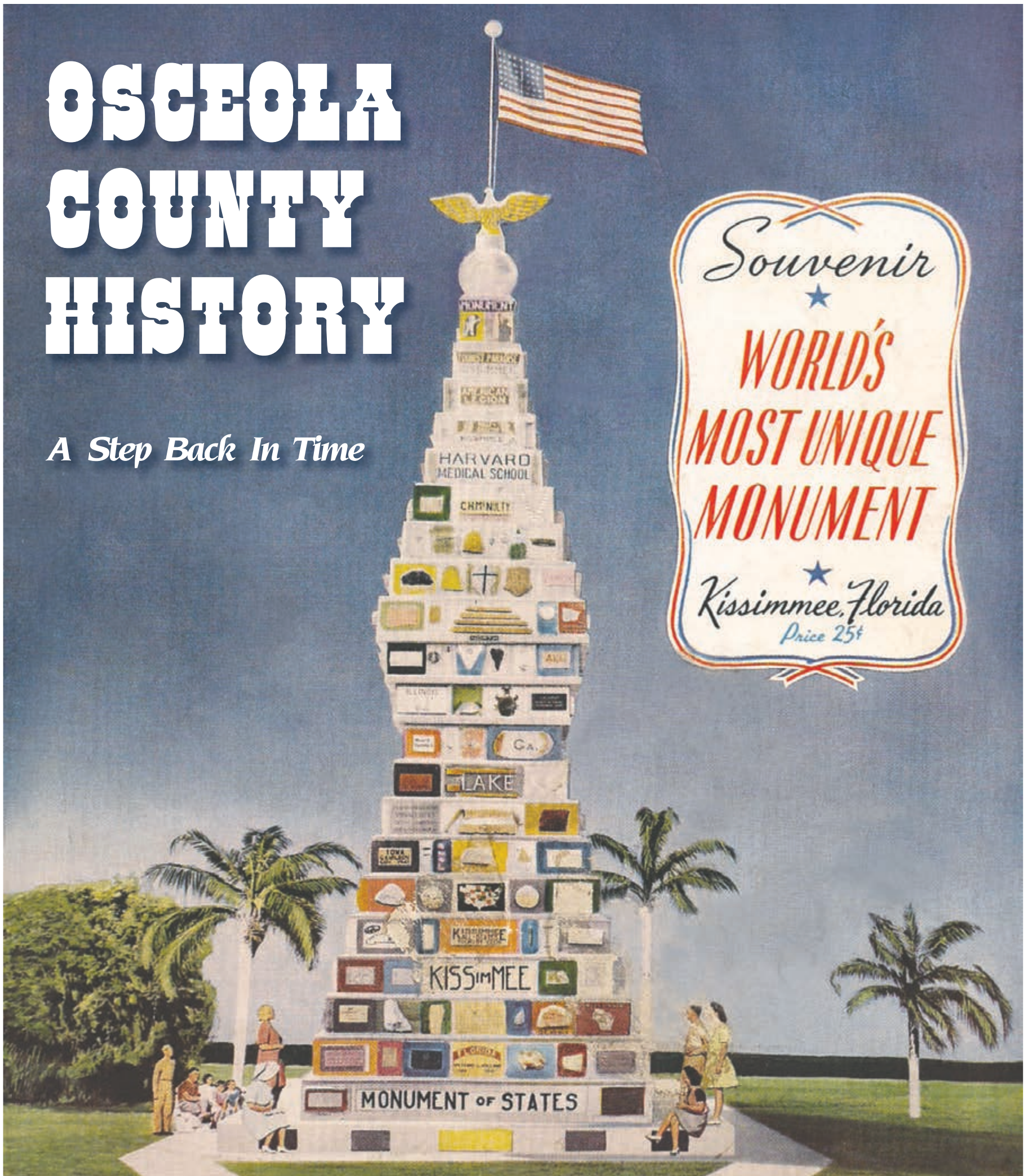


OSCEOLA COUNTY HISTORY

A Step Back In Time



OSCEOLA HISTORICAL FACTS

Monument of States

The Monument of States was built by local tourism booster, Dr. Charles Bressler-Pettis. The monument contains 1,500 stones including meteors, stalagmites, petrified wood, teeth and bones.

Osceola County Courthouse

On May 6, 1890, the Osceola County Courthouse opened its doors. It is currently the state of Florida's oldest courthouse in daily use.

Makinson Hardware

Makinson Hardware in downtown Kissimmee, founded in 1884, is the oldest hardware store in the state.

Grissom Funeral Home

According to a Kissimmee Gazette article, dated May 17, 1957, the Grissom Funeral Home began painting their ambulances a San Marquis Blue color around 1928. They did this so their clientele would be able to distinguish between funeral coaches and the ambulances. The color is now known throughout the state as the Grissom color.

