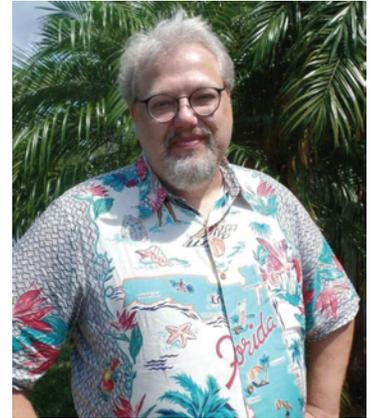


2021 *Un*ANNUAL REPORT: A YEAR UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Watch your head and don't trip as you go through this 2021 Unannual Report. It—like Historical Resources was for a good part of the year—is under construction. The year saw us continuing to respond to the pandemic while also achieving many repairs and upgrades. As you go through these pages, you'll see how we have been busy working in areas from museum exhibits and collections, to tours, historic preservation, and even art. We continue to be the "Small but Mighty" division in the City of Venice.



Everything from floors, to rooms, to the exteriors of our buildings have seen changes or are in the process of change. And the Triangle Inn—ninety-four years young—received a facelift. We had to close the Venice Museum and the Julia Cousins Laning and Dale Laning Archives & Research Center at times. But these were due to construction and not COVID-19.

Some of our numbers have not rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, while others continue to skyrocket. Like any construction document, the construction notes throughout this report share where things got built up and where others still need some work. We are a work in progress, but that means that we are always progressing.

I always like to joke that explaining all the different history organizations in the City is like doing that old Abbott and Costello skit, Who's on First. This past year, as part of our marketing strategy, we surveyed the public to see what is important to you and who you think is on first base. Some of those results are inside.

Your history is in our hands. We thank you for entrusting us with this great responsibility. As your Division of Historical Resources we shall continue to serve our community in the many ways that we can.

With Warm Regards,



Harry Klinkhamer
Historical Resources Manager

**We were able to
rebuild attendance
by 12% in 2021.
However, we were at
43% of our
2019 numbers.**



CAUTION CAUTION CONSTRUCTION AREA

The Triangle Inn Gets a Facelift

The Triangle Inn has been home to the Venice Museum for over thirty years. It is listed on both the Local and National Register of Historical Places. It has seen a lot of history—ninety-four years of it to be exact. So it's not surprising that it was time for a little nip and tuck. In 2021, the Triangle Inn saw upgrades and much needed maintenance to keep her vital and functioning as the City's museum.

On the inside, the building saw new flooring installed in the lobby area. The second floor saw the return of one of the bedrooms to be used as an office, an office turned into a breakroom/meeting space, and a historic entranceway returned to the upper loggia. This may not sound too exciting, but it eliminated the need to use the administrative coordinator's and historical resource manager's offices as the only way to get from one part of the second floor to the other.

On the outside, the Triangle Inn took on a whole new look. Cracking and falling stucco was repaired and replaced, and then the building repainted. The exterior bannister and ADA ramp also were refreshed. And lastly, new lights, awnings, signs, and topiary gave the building a nice touch of class. If you haven't yet come on by to "ooh and aah" you should.



BEFORE



AFTER

CONSTRUCTION NOTE

Thanks to generous supporters, we raised donations up to 49% of pre-pandemic giving.



CAUTION CAUTION CONSTRUCTION AREA

CLARC News



The year 2021 saw the Julia Cousins Laning and Dale Laning Archives & Research Center (CLARC) grow not only in artifacts but physically as a structure as well. We were very lucky that funding got approved to “wall-in” the former lanai area of the building creating much needed additional office and storage space. Additionally, we took advantage of this time to add “strap downs” to the roof trusses which in turn increased our hurricane rating to stand a category 3. Means less of a chance for the archives and staff to get blown away!

For all you hardcore Venice researchers out there, got some great news for you! This year we added Batch #3 (1976-1980 issues) of the Venice Gondolier online for your viewing pleasure. Our current newspaper database now consists of Venice papers spanning from 1946-1980.

