

REFLECTIONS

FROM CENTRAL FLORIDA

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA



SPRING 2023
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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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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 Arts and Culture and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.



The History Center is accessible with elevators on every floor.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

GROW WITH US

Growth is in the air at the Orange County Regional History Center. Even as we continue to recover from the pandemic's considerable effects on our resources, we're deep in the exploration stages of fully renovating and updating our current exhibitions.

We're also growing with new staff positions and adding to our robust schedule of diversified programs for members and guests. We constantly seek ways to reimagine the museum experience to better serve our community.

Our latest special exhibition, *Figurehead: Music & Mayhem in Orlando's Underground*, which focuses on the alternative music scene in the 1980s and '90s, has brought many new visitors to the museum and underscored the idea that history encompasses more recent, as well as long-ago, phenomena. The exhibition, which continues through September this year, is a remarkable record of the creativity and vitality of Central Florida's graphic design community as well as its music community. If you've seen it, come back again and enjoy the programs it has inspired. If you haven't seen it, don't miss it.

Much has changed in the world of museums since the History Center opened more than two decades ago. We are honored by our national awards, Smithsonian Affiliation, and accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums, and have spent the past several years researching and growing our collection to reflect those changes and also to better



The Board of the Association of Professional Genealogists, the world's leading professional organization of family history, genealogy and related professionals, recently toured the museum.

reflect the experience of our entire Central Florida community.

This work takes thoughtful time and care, and we go forward with dedication to building strong relationships across the community and engaging in meaningful conversations. As always, we welcome your participation and encourage you to share your thoughts through our contact form at TheHistoryCenter.org. If you love the History Center, enjoyed a program, or were inspired by an exhibition or an article from this very publication, consider a donation of any size through United Arts. From February 1 through April 30, 2023, your gift will be matched by at least 15 percent and help your contribution go even further. Visit UnitedArts.cc/thehistorycenter/

We're growing, and learning. Grow and learn with us. ■

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

FROM THE COLLECTION

The boots you see here were made by Herzberg's Saddle Shop in Kissimmee and were donated to the History Center as part of the Orange County Sheriff's Collection. Fred Herzberg began the business as a one-person shoe-repair shop in 1917 with a \$100 loan from the State Bank in Kissimmee. Over decades, it became an Osceola County institution, offering leather goods including boots and saddles, with multiple locations in Kissimmee and St. Cloud. See other varied objects from our seven-county collecting area on page 17. ■



CONTRIBUTORS



MARISSA BELLENGER

Marissa Bellenger was the HERstory: Women in History Intern at the History Center for fall 2022. She is a senior at the University of Central Florida majoring in history with two minors in Judaic and American studies.



NOELIA IRIZARRY-ROMÁN

Noelia Irizarry-Román, a Puerto Rican researcher, is the former research associate at the History Center. Prior to working at the History Center, she was a Ph.D. student in Art History at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.



TANA MOSIER PORTER

Orlando historian Tana Mosier Porter believes history matters because the present can be understood only in the context of the past. The beginning is the best place to start.

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ABOUT THE COVER

This architectural rendering by artist Reggie Stanton shows how the facade of the Orlando Municipal Auditorium was to be incorporated into the design of the Bob Carr Auditorium. In 1979, Stanton published a book about architectural renderings or delininations titled "Drawing & Painting Buildings: Reggie Stanton's Guide to Architectural Renderings." The artist, originally from England, was a long-time staff member of the *Orlando Sentinel*, producing cartoons for the opinion page as well as editorial illustrations. ■



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of Central Florida**

Editor-in-Chief

Pamela Schwartz

Managing Editor

Rick Kilby

Copy Editor

Joy Wallace Dickinson

Associate Editor

Whitney Garner

To receive the latest *Reflections* by mail, email Pamela.Schwartz@ocfl.net to become a member. To contribute an article, email kilbycreative@cfl.rr.com.

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 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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

COFFEE & CONVERSATIONS

Dance Music in Central Florida
Sunday, March 5, 2 – 3 p.m.

TOTALLY EIGHTIES POP CULTURE TRIVIA HAPPY HOUR

Thursday, March 16, 6 – 8 p.m.

Get ready for a totally gnarly time as we test your knowledge of the music, movies, and pastimes that made the 1980s the most excellent decade.

FLORIDA HIGHWAYMEN MEET & GREET

Saturday, May 6, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Meet the trailblazing artists of the Florida Highwaymen movement and purchase their original artwork.

SMITHSONIAN MUSEUM DAY

Saturday, September 16, 10 – 3 p.m.

JOSEPH L. BRECHNER SPEAKER SERIES

Named in honor of the late award-winning journalist and community leader Joseph L. Brechner, our next speaker series focuses on music that made history in Florida.

Good Day Sunshine State: The Beatles in 1964 Florida

Sunday, March 19, 2 – 3 p.m.

Featuring author Bob Kealing

Play All Night! Duane Allman and the Journey to Fillmore East

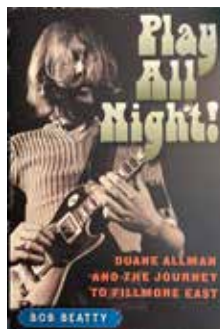
Sunday, April 2, 2 – 3 p.m.

Featuring author Bob Beatty

Gainesville Punk: A History of Bands & Music

Sunday, May 7, 2 – 3 p.m.

Featuring author Matt Walker



ORANGE COUNTY REGIONAL HISTORY CENTER

DOWNTOWN ORLANDO

LUNCH & LEARN

At noon on the first Friday of each month, join us for an interesting program about Central Florida history, the museum, and more. Participate virtually or in-person.

- Friday, March 3, Legends of Tinker Field
- Friday, April 7, 20 Things You Didn't Know About Florida
- Friday, May 5, Florida: A History in Pictures
- Friday, June 2, The Orlando Who? The History of Defunct Local Sports Teams
- Friday, July 7, Topic TBD
- Friday, August 4, Topic TBD

FIRST SATURDAYS: HISTORY ALIVE!

The past comes alive at the History Center the first Saturday of every month from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. with

interactive experiences and themed hands-on activities for the whole family. Upcoming themes include:

- Saturday, March 4, Florida's First People
- Saturday, April 1, Delicious Citrus
- Saturday, May 6, Florida's Pioneering Spirit
- Saturday, June 3, Celebrating Community
- Saturday, July 1, Florida's First People
- Saturday, August 5, Delicious Citrus



SENSORY SUNDAYS

Join us from noon to 4 p.m. for some sensory-friendly fun for the whole family! Admission is free on Sensory Sundays for individuals with ASGO membership.

- Sunday, April 16, Pascua Florida
- Sunday, July 16, Amusement Park Mania
- Sunday, October 15, Spooks and Thrills

READING THROUGH HISTORY BOOK CLUB

Join the History Center book club at 6 p.m. on select Thursdays. We'll meet to enjoy a deep-dive discussion of important works of fiction and nonfiction with links to Florida history. Check back for book selections!

- Thursday, May 18
- Thursday, August 17
- Thursday, November 16

ROSA LEE JONES

THE MOTHER OF COCOA

• BY MARISSA BELLENGER •



Right: Rosa Lee Jones and Tuskegee Airmen in 2006.



Below: Undated photo of Rosa Lee Jones.

The Space Coast certainly has its share of significant history, including notable women, but you may not have heard of one of the most remarkable: Rosa Lee Jones. Her life was dedicated to activism and to nurturing her community, cementing her legacy as “The Mother of Cocoa.” She achieved a series of “firsts,” breaking barriers both for women and for Black residents of Brevard County and acting as a beacon of inspiration and encouragement for those who knew her. She remained active in her community in various ways throughout her long life, creating an impact that has resonated in Cocoa and Brevard County for decades.

FAITH IN EDUCATION

Rosa Lee Campbell was born February 26, 1907, in Quincy, an agricultural community near Tallahassee. From an early age, she understood the importance of education. After graduating from the high school at the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in Tallahassee, she earned a business degree from the Walker College of Business in Tampa.

In 1925, at age 19, Campbell married Osborne Herman Jones, and the two moved to Brevard County, settling in Cocoa to raise their children. At the time, the town’s population was only 1,800 people who lived in scattered communities along dirt roads. The Jones family resided near orange groves.