Silver Spurs Rodeo

The Silver Spurs Rodeo, now the largest east of the Mississippi River, started in 1943, when the riding club members built their rodeo arena on land donated by Henry O. Partin.

Bryant Auto Camp

J.M Bryant, in the early 1920s, cleared a few acres for a campground near the swamp on Old Tampa Highway west of Shingle Creek. Bryant decided to leave the oak trees and opened Bryant's Auto Camp. He offered campers a shady site, a store, a filling (gas) station and well water.

Hamilton Disston

In 1881, Hamilton Disston paid \$1 million for 4 million acres of land in Florida. He drained much of the swamps and dredged a river highway from Lake Tohopekaliga to Fort Myers.

Lake House

The first hotel was the Lake House at Kissimmee's Bryan and Orlando streets, built in the 1880s when Kissimmee was home to a thriving shipyard that built steamboats.

OSCEOLA NEWS-GAZETTE

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**A big thank you to the
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Osceola History: Preserving local history for 70 years

By Mia Overton
Community Relations Manager
Osceola History

Osceola History (formerly known as Osceola County Historical Society) was organized in 1949 by a group of local residents with a mission to collect and preserve the county's history.

Seventy years later, Osceola History continues with the vision to instill a sense of place by inspiring an appreciation of our culture and natural heritage and preserving a legacy for the future. Osceola History provides educational, research and recreational opportunities through museum displays, demonstrations, interpretative programs and special events for residents and visitors. Each year more than 25,000 people visit the History Museum, Pioneer Village and attend special events hosted by Osceola History.

Osceola History currently operates three locations:
Osceola County Welcome Center and History Museum
4155 W. Vine St., Kissimmee.
Open daily 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Pioneer Village at Shingle Creek Park
2491 Babb Road, Kissimmee.
Open daily 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Guided tours available on Monday, Wednesday and by appointment.

Spence Research Center
750 N. Bass Road, Kissimmee. Open to the public by appointment only.



Pioneer Village at Shingle Creek

In 1987, Carl and Ruth Spence donated land on North Bass Road, and the Lanier and Tyson families followed with generous donations of their family homes to help create the Pioneer Enrichment Center. The name was changed to Pioneer Village in 2006.

In an agreement with Osceola County, Pioneer Village was moved to a 10-acre site in Shingle Creek Regional Park on Babb Road in November 2014. This allowed Osceola History to expand the village and provide visitors a unique opportunity to see what life was like when Central Florida was more known for its cattle ranches and citrus groves. Pioneer Village at Shingle Creek now features 18 structures, including seven original buildings that once stood in different areas of Osceola County.

The village tells the story of the families who settled here and their lives in the late 1800s to early 1900s. In addition to three family homes, the village includes historic structures such as a schoolhouse, general store, church, train depot, an original citrus packing plant, Seminole settlement, and a cow camp like those used by Florida cracker cowmen.

Each November, Pioneer Village hosts Pioneer Day, a free family-friendly event featuring pioneer and Seminole life demonstrations, live music, a kids' craft zone, and a real Florida Market. The 29th Annual Pioneer Day will be held Nov. 14, 2020.

The village is located in Shingle Creek Regional Park with walking and biking trails, picnic areas, playground, kayaking, and is adjacent to a seven-acre nature preserve.

Osceola County Welcome Center and History Museum

Osceola History began operating the Welcome Center and History Museum in October 2012. This free museum is a hidden gem that even many locals aren't aware of, but we encourage locals and visitors to discover it. The museum features award-winning exhibits showing the evolution of the region's environment including early Seminole life, wildlife in the Florida pines and swamps, the cattle industry, and the rise of modern transportation and tourism.

The museum offers special exhibits and educational programs throughout the year. A free Storytime at the Museum for children ages 3-5 is held each Wednesday from 10 to 10:45 a.m.

The Welcome Center provides brochures and information about area attractions, restaurants and lodging. The Welcome Center and History Museum is also part of Shingle Creek Park offering walking and biking trails, picnic areas, and is near the Paddling Center on Shingle Creek which provides kayak and canoe rentals.

Volunteer opportunities are available at the History Museum and Pioneer Village. Osceola History offers venue rental space for special events at the History Museum and Pioneer Village.

For more information about Osceola History visit www.osceolahistory.org.





Become a member today!

Your membership supports Osceola History's mission to preserve and share the county's cultural and natural heritage through museum exhibits, educational programs, and the operation of the History Museum and Pioneer Village at Shingle Creek.

Membership Categories
\$50 Individual/\$30 (student, military, senior 55+) | \$100 Family | \$250 Pioneer

Membership benefits include free admission to Pioneer Village, invitation to Osceola History events, and gift shop and facility rental discounts. Memberships at the \$100 level and above also include a membership to the North American Reciprocal Museum Association with free admission to nearly 1,100 museums nationwide.



