

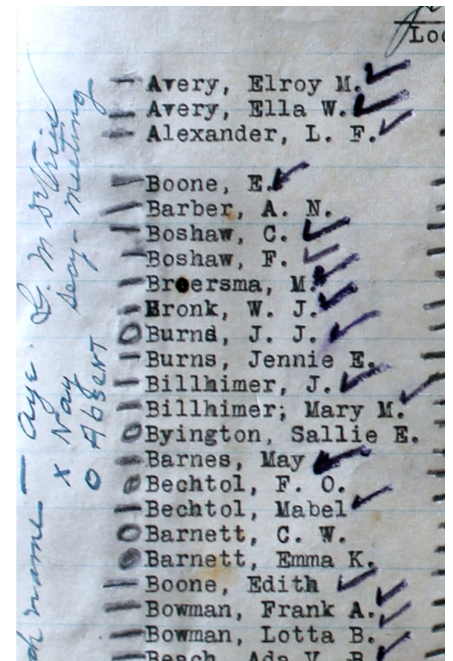


WEST PASCO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

November 2014

New Port Richey is 90 years old



On October 24, 1924, New Port Richey was incorporated as a town, and last month the city commemorated its 90th birthday with several events.

The historical society sponsored one of the events, a one-hour Friendly Kia trolley tour of some of the historic sites in New Port Richey. WPHS board members Jeff Miller and Terry Kline conducted the tour. We thank New Port Richey Mayor Rob Marlowe who arranged a tour of the Hacienda Hotel, and we thank New Port Richey Economic Development Director Mario Iezzoni (pictured above), who conducted the tour. We also went inside the Richey Suncoast Theatre. Because of an overflow crowd, we did a second, unscheduled tour, although we were not able to go inside either of those buildings during the second tour.

The photo on the right shows a portion of the document that recorded the vote by the citizens of the town on the issue of whether New Port Richey should be incorporated. The vote was 201-4 in favor.



New extended hours for the museum

The Rao Musunuru Museum and Library of the West Pasco Historical Society is now open on Fridays from 1 to 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m to 4 p.m. We've added three hours to our Saturday schedule thanks to students from the Gulf High School History Honor Society, who are volunteering to staff the museum from 10 to 1 on Saturdays. Pictured here are two of the students photographed recently at the museum.

The WPHS has no paid staff and relies entirely on volunteers. If you'd like to volunteer at the museum, perhaps on Friday afternoons or other days, please contact us at 727

847-0680 or you can email us at westpascohistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

Historical society cemetery tour



On October 4 the WPHS sponsored a tour of three local cemeteries, conducted by local historian Jeff Cannon, a life member of the WPHS and an expert on our cemeteries. We traveled on the CARES bus and visited West Elfers Cemetery, East Elfers Cemetery, and Hudson Cemetery, where this photo was taken. We commend Mr. Cannon for his extensive volunteer work at these cemeteries.

The New Port Richey Press chronicled our local history



One of the most popular items at the museum is our collection of old newspapers, principally the *New Port Richey Press*.

The paper was founded in November 1918. The earliest issue we have is from Dec. 26, 1918. It is volume 1, number 6; the first five issues are probably lost.

In our oldest newspaper the main front page headline is "Christmas Celebrations in the Ports Richey." The article reports that both hotels in town provided Christmas dinners and the article lists the names of the guests at both hotels. Other articles report on Christmas plays at the various schools, and it is mentioned that a baby girl weighing 9 pounds was born to Mr. and Mrs. S. Prichard of New Port Richey on Christmas day.

The original name of the newspaper was the *Port Richey Press*, even though the newspaper stated that it was published every Thursday in New Port Richey. The name of the newspaper was changed to the *New Port Richey Press* in 1922.

The first owner was Charles L. Fox (1866-1947). He was born in England and lived in a small house on Main Street where the Arcade Building is now.

One account says that the printing press was originally powered by gasoline, since there was no electricity in the town. Another account says Fox and his son set the type and the paper was printed on an old hand press.

On Aug. 19, 1920, the newspaper reported that its circulation was close to 900, of which 700 were mailed weekly to cities in the north.

In 1922 William M. Hetherington of Lakeland, who had earlier owned the *Dade City Banner*, purchased the newspaper.

