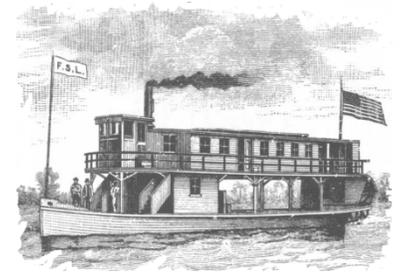


**Historic Melrose, Inc.**  
**Box 704**  
**Melrose, FL 32666**



January 2018 - NEWSLETTER

Greetings HMI Members, Residents, and Friends of Melrose,

**Annual meeting, February 11, 2018, 3:30 – 5:30 pm, Homemakers’ Club.** Corner of Centre and Park Streets. General membership meeting with program, bonfire and live music. Speakers are Jerome Ridaught and Bob Morrison, both descendants of early settlers of Hawthorne, in a ‘front porch’ conversation on the history of their families dating back to before the Civil War. Light fare around the bonfire and music by Dim Lights (Ned Stewart - guitar and vocals, Chuck Spitzner - upright bass, Karan Newman - mandolin).

**Highlights and News of 2017**

**Archaeological Dig - Melrose United Methodist Church.** Members of HMI and volunteers conducted a survey of the grounds of the church November 11 and 12, collecting more than 1,000 artifacts. Among the highlights of the collection are three arrowheads, scores of old nails, and hundreds of glass shards, many of them melted in a fire. Artifact catalog and photographs available on request. This project was initiated in preparation for the installation of an historical marker at the church approved by the State of Florida.

First organized in 1868 by members of the Orange Creek Methodist Church on 219A, the Melrose United Methodist Church was built in 1879 on land donated by Alexander Goodson. Some early members whose descendants are familiar today include the Fords, Jacksons, McRaes, Mizelles and Prices. The marker will be dedicated in a ceremony at the church sometime in 2018. Look for announcement of time and date. The undated photo at right at the Florida State Archives shows the church and some of its congregants before additions to the church in 1931.



Archaeologists, Nigel Rudolph & Emily Jane Murray

**Cemetery Workshop hosted by HMI and Florida Public Archaeology Network**

In Dec. 2017 eleven participants representing cemeteries from Melrose (Eliam), Ochwilla, Johnson, Keystone Heights, and St. Augustine attended. The two archaeologists presented a program giving legal, historical and practical advice to cemetery managers in the region. After the morning session at the Homemakers’ Club we spent the afternoon at Eliam Cemetery practicing hands-on maintenance and preservation tips on our ‘outdoor museums’ which are so important to the small communities across Melrose’s four counties. See FPAN : <http://www.flpublicarchaeology.org/>

## Highlights in the New Year 2018

**Election records project** - In February 2018 begins the HMI sponsored voter registration study of Putnam County voter rolls from unknown decades past. In storage in Palatka these voter rolls show: voter name, age, race, occupation, party affiliation, poll taxes paid, precinct, residence and other information. Our quick examination showed records from the 1900's through 1950's or so. There may well be 19<sup>th</sup> Century poll lists from Putnam County's beginnings in 1850. Volunteers are needed to inventory, catalog, and possibly digitally scan these historic records which will prove invaluable to local historians and genealogists. If you want to help us better understand the socio-political history of the citizens of Putnam County Please contact us (see website below).

Photo at right shows 30 – 35 plastic tubs containing hundreds of voter registration books at Putnam County Supervisor of Elections' office in Palatka. HMI is looking for other partners, in addition to Supervisor Charles Overturf and the Putnam County Historical Society, to assist in this project which may take several months.



### **New Website Historic Melrose Inc.**

New Melrose resident and volunteer web page designer, Joann Russell, is developing our website, bringing us into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Please check periodically for progress or to contact us at: [www.historicmelroseflorida.org](http://www.historicmelroseflorida.org) or call HMI president Keith Bollum 352/283-9700.

### **Volunteers/new board**

As with many organizations such as ours, there comes a time when long-serving volunteers can no longer carry on the bulk of the work necessary to keep HMI functioning properly. In this, our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, that time is now. With the gradual retirement of many in our founding generation, we find ourselves in search of new talent willing to accept the challenge today of helping preserve the story of our past for the benefit of those in the future. The time and effort needed to be a member of the board of directors are so much less than the great pleasure of serving your community with dedicated, like minded citizens. Please consider. Contact Keith or any board member for more information. Meanwhile, take the time to renew your membership on the enclosed form. (Our 2017 book, *Melrose, Florida: An Illustrated History* by Rosemary Daurer and Kevin McCarthy is still available for \$10/copy.) Thank you for your generous support in preserving our fascinating heritage.