Calendar of Events

March 7
Dine with the Departed

April 1-July 31
Tools of the Trade Exhibit

April 2
Exhibit Opening Reception

May 16
Antiques & Appraisal Fair

August 18 – March 31, 2021
Women's Right to Vote Exhibit

November 14
Pioneer Day

Storytime at the Museum
Each Wednesday 10-10:45 a.m.



Join at www.osceolahistory.org
For more information, email jozef@osceolahistory.org | 407-396-8644, Ext. 2

THE BIRTH OF OSCEOLA COUNTY



On July 21, 1821, there were two counties formed in Florida - Escambia to the west and St. Johns to the east. More than 60 counties were later formed from these two counties.

In 1824, the area to the south of St. Johns County became Mosquito County, and Enterprise was named the county seat. The name was changed to Orange County in 1845 when Florida became a state.

A year before, in 1844, Brevard County was also carved out of Mosquito County. On May 12, 1887, Osceola was named a county, having been created from both Orange and Brevard counties. At that time Osceola extended all the way down to Lake Okeechobee, and did so until 1917.

Osceola County became Florida's 40th county and was named after the famed Seminole leader. This area was a transportation hub in the late 19th century for riverboats and railroad and readily began a cattle, sugar, and lumber-based economy.

On May 6, 1890, the Osceola County Courthouse opened its doors. It is currently the State of Florida's oldest courthouse in daily use.

Osceola County's 1,506 square miles include the cities of Kissimmee (incorporated in 1883) and St. Cloud (incorporated in 1911), as well as numerous communities. The city of Kissimmee has always had a strong historical association with the Florida cattle frontier, and the city of St. Cloud has roots that trace back to a northern land baron who began a sugar plantation in 1881.

Osceola County's communities include Narcoossee and Kenansville. Narcoossee is one of Osceola County's oldest settlements and was home to numerous British immigrants who brought with them a love for the sport of polo. In fact, a team was created in 1888 and grew to more than 100 members just two years later. Kenansville is located in southeast Osceola County and was named for railroad mogul Henry Flagler's third wife, Mary Lily Kenan Flagler, once he donated five acres and \$6,000 to build a schoolhouse in 1911.

Source: Osceola County website, www.osceola.org

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Goodwin Realty has been a part of Osceola County History since April, 1973.

Goodwin Realty & Associates, Inc. is a family owned and operated real estate firm that has grown with the Central Florida area. The office opened in April, 1973 in Kissimmee, Florida during the height of the Central Florida business recession. Since then, Goodwin Realty & Associates, Inc has grown to be one of the leading residential and commercial real estate sales firms in Osceola County.

In 2019, Linda Goodwin-Nichols was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for demonstrating a lifetime of contributions and volunteer service. She is a strong believer in community involvement as she has given back to our community by serving as: mayor and city commissioner for the city of Kissimmee, Board of Supervisors for the town of Celebration, past chairperson and current board member of the Kissimmee/Osceola County Chamber of Commerce, Board of Directors of Sun Trust, Park Place Behavioral Hospital, Board of Directors, past chairperson and current board member of the West Highway 192 Redevelopment District, board member for Community Vision.

We are proud to begin our 47th year as Real Estate Professionals in Osceola County. Thank you for your continued support and voting us Best Real Estate Services in Osceola County!

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2019 BEST OF OSCEOLA

MLS

One town's origins: The history of Kissimmee



Before European settlers set foot in Florida, the Kissimmee Valley region of Central Florida was inhabited by a Native American tribe called the Jororo.

The name Kissimmee can be traced back to the language of the Jororo people and means "long water." There were approximately 350,000 people living in Florida when the Spanish arrived in 1513. In the centuries to follow, war, disease, oppression, and slavery reduced the Native Floridian population to virtually nothing.

At that time, Central Florida's terrain was very different from the drained, arable pastures and farmlands that dot the region today. Before the drainage project of the late-19th century, Central Florida was swampland, scattered with pinewood and palmetto flatland prairies. The headwaters of the Florida Everglades expanded as far north as Lake Tohopekaliga. It was here that the Creeks and other Native peoples of the South-Central United States fled in the mid- to late-18th century. The Seminole Indians, a conglomeration of Native American peoples and escaped slaves, settled in the Kissimmee River Valley and in the swamplands of Central and South Florida because of their tactically defensible positions.

Before the Civil War (1861-65), few settlers had moved further south than what is today, Orlando. Cattlemen and their families were making their way in the scrublands and swamps of Central Florida, but few others ventured to the area. It wasn't until after the Civil War that the area began to see an uptick in its European-descended population. Veterans from both the Union and Confederate armies and fortune seekers from as far north as Canada began to pour into Central Florida to try to tame the wilds of the land. The pinewood scrublands would soon be transformed by the industry of man. The manufacture of turpentine became a large operation in Central Florida and later in the mid-1880s, one man would change the landscape of the Kissimmee River Valley forever.

