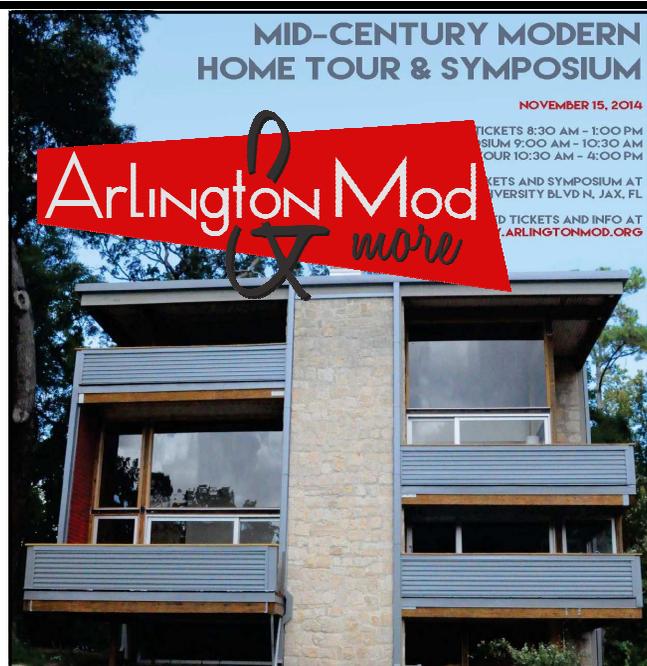


my Arlington MONTHLY

www.MyArlington.org

Connecting Arlington - Building Community

December, 2014



Arlington Mod & More Is the Most

Hundreds Attend OAI's 3rd Annual Home Tour

On-Tour Discovery a Highlight for Architect's Family

"My friends and I from Valdosta thoroughly enjoyed the tour. The fallout shelter was smashing and the Morgan House was an absolute treat!" "The tour was great!" "Can't wait until next year!" These are just some of the comments from more than 200 persons from all over Jacksonville and beyond that toured some of Arlington's finest examples of mid-century modern architecture on the third annual Arlington Mod & More Symposium and Home Tour Saturday, November 15.

The tour included six mid-century homes in the Arlington communities of Alderman Park, Strawberry Creek, and historic Empire Point, two apartments in Arlington's iconic Riverton Tower (Jones College), a mid-century office building designed by Robert Broadfoot, and a 1959 fall-out shelter built and stocked to Department of Defense specifications issued at the time.



The tour's "And More" feature was the Richard-Holden House, ca. 1848, and open to the public for the first time.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

*Arlington and the Spanish-American War?
Check it out in Cleve's Corner, inside page 6*

my Arlington

VOLUME 1, NO. 4, DECEMBER, 2014

MONTHLY

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The “R-Word” -

There’s an “R-Word” being tossed around and about Arlington, and it’s no longer being drowned out in scoff and ridicule. I had been hearing it in a few , usually hushed, conversations but now, there it was staring at me in print. Karen Brune Mathis, of *Florida Times-Union* and other local media fame, proclaiming in a recent piece written for the *Jacksonville Business Journal* on JU’s new dorm project:

“JU is at the center of an anticipated **revival** of what is considered old Arlington.”

Revival. Arlington. Paired together in the same sentence. And it’s happening with increasing frequency, to wit:

Recent reporting on Regency Square’s transformation since last February’s takeover by Namdar Realty Group and Mason Asset Management, has quoted “R-words”, such as **renaissance** and **resurrection**.

Olive Garden is **rebuilding** with its new prototype design after a fire destroyed its Regency location last January.

AMC Theatres is undergoing a \$6 million **renovation** of its Regency location to provide a totally new movie-going experience for patrons.

JU is **reinvesting** in its Arlington campus with an estimated \$50 million dollars in projects and property acquisition.

And a CRA - Community **Redevelopment** Area - is being mapped to provide future funding for infrastructure and improvements to the University Blvd. and Merrill Rd corridors.

Yes, 2014 may go down as the year that Arlington’s **revitalization** took hold, twenty-one years after OAI made it a part of its vision and mission.

And in the spirit of the season, all this leads to another “R-word” - **Rejoice!**

Happy Holidays!

