

In and Around Naples
**A Series of Presentations
 for the Collier County Library
 by Paul Pacter**

**Koreshan State Park
 Estero**

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www.paulvisits.com

Koreshan State Park

Website: www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/koreshan-state-park

Where: 3800 Corkscrew Rd., Estero FL 33928.

Get There: Just west of US-41 at Corkscrew Road.

When: Open daily. Park 8am to sunset. Historic village 8am to 5pm.

Admission: \$5 per car. Or annual pass.

What: Village was the home of a unique and eccentric pioneer group of 200 people that chose to live on the banks of the Estero River.

In 1893, the Koreshans, a religious sect founded by Dr. Cyrus R. Teed, moved here. They built a settlement based on a commitment to communal, celibate living.

The enterprising Koreshans established a farm, nursery and botanical gardens.

Koreshans' Main Beliefs

- **Cellular Cosmogony (Hollow Earth Theory):** Earth is contained within a concave sphere.
- **Immortality:** People will not die. They are reborn.
- **Celibacy:** To attain immortality, abstain from any sexual conduct.
- **Collectivism:** Community ownership of all property. Work without pay.
- **Cyrus Teed as Messiah:** Teed claimed to be the 'seventh' messianic leader (Jesus was the sixth).

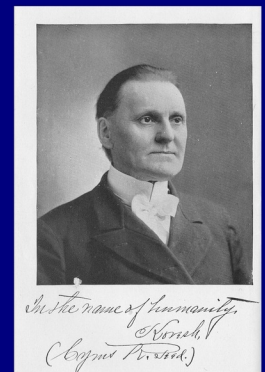
Local people were unfriendly and hostile because of the Koreshans' religious, scientific and cultural beliefs. The sect did not propogate.

Membership began to decline after Dr Teed died in 1908. In 1961, the four remaining members deeded 305 acres of their land to the State of Florida as a park and memorial.

On National Register of Historic Places.

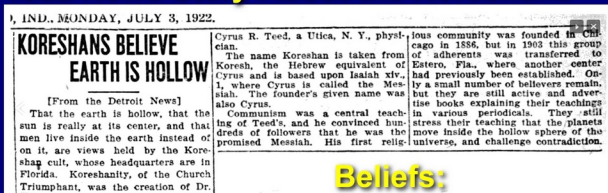
Koreshan State Park has 11 immaculately restored historic buildings erected by the Koreshans between the late-19th and early-20th centuries.

There is an interpretive center with education materials, including a video.



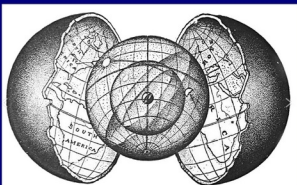
**Cyrus R Teed
 Alias "Koresh"**

1922 News Story About the Koreshans



Beliefs:

- The earth is hollow.**
- Sun is at its center.**
- We live inside the earth, not on it.**
- Cyrus Teed is the promised Messiah.**

