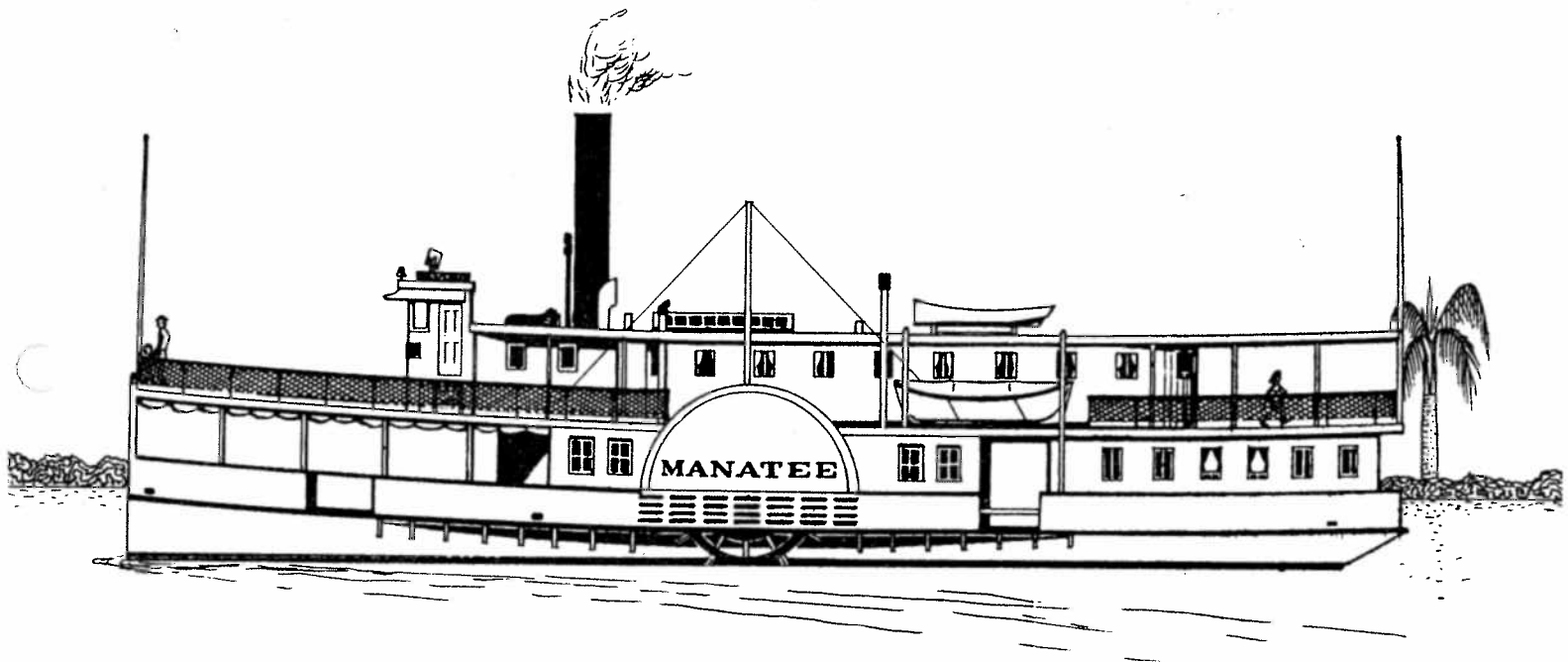


Interesting Dates  
from  
Manatee County  
History



Provided by:

Eaton Florida History Room

## INTERESTING DATES FROM MANATEE COUNTY HISTORY

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- 1539 In the spring, Hernando DeSoto's expedition landed at a spot now known as Shaw's Point. This historical event is re-enacted annually during the DeSoto Celebration, usually held in early April. Explorers and early settlers found Manatees (Sea cows) in the local rivers and when the state was divided into counties, this area was named Manatee County.
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- 1809 Napoleon, having conquered Spain in Europe, claimed all her colonies including Florida; resisted by the United States, with U.S. position elaborated in the Monroe Doctrine.
- 1812 June 18. United States declared war on England. American settlers in East Florida organized the constitutional territory of East Florida, favoring U.S. acquisition.
- 1817-1818 First Seminole War, Andrew Jackson led U.S. troops into Spanish Florida.
- 1819 Treaty drawn up in Washington for transfer of Florida from Spain to the United States.
- 1823 Fort Brooke established as U.S. military cantonment; later became the city of Tampa.
- 1835 Beginning of Second Seminole War. Dade massacre, December 25th.
- 1837 Panic of 1837 ruined the bank of Tallahassee and other banks and planters. Major bank stockholders, the Gamble brothers, decided to leave Tallahassee for the Manatee area.
- 1841-1842 Closing scenes of the Second Seminole War.