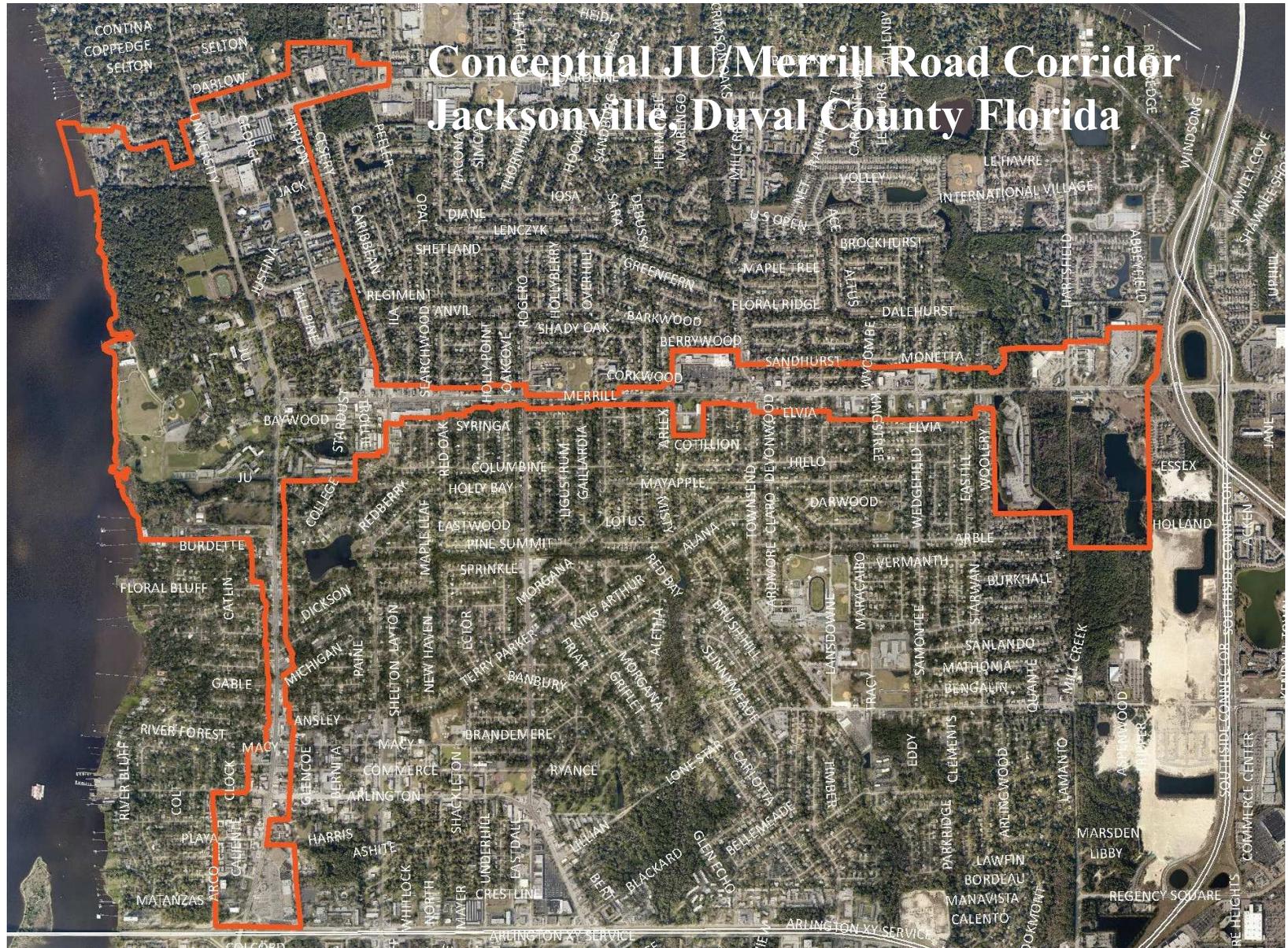
Steve Matchett

editor@myarlington.org

Your Turn Address correspondence to info@myarlington.org

CORRECTION -

Last month in a story about the Arlington CRA, my Arlington Monthly published a map depicting proposed corridors and boundaries currently under review. We were rightly corrected by Jacksonville Office of Economic Development Manager Karen Nasrallah, that the map shown was the area where Code Enforcement performed inspections, and was not reflective of the project area. She graciously provided us the correct map that outlines the project's tentative boundaries, and her most recent update of November 22nd to the Project Dolphin team. Both have been reproduced below.



Hello Project Dolphin Team:

It is with great pleasure that I send you the following good news. Dave Schneider, team member representing Public Works, has reported that he has executed a contract with Waitz & Moye, Inc. to perform engineering services for the "Arlington Traffic Study", which will include the University/Merrill corridor.

As you will recall from past meetings, this study is the first step to creating the new "Mobility Corridor." The Local Option Tax Program will serve as the construction funding source for most of the project improvements. This corridor was targeted among 13 others by JTA as a high frequency transit service area that will enhance transit, pedestrian mobility, safety and infrastructure within the corridor. The study will begin the Friday after Thanksgiving, November 28 and is expected to be complete by the end of the year.

