

DELANDINGS

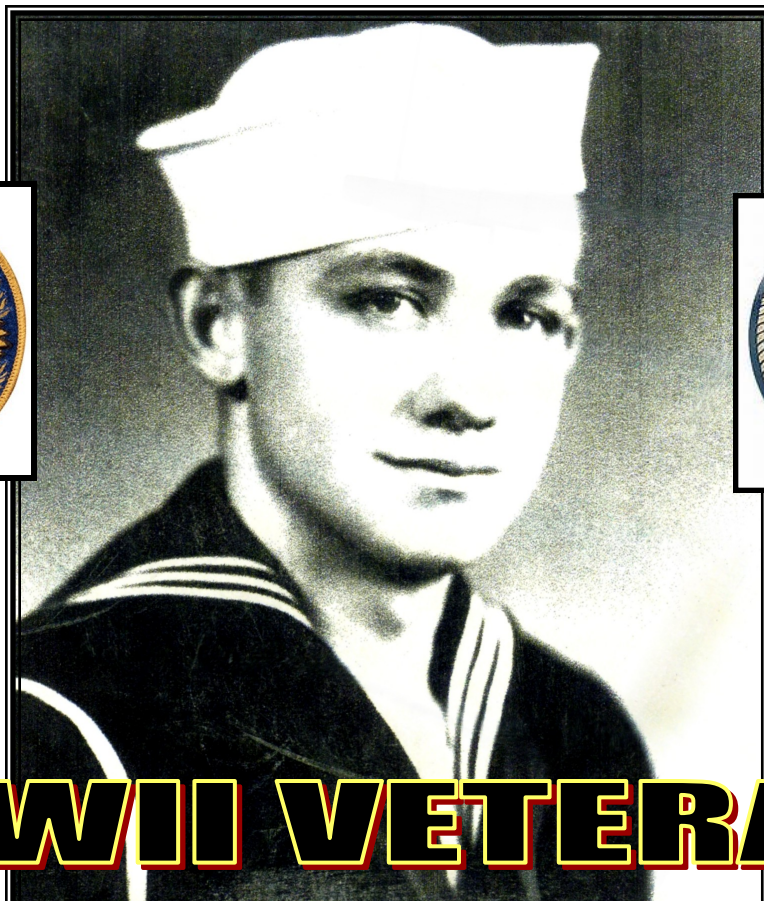
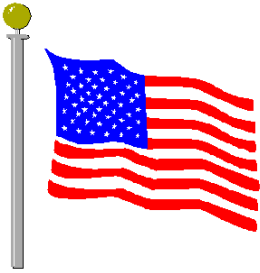


FEBRUARY 2017

WILLIAM J. "BILL" DREGGORS

The DeLand Naval Air Station Museum Remembers

William Joshua "Bill" Dreggors



WWII VETERAN
1926 - 2017



USS Midway



With great sadness, the DeLand Naval Air Station Museum Volunteers grieve the loss of William Joshua "Bill" Dreggors who passed away on February 3, 2017 at the age of 90. Bill was a WWII United States Navy Veteran who served on the USS Midway.

He was a founding member of the DeLand Naval Air Station Museum 22 years ago and served as President, Historian and a Board Director for many years. We send our most heartfelt condolences to his loving wife Irene, son and daughter-in-law Wayne and Leah Dreggors and the entire Dreggors Family. Our condolences also to the West Volusia Historical Society

where Bill retired as Executive Director Emeritus after 43 years of service to DeLand, Volusia County and the State of Florida.

Bill was a DeLand native. After his service in the Navy, he made a career with the Florida Power Corporation for 42 years. He was a lifelong collector of electrical memorabilia and his amazing collection can be viewed at Bill Dreggors Park inside the DeLand Memorial Hospital and Military Museum. The "Ice & Electric" Exhibit features the glow of the first street lights in 1897 as the City of DeLand enjoyed the first electrical system in the State of Florida. This exhibit is one of only a very few electrical museums in the United States. Among the very rare artifacts are vintage photographs depicting the areas ice and electric business as well as a variety of early tools, equipment and appliances. Also displayed is an outstanding collection of rare insulators known once as the "jewels of the wire". These insulators range from every shape and size and every color of the rainbow. Anyone lucky enough to have received a personnel tour of the display with Bill Dreggors remembers how he could give a complete description of each item in the display. He would also share his narrow escape with death when, as a Florida Power Lineman, he received an almost fatal shock while working high on an electric pole but was rescued by co-workers in time.

