

The Historian

Number 137

www.sebringhistoricalsociety.org

July 2009

The Sebring Historical Society

*Shining a light on our community's people and
Institutions of achievement*

Poultry Enterprise in Early Sebring Theme for July 18 Meeting Program

Two Class of 1957 Sebring graduates will be lead speakers at our quarterly luncheon meeting on Saturday, July 18, 2009 at the Sebring Civic Center (at Lake Jackson) at 12:00 noon.

Cousins, Jacquelin Haslinger Webster (Jackie) and Judy Payne Greer, will be keynote speakers as they relive the days when their grandparents, F.C. and Edith Payne, and their sons, developed the family poultry business known as Hidden Hollow Farms. They will discuss how members of this large family acquired properties close to each other



F.C. & Edith Payne

in the vicinity of the western side of Lake Jackson and ran a successful poultry cooperative. A story about Hidden Hollow Farms was published previously in the October 2008 issue of *The Historian*.

Jackie's parents were G. Fred Haslinger and Edith Winifred Payne, daughter of the F.C. Paynes. Jackie married Henry Webster and they had four sons: Henry, Scott, Daniel and Kedric. Judy is the daughter of Carroll and Mary Kelsey Payne and was married to Jimmy Greer, who passed away at the age of 37. Judy's children are: Tommy, Lyle, Karen, Johnny and Amanda.



*Judy Greer & Jackie
Webster 2006*

Bill Schlosser's family also was involved with the poultry business, although on a smaller scale. In the following story, Bill relates in detail what it was like to be a kid helping Dad with the family enterprise back in those days.

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Sebring Historical Society Essay

Chicken Farming at the Schlossers

By Bill Schlosser

My Dad used to raise chickens. He built his first chicken coop in 1917, the second one some time in the 1920s, and the third one in 1936. When Dad bought baby chicks, he would buy 50 at a time. I don't remember what state he would order the chicks from. I do remember they would ship the chicks by parcel post. When you got to the post office, if they had arrived, you wouldn't have to ask! You could hear them peeping as soon as you stepped in the door of the post office.

The baby chicks were always shipped in cardboard boxes, which measured about three feet square, and nine inches high. The boxes had holes on all four



Wooden "chicken nest" crate;
glass egg; wire hook

sides and the top. The insides of the boxes were divided into four sections.

Dad would also buy chicks from Englemann's Hatchery in Avon Park. I was only about five years old at the time. I accompanied my Dad to Englemann's Hatchery one day. Mr. Englemann told my Dad that he put 51 chicks in and that one of them was for me. I had only one problem with that – my chick was mixed in with the others and I couldn't tell which one was mine!

We raised chickens to lay (for eggs) and fryers to sell. We would have around 200 at times. Today, when grocery stores get produce shipped in, it comes in cardboard boxes. Years ago, everything was shipped in wooden crates, and when the grocery stores emp-

ty tied these crates, they would throw them in the trash. My Dad would get the wooden crates and use them for chicken nests.



Schlosser Chicken Coop
Built in 1917; Demolished in 2005

When we were kids, my brother and I used to have to find a pine tree, rake up a big bag of pine needles and take them to the chicken house. We would take all of the old pine needles out of the nests and put new pine needles in them, making a nest about six inches thick. When the pine needles got packed down close to the bottom, we had to do it all over again. It used to take several months before new pine needles had to replace the old ones. If the eggs fell on the wood bottom, they would break.

We used to have a "nest egg" in every nest. These were made of glass. Every now and then, one of these would break. About the late 1930s, our extra nest eggs had run out. I remember my Dad coming home from town and telling us that they quit making glass nest eggs, and that he had to buy wooden nest eggs instead.

In 1955, we sold all of the chickens. In the late 1960s, I cleared out some oak scrub bushes and found a glass nest egg. It was about 150 feet from the old chicken coop. That glass nest egg had been hidden away in the scrub bushes for 15 or 20 years, and nothing even ate it!

The photograph shows the first chicken coop my Dad built, in 1917. Years ago, a fellow told me that that chicken coop appeared to be low to the ground. I said, "But it is still high enough so that when chickens are on the roost, they won't bump their heads".