In December 1925 George G. Holland purchased the paper. He was born in New York and had worked for several New York City newspapers. He increased the number of pages and changed the newspaper from tabloid-sized newspaper to full-sized, with seven-column pages.

Holland had grandiose plans for the paper, saying there was no reason it could not become as good as the *New York Times*. The economic boom was underway, and the look of the paper changed with large, bold banner headlines each week, such as:

FAMOUS MILLIONAIRES OF HOLLYWOOD BUY IN NEW PORT RICHEY

The article under that headline from Jan. 1, 1926, began, "Celebrities the world over, owners of names as familiar to Paris theatre-goers and Australian music-lovers as they are to the inhabitants of old Manhattan Isle, have bought land in New Port Richey, and plan to build winter homes in this famous resort town, the *New Port Richey Press* has learned."

The paper named the celebrities. They were Thomas Meighan, Paul Whiteman, Irving Berlin, and others.

One week later the headline was:

**AMERICA'S MELODY KING
PAYS FOR HOMESITE HERE**

That headline refers to Irving Berlin, composer of *White Christmas*, *Easter Parade*, and *God Bless America*. The front page pictured a check signed by Berlin, a down payment for property in New Port Richey.

The boom did not last, most of the Hollywood figures never came, and Holland sold the paper to John W. Parkes and left town.

The *New Port Richey Press* continued to publish, although money was tight. Parkes wrote several times how difficult it was to pay the bills.

Banner headlines announced the arrivals of Thomas Meighan, a leading Hollywood film actor who wintered in New Port Richey, and the opening of the Meighan Theatre, the Hacienda, and the Pasco Building.

Later owners of the newspaper included Benjamin Lyle of Ulysses, Kansas; Hugh Osborne, who had edited the *Umatilla Tribune*; and W. H. Thomas, who had published a weekly newspaper in Mt. Morris, Illinois.

Eventually the *New Port Richey Press* changed its name to the *West Pasco Press*. Its influence waned as the *St. Petersburg Times* began daily coverage of Pasco, Hernando, and Citrus counties.

The museum has most of the run of the newspaper from 1919 to the mid-1960s, and some papers after that date. The New Port Richey Public Library also has a collection of the *Press* both in bound form in the Avery Room and on microfilm.

The city library apparently gave the museum and others some of its annual bound volumes of the newspaper when it was copied to microfilm. Unfortunately, some of the microfilm is hard to read and some newspapers are missing altogether.

If you know of someone who has newspapers from 1932 or 1933, please let us know. They all seem to be missing.

Newspapers from the second half of 1921 are also missing, so we have not seen the local news coverage of the 1921 hurricane which caused widespread damage here.

On Jan. 11, 1930, the *St. Petersburg Evening Independent* reported that Gloria Swanson, the famous movie star, was expected to visit New Port Richey within the next few days. There was probably a banner headline with that news in the *New Port Richey Press* of Jan. 10, 1930, but, alas, that newspaper is missing.

(She may have canceled her visit, as the *Tampa Morning Tribune*, which reported her plans on page 1, carried no subsequent news of a visit.)

An earlier newspaper in New Port Richey, the *New Port Richey Post*, was published only in 1916. The museum has only the first issue, which is dated January 1916. The Port Richey Co., the developer of the town, may have published the newspaper.

We also have a number of issues of the *Elfers West Pasco Record*, a weekly newspaper in Elfers that was published only in 1922. We have some issues of the *Suncoast News* from the 1980s. The New Port Richey Public Library has in its Avery Room the *West Pasco Chronicle* from the 1960s and 1970s.

Some Pasco County Fun Facts

The town of Fivay was named for Preston S. Arkwright, Martin F. Amorous, H. M. Atkinson, Gordon Abbott, and Charles F. Ayer.

On July 4, 1917, 50 people from Dade City went by car to the NPR 4th of July fish fry, making the trip in less than 2 1/2 hours.

An earlier name for Aripeka, in the 1880s and 1890s, was Argo, same name as the award-winning movie!

In the 1972 Democratic primary, segregationist Governor George Wallace carried Pasco County (and in fact every county in Florida).

In 1929 Louisiana Gov. Huey P. Long and his wife visited Florida and stayed at Gulf Springs Lodge in Hudson.