1842 Armed Occupation Act allowed any head of family or single man to earn title to 160 acres of land by erecting a dwelling and cultivating 5 or more acres and living on the land for 5 years.

Josiah Gates, innkeeper at Fort Brooke, came to inspect the Manatee River area, having heard about it from Captain Tresca who regularly sailed between Cedar Key and Key West. Settled at the mineral spring at what is now 14th Street East and the River.

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Ezekiel and Abigale Glazier came to Manatee from Massachusetts.

Henry Smith Clark and young wife Ellen moved to Manatee.

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1848 The second hurricane to hit the village blew all the waters inland, destroying vegetation, plants, shrubbery and fruit trees. It salted the drinking water in the wells and blew a large sloop inland near Ezekiel Glazier's new residence. It washed away the wharf in front of Henry Clark's store and covered all the islands except Egmont Key, where it did destroy the lighthouse.

1849 Dr. Franklin Branch moved to Manatee, purchasing the spring and property on the river intending to capitalize on the medicinal quality of the spring water.

- 1850 May 30, property deeded to the "Manatee Burying Ground", one of the oldest cemeteries on Florida's Gulf Coast. Since 1892, only immediate family members can be buried there.
- A Meeting House built--one room with benches and pulpit hand-hewn by Ezekiel Glazier. During the week it served as a school. Electa Lee was school mistress.
- Construction of Braden Castle as replacement home for the family tired of living in the small log cabin and wishing to be nearer the sugar plantation.
- 1855 Manatee separated from Hillsborough County to become Florida's 31st County, with the village of Manatee as the county seat. The governor appointed the probate judge, the justice of the peace, the treasurer, coroner, circuit clerk and sheriff. In that year, Manatee participated in its first presidential election: Buchanan-Freeman.
- 1856 March 4, Furman Chairs Whitaker was the first white child born in Manatee County. Later became Manatee County's first native-born doctor, practicing from 1896 to about 1945.
- In the spring, a small party of Seminoles attack Braden Castle. The county covered 5,000 square miles from Gulf to Lake Okeechobee, as large as Rhode Island.
- 1858 Close of the last war with the Seminoles.
- 1860 Josiah Gates donated a parcel of land in Manatee for a courthouse. Ezekiel Glazier awarded contract to build, and completed it that same year at a cost of \$700. Served as courthouse and school until 1866, when the county seat moved to Pine Level in mid-county.
- Captain and Mrs. John Curry, with 9 sons and daughters, with spouses and children arrived and purchased Dr. Branch's property.
- 1861 January 10, Florida seceded from the Union and became the second state to join the Confederacy on February 17 at the Montgomery convention.
- 1866 Pine Level (now located over the county's eastern boundary in DeSoto County) became the county seat, which it remained for 21 years.

- 1868 James Warner, inventor of the Springfield rifle, moved his family to the Manatee River area.
- S.S. Lamb founded the village of Palmetto on the north bank of the Manatee River.
- 1871 Josiah Gates, Manatee County's first settler and Joseph Atzeroth, a veteran of the third Seminole and Civil war, both died during the year. At about this time, the Hendrix dock, the first shipping dock in Palmetto, was built.
- 1873 September 15, first Palmetto post office founded.
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- 1876 Major Alden Joseph Adams arrived in the area and settled in the village of Manatee: later built a tabbystone "castle" on his estate, complete with towers and battlements.
- 1877 Major William Iredell Turner, a veteran of the Second Seminole War and the Civil War, bought 7 riverfront acres which formed the basis of the Bradenton community. He built a store, warehouse, wharf and "mansion", which served as a hotel.
- September 30. Sarasota Bay inundated, fishermen's nets swept away by a hurricane. The sloop "Advance", owned by Ft. Myers spongers, washed ashore 200 feet south of Sarasota's city pier, nearly 100 yards inland.
- 1878 May 9. "Braidenton" post office opened, in Major Turner's store.
- 1880 "Madam Joe" Atzeroth received \$10 gold piece for growing the first coffee in the United States.

