



"The Old Schoolhouse in Sims Park"

West Pasco Historical Society, Inc. Museum and Library

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WINTER 2001

The President's Message

President Ann Hildebrand and all the Officers of the West Pasco Historical Society wish you a Happy New Year!

ANTIQUE tidbits by Eleanor Schoepflin

Majolica is a type of heavy earthenware, relief-molded and decorated in vivid colors with either a lead or tin glaze. It reached its height of popularity in the Victorian era and made a stunning comeback in the late twentieth century. Few potters marked their wares. Among those who did were Minton, Wedgwood and George Jones in England. In the United States Griffin, Smith & Hill (Etruscan) in Phoenixville, Pa. and Sapeake Pottery (Avalon and Clifton) in Baltimore marked theirs.

Covered majolica pieces include sardine boxes, game dishes, cheese keepers, humidors, butter dishes and sugar bowls. Designs run the gamut from floral to fish, cherubs to corn, shells to scenes and birds to berries. All are in multicolors ranging from pastels to cobalt. In addition to tableware, majolica pieces include jardinières, umbrella stands, vases, figurines, steins and garden seats. Prices have skyrocketed in the past ten years and now range from \$50 to \$18,000 (for a Minton walking stick stand in the shape of a stork), depending on rarity, manufacturer, workmanship and desirability.

A Pirate of the Cootee by Terry Kline (Part 2)

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 commanded (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 Cootee! 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 wood pile. I've had a few boats since then, but never that much fun. This old Pirate still floats the Cootee, 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 any 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.

"RITES OF PASSAGE" by George Brandli

In the small village of Lost Creek, West Virginia, Amos Horner owned the only grocery store within twelve miles. Amos was an interesting man, bald, except for a fringe of white encircling his head. He was also a vain man and wore a bright red toupee perched on top. The edge of the toupee almost reached the circle of white fringe. When a customer wanted flour, he would pick up the scoop, bend over into the flour barrel and dip it out. However, his red toupee always fell off into the flour. He would retrieve it and dust it off on his

white.

But, returning to my story, a large pot-bellied wood stove was in the center of the store and this was the gathering place for about eight men of the town. Here, they chatted away the days and practiced spitting streams of Mail Pouch at the stove, usually missing. Over the decades of this ritual, a mound of solidified material had built up around the stove.

Here, they were "Kings of their domain," and if an unaccepted person or child made the error of listening to their conversation, they were soon sent packing. You had to be accepted by them and to be accepted, meant they thought of you as a man. You could then even participate in talks about hunting, dogs, fishing, haying, farming, killing hogs or whatever as one of them. Many strived for this position, few were chosen.

When I was about fourteen years of age, a knock was heard at the back door about 8:00 one fall evening. My Mother answered the door and there were the select group of men with their fox hounds. They asked my Mother if I could come with them. My Mother knew what this meant. An honor to me, but a rite of passage she was not ready to accept. However, she gave me permission and I left with this group.

Nothing was said to me, nor did they talk to each other. In a silent group, through the early evening mist, we headed up the mountain, past the Persimmon grove, past the Big Gate as it was called, on past the next ridge where the Bing Cherries grew, on up the incline and down the ridge past the old Big Barn perched on a rocky outcropping.

Arriving at an graying Snake or Worm fence, we stopped. A fire was built, the hounds were released so we could hear their baying from down in the valley, and conversation started. Ottman Cottrell pulled a jug from his burlap sack and tilted it up on his forearm. Then it was passed down the line from man to man. I was quite aware of the contents of the jug, but I tipped it up and pretended to drink and passed it on down the line.

My rite of passage was complete and from that moment, I could join them and their stories around the pot-bellied stove. I was a man.

Just for a moment, think of time and what it has meant to our Society. I was just a thought in the mind of one or more dedicated citizens who had a dream and a goal.

funding, to location, to collections of the historical items, to obtaining docents, more volunteers, more support. Their intent on preservation and the willingness to share this with the populace in general is awe inspiring. We as humans have our rites of passage, but also does preservation of our memories and our history.