Continued on Page 4.

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Town's Origin

Continued from Page 3.

Hamilton Disston purchased 4 million acres of land from the state of Florida in 1881 for 25 cents an acre. Soon after, he began to dredge a canal, widen the waterways between Lake Tohopekaliga and Lake Okeechobee, and drain the swamplands of the Kissimmee River Valley. Disston set up the headquarters for his operations in a small lakefront pioneer settlement called Allendale. By 1884, Allendale had been incorporated and renamed as Kissimmee City. Its time as a boomtown was just beginning. Kissimmee became a hub of commerce and trade.

The town became an early port for steamboats plying the Kissimmee River from Lake Tohopekaliga to Okeechobee. Later in 1882, trains traveling from Sanford were connected to Kissimmee, and by 1885, Kissimmee was connected to Tampa on the Gulf Coast. At this time the largest hotel south of Jacksonville, the Tropical Hotel (later renamed the Kissimmee Hotel), was built on the shores of East Lake Tohopekaliga, and hosted many celebrities of the day including President Chester Arthur. The rise of the railroad spelled a slow death for the steamboat and shifted cargo and passenger transport away from the wharves; by 1920, nearly all of the steamboats had disappeared from the Kissimmee River.

In 1887, three short years after Kissimmee City incorporated, Osceola County was created from the southern part of Orange and western portion of Brevard Counties, and Kissimmee became the county seat. At the time, the county was home to 815 residents and by 1890, that number had tripled to 2,445. Kissimmee was bustling with life, and Broadway was home to a number of establishments including: a one-room schoolhouse, the First United Methodist Church, and W.B. Makinson's Hardware. The courthouse, built in 1890, has the distinction of being the oldest in the state with continued use from its construction. That same year, electricity was brought to Kissimmee with initial rates costing three cents per hour, or \$7.50 per month.

The first Chamber of Commerce was elected in 1924, and 10 years later, the Cattleman's



Association was established. A second land boom occurred shortly after the First World War (1914-18) and continued until the Great Depression settled over the country in 1929. At this time, the community pulled together, and neighbors helped neighbors to survive the harsh times.

In 1943, the Monument of States, located on Monument Avenue was completed by Dr. Charles W. Bressler-Pettis and J.C. Fisher. Dr Bressler-Pettis hoped that the monument would become an inspiration for American solidarity during the dark days of the Second World War. At the same time, the United States Air Force moved into Kissimmee and Central Florida, establishing air bases and training fields for pilots; like others in the area, this is why Kissimmee Gateway Airport was established. To raise funds for the war effort, the first Silver Spurs Rodeo was held on July 4, 1944, admission was the purchase of one war bond.

After the war, life began to return to normal in Kissimmee, with the city's focus shifting back to tourism as a means of producing capital. By the early 1950s, Kissimmee's lakes and rivers were teeming with tourists and the rise of the automobile

brought an influx of new residents and visitors alike. In 1971, the Walt Disney Company opened its second theme park just outside of Kissimmee. The opening of Walt Disney World sparked a period of unprecedented growth for Kissimmee. Over the next decade, the city would grow from 1,120 residents to 15,490 (173 percent increase). In 1990, 30,050 people called Kissimmee home. By 2018, the city's population had increased to 73,597.

Growing from its Native American then cattle roots, through the trials and tribulations of living on the edge of civilization, Kissimmee has become one of the major tourist capitals of the world.

Sources: Crow, Myrtle Hilliard, Old Tales and Trails of Florida; St. Petersburg, FL: Southern Heritage Press, 1987. Hetherington, Alma, The River of the Long Water; St. Petersburg, FL: Southern Heritage Press, 1980. Moore-Willson, Minnie, History of Osceola County; Orlando, FL: Inland Press, 1935. Robison, Jim and Osceola County Historical Society, Kissimmee: Gateway to the Kissimmee River Valley; Chicago, IL: Arcadia Publishing, 2003. United States Census Bureau.



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SETTLING IN ST. CLOUD



St. Cloud was founded April 16, 1909, as a retirement community for Civil War Union veterans who paid \$50 for five-acre lots.

The birth of modern day St. Cloud is possible through the aspirations of several men, including Hamilton Disston, who began visiting Florida from Philadelphia on fishing trips in the 1870s.

After positive results from sugarcane at Southport, Disston became interested in its production. He erected the first sugar factory at the St. Cloud Plantation at East Lake Tohopekaliga. A small community developed at Disston's sugar works and when the plantation was abandoned, a few families stayed on, moving to the location. The Sugar Belt Railway was merged with South Florida Railway and the St. Cloud Plantation was acquired by the Seminole Land and Investment Company (SLIC).

