REFLECTIONS FROM CENTRAL FLORIDA

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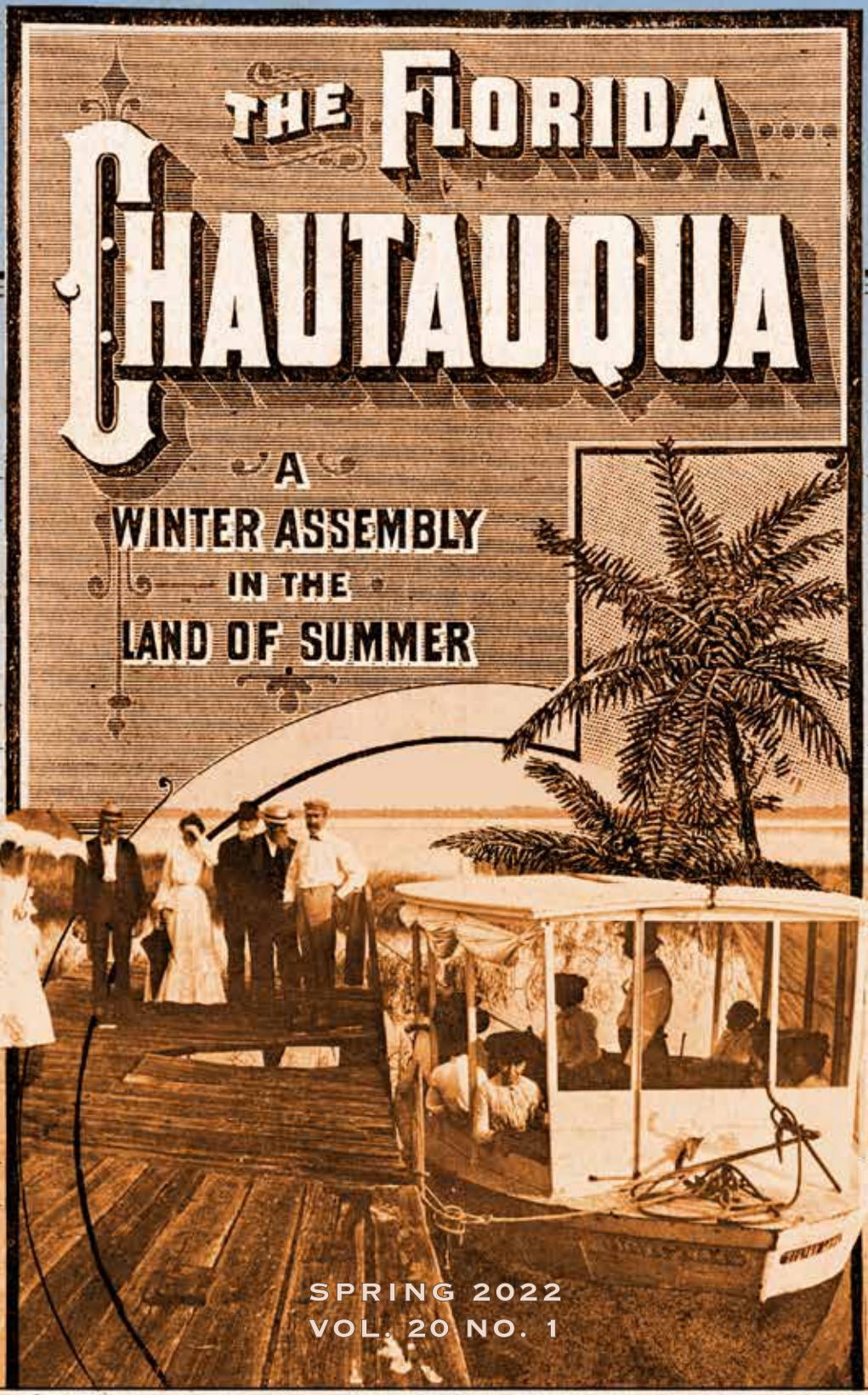
THE MAGAZINE OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA



Philosophy

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SPRING 2022
VOL. 20 NO. 1

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.

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

CULTURE BUILDS FLORIDA

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

The History Center is accessible with elevators on every floor.

A MILESTONE FOR OUR MAGAZINE

FROM THE DIRECTOR

As *Reflections from Central Florida* celebrates its 20th year, we are pleased to have you reading along. Across many issues, we've brought you a wide range of subjects and perspectives in history, and we look forward to many more in the future. At the History Center, *Reflections* is just one of the ways we share and uncover history that might not otherwise fit onto our museum walls.

This March we'll present *INTO LIGHT Project FLORIDA*, a portrait exhibition about families affected by Substance Use Disorder. This is a disease that both historically and presently impacts our region, and the museum hopes to play a role in educating people and helping to remove the stigma associated with it. We encourage you to bookmark our events page online and to sign up for our e-newsletters to know about all the incredible things we have going on.

In this issue of *Reflections*, we follow a path of discovery about Orlando's past that begins with a photograph, venture to Mount Dora as an early magnet for culture, and meet one of our area's most influential early leaders, John Moses Cheney. We'll also take a sneak peek at a fall focus for the museum: music and entertainment. We're preparing an exhibition about the area's music scene in the 1990s, and in the pages that follow, we'll look at some of the interesting objects in our collection related to entertainment, and also at safe havens of entertainment for the Black community in the Jim Crow era.

We also want to recognize all the wonderful people who make the History Center possible: you, our readers and donors. Your vital contributions have helped us to continue navigating a pandemic, have kept us employed, and enable us to offer educational and inspirational community-centered offerings to the public.

If you love history as much as we do, please consider making an additional donation directly to the History Center through the United Arts Collaborative Campaign before April 30. United Arts increases your gift by 15 percent, making it count even more. It only takes a minute – just visit unitedarts.cc/thehistorycenter. ■

– Pamela Schwartz, Executive Director, Orange County Regional History Center

CONTRIBUTORS

Whitney Barrett

Whitney Barrett, a native of Alberta, Canada, has a master's degree in Library Science from Florida State University. She worked in Bethune-Cookman University's archives and the Mary McLeod Bethune Foundation House before becoming the History Center's archivist.

Roger E. Barrows

Roger E. Barrows, who earned his master's degree at the University of Central Florida, teaches Humanities at Valencia College. His interest in the Chautauqua Movement led to his writing *The Traveling Chautauqua: Caravans of Culture in Early 20th Century America.*

Tom Cloud

Through four decades, Tom Cloud has been an attorney at GrayRobinson, focused on local and state government, utility, land-use, and environmental law. He has served as legal counsel on the Historical Society's board and has published numerous articles on Florida law and history. In 2021, he received the prestigious Paul Buchman Award from the Florida Municipal Attorneys Association.

Vanessa Sardon

Vanessa Sardon is a native Floridian who loves exploring her home state. She's worked in healthcare for nine years but imagines she was an antiquarian in a past life. Vanessa enjoys visiting museums and historical houses with her husband, J. She's happiest when she's connecting with people and sharing life stories.

UPCOMING EVENTS

ORANGE COUNTY REGIONAL HISTORY CENTER
DOWNTOWN ORLANDO

For more events, visit TheHistoryCenter.org/events
(All events are subject to change.)

Third Annual Women's History Month Celebration Honoring Mary Ann Carroll: Breaking Barriers Through Art Thursday, March 10, 8 – 10 a.m.
We'll honor trailblazing artist Mary Ann Carroll, the sole woman in the famed group of 26 artists now known as the Florida Highwaymen. Featured speakers at the breakfast include Carroll's daughter, Dr. Wanda Renee Mills, and longtime expert Jeanine Taylor of Jeanine Taylor Folk Art in Sanford.

Brechner Speaker Series: The Legacy of Zora Neale Hurston as a Cultural Preservationist Sunday, March 13, 2 p.m.
N.Y. Nathiri will lead an exploration of the life and work of Eatonville's own Zora Neale Hurston. In addition to exploring Hurston's literary accomplishments, Nathiri will delve into her important work as an anthropologist and activist; she'll also highlight the community-driven effort to promote Hurston's legacy in Central Florida.

Erasing the Stigma of Addiction: An INTO LIGHT Discussion
Thursday, March 24, 6 p.m.
Join us as we examine the stigma associated with Substance Use Disorder. Dr. Thomas Hall, director of the Orange County Drug-Free Coalition, will lead a panel of experts who will discuss false narratives about addiction.

Mythical Mornings: Skunk Ape and Sangria Sunday, March 27, 11:30 a.m.
Explore the history of Florida's favorite cryptid, the Skunk Ape! The program includes a presentation and an exclusive exhibition tour, light brunch refreshments, non-alcoholic beverages, and featured drinks from Carib Brewery USA.

Lunch & Learn: Legends of the Lost Studio Friday, April 1, noon
We'll explore the rise and fall of Nickelodeon Studios in Orlando and revisit the shows, experiences, and brand that shaped a generation.

Sensory Sundays Sunday, April 10 & July 17, noon – 4 p.m.
This special series offers sensory-friendly fun for the whole family! Free admission for individuals with valid proof of Autism Society of Greater Orlando membership.

Lunch & Learn: Lue Gim Gong, the Citrus Wizard Friday, May 6, noon
Born in China in 1857, Lue Gim Gong moved to DeLand in the 1880s and quickly became known as the "Citrus Wizard." Learn more about his career in agriculture and how he changed the Florida citrus industry forever.

Florida Highwaymen Meet and Greet Saturday, May 14, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Meet legendary artists and have the opportunity to purchase their art.

Lunch & Learn: Together We Shine – The Special Olympics in Central Florida Friday, June 3, noon
As Orlando prepares to host the 2022 Special Olympics, we look back at the founding of this important organization and how it serves the Central Florida community.

Lunch & Learn: History of Sinkholes in Florida Friday, July 1, noon
Watch out below! Florida is prone to sinkholes, which are a natural part of the state's ecosystem. These regularly occurring phenomena can cause significant destruction or create something beautiful.