*Unless needed by the Public Works Department, I will not reconvene a meeting of this group until after the new year. However, I will continue to provide updates as they become available and welcome your feed back for circulation. Have a blessed and safe Thanksgiving holiday, - **Karen V. Nasrallah***



A-Town . . . What's the Buzz



Arlington Connecting in Social Media

myArlington MONTHLY checks in on several social media sites featuring Arlington people, places, and things. The views and comments expressed may not necessarily represent ours - but they could be yours!



www.facebook.com

I Grew Up in Arlington is a Facebook Group Page boasting over 6,000 members providing a way for people who have lived in Arlington to re-connect with others.

The Rich History of Arlington - A Unique Place in Time is a Facebook Group Page that provides historical information about the Arlington community. The fledging page has already drawn over 700 members.

Old Arlington Inc. is the Facebook page for OAI and this publication,.

"Eggleston house" moved to the lot on the river was at one time the Eggleston Hotel which was located about a block north of the JM&P RR Sta (Almira and Paine) After the RR was closed and the community dwindled it was taken to the foot of Floral Bluff rd., put on a barge and towed to its new location on the bluff at what became the East end of the Mathews bridge. A well known family named Colcord lived there. It was bulldozed down Ca 64 with all the old furniture in it. - Cleve



Since this old dwelling was the go-to-stop at the community of Eggleston and the Chautauqua assembly grounds it would be amazing to see a guest list of all the folks and performers who spent the night here. I'm sure many gathered around the piano in the parlor in the evening singing popular melodies of the day. - John



We used to go down there and try to watch practice when Artis was there. Got run out of the gym most of the time! - Lee

I was there then, too. I started in 1969 after graduating from TP. I was 17. People never believe me when I tell them we could smoke in class if the professor smoked!!! I was the life guard at the JU pool for my work/study job. What a great time!!! - Elizabeth

Lived across the street in Timber lake Trace Apts. My 1st One bedroom, \$86.00 a month and all the JU Co-eds I could fit inside... LOL - John



Here's another view of the Spanish American War Battery on St. John's Bluff. The property was in a historic preservation trust, owned by a family. Through a legal loophole the property was sold in an online auction. The owner purchased the property without actually seeing the site. Once the owner realized that a historic building was on the site he went to the city to cash in. He's currently threatening to build on the site if it's not purchased from him. The National Park Service is familiar with the location and has cleaned up the site hoping it would be transferred to them eventually. The current owner placed a fence and no trespassing signs around the property. These photos were taken a couple of years ago prior to the site being purchased. As there are signs stating no trespassing now, it's a crime to enter the area. - Lake Ray IV



The infamous "Dungeon" aka magazine for the Spanish-American War Battery on St. John's Bluff. Yeah the Dungeon that's what they said was haunted by the spirits of soldiers... Thanks for bringing back the teenage memories when we were explorers. - Kevin

One third mile south east of Ribault Monument. I remember parking on the side of the road of Fort Caroline and then hiking through the undergrowth woods near the bluff. IT WAS PRETTY SCARY. Of course liquid courage helped at night. - Robert

OAI would like to **Thank You** for a great Arlington Home Tour. A special thanks to all the homeowners and business owners that opened their beautiful homes and offices to the public. Thank You to all that participated - committee members, speakers,



and volunteers - that helped to make this a wonderful annual Home Tour. We are happy that everyone that went on the Tour loved it!

Jones College Radio - The end of an Arlington institution. As EMF prepares to close on its purchase of Beautiful Music 90.9 WKTZ-FM and Adult Standards 1220 WJAX Jacksonville from Jones College, both stations signed-off their programming earlier today. - John

I always played Jones College when leaving the house to keep cat company. - Tommy

So sad...and like some of you, my parents listened to it and in the past decade or so, when I'm in Jacksonville, I listen(ed) to it as well. Thanks to Jones College and the radio owners for giving us "beautiful music" for all those years. Sad day to see it gone. - Margie

Still available on the internet, just not over the air. - Dennis





Cleve's Corner on . . .