### SOME SIMPLE STATISTICS SHOWING HOW MANATEE GREW

1860	854	
1870	1,931	
1880	3,544	
1890	3,895	
1900	4,663	
1905	8,530	(an 83% increase over 1900)
1910	9,550	
1920	18,712	(almost double!)
1930	22,502	
1940	26,098	
1950	34,704	
1960	69,168	(again, almost double)
1970	97,115	
1980	148,442	
1985	170,565	
1987	181,000	

## MANATEE COUNTY HISTORY

**BACKGROUND** - In the spring of 1539, Hernando Desoto's expedition landed at a spot now known as Shaw's Point. This historical event is re-enacted annually during the DeSoto Celebration, usually held in early April. Explorers and early settlers found Manatees (sea cows) in the local rivers and when the State was divided into counties, this area was named Manatee County. Our history is rich in lore of explorers, gold, conquests, Indian wars and early settlers with sugar and tobacco plantations.

### **EARLY GOVERNMENT** -

- 1845 Territory of Florida received statehood. Office of registrar of Public Lands was established.
- 1855 Manatee separated from Hillsborough County to become the 31st County.
- 1860 One story frame courthouse building completed. School districts and trustees appointed.
- 1866 Pine Level became county seat for 21 years.
- 1887 DeSoto became a separate county. County seat re-established in village of Manatee - temporary basis.
- 1888 Village of Manatee incorporated. Mayor and Board of Alderman established. Bradenton (as Bradenton was called then) chosen as permanent county seat.
- 1902 Celebration of erection of first bridge.
- 1903 Bradenton became incorporated.
- 1913 Courthouse erected in Bradenton.
- 1921 Lower half of county became Sarasota County.
- 1947 Merger of town of Manatee and Bradenton.

The beautiful acreage that comprises Manatee County has harbored human life as far back as the year 1000 A.D. The first inhabitants were the Timucuan Indians, farmers, fisherman, and as it turned out, fighters fierce in the defense of their land. The Timucuan tribe had undisputed control of their territory for over 500 years, until the first Europeans appeared on the scene.

### **EARLY EXPLORATION -**

Ponce de Leon first hailed the West coast of Florida in 1521, when he arrived to start settlement to be used as a base for Spain's trading activities. Legend has it that Ponce de Leon searched for a mythical Fountain of Youth. Whether that is so we don't know, but we do know that he didn't find anything he expected in the Manatee area. Thwarted in his colonization by marauding Indians, Ponce de Leon left Manatee County forever.

In 1539, Spain sent another emissary to try to establish a westcoast trading center. Hernando De Doto landed on the Manatee area near Shaw's Point. (Congress declared Shaw's Point a national monument in 1934. Each spring a week long gala celebration is held to commemorate DeSoto's landing.)

DeSoto's massive forces accosted the Indian population, enslaving them and demanding to be guided to El Dorado, a city they believed to be carved from and paved with gold. After numerous expeditions failed to reveal the location of the "Golden City", DeSoto wearied of the chase, sent his sailing ships back to Cuba and set off on foot for the Mississippi River.

### **JOSIAH GATES - THE FIRST SETTLER -**

A peaceful lull of 300 years passed before further settlement by "civilized" man attempted. In 1842, Josiah Gates became Manatee County's first permanent settler. Gates, who ran a hotel in Fort Brooke (now Tampa), sailed down the West Coast of Florida with his brother-in-law, searching for the bountiful land of which he had heard much from the fisherman who supplied seafood for his restaurant.

Knowing that this coastal territory would soon be opened to settlers, Gates surveyed the lush acreage and selected a suitable site to build a homestead. The Armed Occupation Act of 1842 allowed any American citizen to homestead a quarter section of land (160 acres) in the southwest Florida region. The Act also provided military protection to residents living there five consecutive years. Garrisons were established all along the coast as the years went by, encouraging further settlement of the area by people who had formerly been fearful of the lack of security precautions.

In January of 1842 Josiah Gates moved his family to present day Manatee County. He was soon followed by enterprising pioneers who recognized, as he did, the value of the beautiful, fertile land.