After his retirement from the Florida Power Corporation, Bill began his second career as a Folk Historian. He was passionate and committed to the preservation of our local history. His enthusiasm for history was contagious and he was able to inspire so many community members, both adults and youth, to engage in historic preservation by volunteering their time and resources to continue documenting our rich and unique history.

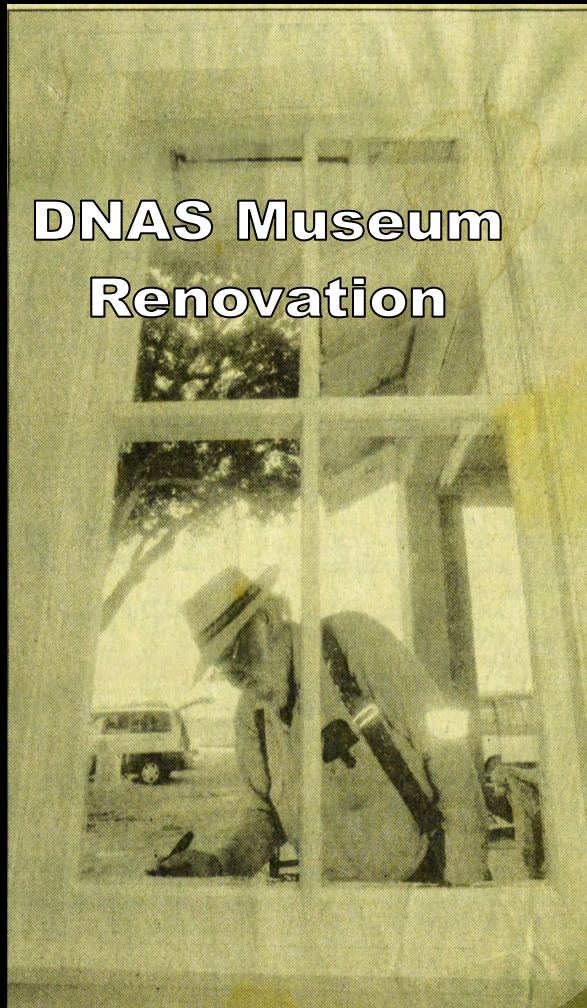
Bill Dreggors portrayed many historical characters over the years, but he was best known for his character role of DeLand's Founder, Henry A. DeLand. Other characters he portrayed included Seth French, Sheriff Ed Stone, Frederick DeBary, and one of his favorite, Santa Claus. Bill was Santa Claus for many children's events. He often recalled one young boy who came to see Santa with a bit of skepticism. He spent extra time talking to the boy who then asked if he could touch Santa's beard. The boy gave the beard a tug and as he left the stage he was heard telling other children waiting in line "He's the real deal"!

The history preservation accomplishments of William J. "Bill" Dreggors, including the many videos and displays he helped to establish, will impact the West Volusia Historical Society, the City of DeLand, the County of Volusia and the State of Florida for generations. Bill was awarded many local and statewide honors and the appreciation and respect for him from our community could never be stated enough. Bill knew that he was just a temporary caretaker of our past history and the history that we are making each day. His tireless efforts to instill the importance of preservation in others will be passed on to future generations and we can thank Bill Dreggors for giving us the foundation and inspiration to continue his life's work. We owe him a great debt of gratitude and will continue to honor and protect the legacy he has placed in the hands of the next generation.

We will miss his gentle demeanor, southern accent, his great stories and his sense of humor. He was our friend and mentor and we were proud to know him. He will always be honored and remembered at the DeLand Naval Air Station Museum.

The following photographs of Bill Dreggors are just a few of the great memories that we have of him and a small slice of his many accomplishments and contributions.