To attend meetings in the 1890s county commissioner James Clark rode his horse from Port Richey to Dade City. Travel time: a day and a half.

On July 4, 1917, 50 people from Dade City went by car to the NPR 4th of July fish fry, making the trip in less than 2 1/2 hours.

The 1886 Charleston S. C. earthquake was felt in what is now Pasco County.

In September-October 1933 three Pasco County schools, Zephyrhills, San Antonio, and Trilby, were destroyed by fire. Arson was suspected.

Paul Delevan, Principal of Pasco High School in the early 1930s, discovered a comet in 1913. Delavan's comet may return in 24,000,000 years.

MEMBER PROFILE: Terry Kline



Terry Kline is a member of the WPHS Board of Directors and is a past president. He oversees the maintenance of the building and has probably spent more time volunteering at the museum than anyone else in our history.

Terry was born in 1948 in the small town of Hoytville, Ohio. He moved with his family to Florida in 1954, at age 6, and says, understandably, that he does not remember being a Yankee.

He first lived on Grand Boulevard in a small home two buildings south of the old shuffleboard club. The modern address of the house is 6119 Grand Boulevard. He lived there until 1961, when he moved to the other end of the boulevard, near the Port Richey fire station.

Terry attended Pierce Elementary School, which was located in the building that is now the New Port Richey Public Library. He transferred to the new Richey Elementary School when it opened in 1957. He attended Gulf Junior High School, which was then located in what is now the red brick Schwettman Education Center on Grand Boulevard, and Gulf High School, which was then located on Louisiana Avenue in the building now occupied by Gulf Middle School.

Terry recalls a simpler time growing up here. He was given a quarter every Friday to go to the movies in what is now the Richey Suncoast Theatre. He recalls that it was a dime to get in, a dime for a drink, and a nickel for a bag of popcorn.

He says that after school, kids worked in the groves or mowed lawns or worked at the chemical plant in Tarpon Springs. He remembers a basketball court in Sims Park with concrete seating. He says it was a rite of passage for a boy to ride his bicycle down the concrete steps in the park, steps that were maybe 20 feet high.

He recalls, "When I was a kid, New Port Richey was my playground. I could go anywhere from 54 to

Massachusetts Ave. as a 9- or 10-year-old kid on my bicycle."

He remembers when the bandshell, now situated next to the museum, was down on the river. The bandshell was the girls' domain, protected by their big brothers. "If you went there, they would kick the crap out of you. The girls would go there and have their little tea parties and play with their dolls, but the rest of the park was for boys."

While in junior high school Terry used his boat to get to school. He recalls that several students came to school by boat and that there would be four or five boats tied up at the bridge near the school each day.

Terry enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1967 and served in Vietnam until 1969. He recalls that out of the 32 men in his boot camp, only two went to Vietnam. The other 30 went to Okinawa.

Terry's father, Norris Kidd, better known as "Huck," had been a farmer and then a foundry worker in Ohio. Huck's older brother Delbert, better known as "Biff," was stationed at a military observation post at Bayonet Point during World War II. That explains how Terry wound up in Pasco County. After the war Terry's family came down to Florida to visit the area where Delbert had been stationed.

Terry's father worked as a welder at a welding shop on U. S. 19 owned by Leo Kidd. Mr. Kline ran the business for Kidd. A street in the area was later renamed for Kidd, who owned property in the area and was a local constable.

After his military service, Terry started his own woodworking shop in Hudson. His partner was a painter and Terry was the cabinetmaker. He operated the business for about three years until about 1974 when the county enacted a building moratorium to address the explosive growth in western Pasco County. That dried up his business, so he began working for his father at Huck's Welding Service. He took over the business when his father retired.

The West Pasco Historical Society was founded in 1973 but originally had no home. In 1981 the Frierson home on Little Road was donated to the historical society. In October of that year the home was moved to Sims Park, where it was to become our museum. (The Frierson home was built in 1915 as the Seven Springs schoolhouse.)

That's when Terry first became involved with the historical society. He was friends with Woodrow Wilson Gay, who drove the truck that moved the home. Terry did welding for Bill's House Moving of Hudson, which

was hired to move the building. Terry donated the flagpole for the museum and constructed the steel railing on the stairs, which is still in use. He recalls that Roy Obenreder borrowed his jacks to jack up the building when it arrived in the park.