## HECTOR AND JOSEPH BRADEN-

Two prominent early settlers of the Manatee region were brothers from Tallahassee, Hector and Joseph Braden. Both men were successful in business: Hector was an attorney, Joseph a graduate physician (though he never practiced his vocation.) The collapse of the Union Bank in Tallahassee in 1837 depleted the fortunes of many wealthy men, Hector and Joseph Braden were not unaffected.

The brothers turned south in an attempt to regain their former prosperity in the bountiful Manatee land. The acreage settled by the Braden brothers included the territory now known as Braden Creek: altogether the two amassed holding of over a thousand acres. Houses were built on their beautiful land, strong sturdy homes capable of withstanding Indian attacks.

Joseph's home was truly his castle. Braden castle was constructed of a highly durable shell-base material: the exterior walls were more than 20 inches thick. It was fortunate for all of the area residents that Joseph Braden had the foresight to provide such protection, for they were one day to need it.

## THE GAMBLE MANSION-

Gamble has long been a familiar name in Manatee County. Major Robert Gamble contributed much to the development of the land surrounding Bradenton. When he arrived in the summer of 1842, he too was trying to recover from the failure of the Union Bank (his father was the organizer.) He came to Manatee with the thought of raising sugar cane for a profit. With him, Gamble brought farming implements, stock, and more than one hundred slaves, who transformed the wilderness into rich-yielding farm land.

Gamble had the best blood in Virginia (his family's home state) in his veins: he was accustomed to the pleasantries of civilized life. After living in a simple wooden house for a number of years, Gamble began constructing a mansion fitting a man of his stature. It was modeled after his father's Tallahassee home, except that the building material contained a mixture of lime, water, shell and sand instead of clay. (Some architectural experts surmise that a portion of sugar or cane juice was added to the formula to harden it and prolong its resistance.) The Gamble Mansion became a symbol of its time; colonial in appearance with its verandahs and its 18 round columns, yet sturdy enough to hold off outside attackers. Just after the Civil War, Major Gamble sheltered the ex-Secretary of State for the Confederacy, Judah P. Benjamin, who was fleeing from government authorities. Benjamin stayed there a short time until it was deemed safe for him to continue his flight to Cuba and, finally, England. The mansion stands still today as a tribute to early Florida and is now one of the South's few remaining confederate shrines.

## PROGRESS OPENS UP A NEW ERA-

The years following the Civil War were devoted to recovering from the loss and destruction of the war years. By 1878, when the first official post office was opened, things were looking up for the community established as "Braidentown." Confusion surrounds the first name given to that town. Whether a postal clerk misspelled it or a government official misread it must be left to speculation. At any rate, with an official name, Braidentown began growing and developing into a "Modern" town. A steady program of construction was initiated that lasted through the 1880's. The first pier was built then at the foot of Main Street (12th St. West).

Manatee County entered the 20th century growing by leaps and bounds. The first bridge was built between Palmetto and Braidentown, and the Seaboard Air Line Railroad extended rail service to the area. In 1903, Braidentown was incorporated and its first Mayor was elected, Judge A.T. Cornwall. (The "i" in city's name was dropped at that time.)

After the depression and the ordeal of World War II, Bradentown and the surrounding area found itself back on the road to prosperity. Tourists once again flocked to the area and land sales began to rise. Mobile home parks appeared throughout the county as the demand for tasteful, inexpensive housing increased. All through the following decades Manatee County continued to grow in both population and affluence. Construction skyrocketed: Businesses were moving in as fast as buildings could be erected to house them.

Today, Manatee County reflects its rich heritage of courageous pioneers, enterprising businessmen and involved citizens in its tremendous popularity as both a vacation spot and permanent home. The great strides taken in technological development coupled with sincere environmental concern allow Manatee residents and visitors alike to enjoy the convenience of modern life in a beautiful natural setting.

lao/4/88

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- Col. William Wyatt and family moved to the area.
- Henry Smith Clark and young wife Ellen move to Manatee.
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- 1880 "Madam Joe" Atzeroth received a \$10 gold piece for producing the first coffee grown in the United States.
- 1881 Pliny War Reasoner (1868-1888) arrives in Manatee County. He and his brother Egbert Norman Reasoner, found Florida's oldest continuously operated nursery.
- 1883 "New Cemetery" established in Manatee at 9th

Avenue and 3rd Street East. Also called "Dew Cemetery" (probably a corruption) or the "Adams Cemetery."

