

Bethune Beach Property Owners Association Welcome Booklet



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Version 3

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Sources

1. *Bethune Beach is now named Historic Site* by Casmira Harrison, *Daytona Beach News-Journal*.
2. *Canaveral National Seashore "Turtle mound,"* National Park Service Pamphlet, U.S. Department of the Interior.
3. *Florida British Heritage Trail*, a Florida Heritage Publication by Dr. Daniel L. Schafer, Professor Emeritus of History, University of North Florida; Fredeick P. Gaske, Historic Preservation Consultant; Malinda Horton, Florida Association of Museums, 2014. (Pages 52 and 53).
4. *History of New Smyrna, East Florida* by Gary Luther, 2001. (Pages 13-15).
5. *Isn't That God's Water? The Advent and Demise of Bethune Volusia Beach Incorporated* by Ethel Cook-Wilson, 2015. (Pages 59, 62, 85, 87, 93, 101, 113, 123).
6. *Mary McLeod Bethune in Florida* by Dr. Ashley N. Robertson, 2015. (Pages 60-78).

Cover Photograph

"Sunset Lagoon," courtesy of Bethune Beach resident Robert Clibbon
<http://www.clibbongallery.com>

Acknowledgements

Welcome Booklet Committee and Contributors
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The Bethune Beach Property Owners Association Welcomes You to Bethune Beach

The Bethune Beach Property Owners Association (BBPOA) is delighted to welcome you to beautiful Bethune Beach, an unincorporated community in Volusia County located south of the City of New Smyrna Beach and north of the Canaveral National Seashore. We are pleased to have you as a BBPOA member, and we look forward to getting to know you.



Photograph "Golden Dawn" courtesy of Robert Clibbon

This booklet has been developed to provide practical information about the community, as well as a brief introduction to BBPOA and the history of the area. The content of this booklet is divided into three sections:

- I. BBPOA Membership and General Information
- II. Pertinent Community Information
- III. History of Bethune Beach and New Smyrna Beach

I. BBPOA Membership and General Information

To become a BBPOA member, you will need to complete the Membership Application found at the BBPOA website below.

Your Application and annual dues should be sent to the BBPOA address listed below. A membership drive is conducted every year from January to February to renew current memberships and solicit new members.

BBPOA Contact Information

Bethune Beach Property Owners Association

P.O. Box 1704

New Smyrna Beach, FL 32170-1704

bbpoafl@gmail.com

<http://www.bethunebeachfl.com/home.asp>

BBPOA Meeting Information

When: Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month, except for the months of July and August.

Where: Silver Sands Civic Building, 5 Palm Dr.,

New Smyrna Beach

Time: Potluck dinner begins at 6:30 p.m. Meetings are scheduled from 7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

Recurring Annual BBPOA Events

Fish Fry - May

Picnic - October

Holiday Party - December

BBPOA Objective and Goals

Since its inception, BBPOA's primary objective has been to bring neighbors together to socialize while building a sense of shared community. It does not develop or enforce rules relating to the community.

BBPOA is comprised of five board members who are elected in February for a one-year term beginning in March. Board members serve as volunteers and are regulated by the BBPOA bylaws, which can be viewed on our [website](#).

The BBPOA bylaws have established the following goals:

- To provide an opportunity for residents to socialize and become acquainted with one another
- To promote the mutual welfare of all residents and property owners of Bethune Beach
- To gather and disseminate information so the individual members can act in what they feel is in their best interests

Bethune Beach Property Owners Association

Since its humble beginning in Margaret Johnson's backyard and its official organization in 1981, the BBPOA has been run by volunteers who share a passion for their community. For most residents, Bethune Beach is more than a home; it's a lifestyle. This lifestyle relies on residents to preserve and protect the beautiful and fragile ecosystem that we call home.

Over the years, BBPOA members worked together to improve the community. In the early days, members petitioned to extend utilities from New Smyrna Beach to Bethune Beach and established defined routes for mail delivery. Before the South Beach Fire Station was built, fire protection was not provided by the

county. BBPOA members volunteered as local firefighters instead.

