



The Pioneer Press

From the Settlement Desk

Barberville Pioneer
Settlement's Newsletter
Spring 2025

STEAM POWER: CATALYZING FLORIDA'S AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE EARLY 1900s



In the 19th and early 20th century, steam technology played a pivotal role in reshaping Florida's agricultural landscape. From Henry Flagler's ambitious railroad expansions to innovative farming equipment, steam power was at the heart of this transformation. Henry Flagler, co-founder of Standard Oil, recognized Florida's agricultural potential and sought to revolutionize its connectivity. In 1912, the Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) extended its reach to Key West, linking Miami to the southernmost point of the U.S. This monumental project, often dubbed "Flagler's Folly," involved constructing over 40 bridges, including the iconic Seven Mile Bridge. The railway's completion facilitated efficient transportation of agricultural goods, fostering economic growth and development across the state.

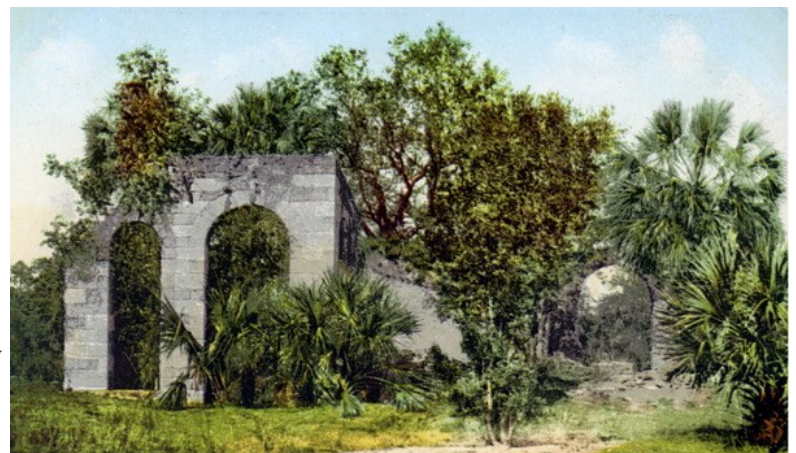
Beyond transportation, steam technology revolutionized farming practices. Steam traction engine were renowned for their power and durability. These new, mule-less tractors enabled farmers to cultivate Florida's challenging terrains, particularly the muck-rich soils of swamplands. Efficiency in land preparation marked a significant shift from manual labor to mechanized farming, increasing productivity and transforming agricultural operations.

Steam technology also played a crucial role in altering Florida's landscape to make it more viable and habitable. Innovations such as steam-powered dredges were employed to drain swamps and convert them into fertile farmland. This process opened up vast areas for crop cultivation and residential expansion, particularly in regions like the Everglades and around Lake Okeechobee. The transformation of these lands was essential for the Florida's growth, allowing for the cultivation of various crops and residential spaces.

By the 1920s, the rise of internal combustion engines began to overshadow steam power. While steam engines were powerful and versatile, they required a constant supply of water and fuel, which made them less practical for smaller-scale operations. The internal combustion engine, with its greater efficiency and portability, was a game-changer for the transportation and agricultural sectors. Tractors and machinery powered by gasoline or diesel engines became more affordable, easier to maintain, and more suitable for diverse farming conditions. This transition marked the end of the steam-powered era and paved the way for modern agricultural practices.



Historical footnote: early on in America's steam era, Florida's sugar industry saw early attempts at mechanization. In 1830, when Florida was a territory of the US, the New Smyrna Sugar Mill was established, featuring a steam-operated sugarcane mill and sawmill. Constructed by William DePeyster and Henry Cruger, the mill's coquina structures housed steam-driven machinery imported from the West Point Foundry in New York. Although the mill was destroyed during the Second Seminole War in 1835, its existence underscores Florida's early engagement with steam technology in agriculture.



Ruins of Old Spanish Mission.

New Smyrna, Fla.

Continued on the next page

Continued from Page 1



Today, the legacy of steam power continues to be celebrated at the Barberville Pioneer Settlement. Local preserver, R.J. Glaser has generously loaned his fully operational 1914 "Peerless" tractor for display and demonstration. This remarkable piece of agricultural history will be showcased in the Settlement, offering visitors a chance to experience firsthand the power and ingenuity of steam technology in action.

Additionally, R.J. Glaser is working on restoring Hollenback & Son's

Blacksmith Shop's boiler and steam engine. This restoration will help mechanize an assortment of blacksmithing tools in the shop, further preserving the technological advancements of the early 20th century.

