



Beach Shop

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Hobe Sound Beach Shop's Turtle Times

Our History is a Treasure: Chapter Sixteen *By Jan Otten*

Grab your favorite beverage, relax in your comfy easy chair, and prepare to enjoy a history lesson related to Hobe Sound that reads like a historical fiction novel – but is true – right here in South Florida. In fact, it was even portrayed in a movie filmed on location in Stuart, Florida, *Little Laura and Big John*.

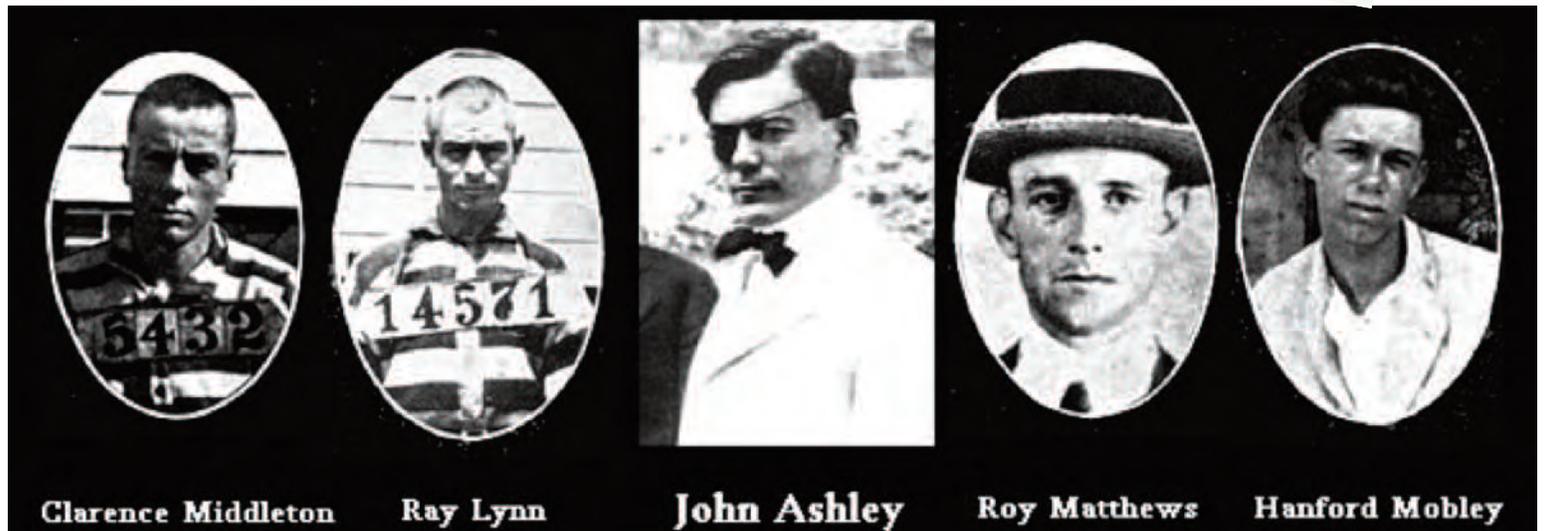
You guessed it...it's about the notorious outlaws, "The Ashley Gang"... and they certainly managed to cause a lot of havoc with their exploits back in the 1910s and 1920s. We could also title this, "The Bullet and the Glass Eye!"

Who were the Ashley's? And when did their life of crime begin?

John Hopkin Ashley was born on March 19, 1888, one of nine children of Joe and Leugenia Ashley. He grew up in the backwoods country along the Caloosahatchee River in the community of Buckingham, Florida, an unincorporated area near Fort Myers in Lee County. His father was a poor Florida woodsman, who supported his family by fishing, hunting, and trapping otters. John Ashley spent much of his youth in the Florida Everglades and, like his father Joe, became a skilled trapper and alligator hunter. In the 1890s the Ashley family relocated to Pompano where Joe Ashley, along with his older sons, worked on the new railroad being built by industrialist Henry Flagler. Joe moved his family in 1911, to West Palm Beach and briefly served as county sheriff. And then moved to Gomez (aka Fruita) in Hobe Sound. It is not known when the family started operating a still and dealing in bootlegging, but their acquaintances soon became aware of it.



Little Laura and Big John Movie Poster. Courtesy of the Elliott Museum



Clarence Middleton

Ray Lynn

John Ashley

Roy Matthews

Hanford Mobley

continued on page 6

Size Matters!

Now that summer has rolled back around again (where does the time go?), so have the nesting turtles out on the beach as they scramble to make this season another successful one for their offspring. As I've described before in previous articles, both male and female sea turtles must individually (albeit instinctively) figure out where to go and when to meet their counterparts in order to complete their life cycles. Once on the beach, the turtles leave all sorts of clues to their reproductive strategies, but these clues are a little lopsided since they're only provided by adult females and tiny hatchlings, leaving huge gaps in our understanding of most aspects of sea turtle biology.



A Pair of Green Turtles. Photo by Jim Abernathy

We can, however, reveal some otherwise hidden aspects of their biology through simple observation followed by the application of basic biological principles. An elegant example of how we can deduce some of the evolutionary drivers behind sea turtle life

histories comes from the observation that male and female sea turtles are quite similarly sized as adults. At first, this observation doesn't sound particularly insightful, but after a second look, might lead to some interesting conclusions about sea turtle behavior.

The differences in appearance between male and females of any species are officially known as sexual dimorphisms. They range from extremes in dimorphism (think peacocks), to virtually none at all (think swans). Sea turtles exhibit no reliable sexual dimorphism until they reach maturity, at which time the males grow a long, conspicuous tail while the females don't. Most importantly, however, it seems that both sexes pretty much stop growing after that point, exhibiting something called a determinate growth pattern. What makes this interesting is that it differs so markedly from most other aquatic species of turtles. Remember that the sea turtle lineage leads all the way back to their semi-aquatic and aquatic precursors that still thrive today in the form of the many pond and swamp species we see in freshwater environments. In most cases, the females are significantly larger than the males, sometimes by a lot. In species where male-male combat is the norm, natural selection often favors big strong males. In species where fecundity matters most (a.k.a. potential to produce offspring), the opposite occurs so she can carry lots of eggs. In the case of sea turtles, it seems these evolutionary drivers canceled each other out, leaving us to wonder how and why.

