

# George Washington Moore House: A Brief Introduction

## History of Site before House was Built

- The parcel where this house once stood was part of a land grant from the Armed Occupation Act of 1842.
- George Washington Moore's original home, built on his homestead in 1875, probably burned down. The house at Heritage Village was the second house built by Moore in the Clearwater-Dunedin area.

## Construction Information

- This Florida "Cracker" house, a Gulf Coast cottage, is built from native pine. The structure has board-and-batten exterior siding.
- The structure originally had only two rooms with open porches on the front and rear. When occupants required additional living space, they enclosed the rear porch and part of the front porch. These additions transformed the structure into a five-room house, with a room that could be used as a kitchen. An outhouse used as the bathroom also came to Heritage Village from this original property.

## History of Occupants

- George Washington Moore was born in 1845, the year Florida became the twenty-seventh state, in Bedford, Virginia (now part of West Virginia). He met wife Francis A. Meador while living in Virginia and had two children while living there. He arrived in the Pinellas peninsula in 1875 and established his residence in the Clearwater-Dunedin area. His three younger children are natives of Dunedin. His father also came to the area in 1875. Both George Washington Moore and his father died in the same year, 1887.
- In 1879, he built the Moore House near the present location of Highland Avenue and Sunset Point Road. Though census records of the 1880s note his occupations as blacksmith and machinist, he also started an orange grove and cultivated crops.
- During this period, landowners operated under the "open range" system that allowed their cows, hogs, and other animals to roam freely.
- While on a business trip to Tampa in 1887, Moore caught yellow fever and died there shortly thereafter. Although the epidemic left Tampa under quarantine, only two Pinellas peninsula residents (including Moore) died from the outbreak.
- Son Moffet W. Moore played an important role in the Dunedin business community for many years. His jobs included making cement blocks, operating a feed store, delivering ice, making ice cream for commercial sales, manufacturing cigar boxes, operating the Dunedin cemetery, and engaging in real estate. He helped to organize the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce on 18 February 1926.
- It is believed that a member of Arthur Lewis Duncan's family brought grapefruit from the Odet Philippe plantation to cultivate in the Dunedin area by the 1890s.
- Daughter Effie married Arthur Horace Duncan (not known to be a relative of A. L. Duncan), an entrepreneur who developed Clearwater Nurseries (with his twin brother, Albert N.) and served as postmaster at the Keene post office. Arthur was born in Keene, New Hampshire. Their children (G. W. Moore's granddaughters)—Gladys and Elsie Duncan—visited the Moore House on many

occasions after the family sold it in the early 1900s. During their childhood, the Moore Home sat far away from the small communities that existed along the Gulf. Duncan employed workers on the grove for about fifty cents a day. Many slept on hay in the lofts of a big barn.

- An 1882 *Sunland Tribune* lists participants at the second annual Fair of Western Hillsborough, held in Clear Water. Members of the Duncan family took many awards for farm products. G. W. Moore won an award for the best vehicle, a one-horse wagon. Files indicate that members of the Coachman family also owned parts of the original parcel that served as a grove into the mid-1900s.

### **Moving of the House to Heritage Village**

- Often referred to as the “Grove House” in early Historical Commission meeting minutes, this dwelling arrived at Heritage Village in the summer of 1981.
- There were still some fruit trees on the property at the time the house moved to Heritage Village.

# George Washington Moore House

## Overview

A native of Virginia, George Washington Moore brought his family from Hopkinsville, Kentucky, to the area near Clearwater and Dunedin in 1875. His parents had arrived along the Pinellas Peninsula earlier that year after receiving a 160-acre homestead. The first house G. W. Moore built for his family probably burned, and in 1879 he constructed a new residence for his wife, Frances Meador Moore, and their children. Built of native pine, the Moore House featured board and batten construction. The original layout of the house contained two large rooms, an open front porch and an open back porch. As the family grew, the Moores enclosed the back porch to provide the home with two more rooms. Later on, half of the front porch became a room that was never connected to the interior of the house. This homestead occupied lands along present-day Highland Avenue near Sunset Point Road in north Clearwater. Moore worked in a sawmill, as a blacksmith, and cultivated citrus. Members of the Moore family won quick recognition in early fairs and other gatherings for their mechanical and agricultural talents.

G. W. Moore traveled to Tampa in 1887 on a business trip. While there, he contracted yellow fever, became quite ill, and perished. After Moore's death his widow and children continued to live in the residence until 1910. Son Moffett W. Moore became an important business and civic leader in Dunedin during the 1910s until his death in the mid-1930s. Daughter Effie Moore married a member of the Duncan family in the Keene area, east of Clearwater and northeast of Largo. Two children from this marriage, Gladys and Elsie Duncan, made notable contributions to the community and later commemorated the arrival of their grandfather's home to Heritage Village in 1981.

The Moore House resembles many late nineteenth-century farmhouses along the Pinellas frontier. This grove house also signals the transformation of agriculture in the Dunedin area from its previous emphasis on cotton cultivation to the newer focus on citrus production. The Pinellas Peninsula became the stage for many early citrus producers, especially those who grew grapefruits for commercial distribution. Dunedin resident and Wisconsin transplant A. L. Duncan—a man not known to be related to the

Duncans of Keene—developed an early grapefruit in the area that soon won acclaim as the first named variety of grapefruit. The Moore House presently occupies an area amidst the pine woods, with the back door leading to a garden similar to what a farm wife might have kept for vegetables and herbs during the late 1800s. The structure arrived at Heritage Village in 1981, and a dedication at the Pinellas County Historical Society’s 1982 Country Jubilee brought Gladys and Elsie to the park to celebrate the renovations and open the structure to the public.