The photograph shows this old chicken coop at

(cont'd on page 3)

(Chicken Farming cont'd from page 2)

about the end of 2005 just before I tore it down.

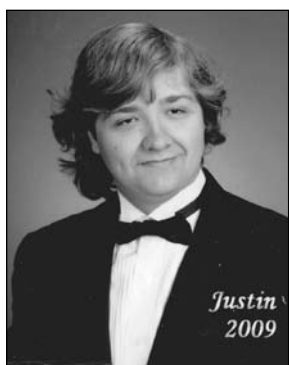
The picture of the wooden crate was taken in January, 2009. This wooden crate is just like the ones that my Dad used for chicken nests. This one is over 80 years old. When this crate was new, it had a Del Monte logo on the side of it. In black letters, it said "Del Monte Food Products" with a black ring around it. The other photograph shows a wire hook

that I made to catch chickens. The last time I used it was in 1955. I found this old wire hook on top of the old chicken coop in 2005 just before I tore it down. The wire had rusted in half.



Justin Finch Awarded Scholarship

By Carole Goad



Justin Finch

Sebring High School senior, Justin Finch, has been awarded the \$500 scholarship by the Sebring Historical Society. This is the second year that our Society has awarded a deserving student a scholarship to assist with his education.

Justin is the son of Mrs. Carol Finch. He will attend South Florida Community College this fall majoring in criminology with hopes of becoming a veterinarian. If that sounds a little strange, Justin explains that there is not a veterinary science program at SFCC, so he believes that the science classes he will take there will help cross over to the science required for a veterinary degree. His plan is to get his associates degree at SFCC, then transfer to the University of Florida (Go Gators!), and pursue his education to become a veterinarian.

During his high school years, Justin has volunteered at Dr. Jernigan's veterinarian clinic. He was in FFA for three years during Middle School, played clarinet in the Middle School band, and was in Boy Scouts. He likes to read, play video games, and chess. He was a member of the Chess Club and the Multi-Cultural Club at Sebring High; and was in a bowling league in Lake Placid.

One of the highlights of his summer of 2008 was a trip to Rome and a Mediterranean cruise with his mother and his aunt. Justin states that he toured the Vatican and saw the Sistine Chapel, then went to Venice where he observed craftsmen involved in glass-making. He and his family then traveled to Sicily and Spain.

Justin states that he gives credit to his mother for everything he has accomplished in his life. Justin has our very best wishes for success during his college years.

From "The Way to Handle a Problem"

By Norman Vincent Peale

Think positively about your problem. Attitudes are more important than facts. The person with positive faith looks at a problem creatively and finds a way to go around or under or over it, or hit it straight on. The positive thinker activates things positively and draws back positive results.

Kayla Griffin

Editor's Note: Kayla Griffin is a 2008 graduate of Sebring High School. Following high school, she attended the Great Commission Bible Institute here in Sebring, from which she recently graduated. While there, she traveled to Israel on a Mission journey. She is currently working part time at the Fitness Factory and is taking classes at South Florida Community College. She will receive her Associates degree in May of 2010. Her future plans are to continue in college, majoring in exercise science, then earn an advanced degree in physical therapy. Kayla is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Donald R. Griffin, II. In 2001, at the age of 11 and in the fifth grade, she wrote the following essay honoring her grandfather at Father's Day.

My Grandpa, by Kayla Griffin

My grandpa is the greatest grandpa ever. His name is Don Griffin and he is sixty-three years old. Here are some of the reasons I think he is the best grandpa in the world.

My grandpa has a kind heart and does a lot of nice things for others. He helps people who cannot get around very well. He mows their lawns, talks to them and even runs errands for them. He thinks nothing of spending an afternoon just being a "friend" to someone in need. He takes good care of sick relatives, too. For instance, when my grandpa's father-in-law had to be hospitalized, he stayed with him for seven days from 6:00 am until 10:00 pm every day! And when his sister found that she had cancer, my grandpa tried to keep her busy so she wouldn't think about it so much. Now that's what I call being a good brother.