For more clues, we might turn to the other differences we see between non-marine aquatic turtles and sea turtles. The most obvious is the gradual adaptation away from webbed feet toward a full set of underwater wings, commonly known as flippers. The next is the highly efficient streamlining of the body to reduce hydrodynamic drag, resulting in the inability of sea turtles to retract their appendages 'into' their shells like most others. Neither of these adaptations were likely to have occurred if similar long-range migrations weren't required by both sexes. Since survival requires a balanced budget of energy, something's gained only when something's lost. Migrations are very energetically expensive, which by necessity cuts into the energy that might be otherwise available for an unending, or indeterminate growth pattern, in which they can attain ever larger proportions (however slow the rate may become) throughout their lives. Once mature, females simply can't afford to grow anymore since they have both the every-few-year migration and the added energetic burden of egg production and deposition. Likewise, the males can't afford to get any bigger because even though they don't have to produce eggs, they do have to make the same migration every year rather than every few. Further, direct male-male combat in competition for females doesn't seem to be a common trait among sea turtles, further dampening selection for larger body size. Thus, the simple fact that the boys and girls grow up to about the same proportions can reveal a number of unseen life history traits that are now gradually becoming revealed by observation and advanced satellite telemetry. For more information, see Figgenger et al. at <https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.8963>.

Now that summer is here again, always be reminded to be kind to the mom turtles as they struggle through the season by keeping the beach as dark as possible, join organized turtle walks if you'd like to go watch, and avoid areas marked off at the beach for the nests. Every little bit helps!



Submitted by Larry Wood, Ph.D.
Research Coordinator
National Save The Sea Turtle Foundation
www.savetheseaturtle.org



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The Old Steam Engine

Provided by Sara Luering, Park Service Specialist, from a display inside the Kimbell Education Center at Jonathan Dickinson State Park

Hidden by thick palmettos in the floodplain of the Loxahatchee River sits a large, mysterious engine. How could something so big be in such a remote area of the park?



Logging activity was growing in the early 20th century. Slash pine trees were desired for their insect and disease resistant heartwood, and large old-growth cypress trees were prized for their beauty and durability.

Area along the banks of the Kitching Creek and the Loxahatchee River in what is now Jonathan Dickinson State Park were very

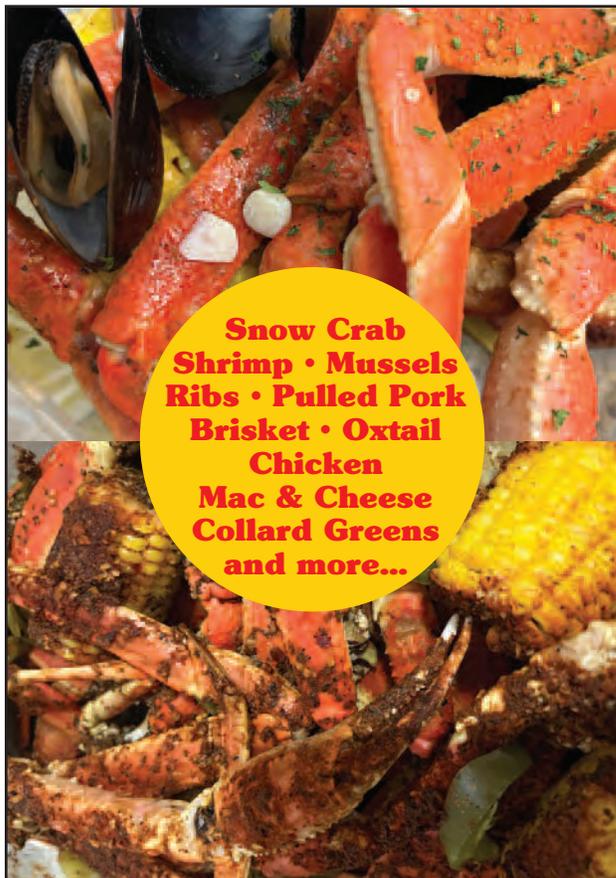
accessible and therefore prime locations for harvesting. After trees were marked, sometimes a year before cutting, they were floated downstream to a sawmill.

These sawmills were intended to be temporary, and whether wheeled onsite by teams of men or pulled by horses, the steam engine was the center of the mill operation. Also called a steam boiler, it powered a large rotary saw blade that cut the tree into planks.

After cleaning an area about a mile wide, the milling operation would move to the next stand. If a steam engine became non-functional, it would often be abandoned as it was more trouble to haul it out than to bring in a new one. Derelict engines were sometimes found by locals and turned into a moonshine still.

The steam engine that remains in the park today is sometimes a destination but always a reminder of our history and the people who lived here before us. If you would like to visit the old steam engine, stop by the Kimbell Education Center for the GPS coordinates. Remember to take only photos of the old steam engine and leave no trace.

Sara Luering
Park Service Specialist
Jonathan Dickinson State Park



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Whether you are a small business with one or two employees, or a large business with many employees, you want your colleagues to make their best appearance when interacting with your customers. Customer service is primary in acquiring and retaining clients. Besides being polite and helpful your employees should always look their best as well. The **Hobe Sound Beach Shop/Tees Please** is ready and able to help you achieve that goal.



If you already have a logo or need a logo created for you, we can help. We can print a few shirts or thousands if that be the need. We work with suppliers who offer shirts in every price point, every style, every color so that we can match your requirements.

Are you part of an athletic team? Tees Please can have your players looking their best and scoring big points for appearance. Is your family planning a reunion? Does the new bride and/or groom want special gifts for their wedding party to remember the bachelor party or bridesmaid's night out, or maybe special bride and groom shirts so everyone knows who the happy couple is?? And of course, Grandma and Grandpa want a shirt or maybe a tote bag with a photo of their grandchild.



If you're looking for a special and unique gift, how about bringing in a photo and have it printed on a shirt, an apron, a tote bag, a mug. Yes, Tees Please can do just one or a whole bunch for any special occasion or business meeting. THE ONLY LIMITATION IS YOUR IMAGINATION!!

