

Volume 2

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# *New Britain Dispatch*



## **A Journal of the Ormond Beach Historical Society Ormond Beach, Florida**



## Ormond Beach Historical Society

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Greetings! Welcome to the Fall 2023 edition of the Ormond Beach Historical Society's *New Britain Dispatch*. Our goal with this journal is to provide you with interesting stories about our history, focusing on Ormond Beach and its vicinity, and relevant stories from other parts of Florida.

In 1874, Daniel Wilson and George Millard traveled to this area from New Britain, Connecticut to start a settlement on the west side of the Halifax River. Others from Connecticut soon followed and they built palmetto shanties near present-day Tomoka Avenue and Beach Street, cleared land, and planted crops including oranges. In the winter of 1874, Daniel Wilson built the settlement's first wood framed house which became known as Colony House. The settlement was named New Britain in honor of their hometown in Connecticut. In 1880, as more post-Civil War settlers arrived in the area from different parts of the country the town's name was changed to Ormond. On April 25, 1950, a referendum renamed the city to Ormond Beach.

Thus, we have named this journal the *New Britain Dispatch* to link the present to Ormond Beach's past. We hope you enjoy this Fall 2023 edition, and we welcome your input.



*New Britain settlers gathered in front of Colony House (which was located on the southwest corner of present-day Tomoka Road and Beach Street, Ormond Beach) - photograph dated January 29, 1878. (Ormond Beach Historical Society's collection.)*

## Invitation and Instructions for Article Submissions

The Ormond Beach Historical Society's History Journal Committee welcomes article submissions for our history journal, *New Britain Dispatch*. You do not need to be an experienced writer or professional historian to submit an article. Preferably, articles should be connected to the history of the Ormond Beach area; however, articles of historic importance regarding the state of Florida are also acceptable. Submissions can be researched articles, recollections, oral histories or short stories. Submissions should be prepared in Microsoft Word (Times New Roman 12-point font, double spaced with a maximum word count of 2,500). Articles longer than 2,500 words can be broken into different parts and published in multiple editions. For researched articles please use endnotes (not footnotes), and include a list of sources. Chicago style endnotes and bibliography are preferred.

Please include a brief biography of yourself.

Submit articles via email with any illustrations and photographs (high resolution, if possible) to the Ormond Beach Historical Society's office at [office@ormondhistory.org](mailto:office@ormondhistory.org) (Please include *Editor, New Britain Dispatch* in the subject line.)

You can also save your article, illustrations, and photographs on a USB flash drive, CD or DVD and mail it to:

Ormond Beach Historical Society  
Attn: Editor, New Britain Dispatch  
38 E. Granada Blvd.  
Ormond Beach, FL 32176

Articles can be submitted anytime.

The deadline for the **Spring edition** is **April 15** (published early in June).

The deadline for the **Fall edition** is **October 15** (published early in December).

- The Ormond Beach Historical Society - *New Britain Dispatch* - needs your article submissions to add to the knowledge base and help keep local and state history alive and remarkable.

### *New Britain Dispatch* – OBHS History Journal Staff

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## Disclaimer

The information provided in all of the articles within this publication are the sole responsibility of their authors or interviewees. This information does not purport to reflect the opinions or views of the Ormond Beach Historical Society or its members.



# Ellinor Village, Mrs. America, (and me)

by Skip Lowery

In the late 1940s, Ormond welcomed Byron and Merrill Ellinor and their plan to construct a local housing development for veterans. They built Ellinor Village instead, the largest tourist resort in Florida, or as claimed in an advertising pamphlet, “*The World’s Largest Family Resort.*” The pamphlet describes “villas” available for tourists: A (three rooms); B (three rooms with a sleeping porch), C (three rooms with a garage), D (one-bedroom apartment separated by a wall from another), B and C Deluxe (villa with four rooms), and E (six room villa).

The two sections of villas were off Florida State Road A1A, separated by three blocks of local houses. Each had a pool, and there were four “well-equipped” playgrounds for kids.

Much more: One of the first beachside malls, for example, was the Ellinor Village Shopping Center, which included an A-frame building that housed the company’s business offices. And speaking of business, Ellinor Village purchased Ormond’s golf course, near which was constructed the Ellinor Village Country Club, an elegant restaurant where well-dressed folks could gather for dinner and dance to live music. Outside the club was an Olympic-sized swimming pool with underwater lights, diving boards, and a life guard.

Imagine a boy...me, of course...who lived with his parents in a 30 foot Shult (travel trailer) at Granada Trailer Park, who could ride his bike over the Ormond bridge to the Ellinor Village pool where an older friend was the life guard and would let me swim and splash around with the well-to-do tourist kids. Next to the pool, closer to East Granada, was Ellinor Village’s tennis court. No interest to me. Trailer park kids didn’t play tennis.

What especially increased Ellinor Village’s fame began in 1954 when it became the host for the Mrs. America Pageant. Contestants stayed in houses on a street in the south village renamed Mrs. America Drive. Their pageants were on a lot above the beach. A national advertising campaign boasted about the site where “...50 American homemakers compete annually for the Mrs. America title...”

Note the word “homemakers.” Contestants showed other talents, and also appeared in one-piece bathing suits and evening gowns on the pageant stage. But check the pamphlet page and you’ll also suspect that “homemaking” ... table setting, ironing, folding laundry, etc.” ... may have been the main competition.

A woman in a family staying at Ellinor Village made me question those “homemaker” skills when I was a beach lifeguard the summer of 1958. My tower was one of two near Ellinor Village, and the family I mentioned came near the tower one afternoon. Their two kids played in shallow water. The mother watched them while her husband walked up the beach smoking a cigarette. She was also saying something to another woman. I couldn’t hear her well enough to know what she was saying, but whatever it was didn’t sound happy. I did hear her last sentence, a scream: “I need a vacation from my vacation!” She seemed to be in tears.

After the family left the beach, the woman talking to her walked in front of my tower. I asked if her friend was okay. She told me that the mother was just exhausted from taking care of the kids, doing laundry, making beds, shopping, cooking, cleaning and so on. She couldn’t even enjoy the beach, and in their Ellinor Village house, the woman said, her husband watched sports on TV and smoked.

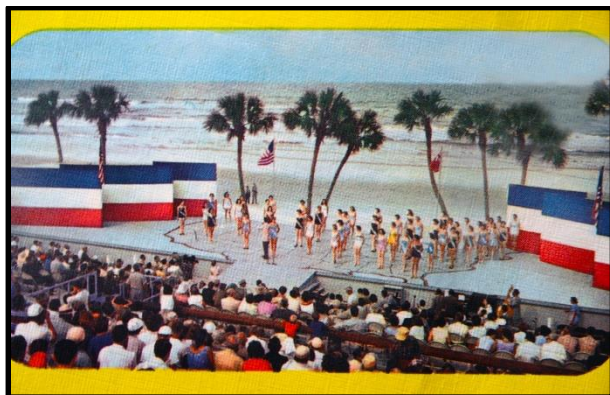
After a few years the Mrs. America pageant moved from Florida but continued in pretty much the same format until 1968 when it was discontinued for a decade. When it reappeared (I don't know where), let's just say that the contestants weren't just setting tables and folding laundry. The times, as Bob Dylan sang, "were a-changin'."