IN THIS ISSUE

JOY WALLACE DICKINSON

Above: The 1904 John M. Cheney House, now next to Interstate 4 on West Colonial Drive, is considered a fine Florida example of early 20th-century Colonial Revival architecture and is an Orlando Historic Landmark.

On the cover: The Florida Chautauqua graphic is from the front of the program for the first annual session of the Florida Chautauqua at DeFuniak Springs in 1885. The photograph shows a group at the Chautauqua dock at Lake Dora in Mount Dora in 1906. Both images are from the State Archives of Florida.

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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 mission: 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 Orange County Regional History Center is financed in part by Orange County through its Community and Family Services Department under Mayor Jerry L. Demings and the Board of County Commissioners.

The Joseph L. Brechner 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. Materials available for research include prints and photographs, archives and manuscripts, architectural drawings and records, books, and other published materials pertaining to Central Florida history. The Brechner Research Center is located on the fifth floor of the Orange County Regional History Center and is free to the public by appointment. We welcome scholars, students, genealogists, filmmakers, journalists, and the general public to conduct research by appointment during our visiting hours.

WE THANK OUR SUPPORTERS!

For donations received between October 1, 2020, and September 30, 2021

Your contributions make the important work our museum does possible.

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INTO LIGHT PROJECT
FLORIDA

Carly Anne Sananes died from Substance Use Disorder at the age of 26. Tina Sananes, Carly Anne's mother: "Life will never be the same without my first-born beautiful child."

INTO LIGHT PROJECT FLORIDA

By Catherine Duffy, Chief Curator

As Theresa Clower grieved for her son, Devin, who died from Substance Use Disorder (SUD) in 2018, her daughter recommended that she draw a portrait of Devin as part of the healing process. Devin lived with addiction for 12 years and died from an accidental overdose of drugs containing fentanyl, but he was much more than his addiction – he was creative, athletic, and loving.

Clower sought out other families who had lost someone and who were grieving. As she connected with others, a dialogue of healing and acknowledgement began. She formed INTO LIGHT Project, a nonprofit organization that seeks to help erase the stigma of SUD across the United States. Each year INTO LIGHT Project selects one state to contribute to the project, which will culminate in a total of 2,001 portraits, including Devin's. At its conclusion, INTO LIGHT Project will form a tapestry of unity, healing, and support for individuals and families living with the impacts of SUD.

This March, the History Center, in partnership with the Orange County Drug-Free Office and INTO LIGHT Project, will host INTO LIGHT Project FLORIDA. The exhibition will feature 41 hand-drawn portraits by Clower of individuals from Central Florida, and across the state, who have died due to SUD. Included with each portrait will be a quote from a loved one, collected by the History Center's oral historians, signifying that these individuals are more than their addiction.

In Orange County, the average age of women who died of accidental overdose in 2019 was 41.5, for men it was 43.4 – the majority of both groups were identified as white. Opioids were the primary cause of death in almost two-thirds of accidental overdose deaths in both 2019 and 2020. As our community, like so many across the nation, continues to treat SUD, INTO LIGHT Project FLORIDA provides healing and hope.

For more information, visit TheHistoryCenter.org/visit/exhibitions. ■

OUR LONG HISTORY ON THE STAGE

From the opera to black box theaters, Central Florida is host to a wide variety of performing arts. This selection of items from the History Center's collection exemplifies our community's long history on stage. If you have any souvenirs from the entertainment scene in Central Florida that you would like to donate, please contact our collections manager, Whitney Broadaway, at Whitney.Broadaway@ocfl.net or 407-836-8587. ■

These awards from the Central Florida Civic Theatre were presented to Doris Mills for several of her performances. The medallion was awarded in 1969 for Best Supporting Role in "The Little Foxes," and the two silver statuettes are for Best Actress in 1970 and 1972 – 1973.

Orlando's Municipal Auditorium was expanded and renamed after Mayor Bob Carr in the mid-1970s. An exterior glass shell was added over the original brick façade. These ribbons are from the dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremonies in 1978.

In 1991, the Florida Film Festival was born at Maitland's Enzian Theater. This annual international event is an Oscar-qualifying festival. This selection of buttons and pins illustrates the Florida Film Festival's past 30 years.

Drive-in theaters were all the rage in Central Florida from the 1950s to the 1970s. This speaker is from the Movieland Drive-In Theater in Sanford.

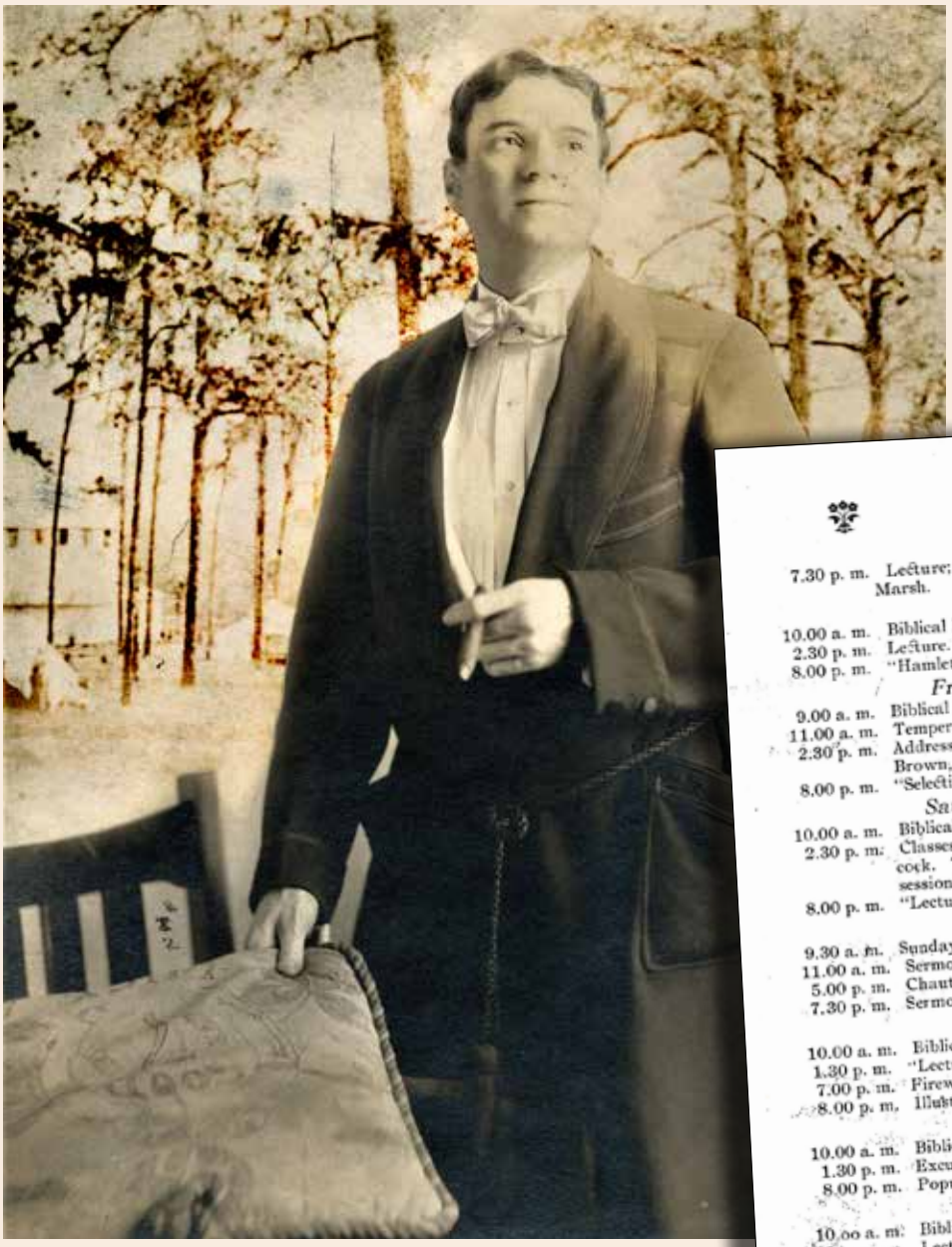
This is the original ticket-drop stand from Orlando's Municipal Auditorium, which opened in February 1927. In the 1970s, it was incorporated into the revamped Bob Carr Municipal Auditorium (today's Bob Carr Theater).

This display case once held snacks at the concession stand in Winter Garden's Garden Theatre during its days as a movie theater – the first in Central Florida built for talking pictures.

