

Naples Area History

Presentation by Paul Pacter

www.PaulVisits.com

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SW Florida History Timeline

- 500 BC** Calusa Indians in the area.
- 1500 AD** Spanish settlers arrive in area.
- 1821** Spain cedes Florida to USA.
- 1845** Florida becomes a state.
- 1870s** Small settlements along coast north and south of Naples.
- 1886** City of Naples founded by two Kentucky investors (The Naples Co). Property sales began.

SW Florida Timeline

- 1888** Population 80.
- 1889** Naples pier first built.
- 1923** Collier County created (split from Lee). County seat Everglades City.
- 1927** Train service comes to Naples.
- 1928** Tamiami Trail completed. Naples now accessible by road.



Pier circa 1953

SW Florida History Timeline

- 1949** Naples incorporated.
- 1962** County seat moved to East Naples.
- 1971** Passenger train service ended.



Census Population 2020

City of Naples	19,915
Collier County	375,752

City of Naples Historical Pop.

1930	391	1980	17,581
1940	1,253	1990	19,508
1950	1,465	2000	20,981
1960	4,656	2010	19,539
1970	12,042	2020	19,115

Naples Collier County Museum

Five Collier County Museums

www.colliermuseums.com



All good!
All free!
History!



Government Center



Naples Depot



Marco Island



Immokalee Pioneer



Everglades City

Collier Museum at Government Center

Website: www.colliermuseums.com

Where: At Government Center, 3331 Tamiami Trail, East Naples 34112.

What: Historical information and artefacts about settlers, American Indians, and development in SW Florida.

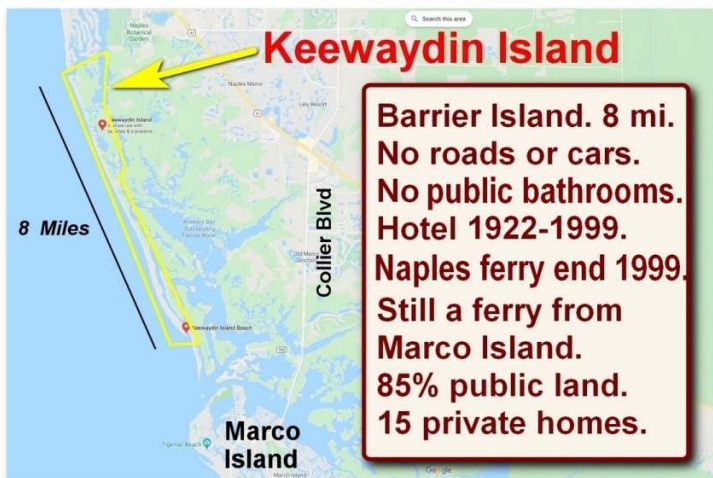
When: Tues-Sat 9am to 4pm.

Admission: Free.

Collier County Museum Main Exhibit Building



10,000 sq feet of displays.



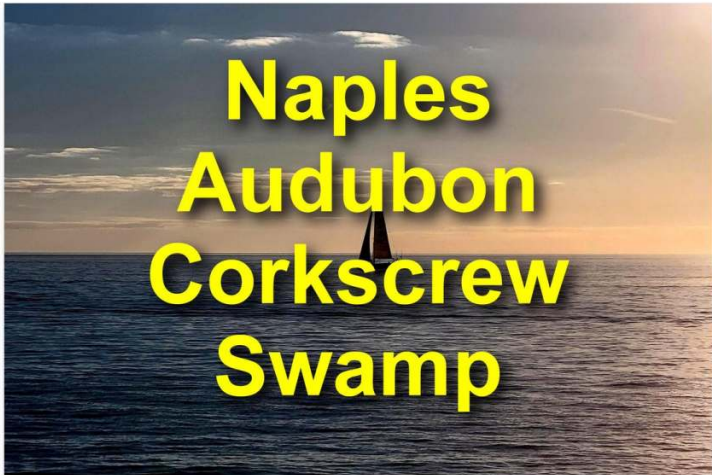


**Calusa Indian Mound
Ritual Platform**



**Logging Train "The Deuce" c. 1915
Used by Lee Tidewater Cypress Co.
in Lee-Collier Counties
Retired 1957**

On display at Collier County Museum



Naples Audubon Corkscrew Swamp

Corkscrew Swamp – "Audubon Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary"

Website: corkscrew.audubon.org/

Where: 375 Sanctuary Rd W, Naples
34120.