Another major issue that needed to change became an issue throughout the country, especially in the South, and includes Ellinor Village. On an Ellinor Village postcard is a photo of a young couple and their children smiling at the camera from a beach cabana. The caption reads "...the fun and joy of beach life at Ellinor Village as portrayed in this happy family group..." Nowhere on the beach or in any of the Ellinor Village ads is there a person of "color."

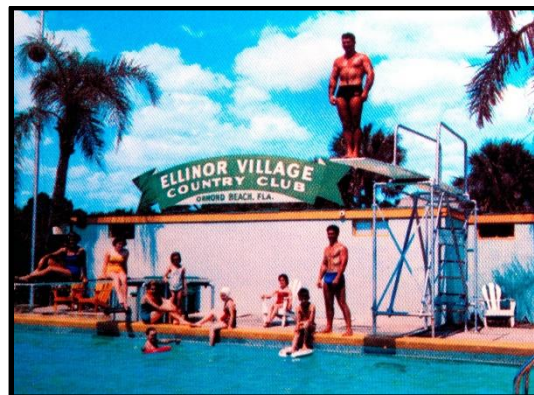
In truth, Ellinor Village could have been named "WASP ACRES" once you do a little digging about its history. First know that a web site about the Jewish Museum of Florida includes a brochure advertising villas at BEAUTIFUL ELLINOR VILLAGE. Inside the brochure, the museum discovered the sub-note "...for restricted clientele." The web site also showed a photo of Ku Klux Klan members with a Christmas tree, above which were the words: "No dogs, no blacks, no Jews." An article on Wikipedia, an Internet encyclopedia site, stated specifically that "Jews were not welcome at Ellinor Village."

According to a 1961 report in the *Ormond Tribune*, Merrill Ellinor sold the north Village to an Illinois corporation, then renovated the south Village, adding air-conditioning inside the houses, etc. Ironically, this section was sold in 1964 to Milton Pepper, a Jewish man. Then in the 1970s, Pepper sold the north village to a developer. Now houses in Ellinor Village areas are no longer for tourists, but sold or rented to locals, whatever color or religion. Blacks live there, and so do women, single and married, many of whom are often involved in business, teaching, other jobs, maybe even politics.

And hey! All living there have a short walk to our "famous" beach. Hooray!



***Bathing Suit Contest - Mrs. America Pageant - Ellinor Village advertising pamphlet. (Skip Lowery's collection.)***



***Ellinor Village Country Club Pool (Lifeguard on the diving board is Sonny Dennis). (Skip Lowery's collection.)***





***Gown Contest - Mrs. America Pageant - Ellinor Village advertising pamphlet. (Skip Lowery's collection.)***



***Ellinor Village Shopping Center - ca. 1950s. (Skip Lowery's collection.)***



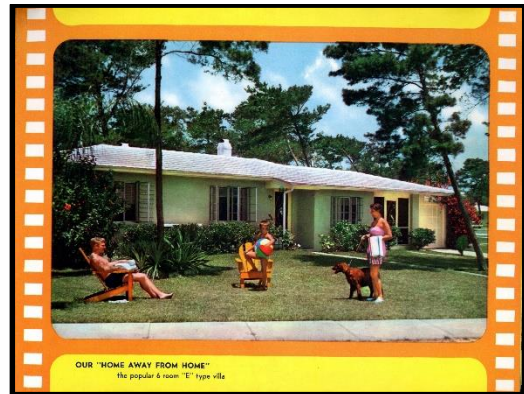
***Recent photograph of a former Ellinor Village 'D' villa. (Skip Lowery's collection.)***



***A family in the 1950s featured on an Ellinor Village postcard. (No Blacks on the beach in the city of Ormond Beach in those days). (Skip Lowery's collection.)***



***The group that planned the Mrs. America pageants posing with a Mrs. America winner. (Skip Lowery's collection.)***

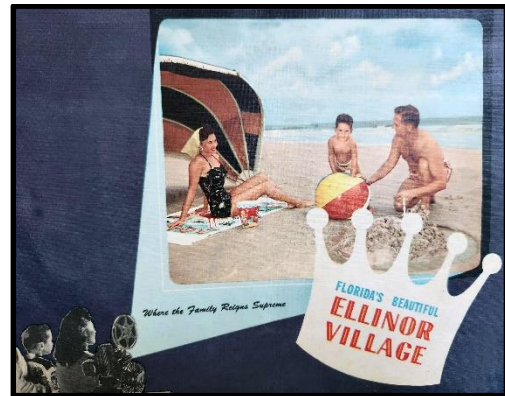


***The popular 6 room "E" type villa - Ellinor Village advertising pamphlet. (Skip Lowery's collection.)***

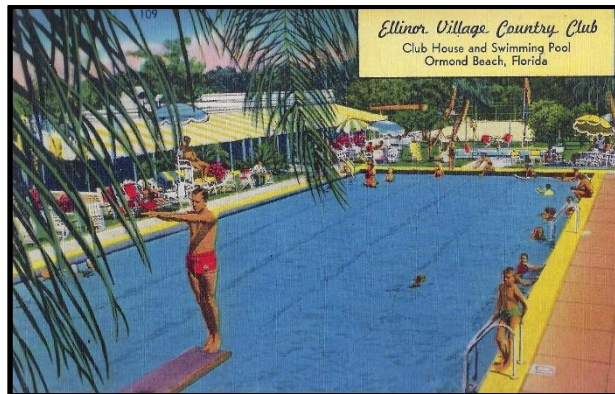




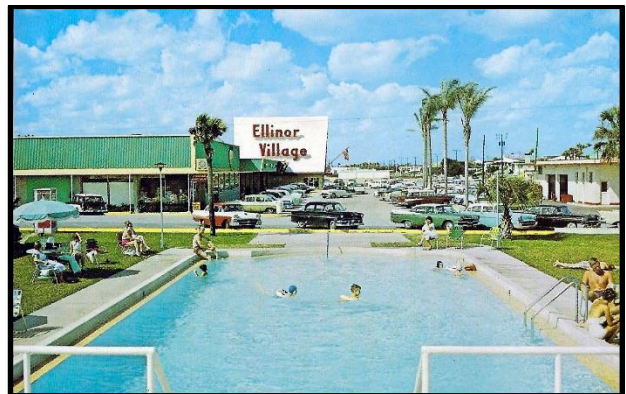
**Various Mrs. America Pageant contests - Ellinor Village advertising pamphlet. (Skip Lowery's collection.)**