Culture in the Pine Grove

By Roger & Barrows

The Mount Dora Chautauqua, 1887-1906

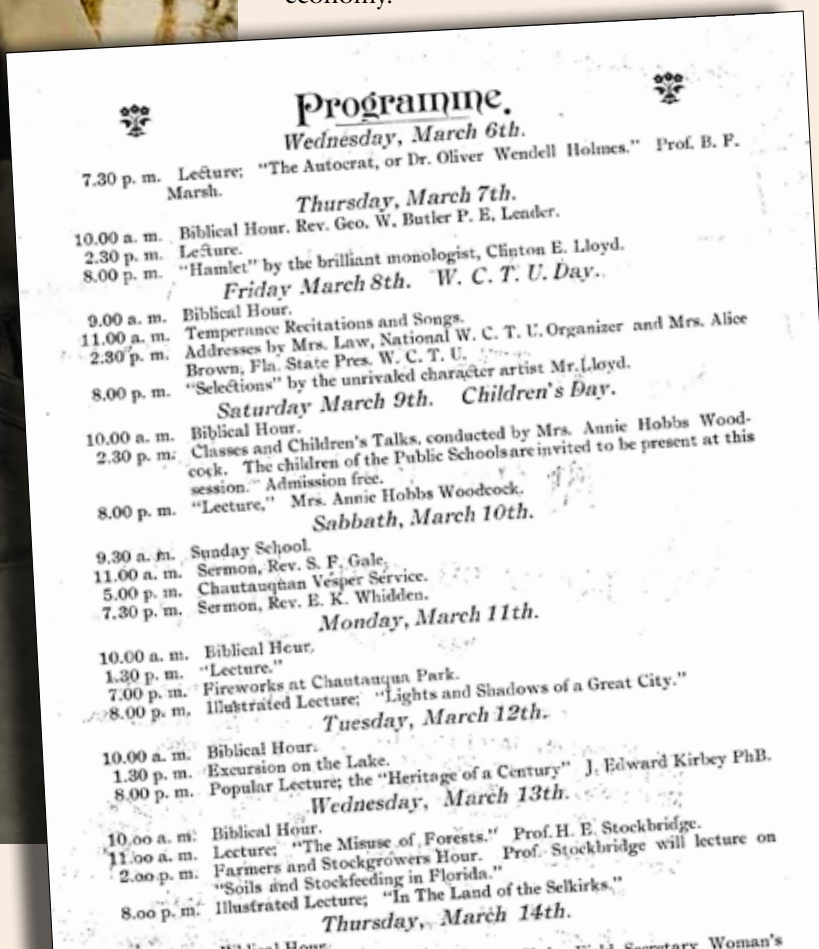


University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections

It's likely Mount Dora pioneer C. R. Gilbert faced greater hardships than he could ever have anticipated. In his 1882-1883 diary, he described his days working "like a government mule" to clear land to grow citrus. He recorded the storms, fires, illness, loss, and doubts that occurred in his first few months in Florida, as well as the relentless toil.

Gilbert also noted Mount Dora's growth. By 1882, the town boasted a store, a carpenter's shop, and two hotels under construction. It had opened a school and hired the first teacher, a 16-year-old woman. Progress was being made, but something more was needed. At day's end, there was no nearby library, theater, or college to refresh the weary spirit or feed the curious mind.

Farsighted town leaders had a solution. They would set aside ten days each year to bring to Mount Dora renowned ministers, lecturers, and performers who could provide religious, intellectual, and recreational enrichment to the community. They might also have had an eye on attracting tourists and prospective residents to the small town, while simultaneously augmenting its economy.



Programme.

Wednesday, March 6th.

7.30 p. m. Lecture; "The Autocrat, or Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes." Prof. B. F. Marsh.

Thursday, March 7th.

10.00 a. m. Biblical Hour. Rev. Geo. W. Butler P. E. Leader.
2.30 p. m. Lecture.
8.00 p. m. "Hamlet" by the brilliant monologist, Clinton E. Lloyd.

Friday March 8th. W. C. T. U. Day.

9.00 a. m. Biblical Hour.
11.00 a. m. Temperance Recitations and Songs.
2.30 p. m. Addresses by Mrs. Law, National W. C. T. U. Organizer and Mrs. Alice Brown, Fla. State Pres. W. C. T. U.
8.00 p. m. "Selections" by the unrivaled character artist Mr. Lloyd.

Saturday March 9th. Children's Day.

10.00 a. m. Biblical Hour.
2.30 p. m. Classes and Children's Talks, conducted by Mrs. Annie Hobbs Woodcock. The children of the Public Schools are invited to be present at this session. Admission free.
8.00 p. m. "Lecture," Mrs. Annie Hobbs Woodcock.

Sabbath, March 10th.

9.30 a. m. Sunday School.
11.00 a. m. Sermon, Rev. S. F. Gale.
5.00 p. m. Chautauquan Vesper Service.
7.30 p. m. Sermon, Rev. E. K. Whidden.

Monday, March 11th.

10.00 a. m. Biblical Hour.
1.30 p. m. "Lecture."
7.00 p. m. Fireworks at Chautauqua Park.
8.00 p. m. Illustrated Lecture; "Lights and Shadows of a Great City."

Tuesday, March 12th.

10.00 a. m. Biblical Hour.
1.30 p. m. Excursion on the Lake.
8.00 p. m. Popular Lecture; the "Heritage of a Century" J. Edward Kirbey PhB.

Wednesday, March 13th.

10.00 a. m. Biblical Hour.
11.00 a. m. Lecture; "The Misuse of Forests." Prof. H. E. Stockbridge.
2.00 p. m. Farmers and Stockgrowers Hour. Prof. Stockbridge will lecture on "Soils and Stockfeeding in Florida."
8.00 p. m. Illustrated Lecture; "In The Land of the Selkirks."

Thursday, March 14th.

Mount Dora Historical Society, Inc.

Visitors arrived by train at the Mount Dora station; the Florida Central and Peninsular Railroad offered reduced fares during the Chautauqua season.

Origins in New York

Mount Dora leaders called this gathering a *Chautauqua* ("shu-TAW-kwuh") — which today may seem an odd term for a revitalizing assembly. It came from the language of the Iroquois people and had been given to a lake in far western New York state, a thousand miles north of Mount Dora. The word was also applied to a gathering that took place each summer on that lake, beginning in 1874.

That first summer in New York, about 2,500 Sunday school teachers gathered for two weeks at a Methodist camp on Chautauqua Lake to enlarge, clarify, and invigorate their teaching of the Bible. In successive years, lessons expanded well beyond religion, and subjects including history, science, and the arts were integrated into the programming, along with musical performances. Since God created the entire universe, the founders reasoned, every aspect of creation opened a window to the Divine.

Word spread, and the New York assemblies were so well received that they led to a permanent Chautauqua Institution, still thriving today, with a summer program of cultural pursuits and education. The institution was so successful, in fact, that within five years of its founding, it had inspired a movement of summer assemblies in a half-dozen states. By the end of the century, nearly 200 "daughter Chautauquas" had sprung up throughout the country, imitating the New York model and identifying themselves by its name.

Florida "Daughters"

The first Chautauqua in Florida opened in 1885 in DeFuniak Springs, in the Panhandle, where an assembly ran for a month each year until 1929 – in winter instead of summer. Mount Dora followed in 1887 with its own winter assembly, named the South Florida Chautauqua.

In the 1880s, the beauties and charms of Mount Dora, together with its economic promise, were drawing southerners and northerners alike. Some families arrived from cities that offered ample cultural opportunities, conspicuously lacking in the small pioneer town. With the advent of train service in 1887, the time was ripe to bring culture and fresh ideas to residents of Central Florida who were hungry for them.

The serious intent of Mount Dora leaders to establish a permanent Chautauqua is evident by their purchase of 250 acres, where they built a dormitory, dining room, and 1,500-seat auditorium. Most participants came from the community and nearby towns, though newspapers from as far away as Tallahassee and Savannah printed announcements for the Mount Dora season. A dock welcomed steamboat passengers directly to the grounds, and stagecoaches met guests traveling by train. Visitors found accommodations in one of the town's two hotels, in the dormitory ($1 a day) or in rented tents ($1 for the season). Season tickets for adults cost $1-2; day tickets, 25 cents.

Some visitors arrived in Mount Dora by boat. Here a lakeside crowd watches a regatta in 1924.

Opposite page: The Chautauqua's daily program offered opportunities including fireworks and lake excursions. Clinton Lloyd (far left), character actor and theater professor, presented Shakespeare.

For Chautauqua organizers, the natural setting in Mount Dora, amid majestic pines and beside a scenic lake, provided an idyllic spot in which to grow in understanding of the word of God as revealed in the Bible, as well as the world of God as revealed in nature. The campground also served an important social function, drawing together congregants from different denominations in a spirit of neighborly congeniality.

National stars

An announcement for the second annual Mount Dora Chautauqua, Feb. 14-23, 1888, proclaimed that "great lecturers on all the sciences and arts have been engaged." The nationally renowned orator Russell H. Conwell delivered his famous "Acres of Diamonds" speech, advising listeners to achieve success where they lived and, in turn, to benefit their communities. One professor projected stereopticon images onto a wall to take his listeners on a virtual tramp through Switzerland, while another discussed Sidney Lanier and other Southern poets, asserting that they revealed their finer senses by favoring "heart" over "trade." Musical performances also lifted listeners' spirits, as did sermons and vespers.

Perhaps the highlight of the 1888 assembly was a talk by the Rev. Lyman Abbott, a Congregationalist minister and one of America's most prominent theologians. Abbott was an advocate of the new Social Gospel movement, and it's likely his Mount Dora audience heard his conviction that the Gospels applied not only to personal salvation but also to social problems exacerbated by the Industrial Revolution.

Christianity was no doubt the heart of the Chautauqua. Mornings began with devotions or Bible study, followed by "normal classes," which taught Sunday school teachers the norms of Biblical interpretation. Teaching basic religious principles to children was deemed vital to sustaining the social, moral, and cultural fabric of a Christian nation.

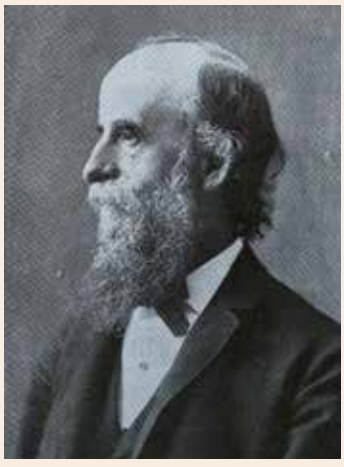
Lean years and calamities

The 1888 program reveals the rich variety offered in a single season. Like any institution, however, the Mount Dora Chautauqua passed through lean years. The first occurred after the Great Freezes of 1894-1895 – two separate disasters in December and February that devastated the citrus industry and impelled some families to pull up roots and leave Central Florida for good. Nonetheless, management forged ahead with the March assembly and cut the cost of tickets. "These meetings are just what you need," declared one DeLand newspaper – "a real soul uplift – good lectures, good music, social enjoyment."