The early 1900s marked a pivotal era in Florida's agricultural history, with steam technology acting as the catalyst for profound change. From Flagler's railways connecting distant markets to steam-powered machinery transforming farming practices, these innovations laid the foundation for modern agricultural techniques and infrastructure in the state. This period not only redefined the physical landscape but also propelled Florida's economy into a new age of growth and development. Today, as we continue to embrace new technologies, the legacy of steam power remains an essential chapter in Florida's rich agricultural history.

A Big Shout out to our Sponsors! Please support them for supporting us!


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TORTUGAS


HIDDEN VALLEY PARK


VOLUSIA ECHO
Enhancing our Quality of Life


Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway
A National Scenic Byway

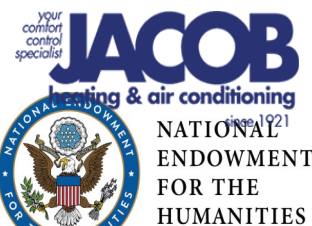

FLORIDA ARTISAN BLACKSMITH ASSOCIATION
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BARBERVILLE PIONEER SETTLEMENT

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Joe Underhill - President
Diana Johnson - Vice President
Joan Carter- Secretary
Edwin Tobin —Treasurer
Dell Hoyt
John Case
Richard Schuler
Bruce Hawley
Fred Ziffa
Paul Howes

STAFF MEMBERS

Associate Director—Gudrun Benson
Associate Director— Erick Nielsen
Event Coordinator — Christen Gandy
Service Ambassador — Heinrich Hole
Grounds & Maintenance — Mike Starinchuck

SEASONAL TEAM MEMBERS

Eric Emery
Deb & Dave Basney
Bill Messer & Marg Chauvin
Phil Pittenger & Chris Collins
Suzie & Donald, Jed & Audrah Lewis



Event Schedule

April 5 & 6, 2025 — 20th Annual
SPRING FROLIC

May 4, 2025 — Playing on the Porches

June 7, 2025— Celebration of Olde
Florida

Sept 6, 2025 — Fire & Ice: Chili Cook-
off & Ice Cream Churn-off

Oct 4, 2025 — Playing on the Porches

Nov. 1, 2025 — Playing on the Porches

Dec. 13, 2025 — A Christmas
Remembered

Open Mon—Sat 9am—4pm; Sun noon—4pm

2025 Calendar of On- Going Events

Square Dancing - almost every Friday
6:30pm—Call ahead to confirm

FABA Monthly Meeting—1st Saturday
of most months.

Playing on the Porches — 1st Saturday
of most months

Fiber Guild Meeting — 3rd Saturday

Music Lessons & Jam Sessions — 4th
Saturday of most months

All dates subject to change—For full
listing of events and the most up to
date information visit our

Facebook page or

www.pioneersettlement.org

**Look on Facebook for
upcoming adult classes and
workshops**

Ambassador Club Members

* LIFETIME MEMBERS

Sarah D Abrahamson
George Agner
Dale Barnhart
Joyce Benedict
Marilyn & Rich Breeze
Harriet B. Bolin
Lee & Kay Doughty
Howard & Snooky Grisham
Richard & Lou Ellen Hagstrom
Lorna Jean Hagstrom
Natalie Hazard & Family
Rachel Jackson
Don & Diana Johnson

Joel Kelley

Bertha Lucas

Mary Rinderle

Pam & Rick Rintz

Richard Schuler

Jean Underhill

Joe & Katie Waller

SUSTAINER

Troy Branning

The Dillard Family

ADVOCATE MEMBERS

Janet Mackall

Heinrich Hole

PATRONS

Nick & Kathy Bernardi

Don Babcock & Kaye Carolone

Joan Carter

John Case

Ed Tobin

Dell & Helen Hoyt

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Jim Schrader & Louise Stedman

Joe & Sandra Underhill

Erick & Echo Nielsen

Rick & Bonnie Stam

David Keith

Fred Ziffra

Bruce Hawley

Paul Howes

TNT Window Tinting

**For Membership info visit our
website or give us a call.**

* A Barberville Pioneer Settlement Lifetime Membership is an honorarium granted to supporters that have demonstrated exemplary patronage either through monetary donations, contributions of time and talents or a combination thereof. Candidates for this esteemed honor may be presented to the Board of Directors for approval by any member in good standing or by the administrative team of the Settlement.

Generous Support from The Will McLean Foundation



The Barberville Pioneer Settlement is honored to receive a generous \$4,000 grant from the **Will McLean Foundation**.

Established in 1990, the Will McLean Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to **research, education, performance, and training** that fosters an appreciation of Will McLean's work and other Florida artists.