DNAS Museum Renovation



DNAS Museum Dedication



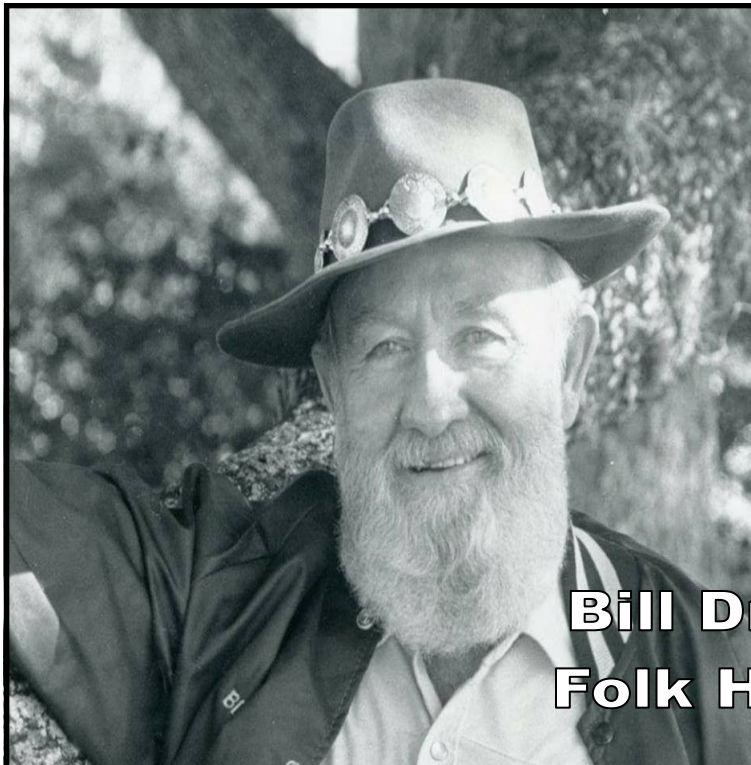
Bill & Irene

Attended Hangar Dances

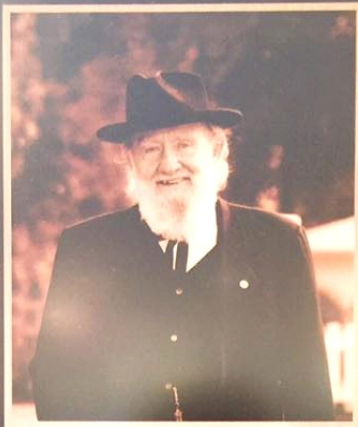
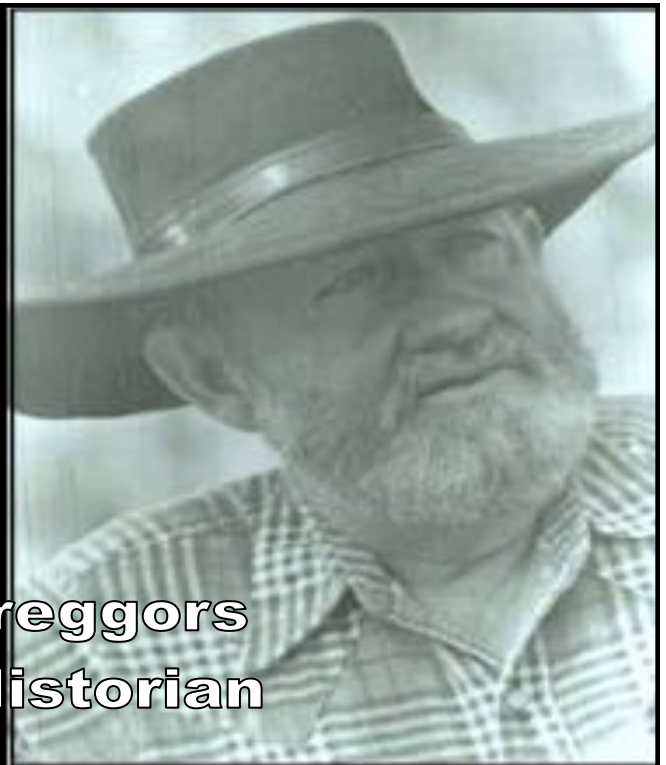


WWII Veterans Exchange Memories





**Bill Dreggors
Folk Historian**



**THE COUNTY OF VOLUSIA
HONORS
WILLIAM J. DREGGORS JR.**

Bill Dreggors is one of Volusia County's "historical treasures." For more than half a century, he has been a tireless champion for preserving and protecting Volusia County's heritage. His efforts in support of historic preservation and heritage education have touched the lives of all Volusia County citizens.

