

REFLECTIONS

FROM CENTRAL FLORIDA



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THE MAGAZINE OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF CENTRAL FLORIDA



The Historical Society's mission is to serve as the gateway for community engagement, education, and inspiration by preserving and sharing Central Florida's continually unfolding story.

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Cover: A sculpture of famed sharpshooter Annie Oakley and Dave the Wonder Dog behind the Leesburg Public Library.

Unless otherwise noted, all archival images in this issue are from the Historical Society's collection at the History Center.



Sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

 *The History Center is handicapped accessible with elevators on every floor.*



COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

Summer can be a quiet time for many of us, but this past season proved to be especially busy at the History Center. On top of our summer camps and regular programming, we received national recognition and hosted an important historical event.

The History Center was honored to receive the National Medal for Community Service from the Institute of Museum and Library Services in Washington, D.C. This prestigious award is conferred on only five museums in the entire country each year. History Center representatives traveled to Washington in June to accept the award and visit some of the Smithsonian Institution's great museums there.

This National Medal truly recognizes the hard work and dedication of the entire staff. Their work within our community to expand our collection, increase our storytelling, and offer more programming has helped transform the History Center into one of the most dynamic museums in the country. The curatorial work involved in creating the One Orlando Collection following the Pulse Nightclub shooting has made us a leader in the field of collecting

contemporary history, and staff members have presented at conferences around the country about this important topic. I'm very proud and humbled to be surrounded by such a dedicated and professional staff.

On June 21, we were honored to host the unveiling of a historical marker, in Heritage Square Park. The marker commemorated July Perry, who was lynched by a white mob near downtown Orlando after encouraging African Americans to vote in Ocoee on Election Day of 1920. The violence that night and in the days following make it among the most violent election days in the nation's history.

Members of the Perry family and other descendants of the event helped unveil the marker, along with Orange County Mayor Jerry L. Demings, Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer, Josie Lemon Allen of Orange County's Truth and Justice Project and Bridge the Gap Coalition, and Bryan Stevenson of the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Ala. Mr. Stevenson, a nationally renowned speaker and public-interest lawyer, then delivered a talk at the Orlando Public Library to close the event.

While receiving awards and recognition is uplifting, our best moments as a History Center come when we serve the community, uncover important stories, and engage the community in dialog. The event honoring July Perry was an important step in the community as we continue to tell the stories that have shaped our history. I hope you will continue to engage with us and learn about the rich and complex story of our past.

*– Michael Perkins, Executive Director
Historical Society of Central Florida, Inc.*

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ACCIDENTAL HISTORIAN EVENTS

Accidental Historian Member Opening
September 20

Accidental Historian Youth & Family Days
September 21 & November 16

Accidental Historian Panel Discussion
October 20

Urban Sketchers Workshop Series
Dates TBD

Historically Poetic
November 7

Coffee with a Curator
November 17

FOR MORE EVENTS, VISIT THEHISTORYCENTER.ORG

(All events are subject to change.)

LUNCHTIME LECTURE SERIES

First and third Fridays at noon; free for members

FIRST FRIDAY LUNCH & LEARNS

History Center staff offer a behind-the-scenes look at the museum and share their research.

Central Florida Artists October 4

What's in a Story: Oral Histories November 1

The Evolution of Downtown Orlando December 6

ARE WE THERE YET?

Central Florida's Transportation History

Join Museum Director Michael Perkins as we explore the trains, planes, and automobiles that made us go.

The Steamboat Era September 20

Railroads Boost the Economy October 11

Early Roads, Aviation, & Tourism November 15

Interstates & Airports December 13

TRICK OR TREAT SAFE ZONE BLOCK PARTY

Halloween fun for the whole family at the museum and Orlando Public Library, October 26, free

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH LECTURE

**"Beyond Tacos, Salsa, and Sombreros:
Latin America's Cultural Wealth"**

Prof. Luis Martínez-Fernández, September 15, free



History HAPPENS HERE

ORANGE COUNTY REGIONAL
HISTORY CENTER

DOWNTOWN ORLANDO

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Reflections from Central Florida

The magazine of the Historical Society of Central Florida Inc. focuses on the Florida counties included within the History Center's reach: Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Volusia, Lake, Brevard, and Polk. The History Center is located at 65 East Central Boulevard, Orlando, FL 32801. Visit our website at thehistorycenter.org

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The Joseph L. Brechner Research Center

The Brechner Research Center houses the special collections of the Historical Society of Central Florida, documenting nearly 200 years of Central Florida history. The center includes a research library, an archive, and space for researching items from the collection. The Research Center was created through a donation from the late Marion Brody Brechner in honor of her husband, Joseph (1915-1990), an award-winning journalist, community leader, and freedom-of-information advocate.

Find us on social media



FROM THE COLLECTION



This early version of the “play pen” or modern pack-and-play portable crib was dubbed the Kiddie Koop. Edward Maurice Trimble of Rochester, N.Y., patented it in 1913. It has a lid that can close to keep baby safe from bugs or pets, and can fold to only 8 inches wide to be carried or stored.

IN THIS ISSUE



DANIEL BRADFIELD

Dan Bradfield was born in Alexandria, Virginia, and moved to Orlando in the early 1990s. He graduated from the University of Central Florida with an M.A. in history in 2016 and has been the History Center's oral historian since April 2017.



LESLEYANNE DRAKE

Leslyanne Drake is a Clearwater native and Florida Gator. She holds an M.A. in museum anthropology and worked in the archives of the Revs Institute for Automotive Research in Naples before becoming the History Center's curator of collections.



RICK KILBY

Author/graphic designer Rick Kilby has designed *Reflections* since its inception. His first book, *Finding the Fountain of Youth: Ponce de León and Florida's Magical Waters*, earned a medal at the Florida Book Awards in 2014. A new book is slated for publication in 2020.



CINDY SULLIVAN

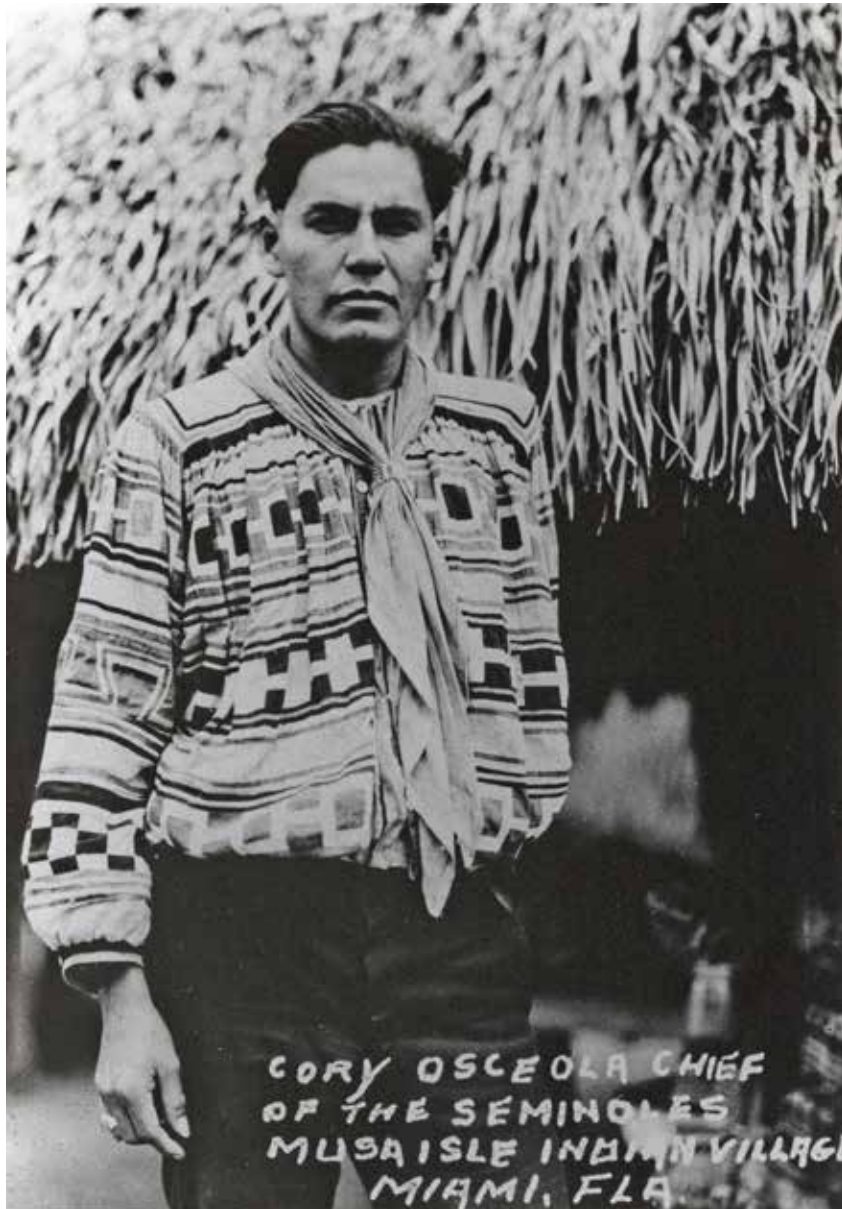
Cindy Sullivan lives in Enterprise with her husband, Ed, and three dogs. Since her kids have grown up and moved out, she has dedicated her time to preserving the history and beauty of Enterprise, which is showcased in the community's museum.



THROUGH THE CAMERA LENS

From the photo archives of the Historical Society of Central Florida

If you have photos you would like to donate to our collection, please contact our collections manager and photo archivist, Whitney Broadway, at 407-836-8587 or Whitney.Broadway@ocfl.net.



Cory Osceola, pictured above, is also standing at the far right in these two postcards for the Musa Isle Indian Village.



Cory Osceola

This photo of Cory Osceola comes from a postcard sold at the Musa Isle Indian Village in Miami around 1929. Musa Isle was the first Seminole tourist camp, founded in 1907. At this time, the Seminole people were struggling to make ends meet in a natural environment that was constantly changing due to industrial expansion. These camps became a way for many Seminoles to earn revenue from tourists eager to see how they lived.

Born in 1893, Cory Osceola was a great-grandson of the Seminole War hero Osceola, who died in 1838. In 1922, Cory's left arm was amputated at the shoulder after a train accident in Fort Lauderdale. He later became the head of the Musa Isle camp before starting his own tourist camp and souvenir shop, called Osceola's Indian Village, along the Tamiami Trail. He was considered the first American Indian to purchase land in Collier County. As if his life wasn't already legendary, he and his family also appeared in several films, including "Winds Across the Everglades" in 1958.

Although the term "chief" isn't often used in Seminole culture, Cory Osceola was an important leader and used the title when identifying himself in the white world. He frequently met and corresponded with presidents and governors concerning land negotiations and other legal battles, and newspaper reports from the time chronicle his long history of activism on behalf of the tribe. In 1931, he halted President Herbert Hoover's attempt to appoint a Seminole from Oklahoma as chief of the Florida Seminoles for a day in an effort to sign away tribal land.