Rosa Lee Jones continued her education at Brevard Community College and became a kindergarten teacher. With the help of her husband, she cared for children in her Magnolia Street home beginning in the late 1920s. In 1930 she became the first Black Girl Scout leader in Cocoa. She was also active in her congregation at Mount Moriah African Methodist Episcopal Church, where she played the organ on Sundays. Church and community members began to call her by the affectionate nicknames “Aunt Rosa” and “Big Mama.”

CALLED TO ACTION

Early on, Jones noticed the social and legal disparities that affected her community. In 1926, a Black man

named James Clark was lynched in Eau Gallie, a section of the nearby city of Melbourne. It was the third lynching in Brevard County within two months. Clark was working as the chauffeur for a traveling salesman



staying at an Eau Gallie hotel when he was accused of raping the hotel owner's 10-year-old daughter. On July 13, 1926, the *Cocoa Tribune* reported that Clark "had been arrested Sunday for an attempted attack on a white girl of Eau Gallie, and that he was on his way, about 7:00 o'clock that evening, with the chief of police to Titusville for safe keeping, when the officer was over-powered by masked men."

Clark was never again seen alive, and his body was discovered the next day. News of the Clark lynching inspired Jones to action, and she became dedicated to more direct activism.

In the 1930s, Jones met a man who would expand her platform: Harry T. Moore, a fellow Brevard County educator who taught fourth grade at a Black elementary school. Moore also fought for equal rights by advocating for equal pay for Black teachers, challenging barriers to voter registration, and investigating lynchings. Jones began her work with Moore taking notes during civil rights meetings that were held in secret. In 1934, she helped Moore organize the Florida branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

In 1937, Jones joined Moore and the all-Black Florida State Teacher's

Association to sue for equal pay in the South with the help of attorney Thurgood Marshall. It was the first lawsuit of its kind. Although the initial suit failed, it created a dozen other federal lawsuits that would eventually lead to equal teacher salaries in Florida.

Over the course of their work together, Jones became close to both Harry T. Moore and his wife, Harriette. While the Moores worked to register voters across the state, Jones helped the cause by acting as Harry's secretary. In 1944, the Supreme Court ruled that all-white primary elections were unconstitutional. Seizing the opportunity, the Moores helped register 31 percent of eligible Black voters and added 116,000 members to the Florida Democratic Party by 1950.

Tragedy struck on Christmas Day in 1951 when a bomb exploded under the Moores' house – the work of four Ku Klux Klan members, investigators said decades later. It was the Moores' 25th wedding anniversary. The heinous act killed the couple and is considered the first assassination of the mid-20th-century civil rights era. No one was ever arrested in the Moores' deaths despite a national outcry and two FBI investigations. The event acted as a catalyst for the impending civil-rights movement across the nation.

REMEMBERING THE MOORES

Harry and Harriette Moore spent decades of their lives fighting for racial equality and assisting Black voters. In 1934, Harry started an NAACP chapter in Brevard County and later became the president of the NAACP Florida State Conference. He also formed the Progressive Voters League of Florida in 1944, which had registered over 100,000 Black voters statewide by the time of his death. Only months before he was killed, Harry had been investigating lynchings and instances of racial violence, including the Groveland Four case and the lynching of 15-year-old Willie James Howard in Suwannee County.

Today, the site of the Moores' home is the Harry T. & Harriette V. Moore Cultural Complex in Mims (see HarryHarrietteMoore.org).

Below: The Moores' home in Mims was bombed on Christmas Day in 1951. Harry T. Moore died the same day, and his wife, Harriette, died from her injuries nine days later, on January 3, 1952. **Right:** Harriette and Harry T. Moore in an undated photo.





Above and bottom right: Undated photos of Rosa Lee Jones.

A FORCE FOR CHILDREN

In Brevard County, Rosa Lee Jones continued her work for the community. After running her in-home day-care center for almost 40 years, she and her husband, Osborne, decided to expand. The couple refinanced their home to fund the construction of the Rosebud Kindergarten and Child Care Center in 1966. The Joneses built the center by themselves and never received government funds, making Rosa Lee Jones the first African American woman to own and operate a licensed kindergarten and day-care center in Cocoa.

Her goal was to help Black mothers find educational support for their children. According to journalist Sara Schwieder in a 1974 *Florida Today* article, Jones “dreamed of opening a school where black children could receive a first-rate education, similar to that offered at a nearby school for white children.” The Rosebud center enrolled white students as well. Believing in the importance of education, Jones would take anyone into her school, regardless of their background. Her students would go on to become notable figures in local government and education, including mayors, executive directors, and community activists.



Above and below: Artist Frank Rao’s work honoring Rosa Lee Jones was installed in August 2021.

Rosa Lee Jones also had a notable presence in Brevard County media. She was one of the county’s first woman broadcasters. On WKKO-AM radio during the “Open House” morning program, Jones shared community news during her segment called “The Gab Bag,” from 1965 to 1985. Every Sunday the community would tune in to hear her eloquent voice. She was also a regular contributor to newspapers that served the Black community, such as *The Brevard* and *The Script*.

A COMMUNITY REMEMBERS

On December 2, 2008, Rosa Lee Jones died at age 101. In August 2021, she was honored with a mural in Cocoa, painted on three 5-by-7-foot panels that were placed at the intersection of Brevard Avenue and Rosa L.

Jones Drive, a street in Cocoa and neighboring Rockledge that had been renamed in Jones’s honor in 1999. Artist and muralist Frank Rao painted the mural, which showcased images of community work throughout Jones’s life. In her later years, Jones was also recognized with honors including the Pioneer award from the Child Care Association of Brevard County.

Rosa Lee Jones was not only known by many but loved by an entire community. Her reach never broke, as she worked in many roles. Her main purpose: transcend hate. Whether Jones was attending civil rights meetings, eloquently speaking over radio waves, playing the organ at her church, or tending to the hundreds of children who would walk through her classroom doors, she was indeed the “The Mother of Cocoa.” ■



Courtesy of the Florida Historical Society

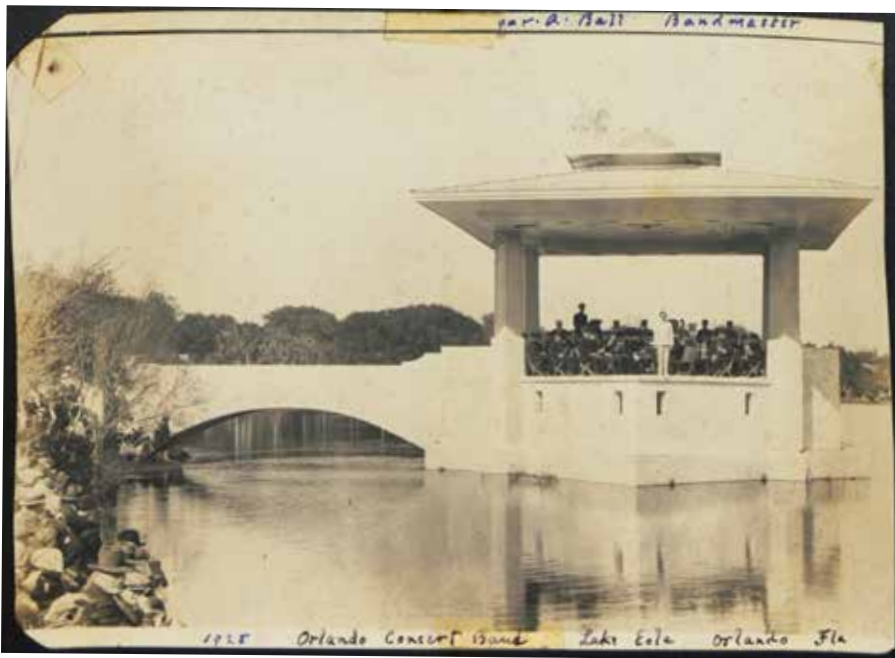


Courtesy of the Florida Historical Society

PLACES FOR PERFORMANCE



Our Figurehead: *Music & Mayhem in Orlando's Underground* exhibition shines a light on a period in the City Beautiful's history when a new generation frequented downtown venues for the communal experience of enjoying live music. Downtown Orlando has a long history of performance, from the creation of the Orlando Opera House in 1884 to the opening of the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, 130 years later in 2014.



Above: The Prairie Style bandstand at Orlando's Lake Eola, designed by architects Ida Annah Ryan and Isabel Roberts, was dedicated on March 23, 1924, with a program featuring the city's Pythian Band, conducted by Edgar A. Ball. Musical selections included the popular *William Tell* Overture and a banjo solo by Charles Green, enjoyed by an audience of hundreds, seated on the lake's shore.

