

From the Archives With Johnny Woodhouse

Anything military related always catches my eye whenever I'm browsing through the Museum's photo archives. Back in 2007, when I was putting the annual historical calendar together for The Beaches Leader, I came across an intriguing black-and-white photo of a Neptune Beach woman serving as an American Red Cross worker in Vietnam.

The photo was dated July 1970 and the caption read, "Long Binh, Vietnam: Red Cross Hospital Field director Priscilla Allen of Neptune Beach and U.S. serviceman David Natta, Houston, Texas, look over contents of Red Cross comfort kit she gave him after he was admitted to the 93rd Evac Hospital. Natta was awarded the Silver Star for Heroism during the fighting in Cambodia."



The publicity photo shows the bespectacled Allen sitting at the soldier's bedside wearing a modest dress with Red Cross insignias on the collar and left shoulder. Immediately, my mind started spinning. Who is this woman, what is her connection to the Beaches, and why is this photo in the archives?

The caption didn't give me much to go on. So, I quickly consulted the old Polk city phone directories, which are located on a shelf in the Museum's reading room. These books contain an alphabetical listing of citizens, their addresses and occupational information. The Museum

has a decent collection of these books dating to about 1945. You can also find them at the Main Library downtown and at the University of North Florida.

Thanks to one of the Polk directories, I discovered that Priscilla Allen lived on Margaret Street in Neptune Beach, and worked in optometry before joining the Red Cross in 1968. That answered one question, but posed several others. I really wanted to talk to this woman to get the full story about that photo. Unfortunately, that never happened. A year after beginning my search efforts, I learned that Allen had died at a hospital in Orange City, Fla. After locating her obituary in the Daytona Beach News Journal, I called her sister in Ohio, who helped me fill in the rest of the blanks.

After her service overseas, Allen was a social worker for the Red Cross. She worked in Red Cross chapters in Florida, and lived in a retirement community near DeLand before her death in May 2007. She died when she was 86, which meant that Allen was 46 in the photo. She was much older than many of the other Red Cross "Donut Dollies" who were stationed in Vietnam until 1971. A documentary on these unsung gals was produced in 2008; it's called "A Touch of Home." In the photo, Allen is wearing a powder-blue dress, something a lot of Donut Dollies wore overseas. But instead of entertaining the troops, her job was to bring comfort and care to wounded servicemen at various field and evacuation hospitals.

That little comfort kit she is showing the soldier in the photo contained puzzles and games that G.I.'s could play while they were recuperating from their wounds. According to her obit, Allen was a member of the Marine Corps Women's Reserve during World War II, was a tax preparer for H&R Block, an organist for her church and a teacher of AARP driver safety courses. She obviously lived a full life. It's a shame I never got to meet her or show her the photo in the Museum's archives. As far as I know, it's still a mystery who donated it to the collection. Whatever the case, at least now we know a lot more about the woman in the photo than we did a decade ago. And, more importantly, it's a story worth knowing about.

Membership

There's never been a better time to be a member of the Beaches Museum!

The Museum is always cooking up something new for the education and enrichment of the communities which are so important to us. From Chapel Concerts and Boardwalk Talks to exhibit openings and History Happy Hours, we love interacting with our Members.



Additionally, membership in the Museum offers access to our partnership with NARM, the North American Reciprocal Museum Association. This is one of the largest reciprocal agreements in the world, including over 700 membership institutions,

offering admission and in some cases other discounts! For more details on NARM visit narmassocation.org.

Visit www.beachmuseum.org or contact us at 904-241-5657 to become a member today!

Mark Your Calendar!

Fletcher All-Class Block Party
Saturday, April 22

Pablo Beach Train Day
Saturday, September 9

Beach Legends Gala
Friday, September 22

Beaches Art Fest!
Saturday, October 14 +
Sunday, October 15

Beach Cruisers

Join the Beach Cruisers for History Happy Hour at Hotel Palms on Thursday, April 20 at 6 p.m.



This Old Florida motor court inn was erected in 1947 and is a landmark in Atlantic Beach. We will share the history of Hotel Palms as well as tasty food and drinks during the next History Happy Hour. The event also coincides with North Beaches Art Walk. Come for History Happy Hour, stay for the fantastic vendors and venues which will be participating in Art Walk.

This event is free to Young Professional Members with a suggested \$5 donation for non-members. Also, Guest Passes can be used to bring a friend!

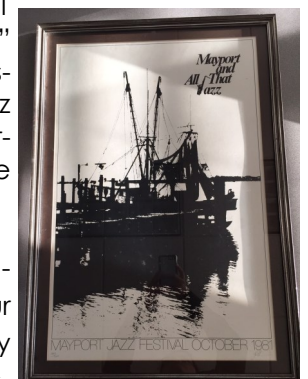
News from Archives & Collections

The historical collection of the Beaches Museum is constantly growing with new artifacts, information, and photographs to preserve our area's unique and exciting history.