- 1884 E.E. Johnson family arrive from Indiana. He became the first certified druggist in the area, as well as the first to die in the yellow fever epidemic.
- Warburton Warner, the son of James Warner, founds the town of Palma Sola, billed as the "Youngest and Largest Town in Florida" because it included the whole peninsula around Palma Sola Bay.
- 1886 Open letter published from a citizen arguing for the incorporation of Braidentown, Williamsonberg (sic) and Fogartyville - the three riverside towns between Manatee and Palma Sola - according to the Manatee Advocate of April 29, 1886.
- 1887 DeSoto County created from portion of Manatee County. Manatee County's seat moved back to the Village of Manatee on a temporary basis. Terrible yellow fever outbreak halts county life.
- 1888 The Village of Manatee incorporated, with a Mayor and Board of Alderman chosen. Braidentown was chosen as the permanent County seat.
- September 11 - Cortez village gets a post office.
- 1889 Commercial phosphate production begins in the Peace River Valley.
- 1892 January 4 - Palmetto Baptist Church organized under Rev. R.H. Whitehead, with 22 charter members and 18 transfers from Benevolence Church on Frog Creek (today Gillette).
- 1893 "Arcadia, Gulf Coast and Lakeland Railroad" arrived. First railroad through Manatee to Sarasota, it was called the "Slow and Wobbly."
- June - the City of Palmetto incorporated with Peter S. Harllee as the first Mayor.
- 1894 George Emerson Bean homesteads on the north end



of Anna Maria Island.

- 1895 Palmetto Terminal Railroad built. A narrow-gauge, it was used to haul produce from the farms north of town to the Hendrix Dock.
- Tampa and Manatee River Telegraph and Telephone Company organized. Lays a two-wire line to Tampa.
- Severe frost in February destroys practically the entire citrus production of Florida for years to come.
- 1902 Celebration at the erection of the first bridge over the Manatee River.
- 1903 Braidentown incorporated as a city, gets an electric light plant and trolley car at Christmas-time. Town drops the "i" from name.
- 1906 Electricity available in Palmetto and north of the Manatee River.
- 1910 Bradentown has about 600 telephones.
- 1911 During the October hurricane, the freight boat Mistletoe, which sailed in the Manatee River sank in Tampa. The boat was rebuilt, named the "City of Sarasota." Charles Duckwall, a member of a Bradentown pioneer family, was its captain.
- 1912 Brick County high school built.
- 1913 Brick Courthouse erected in Bradentown.
- Roser Memorial Community Church is built on Anna Maria Island by John Roser in memory of his wife.
- The town of "Ellenton" was organized into a municipal corporation on July 18.
- 1914 Real Estate Association, from its convention in Tampa, visited Manatee County and were shown why Manatee was called the "Garden Spot of Florida."
- Snead Island's first post office was established

on May 26.

One-room schoolhouse opened on Snead Island.

1921 Lower half of Manatee County is divided to form Sarasota County.

The Florida real estate boom gears up and "progress" and "new" are the watchwords in the county. Many new buildings replaced the old wooden firetrap structures and many new subdivisions developed.

Hurricane destroys the docks of Cortez in October.

1922 The Bradenton Herald begins as an evening newspaper.

1924 Braden Castle ruins and property purchased by Camping Tourists of America for small houses and Tin-can Tourist Park.

1925 Bradentown votes to drop the "w" and become Bradenton. The Board of Trade becomes the Chamber of Commerce.

1926 Palmetto Baptist Church replaces original wooden building from 1892 with brick building.

September 20 - Hurricane ends the Florida Land Boom. The main thrust came to Miami, Okeechobee and Moore Haven in Glades County. New York Times reports that there were 40,000 left homeless. Gale force winds hit Anna Maria Island hard, washing houses off their pilings.

1928 The second great hurricane, which hit Belle Glade, washing out the earthen dam on Lake Okeechobee. The resulting flood killed more than 2,000 people. At the time, this was the third worst natural disaster in U.S. history, after the 1900 Galveston hurricane and the Johnstown flood. The storm totally ended speculative investing in Florida, beginning the Great Depression long before the "crash of the stock market."