PRESENTED BY THE VOLUSIA COUNTY COUNCIL
MARCH 23, 2009

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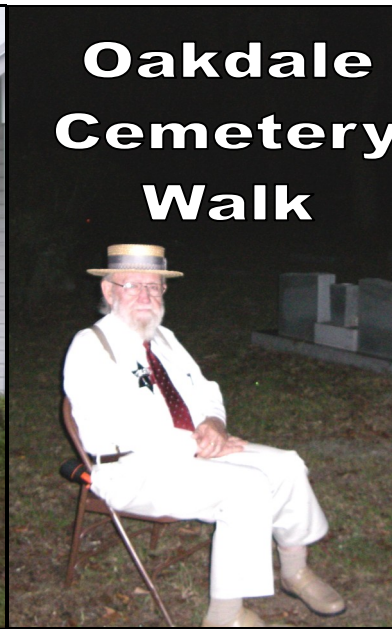


**Bill Dreggors
Honored**



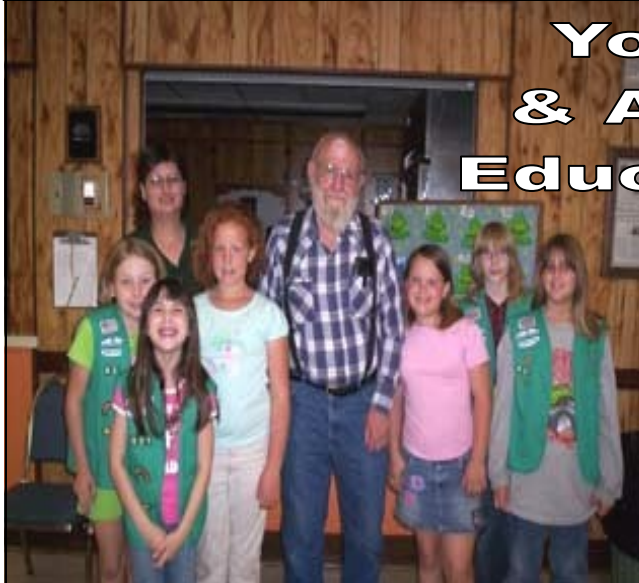
**Bill as
Henry A. DeLand**







