



# Blanchard House Museum

of African American History and Culture of Charlotte Co.  
406 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd – Punta Gorda, Florida

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## Blanchard House Museum's 10 Year Anniversary

### Mission Statement

The Blanchard House Museum is an open access, educational institution devoted to the procurement, preservation, study, and display of artifacts and materials related to the history, culture, and contributions of African Americans in the settlement and development of Charlotte County and Southwest Florida.

### Museum Background – Since Grand Opening 20 May 2004

- The museum is open to the public and admission has always been free of charge
- We operate solely on donations, grants, gifts, sponsors and volunteer dedication
- We operate at two locations, museum and Colored Waiting Room at the Train Depot
- The museum is an organization comprised of an all volunteer staff

### Our Focus

The Blanchard House Museum continues to focus on education, we strive to tell the untold, untaught history.

### Historical Preservation Program - We are continually engaged in:

- Conducting research on African Americans in Southwest Florida
- Gathering and preserving local oral histories
- Researching area pioneer family genealogies
- Preserving photo and documents via digital archiving
- Updating gallery's permanent exhibits, and developing an annual changing exhibit

### Active Partner in the Community

- Teach classes at Lifelong Learning Institute at Edison State College
- Supporter of the Punta Gorda Police Department's "Do the Right Thing" program
- Judge for Charlotte County Schools History Fair (4 years running)
- Punta Gorda City 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (City timeline exhibit development)
- Charlotte County Historical Advisory Board – chair position (1 of 9 countywide reps)
- Punta Gorda Historical Preservation Advisory Board – position (1 of 8 reps)
- Charlotte County Schools Local History Curriculum Development Committee



The Museum is a stop on Florida Tourism's **Black Heritage Trail**.

We are also a founding member of the **Florida African American Heritage Preservation Network (FAAHPN)** based in Tallahassee. The network is a group of 45 organizations statewide that focus on historical preservation.



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**Lt. Carl A. Bailey Cemetery Historical Marker to be dedicated in Cleveland**

**27 February 2015, Friday at 4:30pm**

CHARLOTTE COUNTY, Fla. (Feb. 17, 2015) – The Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners will dedicate a new Charlotte County Historical Marker at Lt. Carl A. Bailey Cemetery located at 27399 Holleyman Rd., Punta Gorda on Friday, February 27 at 4:30 p.m. The marker honors the second of only two known African-American cemeteries in today's Charlotte County. The Historical Advisory Committee approved the marker on November 12 and Civil War re-enactors from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, United States Colored Troops will be present to honor two Union veterans buried in the cemetery, Owen B. "O.B." Armstrong and Augustus Holcomb. Blanchard House Museum of African-American History and Culture of Charlotte County founder Dr. Martha Russell Bireda will be the featured speaker at this event.

Lt. Carl Bailey Cemetery has served this area's African-American community as a final resting place for over 120 years. The cemetery was called the Cleveland Cemetery, established in the 1880s on land owned by New York investor W. Irving Scott. The Punta Gorda Colored Investment Company took over the cemetery's management in 1913 and Charlotte County assumed control in 1986. In 1957, the cemetery was renamed in honor of well-known hometown son Carl Bailey. First Lt. Bailey served as a U.S. Air Force fighter pilot flying combat missions during the Korean War. He was killed in a car accident while on leave and is buried here along with many of his family members. Today the cemetery remains active with over 400 known interments and is still available as a final resting place.

Sponsors of this historical marker are the all-volunteer Charlotte County Historical Center Living Historian team, whose work at the *Tales of Indian Spring Cemetery* tours offset part of the costs involved. The remaining expense was funded by the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners.

Charlotte County Historical Center is a part of the Libraries & History Division in the Community Services Department of Charlotte County government. It is located at 22959 Bayshore Road in historic Charlotte Harbor. For additional information about the Center and its programs, call 941.629.PAST (7278) or visit our website at [www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov) and click on the 'Playing' tab to follow the Historical Center Programs and Events link.