Get There: East on Immokalee Road.
15 miles East of I-75, turn left onto
Sanctuary Rd. Follow signs.

When: Daily 8:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Admission: \$17. College students \$10.
Children 6-14 \$6. Book online.

What: Visitor center:
Check in. Exhibits.
Nature Store.



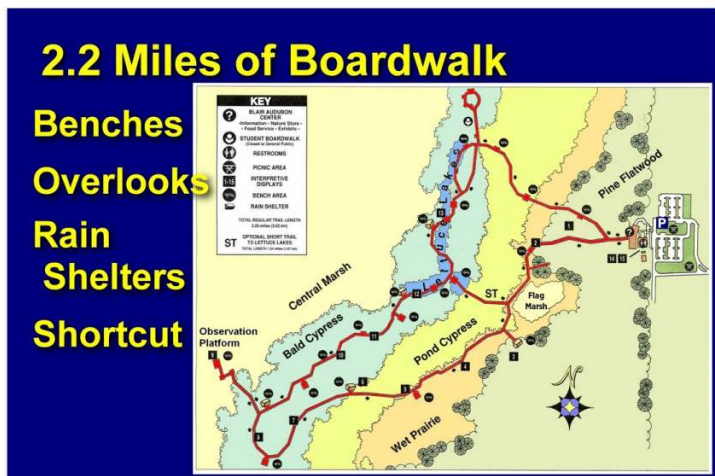
Boardwalk: 13,000 acres of wetlands. 2.25
miles of boardwalk through pine flatwood,
wet prairie, marsh, and the largest old
growth Bald Cypress forest in North
America. Alligators, otters, deer,
cottonmouth snakes, turtles, wading birds,
owls, songbirds, raccoons, etc.

History of Corkscrew Swamp

- 1953 National Audubon Society
began fundraising. *Goal: Stop logging.*
- 1954 2880 acres purchased. Only
accessible by 4-wheel drive vehicle
on dirt road.
- 1956 first boardwalk completed
using local cypress wood. 10,000
visitors.

- 1968 boardwalk expanded to a loop.
- 1969 marsh observation platform
added.
 - **Total length nearly 2 miles.**
- Cypress wood no longer available.
Boardwalk repaired with treated
pine. But that wood was not good in
a wet swamp area.
- By 1990 70,000 visitors a year on
boardwalk.

- In 1995 a completely new boardwalk
built using ipe wood, grown
sustainably in Brazil. Length 2.25 mi.**
- 2017 Hurricane Irma broke the
boardwalk in 24 places. 560 foot
section had to be fully replaced.
- But ipe wood was no longer grown
sustainably. Now repairs are made
using domestic black locust wood
and some plastic "wood".



Naples Pier History

- Original 600-foot pier built in 1889 by the Naples Company. Passenger and freight dock where goods, mail, and people arrived by boat from Punta Gorda to Naples. **T-shaped.**
- Pier had footpath plus tram on rails to take goods to town.
- In those days, 12th Ave South was named Pier Street.

Naples Pier Circa 1920

<https://www.naplesnews.com/picture-gallery/life/2024/06/30/naples-pier-through-the-years/74072747007/>



Naples Pier History – Continued

– Damaged by storms and rebuilt in:

1910.

1926.

1935.

1944.

1960 Hurricane Donna, total destruction.

2017 Hurricane Irma.

2022 Major damage from Hurricane Ian. Pier will need complete reconstruction.



After
Hurricane
Donna

Naples Pier - Hurricane Ian Update as of December 2024.