**Where the Family Reigns Supreme - Ellinor Village advertising pamphlet. (Skip Lowery's collection.)**



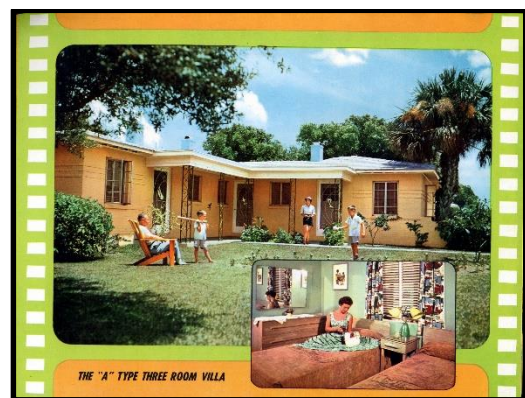
**Ellinor Village Country Club, Club House and Swimming Pool, Ormond Beach, Florida - ca. 1950s. (Ormond Beach Historical Society's Postcard Collection).**



**Ellinor Village Shopping Center and Vacation Resort, Ormond Beach, Florida - ca. 1950s. (Ormond Beach Historical Society's Postcard Collection).**



**"The World's Largest Family Resort" - Ellinor Village advertising pamphlet. (Skip Lowery's collection.)**



**The "A" type three room villa - Ellinor Village advertising pamphlet. (Skip Lowery's collection.)**



# Remembering our Military Veterans at the Ormond Beach Memorial Art Museum and Gardens

by Robert Redd

Volusia County often prides itself on both its dedication to the arts and to honoring our country's military past. The support of these seemingly diverse themes does not have to be exclusive as we shall see.

Volusia County is home to several art museums that any community would be proud to call their own. The Museum of Arts and Sciences (often known by the acronym MOAS) in Daytona Beach has a far-reaching reputation and is home to an amazing collection of not just traditional artworks, but also decorative arts, natural history, African tribal objects, Coca-Cola memorabilia, and what many consider the largest and finest collection of Florida artwork in the world. The CiCi and Hyatt Brown Museum of Art, located on the MOAS campus, is home to more than 2,600 Florida themed paintings, housed in a custom-built facility that is a true showcase.

The Museum of Art DeLand features art from their permanent collection and travelling exhibitions. They have recently exhibited works ranging from those of John Cougar Mellencamp and Clyde Butcher, to M.C. Escher, amongst dozens of other prominent artists. The museum is located adjacent to the campus of Stetson University, which is home to the Homer and Dolly Hand Art Center, a multi-gallery facility used to showcase the university art collection, specifically works by Oscar Bluemner.

The Ormond Beach Memorial Art Museum and Gardens features an incredible permanent collection along with displaying works from local and regional artists. Art classes for both adults and children are regularly offered. The gardens, located adjacent to the physical museum, are a tranquil escape from the noise and bustle of Granada Boulevard which is just a few short steps away from the native plants, flowers, and manmade waterfalls which are lovingly maintained by staff and volunteers. In 2022, a newly redesigned and expanded museum building opened at a cost of nearly \$4 million. The newly constructed museum, building on the legacy of its 1946 ancestor, is a true gem of the Ormond Beach community.

The Ormond War Memorial Art Gallery opened on December 29, 1946, to much local acclaim. The original cement block structure cost \$7,500 to build and contained five rooms with three antechambers.<sup>1</sup>

The newly opened museum became home to a collection of 55 paintings by Malcolm Fraser. Fraser was born in Montreal, Canada on April 19, 1868. In 1895, he graduated from the Sorbonne, in Paris where he then received the title of Professor of Fine Arts from the city of Paris.

By 1897, Fraser was living in New York City, where he created illustrations for magazines such as *Ladies Home Journal*, *Cosmopolitan*, and others. He was also a prolific book illustrator. It was at this time he also began full size painting, exhibiting at shows at the Boss Art Gallery, and others.

Fraser volunteered for service during World War I. He served in a French regiment called the "Blue Devils," before later becoming a captain, serving as a zone commander, with the American Red Cross.

After the war, Fraser returned to art, working as both an instructor and a painter. In 1946, Fraser donated a collection of 55 of his works, creating the foundation for what we now call the Ormond Beach Memorial Art Museum and Gardens.<sup>2</sup>

In keeping with the war memorial goal of the initial museum, today, the Ormond Beach Memorial Art Museum and Gardens today features several unique military displays that are available to the public. Modern garden sculptures are dedicated to Korean and Vietnam War veterans.

Empty boots, a ladder-back chair, along with a three-cornered flag, military jacket, and helmet, show the tragedy and loss of more than 58,000 soldiers during the Vietnam War. The garden sculpture, created by artist Gregory Johnson, took center stage during a 2011 Veterans Day dedication ceremony attended by more than 350 residents.<sup>3</sup>

Artist Mark Chew was selected to create a memorial to Korean War soldiers, men often forgotten in the attempt to return to normalcy in the post-World War II years. His work is a modern version of an eternal flame, made from stainless steel and standing nine feet tall. During a Veterans Day dedication in 2010, several Korean War veterans voiced their approval of the new memorial, while Mr. Chew stated he was “very humbled” for his work to have been selected.<sup>4</sup>

Inside the museum is a large bronze plaque honoring more than 200 local World War II veterans,



*Honor Roll – World War II – Ormond Beach (bronze plaque).  
Photo Source: Ormond Beach Memorial Art Museum & Gardens.*



including twelve on a Gold Star list, indicating they lost their lives in service. This commemoration effort was begun in the immediate aftermath of the war. A Daytona Beach News Journal advertisement was placed in February 1947, seeking names of those who served during the war. Those with additional information were directed to “Mrs. Harold T. Butts”. Mrs. Butts name was Grace Eileen.<sup>5</sup>

As was the standard practice of the day, names of African American and White service members were segregated and ultimately two plaques were created. Not only were there two plaques, but the plaque honoring African Americans was made of inferior materials. The plaques were displayed separately, with the African American plaque disappearing years later.

Through the efforts of Andrea Hall, the niece of James Lewis Hall, an African American World War II veteran from Ormond Beach, this injustice was corrected, albeit, more than fifty years later.

When Hall was just a teen, her uncle gave her a challenge, telling her the story of the omitted names. Years later, Andrea Hall was able to achieve her uncle’s dream of including African American soldiers’ names alongside the names of White service members. In 1999, through her efforts, seventy-seven names, including one woman, Betrice Avery, were added to a newly created plaque, helping to bridge the gap created decades prior. While most of those whose names were added to the plaque were deceased, twelve survivors, including Avery, attended the dedication ceremony on June 27, 1999. Today, the plaque has a prominent placement on the first floor of the museum.<sup>6</sup>

Located near the Granada Boulevard entrance to the museum is a small plaque attached to the exterior of the building. The Honor Roll plaque reads, “This tablet is erected to honor the Ormond men who served in the World war and in loving remembrance of the three who made the supreme sacrifice.”

The three men who are singled out for their sacrifice include, W(illiam) Wallace George, Arthur A. Helm, and Harold E. Waldron. These three men each have a unique story in how they perished in service to their country.

