



Martin Digital History

Newsletter of martindigitalhistory.org

January 2025

martindigitalhistory.org update:

2024 In Review

We've added 5,764 new records to martindigitalhistory.org this year! All contributed materials have been treated as important archival resources and handled professionally. Our process includes:

- All items (except a few that came to us digitally) have been scanned at high resolution; images are stored in TIF and JPG format, documents in PDF (with OCR and accessibility processing).
- All items have been backed up onto two separate hard drives and have also been added to a cloud-based storage system to ensure secure retention.
- All items have been professionally cataloged, listing the contributing institution, original donor (when available), and description of the content.
- All scans of items have been donated with clear Deed of Gifts.

Participants	Items
Black Heritage Initiative	728
Historical Society of Martin County	1741
MCLS-Elisabeth Lahti library	27
Martin County Historic Preservation Board	9
Martin County School District	12
Sandra Thurlow	1764
Stuart Heritage Museum	1307
Stuart Woman's Club	49
Individual patrons	110
Other repositories	17
TOTAL	5764

The four largest collections added this year are the:

- Willoughby Collection, from the HSMC, with 900 items added;
- Sandra Thurlow's Ruhnke/Ricou collection, with 782 items (so far);
- Black Heritage Initiative Memorial Programs, with 651 items; and the
- Martin County School District Board of Public Instruction minute books. While only being 12 volumes, each volume consisted of about 500 pages.

A Special Thank You...

...to our individual donors, whose personal collections have so enhanced this project. Sandra Thurlow's contribution of thousands of images (many of which have been rarely seen before) has unveiled an amazing richness of historical record. John Hennessee's history of Salerno and the Fish House offers many interesting details and photos. Heidi Dyer McNabb's family photos are incredibly engaging, offering a glimpse of the lives of the Dyer and McDonald families. Natalie Evans contributed images of displays in the old Elliott Museum. And thanks to Charlene Thompson and Julie Preast for Stuart Training School yearbooks and reunion materials. Martin Digital History would not be a community digital archive without the community.

Favorite Images & Stellar Content

It's hard to choose, but here are a few wonderful items included in MDH in 2024.



In 1923, the Stuart Commercial Club (a precursor to the Chamber of Commerce) lobbied the U.S. Government Engineers to establish Stuart as a deep water port, which would have necessitated major dredging of the inlet and made Stuart a major center of commerce. They developed a report and presentation, using photographs taken by Florida Photographic Concern, a photography center established by Harry Hill in Fort Pierce. These images were kept by Bette "Tootsie" Kindberg; thank you to Sandra Thurlow for making them available to us. More images of the Florida Photographic Concern exist, many held by St. Lucie County.

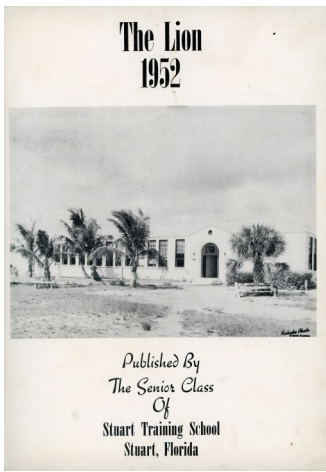


Sandra Thurlow is sharing much of her collections with us, including the incredible photographs taken by Arthur Ruhnke and Earl Ricou, prolific local photographers. The collection includes images of many storefronts, portraits, and events.

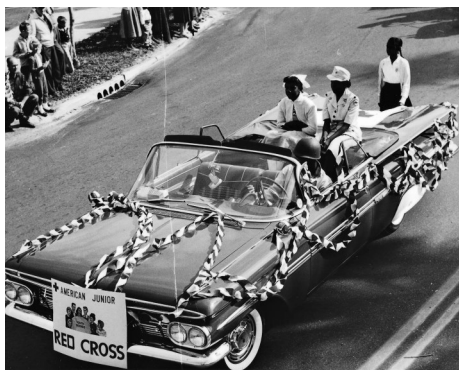


From Sandra Thurlow and Stuart Heritage Museum we had a large number of law enforcement photographs, including Sheriff Roy C. Baker and his deputies raiding illegal stills.





We added several school yearbooks, including *The Lion* : Stuart Training School yearbook, 1952, donated by Charlene Thompson, as well as yearbooks from MCHS (1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1954, 1957, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1967, 1969, and 1973) and Stuart High School (1926, 1939, 1940, 1941).



From Stuart Heritage Museum we received a DVD with 44 Christmas parade photos, as well as many other DVDs of historical images.



The Willoughby Collection, from the Historic Society of Martin County, featured many photos of the Willoughby family, and photos of fishing, boats, and airplanes.



We received a lot of material about Indiantown from several sources, including several unpublished memoirs or texts of oral histories.



Interested in Martin County history? Visit and subscribe to the [Sandy History Lady Blog](#), written by our very own Sandra Thurlow.

Stuart Heritage Museum Event

January 14 at 7 PM: David Jordan on "Treasure Diving in Jensen Beach" at the Flagler Center

Martin County Library spotlight:

Chautauqua South

Is an arts and education series celebrating the harvest of the mind, body, and spirit that runs from January to April yearly, showcasing an array of artists, authors, storytellers, dramatists, historians, educators, and entertainers. Events in January include a talk on Hobe Sound History by Josh Liller (Jan 15).

Full calendar at: <https://www.martin.fl.us/resources/chautauqua-south-at-a-glance-calendar>

Treasure Coast History Festival

Visit our table at the upcoming history fair!

Saturday, 11 January 2025, 9AM - 2PM

St. Lucie Regional History Center, 414 Seaway Drive, Ft. Pierce, Florida

What is the Martin Digital History Project?

The mission of Martin Digital History (MDH) is to encourage the appreciation of Martin County's unique history by collaborating with community members and local organizations to collect, present, and interpret relevant digital content. This project, orchestrated by the Martin County Library System, is the result of the planning teamwork of several far-sighted community members and organizations, including Sandra Thurlow, Black Heritage Initiative, Stuart Heritage, the Historical Society of Martin County, the Library Foundation of Martin County, and many others. It is open for public participation.

- This newsletter will attempt to keep all informed about the project, including new participants and accessions, plans, events, etc. [Click here to subscribe to this enewsletter.](#)
- More information: martindigitalhistory.org
- Feedback, comments, questions? Contact the archivist: Georgen Charnes, gcharnes@martin.fl.us

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