Due to financial hardships, the programs for the next three years were shortened (to a single day in 1898), and management secured local rather than national talent to provide lectures and entertainment. Then, a decade after the freezes, Mount Dora experienced another calamity when the Chautauqua auditorium burned to the ground ten days before the start of the 1905 season. Again, the management continued with the scheduled program, substituting a large tent for the building. But the handwriting was on the wall. Mount Dora presented its final assembly in 1906, the 20th year of its existence.

Other Central Florida communities formed their own independent Chautauquas in the early 20th century (including Daytona Beach, Melbourne, Lakeland, and St. Petersburg), and in the 1910s and 1920s, circuit Chautauqua traveled from town to town to deliver culture for a week at a time. None of these survived as long as the Mount Dora Chautauqua. What television, movies, and the internet provide today, the Chautauqua delivered – live and in person – for a brief but extraordinary interval each year, offering spiritual uplift, continuing education, and wholesome entertainment. ■

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary



"Famous American Men and Women" (1896)

Rick Kilby

Lecturers included famed ministers such as Russell H. Conwell (far left), first president of Temple University in Philadelphia, and Lyman Abbott (left), advocate of the Social Gospel movement. Above, right: A brochure for Defuniak Springs hailed it as the second Chautauqua city in the U.S.

On the Trail of the Orlando Bicycle Club

A Long-Ago Photo Sparks Intrigue 200 Miles from Home

· By Vanessa Sardon ·

Stacks of framed art and abandoned photographs lined the shelves of a Fort Lauderdale thrift store – among them, a captivating black-and-white photo in a simple black frame. It features a group of people dressed in late-19th-century garb, standing on the steps of a building, bicycles in tow. A man leans from one of the second-story windows. A faded handwritten caption reads "South End of Courthouse," followed by "1895," written more legibly.

The back of the photo is stamped with the words "Orange County Historical Museum Photo / Copy by Permission Only." This Orange County courthouse, photographed in 1895, bears no resemblance to its modern replacement, and it's been more than 20 years since the museum named in the stamp was transformed into the History Center.

It's a mystery how a copy of the photo came to the store 200 miles from Orlando, where the original resides in the History Center's collection, but the image opened a path to the past.

Above: The 1892 Orange County Courthouse. Below: The original Orlando Bicycle Club image, in the History Center's collection.

The Courthouse

The courthouse shown in the photo, constructed in 1892, was a magnificent red-brick Romanesque building with an 80-foot-tall clock tower. Illustrations of the building show that it is much larger than it appears in the 1895 photo of the bicyclists. At that time, the courthouse was the largest, most prominent building in the city. In 1927, the county built a new courthouse. The old red-brick building housed county offices for a time but was condemned and ultimately demolished by the late 1950s. The bicyclists in the photo unknowingly preserved a piece of Orange County history.

The Club

These cyclists were members of the Orlando Bicycle Club, and the 1895 photo commemorated the group's first official race. Bicycling boomed in Orlando in the 1890s, in part due to Leslie Pell-Clarke, an influential transplant from the North who brought his love of cycling down to Central Florida. He was known to have mapped several bicycle paths around the city's now-historic areas. The intriguing bicycle pioneer inevitably left his mark in many ways on Central Florida.

The Clarke Family

Long before Leslie Pell-Clarke ever pedaled through Orlando, his family planted their roots firmly in colonial New York. In 1714, George Clarke, lieutenant governor of New York, married Anne Hyde, the daughter of North Carolina's governor, Edward Hyde.

The Hyde family traces its lineage back to the English royal family. In the United States, however, the name is known for its connection to the Hyde properties and farmlands in Cooperstown, New York. In 1817, Lt. Gov. Clarke's great-grandson, also named George Clarke, began construction on the mansion that would become Hyde Hall. His son, George Clarke Jr., inherited the Hyde Hall estate, substantial land, and family wealth.

In 1834, Anna Clarke, younger sister of George Clarke Jr., married Duncan C. Pell, the son of auction company founder William Ferris Pell. The couple lived in Newport, Rhode Island, and in 1853 welcomed their son Leslie.

George Clarke Jr. continued his father's work experimenting with agriculture and farming. His son George Hyde Clarke moved into Hyde Hall in the 1880s and managed the estate and adjacent family farms. The property was handed down twice more, to George Hyde Clarke Jr. in 1914 and then to Thomas Hyde Clarke in 1955. In 1963, the mansion and surrounding acres of farmland passed to the state of New York. The state-owned land became Glimmerglass State Park, and the property still houses the Hyde Hall mansion, which remains open to visitors.

Above: Orlando Bicycle Club members, in June 1892, were identified in notes as (from left) "John Fleming, Merck, J. D. Burden, Geo. Burden, Dr. Baird, Carl Warfield, J.H. Boozer, Crit Coffee, Alex Shine, Watson Knox, Dr. Chas. Shine, J. N. Bradshaw, Cecil Butt, Judge C. G. Butt, Gelsie Butt, and Beebe." Above, right: Leslie Pell-Clarke, photographed with a tarpon, April 30, 1891.

Leslie Pell-Clarke

In 1876, Leslie Pell-Clarke married Henrietta Temple. The New York couple enjoyed northeastern summers but preferred to winter in warmer weather, and in 1890 they purchased their Orlando home on North Main Street, just a few years before the Orlando Bicycle Club photograph was taken.

Pell-Clarke's appreciation for cycling rivaled his love of golf. In 1893, he built a nine-hole golf course – Orlando's first – along the northern shore of Lake Eola. While that course no longer exists, Pell-Clarke's golf legacy lives on in Springfield, New York, where he and former classmate Henry L. Wardwell opened the Otsego Golf Club in 1894 with other founders including Pell-Clarke's cousin George Hyde Clarke. When Pell-Clarke died in 1904, Arthur Ryerson took his place as

Leslie Pell-Clarke with his wife, Henrietta, and family at their Orlando home.

a prime club supporter, as Pell-Clarke had no children. Ryerson died during the sinking of the RMS Titanic in 1912, but others in his family survived. In 1914, his daughter Emily married Pell-Clarke's second cousin George Hyde Clarke Jr. (son of the golf club founder).

In 1900, the Pell-Clarkes donated their Orlando home to the local Episcopal Diocese to serve as a residence for Bishop William Gray. The property changed hands one more time when it was purchased by the county in 1925. The house was demolished, and the land became the site for the Orange County courthouse that opened in 1927, replacing the red-brick courthouse in our photo. The Orange County Regional History Center is now housed in this building, on the land once owned by Pell-Clarke himself. The History Center's collection includes a photo of Leslie Pell-Clarke and his family during their time in Orange County, circa 1893.

Leu House Links

Although the Pell-Clarke home no longer exists, the Pell family also had ties to the historic Leu House, which overlooks Lake Rowena at Harry P. Leu Gardens. One of Leslie Pell-Clarke's nephews, Duncan Clarkson Pell, owned the house in the early years of the 20th century and lived there with his second wife, the future silent movie star Helen Gardner.

Their marriage was somewhat scandalous, considering that Duncan Pell had only been divorced from his first wife, Anna Ogden Pell, for a week before marrying the much younger Gardner. Anna Pell was said to have dismissed her husband's Florida-issued divorce decree. Instead, she sued him for divorce in her home state of New York.

During their time in the home, Duncan and Helen Pell made additions to the home that doubled it in size, making it ideal for the large get-togethers they hosted on weekends. Orlando businessman Harry P. Leu and his wife, Mary Jane, purchased the property in 1936, long after Pell had sold it. Leu Gardens is now owned by the City of Orlando (see LeuGardens.org).

