

L “River Life”

Location: Southeast corner (lower level) New York and Woodland

Artist: Courtney Canova and Doug Harris

This is a fitting subject for the only mural that is part of a water feature. It started out as a wall painting, however, until the water washed away the details and so was later redone with a computer-generated arrangement of 75,582 Italian glass tiles. Standing at a distance from the scene gives the best perspective to visualize the manatee, and largemouth bass swimming in the springs. The sizes, are in life size scale, even that of the amazingly large snapping turtle, which can grow as big as a washtub.

M “Living at the Landmark”

Location: Southwest corner of Howry and Woodland

Artist: Courtney Canova

This excellently restored hotel has the unique feature of having its story depicted in its windows. Each one gives a snapshot of some winter visitors in the 1930s and 40s. This establishment was considered quite luxurious when it opened in 1927, as guests only had to share a bathroom with one other guest’s room. There were originally windows on the wall where the mural is now but they had to be blocked in when the hotel was renovated in 1997. The owners of the hotel saw the mural as a decorative solution to a problem wall and each window’s mural was painted off-site.

Note: There is an additional mural by Artist Courtney Canova, at the Moe’s Southwest Grill located at 941 N. Woodland, DeLand, FL. The mural depicts a river scene showing the Osceola, a steamship that traveled between Jacksonville and DeLand.

Plaques in Downtown DeLand

1. “Painter’s Park”, Wisconsin Avenue:
(DeLand’s first industries)
2. “The Opera House”, 200 N. Woodland Blvd:
(printing businesses/cultural center)
3. “Circa 1885”, 201 N. Woodland Blvd:
(skating rink/insurance agency)
4. “Early Grocery Stores”, 142 N. Woodland Blvd: (family
-run businesses)
5. “First Public Building”, E. Indiana Ave:
(school house/community church)
6. “Circa 1877”, 124 N. Woodland Blvd:
(Busnell’s Grocery/Allen Druggist & Jewelers)
7. “First Movie House”, 103 W. Indiana Ave:
(silent movie era)
8. “The First Post Office”, 105 W. Indiana Ave:
(early mail delivery)
9. “The Athens Theatre”, N. Florida Ave:
(Vaudeville acts and silent films)
10. “First Commercial Store”, 110 W. Indiana Ave:
(early retail supplier)
11. “Landis-Fish Building”, 110 W. Indiana Ave:
(nationally known law firm founders)
12. “The Haven Block”, 112-116 N. Woodland Blvd:
(performing arts center/pool hall)
13. “Miller-Fish Building”, 100 N. Woodland Blvd:
(hay and grain store/livery /carriage shop)
14. “Wilcox Saloon”, 101 N. Woodland Blvd:
(The great fire of 1886)
15. “1925”, 101 N. Woodland Blvd:
(National Bank building/“DeLand’s first skyscraper”).)
16. “Dreka Theater”, 112 E. New York Ave:
(movie industry boom following WWI)
17. “Dreka Building”, 100 E. New York Ave:
(Dreka store/Carrolton Hotel)
18. “Circa 1883”, 112 S. Woodland Blvd:
(a site long associated with the written word)
19. “1925”, 112 W. Georgia Ave:
(the commercial heritage of DeLand)
20. “Iron Works”, 112 W. Georgia Ave:
(custom assembly of truck and carriage bodies)
21. “1925”, 142 S. Woodland Blvd:
(Masonic Lodge/commercial stores)
22. “1883”, 115 E. Howry Ave:
(organization of one of DeLand’s first churches)
23. “Bethel A.M.E. Church”, 226 E. Howry Ave:
(early African-American church)
24. “Koester’s Grocery Store”, 205 E. Voorhis Ave:
(rare surviving example of family-run neighborhood
store front)
25. “Washington Theatre”, 254 W. Voorhis Ave:
(African-American community center)
26. “City of DeLand Quasquicentennial”, 200 W. New
York Ave: (125th year of incorporation)
27. “Rich Cabin”, 139 W. New York Ave:
(founding of the city of DeLand)
28. “Red Brick Building” NW corner Rich and Clara Ave:
(Education site from 1917-1979/memorial to alumni
who died in WWII)
29. “St Barnabas Episcopal Church” 319 W. Wisconsin
Ave: (distinctive architectural features)
30. “DeLand Memorial Hospital”, 230 N. Stone St:
(DeLand’s first hospital)



Downtown DeLand’s Murals & Plaques

13 Delightful Visual Stories

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116. W. New York Avenue
DeLand, FL 32720
386.734.0162
800.749.4350
www.VisitWestVolusia.com

Written by Karen Ryder

A “DeLand at the Turn of the Century”

Location:

Northwest corner Wisconsin and Alabama Avenues

Artist: *Courtney Canova and Robert Brooks, Jan Herr/ DeLand Middle School Students*

This is the largest mural and has some unique features. Wherever there are projections, the space is used create clever dimensional portraits. The concrete retaining wall that the mural is painted on is over 100 feet long and is all that survives of the ramp of a railroad spur which took wealthy winter visitors to the College Arms Hotel. The Hotel and its property were luxuriously expanded and remodeled by famous hat maker John B. Stetson and sat on grounds now occupied by the new Volusia County Courthouse (green-roofed building to the south). These train passengers are depicted at the southern most end of the mural.

The majority of the wall, however, depicts the many ways that ordinary laborers helped to develop the city. For as much as the city founder, Henry DeLand and his friend Mr. Stetson did contribute, none of it could have happened without those who served the guests, worked in the lumber yard, picked and packed oranges and the multitude of other tasks that carved this thriving community out of a wilderness. For this reason it is known as “the people’s wall”.