It brings our grand total up to 53,968 scanned newspaper pages! The website (<https://veniceflmuseum.newspaperarchive.com/>) is available to access at home for a \$29.99 yearly fee or is free to view at the CLARC by appointment.

A large request for historic photo reproductions came from our own Public Works Department this year. The desire was to decorate the main hallway at their new Public Works Building which opened in May. As seen in the photo, staff did our best measuring, doing math (very difficult for history majors), and scratching our heads wondering if everything looks straight or not! Even as we hung the photos, we got many “Oohs and Ahhs” from fellow city employees. Overall, we had 134 images requested by the public in 2021.

One of the aspects of work we like the best at the CLARC is research, discovery, and learning from the past. This year we had 54 researchers, with the help of staff and volunteers, dive into the stacks and go through some of the collections we house at the CLARC. We were honored to be a part of the many historical discoveries that researchers made.

Art on the Move

What do art and history have in common besides art history classes? The Division of Historical Resources manages them both for the City of Venice. Within the category of art, there is public art and city art. The division assists the Public Art Advisory Board with managing the public art program in the City. City Art is considered a collection managed by Historical Resources. A bit confusing but not quite to the level of “Who’s on First.”

The Public Art Advisory Board continued to work on a draft for the City’s first public art ordinance. One project received preliminary approval—a hibiscus flower mural fundraising program for Venice Heritage.

With major work taking place with the renovation of City Hall, the city’s art collection was moved to storage at division facilities where they were updated in the collection.



Construction closure impacted research requests as they fell by 25%.

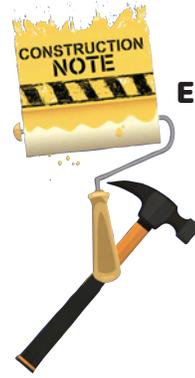




1)



2)



Expansion of the historical collection went up by 2% over the past year.



New in the Collection

VAUGHAN PITMAN COLLECTION

ATENTION! This year we received a significant photo collection capturing scenes at the Venice Army Air Base in 1943. The photographer, Vaughan Pitman served as a U.S. Army photographic technician at the base in the autumn of 1943 before going on to fight in the European Theatre of World War II. The donor expressed his grandfather's wishes were to share his photography with as many people as possible.

- 1) The Vaughan Pitman Collection - Airmen standing in review inside the Venice Army Air Base. (VMA #2021.17.027)
- 2) The Vaughan Pitman Collection - Airmen inside their barracks at the Venice Army Air Base. (VMA #2021.17.042)

Additional Donations

Overall, we processed 394 new donations in the collection this year. Some of the highlights were:

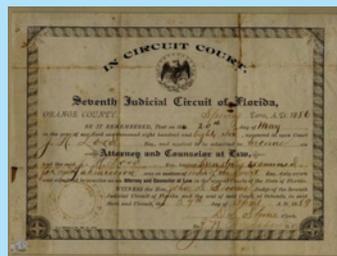
- 1) Souvenir coin bank purchased at the Venice Ringling Circus Arena in the 1980s. (VMA# 2022.02.01)
- 2) Desk used at the Kentucky Military Institute in the 1960s/70s. (VMA# 2021.19.01)
- 3) Joseph Lord, one of Venice's earliest pioneers and entrepreneurs, license to practice Law. (VMA# 2021.25.04)
- 4) Original stonework from Fire Station #1 which was rebuilt in 2021. (VMA# 2021.26.01)
- 5) Homemade poster for the senior class's 1964 Venice High School play "The Mouse that Roared". (VMA# 2022.03.01)



1)



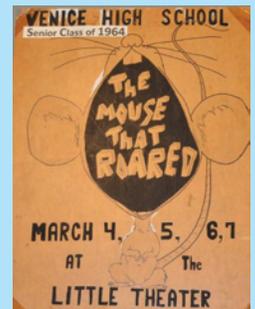
2)



3)



4)



5)

2021 Exhibits

Improvements to Permanent Main Gallery

We installed updates to our permanent exhibit, Venice's Inhabitants, this year in the main gallery at the museum. With Phase 1, we had two new artifact cases built, new interpretation written, and new graphics designed for both the Kentucky Military Institute (KMI) and the Venice Army Airbase displays. We also, included a very neat multiple push-button video cabinet featuring homemade KMI films taken around Venice from the 1940s.