- 1932 May 5 and 6 - A "no name storm" washed out the original bridge between Anna Maria and Longboat Key. The storm arrived at high-tide and with the full moon. The storm surge lifted the bridge off its pilings and dropped it in the bay waters off Cortez Fishing Village. This storm furthered the economic depression of the area and many tax-sales resulted.
- 1935 Another hurricane hit the Florida Keys. This storm caused the deaths of 200-500 workers constructing the Railroad line to Key West.
- 1937 The Art League of Manatee County is organized.
- 1942-1945 During this time, the U.S. Government constructed airport runways in Manatee County to train pilots prior to service overseas. These runways were just north of the current Sarasota County line.
- 1945 Unable to meet its debts from bonds issued in the 1920's Boom Years, the town of Manatee was dissolved by the legislature in 1944. It joined Bradenton in 1945, forming east Bradenton.
- 1950's The end of World War II brought new economic life to Manatee County. With the influx of new residents came the building of new commercial and housing developments. Banking and shopping flourished and the boom continued well into the 1960's.
- 1966 June 8 - Hurricane Alma passed 35 miles offshore killing 1 person in Manatee County and 4 in Pinellas County. Damage in Sarasota is estimated at \$4.4 million.
- 1972 June - Hurricane Agnes, with winds of 85 miles per hour, pushed tides at St. Petersburg 5 1/2 feet above normal. With heavy flooding in the U.S., Agnes left 117 dead and caused \$3.0 million in damages.
- 1976 As the County's U.S. Revolution Bicentennial project, Manatee Village Historical Park was created. The park included the original 1860 County Courthouse and the 1887 United Methodist

Church.

- 1978 April - New Manatee County Central Library opens.
- 1979 The old Carnegie Library building reopens as the County archive. The building is renamed the Manatee County Historical Records Library.
- 1981 The City of Anna Maria dissolves their police department. Beginning June 1, services will be provided to Anna Maria by the County Sheriff's Department.
- 1982 September - Palmetto Federal Savings and Loan plans their new headquarters building. The headquarters was the first high rise building in Palmetto.
- The Bradenton Herald, an evening newspaper since 1922, changes to mornings.
- 1983 After lying idle for nearly 20 years, more than \$400,000 worth of construction began on the site of the "Sandpile", a dredge-and-fill area on the Manatee River east of Business US 41. The site became home to parking lots, professional offices, a condominium, a hotel, a replica of an old fashioned Spanish-style train station, the new Bradenton Herald offices, "Old Cabbage Head" the locomotive and play sets.
- The first Cortez Village Fishing Festival was held in February. The Historical Society dedicated a marker to the community at the festival.
- The bones of prehistoric Natives are uncovered at Tidy Island. Two museums are established (one prehistoric and one history.)
- 1984 The sale of Manatee Memorial Hospital marks the end of public hospital service in Manatee County.
- Citrus canker is found in groves and nurseries in Manatee County.
- Siemens-Allis Utility Power Corporation

constructed on old Atwood Grove site between Palmetto and Ellenton.

New banking laws from 1984 to 1987 contribute to a flurry of mergers and many of Bradenton's banks change their names.

1985      Hurricanes Elena and Juan batter the coastline, but stay offshore.

Manatee County Civic Center opens on the north bank of the Manatee River near DeSoto Bridge.

New high-rise bank buildings in downtown Bradenton change the skyline.

1986      Citrus canker is found on Anna Maria Island.

Manatee Village Historical Park adds a settler's house and the old King Wiggins Store.

1987      Old downtown buildings (across from the Courthouse) are torn down to make way for a multi-story County Government office building.

Beker Phosphate closes its Wingate Creek mine, Manatee County's last operating mine. The mine was in operation since 1974.

Murry Industries, builders of Cris-Craft boats, moved to Manatee County with offices near the DeSoto Bridge.

1988      Tropicana sold by Beatrice Foods to Seagrams Company, Ltd., for \$1.2 billion. In September, Tropicana unveiled \$30 million plan to build a co-generating steam and electric plant.

Port Manatee begins operation as a Federal Port of Entry.

Manatee County closed deal with Becker Phosphate to buy 10,000 acres of land in the Lake Manatee watershed area.

In 1988, boats killed 43 manatees.

