Historic Pinellas County: A Centennial History

James Anthony Schnur

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Recommended Citation

Throughout the centennial celebration in 2011-2012, the Pinellas County Historical Society and Heritage Village partnered for a series of successful lectures and programs to commemorate the centennial of Pinellas County’s creation on January 1, 1912. Jim Schnur, the speaker at many of these programs and a past president of the Society, also spent the spring of 2012 writing a book that captures many of the events mentioned in the lectures.

Working with Historical Publishing Network, Schnur authored *Historic Pinellas County: A Centennial History* as a colorful commemorative book that traces the footpaths along our peninsula back to its earliest settlement. A lifelong resident of Pinellas and longtime member of the Society, Schnur waived his right to royalties so funds raised from the sale of the book would go to PCHS for its support of Heritage Village.

This book, rich with images from Heritage Village’s archives and other sources, walks the reader along a trail in Pinellas from the earliest footprints in the sand, long before the arrival of Spanish conquistadors, to the “condomania” of the late twentieth century. In between, the reader learns of the agricultural legacies of our citrus and farming enterprises, how coastal living shaped settlement, how community folkways and lifestyles evolved, and the important role that tourism has played throughout our county.

Copies of *Historic Pinellas County* arrived in time for the County Jubilee in October 2012, and are presently available in the Gift Shop operated by the Society in the Beach Cottage. As part of the agreement between the publisher and PCHS, the Society received a shipment of books without cost. All proceeds from this shipment, with the exception of sales tax, directly benefit the Society and will be available to sustain our programs and ongoing support at the Village. The book can be purchased for $24.95.

The popular lectures from 2011-2012 are permanently available on the county’s website at http://www.pinellascounty.org/heritage/streaming_video.htm#decades for all to enjoy. Now, you can also add an attractive coffee table history that will benefit the Village to your personal library.
Welcome These New Members

The Pinellas County Historical Society

Glenda Wood
Geraldine Sullivan
Karen Robbins
Judith Powers & Michael Jones
Janet McMullen Randall
Bill Holland
Shari Layne
Mark Winterbottom
Marje & Ray Dube

Conservation Resources at (727) 582-2100.

The pines at Heritage Village are much older and require our attention. Many of the trees are small and stunted, and if maintained at their current density, would become further stressed and vulnerable to diseases. Diseased or unhealthy trees, in turn, pose a hazard to visitors and historic structures and can increase the risk of catastrophic wildfire. Specifically, this project will remove about half the trees to achieve the density recommended by a professional resource planning consultant. While thinning is an important resource management tool used to promote healthy forests, it is also beneficial for other native species. By allowing more light to reach the forest floor, thinning promotes the growth of diverse plants that provide food and habitat for wildlife. The harvest is even expected to generate a modest amount of revenue.

If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact Pinellas County Parks & Conservation Resources at (727) 582-2100.

Ellen Babb, Museum Operations Manager

The Pinellas County Historical Society Welcomes These New Members

Marje & Ray Dube
Mark Winterbottom
Shari Layne
Bill Holland
Janet McMullen Randall
Judith Powers & Michael Jones
Karen Robbins
Geraldine Sullivan
Glenda Wood

Thanks to everyone!
RoseMarie Kafer, President, Pinellas County Historical Society

Members, watch your mail!

Tuesday, April 9, 2013, Magnolia Luncheon
Bellevue County Club. Mac Perry will present
Tall Tales & Toe-Tapping Tunes from the 1500s to the 1900s

Friday, May 17, 2013, 6 p.m., Pot Luck Dinner, Pinellas Room

Friday, September 20, 2013, 6 p.m., Annual Dinner
Smoothing Sailing Ahead

The McKay Creek Boat Shop site, east of the Greenwood House, is being prepped for construction! The land has been cleared, the building permit received, electrical needs assessed, and select volunteers have attended their safety and project orientation. There is still time to get your name on the recognition plaques which will be located inside the Boat Shop and in the museum breezeway (donations of $250.00 and above) or you can buy your own mini pram!

