which was not the case. The Union report indicated that not one of their soldiers was hurt, while the Confederates lost 40 men. The first Confederate casualty occurred on the north side of West University Avenue at NW 1st Street. Thirty-six African American men left with the Union soldiers, and of them, 33 enlisted in the Union Army.

The larger battle took place in August. A Union raiding party under the command of Andrew T. Harris of the 75th Ohio Infantry had left Baldwin heading southwest to Gainesville on August 15, 1864. They met up with the 4th Massachusetts Calvary and 12 to 15 "loyal" Floridians in Starke where they proceeded to Gainesville by way of Lake Santa Fe. They arrived on August 17th at 6:30 a.m. and rested on the hill east of Sweetwater Branch where they prepared their breakfast and watered their horses. There the Federal forces found themselves under attack by the home guard composed of 30 to 40 young boys and old men who were no match for seasoned soldiers. Again, the Federals thought they repulsed Dickison's men.

Union soldiers began to plunder the town and were milling around when they learned that Confederate forces were approaching from the south in great numbers. They were completely unprepared when Captain J. J. Dickison and 175 men with the 2nd and 5th Florida Calvary attacked them. The Federals left their position along the railroad and made their final stand in front of the Beville Hotel in the vicinity of the GRU building today. Colonel Harris had 342 men under his command, but believed he was surrounded by 600 Confederate soldiers. He ordered his men to retreat down Waldo Road, but some of them went toward Newnansville and the Confederates surrounded them again. The Union expedition that had intended to take Gainesville for permanent occupation held the town for less than three hours.

They never attacked Gainesville again.

Melanie Barr
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
December 9, 2014

History of Ambulance Service in Gainesville, Florida

In my childhood in Gainesville ambulances were often called when there were accidents in front of my house. There were a lot of accidents because we lived on the northwest corner of the intersection of Northwest 13th Street and 10th Avenue (called, at that time, North 9th Street, or U.S. 441, and Cypress Street). There were a lot of accidents because it was soon after the end of World War II, and the GI Bill had almost doubled the population of Gainesville.

Firefighters did not provide ambulance service because they were firemen who only fought fires at that time. Funeral homes provided ambulance services in the 1940s and 1950s. It was a side business for them.

In an interview with Gene Williams, present owner of Williams-Thomas Funeral Home, Gene told me about the history of their family's involvement in the ambulance business. His father, Dick Williams, started Williams Funeral Home in Hawthorne about 1940, and moved the business to Gainesville in 1944. The Williams family lived next door to my family and, when an ambulance siren could be heard, all of the Williams children could tell which funeral home's ambulance siren we were hearing.

The lives of the Williams children were intricately involved with their dad's business. Gene now owns Williams-Thomas Funeral Home. Milam's Funeral Home is owned by Gene's brother-in-law, Mickey Milam. Gene's sister, Mary Katherine, was married to Mickey until she died.

I also spoke with Charles Chestnut, owner of Chestnut Funeral Home, and he assured me that the African-American-owned funeral homes in this area had ambulances during those times and provided the same services that were provided by white-owned funeral homes. Serving the white community in the 1940s in Gainesville were the following:

- Dewitt C. Jones Funeral Home, located at 311 South Main Street; after Dewitt C. Jones, it was Jones-Johnson, and then Johnson-Hayes; it is now Milam's Funeral Home.
- Thomas Funeral Home was located at 404 North Main Street; the business was on the ground floor and the Thomas family lived upstairs.
- Williams Funeral Home was located at 900 West University Avenue from 1944 to 1954; in 1954 they merged with Thomas Funeral Home, located at 404 North Main Street. The name of the firm became Williams-Thomas Funeral Home. They are still at that location, and Gene Williams' son works there with his father.

Serving the African American community in the 1940s in Gainesville were the following:

- Chestnut Funeral Home, located at 18 Northwest 8th Avenue; interestingly, Charles Chestnut Sr. served as an apprentice with Williams Funeral Home.
- Duncan Funeral Home, located at 428 Northwest 8th Street
- Pinkney-Smith Funeral Home, located at 727 Northwest 2nd Street

The ambulance service provided by funeral homes ended with the passage of the Federal Emergency Medical Response Act of 1973. The act created "an entity that provides for the arrangement of personnel, facilities, and equipment for the effective and coordinated delivery of health care services under emergency conditions in an appropriate geographic area..."

At that time, the firefighters took over the responsibility for ambulance services. Government regulations brought about those changes—not just locally, but across the United States.

Bobby Ruth Powell
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
March 10, 2015

Spanish Moss (*Tillandsia usneoides*)

Gathering moss in Florida was not unique to Gainesville and Alachua County but once was a thriving business here in the late 1800s. Spanish moss is the silvery-gray threadlike substance which hangs from just about every branch of a live oak and pine tree in Alachua County. Despite its name, Spanish moss is neither Spanish nor a moss but a bromeliad, a perennial herb in the pineapple family. It was once called “Tree Hair” by early Native Americans, which was translated by the French explorers to “Spanish Beard”. It can reach up to 25 feet in length and is covered with gray scales that receive and retain moisture from the atmosphere. There are over 500 species of moss and all but one is native to tropical America and the West Indies. Spanish moss only grows on trees but can drop or be blown almost anywhere and thrive.

In 1883, the Gainesville Moss Factory opened and in 1889, the Pruitt Moss Factory opened in Alachua. By 1900, there were four moss factories in Alachua County (Gainesville, Hawthorne, Micanopy, and Alachua) and ten in all of Florida. Dried moss was used for packing material, kindling for home fires and it was good for mulch because of its ability to retain moisture. It was also used for saddle blankets, bridles and even filament to repair fisherman’s nets. Before that, the local Indians used moss as clothing and fire arrows. It was also an ingredient in the clay that was used to plaster the insides of homes. It is said that boiled moss tea cures chills and fever and has been attributed to curing other maladies as well.

Spanish moss was usually harvested in the winter as it was less subject to damage at that time of year. Pickers would use a long pole to pull the moss down and a large tree could yield as much as a ton of moss. The moss could lose up to 80% of its weight after the waste material was removed and after the curing process. Notable local historian, Ashley Wood, recalls that the moss men would circulate in the rural areas about once or twice every 6 months in a truck with 3 men that would collect the moss from the trees.

To cure moss, the “factory” workers would either hang it on vines for several months or would stack it in mounds to cure. After this, the ginning process loosened the gray outer scales by feeding the moss to a revolving, toothed cylinder while fans blew out the dirt. The loosened moss was then straightened and baled, with each bale weighing between 125 and 150 pounds. Later, the stripped moss would be used for stuffing in automobile cushions and mattresses. Moss mattresses were particularly prized because of its ability to allow the cool air to permeate its’ strands, a blessing in the hot, humid climates. In the winter blankets of moss were used for insulation. As a result of the moss being highly flammable, its use in mattresses, pillows, and car seats was replaced by synthetic materials in the early 1970s.

The only commercial mills in the 19th century were located in Florida and Louisiana. The ginned moss was shipped to manufacturers in Europe and was a profitable

venture from about 1900 to 1975 when synthetic fibers eliminated the need for natural filaments.

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Alicia Antone

Alachua County Historical Commission

Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting

June 9, 2015

History of Gainesville's Harris Field

The Gainesville Daily Sun article of March 18, 1926 reported that "Twenty Aspirants Report to Locals." About 20 candidates responded Monday and yesterday afternoon to Manager C. J. Harris' call for the Gainesville baseball club practice and everything is rosy in the local camp. "Some exceedingly good diamond talent is trying out for the Gainesville nine and everything is pointing to the best team that the local city has boasted in several years," asserted Manager Harris last night. The playing ground is to be equipped with showers, dressing rooms, and other conveniences. Modeled after the playing grounds of the New York Giants, the local ball diamond now under construction will be the equal of any baseball field in the state when completed, according to manager Harris of the Gainesville ball club.

The fairgrounds lot has been surveyed and now is awaiting the gravel which will be laid just as soon as workmen and material can be secured from the prairie work [i.e., "prairie work" refers to the paving of U.S. 441 across Paynes Prairie]. After the gravel is spread over the field it will be [illegible] for the local nine within a week or so. It is hoped and expected that final work on the diamond will be finished within the next two or three weeks. The diamond itself is an exact duplication of the New York Polo Grounds and can be termed a "turtle back" field in that it drains itself and can be used two hours after a

rainfall at the most. Manager Harris intimated yesterday that a grandstand will be erected upon the field and all modern conveniences be built, such as showers, dressing rooms, ticket office, etc. It is the plan of local baseball magnates to put forth every effort next year towards the bringing of some big league team to Gainesville for the spring training season.

Harris Field was the name of Gainesville's 20th century professional baseball field. Located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Northeast 8th Avenue and Waldo Road (State Road 24), the baseball stadium was the dream field of Mr. Charlie Harris, long-time manager and promoter of Gainesville's professional baseball team, the Gainesville G-Men. Although there were other local teams in earlier years, the G-Men lasted far longer than the rest, probably due in great part to the enthusiasm of Charlie Harris.

There were two important men, both named Harris, who were involved with the G-Men. One resource said that Mr. Fred Harris officiated many of the games, and the field was named after him. I could not confirm that, nor could I confirm the naming of the field for Charlie Harris. Clearly both Harris men had great impact on the sport of professional baseball in Gainesville, at a time when all of Alachua County had a population of around 35,000.

According to Jess Davis, long-time Gainesville postmaster, there was a ball park around S.W. 5th Avenue and 3rd Street, and Charlie Harris and a few other Gainesville baseball players reportedly lived in the area, along with the great John McGraw.

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- Gainesville Daily Sun index. *Twenty Aspirants Report to Locals*, (available in the Headquarters of the Alachua County Library; see Gainesville – Sports – Baseball G-Men), Additional excerpt, "...playing ground to be equipped with showers, dressing rooms, and other conveniences, modeled after the playing ground of the New York Giants... awaiting gravel which will be laid as soon as workmen and

material can be secured... 6 March 1934, p. 1, column 4: Plans for Building of Grandstand at Harris Field Are Announced: The Board of Directors of the Gainesville Baseball Association announced that work would begin immediately on a modern grandstand capable of seating over 2,000 persons. March 18, 1929.

- Perry McGriff. *Brief oral interview with Perry McGriff*, Mr. McGriff talked with friends from his youth (all sports players and/or fans) who attended games at Harris Field. Some of them played for the G-Men.
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Bobby Ruth Powell
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
September 22, 2015

Art Deco Nightspot

Located at 30 North Main Street on a narrow lot in the city of Gainesville Florida is a small three-story building that is a rare example of Art Deco style architecture in the city. The building is currently being used as nightclub and music venue known as the Atlantic Nightspot.

The building was built as a bank in 1888 and it is highly likely that the building was designed in a classical architectural style originally, which was common for financial institutions during that time period. The bank was named the First National Bank and was the only National bank in Gainesville until 1905. The vault of the bank is dated 1932, which is probably around the time the exterior of the building was remodeled in the Art Deco Style. Then in 1954, the bank was moved from the 30 North Main Street building to another building across the street and in 1974 the bank was renamed the Atlantic First National Bank of Gainesville.

Art Deco is an architecture style that developed as a desire to move further away from the overly ornamental style of the Victorian era. This style was known for being simple, using clean shapes, geometric or stylized forms and rich materials. The design features often had a streamlined look and used curvilinear forms. *The Art Deco style, also known as Style Moderne, was a movement in the decorative arts and architecture that originated in the 1920s and developed into a major style in western Europe and the United States during the 1930s. Its name was derived from the Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes, held in Paris in 1925, where the style was first exhibited.* Though the Art Deco movement was very popular during the 1930s, buildings of this style are very rare in the United States.

The well-known buildings of this style, such as the Chrysler Building and Rockefeller Center in New York City, are located in a major city and were done on a grand scale. Also, it seemed that the style was more prevalent in northern cities, but *during the 1930s the style took over South Beach in Miami, Florida, producing an area now known as the Art Deco historic district.* It would be this new design trend in Miami that inspired the style of the remodeled facade of the of the First National Bank's exterior in 1932. Considering that the Art Deco Style was used more prevalently in major northern cities and was done on a grand scale, it is rare to have an example of this style in the city of Gainesville Florida. The Atlantic Nightspot is a small and elegantly well-designed example of Art Deco Style architecture and should be treasured.