One of BBPOA's early founders, Margaret Johnson, advocated organizing the streets alphabetically and naming them after local fish. She was successful in getting the east-to-west streets renamed, adding a logic and charm to the community that reflects its beach and fishing culture.

In 1986, BBPOA helped raise funds toward the development of Mary McLeod Bethune County Park, built on the site of George Engram's old "beach casino." Contributions went toward the park's landscaping, flagpole, appliances, and air conditioning, among other things. Members also donated money to purchase a plaque honoring George Engram, early honorary mayor of Bethune Beach.

Later, Sonny Ellison, the first BBPOA President, took steps to have the county add a crosswalk across Turtlemound Road, joining the east and west sides of the Mary McLeod Bethune Park. Sonny also worked to ensure that the boat launch at the entrance to Cape Canaveral National Seashore would always be open to the public, even when the park is closed.

In the early 2000s, BBPOA started the Student Achievement Award, granting \$1,000 annually to high school seniors who are residents of Bethune Beach. The money is purposed for advancing their higher education.

BBPOA began providing support to CUDA'S UnHooked in 2019. The local nonprofit organization provides mentoring and shelter to at-risk and homeless teens.

Most recently, BBPOA donated to local nonprofits adversely impacted by COVID-19. Some of the donations went to New

Smyrna Museum of History, Mary S. Harrell Black Heritage Museum, and God's Bathhouse of Volusia.

Throughout the years, BBPOA members have volunteered to clean up the beach, watch over the turtles, maintain the vegetation and, in general, be the voice that fights for issues that affect us all.

To give you a sense of the early days of Bethune Beach and the commitment of its residents to improving the community, we share a short chronicle from one of BBPOA's founders, Margaret Johnson (1931 - 2019):

When we bought our property in 1973, there was talk of a submarine base going in where Canaveral National Seashore Park is now and [a] Joe Namath building on the island by Government Cut. In '73 we barely could drive on our roads, and many people got stuck in the soft sand. We had about 40 feet of dune at the end of Flounder. Henry Lee had a fish camp where Cedar Island Condos now stand. He sold lots for \$1,500, with \$25 down and \$25 a month.



Photograph "Indian River" courtesy of Robert Clibbon

Some of the early folks got together in our yard and formed the property owners association. We didn't feel we had enough homes here to call it a homeowners association. Clyde Mann, our elected councilman for the area, pulled everything together for us at the county level. He got the streets out of subdivision status and turned over to the county.

George Engram was a big part of our beginnings. George and I went to the Postal Service with a petition signed by everyone here to get mail delivery, as they didn't want to deliver this far down the island. We were lucky to get a new postmaster, by the name of Carolyn Talburry, who finally pushed our request through. Every time we asked for any improvement here, we ended up before the County Council. The taxes we paid were being used elsewhere. We had no fire protection, except for forest service, until the Municipal Service District (an appointed body to deal with county issues relating to Bethune and Silver Sands) pressured the county to get protection from the City of New Smyrna Beach.

II. Pertinent Community Information

Waste Collection:

Waste Management in Bethune Beach is provided under contract overseen by Volusia County Solid Waste (VCSW).

Garbage and yard waste pickup services are on Mondays between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. Recycle pickup service is on Fridays between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Garbage, recycling, and yard waste must be placed curbside no later than 6 a.m. on the day of collection and no more than 12 hours prior to collection. It must be removed within 12 hours after collection.

Garbage, recycling, and yard waste should be placed no more than 10 feet from the road.

Garbage collection:

Garbage pickup comes on Mondays and should be placed in the container provided by the county's contracted garbage company. If carts are full, you may place excess refuse in up to two 32-gallon garbage cans, placed next to the cart.

For an additional 95-gallon container, the cost is \$6.75 per month.

The county's contracted waste collection company is not responsible for construction debris or debris from home improvements.

Recycling

Recycling pickup comes weekly, on Friday. Recycling collection is unlimited and uses a dual-sort system. In one bin place paper

materials; glass, aluminum, steel, and plastic items should be placed in a second bin.