Grandpa Don is very involved at his church. He likes to teach people about God, so he became a Sunday School Director. He sings songs about God and tells others about how Jesus died for



Kayla Griffin

them on the cross. He even spends his own money on books to tell others about God, and he buys prizes for the children who go to his church. He often goes to the church in his spare time to fix things that need to be repaired.

My grandpa can always be counted on to get the job done.

He is a good carpenter and is always working on a project for someone. He can make almost anything from wood, like cabinets, desks, dollhouses, boats and other toys. He doesn't make things for money. He builds things because it makes people happy. I asked him to build something for me and he said that he would. I wonder what it will be!

My grandpa lives on a small farm. He has to keep the yard mowed and the animals fed. The animals are a lot of work for him but he takes good care of them. I like it when the cows have babies and I can pet the calves. I know it's more work for him but he never complains about it.

When I visit, my grandpa likes to make sure that I have a good time. It's kind of a tradition that he takes me to McDonald's and lets me have whatever I want. He doesn't have much money but he doesn't worry about that! After McDonald's, sometimes he takes me to a flea market. We have fun just walking around and looking at all the stuff. Then we both go home and take a nap!

These are just a few of the special things about my grandpa. I think it made my grandpa proud when I told him I was writing this paper about him. He doesn't have to win anything, but at least now someone has done something nice for him.

Mike Sawyer - A Man of Wisdom For Our Time

By Carole Goad

During the past few years, I have had the privilege of meeting and speaking with Mike on several occasions here in the archives about subjects great and small. There are some persons you meet in this life who are so remarkable that their stories just have to be told. Mike is one of those persons!

Mike and his former wife, Sue, are the parents of a son, Zachary Sawyer, who is a 2009 graduate of Sebring High School. Mike and Sue also raised her two sons, Mike's stepsons, Kyle Mathes and Marcus Mathes. Sadly, Sgt. Marcus Mathes died in the service of his country in Baghdad, Iraq, on April 28, 2008.

Mike and his family have belonged to First Baptist Church of Lake Josephine for more than 30 years, where he has taught at their Vacation Bible School and young adult classes. He has also served as church photographer over the years.

Mike Sawyer was born in Lakeland, Florida in 1951. During his early childhood, Mike and his parents were frequent visitors to Sebring, as Mike's grandparents, Leroy and Margaret Silkett, lived in the Kuhlman (Lake Josephine) area. Mr. Silkett was a citrus grower. Mike came to Sebring to live with his grandparents in 1961, and graduated from Sebring High School in 1969. Mike



Mike Sawyer

has many fond memories of his teachers and coaches while at Sebring High, and states that they had a big impact on his life. He gives special appreciation to Band Director Paul Gustat, Coaches Jim Taveniere and John Freeland; English teacher Roy Riedy; and Julia Titus, who Mike states was the first teacher who got him really interested in math.

After high school graduation, Mike worked at Publix for awhile, then went to work with the Florida Division of Forestry in the Okeechobee District, which included Glades and Highlands Counties. He worked in Forestry for 31 years, his main duty being "wildland firefighting". However, as Mike states, he "did everything" during the course of that career. It should be noted that Mike was recognized by the governors of several states for "meritorious service" for his firefighting activities as one of the members of the Florida Incident Management Blue Team. He retired from the Division of Forestry in 2003.

During his years at Forestry, Mike had many other interests and avocations. He attended South Florida Community College and the University of Florida, taking specialized courses through the Forestry Division toward a Criminal Justice degree. He served as part-time deputy for 14 years with

(cont'd on page 6)

(Mike Sawyer cont'd from page 5)

the Highlands County Sheriff's Department from 1978 to 1993.

In addition, Mike worked with Future Farmers of America over the years, coaching students in such subjects as tree identification, insects and disease, forestry tools, and other matters relating to the environment. He has also spoken to groups of middle school students about the environment, and participated in LEEP, Local Environmental Education Program for fourth graders in several County schools. Mike was a Deputy Director of a summer camp for middle and high school students in environmental education at Brooksville, Florida, for over 20 years.