William Wallace George was born in St. Augustine, FL on November 27, 1896. Prior to enlisting for service, he was self-employed in Ormond Beach. During the war he served in the United States Naval Reserve as a Machine Mate, Second Class. According to the 1932 application for a military headstone, it appears that George served for only ten months, as the war ended. While in the service he contracted pulmonary tuberculosis and passed away at the United States General Hospital #19 in Asheville, North Carolina on March 25, 1920, though some sources show him discharged from service in 1919.

George’s remains were returned to Florida, and he was interred at Pellicer Creek Cemetery in St. Johns County.<sup>7</sup>

Arthur Adolph Helm was born to a German father and mother from South Carolina on August 21, 1896, in Bulow, Florida. Helm registered for service in June 1918 and was ordered to report to Camp Jackson, in South Carolina on August 26, 1918.

Helm’s service card shows he did not leave Camp Jackson. Rather, he was briefly assigned to Company B, 4<sup>th</sup> Provisional Regiment, 156<sup>th</sup> Depot Brigade before being reassigned to Battery B of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Provisional Development Brigade.

Helm’s headstone at Pinewood Cemetery, in Daytona Beach, states that he died at Camp Jackson in 1918. His death date is October 12, 1918. Private Helm was stricken with influenza and his cause of death was ruled bronchial pneumonia. Helm was one of many young soldiers who endured the influenza outbreak during the war. From January 1, 1918, through November 30, 1918, Camp Jackson alone reported 8,255 cases of influenza with 412 deaths.<sup>8</sup>



Harold Edwin Waldron was born on May 16, 1895, one of six children to parents D.W. (Daniel Whipple) and Florence Waldron. D.W. operated a “staple and grocery store.” Harold worked as a plumber when he was called into service at Camp Jackson in March 1918. He was sent overseas on the ship *SS Talthybius* in May 1918 as a member of Company E, 105<sup>th</sup> Engineers, 30<sup>th</sup> Division. He was reported wounded on October 18. In late November, Waldron’s parents received notice that Harold died on November 5, less than one week before the armistice was signed bringing an end to hostilities. While the local newspaper stated Harold was killed in action, his World War I Service Card states he died from “influenza and pneumonia.” Harold’s remains were buried under a white cross at the Somme American Cemetery in northern France.<sup>9</sup>



*Ormond Beach Memorial Art Museum & Gardens – ca. 2022. (Photo Source: Ormond Beach Historical Society).*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> “Ormond War Memorial to be Dedicated Today.” *Daytona Beach News Journal*. December 29, 1946.

<sup>2</sup> For more on the life of Malcolm Fraser, readers are referred to the Ormond Memorial Art Museum and Gardens website. In reading their information, please understand that Fraser was not awarded the Medal of Honor. There are several “lifesaving” medals, but I have been unable to determine which he was awarded. <https://www.ormondartmuseum.org/art-garden/malcolm-fraser-collection.html>. Accessed October 3, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Audrey Parente. "Honoring our Veterans: For Vietnam Vet, Dedication A Moving Tribute." *Daytona Beach News Journal*. November 12, 2011.

<sup>4</sup> Audrey Parente. "Sculpture Dedication Fetes Korean War Vets." *Daytona Beach News Journal*. November 12, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> "Advertisement." *Daytona Beach News Journal*. February 16, 1947. Page 7.

<sup>6</sup> Ormond Beach Memorial Art Museum and Gardens. "World War II Memorial." <https://www.ormondartmuseum.org/art-garden/military-tributes/world-war-two-memorial.html>. Accessed October 3, 2023; Maria M. Perotin. "53 Years Late, Ormond Salutes It's Black Veterans." *The Orlando Sentinel*. June 18, 1999; Mark Schlueb. "Their Rightful Place: Forgotten for 50 Years, Black Veterans of World War II Will Be Saluted Today in Ormond Beach, Thanks to One Woman's Fight on Their Behalf." *Daytona Beach News Journal*. June 27, 1999.

<sup>7</sup> "Standard Certificate of Death" signed by 1<sup>st</sup>. Lieutenant E. L. Wilson. Issued by the State of North Carolina; "William Wallace George World War I Service Card." *State Archives of Florida*. <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/221450>. Accessed October 9, 2023.

<sup>8</sup> "Arthur A. Helm World War I Service Card." *State Archives of Florida*. <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/225207>. Accessed October 9, 2023; "Influenza Pandemic of 1918." *South Carolina Encyclopedia*. <https://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/influenza-pandemic-of-1918/>. Accessed October 5, 2023. Readers are also referred to Jennifer George. *The Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and Its Effects on the United States Military*. <https://wou.edu/history/files/2015/08/Jenny-George.pdf>. Accessed October 5, 2023.

<sup>9</sup> "Harold Waldin (sic) Dies in France." *Daytona Beach News Journal*. November 24, 1918; "Harold E Waldron World War I Service Card." *State Archives of Florida*. <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/195854>. Accessed October 5, 2023; Willard P. Sullivan and Harry Tucker. *The History of the 105<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Engineers: Divisional Engineers of the "Old Hickory" (30<sup>th</sup>) Division*. New York: George H. Doran Company, 1919. 351.

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# Lambert House: An Enduring Bunnell Landmark

An Oral History Interview featuring Sisco Deen

**Editor's note:** The *New Britain Dispatch* conferred with Sisco Deen on this oral history interview project late in 2022. Sisco Deen passed away on August 31, 2023 in Palm Coast, at the age of 83.

The Lambert House is located at 202 North Railroad Street, Bunnell, FL. It is a well-known landmark that is often mentioned in local folklore. It was built by James Frank "Major" Lambert around 1909, and was one of the early houses built in what was then the settlement of Bunnell. Currently, the house is occupied.

Around 1881, Alvah Alonzo Bunnell, a shingle maker, settled in the area and established a saw mill. The settlement became known as Bunnell Stop, and was part of St. Johns County. By 1903, the settlement was renamed to Bunnell and was supported by its own post office. In 1913, the town of Bunnell was incorporated within St. Johns County. In 1917, the town of Bunnell became the county seat of the newly founded Flagler County. In 1924, Bunnell was incorporated as a city.

Part of the folklore of the Lambert House is its misrepresentation of being Bunnell's oldest house. Since the Bunnell Stop settlement was established in 1881 (approximately 28 years before the construction of the Lambert House) the residents obviously had to have built earlier houses (although none are known to still be standing). There were some ghost stories and purported paranormal activity reported at and near the Lambert House over the years. These stories most likely were fueled by Major Lambert's tragic and untimely death in 1938. Another story says the Lambert House was used as offices for early Flagler County administration personnel before its first courthouse was built in 1924. This is not accurate as the Lambert House has always been a single family residence.