Additional and replacement bins will be delivered upon resident request.

Do not place Styrofoam or plastic bags (grocery bags, shopping bags, newspaper sleeves, etc.) in recycling bins. These items can be recycled in the bins in front of the Publix grocery store at 709 E. Third Avenue, NSB.

Yard Waste

Yard waste pickup comes every Monday. The weekly collection allowance is the equivalent of eight 32-gallon containers, not to exceed four cubic yards. Containers and bags must weigh less than 60 pounds each.

Palm fronds and limbs must be neatly stacked, with no need for bundling. Limbs may not exceed 4 feet in length or 1 foot in diameter and must weigh less than 60 pounds apiece.

Do not place yard waste in the container provided by the county for garbage collection or in recycle bins.

Hazardous waste

Garbage companies don't pick up hazardous waste. Bring all hazardous waste — with the exception of biohazardous waste — to the Household Hazardous Waste site located at the Tomoka Landfill or the West Volusia Transfer Station. Disposal of biohazardous waste can be coordinated with your local Health Department.

Residential Rentals:

The residents of Bethune Beach love their neighborhood and work hard to keep the community a safe and a desirable place to

live. Should you decide to rent your property, be considerate of your neighbors and ensure that your renters are not only respectful of your home, but of your neighbors, our beaches, and the community.

Before you rent, contact the Volusia County Building and Code Administration at (386) 736-5925 to verify the zoning of your property. They will advise you of local rental restrictions and tax implications. Volusia County ordinance limits the renting of property zoned “residential” to durations of 30 days or greater. Rentals less than 30 days are reserved only for “hotels/motels” and are not allowed in a majority of the county’s single-family homes.

For information regarding the short-term rental ordinance, rental tax, and tourist development tax, visit the county website at www.volusia.org/tdt or email revenue@volusia.org.

Beach Information:

Beach rules are posted at the beach access walkovers. Lifeguards are on duty as determined by need. Lifeguard stands are located at two locations:

- “The Wall” at Mary McLeod Bethune Park
- In front of the Sandpiper Condominiums at Hiles Avenue

Beach Warning Flags:

Lifeguard stations or the [beach safety website](#) provide the latest safety information on undertow and riptides. The following flag definitions are:

- Double red flags indicate that water is closed to the public.
- A single red flag indicates high-hazard conditions, meaning high surf and/or strong currents.

- A yellow flag indicates medium-hazard conditions, meaning moderate surf and/or currents.
- A green flag indicates low-hazard conditions, meaning calm conditions, exercise caution.
- A purple flag means dangerous marine life spotted.

Do not swim when you see groups of small fish that attract sharks to the area. Avoid Portuguese man-of-war (recognized by their blue tentacles) and other jellyfish.



Photo courtesy of WynneDee Throop

Protect Dunes, Vegetation, and Wildlife:

Beaches must be accessed by walkovers only. Do not walk on or disturb the dunes and vegetation. Note that it is illegal to pick sea oats or disturb taped-off areas where turtle and bird nests are protected. Violations are subject to fines.

Turtle Nesting Season:

Turtle nesting season runs from May 1 to October 31. During this time, hundreds of sea turtles emerge from the surf to lay eggs on the beach. The eggs incubate in the sand for about two months before the tiny hatchlings make their treacherous crawl to the ocean. To protect our turtles, please keep the following rules in mind during nesting season:

- Residents are required to turn off, shield, or redirect lights so they don't shine on the beach.
- Do not touch or disturb turtles or their nests.
- Do not disturb the dune system or plants. Use designated beach access points, and do not walk on the dunes.
- Do not use flash photography at night.
- Do not use cellphones on the beach to light your way at night.
- Use only red LED flashlights; they are less visible to turtles.
- After a day at the beach, flatten sandcastles, fill in holes, and take your chairs and equipment with you.
- Dispose of trash and recyclables in proper receptacles. Trash left on the beach can attract predators.
- Do not use fireworks. They are not only prohibited on the beach at all times, and they can be disruptive to the turtles.