For a $50 donation, a small personalized wooden pram will be displayed in the McKay Creek Boat Shop. To find out more call the Pinellas County Historical Society at (727) 582-2233 or pick up an application at the Village gift shop or museum.

Volunteer lead Ed Proefke (Proefke Construction Company) discusses project plans with boat shop volunteer crew.

21st Century Technology Comes to Historic Heritage Village

In an effort to give visitors a better understanding of the architectural styles each of the structures at Heritage Village has to offer, Pinellas County has installed QR (quick response) codes for many of the buildings. Located on a small sticker on the interpretive signs at each building, visitors can scan the code with their smart phones. The code links them to an audio file that tells about the unique architecture each building has to offer.

QR codes are being used at Brooker Creek and Weedon Island preserves to welcome visitors and are being used in promotional pieces throughout the county to give people quick access to the website. However, Heritage Village is the first destination in Pinellas County to use the technology to enhance the experience of self-guided tours to give visitors an opportunity to listen as they walk through history.

Whether it’s the impressive variation of a late Queen Anne style seen in the House of Seven Gables or the Adirondack Rustic style of the Safford Pavilion, visitors can better understand what makes these structures so unique and interesting. These QR codes can also be found on the Heritage Village website.
This year communities all over Florida are recognizing the significance of the 500th anniversary of Juan Ponce de León’s arrival on Florida’s east coast, as well as Florida’s rich heritage and diverse cultural history. At Heritage Village, special exhibits and a family event in May will mark this noteworthy milestone.

From May 1 through December 29, an exhibit entitled “For God and Gold,” will feature reproduction weapons, nautical items, clothing, camp gear, religious items and other objects to depict everyday life during the ocean crossing and the subsequent exploration and colonization of Spanish Florida.

On May 19, the Pinellas County Historical Society, Pinellas Public Library Cooperative, and USF St. Petersburg join together for a signature event at Heritage Village. Activities will include:

• Presentation: "Early Footprints in the Sand: Pre-Columbian Settlements along the Pinellas Peninsula and the Legacies of First Contact"
• Exhibit of pre-Columbian Pottery
• “For God and Gold” Exhibit
• Family Crafts and Storytelling
• Refreshments
• Time Capsule Dedication

The decision was made to permanently remove the modern washer/dryer, and to replace the old water heater with a space-saving on-demand model (installed inside the original kitchen cabinetry)–thereby gaining valuable floor space. The walls received fresh paint and the project was complete. The Greenwood’s life has been extended well into the future for the enjoyment of everyone visiting in coming years.

This project was completed with the help of the great staff at Heritage Village, the encouragement and financial help from the Pinellas County Historical Society, and through the love of volunteers - a crew of VIPs (Volunteers in Pinellas): Richard Samay, Tom Rapson, Lon Mackey, Dave Wegener, Greg Krause, Brian Parker, Ron Bilby and Fred Belzel.

--David Wegener, Project Leader

Interactive Fun at the Depot!

The Florida Chapter of the Morse Telegraph Club recently donated and connected vintage telegraph instruments for the Sulphur Spring Depot’s telegraph office. These more accurately reflect the type of instruments that would have been found in a typical railroad depot. They are operational and in addition connected to a Morse code generator that can be activated by a large push button, making the set up interactive. The approximately 10 second American Morse coded message that sounds on the instruments is a reproduction of Samuel Morse’s first public telegraph message sent from Baltimore to Washington, DC on May 24, 1844. This has the option of also being activated by a motion sensor when it senses someone entering the area. A lockout feature prevents the motion sensor from initiating a message more than once every 15 minutes. The club will also provide a large code chart and other amenities that will further enhance the display.

This setup will be similar to the installations made at the Dade City Pioneer Park’s Trilby RR depot, the Barberville Historic Community’s Pierson RR depot, and at the Central Florida Railroad Museum in Winter Garden.

Don Andrus - Morse Telegraph Club/Florida Chapter installs new equipment in the Sulphur Spring Depot at Heritage Village

L to R – Volunteers Tom Rapson, David Wegener and Lon Mackey (foreground) remove old floor in the Greenwood House kitchen.