## Architectural Features of the Lambert House

The Lambert House is a wood framed rectangular two-story house consisting of 2,559 total square feet, and is slightly raised above ground level by brick pillar supports. It was designed in a modest Shingle architectural style. The Shingle architecture style was popular in the United States from around 1880 to the early 1900s. It was influenced by a combination of the English Tudor styling and Colonial American architecture, and typically featured large wood framed horizontal structures that blended into their natural surroundings.

The steep gable roof is covered with standing seam metal (it originally had wood shingles). A brick chimney protrudes through the edge of the south side peak of the roof, and a second brick chimney protrudes from the northeast side of the roof. A centrally located gable dormer protrudes from the peak of the roof at the front side and includes two double hung windows (originally there were four windows) at the second floor level. This gable dormer is one of the most noticeable features of the house. The exterior of the house on the second story level is covered with overlapping rectangular wood shake shingles. The first story has horizontal wood plank siding. An external porch on the first floor level has a shed roof and covers the entire front of the house and wraps around the entire south



side. Another noticeable feature of the first story is a three-sided protrusion section on the front of the north side of the house. The east and west sections include one double hung window, and the central section includes two double hung windows. This protrusion has a shed style roof that is curiously higher than the shed roof on the wrap-around porch.

A room was added on the south side of the house story at the second story level in the 1930s.

### **The Story of James Frank “Major” Lambert**

James Frank “Major” Lambert was born in June 1862 in South Carolina. Around 1899, he married schoolteacher Marie Catherine Ludwig, they had one daughter Anna Marie Lambert who was born in 1902.

He moved to St. Johns County prior to 1900. He and Isaac I. Moody, Jr. operated a turpentine camp west of the settlement of Bunnell Stop. Lambert and Moody went into business together and purchased a shingle mill, and later 30,000 acres of land and founded the Bunnell Development Company in 1909.

Lambert was also the proprietor of the Hotel Halcyon in Bunnell, a councilman for the town of Bunnell, and the vice-president and director of the Bunnell State Bank. In 1919, he was elected president of the bank succeeding Isaac I. Moody, Jr. who had died from the Spanish Flu.

In 1917, Lambert was a member of the delegation that traveled to Tallahassee to appear before the legislature supporting the formation of Flagler County. He retired as president of the Bunnell State Bank in August 1922, and in December 1923 he purchased the Bank of Hastings.

Lambert was active in community affairs and his name was placed on the cornerstone of Bunnell High School as a School Trustee when the building was dedicated in 1924.

Lambert’s life came to a tragic and an abrupt end on February 26, 1938 when his automobile was struck by a freight train at the railway crossing on Moody Boulevard in Bunnell.

### **Oral History Interview with Sisco Deen**

**New Britain Dispatch:** What are your earliest memories of the Lambert House?

**SISCO DEEN:** “It was big and not air conditioned. There was a small orange grove in the rear of the house as well as a large water tank which was installed in February 1913. Next to the water tank were stables for my uncle and aunt’s horses (Dollie and Pal) and my Shetland pony (Daisy Mae). There was also a wash house in the rear and to the north of the main house.”

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**New Britain Dispatch:** How long did you live in the Lambert House?

**SISCO DEEN:** “My uncle and aunt (Clarence Otis Magee [1898-1972] and aunt Pauline Sisco Magee [1891-1985]) purchased the Lambert House in 1937 or 1938 and sold same to Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Zalewski in January 1947. I lived there with my aunt and uncle for two years (1946-1947).”

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**New Britain Dispatch:** What do you think are the most interesting features of the Lambert House?

**SISCO DEEN:** “The porch on the west and south side of the house.”

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**New Britain Dispatch:** With so much local folklore surrounding the Lambert House, including ghost stories, what are some stories you personally know about?

**SISCO DEEN:** “Strange as it may seem, I do not know of any folklore surrounding the house including ghost. No ghost living there when this 6-year-old was in residence.”

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**New Britain Dispatch:** How important is the Lambert House related to Bunnell’s history?

**SISCO DEEN:** “It’s important in that it was constructed here by one of Bunnell’s and Flagler County’s founding fathers.”

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**New Britain Dispatch:** How do you think James Frank “Major” Lambert should be remembered?

**SISCO DEEN:** “Major Lambert should be remembered for his active part in the development of Bunnell and the creation of Flagler County. He was active in the turpentine, farming and real estate business here for 40 years. Lambert was at one time, president of Bunnell State Bank. He was appointed as a Bunnell City Councilman when Bunnell was first incorporated in June 1912.”

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**New Britain Dispatch:** Do you know any of James Frank “Major” Lambert’s relatives?

**SISCO DEEN:** “He and his wife Marie Catherine Ludwig [1860-1931] only had one child, Marie Ann Lambert who was born in Bunnell on 04 Jan 1902 and who died on 20 May 1998. Marie was married to John Esesne Center, Jr. [1902-1976]. Marie and John did not have any children.”

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*New Britain Dispatch*: What do you think about future Lambert House restorations?

SISCO DEEN: “I am all for the restoration of any structure of historical significance.”

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*Portrait of James Frank “Major” Lambert and his wife Marie Catherine Ludwig Lambert – ca. 1915.  
Source: Sisco Deen collection.*





*Claude Sisco Deen Jr. riding his Shetland pony, Daisy Mae, in front of the Lambert House – ca. 1947. Source: Sisco Deen collection.*



*Lambert House – Northwest View – ca. 1937. Source: Sisco Deen collection.*



*Lambert House – Southwest View – ca. 1937. Source: Sisco Deen collection.*



*Lambert House – West View – Unoccupied, boarded up and in a state of disrepair - ca. 1995. Source: Sisco Deen collection.*