We would like to thank Mrs. Chelly Bull Schembera for donating an extensive collection of records documenting the beginnings of Atlantic Beach on behalf of the Bull family.

Another fantastic addition to the Collections is a framed poster for the 1981 "Mayport and All That Jazz" jazz festival – the predecessor to the Jacksonville Jazz Festival – donated by Lorraine Jenkins of Neptune Beach.

Thank you to those who continue to contribute to our collection of the rich history of the Beaches communities.



Celebrating 80 Years!



Fletcher All-Class Block Party
Saturday, April 22, 2017
6:00-10:00 p.m.

Duncan U. Fletcher School first opened its doors to students on September 20, 1937. It has seen a lot of changes over the years, including a split in to a Junior and Senior High School and a move across Seagate in 1964. Senator spirit still runs strong in the beaches community as the island's only high school.

Celebrate 80 years of Fletcher High School with the Beaches Museum & History Park! Live music by **Fish Out of Water**, dining options from local food trucks and a few surprises will be on tap for attendees!

- **General Admission:** \$25 in advance, \$30 week of the event
- **VIP:** \$40 in advance, \$45 week of the event, includes 4 drink tickets
- **Sponsor your Class Year:** \$100, includes 2 VIP tickets to the event, listing on our thank you board and a name badge
- **Reserved Table:** \$300, includes General Admission 8 tickets to the event and a designated reserved table for your group.
- **Event Sponsorship:** Various levels. Contact director @beachmuseum.org for more information

For more information on tickets and sponsorship, visit www.beachmuseum.org or call 904-241-5657!

Thank you to our sponsors!

Media Sponsor:



Purple Pride:

The Brix Taphouse/The Ritz Lounge
 Romano Bros. Roofing



Class Year Sponsors:

1995: Lorelei Lampe
 1986: Andie Patton--The Island Times
 1986: Stephanie & Mike Mandabat
 1983: John King
 1982: Mary Kay Clemens-Mathis
 1979: Rick Poppell
 1978: Jeri Cancel
 1978: Kevin Brown
 1976: Patsy Bishop
 1974: Marsha Holton
 1974: Margie Horvath
 1974: John Scott, Surfside Pools
 1970: Tim Ellis
 1969: Richard Hana

In-Kind Sponsors:

Lynch's Irish Pub

Special Thanks

Everyone is talking about how great the History Park looks. That is due in large part to the hard work of Rockaway, the Museum's neighbor AND partner! The Rockaway team does a great job taking care of the Park including irrigation, landscaping, weed control, and so much more. More improvements are coming! Keep an eye on the History Park and if you haven't yet, make sure to check out the new walkway system winding through the park, thanks to the City of Jacksonville!



Volunteer News

The Beaches Museum has launched a new volunteer fieldtrip program to show our loyal legion of volunteers just how much we appreciate their commitment to us.

To gauge interest in this new program, we held a pilot outing to Fort Mose Historic State Park in St. Augustine and invited some of our weekly front desk and docent volunteers to come along. The response was overwhelmingly positive! They, along with our Operations Manager Brittany Cohill, had the opportunity to go on Fort Mose's annual "Flight to Freedom" tour before it opened to the public. Afterward, they enjoyed lunch at Schooner's Seafood House before returning to the museum. Volunteers enjoyed getting to know one another better while taking in some fascinating local history. With the success of this first trip, future outings are already in the works!

More information is available by contacting Brittany Cohill at 904-241-5657 ext 111. The Museum looks forward to rewarding volunteers again and again!



Upcoming Boardwalk Talk Events

Monday, April 10, 5:30 p.m.

On the 75th anniversary of its sinking, local expert Scott Grant will discuss the SS Gulfamerica, in the Dickinson Gallery.

Thursday, May 18, 5:30 p.m.

Johnny Woodhouse will share the history behind four Atlantic Beach men who lost their lives in WWII

Thursday, June 22, 6 p.m.

Hear from Master Gardener Program Leader and University of Florida Extension Office's Urban Horticulture Agent, Terry DeValle.

Thursday, July 13, 6 p.m.

Historian, author, and professor David Head will cover *Revolutionary Rogues: The Spanish American Pirates Who Tried to Conquer Florida*.

Thursday, August 17, 6 p.m.

Beaches Museum Operations Manager, Brittany Cohill will discuss the history of Manhattan Beach.

All Boardwalk Talks are free to members with a suggested \$5 donation from non-members. These will be held at the Museum Chapel unless otherwise specified.

Education

The Education Committee is excited to roll out the Museum's Early Elementary Field Trip Program entitled "History Explorers". With this program, our Pre-Kindergarten through 2nd grade visitors will participate in an interactive storytelling experience alongside our 1911 H.K. Porter Steam Locomotive; learn about early pioneer life in the Oesterreicher-McCormick Homestead while making a paper quilt to display in their classroom; and spend time with the Duval County Master Gardeners in the Museum's Heritage Garden.