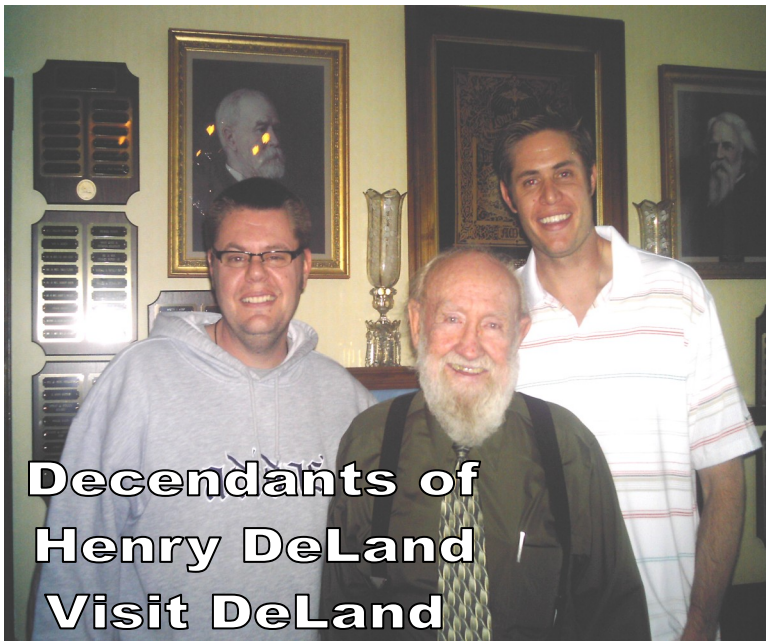
**Making
Swamp
Cabbage
ROTARY
Feast**



**Youth
& Adult
Education**



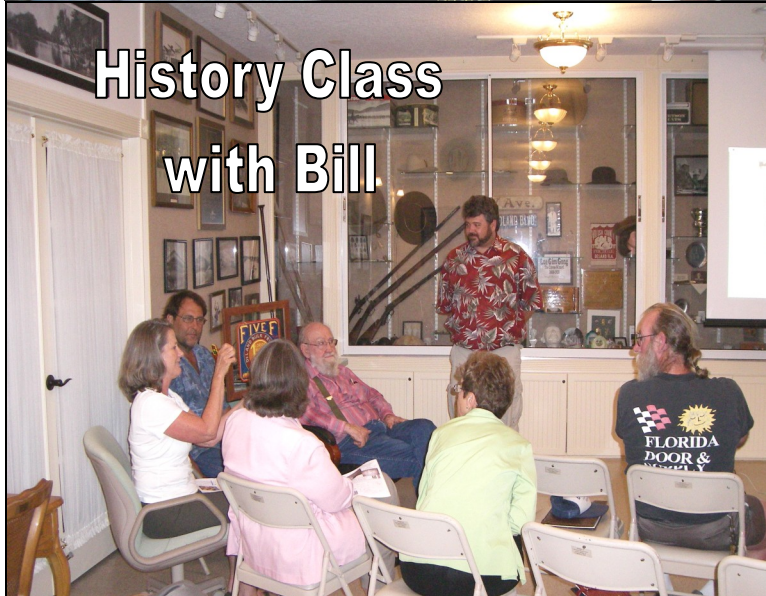
**St. John's
River Tours**



**Decendants of
Henry DeLand
Visit DeLand**



**ECHO Conrad
Center Ribbon
Cutting**