The Foundation has long supported the Settlement in many ways, and their generosity has always been deeply appreciated. However, this **increase in funding goes far beyond what we could have hoped for and comes at a much-needed time**.

This grant will help provide **meals for musicians, artists, and volunteers** during our **Spring Frolic and Fall Jamboree**, ensuring they are well-fed and supported while bringing history and folk traditions to life.

We extend our heartfelt **gratitude to the Will McLean Foundation** for their dedication to Florida's artistic heritage and for supporting our mission at the Barberville Pioneer Settlement.

Preserving the Past; Securing the Future

How You Can Help

At the **Barberville Pioneer Settlement**, we take preservation seriously—not just of Florida's artistic, cultural, and historical heritage, but of the legacy of the Settlement itself. In that spirit, we are proud to announce the creation of **two new funds** to support our mission.

The Legacy Fund

Our **Legacy Fund**, opened with an initial \$10,000 from a generous donor, allows donors to honor the founders and key contributors who have shaped the Settlement since its inception 48 years ago. When **\$10,000 is raised in the name of an honored volunteer**, their legacy will be permanently secured with a **monument in their name**. The initial donation has already designated **\$2,000 each** toward the legacies of **Ellis Price, Lester Hollenback, Ethel Murphy, Russell Pierson, and Mary McClancy**.

The Charitable Brokerage Account

We have also established a **brokerage account** to make donating to the Settlement easier. This account **accepts contributions of stocks, bonds, and even property**. It was made possible by a generous donor who had depreciable stocks that would have resulted in higher capital gains taxes. Instead, by donating through this fund, they were able to make a **charitable contribution** (as the Settlement is a **501(c)(3) nonprofit**) and receive a tax benefit.

If you are interested in contributing to either of these funds—or donating toward our **many ongoing projects** or the **daily operations of the museum**—please call **386-749-2959** or email directors@pioneersettlement.org.

Any and all support is received with the **greatest gratitude**.

A Celebration of Literature

On **March 15th**, the **Barberville Pioneer Settlement** hosted an extraordinary gathering of literary talent at our **first-ever Author Symposium and Book Signing**. This **inspiring and enriching event** featured writers from across **Central Florida**, each sharing their unique craft, creative journey, and invaluable insights with an eager audience.

Our featured authors represented a diverse range of genres and expertise—truly a Showcase of Literary Excellence:

- **Elaine Person**, an award-winning poet and writing teacher, captivated the crowd with her wisdom. She is the **2022 recipient of the Florida Writers Association's K. Coppersmith Award** for Writers Helping Writers.
- **Sadie May Bradford**, a historical demonstrator and beloved children's book author, delivered a **folksy and fabulous** talk filled with warmth and charm.
- **Robert Redd**, an esteemed historian and former executive director of the **New Smyrna Museum of History**, brought a wealth of historical knowledge to the event.
- **Anthony Ehrlich (Tony)** infused the symposium with humor and heart. A **masterful poet and board member of the Black Bear Scenic Byway**, his words left a lasting impact.
- **D.S. Gavagni** thrilled the audience with his chilling storytelling. His debut novel, *Cobb's Corner*, is quickly gaining recognition among ghost story aficionados.
- **Brian Polk**, a dedicated historian and former **park manager at DeLeon Springs State Park**, engaged listeners with his meticulous attention to historical detail.
- **Larry French**, a luminous historian and historical fiction author, **enraptured attendees** with his captivating presentation.
- **Gary Robert Childress**, a poet and member of the **Orlando Area Poets Chapter of the Florida State Poets Association**, shared his **awe-inspiring** literary insights.

Other talented authors, including **Marc Davidson**, **Benjamin Smith**, **James Chapin**, and **Eddie Lucas**, delivered **outstanding speeches** and invaluable advice for aspiring writers.

This event was **the first of its kind** at the Settlement, but judging by the **overwhelming gratitude and enthusiasm** of both authors and attendees, it certainly won't be the last! If you are a published author interested in participating in our next symposium, please send your information—including your **email address** and a **sample of your published work**—to:

PO Box 6, Barberville, FL 32105

We look forward to growing this event into a cherished tradition, celebrating the **literary voices** that help keep history, storytelling, and creativity alive.



