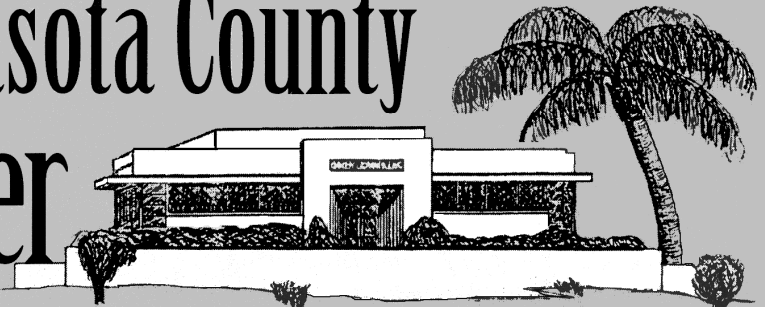


Friends of Sarasota County History Center



Vol. 2 No. 1

www.foschs.org

Winter 2008

Annual Meeting Held — New Officers Elected

The second Annual Meeting of the Friends of Sarasota County History Center was held on Wednesday, February 27, 2008 at the History Center on Porter Way in Sarasota.

Friends President George “Pete” Esthus greeted existing members and introduced new faces to the group.

Included in the business conducted was the annual election of officers. A slate of candidates for expiring offices was presented by the Nominating Committee. Additional nominations were solicited from the floor. There were no additional nominees and by motion there was a unanimous ballot cast for the proposed slate.

Newly elected were:

Vice President—Deborah Walk
Secretary—Diane Esthus
Treasurer—Hope Black
Director—Arnie Berns
Director—Marshall K DuBois
Director—Larry Kelleher

Continuing in office for their un-expired term were:

President—George I. “Pete” Esthus
Director—June Benowitz
Director—Elmer Berkel
Director—Dick Jackson
Director—Nathalie McCulloch
Director—Curran Smith
Director—Sue Tharp

Liaison with the History Center is provided by Dan Hughes, Acting Director and staffer Jeff LaHurd. County Liaison is Linda Greaves.

Pete Esthus gave a brief overview of a number of activities of the group during the last year.

History Center [Acting] Director Dan Hughes discussed the implications of the state tax cuts and the grave effects of the local operating budget reductions and the consequences it will have on the functions of the History Center in the immediate future.

Friends will purchase approximately \$400 of consumable supplies and share them with the staff of the History Center.



John Ferrell made a presentation about the loss of historic buildings from the time of the earliest settlers in the “Village of Sarasota”

Early Churches In Sarasota



Methodist Church, Sarasota, Fla.
 First Methodist Church on Pineapple prior to its current edifice pre 1955.

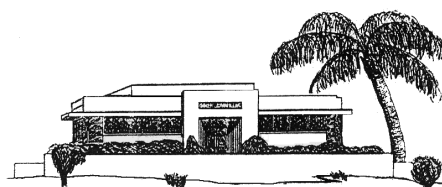
In the 1890s and early 20th Century, in downtown Sarasota, church affairs were quite a bit more rustic than today's churches, but there was a spirit of cooperation that was extremely refreshing. J. Hamilton Gillespie and the Episcopalian Church (primarily Scottish immigrants) founded a church on the northeast corner of five points (all dirt roads) in 1891. It was initially in a storeroom with 12 members. The modest structure was a converted barn and the birthing point of religious activities downtown. Unfortunately the building also housed a great number of chickens that lived under the building and brought with them "mites" that could become troublesome during Sunday services. It was even written that near the turn of the century there were around 600 chickens on Main Street, which was considerably more than the number of human beings. Citizens were few, crime was rampant, and cattle and chickens roamed free during daylight hours.

Eventually the Methodists were given a piece of property across the intersection by Harry Higel. Mr. Higel had purchased the property for the modest sum of \$40.00 and donated it to the church. A new wooden church was constructed and was dubbed the Little White Church at Five Points (it existed where Patricks is now located). Traveling preachers accommodated the fledgling congregation for many years before a permanent one took over at a "modest" salary. Despite the impressive bell tower (the only thing that made it different from regular houses) the building soon became too small for the burgeoning congregation.