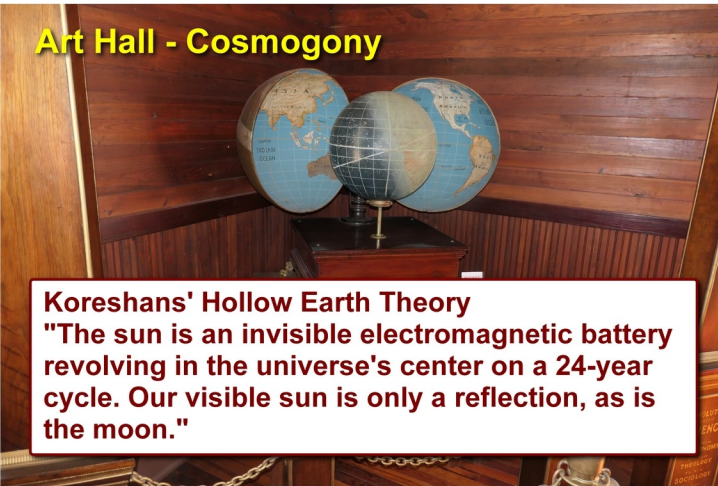
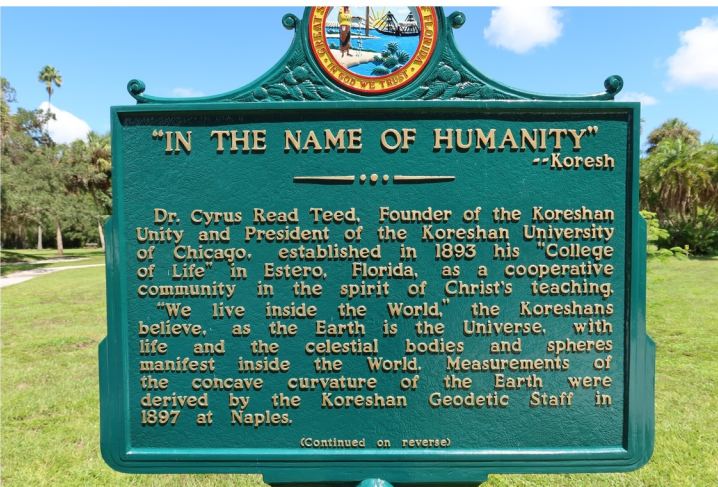


**Welcome to
 Koreshan State Park**

The Koreshan Unity was a religious communal society that believed in universal education and social equality for all individuals.

The above image depicts the Koreshan settlement as it appeared in the early 1900's.

Koreshan State Park and the Florida Park Service seek to preserve and interpret this unique period of early Florida history.





Koreshan Unity Settlement
The Koreshans made money by selling produce and goods to local people.

A Look Inside ...
The Koreshan Unity General Stores



Koreshan Unity Settlement
Dining Hall and Dormitory
1897-1949

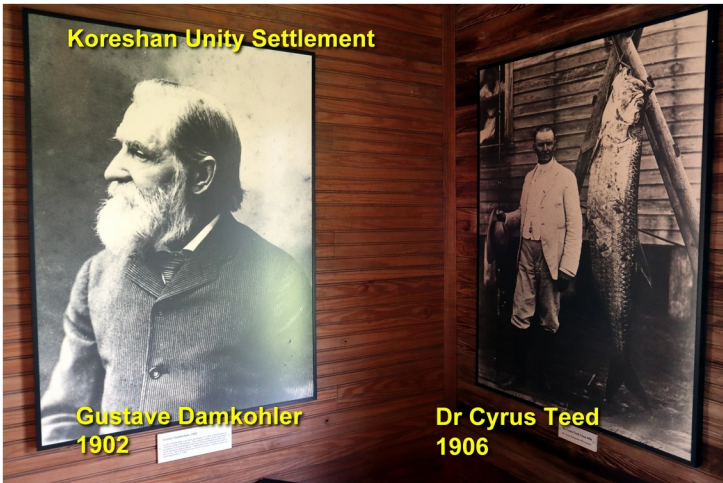
Dining Hall (1897/1898-1949)
This three-story building served as the settlement dining hall and dormitory. The two upper floors were used as a "Sisters' dormitory." At the time of its construction it was said to be the largest structure in Lee County. In 1949, after the structure had deteriorated substantially, the building was torn down.