The **Hobe Sound Beach Shop/Tees Please** was founded on printing custom tee shirts and has evolved into much more. Come in and talk to us and learn how we can help you and your crew look your best and further promote your business while serving your customers. Or let us help you make any occasion truly special! We're here 7 days a week and ready to serve.



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Design Consultant



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Fun Facts about Ice Cream

- The ice cream industry has a \$13.1 billion impact on the U.S. economy, supports 28,800 direct jobs, and generates \$1.8 billion in direct wages.
- The majority of U.S. ice cream and frozen dessert manufacturers have been in business for more than 50 years and many are still family-owned businesses.
- In 2020, ice cream makers in the U.S. churned out just over 1 billion gallons of ice cream, up 6% from 2019.
- The average American consumes approximately 23 pounds of ice cream and related frozen desserts per year.



America's top 10 favorite ice cream flavors:

- Vanilla
- Chocolate
- Cookies N' Cream
- Mint Chocolate Chip
- Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough
- Buttered Pecan
- Cookie Dough
- Strawberry
- Moose Tracks
- Neapolitan

If you love ice cream as much as we do, join us July 3 from noon to 3:00 for free Sundaes at the Hobe Sound Beach Shop

Source: International Dairy Foods Association

DJ Jef is available with great music for of all your special occasions

Weddings, Anniversaries, Birthdays, Backyard BBQs, and he can challenge the best with his Trivia Quiz events.

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Our History is a Treasure: Chapter Sixteen continued from page 1

"King of the Everglades" and "Swamp Bandit" were nicknames bestowed on John Ashley during his crime-spree years spanning from about 1910 thru 1924. Some say the downfall of John Hopkin Ashley occurred when he allegedly killed a Seminole trapper named DeSoto Tiger, son of one of the most highly respected Seminole chiefs, Chief Tommy Tiger, head of the Cow Creek Seminoles. Desoto Tiger was known among the white pioneers as a man of integrity.

After the body of DeSoto Tiger, who had been shot in the head, was found on December 29, 1911 by a dredging crew working near Lake Okeechobee, an investigation ensued, and John Ashley was immediately under suspicion for the murder, and became a hunted criminal who led his gang for the next thirteen years.

Testimony of Seminole Jimmy Gopher stated that he last saw Desoto Tiger and John Ashley traveling in a canoe loaded with otter hides to sell at a local market. And later authorities were told by the Girtman Brothers, fur traders in Miami, that they had paid John Ashley, who was alone, \$1,200 for the hides. Add to that the fact that on the evening of December 28, 1911, John had been arrested in West Palm Beach for "recklessly displaying firearms." Two deputies, S.A. Barfield and Bob Hannon, were sent in pursuit of Ashley and they found him camping in a

palmetto thicket in Hobe Sound. As the deputies walked along the old Dixie Highway, looking to take him into custody they were surprised by John and his brother, Bob, and were disarmed at gunpoint. John Ashley sent them back with a message for Sheriff George B. Baker "not to send any more chicken-hearted men with rifles or they are apt to get hurt". Amazingly, the brothers later sent the deputies' guns back to Sheriff Baker.

After that incident, John left the state and went to New Orleans where he briefly worked on a boat and then went to Seattle to work in a logging camp. He began to miss his "loyal and close-knit family" and so returned to Florida in 1914. He surrendered for the murder of DeSoto Tiger admitting killing him but said he did so in "self-defense." He was apprehended near the family home in Gomez. The trial took place in July 1914 and ended in a mistrial. During his trial he claimed that DeSoto Tiger threatened to shoot him if he didn't give him some liquor. The jury voted nine for acquittal and three for conviction.

A second trial was held with a change of venue to Dade County. After the court adjourned, the wife of Deputy Sheriff Robert "Bob" Baker brought him a plate of food sent by John's mother. In a moment when Jailor Bob Baker turned his back, Ashley threw down the plate, bolted over a 10 feet high chicken wire fence, and disappeared into the darkness. He was pursued by

THE HUNTER AND THE HUNTED.



SHERIFF BOB BAKER OF PALM BEACH COUNTY.



JOHN ASHLEY, BOLD FUGITIVE, WHO DEFIES LAW.

Newspaper clipping of John Ashley and Sheriff Bob Baker. Courtesy of the Elliott Museum

Bob Baker on a bicycle, but successfully escaped. During the time he stayed hidden in the Everglades he joined up with three criminals who were from Chicago: Clarence Middleton, a dope addict; Kid Lowe, a bank robber; and Roy Matthews.

First a train, then the Bank of Stuart

The group attempted a train robbery which failed miserably. The Gang eluded arrest and desperate for a capture Sheriff Baker arrested John Ashley's nephew, Hanford Mobley, John's father, Joe Ashley, and "a colored man who worked for him." All were later released to the public embarrassment of Sheriff George Baker. It was one week later on February 23, 1915, when the "Ashley Gang" robbed the Bank of Stuart.

John, his brother Bob and fellow gang member, Kid Lowe, held up the bank getting away with approximately \$4,500. They ordered one of the bankers to get in his car and drive them away.



Ashley Family Cemetery located on what used to be their homestead. By JoeCapozzi.com

The Gang began firing their pistols to show that they meant business. In the melee, Lowe fired a shot that shattered John Ashley's jaw with the bullet resting against his left eye. Sheriff Baker later caught John Ashley at his camp only because he needed medical care. He refused surgery to remove the **bullet**, and eventually was fitted with a **glass eye**.

Bob and Kid Lowe escaped, and John was taken to the jail in Palm Beach where he was held to be tried again for the murder of DeSoto Tiger. The trial took place in Dade County. After a short trial John Ashley was found guilty as charged and was sentenced to death by hanging. In an attempt to help his brother escape, Bob Ashley went to the home of Sheriff Wilber Hendrickson to take the keys to the jail. When Hendrickson opened the door Bob Ashley shot him. Grabbing the keys which he later dropped, he fled the scene and was pursued by two policemen. A gun fight broke out and Bob Ashley was killed by officer John Rinehart "Bob" Riblett but not before he shot Riblett, who also died. He was the first of the Ashleys to be buried in a family cemetery near their home in Gomez, and Riblett was the first officer killed in the line of duty in Palm Beach County.