For more information about Volusia County's sea turtle program, visit www.volusiaseaturtles.org.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Emergency — fire, ambulance sheriff	911
Animal Control	(386) 423-3888
Beach Patrol/Lifeguard	(386) 424-2345
Canaveral National Seashore	(321) 267-1110
Chamber of Commerce	(386) 428-2449
Coast Guard — Ponce Inlet	(386) 428-9085
Driver's Licenses	(386) 238-3140
Fire Station 21 — non-emergency	(386) 254-4657
FCC Environmental Services	(877) 642-3702
Florida Fish and Wildlife	(888) 404-3922
Florida Highway Patrol, DeLand	(386) 736-5350
Hospital — Advent Health, NSB	(386) 424-5000
Mosquito Control	(386) 424-2920
NSB Public Library	(386) 424-2910
NSB Parks and Recreation	(386) 410-2600
Sheriff — non-emergency	(386) 409-8276
Tax, Tags, and Title Office	(386) 254-4610
Utilities Commission of NSB	(386) 427-1361
Volusia County Solid Waste	(386) 943-7889
Volusia County — All Departments	(386) 423-3300
Volusia County Solid Waste (VCSW)	(386) 423-3862
Volusia City Tax Appraiser and Exemptions	(386) 423-3315

Who to call:

Report entangled wildlife to Florida Fish and Wildlife

Report marine debris dumping to U.S. Coast Guard

Report stranded whale or dolphin to Florida Fish and Wildlife

Important Website Addresses

Volusia County: volusia.org

Volusia County Waste: <https://www.volusia.org/services/public-works/solid-waste-and-recycling/>

City of NSB: <https://www.cityofnsb.com>

Beach Safety: <https://www.volusia.org/services/public-protection/beach-safety/>

Beach Webcam: <https://www.volusia.org/services/public-protection/beach-safety/beachcams-and-daily-safety-report.stml>

III. History of Bethune-Volusia and New Smyrna Beach

Bethune Beach: A Historically Black Beach



Photograph courtesy of WynneDee Throop

John Tolliver and Thaddeus S. Gooden, two of Daytona Beach's founders when it was incorporated in 1876, were African American. Even so, Jim Crow laws significantly changed the social climate of the state and by the 1920s, African Americans were banned from most of Florida's beaches. By 1935, only two places in Volusia County allowed African Americans beach access solely during the summer and on specific holidays. Bethune-Cookman College cofounder and president, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, recognized the need for a beach in Volusia County for African Americans to enjoy without restriction or fear of harassment.

Born in in 1875 in Mayesville, South Carolina, to formerly enslaved parents, Bethune moved to Daytona Beach in 1904. She opened the Daytona Literary and Industrial School for the Training of Negro Girls. The school later merged with Cookman Institute in Jacksonville to become Bethune-Cookman College. Bethune was an active crusader for educational advancement and

civil rights for African Americans in Florida and throughout the nation.

In 1945, Bethune approached architect and developer Mr. Dana F. Fuquay about purchasing a two-and-a-half-mile strip of land (189 acres) south of New Smyrna Beach. Fuquay owned most of the land along the Intracoastal Waterway in Volusia and Flagler counties.

However, in order to purchase the land for the beach, Bethune needed investors. She used her influence to arrange a meeting at the Rogers Hotel in Tampa with some of the wealthiest African Americans in Florida, and on December 9, 1945, the Bethune-Volusia Beach Corporation was formed.

The Bethune-Volusia Beach Corporation paid approximately \$132,000 for the property that is now known as Bethune Beach. The 189 acres were divided into 2,547 lots, with 25-foot frontage and 100-foot depth. Board members advertised the opportunity to purchase lots in Black newspapers and created brochures highlighting features of the area. Salesmen marketed to Black churches and various organizations. Bethune promoted the lots through her weekly column in the *Chicago Defender*. People from as far away as Philadelphia, Brooklyn, Montgomery, and Charleston purchased property.