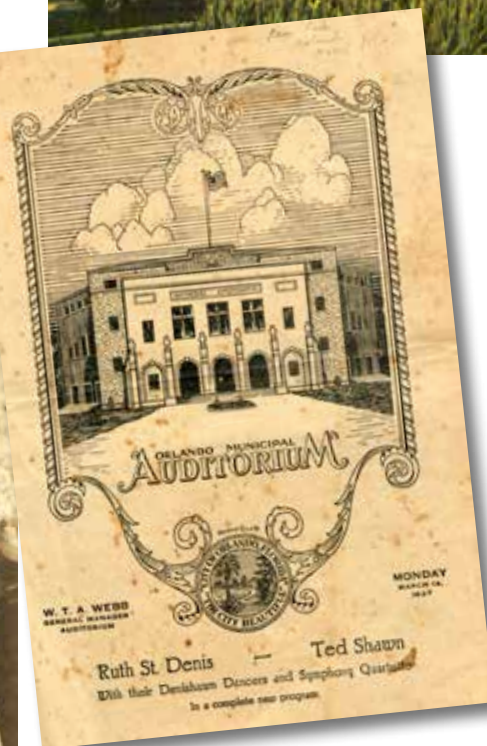
Top: In 1883, the family of cattle baron Jacob Summerlin donated land they owned around Lake Eola for public use. According to the city's website, Lake Eola was recognized as a City of Orlando public park in 1888, and a bandshell has been a "staple of the park" since 1886.



DOWNTOWN ORLANDO'S MUSIC VENUES THROUGH THE YEARS



Below: Orlando's Municipal Auditorium on West Livingston Street first opened its doors in 1926 on land reserved for the Orange County Fair. The auditorium's grand opening on February 21, 1927, featured the La Scala Grand Opera Company of Philadelphia presenting Verdi's *Aida*. Elvis Presley performed there on three occasions in 1955 and 1956. Despite being notoriously hot in the years before air-conditioning and having poor acoustics, the venerable venue holds a special place in the hearts of many Central Floridians.



Above: In the 1970s, “Muni Aud,” as longtime Orlandoans often called it, was transformed into the Mayor Bob Carr Performing Arts Centre and is now an official Orlando Historic Landmark. Bob Carr was mayor of Orlando from 1956 to 1967. During the renovation, the Municipal Auditorium’s original facade was enclosed by glass walls that created an interior lobby (see the cover of this issue). Today the Bob Carr is managed by Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts and is part of the Creative Village Development.



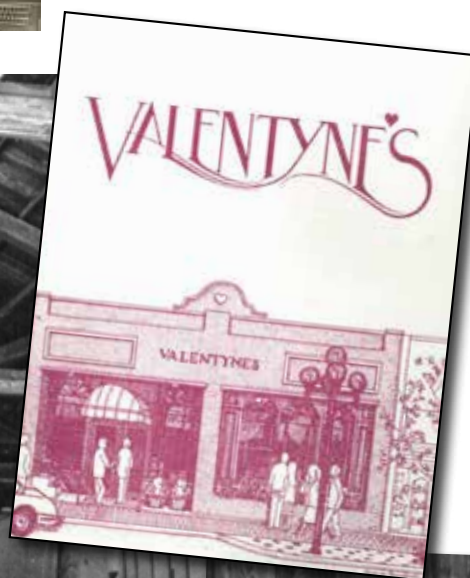
The Orlando Coliseum (seen above in the 1940s) opened its doors on December 23, 1926, the start of a multiday celebration of the new venue (left) on North Orange Avenue near Lake Ivanhoe, just north of downtown. The opening featured vaudeville performances, an elaborate indoor light show, and music from the Tom Danks Orchestra. Over the next several decades, the Coliseum hosted dances, basketball games, concerts, and civic events of all varieties. The property boasted the Aquaseum, one of Orlando's first public swimming pools, and the Bowliseum, a twelve-lane bowling alley. The main dance floor also doubled as a skating rink for local youth. Sadly, a fire ravaged the Coliseum in 1972, and the building was soon demolished, leaving only the memories of what was once Orlando's most popular hangout.



Left, above, right: Built by former Orlando mayor Braxton Beacham Sr. in 1921, the Beacham Theatre started as a venue for vaudeville performers as well as motion pictures. It became Orlando's premier movie palace, and its Orange Avenue facade was often bedecked with elaborate decorations to advertise local movie debuts. The building was shuttered in 1975 but returned as a live music venue called the Great Southern Music Hall, a franchise of a venue of the same name in Gainesville. Today it is a nightclub known simply as The Beacham.



J. Mascies of Dinosaur Jr. performs at the Beacham. Photo by Jim Leatherman.

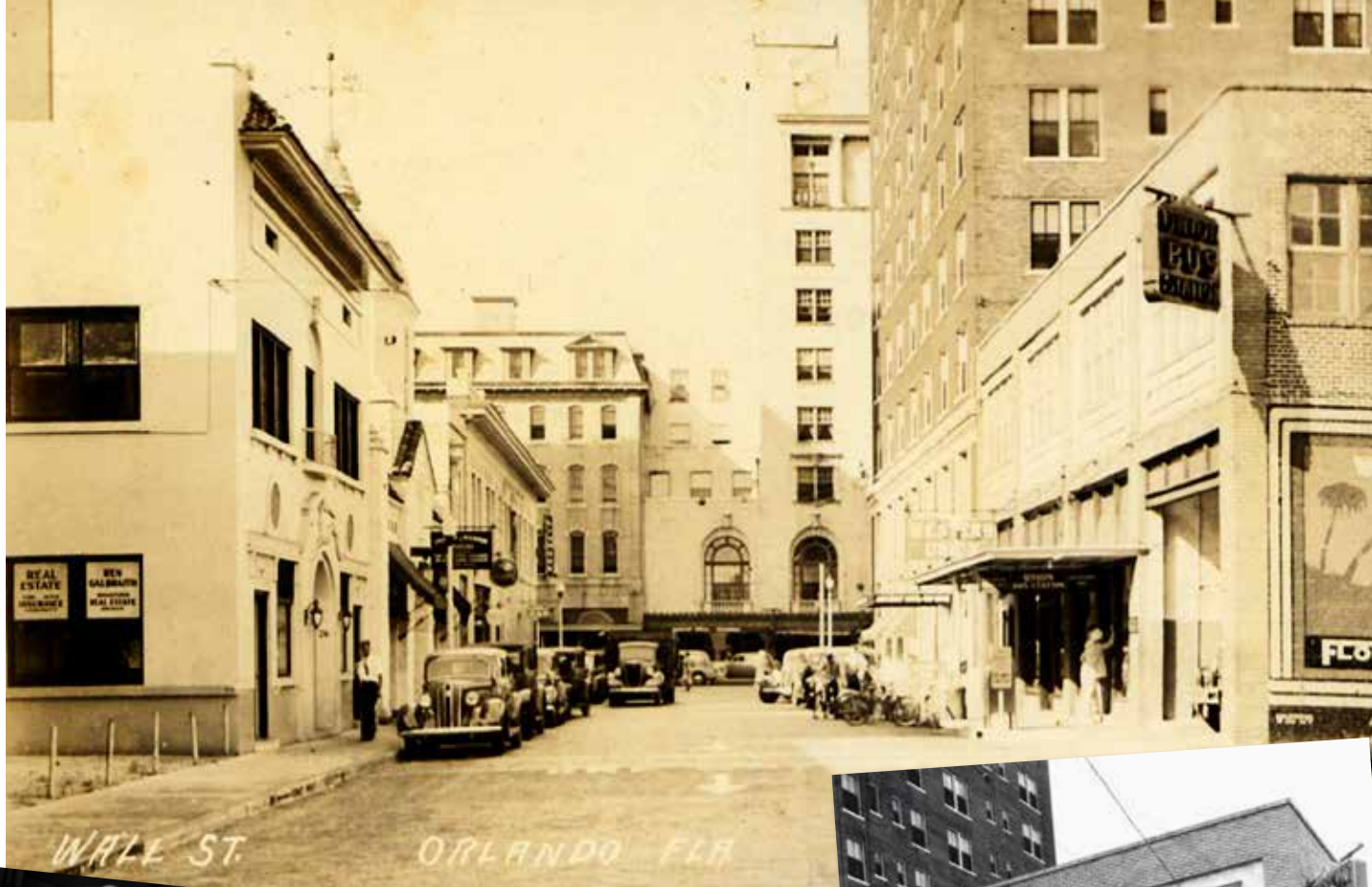


Below: From 1995 to 2001, the Valentyne's space became the Sapphire Supper Club, owned by Figurehead's Jim Faherty and Shayni Rae. Since 2001, the spot has been home to a venue and bar called The Social.