Down the Hall by Frances Mallett

The West Pasco Historical Society was proud to participate in the Founders Day events, with a program honoring "founding families" last October. In the early days, all of West Pasco was represented, which was the case that evening when pioneer families from Aripeka, Hudson, Port Richey, New Port Richey and Elfers attended. There were Littells, Norfleets, Knowles, Hudsons, Clarks, Baillies, Lukarts, Drafts, Pierces and many more telling about their family history in this area.

There will be a book on these families and any others that wish to have their family history added. The book will be on display in the Pioneer Hall of the museum. We urge all families to bring stories and pictures to the museum to be added to "the book." We look forward to your visit.

Florida Before Disney

On Saturday January 20th, at 1:30, we will have our next program which is called "Florida Before Disney". Clara Ann Smith has put together a panel of speakers to tell us about the early attractions and interests in this area.

Pres. Ann Hildebrand will moderate a panel consisting of Mr. Leland Hawes, historian and Tampa Tribune writer; Dr. Luther Rozar Retired Director of the Co-Op Extension Service, Horticulture Home Economics; Commissioner Peter Altman, and former Mayor of New Port Richey; Commissioner Ted Schrader, founder and co-owner of Schrader Realty; and Brenda McLain La Pointe, a former Weeki Wachee Springs Mermaid. Come join us and here about how things used to be.

It's Annual Fashion Show Time by Norma Nelson

As in the past we look forward to a great luncheon, fashions and prizes. It will be at the Spartan Manor on Friday, February 9th. The doors open at 11:30am. The menu is set for "oven-baked chicken," string beans almondine, roasted potatoes, plus Greek salad and strawberry whipped cream cake for desert. Yummie!

The donation is \$13.00, and yes there will be plenty of door prizes. The deadline for obtaining your tickets is Tuesday, February 6th. Pick up your tickets at the Museum or leave a message on the Museum phone to reserve them. Also, the following members will be selling tickets, Midge London Prace, 847-3129; Mary Jane Prichard, 845-4936; and Audrey O'Neil, 849-3451. will take your door prize donations

CURATOR REPORT by Midge London-Prace

Recent donations are as follows:

1. **Mary O'Benar** and **Ruth Teal** donated a boy's dress cap which was their Father's circa 1915, (can be seen in schoolroom nook,) a glass door knob, and antique thread spools with book, 1 ½ dozen, all are on display in Museum room.
2. **Mary Jane Prichard** donated 6 Picture frames.
3. **Hazel Kinnunen** (for the family of **Jim St. Clair**) donated a Memorial Methodist Church plate.
4. **Clata Lou Casto-Hevey** donated a collection of Indian Kachina doll decanters.
5. **Joan Rees** donated a map of the United States showing the American Indian Tribes geographically.

Our thanks go to these contributors. By-the-way we recorded 999 donations since opening the museum. Yours could be the 1000!

MEMBERSHIP by Julia Hall and Edith Hempel

The beginning of the year is when memberships are due. We have had a good response so far and thank those who have sent in their dues. If you haven't please do now, we appreciate your support.

Wish List

-A copy machine for the museum new or used.

Aripeka Sunsets

The Program "Aripeka Sunsets" put on by Wayne and Nancy Norfleet this past fall was so very enjoyable. Not only were the slide pictures, (that were taken over the years,) beautiful, but the comments made by Wayne told a history lesson about that area that was so interesting. Nancy had snapshots that she commented on to round out the evening. Our thanks goes to both of them.

2000 Christmas Party

Our thanks goes to Audrey O'Neil for planning this years party at Lola's. The food was good, and Beverly

Dunn's presentation was delightful. Georgia Robertson presented the winners of the third annual "Christmas Tree Festal Contest" with style. Thanks goes to her and her committee. The winners were, 1st Pithlachascotee Questers, 2nd Clayton Woods Questers, and 3rd Fivay Country Questers. A lovely evening was enjoyed by all.

NEW MEMBERS ADDENDUM 2001-4

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