Prof. Bridges, principal of the Kissimmee High School, suggested "St. Cloud" as the name of the city. Other names were suggested, but "St. Cloud" was unanimously accepted.

According to the late St. Cloud official historian Bob Fisk, in the early days of laying out the city, streets were named after states. Col. John McElroy was a main player in the SLIC, which had advertised and brought Civil War Union veterans to the new

community. Col. McElroy first named the downtown streets, running north and south across numbered streets, for states that participated in the war on the Union side (New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, etc.). Later, as St. Cloud spread more to the east and west, former states in the Confederacy were added (Virginia, Alabama, Mississippi, and so on).

City of St. Cloud was incorporated Jan. 3, 1911, and St. Cloud's boundaries have expanded dramatically since then. The size of the city is now controlled by voluntary annexation based on the supply of sewer and water services to the expanding urban area. Growth has been demand-based, and city services have been extended to meet the needs of new residents as well as providing economies of scale for the operation of City utilities and services.

The city now boasts 2.5 miles of beautiful lakefront and an extensive parks program. Historic Downtown St. Cloud attracts visitors and residents alike with its charm and beauty. Located on the south shore of East Lake Tohopekaliga, the city's original grid pattern is still a primary housing area.

Source: St. Cloud Chamber of Commerce website; Paula Stark, St. Cloud Main Street, Inc.

History at Heritage

By Olive Lane Horning
Curator, St. Cloud Heritage Museum

The Woman's Club of St. Cloud Heritage Museum was established in 2005 at 1012 Massachusetts Ave. in St. Cloud. The museum is open Thursday – Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Woman's Club of St. Cloud operates the museum and club members volunteer as docents.

The museum holds most of the history of St. Cloud found in artifacts and paper documents. There are approximately 400 binders containing, postcard collections, citizen interviews, family histories, photographs of historic homes, newspapers from 1910, and general information about the Civil War veteran founders of the city.

The museum building was damaged by Hurricane Irma in 2017, and is under repair, so the museum opened in the Woman's Club of St. Cloud, 1014 Massachusetts Ave. Because of the hurricane damage, the members decided to embark on a digitization project. Twenty-five members volunteered to number more than 25,000 binder pages in preparation for scanning. The scanning phase began in January 2020. When finished, the collection will be available electronically as well as in the building.

The Joshua Stevens Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution sponsored us to obtain a grant from the National Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) for a 36-inch scanner and printer. Historic preservation is one focus of the DA, and we appreciate their help with this project. In addition, the City of St. Cloud granted us funds to purchase a book scanner and other preservation materials. Its assistance is also appreciated as we save the history of St. Cloud for the future.



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Narcoossee Area Chapter of Osceola History

By Lisa Liu
Board Member, Narcoossee History

This past year brought exciting accomplishments the dedicated volunteers of the Narcoossee Area Chapter of Osceola History.

The exterior of the historic 1886 schoolhouse received a fresh coat of paint to ensure its continued upkeep. Members sourced period furnishings for the schoolhouse including desks, flags, maps, a chalkboard, and related items, which will be installed this spring. The hunt is still on for a 1880s cast iron stove to complete the interior and to share what would have been present and experienced by students in this period of Florida's history.

Chapter members visited Fellsmere, Fla., and led by Richard Votapka, a local historian/Nelson Fell re-enactor, toured numerous sites related to the Fell family who founded Narcoossee and later Fellsmere. The chapter then hosted Fellsmere/Indian River County guests for a reciprocal tour of Osceola History sites related to the Fell family.

Current Activities and Goals

The chapter hired Farmer Architecture, Orlando, to prepare preliminary drawings for a proposal for a Narcoossee Historical Park encompassing the schoolhouse, a museum of local history and a gazebo for special events. More details about this project will be shared as these plans are finalized and approved. The chapter also sponsors a History Club for local homeschool students giving them the opportunity to learn about the unique history of their neighborhood in fun and creative ways. Local middle school Honor Society students engage with the chapter, learn local history, and earn volunteer hours while helping at our various fundraisers. Six fundraisers are scheduled for 2020 including:

- Community Barbecue and Bake Sale on Feb. 22 and Sept. 12.
- Bromeliad/Plant Sale and Bake Sale on April 25 and Oct. 10.
- Pioneer Market and Bake Sale on Nov. 14 at Osceola History's 29th Annual Pioneer Day.
- Chili Cook-off, Bake Sale, and Meet Santa Event on Dec. 12.

All the events take place at the historic 1886 schoolhouse except Pioneer Day, which takes place at the Pioneer Village in Kissimmee.

Other goals for this year include rolling out a new logo – Narcoossee History – to coordinate with the recent shortening of the Osceola County Historical Society name to Osceola History and applying to list the 1886 schoolhouse on the National Register of Historic Places.