- 30 pilings collapsed.
- Half the pier is missing.
- New pier: \$24.6 million.
 - FEMA expected to pay about \$14m.
- Contract awarded to Shoreline Foundation, West Park, Florida, but that work can't start until the final signoffs from federal agencies.

Naples Pier Reconstruction Plan



Naples Depot



Naples Depot Museum

Website: www.colliermuseums.com

Where: 1051 Fifth Ave South at 10th St, Naples 34102.

Get There: One block east of US-41 downtown.

Admission: Free. Tues-Sat 9am to 4pm.

Same site: Naples Train Museum (private): \$7 adult, \$3 kids. Fri and Sat. 10am to 2pm. **Model Railroading.**

What: Museum about Naples railroad history and general history.

- Set in restored 1927 Seaboard Air Line and Atlantic Coast Line Railway passenger station.
- Freight service ended 1930s.
- Passenger service ended 1971.
- National Register of Historic Places.

Museum is about the history of Naples in general, not just about railroading.

Naples Depot Museum



Two men from Kentucky purchased a large amount of land in Naples in 1887, named the place Naples, and began developing and selling the land.

THE ITALY OF AMERICA



Naples' future changed dramatically in June 1887 when Civil War General John S. "Curry" Gordon Williams, a Kentucky war hero and U.S. Senator, purchased 64 lots of land in Naples for himself, and another 48 lots for Walter N. Haden, the owner and publisher of the Louisville Courier-Journal. Other prominent Louisville statesmen and business leaders followed suit and backed the Naples venture by taking over the company in 1887.

Work began on building a small, twenty-room hotel at Naples, with a swimming pool, a 600-foot pier to bring in construction crews, passengers, and cargo. A wooden trolley running the length of the pier was used to shuttle luggage and supplies up to the hotel.

The company also opened new offices in Boston, Philadelphia and St. Paul, Minnesota, and used the power of Walter Haden's newspaper to sell the idea that Naples offered the same exotic beauty, relaxation and wealth of amenities as Europe. A 32-page sales pamphlet, titled "Naples, the Italy of America," showed a lush landscape of palm trees and fruit trees and promised visitors a chance to escape the "chilling blasts of winter" during their brochure, asthma and hay fever.

History of the Naples Pier - First Built 1888-1889

THE NAPLES PIER



The Original Naples Hotel and Naples Beach Hotel



Naples' First Auto Garage The First Building on 5th Ave South – 1927

NAPLES IN THE AUTO AGE

Automobiles, railroads and electric power transformed Southwest Florida during the 1920s and early 1930s and gradually began reshaping Naples with gasoline stations, a telephone exchange, general store, diners, and several small "mom-and-pop" hotels.

A depot "hack" built on Henry Ford's sturdy Model T chassis, was provided by the railroad to carry passengers and their baggage to and from the Naples Hotel. The hotel also operated a ten-passenger bus to meet the train in Fort Myers and Bonita Springs before the Naples Depot was opened in 1927. A one-way trip to Naples over the crushed shell, "two-rail" or trail often took four hours or more. Passenger comfort was minimal and travelers recalled that the old bus had most of the springs in its seat cushions "sticking up through the upholstery."

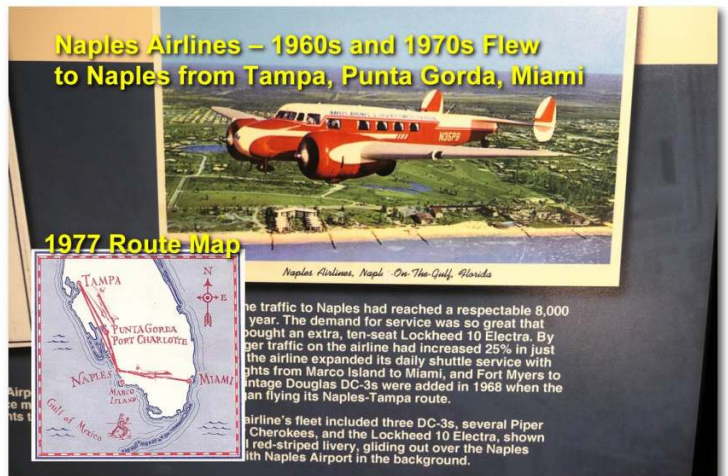
This 1922 Ford Model T, 4-door depot hack was a gift from the City of Naples, the Honorable Bill Barnett, Mayor.