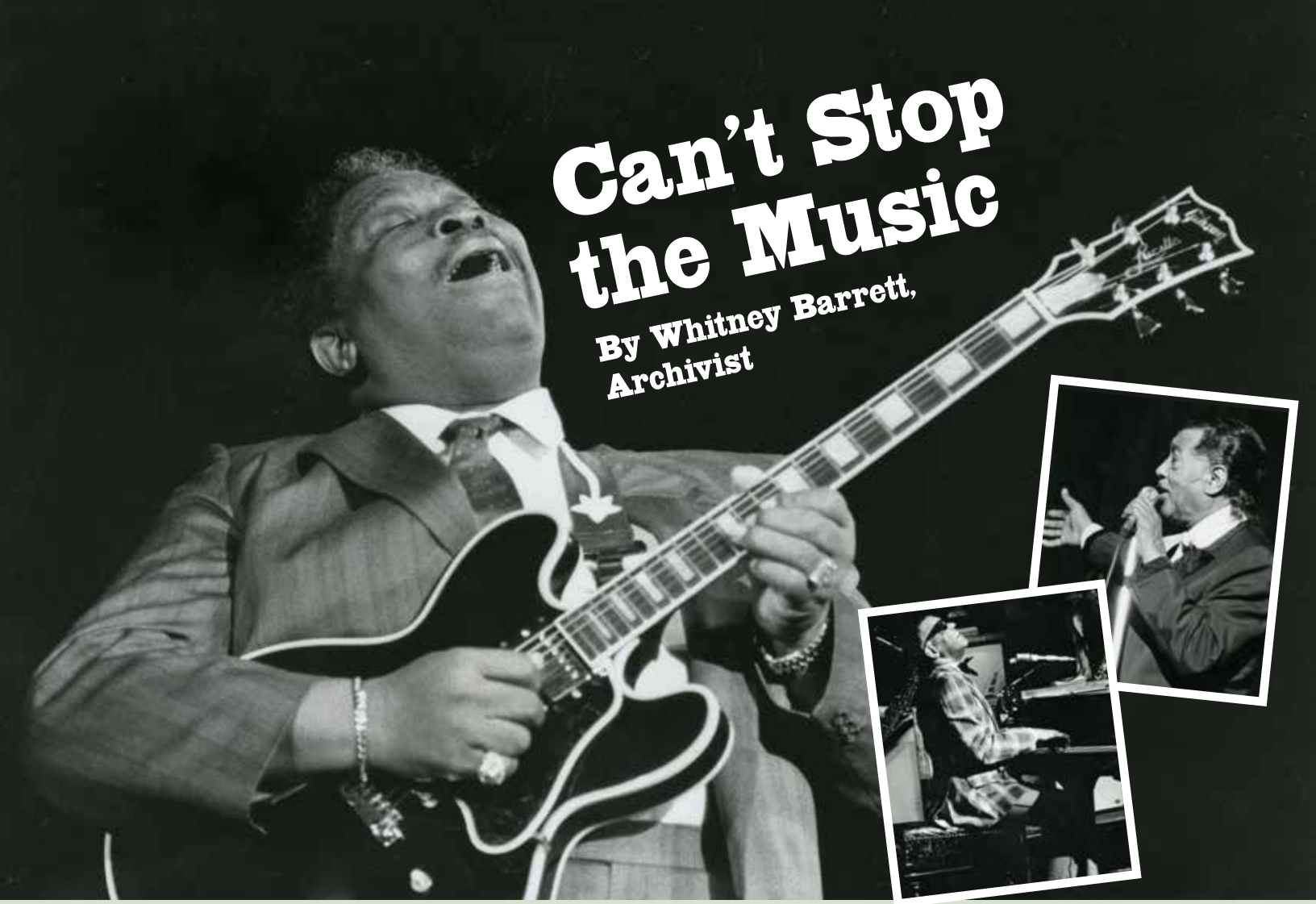
Cycling Legacy Continues

Bicyclists today face hurdles Leslie Pell-Clarke would never know. The most notable of them: traffic. The City of Orlando has undertaken numerous transportation projects aimed at improving accessibility and safety for bicyclists. Orlando's bicycle network currently boasts 45 miles of off-street trails that offer cyclists a traffic reprieve. Those inspired to celebrate Pell-Clarke's cycling legacy can explore Orlando's many bicycle trails. Detailed information and bicycle-loop maps are available on the city's website, Orlando.gov. ■

Left: Children perform the maypole dance at the Pell-Clarke School in Orlando in 1912. Above: The Leu House at Harry P. Leu Gardens (top); Duncan Pell, who once owned the Leu House, in 1908 at his office at Orlando's San Juan Hotel.

Can't Stop the Music

By Whitney Barrett, Archivist



Above: B.B. King in Orlando on January 19, 1990, at Orlando's Bob Carr Performing Arts Centre (now the Bob Carr Theater). Inset, top: Duke Ellington performs on March 31, 1971, at Orlando's Municipal Auditorium. Inset, bottom: Ray Charles at the Tupperware Convention Center in Orlando on December 1, 1978.

Although you might not think of Orlando as a popular music destination, many of the great singers of jazz, blues, and gospel music passed through the city during its history. Big names such as Ray Charles, B.B. King, and Ella Fitzgerald, just to name a few, all made stops in Orlando on their way to becoming legendary artists.

Some Black singers, such as Charles, King, and Fitzgerald, got their start and rose to fame during the Jim Crow era – a time when segregation was legal and touched nearly every aspect of life in the United States. The color line was drawn in restaurants, schools, hotels, hospitals, bathrooms, water fountains – the list was endless. It even extended into the world of entertainment.

Black artists were certainly talented enough to perform in the same venues as their white counterparts, but many were not extended that opportunity. However, this did not stop the music. It led instead to the creation of what is now commonly called the Chitlin' Circuit – a network of Black-owned venues, mostly concentrated in the South, where now-famous Black musicians performed during the Jim Crow era. According to author Preston Lauterbach, it was also called the one-nighter circuit or the theatrical circuit.

Although the origin of the term Chitlin' Circuit can be debated, one theory links it to the food served at many venues, which included chitlins (cooked pork intestines), along with other traditional soul food dishes. Some artists have recalled that a plate of chitlins would be included as a part of the pay for their performance.

In Orlando, the circuit's most prominent venue could be found on South Street.

The South Street Casino

During its heyday, from the 1920s through the 1960s, the South Street Casino was a staple in Orlando's Black community. Located at 519 W. South St., it was owned and operated by Dr. William Monroe Wells, one of the city's first Black physicians. He also owned the Wellsbilt Hotel next-door to the casino, one of the few places in Orlando where Black visitors could stay. The importance of Dr. Wells' contributions is significant, as he provided shelter, entertainment, and medical services to Orlando's Black community. (Note that Dr. Wells' hotel is now home to the Wells'Built Museum, but its original name was spelled "Wellsbilt.")

Dr. Wells' "casino" does not refer to a place for gambling, but a setting for social events. The South Street Casino was a community center

that hosted neighborhood dances, meetings, weddings, birthdays, and even boxing matches. At one point, it even had a basketball court and a skating rink. It also became a popular stop for up-and-coming Black musicians touring the music circuit in Central Florida. Although it couldn't compare with the Apollo Theatre in Harlem or the Royal Peacock in Atlanta, in Orlando the South Street Casino was *the* place to perform!

As time went on, things changed, and the Quarterback Club began to operate inside the South Street Casino. This was a private bottle club – meaning members would bring their own alcohol to drink instead of buying beverages from a bartender – that had once met at the Wellsbilt Hotel. However, after Dr. Wells' passing in 1957, the club began to operate inside the casino.

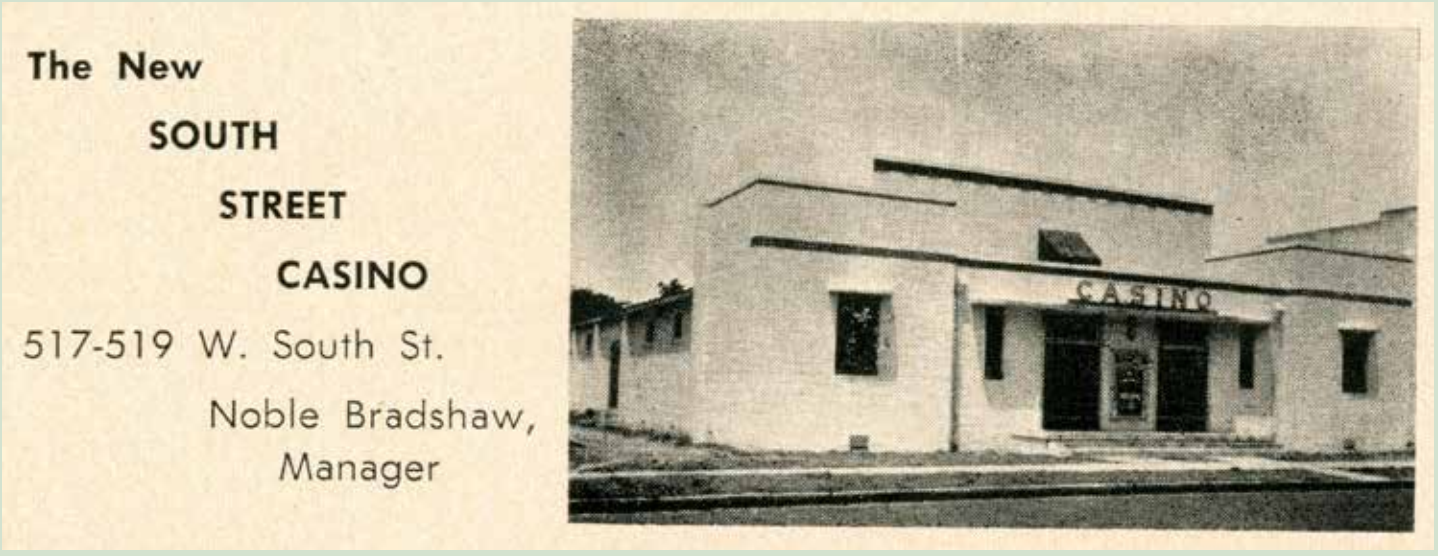
The Quarterback Club continued to host adult dances and musical performances as part of the Chitlin' Circuit. One 1962 ad in the *Orlando Evening Star* reads, "The Quarterback Club of Orlando Presents Count Basie and His Orchestra at the South Street Casino." As the South Street Casino continued to evolve, so did its name. Eventually, the building was regularly referred to simply as the Quarterback Club. Unfortunately, the building suffered fire damage in the 1980s and was torn down. Even though it is gone, it is still remembered as a once-vital part of Orlando's Black community.

Famed gospel singer Mahalia Jackson was photographed in Orlando in June 1959 at Gales Clothing Store on West Church Street. She was in town for a performance at the city's Municipal Auditorium. The poster promoting the show can be seen at top right.

I've Got a Gig to Play, But Where Can I Stay?

When musicians traveled the circuit in the South, securing sleeping accommodations was just as important as booking performances. Being on the road wasn't always fun and music. Racism was real, and sometimes deadly. Being Black in the South in


THE QUARTERBACK CLUB OF ORLANDO
Presents
Count Basie and His Orchestra
At The South Street Casino
On Wednesday, January 31, 1962
FROM 10:00 P.M. UNTIL 2:00 A.M.
ADMISSION $2.50
BOX OFFICE OPENS AT 6:00 P.M.
FOR TABLE RESERVATIONS
CALL GA 2-9302 OR GA 4-7012



The South Street Casino as depicted in a directory for Orlando's Negro Chamber of Commerce. Above, right: An ad for a performance by Count Basie and the Count Basie Orchestra in the *Orlando Evening Star*, January 31, 1962.

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Above: The 1956 *Green Book*. Below: A Sun-Glo brochure and receipts from stays by famous visitors.

an unfamiliar area could prove to be a dangerous situation if travelers were not careful.

In search of information and safety, many Black travelers turned to *The Negro Motorist Green Book* – a guidebook listing hotels and restaurants that would cater to them. Although author Victor H. Green's first edition, published in 1936, focused on New York City, the *Green Book* soon expanded to cover other states. The 1956 edition included two listings for Orlando: the "Wells Bilt Hotel" and the "Sun-Glo Motel."