After the hurricanes of 2004, Mike opened a photography studio. He states that when he was about eight or nine years old, his grandmother had given him his first camera. He stated that he took lots of pictures as a child and decided that someday, he would indeed be a photographer. He started doing church and wedding photography in the 1970s, and had decided that when he retired from the Division of Forestry, he would open his own photography studio. He attended the FPP (Florida Professional Photographers Association) school at Daytona Beach Community College annually. He also joined the Professional Photographers Guild of Mid-Florida. He still maintains an active photography business, known as "Photography by Mike", located on North Ridgewood Drive. In addition to his photography business, Mike began working full time as a Park Ranger at Highlands Hammock State Park in December of 2008.

Mike is a man who has a humble attitude about his intellect and his many accomplishments, only a few of which are mentioned in this story. He is a man who possesses the wonderful combination of common sense and uncommon wisdom. Just engage him in a conversation about the environment, and you will be inspired by his knowledge and perception of this very important subject. He is a devoted family man, church member, and teacher; he is hard-working, talented, ethical, practical and honorable.

Godspeed Mike. Here is hoping that your words of wisdom about our beautiful world reach many more hearts and minds.

In Loving Memory of

Poppa and Momma

Joseph and Anna Georgia

and Siblings – Beatrice, Dante and Theodore Georgia

With Love,

Lillian Georgia Barnes

**2009 Luncheon
Meeting Dates**

**Put these on your
calendar!!**

**All at 12:00 noon at
Sebring Civic Center
Saturday, July 18
Saturday, October 24**

The Hodge Place and Windmill Energy

By Bill Schlosser

In one of my articles written in 2003, I told about the old wagon trail that ran from Fort Ogden to Fort Bassinger. DeSoto Road was also part of the old wagon trail. At that time, Highlands Avenue ended at DeSoto Road. It didn't go on south like it does today.

On the south side of DeSoto Road and about 300 feet west of Highlands Avenue, there was a house, a chicken farm and a grove. That was known as the Hodge Place.

Willie Taylor taught fifth grade in the old school on Pine Street for many years. I remember hearing her say that when she was a little girl, her dad worked in the field at the Hodge Place. Her family lived at the Hodge Place at that time. The Hodge Place was about two miles from where my dad lived. Back in the teens (circa 1912-1919), the only thing located between where my dad lived and the Hodge Place was woods, Jackson Creek and more woods.

In the teens, if you went to town from our house in a wagon or car, you had to take the wagon trail past the Hodge Place, and then up Highlands Avenue. That was before Lakeview Drive was in existence. I remember my dad telling me that he went to visit Hodge one Sunday afternoon. Dad was walking back home that afternoon when he got caught in a rain storm. Just before he got to Jackson Creek, there was a pine tree at the side of the road and lightning hit that tree, knocking dad down on his knees. He said that he didn't know what happened at first.

In the 1930s, Hodge had an eight foot Chicago Aermotor windmill and about a 30 foot tower. That was the first windmill I can remember seeing. Hodge also had a wind charger on about a 40 foot tower.

There was a little building right beside the wind charger. I remember Mrs. Hodge took my dad and I in that little building and told all about how that wind charger worked. The only thing I can remember is there were two long rows of batteries all hooked together in the little building. In the 1950s, Hodge took down the old wind charger and put a new wind charger up. The new tower was about 80 feet tall.

Then in about the 1970s, the Hodge grove was pushed up. The building and everything else on the Hodge Place was taken down. During the early 1990s, I was talking with Hank Webster, who asked me if I remembered that tall wind charger at the old Hodge Place. I told him that I did remember it. Hank told me he was the one who climbed up that tower. He said that he had his safety belt loose enough where he could lean out away from it and he used his stomach to push the propeller into place, and then he tightened it.



This photograph was donated by Mike Sawyer. This may have been the Hodge place; but we are unable to verify. However, it does represent the era and type of home in the Bill Schlosser story.