1989

The new Sarasota Bradenton Airport opened.

The Oneco Post Office is 100 years old.

The U.S. Coast Guard automates the Egmont Key lighthouse and leaves old Fort Dade. Only the lighthouse keeper and pilots stations remain on Egmont. In November, the state assigns 24-hour supervision of Egmont.

May 30 - The 450th Anniversary Celebration of Hernando DeSoto's Landing was held.

November - voters agree to tax for the purchase of Emerson Point, an environmentally sensitive site.

It got COLD for Christmas. The big freeze hit December 25 with snow. There were electric blackouts due to cold. Severe tree and crop damage was sustained due to length of the cold weather.

1990

In January, snow, even in Longboat Key. Statewide, 41 manatees die because of severe cold.

Beach re-nourishment begins on Anna Maria Island.

In October, tropical storm Marco does heavy damage in Longboat Key and Anna Maria Island.

Pirates stay - After saying they were going to leave, the Pittsburgh Pirates agreed to keep their spring training facilities in Bradenton after signing a new contract with city officials.

In December, Longboat Key voters approve \$14 million bond issue for beach re-nourishment.

Cortez residents fight to save the old Albion Inn, a historic landmark.

1991

County and state taxpayers closed the purchase on the Crosley Estate in south Manatee County and most of Emerson Point in the north of the county, keeping the property in the public domain.

Royster Phosphate Plant in northern Manatee County was the site of a toxic gas leak and several industrial accidents. Plant is investigated by state and local authorities.

Manatee and Sarasota counties forge a WATER PACT. Sarasota County gets water and Manatee County gets \$10.8 million.

Manatee count at 1,468 in Florida waters. On April 25, US Representative Charles Bennett introduced the "Manatee Protection Act of 1991" requiring the Federal Government to devise ways to protect manatees from ship and boat caused accidents.

The police DELTA drug-squad makes 52 arrests in crackdown, with many juveniles and 33 dealers caught.

Expansion for Tropicana approved for up to 13 additional buildings over the next nine years. The buildings are planned for administration, storage, and refrigeration warehouse.

Pittsburgh Pirates, again threaten to move - this time to Winter Haven. Winter Haven votes against building dormitory for the Pirates, so baseball stays in Bradenton.

Monument, designed by Bill Carey of Palmetto, to former Prisoners of War (POW's) is erected at Camp Blanding museum near Starke in Central Florida.

Riverpark Hotel, the downtown Bradenton "pink" hotel, shuts down for the summer. Formerly known as the Manatee River Hotel, it will spend the summer being renovated.

Egmont Key is now a 400-acre island state park.

In May, Bradenton gets 6.2 inches of rain. Normal rainfall is 3.85 inches. Some areas of the County are under knee deep water.

Cortez Village gets preservation grant of \$3,500 from the State's Bureau of Historic Preservation.

The old Albion Inn, a 101 year old landmark, is razed for the new U.S. Coast Guard Station.

In July, Red Tide from Venice to Longboat Pass. By August, all Manatee County Beaches are effected. No shell-fishing is allowed.

State and Manatee County announce the purchase of Emerson Point.

In December, President George Bush visits Bradenton and Tropicana to praise drug-free workplace program.

1992 First Annual Bridge Street Festival in Bradenton Beach.

Port Manatee suffers financial setbacks during major recession.

In June, Myakka River floods after two days of heavy rain. Estimated 13 inches of rain in Manatee County created a state of emergency. Approximately 2,000 residents evacuated from homes.

In August, the Myakka River overflows again after continued heavy rains.

1993 In February, waves batter Anna Maria Island.

The "Tides of March" strike. Tides up to 11 feet above normal along Gulf Coast. This is the southernmost part of the storm called the "Blizzard of '93. President Clinton declares Manatee County and 20 others to be "Federal Disaster Areas."

Snooty, Bradenton's manatee, gets moved into a new larger tank at the South Florida Museum.

Manatee County Commission sponsor a referendum for 1994, asking for approval of a \$.01 sales tax increase.



1994

Florida Heritage Festival holds first Indian Cultural Arts Festival in association with the old DeSoto Celebration.

Referendum for \$.01 sales tax for schools passed April 26, 1994. The sales tax revenues will be used for construction of new buildings and improvements to existing ones.

