



THE GULFPORT HISTORIAN

Volume 8 = NEWSLETTER OF THE GULFPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY = December 1984

Dear Friends:

The year 1985 will soon be upon us and with it our commitment to publish the history of Gulfport by October. We need to get our manuscript to the printer at least three months prior to publication date. I want to thank all of those who have contributed their time and energy to this most worthy task.

Frances Purdy, as chairman of the Editorial committee, and her members are getting nervous about their job. Any help you can give them will be appreciated. They deserve our thanks!

We need also to give thought to the manner in which we will participate in Gala Days which will be celebrated the entire month of October.

Agnes Conron has been working hard at readying the museum. She is there every Tuesday from 2 to 4, and other times by appointment. Why not drop by to see her and offer your help.

George Payne has contributed many fine articles from his collection of antiques and I know you will enjoy seeing them.

Helen Ross continues her good work interviewing and researching. She recently uncovered information pertaining to early settlers and where they are buried.

This is surely an organization that accomplishes worthy efforts. May I take this time to thank all of you for the privilege of working with you and wish all of you Happy Holidays. 1985 will be an important year for the Gulfport Historical Society.

Sincerely,

Catherine A. Nickman

EDITORIAL REPORT

(given at our Nov. 12th meeting)

Some wonderful people are writing YOUR HISTORY of GULFPORT - - identities later, but they know who they are: they include - - - - -

two volunteers offered to do "the overture" - - early days - - - - -

two others said they would like to summarize several taped interviews into the story of the First Settlers and their descendants.

another is doing waterfront activities, Yacht Club to Community Center.

Many have completed their assignments - and the Chairman is putting some finishing touches on reports of selected buildings. Churches and service organizations are done!

It has been challenging and exciting and pleasurable too. to take from many interviews jottings of what happened in the daily living, of many strange things; happy things and sad ones too.

Major developments of overall city affairs are fairly well completed - - Police and Fire Departments, selected Council decisions, newspapers, and major "unique" features of our Community such as Little League, the Clover Farm, the Boomeranges, our services to Senior Adults and more - - - - -.

Families are being encouraged to write in their own reports which can then be catalogued into the archives in our Museum - - Helen Perrault has done it!

Mary Atkinson and her helpers, have

selected to a certain extent, what pictures we can use in the book. Two others volunteered to put into sequence, and into an album, many small pictures which cannot be used - and remember, many pictures could well be included in the "family stories" right?

Genevieve Smith, our highly talented and generous artist - writer, has done many line drawings, ensuring plenty of illustrations to add to the overall excitement and acceptability of this production.

Who would like to bring us more information, especially about times before 1950? Typists, thank you again for what you have done and will do! We would be happy to hear that others will join that group without who we could not complete our tasks. - - typists, we mean! Time keeps running along and there will be much reorganizing, rewriting and all to be done and it's almost 1985 now !!!!!

Gratefully,
Frances Purdy, Editor

FROM AGNES CONRON

Our Museum is beginning to look as a museum should. Thank you for all the wonderful gifts. Just don't forget to let me know who brought what so donor tags can be attached when the items are displayed.

We still need several things.

1. Pigeons evicted from the loft and opening closed completely.
 2. Front door hinges put inside.
 3. Windows washed.
 4. Lawn mowed, bushes trimmed and weeded. Gulfport Garden and Bird Club have us on their list for new plantings.
 5. Toilets fixed and cleaned.
 6. A dress rack on wheels for costumes.
 7. Hat stands.
 8. An appraiser for more valuable items.
 9. Insurance for our items and any which we have on loan.
 10. At last we are ready for serious cataloguing and inventory. Please sign up for a committee or a job or even just give me information about who can help. Thanks so much.
-

OUR NAME

(Copied from THE SEA BREEZE, our first newspaper, April 1, 1886)

It has been said that there is nothing in a name, but there is a proverb something like this, "give a dog a bad name and it will kill him," in which we have more faith. Solomon spoke favorably of a good name. We think it is well to have a settled, well established, indisputable name for most things, and especially for towns of large dimensions, prospectively, of our beautiful city. Bonifacio, the present name of our post office, and the only one that the Post Master General will recognize, is not at all satisfactory to most of our citizens. It does not have the right jingle to the ears of a native born American; Slab Town or Gopher Knoll would be considered an improvement. Our name is on record as Disston City, but there is a small post office in the northern part of this county known as Diston; so we are involved in a scramble for a name. Well, why should we wish to contend for this name? Who is this man, H. Disston. - - more than an ordinary land speculator? He bought up all the vacant lands for a song and is selling them at stiff prices. What has he done or is now doing to build up this place? We wait for a reply. Now as to bottom facts, we would not care so much about the name if we only had one name, but as it is now, the annoyance is very great. Our mail gets all mixed up, some is sent to Bonifay (another post office), and we think some of it goes to Cuba or some other place, some letters reaching us two or three weeks after passing through the Tampa office the first time. It seems to be a settled fact that the Disston Co., and the Lake Butler Villa Co., who owns the larger part of the lots in this town, are not going to help us out of this trouble soon, all promises coming from them up to date have failed. We think it is about time to help ourselves. These columns are open to pointed remarks, or will call a public meeting at demand of some of the property holders. What say you?