For Phase 2, we completely redesigned the Native Cultures display (including acquiring some very cool replica handmade Calusa tools!) and designed a new entryway with vintage aerial blowup photos of the city. Our TV on the mantel got a new decorative display box around it and the ability to push a button to play the video instead of the old continual looping playback which we had before (some of our wonderful docents were beginning to have the full hour-long history video memorized!).

2021 Seasonal Hallway Exhibit

Celebrating a Centennial: The Origins of Sarasota County

January 19th, 2021 – February 2nd, 2022

This exhibit commemorated Sarasota County turning 100 years old with historic photos focused on the origin, controversy, and creation of the county we call home today.

2021 Seasonal Room Exhibit

Venice Area African American History: Over 100 Years in the Making

October 4th, 2021 – July 27th, 2022

This educational exhibit details the establishment, roles, and accomplishments of the African American community.

Lord-Higel House and Shed Announce Birth of New Exterior Building

Did the Lord-Higel House and its storage shed have a baby? Not exactly. However, if you've gone by the area over the past year, you will have seen a lot of visual activity going on. The biggest is the construction of a new building on the premises. Next to the shed and off the rear of the Lord-Higel House, this new building will serve as a restroom for visitors and a place to store items for events, cleaning supplies, etc. Construction crews replaced and redid the second floor exterior in a way that will help prevent moisture and the elements from getting in.

The City of Venice, as part of the City Hall expansion, completed the parking lot that will be used by both City vehicles and the Lord-Higel House. That project also included stormwater management for both sites.



Couldn't Do It Without Them!

Neither wind, nor fog, nor heat nor COVID-19 could keep our volunteers away. Despite facility closures, they managed to donate 1,350 hours in 2021. Volunteer docents greeted visitors, provided museum tours, handled gift shop sales and helped with a variety of clerical assignments. Collection assistants processed, photographed, and organized artifact donations. And researchers (well, of course they researched) and handled information requests.

Our paid staff of three is strengthened by this diverse group of volunteers with backgrounds in education, law, military, healthcare, law enforcement, government, and insurance.

We thank you...Michelle Adams, Tina Bird, Edy Browne, Mary Charles, Linda Dalton, Sam Humphreys, Peg Kapustiak, Dorothy Korwek, Jay Matthews, Jim Nemec, David O'Brien, Teri Ostroviak, Myra Plescia, Clarke Pressly, and Laura Scott.



Building on the importance of our unpaid staff to operate the Division of Historical Resources, we were fortunate to have the equivalent of 2/3rds a staff person in volunteer hours for 2021.



Old Betsy Ramblings



As life began to open up more from COVID-19, Old Betsy came out more for events. She managed to get her roughly 10 miles in this year. The City's Best Ambassador logged time at the Venice High School Champions Parade in June. She came to bless the new Fire Station 1 in September and was once again in the Holiday Parade right after Thanksgiving.

Work continued on the development of a new home for Old Betsy. Internal meetings hashed out a location, needs, and possible exhibit design. The group then kicked off the design process with an architectural and engineering firm to do renderings, site and development plan, and construction documents. It's great to see Old Betsy around town again.

Congratulations to Julia Cousins Laning!

Julia Cousins Laning, a generous benefactor of the Venice Museum & Archives, celebrated her 100th birthday in 2021. We wanted to throw a big party to celebrate the milestone, but COVID-19 made that idea too risky. Instead, the public was invited to be a part of the big day by sending a birthday card to Julia c/o the museum. A flood of cards came in from all over the United States, Germany, and New Zealand! Wrapped in a giant ribbon, the stack of cards was presented to Julia at a small party. She was amazed, and happy, and looked like a queen that day. The Julia Cousins Laning and Dale Laning Archives & Research Center across the street from the museum is named in the couple's honor.



