



HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

FRIENDS of the

PEARCE HOMESTEAD

Newsletter March, 2023 EDITION

2023 Heritage Festival

April 15 & 16

A Celebration of History at the Pearce Homestead

Both days will feature musical entertainment by Tommy Brandt, Barney and Nancy, Sharon Cornine and on Sunday Keith Mathys . Cloggers and Celtic Dancers will perform. The S.A.R. will present colors and a Black Powder Salute at noon both days.

The entertainment will continue with a poetry recitation by Brad Phares, a Pearce Family Descendant, followed by a Colonial to the 1950's Fashion Show created and narrated by Alexandra Maxwell.

Pioneer Skills Exhibits in the School House show Sewing and Recycling, Spinning, and Quilting by the Tantie Quilters of Okeechobee. There will be a Colonial Laundry Demonstration and the Cemetery talk will describe Victorian burial customs.

Something new this year is an authentic Native American village with demonstrations by Jim Sawgrass and a Champion Hoop Dancer

For CHILDREN of ALL AGES: Live animals, Pirate stories, face painting and balloon art by Toby's Clowns.



Saturday—Boat Rides on the Kissimmee River

\$20 per person

Cowboy Church on Sunday



Mural image from Florida Archives is John Pearce's log house and out buildings on the west bank of the Kissimmee River.

During the Third Seminole War, John M. Pearce served in several volunteer companies, including that of Capt. William B. Hooker. At one

time, he was a scout, surveying Indian activities, in the Kissimmee Valley area. During the Civil War, he enlisted about 1863 in and served as orderly sergeant. He left the command at the disbanding of the Confederacy. On September 23, 1907, Martha A. Pearce applied for a widow's pension as the widow of J. M. Pearce, who served in the military in the Home Guard. She gave her address as Bassenger, Fla. She stated she had resided continuously in Florida since 1852. An "X" was signed in lieu of signature. Her claim 6291 was approved February 8, 1907, with pay from November 11, 1907 at the rate of \$120 per annum. (Research by John Dean, S.A.R.)



An award given by a grateful nation and signed by the President of the United States honoring the memory and military service of John Mizell Pearce was presented to Butch Thompson recently. Thank you to Cindy Morrison for filing the necessary paperwork making this award possible.



The annual trail ride reenactment across Central Florida is always a welcome spectacle. Cracker Trail riders stopped at the Pearce Homestead for a lunch break and a rest and water for the horses. Butch Thompson, ever the gracious host, chatted with trail boss Catherine.

The handsome team of mules shown below are owned by Marilyn Whitlock of Jacksonville. Ted and Tom are brothers and are



PEARCE FAMILY HISTORY

Thousands of years ago, Florida was under water. Fossilized aquatic life have been found as have artifacts from ancient cultures. One such find was plowed up in July 1878 by John Mizell Pearce on his cattle ranch. The piece pictured here is now on display at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. It is attributed to the Calusa tribe and was most likely worn as a pendant. It was hammered out of gold and engraved. The Smithsonian lists the place where it was found as Istokpoga Island, Kissimmee River; Fort Bassinger; Brevard County; Florida; USA.



This piece has changed hands many times. The Smithsonian documents its history as follows: sold to Damon Greenleaf (1834-1895, a jeweler in Jacksonville, Florida, who also collected and sold Indian artifacts) in 1878; purchased by Andrew Ellicott Douglass (1819-1901, an amateur archaeologist and collector with interests in Florida archaeology) from Damon Greenleaf in 1882; purchased by George Frederick Kunz (1856-1932, a mineralogist and collector) from A.E. Douglas at an unknown date; purchased by George Heye from George Kunz circa 1907.

The Pearce Homestead continues to be a treasure to this day.

Future Rancher ??



FESTIVAL FUN



Heritage Association board members and friends participated in the Master Gardeners event in November, 2022. Homestead T-shirts were modeled and sold. Visitors to pour table were fascinated by the Liberty Tree photo on display. Participation in events such as this generates interest in our Festival.

Board members from left to right, Butch Thompson, Pat Harrison, Nancy Fisk, Maria Hagg and Friend of the Pearce Homestead, Ruth Bergman



The FRIENDS of the PEARCE HOMESTEAD —



is an organization devoted to the preservation and promotion of the property as an historic treasure and example of pride in the legacy of the Florida Heartland.

As a friend of the Pearce Homestead you are encouraged to attend the Heritage Festival on April 15 & 16.

- ◆ A variety of volunteer opportunities await you
- ◆ When you arrive, report to the information tent located opposite the house at the end of the walkway leading from the parking area.
- ◆ Volunteer Area with water and snacks when you need a break
- ◆ Your Help will make this the best Heritage Festival ever !!



The Cracker Trail Riders stop at the Pearce Homestead each year as they traverse the state on the reenactment of the cattle drive After lunch and a water break for the horses, the ride continued across the Okeechobee bridge and we had a perfect view from the Homestead