

Orange City Town History

The "Town" of Orange City has made this page of our website a "Step Back in Time" to let you to see how our city became what it is today and to share some interesting facts.

10 Important Facts About Orange City's History

- The earliest inhabitants in the Orange City area were the Mayaca and Jororo Indians. By 1820, the natives became extinct due to disease and war.
- The first permanent home in this section of Volusia County was the Thursby house, located on the east side of Blue Spring Run, built in the 1850s. The large home which stands there today was built in 1872.
- In 1875, Dr. Seth French, David P. Graves, John E. Stillman, William Hawley, John C. Thorpe, James M. Smith, and Allen Cameron purchased about 5,000 acres of internal improvement land and started the town that became Orange City, FL.
- Hugh and Sophia DeYarman began construction of the first hotel in the summer of 1875. The hotel is now called the 1876 Heritage Inn and is still open for business.
- The first public school was organized in 1876 by Major George J. Alden, Superintendent of Schools. The school, Orange City Elementary, is still operating and educating Orange City's youth.
- On August 26, 1882, Orange City, named for the thousands of acres of orange groves planted in and around the city, was incorporated as a city. Twelve years later, the Big Freeze wiped out the orange groves that the town was named for.
- Many notable organizations have contributed to the betterment of the Orange City community beginning in 1882 with the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Years later, since most of these women were also members of the Village Improvement Association, they gave up the

WCTU meetings and joined the VIA.

- Orange City received the Silver Medal, the “highest award that the world can give”, for its pure water at the 1904 St. Louis Exposition. American business tycoon and philanthropist, John D. Rockefeller, Sr. reportedly had Orange City Mineral Springs water sent to him wherever he traveled, and even used it for bathing.
- The Dickinson Memorial Library was dedicated to the City of Orange City by Albert Dickinson in memory of his sister, Melissa Dickinson, on December 17, 1919.
- Mayor Edward B. Alling commissioned the new Town Hall, built in 1928 and designed by Elton J. Moughton, to be built in the style of a New England town hall at a cost of \$20,000. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.

Want to learn more? Take a self-guided tour of the historic district.

Download the free mobile app “Clio – Your Guide to History.” Once you have the app, click on “Tours” and search for “Walking Tour of Historic Orange City.” You can also view the tour online here: www.theclio.com/tour/1089.