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THE HISTORIAN

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JANUARY 2005

THE SEBRING HISTORICAL SOCIETY

QUARTERLY LUNCHEON MEETING

SATURDAY, JANUARY 29, 2005

Please bring a dish to pass and \$1.50 to help with service and the rent of the building.

Ray McIntyre to Present “Florida Cracker History” at Luncheon Meeting

Raymond McIntyre is a sixth generation “Florida Cracker” and a third generation resident of Highlands County. His family moved to Florida in 1820 just as Florida became a territory of the United States. His family originally settled in the area where Lake County is today, in a small town named Center Hill. Raymond’s great great grandfather served in the Confederate States Army during the “War Between the States”. He was in the Florida Infantry Company J and fought throughout the southeast during the last three years of the war.

Raymond’s grandfather moved to Sebring in 1921 and started a dairy south of Lake Jackson on a winding dirt trail that eventually became known as McIntyre Road. Today, this road is known as Sparta Road. The old dairy barn existed on the property at the corner of Sparta Road and Sudan Mission Road where warehouses are located today.

Raymond grew up in Sebring and graduated from Sebring High School in 1977. He married Becky Harner McIntyre in 1981. Becky is also a third generation resident of Highlands County. Her mother’s family is the Swanks. Her grandfather, Harry Swank, moved his family to Highlands County in the mid-1920s and originally was the pastor of the Brethren Church in Lorida. Becky and Raymond were born at Walker Memorial Hospital in Avon Park and were high school sweethearts.

Today, Raymond and Becky reside out near the O’Berry place west of Payne Road. Raymond likes to travel and tell the story of the “Florida Crack-

er”. He grew up working on his grandfather’s ranch in Sebring. Raymond says, “The name of the ranch was the ‘Lited Knot ‘ ranch and I made a lot of good memories working that ranch. I can still smell the old feed mill when we would be mixing up sweet feed for the cattle. It smelled so good that I had to try some myself one time. I remember one of Papa’s horses that did not like to cross water. He would stall every time you came to a ditch or canal. One time, my father got off the horse, walked across the ditch to the other side and pulled the reins of the horse to make him jump the water, and sure enough, he jumped the water and landed on top of my dad, pushing him down into the canal and nearly drowning him.”

Raymond enjoys studying the history of the “Florida Cow Man” and the story of the “Florida Cracker”. He travels throughout the state telling the story of the pioneer days in Florida. He has ridden the Florida Cracker Trail from coast to coast eight times and was trail boss on two of the trips.



Raymond McIntyre

Remembering Arthur “Buck” McIntyre

By: *Donna & Howard Crawford*
(and *Buck McIntyre*)

An article about the “Sebring High School Class of 1954 - 50th Year Reunion” appeared in the October, 2004 issue of the Sebring Historical Society’s Historian.

When our class happily gathered together for that special occasion in May, 2004, little did we know that 4 months later we would be losing another member. None of us ever dreamed it would be “Bucky”. Perhaps most of us thought he would “be with us always”. And yes (like all of our other dear classmates who have passed away), he too will be sadly missed.

For that 50th Year Anniversary of our class, a large 167 page reunion book was prepared. It contained class history, a copy of the Sebring High School Student Handbook, long forgotten pictures of classmates as well as more recent and updated classmate and family information, stories and photos. The response from our class members in obtaining what was needed for the book, was more than overwhelming. I (Donna) am submitting excerpts of what was written at that time.

In May, 2004, Buck wrote the following about himself... [This is the story of my life. I hope Donna meant “up until now”

After school, I volunteered for the draft and went into the Army. I became a Front Line Aidman, & went to Japan where I was assigned to Medical Company, 7th Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. After much hard work, I was promoted to Motor Sergeant for our company. All of my military time was after Korea. I was a cold war soldier.

My travels through Japan would be a nice story all it’s own, from the mountains to the beaches, to the religious temples, to watching for nine months while a home was being built with no electricity available. All was very interesting and unforgettable.

When I returned home on October 13, 1956, I met Louada Smith. After what seemed like years,

on February 21, 1957 we were engaged to be married, and on June 22, 1957, she changed her name to Louada Smith McIntyre. That was a very good year!!! Since then, we have been blessed with three children who live a short distance away, so visiting is easy:

Artie is the Fairboard Manager for the Highlands County Firemen’s Association. Kevin works for the State of Florida in the prison system. Deborah is store manager for Barnes and Noble book company in Miami, FL, but will be transferred to their Ft. Myers store. We have two grandchildren: Ryne (age 13) is Kevin & Robyn’s and Samantha (Age 10) is Artie & Lisa’s. We also have two adopted grandchildren: Timothy & Matthew from Kevin & Robyn.