The chapter welcomes new members and volunteers and meets the first Monday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at the Narcoossee Community Center at 5354 Rambling Road, St. Cloud. To contact the chapter, send an email to: info@narcoosseehistory.org.

THE NARCOOSSEE COMMUNITY

Common signs and sights in our area such as Fells Lane, Fells Point, Fells Landing and Fells Cove give testimony today to the beginnings of the Narcoossee community. Arthur Fell, a New Zealand born Englishman and solicitor in London, England, became interested in investment opportunities in Florida. On March 17, 1883, he purchased 12,640 acres of raw Florida frontier in what was then east Orange County, Florida. (Osceola County was not established until 1887.)

Arthur appointed his younger brother, Edward Nelson Fell, as his agent with the assignment to establish a colony on these lands. Arthur rose in stature to become a member of the British Parliament holding the Great Yarmouth seat from 1909-21 and was knighted by the King George V of England in 1918.

Younger brother, Nelson, was born in Nelson, New Zealand, on Aug. 27, 1857, and was educated in England and trained as an engineer. He was



The Fell Family

27 years old and working as a mining engineer in Colorado when he answered his brother's call to move to Florida and establish the colony. Forming a partnership with his friend, Walter Bruce Murdock Davidson, 2,000 of the purchased acres on East Lake Tohopekaliga were surveyed, platted, and named Narcoossee in September 1884. Fell & Davidson promoted and sold these small farms for citrus and other crops to prospective British settlers and other buyers.





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Here are the buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places



Osceola County Courthouse

The Osceola County Courthouse was completed on May 6, 1890, for approximately \$25,000, and is possibly the oldest courthouse in Florida to be used continuously for county governmental purposes. This Romanesque Revival brick structure is indicative of many courthouses built in the United States during the late 19th century. It is made of Georgia hand-burned pressed facing brick with flush joints of red mortar. Many cases have been tried in this building: murder, robbery, cattle wrestling and moonshine trafficking to name a few. One infamous

trial was held for a member of the notorious Ashley Gang, Joe Tracy, who was tried for the murder of a taxi cab driver. His girlfriend, Laura Upthegrove, married him as she stood outside the jailhouse window, so that she would not have to testify against him in the case. She ended up dead a few months after his release. Court cases are still heard in the refurbished courtrooms upstairs. Listed on National Register: 1977.



Colonial Estate (Tucker/Ivey House)

This Classic Revival style colonial estate in Kissimmee was built about 1915 by J. Wade Tucker, a Georgia lumber baron, and served as his residence. On Feb. 22, 1928, the family home was opened as the Colonial Inn and Club, a first class

tourist hotel featuring a nine-hole golf course and café. It was a popular spot in the 1920s and early 1930s for ladies' tea parties and as a gathering place for local civic and social club meetings. Lester and Hilda Ivey bought the house in the 1930s and lived there the remainder of their lives. The back of the house is located on Orange Blossom Trail, but the best view is the front as seen from Old Dixie Highway. Descendants of the Ivey family still own the house; this is a private residence but can be viewed from the street. Listed on National Register: 1994.

The Desert Inn

Wilson's Corner gas station began about 1932 at the crossroads of two highways in Yeehaw Junction; the two-story structure also accommodated boarders upstairs. With a series of owners over the years, it eventually became known as the Desert Inn and a motel was added behind the main building. In its early years, the property was a trading post for cattlemen and those working in the nearby logging and turpentine camps. In more recent times, the Desert Inn was a popular rest stop for people traveling to the beach. The property was left to the Osceola County Historical Society in 2015 to restore and preserve. Note: On Dec. 22, 2019, a semi-truck hit the Desert Inn, severely damaging the building. Osceola History is working to assess the safety of the structure and no decision has been made about the future of the building. Listed on National Register: 1994



First United Methodist Church

The First United Methodist Church, constructed in 1913, is a two-story, brick Gothic Revival style building on Church Street in Kissimmee. Stained glass windows on both sides and the rear of the church provide natural interior lighting for the grand chapel and bell tower. The church is still in use by the Methodist congregation. Listed on National Register: 1994.



Kissimmee Historic District

Almost 70 acres comprise the Kissimmee Historic District, which includes commercial, residential and governmental dating from 1889 to 1940. The Historic District is Osceola County's only listing that encompasses a large group of historic buildings. The 41-block district is roughly outlined by Altman Street, Monument Avenue, Penfield Street and Randolph Avenue. The streets of Kissimmee have gone from a wild Cowtown with cattle drives down Broadway to a booming array of unique shops and restaurants. You can still see the cattle drive down Broadway each spring. Listed on National Register: 1994.

