

Charlotte Harbor Cemetery

Oldest Marked Cemetery in Charlotte County

Established in 1879, Charlotte Harbor Cemetery is the oldest known marked cemetery in Charlotte County and the final resting place of many local pioneers who braved a subtropical wilderness and Civil War reconstruction to build a settlement on the Charlotte Harbor waterfront. Everyday families, intrepid individuals and noteworthy leaders are all represented here. Their personal monuments are now weathered tombstones.



When Joel Knight died in 1879, his daughter Mary E. (Knight) Giddens and her husband Mathieu Giddens set aside a corner of their property for a burial place. It became the local cemetery for residents over three decades, until the Charlotte Harbor Cemetery land with boundaries as they exist today was deeded to First Methodist Church of Charlotte Harbor (now Trinity United Methodist Church) on May 1, 1908 for \$1.00.



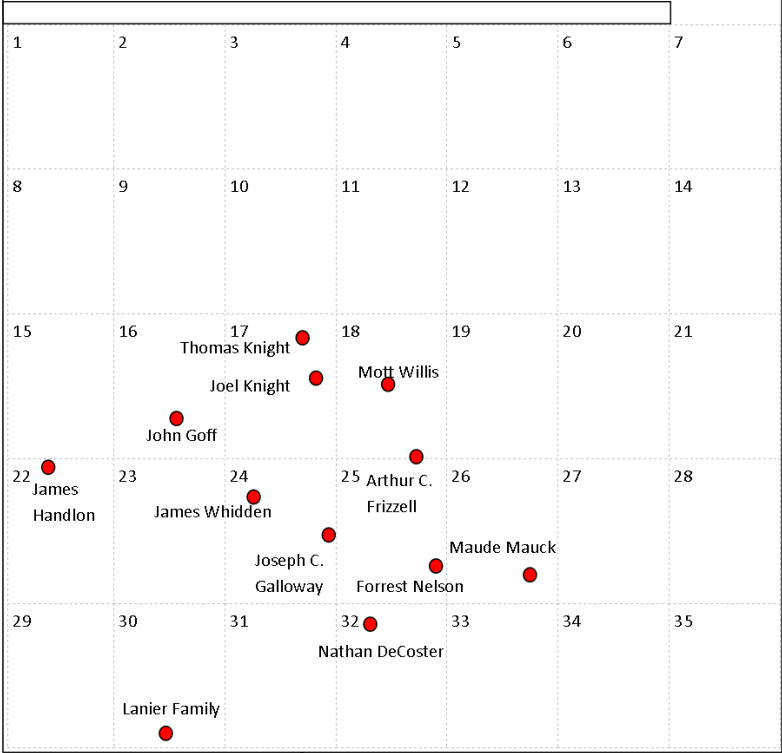
The church buildings and the Charlotte Harbor Cemetery were damaged by several hurricanes over the years, including Hurricane Charley in 2004. Meeting continuously since 1879, the small congregation has repaired and renewed the historic grave markers and the cemetery landscape each time. This perpetual-care cemetery is still active and available as a final resting place today.

The following biographies are but a few of the prominent settlers at rest in Charlotte Harbor Cemetery.

Harper Avenue

Foster Avenue

Church Street



Charlotte Harbor Cemetery

Nathan DeCoster (1837-1912) - 2nd Lieutenant to the U. S. Army, 2nd Regiment, Colored Troops during the Civil War. In 1865, he attained the oaths of allegiance from former rebels in the Peace River area. He returned to Hickory Bluff after the war and opened the first saw mill south of Tampa. He was county judge in 1875, postmaster of Charlotte Harbor Town in 1876, postmaster of his platted town of Harbor View in 1890, and farmer of tobacco & citrus.

Arthur Cleveland Frizzell (1890-1961) - and wife Patti, came to the area in 1918 as station agents/telegraphers for the Charlotte Harbor and Northern Railroad. They purchased the old Murdock general store and invested in land, buying large acreage parcels in what is now Port Charlotte and Murdock. He owned cattle, ran a turpentine industry and a portable saw mill to turn the dead pine trees into lumber.

Joseph C. Galloway (1873- 1955) - Christian Naturalist . His home "Eden" in Pennsylvania had a "state-of-the-art" greenhouse, propagation area, and plant nurseries. In 1946, his family moved permanently to Solana where he wrote "Our Own Botanic Garden" section of the Punta Gorda Herald and published "Native and Imported Trees of Punta Gorda" with the PG Garden Club in 1950.

John Allen Goff (1888-1940) - son of Capt William Marvin Goff, Sr who fought for the Confederacy in the Civil War. The Goff family moved to the Englewood area in 1878 and descendants lived in the Placida Bunk House.

James E. "Skip" Handlon (1901-1981) - "The World's Greatest Amateur Tenor Banjoist". He performed with Major Bowes Vaudeville Shows in the 1930s under the stage name John Jewell. He retired from the stage and moved to Charlotte Harbor in the 40s becoming band director at Charlotte High School.

Knight family— famed for their cattle trade in Charlotte Harbor area. **Joel Knight** (1822-1879) donated the land for the first church, first school, and first cemetery in the area. His grave is the oldest marked in Charlotte Harbor Cemetery and the whole of Charlotte County. **Thomas Knight** (1849-1911) and Joel opened the Knight-Willis Store in Hickory Bluff.

Lanier Family— James and Sarah Lanier moved to the Punta Gorda/Charlotte Harbor area in 1879 and were some of its earliest settlers.

Maude Mauck (1898-1992) -Maude and Lloyd Mauck were early settlers in Hickory Bluff (now called Charlotte Harbor). Maude's grandfather, Hiram Curry, tended to the lighthouse in Punta Gorda from 1896-1899.

Forrest Nelson (1901-1986)-The Nelson family settled in the Charlotte Harbor area in 1907. The road leading to the 180 acres in Murdock purchased as a homestead by Forrest Nelson in 1930 is now known as Forrest Nelson Blvd. He raised orchids, roses, ornamental shrubs and vegetables.

James Whidden (d. 1909 approx. 65 years old) - married Josephine Driggers Whidden. The Whidden family were early settlers to Charlotte County, with ties to Deep Creek, Charlotte Harbor (Hickory Bluff), and Punta Gorda. Relation of James E. Whidden, who established cattle on 7,000 acres of land in Deep Creek in 1861. The family owned a pinery in Punta Gorda and helped build the first bridge.

Mott A. Willis, Sr. (1868-1944)- purchased the general store from Joel Knight in 1912, referred to as the Mott-Willis Store in Charlotte Harbor. Willis also had an oyster business, would carry mail to the outer islands and ran a ferry service.

For more information contact:

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Charlotte Harbor Trinity United Methodist Church

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