John Ashley made attempts to break out of prison but in August of 1916 the Supreme Court of Florida reversed the decision of the circuit court and the case was dismissed. He was returned to Palm Beach for trial for bank robbery and was sentenced to 17 ½ years in the penitentiary. He proved to be a "model prisoner" and was sent to work on a road camp. Within a few months he escaped and fled to the Everglades where his girlfriend, Laura Uptegrove was waiting for him.

John loves Laura

Laura Uptegrove was a member of one of the old Florida families and the only woman who was ever linked romantically with John Ashley. It is reported that she participated in all of the



John Ashley's actual glass eye on exhibit at the Elliott Museum. By JoeCapozzi.com.

activities of the Gang. A reporter described her as a "large woman with dark hair, a deep suntan, and wore a .38 caliber revolver strapped to her waist." Due to her association with the notorious Gang, she was called the "Queen of the Everglades." Overall, the Gang was wanted by Federal Indian Agents, the Florida East Coast Railway, the banking company, and of course, local law enforcement.

Poor Florida "Crackers" tended to consider John Ashley a "folk hero", a kind of modern-day Robin Hood, representing a symbol of resistance to bankers, lawmen and wealthy landowners. Some told of acts of kindness: leaving money or food for needy people, ditching a bank robbery after learning the bank president was a childhood playmate, disarming but sparing a man sent to kill them and sending him off with a \$5 bill. Many people lived in terror of him, while many helped protect him and considered him a friend.

The Indians would invite the Ashley boys to hunt and trap with them because they usually brought liquor into their camps.

Local "moonshiners" didn't like him very much because Ashley and his gang undermined their activities by hijacking numerous shipments of illegal whiskey being smuggled into the state from the Bahamas. They were so effective that rum-running on the



John Ashley and Laura Uptegrove. By JoeCapozzi.com. Courtesy of the Elliott Museum.

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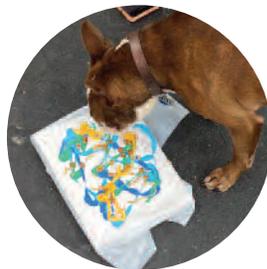
Everyone in Hobe Sound has heard DJ Jef one time or another as he's frequently found playing music and leading trivia at the VFW and other places around town. He's a terrific addition to any party and will make sure we all have fun listening to music, browsing the sales, and eating free ice cream sundaes.



Is your dog the next Picasso or van Gogh?

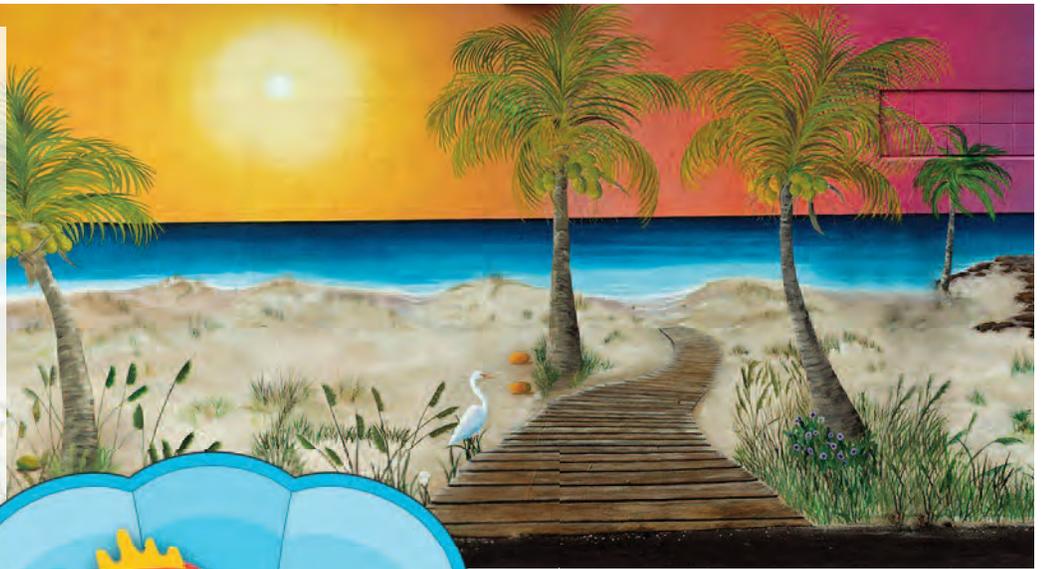
ArfArt is an original Beach Shop event that allows your dog to be creative and give you a gift of his/her own creation!

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We're famous! You can be too!

We've noticed many professional film crews taking awesome pictures in front of our very special murals. So we thought, "we can too!" But our Beach Shop creativity kicked in and we decided photos for our Sundaes on Sunday event should be even more special. Come take your picture as the Mermaid you wish you were. Or picture what it's like in the mouth of a shark. And Raya the Disney Dragon is special for boys and girls everywhere.



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**Lots of
Surprises
and Prizes**

Our History is a Treasure: Chapter Sixteen continued from page 7

Florida coast virtually ceased while the Gang was active. His two-man raid on the West End in the Bahamas in 1924 marked the first time in over a century that American pirates had attacked a British Crown colony.

The Ashley Gang robs 40 banks!

It is estimated that during their heyday the Gang managed to rob nearly \$1 million from at least 40 banks. The news media frequently compared John Ashley to Jesse James. Almost every major crime in Florida was blamed on Ashley and his gang and one Florida official called him "the greatest threat to the state since the Seminole Wars."

John and his brothers operated 3 stills which proved to be a very lucrative endeavor due to the 1920 Prohibition Law. During this time, he was once again apprehended and returned to the penitentiary from which he previously escaped in Raiford, Florida. While he was detained more tragedy struck the Ashley family when brothers Ed and Frank, who continued the rum-running in John's absence, never returned from a run they made to the Bahamas with \$13,000 to make a purchase. Their disappearance was never solved, and speculation was whether they fell prey to weather, to other hijackers, or to Ashley vengeance.

