



On the Heritage Trail “News from the Port”

Davenport Historical Society, Inc.

P.O. Box 774
Davenport, Florida 33836
Meetings:

2nd Monday each Month

City Commission Building

1 South Allapaha Ave.

Davenport, FL 33837

(No meetings June, July & Aug.)

Quarterly Meetings are
Special Programs

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VISIT WEBSITES:
Quiltsandtea.com
Mydavenport.org

Email:
Jthompson.dhs@gmail.com

Welcome to Davenport Historical Society’s Seventh Newsletter

Yes, it has come to be!! Exciting news for DHS and the City of Davenport “Restoration and Construction” of Davenport Elementary School. From the Bowen’s Strawberry School on the Old Dixie Highway circa 1883 to 2020 campus on Palmetto Street, history in the making again.

While celebrating the restoration of Building number one, the 1927 Classical Revival building built by James McMichael the new construction will be of similar Classical Revival design. It will become the centerpiece of the City of Davenport once again.

The new Principal has history in the area and will certainly keep the history alive while moving the students into the future. WELCOME Shannon Brown!

Being a significant building to the National Historic District of Davenport adds importance to the City, County and State. Please visit : mydavenport.org to keep up with DES happenings.

HRR editor



Prior to Regular meeting.

*You are invited to the
Renaming of the
Davenport Community Building
To
Peter Rust Civic Center
History Culture
October 14, 2019
6:00 pm
5 South Allapaha Avenue
Davenport, Florida 33837*

Come Tell Your Davenport School Stories at our meeting Oct. 14th

President’s Message

Hello Friends,
Davenport Elementary is undergoing quite a few changes. The 1927 building will be renovated and other buildings added to the campus. My hope is that those who attended and or worked at Davenport school will be willing to

write some of your memories to share with the DHS and the new generation of students and staff. We will have a presentation meeting on Oct. 14, 2019 at 6:30 pm at the Davenport City Commission Building . Please bring your written memories to share or mail

Kathy Blue Linder

them to DHS, PO Box 774, Davenport 33836 or you may give them to Linda at Her Hair Care Shop by the end of Sept. Hope to see you in Oct. to share memories of the good old days at Davenport School.
Kathy B. Linder
President & Treasurer, DHS

Due to the length of the information regarding the Davenport and Loughman Schools the Fall Newspaper layout will not be standard.

ON THE HERITAGE TRAIL:
SCHOOLS IN DAVENPORT AND LOUGHMAN

In 1883, James and Frances Bowen settled in Davenport with one son. Over the next years their family was blessed with eight children born to them and five more adopted. Francis and Julia Ann Gill also came in 1883 with their eight children. Education was very important to these pioneer families, so they built the first school, the Bowen Settlement School, halfway between Davenport and Loughman. The school had only one room and was open four months out of the year as the children were needed to help at home and with the crops.

When the Everglades Cypress Lumber Company decided to build a lumber company in Loughman in 1905, the company built a church, housing for the employees and a school for the children. By 1918, the Loughman school had shut down and students were brought to school in Davenport. The schoolhouse in Loughman is now a residence,.

The Davenport school was a wooden two-room school built around 1911 with a small porch over the front door. Later, the porch was enlarged to cover the entire front side. (Some say 1917-1918, but I have a map dated 1914 that shows the location of the building on the lot). My father, Arnold Torgersen, wrote the dates, schools and other information in his memoirs. He stated that he attended first grade in this school in 1926. His teacher was Miss Moseman.

By 1922, a larger building was needed so a yellow sand brick school was built. It had two rooms upstairs and two rooms downstairs plus restrooms. Arnold attended second grade in this building in 1927 with Miss Dilley as his teacher. Apparently, each previous school was utilized for several years before the older one was razed.

In 1927, the stately red brick schoolhouse, that is still an important part of Davenport, was built. Another map shows both buildings still on the lot., The school came equipped with a full basement with modern rest rooms, steam heat , a modern auditorium with curtains and opera chairs. An orchestra pit was a part of this fine auditorium. Over the years, new buildings were added, Arnold remembered Mr. Eastwood, the principal and his wife who was a teacher, Later, Elizabeth Shumate Brown was the principal and then our beloved principal Mr. Louie D. Berry was the principal for many years,.

In the 1940's and 50's, the subdivision of Jamestown had a one-room school on the east side of Hwy 17-92. Although the school was very modest, one teacher stood out from the others, Mattie J. Perry. She married T.C. Walker, an employee for the railroad. She was the principal and teacher at the Jamestown school and later became the principal for Bethune in Haines City. Mattie J. Walker made a lasting positive impression on her students.

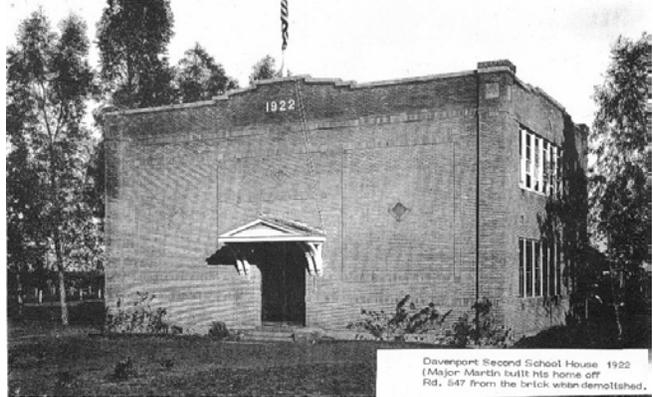
In 1992, the New Loughman Oaks Elementary School opened to help ease the overcrowding in the other schools. It is located between Davenport and Loughman on Highway 17-92. Sharon Nable Knowles was the first principal. She has served as Principal at Davenport Elementary and Bethune Academy.

In 1999, Principal Brian Kier facilitated the transition from Davenport Elementary School to Davenport School of the Arts. Parents asked for grades six, seven and eight to be added. This was done seamlessly by adding one grade each year. Within ten years, the time had come when a larger facility was needed. In January 2011, the beautiful new campus for DSA was opened. The new location is on CR 547 North, less than two miles from the original Bowen Settlement School.

With the population continuing to increase, Ridgeview Global Studies Academy opened north of I-4 in 2001. Horizons Elementary welcomed new students for the 2008-09 school year. Now, in 2019, the Navigation Academy has just welcomed the first students. The new Davenport High School is under construction on the DSA campus and scheduled to open Fall 2020.

Many of Davenport's citizens had hoped the 1927 school could be renovated and could remain one of our treasured historic buildings. We are delighted that our Mayor and Commissioners agreed with us, The Polk County School Board is in the process of restoring the red brick building to original condition as well as recreating a campus that will be both functional and a spectacular asset to our community.,

Judith Torgersen Thompson



Davenport Second School House, 1922
(Major Martin built his home off
Rd. 547 from the brick when demolished.)



Historic home in Davenport.
Sandhill cranes squabbling nearby.



DO YOU KNOW THAT 6 OF THE BUILDINGS STILL EXIST IN THE CITY OF DAVENPORT?
There are many, many more. Come help us save them and tell their stories. October 14th, 6:00 pm
Peter Rust Civic Center, 5 South Allapaha Ave. (near the Davenport Fire Department).