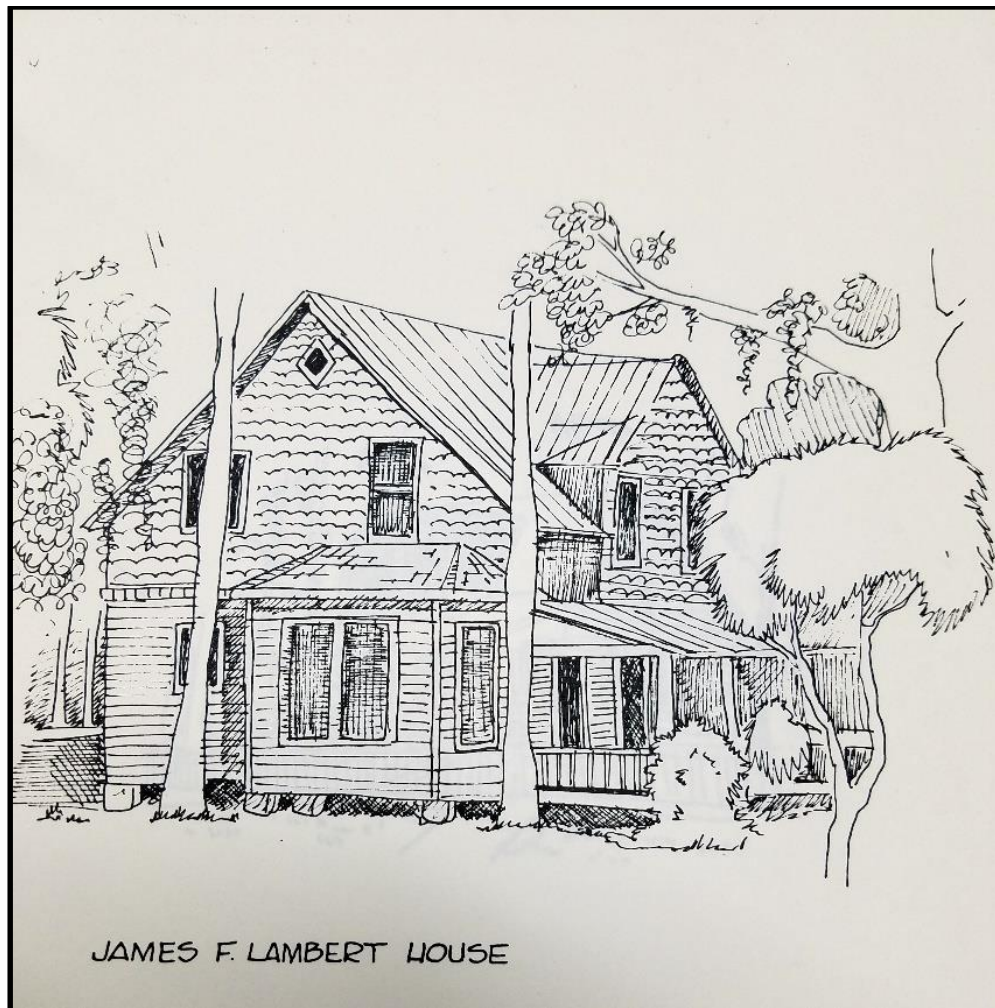


*Lambert House – Northwest View. Source: Photograph by Randy Jaye (December 1, 2022).*



*Lambert House – West (Front) View. Source: Photograph by Randy Jaye (December 1, 2022).*





*Sketch of the James F. Lambert House. Source: Flagler County Historical Society.*

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# Daytona Beach's Unaesthetic Sightseeing Tower (1963-1983)

by Randy Jaye

Many say that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. That was certainly the case with Daytona Beach's once iconic 125-foot tall Sightseeing Tower (also informally known as the Lookout Tower). The structure stood near the boardwalk (sometimes called the Broadwalk) between the band shell and the coquina clock tower for twenty years, from 1963 to 1983. Throughout its brief lifetime some considered it to be an important local landmark and others considered it to be a public eyesore.



*Sightseeing Tower, Pier and Boardwalk in Daytona Beach. Postcard ca. 1970s. Author's collection.*

Long-time local resident, editor, reporter and columnist for the *Daytona Beach News-Journal*, Mark Lane, remembers the Sightseeing Tower as, "Positioned between the Boardwalk's magnificent Bandshell and its cool and quirky stone clock tower, the sheet-metal Sightseeing Tower stuck out like a sore thumb. That was one ugly stretched-out garden shed of a structure."

The Sightseeing Tower was built in 1963 by Smith Steel Construction Co., from Jacksonville. It was owned by Tona-Rama Inc. In 1963, the city of Daytona Beach leased a 30 by 35-foot piece of land, where the structure was built, to Tona-Rama Inc. for 10 years. The lease payment was \$600 per year plus five percent of the attraction's gross income over \$25,000.

The top observation deck of the Sightseeing Tower was accessed by an elevator. A spiral stairway inside the structure was only used in case the elevator malfunctioned or was being serviced. The tower's business and ticket office was housed on the ground floor.



*Daytona Beach's Space Needle. Postcard ca. 1970. Author's collection. Note: In 2012, it was demolished after becoming structurally hazardous and deemed an eyesore.*

The Sightseeing Tower operated with no real competition until 1969 when the Space Needle was built adjacent to the nearby pier. The Space Needle was 176-feet tall and had an ascending and descending 25-passenger circular gondola which rotated slowly while in motion. Obviously, this newer, taller and more modern attraction was going to be challenging for the Sightseeing Tower to compete with.

A lawsuit was filed by the owners of the Sightseeing Tower which claimed the permit to build the Space Needle was illegal because the structure was too close to the high water mark on the beach, and the part of the beach around the pier had become public property and was interfering with public access to the beach.





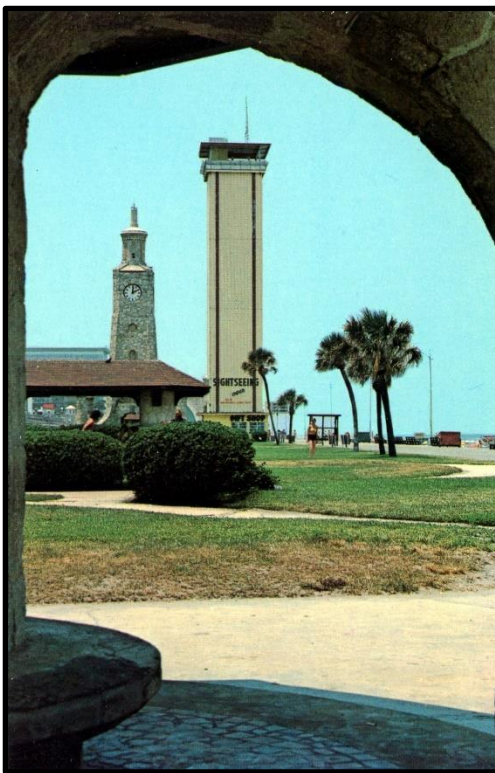
*Ocean Front Park - Coquina Clock Tower, Balconies, Bandshell and the Sightseeing Tower - Daytona Beach, Fla. Postcard ca. 1970. Author's collection.*

appeals were forwarded to the Florida Supreme Court. Harry Doan, owner of the Space Needle, pleaded to the Supreme Court to reverse the lower court's decision because he said he would be "robbed" of a \$125,000 investment.

The lawsuit became a significant state-wide argument as it had the potential to establish a precedent to determine if beaches were legally public property in Florida. During the three years the lawsuit worked its way through the courts the Space Needle was open for business.

On August 31, 1972, the First District Court of Appeal stated, "the Space Needle built on the soft sand area of the beach should have never been constructed, and the city of Daytona Beach erred in awarding the owners a building permit." The court issued orders to take the Space Needle down in 90 days.