Seeing historic buildings was very popular in 2021. Walking tour revenue went up 13%.



Making and Breaking Records in the Gift Shop

Gift shop receipts set a record in 2020. But that record didn't stand long, as 2021 sales exceeded the previous year by 31%. Interestingly, December was the best month; Tuesday was the best day, and 11:00 a.m. proved to be the best time for ringing up those sales. Cha-ching! Cha-ching!

New (and really, really old) in the Gift Shop The candle is new, but what's inside is very old. Each scented candle contains a fossilized shark tooth from a local beach. These soy candles are not only made in the USA, but they are made right here in Venice, Florida. And the lavender, driftwood, and grapefruit scent is divine.



Gift shop sales continue to rise like a skyscraper. Our 2021 revenue surpassed the previous year by 31% and was the highest total ever recorded.



Building Up Our Outreach

One pillar of our services that we began rebuilding was our outreach. Although Venice Museums Day was put off again, we were able to continue and expand upon our successful walking tours. With the assistance of Sebastian Liseo, we offered up tours of the "Grand Homes" of Venice and the Venezia Park Historic District. Despite operating the tours with COVID-19 restrictions, we were equal to our pre-pandemic numbers.

The museum also started seeing the return of group visits. You can read more about them below. Finally, we participated in several events to help mark Sarasota County's Centennial. We welcomed Sarasota County for a couple of Facebook Live talks on Venice History and the Centennial. Historical Resources contributed to several of the County Library System's "100 Programs in 100 Days." These included a talk on John Nolen and partnering with Venice Heritage on a trolley tour of Venice and Nokomis.



Get on the Bus, Gus

As with all museums, group tour visits slipped when compared to pre-COVID days. However, tradition dictates that leaders of Troop 526 in Winter Park, Florida treat their scouts to an educational spring break each year. It was Venice Museum or bust! While onsite, the museum was abuzz with youthful energy and the boys remarked the fossil exhibit was their favorite.

The Venice Area Chamber of Commerce Leadership Class came again this year to learn about local history. Suncoast Technical College's Classroom on Wheels brought eager adult learners to the museum on two occasions. It was gratifying to read the many letters of appreciation from this Sarasota group. In December, the Venice Museum was the first stop on the "Sarasota County Day" bus tour for the Englewood Chamber of Commerce Leadership Class.

What happens in Venice does not stay in Venice—because they all tell their friends!

Who's on First

It is amazing how much people appreciate Venice's history. A city this size has many groups doing all kinds of things to protect and promote the past. The Division of Historical Resources hired DRMTM to do a community research survey to get a better handle on what people think about history in Venice and who does what around here.



The results were quite interesting. Below is what survey respondents thought compared to what is true.

Function	Survey Response	Correct Response
Operate Museum at Triangle Inn	VMA (47%)	VMA (47%)
Operate Museum at Venice Train Depot	VAHS (55%)	VAHS (55%)
Restore the Lord-Higel House	VAHS (39%)	VHI (33%)
Restore the Circus Railroad Car	VAHS (47%)	VAHS (47%)
Preserve "Old Betsy"	VAHS (36%)	VHI (24%)
Collecting Historical Material	VMA (41%)	VMA (41%)
Protect the John Nolen Plan	VAHS (32%)	VHI (19%)
Promote Historic Downtown	VMS (85%)	VMS (85%)
Host Lecture Series	VAHS (63%)	VAHS (63%)
Operate Cousins-Laning Archives Center	VMA (38%)	VMA (38%)
Maintain Plaques in Heritage Park	VMS (39%)	VDHR (18%)
Oversee Public Art in Venice	VMS (48%)	VDHR (13%)

VAHS - Venice Area Historical Society; VDHR - Venice Division of Historical Resources; VHI - Venice Heritage; VMA - Venice Museum & Archives; VMS - Venice Main Street

Facebook Greatest Hits

Let's do a Casey Kasem-style Countdown of the top 5 Facebook posts for 2021!



