

# ARCHER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Whistle Stop News

### Update Depot Museum News

We wish everyone well through these trying times. As everyone is aware the Museum is still closed due to the Covid. Our wonderful speakers are on hold until we can have presentations at the United Methodist Church.

With the help of Joyce and Bill Lewandowski we have conducted two very successful meetings using Skype. The secretary's notes were then sent by e-mail to AHS members.

Good news, the grant we are seeking is going forward making these times exciting for all members of the Archer Historical Society. The grant will enable us to improve the safety of visitors and docents alike. We were fortunate to have the outside of the Depot painted last year. We are now working on getting the inside removing the false ceiling to show the original structure and replacing the

lighting fixtures with period lights. Some of the window panes will be replaced with glass because the existing plexiglass has become cloudy over time. Brenna Lee our longtime curator is playing a major role in evaluating these improvements.

Most Saturday mornings there will be a member working with Brenna on this and other projects pertaining to the Museum. We always need help. If you would like to spend 2 hours of your time, even once a month please contact us. Your help will be much appreciated.

### VINTAGE MARKET SALE: SATURDAY OCTOBER 17TH 2020

Our 3rd Vintage Market Sale will be held on the grounds of the Archer Community Center October 17th Saturday 2020 from 9am -3pm We will have ample spacing for the vendors following CDC rules. There will be vendors selling numerous vintage items from pottery, toys, books homemade jams, furniture and tools and lots more. This event was a great success



benefiting the Archer community and the Archer Historical Society. Church groups are invited along with community groups. There will be food and refreshments available. Information and application can be found on our Web Page [www.ArcherHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.ArcherHistoricalSociety.org). [ArcherHistorical@gmail.com](mailto:ArcherHistorical@gmail.com)

## THE FREIGHT DEPOT

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*by Henry Sheldon*

Since the time of the Civil War Archer was a railroad town. Of Archer's several passenger and freight depots (stations) of that century, only this freight depot remains. Built c. 1900 by the Sea Board Airline Railway (SAL), it stands on its original location.

Before American towns were connected with asphalt roads, they were connected with iron rails. In 1900, you could board a train at Archer's 'Passenger Station' and ride it to San Francisco. You could look out of the window and see America in its primeval state, as it had been seen by explorers and hunters.

In 1900, other than in the cities, there were no paved roads in America. If you traveled by road, you traveled slow either on horseback, in a stagecoach, or in a horse drawn wagon. Or else you walked. But if you traveled by train, you traveled fast and in relative luxury. In the 1840's prior to the railroads, it took pioneers heading west from Saint Louis four months to reach San Francisco. In 1900, you could board a passenger train in Archer and step foot in San Francisco four days later. Now we can fly there in 4 hours.

While 'train stations' were portals to the world for travelers, it was not for passengers that railroads were extended into Florida. Yankee entrepreneurs who financed the construction of railroads into Florida before and following the Civil War came not for people, but for products. Florida's natural resources and products were highly valued in northern markets. These included lumber from pine, cedar, and cypress. Fruit and nuts including citrus, pecans, peaches, and pears. Trains came for vegetables and field crops - corn, cotton, strawberries, tobacco, & melons. They came for range cattle, limerock, hides, & hogs.

In return, trains brought for sale by local proprietors beds, blankets, & bicycles; pillows, pianos, & phones; pants, petticoats, & boots; ice boxes, stoves, & eyeglasses; chewing tobacco, beer, & liquor; silverware, guns, and a myriad of other 'General Merchandise' from northern industries and markets. All of these products to and from Archer passed in crates through the great sliding doors of this Freight Depot as they were boarded on or unloaded from the trains.

During the Jim Crow Era this Depot served as a 'safe de-boarding place' for Blacks fleeing the 'Rosewood Massacre' (January 1923). During the World Wars of the 20th Century, this Depot shipped munitions manufactured by Maddox Foundry to the 'Front lines' of European and Pacific battlefields.

For a hundred years, this Freight Station was the Heart of the City. It was a veritable beehive of activity around the clock. Here the City and never slept.

Come in and sit in the Station Agent's chair and make believe like he, that you are watching for arrival of the 6:10 from Gainesville. Come in and imagine the sounds and the commotion associated with the arrival of a freight train that has just pulled to a stop at the Depot. Imagine an arriving train's doors about to be opened and the children's excitement of what lies within and about to be unloaded.

This Depot was built just before the Wright Brothers figured out how to fly. With the advent of planes and Interstate highways (1960's), trains became a bygone part of America. On April 9, 1975, the Seaboard Coastline (SCL) RR shut down the station and abolished the job of Archer's the last Station Agent Mr. H.S. Sistrunk. The Depot is now owned and maintained by the Archer Historical Society, Inc.

## **AHS BOARD MEMBERS and CHAIRS**

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### *Art at the Archer Depot Festival*

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### *Archer Community Museum*

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### *Directors*

Mary Hope  
Linda Kasicki — — — kasickie1@bellsouth.net  
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Just two of the many Community Museum artifacts on display.





Archer Historical Society  
P.O.Box 654  
Archer Florida 32618

RENT THIS SPACE

\$6.00

**September-June is our calendar year. Members dues are due. We always welcome new members and annual membership dues are \$10.00.**

### **HOMESTYLE REALTY**

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Send articles, pictures to Linda McMahon,  
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