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Kerryann Kanch
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
January 12, 2016

History of Magnesia Springs near Hawthorne, Florida

From the late 1920s to 1970s, the historic 4th magnitude Magnesia Springs, located near Grove Park and Hawthorne off CR 2082, was one of the most popular recreational destinations in Alachua County. With a kiddie (wading) pool and large pool fed by a natural spring, picnic areas, concession stand, and pristine surroundings, people from all over the region could spend an entire summer day frolicking in the crystal-clear, blue, 72-degree (really COLD!) water.

The Magnesia Springs property was included in the 1817 Arredondo Land Grant and has passed through many owners since then. Some development of this property began between 1873 and 1882 with owner Cicero A. Simmons. In 1882, Simmons platted 97 acres with the plan to create a town and he is also credited

with building the first pool at Magnesia Springs. John L. Brown from Indiana bought the land in 1882 for the springs' reported healing powers; he was severely wounded in the Civil War. He planned to create a resort to include a sanitarium, hotel, and boarding houses to treat various ailments. His plans fell through, primarily due to extended legal entanglements.

The Brown and Kelley families owned Magnesia Springs for the next 82 years. Brown's daughter, Nellie, married G. Hartwell Kelley from Windsor, who built and maintained the two concrete pools for which Magnesia Springs became famous. Nellie restarted the former 1914 Magnesia Springs Water Company in 1929. The year Hartwell died (1965), his sons (Harvey and George) sold the property to David Reber, who continued to operate the pools for public recreation. Between 1974 and 1977, Reber leased the springs to a nudist colony. After they defaulted on the contract, Reber reclaimed the property, but was unable to make a go of it.

Dr. Charles W. LaPradd acquired the land through auction, finalized in 1982, and kept it as private property. That was the end of public access to the springs. Gary Junior (former Gainesville City Commissioner and Mayor) bought Magnesia Springs in 1997 and restored it, but the springs remained closed to the public. Thomas Dorn, the current owner, bought Magnesia Springs in 1999. According to his wife Melinda Dorn, nothing has been done to the site since they acquired the property. There have been various opinions about the viability of returning Magnesia Springs to public use. Magnesia Springs is an important historical/ cultural vestige of the 20th century in this southeastern rural area of Alachua County. If present circumstances change, there may still come a day when the public will again be able to enjoy this not forgotten hidden jewel.

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Robert Moore

Alachua County Historical Commission

Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting

March 22, 2016

The Alachua County Ancient Records Transcription Project

Back in 1998, Alachua County Clerk of the Court Buddy Irby had the genuine interest and foresight to have Alachua County's oldest records scanned and put on-line. That was the true start of the Ancient Records Transcription Project, which today has almost 500,000 pages online, of which more than 27,000 have been transcribed by volunteers.

Jim Powell Jr., came to the archives and, finding it difficult to read the old handwriting and handle the big records books, volunteered to transcribe some pages. In 1999 Jim was hired and, using a Cold Fusion database program, put together the Ancient Records website (www.alachuaclerk.org/Archive). Initially just Jim and even Mr. Irby transcribed the records and put them on line with the image. In the year 2000, the website was modified to allow anyone who registered the ability to transcribe the records. To date 141 people have registered and transcribed at least one page. More than 20 states are represented.

What are these ancient records? deeds, mortgages, marriage licenses, judgments, County Commission minutes, and other records going back to 1826. Today all deed books up to 1866 have been completely transcribed; Mortgage Records from 1847 to 1879 have been transcribed; all County Commission minutes beginning in 1846 through 1992 are on-line through the ancient records page. The County Commission minutes from 1846 to 1923 were all transcribed by volunteers.

These ancient records of Alachua County are not only treasures for genealogists, they tell the story of our county in great detail. From these records we learn where pioneers

of this county settled, the names of individuals enslaved on local plantations. We find freedmen purchasing land. We discover the impacts of war and the fallout from crop failures. We see political turmoil during reconstruction. And we discover a County Commission which gave each pauper a monthly stipend. We learn about Joseph Valentine, in 1860 a free person of color, who in 1862 sold himself as a slave likely to have food and shelter, and became a county commissioner in the 1870s. We discovered Henry S. Harmon, a veteran of the 3rd Regiment United States Colored Troops, who settled here and became the first African-American admitted to the bar in Florida in May 1869, and in 1871 became the first African-American Clerk of the Court in Florida.

Thanks to the vision and foresight of Mr. Irby and the passion of Jim Powell, whom we call The Wizard of AR, the Ancient Records Transcription Project provides a great service to the public by offering an easily accessible on-line archive of history. The beauty of transcription is that it makes every word in the document searchable. Of more than 27,000 pages transcribed by volunteers to date, five volunteers have transcribed over 1,000 pages each. I have personally transcribed over 9,500 pages.

We know of only two or three other such transcription projects in the country. With more and more school systems debating whether or not to drop the teaching of cursive handwriting, the Ancient Records Transcription Project takes on even more importance in allowing future generations an easy way to research the past.

Karen Kirkman
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
July 12, 2016

Moore's Hotel, Hawthorne, Florida

In 1879 the railroads came to Hawthorne and shortly afterwards in 1881 the town was incorporated. "Moore's Hotel" began when William Shepard (W. S.) and his wife Virginia "Jennie" Moore moved from Braden, Tennessee in the early 1880s to settle in Hawthorne. Their friends from the north would often visit and Mr. Moore would guide them on hunting and fishing trips. W. S. Moore was an avid hunter and used dogs, horses and guides to track wild game.

Sportsmen from the north soon filled the hotel, enjoying the hearty breakfasts, which were served at 4:30 a.m. to get an early start. Dinners at the hotel consisted of fresh Jersey milk, butter, vegetables, broiled quail, dove pot stew, and wild duck from the day's hunt. The hotel is said to have served some 2,500 game birds in one season. Local Magnesia Springs water (known for its healing qualities) was served at the hotel. Moore's was the first hotel in Hawthorne to have lights from acetylene gas. Ads stated that room rates were \$2 a day and \$10 per week. The first bathtubs were installed with water

pumped by a windmill located in the back yard. Free baths were also offered as an amenity!

In 1911, Moore's Hotel was touted as the "Drummer and Sportsman's" favorite place to stay. Many patrons were wealthy doctors, dentists, lawyers, businessmen and other people planning to settle in Florida.

The hotel was located on "Main Street" running north and south parallel to the railroad and was just south of the train depot. City Hall and Pleasant Grove Baptist Church were across the street (now the First Baptist Church of Hawthorne).

The hotel consists of four separate wooden buildings that are linked together by a series of walkways and porches. Gingerbread trim embellishes the porch columns and rails. The largest portion is made up of two buildings placed together, purchased from the Peninsular Railroad (previously used as barracks) to form the center of the hotel. Mr. Moore built the south end building around 1900. The northeast section (originally a two-room schoolhouse and Masonic Lodge) was moved with logs and mules from across the street. It was the last building moved to the site.

As times changed Moore's Hotel (which is located on the original U.S. Highway 301) became a hotel for overnight travelers and had its share of people still coming in the 20th century to escape the cold northern winters. The hotel had twenty-three rooms with a lobby area located in the center building. The lobby was used for registering hotel guests and also provided a social area for many Saturday night bridge games with both guests and Hawthorne residents.

Throughout the years, the Moore family has owned the hotel and during the 1960s the original hotel rooms were converted into 10 apartments by architect Glenn D. Moore Jr. and his brother Francis R. Moore (grandsons of W. S. Moore). The Moore Hotel has been both a home and hotel for thousands of people for over 130 years.

Since the year 2000, great grandson Richard G. Moore has owned and managed this 130+ year-old historic site. It is now called "Hawthorne Apartments" and provides a special place people can still call "home."

Special thanks to the Moore family of Hawthorne, Florida for use of their photographs and documents.

Bonita Dewiliby
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
October 11, 2016

History of Evinston, Florida

The community of Evinston, Florida is situated on the Alachua-Marion County border south of Micanopy. Humans have inhabited the area in and around the Evinston community for thousands of years. The lands yield both projectile points and pottery shards from a number of different native populations. Within a half-mile of the community center is an excavated Potano village where Desoto encountered the Potano.

The land where Evinston is located is part of the Spanish Arredondo Grant of 1817. Nehemiah Brush received a grant from Arredondo and in 1854, sold two sections to the Evins family of South Carolina. Captain William Drayton Evins had large land holdings here west of Orange Lake and bordering Marion County. The town was already populated by some inhabitants and grew after he gave the right of way for the Florida Southern Railroad in 1882. The station with new depot was given the name Evinston in 1884. In that same year the building that is the present country store and post office was built. Evins moved his family to the town in the 1880s and built the original Evins-Wood home.

The community once consisted of two additional stores, a schoolhouse, three churches, a blacksmith shop, two packinghouses, and a gristmill. Until the 1890s freezes, citrus was a major industry. Agricultural crops and cattle were and are still raised here. In 1956, the depot was moved and the railroad discontinued passenger service. Freight service continued until the tracks were removed in 1982. The community park was established in 1909 by J. L. Wolfenden, W. P. Shettleworth, and F. B. Hester and continues to serve as a pleasure to the residents. Many present-day residents of the town are direct descendants of the original white and black families that came to the area in the 1880s.

In 1884 W. P. Shettleworth built the Evinston community store of heart pine as a warehouse for a Micanopy merchant. It was bought by Joseph Wolfenden, who first operated it as a store. The post office was established in 1882 and in the early 1900s moved into this building. The present store sits 100 feet south of its original location, moved in 1956 because of road paving. Originally located across from the railroad depot, it was a meeting place then as now. Numerous owners managed the store through the turn of the century. In 1909 H.D. Wood and Robert Evins bought the store. The later partnership of F. W. Wood and P. C. Swink bought the store in 1934. This name is still indicated on the storefront.

Fred Wood, Sr., became postmaster of Evinston in 1934 and served for 44 years, longer than any other postmaster in Florida. Still containing original post office boxes and equipment, this is one of the few remaining country store/post offices and remains in operation six days of the week. The building has been the subject of many news, magazine, television, and Web articles and stories. It has been used in movies and photographed by thousands of visitors.

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Ashley Wood

Alachua County Historical Commission

Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting

January 24, 2017

Radio Broadcasting in Alachua County

Radio broadcasting has a long history in Alachua County. Following World War 1, there were several licensed and unlicensed amateur radio operators in the County. The year 2018, marked the 90th anniversary of commercial radio when WRUF first went on the air. Their original building still stands on campus as the University Police Headquarters. The FCC first licensed WRUF as an educational station which first broadcasted on October 6th 1928. Major Garland Powell became the station manager from 1929 to the mid 1950s. In 1938, WRUF switched from educational to full commercial. Since 1939, WRUF has operated without any funding from the state or university, and in fact donated \$100,000 dollars to the University Athletic Department for the construction of the west side of the Stadium where WRUF moved from their original building. All of the WRUF offices and studios including the new WRUF FM studio took over the 4th floor of the stadium. In 1969, University President Steven C O'Connell moved WRUF under the umbrella of the College of Journalism.

While radio listeners had out of county radio stations to listen to, it wasn't until February 1, 1948 that WRUF had any local competition. On that date, Dolph Chamberlin put WGGG on the air. WGGG stood for Watch Gainesville Grow. Cost to put the station on the air, \$25,000. According to Windsor Bissell, who helped build the station, it was not a big money maker. Their radio signal did not help being 1000 watts during the day but reduced to 250 watts at sundown till signoff at 11PM.

WDVH was the next entry in the local broadcast market. Unlike WGGG it was a 5000 watt station, but like WGGG could not operate at night. WDVH appeared in the 1950's playing country western music. A notch they held for many years. Since WDVH there have been a multitude of AM and FM stations, many did not survive and were sold and formats changed, frequencies changed.

All television signals covering Gainesville in the late 1940s and 50s came from Jacksonville's WMBR, later changed to WJXT. WFGA in Jacksonville didn't come on the air until 1957, the same year that WESH in Daytona-Orlando shared operations. The first Gainesville television station was WUFT operating on the 1st floor of the Stadium with two studios. A third studio was built by Encyclopedia Britannica to do a 1960 high school chemistry film with Dr. John Baxter. The main studio of WUFT had a support column in the middle causing problems for studio cameramen and producers.

WCJB-TV joined the local broadcast lineup in 1972, and switched from ABC to NBC to ABC over the years. The station owned by Bill Minchell is currently owned by Diversified Communications. The 21st Century brought a new TV broadcaster to the market with Gainesville Television Network beginning operations. Currently TV listing shows 13 television stations including two between Gainesville and Ocala serving Alachua County.

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Bill Breeze

Alachua County Historical Commission

Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting

April 25, 2017

William Jefferson Priest

"W.J." Priest, as he was best known, spent his early days in the Crystal River area. Saturday night dances were enlivened by the sweet tones from a violin of his. The

sweetness of the tone was later explained when it was appraised and found that a student of Stradivarius was the Maker.