Cory Osceola spent his life bridging the gap between the Seminole people and their white neighbors. Though his activism took place outside Central Florida, his life gives us a fuller understanding of the continuing Seminole story and helps us put our own area's past into a broader context. Following his death in 1978, his son began an annual event in his father's honor, American Indian Days, in Naples to increase awareness about American Indians. This powerful photo from our collection is one of the many marks left behind by this important figure in Florida history. ■

LITTLE SURE SHOT'S SNOWBIRD DAYS: ANNIE OAKLEY IN CENTRAL FLORIDA

BY RICK KILBY

Annie Oakley shot her way out of poverty, overcoming childhood hardships and ultimately earning the respect of royalty, an adoring public, and a great Lakota leader. She was one of America's earliest superstars, bursting through the gilded glass ceiling of the Victorian era – the main

breadwinner during times when it was difficult for women to earn money.

Her appearances in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show in the 1880s and '90s made her as well known as any famous actress and "probably the most celebrated female performer in the world," according to writer Larry McMurtry.

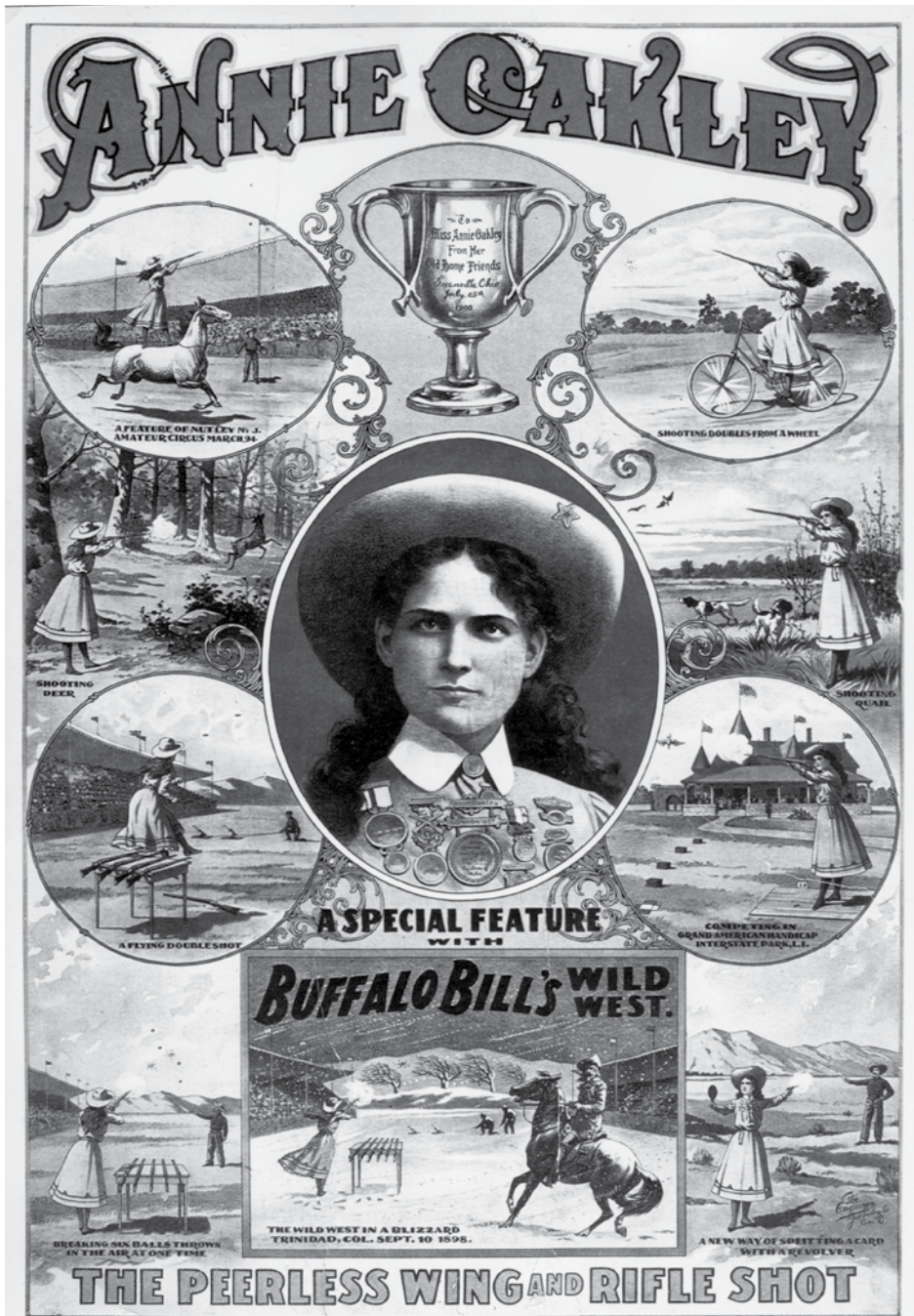
Her legacy continued in 20th-century popular culture with the Irving Berlin musical *Annie Get Your Gun*, featuring stars from Ethel Merman to Reba McEntire in the leading role.

Later in life, Oakley would also become a snowbird in Florida, spending winters in Lake County with her husband, Frank Butler, for at least a dozen years. Her longevity as a guest at Leesburg's Lake View Hotel is now immortalized by a life-sized statue behind the town's library, not far from where she once spent the winter season. Featured prominently in the sculpture is her beloved companion, Dave the Wonder Dog. She might have spent the rest of her days in the Sunshine State had it not been for dual disasters near the Dixie Highway.

OVERCOMING THE ODDS

The woman the world would know as Annie Oakley was born Phoebe Ann Moses (she also used Mosey) in rural Ohio in 1860. She had a traumatic childhood – her father died of pneumonia after getting caught in a blizzard before she was 6 years old. At a young age, she trapped and hunted to help put food on the table for her impoverished family, but it was not enough – she was sent to the Darke County poorhouse. At age 15 she returned to her family and began to hunt small game to sell to the local grocer. Ultimately, she earned enough with her rifle to help her struggling family pay the mortgage.

The grocer who bought game from Oakley encouraged her to enter a shooting competition, and although accounts differ about the exact year and location, they agree that she hit 25 out of 25 targets, defeating her opponent by a single shot. The traveling marksman she bested was an Irishman named Frank Butler, who was much impressed by the young sharpshooter. Butler often included his dog George in shooting performances, and he had George bring Oakley an apple that Butler had shot from the dog's head,



COURTESY RICK KILBY

Oakley had a prominent role in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, but she left for a brief time after a younger markswoman named Lillian Smith started touring with the troupe. Oakley rejoined Buffalo Bill and became a celebrity in Europe, where Queen Victoria called her a "very clever girl."

William Tell-style. Presumably with George's approval, a courtship between Oakley and Butler ensued.

The couple were married either in 1876 or 1882 – exact dates are unclear, for several reasons. Later in her career, Oakley altered her birthdate to appear younger after a teenage sharpshooter began to steal attention away from her.

It's also possible that when Oakley and Butler began traveling and performing together, Butler may not have been divorced from his first wife. It is a matter of record, however, that Oakley's first performance as part of Butler's act was on May 1, 1882, and that afterward she adopted the stage name "Annie Oakley."

Initially, Butler, Oakley, and Butler's dog George performed on the vaudeville circuit, but in 1884 they signed on with Sells Brothers Circus and toured much of the country. It was during that same year that the famed Lakota leader Sitting Bull bestowed on Oakley the nickname "Little Sure Shot," because of her shooting prowess

The *Gainesville Daily Sun* announced that Annie Oakley, her husband, Frank Butler, and trap shooter George W. Maxwell would present a free exhibition on Feb. 12, 1909.



Oakley and Butler lived at Leesburg's Lake View Hotel during their Florida stays. Ads claimed the hotel offered special attention to motorists, fishermen, and hunters.

and her small stature. The sharpshooter stood just five feet tall and weighed 100 pounds.

The following year Oakley's career skyrocketed when she joined Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show – her popularity was second only to that of Buffalo Bill Cody himself. She stayed with the show for 16 years and traveled across the globe, entertaining royalty including Queen Victoria and Kaiser Wilhelm. When she left Cody's show in 1901 after a train wreck in North Carolina injured her back, she was a superstar, known worldwide.

LIBEL AND LEESBURG

Oakley and Butler continued to tour and perform after breaking away from Buffalo Bill. Butler had a contract with the Union Metallic Cartridge Company (Remington after 1912) that provided income for the couple.

Like superstars of today, Oakley carefully crafted her public persona and fiercely defended her reputation. In 1903, newspapers owned by William Randolph Hearst falsely claimed Oakley had attempted to steal trousers off a man in order to sell them for money to satisfy a fictitious cocaine addiction. The fastidious Oakley doggedly spent six years pursuing libel lawsuits against many of the newspapers that printed the fabricated article.

The first published account about Oakley in Florida concerns a 1906 trial against the Jacksonville *Metropolis* newspaper in which she was awarded \$2,000 of the \$10,000 she requested.

She was evidently a force in the courtroom, winning 54 out of 55 lawsuits. Despite her legal successes in defending her good name, however, these courtroom battles were a net loss financially.

In 1908 and 1909, Oakley and Butler appeared in shooting demonstrations for Remington in Gainesville, Ocala, Palatka, Jacksonville, and St. Petersburg. According to a *Gainesville Daily Sun* newspaper report, the duo began their act by shooting a potato off a stick, one piece at a time, then drilled the ace of hearts with a bullet, and shot through a variety of targets from pennies to marbles in a two-hour demonstration that never had a "dull moment."

It was around this period that Oakley was invited to Leesburg by a wealthy sportsman from Boston named Nicholas Boyleston. A booklet on Florida tourism raved that Lake County had "excellent tourist accommodations" that would thrill the "sport loving visitor" with opportunities for hunting and fishing.

Oakley biographer Glenda Riley writes that Frank Butler loved Leesburg, and that the Lake View Hotel, where the couple made their winter home, was known for catering to sportsmen. Both Oakley and Butler were avid quail hunters, and they found plenty of company for their hunting trips, including Philadelphian John Jacob Stoer, whom Oakley reportedly called the "best quail shot" she had ever known.

In addition to quail hunting around



THE HOSPITAL AND SANITARIUM

THE OBJECTS OF THE HOSPITAL AND SANITARIUM.

Places IN FLORIDA for the sick are few, perhaps this is because Florida is healthful and has one of the lowest death rates of any state in the union. People do become ill, however, in Florida, as with the rest of the world, and during the winter months many people who are not strong come from other states. In consequence we have provided A PLACE FOR THE SICK.

