Davenport
HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.
POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA

Visit New Website
Davenporthistory.org

News from the Port

Davenport Historical Society, Inc. Meetings are Open to the Public

Volume 4, Issue 2 | Spring Quarterly 2021

Letter from the Editor

By HRR

Welcome Spring! All the beautiful flowering trees and plants in our area remind us that things will be alright with the world again. Orange Blossoms smell just as sweet, just not enough of them. Plant some in your backyard. If we all planted just one, what would it smell like next year??There is so much history of citrus in our area. To experience some beautiful art and citrus history go to Polk County History web site and select the Citrus Label Tour icon and find the map of all the labels in Polk County. A driving tour of 50 or more labels. Started right here in Wilson Park. We have 3 in the City limits.

DHS is welcoming volunteers getting ready for our fall events, Please visit our email to sign on., We are growing and need you all. Check out our FB page and our new website. *HRR*

Beautiful pastel art above by Bonnie Liss. Welcome to Polk County Marker north of Loughman. Citurs! Yes that's what the sign says.
Don't miss Following the Heritage Trail "Wonderful Orange Blossoms". Page 2

Vice President's Notes
By: Deborah Burress

Well here we are again still living with COVID. Hope you have had your Vaccine or an appointment to get it.
Davenport Historical Society's new website will be up and running by April 1. Our new Facebook page is available and it has some really interesting subjects about early homes in the area. Both of these will be updated regularly, so spend some-time visiting DHS and finding more about how it use to be and "What's Happening Now".
Hope to have a new home for DHS soon. Be sure to visit the Little Free Library in Merchant Square.

President's Message
By: Kathy B. Linder

Hello Members:
We have a new year under way and traveling at rocket speed. Please invite new and old friends to join us as members and volunteers. Membership invitation is included in this newsletter. We are always looking for donations of old Davenport photos and artifacts. When donating items please include who is contributing and a contact phone number. Artifacts may be dropped off at Linda's Hair Center at the Mart downtown Davenport. Linda's contact number is: 863-514-0886. Stay Safe!
Kathy B. Linder, President & Treasurer
President & Treasurer

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If you missed Judith Thompson's first book you have another opportunity to read her second edition. For Sale at Linda's Hair Salon

Following the Heritage Trail — By Judith Torgersen Thompson

"Wonderful Orange Blossoms" Ah… springtime in Florida with thoughts of bygone years coming to mind. I am thinking of the days when thousands of orange trees were all that was between Davenport and Clermont and the sweet fragrance of orange blossoms perfumed the air. Traveling along Highway 27 was a pleasant drive with that heavenly scent and no stoplights. Since my orange tree in the backyard was loaded with blooms this year I was fortunate to be able to smell the wonderful fragrance of Florida's state flower. Fewer groves have resulted in fewer people being able to experience a true Florida spring. Why, then don't we have more trees? Where did the first citrus originate?

Citrus trees were brought to Florida by the Spanish explorers in 1565. Odet Philippe is given credit for establishing the first commercial grove in Florida in 1830, He brought oranges, limes, and other tropical fruit from the Caribbean.

The earliest pioneers in Polk County in the 1840s, found citrus trees growing wild. By 1874 many settlers were planting groves. In the 1880s, an orange cost one penny. People bought them and planted the seeds. In 1895, the weather was brutally cold causing the fruit to freeze which discouraged many growers. The fruit froze and dropped to the ground, but the trees did not die, so many people continued growing citrus.

By the early 1900s, nearly every community had one or more citrus processing plants or packing houses for fresh fruit. Some of the local companies were the Cherokee Operating Company, Davenport Citrus Growers Association, Florida Fruit Growers, and Holly Hill Fruit Products, Inc.

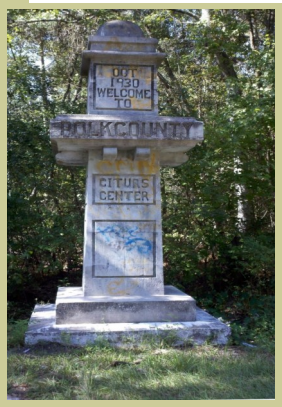
The citrus industry brought many jobs to Davenport. and other towns. There were soil laboratories, fertilizer companies, advertising agencies, real estate companies selling homes for employees and a new industry of citrus candy.

The advertising agencies created beautiful citrus labels for the crates that were sent north filled with sweet, juicy oranges, tangerines and grapefruit. The colorful labels appealed to winter weary northern shoppers. The citrus candy that was first created in Davenport in 1928 is still being made a few miles from the original location. There is more information on these and other aspects of the citrus industry, Please contact the Davenport Historical Society if you would like more information.