In the early 1900s, High Springs was a booming town due to the Plant Railroad System Headquarters, terminal, and shops located there. That was the place for an enterprising man to be. As railroad travel gave way to the automobile, it was easy to see that motorcars was the business to be in. Farmers needed those Ford Tractors. "W.J." secured a dealership from the Ford Motor Company. Ford purchased Lincoln in 1922 and Mercury was first produced by Ford in 1938. Priest Motor Company became a Ford, Lincoln, Mercury dealership. It was to become the oldest Ford dealership in the state of Florida.

The first building built to house his Motor Company was at 15 NW 1st, just north of the railroad tracks because cars were shipped in via rail. There were large glass windows on either side of the front entrance so that "window shoppers" could see the latest cars brought in from Detroit. However, another building was built right on the northwest corner of the main intersection of town, a better location. A garage area where mechanics could do repairs occupied the west end of the building. Auto parts were inside the front door and gas pumps were out front, all under the same roof. This became the well-known Priest Motor Company. The building by the railroad tracks is still there. The tracks are gone now but townsfolk still enjoy going to the movies in what became the oldest continuously running theater in Florida, the Priest Theater.

"W.J." got the Gulf Oil distributorship assigned to him. Townsfolk drove up to the pumps out front of Priest Motor Company and filled their tanks with that "Good Gulf Gasoline." When they needed new tires, "W.J." sold them a set of Goodrich tires. He had the exclusive dealership for those. He acquired "filling stations" around the county and over in Trenton. These businesses sold gas, oil, tires, soft drinks, snacks but also had "one arm bandit" slot machines which were then legal. He encouraged Jim Douglas to move his Chevrolet dealership from Alachua to High Springs saying that competition was good for business.

One of High Springs most beneficent citizens, "W.J." gifted a part of his property immediately west of the garage portion of Priest Motor Company to the New Century Woman's Club on which to build their clubhouse. He served on the High Springs City Commission. A member of the First Baptist Church, he purchased an organ for the church. At Christmas time, he would donate a large sum of money to each of the local churches, both black and white congregations. When World War II occurred and he could no longer take his Cris-Craft cruiser out into the Gulf, in a spirit of patriotism, he donated the vessel to the Coast Guard. He was an active member of Rotary, Masons, Shriners, and the Knights Templar clubs and organizations.

William Jefferson Priest died in 1952 and is buried in the High Springs cemetery beside his wife, Mary Brown Douglas Priest. The Priest Motor Company building burned down in 1966. The Priest Theater recently celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2014.

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Janice Arinson
Alachua County Historical Commission
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July 11, 2017

Collegiate Gothic Architecture and the University of Florida Historic District

A sub-genre of Gothic Revival, Collegiate Gothic architecture was a popular style in the United States for university and high school campuses as early as the mid-19th century. Imposing moral overtones for academic and political buildings, the stylistic movement persisted for nearly 100 years.¹ At the University of Florida (UF) campus in Gainesville, twenty-one surviving Collegiate Gothic buildings were constructed between 1905 and 1939.² Collegiate Gothic architecture is characterized by arched windows, recessed entryways, roof dormers, parapets and crenellation, buttresses, stone or brick walls, and relief sculpture. Although rather austere for the style, UF's Collegiate Gothic buildings exhibit all these features. Nineteen of these structures reside within the "National Register" zone that was designated in 1989, located at the northeast corner of campus. The former P. K. Yonge Laboratory School, now known as UF's Norman Hall, resides within UF's Area of Impact to the east of 13th Street. The Dairy Science Building is just south on Newell Drive.

The two men responsible for UF's Collegiate Gothic style are William A. Edwards and Rudolph Weaver, both architects for the Florida Board of Control. A native of South Carolina, William A. Edwards was a prominent architect based in Atlanta, Georgia.³ Named architect for the Florida Board of Control from 1905 to 1925, Edwards designed fourteen buildings in the Collegiate Gothic style for the University of Florida.⁴ Rudolph Weaver took over the position for the Florida Board of Control in 1925, and was also the founding Dean of UF's College of Architecture. Weaver served as professor until his death in 1944.⁵ Weaver designed nine Collegiate Gothic structures during his tenure at the University of Florida. Edwards era buildings include Thomas (1906), Buckman (1906), Newell (1909), Flint (1910), Benton (1911), Floyd (1912), Johnson (1912), Anderson (1913),

¹ Collegiate Gothic: www.loyola.edu/academics/history/architecture/glossary.

² UF Builds: The Architecture of the University of Florida, "Timetable of Key Building Events".

³ William Augustus Edwards (1866-1939): Wikipedia.

⁴ UF Builds: The Architecture of the University of Florida, "Timetable of Key Building Events".

⁵ Rudolph Weaver (1880-1944): Wikipedia.

Peabody (1913), and Bryan (1914) Halls, the Women's Gymnasium (1919), University Auditorium (1925), and Library East (1926). The Sanborn map indicates the systematic arrangement of academic buildings designed by Edwards, positioning the proposed University Auditorium on a central axis with to the south of the main plaza. All but two of these structures survive and are still in use today. Benton Engineering Hall was demolished in the 1960s, and Johnson Dining Hall was destroyed by fire in the 1980s.⁶

Rudolph Weaver was responsible for the completion of Library East (1926) and Rolfs Hall (1927) after Edward's death, and went on to design many more Collegiate Gothic structures. These include: Leigh (1927), Walker (1927), Sledd (1930), Dauer (1936), Fletcher (1939), and Murphree (1939) Halls, the Infirmary (1931), the P. K. Yonge Laboratory School (1934), and the Dairy Sciences Building (1937). All of these structures are active academic or administration buildings. The University of Florida Historic District was originally listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1989. This designation included eleven of Edwards' Collegiate Gothic buildings and eight of Weaver's. It wasn't until 2008 that other structures from later years were added as contributing properties to the Historic District. Although not constructed during the Collegiate Gothic era, Century Tower exhibits stylistic detailing consistent with the Edwards/Weaver design philosophy.⁷

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ University of Florida Campus Historic District: Wikipedia.

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Tina Sessions

Alachua County Historical Commission

Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting

September 12, 2017

A Brief History of Windsor, Alachua County, Florida

Windsor today is a small, unincorporated, serene hamlet located between Gainesville and Hawthorne off State Road 20. County Road 234 north (Green St.) takes you

through Old Windsor. Its claim to fame these days is the popular annual Zucchini Festival in May, which supports their Volunteer Fire Department.

In 1846, Englishmen came from northern states to grow cotton and started a settlement in the area of Windsor. The Reverend Edward Lewis King was a major landowner in the region. He established the Providence Methodist Church in 1855 within what would become the town of Windsor. Another building near the same site replaced it circa 1884 and is still in use. There are grave markers in the Providence Methodist Cemetery with dates as early as 1855.^{1, 2, 3, 4}

Kelley family members were among the founders of Windsor. In 1883, patriarch George Washington Kelley and family moved from Gibson, Georgia to this territory. George and his son, Dr. James Lawrence Kelley, along with William J. Walker, together purchased three sections of land (1,920 acres) just east of Newnan's Lake, which included most of Windsor.⁵ They soon divided the property among themselves.⁶ Their plan was to expand and create a town.^{3, 4} An 1884 Windsor plat was drawn up by the Kelleys.⁴

Although the name of the town has been attributed to the 1846 English cotton planters, a number of sources indicate that the name "Windsor" came from the surname of Dr. James Lawrence Kelley's wife, Lillian Mae Windsor of Philadelphia. A long-time resident of Windsor, Ashley Beckham, states he heard that the community was originally called Providence, after the church.^{4, 7, 8}

In 1885, the population of Windsor was listed as 75. Within a year, the population was over 300.^{2, 9} The town grew with three stores, a gristmill, two sawmills (owned by the Kelleys), a fertilizer plant, a post office, and a physician. By 1887, there were 400 residents, three churches, and four stores. A daily stagecoach connected Windsor and Rochelle, Campville's Brick Factory supplied bricks, and Captain Kelly's [one "e"] ferry service carried people, cattle, supplies, and oranges across Newnans Lake to a station on the west side. From there, goods and people were transported to Gainesville.^{2, 10}

Windsor's economy was heavily invested in orange groves, as were many developing towns in north-central Florida in the late 1800s. During the 1890s, Windsor prospered with many beautiful homes along Society Row (Green St.).²

Then disaster struck. At 15 years old, Mrs. Louise P. Finklea and family moved from Chicago to Windsor in 1894, just in time for the first Great Freeze from December 27-29, sending frost all the way to Key West. Thermometers in Alachua County fell to 14 degrees (F). Then in February 1895 a four-day cold wave hit again. Citrus froze to the ground. Six million boxes of oranges in 1893 dropped to only 75,000 in 1895. People sold their property for taxes and went back north. Some stayed and struggled. In 1899, six inches of snow and 6 degree temperatures obliterated the remaining citrus industry. People were said to have abandoned their homes so fast that they left dishes on the table and clothes in the closets. The school and stores were boarded up and padlocked. Hotels closed. Residents remembered snow staying on roofs for a week while coffee froze in their cups.¹¹

Thereafter, many of the fine homes on "Society Row" were torn down, deteriorated, or destroyed by fire. The post office, housed in the Old Windsor General Store operated by

Mrs. Finklea for 33 years, closed in 1936. The store continued until 1971. Mrs. Finklea died in 1979 just shy of her 100th birthday.¹¹

A few magnificent homes have been restored, treating visitors to a distant past and celebrating the days of a once prosperous pioneer community.

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Robert Moore
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
December 12, 2017

The Spring at High Springs

A hidden spring on a hill has no official name, obscuring its influence on local history: there would likely be no City of High Springs without it. The first settlement in that area was near it and at least two other smaller springs on the hill.¹ A rail line fortuitously passed a little less than half a mile south in 1884,² and the unique geo-graphical feature of a handful of “high springs” not only gave the city a name but also enticed the Plant System railroad to establish its division headquarters there in 1895.³

High Springs became an important rail center because the water from the spring on what is now known as High Springs Hill was conveniently accessible. The spring was dammed and the water diverted through underground pipes down to the tracks for use with the steam engines. Gravity did the work directing the water downhill.⁴ The spring, the water level clearly visible in old aerial photographs, greatly diminished due to years of rail siphoning and other human use and has been forgotten by all but a small number of residents.

It was more than economically vital to the early community of High Springs, though, as it also served as a central gathering place for locals. According to an early article from the High Springs Herald celebrating the City’s 75th Anniversary in 1967, “the spot was a favorite picnic ground in this section of the country. A natural park, the two-acre area surrounding the spring was covered with heavy oak and magnolia trees. Political gatherings and Fourth of July celebrations were always held there. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, most nearby residents could be found, come Independence Day, at High Springs Hill. The outings with public speaking, competitive games and extended lunches, could have become all-day affairs...”⁵

High Springs Hill was also the site of one of the community’s first school houses, a two-story wooden building built in the late 1890s referred to as “The Red Schoolhouse.”⁶

The only archaeological work done to date near the spring was conducted in 1950 and 1962, as recorded in the Florida Master Site File, which uncovered some triangular flint points and potsherds suggesting the presence of some Paleolithic era activity,⁷ not at all surprising considering Hornsby Spring – a massive Paleolithic site – is less than a mile away.⁸

The City of High Springs owns the acre of land on which the spring resides, and an effort to acquire an adjacent 16-acre parcel in conjunction with Alachua County Forever

1 Laurie, Murray D., Architectural and Historical Survey of High Springs, Florida (City of High Springs, 1990), 5, 9. Forrester, Mary Lois, High Springs, Florida, Our Town: A look back at High Springs History, People and Places (Mary Lois Forrester, 2000), 8. Davis, Jess G., History of Alachua County: 1824-1969 (Alachua County Historical Commission, 1969), 87.

2 See Laurie, 10.

3 Ibid, 10.

4 Ibid, 5.

5 High Springs Herald. 1967 “High Springs 75th Anniversary Edition.”

6 Downing, Betty Donnally, “A History of High Springs Schools,” in Our Towns – The Way They Were, compiled by Mary Lois Forrester (2002), 37.

7 Florida Department of State. “Florida Master Site File AL00175.”

8 Dolan, Edward M. and Glenn T. Allen, Jr. 1961 “An Investigation of the Darby and Hornsby Springs Sites, Alachua County, Florida,” (Florida Geological Survey,).

and the Alachua County Tourist Development Council fell apart at the last minute in 2006 when the owner unexpectedly raised the asking price beyond the initial agreement.⁹

To date, no progress has been made to address protecting, conserving, or officially recognizing the historical, cultural and ecological importance of the spring.