With a new property owner and its fate uncertain, Cleve gives us the

Arlington & the Spanish-American War

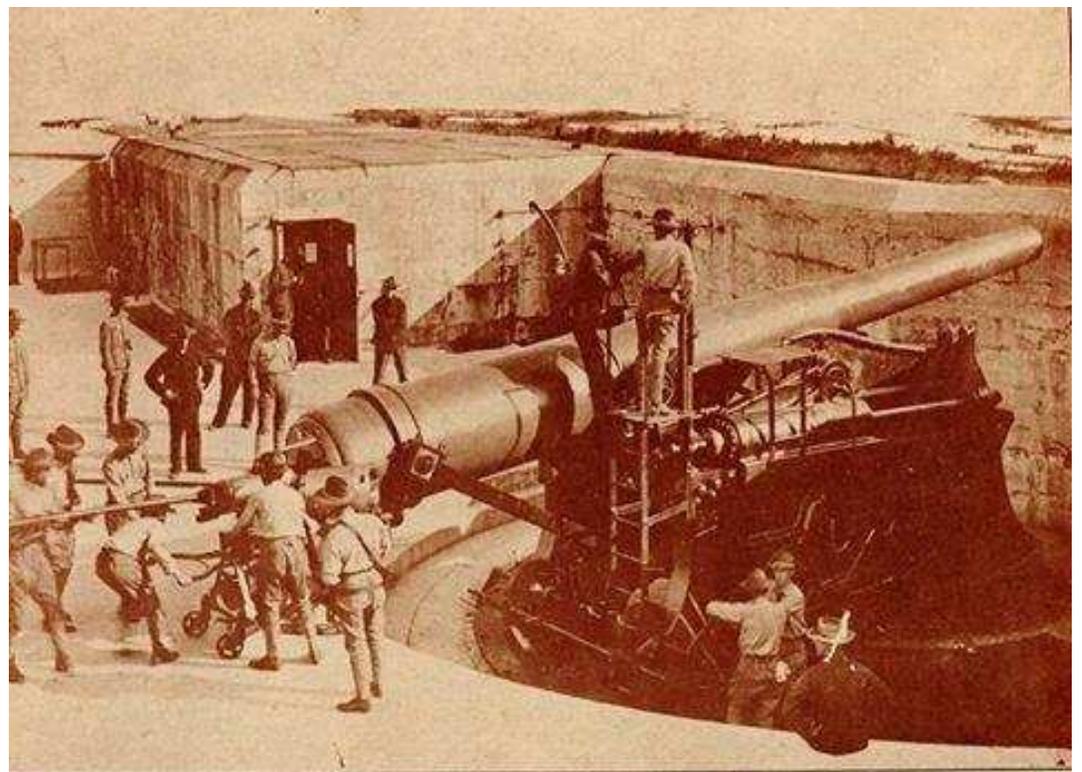
Many Arlington teenagers in the 1930s through the 60s explored the old Spanish-American War concrete gun emplacement found in a wooded area on the eastern edge of St. Johns Bluff. Built in 1898, its



purpose in protecting the City of Jacksonville was all but forgotten, and sometimes confused with the original Fort Caroline. Belief that a dungeon existed (which was actually the battery's underground gunpowder storage room) embellished legends of ghosts, and provided fodder for the teens and their dates who would come to enjoy the view across the river. The Arlington Boy Scouts used the site for campouts, hiking past the very sandy road that terminated near what is now the Ribault Overlook. But few realized what it was built for, and fewer still that early Arlington residents were instrumental in its establishment, construction, and maintenance as a military reservation for twenty years.

The Spanish-American War lasted for ten weeks in the middle of 1898, resulting from American intervention in the Cuban War of Independence and the sinking of the U.S.S. Maine battleship in Havana Harbor. The cause of the sinking is still unknown, but popular opinion blamed Spain and spawned the famous rallying cry, "Remember the Maine, to Hell with Spain!"

The City of Jacksonville had concerns of invasions by Spain due to Jacksonville's activities in supporting the Cuban Revolution. Gun running expeditions were made by Napoleon B. Broward, Montcalm Broward and George DeCottes, co-owners of the sea-going tug "Three Friends". Between 1895 and 1898, the U.S. made seventy-one filibustering (munitions) runs to Cuba, and of these, twenty-three were from Jacksonville, twelve of which were successfully made by the "Three Friends". Napoleon Broward, at one time, lived in what is now Arlington on the Newcastle Plantation on Mill Cove and studied at a private home also on Mill Cove. He was elected as Governor of Florida in 1905.



SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR FORTIFICATIONS

Fearing attack from Spain during the Spanish-American War, gun emplacements were constructed on St. John's Bluff in April, 1898. Thus, 333 years after the Spanish attacked Fort Caroline, the United States became the fifth country to fortify St. John's Bluff (France, Spain, England, Confederate and U.S.). The remains of these fortifications can still be seen overgrown with Florida underbrush.

