



# The Pioneer Press

From the Settlement Desk

Barberville Pioneer  
Settlement's Newsletter  
New Years 2026

## The Settlement Turns 50!!

The Settlement turns 50 years old this year! It is old enough to join AARP.

In 1976, founders such as Lura Bell began what would become the Barberville Pioneer Settlement with just one structure: the Central High School of Volusia County. Long before it became the crown jewel of the Settlement, the school had already shaped young minds for almost 60 years, standing as a symbol of education, community, and perseverance. From that one building, something improbable—and enduring—took root.

Fifty years later, the Settlement stands as a thriving living-history museum, a rustic village of twenty historic structures situated in rural Barberville. In a county where cultural institutions have faced mounting challenges, our continued existence sometimes feels nothing short of miraculous. We often say that the Settlement runs on small miracles—and it's true. What our founders created was extraordinary, and every steward since has carefully cultivated, protected, and expanded that original vision.

The year 1976 itself was a moment of cultural and historical significance. The United States celebrated its **Bicentennial**, meaning that this year, as the Settlement turns 50, it is exactly one-fifth as old as the nation it seeks to help interpret and preserve. **Jimmy Carter** was elected president. **Viking 2** landed on Mars and sent back the first color photographs from another planet. Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak, and Ronald Wayne founded **Apple**. The **Muppets** premiered on television. **Elvis Presley, Jimmy Buffett, and the Ramones** all released albums.

Against that backdrop of innovation and cultural milestones, the Pioneer Settlement quietly began preserving something timeless: the everyday lives, skills, and stories of those who came before us. Fifty years later, that mission remains unchanged—but the ways we share it continue to evolve.

As we celebrate this milestone anniversary, the Settlement is expanding its offerings with new and reimagined events designed to invite deeper participation and connection. Among them are a **fall night sky viewing** program, co-hosted with **the Brown Museum** (formerly MOAS), allowing visitors to experience the Settlement after dark while exploring the same skies that guided pioneers and early Floridians. This summer, we'll also debut a **Cowboy Fest** in July, celebrating frontier traditions, music, and culture in a way that's both educational and festive.

One of the most exciting evolutions is the transformation of our COVID-born "Playing on the Porches" program into "**Jammin' on the Porches**." This change reflects something we've heard clearly from both musicians and guests: people want to participate. Rather than passively playing to small audiences for hours at a time, our folk musicians expressed a desire to teach, learn, and interact. Now, patrons & visitors are encouraged to bring their own instruments and join jam circles led by talented musicians throughout the village. The result is a more dynamic, inclusive, and communal experience—one that feels truer to the way music historically lived on front porches and in shared spaces.

And, of course, no anniversary year would be complete without a huge celebration. This year's Jamboree promises to be the largest and most eclectic in Settlement history, featuring more musicians, a wider array of artistic vendors, and an expanded lineup of demonstrators showcasing pioneer *métiers*—the essential trades and skills that sustained early communities. From blacksmithing to fiber arts to cooking swamp cabbage, these demonstrations are not performances but living knowledge passed hand to hand, generation to generation.

**As we mark 50 years, we do so with gratitude—for our founders, our volunteers, our supporters, and the countless visitors who have walked these paths and porches.** What began as a single schoolhouse has become a village. What started as a hopeful idea has endured through dedication, care, and belief in the value of preserving the past.

If the Settlement runs on small miracles, then this anniversary is proof that those miracles add up.



# In Memoriam

In the days leading up to this year's Country Jamboree, Settlement staff and volunteers were shocked and deeply saddened by the loss of not one, but two cherished and vital members of our volunteer family: **Lillian Shelton** and **Joe Waller**. Their deaths left a palpable absence at the Settlement during a time that is usually filled with music, laughter, and reunion.

Lillian Shelton was a woman of remarkable generosity, intellect, and quiet leadership. At the Settlement, she was best known for helping run our silent auction during both the Spring Frolic and Country Jamboree—an enormous undertaking that she handled with grace and steady competence. Before retiring, Lillian served as Director of the Secrest Artists Series at Wake Forest University, a role that reflected her lifelong devotion to the arts and education.



Lillian's interests and passions were many, and she gave herself fully to each of them. She taught Bible study at her husband's Moravian Church, was a Master Gardener, and volunteered extensively throughout Volusia County, including at the Agricultural Center, the DeLand Library, Friends of DeLeon Springs State Park, and here at the Barberville Pioneer Settlement. Wherever she served, Lillian brought curiosity, kindness, and a genuine desire to enrich the lives of others.

Joe Waller was, at his core, a lover of the outdoors, music, and people. He spent most of his professional life with the United States Forest Service, a natural extension of his deep respect for land and nature. After retiring in the early 2000s, Joe began what would become a long and deeply impactful volunteer career at the Settlement.

