



WEST PASCO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

July 2014

News briefs from the historical society

The Rao Musunuru, M. D., Museum and Library is closed for the summer except for special events. We will reopen in September. However, group tours can be arranged by request.

Our normal hours are 1 to 4 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. However, we expect to expand our Saturday schedule to 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with the help of students in the Gulf High School history honor society, who have been volunteering at the museum.

Our opening program in September will feature State Rep. Amanda Murphy. In October we expect to offer a special Cemetery Tour of several cemeteries in western Pasco County. It will be conducted by Jeff Cannon and transportation will be provided by CARES buses. There will be a \$15 donation for the tour.

Please check our web site at westpascohistoricalsociety.org or our Facebook page at [facebook.com/westpascohistoricalsociety](https://www.facebook.com/westpascohistoricalsociety) for the latest information on our scheduled programs.

Kathryn Flannery, a volunteer at the museum who has studied library science at USF, has completely rearranged our vertical files so that the material is more professionally displayed and preserved. (Photo at right.)

We are planning an Antique Appraisal Fair at the New Port Richey Recreation Center, probably in January. Bring two or three of your antiques that you think are valuable and find how much they are worth. There is no charge to attend but the professional appraisers may charge a fee.

Starr Stevens, who has retired as a teacher at Gulf Middle School, has donated to the WPHS a school yearbook from each year since 1984. She was the yearbook sponsor at the school.





Message from the President

Dear Members and Friends of the West Pasco Historical Society,

I appreciate and am humbled to be the newly elected President of the Board of Directors for the West Pasco Historical Society. I am looking forward to serving your needs over my term in office. We have been busily working at the museum and library organizing and cataloging the items making it easier to do research and find those things that are meaningful to you. Jeff Miller has been scanning, cataloging and identifying old photographs including even the names of the folks in the pictures.

We have a number of programs lined up for our membership meetings that I believe you'll totally enjoy, beginning with our September meeting with Amanda Murphy, State Representative, District 36 as our featured speaker.

We will also be having a couple of historic tours, book authors and an Antique Appraisal Fundraising Fair probably in January. If you have any comments or suggestions please just give me a call or drop me an email. We're constantly working to improve your experience at the West Pasco Historical Society.

Bob Langford, President



Message from the Chairman

Dear West Pasco Historical Society Members and Friends,

After 4 years as President I have stepped down and now as a Past President have become Chairman of the Board giving David Prace a long deserved respite from that job. As you know, we operate solely with donations and volunteers. I ask you to think back to when you last have done either one for your Society's sake.

It is said that 10% of the people do 100% of the work. At The West Pasco Historical Society, I believe it is more like 5%. Let's see you raise the percentage of "active" members.

First, you can help reduce our expenses for printing and mailing meeting notices and these newsletters by simply notifying us at westpascohistoricalsociety@gmail.com of your email address. By doing this, you will receive timely, cost effective, information about your Society.

Second, consider helping us with your time by working on any of our many projects that keep your Society operating. We can always use greeters, help on committees, and record keeping. Right now your Board is hard at work scheduling programs and displays for the next year. Is that something you can help with?

Third, you can always donate money at any time. Did you know that many companies will match an employee's donation to a non-profit? Find out if your company does, and take advantage of that benefit. Think about becoming a sponsor for our fundraising events. Note, we haven't had a fundraiser in 3 years due to lack of people willing to do the work and make contact with potential sponsors.

If you are one of the 2000 Facebook fans reading this via Facebook, please consider becoming a member for \$5 if you're a student under 18, or \$15 for an annual adult member, or \$100 for a lifetime membership. Once you become a member, come to the Society and start helping out, instead of sitting home and looking at Facebook.

The West Pasco Historical Society will live or die depending on your degree of involvement and help of time or money.

If you're reading this newsletter it's because you have an interest in The West Pasco Historical Society, so step up, contact us by phone 727-847-0680, or email, and help. Don't let the 13 Board members do all the work.

I thank you in advance for deciding to help us in the near future,

(That's my Plea) Bob Hubach, Chairman, The West Pasco Historical Society, Inc.



Painting of the old Hudson home donated to the WPHS

Paul and Laurel Hudson were visitors to the museum on April 5. They donated this painting, which shows the home of Isaac and Amanda Hudson, for whom Hudson is named. Mr. and Mrs. Hudson are sitting on the porch. There are fish nets on the left and beehives on the right. The home was rebuilt in 1945 by Hershel Hudson, son of Alfred Leander Hudson, who is the boy feeding the chickens. Paul is Hershel's son. The painting is relatively modern, by Patricia Newman, but it is based on (and looks just like) an old 19th-century small photograph black-and-white photo. The painting is hanging in a prominent location in the museum.



Henry Fletcher, a great friend of the historical society!

Henry Fletcher, pictured here in the Julia Obenreder Library of the museum, recently retired as music director of First United Methodist Church. Mr. Fletcher is also a former music teacher at Elfers Elementary School. One of his many interests is collecting picture post cards and his collection includes about 500 local post cards which we do not have. He has scanned them all for us, and they have greatly enhanced our collection of local photos which can be viewed on our web site and Facebook page. He also has scanned several historical brochures of New Port Richey and Elfers which can also be viewed. Mr. Fletcher has also helped us in a project

by photographing every page of the old weekly newspaper the *New Port Richey Press* for a three-year period in the 1920s.

Why are there both a Port Richey and a New Port Richey?



Left: An 1882 map shows Hopeville but no New Port Richey and no Hudson yet. Right: An 1886 map shows Port Richey, but New Port Richey was not to appear until about 30 years later.