Appeals were quickly filed by attorneys for both the city of Daytona Beach and the attraction's owners. The



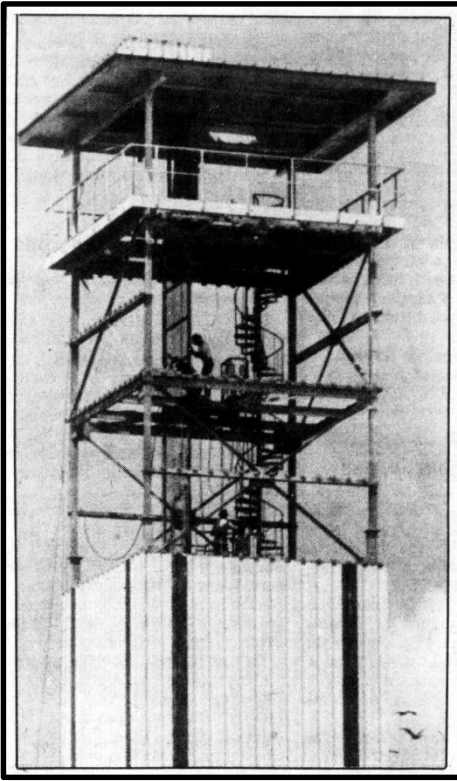
*Sightseeing Tower and Clock Tower view from beneath a coquina balcony in Ocean Front Park, Daytona Beach, Fla. - Postcard ca. 1970s. Author's collection.*

On March 25, 1974, the Florida Supreme Court ruled in favor of allowing the Space Needle to stand where it was. Chief Justice James C. Adkins said, "the Space Needle does not substantially interfere with public access to the surf...the erection of the sky-tower was consistent with recreational use of the land by the public." This case, *Daytona Beach v. Tona-Rama*, provided a landmark decision regarding the public's right to access the dry-sand part of beaches throughout the state of Florida.

By 1977, the Sightseeing Tower was attracting about 10,000 visitors per year (about 80 per cent were between the Daytona Speed weeks and Easter, and June through August). At this time, the price to enter the Sightseeing Tower was fifty cents per person. The telescope on the observation deck cost twenty-five cents.

Harry Halliday, owner of the Sightseeing Tower and its gift shop from 1971 to 1983, visited its observation deck many times and claimed he was always impressed with the way the ocean changed from day to day, sometimes from hour to hour. Halliday said "The sun changes its color. When we get an offshore wind, it's like a lake. It's almost that still. Then we get a north-eastern breeze and the waves run out almost parallel to the beach."





*Sightseeing Tower Coming Down. The Orlando Sentinel, October 4, 1983.*

During the early 1980s, the popularity of the Sightseeing Tower declined. There was also public outcry claiming the Sightseeing Tower was an eyesore and should be removed from Daytona Beach's beautiful Oceanfront Park. There were also plans to build a luxury hotel east of Atlantic Avenue and the 125-foot tall Sightseeing Tower would obstruct its guest's view of the ocean. Daytona Beach officials told the *Orlando Sentinel* on July 6, 1983 that the Sightseeing Tower will not remain. "It's just too unsightly."

The city of Daytona Beach denied the owners of the Sightseeing Tower an extension of their lease and announced the tower will be torn down. The city commissioners of Daytona Beach agreed to allocate \$5000 to assist in the removal of Sightseeing Tower.

In October 1983, after a twenty-year run, the Sightseeing Tower was disassembled and all of its pieces were removed from Daytona Beach's Oceanfront Park.

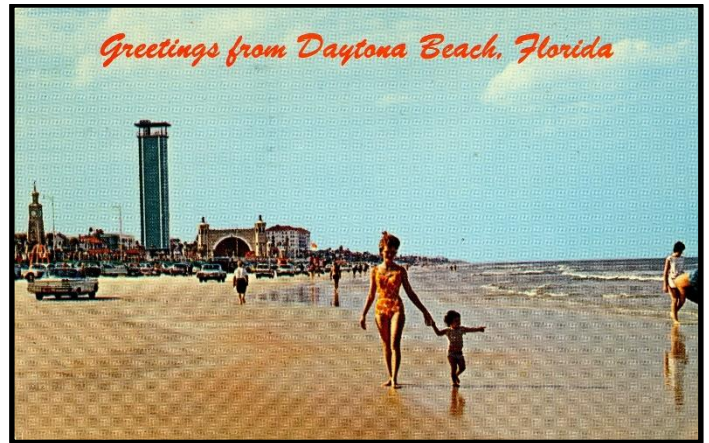
By the way, the removal of the Sightseeing Tower coupled with the enticement of potential investors and contractors by the city of Daytona Beach and county of Volusia did lead to the construction of a new luxury hotel next to Oceanfront Park, which was completed in 1989. The \$47 million 402-room oceanfront Marriott Resort immediately became notable for its shape, color and ocean views.



*The Marriott Resort on Atlantic Avenue in Daytona Beach. The eye-catching stepped pyramid themed architecture with a pink and turquoise color scheme dominates the skyline. Originally, it also featured pastel-themed rooms and a lobby which was adorned with pink marble and brass. Postcard ca. 1989. Author's collection.*



*"World's Most Famous Beach", Daytona Beach, Fla.*  
**Ocean Front Park - featuring the Coquina Clock Tower and the Sightseeing Tower - Daytona Beach, Fla. Postcard ca. 1970s. Author's collection.**



**Looking North on the World Famous Daytona Beach showing the new Sightseeing Tower. Postcard ca. 1968. Author's collection.**

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## Samples of OBHS's Historic Photographic & Postcard Collections

The following two postcards were donated by Ned Kraft.



*Palm Walk from Hotel Ormond to Beach, Ormond Beach, Fla. - ca. 1920s.*



*QUICK 'N TASTY Coffee Shop (You'll Be Glad You Stopped), Ormond Beach, Fla - ca. 1960s.*



The following two digital photographs were taken in 2023 and donated by Randy Jaye.