### **More than an Isolated Cottage on the Clearwater-Dunedin Frontier**

George Washington Moore came into the world in 1845, the year that Florida became the twenty-seventh state of the Union. Born in Bedford City, Virginia, George was the only child of James Madison and Nancy A. Moore documented in census records. Both of his parents originally came from Virginia and both were born in 1819. James and Nancy Moore homesteaded on 160 acres south of Dunedin near Sunset Point Road and east of the opening of Stevenson Creek. On their land, they constructed a log cabin.<sup>1</sup>

Stevenson Creek commemorates one of the region’s earliest settlers in the area bordering northern Clearwater and southern Dunedin. An 1813 native of Canada, Samuel H. Stevenson arrived in Florida by 1828. He lived in Duval County during the 1840 census, and filed for a claim of land in November 1842 under the provisions of the Armed Occupation Act. This legislation, passed by Congress in August 1842 just a few months after the conclusion of the Second Seminole War, allowed squatters to build homes and claim 160 acres of land if they agreed to “bear arms and live on the land in a fit habitation” for a period of at least five years and improve at least five acres of their lands for the crop cultivation. By the end of the 1840s, Stevenson improved his land and brought his family from Marion County. Soon, members of the Garrison and Somerville families arrived in the area. The quickest land route to Clear Water Harbor at the time

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<sup>1</sup> Genealogical research on the Moore family appears in the building files at the Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo. A typewritten “Moore House History” paper in the building files claims that James and Nancy Moore arrived in 1865, whereas W. Lovett Douglas’s *History of Dunedin* marks their arrival ten years later, in 1875. Most sources point to the latter date as the more accurate of the two, although additional research of land records associated with the elder Moore would clear up this discrepancy. See:

was a crooked sand road to Stevenson Creek that required settlers to ford across the creek at low tide.<sup>2</sup>

Although many published accounts of Dunedin claim that the town represents the oldest settlement on the West Coast of Florida south of Cedar Keys, the area during the mid-1800s faintly resembles the community that existed by 1900. Allen Gouley Andrews, who came to the region in 1874, mentioned in a 1924 interview that “this territory around here was practically all wilderness and one could hardly drive a horse between the palm trees, while the roads or paths were as crooked as a snake.” During the 1860s and 1870s—even after the Civil War—cotton remained the king crop of the region. Maj. M. G. Anderson arrived by 1868 and established a horse-operated gin to accommodate the pioneers in the region who grew cotton at a time before anyone cultivated citrus for commercial distribution. Lacking a wharf, local cotton producers took their cotton bales from this gin to rowboats that then transported the cotton to larger vessels. According to Andrews, cotton remained the chief industry in the areas around Stevenson Creek and Curlew until 1878, when local residents started to raise oranges. The gin soon fell into the hands of the Douglas and Somerville families, and they opened an early trading post.<sup>3</sup>

George W. Moore came to the Pinellas Peninsula in 1875 by way of Kentucky. Family members claimed that Moore fought in the Civil War. By 1868, he resettled in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, a city about twenty-three miles north of Clarksville, Tennessee. He met and courted Francis A. “Fannie” Meador, a Hopkinsville native born in 1849. George and Francis exchanged wedding vows in 1868, and soon decided to start a family. Between 1870 and 1882, the Moores had two sons and three daughters. The two oldest children, Moffett Warren (born August 1870) and Nannie Meador (born October 1872) claimed Hopkinsville as their hometown. The three younger children, Effie Louis (born 3 October 1877), James Madison (born 10 January 1880), and Blanche (born June 1882) were natives of Dunedin. While some accounts refer to the young James as “Junior,” one

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W. Lovett Douglas, *History of Dunedin* (St. Petersburg: Great Outdoors, 1965), 138-139; “Moore House History,” April 1988 manuscript, Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo.

<sup>2</sup> *Dunedin Times*, 3 April 1924. For a brief over of Stevenson and other early Pinellas Pioneers (including some who occupied buildings located at Heritage Village), see: Evelyn C. Bash, “Profiles of Early Pioneers on the Pinellas Peninsula,” *Tampa Bay History* 5 (Spring/Summer 1983): 82-93.

<sup>3</sup> *Dunedin Times*, 3 April 1924.

must remember that James Madison Moore, Jr., was the grandson—not the son—of James M. Moore.<sup>4</sup>

The Moore House at Heritage Village represents the second structure built by George Washington Moore. The family probably traveled south along established railroad lines to Cedar Keys, then took a raft along the Gulf of Mexico to reach the lands owned by James M. Moore. When the family arrived in 1875, G. W. Moore received approximately eighty acres of his father's homestead along a boundary roughly corresponding to Highland Avenue on the east, Palmetto Street on the south, Kings Highway on the west, and the "rear lot line" of homes on the southern side of Sandy Lane to the north. This area, south of Dunedin and east of the wide opening of Stephenson Creek, included fertile croplands. The creek meandered through this property, an area just to the north of the present-day Clearwater Country Club. Moore built a temporary or smaller home on his land; the original home may have suffered damage or destruction by fire. In 1879, his family moved into the home preserved at Heritage Village, a Gulf Coast vernacular cottage constructed with native pine that includes board and batten exterior siding. When first occupied, the 1879 structure had two rooms with open porches on both the front and rear of the cottage. Over time, occupants transformed the left half of the front porch and the entire back porch into interior rooms. Now a five-room dwelling, the structure included a variety of window sizes and lacked indoor restroom facilities throughout its existence. The outhouse to the rear of the George Washington Moore House also came from the family's property.<sup>5</sup>