Above: The Beacham Building extends from the theater north to Washington Street. When this photograph was taken in the 1980s, part of it was being remodeled into a club called Valentyne's. In the 1990s, the Valentyne's space became the Downtown Jazz & Blues Club and then the Blue Note (before getting a cease-and-desist order from Beacham's Blue Note in New York).

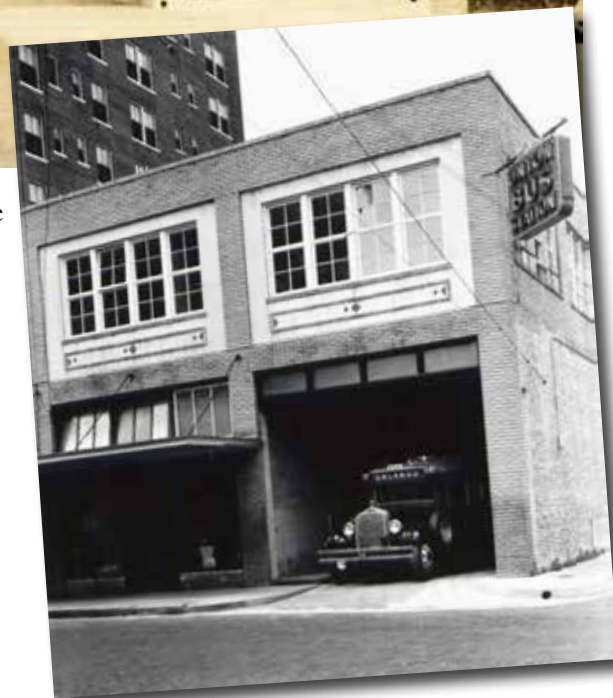


Photo by Jim Leatherman.



Above: Seven Mary Three at the Go Lounge. Photo by Jim Leatherman.

Above and right: The first contemporary venue to open on Orlando's Wall Street was 1992's Yab Yum Coffeehouse, which, according to the *Orlando Weekly*, soon catered to a range of customers from "beatniks who liked the poetry readings, open mic nights and one-act plays; gutter punks who had nothing better to do; and judges and attorneys who grabbed a bagel before heading to the old courthouse." In 1993 the owners opened Go Lounge in the former Union Bus Station on the corner of Court Avenue and Wall Street, hosting many Figurehead shows in back by moving out a 1963 Bluebird bus that was parked there to provide more seating for customers.



Left: The Edge venue has featured performances by nationally known acts such as Nine Inch Nails, Beastie Boys, The Ramones, Foo Fighters, and Hole. At one time it housed the hardware-and-mill building supply company owned by Harry P. Leu. Later it became a country music venue called 8 Seconds. Today, the building is home to the Ace Café.



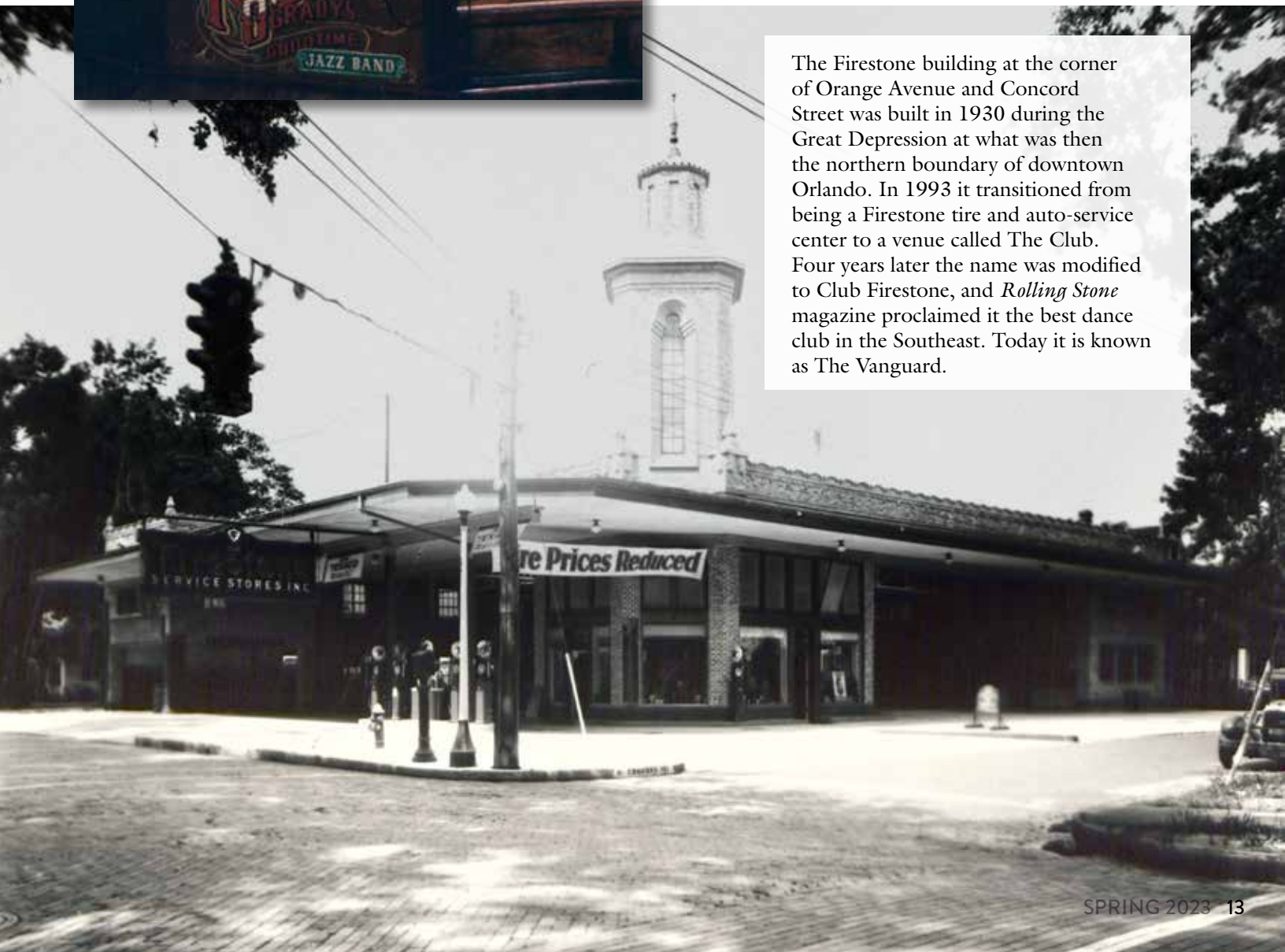
Above: Henry Rollins at The Edge. Photo by Jim Leatherman.



