

# True treasures

## Local lawyer recalls historical tales of the Treasure Coast in new book

By Crystal Chew

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Rick Crary went on his own personal treasure hunt. Not one of gold or riches but historical tales from an area where he and previous generations have grown up.

After a house that belonged to his grandparents was saved from being demolished and then moved to downtown Stuart, Crary was asked to give a talk about the home's history.

Equipped with old letters, documents, newspaper articles and personal memories, the third-generation Treasure Coast resident wrote an essay he passed out during his speech.

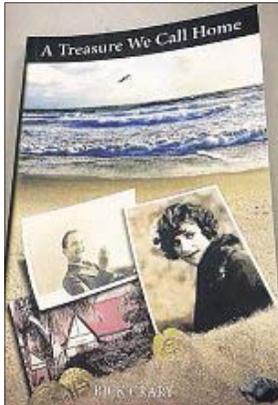
The essay was the first of many historical tales Crary wrote and included in his book, "A Treasure We Call Home." Pieced together, they form a historic quilt of the Treasure Coast.

In "Crary House," he talks about how the quaint yellow home that sat on Cardinal Way for nearly 85 years was hauled almost two miles down East Ocean Boulevard, around Confusion Corner and past other historic structures like The Lyric Theatre. It now sits on Flagler Avenue.

The home becomes the backdrop for telling his grandparents' story. Evans Crary Sr. was a Stuart municipal judge, the one of the county's early state representative to

### ON THE SHELF

"A Treasure We Call Home" by Rick Crary  
(208 pages, price \$13.30)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Crary House becomes the backdrop of Rick Crary's "A Treasure We Call Home."

Tallahassee, Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives and a state Senator, but to Crary, he was just Granddaddy.

Uncovering the story of his grandparents, and the era in which they lived, led to other explorations of the past. Crary was inspired to write about various people and topics such as President Grover Cleveland, who arrived in Stuart by accident, but became a regular in the area.

Crary, who has been practicing law at the Crary-Buchanan law firm since 1980, devoted his downtime and vacations to tracking down information for the stories in this book.

A self-proclaimed history buff, he writes with great detail. He visited many sites where the



Local lawyer Rick Crary wrote "A Treasure We Call Home."

events occurred, even driving up to South Carolina to see the grave of the man who murdered Charles Tobin McCarty, a leading citizen of Fort Pierce who owned and operated "the largest pineapple plantation in the world."

His favorite story to uncover was of John Wellborn Martin, for whom Martin County was named in 1925.

"How could a governor impress his name on the map, but leave so few other

footprints behind," Crary wrote in his book.

Crary visited the area where he was born, where he went to school and the building that once housed his law office. He also visited the State Archives in Tallahassee in search of more information. There was a small box of papers, and after searching for the box, the clerk told Crary that he was the first person that has ever asked to see it.

Like he did with Martin, many of Crary's stories shed light on people and historical events, making them less of a mystery.

Readers of this book will learn the inaccuracies surrounding Juan Ponce de León and the possibility that he first landed in St. Lucie County when he

found the Florida Peninsula and the trial that took place in an old courthouse in Fort Pierce where one judge murdered another judge.

And of course, the 1715 Spanish Treasure fleet. Crary describes not just the stormy, raging winds that took out an entire fleet, but the stunned castaways who congregated in several encampments on the beaches that later became Indian River, St. Lucie and Martin counties.

"We Floridians allow the sand castles of our history to wash away as quickly as the tides roll in," Crary writes in the introduction of his book.

But this history remains beautifully intact through the words in this book.