A frequently-asked question by new residents is: Why are there separate towns, Port Richey and New Port Richey? This article will attempt to answer that question.

The first settlers that we know of by name lived in the vicinity of the mouth of the Pithlachascotee River. James Washington Clark established a post office named Hopeville on Dec. 2, 1878. The town was named for the Hope family, some members of which had settled in what is now Hernando County in the 1840s. The Hopeville post office only lasted three years, as it closed when a post office was established at Hudson. But early maps of Florida show Hopeville where Port Richey is today. (It is said that this area was also called Hickory Hammock at one time, but we have not been able to confirm that name.)

In 1883 Aaron McLaughlin Richey moved from Missouri to the mouth of the Pithlachascotee River. He established a post office in his residence which he named Port Richey. The name Port Richey dates officially to July 9, 1884, when the post office was established. Mr. Richey lived here only about seven years, as he moved with his family to Tarpon Springs to be nearer a doctor. The post office was moved to Mr. Clark's home. For a 30-year period, maps showed only Port Richey.

Beginning in late 1911, the Port Richey Company began developing the area around Orange Lake. To distinguish this section from the earlier development, the *Tampa Morning Tribune* by 1914 began to refer to them as old Port Richey and new Port Richey, which the newspaper reported were a mile and a half apart. At first there was not a direct road between the two sections. In fact, on Sept. 18, 1914, the newspaper reported, "The residents from the old and new Port Richey will therefore have a 'road bee' Saturday and cut a road from Orange circle straight north about three-quarters of a mile to connect with the river road." The road became necessary because people had not been careful to close the gate on the farm of L. C. Draughon, allowing his cattle to stray. This led him to nail his gate shut permanently and the trek between the two sections increased to 4 miles. That same newspaper article elsewhere used the name New Port Richey (with a capital "N").

On Aug. 30, 1915, the name New Port Richey became official, as a separate post office by that name was established. New Port Richey began to appear on state maps.

New Port Richey incorporated in 1924 and Port Richey followed suit in 1925. Thus, in one sense, New Port Richey is older than Port Richey, but only as incorporated towns with city governments.

MEMBER PROFILE: David Prace



David Prace is a life member of the West Pasco Historical Society. He served as our president for 5½ years, and has also held the titles of vice president and Chairman.

David grew up in New York City. After graduating from William Cullen Bryant High School he left home at age 17 to start school at Mohawk College in Utica, N. Y. He transferred to the University of Colorado in Boulder to study engineering. He dropped out in his junior year and returned to New York City, where he worked for the noted advertising agency BBD&O.

At the start of the Korean Conflict David enlisted in the Navy. Boot camp was at Newport, R. I. He writes, "I was the oldest kid in Company 37 and for some reason, while all others were sent overseas, I was sent to Patuxent River NAS in Maryland. My squadron was VX-4, which consisted of one four-engined L-149 Lockheed Constellation, equipped with some electronics and had a mushroom antenna on top of the fuselage. We also had three gutted-out B-17s. I was never to sure what we were doing."

David transferred to Pensacola NAS for flight training as a cadet. After several months he decided that it wasn't for him and he was honorably discharged from the Navy. Now engaged to be married, he returned to Colorado to resume his studies. He writes that under the GI Bill, "there was a definite advantage for married folks and so we wed and took up life in university housing which was called Vetsville."

In 1954 he graduated with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and was hired by Stromberg-Carlson, a Rochester, N. Y., supplier of telephone equipment. There he worked on numerous projects and was awarded two U. S. patents. Moving into the International Marketing division, he was able to travel both domestically and around the world.

After 27 years with Stromberg-Carlson, a career change presented itself and he joined Leonid Corp., a Gaithersburg, Md., company which designed radio and telephonic communication systems for overseas customers.

He subsequently was hired as the Proposal Manager for S3 Technologies in Columbia, Md., an offshoot of the Singer Company. S3T designed and built nuclear power plant training simulators for the power industry. These simulators replicated a nuclear power plant operating station and cost 10 to 15 million dollars.

After retiring, David and his wife Midge London-Prace moved to New Port Richey, where both have volunteered in numerous community organizations. He has been a volunteer for 20 years at Community Hospital (now Medical Center of Trinity), where he has been a Runner, Wheelchair Transporter, and now Pathfinder. He has served on the hospital's Volunteer Board of Directors and edited the volunteer newsletter for 10 years. David has served on the Board of Directors for Habitat for Humanity, has served as President of the Friends of the New Port Richey Public Library, and is now a librarian for the Avery Branch of the New Port Richey Library at the CARES Elfers Center. He is also a member of the Friends of the County Library system. He has served on the Community Redevelopment Advisory Board for the City of New Port Richey and has been a pollworker for the Pasco County Supervisor of Elections, working on elections for 13 years. He has won numerous community service awards and has twice been nominated to be King Pithla in the Chasco Fiesta.

About the West Pasco Historical Society

The WPHS was formed in 1973. Our first president was Julie Obenreder. In 1974-5 the society published the first hard-cover local history, *West Pasco's Heritage*. In 1981 Alex Acey donated a local residence to the society. The building, which had served as the Seven Springs schoolhouse from 1915 to 1925, was moved to Sims Park later that year and was dedicated as our museum in 1983. A library addition was added in 1992. The museum was extensively remodeled in 2010-11 and in the re-opening ceremony on Sept. 10, 2011, the museum was named the Rao Musunuru, M. D., Museum and Library, in honor of the donor who had largely financed the renovation. The museum is open Fridays and Saturdays except during the summer, and by appointment. The historical society is composed entirely of volunteers; there is no paid staff.

Some WPHS Personnel

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