(Courtesy Jacksonville Historical Society)

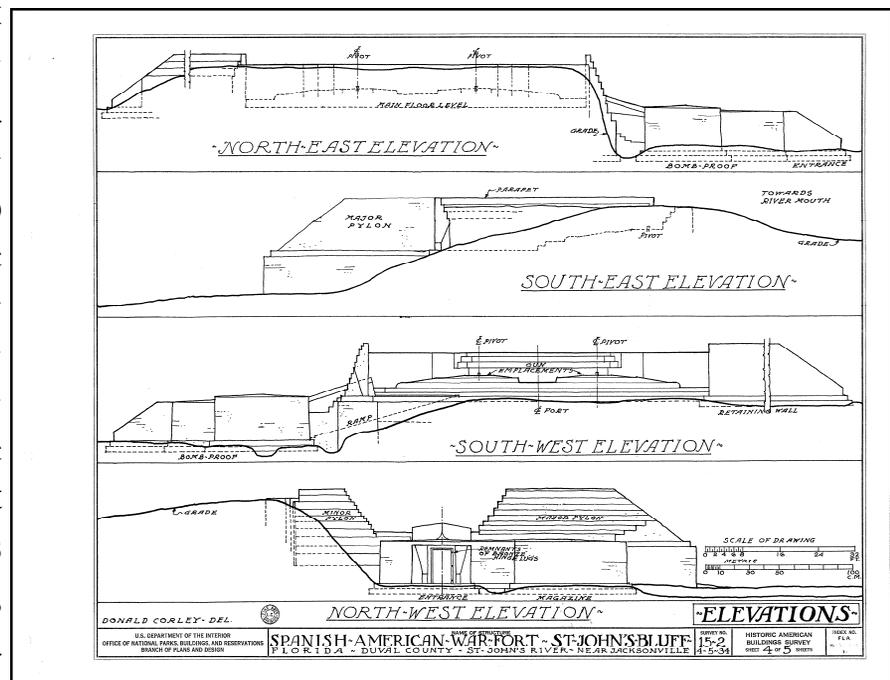
The History of Old Arlington

story behind the Spanish-American War fortifications still standing in Arlington

ARLINGTON & THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR (CONTINUED FROM PG 6)

The City selected St. Johns Bluff as the place to build gun batteries for protection. In conjunction with the Corps of Engineers, site work began with clearing on April 11, 1898. The land at that time was claimed to have been owned by three parties – Florida Finance Corporation, Sarah F. Williams, and W. D. Browne, whose son, Willie (I believe) furnished lands for the Timucuan preserve years later. All three owners had agreed to the use of their land for a minimal fee.

The scope of work consisted of a dock (wharf) at the foot of the bluff, facing the river, to unload materials. Next was a “cut” up the bluff to facilitate a railway and tram to pull heavy construction material, equipment, guns, and ammunition to the top of the bluff and along the high ground facing the marsh. There was a temporary battery constructed of earth and stone built in the same location which is now the Ribault Overlook. The railway continued southeast along the bluff facing the marsh, 1,100 feet to the permanent battery that was constructed with concrete and steel. This battery was set up for two eight-inch “rifles”, which weighed over sixteen tons each, and shot a 300 lb. projectile capable of hitting a ship in the river at the mouth of Sisters Creek (Intracoastal Waterway). This was the ‘fort’ that everyone saw in later years.



A series of wooden buildings was constructed to support the small military base and work also included two miles of cable with floating mines (torpedos) stretched across the river. There was a wooden building on poles at the foot of the bluff which (I believe) was the electrical terminus.

Construction work on the gun battery was completed, however the big guns were never fired - even in practice. After the Treaty of Paris ended hostilities in December, 1898, Mr. B. J. Starling was hired to live on the site as caretaker and watchman for the sum of \$60 per month. Orders were given to have the guns removed and the mine fields pulled out of the river.

A topographic survey was started November 14, 1898, by Corps of Engineers employee F.W. Bruce, who had just returned from modifying Ft. Taylor at Key West. Bruce and J. W. Sackett prepared a drawing dated December 6, 1899, which covered the leased area and showed the dock, railroad, empty gun emplacements and buildings. It is of interest that on the topographic survey there is no reference to any signs of the old French fort (Fort Caroline) or any of the other fortifications that followed. It does show “house ruin” on the shore near the west end of the survey. Bruce also did a detailed drawing of the permanent battery, and in 1900 took pictures of the dock and cut from the river, which also shows the buildings on top of the bluff. Bruce moved to Arlington in 1913 where he lived the remainder of his life.

CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE

ARLINGTON MOD & MORE IS THE MOST (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The historic Richard-Holden House, never before opened to the public, was featured as the “And More” historic component of the tour. The house, built around or before 1848, is the oldest continuously occupied home in Duval County and was originally the home of Francis Richard III. (For the history of the Richard family in Arlington, see *Francis Richard and Mill Pond* by Cleve Powell, *MyArlington Monthly*, November, 2014). Tour guests were able to view the lower portion of the home and the cellar, with the hand-hewn beams that date the house to 1848 or earlier.

