

**MUSEUM OF SEMINOLE COUNTY HISTORY
HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

June 26, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Kathryn Townsend, Donna Bundy, Rosalie Cook, Eunice Mann, Carmen Bierman, Desta Horner, Paul Zuromski, Bob Hughes, Imogene Yarborough

Members Absent: Nathan Jordan, Joanne Schwartzmann, Ben Wheeler, Beverly Mason, Cecil Tucker, Caroline van den Berg

Staff Present: Corey Warner, Michael Wirsing, Bennet Lloyd

Guests: Don Epps of the Historical Commission. Jim Jones of the public.

Location: Virtual – Zoom Meeting

Call to Order: 1:08 PM

Opening Ceremonies: Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment: Chairman Bundy asked if there was any public comment. Jim Jones stated that the wording of the application as given to the Commission is historically inaccurate. Mr. Jones stated that the plane did not overshoot the school, but in fact purposely fell short of the school.

Oviedo Navy Plane Crash Historical Marker Application Approval: Motion by Desta Horner, second for discussion purposes by Kathryn Townsend, to accept the plane crash marker as given. Motion passed. Motion by Kathryn Townsend, second by Imogene Yarborough, to amend the marker verbiage, changing the word "overshot" to "fell short of". The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment: 1:16 PM

Naval Air Station Marker

[Side 1 – 900 characters]

NAVY PLANE CRASH

JANUARY 15, 1962. Lt. Charles Hodgate, Delton Wilson, John Bush, and Horace Marks struggled to get their A3D-2 Skywarrior plane airborne. Sanford NAS cleared them for take-off on a bombing run, but the tail bumper, starboard engine, and wingtip dragged, leaving marks for 2150 ft. The order came to lower landing gear, dump fuel, and turn east to avoid Orlando. Wilson then reported the starboard engine-fire warning light was on. Two A3J aircraft joined the A3D and confirmed the engine fire. Skimming the treetops while losing altitude, the Oviedo School lay directly in the flight path. An immediate bailout was ordered. Delton Wilson parachuted out and survived, but then the plane's escape chute mechanism failed. As children watched, the plane fell short of the school and crashed into Ward Citrus Grove, exploding and killing pilot Charles Hodgate, John Bush, and Horace Marks.

[Side 2 – 897 characters]

JIM JONES: AN EYEWITNESS

“In 1962, I was a high school senior sitting in Jack Calvert’s English class looking out into a crystal-clear sky when I saw three planes skimming the tree tops heading directly towards the school. The two planes on each side peeled away and a parachute appeared under the planes, dropping rapidly to earth. The middle airplane rose vertically, cartwheeled sideways to the right. I could see the underbelly of the plane as it summersaulted nose-down into Ward Citrus Grove. As the enormous fireball rose up, I hoped the people inside would make it. Business teacher Novella Aulin came into the classroom and asked me to drive her car over to check on Mertie and Bill Ward, who were living near the grove. I was the first to arrive at the crash site and I could feel the intensity of the heat from the aluminum plane burning. I knew immediately there could be no survivors.”

Most Recent Update: 06/26/20