The Sun-Glo was located at 737 S. Orange Blossom Trail, near Jones High School. It opened around 1955 and added 16 apartment units the following year. Its motto was "A Highway Hotel Catering to the Elite Colored Clientele." As hotel receipts in the History Center's collection make clear, many famous performers stayed there. However, unlike Dr. Wells' hotel, the Sun-Glo was white-owned and operated. Franklin James Manuel, owner of the construction company Manuel Builders Inc., ran the hotel until about 1970. The building still stands and is currently home to the Orange Inn Motel.

The End of an Era

Eventually, Black performers were allowed on stage in other venues in Orlando. Unfortunately, Jim Crow still reigned and the audience remained segregated. In 1957, Louis Armstrong performed at Orlando's Municipal Auditorium (later transformed into what is now the Bob Carr Theater); an *Orlando Sentinel* ad noted a "Reserved section for White and Colored." Two years later, another *Sentinel* ad from June 1959 for a Mahalia Jackson concert at the auditorium reads, "Seats for White and Colored."

The passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act ended the segregation of public spaces. This allowed for increased opportunities not only for artists to perform but also for Black people to attend more shows. With public spaces becoming generally more integrated, the need to seek out Black-only hotel and performance spaces waned. Although many of the clubs and venues where Black artists performed are no longer around, the influences of the musical talent who walked through their doors can still be heard today. ■

IN SEARCH OF JOHN MOSES CHENEY

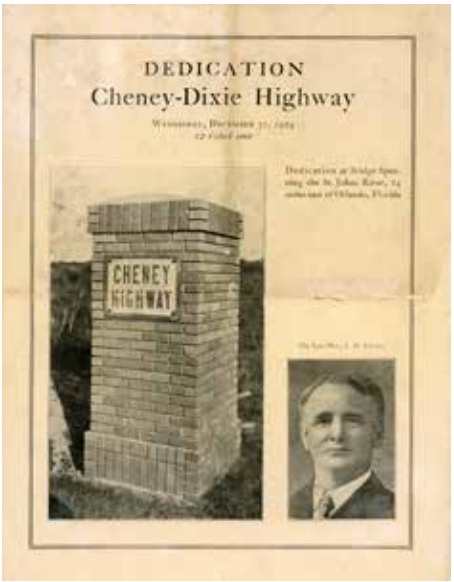
BY THOMAS A. CLOUD

A New England lawyer settles in 1885 Orlando, shaping our city as few others have, in Part I of a two-part series chronicling Cheney's impact throughout the region.

John Moses Cheney is no longer a household name in Orlando. A century after his death, only scattered clues to his life remain. Road signs along a truncated highway that once blazed the first paved road from Orlando to the Atlantic coast still carry the name "Old Cheney Highway." An east Orange County elementary school, as well as several businesses, have borrowed the name based on proximity to that road, and an aging 1970s county dam along the Little Econ Greenway bears the name of John's oldest son, Donald.

At Orlando's Greenwood Cemetery, John Cheney's grave sits amongst others of his family on a low hill, where an aging, flat grave marker reveals only that he was a "lawyer and jurist." The reference to "jurist" must have been a little bittersweet. Really, though, it's the briefest of epitaphs for a man who was so much more. Cheney combined the savvy of a businessman with the patience of a teacher, the cleverness of a lawyer with the chops of an actor and singer, the love of a father with the integrity of a judge, and, finally, the vision of a statesman with the community spirit of a town builder. For almost four decades, he shaped the city as few others have.

He had a knack for improving things. He acquired a "paper" water system and built it into the engine that would help propel Orlando onto the world's stage. As a federal prosecutor,



Above: A program for the 1924 dedication of the highway named for John Moses Cheney.

he initiated a relentless one-man campaign against the infamous practice of peonage – a form of continuation of slavery. Running as a Republican, Cheney had little chance of winning election in Jim Crow Florida. He labored against the "Lily White" faction of his own party, as well as very real threats from the Ku Klux Klan, and defended Black voting rights decades before the birth of a national civil rights movement.

Cheney wasn't just about business and politics; in many ways, living in Orlando changed him. He fell in love with both the people and culture of frontier Florida, transforming himself from New England Yankee into a kind of Florida Cracker savant. He loved hunting, fishing, horseback riding, and camping with his entire family. He once submitted an article to the *Ladies Home Journal* written in "Cracker" dialect; it was the language his jurors spoke and understood. His oldest son, Don, said he turned down a career in opera to practice law. As president of Orlando's first theater arts organization, the Mendelssohn Club, he directed generations in theater and singing through the comic opera of Gilbert and Sullivan.

BEGINNINGS

Cheney's parents, Joseph and Juliette, came from well-established New England families. He was born in 1859 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin – a result of his parents' roles in a traveling music show. When he was 3 years old, the family returned to Woodville, Vermont, following the death of his grandmother. Besides farming and roofing, his father taught in various music schools for some 30 years in New England. Tragically, his mother was killed by a runaway team of horses in 1881, when Cheney was a young man. His father died of pneumonia in 1886.

Cheney attended locally funded schools until age 14, spent four years clerking at a Vermont country store, and then attended New Hampton Literary Institution in New Hampshire. After finishing college-preparatory studies and earning a teaching certification, he taught both day and night classes to earn tuition for law school. From 1881 to 1883, he clerked for an up-and-coming Republican attorney and future minister to Spain, Henry Clay Ide, who handled a lawsuit against the town of Ryegate, Vermont, about the death of Cheney's mother. The jury awarded a cash verdict against Ryegate in 1882.

The Mendlessohn Club's *Mikado* featured John Cheney's son Donald A. Cheney, as seen in this photograph taken on May 16, 1914.

Following his clerkship, Cheney attended Boston University Law School. The original building still exists at 36 Bromfield St., which put Cheney about four blocks from Boston's theater district at the very moment when Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera was taking America by storm. According to his son Don, he helped pay his way through law school by singing in Boston-area churches and also worked as a waiter. After graduation in 1885, he passed the Massachusetts Bar and formed a partnership with classmate Arthur Odlin. The two prepared to open a law office in Florida.

Below, from left: Judge T. P. Warlow, Helen Warlow, Lizzie Alexander Cheney, Bertha Sturchfield, John Moses Cheney, Halle Warlow, and Tom Williams camping along Lake Butler in Windermere, circa 1900.

A NEW ENGLAND YANKEE MIGRATES TO THE OLD CONFEDERACY

In moving to frontier Florida, the young Republican lawyer participated in a major migration between 1880 and 1900 – a two-decade span in which Florida's population more than doubled, with a majority of new settlers coming from New England states. These new Floridians were also joined by more than 100,000 newly emancipated, formerly enslaved individuals.

This demographic shift collided with the efforts of former Confederates

in Florida to remove what they perceived as the "shackles" of Reconstruction, derisively called "Carpetbagger Rule." Florida Gov. Edward Perry and U.S. Sen. Wilkinson Call were both former Confederate military officers. In 1885, state electors approved a new Florida constitution that weakened the governor, Republicans, and Black voters in favor of local Democratic political organizations, strengthening the grip of Jim Crow in Florida.

Cheney described his December 1885 trip from Boston to Orlando in a letter to his childhood sweetheart and fiancé, Elizabeth "Lizzie" Alexander, tracing the train and steamboat journey via Savannah, Jacksonville, and Sanford. Written on Sinclair's Real Estate Agency letterhead from Cheney's newly rented office, the letter also contains a cryptic reference to joining "in the ring so to speak." He's referring to a well-documented phenomenon of 1880s Florida politics: "ring rule."

A local "ring" was controlled by the "ring boss." Any particular town might have more than one ring. Democrats has not yet wrested complete control from Republicans in Florida, and a local ring might consist of members of both parties.

In this transitional period, county "courthouse gangs" controlled many local issues, including to whom legal work was referred. In the letter, Cheney described an influential member of one local ring, Maj. Alexander St. Clair Abrams, renowned newspaper editor, lawyer, and founder of Tavares. Abrams held stock in two local railroads that could, according to Cheney, "turn lots of business into our hands."

Cheney handled real estate matters for Sinclair. He was also commissioned by a group of Pennsylvania bankers, insurance companies, and investors to investigate the status of several properties and businesses in Florida, including the franchising of a water system in Orlando. This marks the beginning of Cheney's involvement with utilities in Orlando, which would have significant consequences decades later. Within five years, the young New Englander also became city attorney of Orlando – the only political office to which he would ever be elected.

A RICH AND VARIED LIFE

Cheney's life encompassed much more than law and politics. In early 1886, he married Lizzie Alexander in Vermont, brought her to Orlando, and set about building a home on Lake Cherokee. The couple brought up their three children – a daughter, Glenn, and two sons, Don and Joseph – in a series of homes located between Lake Cherokee and Lake Concord. (The last home, an official Orlando Landmark, still stands at 105 W. Colonial Dr., next to Interstate 4.)

Except for Lizzie, the entire family participated in a variety of outdoor activities including hunting, fishing, and boating. Cheney eventually contributed toward a clubhouse referred to as Bee-Gi-Wo-Che, the combination of the first syllable of the last name of the builders (Beeman, Giles, Woodford, and Cheney) – much like the naming devices from one of his beloved Gilbert and Sullivan plays. His son Don would later use the same device to name a major Boy Scout camp, still known as Camp La-No-Che.

The senior Cheney also belonged to a number of community organizations, including Orlando's Masonic Lodge No. 69, where he would become grand master in 1893. He served as president of the Mendelssohn Club, Orlando's first iteration of civic theater. He performed in and directed numerous Gilbert and Sullivan productions, which took place in Orlando's Opera House or in various churches. Cheney and his son Don also contributed their time and talents to Rollins College, where they served on the Board of Trustees.