⁹ City of High Springs. *High Springs Reservoir Park Files*.

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David Wisener

Alachua County Historical Commission

Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting

March 2018

The 1885 Alachua County Courthouse Lions

In 1885, two copper lion statues were placed above the north and south entrances of the newly constructed Alachua County Courthouse. This structure replaced the original frame courthouse and was a stately red brick building ornately decorated with high gables and a central Victorian bell tower with a soaring eagle residing at the top.

In the late 19th century, this type of statuary was handmade by craftsmen in the factories of northern cities and could be ordered from metal ornament catalogs. These statuarys were usually located on or near government buildings and private residences.

Zinc was the common material used in this type statue fabrication. Copper was also used – but it was an extra cost. The lion statuarys were made in sections of sheet copper, which were hand hammered over wooden forms to form pieces or pressed into mold shapes. Once the copper pieces took the shape of the form, they were removed and soldered together over a wooden or metal framework. The most famous example of this

type of statue is the Statue of Liberty, which consists of copper sheathing over a steel framework. The county lions were made in the same manner and are hollow with steel bracing.

The lions sat in place for over 75 years, and then in 1958, the courthouse was razed and the lion statuary was removed and placed in storage.

At a later date (circa 1970s) the statues were removed from storage and repaired by Alachua County Public Works staff (Ed Culpepper and Charlie Morgan). After this repair the lions became prominent elements outside the entrance of the Public Works Hague Office located at 5620 NW 120th Lane in northwest Alachua County until 2012.

Some breakage of the statues occurred over time due to wear and tear, and there was some concern that continued exposure to the elements would further deteriorate these historic artifacts. The bracing inside one of the lions was broken resulting in its back being damaged. One of the lions was missing a tail; the other had a broken foot and both had incurred dents, cracks and bullet holes.

Saving the Lions

The Alachua County Historical Commission advocated that the value of these public statues in the understanding of local history and appreciation for cultural artifacts was reason to relocate the statues from the Hague location. In April 2008, the Alachua County Historical Commission asked that the statues be placed in a prominent public building. The Historical Commission acknowledged and stated that it was grateful that County Public Works was previously successful at completing rudimentary restoration of the statuary.

On April 14, 2015, the Alachua County Commission approved repair and restoration of both lion statues. Tom Thomas of Fine Line Architectural Detailing presented a plan for restoring the lions and was hired to begin the restoration and repair. Over a period of months, the lions were skillfully restored and brought back to reflect their original beauty. Restoration was completed in 2016 and they were placed in two locations. Today, one lion is placed in the lobby area of the Alachua County Administration Building located at 12 S.E. 1st Street, Gainesville. The second lion is located at the Matheson History Museum located at 513 East University Avenue, Gainesville.

The lions can be seen by everyone now thanks to the Alachua County Historical Commission, and the Alachua County Commission. This public art represents a glimpse into our past and allows an opportunity for appreciation of the history of Alachua County Florida. The size of the lions is 75" long; 25" wide; 39" tall.

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Bonita Dewiliby Moore
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
June 26, 2018

A Brief History of Citrus in Alachua County

The orange is not native to Florida. It was first enjoyed by Malaysians 20 million years ago and was later brought to mainland China. Citrus seeds then traveled to Japan, Arabia, Africa, Greece, Rome, India and Spain.

Columbus brought Seville (sour orange) seeds and several other types of citrus on his second voyage to the Western Hemisphere in 1493, and Spanish explorers introduced the orange to Florida sometime between the arrival of Ponce de Leon in 1513 and the establishment of St. Augustine in 1565. By the century's end, Spanish ships had brought millions of seeds to Florida. A century later, Florida, was exporting oranges back to Spain.

The Timucuan helped transfer citrus seeds across the Sunshine State, both deliberately and casually by eating citrus and spitting out the seeds as they traveled. When William Bartram visited Alachua and Marion Counties in 1774, he reported finding large stands of wild orange trees, including at Paynes Prairie. Bartram reported that orange trees grew like weeds in Florida. He described a campsite on the St. Johns River as being "one entire orange grove, with a few live oaks, magnolias, and palms."

Along with cotton, citrus was among the most important cash crops in east Florida in the early 1800s. By the 1830s, millions of oranges were shipped north from St. Augustine, and the city "had the appearance of one vast orange grove from end to end," according to a 1976 Gainesville Sun article by John Liles.

In Alachua County, small towns near Paynes Prairie and Orange Lake became important citrus centers. Melrose, Micanopy, and Cross Creek prospered in the nineteenth century. By the end of the century, Micanopy was one of the wealthiest towns in Florida. One Micanopy man was said to own 100,000 orange trees. Two railroads were needed to ship citrus from Micanopy to northern markets, and the town had two hotels and a variety of shops. In addition to the rail lines, growers also shipped oranges across Paynes Prairie by boat.

In the early 1880s, nearby Cross Creek had a packing house and dock where oranges were shipped to Boardman. The Axline House (also known as the Brice/Williams House), a Folk Victorian house with decorative detailing applied to a vernacular house, still stands as a testament to the economic impact of citrus in Alachua County. Located near the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park in unincorporated Cross Creek, the house is currently owned by local artist and former Alachua County Commissioner Kate Barnes. According to Murray Laurie's successful 2015 application to add the house to the National Register of Historic Places, Jasper Axline built the house in approximately 1885 and purchased several additional parcels where he established citrus groves. A small shed the Brice family used as a fruit stand still remains. The family used to sell bags of citrus from their grove to passing motorists on County Road 325.

In the Winters of 1894 and 1895, the "big freeze" or the "great freeze" struck Alachua County, which was once the top producer of citrus in the state. In late December 1894, freezing temperatures spanned the state from the Panhandle to Key West, where there was frost on the ground. Temperatures dipped to 14 degrees in Gainesville, and young trees were killed to the ground. The December freeze was followed by another cold wave in February 1895. This three-day freeze destroyed more crops than any other freeze in the history of the state.

Trees that lost their leaves in the December freeze sent out new shoots, and sap flowed to the damaged portions of the trees. Many trees that survived the December freeze were killed to the ground in February. Commercial citrus in north Florida was largely wiped out. Almost all of the oranges that were shipped to market the next year came from south Florida, and almost all north Florida vegetables were killed as well. Some optimistic Alachua Countians replanted citrus. Then in February 1899, another deadly freeze destroyed the citrus industry in the northern and north central portion of the state, except in a handful of localities. In Tallahassee, the thermometer dipped to minus two. Gainesville experienced a low of six degrees.

"A snowstorm fell upon us," Augusta Steele Matheson wrote in her diary on February 13th, 1899. Although she described the snow as a "beautiful and unusual sight in this climate," the incident marked the end of the orange boom in Alachua County, where hundreds of orange groves could once be found. Alachua County oranges used to be considered second only to Indian River fruit. And in the 1880s, a grove north of Waldo was said to be home to the largest orange tree in the state. The tree was 37 feet tall, had a nine-foot circumference and produced several thousand oranges each year before it met its demise during the freezes of the 1890s. The 1899 freeze was said to have killed almost every orange tree in the county to the ground.

After the freeze of 1899, most growers moved further south. One of the only seemingly safe spots for citrus in the area was Orange Lake, which had been the southernmost location of citrus when it was first introduced to Florida in the sixteenth century. During Florida's territorial days, the lake was thick with wild citrus trees, hence the name Orange Lake. There were once more wild orange trees growing around Orange Lake than in all of Florida, according to James A. Harris, who established the town of Citra

on the lake's southern shore. After the disastrous freezes of the 1890s, Harris, dubbed the "Citrus King of Florida," abandoned his groves and switched his attention to phosphates.

The very land the county administration building is resting on was covered by orange trees before the killer freezes of the 1890s. Today, most Alachua County grocery stores carry citrus shipped from California or Brazil, while University of Florida researchers work to save the orange from the greatest threat to its existence in the twenty-first century: citrus greening. But that is another three-minute history. For now, let us raise a glass of imported orange juice and toast the glory days of Alachua County's orange boom.

Peggy Macdonald
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
October 9, 2018

Guy Lindsey, An Everyday Guy from Hawthorne's Past— Entrepreneur, Inventor, Mechanic, Farmer, Pilot

Guy Lindsey was born on October 31, 1894, in Buffalo, Alabama. He married Janie Allene Bullock on September 6, 1914 in LaFayette, Alabama. He died on January 3, 1978 in Hawthorne, Florida. (1)

Guy and Janie Lindsey probably moved to Hawthorne soon after marriage. He was hired as a mechanic at the Ford garage in town. Guy boasted that he assembled the first Model-T Ford in both Hawthorne and his hometown, LaFayette, Alabama. After leaving the Ford dealership, he focused on farming. (2)

Along with other farmers, Lindsey planted popular Fordhook lima beans, strawberries, and other produce. There were four bean sheds within the Hawthorne city limits. Railroad cars were loaded with lima beans and sent to all parts of the country. Residents liked to say that Hawthorne was the "lima bean capital of the world." Lindsey opened his own bean shed in April 1937 with four conveyor belts, which were fed by field trucks. He hired as many as 80 people every season to dump beans on the conveyer belts, sort out leaves, other trash, culls, and finally selecting the prettiest bean "toppers" to place on the top of each basket. (3)

The first-ever refrigerated truck body originated in Hawthorne when Lindsey invented the mechanism in 1931. He developed a system of forcing air to circulate through wet ice, powered by an engine mounted atop the truck cab. Thereafter, trucks (with Lindsey's refrigerator bodies) as well as trains could keep highly perishable strawberries fresh, all the way to New York. He said there wasn't any other truck refrigeration system to preserve strawberries. In an article, Guy said, "I drove the first refrigerator truck out of Florida to the New York City market in the early thirties." Lindsey built numerous

refrigerated truck bodies for customers throughout the U.S. He received a patent in 1938, but because others easily made minor modifications, the patent was not enforceable. For many years the refrigerating device was reproduced all over the world. People who knew Guy said that he was a mechanical genius., (4, 2, 5, 3)

Lima bean prosperity ended in Hawthorne in the late 1950s when mechanical harvesters were invented, which cut labor costs, and packing sheds were unable to compete. Lindsey sold his shed in 1958 to Frank Worley, who wanted to use it for storage. In 1974 it was demolished to conform to Hawthorne's beautification program. Guy's house is still standing and may be seen today on South Johnson St. (6, 3)

Guy was also a pilot. He loved to fly his own plane out of Stengel Field in Gainesville. One anonymous writer said, "...We'd hear something that sounded like a motor boat with asthma. Presently, thru a hole no bigger than your hat, here'd come Guy Lindsey, fresh from Hawthorne for his morning hop. He flew that little cub cruiser of his in weather so thick that even the seagulls went about wearing pontoons." (7, 8)

Guy's inventive mind apparently was always working. At 77 years old, after losing a leg due to diabetes, he designed and built his own motorized wheelchair. He buzzed around town, going to the post office, grocery store, and often carried a passenger—his beloved granddaughter, Barbara. (2)

Lindsey said he was the first in town to have a radio that he built in his garage. He said, "Oh, people came from all over to listen to that thing, especially when the fights were on." His wife, Janie, said, "He did a little bit of everything." (2)

Sometimes, even small town citizens become big contributors to our world. I am sure we can all think of other people in our past and present that are worth remembering.

In this 1950 photograph, Guy Lindsey is in his bean shed holding his granddaughter, Barbara (Photo source: Hawthorne Area Museum and Cultural Center)

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Robert Moore
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Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
December 11, 2018

The Star Garage – A Brief History

Most people passing by a building now hidden by large trees on the south side of the Bo Diddley Community Plaza have no idea that the building was once used as a stable for horses and mules, automobile dealerships, a bus terminal, and an airplane manufacturing facility before it became law offices and the Superintendent of Elections office.

The W. H. Davis stables were first opened in 1889, and on May 8, 1891, John Allen and Charles Crawford paid William and Hattie Davis \$2000 for an undivided two-thirds interest in the property. A receipt from December 1st, 1891 shows that the three partners operated a “Livery, Sale and Feed Stables.” The 1892 Sanborn map shows a small brick stable building fronting on what was then called Union Street. By 1897, the alley that is present today between the Star Garage and the Hampton Inn was in place.

The August 1, 1903 issue of Southern Industry magazine noted that “Selling horses and mules is their specialty, and several car-loads are brought into Gainesville and sold yearly. Buggies and wagons are also sold and a general livery business is carried on.” Shortly after the article was written the stables doubled in size when large wood frame buildings were added to the south of the original brick building.