Physicians may bring their cases here entirely under their own care or put them under ours. The wishes of the home physician are religiously observed.

The Hospital and Sanitarium is run on broad lines and is open to all patients not suffering from objectionable or contagious diseases.

Our objects are to give treatment that may be required, and to follow up that treatment; to give surgical aid when necessary and proper care thereafter; to give laboratory examinations when indicated and to instruct patients regarding their diet and lives after leaving the institution. WE HAVE NO FADS.

“A Place in Florida for the Sick” reads the headline on the front of a 1909 brochure for Dr. Bohannon’s Hospital and Sanitarium in Daytona Beach. Published rates to stay at the institution ranged from \$25 to \$30 a week. Dr. Clyde C. Bohannon was listed as the chief surgeon and owner.

Lake County, Oakley was also said to have shot and skinned a 7-foot-long rattlesnake, stalked black bears in the Ocala National Forest, and performed shooting exhibitions for tourists. For more than a decade, the Butlers enjoyed wintering in Lake County, but two tragic events would darken their perception of the Sunshine State.

TRouble ON THE DIXIE HIGHWAY

On Nov. 9, 1922, the Butlers and their fellow snowbirds, the quail hunter Stoer and his wife, Margareta, were speeding toward Leesburg in a chauffeur-driven convertible on the Dixie Highway about 50 miles from Daytona Beach. There are multiple accounts of what happened next, but the results were conclusive – the car “turned turtle,” as one eyewitness recalled, rolling over and pinning tiny Annie Oakley underneath.

Once extricated, the world’s most famous sharpshooter was rushed to Dr. Bohannon’s Hospital and Sanitarium, a facility that catered to the health-care needs of tourists. Chief surgeon Clyde C. Bohannon found that Oakley, now 62 years old, had broken her hip and her ankle, and after surgery she endured a long period of rehabilitation.

Butler booked a room across from the hospital, and Oakley’s half-sister came down to help during her convalescence, which kept her under Dr. Bohannon’s care for six weeks.

When she was finally able to return to Leesburg, Oakley expressed her gratitude to the well-wishers who had sent her more than 2,000 letters and telegrams. In a note published

in *American Field* magazine, she expressed her appreciation for all her friends had done for her and said she expected to recover fully in time.

Privately, however, doctors expressed doubt that she would ever shoot again. The woman who had once effortlessly picked off targets while standing on the back of a horse now had her mobility constrained by a leg brace that she wore the rest of her life.

THE DEATH OF THE WONDER DOG

Oakley and Butler never had children, but they were devoted to their dogs, including their much-celebrated black-and-white English setter, Dave. Like

Butler’s poodle George, Dave was part of their act – a widely reproduced photo shows the dog sitting obediently while Oakley aims at an apple resting on his head during a segment of their routine, just as Butler had done years earlier with George.

During World War I, Dave the Wonder Dog earned another moniker – the “Red Cross Dog.” During performances with Oakley, Dave successfully “sniffed out” cash donations that were hidden in handkerchiefs in the audience. Dave raised more than \$1,600 for the cause, and his fame grew so much that he was “scarcely less known than his mistress,”



Frank Butler, Annie Oakley, and a hunting dog named Bob survey the spoils of a hunting excursion in Leesburg in 1912. One of the legends surrounding Oakley is that her hair turned white after she survived a train accident in 1901. She was known to have worn wigs afterward.

according to one report.

Three and a half months after the auto accident, Oakley was still recuperating in Leesburg when tragedy struck again. A passing car hit Dave on Main Street in front of the Lake View, and he died on Feb. 25, 1923.

The grieving couple felt the pain of Dave's death as "parents would feel the loss of a child," one newspaper noted. To pay homage to their canine

Ground," Butler concluded.

The Butlers wished to bury their cherished pet in the city's Lone Oak Cemetery, but were rebuked by officials who said only people could be interned there. There is some debate as to where Dave's final resting place was, but most accounts suggest it was on property owned by George and Annie Winter, friends of the Butlers.

Leesburg lore maintains that



GARST MUSEUM & THE NATIONAL ANNIE OAKLEY CENTER

A white-haired Oakley (at left) in Leesburg.



GARST MUSEUM & THE NATIONAL ANNIE OAKLEY CENTER

A page from a scrapbook at the National Annie Oakley Center at the Garst Museum in Greenville, Ohio, shows Oakley at her dog Dave's grave (top).

companion, Butler penned a short booklet titled "The Life of Dave as Told by Himself."

"Dave was more than some humans," Butler wrote on the back page of the booklet. "He sat for weeks watching faithfully by the bedside of his mistress and would snuggle close, tapping gently with his little paw, his big eyes burning with love." Dave "awaits us both in the Happy Hunting

Oakley was so irritated at the city for the slight that she left, never to return. Other accounts claim just the opposite – that over the next few years, the Butlers rarely left Leesburg.

A letter from Butler to Oakley's niece in 1925, however, shows that he was beginning to sour on the Lake View Hotel and Leesburg, writing "the fishing is not good here and the hotel is rotten."

OAKLEY'S FINAL HURRAH

Annie Oakley had overcome adversity her whole life, so it only seems natural that she would defy the doctor's expectations about being able to perform again. A month after Dave's demise, she and Frank appeared before a Philadelphia Phillies spring training game at Leesburg's Cooke Field, where the Phillies trained from 1922 to 1924.

With players and fans watching from the wooden bleachers, Oakley balanced on one leg and shot at pennies tossed into the air, hitting a dozen without a miss. After she blasted five eggs that Butler tossed into the air while she shot left-handed, the Phillies "broke into applause," claims Oakley biographer Riley. For a time, Little Sure Shot was back.

At the end of 1924, Oakley and Butler returned to Ohio, eventually ending up in Darke County, where she had spent her childhood. Oakley got her affairs in order before succumbing to pernicious anemia on Nov. 23, 1926. Her partner of fifty years, Frank Butler, followed her to the "Happy Hunting Grounds" just three weeks later.

In a thoughtful article, Tallahassee scholar Claude R. Flory noted that although Oakley's name conjures up notions of the Wild West, she was really an Ohio girl whose reputation was made through performances as far away as England and France. Like so many Midwesterners, though, she long wintered in Florida, and despite her fascinating, globe-trotting personal history, two of the most "pivotal events of her life" happened in the Sunshine State. She was a part of our history, as Florida was of her's. ■



The steamer "Nemo" arrives at a landing on the Tomoka River in a Detroit Publishing Co. image attributed to William Henry Jackson.

ANNIE BY ACCIDENT?

William Henry Jackson, whom historian Michael L. Carlbach has called the country's "most famous frontier photographer," worked in Florida from 1887 until 1897 and was one of a number of well-known 19th-century photographers who created images of the state for stereographs and postcards.

In 1898 Jackson sold his library of images to the Detroit Publishing Company, and many of them were colorized and used for picture postcards. The images from the Detroit Publishing Company are now in the collection of the Library of Congress, including almost 950 from Florida. One of those photographs, titled "Landing on the Tomoka," shows a steam launch near the bank of the Tomoka River in Volusia County with passengers including a rifle-bearing woman who resembles Annie Oakley.

Was this really "Little Sure Shot," captured in a promotional photo by one of Florida's earliest commercial photographers? At least three books on Volusia County history have reproduced the image with a caption identifying the shooter as Annie Oakley. Many of the boat tours of the Tomoka River originated at Henry Flagler's Hotel Ormond, and an online source lists Oakley as a former guest of the hotel.

It is also known that Jackson worked for Flagler, taking photographs of his hotel properties on Florida's east coast. The data with the image on the Library of Congress website, however, says the photo was created between 1880 and 1897. If Carlbach's date of 1887 for Jackson's first Florida photograph is correct, that means it was actually taken between 1887 and 1897. But Annie Oakley toured with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show from 1885 to 1901 (with an interim when she briefly left and joined one of Buffalo Bill's competitors).

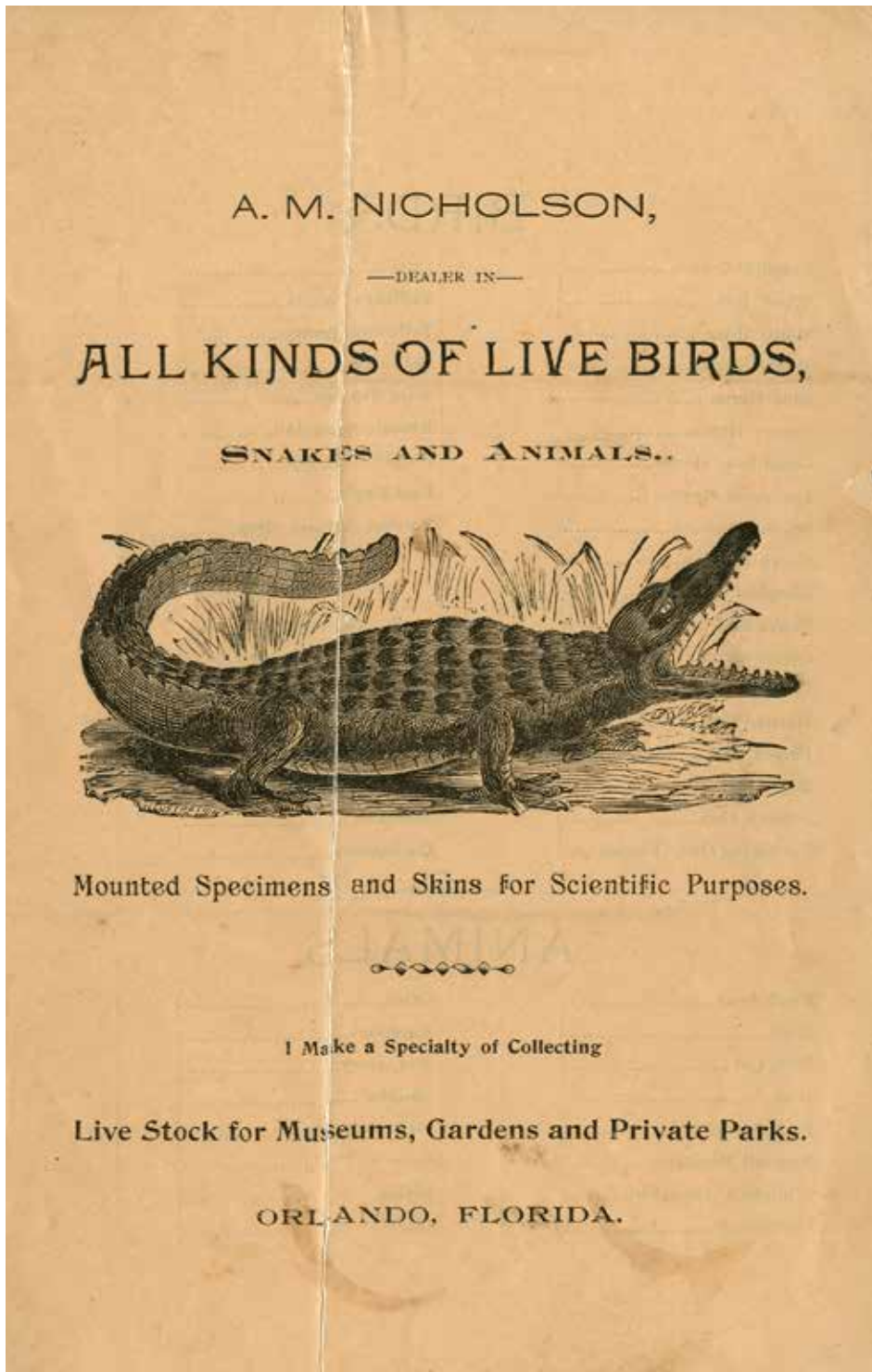
Buffalo Bill would not tour Florida until a decade after Oakley left his show, so it is highly unlikely that she could have visited Florida between 1887 and 1897.