The new beach quickly became a popular vacation destination for African Americans from all over the country. By 1952, 860 lots had been sold. In 1953, Bethune and other investors pulled together \$1,500 to purchase oceanfront lots and borrowed funds to build a motel and entertainment center.

The Welricha Motel, along with an open-air bar and restaurant, was built where Mary McLeod Bethune Park now stands. George

Engram, owner of Engram Electric, was instrumental in building and managing the business.



Business was good, but the Bethune-Volusia Beach Corporation still needed to sell many more lots to be solvent. After Mary Bethune died in 1955, the enterprise struggled financially. In 1959, the Bethune-Volusia Beach Corporation sought help from Volusia County. The corporation deeded 84 lots to the county with the understanding that it would build a boardwalk, pier, and boat ramp.

Bethune-Volusia Beach was open to all races, though ownership of the land and businesses was retained solely by African Americans. Following the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the beach lost popularity, and many visitors, particularly those from out of state, stopped coming as other local options became more available.

Bethune-Volusia Beach experienced a land boom by the mid-1970s, and many of the original landowners sold their lots.

George Engram worked to obtain support from the county for Bethune-Volusia Beach. The city council agreed to allocate \$34,000 toward the construction of a park in 1985, with the remaining \$120,000 coming from grants from the State Department of Natural Resources and the city. The park was completed in 1986 and dedicated to the memory of Mary McLeod Bethune. Engram was deemed honorary mayor.

Today, Bethune-Volusia Beach is known as Bethune Beach, but many do not know the story of the woman whose name it bears. Once a haven and a place for financial investment for African Americans, it now has a mix of full-time residents, vacation homes, and rental properties.

In May 2017, BBPOA member Joe Stevens worked with Bethune-Cookman University and Volusia County to designate a two-and-a-half-mile strip of Bethune Beach as a Florida historical site. A state marker has been placed in Mary McLeod Bethune Park to denote the historical importance of Bethune Beach to Florida's history and honor the influence of its founder.

The Early History and Growth of New Smyrna



Photograph "Winter Dawn" courtesy of Robert Clibbon

The Early Settlers

Before the Spanish arrived in search of the Fountain of Youth, the Timucuan Indians, a local nomadic tribe, were living on the banks of the Mosquito Lagoon; they raised their families, hunted local game and ate the bountiful shellfish from the river. The tribe harvested and ate oysters and clams, discarding shells in heaps. These heaps (also called mounds or middens) are the last remaining vestige of the Timucuan people. From the animal bones found in the mounds, archeologists perceive that Timucuan hunters used bows and arrows, spears, and snares to catch a variety of small mammals and reptiles. The contents of the middens also indicate that deer was an important source of meat.

While at one time more than twenty of these mounds could be seen throughout the New Smyrna area, most have been destroyed and used for road material. Turtle Mound, a midden located in the Canaveral National Seashore, lost about half of its

original height of seventy-five feet before the Florida State Historical Society stepped in and purchased it for \$8,000. The State of Florida later declared it a historic site.

Following the arrival of Ponce de Leon in 1513, many of the Timucuan tribe were killed, captured, or died of diseases brought by the Europeans. When England gained control of the area in the 1770s, the remaining Timucuans are said to have fled to Cuba with the Spanish.

The New Smyrna Colony of Florida

In 1776, Dr. Andrew Turnbull, a wealthy Scottish physician residing in London, received a land grant from the British government of 20,000 acres located about seventy-five miles south of St. Augustine. His business partner Sir William Duncan was granted the adjacent 20,000 acres. They eventually increased the plantation to more than 100,000 acres, making it the largest British colony in America.

Although a number of agricultural products would grow on the plantation, the main cash crop was indigo, a plant used to produce a brilliant blue dye that commanded a high price in Europe. The new settlement was named in honor of Turnbull's wife, a native of Smyrna (today's Izmir) in present-day Turkey.