Anna Maria Island celebrates its Centennial of Settlement, 1894-1994.

Future of historic Crosley Mansion in doubt when Manatee County officials learn that the University of South Florida will not buy the deteriorating Mansion.

First African-American woman, Gwen Brown, elected to the Manatee County Commission.

1995

Red Tide began in April, hurricanes pushed the Red Tide on and off of the coastline all summer.

Manatee County gets 3.5 inches of rain in June. The sudden rains flood roads and stall cars.

Snooty turned 47 years old in July.

Money Magazine rates the Sarasota/Bradenton area one of the 15 best places to live.

The ISLAND TROLLEY rolls up and down Anna Maria Island and Longboat Key.

Bradenton Beach Marina \$1.1 million dollar expansion approved by Bradenton Beach City Council.

The 13th Annual Cortez Fishing Festival is held. This is the last festival before the ban on net fishing goes into effect.

1996

Over 300 manatees die in Florida. Only 158 are directly attributable to Red Tide.

The Olympic Torch passes by with 16 local runners during the July 4th weekend.

One year after the net-ban took effect, the County Commission refuses the designation of Cortez Enterprise Zone to Cortez.

Fire completely destroys the Red Barn Flea Market. A bad florescent fixture causes a fire that burned for two days (October 21 and 22). The complex of 170,000 square feet housed 569 vendors.

Despite strong public opposition based on noise pollution and parking problems, the Bradenton City Council decides to build a city center atop the Municipal Auditorium.

1997

Founded in 1947, Tropicana celebrates its 50th anniversary. The company revealed plans for a \$17 million, 69,000 square foot research facility to house over 100 researchers to improve the taste and nutritional value of Tropicana products. With 3,200 employees, Tropicana is Manatee County's largest non-government employer.

After 25 years in business, Miller Furniture closes its downtown furniture store.

After months of work by environmental activists and historic preservationists, the County tries to acquire 9 acres near DeSoto National Memorial. The County acquired the land for \$1.66 million raised from private fund-raising and other government assistance.

The Red Barn Flea Market got its building permit in November to rebuild at its original location. A huge picnic for the ground breaking brought out more than 750 people. The new market consist of more than 115,000 square feet of sales space.

1998

El Nino effects Manatee County weather dumping 8 1/2 inches of rain on Anna Maria Island in February. Roofs were ripped off houses and trees were toppled, but no one was injured. From

November through March, our traditional dry season, Manatee County had 26 1/2 inches of rain. This is roughly half our normal yearly estimate.

Three months of drought followed the rains. By June much of Florida's forests were on fire. The fires were brought under control in July. The fires were finally extinguished in August when the rains began to fall again.

Gulf Coast Factory Shops in Ellenton changed its name to "Prime Outlets" and added 35 new stores. This brought the total square footage to 482,000 with a total of 135 stores.

Lowest tide in the memory of even the Cortez fishermen virtually stops marine traffic on New Year's Day.

Snooty gets his first roommate. Newton, a new manatee, arrives at the Barker Aquarium, South Florida Museum on February 4. Newton was a four year old, orphaned manatee, who came from the Miami Seaquarium. He was being treated for a chronic shoulder infection, and was operated on in May to clean out an abcess. Newton died suddenly on August 22, just one week after passing a physical examination.

Anna Maria becomes the first electric car city in Florida. The two cars were loaned to Anna Maria by a Canadian manufacturer. Top speed for the cars is 25 miles per hour.

Tropicana is bought by PEPSICO for \$3.3 billion from Seagrams, the Canadian whisky distiller. The PEPSICO company makes Pepsi cola and a variety of snack foods.

Manatee County fingerprint experts receive worldwide acclaim when they are awarded the "Hit of the Year Award" by a group of fingerprint experts from 36 nations. This award was for their work on a case involving abuse of a body brought to a Manatee County funeral director and her son for preparation and burial. The funeral director was involved in the practice of Voodoo.

Snooty the Manatee is 50 years old. He ate all the strawberries, grapes, and bananas he wanted at his party.

For back-to-school, the state gave a sales-tax free shopping week for all clothing items costing less than fifty dollars.

The old Cortez School and Riverview Pointe in West Bradenton won grants from the Florida Communities Trust.

The new City Center, combining police headquarters, city hall, and an auditorium, was opened on November 1.