In 1956, I worked for my daddy, spreading fertilizer. Then in 1958, I started working for W. G. “Bill” Young Construction and learned a little carpentry. I began painting under the leadership of Oscar Morrison. Louada and I now own a painting contracting company called McIntyre Painting, Inc.

The last 46 years have really been interesting, from going to a home to paint, and could not find a speck of dust, to a home where they moved the refrigerator sixteen inches from the wall and put table scraps there. The old food was all the way to the top of the refrigerator. The coils on the back dried the food so there was a record of food consumption over the years -enough said


Well, I did what I don’t like and that was to dwell on the bad instead of the good. I wrote two sentences about good and five about the bad. Just plain human nature.

If I were to tell all the good things that happened and all the good people I have met, and mentioned all the folks I consider my friends, there can be no room for the not so good.

I’m truly glad to be a part of the Sebring High School - Class of 1954. We’ll see you all at the reunion ... Buck.]

(The following addendum also appeared in the class reunion book and was written in May, 2004 by Donna Crawford, a friend & former classmate.)

[Buck is a talented person, an excellent, licensed painting contractor & maintenance man. Yes, he thinks of himself as “good”, but others consider him

cont’d 

Indian Burial Ground Ignored

By Alden Franklin Young

I moved to Sebring, Florida in 1920. My sisters, Mearle and Opal, made friends immediately and joined the activities of the high school students.

The Seminole and other Indian tribes lived in Florida hundreds or thousands of years before Columbus discovered that there was an American continent. The Indians lived off the land and grew some crops very successfully. We must remember the native Indians, prior to the extensive Spanish exploring, did not have horses to carry their freight. This made burial grounds a necessity, with little transport after death. Every few miles, they established a burial ground, where they interred their dead, along with items they considered necessary for the deceased to take to the "Happy Hunting Ground". Some of the Indians south of Sebring, such as Miccosuki tribe, buried gold coins they took from the invading white men to pay for their entry into the afterlife. As a result of this habitation by the Indians hundreds or thousands of years prior to Columbus, there are no doubt hundreds of burial plots from this Indian culture which were never found nor identified. One of these was located near the shore close to the waters of Lake Josephine.

Someone in the group of high school students discovered this Indian burial ground in the Lake Josephine area, between Sebring and Lake Placid. I was too young to have been associated with this activity, and only know what I overheard.

Each Sunday, the group would take a couple of Model T Ford cars loaded with teenagers or possibly older people, and a few shovels and go to this Indian burial area to dig for artifacts. I remember my sisters displaying beads and a few carved wooden objects they recovered from their effort.

Ten years later, my sister, who was by then Mearle Molter, developed a friendship with Billy Bowlegs. Billy was well known in the Indian history of Highlands County, and has a creek named after him in Highlands Hammock State Park. Billy would ride his pony into Sebring and tie the pony to the fireplug at the Circle and South Ridgewood Drive,

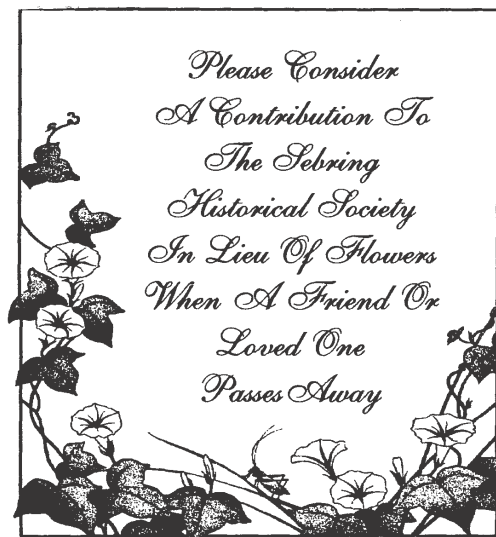
at the Molter Drug corner. Billy and my sister talked many hours, and became good friends. Mearle did not write down this history which was passed on to her from these conversations.

In checking this area today, it is apparent that the burial mounds were stripped of all the items that had been buried with the bodies. This made the area appear as just a rough spot in the sandy woods. When developers bought this area for housing, they were unaware it was a burial area, as there was no legal record made of such.

In tracing known history of Florida, remember at one time the Atlantic Ocean was much higher in levels than we have known it to be. Historians tell us the ocean at one time began at Columbia, South Carolina and covered nearly all the land south of that point. Some of the high points in Georgia and Alabama may have been tiny islands at that time. Perhaps this water level occurred prior to the polar ice cap buildup. We know the polar ice cap stores enough frozen water that, if melted, would raise the ocean many feet deeper than we find it now, and Florida would again be inundated.

These burial mounds are thought to be of Miccosuki or Seminole Indian origin, but I do not offer any proof of which tribe occupied the land and for how long. There could have been other tribal claims on this land during the long and unrecorded past. We will probably never know the facts in this case.

