Faith communities representing a wide spectrum of traditions were established by the region’s settlers. Small wooden church buildings soon gave way to brick buildings erected in the growing towns and communities of West Orange County.

(Continued on Page 3)
From Our Chair

Fall is here and the Winter Garden Heritage Foundation is a hub of activity as usual! We have several events and exhibits coming up that you won’t want to miss:

- Heritage Beats, November 8. Rock along with Johnny Wild and the Delights as you enjoy fare from local food vendors
- Exhibits - *Praise! West Orange County Houses of Worship*, at the Winter Garden Heritage Museum and Winter Garden City Hall; and *Henry Nehring and the Gotha Legacy*, opening at the Winter Garden Heritage Museum
- Lakeview High School Alumnae Reunion, January 30

Details can be found on our website at wghf.org.

This is my final column as Board President of the Winter Garden Heritage Foundation. I want to thank our staff and board members who showed incredible support during my term. Together we accomplished great things for the Foundation, and I could not have done it without all of them. At this time I welcome Frank Chase, our new Board President, who is a lifelong resident of West Orange County. He has a true passion for history, and I know he will do great things for the organization.

Remember to continue supporting the Winter Garden Heritage Foundation by becoming a member, attending our fundraisers and exhibits, and visiting our museums. For more information, please visit wghf.org or visit our Facebook page.

See you around town!

Geegee Burmeister

Foundation Board

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Praise! From Tents to Temples:
West Orange County Houses of Worship

EXHIBIT DATES
The Winter Garden Heritage Museum
1 North Main Street
Through November 30, 2019

Winter Garden City Hall
300 West Plant Street
Opens December 1, 2019

Faith communities representing a wide spectrum of traditions were established in West Orange County by the region’s settlers. Services held in private residences or even outdoors sustained and nourished pioneers challenged by life in their new home and provided a spiritual bond with the congregations they bid farewell to when they moved here.

Small wooden church buildings soon gave way to brick buildings erected in the towns and communities of Winter Garden, Oakland, Gotha, Ocoee, Windermere, and Beulah.

African American workers established their own congregations, initially worshiping at places where they labored, such as turpentine stills and open fields.

This exhibit features images of religious structures dating from the 19th century through today.
Upcoming

Spirits in the Garden
Thursday, October 10, 6 – 9pm
Stroll Historic Downtown Winter Garden sampling wine, whiskey and bourbon, and gourmet cheese, all while visiting unique shops and restaurants. $45 per ticket; Advance tickets are required and can be purchased by visiting www.eventbrite.com/e/spirits-in-the-garden-tickets-74001800377

Henry Nehrling and the Gotha Legacy
Winter Garden Heritage Museum
1 North Main Street
January 2 – March 31, 2020
A new exhibit presents the life and work of Gotha pioneer Dr. Henry Nehrling, the botanist and ornithologist whose experiments with plant life helped create Florida’s ornamental foliage industry.

Lakeview High School Reunion
Winter Garden Heritage Foundation
Thursday, January 30, 5:30–8:00pm
Join us for a class reunion honoring the students and faculty of Lakeview High School. Enjoy hors d’oeuvres, wine, and beer while viewing artifacts from the Foundation’s Lakeview High School collection covering the years 1928 through 1976. (On display through January 31.)
$12 per ticket - limited quantity available.
RSVP to jcrescitelli@wghf.org or call 407-656-3244

Membership

Membership provides the Winter Garden Heritage Foundation with the support we need to thrive. At the heart of the Winter Garden Heritage Foundation’s two museums, exhibits, and educational programs are the people who sustain our commitment to preserving West Orange County’s history and creating unique cultural experiences.

Membership levels begin at $50. To learn more, visit our website at wghf.org/membership

Become a Volunteer!

The Winter Garden Heritage Foundation welcomed over 100,000 visitors to our museums and programs in 2018 – a record! Our volunteers hosted people from every state and almost 90 countries – and we’re looking for extra help to greet guests, answer questions about the area’s attractions, and assist with our collection. We also need help conducting our educational field trips. Call 407-656-3244 and we’ll sign you up!

Planned Giving

Help support West Orange County local history for many years to come!

Consider our Winter Garden Heritage Foundation Endowment Fund. The purpose of an endowment fund is to financially sustain the mission and work that we do. The principal of an endowment is kept intact and only the annual earnings are used to support the programs. Perhaps the easiest strategy that can benefit you while building our endowment is the bequest.

You can make a bequest of a dollar amount, a specific asset, or a percentage of or residue from your estate. Our supporters like the fact that bequests are gifts that are made through an estate plan and are revocable, meaning you still have the opportunity to change your mind.