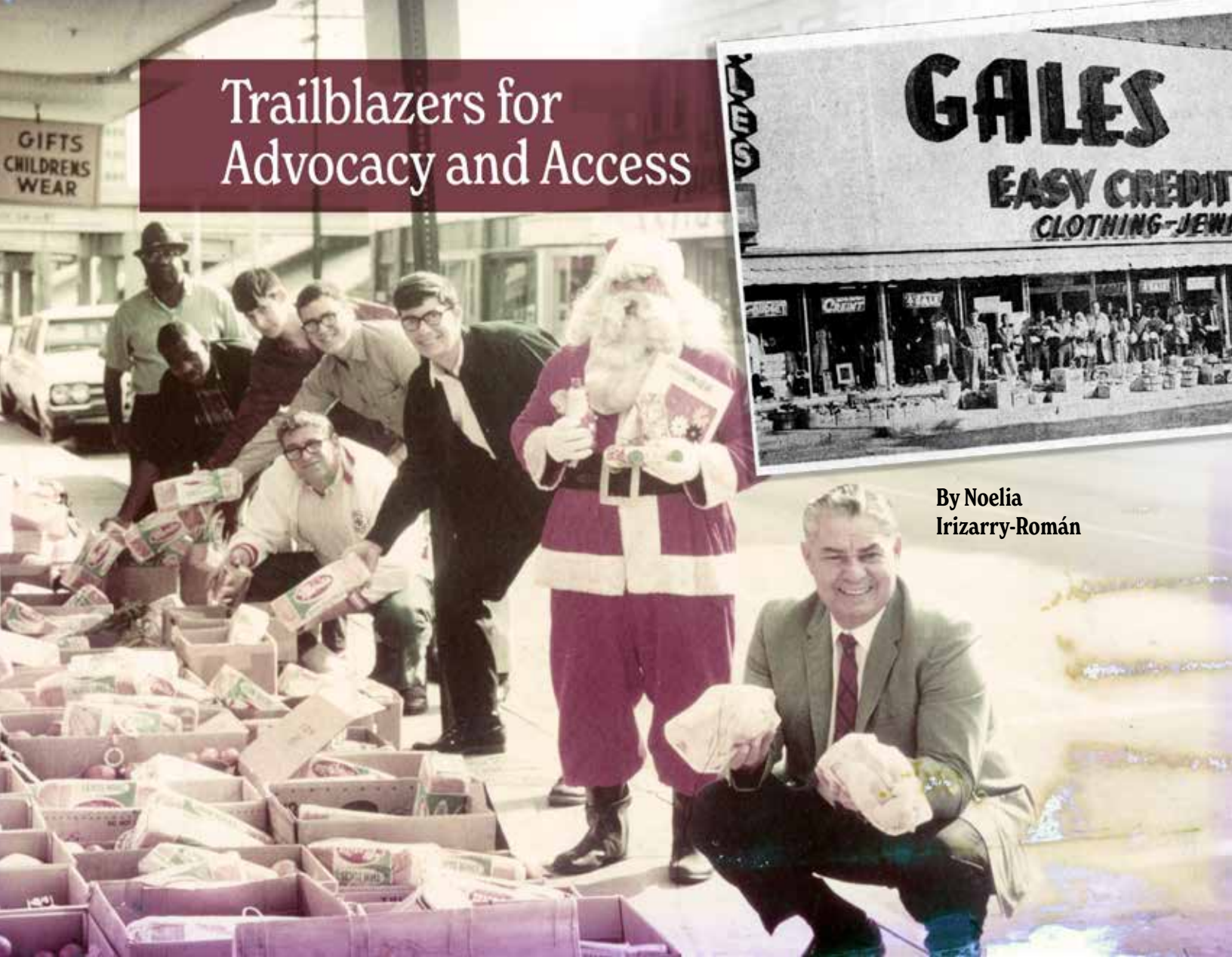
Left and below: The brick building that once housed Rosie O'Grady's Goodtime Emporium at Orlando's Church Street Station was built by the J. C. Hanner Construction Co. in 1924. It housed Slemons' department store and over the years was also the site of Belk-Lindsey's department store, as well as the Orlando Hotel. Bob Snow purchased the building in 1973, and Rosie's opened in 1974.



The Firestone building at the corner of Orange Avenue and Concord Street was built in 1930 during the Great Depression at what was then the northern boundary of downtown Orlando. In 1993 it transitioned from being a Firestone tire and auto-service center to a venue called The Club. Four years later the name was modified to Club Firestone, and *Rolling Stone* magazine proclaimed it the best dance club in the Southeast. Today it is known as The Vanguard.



Trailblazers for Advocacy and Access



By Noelia
Irizarry-Román

Harry Becker (far right) and Babe Lancaster (dressed as Santa Claus) outside Gales Clothing Store on West Church Street in Orlando.

Gales Clothing Store holds a place of significance in Orlando's history well beyond its role as a West Church Street retailer of clothing for families. Under the ownership of entrepreneur and philanthropist Harry Becker in the 1950s and '60s, Gales functioned as a cultural, educational, and commercial force in Orlando's historically Black west side, now called Parramore.

Becker and his wife, Dorothy, were among the many Jewish families who owned retail businesses in Orlando in the early and mid-20th century.

Gales opened its doors at 228 West Church under its first owner, Morris Segal, in May 1941, according to an *Orlando Sentinel* report. Becker, who arrived in the city after World

War II, owned the business for most of its history, into the late 1960s, eventually moving it to 343 W. Church. Photographs in the History Center's archives capture the activity in and around the store and depict Orlando's Black residents in a booming and self-sustaining community.

Harry Becker and Babe Lancaster

In many photos, Harry Becker stands next to community leaders with whom he collaborated through Gales sponsorships. By the early 1960s, his name had become synonymous with fundraising and philanthropy. Gales often sponsored events at venues for Black patrons such as Orlando's iconic South Street Casino and Club Eatonville in Eatonville. On July 6,

1959, the *Orlando Sentinel* published a photo of a South Street Casino show with the caption, "Walter Moore and his orchestra provided music at a dance for teenagers held recently at the South Street Casino. The affair was sponsored by the owner of Gales Clothing Store."

Through his philanthropic involvement, Becker soon became linked to Babe Lancaster, a successful Black entrepreneur. A boxer from the mid-1920s into the '30s, Lancaster became a boxing promoter in the late '30s after losing his eyesight due to physical trauma from boxing. He organized matches at the South Street Casino and became a well-known promoter who brought nationally famous boxers to Orlando.

In the late 1950s, Becker and



Lancaster started a yearly Christmas fund drive to aid children in Orlando's Black community. Every year, Lancaster dressed as Santa Claus and stood outside Gales to welcome donations, with Becker as his partner. Two *Sentinel* columnists, Clyde Sanders and Charlie Wadsworth, consistently championed the tradition. Sanders was Orlando's first Black radio personality and also wrote a column, "As Clyde Sees It," in the *Sentinel* section aimed at the Black community, in which he regularly mentioned events sponsored by Gales. During December and January, Sanders especially encouraged readers to donate to Lancaster's cause. In the paper's main edition, Wadsworth's long-running "Hush Puppies" column also often celebrated Lancaster's Christmas tradition and called for everyone in Orlando to contribute.

Ruby Sanders and Broadcasting

Gales' prominent media presence in Central Florida was also evident on radio, one of the main mediums of communication at the time. For many years, Gales sponsored the program "Sunday Spiritual Hour" on radio station WHOO, hosted by Ruby Sanders. The show's popularity is evident in *Sentinel* articles, including an August 1958 report of



Radio broadcasters take to the airwaves from Gales in an undated photo.

an anniversary broadcast that drew about 1,500 people to celebrate the show and its host's achievement. Although the scope of the program's reach has been underappreciated and understudied, it was a staple of the community and an example of how Becker used his store's business success to fund projects that resonated not only with Black residents but with all who tuned in.

"Sunday Spiritual Hour" dispelled

racist stereotypes. Ruby Sanders was a trailblazer in many areas in segregated Orlando. Beyond her role as a radio personality, she achieved status as a musician, columnist, health educator, activist, and pioneer of public health. In the mid-1950s, she led a groundbreaking public-health effort that saw thousands of people receive X-ray screenings to combat tuberculosis. Gales was not the sole reason she was able to produce and broadcast her radio show, but it was one of the successful businesses that supported progressive projects such as hers.

Jones High School and Gales

Gales Clothing Store also collaborated with Jones High School in the school's Diversified Cooperative Training Program, which offered students a chance to gain job experience. Tireless and visionary work by Jones faculty and students broke barriers. The program placed students in the 11th and 12th grades with local businesses to give them employment-training opportunities, and Gales was one of the Orlando businesses that participated. Students were given the responsibilities of full-time employees and were paid wages. In 1957, for example, Jones student Lizzie Leach participated in the program and worked as a



Babe Lancaster works his Santa magic with a group of children, circa 1963.

sales person at Gales. The store also sponsored other school activities.

Photography and History

Photography does not create an objective historical record. An image can reflect both implicit and explicit biases. How a photo is framed, who is photographed, and who is excluded all denote subjectivity. A point of view is present.

The photographs related to Gales Clothing Store in the History Center's collection are from Harry Becker's family archives, spanning the mid-1950s to the late 1960s. They are

snapshots of everyday life in Orlando's historically Black community, as seen through the lens of a significant business, and help sew a thread of confluence between commerce and civic activism in the community.

While we do not know all the photographers who created them, it's worth noting that several are the work of the Mitchell Photo Studio on Division Avenue, founded by E.B. Mitchell, who played an important role in the Black community, recording weddings and other significant events. In 1963, Mitchell would become the first Black news staff member in the

history of the *Orlando Sentinel*, as the paper's first Black photographer.