Members of the Greenwood restoration team smile at a job well done!

L to R - Volunteers Ron Bilby, PCHS president RoseMarie Kafer, Richard Samay, Project Leader David Wegener, Fred Belzel, and Lon Mackey.
See It–Do It–Share It

Festivals & Events

Viva Florida 500 Celebration*
May 19, 2013: noon - 4 p.m.

Antique Appraisal Fair*
June 15, 2013: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Country Jubilee*
October 26, 2013: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Farm City Day Celebration
November 23, 2013

Holidays at the Village*
November 30 – December 29
Closed Mondays, Tuesdays
Christmas Day and New Year’s Day

Trees and Traditions*
December 7, 2013: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Pinellas Folk Festival*
January 25, 2014: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

* Sponsored by The Pinellas County Historical Society

Education

For Teachers
www.pinellascounty.org/heritage/for_teachers.htm

• Pop into History – “Enter-Action” History Fun!
• School For A Day
• Heritage Village History Kits

Historical Writing Workshops
Award-Winning Author, Angela T. Pisaturo will continue to conduct Historical Writing Workshops on: May 10, July 12, & Sept 13 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Each three hour workshop will be unique and cover aspects of writing historical novels, from research to setting the scene, and more. Each workshop will cost $15.00 ($13.00 for PCHS Members). Advance registration is recommended. Call (727) 582-2233 for further information or to register.

Speaking of History Lecture Series – Sundays at 2 p.m.
Call (727) 582-2233 for further details or visit our website
www.pinellascounty.org/heritage

March 17, 2013
“Equal Pay for a Classroom Day: the Florida State Teachers Association’s Struggle to level the ‘Paying Field’, 1938-1948”
Presenter: Mr. Jonathan Tallon

April 21, 2013
“An Enlightening Account of Early Tourism: The Travels and Diary of Abbie M. Brooks, Florida’s ‘Silvia Sunshine’”
Presenter: Ms. Dara Vance

May 19, 2013
“Early Footprints in the Sand: Pre-Columbian Settlements along the Pinellas Peninsula and the Legacies of First Contact”
Presenters: Mr. Jim Schnur and Ms. Elizabeth Southard

Special Exhibits

May 1 – December 29
“For God and Gold”
This exhibit features Spanish Florida during the exploration and colonization of Florida.

June 5 – September 1
“Here Come the Brides”
Enjoy an exhibit of antique wedding gowns dating from the Victorian Era through the 1930s.

For more information or to make an appointment, please call 582-2127.
Connect the Past with the Present

Become a volunteer at Heritage Village and provide your community with a greater understanding of local and state history and the importance of preserving it for future generations.

Junior Docent Orientation
Saturday, June 8, 2013 10 a.m.
Call (727) 582-2125 for further information.

Unique Volunteer Opportunities

Docent Tour Guide: Are you curious or interested about architecture, historic houses, Pinellas County or Florida history? Do you enjoy sharing your knowledge and passion with others? Then join our docents at Heritage Village and welcome visitors to our historic structures. Engage guests in conversation about community life, architectural styles, artifacts and more. One on one training and mentoring by experienced volunteers is provided.

Museum Greeters: Meet school groups, bus tours and visitors, provide tour information, help guests read their maps and answer questions in the field. Morning and afternoon shifts available.

Historic House Caretaker: “Adopt an historic house” and provide special care and detailing utilizing historic house preservation guidelines.

Maintenance: Are you experienced with home or commercial repair or are you interested in historic preservation? Help staff with behind the scenes upgrades, light maintenance and simple repairs. Inside and outside work is available.

Grounds Assistant: Do you love the Florida piney woods? Help keep Heritage Village pathways, porches and walkways clear of debris and provide upkeep to plantings around historic houses. Heritage Village Garden volunteers provide interesting info on the history of agriculture, crops and growing vegetable gardens in Florida.

Call (727) 582-2125 or email pnoel@pinellascounty.org for further information.

