

The Pembroke Pines Historical Museum

By Gerry Witoshynsky



Pembroke Pines Historical Museum World War II Exhibit Dedication, September 13, 2008. World War II Veterans Charlie Ober (left) and Fred DeCicco (Photo by Johnny Mullin)

The Pembroke Pines Historical Society incorporated in 1980 under the leadership of city pioneers Estelle Kipnis and Gerry Witoshynsky. Estelle and her husband, Dr. Walter Seth Kipnis, established their home in the first 1954 subdivision of Pembroke Pines #1, and were leaders in organizing the community toward incorporation as a village in 1959.

After the first incorporation attempt failed on legal technicalities, a January 1960 election succeeded and Dr. Kipnis was re-elected as mayor. The Kipnises started preserving newspaper clippings in 1954; these scrapbooks became the first documents of the society. Witoshynsky started collecting newspaper clippings in 1980, believing they provided an ongoing historical outline of the growth of the city.

When Mrs. Kipnis was no longer able to participate and the Historical Society dissolved, Witoshynsky continued the work of collecting and saving all materials pertinent to the city's history. Since 1980, the city has provided museum space for the collection of newspapers, city documents, maps, photographs, organization scrapbooks, publications and books. The museum's purpose is simple: collect, preserve and disseminate the city's history.

Today the museum is housed in an appropriate facility — the original Village and then City Hall, now the Village Community Center.

In September 2008, the museum dedicated its *World War II Continuing Exhibit*, honoring the hundreds of veterans who have retired to this community. The collection continues to grow with the museum receiving uniforms, guns, medals, maps, newspaper clippings and most importantly, World War II photos from local veterans.

As the city celebrates 50 progressive years, Pembroke Pines residents are encouraged to join the Friends of the Museum to assist City Historian and Museum Director Gerry Witoshynsky and volunteer staff in the ongoing work of preserving Pembroke Pines history.

The museum is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from noon to 4 p.m. Special hours may be arranged for groups. The museum is located at 6700 S.W. 13th Street, Pembroke Pines, Florida, 33028. Visitors may contact the museum by calling 954-986-5049 or emailing pineshistoricalmuseum@gmail.com.