The tour featured three mid-century “modest” homes – homes built to be within the reach of a large portion of the population at the time – in Alderman Park. Also in Alderman Park, the home designed by pre-eminent Jacksonville architect George Fisher (Jacksonville Coliseum) for his family was open and tour guests were treated to stories by the Fisher family, who had been invited by current owner Jamie Smith to be on hand for the day. During the day it was learned that another home on the tour, located on Strawberry Creek, was built by Fisher and occupied by his family.

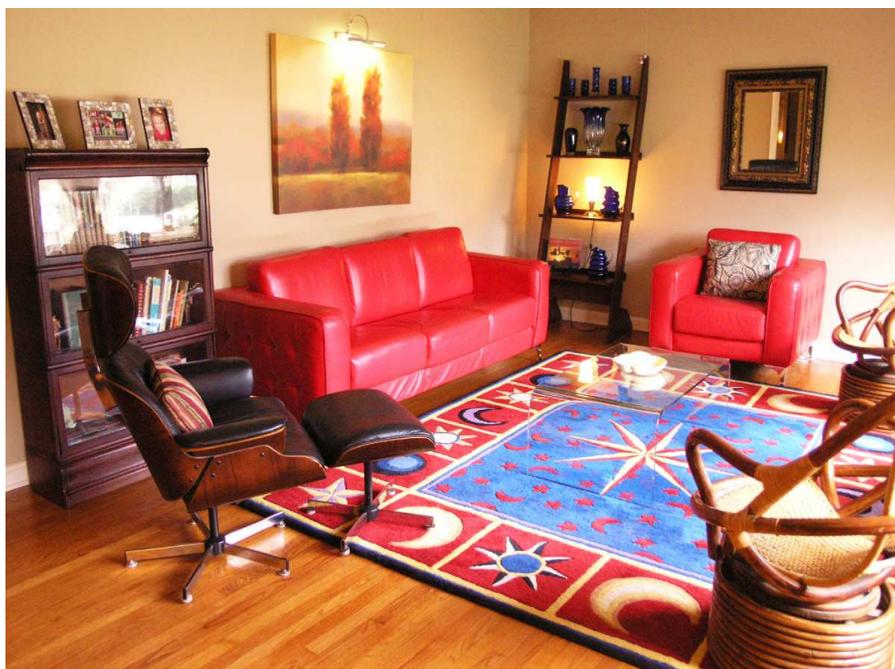


With three naval bases in the area, Jacksonville residents’ fear of a nuclear attack was real during the cold war years. The original owners of this home in Alderman Park did what 10% of the population did – they built a shelter to protect themselves from radioactive fallout.

The symposium, held at the Arlington Congregational Church on University Boulevard N., started off with University of Florida Prof. Martin Gundersen, speaking on Domestic Architecture in Florida between 1950-1970 - the architecture of Modernism in the Florida Landscape before air conditioning. Jacksonville architectural historian Dr. Wayne Wood followed with a pictorial history of Arlington, including examples of Arlington’s mid-century architecture, and sent the audience off with an assignment to spot as many of the mid-mod buildings as they could.

Even the homeowners, some of whom were at first hesitant to open their homes on the tour, expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to be on the tour. Homeowner Lucie Ulrich wrote “Thanks again for allowing us to take part. We have come to appreciate our home and those in the neighborhood more than we thought possible.”

The Arlington Mod and More Home Tour is an annual event held in November. If you have a mid-century modern home that you would place on tour, or know of someone who does, please contact the Mod Squad at info@oldarlington.org.



ARLINGTON AGLOW



Where do you go to see the holiday lights in Arlington?

We enjoyed last weekend's Christmas tree lighting at the Landing and the annual boat parade along the riverbank that ended with dazzling fireworks! Jacksonville is a huge metropolis and St. Augustine's "Nights of Lights" is a field trip that makes parking your car an adventure. So, who has their lights on in Arlington?

Holiday traditions in Arlington neighborhoods such as Clifton and Alderman Park, have boasted Luminaries, and visits from Santa, with community coordination and volunteers. Each year brings new technology. Newer subdivisions such as Charter Point, Fairways Forest, Colony Cove, and other neighborhoods along Fort Caroline Road, also see Santa and earned their "glowing" reputations and expectations.

Retired electrician Tim Pollard, a resident of Blackhawk Bluff- situated along both sides of Girvin Road, refined his community's spirit in 2002 with tools designed centuries ago. Using bows and arrows, and fishing line, with his strings of decorative lights, he created a vision of "magically suspended" sparkling trails of brightly lit colors and ornaments. Now, dozens of neighbors have acquired their own bows and arrows allowing this neighborhood to share their wonderland nestled in an enchanted forest!