GET INVOLVED

Volunteer at Heritage Village

Volunteer opportunities include:
• Docent
• Greeters
• Interpreter
• Receptionist
• Maintenance
• Junior Docent
• Office Assistant
• Craft Demonstrator
• Gift Shop Volunteer
• Grounds Management
• Special Events Assistant
• Historic House Caretakers

For more information call (727) 582-2125 or e-mail pnoel@pinellascounty.org

Become A Member

Become a member of the Pinellas County Historical Society and help support Heritage Village. Society membership includes a subscription to the Society’s newsletter; invitations to special programs; use of the library and archives; 10% discount in the Gift Shop and participation in special interest projects.

Please write name the way you’d like it to appear in print.

Name: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________
City: ____________________________ State: ____________________________ Zip: ____________________________
Day Phone: ____________________________
Evening Phone: ____________________________
e-mail: ____________________________

Please check one:

☐ Annual $20
☐ Family $35
☐ Contributing $50
☐ Sustaining $100
☐ Patron $500

Make membership check payable to:
PCHS - Pinellas County Historical Society
727-582-2233

Mail to:
Pinellas County Historical Society
P.O. Box 4862
Seminole, FL 33775
Green benches dot the landscape at Heritage Village, providing a place to rest while strolling the winding paths among the historic buildings; to enjoy performances at stages during festivals; and to contemplate in this special environment.

Celebrate a milestone event or honor a loved one by becoming a Green Bench Supporter. A commemorative plaque on a bench plus a prominently displayed recognition sign will be a visual expression of your commitment to preserving our past for future generations. Take a seat at Heritage Village and mark your place in history with your Green Bench contribution to help support the ongoing restoration and interpretation of our historic structures. Call (727) 582-2127 for more information.

Thank you to those who have marked their place in history with a Green Bench contribution.

**One Book at a Time**

The Heritage Village Archives & Library provides answers to numerous research requests each month. To keep up with the demand for information, the Pinellas County Historical Society developed a program to help supplement this 3,500-volume library. You can help the Heritage Village Archives & Library continue to grow by making a minimum contribution of $50 for a book to be purchased in memory or in honor of someone special to you or to celebrate a milestone event. Recognition of your gift will appear on a nameplate inside the book and will be noted in a leather-bound book displayed in the Archives & Library. For more information, please call (727) 582-2233.

**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY**

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Address
City
State Zip Code

Please make check payable to: PCHS

Mail check and form to: Book Donation - Pinellas County Historical Society P.O. Box 4862, Seminole, FL 33775

**A Tale Of Three T’s**

*By Bob Croslin*

Model T, Model TT, and Termites. It’s not widely known, but in addition to all the beautiful buildings and museums, Heritage Village is the proud owner of an antique car collection that would make most serious collectors envious. In addition to it’s two 1925 Model T Fords, the Village also owns a 1917 American LaFrance fire truck originally owned by the Belleview Biltmore, a 1929 Ford Model A “doodlebug,” a 1940 Ford pickup, and a 1950 Chevy pickup.

Recently, one of the Model T’s, commonly known as a doctor’s coupe once owned by local musician, Gene Meyers, had to be treated for an infestation of termites in it’s wooden structure. Curt Chandler of Bay Area Termite and Pest Control Services, who donated his company’s services to treat the T, said it’s not uncommon for antique cars to get termites or weevils and has treated quite a few of them. On a recent Sunday morning, the members of the Pin-MAR Antique Car Club, the group that arranged the donation of most of the vehicles, gathered and pulled the Model T coupe into an enclosed trailer owned by one of the members, Chuck Lesnewski. This allowed the antique auto to be “tented” just as a home might be.
Be sure to visit Heritage Village’s affiliate museums!

**The Gulf Beaches Historical Museum**
115-10th Avenue
St. Pete Beach
FL 33706
(727) 552-1610

**North Pinellas Historical Museum**
2043 Curlew Road
Palm Harbor, FL 34683
(727) 724-3054

Heritage Village is a collection of 28 historic structures and features moved here to create a 21-acre living history museum. Explore the history of the Pinellas Peninsula as you wander the winding paths through the native pine and palmetto landscape.