In 1927, a young mechanic from Bonita, Ed Frank, filled in a "letter hole" between the train from the Naples Depot and South Naples, and drove his brother Louis and Rudy Frank's Garage into the station of Naples. The first commercial building on Fifth Avenue South was situated in the area of an authorized Ford dealership in 1931. The business was in operation until 1931 when it was sold to the Bonita-based Tampa and Bonita Springs, and the garage, grocery store, and other businesses were sold to a group of investors.



Naples Airlines – 1960s and 1970s Flew to Naples from Tampa, Punta Gorda, Miami



1977 Route Map



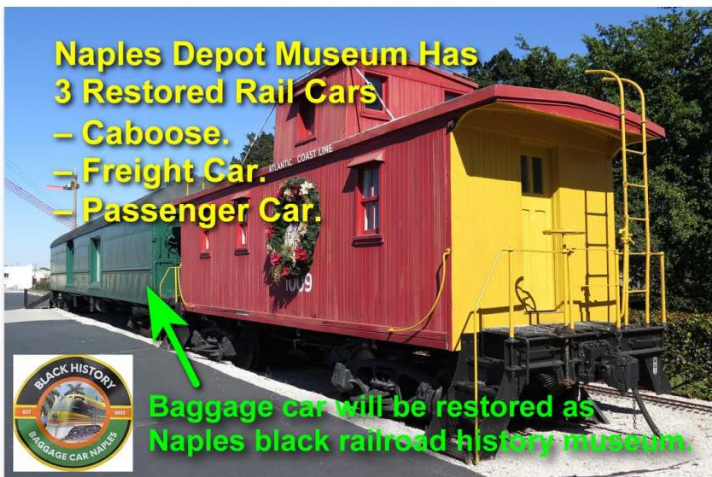
Naples Airlines, Naples - On The Gulf, Florida

The traffic to Naples had reached a respectable 8,000 year. The demand for service was so great that it bought an extra, ten-seat Lockheed 10 Electra. By 1977 traffic on the airline had increased 25% in just the airline expanded its daily shuttle service with flights from Marco Island to Miami, and Fort Myers to Naples. Douglas DC-3s were added in 1958 when the airline was flying its Naples-Tampa route.

The airline's fleet included three DC-3s, several Piper Cherokees, and the Lockheed 10 Electra, shown in red-striped livery, gliding over the Naples with Naples Airport in the background.

Naples Depot Museum Has 3 Restored Rail Cars

- Caboose.
- Freight Car.
- Passenger Car.



Baggage car will be restored as Naples black railroad history museum.



Naples Lionel Train Museum



Naples Lionel Train Museum

What: Model train exhibits and outdoor mini train ride.

Where: 401 10th St South, Naples, FL.

Website: naplestrainmuseum.org/

Admission: Over 14 \$8. Ages 3-13 \$4.

When: Open Fridays and Saturdays
10am to 2pm in Season – mid-October
to end of April.

Naples Lionel Train Museum is at the back end of Naples Depot. Separate entrance. Don't let this unattractive entry deter you. Lots of history inside.

NAPLES LIONEL TRAIN MUSEUM
FRIDAY & Saturday 10-2

Naples Train Museum



Naples Train Museum



Naples Palm Cottage

Palm Cottage

Naples Historical Society

Website: <https://napleshistoricalsociety.org/>

Where: 137 12th Avenue South, Naples.

Get There: On 12th Avenue South Near
Naples Pier.