Soon after their arrival, the Moores planted citrus groves on the northern portion of their property and engaged in farming. The home later became popularly known as the "Moore Grove House" because of the number of grapefruit trees planted on the property. Family recollections note that George W. Moore worked in a sawmill, operated a blacksmith shop (according to the 1880 federal census), and cultivated vegetables and livestock. The family's cows and hogs roamed freely in the area south of Dunedin in the

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Some sources refer to the spelling of Moffett W. Moore's first name as "Moffet." Most residents of Dunedin probably called him "M. W. Moore," the name often associated with his many business interests.

<sup>5</sup> Architectural research files created by Stephanie Ferrell reside in the Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo; "Moore House History" manuscript.

years before the closing of the range, while chickens stayed close to the family's quarters. Children walked to school in Dunedin.<sup>6</sup>

The small communities of Clear Water and Dunedin near the Moore homestead offered convenient meeting places for many families living on the coast of the Pinellas Peninsula. Clear Water Harbor became an important stopping point for early settlers, offering the closest post office and place to obtain provisions. During Christmas celebrations in 1881, many residents and visitors came to the home of Walton Whitehurst. Captain Samuel E. Hope brought his family to the gathering from their home along the Anclote River, near Tarpon Springs. Those in attendance enjoyed fireworks near the wharf of J. O. Douglas and James Somerville, notable Scottish immigrants who played an important role in establishing Dunedin. A newspaper article remarked that some women at the gathering kept celebrations under control: "No eggnog, no drunk. The old hens held a temperance meeting and resolved to encourage no mixing of sugar, eggs, and whiskey."<sup>7</sup> An advertisement by pioneer settler George L. Jones in the 11 June 1881 *Sunland Tribune* indicated how quickly citrus fever gripped the residents of Dunedin and provided an excellent portrait of the community at that time:

For sale . . . a beautiful and thriving young Orange Grove, containing 175 Orange Trees of the choicest sweet variety, some in bearing, 25 or 30 will bear in another season; also Grape Fruit, Lemon, and Citron on the place. A dwelling house with 4 rooms, hall, and piazza extending all around the house, also kitchen and other outhouses on the place, all frame buildings. Front yard with flowers, laid off tastefully and walks shelled—Water the best on the coast. Post-office within 100 yards, also 2 stores. Hotel and dwelling houses within 150 yards of the bay. Society excellent; Churches and Schools good. The healthiest spot on the earth. Sold only to pay debts. The owner expects to live near here balance of life. Fine fishing and yachting, and handsomest bay in the State; Scenery grand. Steamer running here regularly. Price \$2000, \$1300 cash down,

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<sup>6</sup> "Moore House History" manuscript; Census research appears in files at Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo.

<sup>7</sup> *Sunland Tribune*, 26 January 1882.

balance in 3 years, secured by land note or mortgage.<sup>8</sup>

The culinary, agricultural, and mechanical talents of the Moore family won them honors in early gatherings during the 1880s. Approximately thirty-five years before the annual Pinellas County Fair started in Largo, the farmers along the sparsely settled Pinellas Peninsula conducted an early version of this event in an assembly known as the Fair of Western Hillsborough. Held at Clear Water for the first time in the spring of 1881, this fair allowed farmstead families from throughout the region to celebrate their harvests, compare their livestock, judge their handicrafts, and swap their recipes.<sup>9</sup> The 21 May 1881 edition of the *Sunland Tribune* listed awards received by those who participated in the contests. Francis A. Meador Moore won honors for best light bread, tomato preserves, and pickles in a jar. Meanwhile, G. W. Moore submitted the only exhibit for the contest sponsored by the Committee on Farm Improvements, a one-horse cart exhibiting “excellence of material and superior construction.” Members of the Moore family also did well in the second annual Western Hillsborough Fair held in 1882. G. W. Moore received an award for best one horse wagon, while judges recognized his mother for her jelly and light bread.<sup>10</sup>

Enterprises at the Moore homestead became more sophisticated by the mid-1880s. According to the 1885 Florida census, sixty-seven year-old James Moore worked as a fruit grower and shared his farmstead with Nancy. Son G. W. Moore continued to live on the adjacent plot of land, though his listed occupation of “machinist” does not tell the complete story of life at the grove house. Then thirty-eight years old, George Washington Moore and thirty-nine year-old Fannie raised their five children—Moffett (age 15), Nancy (age 12), Effie (age 8), James (age 4), and Blanche (age 3)—while tending to the family’s growing citrus crops, farm animals, and other agricultural

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<sup>8</sup> *Sunland Tribune*, 11 June 1881.

<sup>9</sup> Early descriptions of the area refer to the settlement at Clearwater by its earlier names of “Clear Water Harbor” and “Clear Water.”