However, a disastrous fire struck the building October 14, 1903. The fire started in hay over the stock stalls and spread rapidly. Crawford and Davis lost their stock of 25 animals, and horses boarded by Dr. J. Harrison Hodges, Col. B. A. Thrasher, Eva Haile, and W. G. Robinson all lost their horses too. Five buggies, five wagons, and several hundred dollars of new harnesses and hay and grain were also consumed by the fire. The newly built stables were valued at \$15,000 and Crawford and Davis only had \$3,500 worth of insurance. A black man who operated his tailor business on the second floor lost everything as well. The fire occurred while Davis was in Kentucky buying more inventory. Incredibly, a second large fire occurred in the stables less than two weeks later.

Rebuilding began in January 1904 under the direction of contractor A. E. Wittstock, a resident of the Pleasant Street neighborhood and a former City Commissioner. Crawford and Davis lived near him with Davis’s widowed mother in a house located on what is now the parking lot for Wells Fargo. The new brick stable had a beautiful curvilinear roof line with large windows flanking an arched entry way in the center. One of the front offices was

occupied by a veterinarian who graduated from Kansas Veterinary College, a real plus for the stables.

Unfortunately, another fire broke out on December 1, 1909. Although uninsured this time, the partners recovered financially, and Charles Crawford was able to build a new house in the Duckpond Neighborhood in 1912. The livery stable was sold in 1913 and became known as Oliver and Venables Livery. It was the last livery stable left in Gainesville.

In 1916, it was purchased by J. R. Fowler, a director of the First National Bank, who named the building the Star Garage. He remodeled it to include an automobile showroom with large plate glass windows. He was a dealer in Cadillacs and Stude-bakers, and sold a full line of repair parts as well. The company upholstered automobiles, and painted them using the "famous 'Duco' finish, "the most durable as well as the most beautiful finish known to modern science." He installed a car elevator to take automobiles to the second floor which is where the body shop was located. By 1925, the Star Garage was thought to be the largest automotive facility in the County.

On April 10, 1931, a devastating fire destroyed most of the interior and the roof of what was now known as Fowler Buick in the W. R. Steckert building. The blaze started in the rear of the second floor when sparks from an electric paint sprayer ignited banana oil which was being spread on the wings of a newly completed airplane. The banana oil exploded and spread the fire through the roof rafters which set the entire building ablaze. The heat from the fire was felt a block away.

Contractors Winston and Penney began remodeling the building on April 18, and the company was back in operation on August 15, 1931. The citizens of Gainesville had high hopes for the business and filled the Gainesville Sun with congratulatory advertisements. However, the Depression was underway and the business closed for good in 1933.

That same year the Florida Motor Lines took over the building to use as their bus station in Gainesville. The Brookings Motor Company, which had once been a rival of the Star Garage, moved into a portion of the building in 1936. The bus line moved out in 1939, but Brookings sold Plymouth and Dodge cars from the site until 1952 when it was renamed Poole Gable Motors.

Poole Gable Motors operated here until 1977 when it was acquired by the City of Gainesville. They planned to demolish the building in order to erect a parking lot. The building's future was in doubt for two years with several City Commissioners opposed to leaving it intact. However, in 1979 it became a cultural center under the direction of Paul Kittas. The grand opening included a dance by the Gainesville Civic Ballet, belly dancing, a disco demonstration, and a performance by the Lavern Porter Dance Company. It was later leased to the Acrosstown Repertory Theater, and to the Police Athletic League for the use of youth boxing.

On December 17, 1985, it was added to the National Register of Historic Places and the renovation of the building began in 1986. Workmen found a collection of horse shoes, bridle bits, buggy steps and harness buckles when digging the new foundation. The new occupants of the building were the law offices of Clayton, Johnston, Quincy, Ireland, Felder and Gadd, and the State Attorney's office. The State Attorney employees were pleased to

be able to finally be located in one building for the first time since their previous office burned down in 1977.

Today most citizens remember the building as the place where they registered to vote since the Star Garage was occupied by the Supervisor of Elections from 2005 to 2016. One can only wonder what the future holds for this building which has been used for an unusually high number of diverse uses during its 115 year history.

Melanie Barr
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
March 4, 2019

History of Rochelle

The community of Rochelle, located southwest of State Road 20 (Hawthorne Road) and County Road 234, was originally called Perry Junction in honor of Madison Starke Perry who was a large land owner and the fourth governor of Florida (1857- 1861). It was later named Gruelle for the surveyor that brought the Florida Southern Railroad, a huge boost to the town's economy. Rochelle became its current name to pay homage to the mother of the governor's wife, Martha. The last descendant of James Rochelle (Charlotte L. Kennedy) died July 24, 1876, and is buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery, where other family members rest, including Madison Starke Perry.

By 1888, Rochelle's 175 residents (at its peak over 4,000) enjoyed prosperity: 24 trains stopped each day, there were two each of hotels, schools, churches, and general stores; restaurants, a grist and saw mill, and a cotton gin, acres of citrus, and prolific vegetable and fruit farms.

Rochelle's demise seems to be due in part to the freezes in 1894-95 and again in 1899, which devastated the citrus industry and other crops.

In 1995, the Alachua County Historical Commission erected a state marker describing the pioneer families, history, and some of the existing structures. One is the Rochelle School, which was originally called the Martha Perry Institute, constructed in 1885 and closed in 1935. The building has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1973. According to statements by previous owner Wallace Zetrouer, his wishes were to have the building used as a valuable community resource. Now the once vibrant, important edifice in Rochelle has many broken windows shuttered by large sheets of plywood.

Another historic structure included in the Zetrouer Trust is the 1890 Trinity Methodist Church, which is in need of remediation. In 2008, under the guidance of the Alachua Conservation Trust, thousands of dollars were raised and used to stabilize the church. During a one-year lease many volunteers donated time, money, materials, and

labor in hopes that in the future more would be done to restore this once magnificent folk Gothic revival style wooden building.

The Florida Trust for Historic Preservation listed both buildings on “Eleven to Save.” Experts statewide recognize their significance as remnants from this critical period of Florida’s growth.

Pat Moore
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
April 23, 2019

Tom Petty

Of the five people from Gainesville in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Tom Petty is one of the most well-known. He organized the band “Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers” and their 2017 40th Anniversary tour of 44 shows in 36 cities sold 637,671 tickets.

Thomas Earl Petty was born at Alachua General Hospital on October 20, 1950 to Earl and Kitty Petty. Mr. Petty purchased a house at 1715 NE 6th Terrace on December 31st, 1953 and Tom lived there with his family from 1954 to 1974, except for a few months at a time after he graduated from high school.

Tom played in the woods where St. Patrick’s elementary school is now located, and in the park named Northeast Park, which was renamed Tom Petty Park in 2018 on what would have been Tom’s 68th birthday. His childhood included looking for crawfish in the duck pond in the Duckpond Neighborhood, being a member of the Boy Scout Troop with Burt Ames as his Scoutmaster at the First United Methodist Church on NE 1st Street, and attending the North Central Baptist Church on NW 4th Street and NW 14th Avenue. He attended Sidney Lanier Elementary School, Howard Bishop Middle School and was in the Gainesville High School class of 1968. Although he didn’t walk at commencement he received his diploma after completing summer school.

Petty’s love of music began when his uncle, Earl Jernigan, took him to the filming of “Follow that Dream” in Ocala, where he met Elvis Presley. At age 13, Petty’s father bought him an electric guitar. He learned to play from friends and from future Eagles’ guitarist, Don Felder, at Lipham’s Music.

He formed his first band, the Sundowners, to play at a dance at Howard Bishop after a cute girl asked him if he knew a band that could play during the intermission of a disco party there. The Sundowners later won a Battle of the Bands at the Moose Club which resulted in their being paid to play there. Therefore, Petty became a professional musician at age 15. His next band was the Epics, which played at venues in north Florida.

Tom's day jobs included working for the City of Gainesville at Evergreen Cemetery and for the University of Florida with the grounds crew at Lake Alice. His next band, Mudcrutch, played at the fraternity houses on campus and performed nightly shows at Dubs, Trader Toms and other venues in Florida and Georgia. Realizing that the band was at the top of their game in Florida, they left for California in 1974.

Mudcrutch signed with Shelter Records, but broke up after recording one single. Petty's new band, "Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers" was formed in late 1975. Their debut album earned little notice in the US, but was a hit in the UK and the band toured Europe in 1977.

Shelter Records sold the band's contract to MCA without Petty's permission in 1979. He then refused to release a third album and declared bankruptcy. MCA sued and Petty won, a milestone victory for artists' rights. In 1981, MCA tried to raise the price of the album, Hard Promises, to \$9.98. In protest Petty tried to name the album "\$8.98." MCA sued and Petty won again.

In 1988, he joined the Traveling Wilburys, a supergroup with Beatle George Harrison, Bob Dylan, Roy Orbison and Jeff Lynne. He won his first Grammy with them in 1989. He won his second in 1995 for Best Rock Vocal Performance. Petty was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2002. His Heartbreakers band played during the halftime of the 2008 Super Bowl which was seen by an estimated 97.5 million viewers in the United States. Petty was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2016, and was named the 2017 MusiCares Person of the Year.

Tom Petty found out that his hip was fractured before the 40th Anniversary tour was set to begin. Instead of canceling he toured for five months with this condition. It was later discovered that his hip was broken in two. One week after the tour ended he died unexpectedly on October 2, 2017 at the age of 66.

Melanie Barr

Alachua County Historical Commission

Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting

October 22, 2019

The Inspiring Story of Chester Shell, African-American from Hawthorne

Even as a young man, Chester Shell was keenly aware of the need for a school to serve the Negro community in Hawthorne. His foresight, persistence, and hard work ultimately resulted in bringing better opportunities for education to hundreds of both black and white students.

When Chester Shell was born on February 16, 1892 in Orange Springs, Marion County, FL, near Hawthorne, there was no school for Negro children in the Hawthorne area. Some teaching was done in churches, private homes, and an old Masonic hall owned

by the black community. [1] From 1915 to the mid-1920s Negro children were taught in a one-room community hall, partitioned with bed sheets to form two rooms: the “Big Room” for older children and the “Little Room” for younger kids. The school year was two months long, later stretched to three. Parents were charged twenty-five cents for each child to help pay the teacher for the extra month. [2]

Chester had limited education himself and never graduated from high school. [3] As a child, he learned how to hunt, fish, sleep in the Florida woods, prepare game for eating, cook over a camp fire, and train hunting dogs. With these skills, he became a seasonal hunting guide at the Moore Hotel, where wealthy white northerners would stay during hunting season. As an adult, Mr. Shell became a full-time porter for the Seaboard Railroad and traveled extensively. [1,4,5,6]

After many failed attempts by the black community from 1922-1925 to enlist help from the Alachua County School Board, Shell learned of the Julius Rosenwald Education Fund. Mr. Shell investigated how this fund might help. The Rosenwald Fund was offered for the Hawthorne black school project with the understanding that an equal amount would be raised locally. [1,2,5]

In 1926, Mr. Shell again approached the School Board for help. This time, due to the addition of Rosenwald funds, he was told that if he raised half of the necessary money, the School Board would match the funds, and a school would be built. [1]

Chester rode the train north on his railroad pass and visited the men he had guided during their hunting trips. The charismatic Shell raised much of the needed funds (\$10,000) through these contacts. The rest came from the Hawthorne black community by selling dinners, soliciting funds, and making personal donations. When the goal was reached, the school was built.

Mr. Shell encouraged the use of materials from the former wooden white Hawthorne Grade and High School, which was torn down in 1926. The reconstructed building was named Hawthorne Negro High School. The name was later changed to Shell Middle School, which provided only kindergarten through eighth grade, so high school students had to be bussed to Gainesville’s Lincoln High School. [1,2,4]

Another renovation of the school, completed in 1955, created the high school for black students. Eventually converted into an elementary school, named Shell Elementary, it was integrated in 1970. [1]

In 1950, a portrait of Chester Shell was presented to him at the Shell School in his honor, and he expressed appreciation for those who had worked so diligently. In 1976, a dedication was held after a remodeling project that increased the size of the school by two-thirds. Shell’s daughter, Margery Shell Johnson, a fifth-grade teacher at the school said, “If my daddy were here, he would be crying tears of joy.” [2,6]

1. Alachua County Library District Heritage Collection, 2002 *Chester Shell*

2. Martin, Elizabeth W. and Matthews, Billie H. *Chester Shell Elementary: a History*. Presented March 17, 1976 to Shell Elementary

3. Herring, “Pop”. Interview by Robert Moore December 6, 2019, at Hawthorne Historical Museum and Cultural Center

4. Moore, Robert. *Francis Read Moore, Florida Folk Artist*, 2011

5. Weismantel, William. *Historic Hawthorne Florida Survey and Plan*, 1996, University of Florida

6. Shields, Bill. *Gainesville Sun*. “500 Pupils Attend School Dedication.” March 18, 1976

Chester Shell died on May 9, 1967 and is buried in Hawthorne Cemetery. He is remembered by his philosophy, "Give the best you have and the best will come to you." In 2020, Shell Elementary was busy dedicating an entire room at the school to honor Chester Shell. His legacy lives on.