Mitchell's photos of Gales and the community in which it thrived are sharp, focused, and direct. They are an example of a Black photographer capturing a prosperous Black community in segregated Orlando and are of historical value.

For two decades, Gales was a constant for Orlando's Black residents. While the business no longer exists and its physical location has been demolished to make way for Interstate 4, through these photographs we are able to engage with its rich legacy. ■



Photographs courtesy of Amy Becker

Central Florida Treasures



From Brevard County: Guest Viewing Badge for Apollo 7 Launch

On October 11, 1968, the first crewed flight of NASA's Apollo program launched from the Cape Kennedy Air Force Station on Cape Canaveral. A grandstand on the Merritt Island Causeway served as a viewing area for credentialed invitees, who witnessed astronauts Donn Eisele, Walter Cunningham, and Wally Schirra make their ascent into space. This badge for distinguished guests was issued to

E. P. Huey, who was then commander of the Naval Training Center Orlando, and was donated to the museum's collection by his wife, Jane Huey, in 2000.



From Lake County: Painting of a Chow Chow, mascot of the Mount Dora Citrus Growers Association

The Mount Dora Citrus Growers Association was a local branch of the Florida Citrus Exchange that formed in the early 1920s. The association soon became the Mount Dora Growers Cooperative, which created and successfully marketed the "Chow" brand. The brand's mascot was modeled after a dog that belonged to G.B. "Crip" Hurlburt, the cooperative's manager. One of the brand's slogans was "The Watchdog of Quality." This painting was given to Hurlburt by packinghouse employees one year for Christmas.



From Polk County: Moon Soup from Chalet Suzanne
"Moon Soup" from the now-defunct Chalet Suzanne in Lake Wales, symbolizes the unique relationship the restaurant had with the space program. In 1971, the astronauts on the Apollo 15 moon mission – James Irwin, David Scott, and Alfred Worden – took with them freeze-dried gourmet soups from the Chalet. Then in 1975, the Chalet's seafood mushroom soup was served on the first-ever international space dinner date between Russian cosmonauts and American astronauts on the joint Apollo-Soyuz mission.

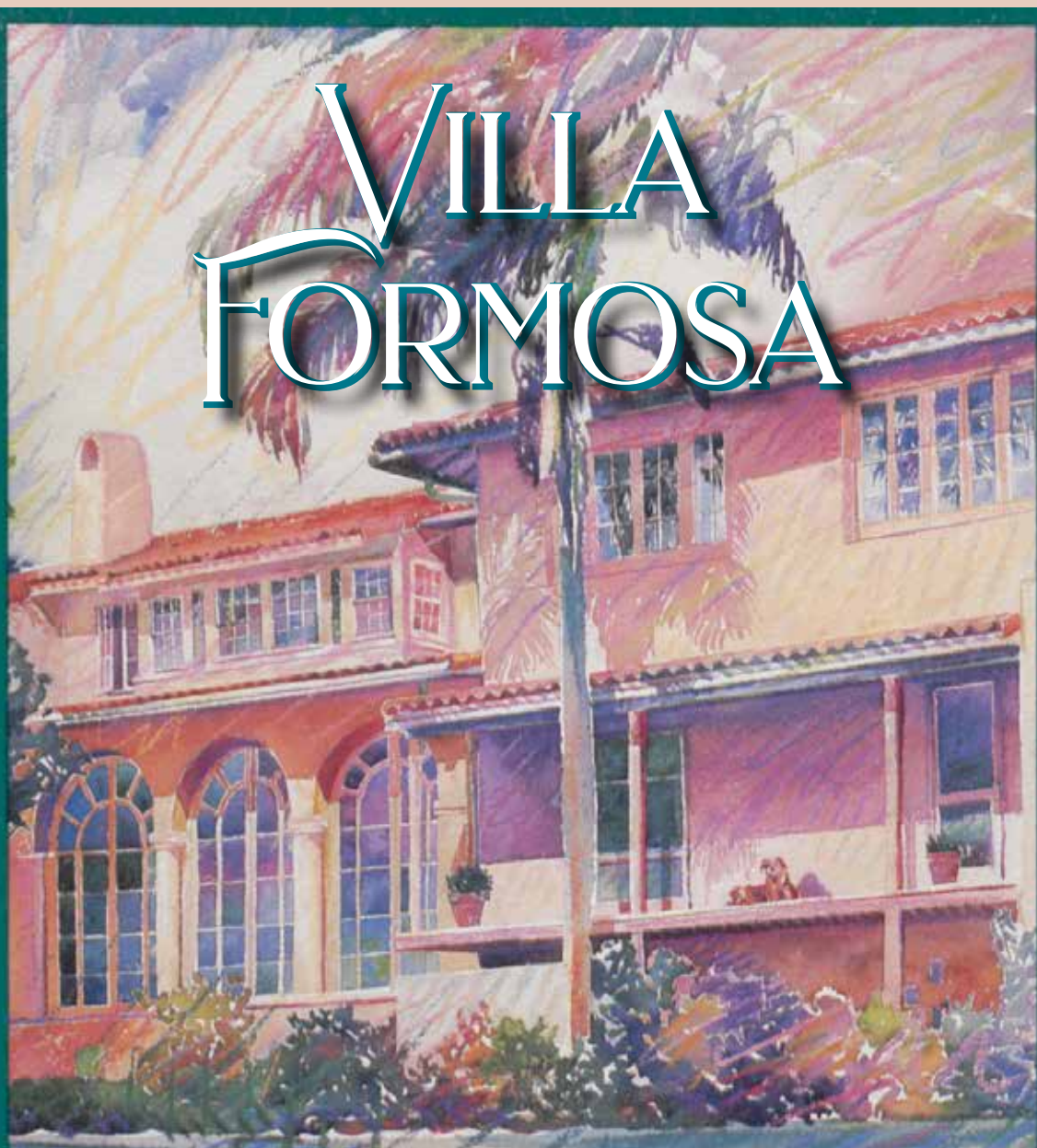


From Orange County: Goodyear Double Eagle Clipper Bicycle

This bicycle, was a model made from 1941 to 1960, belonged to Alice B. Robinson (1887-1974), daughter of Orlando pioneer Samuel Robinson. She was easily recognized around Orlando, wearing a wide-brimmed hat as she rode her bike. She donated it to the Historical Society when she felt traffic had become too busy for her to ride safely.



VILLA FORMOSA



RYAN & ROBERTS' LOCH HAVEN LANDMARK BY TANA MOSIER PORTER

On February 27, 1929, the *Orlando Evening Star* announced that Miss Mary Morse and Miss Margaret Collard, recently of Argentina, had purchased property in Orlando's Loch Haven neighborhood, where they planned to build a Spanish home. They paid cash for two lots to the west of the "super artistic typically Mediterranean home now in the course of construction by Miss Matilda A. Fraser." It is

not certain that their house ever materialized, but Miss Fraser's elegant mansion at 802 N. Lake Formosa Drive, designed by the Orlando architectural firm of Ryan and Roberts, remains one of the city's finer examples of the Mediterranean Revival style popular during the 1920s land boom.

TEACHER AND SUFFRAGIST

Matilda Alexandra Fraser, born in Canada in 1865, immigrated to the

United States with her family in 1866 and grew up in Cleveland, Ohio. She preferred to be called Alexandra. She studied at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio, in 1894 and 1895 and graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology about 1896. She retired in 1927 after a thirty-year teaching career in the mathematics department at the highly regarded Girls Latin School in Boston, Massachusetts, the first college

preparatory school for girls in the United States.

From the beginning of her teaching career, Fraser took an active role in educational organizations, publishing studies and serving on committees. In 1917 she argued for pay equity for women. She served as an officer in the Women's School Voter's League in 1911, and in 1913 she joined a party of Boston suffragists on an automobile trip to Washington, D.C., to take part in a constitutional amendment demonstration on July 31. Traveling in a car decorated with pennants and banners promoting votes for women, the group stopped for suffrage meetings along the way.

Fraser's Scottish-born father may have been an architect in Cleveland, Ohio, and she could well have been acquainted with architect Ida Annah



Architects Ida Ryan and Isabel Roberts designed their home and studio in Orlando's Park Lake neighborhood in the Mediterranean Revival style.