A woman? bank robber

While John remained in jail different members of the Gang served as leader. Their continuing activities mostly involved the hijacking of rum-runners whose loads were transported by car or by boat. His young nephew, Hanford Mobley, quit school and became an active member of the Gang. They planned more bank robberies. On one attempt, in May 1922, again on the Bank of Stuart, young Mobley disguised as a woman to perpetrate the crime. They fled the scene in a car they had stolen from a resident in Gomez, having tied him to a tree. They were pursued and apprehended by Bob Baker who had now followed his father as Sheriff of Palm Beach County. After several attempts to break out of jail, Mobley and Matthews were moved to a more secure facility and eventually broke out anyway. In September 1923, John Ashley apparently bribed a guard and once again broke out of the penitentiary in Raiford.

John Ashley avenges his mother

Shortly after, he was reported to have murdered a tramp who had gone to the back door of the Ashley home to beg for food. Mrs. Ashley invited him in and gave him dinner. Realizing she was alone he grabbed and raped her. According to a report by a close family friend, John hunted the man down and killed him.

On January 9, 1924, Sheriff Bob Baker and a large posse attacked the Ashley campsite located about 2 miles southwest of the family homestead in Gomez. During the ensuing firefight Joe Ashley was shot in the head as he bent over to tie his boots. After witnessing his father's death, John Ashley fired his gun at one of the officers hiding behind a palmetto bush. He killed Deputy Sheriff Frederick "Fred" Baker – cousin of Sheriff Bob Baker. The Gang again escaped. So furious regarding his cousin's murder, Bob Baker and the posse burned to the ground the homes of Hanford Mobley and Joe Ashley.

Their illegal activities continued, and they expanded their operation to the central part of the state. Between their exploits in crime and breaking in and out of jails they continued to keep the sheriffs of many counties frustrated and embarrassed.

According to reports, "the outlaws frequently stole automobiles to haul their shine, and later abandoned them." This crime was committed so frequently that Sheriff Merritt's office in Fort Pierce reported recovering thirty automobiles in one month." So angered, the sheriff and his posse invaded the Everglades and destroyed every nook and cranny associated with the Gang.

The bullet and the glass eye and a family traitor!

During a bank robbery in Pompano on September 12, 1924, the legend continues that Ashley had a "to the death" feud with local Sheriff Bob Baker and that Ashley gave an unspent **bullet** to the bank cashier with instructions to give it to Baker stating that he had "one just like it that had his name on it", and Baker sent word back that one day he'd "wear Ashley's **glass eye** as a watch fob."

Ashley made a decision to relocate and hide his gang 275 miles north to Jacksonville where his sister Daisy resided. The plan was to rob banks there before returning to Palm Beach County to avenge his father's death by assassinating Sheriff Baker after the November elections.

On the morning of November 1, 1924, John Ashley's brother-in-law, George Frances Mario, husband of his sister, Lola, was observed by Stuart Police Chief Oren B. Padgett coming out of a Stuart grocery store with bags of goods which he proceeded to load into a black Model-T Ford. For a reason yet unknown, Mario betrayed his brother-in-law and motioned for Padgett to come over and whispered, "They're leaving tonight for Jacksonville and will be traveling in this automobile."

Chief Padgett knew that Mario was referring to John Ashley and his gang. Padgett immediately telephoned Sheriff Robert C. Baker. The sheriff contacted St. Lucie County Sheriff J. R. Merritt and they devised a plan to suspend a heavy chain across Dixie Highway on the south end of the Sebastian River Bridge, a hundred miles north of West Palm Beach, with a red lantern hanging from the center.

In addition to Stuart Police Chief Oren B. Padgett, Sheriff Baker sent Palm Beach County deputies Elmer Padgett, Henry Stubbs, and L.B. Thomas to the bridge. Sheriff Merritt brought two of his St. Lucie County deputies. Strangely, Sheriff Baker, the man who most wanted John Ashley, did not go with them.

Ashley's sneaky move backfires....

As they waited at the bridge, word reached Sheriff Merritt that at 8pm Ashley and three men had left Fort Pierce, 35 miles to the south, in their black Model-T Ford. At 10:30pm, a car pulled up in the darkness and the lawmen approached with their sawed-off shotguns. To their surprise it was two young Sebastian men, Ted R. Miller and Shadrick Odell 'S.O.' Davis staring nervously back at them. Within seconds, another car pulled up behind Miller and Davis. It was the Ashley Gang!! The lawmen rushed them from both sides, and before they had a chance to react, shoved their shotguns into the faces of John Ashley, Hanford Mobley, Clarence Middleton, and Ray "Shorty" Lynn.

They were ordered out of the vehicle. Sheriff Merritt asked Miller and Davis to drive him across the bridge so he could retrieve his car and transport the Gang to the Fort Pierce Jail. As they drove away, Miller and Davis clearly saw Ashley handcuffed by himself and the other three men handcuffed together.

It was reported in the newspapers that Ashley and his gang "made a move against the lawmen." The officers claimed they had no choice but to defend themselves and shot the gangsters dead on the spot. John Ashley and his henchmen were finally stopped from their escapades terrorizing South Floridians while

Banner Lake Academy

Join us in congratulating the third grade students of Banner Lake Academy! On May 26th, 2022, Banner Lake Academy celebrated a monumental accomplishment when their first, third grade class graduated from the kindergarten through third grade private academy. This is the first graduating class, from a third grade class in the community in over 50 years! The last school, Dunbar Elementary School, named after African American poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar, was reinvented just down the street from its original location. Banner



Photo provided by Seezen Studios by Raime Weaver.
Johan, Luzlena, Diego, Johan, Callie (left to right) Middle (Alijah)

Lake Academy was established in 2019, as a privately funded and tuition-free elementary school. An additional grade level, started each year since the initial opening, now makes the Academy a kindergarten through third grade school. The Academy prides itself on a low teacher to student ratio, small class size, along with intense student, innovative instruction. This includes collaboration, and a

strong foundation in social and emotional learning. The goal of Banner Lake Academy is to ensure students receive the highest rated education and transition confidently, into the 4th grade with proficiency and academic success. Parents are very proud that their children will attend either Hobe Sound Elementary or The Pine School, as they grow to their fullest potential.