Together with his wife, Katie Waller, Joe was instrumental in calling, organizing, and scheduling musicians for our two largest festivals: the Spring Frolic and the Country Jamboree. Joe was

also the bandleader of *Jackson Creek*, with Katie playing fiddle alongside him. While Joe's singing could stop people in their tracks, his songwriting was something truly special. He wrote songs about rivers, mountains, family, and cowboys—songs rooted in place, memory, and love.



Joe was a friend to everyone he met. At the Settlement, people gravitated toward him—whether to play music with him, talk with him, or simply sit nearby and listen. He loved Katie, music, and dogs, and he carried that love openly. His absence will be deeply felt not only at the Settlement, but across the many music festivals and communities he touched.

**Lillian Shelton** and **Joe Waller** were special not simply because of the many hours they freely gave to the Settlement, but because of *how* they gave them. Both served with warmth, humility, and genuine joy. Their love for the Settlement was an extension of their broader commitment to education, community, and friendship-building.

They leave behind a legacy that will not be forgotten—woven into the gardens, the music, the gatherings, and the shared purpose that define this place.

## BARBERVILLE PIONEER SETTLEMENT

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joe Underhill - President  
Diana Johnson - Vice President  
Joan Carter- Secretary  
Ed 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  
Field Trip Coordinator — Heinrich Hole  
Maintenance — Mike Starinchuck

### SEASONAL TEAM MEMBERS

Bill Messer & Marg Chauvin  
Phil Pittenger & Chris Collins  
Tom & Betty Jo Jackson  
Don MacNiel  
Deb & Dave Basney



## Event Schedule

(tentative—as of January 2026)

Feb. 7th — Celebration of Olde Florida

Feb. 14th — Membership Meeting

March 7th — Jammin' on the Porches

April 4th —Jammin' on the Porches

Open Mon—Sat 9am—4pm

Sunday noon—4pm

## 2026 Calendar of On Going Events

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

**FABA Monthly Meeting**—1st Saturday of most months.

**Jammin' 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](http://www.pioneersettlement.org)

## Ambassador Club Members

* LIFETIME MEMBERS	SUSTAINER
Sarah D Abrahamson	Susan Mackall
George Agner	Troy Branning
Dale Barnhart	Macall Steve
Joyce Benedict	The Dillard Family
Marilyn & Rich Breeze	<b>ADVOCATE</b>
Harriet B. Bolin	Heinrich Hole
Lee & Kay Doughty	Susan Taylor
Howard & Snooky Grisham	<b>PATRONS</b>
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Lorna Jean Hagstrom	Joan Cater
Natalie Hazard & Family	John Case
Rachel Jackson	Anthony Ehrlich
Don & Diana Johnson	Marg Chauvin
Joel Kelley	Bill Messer
Bertha Lucas	Bruce Hawley
Mary Rinderle	Del & Helen Hoyt
Pam & Rick Rintz	Paul & Susan Howes
Charlie & Marianna Ross	Jim Schrader & Louise Stedman
Richard Schuler	Rick & Bonnie Stam
Jean Underhill	Ed & Coleen Tobin
Joe & Katie Waller	Joe & Sandra Underhill
	Fred & Kim Ziffra
	Joe Underhill
	Marg Chauvin
	Randell & Debra Poirer
	Eric Emery
	Nick & Kathy Bernardi
	Paula Ciniero
	Tom & Wendy Henry
	Tom & Alic Casey



For information on how to become a member call 386-749-2959 or visit our website [www.pioneersettlement.org](http://www.pioneersettlement.org). There is also a membership application on the following pages.

\* 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.

# BARBERVILLE PIONEER SETTLEMENT



## A CELEBRATION OF OLDE FLORIDA SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7<sup>TH</sup> • 9 AM - 4 PM

We've heard you—and we've made a thoughtful change.

*Celebration of Olde Florida*, traditionally held in June during the height of Florida's summer heat, has been moved to a more comfortable time of year. Beginning this year, the festival will take place in **February**, when the weather is better suited for outdoor demonstrations, music, and hands-on experiences.

We're excited to announce that **Celebration of Olde Florida will be held on February 7th**, allowing visitors, volunteers, and demonstrators alike to fully enjoy the day without battling the summer heat.

We look forward to celebrating Florida's rich heritage with you under cooler skies.