ARGENTINA WOMAN BUY HOMESITES IN COUNTY

Will Erect Permanent Spanish
Home on Shores of Lake For-
mosa Near Frazier Home

The Argentine, South America, is now represented in Orlando. Nat Claybaugh, realtor, has just completed a cash sale to Miss Mary O. Morse and Miss Margaret Collard, Mendoza, Argentina, South America. They purchased two of the most select lake lots in Loch Haven, where they plan the erection of a permanent Spanish home amid the orange trees, large spreading live oaks draped with Spanish moss on the clean cut shores of Lake Formosa. The home site is just west of the super artistic typically Mediterranean home now in the course of construction by Miss Matilda A. Frazier.

Cosmopolitan Orlando, which each year adds new permanent residents from all states and Canada, welcomes, and is highly honored by Miss Morse and Miss Collard, who have lived in the Argentine for 20 years, that they have selected Orlando as their choice of a permanent home, in view of the fact that they own South American property, and homes in Santa Cruze, Calif., and New Rochelle, N. Y.

Orlando Evening Star article from 1929, detailing the origins of Villa Formosa.

Ryan when they both lived in Boston. Fraser was eight years older and graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology several years before Ryan, who graduated in 1907, but both were members of the Cleophan social club at MIT, and, as single professional women, both supported feminist causes. Ryan already worked in Orlando when Fraser retired in Boston and bought the building site on Lake Formosa.

Ryan was the first woman to graduate with a master of science degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, winning a scholarship in 1907 that enabled her to study architecture in Europe. She spent most of her time in Spain and Italy. Ryan established the first women's architectural practice in Waltham, Massachusetts, designing structures in New England and in Central Florida, but the Massachusetts chapter of the American Institute of Architects refused to accept her because she was a woman.

Ryan moved to Orlando when the construction industry slowed during World War I, becoming Orlando's first woman architect, and in 1921, the eighth woman to become a member of the American Institute of Architects. She worked for F. H. Trimble in 1918-1919, and in the 1920s, as the Florida

Land Boom created a need for more construction in Orlando, Ryan joined with Isabel Roberts, a former associate of Frank Lloyd Wright in Chicago, to open a new firm, "Ryan and Roberts."

They joined a group of architects in Orlando who sought to create a distinctive Florida architectural style, one especially suited to the Central Florida climate. The Mediterranean Revival style, with its low pitched roofs and wide eaves, built of more durable stone and clay tile, met the need and became popular in 1920s Orlando.

M. Alexandra Fraser bought three lots in the new Loch Haven Subdivision on Orlando's Lake Formosa. In 1928, she took out a building permit for a residence to cost \$21,700. She hired the architectural firm of Ryan and Roberts to design the house, and C & O Construction to build it. When the 1926 subdivision was re-platted in 1930, her property became lot 3 of block 9.

Fraser chose an elegant setting for her home. Developers of the Loch Haven Subdivision advertised a "secluded retreat" and a "vista of green, wooded slopes" set among three lakes. They promised paving, sidewalks, sewers, water and gas mains, and underground lighting and telephone systems. The home sites featured orange trees remaining from

the Charles Jacocks grove, famous for its pecans and oranges from 1879 until 1915, when Jacocks's widow sold the forty-four acre property, for \$50,000. The grove continued as a mail-order business until 1923. The Loch Haven Company bought it in 1926 for a residential development.

Ryan and Roberts designed a Mediterranean Revival masterpiece for Alexandra Fraser, with their own trademark embellishments. Built of concrete block and stucco, with a traditional red barrel tile roof, the 15-room mansion features the architects' signature window shapes and asymmetrical arrangements for the most pleasing play of light. Varied ceiling heights and step-downs add flavor, while Spanish tile floors, accented with art deco Rookwood tiles, and two sets of French doors opening to a large open porch in the back make it a charming residence.

Alexandra Fraser lived for a decade in the house she called "Villa Formosa." The federal census found her there in 1930, but the city

directory shows nothing on the site until 1931. For several years hers was the only house on North Lake Formosa Drive. She reportedly lived alone, though she employed a cook who shared the house. The 1940 census report showed her widowed sister, Belle Smith, living in the house with her, along with two other women.

A member of the Sorosis Club and the American Association of University Women, Fraser took an active interest in Girl Scouting in Orlando, playing an important part in the establishment of the Girl Scouts' Little House. She entertained frequently, giving teas and luncheons for friends, and regularly hosting meetings of the AAUW, beginning with an elegant Christmas tea in December 1930. She followed that with a reception for Boston friends on New Year's Day 1931.

Houseguests from Boston and

Cleveland Guest Is Entertained

Mrs. J. Parks Smith of Cleveland and Orwell Ohio, is spending a week with her sister, Miss Alexandra Fraser at the Villa Formosa.

Miss Fraser entertained a small group of her sister's friends at dinner on Thanksgiving Day, and a larger group of them at a dinner party last evening.

A society-page announcement from the *Sunday Sentinel Star* mentions Villa Formosa on December 3, 1939.

family from Cleveland visited each winter. Among her Boston guests were Lucy Wheelock, pioneer in the American kindergarten movement, and well-known organist and Unitarian clergyman Eugene Rodman Shippen, who later became a resident of Winter Park. Mary E. Dow, the sister of the Dow Chemical Company founder, escaped the cold in Saginaw, Michigan, to visit Fraser, probably a childhood friend from Cleveland, Ohio. Margaret Collard and Mary Morse, who had hoped to become her neighbors, came

According to architectural historian John Dalles, Ryan and Roberts' Amherst Apartments at 325 West Colonial Drive were, for many years, Orlando's most prestigious apartment address. Built in 1921-1922, the Amherst included 47 apartments overlooking Lake Concord.



to Villa Formosa from Orange City, where they settled instead. They later returned to Argentina, where they both died in 1945.

Matilda Alexandra Fraser died on April 30, 1940. She left an estate of \$185,905, including her house, appraised at \$13,000. She valued her home enough to make special provisions for it in her will, requesting that the house be offered for sale for two-thirds of its appraised value to three people, in the sequence that she named them. The first person, a relative, declined the offer, but the second, Raymond D. Robinson, bought the house for \$9,310.70. He lived at Villa Formosa for six years, before selling it in 1946.

Like so many ambitious developments in the 1920s, the Loch Haven Subdivision fell victim to the Great Depression of the 1930s. The city foreclosed in 1931, taking possession of the failed development, by then with liens of nearly \$100,000 for paving and sewer assessments. Plans called for a world's fair, called "Florida on Parade," to be built on the site of the Loch Haven Subdivision, but that, too, failed in 1936. The city eventually offered some of the properties for sale and created a city park on others. Villa Formosa now faces Loch Haven Park and the Mennello Museum of American Art, with Lake Formosa at its backyard.

When the City of Orlando foreclosed in 1931, it took possession of all of the Loch Haven development except Fraser's property, and the Florida on Parade failure possibly spared her a fight to keep her beloved mansion. In 2008-2009, the city again attempted to acquire the house, this time to be demolished to create green space around Florida Hospital. Four houses were bought and destroyed, but with a recession looming, the Villa Formosa offer was withdrawn. It would appear that economic downturns have twice saved the elegant mansion, an outstanding example of Mediterranean Revival architecture and one of only two known Ryan and Roberts-designed residences in Orlando. ■



FOURTH ANNUAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH BREAKFAST HONORING PATHBREAKING ARCHITECTS IDA ANNAH RYAN & ISABEL ROBERTS - MARCH 9, 2023 -

On March 9, the History Center presents its fourth annual Women's History Month Breakfast, honoring pathbreaking Orlando architects Ida Annah Ryan and Isabel Roberts.

The program will feature the short 2022 documentary film, "Pavilion on the Water," highlighting especially Roberts' role in Ryan and Roberts' design for the 1924 bandstand at Orlando's Lake Eola Park. The film was produced in 2022 by the Grace Arts Center with support from a Florida Resources Board grant and the Orlando Foundation for Architecture (OFA) and features Central Florida historians and architects.

The film and following panel discussion will highlight the achievements of these two remarkable women and the obstacles they faced as architects in a profession in which women continue to be in the minority.

Presented in partnership with the League of Women Voters of Orange County and the OFA, the 2023 breakfast continues a series of Women's History Month Celebrations that have honored Mary McLeod Bethune, educator and civil rights activist, Mabel Norris Reese, the crusading Central Florida journalist who fought for justice in the Jim Crow South, and Mary Anne Carroll, who broke barriers through her art as the sole woman among the legendary Florida artists known as the Highwaymen.