Banner Lake Academy is just one pillar within the Banner Lake Club. The "Club" also provides support to the entire community, through an after-school program serving children ages 5 to age 18, in a program called B.L.A.S.T. (Banner Lake After School Time).

The Banner Lake Club ensures alpha to omega support to the community. The goal is to provide a conscious environment which starts at the beginning of life and never ends. Support is provided to pregnant mothers, young families and seniors, Banner Lake Academy, with a village of network partners and alliances. The Club offers several support programs. Keep Banner Beautiful for example, renovates homes and areas of concern for community residents.

It has been and will continue to be our goal to provide the community with equal access to learning opportunities, nourishment, housing restoration, and life skills. The Banner Lake Club has a team of senior directors, to oversee each pillar of this organization.

Wendy Reynoso, Executive Director

Dunbar Early Learning Center & Banner Lake Club

Our History is a Treasure: Chapter Sixteen *continued from page 10*

confounding and causing embarrassment for Sheriff Robert "Bob" Baker and his colleagues.

Set the record straight...

In the 1950s, Ada Coats Williams, who taught at Fort Pierce's Indian River Community College, learned the true story about the Ashley Gang's demise from a retired deputy who'd been on the bridge that evening. The deputy confessed that as soon as the car carrying Sheriff Merritt, Miller and Davis was across the

bridge the lawmen summarily executed all four men. He said Sheriff Merritt knew the tiny Fort Pierce Jail would never hold the Ashley Gang. They had already killed three law enforcement officers. There would not be a fourth! Ms. Williams was not to publish this accounting until all of the officers involved had died.

Laura defends Ashley's glass eye

They drove the bodies to Will Fee's Hardware and Mortuary in Fort Pierce. It didn't take long for word to spread, but the public was skeptical that they were actually dead because the Ashley Gang had survived so many incredible odds. The next morning, all four corpses were carried outside and displayed on the sidewalk in front of the mortuary. John Ashley's glass eye was plucked out and sent to Sheriff Baker. Upon hearing this, Laura Upthegrove sent a message to the sheriff that read, "If you don't put back that eye, I'll crawl through Hell on my hands and knees to kill you." Sheriff Baker immediately returned John Ashley's glass eye for burial on November 4th at the family property in Gomez. (The actual eye is currently on exhibit at the Elliott Museum.)

The last of the Ashley Gang, Heywood Register, was killed in a shootout with Baker and two deputies on January 29, 1929, along the Boynton Canal after escaping from Raiford Penitentiary on December 5th.

The last remaining Ashley brother, Bill, wanted nothing to do with the family business. Known as the good Ashley, Bill dabbled in bootlegging, but that appeared to be the extent of his criminal activities. However, he was the only witness when George Frances Mario died on December 2, 1932, in the South Fork of the St Lucie River when their small boat capsized.



John Ashley's Hat. By JoeCapozzi.com. Courtesy of the Elliott Museum

Our History is a Treasure: Chapter Sixteen continued from page 11

Though he knew how to swim, George drowned while Bill made it safely to shore. It has been speculated that Bill sought revenge against George for informing Police Chief Padgett of the Ashley Gang's plans on November 1, 1924 that resulted in their capture. Bill Ashley died in Pompano Beach in 1940. The Ashley matriarch, Lugenia Clay Ashley, survived her husband and all five of her sons and died in 1946 at the age of eighty-four.

Laura Upthegrove was heartbroken after the death of John Ashley and reportedly was in and out of jail on various charges including public intoxication, bootlegging, and gambling. She owned and operated a small gas station in Canal Point on the southeastern shore of Lake Okeechobee. On August 6, 1927, she got into a heated argument with a man returning a bottle of moonshine. He claimed it was inferior and wanted a refund. Enraged, she chased him out of the store with a gun. Upon returning, Laura impulsively grabbed a bottle of what she thought was gin and chugged it down. The bottle contained Lysol disinfectant and she collapsed to the floor writhing in convulsions. Coincidentally, the sister of Stuart Police Chief Oren B. Padgett, Eliza Padgett, had just stopped by to visit her. Eliza begged Laura's mother, Emma, to call a doctor. Emma looked down impassively at her thirty-year-old daughter and said, "No, she's better off this way."

Please take note: I have done a great deal of research on this topic. However, each version of the story of the Ashley Gang has just a little bit different information as relates to time frames and some incidents and each is filled with a lot of "hearsay." That being the case, I have put together a timeline and references that most consistently appear in the different accounts of the Gang's capers and life experiences. It will definitely give you an idea of what transpired; therefore, some facts may be reported differently in different versions. Above all, I hope you enjoyed reading about this intriguing part of Hobe Sound history!

Some sources of information for this article include: "Florida's Ashley Gang" by Ada Coats Williams, copyright 1996; Palm Beach Post article from March 6, 2016 by Eliot Kleinberg; Notes for westpalmbeach.com from Alice L. Luckhardt, historian of Stuart Heritage Museum; and Wikipedia.

For an in-depth look and docent tours regarding the Ashley Gang please visit the Elliott Museum, 825 NE Ocean Blvd., Stuart, FL 34996. 772-225-1961; www.elliottmuseumfl.org

There are several interesting presentations about the Ashley's on YouTube and you can find Ada Coats Williams book at the Florida Classics Books & Gifts, 11309 SE Lares Street, Hobe Sound.