Anthony Ehrlich



D.S. Gavagni



Sadie May Bradford



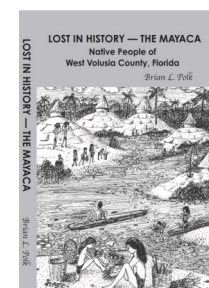
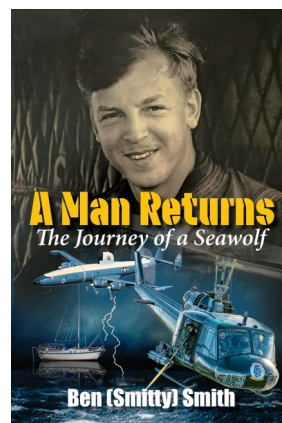
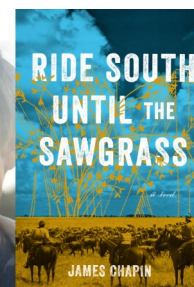
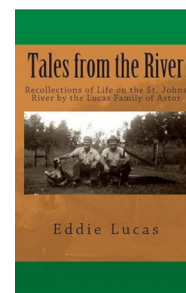
Elaine Person



Gary Robert
Childress



Robert Redd





OUR FIRST EVER

LOCAL AUTHOR Symposium

PARLEY & SIGNING

FEATURED AUTHORS

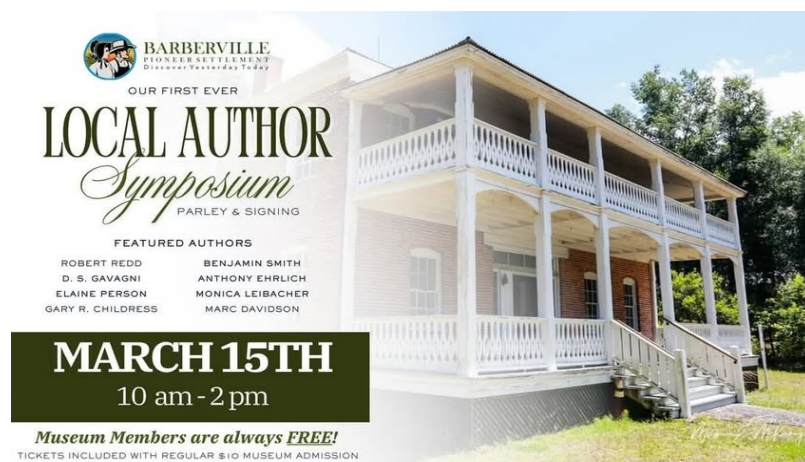
ROBERT REDD	BENJAMIN SMITH
D. S. GAVAGNI	ANTHONY EHRLICH
ELAINE PERSON	MONICA LEIBACHER
GARY R. CHILDRESS	MARC DAVIDSON

MARCH 15TH

10 am - 2 pm

Museum Members are always FREE!

TICKETS INCLUDED WITH REGULAR \$10 MUSEUM ADMISSION





BARBERVILLE
PIONEER SETTLEMENT
Discover Yesterday Today

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Your Membership Rewards -

- FREE General Admission to the Pioneer Settlement including most special events
- Supplies you with our informative Newsletter that keeps you up to date about events and news
- Provides you with a 10% discount in our Country Store and the Bridge House Gallery
- Gives you additional discounts on Workshops and Seminars
- You can receive half price Guest Passes for friends (quantity varies with membership level)
- Ambassador level members are recognized in the Pioneer Press Newsletter and Advocates get a link on the Pioneer Settlement's website

Your Membership dues help to support-

- Low cost educational programs to over 10,000 school children that visit the Settlement annually for field trips
- The on-going maintenance and preservation of 18 historic structures and over 10,000 historical artifacts
- Sustainability and growth to empower the Settlement to continue to serve as a historical cultural resource for future generations

PLEASE DETACH AND REMIT INCLUDING PAYMENT

BARBERVILLE PIONEER SETTLEMENT MEMBERSHIP FORM

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal

NAME / COMPANY _____ DATE: _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____ PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____ Would you be interested in volunteering? ☐ Yes ☐ No

AMBASSADOR'S CLUB

- ☐ **Sustainer** - \$2,500 and over - Sponsorship mention in newsletter, a link on website, 10 annual and 20 half price passes
- ☐ **Philanthropist** - \$1000 - \$2,499 - Sponsorship mention in newsletter, a link on website, 8 annual and 14 half price passes
- ☐ **Advocate** - \$500 - \$999- Sponsorship mention in newsletter, 6 annual and 10 half price passes
- ☐ **Patron** - \$150 - \$499 - Sponsorship mention in newsletter, 4 annual and 6 half price passes

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

All levels receive 2 Half Price Passes

- ☐ Teacher \$25
- ☐ Student \$10
- ☐ Individual \$30
- ☐ Sr. Individual (60+) \$25
- ☐ Couple \$40 **List both names below**
- ☐ Sr. Couple (60+) \$35 **List both names below**
- ☐ Family \$50 - Family members **MUST** live at the same address

GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Provides annual passes that can be shared throughout any group, community, or organization.