Holy Redeemer Catholic Church

In the late 1890s, a priest would come to Kissimmee three times a year and conduct mass at various locations and stay with the Dunne family. When the Dunne family moved, the Anthony Tress family was the only Catholic family in town, so the priest began staying with them and holding mass in their sitting room. By 1910, the Tress sitting room became too small, so mass was held in the local theater on Saturday nights after the picture show was over. Soon a plan was developed to construct a new chapel for the growing congregation in Kissimmee. On June 30, 1912, the first mass was said in the newly built Holy Redeemer Catholic Church. There were no pews or electricity during the first services; folding chairs were brought in for the congregation. The brick Gothic-style church cost \$7,000 to build and is located on Sproule Avenue. It was sold in 1972 to neighboring First United Methodist Church and is used occasionally. Listed on National Register: 1994.

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Don Schmidt Contracting and Roofing, Inc. is a local and family owned business that has been serving Central Florida since 1988 and Osceola County residents since 1959. Don Schmidt, learning construction from his father, obtained his contractors license in 1972 in both building and remodeling residential homes. In the 1980s he received his Florida State Certified Roofing license and formed Don Schmidt Contracting and Roofing, Inc. He is joined by his oldest son Jared, who is following in Don's footsteps by learning every aspect of the roofing and contracting business. When you call for a free roof estimate, you will receive a professional and reliable roofing quote.

Our contracting and roofing business, located at 101 East 13th Street in St. Cloud, is licensed, bonded and insured through both state and local agencies. We are members in good standing with the St. Cloud Chamber of Commerce, Kissimmee/Osceola Chamber of Commerce, and are a Preferred Tamko, Owens Corning, and GAF authorized contractor, as well as OSHA certified. Don is currently active in the St. Cloud Little League and previously participated on a number of Boards and Committees such as CFRSA, FRSA, and the Florida Emergency Disaster Relief Program. Don says "we are looking forward to serving our community for at least another 30 years."

ROOF INSPECTIONS	ROOF REPAIRS	SHINGLE ROOFS	
METAL ROOFS	CONCRETE TILE ROOFS	MODIFIED BITUMEN	

Continued on Page 9.

Historic Places

Continued from Page 8.

Grand Army of the Republic Hall

The Grand Army of the Republic Hall in St. Cloud was built in 1914 with funds raised by the L.L. Mitchell Post No. 34 of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). The brick two-story rectangular structure was built as a memorial to veterans who served in the Union Army during the Civil War and was a gathering place for veterans and the community. A theater with raised stage and orchestra pit afforded an opportunity for performances to be enjoyed; a large meeting room was upstairs. The GAR Hall is privately owned and closed to the public. Listed on National Register: 1997.

Monument of States

The Monument of States in Kissimmee was the idea of Dr. Charles Bressler-Pettis as a way to pay tribute to winter tourists who came to the area from other states. Work on the monument began in September 1941. The 50-foot monument, located near Lake Tohopekaliga, is made of more than 1,500 stones, donated from all 48 states, governors of 45 states, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and 21 foreign countries. Bags of concrete and labor were also donated. Atop the monument is a three-foot concrete sphere, a concrete American Bald Eagle with a 6-foot wing span and the American flag. The monument was dedicated on March 28, 1943. Contrary to popular belief, Dr. Pettis's ashes are not buried in the base of the monument; his wife chose to have them interred in his hometown of Grant, Missouri. Listed on National Register: 2015.

St. Cloud Depot

The Atlantic Coast Railroad passenger depot opened in St. Cloud in May 1918 with a parade, speeches, a dance and flag presentation. The rectangular Prairie Style brick building retains its original flooring although the interior has been modified over the years. Currently in use by the VFW, the structure still reflects its historic appearance. Listed on National Register: 2018.

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Olive Branch Colony

In 1884, a small delegation of Shakers came from Watervliet, New York, and found temporary quarters near Narcoossee. In November 1896, a tract of land was purchased from the Disston Land Company by Elder Isaac Anstaat – almost 7,050 acres – for \$94,000. With this purchase, the Narcoossee Shaker Village was established and referred to by its spiritual name, Olive Branch.

The Colony became famous for its pineapples, some of which were shipped to commercial markets. In August of 1906, the Shakers were selling between 300 to 400 pineapples in Kissimmee each week. They also cultivated bananas, oranges, peaches, and strawberries, along with other fruits and a variety of vegetables.

Photo: Members of the colony in the banana grove.



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Ann Whitewolf

Ann Whitewolf was the granddaughter of Quanah Parker, the last chief of the Comanches, and was named for her great-grandmother, Cynthia Ann Parker.

The Parker family, originally from Illinois, founded Fort Parker in the Texas frontier in the 1830s. In 1838, 9-year-old, Cynthia Ann and her brother John were taken by Indians during a raid on the fort. Cynthia Ann was raised by the Comanches and given the name Naudah; John's fate is unknown.