Most of Cheney's lengthy political career took place during a time when the state Democratic party was riven with division between the conservative "Bourbons," who supported out-of-state corporate investment, and the Jacksonville-based "Straight-Outs," the party's less conservative, anti-corporate, anti-railroad faction.

While this division might occasionally enable an outsider such as Napoleon Bonaparte Broward or Sidney Catts to become governor, a Republican candidate had no chance of winning statewide office in Florida. The largest block of Republican voters, formerly enslaved Black residents, had in essence been stripped of any ability to vote, by Florida's 1885 constitution, the state poll tax, and other provisions of a Jim Crow code created by the Legislature from 1887 through 1920.

Still, from 1904 through 1920, Cheney mounted unsuccessful statewide Republican campaigns for governor, U.S. senator, the Florida Supreme Court, and twice for Congress. He did so "with no hope of being elected," according to his son Don. At a national level, though,

On January 8, 1886, John Cheney wrote to his future wife, Lizzie Alexander, on Sinclair's Real Estate Agency letterhead. He described his December 1885 trip to Florida.

Cheney achieved success through federal appointments, because a Republican president controlled a number of appointed state positions. His 1900 appointment by President McKinley as federal census supervisor for Florida's second district left a positive legacy. Some historians have credited his efforts with the first modern statewide census in Florida.

Cheney also commissioned the first comprehensive, accurate assessment of the Seminole population. He hired Brevard County surveyor J. Otto Fries and Fort Pierce rancher Arch Hendry as the "enumerators." Fries knew the country, and Hendry knew the Seminole language and culture. Together, they documented not only the number of Seminoles but also the location of settlements and other priceless information.

In the early 20th century, many Black and immigrant laborers were exploited by a kind of indentured servitude called peonage, which John Cheney vehemently opposed.

THE CRUSADE AGAINST PEONAGE

Cheney's next appointment as a federal prosecutor from late 1905 to 1912 brought him statewide notoriety because he took on the practice of peonage.

From 1890 to 1900, both the country and Florida significantly expanded railroad track and routes. Besides Henry Flagler's and Henry Plant's major railroad systems, a myriad of smaller lines crisscrossed the state. These transportation corridors enabled Florida to develop a classic export economy for timber, phosphate, cattle, and farming produce.

Railroad construction, timber, and phosphate were labor-intensive; each required thousands of workers who toiled under less than ideal climatic and environmental conditions. To recruit enough workers to mine phosphate rock, cut timber, or clear right-of-way through mosquito-infested swamps, employers turned to the vast numbers of immigrants arriving along the Atlantic Coast. Many came from Italy, Russia, Poland, Bulgaria, and other countries where little English was spoken. In a place where slavery had only recently been outlawed by force of arms, perhaps it's hardly surprising that employers resorted to peonage.

A form of indentured servitude, peonage exists when an employer compels a worker to pay off a debt with work. Although outlawed by Congress in 1867, the system prospered in the South until the 1940s. Peonage took several forms, including the leasing of prisoners by states such as Florida that were too penurious to build state prisons.

The typical form in Florida worked as follows. An employer might advance pay or transport costs to a prospective employee, to be paid off later. Imagine an Italian or Russian immigrant transported to a company town in rural Florida and being paid a wage that couldn't pay for company-supplied food and lodging, let alone preexisting debt. In some cases, law enforcement and railroad employees conspired with employers to prevent a worker from leaving by train by confiscating lawfully purchased train tickets.

Cheney secured his appointment as federal prosecutor in late 1905 using his New England Republican connections. His appointment coincided with revelations in the national press of systemic peonage in the South, and he found himself catapulted into the limelight through a series of prosecutions that lasted into 1910 in Florida. He worked in tandem with Charles Wells Russell, a senior U.S. attorney responsible for coordinating national prosecutions, including the case brought against Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast Railroad. While the prosecution in New York against Flagler ultimately failed, Cheney won a series of high-profile trials in Jacksonville, Pensacola, Tampa, Ocala, and Orlando.

The peonage trials were not popular with everyone in Florida. Several newspapers accused Cheney of trying to curtail immigration to the South. Despite heated criticism over the trials, however, no one ever accused him of questionable motives. The continuing convictions turned some papers into ardent Cheney supporters.

With his background in theater, Cheney developed into a talented trial lawyer known for his ability to win over juries. He could be seen reciting dialogue from Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado* as a mnemonic device to prepare for trial closings while walking the streets of Orlando, according to his friend and political ally, banker and Orlando businessman William R. O'Neal. His understanding of and sympathy for Floridians from all backgrounds allowed him to connect well with juries. The 16-to-18 hour days spent in trial prep didn't hurt, either.

JUDGE CHENEY

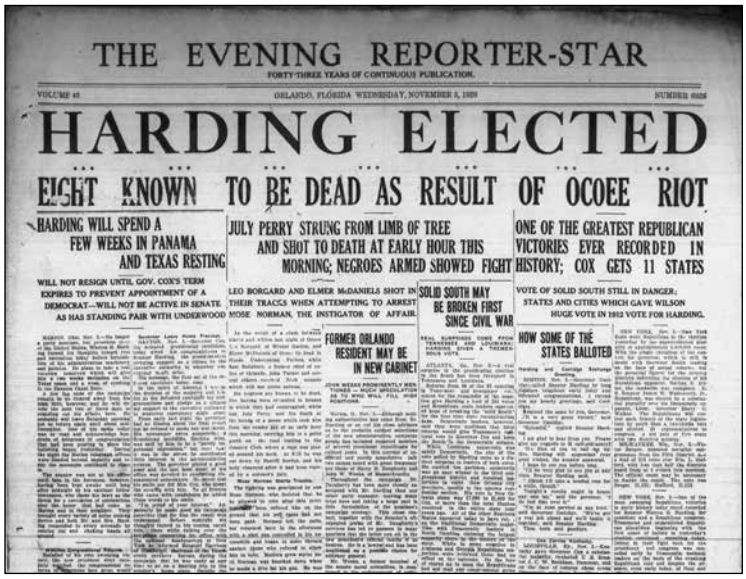
By 1912, federal Judge William Locke was reaching retirement age, and Cheney's friend and mentor, New Hampshire attorney Henry Ide, recommended Cheney for the job to President Taft, who made the appointment in the summer of 1912. Orlandoans began referring to "Judge Cheney," but the appellation proved to be premature. Events in both Florida and Washington, D.C., combined to deny Cheney the necessary Senate confirmation.

A national split in the Republican Party manifested itself in Florida in a faction known as the "Lily Whites." Coined in Texas in the late 1880s, the name describes a faction of white Republican conservatives who sought to oust Black individuals from the party and reclaim southern voters who had defected to the Democrats. In Florida, because Black voters constituted a sizeable percentage of Florida Republican voters, the Lily Whites limited their efforts to denying Black Republicans positions of leadership.

But Taft had other ideas, maintaining favorable relations (and federal appointments) with Black Republicans. In 1912, when Teddy Roosevelt sought to wrest control of the Republican Party from Taft by courting southern Lily Whites, Taft's appointees in Florida, including Joseph Lee of Jacksonville, the Black customs collector and state party chair, sought to seat only Taft delegates for the national convention in Chicago. Florida's Lily Whites, led by Ocala attorney H. L. Anderson, would have none of it and called their own state convention, excluding Black Republicans and Taft supporters and blasting Cheney's appointment as "corrupt."

The resulting political melee led to Roosevelt's third-party "Bull Moose" candidacy, a Wilson presidency, and the loss of votes in the Senate needed to confirm Cheney's appointment as federal judge. Cheney later sought another federal judicial appointment at the start of Harding's administration, but poor health intervened. His judicial career lasted only six months, but until his death in 1922, Orlando newspapers typically referred to him as Judge Cheney.

The final decade of Cheney's legal career consisted primarily of high-profile criminal defense trials, a real estate practice, and negotiation of agreements on behalf of several local utilities in which he held stock. Typical among these cases is perhaps his last case, the defense of the hapless chauffeur Baxter Patterson in the sensational 1921 murder trial of Lena Clarke, who was accused of drugging and shooting restauranteur Fred Miltimore at Orlando's San Juan Hotel. Cheney secured a not-guilty verdict for Patterson based on a two-sentence closing argument. Clarke's lawyers used an insanity defense, and after a year in the Florida State Hospital in Chattahoochee, she returned to live out her life in West Palm Beach.



THE EVENING REPORTER-STAR

FORTY-THREE YEARS OF CONTINUOUS PUBLICATION.

ORLANDO, FLORIDA WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1920

HARDING ELECTED

EIGHT KNOWN TO BE DEAD AS RESULT OF OCOEE RIOT

HARDING WILL SPEND A FEW WEEKS IN PANAMA AND TEXAS RESTING

WILL NOT RESIGN UNTIL GOV. COX'S TERM EXPIRES TO PREVENT APPOINTMENT OF A DEMOCRAT—WILL NOT BE ACTIVE IN SENATE AS HAS STANDING PAIR WITH UNDERWOOD

JULY PERRY STRUNG FROM LIMB OF TREE AND SHOT TO DEATH AT EARLY HOUR THIS MORNING; NEGROES ARMED SHOWED FIGHT

LEO BORGARD AND ELMER McDANIELS SHOT IN THEIR TRACKS WHEN ATTEMPTING TO ARREST MOSE NORMAN, THE INSTIGATOR OF AFFAIR.

SOLID SOUTH MAY BE BROKEN FIRST SINCE CIVIL WAR

FORMER ORLANDO RESIDENT MAY BE IN NEW CABINET

ONE OF THE GREATEST REPUBLICAN VICTORIES EVER RECORDED IN HISTORY; COX GETS 11 STATES

VOTE OF SOLID SOUTH STILL IN DANGER; STATES AND CITIES WHICH GAVE WILSON HUGE VOTE IN 1912 VOTE FOR HARDING.