<sup>10</sup> *Sunland Tribune*, 21 May 1881, 4 May 1882.



pursuits. By this time, George's agribusiness activities required him to make occasional trips to the seat of Hillsborough County government, Tampa.<sup>11</sup>

### **In Search of “Health City,” But Finding Yellow Fever**

Railroads, real estate speculation, and the hope of physical recuperation brought many settlers to central and southern Florida after the end of Reconstruction. The recently opened railroad networks south of Cedar Keys—including the Orange Belt Railway that spanned the Pinellas Peninsula by 1888—transported many travelers to towns and settlements. Hamilton Disston's purchase of four million acres of land along the peninsula of Florida enhanced property values and accelerated real estate transactions. Invalids, consumptives, and others seeking a healthy climate began to arrive in Florida in greater numbers during the early 1880s, searching for their version of the “Fountain of Youth.”

Early boosters of the Pinellas Peninsula touted the region's healthy setting. For example, George Jones of Dunedin described a visit by Joseph Wilcox of Philadelphia to the upper Pinellas groves of Captain Richard Booth in a January 1882 issue of the *Sunland Tribune*. Claiming that the region promoted health “the year around,” Jones considered the Pinellas Peninsula the “healthiest spot this side of heaven. And we will be glad to see those fellows who are settling near hammock lands about next chill and fever time and sell them a summers (sic) health retreat.”<sup>12</sup> A dispatch appearing in the 9 November 1882 *Sunland Tribune* touted the potential of the “Gulf Coast Reserve,” an area from Point Pinellas on the south to lands north of the Anclote River. In celebrating this region—and encouraging prospective buyers to purchase tracts from Disston representatives—the writer proclaimed:

It is impossible to give an adequate description of this beautiful region in mere words, combining, as it does, so many qualities of beauty and value. The settler has it at his choice to select lands comprising all the advantages of sea fronts, or, if he prefers, high, dry, and healthy locations inland.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Census information located during the research phase of this project appears in the Moore House files located at the Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo.

<sup>12</sup> *Sunland Tribune*, 26 January 1882.

<sup>13</sup> *Sunland Tribune*, 9 November 1882.

W. C. Van Bibber, a doctor from Baltimore who had acquired land on the southern end of the Pinellas Peninsula, claimed to have found an excellent location for a “Health City.” Raymond Arsenault’s narrative on the history of St. Petersburg describes a talk delivered by Van Bibber at the 1885 American Medical Association convention. Van Bibber hoped to answer a call issued eleven years prior by a British physician who asked his colleagues to find the best location for living a long and healthy life. In his lecture, Van Bibber praised the area near Point Pinellas for its curative climate that promoted health and longevity. Van Bibber’s recent purchase of lands in Pinellas and his interests in speculation may have led some to dismiss his claims, but a growing number of visitors and settlers along peninsular Florida proved that many welcomed such messages.<sup>14</sup>

Despite these cheerful pronouncements, residents of nineteenth-century coastal regions such as peninsular Florida feared the sudden onset of illnesses such as yellow fever. The semi-tropical climate promoted a number of epidemics that could quickly transform a salubrious setting into a quarantined quagmire. Epidemics of yellow fever—also known as yellow jack—a quick-spreading virus transmitted by the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito, caused havoc in Tampa, Key West, and other coastal communities. Small and sporadic outbreaks had hit Fort Brooke and Tampa Town in 1839, 1841, and 1849. As more residents arrived in the region, the summer outbreaks of the 1850s and beyond grew into epidemics. According to research by Eirlys Barker, at least two hundred cases of yellow fever occurred in Tampa during each of the outbreaks in 1853, 1858, and 1867. After a small yellow fever outbreak in the fall of 1871, Tampa remained free from the epidemic until 1887. During this sixteen-year period, the small town had transformed into a booming community, new immigrants began to settle in Ybor City, and Henry B. Plant’s railroad and steamship enterprises fueled even greater real estate speculation.<sup>15</sup>

Outbreaks of yellow fever provoked fear because physicians did not understand the origin of the illness. Before 1901, doctors often attributed the painful epidemic to miasma, poor ventilation, and other sources rather than the mosquitoes that actually

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<sup>14</sup> Raymond Arsenault, *St. Petersburg and the Florida Dream, 1888-1950* (Norfolk, Va.: Donning, 1988), 52-53.

<sup>15</sup> Eirlys Barker, “‘A Sneaky, Cowardly Enemy’: Tampa’s Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1887-88,” *Tampa Bay History* 8 (Fall/Winter 1986): 4-6.

transmitted the virus. Dr. John P. Wall, a Tampa physician exposed to the disease during the fall of 1871, knew that panic resulting from fears of a yellow fever outbreak might quash the speculative spirit of the growing city. When yellow jack hit Key West in the spring of 1887, Tampa officials hoped the illness would bypass their city as they immediately imposed quarantines and supported the establishment of a refugee station at Egmont Key by the U.S. Marine Hospital Service in the summer of 1887. Unfortunately, documented cases of yellow fever appeared in Tampa by September 1887; within a month, panic gripped the city and news of the outbreak reached the pages of the *New York Times*. This devastating epidemic led other Florida cities to impose strict quarantines prohibiting Tampanans from entering their communities. During the summer and fall of 1887, Wall believed that the Tampa area and Hillsborough County suffered approximately one hundred deaths and nearly one thousand cases of yellow fever. The epidemic continued at a diminished pace into early 1888, when about ten people perished in three hundred new cases of yellow fever.<sup>16</sup>