Sebring High School's Outstanding 2009 Graduates

Editor's Note: Sebring High School graduated 297 students in 2009. We have a very promising group of students who have worked so very hard to achieve the highest honors, by not only achieving high grades in their regular high school coursework, but also by taking Advanced Placement (AP) courses (college level). We need to appreciate our young people and honor them. The following is a list of Sebring High School's highest achievers, in alphabetical order, who graduated on May 30, 2009:

Graduating Summa Cum Laude, with Highest Honors (Weighted GPA 4.4800 or higher):

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Clarissa Mae Antioquia | Melissa Amy Luke |
| William Dale Broen | Caleb Hunt McGee |
| Katelynn Elizabeth Bullard | Heather Suzanne McIntyre |
| Spencer Ray Caton | Hong Thi Truong Nguyen |
| Caroline Lorraine Davidson | David Olavi Ontermaa |
| Erica Lynn Estep | Christian Perilla |
| Molly Cara Gossett | James Marion Polatty III |
| Aaron Matthew Kelley | Metzli Guadalupe Ramirez |
| Bryan Michael Kirsch | Abhinav Prakash Seetharamiah |
| Heather Maria Lemos | Jessica Lee Ann Smith |
| | Colton Gregory Statler |

Graduating Magna Cum Laude, with High Honors (Weighted GPA 4.3200 to 4.4799):

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Brittany Melyn Alcordo | Eugene John Lorandean II |
| Patrick Thomas Barabas | Samantha Marie Lower |
| Michelle Leigh Bash | Elke Sofia Tagesson |
| Whitney Nicole Belcher | Brittany Nicole Thomas |
| Emily Amanda Hatley | Matthew Weston Vickers |
| Alyssa Ann Kariofyllis | Amanda Lynn Vizcaino |
| | Jennifer Lee Wilson |

Graduating Cum Laude, with Honors (Weighted GPA 4.1600 to 4.3199):

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Natalie Lynn Dyall | Mary Elizabeth Parker |
| Alana Siracuse Gordon | Tiara Shantee Pressley |
| Kalley Amanda Johnson | Brent William Starr |

From the Board of Directors

The Board has begun planning for our Sebring Centennial celebration which is scheduled for October 13-21, 2012. Allen Altvater has made several contacts with City officials and other community organizations and has garnered their support for and participation in this special event. Sebring Historical Society will be working on writing and publishing a commemorative book about our first 100 years.

Jack Stroup attended our May Board meeting and suggested that we honor Tommy McGuire by renaming Kenilworth Boulevard after him. After much discussion, the Board concluded that we compose a Resolution recommending to County officials that we honor Tommy McGuire by “renaming that section of Kenilworth Boulevard/Airport Road beginning at the turn at the Sebring City limits and extending to the Sebring Regional Airport the ‘Thomas B. McGuire Boulevard’.” The Resolution must be reviewed and voted on by Board members prior to submission to County authorities.

I would like to contribute a financial gift to the Sebring Historical Society to be used as follows:

_____ *To support Needy Student Scholarships*
 _____ *General Operating Fund*

*Mail to: Sebring Historical Society
 321 W. Center Ave.
 Sebring, FL 33870*

Your Name & Address: _____

2009

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

have been received from April 2009 through June 2009 in honor and memory of our dear friends and family members as follow:

In Memory of Donald Hall, from Alberta M. Ingle

*The Sebring Historical Society gratefully accepts memorial gifts, which may be sent to:
 Wanda Whitehouse, Memorial Chairman, 9230 Spring Valley Lane,
 Sebring, FL 33875-5977*

2009

SEBRING HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD MEMBERSHIP 2009

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The Sebring Historical Society

What We Do and Why We Do It

By Carole Goad

The Sebring Historical Society is, basically, a repository of the memories of this community's people and institutions. What we do is collect the stories, documents, photographs and other items that illustrate the history of the citizens and institutions of our community, and maintain these items in a safe and orderly manner so that they can be accessed by interested persons.

What we have in the Archives:

1. Six Cabinet and approximately 20 Board Displays regarding many subjects.

2. Bound volumes of local newspapers going back to the 1960s. We also have local newspapers starting from 1913 and going through the 1960s that have been laminated. Several years ago, a local attorney was retiring and closing down his office and gave us a call. He said that he had a "whole room full of old newspapers"... we could come and get them if we wanted them, or he was just going to throw them out! Well, our people went right over there and got them all. At that time, we had this wonderful volunteer named Al Thiele, who painstakingly laminated every page of these, and they became a very valuable asset to our Society.