- ☐ Friends \$100 - 5 Annual Passes
- ☐ Pioneers \$250 - 13 Annual Passes
- ☐ Homesteaders \$350 - 21 Annual Passes
- ☐ Settlers \$500 - 32 Annual Passes

Print below the name of Group or Organization as it should appear on the membership cards

Print names for all family or couple members _____

REMIT TO: Barberville Pioneer Settlement • PO Box 6 • Barberville, Florida 32105
386-749-2959 • www.pioneersettlement.org

12-2018

Our Mission

To educate and entrust the public and future generations with knowledge of the pioneer lifestyle of our forefathers, through hands on experience, folk life demonstrations, preservation, and historical exhibits.



Announcements & Tidbits

- Our family is growing! Longtime volunteer **Mike Starinchuck** just couldn't stay retired from his role as groundskeeper for Halifax Marina—so we made it official and hired him here at the Settlement! Most of you know Mike as the big guy with a permanent grin, tending the garden or keeping the grounds in top shape. Well, not much has changed—except now we get to see even more of him! Like all our volunteers who've joined the staff, Mike does it for the pride, not the paycheck, and we couldn't be happier to have him on board.
- We love our volunteers! However, like many other non-profits over the past several years our **volunteer base has diminished drastically**. Especially as the school year ramps up and fundraising events approach, we could really use more volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering at the Settlement, you can find applications at **www.pioneersettlement.org/volunteers** or call us at 386-749-2959.
- We'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to **Deb and Dave Basney**, who have been a wonderful addition to our work camper crew since January. A series of unexpected coincidences led these dedicated volunteering snowbirds—our very own "**Snow Angels**"—to the Settlement, and we couldn't be more grateful. Though they'll be heading home after Frolic, we're thrilled to know they plan to return next year. Safe travels, and see you soon, Deb and Dave!
- Have you ever wanted to learn how to be a **blacksmith**? You're in luck. We offer Blacksmith classes! 1st responders, military, and teachers get a \$25 discount on classes. Learn more at **[www.pioneersettlement.org/blacksmith—coal](http://www.pioneersettlement.org/blacksmith-coal)**. We also sell Blacksmith coal.
- We need your **old Christmas Cards**! One of the lessons during our Old Fashioned Traditions field trip program in December is the history of the Christmas Card.
- Membership has its benefits. FREE general admission including special events, 10% discount in our country store and Bridge House Gallery! Discounts on workshops and seminars! Half-price Guest Passes! And even more benefits for those in the **AMBASSADOR'S CLUB**! See the opposite page for more information.
- **The Schoolhouse Fiber Guild** meets every 3rd Saturday from 1pm –2:30pm. Share your love of the fiber arts with other spinners, weavers, crocheters, basket makers, quilters, origami folders, and more.
- Join us for **Saturday Music Lessons & Jam Sessions** on the 4th Saturday of the month. Lessons will be free with admission into the Settlement. Follow us on **Facebook** for information on what will be taught & when. Reach out to us if you are interested in teaching.
- We are a drop off location for **Christine's Blankets**. They need new blankets, towels, and socks to distribute to the homeless. Christine's Blankets provide blankets and other essentials to the area homeless for comfort and encouragement in order to remind them that they are loved and not forgotten.
- We accept all kinds of **donations**! Of course artifacts (from the 1870s—1920s) are most welcome (as is cash). We also have all kinds of other needs though. If you have a **propane grill, riding lawn mower, golf cart, or vehicles** that is just taking up space at your house; before you call the scrap man, call us. One man's junk could be the Settlement's treasure. Since we're a 501(c)3, all donations are tax deductible.
- Exciting developments are underway at the Settlement! First, we're moving from pre-planning to fundraising for a much-needed **modern restroom facility**. Second, plans are in motion for a **turn-of-the-century Citrus Barn**, adding another piece of Florida's agricultural history to our site. Lastly, we're actively writing grants and gathering bids for critical **restoration work** on the **Pierson Train Depot and caboose, the turpentine still, and the cane boil sugar shack**. Want to get involved? Check out "**Preserving the Past; Securing the Future**" on page 4 to learn how you can help!

Music & Living History Festival



20th Anniversary Spring Frolic

APRIL 5th & 6th 2025

A Family-Friendly Event at the Barberville Pioneer Settlement

go to www.pioneersettlement.org for more information. Or call 386-749-2959. Vendors and volunteers wanted.



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