As Tampa struggled with yellow fever, tragedy also came to the Moore family in 1887. George Washington Moore traveled to Tampa to conduct business in the county seat. Shortly after his arrival, he contracted yellow fever and became quite ill. He died at the age of forty-two. Research by W. Lovett Douglas and others attributes only two deaths in the upper Pinellas Peninsula to this outbreak: G. W. Moore and Elias Hart, a settler who lived east of Clear Water. Indeed, one could make a strong argument that the relative isolation of the Pinellas Peninsula and restrictions imposed on travel to Tampa prevented more residents of the area from contracting yellow fever. In a 1988 conversation with Gladys and Elsie Duncan, two granddaughters of G. W. Moore, the Duncan sisters claimed that Nancy Moore died within a few hours of her son, and neither knew about the other's death. Unfortunately, census and burial records examined do not provide conclusive evidence of the exact date and time of death, so this story remains unconfirmed. Sometime in 1887, G. W. Moore's father, James Madison Moore, also died

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 4-20.

of unspecified causes. Thus before the end of the year, seventeen year-old Moffett W. Moore became the male head of the family and operated the farmstead.<sup>17</sup>

During the 1880s and 1890s, the Moore family continued to live in the 1879 house constructed by G. W. Moore. Moffett quickly assumed the responsibilities of maintaining the family's agricultural interests. The younger children walked to a school in Dunedin. They occasionally enjoyed the early dismissal of classes to meet steamboats bringing supplies from Cedar Keys and Key West. The construction of the Orange Belt Railway brought excitement to Dunedin. Children left their classes to witness the arrival of trains. A small portion of the Moore property, located along the Pinellas Trail, became part of the right-of-way for the Orange Belt.<sup>18</sup>

M. W. Moore, in his early history of the community—*Dunedin, Overlooking Clearwater Bay and Gulf of Mexico*—mentioned challenges faced by his grandfather, James M. Moore, during the 1880s. Moffett, regarded by many as Dunedin's first historian, issued this pamphlet in the late 1920s or early 1930s through his real estate firm. He described an attempt by his “dignified” grandfather one early morning to move a yoke of oxen onto the recently built dock at Clear Water. The wooden docks, wet with dew, caused the oxen to slip and soon they took Moore with them into the water and “got a good drenching.” The elder Moore grew sugar cane and, like many farmers in the region, boiled the cane in a kettle to make sugar and syrup. During this process, farmers skimmed the kettles and stored the “skimmings” in barrels to use as animal feed. Moffett mentioned an episode when one of his hired hands decided to give a “liberal” amount of the fermented feed to about a dozen of James Moore's hogs. Members of the Moore family watched the “gloriously drunk” swine swagger and stumble around the farmstead.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> “Moore House History” manuscript; Douglas, *History of Dunedin*, 46-47. For a general discussion of the Yellow Fever outbreak in Tampa, see: Eirlys Mair Barker, “Seasons of Pestilence: Tampa and Yellow Fever, 1824-1905,” (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of South Florida, 1984).

<sup>18</sup> “Moore House History” manuscript.

<sup>19</sup> William L. Davidson, *Dunedin thru the Years, 1850-1978*, 2d. rev. ed. (Charlotte: Delmar, 1988), 6; M. W. Moore, *Dunedin, Overlooking Clearwater Bay and Gulf of Mexico* (Dunedin: M. W. Moore Real Estate, 192?), 29.

### **A Grapefruit League of Their Own: The Tales to Two Duncan Families**

In addition to the Moores, other new settlers invigorated the Pinellas Peninsula during the 1870s and 1880s. Two families with the last name of Duncan came to the region by the mid-1870s. Although they hailed from different regions of the United States and settled in different areas of the peninsula, they each contributed to the development of citrus culture in the region and also interacted with members of the Moore family. Additional genealogical research may uncover possible ancestral connections between these two families, though no conclusive relationships appeared in census records examined to date. A discussion of Arthur Lewis Duncan of Wisconsin who settled Dunedin and the Duncan family of Keene, New Hampshire, who originally homesteaded in the Clearwater-Largo area illustrates their involvement with agricultural enterprises in Pinellas.

Arthur Lewis Duncan had arrived in the Dunedin area from his native Wisconsin. According to a published history of Dunedin, he joined a local church in 1875 and became a grower of crops and citrus. Other sources place him in the area no later than 1883. His family also participated in the social activities of the growing Dunedin community. Articles in the 1 April 1886 *West Hillsborough Times*—forerunner to the *St. Petersburg Times*—announced a successful “Ye Old Folks Concert” and a forthcoming minstrel show. These stories praised the programs as evidence of the settlement’s growth, noting that people “began to arrive early from every point on the compass. They came in vehicles of every shape, color, and time of service; they came in carriages, carts, and saddle” to enjoy a variety of musical performances and entertainment. Those who attended heard a piano duet by members of the Duncan family. Indeed, a correspondent for the *Times* claimed that “the name of the town ought to be changed to Duncanedin, for while Mr. Duncan is carrying on horticultural operations, Mrs. Duncan is sustaining the church, and bringing [up] the social element as no woman has ever done before.” During the 1870s and 1880s, A. L. Duncan certainly crossed paths with fellow farmer G. W. Moore on numerous occasions.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *West Hillsborough Times*, 1 April 1886; Davidson, *Dunedin thru the Years*, 47. The 7 February 1924 issue of the *Dunedin Times* had a cover story that also described A. L. Duncan’s arrival. This account places his arrival in 1883 and notes his affiliation with the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