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Robert Moore

Alachua County Historical Commission

Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting

February 11, 2020

Alachua Country and the 2nd Seminole War

In Alachua country by 1835, hundreds of settlers, mostly from Georgia and South Carolina, had encroached on lands previously settled by Seminoles, three to four generations ago. The territorial intrusion occasioned by the 1821 U.S. acquisition of Florida led to arson, killings, thievery, and mayhem. Greatly exacerbating the cultural differences between the Caucasians and the Indians was the "Indian Removal Act" of 1830, passed by the U.S. Congress at the urging of President Andrew Jackson. (President Jackson was a retired Indian fighter and speculative land trader of Indian property.)

This Act and its administration caused both sides to prepare for war. Alachua country and, more exactly, Alachua Sink and Paynes Prairie, were the major physical and emotional sources of the ultimate war. Can you imagine earlier white migrants to the Prairie being hosted for "tea" by Cowkeeper and his son, King Payne, on lovely French china? This is after viewing 25,000 head of cattle and 3,000 hogs feasting on the succulent grasses of Paynes Prairie.

So whether you call it "settler colonialism," property confiscation or theft, the resultant war was a conflict over real estate ownership!

Several nearby events in 1835 preceded the "formal" start of the 1835-1842 war:

- April: Ft. King meeting where General Clinch and the Superintendent of Indian Removal (Wiley Thompson) hosted 16 Indian chiefs who were told of U.S. plans to move them by force.
- June: Superintendent Thompson imprisoned Osceola for one day for "insolence."
- Summer: Indians planned to destroy East Florida sugar plantations.
- June: Bold cattle rustling on Paynes Prairie; an Army mail carrier was killed and mutilated.
- December: Large southbound wagon train ambushed at Black Point on the southern rim of Paynes Prairie.
- December 28th: Dade Massacre left 103 dead soldiers near Bushnell.
- June 9, 1836: Attack by 200 warriors vs. 80 soldiers at Lake Tusawilla near Ft. Defiance in Micanopy. The Indians were repulsed.
(The Micanopy Museum has a Jackson Walker painting depicting this event.)

Charles Horn
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
March 10, 2020

Florida Indigenous Peoples: The end of the Timucua and Potano followed by the rise of the Alachua Seminole: Part 1

Florida Indians lived in the peninsula since approximately 10,000 BCE. There are known established villages starting around 5,000 BCE. Sea levels rose to present levels by 3,000 BCE and Paleo-Indians started firing pottery by 2,000 BCE.

It appears that the Indian societies were not tightly knit enough to be classified as tribes and were classified by anthropologists as "cultures." Around this 500 BCE era northeast Florida was occupied by the St. Johns culture, which endured for more than 1,000 years before finally evolving into the "Timucuan" tribe(s) by the 1500s. (Wilkinson)

The Timucua people is a language designation given by the Spanish for all people that spoke the Timucua (Thimogoua) language. The people themselves never shared a political affiliation. There were at least 35 chiefdoms with a primary village and up to 10 villages underneath each chiefdom, with 200-300 people per village. They practiced several different cultural traditions and were not one unified people. These indigenous peoples lived in Northern Florida. From east to west, they lived from modern day St. Augustine to the Aucilla River in the Florida Panhandle, neighboring the Apalachee people. From north

to south, they extended from S. Georgia to Lake George aka Lake Welaka, one of the Timucua placenames to survive. (Milanich)

Their diet consisted of maize, beans, squash (also known as 3 sisters a companion planting technique used by tribes from MesoAmerica to Upstate New York).

Diet also included melons, tropical fruits, meat often cooked over open fire. (Known by Spanish as Barbacoa. This Spanish word was used for cooking method of Caribbean tribes Arawak and Taino.) Men caught fish, hunted alligator & manatee. When the mission system was established, the tribes incorporated many more items into their diet, most enduring contribution being the orange. (Hudson) What shocked the Spanish was the height of the Timucua people – men on average being 4 inches taller than the Spanish. (Hoshowers & Milanich) Tribal members were extensively tattooed based upon deeds. Children started getting tattoos when they were given more responsibility. Their clothes were of various animal skins and moss.

When the Spanish first made contact in 1513, the estimated population of the Timucua was 200,000. Like most indigenous people they had no immunity to European disease. Coupled with warfare, within a century in the 1600s that number declined to 20,000, by the 1700s, the tribe was reduced to 1,000 and shortly thereafter all but extinct. No doubt those that survived joined neighboring tribes such as the Seminole tribe who coalesced from various indigenous peoples and runaway slaves in the beginning of the 1700s. Last known records of the Timucua were the 60-70 who left with the Spanish for Cuba around 1763, when England took control of Florida.

Within Alachua County lived the Potano tribe. The Potano Indians were misidentified by the Spanish as part of the Timucua People. As noted earlier, Timucua was a language family and had no established political alliance. The Potano were identified as a tribe of the Western Timucua living in a geographic area bordered to the north by the Northern Utina tribe north of the Santa Fe River and bordered to the south by the Ocale tribe (giving us place name for Ocala). (Johnson) Their first known village was located on the western shore of Orange Lake, near Evinston - before the tribe was moved to Gainesville. In 1564, French artist Jacques le Moyne accompanied French explorers on a failed attempt to settle the peninsula. His map shows the placement of the Potano(u) and recorded Timucuan life.

The 1539 De Soto expedition, Spanish settlement and the mission system will be presented in a subsequent presentation. 1

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Nicole Nesberg
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
February 9, 2021

The Federation of Women's Clubs

The Federation of Women's Clubs began in New York City in 1890. Club members worked toward goals such as child welfare, conservation, education, health and town beautification. Some men did not like their wives joining women's clubs since they felt they should be at home taking care of the house and raising children, and there was no need to spend time discussing current affairs, history, geography and literature. The suffrage movement was also a high priority. It was not until 1920 that women were able to vote, and up until then had no voice in the political process. Women's clubs helped members learn about public issues. They would take a position and write letters, but only men could vote.

The Florida Federation of Women's Club began in 1895. In 1903, a club in Gainesville was created and called the Twentieth Century Club. Its purpose was "intellectual and social improvement." Each woman had to provide a quotation about current events at a meeting. The first topic was "The Early History of Our Continent." Three papers were read, with one vocal solo and one instrumental. The 45 charter members met every other Monday afternoon in a member's home. Dues were fifty cents.

In 1906, the Gainesville Sun wrote an article with the headline "Spare the trees, says Woman's Club. Twentieth Century does not appreciate Cutting Landmarks." They said that beautiful trees had been needlessly sacrificed and that the trees "had been the pride

and main attraction of our town.” The City Council finally adopted a motion prohibiting removal of any shade tree from city streets in 1911.

Further demonstrating their interest in conservation in 1913, the Club donated \$500 to match the City’s portion to create a park now known as Roper Park located on NE 2nd Street, east of the First United Methodist Church. Their donation is equivalent to nearly \$14,000 in 2021 currency. They also sent a letter protesting the erection of a water tower a few blocks from the park that would be unsightly and lessen the desirability of the park.

The public library is a creation of the Woman’s Club. Due to the lack of a library members were required to donate a book when they paid their dues. They eventually accumulated 2,000 volumes through purchases and donations. In 1915, a club member wrote to the Carnegie Library to request a grant to fund a library. The women then had to ask their husbands to request that City Council vote to fund their half of the library. It worked, and in 1918 the Gainesville Sun reported that “the Library Board and The Twentieth Century Club will greet you and all will unite in a general rejoicing over the completion of our beautiful library building. Let us there resolve to lend every effort in filling the shelves with volumes useful to all ages. The social committee, assisted by the young daughters of the Twentieth Century Club, will serve fruit punch during the evening, while the sweet sounds by the University Orchestra will add very much to the enjoyment of the occasion.”

The Club also focused on social, welfare, literary, music, fine arts and beautification projects, including helping to establish kindergartens in public schools, supporting soldiers in World War I and World War II with bandages and facilities, bringing art exhibits from the Chicago Museum to Gainesville, and trying to prevent the City from removing the trees and the median on NE 1st Street. In 1935, they organized the Junior League which recently celebrated their 85th anniversary.

In 1954, the Club had 681 members and needed a new facility since the Clubhouse that they had built in 1921 could no longer hold their events. An architect and contractor were secured and the present building opened in 1961. This year (2021) the Gainesville Woman’s Club celebrated 100 years of owning a clubhouse and the 60th anniversary of the present Clubhouse. The Club still donates to parks and recently donated \$10,000 to Unity Park on NE 31st Avenue, and still has an active Education and Library Committee. The property was almost sold in 2021, but thanks to adding members and raising money the Clubhouse remains a landmark on University Avenue today.

Melanie Barr
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
October 26, 2021

Florida Indigenous Peoples: The end of the Timucua and Potano followed by the rise of the Alachua Seminole

Part 2

Florida Indians: Part 1 discussed 16th century Spanish Expedition and the encountering of indigenous, including North Florida Timucua. Part 2 will focus on 16th century European expansion, brief French settlement, Spanish Colonization, establishment of 17th century mission system and its impact on Alachua County Potano.

European Exploration and Expansion

During the first expedition of Ponce de Leon to Florida in 1513, he claimed the territory for the Spanish Crown. The Spanish made multiple attempts to further explore Florida before finding success with the 1539 Hernando de Soto expedition. Over the next 25 years, Florida was little more than a strategic stopping point compared to the other territories of New Spain. Florida was widely ignored until the French started to explore the eastern coast in 1562 (hence the multiple images created by Jacques le Moyne) and 200 French Huguenots founded a settlement Fort Caroline in 1564 near present-day Jacksonville. One might ask what this has to do with Indians in Alachua County? One of the strongest bands of the Timucua were the Utina, known as the Agua Dulce or Agua Fresca by the Spanish – in reference to the freshwater of Lake George also known as Lake Welaka. The Utina were friendly with the French and saw an opportunity to ally and use them to defeat historic enemies such as the Potano. The French relied heavily on the indigenous for food and trade. Chief Outina twice "coaxed the French into participating in attacks on villages of his rival, the Potano, to seize surplus corn." (Slides 1 and 2 were presented.)

200 Years of Spanish Control

What is important about these events are that they solidify the Timucua was a language group and those within it could be centuries-long enemies fighting over resources. With the ousting of the French by the Spanish in 1565, the Utina befriended the Spanish to replace the French as a military ally. However as Spanish influence grew in Florida the realization of who had the most strength would continue to shift. In an effort to protect their claim in 1565, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés expelled the French and established St. Augustine in 1565, solidifying the territory as a Spanish colony. Florida now served a defensive position in need of further settlement to protect the lucrative trade from New Spain.

Throughout the remainder of the 16th century, the Spanish continued to expand inland. In retaliation for the Potano killing a Spanish captain, who had led an invasion into Potano territory, the Spanish led a second expedition to get revenge. This second expedition killed many Potano, attacked and burned their main village forcing the Potano from Evinston to Fox Pond near Devil's Millhopper.

Indigenous Peace with the Spanish and Rise of the Mission System

While the Potano were enemies of the Spanish for 30 years, in 1597, the chiefs of Potano and W. Timucua tribes pledged allegiance to the Spanish governor in a hope of

finding peace for their people. This period also saw the growth of the Spanish missionaries. The intent of the mission was two-fold: 1) to convert the indigenous, and 2) to establish a food and labor systems in which the Indians sent food and laborers to St. Augustine as a form of tribute.