Koreshan Unity Settlement
Remains of Garden Walls



Damkohler Cottage - 1882
Home of Gustave Damkohler & Family



Koreshan Unity Settlement

Gustave Damkohler
1902

Dr Cyrus Teed
1906



Koreshan Unity Settlement
Founder's House - 1896



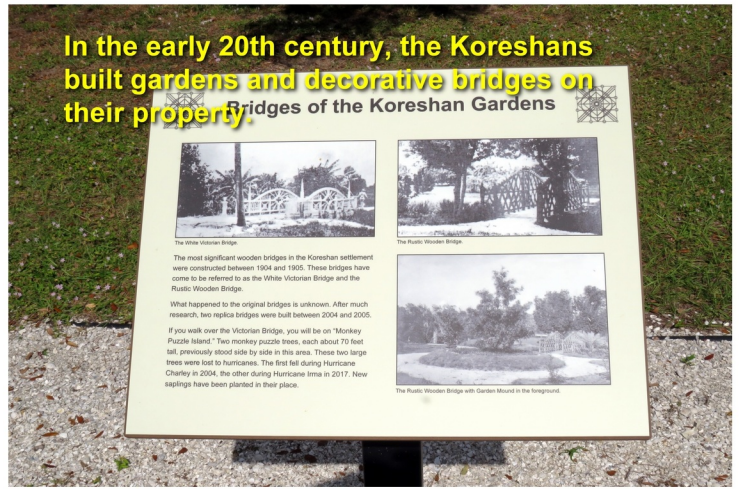
Founder's House - 1896
Interpretive Center
Exhibits Photos Videos



Founder's House - 1896
Koreshan Interpretive Center
and Exhibit Hall



**Founder's House - 1896
Koreshan Interpative Center
and Exhibit Hall**



In the early 20th century, the Koreshans built gardens and decorative bridges on their property.



**Koreshan Unity Settlement
White Victorian Bridge
1904-1905**



**Koreshan Unity Settlement
Rustic Wooden Bridge
1904-1905**



**Gopher Tortoise Leaving Its
Burrow at Koreshan State Park**



**Koreshan Unity Settlement
Bakery - 1903**



**Koreshan Unity Settlement
Bakery - 1903**



**Koreshan Unity Settlement
Lillian "Vesta" Newcomb Cottage - 1920
Vesta moved to Koreshan 1894
Lived there until 1974**



**Koreshan Unity Settlement
"Vesta" Newcomb Cottage - 1920**



**Koreshan Unity Settlement
Newcomb Cottage - 1920**



**Koreshan Unity Settlement
Conrad Schlender Cottage - 1903**



**Koreshan Generator Building
1908**



**Koreshan Generator Building
1908**



**Koreshan Unity Settlement
Large Machine Shop - 1904**



**Koreshan Unity Settlement
Large Machine Shop - 1904**



**Koreshan Unity Settlement
Large Machine Shop - 1904**



**Koreshan Unity Settlement
Blacksmith's Shop - 1904**



**KORESHAN
UNITY SETTLEMENT**

In 1893, the Koreshans, a religious sect founded by Dr. Cyrus R. Teed, moved here. Communal living and a belief that the universe existed on the inside of the earth were among the distinctive features of their doctrine. Living celibate lives, the industrious Koreshans established a farm, nursery, and botanical garden. Their cultural activities included art and music. In 1961, the surviving members of the settlement presented their property to the State of Florida.

FLORIDA BOARD OF PARKS AND HISTORIC MEMORIALS
IN COOPERATION WITH
THE FLORIDA FEDERATION OF GARDEN CLUBS, INC.



Members of the Koreshan Unity



**Celibacy was a central Koreshanic doctrine.
Yet...**



**Koreshan State Park - Grave of Hedwig Michel
1892-1982 - Last Surviving Koreshan Member**

HEDWIG MICHEL
Born at Fredericktown, Ohio, Germany
March 21, 1892
Died at Sebring, Florida
October 24, 1982
Member, President and
Executive Director of
THE KORESHAN SOCIETY
1944-1982
"To my husband for
many years"
"My husband and I
will live here until
we die"
Presented to the State of Florida
by the people of Florida

Fascinated by Koreshan? Visit the Florida State Library website:
www.floridamemory.com/learn/exhibits/koreshan/

The Koreshan Unity

The Earth A Concave Sphere

MENU (Partial):	Inside the Hollow Earth	Cashing In
Overview	The New Jerusalem	Brawl in Fort Myers
Origins	Followers	A New Era
Millennial Fervor and Utopian Communalism	Becoming Koreshan	Spreading the Word
Burned-Over District	Working Together	Support
Teed's Illumination	Building a Utopia	On Their Soapbox
Koresh	Koreshan Estero	Publications
	Koreshans at Work	Satellite Branches