"Arlington Aglow" guarantees fascinating and delightful opportunities to enjoy Arlington as your neighbors intended. You are invited, and welcome, to "freely" drive by our neighborhoods to bask in youthful excitement as you and your family mark another holiday tradition in your hometown. For those of



you who are unable to travel, we will be offering highlights of Arlington Aglow on Old Arlington Inc's Facebook page and the "Rich History of Arlington - A Unique Place In Time". Until then, you can also visit the 2011 rendition of Blackhawk Bluff at: <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=k7jEsaPD3RM>.

The Neighborhoods of Arlington

A monthly spotlight on the building blocks of Arlington community

Alderman Park

The neighborhood known as Alderman Park was developed beginning in early 1955 by W. C. Whelan, who purchased the property from Carlotta Townsend Alderman. This area, located north of the Arlington Expressway and east of Tree Hill Nature Preserve, would see a building boom that spanned from the mid-50s, through the 1960s and into the early 70s, eventually resulting in the 815 mostly brick and block homes of today.

Advertisements touted Alderman Park as “The Correct Address” with a “Galaxy of Heavenly Homes,” both contemporary and conventional, and cited the convenience to both the beach and town – with no traffic congestion!

Homes were designed by renowned architects including Robert C. Broward and George Fisher, to other architects whose names are unknown to us today. At the 1957 Parade of Homes, 17 builders were represented, and the *Florida Times Union* reported that “. . . some of the homes are quite elaborate; others are designed to be well within the financial reach of a large portion of the population.”

George Fisher, one of Jacksonville’s preeminent modern architects, built this Alderman Park home in 1959 for his family. It was featured on last month’s Arlington Mod & More Home Tour.



Even though almost sixty years have passed, home buyers still seek the convenience of Alderman Park, the solidly constructed homes, and the active community. Alderman Park Civic Association, formed in 1958 because of concern over a dangerous intersection at Townsend Blvd. and the Arlington Expressway, is recognized as the longest continuous civic association in Jacksonville. Among other activities are a Welcome Neighbor program, Neighborhood Watch, Yard of the Month contest, neighborhood-wide garage sales, a quarterly newsletter, directory and Christmas luminaries.

1957 *Florida Times Union* advertisement

**GRAND
OPENING**

Next Saturday

SEPT. 14 - 2:00 P.M.

PARADE

OF

HOMES

AND

**MODERN LIVING
EXPOSITION**

IN

ALDERMAN PARK



SEE . . .

17 – Different – Exciting
New – Model Homes – Showing the
Latest Trends in Florida Living

PLUS . . .

Hundreds of Exhibits Presenting
All That Is New in Modern Living

Community Pipeline

What's happening between Arlington and City Hall

Summary Report of the Greater Arlington/Beaches CPAC Meeting, November 10, 2014

Presentation

Ashley Smith Juarez a member of the Duval County School Board (DVSb) discussed the ongoing effort towards retaining quality teachers and allowing the underperforming teachers to “self-select’ another career”. While discussing improvements in the schools she said that all middle and high schools in Duval County now have Deans of Discipline. She also touched on the following points during her discussion:

Duval County now has a 72.1% Graduation Rate the highest in its history

Duval County now has 8 Nationally Recognized High Schools

Duval County now has 5 State of Florida top 100 Middle Schools

Craig Field - Jax/Ex Airport

Blue Sky Golf Course is now open. The public is encouraged to take advantage of this updated / recently renovated facility. Craig Field - Jax/Ex Airport won the “Community Affairs Award” for 2014 from the Florida Airport Council.

JSO -Property Crime is down almost 3% and Violent Crime is down almost 2% over last month.

Mayors Liaison - No Report from the Mayor’s Office.

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) - No Report from the FDOT.