The system eventually extended from St. Augustine to Tallahassee. These missions became the most important institutions for Spanish Florida until they ceded the land to the British in 1763. The mission system, a network of outposts across Florida, served as the “political, economic and religious backbone of the territory.” The missions provided much needed supplies of food and labor to the Florida colony of New Spain. In fact, the Potano requested a mission be built to avoid sending their people to St. Augustine to labor instead being able to live and labor at home, and fulfilling their agreed upon obligation. By 1601, a new leader of the Potano, Cacique Apalau, with his heir traveled to St. Augustine requesting that his tribe could return to their original village on Orange Lake. (Slide 3 presented)

The century would be a system of first itinerant missionaries establishing missions across North Florida, including in Potano territory in the 1590s and more permanent doctrina (a mission with at least one permanent resident friar) being established in 1606. It later reverted to a visita due to opposition to the resident friar. A doctrina served as the central mission from which the friar would visit smaller visitas, missions that did not have a permanent resident friar. The intent was for the doctrina to be in the largest village where the Spanish would convert the cacique or chief, easing conversion of the tribe. (Slide 4 presented)

This mission, San Francisco de Potano, was the first west of the St. John’s River and its archaeological remains were first located in the 1950s and 1960s. A fuller excavation in 2007 found Spanish built posts at the south edge of present-day San Felasco Hammock. The exact location remains largely secret to avoid any looting or amateur excavation.

According to University of West Florida Professor John Worth’s book, “The Timucuan Chiefdoms of Spanish Florida,” Friar Martin Prieto established three missions in 1606: San Francisco de Potano village of 400, Santa Ana de Potano, with a population of 400, followed by San Miguel de Potano, with a population of 200. All were clustered within five miles of each other. In 1607 or 1608, a fourth mission San Buenaventura de Potano was established near Evinston where the initial village of the Potano existed and served the entire tribe of 1,200 Potano, including 200 who were allowed to return to the original village site. San Miguel and Buenaventura were closed in a few years due to the rapidly decreasing number of Potano ravaged with European disease. A fifth mission on the border of Alachua County and Columbia County was established in 1610 or 1612, called Santa Fe de Toloca. This mission near the Santa Fe River is located in O’Leno State Park just north of High Springs. First investigated in the 1950s a more comprehensive investigation in 1986 found at least six structures including a chapel and cemetery. This mission would have been established in a Timucua village belonging to either the Utina or the Potano.

For the third installment of Alachua County indigenous history, we will talk about the growth and strength of the mission system, creation of El Camino Real, the King’s

Road, based upon native trails as a manner to more easily travel from the missions to St. Augustine, and eventual decline of the power of the Spanish Empire within Florida and what that meant for the indigenous people.

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Nicole Nesberg
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
December 14, 2021

Florida Indigenous Peoples: The end of the Timucua and Potano followed by the rise of the Alachua Seminole Part 3 And the significant role cows played

This brief lecture will cover periods from the 1600s to 1763 when the British won the French and Indian War and gained control of Spanish Florida. Throughout this 150-year period, fewer Potano and Timucua lived in Central Florida and starting at the turn of the century Creek began moving into North and Central Florida. By 1750, Cuscowilla village was established at a spot of two Indian trails on Tuscowilla Lake in modern day Micanopy.

Cuscowilla village had been founded by Ahaya Secoffee, also called Chief Cowkeeper of the Creek and later known as Alachua Seminole (Ahaya Muskogee for Big/Likely designation of status). In 1763, the remaining 60-70 Timucua left with the Spanish for the next closest Spanish colony, Cuba. This timeframe showcases the decline of one indigenous tribe and a conflicted landscape being occupied and fought over by: 1)

indigenous tribes; 2) Spanish; 3) French from the west and Caribbean; and 4) British from the north and east. In this overlapping space, other migrating indigenous tribes of Creek and Miccosukee found a new home in modern day Alachua County, becoming the Alachua Seminole.

Indigenous Peace With the Spanish and the Rise of the Mission System

In the 17th century many more Spanish missionaries came to Florida where they established new Spanish missions. The intent of the mission was two-fold: first to convert the indigenous peoples and secondly to establish a food and labor system in which the Indians sent food and laborers to St. Augustine as a form of tribute.

A Spanish Mission system was established from St. Augustine to Tallahassee. These missions became the most important institutions for Spanish Florida until they ceded the land to the British in 1763. The mission system, a network of outposts across Florida, served as the “political, economic and religious backbone of the territory.” The missions provided much needed supplies of food and labor to the Florida colony of New Spain.

Missions were built and abandoned with changes in tribal populations and uprisings. To support this system, the establishment of a permanent route was necessary. In the 1680s, engineers were employed to build a continuous roadway, El Camino Real – the Royal Road. Prior to then Indian trails and waterways were used for transportation which could be arduous such as navigating the Santa Fe River. However, this was an incomplete trail that required constant upkeep. And as La Florida was low on the priority list of the Spanish Empire it remained an incomplete and hazardous roadway.

For most of the 1600s, the Spanish had established a peace with the north Floridian tribes. There were two major uprisings in the middle of the century; but the main focus of violence did not originate with the tribes. It was coming from the British colonies to the north and the French colonists to the west. Starting in 1680, Carolina colonists and their Native American allies repeatedly attacked Spanish mission villages and St. Augustine, burning missions and killing or kidnapping the Indian population.

During the early-to-mid 1600s, the most successful agricultural enterprises in north central Florida were large free-range cattle ranches. These ranches would supply beef to local markets and the Spanish islands in the Caribbean. According to John Hann in “A History of the Timucua Indians and Missions,” the best potential pastures in Spanish Florida were the grasslands in the Potano Province. From past lectures you recall that Alachua County from North Marion County/Evinston to Gainesville was the main land of the Potano.

The Potano people regularly burned their lands to clear them for agriculture and to create better conditions for hunting. The repeated fires converted woodlands to savannas. This suggests that at one point woodlands were prevalent across what is now an open Payne’s Prairie. As years and violence ravished the Potano, this land was mostly uninhabited and available for open-style cattle ranching.

Around 1637, Francisco Menéndez Márquez, the royal treasurer of Spanish Florida, established Rancho La Chúa in the vicinity of Payne’s Prairie. Chua is both a Potano word for “jug” and a Timucua word for “sinkhole.” Rancho La Chúa spanned 87 square miles and became the largest cattle ranch in the colony By discussing local 17th century cattle

ranching one can see the connection to the first recorded chief of the Alachua Seminole, Ahaya, and why he was nicknamed Cowkeeper. In his 1770s recordings, William Bartram only referred to Ahaya as Chief Cowkeeper of the Creeks, founder of Cuscowilla village on Tuscowilla Lake in Micanopy.

Returning this study to Spanish Florida and cattle ranching, history shows that the Menéndez Márquez family (descendants of Menendez de Aviles known as the Spanish founder of St. Augustine) bought most of the ranches located between the St. Johns River and the Potano missions. The best known of these ranches is the aforementioned Rancho La Chua.

Later in the 17th century, there were 34 permanent ranches in Spanish Florida. In 1698 and 1699, those 34 ranches paid an in-kind tax for 222 head of cattle. The largest ranch, la Chua, paid an in-kind tax for 77 head of cattle. (The next largest ranch only paid tax for 15 head). One unverified source noted that the taxes implied that in two years there were at least 3,080 calves born on the La Chua ranch. Being the largest cattle ranch in Spanish Florida gained the attention of others. Cattle would serve as both food and profit when sold.

Cattle ranching in their territories did not bode well for the Timucua and Potano of Spanish Florida. Resistance to the ranches was part of an ongoing struggle over the control of land and labor. During the Timucua Rebellion in 1658, the Timucua raided the La Chua ranch, killing four ranch hands (two on the trail and two at the ranch) and all the cattle they could find.

The black cattle of the ranch became so well known that French pirates came overland in 1682 from the Gulf. They captured the ranch's head Don Thomas and seven others, demanding money and 150 head of cattle. Unsuccessful in the first raid, they attacked again in 1684. After several years, the price of cattle depreciated from as much as 25 pesos in 1651 to 2 pesos in 1702. During this time, runaway slaves and natives who had left their mission villages killed cattle for food. Although cattle were not of as much value as they had been, the Spanish would not allow this lawlessness and taking of property.

War between the European nations became a global conflict and was fought in the New World colonies. The War of The Spanish Succession was fought from July 1701 to September 1714 in Europe. This war in North America was called Queen Anne's War and was fought primarily between England, France, and Spain. Conflict between British and their Indian Allies and the Spanish and their Indian allies led to the destruction of the mission system. As the Indians abandoned these locations, it led to the decline and loss of the Royal Road.

The 1700s saw a steady decline of Spanish power in Florida and rise in power of British North American colonies. With the vacuum left by destruction of the mission system, lower Creeks were encouraged by the Spanish to move into north and central Florida in the early 1720s settling near Tallahassee and the Alachua Savannah's present day Payne's Prairie. Spanish hoped the Creek would serve as a military buffer to the British. However, multiple other tribes and bands allied themselves with the British and continued raiding Spanish Florida. By as early as 1750, the village of Cuscowilla had been established.

In 1763, British colonial official James Robertson noted that, before the destruction of the Spanish missions in Florida and to the beginning of the 18th century, cattle abounded in Florida. One Spaniard (presumably, Tomás Menéndez Márquez, whose family owned la Chua) owned 7,000 head. As sated previously, after 1763, the Seven Years War fought between Great Britain and France in Europe resulted in the French and Indian War on the North American continent. With a British victory, the British acquired Spanish Florida in exchange for giving Spain Cuba and the Philippines which were much more valuable to the Spanish Empire than Florida.

Historical records show the Spanish vacating Florida with everything they possessed including 60-70 Timucua, the last known/recorded Timucua Indians. There is evidence that some remained in the Florida interior and would later align with migrating indigenous peoples who we would come to identify as the Seminole tribe.

The Alachua Seminole first lived in this area by scavenging the remaining cows left by the Spanish, eventually rounding up and domesticating enough to start open ranching. Their first recorded Chief was Cowkeeper of the Creek who with his tribe founded Cuscowilla. Cowkeeper was the father of King Payne and Bowlegs, both of whom would successively succeed him.

For the next twenty-years the British explored Florida and supported the growth of the Seminole Tribe, including many of their former Creek allies. Multiple southeastern Indian groups were living in North Florida and were already called cimarrons, (wild untamed runaways) by the Spanish. This name eventually turned into Seminoles.

In future lectures and interpretive sites we will explore the early years of the Alachua Seminole through British rule from 1763 until 1783. This includes the American Revolution. After 1783, Florida returned to Spanish rule. In 1819, Florida was ceded from Spain to the United States of America by the Adam-Onis Treaty.

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Nicole Nesberg
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
August 9, 2022

The Center of Modern Art in Micanopy, Florida

The Center of Modern Art existed in Micanopy, Florida from 1966 until February 1982. Hollis and Vivian Holbrook founded and operated the center for its first several years.

Hollis Howard Holbrook, renowned artist and founder of the University of Florida Art Department was a noted painter and sculptor who inspired thousands of art students during his 50-year tenure with the University of Florida fine arts department.¹

Holbrook joined the University of Florida's art faculty in 1938. He and his wife Vivian were graduates of the Yale University School of Fine Arts. Holbrook was in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

When the war ended, Holbrook returned to Gainesville and the University of Florida where he became chairman of the University of Florida's fine arts department of the School of Architecture and Allied Arts (SAAA) and president of the Florida Federation of Art (FFA).² Vivian Nicholas Holbrook, American artist, was the first director of the Center of Modern Art, from 1969-1972.³

When the Center for Modern Art was established in Micanopy in the old Feaster Building (which once housed a theater), it had studios and showrooms. The art shows had gala openings with wine and cheese parties. Featured artists shows usually ran for one to two months when new shows and openings again exhibited art works of many of the most talented artists and crafts-persons of the area. The opening and first exhibition of the Center of Modern Art was October 1966.

The Center of Modern Art was a chartered not-for-profit organization, operated entirely by volunteers who sought to promote art and the arts for North Central Florida. The center's purpose was to make a major cultural contribution to the area by exhibiting the finest quality contemporary arts and crafts otherwise unavailable to the area. At that time, the Center for Modern Art was the only gallery of its kind between Tallahassee, Jacksonville, and Orlando.

The Center for Modern Art's financial support came from membership fees, commissions on art and craft sales, and donations. The Center for Modern Art also received two Fine Arts Council of Florida (FACF) grants in 1974-75 and 1977-78.

For the duration of the center's existence in Micanopy it was housed in the two rooms of the first floor of the Feaster Building. After the center's departure in 1982 and up to the end of 2022, the first floor of the building was and is occupied by two different businesses.

From the center's inception, the organization worked to bring to North Central Florida monthly and bimonthly exhibitions of outstanding quality art by the best artists and crafts-persons of the United States. Exhibitors were nationally recognized with highly favorable reviews of the exhibitions in both local and national newspapers and magazines.