Upon reviewing the photograph, historians at the Annie Oakley Center Foundation at the Garst Museum in Ohio concluded that, based on appearance alone, the woman in Jackson's photo could not be Oakley. Thus, if they are correct, it seems Jackson did not record a moment in Oakley's life. Nevertheless, he remains an important "accidental historian" who left us a remarkable vignette of Florida tourism in the Gilded Age. ■

GATORS AND WILDCATS AND SNAKES, OH MY!

Orlando's first taxidermist, the adventurous A.M. Nicholson,
was no stranger to live creatures.

by Lesleyanne Drake, Curator of Collections



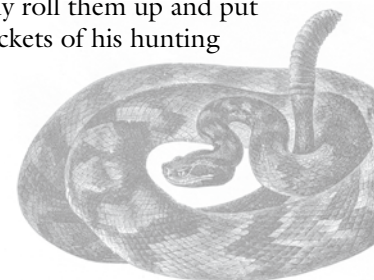
Augustus Milton Nicholson was in his 20s when he arrived in Orlando around 1885. At the time, the city already had doctors, blacksmiths, teachers, hoteliers, and even an undertaker. But there was one profession Orlando was still missing: a taxidermist.

According to Eve Bacon's *Orlando: A Centennial History*, Nicholson was the first taxidermist in Orlando. His shop, located somewhere along West Church Street between Orange and Garland avenues, had a large pen in back containing live snakes and other reptiles that Nicholson caught in the Florida wilds.

FROM SNAKES TO PELICANS

Sometimes Nicholson would sell the creatures he caught, such as when he reportedly received an order for 100 live snakes for a traveling show. Other times he would milk the snake venom and sell it for laboratory research. He was only ever bitten once, Bacon writes – by a rattlesnake on the finger. Though his arm swelled to the elbow, he recovered after a few days with no long-term effects.

Nicholson developed his own techniques for capturing snakes, as described in E. H. Gore's *History of Orlando*. If they were not poisonous, he would simply roll them up and put them in the pockets of his hunting jacket.



Left: Nicholson's brochure in the History Center's archives advertises all manner of animals for sale, from black bears to monkeys.



Augustus Nicholson, wearing no gloves or protective gear, extracts rattlesnake venom with a spoon.

For rattlesnakes, he applied a little more caution. Using a noose at the end of a 5-foot pole, he would place the animal in a sack with a double layer of cloth, thick enough that its fangs couldn't pierce the fabric. However, if Nicholson was in a pinch, Gore states, he would distract the rattler by dangling a handkerchief with one hand while grabbing the back of its neck with the other.

Snakes weren't Nicholson's only specialty. In a brochure in the History Center's archives, he advertises a wide variety of animals for sale – both “mounted specimens and skins for scientific purposes” and “live stock for museums, gardens, and private parks.” In addition to 14 different species of snakes, the brochure lists various mammals, large and small, commonplace and exotic. Alligators have their own feature section, priced

by length. A one-foot baby alligator cost 50 cents, while a 12-foot alligator was \$50. It is unknown whether this price referred to live animals or mounted specimens.

Birds adorn another page in Nicholson's pamphlet, listing 38 species available for sale. During the late 19th century, exotic birds were in high demand, especially the long, curved, white plumes of egrets and herons, which were all the rage in ladies' hats. The fashion fad resulted in more than five million birds being killed annually for their feathers, until a conservation movement, led chiefly by the Audubon Society, successfully advocated for changes in state and federal laws that would protect the endangered birds.

Though these laws cut into Nicholson's business, it did not necessarily put an end to his trade in

birds. In 1914, Nicholson returned from Tampa Bay with 19 large pelicans in coops. This was such an unusual sight for passengers on the Atlantic Coast Line railroad that the story found its way into Orlando's *Morning Sentinel*. Some of the birds Nicholson would keep, and others would go to a zoo, he told the newspaper.

TALES OF A TAXIDERMIST

In addition to making belts and souvenirs out of the reptile skins, Nicholson dealt with the snakes, fish, alligators, and other animals that locals and tourists alike brought him for mounting. From the 12-pound black bass caught by a St. Louis tourist to the 5-foot, 3-inch rattler that was too busy trying to swallow a “good-sized rabbit” to bite the laborer who stumbled upon it, what better way was there to remember surviving Florida

than to have Nicholson immortalize your creature encounter through taxidermy?

In one memorable incident in 1916, detailed in the *Sentinel*, a Mr. H. Tisell was bitten on the leg by a 6-foot alligator, which he then captured, put in a box (even though it “still had considerable life”), and drove 12 miles in a wagon to Nicholson’s shop, arriving at 7 p.m. He told Nicholson he had bathed the bite with turpentine, and the taxidermist advised him to see a doctor as soon as possible.

In another instance, Nicholson was called upon to ship an alligator that had, for some reason, been housed in a coop on the shore of Lake Eola to its new home at the New York Aquarium. The gator had apparently been at Lake Eola for some time,

and the *Sentinel* reported that there were “no alligator tears shed over his departure.”

Nicholson himself was once bitten on the leg by an alligator. According to his son Delmar “Radio Nick” Nicholson, “he came through with minor tooth indentations due to the extreme courage and knowledge he possessed. Knowing that the alligator did not relish anything but live food, he remained perfectly still with the alligator’s teeth embedded in his leg. Shortly, the alligator slowly released his leg and crawled away.”

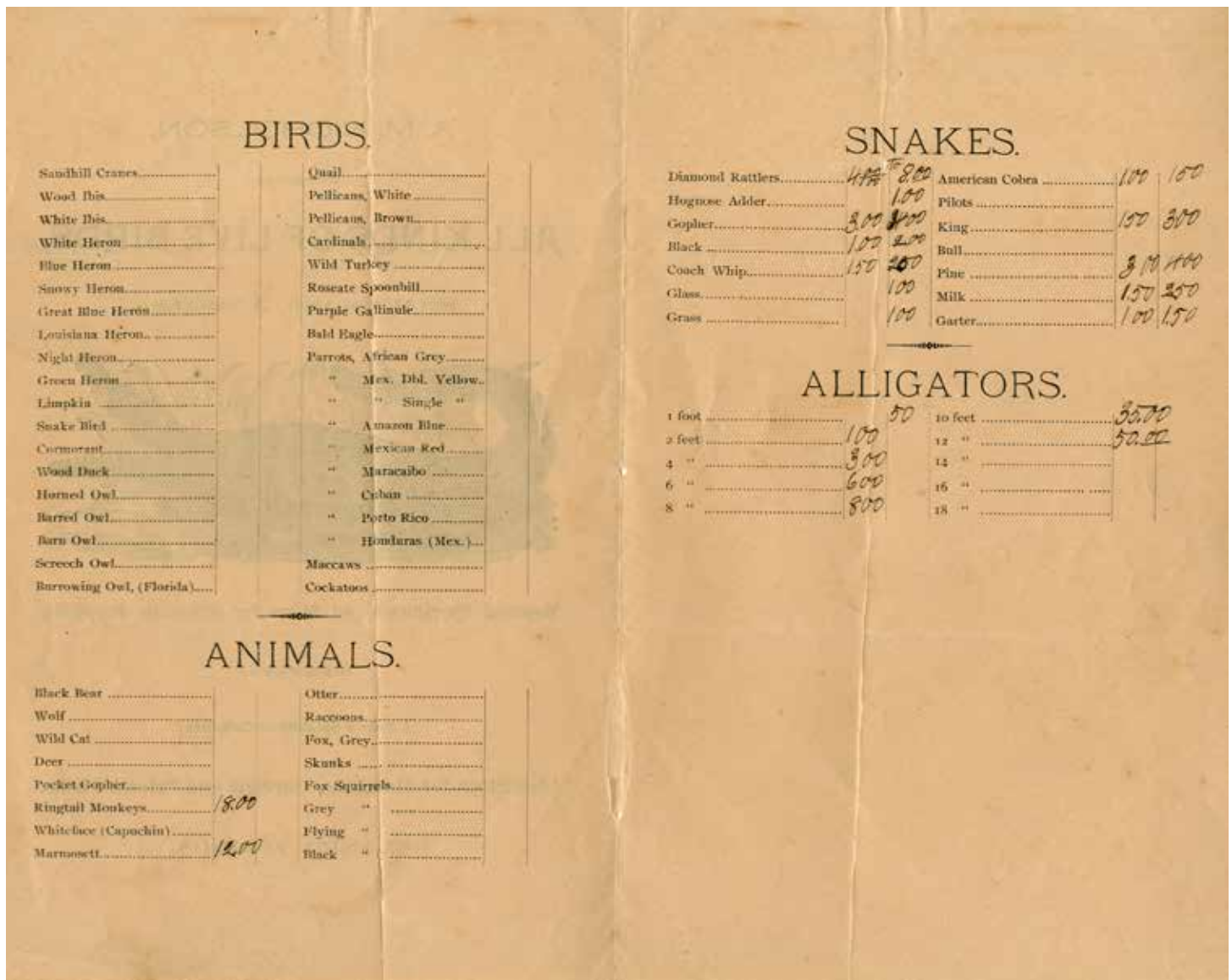
Delmar Nicholson also acknowledged that his father had been extremely lucky – an “overly hungry” alligator would never have turned loose a leg that was surely moving when it was grabbed.

A PASSION FOR NATURE

In addition to being the go-to person for wild animals and taxidermy, Nicholson also provided camping equipment, collected scientific specimens, and acted as a guide for visiting wildlife researchers. Most notably, in 1916 he collected material for Mary Cynthia Dickerson, the first curator of herpetology (the study of amphibians and reptiles) at the American Museum of Natural History, so that she could reproduce a Florida cypress swamp habitat for a museum display.