Proceeds for the event help support the programs of the History Center, especially our paid HERstory: Women in History Internship.

Doors open at 8 a.m. with a breakfast buffet, coffee, and conversation, followed by a program at 9 a.m. Tickets are \$35. Parking for History Center visitors is available at the Library Garage, 112 E. Central Blvd. For more information and to register, please visit our events page at TheHistoryCenter.org.

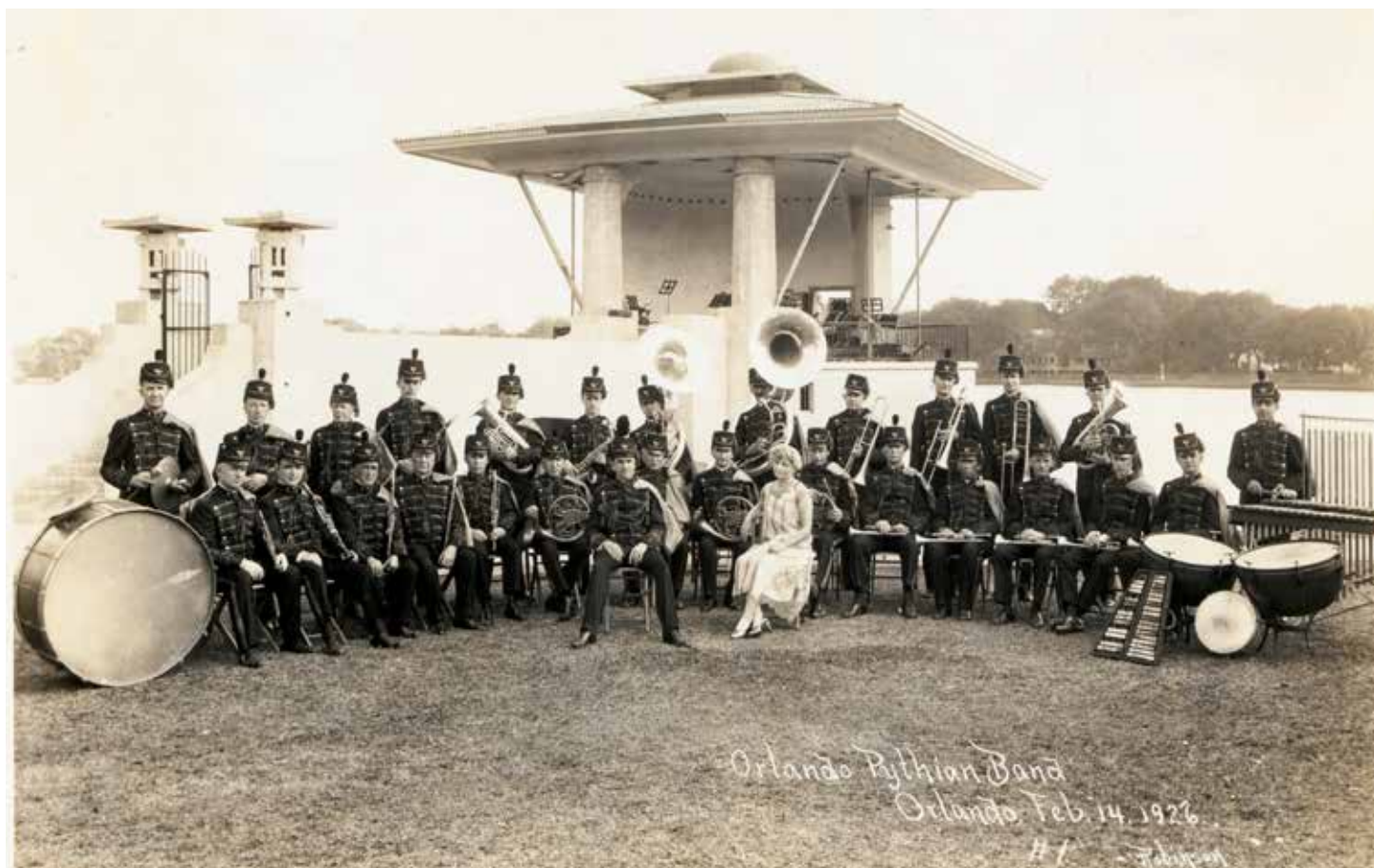


THROUGH THE CAMERA LENS

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 Travis Puterbaugh at Travis.Puterbaugh@ocfl.net or 407-836-8584.

Music and trailblazing architecture at Lake Eola



When the Orlando Pythian Band performed at the 1924 Lake Eola bandstand on February 14, 1926, they were part of a series of concerts that marked perhaps the city's most popular entertainment at time, based at one of its architectural jewels.

The band was organized in 1922 from members of the Orlando lodge of the Knights of Pythias, an international fraternal organization. Soloists from other cities joined for winter-season concerts at Lake Eola that took place as often as twice daily.

The concerts' popularity inspired city leaders to create a more permanent bandstand than the wooden structure where performers appeared in 1922 and '23. The result was remarkable. In contrast to typical bandstands of the time, it appeared to float on the lake, with the audience seated on benches on the shore. Its Orlando-based architects, Ida Annah Ryan and Isabel Roberts, were rare in a profession dominated by men.

The duo's design for the bandstand showed the influence

of the Prairie Style associated with architects of the time, including Frank Lloyd Wright, which was no accident. Before Roberts moved to Orlando and joined her partnership with Ryan, she worked for Wright as a draftsperson-architect. Her partner, Ryan, was the first woman to receive a master's degree in architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After working as an architect in Waltham, Massachusetts, she came to Central Florida in 1917.

In 1923, the firm of Ryan and Roberts was tapped to design the new Lake Eola bandstand, dedicated in 1924 and torn down in 1957. During the 1920s boom, the women designed several other landmarks of an earlier Orlando, including the First Unitarian Church's Unity Chapel, the Amherst Apartments, and the house called Villa Formosa – a rare survivor. They also designed notable buildings in other Central Florida cities, including St. Cloud.

On March 9, 2023, Ryan and Roberts will be honored at the History Center's Women's History Breakfast. ■

HISTORIC HAPPENINGS

FIGUREHEAD OPENING BASH



At the opening bash for *Figurehead: Music & Mayhem in Orlando's Underground*, guests got the first look at the new exhibition, received a tour from Figurehead founder Jim Faherty, and enjoyed live music from Orlando's The Green Today. Look for a closing party for the exhibition in September.

ART OF THE UNDERGROUND PANEL



We explored the art of Orlando's underground music scene with Figurehead poster artists Thomas Scott, Jeff Matz, Scott Sugiuchi, Greg Reinel, and Klaus Heesch at a November 5 panel discussion, moderated by Dr. Dori Griffin of the University of Florida's School of Art + Art History.

CELEBRATING LATIN AMERICAN ARTS & CULTURE



On Smithsonian Museum Day, September 17, we kicked off Hispanic Heritage Month with a celebration of Latin American arts and culture. Central Florida artists representing several Latin American countries displayed their artwork and performed heritage music and dances.

TRICK OR TREAT SAFE ZONE



On Saturday, October 29, children enjoyed trick or treating throughout the History Center and the Orlando Public Library, along with creepy crafts, candy, and a scavenger hunt! The free annual event remains one of the museum's most popular programs.

COFFEE & CONVERSATIONS: ISRAEL VASQUETELLE



In September, our first installment of Coffee & Conversations featured journalist and veteran educator Israel Vasquetelle. Vasquetelle has produced music-related projects, directed documentaries, hosted podcasts, and founded *Insomniac Magazine*, which has covered hip-hop music and culture since 1996.

COFFEE & CONVERSATIONS: TERRI BINION



Central Florida singer-song writer Terri Binion spoke and performed at our December 11 Coffee & Conversations event. Binion shared that she felt the support of the local community as she went on to play venues including New York City's The Bottom Line and Nashville's sacred Ryman Auditorium.



FIGUREHEAD NIGHT OUT

This September

To celebrate the one-year anniversary of the opening of this innovative exhibition, we are planning a weekend packed with events to honor all the people who made it happen. Live music will rock the halls of the museum! Check back for details.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

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For Ages 6-11

ADVENTURES

IN HISTORY

SUMMER
CAMP

May 30 – August 4, 2023

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 6-11. (All students must have completed kindergarten.) Early bird registration begins February 5 at TheHistoryCenter.org/education/summer-camp-2023/.