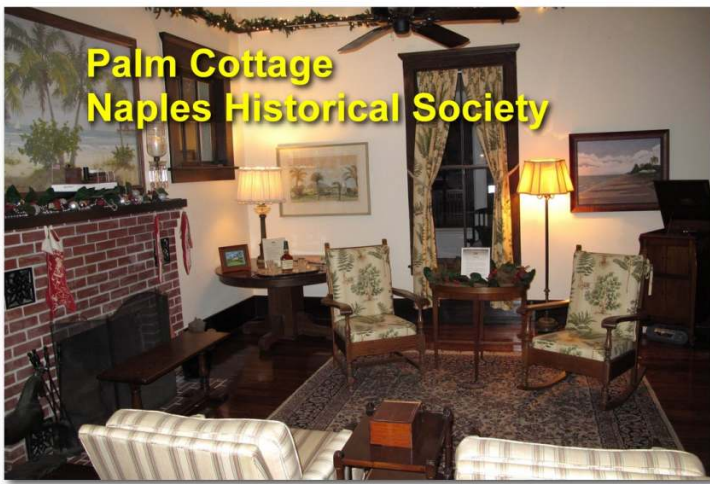
Admission: \$13.

When: Noon to 4pm Tues-Fri. 1pm-
4pm Sat. Guided tour (calendar online)
or self-guided.

What: Palm Cottage is Naples' oldest house, built in 1895. 3,500 sq ft house. Tabby mortar construction. Filled with antiques. National Register of Historic Places. Tours. Lecture programs. Norris Gardens are on the property.
Winter home of Henry Watterson, editor of Louisville Courier-Journal and friend of Naples founder Walter Haldeman.
They also offer walking tours of Naples Historic District nearby.

Palm Cottage 1895





**Palm Cottage
Naples Historical Society**

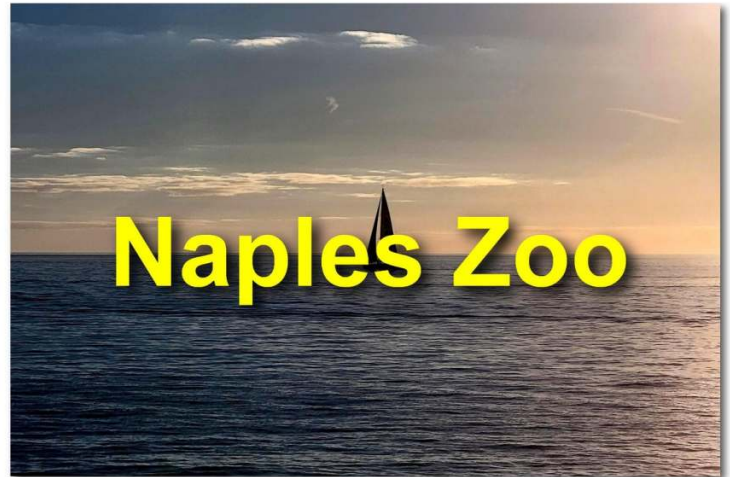


**Palm Cottage
Oldest House in Naples**



**Opened February 2025:
Smith Exhibit Hall
Next to Palm Cottage**

Exhibits on Naples History



Naples Zoo

Naples Zoo

Website: www.napleszoo.org/

Where: 1590 Goodlette Rd, Naples 34102.

Get There: Just south of Golden Gate Pkwy on Goodlette Road.

Admission: Adults \$27. Children 3-12 \$18. Free parking. 9 am to 4:30 pm daily.

Formal name: The Naples Zoo at Caribbean Gardens.

What: 43-acre zoo and historic botanical garden.

Naples Zoo History:

1919: First plantings by botanist and ornithologist Dr. Henry Nehrling.

After 1929: Nehrling died. Gardens neglected.

1950s: Julius Fleischmann added plantings, lakes, pathway, and parrots and waterfowl.

1954: Opened as Caribbean Gardens.

1968: Fleischmann died.