As the board member who best knows the early history of the West Pasco Historical Society, Terry says he regrets that the early volunteers are not sufficiently remembered.

A Pirate of the Cootie

This article was written some years ago by Terry Kline.

The other day as I was jacking my jaw, a typical Yebel (that's a Yankee transplant who thinks he's from the South-you know, one that say "ya'll" after being here three years!) stopped me in the middle of a half-truth or a half-lie (I can't remember which one), to tell me I was pronouncing it all wrong.

"It's Pithlachascotee—not cootie! That's a bug kids get!" she said.

Little did she know that she had hit a soft spot—that those waters run deep through my life as sure as the blood in my veins. Being the smartass that I am, I informed her the actual name is Askachascootee. The Pithla probably came along to try to legitimize the story the postman stole from Pocahontas—and the reason there is a Chasco is it rhymes with Pasco. (That got her!)

My first Cootie encounter was as a small boy during the occasional boat ride up river.

It was Jungle Jim, Tarzan, and the African Queen all rolled into one. It was jungles, turtles, spiders, and snakes. It was love at first sight! I remember my father telling us to keep our hands out of the water because of the large gar that swam in the river. The gators on the bank already had us convinced.

Sometimes we would picnic or go to the mouth of the river to watch the sunset. The part that I liked best was that I got to sit in the front of the boat. Living in downtown New Port Richey, as soon as I was mobile, the river became my South and West boundaries. My friends and I spent most of our time playing and building forts in her hammocks, swimming and fishing in her waters. Sometimes we built a raft to float like Huck Finn.

The Chasco Fiesta was no doubt the biggest event in our lives. There was a circus and rides, hot dogs and cotton candy, and we got to dress like Indians. . .what more could a boy ask for?

When the boat parade came, we were ready, having built a palm frond Teepee on the old raft. Our mother's

best lipstick was warpaint. We paddled the river, sure that we would win the grand prize!

There were two bridges we called the day bridge and the night bridge. The day bridge on the Boulevard was where we went to smoke, cuss, and do the things our parents told us not to. We always went under the south side, never the north, as it just wasn't cool. That meant that most of the time I had to pass by the Troll, a local bully who was always ready with a wedgie or a toss off the bridge. Sometimes I think he started the north side taboo.

On a summer evening with nothing to do, we would go to the bridge on Main Street. There, the old men of the town would be arguing as they figure-eighted their long cane poles with a handmade plug on the end—each one sure to catch the granddaddy snook!

Sometimes they would let us try as we listened to their words of wisdom. They said things like "the big ones always get away" and "when you catch one, nobody's ever around" (that goes for fishing as well as politics).

When I was about twelve, we moved to the other end of the Boulevard in Port Richey. Along with the house came an old wooden rowboat which I quickly commandeered (after weeks of begging).

My new friends and I christened her *The Yacht* and spent every day after school fixing and painting and making her almost seaworthy. The day of the launch was extra special to me—not only was I the captain of my own ship, but my father showed up with the rules and an old Johnson outboard! I knew it was his way of saying "I trust you, son—you're a man...."

All summer long we sailed the blue river (we weren't allowed into the Gulf—one of the rules) as true Pirates of the Cootie!

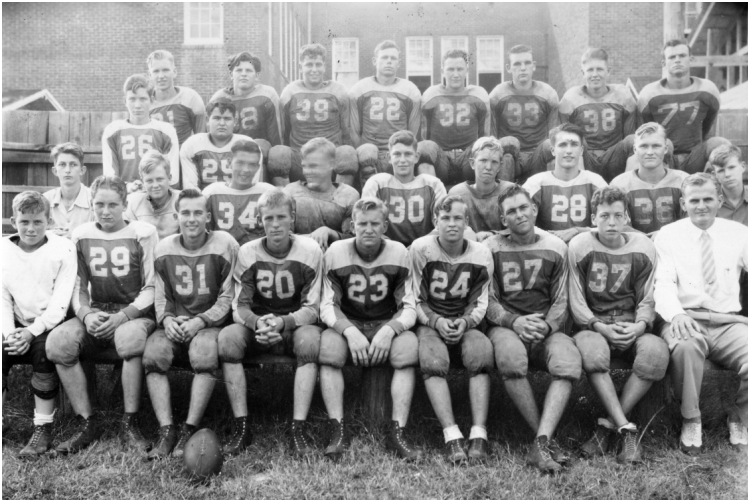
Sometimes on a Friday night, with a flashlight tied to her bow, we'd go to town to take in a movie or to go to Roscoe's for a cherry coke.

