

## OUR INTRODUCTION TO THE ORMOND BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

As a young man getting a technical education there was no priority, no time spent, and no interest on my part, in history. Joining the Ormond Beach Historical Society seemed like a strange thing to do.

After years of homeownership however, a few years ago we moved closer to family, into a residential condo, a pretty place built on the site of an old hotel; I found that this old Hotel Ormond was once the largest wooden structure in the US which I thought was very special. John D. Rockefeller lived there part time until he bought his own house across the street--the Casements, now a beautifully renovated Ormond Beach Cultural Center. Out our window nestled in the woods on what some still refer to as Hotel Street is a unique old house called Talahloco which is built from palmetto palm logs and I'm told that hotel workers used to live there. And just down the street a most attractive little cottage, built from lumber from the 1896 shipwreck of the Nathan Cobb Schooner off our coast, and renovated by one of the Society's great contributors.

Another special historic house almost across Granada is the Queen Anne style MacDonald house built in 1903. We went there to collect some information about our new community, and it turns out to be the Ormond Beach Welcome Center and the headquarters of the Ormond Beach Historical Society. Among other offerings they provide an outstanding narrated "Loop Bus Tour" of local historical sites which includes a visit to a beautiful part of original Florida. They also sponsor, with assistance from the Florida Humanities Council, a monthly Saturday morning "Speaker Series" in a magnificent old house on Beach St which the Society owns, and rents out for weddings & other special occasions--the 1915 Anderson Price Memorial Building. These presentations, by highly qualified typically college professors, show slides and are excellent lectures on a broad range of Florida History, and they are free, with coffee & cookies besides.

So we joined the Historical Society and I'm glad we did. It's been a perfect way for us new residents to meet many fine people all working towards a common objective of preserving and sharing the history of Ormond Beach, but it seems more broadly enhancing the overall quality of life in our new home town. There are many ways to enjoy membership, with room for all levels of contribution: some just want to be members; others contribute financially; some work just a few hours occasionally; some work almost full time on this excellent cause. There are many ways to help: office work; computer work; writing for our History Happening Newsletters; organizing & working at our "Special Events"; cooking great treats for the Special Events; making cookies for the Speaker Series; educational programs including teaching children about our history; creating videos; grounds maintenance at our sites; maintenance on our buildings; applying for funding grants; member recruiting; new member welcoming; role playing early settlers during our cemetery tours; serving as a docent at the preserved Ormond Hotel Cupola; publicity and advertising; planning the upcoming renovation of the Macdonald House; and even working on the creation of a Museum of Ormond Beach. Beyond all this many of their Special Events serve as quality social events which we particularly enjoy.

I personally believe that you need to join a committee and get involved in order to get the full benefit of membership. What the Society has done for us is: introduced us to a number of new friends; kept me off the couch and involved in a meaningful activity; provided some outstanding social events; and to my surprise--genuinely awakened my interest in the fascinating history all around me.

Jim Geis  
Membership Chairman