Some trivia of interest:

- The Gang led by John Ashley included: Joe, Bob, Ed and Frank Ashley; Kid Lowe; Roy Matthews; Ray Lynn; Clarence Middleton; Hanford Mobley; Heywood Register; and Laura Upthegrove
- The Ashley family cemetery is located near the 18th hole of the golf course in the gated community of Mariner Sands at 6500 Mariner Sands Drive, Stuart
- Sheriff George B. Baker was the first sheriff of Palm Beach County, his son Robert "Bob" Baker followed after George's death
- Reportedly thousands of dollars of the Gang's money may be buried in sites in or near Hobe Sound. Some say it was "used up" or "donated" to family members.
- Until 1925 present day Martin County was part of Palm Beach County
- *Little Laura and Big John* was filmed in 1969 and finally released in 1973
- Filmed in and around Stuart 32 local people had roles in the movie and 125 others appeared in crowd scenes
- The movie starred Fabian (then teen heart throb) and Karen Black
- It cost \$200,000 to make the movie
- Sadly, it got bad reviews, but locals loved it
- First book written about the Gang was published in 1928 by Hix C. Stuart, *The Notorious Ashley Gang*
- Today there is a Florida folk band called The Ashley Gang performing songs about the original gang
- There exists an Ashley Gang Imperial India Pale Ale produced by Big Top Brewing Co. in Sarasota

If you would like to read other **Hobe Sound Beach Shop's Turtle Times** chapters of Our History is a Treasure visit www.hobesoundbeachshop.com. All past issues are posted there.



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A little Trivia from Dictionary.com:

jubilant[joo-buh-luhnt] adjective

showing great joy, satisfaction, or triumph; rejoicing; exultant.
*Come one and all and celebrate a **jubilant** event at the Hobe Sound Beach Shop for Sundaes on Sunday. Hear great music by DJ Jef, get a Mermaid Massage by Martha, find a perfect gift, a brand new name-brand outfit, or souvenir on sale, and enjoy a FREE ice cream sundae. Bring your dog along and he can create a one-of-a-kind t-shirt or canvas Art for you. Take photographs as a Mermaid, or Shark, or Raya the Dragon, in front of the famous No. 1 Hobe Sound Mural. The **jubilation** begins on Sunday, July 3rd at 10am and goes until 4pm.*

Real Estate Corner- Hey Rich, How's the Real Estate Market?

My answer, to quote Paul Simon, "Still Crazy after all these years"

However, there are some predictions it's shifting according to Redfin economist Taylor Marr, who sees a slowing market ahead — but not price drops. Does that augur the return of the so-called balanced market of yore? Unclear as of today a consensus has emerged this spring that the market is changing. Economists are seeing a shift. So is Gary Keller. Fannie Mae is predicting a recession. And mortgage rates are suddenly higher than they were just months ago. Insurance rates have gone sky high to just further confuse the Real Estate Market.

The result is growing pressure on home prices. And though it's still relatively early days in this story, two things are clear: First, home prices are still rising. They haven't collapsed and are not expected to in the near future. But second, sellers are losing some of their advantage and are having to reduce what they're asking. That doesn't mean prices are dropping, but it does suggest price growth will slow down and a more balanced market may return.

Now for some good news!

Governor DeSantis has allocated \$100 million Dollars to help Homeownership in the State of Florida.

If you are a first responder or front line worker, you can qualify for up to \$25,000 in credits towards down payment or closing costs. This program is a bond for down payment assistance.

Jobs That Qualify:

- Teachers
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- Nurses
- Firefighters
- Medical Assistants
- MANY MORE....

This bond program does have some requirements such as: minimum credit score, only applies to primary homes, only for first-time homebuyer (unless you are a veteran).

Ask your Mortgage Broker and get pre-qualified for a mortgage while the program is in it's infancy!

Perhaps with some help renters can now buy a new home.

Just Sayin'

Rich Otten, PSA, C2EX

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Chapter Sixteen

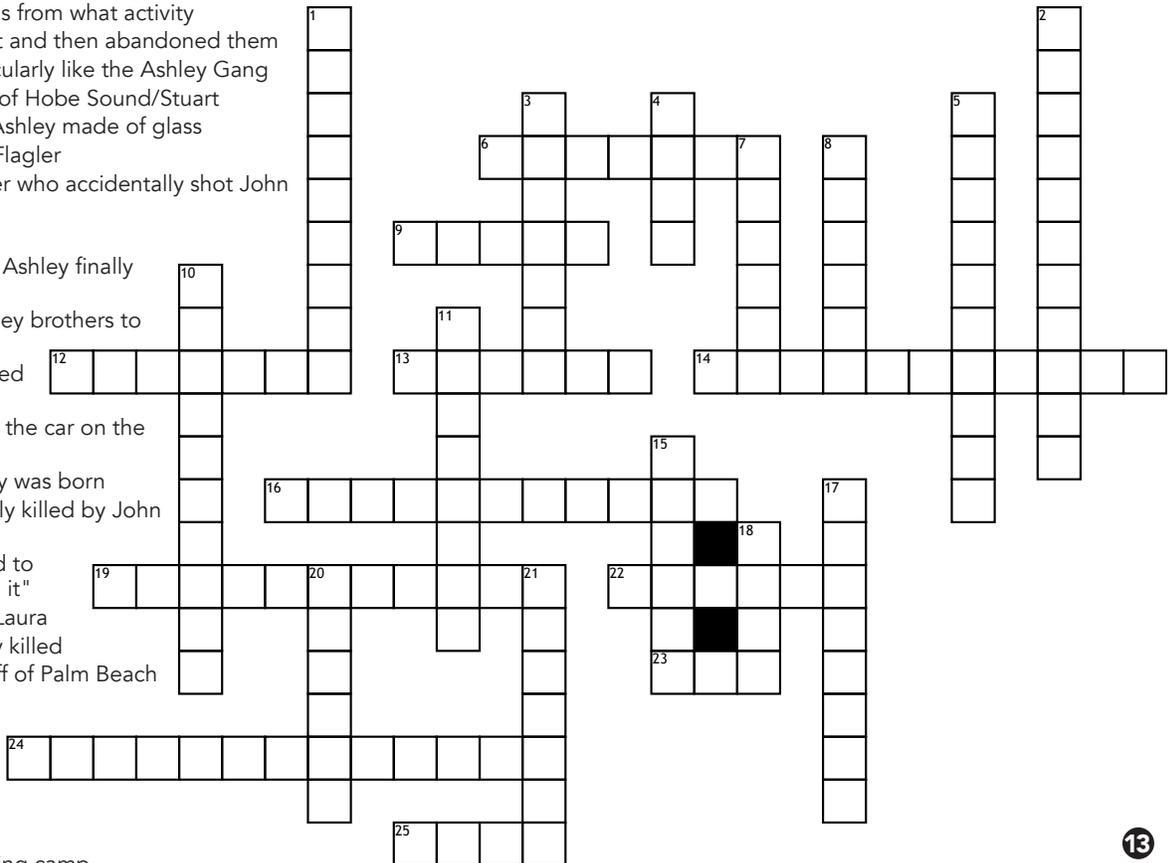
Hint: All Answers Can be Found in the Chapter Sixteen Article.