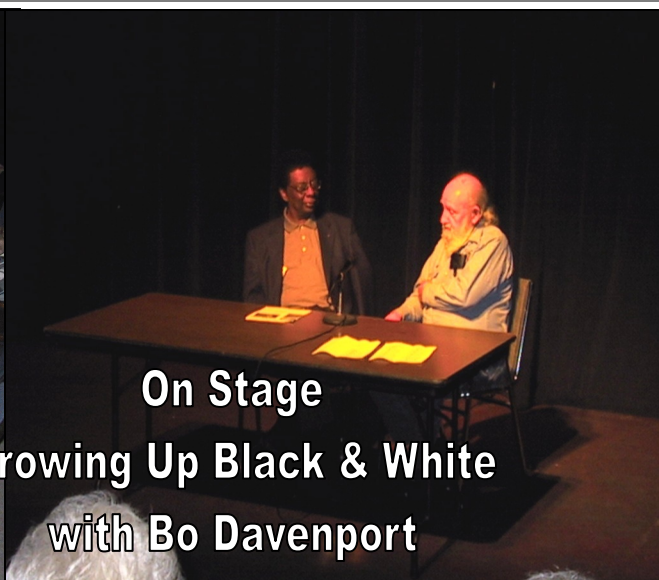


**History Class
with Bill**

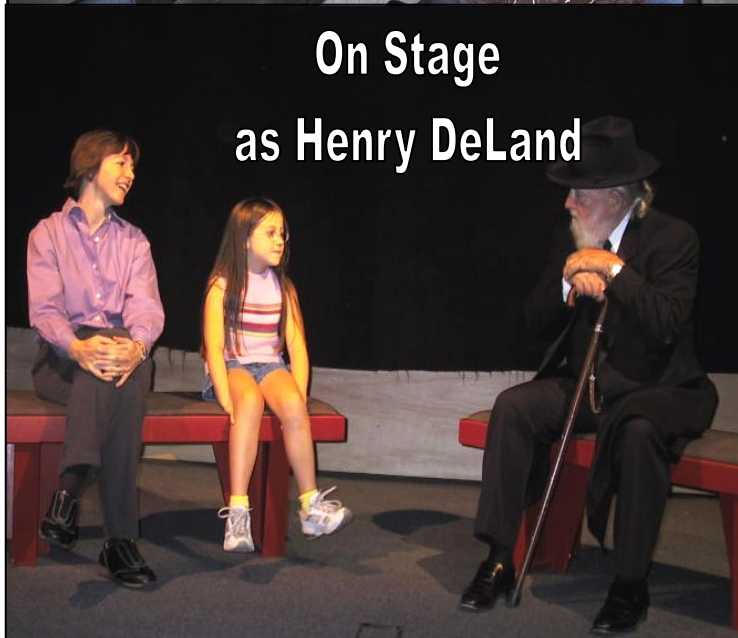


**Students Visit
Ice & Electric
Collection**





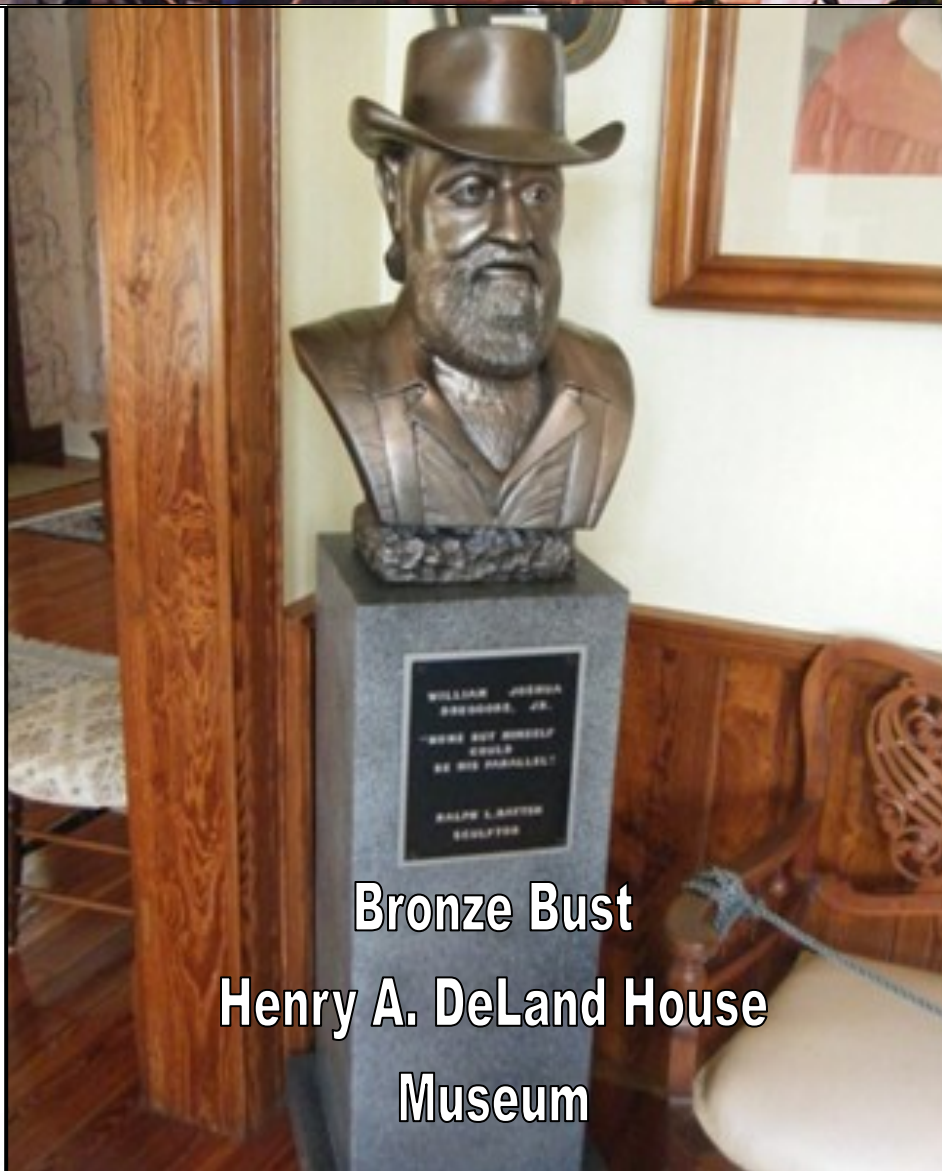
On Stage
Growing Up Black & White
with Bo Davenport