I remember my first kiss was at Sims Park where young lovers came to sit on the bank. I was smooth as Errol Flynn as I launched into the moonlight while my true love waved good-bye from the shore.

A couple of years later, the old *Yacht* was dry docked for an unauthorized trip up the river during school hours and ended up in the woodpile. I've had a few boats since then, but never that much fun. This old Pirate still floats the Cootie, now with my sons and grandson, or when I need an old friend to talk to.

So, when you hear me say her name wrong I don't mean no disrespect. I'm probably just running my mouth so fast I can't get the whole word in. A rose by any other name is still a rose.

Gulf High football has had a few great years



Above: the 1941-42 and 2008-09 Gulf football teams, which both had 9-1 regular season records.

The Gulf High School football team made the playoffs this year (2014) for the third time in school history, after an 8-2 regular season record. So this seems like a good time to take a look at the history of Gulf football.

Football began at Gulf in 1930 (the 1930-31 school year). Pasco High School had a team then, as did St. Leo Academy, but Zephyrhills High School did not. There were no other high schools in Pasco County.

A Tarpon Springs baker, Bill Moutsatsos, was the volunteer coach. A photo of the team lists these players: "Carp" Carpenter, Charles DeWoodie, F. Dean, Oris Bragg, Henry Falany, James Grey, Victor Moore, Lucien Roy, B. Dean, Bill Fisher, "Preacher" Mitchell, Cecil Henderson, William Weiskopf, Francis Luikart, Gordon Fullington, Raymond Nikkari, George Marks, Melvin Knowles, Bud Clark, Corwin Littell, Frank Kauffman, Fred Kolb, James Vickers, Robert Foskett, and Buck Kelly.

Interviewed for a 1984 *Tampa Tribune* article, James Grey recalled that the team won one game. Newspaper accounts show losses to Tampa High School and St. Leo by identical 70-0 scores.

The team had second-hand uniforms, shoes that didn't always match or fit, and equipment purchased used from Clearwater High.

"Most of us were playing in the first game we'd ever watched," said Grey, of the team's first game that year. "There were only 15 of us on the team so we all went both ways.

"We had shoulder pads and thigh pads but you didn't have to wear a helmet if you didn't want to. Most of the time I didn't because it got in my way."

Grey recalled that quarterbacks couldn't throw two incomplete passes in a row. The team had to use a running play after throwing an incomplete pass.

If a team was losing, that was no problem. Just switch jerseys around and insert some of the local college kids who might be home visiting. Grey said that Largo and Saint Leo (then a high school) did that, and both came from behind in the second half to beat Gulf.

"Football those days is nothing like it was when I played. You could pile on as much as you wanted in the '30s. You thought they were going to kill you, but the worst injury I ever suffered were some broken ribs."

Grey was 5 ft. 6 inches tall and weighted 127 pounds.

In 1931 Deane DeFord, a Gulf teacher and the acting principal, coached the team. Football was played again in 1932, but there apparently was no football at Gulf from 1933 through 1937.

In 1938 football resumed at Gulf, under Coach Paul Stephens. Although other high schools continued their football programs, Gulf had not, so none of the players on the team had ever played a football game before, and many had never even seen a football game.

1938 was probably the worst year in Gulf football history. Gulf lost the first game of the season to the Clearwater Tornadoes by 60-0. The season included a 68-0 loss to Bushnell, a 47-0 loss to Brooksville, and a 44-0 loss to St. Leo College. A player on the team later recalled a 72-0 loss. But *Tampa Morning Tribune* sports writer Pete Norton praised New Port Richey fans for supporting the team. See his column at the end of this article.

The 1938 football team included 11-year-old Wally Frierson, who weighed 79 pounds. Frierson did get some playing time, but on Sept. 23, 1938, the referee of the game against Tampa College refused to allow him to play, saying he was too small for high school football.