In 1892, A. L. Duncan introduced the first named variety of grapefruit. The cultivation of grapefruit—originally known as “pomelos”—began in Florida with the arrival of Odet Philippe to the Tampa Bay region. Philippe—a pioneer settler whose ancestry and life remain the subject of much speculation, mystery, and controversy—settled along Old Tampa Bay near present-day Safety Harbor. He established his plantation, St. Helena, on the present site of Philippe Park. Philippe, his family, and slaves began to cultivate citrus at one of the first citrus farmsteads in Florida. A. L. Duncan took samples from the St. Helena site, harvested them near Dunedin, and developed the seeded grapefruit *Citrus paradisi* for commercial distribution. His expertise at budding and grafting shortened the bearing time for seedlings from ten years to about five years. By this time, Duncan had built a close partnership with Lee Bronson (L. B.) Skinner, another Wisconsinite who had settled in the Dunedin area and established the Milwaukee Groves. As manager of the Milwaukee Groves, Duncan crafted this cold-hardy species that flourished as freezes of the early 1890s decimated citrus crops in other regions of Florida. Just as Philippe deserves recognition for introducing grapefruit and other citrus to the region—not to mention his efforts in bringing Tampa its first cigar industry—A. L. Duncan must receive credit for his ability to transform grapefruits into a profitable agricultural commodity.<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile, the Duncans of New Hampshire homesteaded on 160 acres near Druid Road, Lake Avenue, and Keene Road by 1878. Originally from Keene, New Hampshire, this Duncan family started to grow citrus in mid-Pinellas shortly after their arrival. Mr. Duncan (no first name given in census records examined) married Annie Newton, a woman born on 1 August 1817. The elder Duncans had three children: Clara (born in September 1851) and twins Arthur Horace and Albert N. (born 11 August 1856). According to a family interview, the Duncan family settled in the area in 1877 or 1878 and established a presence near Keene Road, a path named in honor of their hometown.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas B. Mack, *Citrifacts II: A Portion of the Florida Citrus Industry* (Bartow: Associated Publications, 1998), 38-41; Davidson, *Dunedin thru the Years*, 209; Moore, *Dunedin*, 14-15. For a discussion of Odet Philippe and the mysteries surrounding his life, consult a book written by one of his descendants. See: J. Allison DeFoor II, *Odet Philippe: Peninsular Pioneer* (Safety Harbor: Safety Harbor Museum of Regional History, 1997).

### A Keen Union in the Moore House

In October 1896 Arthur Horace Duncan married Effie L. Moore—daughter of the late George Washington Moore—at the Moore homestead. Fannie watched as her daughter exchanged vows with A. H. Duncan in a ceremony officiated by Rev. I. M. Auld. In 1896, according to an oral history interview, the newlyweds constructed a two-story farmhouse on the family’s land near present-day Keene Road. Women in the family, including Annie N. Duncan and daughter Clara (or Claire) opened a “Keene Post Office” at the house and distributed mail to nearby residents. The union of Arthur and Effie Duncan produced four children, all natives of Clearwater: Louis Arthur (some records note him as Lewis Arthur, born 11 July 1904), Gladys (born 2 November 1905), Elsie (born 2 February 1910), and Mary Lou (born 1916). An undated letterhead held in the Heritage Village archives notes that by the 1890s A. H. Duncan served as proprietor of the Clearwater Nurseries, originally established 1877. This nursery, located along the Orange Belt (Sanford and St. Petersburg) Railway touted the “finest variety of oranges, lemons, and pomelas [grapefruit] a specialty.” The family homestead, simply known as “P.O. Keene,” served as the company’s offices. Within a year of this marriage, Arthur’s twin brother—Albert Duncan—wed his wife Mattie, a woman born in Missouri in 1870.<sup>23</sup>

Changes came to the Duncan and Moore families during the early twentieth century. According to the 1900 census, Albert and Mattie Duncan grew fruit on their homestead. “Bert” Duncan later moved to St. Petersburg by the mid-1930s. Albert opened the Old Curiosity Shop, a second-hand clothes and merchandise store, at 307 Ninth Street South, a site presently near the AAA building and the western parking lot at Tropicana Field. Arthur and Effie Moore engaged in farming. Clara Duncan, the older sister of Albert and Arthur, lived with Arthur and Effie during the 1900 and 1910 census periods. “Aunt Clara,” as she was fondly known by the children of Arthur and Effie, remained an important part of the household, at times assisting with the postal duties and

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<sup>22</sup> Transcript of interview of Gladys and Elsie Duncan, 11 October 1986, located in Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo; Census records on file at Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo.