HOW SOME OF THE STATES BALLOTED

The front page of Orlando's *Evening Reporter-Star* from November 3, 1920, carried a headline reading "EIGHT KNOWN TO BE DEAD AS THE RESULT OF OCOEE RIOT."

AN ENEMY OF THE KLAN

While he defended clients such as Patterson, Cheney's last years also placed him at the center of one of Orange County's most horrific and far-reaching episodes. Continuing his role as a perennial Republican candidate, he became the party's candidate for U.S. Senate in 1920 – the first time that women could vote in national elections, following the ratification of the 19th Amendment. In Orlando and Orange County, the election is especially remembered for the event now called the Ocoee Massacre of 1920, which began the erasure of Black residents from a community in west Orange. Cheney played an important role in the lead-up to the tragedy, through his support and education of Black voters.

Toward the end of the campaign, Florida's Ku Klux Klan threatened both Cheney and fellow Republican candidate William O'Neal, accusing them of being "in the habit of going out among the negroes of Orlando and delivering lectures, explaining to them just how to become citizens, and how to assert their rights." Then, on Election Day, a Black Ocoee resident named Moses Norman reportedly visited Cheney and his law partner, Alexander Akerman. Norman and his colleague July Perry sought help to be able to vote in Ocoee. Following the meeting, Norman returned to the Ocoee polling place, where the white men in charge denied him the ability to vote. He became involved in an altercation that led to his pursuit that night by a group of white men who came to Perry's house in search of Norman, who had fled. The violence ignited that day led to Perry's lynching and ultimately to the destruction of the Black community in Ocoee.

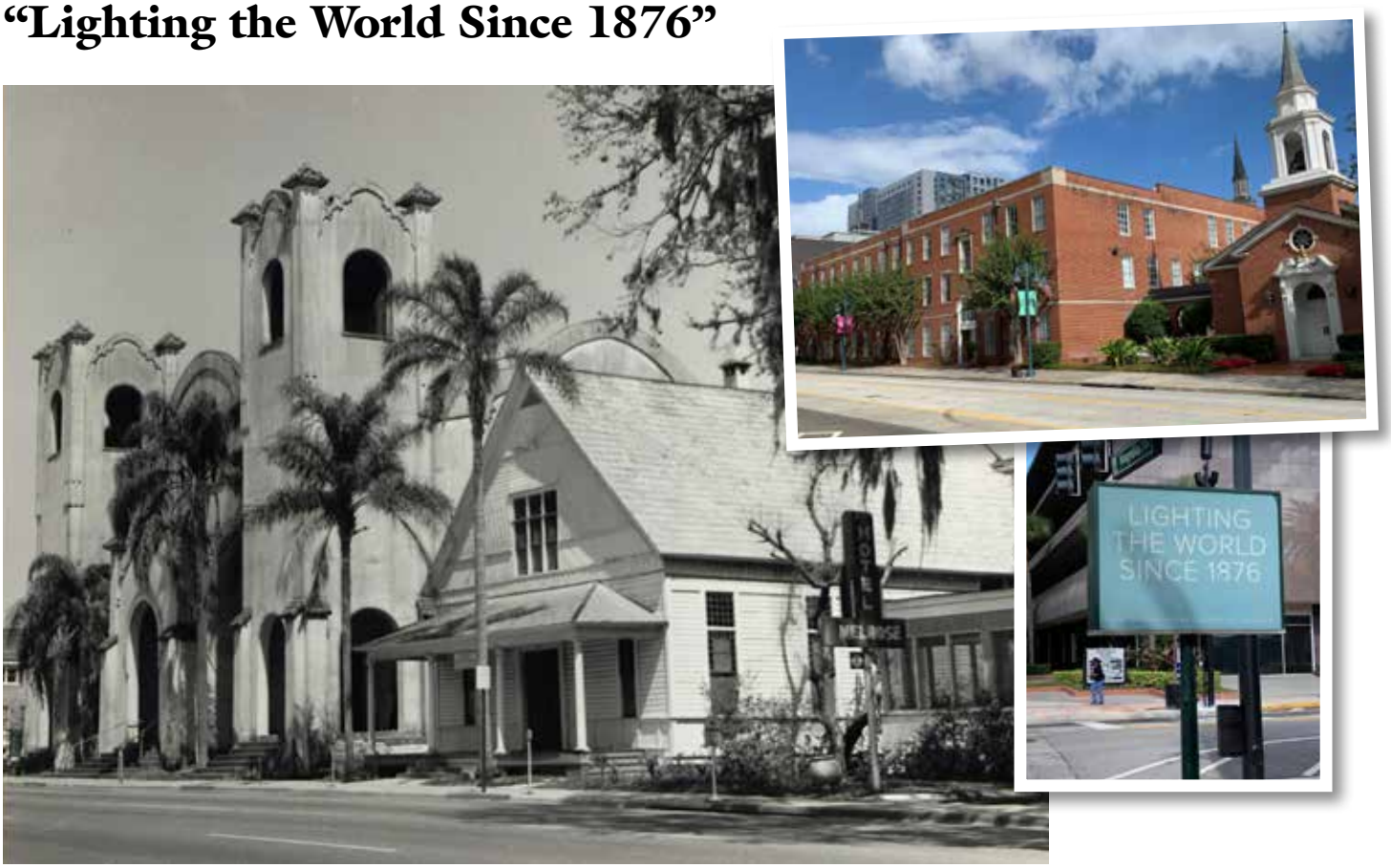
Cheney's role in the story of the Ocoee Massacre would carry his name to future generations. But, as we look back from more than a century later, perhaps the chief reason he deserves to be remembered concerns his creation of the city's first utility, the precursor of today's OUC. It's a fascinating story on its own, and we'll return to it in Part II of "In Search of John Moses Cheney" in a future issue of *Reflections from Central Florida.* ■

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, Whitney Broadaway, at Whitney.Broadaway@ocfl.net or 407-836-8587.

"Lighting the World Since 1876"



Countless city blocks in downtown Orlando are unrecognizable from 50 years ago, much less a century ago. One spot in particular has seen plenty of change in a century and more: the campus of the First Presbyterian Church of Orlando – an entire city block bound by Magnolia and Rosalind avenues on the east and west and Church and Jackson streets on the north and south.

The church was organized and established 146 years ago, as is highlighted by signage at that campus — "Lighting the World Since 1876." Its current location on Church Street represents its fifth home in the downtown area. In its early years, First Presbyterian conducted services everywhere from a private residence to the Orange County Courthouse and the Orlando Opera House. The congregation's first building of its very own was not built until 1889, on the southeast corner of Church and Main streets (today known as Magnolia Avenue).

As the congregation grew in size, the church began adding to its footprint. In 1915, it remodeled and enlarged its sanctuary into the stucco-covered, Spanish-mission style church seen in the photograph above. The unique design surely must have stood out in the downtown landscape of the mid-1910s.

The photograph shows the palm-tree-lined, arched entryway into the sanctuary on Main Street and an adjacent building, used as a Sunday School annex. On the far right of the photograph, a sign points the way to 229 S. Main St. site of the Melrose Hotel. The Melrose was likely more of a boardinghouse than a hotel, as its classified ads touted "nice warm rooms, daily and weekly rates." According to Orlando City Directories, the Melrose began operation in the mid-1920s and was torn down in 1961 to make way for additional expansion by the church. Because parking meters were not installed in this area of downtown until early 1951, we can date this photograph to sometime during the 1950s or early 1960s.

Forty years after its 1915 remodel, the church once again found a need to grow and constructed a new sanctuary, which to this day opens out onto Church Street. To much fanfare, the new $500,000 Greek Revival-meets-Colonial, spire-topped sanctuary was dedicated on May 19, 1955. Today, The Christ School stands on the space once occupied by these long-forgotten structures. ■

HISTORIC HAPPENINGS

OCTOBER EXHIBITION OPENING

At the opening of *Giants, Dragons & Unicorns: The World of Mythic Creatures*, guests had fun inventing their own creatures – one of the features we added to the exhibition from the American Museum of Natural History.

2021 TRICK OR TREAT SAFE ZONE

Our beloved Trick or Treat Safe Zone event returned this year on October 30 with a capacity attendance shaped by COVID guidelines. We offered a drive-through station with candy, goodies, and take-home activities for kids.

MARKING 50 YEARS OF DOWNTOWN ORLANDO

The City Beautiful: 50 Years of Developing Downtown opened in November and highlighted the Downtown Development Board's achievements through a timeline of events and images showcasing the city's growth.

2021 DONALD A. CHENEY AWARD WINNER

Cheers for Frank Billingsley (center), honored for his service to Central Florida history. Pam Schwartz of the History Center surprised him with the award at a November 8 event celebrating his retirement from the City of Orlando.

JOURNEY DOWN THE SECRET RIVER

Guests enjoyed an advance look at Opera Orlando's *The Secret River*, based on a children's book by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. Composed by Stella Sung of UCF, it debuted in December at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts.

FLORIDA HIGHWAYMEN MEET AND GREET

At our December "Meet and Greet" with Florida Highwaymen, five of the legendary artists chatted with visitors, sold paintings and prints, and even painted during the event. We anticipate another great Highwaymen event in May.

Summer Camp 2022

May 31- August 5, Ages 6-11

History and fun collide at our Adventures in History Summer Camp program. We provide a safe and fun learning environment that combines cool historic facts with STEAM content through hands-on activities. Campers will discover the history that surrounds us every day!

We offer classes for ages 6-8 and ages 9-11. Register your child today at **TheHistoryCenter.org/education/school-break-camps/**

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INTO LIGHT PROJECT FLORIDA

On exhibition March 5 – April 15, 2022

Presented in partnership with the Orange County Drug-Free Coalition and the national nonprofit INTO LIGHT Project, this powerful special exhibition presents original portraits of people who have died from drug addiction – the first public exhibition of its kind in Florida. The exhibition seeks to raise awareness, help erase the stigma of Substance Use Disorder, and provide a space of healing for those impacted by addiction.

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