Deciding that she needed to see the environment and collect samples in person, Dickerson traveled to Florida with Nicholson as her swamp guide. He helped her collect plant and animal specimens to take back

Below: Nicholson’s brochure in the History Center’s archives lists many different birds, including parrots, as well as snakes, alligators, and more.





This image from a postcard in the History Center's archives shows Nicholson joyfully holding up alligator eggs after discovering 48 in one nest.

to New York, including turtles, rare geckos, and snakes. Nicholson, who was very impressed with Dickerson and disappointed to see her leave, recounted the expedition in an article for the *Sentinel*, lamenting, "I had no time to even show her about the city. She is a lady of only business, business, business."

Though wildlife was how Nicholson made his living, his writings reveal a passion for nature. When an editorial appeared in the *Orlando Evening Star* speculating that squirrels were to blame for driving the birds away and that something should be done, Nicholson wrote his own editorial defending the creatures:

"For nearly thirty years I have been a roamer of the field and forest. I think

I am a pretty close observer along nature's lines. Some years ago we did not have towering dense trees for these birds to sit in. Today there are numbers of little birds that flight about in these oaks and sit in their tops and sing and the breeze will carry their notes forever, away from our ears.

And unless one takes the time to stop and look closely for them they would never be seen or heard. . . . Don't blame the poor cunning little squirrel."

Instead, Nicholson asked readers to consider the idea that human interference is the reason for fewer birds. He suggested that it might help to ban the sale of air guns, which in his view, are useless for legitimate hunters and have no other purpose than to allow young boys to torment birds and other animals for fun. He concluded, "It is as much pleasure to me to see the squirrels and watch their pranks as it is to hear the birds sing, and I hope there will be no action taken to do away with them."

Nicholson and his wife, Alice, were the parents of five children, two

girls and three boys, who grew up surrounded by animals. He passed his love of nature on to his son Delmar, whose effort to create a zoo in Orlando and educate the community about nature and endangered animals is its own story. Be on the lookout for Delmar's adventures in a future issue of *Reflections*.

While Nicholson kept his animals at his shop on West Church Street, according to Gore, he was "notified to remove them from the business section of the city" after a large alligator knocked down a part of the fence and escaped, along with Nicholson's collection of snakes.

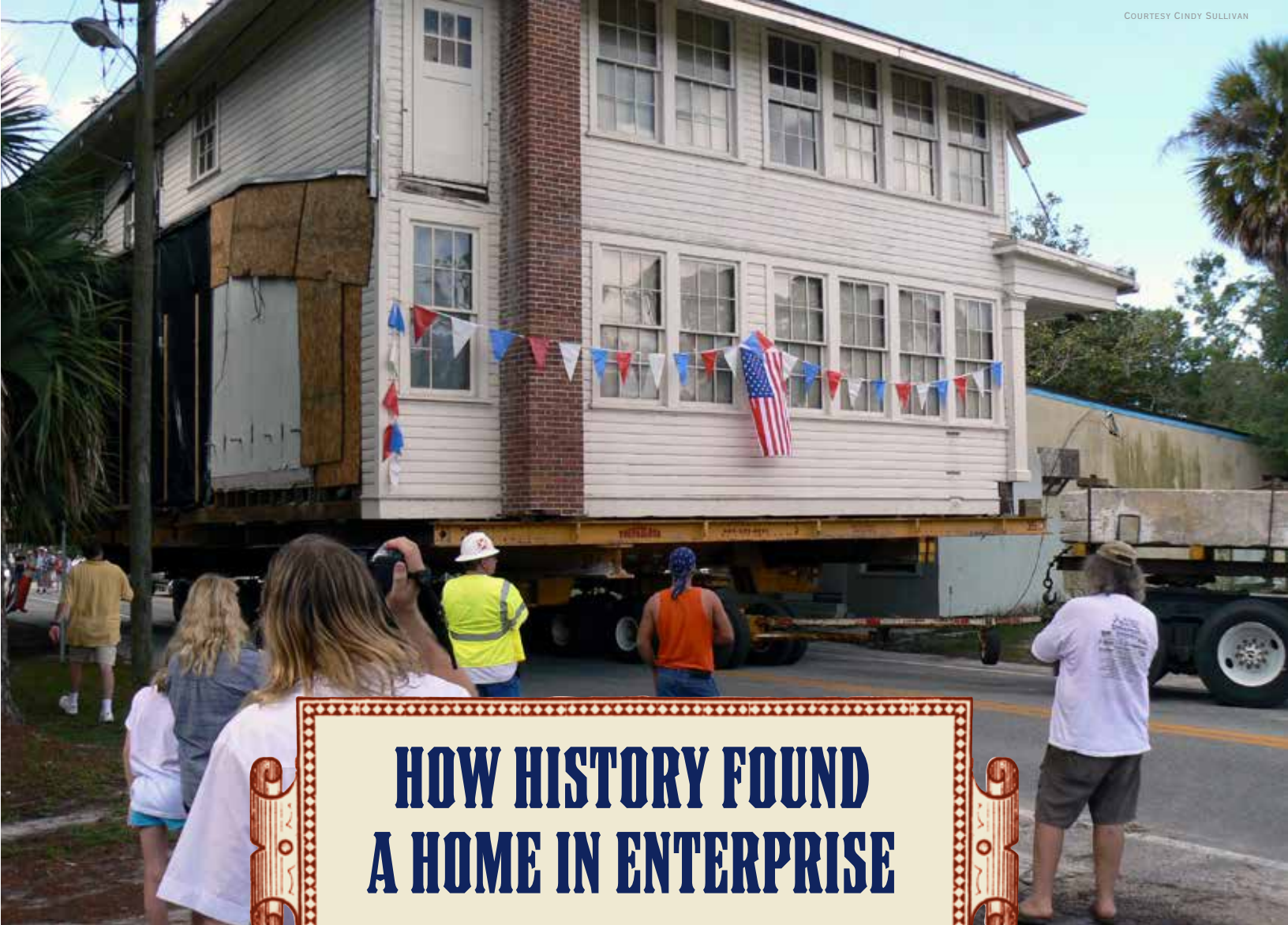
After that, Nicholson moved his business to present-day South Division Avenue, which was, Gore notes, considered "the country" at that time. Though there were several more animal escapes over the years, including a wildcat that found its way into a neighbor's henhouse, Nicholson lived and worked on Division Street until his death in 1926 at the age of 66.

Nicholson's story reflects both the exploitation as well as the wonder, appreciation, and discovery of Florida's natural environment.

Now, a century later, we still struggle to preserve Florida's ecosystems. Looking back at Central Florida during Nicholson's time reminds us of how far we've come, how far we still have to go, and how important it is to stop and listen to the birds. ■



The caption printed on this postcard, which shows Nicholson catching rattlesnakes, reads, "Snake en' em right in."



HOW HISTORY FOUND A HOME IN ENTERPRISE

BY CINDY SULLIVAN

Above: The Enterprise schoolhouse moves down the street in 2007.

Below: Cornelius Taylor, one of the area's first settlers of European descent.

The small Volusia County village of Enterprise on the north shore of the St. Johns River has a big history. As the county seat for three different Florida counties, Enterprise became an important destination for steamboats in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Now an unincorporated community, it is preserving its past through the Enterprise Museum, a building with an impressive history of its own.

FROM SEMINOLE WAR FORT TO STEAMBOAT STOP

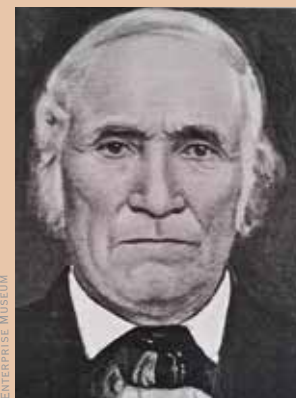
In 1819, the United States acquired Florida from Spain as the result of the Adams-Onís Treaty. In 1835, during the Second Seminole War, the U.S. Army established two forts on Lake Valdez, now called Lake Monroe. The

first, Camp Mellon, later renamed Fort Mellon, was on the south shore and became Mellonville (and later Sanford). Enterprise traces its roots to the second fort on the lake, Fort Kingsbury, which was on the north shore – although the exact location remains a mystery.

Historians think the short-lived Fort Kingsbury was somewhere on the 160 acres that Cornelius Taylor claimed under the Armed Occupation Act of 1842. Taylor served in the Second Seminole War with Gen. Zachary Taylor, who by some accounts was his cousin. He became a timber agent, built the first hotel in the area, and led a group of settlers who established the foundation for the future town.

In 1843, the county seat of Mosquito County was moved to

Enterprise from New Smyrna. Created in 1824, Mosquito County encompassed land that is included in eleven counties today. When Mosquito County was divided into St. Lucia County in the south and Orange County in the north, Enterprise became the seat of Orange County.



ENTERPRISE MUSEUM

In 1854, Orange County was divided again, and Enterprise became the seat of Volusia County, remaining so until 1887 when

the county seat was moved to DeLand.

In the 19th century, Enterprise flourished as a tourist destination and exporter of lumber, citrus, and turpentine. Ideally situated at the terminus of steamboat lines from Jacksonville, Enterprise featured the enormous Brock House Hotel, built by the steamboat captain Jacob Brock. The luxury hotel catered to tourists who came to hunt, fish, and bathe in nearby springs and hosted such famous visitors as Ulysses S. Grant and future Volusia pioneers Frederick DeBary and Henry DeLand. Later the hotel was renamed the Benson Springs Inn, and then the Epworth Inn, before it was demolished in 1937 to make way for expansion of the United Methodist Children's Home.

A PLACE FOR LEARNING ABOUT THE PAST

The courthouse in Enterprise was sold for use as a school in 1891 and housed the Florida Normal School until 1917, when it was demolished and replaced with an American Foursquare building. A second building in the American Foursquare style – the present-day museum – was added about 1936 to house the school's older grades. In 1964, lightning struck the older school building, which burned down, but the 1936 structure remained.

In 2003, rather than tear down the school, the Volusia County School Board agreed to donate it to the Enterprise Preservation Society, a nonprofit organization formed in 2000 that planned to move the building.

The move was designed to make room at Enterprise Elementary School for new construction, which was delayed by the hurricanes in 2004, and it was not until June 2007 that the old school building was ready to move.

By that time, the Enterprise Preservation Society had obtained a Volusia County ECHO grant for \$80,000, using the property where the building was to reside as matching funds. Sandra and Roy Walters of nearby Stone Island donated the land at 360 Main Street for the project. ECHO grants support environmental/ecological, cultural, historical/heritage, or outdoor recreational public-use projects.

In order to relocate the school building and move it an



NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY



BROCK HOUSE, ENTERPRISE.

SCENE NEAR ENTERPRISE.

Top: Steamboat captain and Brock House owner Jacob Brock. Above: Stereograph showing a spring in Enterprise. Right: Enterprise images from a Florida pictorial guidebook.