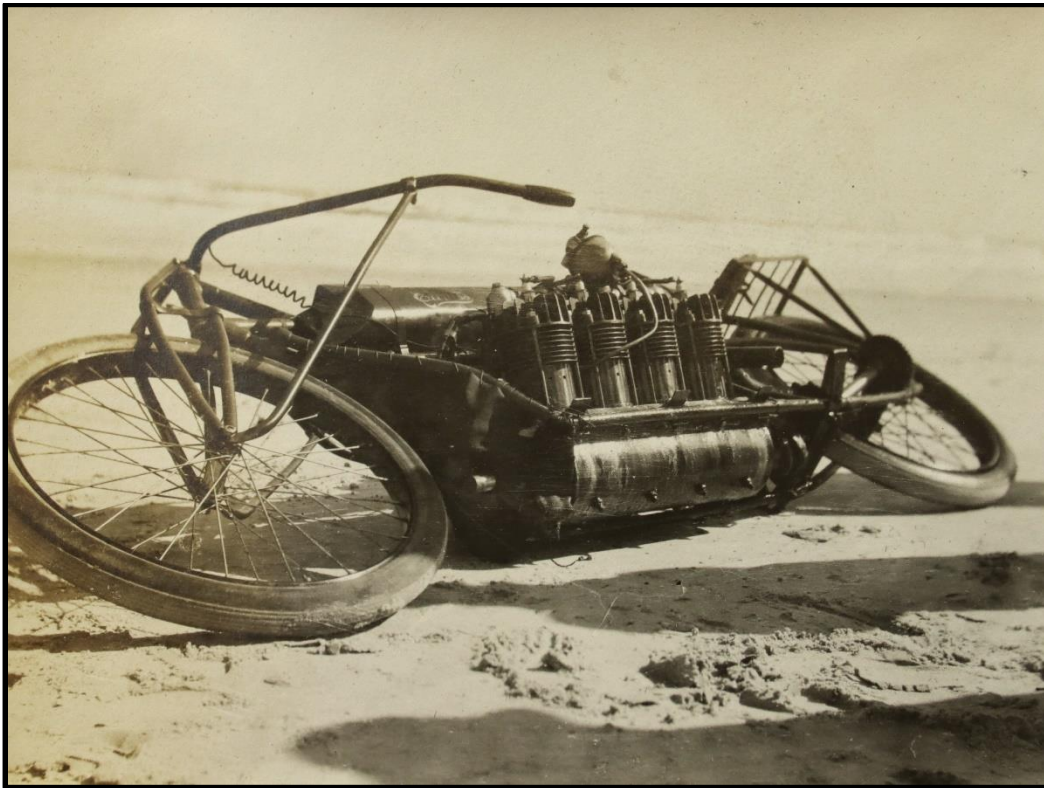
*The Cupola is located in Fortunato Park at the northeast corner of the Granada Bridge. It stood on top of the Ormond Hotel's roof and allowed guests to see panoramic views of the nearby ocean, river and town. It is the only remaining structure of the former landmark hotel, which was demolished in 1992.*



*Talahloko, located at 19 Orchard Lane, is a rare historic structure built in 1886 in the Adirondack Rustic architectural style using native materials, including palmetto logs, which blended into the local natural environment. It was constructed by John Anderson, an early promoter and driving force of Ormond (now Ormond Beach), and originally used as a winter resort. Talahloko was added onto the National Register of Historic Places on September 6, 1989.*



The following two digital photographs were donated by Robert Sanford. Sanford's grandfather, Ross Edward Apgar, shot these pictures in Ormond, Florida in 1906.



*An early racing motorcycle lays idle on the beach in Ormond – ca. 1906.*



*Spectators line the beach for the start of an automobile race in Ormond - ca. 1906.*

## Brief Biographies of this Edition's Authors and Interviewees

**Skip Lowery** taught high school and college for 40 years and spent most of his life in Ormond Beach. In 2014, he wrote a book called *Ormond Boy: A Mid-century Memoir*. Skip has also written photo-essays and poems for several magazines, and wrote a play about Mark Twain that opened in Deland. Now, however, he just hopes he can hang around Ormond (and some parts north) with his wife.

**Robert Redd** is currently the Cultural Coordinator for the County of Volusia. Previously, he was the Executive Director for the New Smyrna Museum of History. He has published six books through Arcadia Publishing. The two most recent include *Hidden History of Civil War Florida* (2022), and *Florida at Sea: A Maritime History* (2023). The latter is co-authored with Dr. Nick Wynne and Dr. Joe Knetsch. He holds a Bachelor's degree in American Studies from Stetson University, and a Master's degree in Public History from American Public University.

**Sisco Deen** (1940-2023) was born in Flagler County. He was educated in area schools and lived in Bunnell until he moved with his mother, sister and brother to Ormond Beach in 1952. Sisco graduated from Seabreeze High School in Daytona Beach in 1958, Florida State University in 1962 with a B.M.E. degree and Central Michigan University in 1974 with a M.A. degree in Public Administration. He is a Vietnam veteran who served in both enlisted and officer status, and retired from the military with 16 years and eight months of active service with the rank of Captain. On his return to civilian life, Sisco became involved in the building industry in Port Orange. He served as the CEO for both DECO, Inc., a landscaping company and D. B. & S. Investments, a company which built single family homes. While in Port Orange, he served on the city's Board of Review; Historic Preservation Board; Beautification/Environmental Advisory Board and Code Enforcement Board. Sisco returned to Flagler County in 1993 where he became active in local historical organizations. He also served on the Flagler Beach Code Enforcement Board for two years. He was a well-known local historian who published many articles and 3 books; *Our Heritage, A Genealogy of the Descendants of Phillip Deen* (2004); *News about Flagler Countians in Military Service* (2005), and *Images of America-Flagler County* (2017). Sisco Deen passed away on August 31, 2023 in Palm Coast, at the age of 83.

**Randy Jaye** believes that studying history helps people understand how past events have shaped the present. He is also a firm believer that understanding the lessons of history can prevent undesirable events in our past from occurring again. He recently researched and nominated 4 properties that have been successfully added onto the National Register of Historic Places. He is the author of three recent history books, and writes articles for historical journals, online publications, local newspapers and magazines. He has also appeared on several radio shows and PBS documentaries. His latest book *Florida Prohibition: Corruption, Defiance and Tragedy* is being published by The History Press and is due on the shelves in February 2024. He earned both a Master's degree and a Bachelor's degree from California State University.



## Ormond Beach Historical Society - Board of Directors (2023)

Joyce Benedict	Dr. Sue Kim
Carol Bigelow	Leslie Madigan
Joy Brown	Alisa Rogers (Treasurer)
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Pattie Gertenbach	Erlene Turner
Mia James (First Vice President)	Amy Valcik (Recording Secretary)
Randy Jaye	Pam Woodsome

## Ormond Beach Historical Society – Staff

Desiree Girty (Office Manager)  
 Cheri King (Office Assistant)  
 Randall Herron (Anderson-Price Building Superintendent)

## Brief History of the Ormond Beach Historical Society (OBHS)

The OBHS was formed in 1976 as the Ormond Beach Historical Trust. The OBHS's first major project was to save The Casements (John D. Rockefeller's house from 1918 until his death in 1937) from demolition. The Casements was added onto the National Register of Historic Places in 1972, and was subsequently restored and now functions as the Cultural Center for the City of Ormond Beach. Other historic sites and structures that the OBHS helped to preserve include the Indian Burial Mound (ca. 800) located on South Beach Street across from Ames Park, the Pilgrim's Rest Primitive Baptist Church (ca. 1879) in Bailey Riverbridge Gardens Park, the Ormond Hotel Cupola (ca. 1887) in Fortunato Park, the Anderson-Price Memorial Building (ca. 1915) at 42 North Beach Street, the Three Chimneys Sugar Mill Ruins (ca. 1768) at 715 West Granada Boulevard and the World War II Watchtower (ca. 1942), on Highway A1A, 4.3 miles north of Granada Boulevard. The OBHS currently owns and preserves the Anderson-Price Memorial Building (deeded to the OBHS by the Ormond Beach Woman's Club in 2002), and the Nathan Cobb Cottage (bequeathed to the OBHS by Tom Massfeller in 2020). The OBHS's main office is in the MacDonald House, 38 E. Granada Blvd., Ormond Beach, where it also operates the Ormond Beach Welcome Center.