An elected Board of Directors, consisting of eleven members governed the operations of the Center of Modern Art. An appointed Board of Artists, consisting of ten members had the responsibility of maintaining the quality of the exhibitions by serving as jurors and recommending potential exhibitors. A dozen or more appointed committees

staffed by volunteers carried out the work of operating the center's many daily functions. On two occasions, when the financial situation allowed, a salaried gallery / shop manager was employed part-time. This was during the final years of the center's operation.

The Holbrooks purchased the Feaster Building and lots from George Franklin in March 1966. ⁴ The Building was sold in November 1972 to Marie-Therese Suzanne Purcell with Holbrooks holding the mortgage until it was satisfied in 1982.⁵

In the early 1980s, the new owners raised the rent in the Feaster Building three-fold, which was beyond the financial abilities of center's resources. The Center of Modern Art ceased its presence in Micanopy after the 1982 show season.

The Center of Modern Art continued in Gainesville for several more years with shows in the Thomas Center Gallery and other galleries and exhibitions in Gainesville.

The Center of Modern Art Historical Resources

In the archives of the Micanopy Historical Society is a binder containing 76 pages of announcement flyers and advertisements for the last six years of the exhibitions and events of the Center of Modern Art. Included at the end is a multi-page grant proposal that lists the center's history, operations, and objectives. Note that several of the show flyers promote children's art shows from various schools in the area.

These printed documents are historical narratives of the existence and work of the Center of Modern Art. Many of the artists and crafts persons list these exhibitions and shows of their work on their biographical sketches and resumes. Therefore, these official documents of the center that contain these references for the shows and events are preserved in the Micanopy Historical Society Archives for that purpose.

These printed show flyers were designed by graphic design professionals at the University of Florida. The designers are listed by name on each document. Cunningham Printing Company, no longer in business in Gainesville, Florida, printed all of the flyers and announcements.

This information was submitted to the Micanopy Historical Society Archives, December 2021.

The presentation: Ashley M. Wood, Alachua County Historical Commission member, and the past president, past treasurer, past member of the Board of Directors, and past graphic design and advertisement coordinator, all of the Center for Modern Art.

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Ashley Wood
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
March 14, 2023

The Gainesville Servicemen's Center/ Thelma Boltin Center

The City of Gainesville purchased the Servicemen's Center lot on December 7, 1942. The Federal Works Agency constructed a \$37,000 building with a ballroom, stage, dressing rooms, second floor reading room, three showers, three telephone booths for long distance calls, a coat check room, a 20-foot-long long snack bar, and a kitchen with a ten-burner stove. The FWA provided sofas and easy chairs, a baby grand piano, a fiddle, trombone, radio, juke box, and a victrola. The city paid for kitchen equipment, flowered drapes, the mantle mirror, ping pong and snooker tables. They also paved NE 2nd Ave and laid sidewalks. The Garden Club supplied and installed plants.

Senator Claude Pepper dedicated the building on July 23, 1943. Servicemen from Camp Blanding, the Alachua Army Air Base, the Officer Candidate School and the 62nd College Training Detachment attended events organized by program director Thelma Boltin (1904-1992) seven days a week from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. that included dances, plays, variety shows, sing alongs, chess, pinochle and bingo. Outdoor activities included badminton, barbeque and shuffleboard. Civic clubs provided funds and hostesses for meals including 400 dinners on Thanksgiving.

The city bought the building for \$12,500 in 1946 and retained Miss Boltin as Director. A 1928 graduate of Emerson College, she returned to Gainesville after teaching in Polk County 1930-32 and taught English, Speech and directed plays at Gainesville High School. The School Board employed her until 1956 when she moved to White Springs to direct the Florida Folk Festival. She was a founder, actor and director at the Gainesville Little Theater (Community Playhouse), chair of the Florida and National Federation of Music Clubs,

received an award from the American Assoc. for State and Local History, was WGGG Radio's "Story Hour Lady," artist in residence at schools, and assisted folklife programs in Dade City, Apopka, Cocoa, and Fernandina.

She was known as "Cousin Thelma," and "Queen of Florida Folklore." In 1943 she organized the teen club at the "Rec Center" which continued through the 1960s. Local bands with Stephen Stills, Don Felder and Bernie Leadon played at Friday night dances which Tom Petty attended. All four are now in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The building became a senior center in the 1970s and is also used for dances, wedding receptions and civic events. A \$420,000 renovation took place in 2000.

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Melanie V. Barr

Alachua County Historical Commission

Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting

June 27, 2023

Resilience and Education: The Stories of Union Academy, Mebane, and Lincoln High

Union Academy, A. L. Mebane High School, and Lincoln High School stand as pillars of Black education in Alachua County, Florida. These institutions emerged during an era of systemic segregation, offering African American students opportunities to learn, grow, and thrive despite the harsh realities of racial discrimination.

Founded in 1867, with support from the Freedmen's Bureau, Union Academy became the first public school for African Americans in Gainesville. The school was established in a modest building constructed by Black carpenters, demonstrating the commitment of the local Black community to education. At Union Academy, Harriet E. Barnes was among the early educators who laid the foundation for academic excellence. Barnes, a New England teacher, faced an uphill battle by providing education to formerly enslaved children in Alachua County and training Black teachers. Despite facing constant underfunding and racial discrimination, the school thrived due to the dedication of its staff and community, serving as a cradle of academic excellence and community pride.

In 1923, Lincoln High School was established under the leadership of A. Quinn Jones. Jones, a Florida A&M University graduate, emphasized academic rigor and character development. Under his guidance, Lincoln High became one of the few

accredited Black high schools in Florida. Lincoln offered a diverse curriculum that included Latin, music, and industrial arts, providing students with a well-rounded education.

A. L. Mebane High School opened in 1956 in the town of Alachua, extending educational opportunities to Black students in rural areas. Named after Principal Albert Leonidas Mebane, the school became a hub for academic and extracurricular activities. The faculty at Mebane often went above and beyond to mentor students, serving as role models and community leaders. The school hosted annual sports events and talent shows, creating a vibrant school culture despite the limitations of segregation.

The federal mandate for desegregation in 1970 brought profound changes. Lincoln High School was closed, and its students were sent to newly integrated schools across Gainesville. Mebane High was converted to a middle school, ending its role as a high school. The closures were met with sadness and frustration by many in the Black community. Lincoln students held a protest march, mourning the loss of a school that had been more than just a place of learning, it had been a center of unity for the minority community. The legacies of these schools live on through the efforts of alumni associations, reunions, and community projects. Today, the names Union Academy, A. L. Mebane, and Lincoln High resonate as symbols of resilience and a commitment to Black education in Alachua County.

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Jerald Cheesborough (presented by Melanie Barr)
 Alachua County Historical Commission
 Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
 October 14, 2025

City of Alachua: A Story Written in Layers

As part of the Alachua County Historical Commission, our three-minute lecture on the history of the county today focuses on the City of Alachua, where history is not only remembered but also lived.

Long before Main Street was filled with storefronts and brick buildings defining the City of Alachua downtown, this land already had a story that spanned thousands of years. For over 2,000 years, from around 500 BCE to the early 1700s, this region was inhabited by the Timucua people, including the Potano, who lived throughout what is now North Central Florida. Their presence influenced the cultural and physical landscape of this area long before the city we recognize today existed.

Even the name "Alachua" reflects a deep connection to the land. It originates from a Timucuan word "chua," which is believed to refer to sinkholes—natural limestone depressions that shape the region's landscape. These features are more than just part of the scenery; they are a vital part of this place's identity. When the Spanish colonizers arrived, the word was pronounced in Spanish: "Vamos a Alachua (We are going to 'the chua')."

By the early 1600s, this area became part of Spanish Florida, where missions such as San Francisco de Potano were established. These missions linked indigenous communities and Spanish settlers, marking a period of cultural exchange—yet also causing significant

disruption. Disease, conflict, and colonial pressures caused the decline of the Timucua population, and by the early 1700s, their presence in this region had largely disappeared.

Yet the story of this land did not end, it continued to evolve. In the 1800s, a new community emerged: Newnansville, one of the earliest American settlements in this region and the original county seat of Alachua County. During the Second Seminole War in the 1830s and 1840s, Newnansville became a place of refuge and activity, growing into an important center of early Florida life.

But history is never static. In 1884, the arrival of the Savannah, Florida, and Western Railroad transformed the region. When the railroad bypassed Newnansville, residents and businesses followed the tracks, giving rise to a new settlement. By 1887, a post office had been established, and a new community had taken shape. That community would develop into the City of Alachua.

On April 12, 1905, Alachua was officially incorporated with a population of 526 residents. In the following years, it rapidly grew into a regional center for agriculture, commerce, and daily life. By 1914, the city boasted banks, hotels, mills, and vital infrastructure—proof of a thriving and expanding community.

Main Street became the center of everything. The buildings that still stand today are more than just structures; they are witnesses to history. In recognition of their importance, the City of Alachua Downtown Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places on July 14, 2000, thereby preserving over a century of architectural and civic heritage.

But this history also carries tragic truths. Historical records document acts of racial violence in this region, including multiple lynchings in the late 1800s, with nine recorded cases in the City of Alachua between 1867 and 1896. They also include the assassination of Rev. A. S. J. Allen by a white neighbor over a property border dispute in 1904. During the Jim Crow era (late 1800s-1960s), state and local laws in the U.S. enforced strict racial segregation and legitimized white supremacy, especially in the South. “Separate but equal.” The white neighbor faced no consequences for his actions. These events are part of the historical record, and recognizing them is essential to understanding the full story of this community.

Because history is not only what we celebrate — it is also what we choose to remember, to learn from, and to carry forward with honesty. There is a Spanish saying: “Quien olvida su historia está condenado a repetirla.” It reminds us that when we forget the past, we risk repeating it.

But when we do remember—truthfully and with intention—we create the opportunity to move forward differently. To recognize one another with dignity, to ensure that every storyteller is seen, and to affirm that, today, we stand as one community—equal in value, connected by a shared history we choose to honor with understanding.

Today, our history isn't just in preserved buildings or historic designations — it lives in the people who keep shaping this community and embracing diversity and inclusion.

The story of Alachua isn't just a single moment in time; it's a story written in layers. The City of Alachua is much more than the city incorporated in 1905. It is a living story — and we all have a part in telling it forward.

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Vailma Roca Fernandez
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
March 24, 2026

The Axline – Brice House

Cross Creek is located between Orange Lake and Lake Lochloosa in southeast Alachua County. It connects the two lakes and has been the site of human habitation for thousands of years. The small, unincorporated community was the subject of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' book *Cross Creek* (1942) where she spread the names, places, and values of the rural Florida hamlet across the world.

In her book *Cross Creek*, she described the home of her closest neighbor, Boss Brice, as a "Rococo two story affair, tall and gangling like an antique spinster." She went on to say that "the house is on the opposite side of the road from mine, just out of sight."

This house that she described as an "antique spinster" was already old by the time of Marjorie's arrival in 1928. It was built a half a century prior in 1885 by Jasper Axline, a produce merchant from Cincinnati who wanted to get in on the citrus boom of the 1880s and built the home as part of an orange grove operation. The Creek's proximity to the railroad would allow oranges to be distributed up north and his fortune made.

Axline constructed what was then a very modern and attractive two story dwelling in the untamed Florida wilderness for his family. The exterior featured turned columns, brackets with jigsaw cut geometric motifs, eaves supported by paired corbels, all topped by an elaborately carved gable truss. The two main entrances were each surmounted by a single pane colored glass transom, one being blue and the other red. This was an architectural statement that represented Axline's wealth in a time when such features were very expensive. Another notable feature was a porthole window on the front facing gable that looked out on the rural Florida landscape.

The house featured extensive moldings, carved fireplace mantles, a detached kitchen at its rear, a butler's pantry, and a plumbed bathroom fed by a water tank in the attic at a time when such modern convenience would have been a novelty in the city, let alone rural Florida.

Axline died in 1900 and the property was neglected by his wife and sons until it was sold in 1911 to William Riley Brice, Rawlings' neighbor. It stayed in the family until 1971 when it was purchased by Gary Haskins and his wife Kate Barnes, both artists, who fell in love with the rural setting where they could work on their art.

In 2015, the Axline Brice House was designated on the National Register of Historic Places and just this year, the Alachua Conservation Trust purchased the surrounding 46 acres for conservation. The Axline-Brice House is an important reminder of the once booming Florida citrus industry in the late nineteenth century and a window into Alachua County's historic past.

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Trey Asner
Alachua County Historical Commission
Presented to the Alachua County Commission Meeting
July 14, 2026