B “Henry’s Vision”

Location: Northeast corner Wisconsin and Woodland

Artist: *Courtney Canova and Robert Brooks*

This mural has three sections. The larger left side shows what the surrounding environment looked like before it was developed. Most prominent is the log cabin of John and Clara Rich, one of the earliest families drawn here by “orange fever” at a time when the community was known as Persimmon Hollow. A large portrait of city founder, Henry DeLand, is included in the center to honor the upstate New York businessman who came to the Rich cabin in March of 1876 and dreamed of how charming this area could be with “pleasant homes and orange groves here and there”. It was his vision, his capital and his intrepid spirit that inspired the local citizens’ endeavors. At right is the portrait of a landing on the St. Johns River that was renamed “DeLand Landing”.

C “Riverboat Landing”

Location: Southeast corner Wisconsin and Woodland

Artist: *Richard Currier*

Getting to Florida was the first big ordeal faced by the early pioneers who settled here, starting in the 1870s in the days before railroads. The only way to get through the dense, marshy forests was to go south from Jacksonville by steamboat and put in on landings of various kinds. This mural depicts one such landing on Lake Beresford (west of present-day DeLand) whose accommodations included a place to lodge and buy provisions. However, the river is too shallow here for these large boats to go all the way through, so passengers were let off on a piece of land on the west side of the lake. The town of Beresford had developed on the east side of the lake, and a wagon had to be signaled to come around and pick up the people and their supplies. Notice the settlers’ plain clothing and minimal personal items. They brought only what was essential for survival on the Florida frontier.

D “Old Spanish Sugar Mill”

Location: Northeast corner Church and Woodland

Artist: *Courtney Canova and Robert Brooks*

The mill, located in DeLeon Springs, is seen here as it was in 1920 when it functioned as a favorite family picnic spot. But the history goes back much farther. Native American shell mounds from 8,000 years BC and other such ancient artifacts have been discovered there. In the early 1500s, Spanish forces, led by Juan Ponce de Leon, may have passed through. In 1570, Spanish settlers took this land from the Native Americans, cleared 100 acres, planted sugar cane and erected the first mill on this site. A mill functioned on this site until the second Seminole War when it was burned down by the tribe. During the Civil War, Union troops destroyed the mill a second time, but it was rebuilt again by retrieving its parts from the springs. An early example of a Florida amusement park was operated here in the 1950s.

E “Black Bear Family”

Location: East side of building at 115 E. Rich

Artist: *Terry Smith*

Volusia County is in one of only six black bear population centers in Florida. Black bears are part of both the written history and natural history of DeLand. They are considered a threatened species in Florida and it is illegal to hunt them in the state. Here a mama bear and cubs stroll through the morning mist hanging over the trees and marshes. Note how the building’s rough surface was incorporated to enhance the depiction of tree bark and details on the bear’s coat.

F “Pioneers at the Parceland”

Location:

On south wall in the park at Rich and Woodland

Artist: *Perigo*

This mural, designed from an 1890 photograph, shows a large group of winter tourists who have come to the end of their vacation at DeLand’s Parceland Hotel. By this time the hotel had been enlarged twice to accommodate the ever growing number of visiting tourists. By the turn of the 20th Century it would be remodeled into the College Arms Hotel by Mr. Stetson—see mural A. These early “snow birds” are waiting at the train depot for their ride to the local river landing where they will make a steamboat connection to Jacksonville and beyond for their return journey to their homes in the north. Notice the elaborate Victorian clothing of these wealthy visitors and the branches of oranges they carry as souvenirs of their trip.

G “Strolling Through Time with Bill”

Location: 142 E. Indiana Ave

Artist: *Courtney Canova*

This is a portrait of Bill Dreggors, sporting the clothing and wide smile that DeLandites have come to associate with him. Born and raised in DeLand, he is the founder and current Executive Director of the West Volusia Historical Society which was developed during the late 1970s as a direct result of his extensive efforts toward an avowed life mission to preserve the city’s history. Bill serves as a folk historian for Stetson University, has created hundreds of slide shows on the history of DeLand and West Volusia, narrated many videotaped histories and authored numerous books.

H “A Conversation Over Chess in 1929 ”

Location:

On west side of the building at 112 W. Indiana

Artist: *Jill Cannady*

This is the only sepia-toned mural and depicts the city’s diversity during the 1920s. This is the artist’s first mural and the scene is from her imagination.

I “Gibbs Clothing Store”

Location: 137 N. Woodland

Artist: *Brenda Starr*

The Gibbs Family members in the “shop windows” are an early example of “mixed use” of commercial buildings, where owners or other residents live downtown above the businesses.

J “Bicycling the Boulevard”

Location: 100 N. Woodland

(inside hall leading to Mainstreet DeLand office)

Artist: *Courtney Canova and West Volusia Artists, Inc.*

Ironically, the only indoor mural is about an outdoor sport. In the 1920s almost every town had a bicycle club. High wheel unicycles were replaced by the two-wheel safety bike. People loved to ride their bicycles to other communities, meeting up with others, socializing and having picnic lunches. These men, gathered on Woodland Blvd., will perhaps pay 10 cents to take the road out to DeLeon Springs. Notice the perspective shot that makes use of the wall corner to create a sense of depth.

K “DeLand Naval Air Station”

Location:

Northwest corner of Woodland and New York

Artist: *Courtney Canova*

The small city of DeLand played a large role in WWII when three different types of airplanes were used here either to patrol the shoreline (Ventura Patrol Aircraft) or to train Navy pilots in dive bombing and air craft carrier landing (SBD “Dauntless” Aircraft and SB2C “Helldiver” Aircraft). Dive bomber teams, such as those put together at this naval air station, are credited with being a major force in winning the war in the Pacific.