During the 1980s, Florida had five major freezes that destroyed 40% of all citrus and most growers did not replant. Later, foreign markets began to import a larger proportion of fresh citrus to Florida. Much of the previous grove land began being used for housing. The industry also suffered from pests and diseases such as citrus canker in the 1980s and lately, citrus greening.

The good news is that the Florida Department of Agriculture and independent companies are making headway on finding ways to make the citrus trees more resistant to disease and insects.

Remember "Buy Florida Citrus" whenever you have a choice.



CITRUS LABEL TOUR
Polk County

Heritage Trail Continued Cont. from 2

HERE IN

DAVENPORT

WE SEE THINGS THROUGH OUR GREEN EYES

The small town of Davenport has a large natural and human history, most of which is still here. Horse Creek is still peacefully flowing through the country-side east of town. Many native plants carried and used by native Americans are evident in many of the woodland areas especially on high banks over the creek. The sand hill and scrub communities are still pretty much intact and full of plants that grow only in central Florida and no where else in the world! One of which, the Dicerandra modesta a rare native mint, was just recently discovered. Many other rare and beautiful plants are in the scrub ecosystem to the east of Davenport including Pygmy Fringe, Garberia, Lewton's milkwort, and of course our wonderful Gopher tortise.

Pygmy Fringe

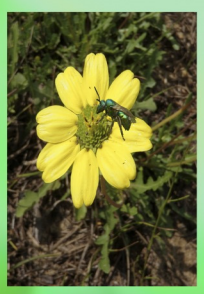
Dicerandra Modesta

Garberia with Butterfly

In town, a long time resident (many thousands of years) shows up to brighten street sides, lawns and, open areas. It is the Green Eye, a sandhill wild flower that is coveted by native plant lovers and butterfly gardeners all over Central Florida. Green Eyes are also one of the best nectar plants for our many native bee species, like the beautiful iridescent Metallic Bee. This little Aster is so hardy that it has withstood 100 years or more of earthmoving, building construction, and mowing to keep comming back to grace the urban landscape with it's beauty and strength every spring and summer.

Lewton's Milkwort

Gopher tortoise



Green Eyes with Metallic Bee one of fast dissapearing native bee species

Florida Green Eyes
Borlandiera subacaulis

Member Invitation

Membership Invitation:

The Davenport Historical Society, Inc. purpose is to preserve the city's history and share this heritage by contributing to the records of the state of Florida and the United States of America in an effort that will embrace our past while working toward a brighter future for all of Davenport's citizens.

Please join us. Meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 6:30 pm at different historic locations., except June, July & August unless otherwise stated. For location email:

jthompson.dhs@gmail.com

___1. Become a member of DHS
$10.00 Individual Membership
18.00 Family Membership
35.00 Business Membership
75.00 Corporate Membership
$100.00 Lifetime Individual Membership

___2. Share artifacts or personal stories with DHS and Museum

___3. Volunteer time to the DHS & Museum (select interest)

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

EMAIL_____

PHONE_____**CELL**_____

Please complete & mail to:
Davenport Historical Society, Inc.
% Kathy Linder P.O. Box 774
Davenport, FL 33836
DHS is a 501 c (3) non profit organization

Thanks Bill Bissett and the "Natives" for Green Eyes Article.

There have been many more projects , events and partners from 2010 to 2020 that we have not had room to share, so please join us for future plans when we are allowed to gather again. Please email Judy if you are interested. We need You and Your ideas. Contact info on page 4.

Meetings:
Second Monday
Each month at
6:30pm
Davenport
Commission
Chamber

Quarterly Meetings with Special Programs.

No Meetings:
June, July, August

Websites:

Davenporthistory.org

Mydavenport.org

Polkhistorycenter.org

des.polkschoolsfl.com

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DAVENPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. BOX 774

DAVENPORT, FL 33836

TO:

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Future Plans for Davenport Historical Society include : Mobile historic displays, FL History to accommodate 4th grade school field trips, On-line research center computers for public use, Information station with brochures and flyers related to Davenport and NE Polk, Docent led tours, Field Trips to historic sites and other heritage offerings.

New Facebook Page: davenport, fl historical society-Facebook

ALL DHS MEETINGS AND EVENTS CANCELED OR POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

TOM FELLOWS COMMUNITY CENTER UNDER CONSTRUCTION. OPENING FALL 2021
See More:
mydavenport.org

THANKS TO ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE WRITTEN LETTERS OF SUPPORT . WE GREATLY APPRECIATE ALL YOUR WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE PARTNERING OF DHS WITH THE CITY OF DAVENPORT TO HAVE A HOME OF OUR OWN.