The Episcopalians and the Methodists both outgrew their modest churches and relocated. The Episcopalians moved and improved their existing structure down Pineapple Ave. The Methodists constructed the "Greek Temple" just down Pineapple Avenue (104 Pineapple Ave.).



Little white church at 5 points (Methodist) built prior to 1906 but bought in 1906 by the Methodists and added the belfry.



FRIENDS OF THE SARASOTA COUNTY HISTORY CENTER

6062 Porter Way
 Sarasota, FL 34232

Diane Esthus, Editor
 Marshall K DuBois, Publisher

Board of Directors

President: George I. "Pete" Esthus
 Vice President: Deborah Walk
 Secretary: Diane Esthus
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Directors:

June Benowitz	Larry Kelleher
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Arnie Berns	Curran Smith
Marshall K. DuBois	Sue Tharp
Dick Jackson	

It was a concrete structure that was a major step up from the mite infested dwelling at five points and many major renovations and additions have created quite a bustling congregation. In fact remarkably from their initial \$40.00 site, the parishioners just recently turned down a developer's offer of eighteen million dollars for their current church property.

The Episcopalians moved just down the street to the corner of (the now extinct) Strawberry Ave. and Pineapple Ave. (see picture). They eventually moved again to the present site at 222 South Palm Ave., where their buildings and the impressive bells that ring out with regularity have become a Sarasota landmark. Much of the early history of the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer was lost, but the impact of their efforts is evident. And as the Episcopalians hosted the Methodists, the Methodists returned the favor.

The First Baptist Church was founded in 1902 and initially housed in the Methodist church. The Methodists would meet on Sunday mornings and the Baptists would have their services in the afternoon. The original First Baptist

church was built on 2nd Street in 1903 after a prominent local businessman, William Worth, helped with the funding. Mr. Worth owned the Worth Grocery store which was located where the Gator Bar is today. The church was a modest structure to be sure, but it did have a bell tower to announce services. By 1919 the church could no longer house the congregation, so a new site was found at 1661 (now 1665) Main St. and purchased for the then astronomical sum of \$2,500. It was there that what is now called the "Chapel" was built for \$30,000. With the land boom that ensued, the church was designed in the Neoclassical Revival style by renowned church architect

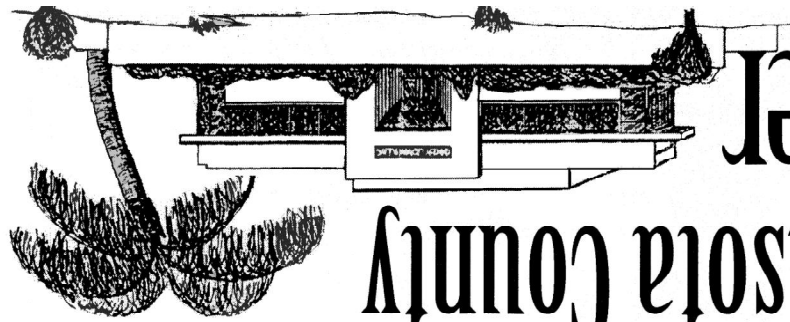


Little white church at 5 points (Methodist) built prior to 1906 but bought in 1906 by the Methodists and added the belfry.



First Baptist Church

George Washington Kramer of New York City. It should be noted that this important aspect of our local heritage is valuable and that I could not have garnered this information without the resources of the Sarasota County History Center. The time honored adage that we cannot know where we are going if we don't know where we have been seems well founded and we need to preserve this resource.



Friends of Sarasota County History Center

To those of you who have not, as yet, renewed your membership, we encourage you to do so which will allow us to continue our efforts to help the History Center remain viable in these economic times.

Friends of Sarasota County History Center
 6062 Porter Way
 Sarasota, Fl. 34232



TIME TO RENEW!

Annual Membership Categories

Individual	Family	Organization	Corporation
\$20	\$30	\$100	\$250
Patron	Benefactor	Individual Lifetime	Student
\$50-99	\$100-500	\$250	\$10

Please detach and return to:
 The Friends of the Sarasota County History Center
 6062 Porter Way - Sarasota, FL 34232

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ E-Mail _____

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I am interested in volunteering _____

Renew (painlessly) online with your credit card! www.foschc.org