Oliver Daugherty coached the 1939 football team. The 1940 yearbook lists the players as: Charles Frierson, Hilton Williams, Harmon Stevenson, William Willis, Duane Hope, Wally Frierson, Ronnie Sampson (water boy), Johnny DeCubellis, Charles Fisher, Manley Lashua, Joe Littell, Kenneth Hope, Worth Littell, Curtis Falany, Napoleon Falany, Happy Clark, Dick Platt, Albert DeCubellis, Bill Grey, Claude Johnson, and David DeCubellis. (Clark later was a school administrator and a Pasco County commissioner.)

The 1940 football team began the season with big wins over several teams, including the Clearwater team it had lost to by ten touchdowns two years earlier. Describing the Clearwater game, the *New Port Richey Press* wrote:

The most sensational play of this game, and of the season thus far, was Worth Littell's 99-yard touchdown. This was undoubtedly one of the few perfect plays in football. Not one man laid a hand on Littell in his jaunt, so good was the interference. Harmon Stevenson, Right End, after taking out his man, got up and ran all the way to the goal with Littell. This was not the only time that Stevenson was heard from in this game. When a Clearwater player picked up a fumbled ball and started for the goal, who should come streaking after him but our fleet-footed little end, Stevenson, who caught him on the 10-yard line. A touchdown racked up by Falany on a double-reverse proved to be another perfect play. Falany could have run 200 yards instead of 20 yards, so well was this play carried out. New Port Richey is one of the few high schools who use the double-winged back system; there is no other high school team in the state that can run double-reverse better than our own "Bucs."

The 1940 team would have had the best record in school history up to that time and might have won the Gulf Coast Conference title, but on Nov. 20, 1940, Principal James Lanier announced that Gulf would forfeit the six conference games it had won because the school had discovered that two players were ineligible because they had left school a few weeks before the end

of the previous school year in order to go to Canada for the summer.

Coach Ralph Hood of Crystal River told a newspaper reporter, "I think the action of the principal and coach at New Port Richey is the finest gesture of sportsmanship I have seen. I am sincerely sorry to see them lose the conference championship, but I believe the lesson in sportsmanship and fair play is worth more to the boys than any conference victory. We would have much better athletics in Florida if we had more schools like New Port Richey."

Local citizens honored the 1940 team with a banquet at the Hacienda on Dec. 10.

The 1941 football team (1941-42 school year), under Coach Oliver Daugherty, had a 9-1 record, the best in school history until the 2008 team had an identical regular season record plus one playoff win. In 1941 there was no playoff system, but Gulf was declared the conference champion by a mathematical point formula called the Dickinson System. The 1941 team kept the opponents scoreless in six games and outscored its opponents 242 to 33.

Members of the team were Dave Luikart, Bryce Bliss, Jim Butler, Sam Baillie, Harland Kingsley, Manley Lashua, David and John DeCubellis, Harmon Stevenson, Claude Johnson, Sebert Parker, Don Uzzle, Duane Hope, Bob Emmons, Worth and Joe Littell, Frank Morgan, William Willis, and David Clark.

In a 1997 newspaper article, David Luikart Sr., the right end, recalled, "We had an excellent team. We beat a lot of people we weren't supposed to. I remember we beat a hotshot team from St. Pete called St. Paul. They had a 240-pound guy in the backfield and we beat them, 19-6."

The 1941 team defeated Zephyrhills 46-0. Its only loss was to Hernando, 7-2. That game was a defensive struggle with Gulf leading 2-0 in the final quarter, when the Leopards scored a touchdown.

In the 1942-43 school year football was the only sport played because of World War II gasoline rationing.

The 1944 season included a 61-0 win over Zephyrhills, thought to be Gulf's greatest-ever margin of victory. The 1944 team also won the conference championship by the Dickinson System.

The coach during this period was Arthur H. "Red" Stevens, who also served as principal. He was a Pasco County commissioner for 18 years. Joe Semago coached the team in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

On Nov. 22, 1946, the New Port Richey Press reported, "Members of the local team had a busy day last Friday. In the afternoon the boys joined the local fire department in combatting grass and brush fires that threatened property on the northeast side of town, and this effort kept them busy for hours. Then they

changed into their football togs and tackled the hard-to-beat Dade City team.” (Gulf and Pasco had been undefeated at that point, but Pasco won the game 38-0.)

