

New Madeira Beach Book Benefits Heritage Village

A century ago, a developer from St. Petersburg bought miles of beachfront property with a few dollars and an ambitious dream. Noel Mitchell, often known as the "Sand Man" for his real estate gimmickry, acquired lands on the north side of Johns Pass in early 1914 with plans to develop the shoreline into a popular destination.

Although his dreams washed away with the tide, others such as Albert Archibald and David Welch soon transformed the island in the 1920s. After World War II, the municipality of Madeira Beach took shape.

Jim Schnur, PCHS president, has published his third book since 2011 that will benefit Heritage Village. *Madeira Beach*, a new title in Arcadia Publishing's "Images of America" series, uses vivid images and a rich narrative to take the reader through the century of settlement and development of a city that has touted itself as "an island two miles long and a smile wide."

Similar to his published histories of Largo and the Pinellas County centennial, Schnur has assigned all royalties from *Madeira Beach* to local cultural heritage



A view of Archibald Park as it appeared more than forty years ago

institutions. Half of the royalties will go directly to the Pinellas County Historical Society to support its efforts at Heritage Village; the other half will allow the Friends of the Gulf Beaches Public Library to support a library that has served the residents of Madeira Beach, Treasure Island, and the Redingtons for more than sixty years.

The book's first chapter describes early attempts to settle the island as well as neighboring areas along the mainland at Bay Pines and near Seminole. Readers will learn about the opening of Welch Causeway in 1926 and the first bridge across Johns Pass a year later, the creation of the Madeira Casino and "Archie's Ark" by the

Archibald family, and Charles Redington's plans to develop new subdivisions north of Madeira around the Tides Bath Club. The second chapter traces the transformation of Johns Pass since World War II. Subsequent chapters allow the reader to see how the island community transitioned from a small settlement with beach cottages and fishing fleets to a city that experienced "condo mania" and grew through the dredging of "finger islands."

You may purchase signed copies of *Madeira Beach* at our Gift Shop, an appropriate venue, especially since this former beach cottage once sat along the shoreline in Madeira Beach.