

SOUTH BREVARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P. O. Box 1064
Melbourne, FL 32902-1064

S.B.H.S. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & RENEWAL

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Please make checks payable to South Brevard Historical Society and mail to P.O. Box 1064, Melbourne, FL 32902-1064.

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South Brevard Historical Society, Inc.

Founded 1966

P.O. Box 1064, Melbourne, Florida, 32902-1064

www.southbrevardhistory.org

Newsletter Editor, Patty Fabian

October 2013

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2013 – 3:00 PM

Melbourne Public Library
540 E. Fee Avenue, Melbourne

Groves and Graveyards Protecting Florida's "Passed"

Presented by Molly MacGuinness



Molly MacGuinness is passionate about historic preservation. As a graduate of the University of Central Florida with a degree in Anthropology, Ms. MacGuinness redirected her focus to the preservation of cemeteries after discovering several historic cemeteries in her Ohio hometown were on the endangered list.

In Ms. MacGuinness's words "*cemeteries are museums to the communities they represent*". During her presentation she will discuss her work on the ongoing Brevard County Historic Cemetery Recording Project, which is overseen by the Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN). She will also talk about her work on the St. Luke's Ledger Project. In this project Thomas digitally preserved the 19th century church ledger that contained vital records for the congregation between 1889 and 1957, thereby charting local Melbourne history one gravesite at a time. Why, she may even share some ghost stories from our local cemeteries!!

"You can judge the morals of a community by how they take care of their dead"

~ Benjamin Franklin

DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS....

Sometime last spring I began to ponder our legacy. Have we made a lasting contribution to the community? If we closed down the SBHS this year would there be a void within the community? In ten years would anyone remember this organization?

Then, in early summer I received a call from Victoria Finsted, Assistant Principle of John F. Turner Elementary School in Palm Bay. The SBHS was invited to attend a 30th anniversary of the school's 1983 opening because...when the school opened the SBHS presented them with a plaque honoring John F. Turner, Sr. I knew his name only as owner of Turner's Department Store and asked about the connection to the school. As she proudly related Mr. Turner's accomplishments when principal of Melbourne High School, I could tell that his legacy as school principal continues to inspire.

Husband Carl and I attended the celebration along with excited kids, parents, school staff members and local dignitaries. I felt proud to be seated in the front row reserved for special guests such as the Palm Bay Fire Chief, Police Chief, the former school principal, and sponsors of the celebration.

Other legacies come to mind. Through the efforts of the local chapter of the DAR, the Melbourne Rotary Club, FIT and the SBHS Melbourne's first school, the restored "Little Red Schoolhouse", resides on the campus of FIT. Most of the blue historic markers, the project of Brevard Historian Weona Cleveland, are still seen in Melbourne and Eau Gallie. Efforts of the City of Melbourne are underway to replace signs that are missing.

Some of our members joined with others for the September 28th "Hands Across the Lagoon", an event that kicked off a renewed effort to restore quality to the Indian River Lagoon. Diane Barile was a founder of the Marine Resources Council, leader of this effort. We thank our writers whose histories can be transferred from generation to generation as they are adapted to whatever media technology the future presents.

The question remains, what can we do to contribute to our community and inspire future generations?

Carol Andren, President, SBHS
321.725.4115

UPCOMING SBHS PROGRAMS

November 9, 2013 3:00 PM
The History of Palm Bay
Presented by Mel Broom, former mayor of Palm Bay

December 14, 2013 3:00 PM
The History of Cattle Ranching
Presented by Billy Kempfer, Brevard Cattlemen's Association

All programs at the Fee Avenue Melbourne Public Library
540 E. Fee Avenue, Melbourne, Florida

AROUND BREVARD

Oct. 25, 2013 7:00 PM
The Archaeology of Death
Presented by Dr. Rachel Wentz
Halloween Spooktacular! An examination of burial rituals and the information they provide.
Florida Historical Society, 435 Brevard Ave., Cocoa
321.690.1976
Hosted by Florida Public Archaeology Network

Nov. 1, 2013 4:00 PM
Nov. 2, 2013 10:00AM & 2:00 PM
Patrick Smith Days at Forever Florida
Eco Safaris
Florida is a Land Remembered
Presented by Patrick D. Smith, Jr.
A visual storytelling of the writing of this Florida classic.
Forever Florida Ecosystems
4755 N. Kenansville Road, St. Cloud, FL
321.766.4803

Nov. 8, 2013 7:00 PM
Florida Songs
Presented by Pete Gallagher
Florida Historical Society, 435 Brevard Ave., Cocoa
321.690.1976

The following is edited and revised from the wording of the plaque presented at the 1983 opening dedication of the John F. Turner, Sr. Elementary School in Palm Bay by the SBHS. It is both informative and inspirational.

JOHN F. TURNER, SR.

On April 9, 1937, during the latter stage of the depression, John F. Turner, Sr. took over as principal of Melbourne High School. He served the school system until June of 1945 when he retired as Supervising Principal of Melbourne Schools.

"When I came here" he mentioned, "more than half of the children in Melbourne were hungry and their school lunches, if they brought any, consisted of cornbread and a mullet. Or a cold baked potato. I immediately approached all of the civic organizations in town and told them of the desperate need for a school cafeteria, which they then established, and for a while more than half the children were fed on charity funds. It was not until two years later that the cafeteria became a money-making project."

Besides establishing a cafeteria, Mr. Turner went on to tell of the 104-piece school band organized within 90 days after his arrival in Melbourne, and completely financed "from one end to the other" by business men in the area. From then on, he said, the moral structure of the town changed, improving from year to year.

Turner described his arrival in Melbourne in 1937 as more or less accidental. He had been requested by the school board to take over a school in Brevard County, preferably Titusville, and at that time he said he didn't even know Melbourne existed. After looking Titusville over, Mr. Turner said he was advised to drive through Cocoa and Melbourne before returning home to Lake Alfred.

Arriving in Melbourne, he was first impressed by the neon lighting just installed on U.S. 1, which gave the appearance of a "much cleaner and more progressive town than Titusville or Cocoa". His first impression of the school (Ruth Heneger): "It looked at that time like a college building and I knew the people of Melbourne were interested in education, so I made up my mind to stay".

The enrollment in the school when Mr. Turner became principal was approximately 300 elementary students and 500 junior and high school students.

In 1945 he opened his department store in downtown Melbourne. He said, "Not a week goes by that some of 'my children' don't show up! I know I have students all over the world. And they come in from time to time, some with grandchildren, to recall past school days."

*The SBHS thanks AAA Malabar Mini-Storage, located across the street from the Malabar Town Hall, for their generous donation of air-conditioned secure storage for the Society's collections and archives.
We also wish to thank Y. (Rusty) Rutstein, SBHS member and owner of A Better Copy, located at 102 East New Haven Avenue, for providing discounted printing services for the newsletter.*