Cynthia Ann became the wife of Chief Nocona. They had three children; one son was Quanah Parker. While out picking berries in 1860 with her daughter Prairie Flower, blue-eyed Cynthia Ann was spotted by Texas Rangers. Both were taken to Fort Parker. Three times she tried to run away and three times she was returned.

Quanah searched for the mother who'd been taken from him when he was only 10. Years later after becoming chief of the Comanches, he finally located the graves of his mother and sister, who had died shortly after being taken to Fort Parker by the Texas Rangers. Quanah had their remains moved back to Oklahoma and buried near the town of Lawton, Oklahoma.

One of Quanah's wives, Maheheet-To-Wook-Ky Parker, was Ann's grandmother. Their son, White, attended seminary school in Phoenix, Arizona, and became a Methodist minister; later he returned to Oklahoma to minister to the Comanche, Kiowa, Creek and Ponca tribes. White married Laura Clark, daughter of a Methodist missionary. Ann was born on Dec. 21, 1924, in the Kiowa Indian Hospital in Lawton and was the youngest of their four children.

Ann Parker married Edwin Whitewolf in Lawton and moved to Kissimmee in 1957, only intending to stay a few months. Kissimmee became their home, and Edwin found work as a roofing contractor, while Ann worked for Cody Publications for 12 years. Ann later worked in the traffic department at the Osceola County Courthouse. Edwin passed away in March 1979; Ann on June 17, 2008. Both are buried in Highland Cemetery, in Lawton, Oklahoma.

Sources: Ancestry.com; "The Orlando Sentinel" issues 1992 - 2008



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Tyson Family

In May 1889, James Tyson (*Tison) married Victoria Lavinia Peterson. James and Victoria had 11 children between 1890 and 1917. In 1891, the first record to our knowledge shows they purchased a small plot of land where James and Victoria began to raise their large family. The seven-and-a-half-acre plot was valued at \$50. In 1892, the tax evaluation increased to \$115, suggesting the home was built. (*Tison is the original spelling of the family's name, but over time it changed to Tyson.)



Tyson House is located at Pioneer Village in Kissimmee.

When the Tysons arrived in Narcoossee, Florida, in 1890 more than 100 residents lived there, mostly taking advantage of the Sugar Belt Railroad spur. Although the Tyson family had limited means, they did know how to read, and their children attended school. They were a hard-working family with records showing they raised cattle and citrus. James Tyson also owned 20 acres 14 miles north of their home primarily for farming.

At least once, James Tyson supplemented the family income by working for others, and for a time, he was the Narcoossee postmaster.

The Tyson House at Pioneer Village was built in the 1920s by one of the Tyson sons. It is modeled after the family's original home and is similar in style to houses built in the late 1800s.

Rinaldi & Sabetto Families



Rinaldi Family



Sabetto Family

been born to them. His chosen profession was fireman, one he kept when they moved to Toledo, Ohio.

The family's final move was to Kissimmee in 1938. Angelo died on June 7, 1945, at age 71. Five years later, tragedy struck when Catherine and son Joseph died in a fire at her filling station home at Shingle Creek in June 1950.

Angelo and Catherine's son Peter remained in Toledo, Ohio; Michael married Mary Rinaldi and James married Victoria Rinaldi, joining the two Kissimmee Italian families.

Sources: Ancestry.com, "The Orlando Sentinel", "Orlando Evening Star" and "Kissimmee Gazette" issues 1939 - 1987, family photos shared by family member

When the S.S. Berlin sailed on Dec. 6, 1912, from Naples, Italy, passengers Giovonni (John) Battista Rinaldi, age 48, and his wife, Giocondina Perugini, listed their final destination as Lake Mary, Florida. By 1930, they had moved to Kissimmee, Florida, and had six children, ages 16 to 1 month.

John engaged in truck farming with the help of his sons. Tony and Thomas served in the U.S. Army; Isaac was in the Air Force during World War II; Joseph served in the Korean War. Daughters, Mary and Victoria, married sons of another Italian immigrant, Angelo Sabetto, who lived in Kissimmee. Tony was killed in action while serving in Tunisia in 1943.

John B. Rinaldi passed away in 1943 at the age of 80. Giocondina, a native of Marcone, Italy, died in 1955 at the age of 65.

The Sabetto family patriarch, Angelo, arrived in 1891 from Italy, and appears in the 1900 census in Winnebago County, Wisconsin. In April 1898, Angelo enlisted as a private in Company G, 2nd Wisconsin Infantry to fight during the Spanish American War. He was discharged one year later in April 1899.

Angelo married an Irish lass, Catherine Gallagher, in 1899. By 1910, Angelo and Catherine were in Delta County, Michigan, with only four of the six children whom had

Motor boats cruised Broadway in great Kissimmee flood



Photo source: The Orlando Sentinel

Water runs bumper high during the flood that hit downtown Kissimmee in October 1956. Between 12 and 18 inches of rain fell.

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