Did You Know

That the first electric lights in the Gulfport area were on the Veteran City dock and Casino when built by the trolley company in 1905? Power was obtained by taps from the trolley wire - a source of electricity not available to others.

WPA Guide

An article in our September issue recommended that the 1939 "WPA Guide to Florida" be reprinted. That has been done and the book is now available at Haslam's and other book stores in a paperback edition. It has excellent brief histories of all sections of Florida, and interesting guides to, and suggested tours of, the state as it existed in the 1930's.

Other Groups

The SUNSHINE POSTCARD CLUB will hold its annual exhibit and sale on Feb. 2 and 3, 1985, at the IBFW Hall, Harney Rd.. Tampa (north on 50th St. from I-4). Almost 40 dealers with all kinds of post cards for sale.
mission 50¢

The Friends of the Gulfport Public Library Inc. invite members of the Historical Society and their friends, to hear Hampton Dunn, well known Historian, January 8, 1985. Professor Dunn will give his slide talk "From Huegenauts to Astronauts" at the Multi-purpose Center at two in the afternoon and refreshments will be served following the program.
Do please come. you-all! for he is a splendid speaker - why read his words when you can share him too? I'll be looking forward to greeting one and all.

Sincerely,

Frances Purdy, President

Copies of the Sea Breeze (all 17) have been printed, bound and can be purchased for \$10.- Many items of interest have also been included. If you are interested in buying a copy call:
Willard B Simons - - Ph:345-7938 - or
Catherine Hickman - Ph:321-7095.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Answer : Irving Slaughter answered our question in the June issue. It was on the east side of the trolley tracks at about 27th Ave. So., and was a combination passenger and freight station and mail transfer point. Postmistress, Mary McRoberts picked up the mail coming out on the trolleys and carried it to the Post Office, which was in her home, about one block west.

New Question: How was Capt. J. Frank Chase occupied after the Veteran City development petered out about 1907 or 1908? Chase had spent years planning, promoting, and advertising that project which was financed by F.A.Davis and Jacob Disston, and which ended in financial disaster for all three. Chase died in 1914, survived by his wife and five children. One of his daughters, Beulah, was the "Chase" of Wilson - Chase Co., the county's premier department store during most of this century.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Editor: Gulfport Historian:

The book, "Pinellas Peninsula" by June Hurley Young has finally reached the stores after months of delay. Unfortunately I cannot recommend that anyone spend money on this book. In those areas of County History with which I am familiar there are numerous inconcistencies misinterpretations, and some outright errors, and a couple of major omissions.

Gulfport, the County's oldest and third largest incorporated city, rates less than one half page of text and one historic picture! If Mrs. Young is to be believed nothing worth mentioning has happened in Gulfport since 1928.

The Book does have many good historic pictures, some of which have never been published before. But, at least one of the pictures is incorrectly captioned.

Finally, the book credits the Gulfport Historical Society for help in its preparation. In fact, no help was asked of, or given by, the Society in the preparation of this book.

The Gulfport Public Library has a copy available to anyone interested.

Willard B. Simonds

GULFPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A voluntary, non-profit, educational organization whose purposes are to collect, preserve, and to publish the history of Gulfport and the surrounding area. Dues are: Individual, \$5.- per year; Family \$10 per year, Life \$50.-

Officers (terms expire June 30, 1985)

President, Catherine Hickman
Vice-President, Genevieve Smith
Secretary, Ruby Walker
Treasurer, Doris Brown

Directors: (terms expire June 30, 1984)

Nathan White
Mary Atkinson
Judith Ryerson

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Gulfport, Fl., 33707

From the Editor:

The Editor and contributing members of THE GULFPORT HISTORIAN shall strive to preserve the dignity and integrity of the Newsletter through its appearance and published material.

The Historian welcomes suggestions and input from Members and Friends. News items and brief articles of historic local interest are needed. The content should in every way reflect the objectives of the Gulfport Historical Society.

THE GULFPORT HISTORIAN

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*To you
and yours* **Season's Greetings**

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