In the mid-1950s Gulf had some lean seasons. In 1953 only 8 boys reported for the first practice in August. The team had no wins in 1954 and 1955.

The team was more successful in the late 1950s and early 1960s under Coach T. Edd Webb. In 1958, the team had an 8-2 record, second best in school history, and played a post-season bowl game against Umatilla which ended in a 25-25 tie.

Player Tom Chittum (‘58) recalled in a newspaper interview that he played every down on both the offensive and defensive lines.

“We had no equipment, no trainers, nothing like today’s players have. We played through injuries. Unless it was a broken bone, the coach taped us up and sent us back in,” Chittum said.

Lineman Tommie Boyd agreed. At 135 pounds, Boyd played guard on offense and tackle on defense.

“We came home bandaged up like a bunch of war veterans. But even though we lost more games than we won, we played our hardest and held our heads high. Having a victory was important, but having character was just as important,” he said.

One of the team’s leaders in the 1950s was running back Orville Williamson (‘58). In addition to being Gulf’s leading scorer, Williamson played all positions on offense and linebacker on defense.

“Back then, if the coach told you to snap the ball, you did it. There was no talking back.”

“We practiced four, five hours without a water break. You were called a sissy if you drank water,” Williamson said.

During one after-school practice, the coach told Williamson to run laps around the field in full equipment. Four hours later, he was still running.

Tom Weightman, who later became the Pasco County Superintendent of Schools, coached the team in 1964, 1965, and 1966. He was an assistant principal at Gulf.

In the 1960s New Port Richey radio station WGUL broadcast the Buccaneer football games. The station was originally an AM-only station, limited to daytime broadcasting, so the play-by-play was recorded on Friday nights and played back on the air on Saturday mornings. In 1969 WGUL began broadcasting on FM and was able to air the games live.

Coaches in the 1970s included Jim Valentine, Joe Konstantinos, Jim Riser, and Jerry Young.

On Oct. 22, 1976, the new football stadium was dedicated as W. D. “Des” Little Stadium, named for William Desmond Little, who had been an important benefactor of Gulf High School. He and other community volunteers raised money and actually built

much of the stadium. The school district built only the bleachers. The volunteer committee was headed by Pete Little (Des’s son) and included principal Ed Campbell, assistant principal Art Engle, Wilma Lee, Orville Williamson, Jim Loechelt, Clarence Moody, T. Edd Webb, and Marty Paventi.

Gulf football trivia: Frank Papa scored the first touchdown at Des Little Stadium during the first JV game.

New Port Richey attorney Steve Booth, who helped construct Des Little Stadium, began his long stint as the volunteer stadium announcer of the football games at the start of the 1976 season. His outstanding work has been a feature of the Gulf home games almost every year since then.

Gulf football had some lean years in the late 1970s and early 1980s including an 18-game losing streak in the early 1980s.

Two long-term coaches in the 1980s and 1990s were Wilbur Lofton and Keith Newton. Lofton’s son Dean is currently a teacher and coach at Gulf.

Because of Hurricane Francis one football game was canceled and the game scheduled for Sept. 10, 2004, was played the next day, Saturday morning at 11 a.m. It was thought to be the first daytime football game for Gulf since a game in Tarpon Springs in 1959.

On Sept. 9, 2005, Gulf defeated Citrus 68-40. It’s the highest-scoring game for Gulf that we know of.

In 2006 under head coach Jay Fulmer, Gulf made its first-ever appearance in the playoffs.

In 2007 Courtney Cohen, a kicker, became the first girl ever to play football for Gulf.

The 2008 team had a 9-1 regular season record, matching the 1941 team record, and went on to win the first of two games in the playoffs.

After Fulmer, the coaches have been Ken Hollar, Tom Carter, and Jason Messamore, the current coach.

On Oct. 3, 2014, the football field was named Girardi-Young Field, in honor of Paul Girardi, a retired athletic director and coach, and Jerry Young, a retired long-time coach. The stadium retains the name W. D. “Des” Little Stadium.

The 2014 team had an 8-2 regular season record, and made an appearance in the playoffs, for only the third time in school history. Gulf lost the game to Lakewood 30-27 in two overtimes.