Some of the houses in the Lake Josephine area are built on top of remains buried hundreds of years ago. They will never be identified nor recovered from this final resting place.



IN MEMORY OF TWO RESPECTED VOLUNTEERS

By Carole Goad

The Sebring Historical Society has lost two of our highly respected volunteers. On December 4, Lois Thiele passed away; and on December 6, Myrtle Card died.

Lois Thiele. Lois and her late husband, Al, worked diligently in the Archives for many years. Al was our “laminating specialist”. Lois and Al moved to Sebring in 1958. For the past 30 years, they were active in the Faith Lutheran Church and in many community organizations serving as volunteers. Lois was involved in Girl Scouts, receiving their second highest award (The Honor Pin). Lois also delivered Meals on Wheels, and served meals from her home to those in need and visited persons who were ill, in her “spare time”.

Myrtle Card. Myrtle volunteered for about eight years in both the Sebring Library and the Archives. She faithfully maintained the news clipping files and performed other services as needed. She will always be remembered for her sparkle and sense of humor, and her dedication in lending a helping hand where needed.

We extend our condolences to the families of these outstanding people who were so generous with their time and talents. They are greatly missed.

REMEMBER WHEN.....

By Verdelle Medlin

I decided to play “remember when” for this issue of The Historian. What you remember may be a little different than what I remember.

We used to play high school basketball games at Tusawilla Park. I also remember another time at Tusawilla when we were playing “Sardines” (that’s when everyone hides in the same place!) and yours truly slid down a door to “get home free”. I got hung on a nail and Hayden Williams took me to visit Dr. Weems. (I always was a tomboy.) Dad kept reminding me, “You’re a young lady, act like one!”

My fondest memories are times with the Sebring High School Band. A concert was performed every Sunday on the City Pier during the tourist season. A special concert for the Duke and Duchess of Windsor was performed as they greeted us from the observation car on the back of the Silver Meteor train.

Being a proud member of the Sebring High School Band meant winning a Class A+ rating at competitions when Sebring was only a Class C (in size) school.

I remember swimming and fishing from the

City Pier. The water was deep enough to allow diving and participating in many games of “tag”.

And how about those Girl Scout slumberless parties in the Scout House, making s’mores the old fashioned way and telling ghost stories until we finally fell asleep.

I remember having real fun at the Sebring Races in the good old days when all of the civic organizations had the food concessions and everything benefited the community. There were very few out-of-community concession booths.

I remember riding my bike around the lake on the two-lane road, then to the Hammock with several friends (Iris June Hart Young and Jim McRae Barber). We would stop for a swim, eat our packed lunch and just meander around doing nothing much. On a Saturday, we visited with Mississippi, the mother alligator and her babies that hung out near the Hammock’s main gate.

Many years ago, the community celebrated Christmas on the Circle. The Sebring Women’s Club bought and put hard candy in individual boxes, which were given to all the children, along with an apple. The Sebring High School Band and their alumni played Christmas music. Rev. Charles Weigle sang “Oh, Holy Night”, and everyone had a wonderful, blessed time.

one of the best in the area. Known for quality work, he's often asked to take on a job which is located some distance from Sebring.

It isn't only painting that he does. He's handy with his hands, and if you ask for something to be changed, repaired, replaced or rebuilt, he can do that also. It's during this time that the "artist" comes out in him. If someone wants a piece of furniture, a wall, door or what ever, painted and then would like to add a decoration of flowers, leaves or trees, he can do that too. He'll make a plain painted item (even a room air-conditioner) look like wood -complete with wood-grain & knots.

Arthur Edward (as he's also known), once told someone (and Louada could have crowned him when she found out), that his wife slept with the gardener. Well, you should see the yard around their beautiful home. Buck (with pride), is that gardener, and the one who maintains and cares for it. It reminds us of a beautiful park with pretty green grass, a variety of huge trees (oak, magnolia, palm, etc.), and an assortment of lush flowering plants.

How about a cook out? While Louada fixes the delicious salad, veggies, and dessert, Buck is the one who prepares the most mouth-watering array of grilled meats (beef & pork roasts/ribs, steaks, chops, chicken, turkey & sausage). Then additional enjoyment comes when family and friends gather at the house to partake of their bounty. One of Buck's pleasures is fishing, and many folks have tasted his fried fish fillets, which are another winner.

Agreed, during his career Buck has met a multitude of people with varied personalities and beliefs. He's full of stories, just ask him for a sample of the many he can tell you. Based on the way he expresses himself, one can't help but chuckle. And yes--Louada has to "get after him every once in a while and tone him down if he gets too wild".]