On Stage
as Henry DeLand



Youth Historian
Awards



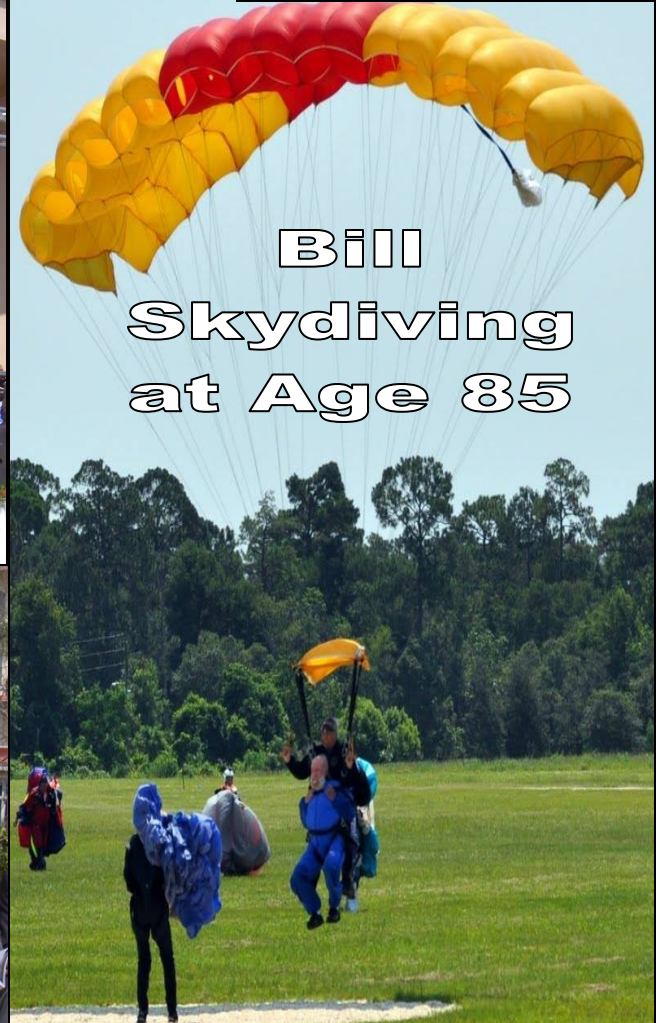
Bronze Bust
Henry A. DeLand House
Museum



**Governor Christ
Florida History
Preservation Award**



**125th Anniversary
City of DeLand**



**Bill
Skydiving
at Age 85**

Educating Youth



Dear Mr. Dreggors,

Thank you for coming to our school. We learned a lot. I thought it was interesting that your family was able to live back then. I wanted to know how it would be to live back then and now I know because you taught me how it was. So thank you so much.

Dear Mr. Dreggors,

Thank you for coming to our school. I learned that a lot of stuff happened on St. John's River. But what I liked the best is that people were poor but they had a lot of kids and only enough to survive and the stores only carried what they needed. The other thing that I learned is that there were only about 800 people living there. There is a lot of stuff that you can't find to day.

Dear Mr. Dreggors,

I really learned a lot from you. And I would like to thank you with this letter.

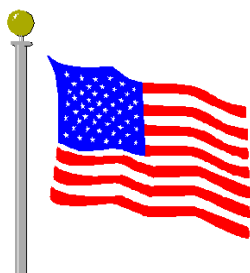
One of the most interesting thing I learned was that a lot of people wore no shoes, because they were very poor. And that they got about ten cents a hour.

One very cool thing you told us was that there was a very old building built on New York Ave and I live on that street.

Thank you again for all you taught us and I bet you are the smartest man alive.



Thank You Bill
You Will Be Missed



DeLand Naval Air Station Museum
910 Biscayne Boulevard
DeLand, Florida 32724
(386) 738-4149
www.delandnavalairmuseum.org



"In Memory of All Who Served"