

FOUNDING OF THE ST. JAMES CIVIC ASSOCIATION

In 1961 a few ladies from this area attended the hobby club at Matlacha, then decided we should have our own club for this area. In Jan 1962 the first meeting was held in the home of Marie Gardner with 12 ladies present. The second week Bernice Strong was hostess to 15 ladies and the third week Olive LaVoy was hostess to 16 ladies. With this number increasing each week, it was evident that a larger place was needed. Mr. Ed Hughes, then owner of the trailer park offered us the use of his club house each Wednesday, free of charge. This offer was gratefully received. With the facilities available, our first covered dish supper was planned for Nov. 21, 1962. Husbands were invited and 63 attended and plans made to make this a monthly event.

Gladys Gaskins founded the idea that we should work toward an organization and everyone agreed that the community greatly needed one for this area. On Jan. 29, 1963 a meeting was held for the purpose of forming a community organization. By-Laws were drawn up by Roscoe Fowler, Vern Davis and H. H. Cobb. The name of the organization to be the Saint James City Civic Association. First officers elected were Roscoe Fowler, Pres., Bob Steele, V. pres., Gladys Gaskins, Sec. and Delene Smith, Treas. A committee was named to investigate suitable locations for a building. Several persons worked hard on this, to name a few: Gladys Gaskins, Delene Smith, Ada Dobson, Bob Steele and Pat Papalardo. In ten months the ladies of the Hobby Club had raised \$3,000.00 by holding various events and this was turned over to the new association for purchase of land. These eight lots were purchased from James B Kelly in Fort Myers for \$4,000.00 with Mr. Kelly donating back \$2,000.00 toward the purchase price.

From this point bids were requested for a building. Several worked very hard to obtain a loan so building could be started. The ladies worked to obtain donations and new members to help. Specifications were presented on Jan. 11, 1964 and on Jan. 29, 1964, Mr. O. O. Wilson was granted the contract. The amount of \$9,738.00. Work to be started at once. On June 14, 1964, the Hobby Club served the first chicken dinner in our new building and all proceeds went to the building fund. Since that time, many events have taken place and many donations made as well as much hard work by members.

In Nov. 1968, Mr. & Mrs. Solin Cutler generously donated \$2,557.56 toward our new air conditioner which cost \$3,450.00. Meeting in the building are Sunday School, Hobby Club and card parties and a monthly covered dish supper with business meeting to follow.

We have three large events each season, The Country Store, Hobby Club Bazaar and Hobby Show, and solicit the help and cooperation of everyone. Discussions have been held regarding shuffleboard courts and we do have a small fund started. It has been agreed that funds for this should come from donations or events specifically held for this purpose. Several times ladies have worked to get activities started for the young folks and each one has failed due to no interest by parents.

In these few years we have this beautiful property and building very well equipped and entirely free and clear of any debt. We most cordially invite everyone to join with us and help promote our Civic Association for a better St. James City.

Submitted by: Mae Butterfield Jan. 1970

The above was donated to Hobby Club by Marge Tahner May 25, 1983