For more information, call 407.656.3244.

By the Numbers

By the Numbers: Museum visitors through September 2019

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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>6197</td>
<td>History Research, Education, and Visitors’ Center guests</td>
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<tr>
<td>10476</td>
<td>Winter Garden Heritage Museum guests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7853</td>
<td>Central Florida Railroad Museum guests</td>
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Help us restore our 1954 American La France fire truck!

The iconic vehicles in front of the Winter Garden Heritage Museum are part of what make our city unforgettable. They provide the perfect backdrop for photos, give a glimpse into our history, and make Winter Garden unique — and they require a lot of care.

The Winter Garden Heritage Foundation is currently raising money to restore the fire truck and bring it back to downtown Winter Garden. You can donate through our Go Fund Me campaign at https://www.gofundme.com/fqrdcnak. By contributing, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping to keep Winter Garden unique by preserving a piece of Winter Garden history.

Heller Hall

Historic Downtown Winter Garden’s Exclusive Event Venue

Prepare to be swept away by the beauty and charm of Heller Hall, your home for memorable wedding ceremonies and extraordinary events. Recently featured in Orange Blossom Bride magazine, this hidden gem is nestled in the heart of historic Winter Garden and features a serene setting ideal for your special occasions.

This gorgeous space can hold up to 70 people for a seated dinner or a buffet-style meal. And our covered courtyard expands the capacity of your Heller Hall event to 150 people.

When planning your event, choose Heller Hall to host your celebration. Call (407) 656-3244 or email Julie Zimmerman at jzimmerman@wghf.org to schedule an appointment. Don’t miss out on the opportunity to rent this casually elegant and intimate venue!
Archive Spotlight: 
The Nehrling Gardens Historical Collection

The Nehrling Gardens Historical Collection, which consists of the Nehrling Garden Archives and the Koreshan Collection, is on loan to the Winter Garden Heritage Foundation through April 2020.

Henry Nehrling (1853-1929) spent a lifetime studying birds and experimenting with plants. In 1890 he became Curator of the Milwaukee Public Museum and soon published *The World of North American Birds* in the original German. Impressed by the caladiums exhibited at Chicago’s 1893 Columbian Exposition, Nehrling introduced the plants into Florida’s landscape, eventually hybridizing and commercially growing more than 1700 varieties.

In 1885, Nehrling purchased 40 acres in the German colony of Gotha, a community located five miles southeast of Winter

![The Nehrling home in Gotha](image)

Garden. The following year, he visited the property and began construction of Palm Cottage, which became his home. Nehrling moved to Gotha permanently in 1902, but moved to Naples, Florida for a time after a 1917 freeze destroyed many of the rare specimens in his garden.

The material in the Nehrling Collection includes correspondence, photographs, and research documenting the life and work of the eminent botanist. To find out more, call the Winter Garden Heritage Foundation at 407-656-3244, or the Henry Nehrling Society at nehrlinggardens.org.

An upcoming exhibit at the Winter Garden Heritage Museum from January 2 through March 31, 2020 will highlight the life and legacy of Dr. Nehrling and the town of Gotha.

History Through the Gift Shop

After enjoying our museums, be sure to take home a memory from our gift shop. Our best-selling citrus crate label coasters are the perfect welcome gift for newcomers to our area.

Our newly-expanded kids section features children’s toys from Melissa & Doug, including wooden puzzles, train layouts, plush toys, books, and many more educational items.
The Central Florida Railroad Museum

The Central Florida Railroad Museum at 101 South Boyd is highlighting its expansion and renovation. Housed in the former Tavares & Gulf railroad depot constructed in 1913, visitors from around the world - more than 11,000 in 2018 - enjoy the new meeting space, library, and exhibits. Interested in becoming a member? Contact VP Mike Forrester at info@cfrhs.org.

The Winter Garden Heritage Foundation

Preserving our heritage and architecture while creating new cultural experiences

Since 1994, the Winter Garden Heritage Foundation has played a major role in preserving and revitalizing downtown Winter Garden’s Historic District. Its efforts have succeeded in fostering an understanding of the social, cultural, economic, and environmental transformations that have transformed the area.

Today, the Foundation continues to further its mission through the operation of three locations in the heart of Winter Garden: the Heritage Museum, the History Research and Education Center, and the Central Florida Railroad Museum, which showcases the influence that the railroads had on Florida’s development. Our archives house a comprehensive collection of photographs, documents, and artifacts covering every aspect of West Orange County history.

Visit wghf.org to plan your visit, support our efforts, learn about our programs and exhibits, and explore the area’s rich history.