### Explore & Experience:

- Living history demos: blacksmithing, spinning, natural dying, & Swamp Cabbage
- Storytelling under the trees.
- Classic Southern Vittles
- Live music & front porch jams – bring your instruments!
- Farm animals, peacocks, and a blooming butterfly garden.
- Summer Kitchen open serving hamburgers, hot dogs, and our world-famous BBQ pork.
- 20 unique historic structures to explore

**Mark your  
calendar.**

**Get ready to  
make some  
memories.**

**February 7th,  
9am -4pm.**

**Discover  
Yesterday  
Today**



Herman's Garage – Home of the Crankin A's

For anyone not acquainted with our Garage and Club, we are located at the Southwest area of the Settlement, backed up to the Bolin lot. We meet every Tuesday for Tinker Tuesday. We meet to discuss upcoming club events and how we can improve our interaction with the Settlement and the public. We also work on our Model A's – to keep them safely rolling along. We have a museum exhibiting everything about Henry Ford and 1928 – 1931 Ford Model A's. Please stop by and learn what we are about and why we love our Model A's! We are here to share the history of these wonderful vehicles.



Every year we try to give thanks to our 1<sup>st</sup> responders. In December we invited the Fire/Rescue team from Station 44 in Pierson, FL to our Garage. We presented them with a plaque and thanked them for their service and for protecting our community. In addition - with this beautiful Florida 'winter' weather we participated in the Eustis, FL car show. We had 10 cars at the show. Members drove from Bunnell, New Smyrna, Sanford, Enterprise and other central FL destinations. It was a beautiful setting on the Lake at Ferran Park.

Stetson Mansion In DeLand, FL was another club tour destination. The mansion was decorated with period-correct Christmas decorations. It was absolutely spectacular! We are planning to return in April for their Historical Tour.

Saturday 1/17/26 we are heading to the DeLand car show to show off our cars. This is what we do. Show off our cars and make people smile.

Kim Ziffra

Crankin A's Model A Restorers Club, Inc.

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*

\_\_\_\_\_

Printnamesforallfamilyorcouplemembers \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Legacy Fund

Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous benefactor, the Barberville Pioneer Settlement has established a **Legacy Fund**—created to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Settlement while honoring the extraordinary stewards who helped build and preserve it.

The purpose of the Legacy Fund is twofold. First, it provides essential support to help maintain and perpetuate the Settlement for future generations. Second, it serves as a lasting tribute to those who have passed on but whose dedication, service, and love for the Settlement continue to shape who we are.

Donations to the Legacy Fund may be made in honor of a loved one, allowing their legacy to be remembered for generations to come. When donations made in an individual's name reach **\$10,000**, that honoree is added to the official **Legacy List** and commemorated with a permanent plaque of remembrance.

In addition, individuals who donate **\$1,000 or more** to the Legacy Fund will have their own name placed on the list as a potential Legacy member after their passing—which we hope will not be for a very long time.

## Current Legacy Members

The following individuals have already reached the \$10,000 threshold and are recognized as Legacy Members:

### **Joe Waller**

Joe was instrumental in coordinating musicians for the Settlement's two largest music festivals each year. Alongside his wife, Katie, he volunteered to manage this demanding task for 21 years. Their dedication helped shape the musical heart of both the Spring Frolic and the Country Jamboree.

### **Lillian Shelton**

Lillian nurtured the Settlement's silent auction until it became—and continues to be—one of the most profitable and beloved features of our two major festivals. Her steady guidance and care left an enduring mark on both the Frolic and the Jamboree.

### **Lester Hollenbeck**

Lester was one of the most decorated farriers of World War II, serving in the Eastern Theater with the legendary Merrill's Marauders. After the war, he founded the first farrier school in America. Following his retirement and move to Florida, Lester discovered the Settlement and became a devoted volunteer. His donations of both time and tools helped shape the blacksmith and wheelwright shops into the remarkable and unique features they are today. *(continued on following page)*

## **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.

In addition to these fully funded Legacy Members, several individuals currently have funds growing toward Legacy status:

Lura Bell, one of the most dedicated founders of the Settlement

Ethel Murphy, a founder and long-time volunteer from the Settlement's earliest generation

Viola and Russell Pierson, instrumental in bringing the Settlement from idea to reality

Luella Ross, affectionately known as "the Butter Lady" and a long-time volunteer

To make a donation to the Legacy Fund or to learn more, please call 386-749-2959 and ask for Gudrun or Erick. Please note that the Settlement accepts property, stocks, and bonds as Legacy donations and all donations are tax deductible.

Through the Legacy Fund, we honor the past while safeguarding the future—ensuring that the people who built this place are never forgotten.

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



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Attention: Members and Friends

You are invited to our Annual Membership Meeting. These meetings are a chance for us to provide you with a State of Settlement review while also fielding questions and comments you might have. Please let your voice be heard.

Spend Valentine’s Day with loved ones at the Barberville Pioneer Settlement!

February 14, 2026

2:00 pm



**BARBERVILLE**  
PIONEER SETTLEMENT  
Discover Yesterday Today

PO Box 6 1776 Lightfoot Lane  
Barberville, FL 32105  
(386) 749-2959  
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