



*South Brevard Historical Society, Inc.*  
*Founded 1966*

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

[www.southbrevardhistory.org](http://www.southbrevardhistory.org)

June 2010

**AN INFAMOUS CRIME**

**Please join us**  
**Saturday, June 12, 2010**  
**3:00 P M**  
**Melbourne Public Library**  
**540 E. Fee Avenue, Melbourne**

On the morning of December 9 1955, the residents of tiny Melbourne would awaken to the news of a brutal murder the night before. Soon Philip Van Eeghen would go on trial for the double homicide of his wife and daughter. The murders and their aftermath would rock the little town of Melbourne and the nation. For months, local and national newspapers screamed out every detail of the trial right up to his 1958 conviction. From the New York Times to the Melbourne Daily Times, it was a sensation.

When he was finally convicted, Van Eeghen was sentenced to life at Raiford, Florida's State Prison. After only 13 years, he escaped and was not found for 8 years. Unbelievably, only one year after his capture, he was paroled. What a miscarriage of justice! How could he be paroled after escaping and serving such a short time?

Was he really the murderer? How was he convicted with no motive and no murder weapon or did the police have the weapon and was there a motive they overlooked?

Was he guilty of the brutal death of his son the year before or was it an accident as he claimed?

Come and find out about Melbourne's crime of the century which rivals the O.J. Simpson trial and the Jon Benet murder. It remains a mystery after 55 years and still baffles and fascinates us today.

This fascinating program will be presented by Ann Raley Flotte. Ann researches and writes about local history and is the secretary of the SBHS. She and her sister Karen Raley are co-authors of "Images of America, Melbourne and Eau Gallie".



**Dear Members and Friends...**

While we take a break from program meetings over the summer your Board will continue to work on future programming and activities as well as some special projects. We hope you'll take advantage of the break and go to the FPAN film series or visit one of South Brevard's historical attractions.

For an alternate view of history, art and culture, you might visit the Ruth Funk Textile Museum on the FIT campus. The museum presents textiles in the context of historical, cultural, artistic and technical background. On exhibit through August 21st is "Styling the Modern: Fine Art Meets Fashion".

The exhibit features modernist scarves produced by the Ascher studio of London combining the art and culture of the post WWII era.

On the Web: [textiles.fit.edu](http://textiles.fit.edu)

Open: Tues - Fri, 10a.m. - 4 p.m.

Saturday, 12 p.m. - 4 p.m.

The closest parking is off Babcock Street north of University Boulevard. Signage in the parking area directs to the Museum.

This museum is the only one of its kind in Florida and one of only a few in the United States. Enjoy!

Carol Andren  
President, SBHS  
(321) 725-4115

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**FPAN and the Florida Historical Society**

**SUMMER FILM SERIES** at the Florida Historical Society headquarters, 435 Brevard Avenue in Cocoa Village. For information on their programs and the Summer Florida History Film Festival go to: [www.myfloridahistory.org](http://www.myfloridahistory.org) or phone: [321-690-1971](tel:321-690-1971).

**SBHS CALENDAR .....**

July and August

We take a summer break and will resume our programs in September.

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**WHAT TO DO THIS SUMMER**

**Grant**

**1916 House at Fisherman's Landing (Grant House)**

5795 U.S. 1

This historic Brevard home was relocated one half mile south to it's present site on the Indian River. The site is the the location of the first home built in Grant.

It's not open for regular hours during the summer but you may call to schedule a guided tour. Phone Ruby Lord: (321) 723-2260.

**Melbourne Beach**

**Old Town Hall History Center**

The Center is open Saturdays from 11 - 3.

Located at 2373 Oak St, Melbourne Beach across from Spessard Holland Golf Course. Admission is free

.For more information, call 321-676-0660

**Melbourne/Eau Gallie**

**Historic Rossetter House Museum & Gardens**

Located at 1320 Highland Avenue in the Eau Gallie Arts District of Melbourne.

**Historical Tours**, Daily, \$5/person (Tours begin 15 minutes past the hour, Last Tour begins at 3:15 PM)

**Ghost Tours**

First Fridays, May 7, June 4, July 2 and August 6 at 7 PM

\$7.50 per person Call to reserve. 254-9855

**For more information** about tours and other activities go to: [rossetterhousemuseum.org](http://rossetterhousemuseum.org) or phone: 321-254-9855

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.

## NEWS FROM THE BREVARD COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

### NEW HISTORIC MARKER IN SOUTH BREVARD

The location of the first house in what was known as Melbourne Beach has been designated a FLORIDA HERITAGE SITE. A new historic marker dedicated in May commemorates Myrtle Cottage built in 1888 by Mrs. Hannah Cummings and her daughter Grace. The site is located on Ocean Avenue to the east of the Community Chapel.

For information on Melbourne Beach history you can go to the town's website:

[www.melbournebeachfl.org](http://www.melbournebeachfl.org) click on *our town* then click *history*

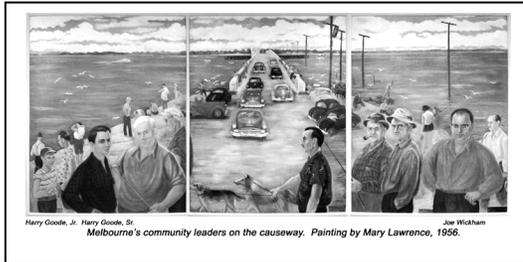
Historic Markers are sponsored by the Brevard County Historical Commission, the Brevard County Tourist Development Council, and the Florida Department of State.

### NEW HISTORIC GUIDE

The new edition of *Your Guide to Historical Landmarks in Brevard County*, the official publication of the Commission is expected to be available sometime in July

Periodically, the members of the Commission nominate landmarks in each of the five County Commission districts to be recognized in this pamphlet. It includes a map showing the location of all landmarks as well as a description of its historic significance.

Look for copies at county libraries, government centers, chambers of commerce and other local outlets. Call the Historical Commission's office at (321) 433-4415 for information on availability.



ON THE MELBOURNE CAUSEWAY 1956  
photo of paintings by Ed Vosatka

### OUT OF THE PAST

These three paintings are part of a series commemorating the opening of the "new" Melbourne Causeway on exhibit at the Lagoon House. They are on loan from the collection of the South Brevard Historical Society. Visit them and other items from the collection over the summer. You'll also see other historical and scientific displays prepared by the Marine Resources Council.

### Kellersberger Fund Publications

The following books published by *the SBHS Kellersberger Fund* are available for sale by the SBHS: *Tales of Old Brevard*, by Georgiana Kjerulff, *Rooted in Florida Soil*, by Julia Lake Kellersberger; *Historic Florida: A Closer Look at the Photographs of a Century Ago in Three Dimension*, by Clement Slade; *Troubled Paradise: Melbourne Village, Florida*, by Georgiana Kjerulff; and *Pineapples are Never Black or White*, by Harry Goode, Sr.

Board member, Patsy Oliphant, will be in charge of sales of the Kellersberger books. Publications will be on sale at most general meetings.