#5

Starting Off at Number 5 was our 3rd Annual April Fools' Day prank and it went like this: Venice, Florida Shark Tooth Capital of the World lived up to its name yesterday! Monty Andrews was doing some excavation work in the Monty Andrews Arboretum (yes, the park is named for him) and unearthed this MONSTER Megalodon shark tooth. It measures a whopping 7.1". Local divers were stunned and said it's definitely one of the largest teeth ever found, to which Monty responded, "Well, I'll be damned."



#4

Climbing the Chart at Number 4 - Please help us celebrate! Ms. Julia Cousins Laning is turning 100! Although we won't be able to celebrate with a big party, we can surprise her with a zillion birthday cards! We are asking everyone to consider sending a card to Julia c/o the Venice Museum.



#3

Coming in at Number 3 - Aerial shot of the south jetty in 1958 showing small cabins where the parking lot sits now.

#2



Holding Strong at Number 2 - Elephants grazing outside the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Arena in Venice, Florida, 1979. As seen from U.S. Route 41-Business.



#1

And the Winner by a Long Shot at Number 1 - It was 1999 and the end of an era...

Bob Briner waved goodbye after closing the Dairy Queen he owned and operated on Tamiami Trail for over 43 years (1955-1999). Dairy Queen was a popular gathering place and Bob made a point of remembering his regular customers' favorite menu items and often had their order ready before they got to the window.

For many years Bob was a knowledgeable and treasured volunteer at the Venice Museum. He was a caring man and a generous supporter of local causes. Before he passed in 2013, Bob donated the famous red table and chairs to the Venice Museum. So many memories—if only that little table could talk!

Our followers on Facebook continued to grow to the tune of 20%.

—
Virtual visitors to our online collection saw a 1% increase.

CONSTRUCTION NOTE



CAUTION

CAUTION CONSTRUCTION AREA



Historic Preservation Board Making Preservation Easier

Although there were no new properties listed on the Local Register of Historical Resources, there was plenty of work to do for the Historic Preservation Board. In 2021, they:

- Sent a draft of an Updated Version of the Historic Preservation Board Ordinance to the Chair of the Planning Commission and the City Attorney for review and comment.
- Created a “Property Owners Guide to the Local Register of Historic Places to provide owners the benefits and obligations of having their property listed on the Local Register, and to guide them through the application process. Available both on-line and in hardcopy.
- Created a Historic Preservation Board Kit to provide all board members with complete information on how to assist a property owner through the application process to nominate their property for the Local Register of Historical Resources.
- Approved 2021 Legacy Award Winners
- Submitted comments to the Planning Commission regarding the Draft LDR Ordinance

Members of the Historic Preservation Board include:

Jean Trammell, Chair
Franklin Wright, Vice Chair
Ben Abramson
Thomas Cookingham
Cynthia Greene
Heather Munro
Carol Orenstein

Venice Heritage
Florida

This past year, VHI has tried to slowly start re-introducing fundraisers and events. Here’s a quick summary:

- Historical movies at the library.
- Booth at art and craft festivals
- Annual dinner with Larry Humes as Mark Twain
- Participated in Sarasota County Centennial events
- Partnered with Venice Museum and Venice MainStreet for Valentine’s Heart Bombing
- Reviewed and updated VHI Website
- Increase in merchandise sales
- Planning for the 2022 Book Fair and Writers Festival in West Blalock Park was initiated.
- Lord-Higel House updates:
- Ball Construction has completed the outside of the ADA Restroom and Utility Closet. The inside needs to be completed. We will need to raise more funds for this to be completed.
- Second floor siding replaced, so that storm shutters could be secured in open position.



Requests for images took a tumble as there were 25% less of them.