RICK KILBY

eighth of a mile up Main Street to the new site, Youngblood Building Movers had to remove the back section of the building, which included all the plumbing and bathrooms.

The move was essential but was only the beginning of efforts to transform the school into a museum. Members of the community worked for years to restore the building to its original look. Thousands of volunteer hours were logged. The interior includes original windows, globe light fixtures, and floors and wood molding that were stripped and revarnished throughout the first floor. The walls

were covered with the original paint color, painstakingly recreated. Updates included cork and chalk boards and a bathroom that meets the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Today the building is the home of the Enterprise Museum and the permanent history of the community, as well as exhibits, talks, presentations, and more for all residents of Central Florida to enjoy. We hope you'll visit the museum and learn more about our community's great history. You'll find more information at oldenterprise.org. ■



RICK KILBY

PETE PETERMAN

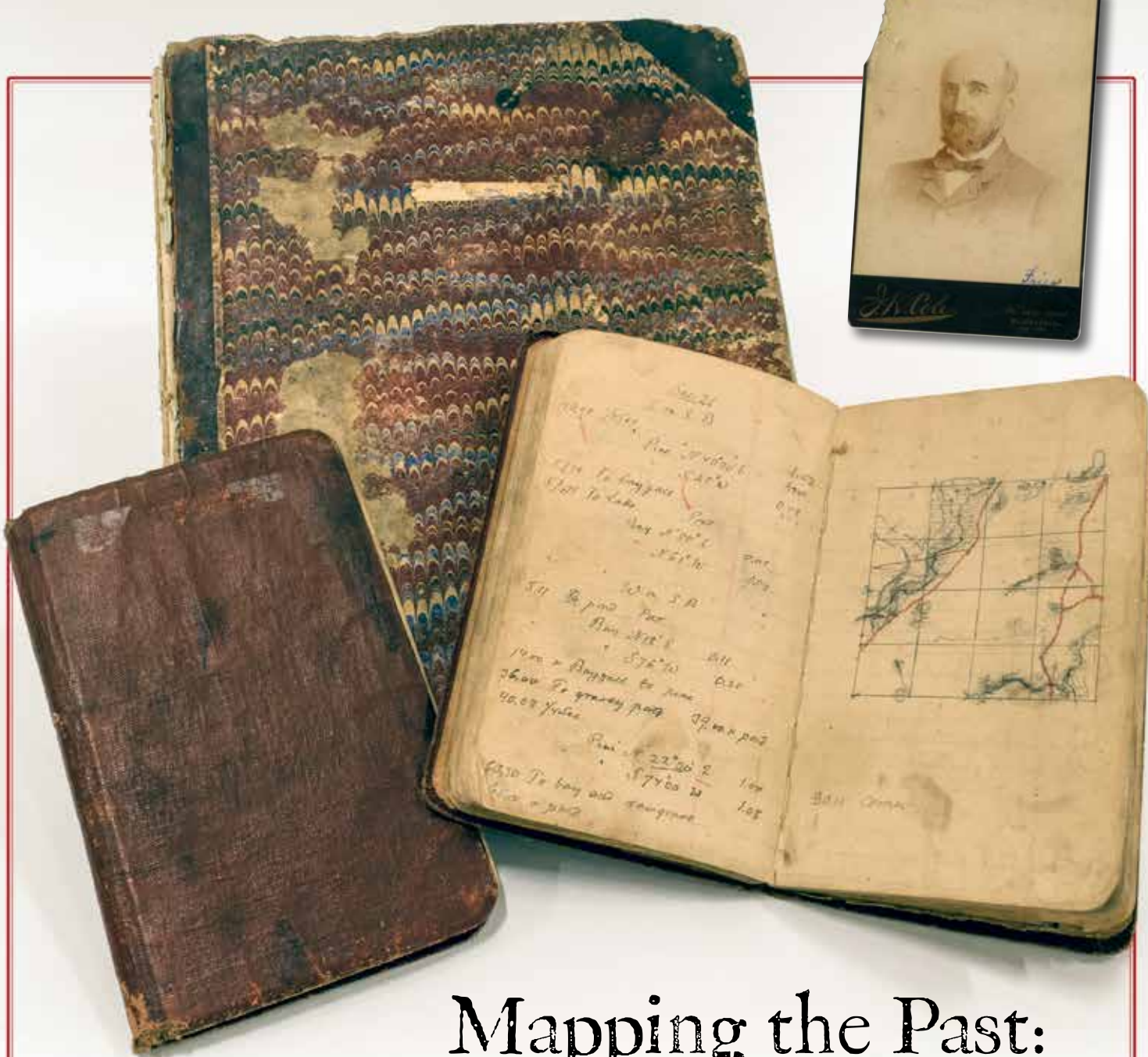


RICK KILBY



COURTESY CINDY SULLIVAN

Top: Historical reenactors Mark Matzinger and Carol Aymar at the opening of the Enterprise Museum. Center left: The Enterprise Elementary School that was struck by lightning and burned down in the 1960s was identical to the one that became the museum. The girl in the photo is Norma Adamczyk. Above: Vintage desks sit on the refurbished hardwood floors in the museum. Left: The 1936 schoolhouse reopened as the Enterprise Museum in 2014. The museum is open Tuesday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.



Mapping the Past:

Land Surveying as a View
into a Bygone Environment

*J.O. Fries left a fascinating record
about the land, flora, and fauna of a
swath of Florida at a significant time
in the state's development.*

by Daniel Bradfield, Oral Historian



At the turn of the 20th century, a man stood in a glade near Clear Lake. Surrounded by surveying equipment, he marked measurements and notes in a small leather-bound book. He walked the land of Orange County methodically, recording by hand the exact distances between the topographic features of the area.

The man was John Otto Fries, known more familiarly as J.O. He was born in Uppsala, Sweden, in 1838, and he moved to Orlando on Christmas Day 1871 and worked for decades as a surveyor for the federal government and for Brevard, Orange, and Manatee counties. Fries platted and surveyed a number of Central Florida landmarks, including Orlando's Greenwood Cemetery.

During his work on the 1900 census, Fries was the first to include the Seminoles in the population schedule. Unfortunately for researchers, though the census exists, Fries' own documentation does not seem to have been preserved, except for some letters to Judge John Cheney in Orlando that include personal thoughts related to his integral contributions to the census.

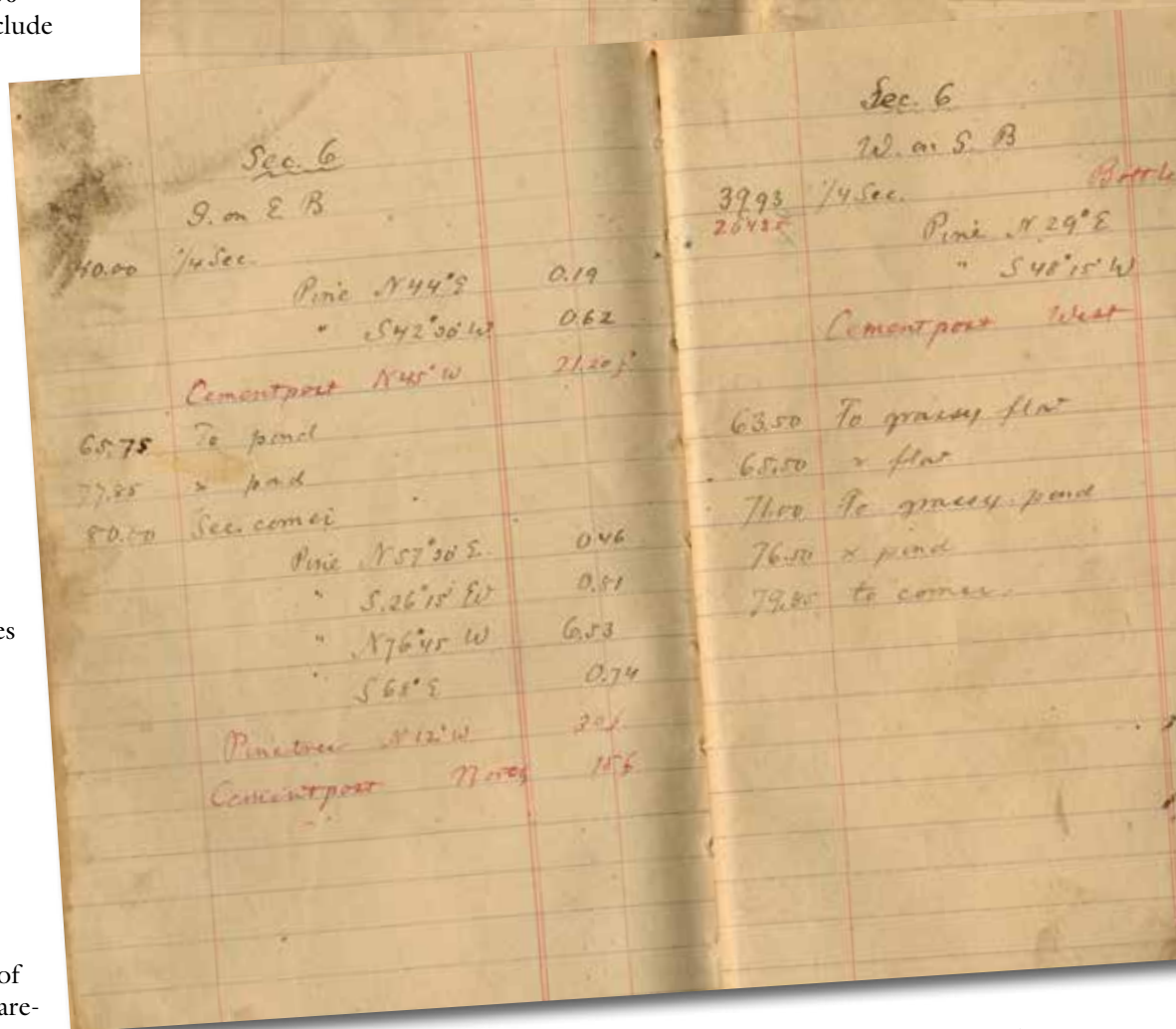
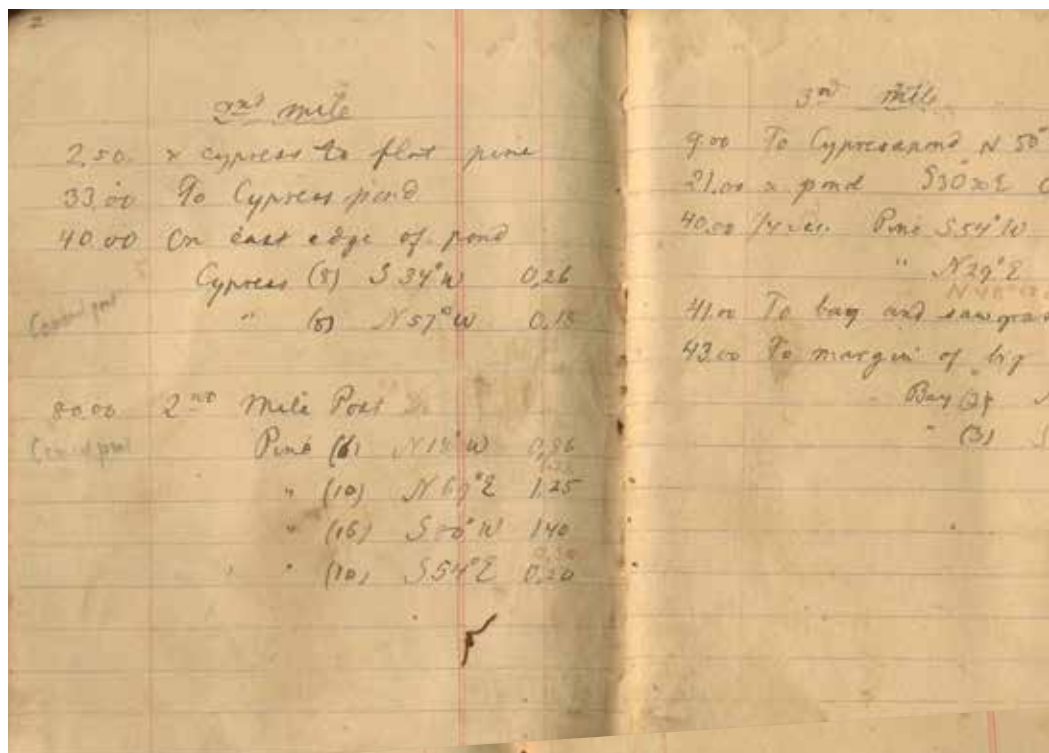
This must have been tedious and exhaustive work. Fries didn't just describe and record distances – he detailed the general fauna of an area he surveyed, including pine trees, cypress trees, and the flat grasses of the marshland.