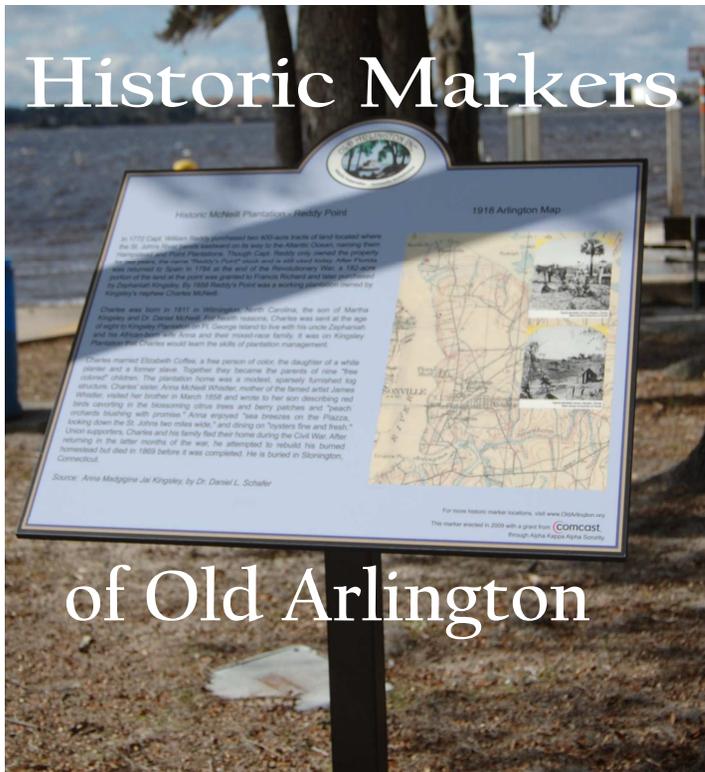
Code Compliance - The code compliance department is fully staffed in Arlington for the first time in several years. As they are correctly staffed and trained, they will become proactive in their enforcement of code violations. Their focus in November is the Woodland Acres area of Arlington. Due to their understaffing in the past, they would respond to concerns expressed about a particular property and not note issues with adjoining properties. Now since they are fully staffed, they will be able to respond to issues at the reported property and examine the entire area for code issues.

Planning and Development - No Report

Office of Economic Development – Operation Dolphin Update, the Chairman of the Greater Arlington Beaches District Citizens Planning and Advisory Committee reported that the funding for this project has a ‘clearer path’. The funding that will pay for the initial planning will be put out to bid in the near future.

Land Use and Development - AMC Regency Theatre, as has been reported recently in *my Arlington Monthly* and other local media outlets, the owners of the AMC Cinema on Regency Square Boulevard plan an extensive remodeling and updating of the cinema. As part of that updating effort, they plan on offering a more substantial menu which would include alcohol. It would also include a small bar in the lobby of the theatre. This renovation will cost in excess of six million dollars and includes the replacement of all seats with plush leather rocker reclining seats. They also plan on sound and sight upgrades as well. Under current law, an establishment that sells alcohol must be at least 1500 feet from all churches and schools. The cinema is 528 feet from Global Outreach Charter Academy. The owners of the cinema requested that they be granted a waiver of this minimum distance regulation. The group discussed this waiver for several minutes and a vote was taken. The CPAC voted against the waiver of the distance rule overwhelmingly.

Historic Markers



of Old Arlington

#07 - Strawberry Mills: Where Arlington Road crosses Strawberry Creek just south of the Arlington Expressway. Francis Richard, using land acquired in a Spanish land grant, dammed Strawberry and Red Bay Branch creeks in 1817. The resulting 150-acre mill pond was operational by 1820, and provided power to run a combination saw, grist and sugar mill, cotton gin, and brick yard. Logs were floated in, milled and stacked in the two-acre lumber yard on the south bank of the creek, ready to be shipped, along with ground corn, cane, and cotton, out the St. Johns River.

For the rest of the story, visit the marker itself located at 720 Arlington Rd. 32211 [GPS: 30 19' 28.8" N. 81 35' 04.1"W.].

CLEVE'S CORNER - (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

A photograph of the permanent gun emplacement is found on page 308 of the "Jacksonville Architectural Heritage" by local historian, Dr. Wayne Wood. Wood states that in 1898, Jacksonville became a major staging area for the war to free Cuba from Spain, and nearly 30,000 troops were stationed at camp "Cuba Libre" in the city, outnumbering the populace. Wood goes on to describe the gun emplacement construction and its dismantling, stating, "This is the last of many fortifications at St. Johns Bluff and a mute reminder of what Teddy Roosevelt called "A Splendid Little War".

The gun emplacements and buildings became known as "The Saint Johns Bluff Military Reservation" and on April 25, 1901 the Circuit Court, through condemnation, issued title to the U.S. for 117.7 acres on St. Johns Bluff for a value of \$15,000, to be paid to Williams and Browne. Although the government acquired the land, there was no further military development, and the land was sold to Arthur Tillman Williams as President of the Florida Realty Investment Corp. for \$53,839.38 by contract dated June 1, 1925. He brought in other investors, Everett Mizell, William C. Hill, and B. C. Buck. The area was platted as "St. Johns Bluff Estates" in 1945.

The gun emplacement today sits on two privately owned vacant lots facing Ft. Caroline Rd. directly across from Huguenot Lane. The property was recently sold at a tax deed auction, with the new owner unaware of the site's historical significance. Negotiations between the owner, the City, and the U.S. Park Service are ongoing as to the site's future.