Across

- Name of the penitentiary from which John Ashley twice escaped
- Young Mobley disguised as what to rob the Bank of Stuart
- What red item hung on a chain across the south end of the bridge
- Deputy Sheriff Fred Baker was what to Sheriff Bob Baker
- Ashley family's main income was from what activity
- The Gang frequently stole what and then abandoned them
- What local group did not particularly like the Ashley Gang
- Another name for Gomez area of Hobe Sound/Stuart
- Important possession of John Ashley made of glass
- Title of railroad tycoon, Henry Flagler
- Last name of fellow bank robber who accidentally shot John Ashley

Down

- On what River Bridge did John Ashley finally have his life of crime ended
- What 1920 law helped the Ashley brothers to be successful
- Ed and Frank Ashley disappeared coming from where
- How many of the Gang were in the car on the night of their capture
- Florida town where John Ashley was born
- First name of Seminole allegedly killed by John Ashley
- What did John threaten to send to Sheriff Baker "with his name on it"
- Last name of John's girlfriend, Laura
- In what month was John Ashley killed
- Which Baker was the first Sheriff of Palm Beach County
- John Ashley was a "folk hero" to poor Florida what
- Number of children of Joe and Leugenia Ashley
- John Ashley's middle name
- Where did John work in a logging camp



The Meaning of Pain

What is the purpose of pain?

Pain causes you to pay attention to something that is not working right. It's a warning that a limit of some type has been reached that the body is not equipped to handle or cannot adapt further. It's a not-too-subtle way your body alerts you that a change is required.

In many ways, pain is a good thing. It's only when we misinterpret the pain or make it go away without tending to its underlying cause that we get into trouble.

Many people begin care in our practice because of a painful symptom. Naturally, we show our compassion, but our primary interest is in the underlying cause of pain. Numbing the body with drugs to hide the pain may be convenient, but in the long run, expensive. We take a more natural approach. It begins with a thorough examination. Plus, we'll ask about the various physical, emotional, and chemical stresses you may be experiencing.

If you know someone who regularly takes pain medication to suppress their ability to sense pain, urge them to consult our practice. We promise to help identify the underlying cause of their problem and offer safe and natural solutions to their body's cry for help. If we cannot help, we will refer you to someone who can.

For your pain to be GONE call Dr. Gonyo! Call for relief today! 772-781-0193

Dr. Leon Gonyo, D.C. F.I.A.M.A.

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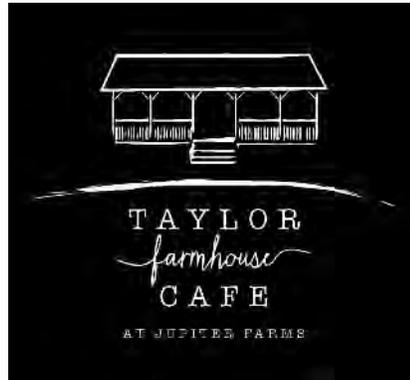
Chapter Sixteen Answers

Across

6. Name of the penitentiary from which John Ashley twice escaped RAIFORD
6. Young Mobley disguised as what to rob the Bank of Stuart WOMAN
6. What red item hung on a chain across the south end of the bridge LANTERN
13. Deputy Sheriff Fred Baker was what to Sheriff Bob Baker COUSIN
14. Ashley family's main income was from what activity BOOTLEGGING
16. The Gang frequently stole what and then abandoned them AUTOMOBILES
19. What local group did not particularly like the Ashley Gang MOONSHINERS
22. Another name for Gomez area of Hobe Sound/Stuart FRUITA
23. Important possession of John Ashley made of glass EYE
24. Title of railroad tycoon, Henry Flagler INDUSTRIALIST
25. Last name of fellow bank robber who accidentally shot John Ashley LOWE

Down

1. On what River Bridge did John Ashley finally have his life of crime ended SEBASTIAN
2. What 1920 law helped the Ashley brothers to be successful PROHIBITION
3. Ed and Frank Ashley disappeared coming from where BAHAMAS
4. How many of the Gang were in the car on the night of their capture FOUR
5. Florida town where John Ashley was born BUCKINGHAM
7. First name of Seminole allegedly killed by John Ashley DESOTO
8. What did John threaten to send to Sheriff Baker "with his name on it" BULLET
10. Last name of John's girlfriend, Laura UPTHEGROVE
11. In what month was John Ashley killed NOVEMBER
15. Which Baker was the first Sheriff of Palm Beach County GEORGE
17. John Ashley was a "folk hero" to poor Florida what CRACKERS
18. Number of children of Joe and Leugenia Ashley NINE
20. John Ashley's middle name HOPKIN
21. Where did John work in a logging camp SEATTLE



Taylor Beach House Café

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taylorbeachhousecafe.com

If you haven't visited this Hobe Sound gem you don't know what you're missing! Besides the beautiful beachy ambiance, the food is truly wonderful. Of particular note is the taco selection that includes fish tacos

and BBQ tacos that are scrumptious and very reasonably priced, as are the drinks. We've also enjoyed the flatbread as an appetizer while we each had a nice glass of wine or beer. Check out the varied menu and you'll surely find something you'll enjoy.

The renovation of the inside of the restaurant is also to be lauded as the décor and color scheme are well thought out and relaxing. Colorful pillows soften the seating and the lighting is perfect, with staff attire that fits in with the color scheme. When entertainment is playing outside the choice is to immerse yourself in the sound, or eat inside where it is background music conducive to conversation. The long bar is also attractive and comfortable if you're just dropping in for a glass of wine or beer and appetizer.

Submitted by Anonymous Restaurant Reviewer



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for details.

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