The reason I tell you this story is to let you know that that is how we get our archival materials – from persons giving us a call and bringing in these wonderful items before they throw them out. So, please keep this in mind so that if there is a time that you might have such items of interest - give us a call!

3. Display Notebooks. These contain archival materials (photographs, documents, articles) organized according to subject matter and displayed in big, colorful binders. We have made 100 of these, and they are placed on tables all over the archives. They include: 7 books on the Sebring International Raceway; 12 books on Highlands County schools; 7 on our churches; 4 books about our African-American history, etc. These have been very well received by patrons in the Archives.

4. We also keep files containing just about every other subject pertaining to Sebring and Highlands County, and information about Avon Park and Lake Placid also. And...we have our "People files", wherein we keep files on individual persons and families in the community.

What We Do: In addition to producing and maintaining all of the projects mentioned above, we host groups of people and speak to them about our history, including school children, groups organized by South Florida Community College; Lifetime Learners, etc. We do special projects as community outreach, including: working with high school and college teachers and students on research projects.

Centennial Planning. Our town has a centennial coming up in 2012, and we are in the early planning stages right now for this wonderful event. It will be a week-long celebration of our beautiful town. My personal part (along with others) will be to partake in writing

“the Centennial book” about the town’s 100 year history and progress. Members of our Historical Society Board of Directors, including a very active part by our Vice President, Allen Altvater III, are currently taking a lead role in the planning, and we have been blessed to receive a positive response by many community organizations and individuals with promises of assistance.

Why we have a Historical Society

My personal goal has been and continues to be to discern those institutions and persons in our community that have represented the very best in moral values and community spirit and to uphold them and shine the light on them and their accomplishments by making displays showing their accomplishments and pointing out these qualities to persons coming into the archives; and writing stories about them for “The Historian”, our quarterly publication.

Moreover, every effort is made to include all of our citizens to the degree that is possible. By being inclusive, we enable ALL individuals and groups of people to see themselves as important to the community, and as stakeholders in the community. What a thrill it is to see someone come into our archives, start looking at one of our school notebooks from earlier days, and suddenly exclaim: “That’s my Dad. I never saw a picture of him when he was a child!” Or when a child says, “That lady goes to my church!”, Or even better yet – “Hey, here’s a picture of me!” And it’s an even greater thrill to see more of our African-American brothers and sisters coming into the Archives and seeing that they too are included.

It is when people discover that they are in-

cluded that they realize they are stakeholders, that what they do matters and is recognized and remembered in our community.

What is a stakeholder? It is a person having or holding a share or interest in any enterprise. In this case, I am talking about citizenship in this community, with all of the respect and privilege and responsibility that comes with it.

What message do you think that sends to people...to realize that they are stakeholders in the community? I believe that it inspires them to want to become contributors to this process of building and maintaining a decent, successful community, to be good and productive citizens.

If there is one thing that I want you all to understand is that the most important thing for this community is that everyone be made a stakeholder in it. No person or group of people should be left out.

And so, I will continue to do my best as part of our Historical Society to “Shine a light on our community’s people and institutions of achievement.” I will make sure that our people and institutions are remembered.

We remember, and thus we honor, those who have gone before us and what they have accomplished. And I will work hard to make sure everyone is included.

We have a lot to be grateful for living in this community, the character of which was established at the outset by our Founder, George E. Sebring, a man of integrity and the finest character. We plan to include and celebrate those who have gone before us and to remember and honor them.

Sebring Historical Society
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**You are invited to join us at the Sebring Historical Society's
Quarterly Luncheon Meeting on
Saturday, July 18, 2009, at 12:00 noon at the
Sebring Civic Center at Lake Jackson.**

**Just bring a dish to share, and \$1.50 each for beverage,
table service and rent of the building.**

**We are pleased to welcome Jackie Webster and her cousin,
Judy Greer, who will be our guest speakers. They are the
granddaughters of F.C. and Edith Payne. The subject of our
program will be the Poultry Industry in Sebring's early days.
(See story on page 1.)**