

Bridging the Gap



View of the bridge across Long Bayou near Seminole and present-day Bay Pines, August 1926. Courtesy, Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System.

For many residents of Pinellas County, crossing a bridge is a daily activity. These structures allow us to move forward, make new connections, explore various places, and safely return to our homes. Without bridges, many areas of Pinellas would be difficult to access.

The bridge in this photograph connected St. Petersburg and the lower Pinellas Peninsula with the Seminole/Largo area for more than forty-five years. Built shortly after the 1921 hurricane, this narrow concrete span replaced earlier, rickety structures erected in 1910-1911 and 1914 that had either collapsed or washed away.

Bridges on this site had an important role in our history: The faulty construction of the first wooden bridge located on Long Bayou angered residents of

this remote region, then a part of western Hillsborough County. The frustration expressed by these early settlers helped to garner support for the movement to separate from Hillsborough and create a new political entity—Pinellas County—in January 1912.

Although waves of uncertainty and a low tide of resources threatened access and impeded progress after the original bridge collapsed, pioneers a century ago joined hands, worked together, mobilized resources, and persevered. Many of us realize that Heritage Village faces difficult challenges today due to a decline in budgetary allocations and staff reductions. We must work together so that the bridge connecting our past with our future remains accessible even as

financial roadblocks and hazardous obstacles impede our efforts.

We have responded in a variety of ways. Though fewer in number, Heritage Village staff members continue their excellent work. Volunteers devote additional hours to assume duties once handled by county employees. The Pinellas County Historical Society has expanded its financial commitment to support Village operations. We continue to seek partnerships and sponsorships, as well as others who can offer their support.

Similar to a bridge that connects where we have been to where we will soon be on life's journey, friends and supporters of Heritage Village have devoted their energies to bridging important gaps. We appreciate those of you who have helped us on this important journey, one that will allow us to reach our destination and fulfill our mission of promoting and preserving Pinellas County's history.

Jim Schnur,

Heritage Village Volunteer and PCHS Member