Turnbull believed that Mediterranean people were well-suited to labor in the hot climate of this new land. To provide manpower for the plantation, he recruited 1,400 indentured laborers from the Mediterranean area, most from the British-controlled island of Minorca, in 1767 and 1768.

The settlement was beset with difficulties from the very beginning due to crop failure, disease, inadequate housing, and poor

nutrition; hundreds of settlers died during the first three years. Among other things, language differences, a shortage of supplies, illness resulting in part from the heavy mosquito population, and mistreatment led to financial losses, rebellion, and political upheaval. The colony reached its breaking point in 1777 and was dissolved after ten years, with many of the surviving colonists going north to St. Augustine.

The Town of Eldora



Photograph courtesy of WynneDee Throop.

Following the failure of Dr. Turnbull's colony, development of the area was fairly slow. Vast wetlands, clashes with the Seminole tribe, and clouds of salt marsh mosquitoes delayed development until Douglas Dummet planted an orange grove in 1830, launching the Indian River citrus industry.

Americans were on the move after the Civil War, and many headed to the Florida frontier. In 1877, property was purchased for the creation of the town of Eldora. The soil was rich in this area, and citrus growers cultivated tangerines, oranges, lemons, and grapefruit. Olives, indigo, figs, and guava were also grown.

Eldora was located along the original route of the Intracoastal Waterway. It not only provided excellent transportation for the shipment of these products, but it was also a convenient overnight stopping point for the river boats. However, the community of Eldora was short-lived. Several consecutive winters of freezing temperatures damaged the crops substantially. The 1887 arrival of the railroad in New Smyrna changed the method of transporting goods forever by significantly reducing dependence on the waterway. Although people continued to build winter vacation homes along the shore, Eldora gradually ceased to exist.

One home built in the early 1900s continues to stand today: "The Eldora State House." This historic house located in Canaveral National Seashore was renovated by The Friends of Canaveral and now serves as a museum.

Canaveral National Seashore

Doris Leeper, a well-known artist and resident of New Smyrna Beach, was instrumental in preserving the area now known as Canaveral National Seashore. Located at the south end of A1A/Turtlemound Road, this national park was created in 1975 and is the last 24-mile stretch of completely natural shoreline left on the Florida coast. Inside the park, visitors can walk to the top of Turtle Mound midden to view the surrounding vista and visit the museum of Eldora State House.

The Mosquito Lagoon in the Canaveral National Seashore has many natural inhabitants. Manatees use the waters to bear and feed their young. Wood storks, brown pelicans, and bald eagles nest here each year while peregrine falcons use the park as a waystation on their annual migrations. From December through March, endangered 40-foot-long right whales appear beyond the breaking surf, birthing their calves before returning north. Dolphins can be observed swimming and feeding both in the lagoon and in the ocean.



"Canaveral Cactus" photo courtesy of Robert Clibbon

Welcome to Bethune Beach

In closing, Bethune Beach Property Owners Association invites you and your family to enjoy the many benefits of membership in our association. As a BBPOA member, you will be notified of upcoming monthly meetings and social events via email. You will also receive minutes of the prior month's meeting so you can stay informed on what is happening in your community. If you would like to suggest items for the monthly meeting agenda, please email us at bbpoafl@gmail.com.

Again, welcome to Bethune Beach! We look forward to meeting you.

Ode to Margaret Johnson

by Sonny Ellison



You know we live in Bethune, we see the stars, sun, and moon. We don't look around and see condos.

We like it that way. And we hope that it stays just like it is 'til tomorrow.

We've got the beach and lagoon. They give us sun, fun, and food. Our surf can compare to most any. The cape is so near we see the rockets quite clear and our land is worth every penny.

We love Bethune! That's why we sing this tune. And very soon, you will too.

Not so long ago there was a "lady in the know." Her name was Margaret Johnson. Fishing was her fame and shrimping was her game, her art was also on it.

She named our streets and paved them too; she lived on Flounder Avenue and was known to be very honest. And Johnny was her love, they both were sent from up above, she will always be among us.

We love Bethune! That's why we sing this tune and very soon, you will too.