(The following was written in November, 2004 by Howard Crawford)

[Buck was some six years younger than myself, when we both entered the Army in 1954. Although we took basic training during the same time at Camp Gordon in Augusta, Georgia, we weren't in the same company.

Later, we were both sent to Fort Sam Hous-

ton for training in the Medical Corps. Again, I was in a different company from Buck. He was sent to the Far East and I was sent to Europe. As mentioned earlier, this was the time of the Cold War, thankfully no actual war.

Our paths didn't cross again until years after our military experience and it had much to do with my wife Donna.

Buck was a man you could count on. In popular terms, with him, what you saw was what you got. There was no pretense about him. If you needed someone to help you, he was there. Honest and steady in everything he did. He was an "up-beat" type of person, and one who made you feel glad to be with.]

Arthur E. "Buck" McIntyre was born January 24,1936 and was age 68 when he passed away in Sebring on September 20, 2004.

He will be remembered for all of the charitable good works he provided his community.

Survivors include his wife, Louada; daughter, Debbi of Miami; sons, Artie of Sebring and Kevin of Avon Park; brothers, Bob of Fort Myers and Donnie of Blairsville, GA.; sisters, Ellen Joyce Cain of Babson Park, Catharine Palmer and Eileen Brannon, both of Maggie Valley, N.C.; and four grandchildren.



Arthur "Buck" McIntyre

Highlands and Desoto Counties

By Alden Franklin Young

When Florida was not yet out of the ocean, we had a least five ages of our state before it arrived at its water table and elevation of today.

Jack Skipper, while putting out a campfire on the Skipper ranch west of DeSoto City, discovered oyster type shells just under the topsoil. These oyster shells had no doubt been there from when the Gulf of Mexico covered southern Highlands County. We do not know for sure, but either the peninsula of Florida upheaved out of the Gulf, or the ocean lowered when the ice age was with us. The same ice age caused the Great Lakes to form as the ocean elevation went down.

During the 1957 era, I was a partner in a rock digging operation just north of Lehigh Acres, south of Sebring. We had a dragline near the western section of LaBelle, and were digging for lime rock suitable for building state roads. Unfortunately, we discovered small deposits of plastic rock material within the road rock, and the State of Florida would not accept the rock because any amount of plastic material therein disqualified it as good rock. Any time you have plastic material, it will soften up and cause a hole to occur in the road surface over the plastic, and this means more trouble in maintenance of the road.

During this search, we also dug between LaBelle and Lehigh Acres north of Highway 80. This was slightly different, except possibly worse for the rock content. We discovered five ages of the earth's water elevation. About fifteen feet below the surface, the rock structure and type was different. It also was a different shade of brownish orange. Between this lower part of the excavation, we discovered four additional layers of types of rocks. Each layer was easily identified, and each had a different geological identifying name. The salt water had been washout of the various layers due to rainfall causing the salt to migrate to the Gulf of Mexico.

Further down in the ground, there was a cap rock type which caused underground water to flow upward. At the Lehigh Acres addition, there were several flowing wells, about six inches in diameter,

making a creek which emptied into the Fort Myers area. They were plugged or covered up at a later date to prevent flooding by Lehigh Acres builders. Their pressure was less than five pounds, which would prevent seeping above the ground. Their content of sulfur was also high, and could be easily smelled on a calm day for several hundred feet.

Altogether, we estimated the earth had gone through several ice ages, and the ice stored at the north or south poles was extremely high during those periods.

Due to the occasional plastic content of the rock, we abandoned the effort to dig and sell rock to the State Road Department. Some private roads were built with this rock, however, before we closed the operation. After we quit the effort, Lehigh Acres bought the property and no further effort was made to find rock on the property.

During this time period, the rumor persisted that a sizeable amount of Confederate States Gold had been delivered to an island in the Everglades. The gold had never been recovered at a later date.

During the late 1940s and 1950s, I was Secretary for the Davie Chamber of Commerce. In digging for the facts, I found the story published by Life Magazine was not correct. Lonnie Harvey, who was game warden for that area southwest of Andytown, had been hired to take the Life photographers to the island where he had recovered a number of Confederate pots, pans and equipment. He purposely took them to an adjoining island, and they found nothing.

However, an old Indian lady from the Tamiami Trail came forward with a story that when she was a young girl, the Braves had brought in a large amount of gold coins when they had discovered the cache of men and equipment on that island. The Braves had buried the coins individually and considered this as their "payment" for their entries into the hereafter, which they called "The Happy Hunting Ground". This gold was never recovered the second time, as none of the Braves told anyone where the individual burials took place.

During the early 1920s, the high school kids used to dig in the Indian Mounds near Lake Placid. My sisters, Mearle Molter and Opal Hodge, participated in these weekend digs about 1921 into 1923, and brought several pocketfuls of small beads

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