

# PIONEER POST



The Official Publication of the Rotary Club of Sarasota's

## PIONEER PICNIC HISTORY

*An Annual Event for Pioneers  
who have lived in Sarasota County for Fifty or more years.*



**Crown House**

**T**he Rotary Club of Sarasota initiated the Pioneer Picnic in 1974 to recognize Sarasota County Pioneers; those who have resided in Sarasota County for fifty or more years. Rotarians Dale Brye, contractor, and Ray Skinner, Midway Groves, coordinated efforts. Thirty-five pioneers attended the initial picnic at the Crown House at the

intersection of DeSoto Road and U.S 301, where the club then met. As attendance grew, Coast Federal Savings and Loan, thanks to Rotarian Bob Reinart, became a major sponsor and the picnic moved to Elks Park behind the Riverview High School, then to its present location - Robarts Sports Arena - where, in 1983 attendance reached 1,000 pioneers. Attendance continued to grow, and reached its peak of 1,500 in 1987.

The original pioneer menu included smoked mullet, barbeque pork, cole slaw, baked beans, buns, hush puppies, popcorn, ice cream, sweet iced tea, beer, and the pioneer favorite - swamp cabbage. Smoked mullet was dropped and unsweetened iced tea was added when the picnic moved to Robarts Sports Arena, but all other menu items remain. The demand for swamp cabbage remains high among the long time pioneers, but, as new pioneers, and pioneer caretakers and family increased, their appetite for this pioneer delicacy has not.



**Swamp Cabbage**