DIVIDING THE STATE

The work of a land surveyor during Fries' time was to break large areas into smaller, measurable segments, with the goal of turning our nation into lots for development, sale, and settlement.

Surveyors divided the state of Florida into hundreds of 6-square-mile townships (the pages at top right show a general overview of one mile in a township.)

Those townships were further broken down into 36 sections of a



single square mile each (see bottom pair of pages, above). These mile-by-mile squares were split into lots for residential or commercial use.

One measurement at a time, this methodical process morphed a wild backcountry into the well-marked and mapped neighborhoods, counties, state, and nation we live in today.

ESSENTIAL RESOURCES

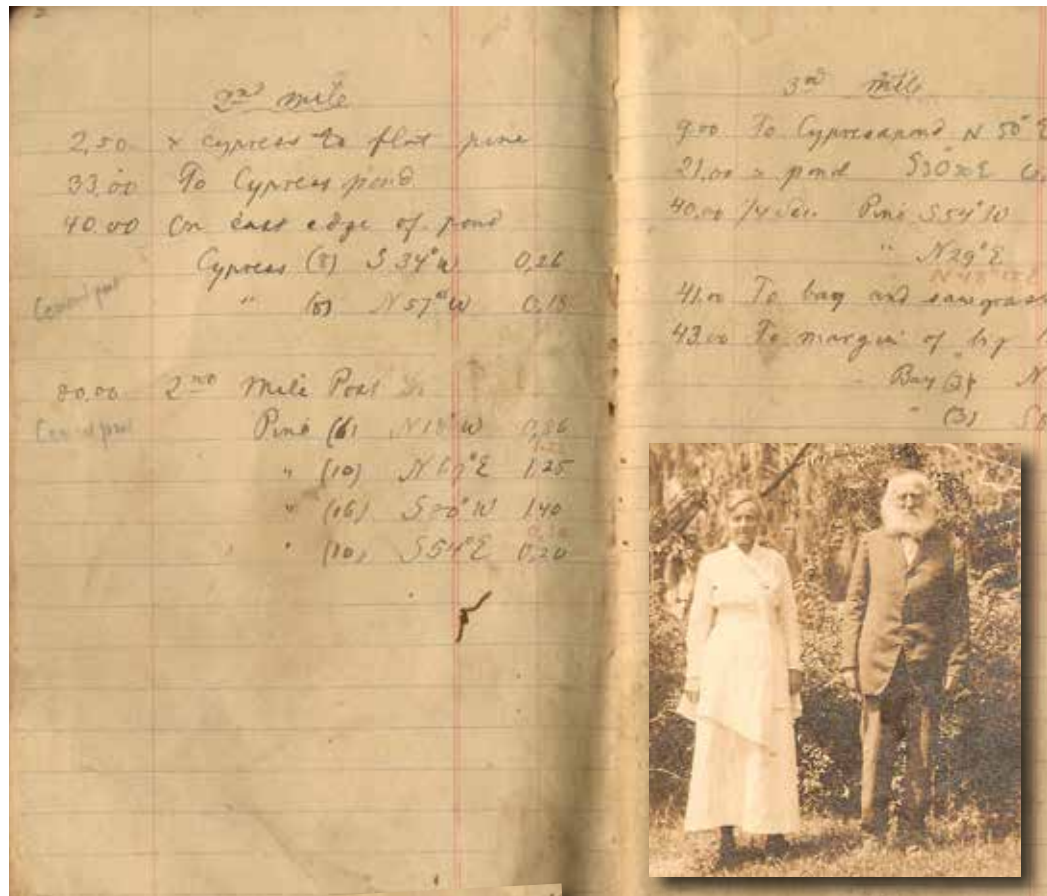
J.O. Fries' books are obviously not the most up-to-date guide to the surveying or development of Central Florida, but they remain essential historical resources.

They offer just one small written description of the land before development took off. So much has changed from the time of our indigenous cultures to today, and the extent of those changes would be altogether lost to history were it not for disparate sources like this.

In this time gap, these survey books provide distances and sizes of fields, marshes, and forests, along with the complete description of what existed in these mile sections. The History Center has an array of survey books, just some of which are highlighted here.

Pine Castle and Conway townships.

Our Conway and Pine Castle survey books both begin with a breakdown of every mile along the boundary of their respective townships (images at right).



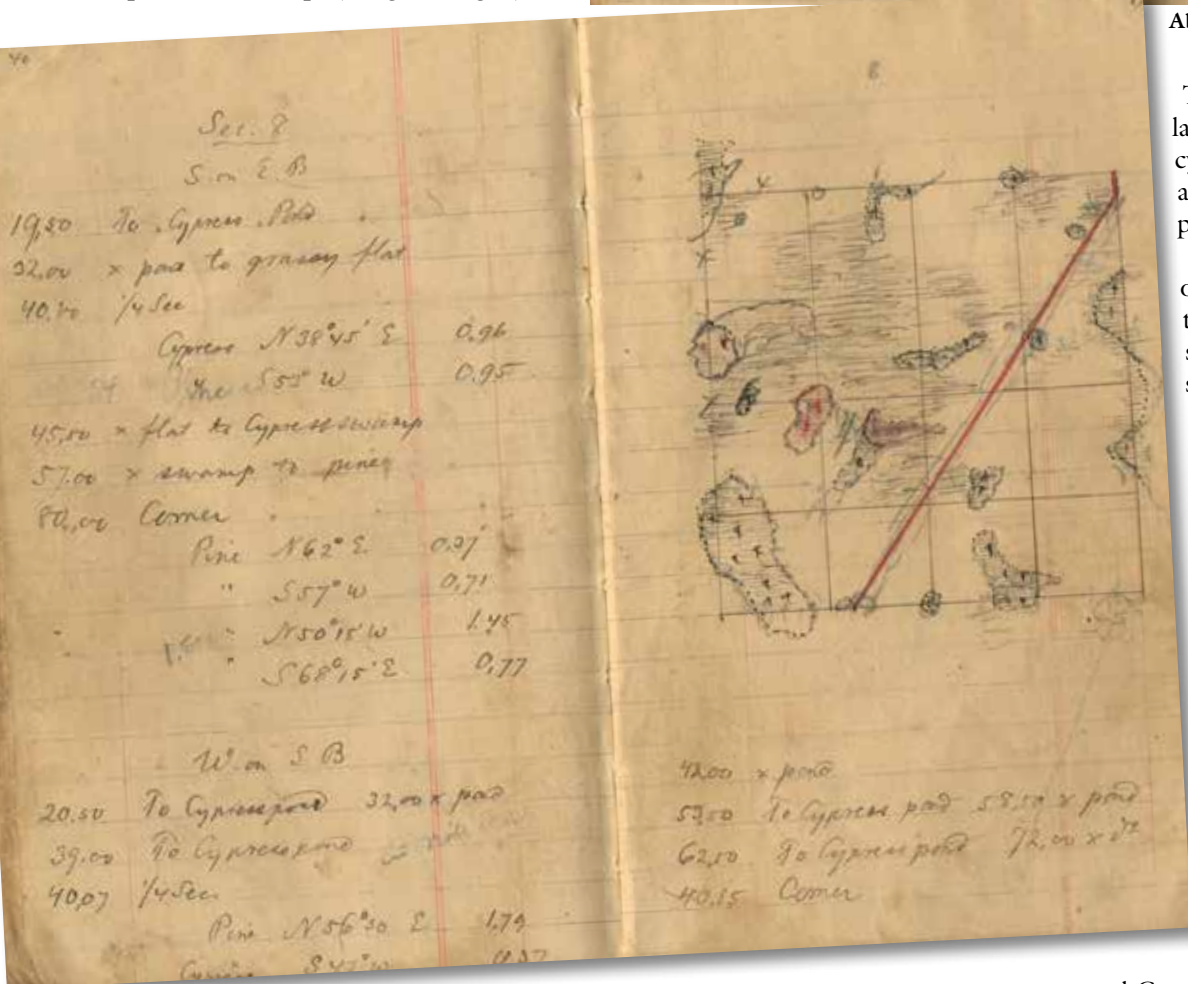
Above: J. O. Fries and daughter Kena.

The two areas have similarities: large numbers of lakes and cypress ponds, sawgrass fields, and flora that's dominated by pine and cypress trees.

Fries detailed every one of the 36 sections in each of the townships. As you can see in the image at left, Fries sketched a map of Section 8, dividing it by using the western and southern boundary lines for his measurements. The image at the bottom left of the opposite page shows a legend created by Fries next to a Pine Castle sectional map.

Manatee County.

Fries' Manatee County documentation provides another factual source about Florida's environment during his lifetime. This survey book (see opposite page) is larger and more polished than the Pinecastle and Conway survey books. The maps are more detailed, and the descriptions





include each section's valuation (bottom right). The general description in the book focused on the land's suitability for settlement.