<sup>23</sup> *Clear Water Press*, 8 October 1896; transcript of interview of Gladys and Elsie Duncan, 11 October 1986; Genealogical research files reside in the Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo. Some records, including those of people interred at Largo Cemetery, denote the spelling of Louis’s name as “Lewis.”

always supportive of the small children. Meanwhile, by 1900 the Moore House had eight occupants. Fannie, G. W. Moore's widow and family matriarch, served as head of household. Moffett, then thirty years-old, worked as a farmer, while his younger brother James engaged in carpentry. Blanche attended school, and sister Nannie shared part of the cramped quarters with her husband Charles Wesley Rousseau and their two children, Sybil and Doris. Charles Rousseau worked as a mail agent for the railroad in 1900; he had married Nannie in about 1896 or 1897, after the birth of Sybil but before the arrival of Doris. Other members of the Rousseau family settled in lands east of Clearwater and established a cemetery in 1870 along present-day South Hercules Avenue after family patriarch William Henry Rousseau (1818-1870) passed away. Charles Wesley Rousseau was buried at this cemetery after his death in 1931. Many members of the Harn and Rousseau families, along with some members of the Allen, Blanton, Booth, and McMullen families, occupy sites at this cemetery.<sup>24</sup>

By 1910, the Moore family moved from the G. W. Moore cottage. Fannie had grown tired of maintaining the home and lands, while son M. W. Moore had found new business opportunities in Dunedin. They sold the homestead and moved to Scotland Street in Dunedin. Before the end of the year, Fannie passed away while visiting one of her daughters (probably Blanche) in Jacksonville. The family brought her remains back to Dunedin, and she found her final resting place in the Dunedin Municipal Cemetery. Except for Effie Moore Duncan, all of the G. W. and Fannie Moore's children and G. W. Moore's parents rest at the Dunedin Cemetery. Effie, her husband A. H. Duncan, and their children occupy sites at the Largo Cemetery.<sup>25</sup>

While maintaining an active family life, Moffett W. Moore engaged in a variety of businesses and became an early civic leader in Dunedin. He first married to Lottie Grant (1873-1912)—daughter of Alfred J. Grant—probably after 1900. The *Tampa Weekly Tribune* announced the arrival of a daughter to Lottie and M. W. Moore in

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<sup>24</sup> Census information appears in building files at the Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo; see the 1933 and 1937 editions of R. L. Polk's *St. Petersburg (Pinellas County, Florida) City Directory*. For an index of those interred at Rousseau Cemetery, see a list compiled for the Pinellas Genealogical Society: <http://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/fl/pinellas/cemetery/rousseau.txt>. The 9 April 1914 issue of the *Clearwater News* included numerous jottings about the Duncan and Moore families in a section on "Keene" written by a special correspondent.

<sup>25</sup> "Moore House History" manuscript; genealogical records included in Moore House files, Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo.



November 1903. They had one boy (Warren), and three girls (Margaret, Francis, and Hazel). After Lottie's death in 1912, Moffett exchanged wedding vows with a woman named Florence Malone. Florence participated in the local Village Improvement Society by 1915, and both Moffett and Florence became charter members of the Dunedin Eastern Star on 5 April 1923. After working in the citrus industry as a young man, M. W. Moore fabricated cement blocks and dock pilings, created the first cement sidewalks in the community, operated a feed store and ice house, manufactured ice cream and cigar boxes, and worked in the real estate business. He also took charge of the Dunedin Cemetery for nearly three decades. In March 1914, he finalized plans to construct a building to house a cabinetmaker and a warehouse for a feed-and-grain business in Dunedin. During one busy week in April 1924, Moore's real estate firm sold three business and two residential lots, and his nursery and banana farm supplied local farmers with excellent plants, as he and wife Florence traveled to St. Cloud, Orlando, and Bartow on business. Issues of the 1924 *Dunedin Times* regularly included advertisements for M. W. Moore Real Estate and Insurance. One of his advertisements touted "A High Class estate in a High Class modern town on water front, two blocks from Post Office. Beautiful house and grounds; large palms; all kinds of fruit; can be subdivided to advantage." Between 1924 and 1926, he worked with other business leaders to secure properties along Main Street that allowed for its extension. This new section of road opened for traffic on the nation's sesquicentennial, 4 July 1926. He joined members of the Grant and Douglas families and other leaders as a founding member of the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce on 18 February 1926. In addition to these many commitments, Moffett became Dunedin's first recognized historian and served one term on the City Commission. He regularly wrote columns in the *Dunedin Times* and published a thirty-one page account of the city's early years.<sup>26</sup>

M. W. Moore outlived his second wife, Florence Malone. She passed away in 1934. An Elder in the First Presbyterian Church, Moffett conducted a prayer meeting at the church in 1936, experienced a heart attack, and died within a few moments. His death

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<sup>26</sup> *Tampa Weekly Tribune*, 12 November 1903; *Clearwater News*, 12 March 1914; Douglas, *History of Dunedin*, 71-72, 138-139; Davidson, *Dunedin thru the Years*, 39, 84, 161; *Dunedin Times*, 27 March 1924, 1 May 1924. For an example of Moore's articles, see: "Dunedin Was Jonesborough," *Dunedin Times*, 17 April 1924.

marked an important transition point in the history of Dunedin.<sup>27</sup> Other family members, most notably Elsie and Gladys Duncan, kept the family's heritage alive until after the Moore House arrived at Heritage Village.