Thanks to John Grey for providing the 1984 newspaper article about the 1930 team.

Real Sportsmanship (1938)

This column appeared in the Tampa Morning Tribune during the 1938 football season.

By PETE NORTON

This is the story of a football Utopia, a land where a team can lose seven straight games, have 399 points scored against it while scoring none, and still retain the solid backing of every fan, the admiration of every person in the community.

In these days of high-pressure football, when players and coaches are thrown to the wolves after each defeat, it is refreshing to run across a coach and a team like Paul Stephens, of Gulf Coast high school, New Port Richey.

Seven times this year Coach Stephens has sent his squad into action, and each time it has been beaten by one-sided scores. The season record reads, 399 to 0, and games with four strong teams remain on the schedule.

Yet the wolves are not howling at New Port Richey, the fans are not demanding a new coach and the boys are not being called quitters each time they drop a game.

In exact contrast, Coach Stephens, who introduced football at Gulf high this year, is just as proud of his youngsters as Dr. Jock Sutherland is of the Pittsburgh Panthers.

When a team has a season record of 399 points to 0, it is news. So we wrote Coach Stephens and asked a few questions about his football team.

How many boys on the squad? What are their weights? How much experience have they had?

Says Coach Stephens: "We have 21 boys on the squad. Not a single one of them had ever played a game of football until this year. Nine of them had never seen a football game until the whistle blew for the opening contest of the season with Clearwater.

"The weights of the boys run from 79 pounds to the giant of the squad, Dave Clark, who tips the scale at 175. Clark is the only player over the 155-pound mark. Seven weigh less than 125 pounds."

Who is the smallest boy on the squad? Wasn't he ruled out of the Tampa College game in Tampa?

"Walter Frierson, a back who weighs 79 pounds, is, I believe the smallest senior high school player in Florida, perhaps in the country. The officials at the Tampa College game would not permit him to play for fear he would be injured by the larger Tampa players."

How do the fans take the numerous beatings the New Port Richey team has been handed this year? Do the boys have a good time playing football, even though they lose? How is the spirit of the squad?

At this point Coach Stephens really goes to town with as fine a recommendation for football in high school as we have seen.

"The people of New Port Richey are proud of the plucky youngsters that form the football squad. They know the boys are light and inexperienced, but now they also know the kids love the game and are learning fast.

"Football was started at Gulf High as an incentive to the boys and it has served that purpose 100 per cent. The boys on the football squad attend school regularly, work harder at their lessons and in general, are better youngsters because they play football.

"Sure, the kids have a good time playing. As a sport, none of them believes football can be excelled. It teaches them to give and take hard knocks with a smile, something they can use all through life. It develops them physically and mentally.

"It is a safe bet to say the spirit of the Gulf High team is as good as that on any prep team in Florida, and that includes teams that have beaten us 10 touchdowns.

"Our youngsters are coached to play the game hard but fairly. That is all anyone can do in sports."

Wouldn't it be a great thing for the game of football if the players, coaches and fans all over the country felt about the game as do the good people of New Port Richey?

Here is a bunch of kids going into every game knowing they haven't a chance of winning, but playing their hearts out and having a grand time.

This column salutes Coach Stephens and the New Port Richey football team.

Note: On Nov. 17, 1938, shortly after this article appeared, Gulf won its first game of the season, 14-6.

WPHS Personnel

Bob Hubach (Chairman) bobsherri@outlook.com
Bob Langford (President) boblangford@gmail.com
Dan Callaghan (Vice Pres.) callbookso@msn.com
Betsy Robinson (Corr. Sec.) bmdr76@gmail.com
Lisa Carey (Treasurer) uniqueinflorida@gmail.com
Dannee Brooks (Curator) brooks4747@aol.com
Terry Kline (Museum Director) paeos@aol.com
Jeff Miller (Digital Archivist) jeff560@aol.com
Clay Colson paeos@aol.com
Darryll Stevenson darryllstevenson@ymail.com
Judith Koutsos revival8446@netscape.net
Anni Callaghan annimj1@hotmail.com
Bill Aycrigg baycrigg@caresfl.org
David Prace wb2ium@pasco.org
Joy Lane-Hetz joylanehetz@verizon.net
Rao Musunuru, M. D. (Honorary Board Member)