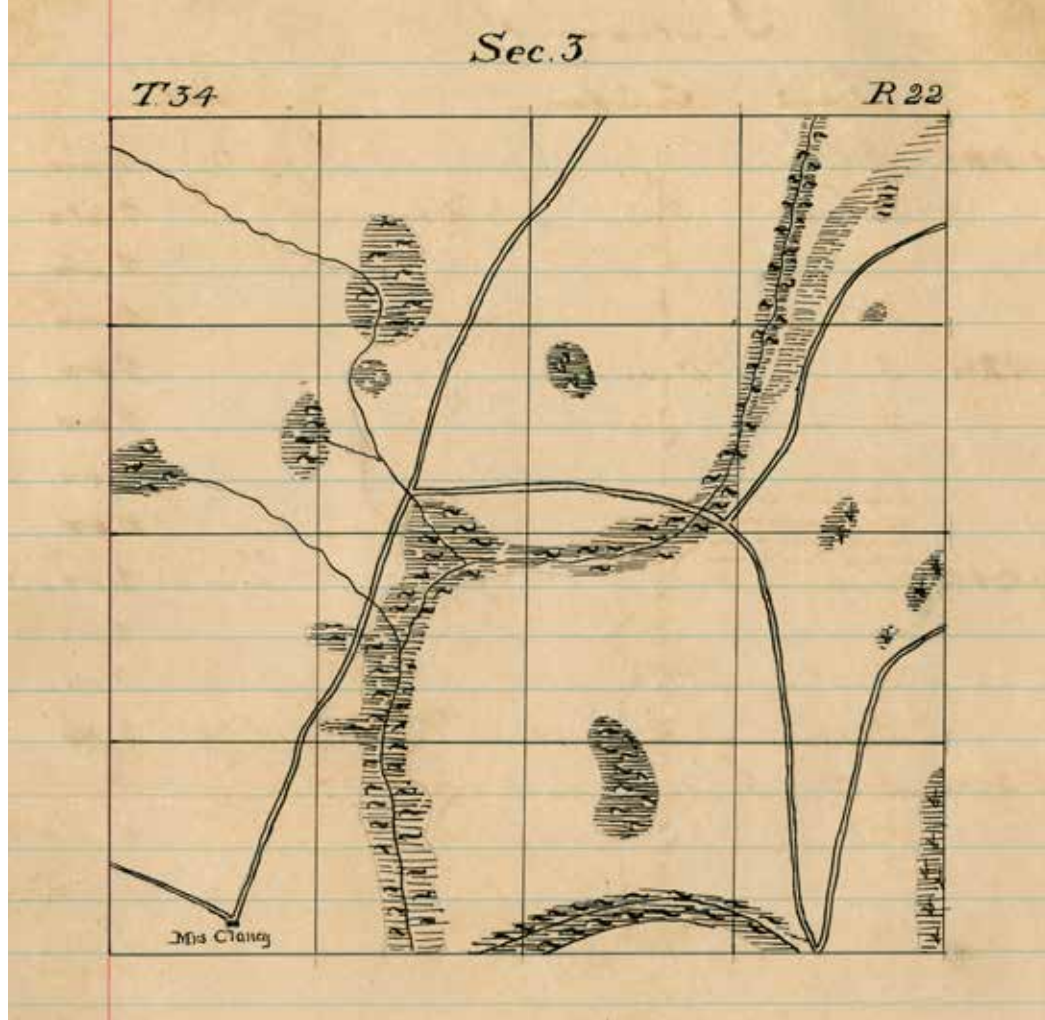
In addition to the pine and cypress found in Conway and Pinecastle, Manatee County had a number of oak trees at the time. Fries describes the diameters and overall sizes of the trees: "large trees of 15-30 minutes diameter or more grow among the smaller trees to a number of 5-15 per acre," he notes.

You'll notice the use of the term "minutes." While this unit of measurement has been primarily used in astronomy, it is also used in cartography. There are 360 degrees in a full circle; 60 arc minutes in each degree, and 60 arc seconds in each arc minute.

After 50 pages of section descriptions, Fries tabulated the value of the two townships in Manatee County. This

valuation appeared to be based on how flat or swampy Fries judged the land to be.

He concluded the book with a narrative section titled "General Description," in which he compared soil quality with other areas: "The fields of sugar cane, corn, rice can be compared with the best I have seen in



Fries' Manatee County survey book (also images below).

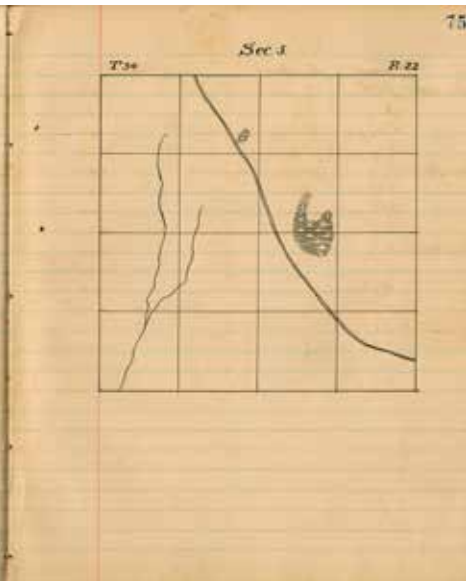
South Florida," he wrote. "The few orange groves planted here prove that this fruit can be grown successfully. . . . I have no doubt that the settlement would be many times increased." Later on, he also described how suitable the land was for cattle ranching.

While J.O. Fries surveyed these areas

for economic purposes, his work also serves as historical documentation. His notations created a fascinating glimpse into the physical environment, as well as the flora and fauna, at a significant time before American settlement and the development of our now sprawling region. ■



| 74 | Section 3 | Value |
|---------|-----------|-------|
| 284/284 | | 100 |
| 28 | | 100 |
| 29 | | 100 |
| 30 | | 100 |
| 31 | | 100 |
| 32 | | 100 |
| 33 | | 100 |
| 34 | | 100 |
| 35 | | 100 |
| 36 | | 100 |
| 37 | | 100 |
| 38 | | 100 |
| 39 | | 100 |
| 40 | | 100 |
| 41 | | 100 |
| 42 | | 100 |
| 43 | | 100 |
| 44 | | 100 |
| 45 | | 100 |
| 46 | | 100 |
| 47 | | 100 |
| 48 | | 100 |
| 49 | | 100 |
| 50 | | 100 |



The Accidental HISTORIAN

On Exhibit September 21 – January 19



Photographer T.P. Robinson captured a picnic at Lake Fredrica in 1913.

To learn more about surveyor J.O. Fries and other Central Floridians whose bodies of work have gained unintended historical value, visit our newest exhibition, *The Accidental Historian*. Explore individuals who are absorbed in recording the world of today and accidentally become some of Central Florida's finest historians for the future. Catch a glimpse into some of our favorite collections that were created for the now – more than 100 years ago.

The *Accidental Historian* features both historic and contemporary work and collections, including drawings by the renowned artist and teacher Ralph Bagley and Urban Sketchers Orlando, poetry by Orlando's inaugural poet laureate Susan Lilley, audiovisual work by food blogger Ricky Ly, historic images by photographer T.P. Robinson, and more.

Born in 1870, Robinson left a prolific record of Central Florida life in the early 20th century, after he turned what had been a hobby – photography – into a full-time career, with a downtown Orlando studio. He snapped pictures ranging from Henry Nehrling's caladiums in Gotha to World War II tugboats produced near DeLand. He was also the official photographer for Rollins College from 1928 to 1944.

While Robinson captured Central Florida with his camera, Bagley left a legacy of sketches and paintings in a career that spanned the last half of the 20th century and more – nearly 60 years. In 1950, he founded the Orlando Institute of Art in a house on Magnolia Avenue and continued to teach into his nineties in his Winter Park home. He died in 2008 and in 2015 was named an "Art Legend of Orange County."

Bagley, Fries, Robinson and the other Central Floridians presented in *The Accidental Historian* didn't see themselves as historians, but their work during their lifetimes helped capture history as we know it today, in an ever-changing world.

Visitors to the exhibit can create 19th-century "tweets" and step into a larger-than-life, Instagrammable photo station, along with other fun features. The exhibit is fully bilingual, presented in both English and Spanish. Related programs range from preservation workshops to poetry readings and a historical food-based demonstration. For details, visit thehistorycenter.org.



Artist and teacher Ralph Bagley is featured in the exhibit.

HISTORIC HAPPENINGS

ADVENTURES IN HISTORY SUMMER CAMP



Our Adventures in History Summer Camp completed a successful summer of sessions in early August. We provide a learning environment that combines cool historic facts with STEM content through hands-on activities, interactive guest-speaker programs, and exciting field trips.

WARRIORS FOR DEMOCRACY



Carol Davis of the League of Women Voters of Orange County speaks at a Brechner Series presentation in April that told the story of the group's history. The panel also included League members Lisa Adkins, Linda Chapin, Joy Wallace Dickinson, and Joan Erwin.

HISTORICAL MARKER UNVEILING CEREMONY IN HONOR OF JULY PERRY



Descendants of July Perry and others who were victims of the Ocoee Massacre of 1920 joined local leaders on June 21 to unveil the historic marker dedicated in Perry's honor.

JOHN YOUNG AWARD CEREMONY



Richard "Rick" Fletcher speaks about his father, Richard "Dick" Fletcher (pictured at right), honored as History Maker Past at the John Young History Maker Celebration on April 23. Ford Kiene was honored as the John Young History Maker for 2019.

2019 NATIONAL MEDAL CEREMONY



The Orange County Regional History Center was awarded the 2019 National Medal for Museum and Library Service on June 12. Accepting the award were Historical Society Board President Lenny Bendo, community member Dana Crosby-Collier, and Executive Director Michael Perkins.



Bryan Stevenson, executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative of Montgomery, Ala., and author of the book *Just Mercy* was greeted with a standing ovation after his talk at the Orlando Public Library, part of the marker ceremony.

COURTHOUSE CUP FOUR-PERSON GOLF SCRAMBLE



**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2019
DUBSDREAD GOLF COURSE**

A fundraiser for the nonprofit Historical Society of Central Florida, which supports the Orange County Regional History Center's mission and programs

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

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ORANGE COUNTY REGIONAL
**HISTORY
CENTER**
DOWNTOWN ORLANDO

History HAPPENS HERE

You might be a historian without even realizing it! That's certainly true of many bloggers, urban sketchers, photographers, and more. In this engaging exhibition, created at the History Center, learn how individuals who are absorbed in documenting the world of today accidentally become some of Central Florida's finest historians for the future. Catch a glimpse into some of our favorite collections that were created for the now – more than 100 years ago.



The Accidental **HISTORIAN**

Their creations were never meant to become history.

New exhibit opens September 21