The Duncan sisters grew up on the outskirts of Clearwater. In a 1986 interview, Gladys and Elsie mentioned that they traveled on horseback or by horse and buggy to get from their farmstead near Keene and Druid roads to South Ward Elementary School in Clearwater. Other children, including members of the McMullen family, also brought their horses to school. The children tied their horses to trees east of the South Ward campus, across South Fort Harrison Avenue near Druid. Elsie once told a reporter that she often rode her horse named "Pet" to the school. By the 1920s, the family had a Model T automobile.<sup>28</sup>

Only one of the four children in the Arthur H. and Effie Moore Duncan household decided to get married. Louis Arthur Duncan exchanged vows with Mary Nell Bagby in December 1925. A laborer in a fish house in 1920, Louis worked on an orange grove by 1930. He and Mary bore two sons in the late 1920s, Louis A. and Walter E. Duncan. Meanwhile, sisters Gladys, Elsie, and Mary Lou remained single throughout their entire lives. Mary Lou, the youngest child, left Florida and died in New York City in August 1946. Gladys and Elsie decided to remain in Florida. According to the 1930 census, twenty-three year old Gladys served as a stenographer for a local lawyer. She later worked for twenty-seven years as the town clerk of Belleair. Elsie Duncan graduated from the Florida State College for Women—now Florida State University—in Tallahassee, and completed graduate course work at the University of Colorado and the University of Florida. In *A Tradition of Excellence*, the school district's commemorative history, Elsie Duncan recalled earning \$90 per month as a teacher at North Ward Elementary School in Clearwater during the Depression years. Except for books brought by teachers into their classrooms, the campus lacked a library. One Friday afternoon during the 1930s, her principal told her to report to the high school because of a drop in enrollment at North Ward. During World War II, Elsie served in the USO (United

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<sup>27</sup> Douglas, *History of Dunedin*, 139.

<sup>28</sup> Transcript of interview of Gladys and Elsie Duncan, 11 October 1986, located in Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo; Undated clipping from the Elsie Duncan files of the Pinellas Genealogical Society.

Service Organizations) away from Florida. She returned to North Ward in the late 1940s and became the school's principal in 1954, after the retirement of longtime administrator Frances Belcher. Duncan led North Ward through a surging enrollment caused by transplants and baby boomers, as well as school integration in September 1965. One of the first white schools to accept African-American children from nearby neighborhoods, North Ward's black enrollment jumped from about ten percent in 1965 to fifty percent by the late 1960s. Duncan's leadership brought the school into this new era without any violence or difficulty.<sup>29</sup>

### **The Duncan Sisters Celebrate the Moving of Their Grandfather's House**

Gladys and Elsie Duncan witnessed incredible changes along the Pinellas Peninsula. Born in the frontier at a time before the separation of Pinellas from Hillsborough, they watched as many acres of former family groves in Dunedin and Largo became subdivisions. During their lifetimes, the isolated settlements of Clearwater and Dunedin transformed into contiguous communities surrounded by new developments. After their father—A. H. Duncan—passed away in August 1938, they took care of their mother, Effie Moore Duncan. They occasionally drove her past her childhood home, the Moore House, at its location on 1740 North Highland in Clearwater. In an undated clipping, one daughter noted that “Mother loved to come past and see the freshly whitewashed house—it was always so pretty.” Effie died on 26 April 1971 at ninety-three years of age. A few years after her death, the grove house on Highland received a reprieve for a new life.<sup>30</sup>

Tom Holland of 1466 Grove Circle in Clearwater, a seasonal resident who also owned a home in Ohio, had acquired the Moore House and its property during the 1950s. By early 1980, Holland contacted administrators at Heritage Village to discuss the possibility of moving the grove house. Director Kendrick Ford visited the house and considered it an appropriate structure in suitable condition. The Moore House, in his opinion, required minimal restoration. Papers held by the Holland family indicated that

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<sup>29</sup> Census records appear in files at the Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo; undated clipping from the Elsie Duncan files; Patricia Perez Costrini, ed., *A Tradition of Excellence, Pinellas County Schools: 1912-1987* (Clearwater: Pinellas County School Board, 1987), 160-162.

members of the Coachman family might have also held title to the land at one point. Ford promptly contacted Cathy Slicker, chair of the Pinellas County Historical Commission (PCHC) and encouraged her to convene a meeting to discuss this matter. PCHC members supported the proposal, and Ford called Roesch House Movers and received an estimate of \$4,950 to relocate the home to Heritage Village. With \$12,500 available in the Heritage Village budget, Ford had sufficient resources to move the Moore House. Discussions continued with Holland as he investigated the possibility of receiving a tax write-off for donating the Moore House to Heritage Village.<sup>31</sup>

By the late spring of 1981, park staff prepared the site that the Moore House would occupy. The Moore House arrived at Heritage Village in July 1981. Restoration efforts included the repair of walls that had suffered considerable termite damage and the removal of asbestos shingles added to the structure after 1900. Ford told PCHC members on 16 September 1981 that he had learned the home originally belonged to George Washington Moore. Gladys and Elsie Duncan, Moore's granddaughters, contributed many family furnishings for display in the house. In addition, a gentleman who repairs timepieces willingly donated a clock that had belonged to Moore's mother. With these original fixtures and the testimony of the Duncan sisters, the Moore House resembles its appearance at or about 1900. Elsie and Gladys participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of the Moore House during the 1982 Country Jubilee. The sisters continued to visit the Moore House at its new setting for many years. Gladys passed away on 16 June 1995, at the age of eighty-nine; Elsie died on 3 September 1997. Though longtime visitors to Heritage Village may miss their presence, their efforts to preserve their grandfather's home will never be forgotten.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Undated clippings consulted in this research project reside in files located at the Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo.

<sup>31</sup> Records of the Pinellas County Historical Commission, Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo, 1980 report on "Grove House at 1740 North Highland," 21 May 1980, 11 June 1980, 17 September 1980.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 September 1981, 18 November 1981. *St. Petersburg Times*, 4 October 1982.