With nearly 350 elementary-age students already scheduled to visit the Museum in the spring and summer months, our History Explorers will join the ranks of our Beach Pioneers (3rd through 5th graders) as they discover the rich past of the Beaches community.

Atlantic Beach: From the Continental to a Coastal Community



The Beaches Museum opened its new history exhibit, "Atlantic Beach: From the Continental to a Coastal Community", Friday, March 3 to a fantastic crowd!

The Museum is proud to host this exhibit showcasing the fascinating history of Atlantic Beach. The exhibit was originally on display at the Adele Grage Cultural Center in December 2016 as a celebration of the City's 90th anniversary. Since that time, contributions ranging from Harcourt Bull's original business documents to record albums and photos of a regular singer at Le Chateau have been contributed to the Museum for display.

Hosting national golf tournaments, weathering infamous storms, and preserving sites filled with local nature and history, Atlantic Beach has made a name for itself. Local leaders, Museum supporters and interested community members joined the Museum for the opening night reception with food provided by Gregory Paul's and draft beer provided by Ragtime.

This exhibit made possible by our Presenting Sponsor, Atlantic Beach Country Club; as well as our Supporting Sponsors, The Bull Family and Chao Framing!



Spring Concert Series Announced

The Beaches Museum & History Park is proud to announce the schedule for the 2017 Spring Chapel Concert Series.

Held in the intimate and historic setting of the 1880'S Beaches Museum Chapel, the Chapel Concerts to date have featured an amazing array of incredibly talented artists performing in this unique, one of a kind venue.



Coco Montoya Band

April 10

Chris Thomas King

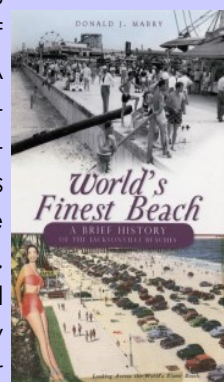
May 22

Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door and can be purchased through the Beaches Museum website, www.BeachesMuseum.org or by calling the Museum 904-241-5657.

The Beaches Museum Chapel Concert series is generously sponsored by the Gasper & Irene Lazzara Charitable Foundation and Entertainment and Productions.

Farewell Friend

The Beaches Museum family is devastated to hear the news of the passing of Don Mabry. A prolific author and avid historian, he was an incredibly important part of telling the tales of beaches history and a true friend to the Beaches Museum. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him though his many contributions will live on. Our deepest condolences to Don's family.



San Pablo Society

Thank you to all of our members, donors, and supporters. We would like to recognize those who have gone above and beyond by joining our San Pablo Society. This list represents a very dedicated group of supporters who not only give financially, but are also very involved in the events and activities of the Museum. THANK YOU for your generous donations of time, talent and treasure!

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Ms. Helen D. Coppedge
Mr. Walter D. Dickinson
Dr. & Mrs. Gasper Lazzara

Mapmaker

Baptist Medical Center Beaches
Mr. & Mrs. William G. Hillegass
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Mr. & Mrs. Robert Taylor
Mr. Robert Kastner
Mrs. Millie Mickler
Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Miller

Explorer

Dr. John G. Bordelon & Mr. Gerry Williamson
Mr. & Mrs. William Carter
Mr. Keith Faver & Mr. James Gray
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Sarah Jackson – Archives & Collections Manager
Barbara Neiser – Office Manager
Jennifer Krechowski - Membership & Marketing Manager
Brittany Cohill - Museum Operations Manager



Museum Hours of Operation

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday
12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Sunday

BEACHES MUSEUM & HISTORY PARK

BEACHES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
381 BEACH BOULEVARD, JACKSONVILLE BEACH, FLORIDA 32250

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Calendar

- April 10** Boardwalk Talk: Scott Grant in the Dickinson Gallery
- April 10** Chapel Concert: Coco Montoya Band
- April 20** Beach Cruisers History Happy Hour: Hotel Palms
- April 22** Fletcher All-Class Block Party
- May 18** Boardwalk Talk: Johnny Woodhouse
- May 22** Chapel Concert: Chris Thomas King
- June 16** Exhibit Opening: Thomas Hager
- June 22** Boardwalk Talk: Terry DeValle
- July 13** Boardwalk Talk: David Head
- August 17** Boardwalk Talk: Brittany Cohill
- September 9** Pablo Beach Train Day
- September 22** Beach Legends Gala
- October 14 + 15** Beaches Art Fest

For more information, please visit BeachesMuseum.org

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BEACHES TIDINGS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BEACHES MUSEUM & HISTORY PARK



Atlantic Beach Exhibit
Page 2



Volunteer News
Page 3



Fletcher All-Class Block Party
Page 6



BEACHES MUSEUM
Chapel Concerts

Page 2



From the Archives
Page 4



Beach Cruisers History Happy Hour
Page 5