1969: Zoo taken over by Larry and Jane Tetzlaff. Exotic animals introduced.

2004: Purchased with public funds. Non-profit created.



Alligator Bay - American Alligators



Freedom Park

Website: <https://www.collierparks.com/>

Where: 1515 Golden Gate Pkwy, Naples.
Just east of Goodlette-Frank Road.

When: Daily 7am to sunset.
Education Center 9am to 10pm Mon-Sat.

Admission: Free.



What: 50 acre wetlands.

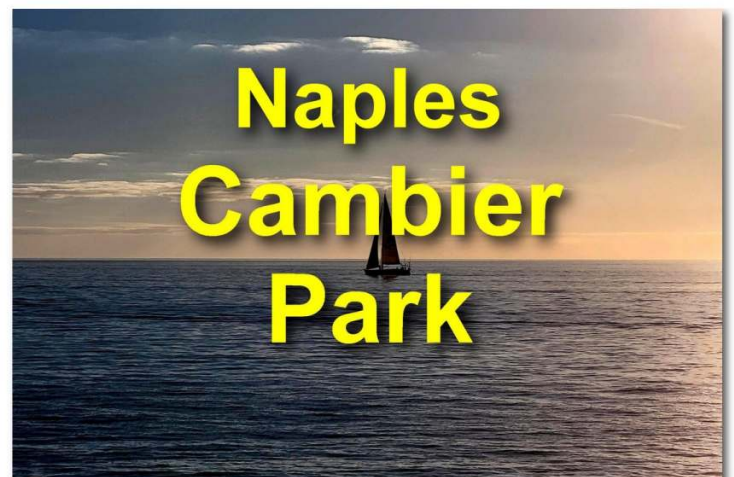
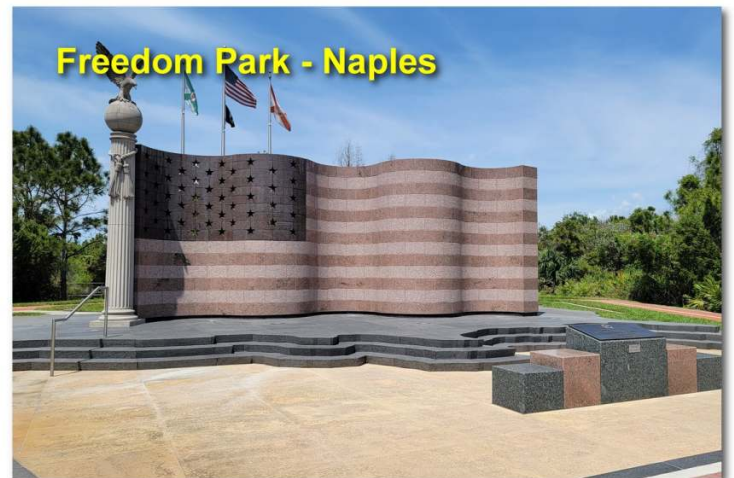
- 3,500-foot boardwalk over the eastern side of the park.
- Plus trails and six lookout pavilions around the lakes in the western side of the park.
- 2,500 square foot Education Center.
- Freedom Memorial – tribute to the lives lost on 9/11/01 in the terrorist attacks and to the heroes of past and present wars.

Wildlife I have seen there include:

- **Birds:** Anhingas, egrets, various kinds of herons, gallinules, woodpeckers, limpkins.
- **Reptiles:** Alligators, turtles, frogs, iguanas, snakes.
- **Others:** Blue crabs, marsh rabbits, raccoons.

Park website also claims:

- Armadillos, otters.



What: Cambier Park sits on 13 acres, just south of 5th Ave., in the heart of downtown Naples.

- Named after William Cambier, a town engineer instrumental in the development of Naples in 1926.
- Band concerts Sundays 2pm. Free.
- Big band concerts Mondays 7pm. Free.
- Various sports.
- Community center.
- Art shows.



Military and First Responders Museum

America's Military and First Responders Museum

Website: www.amfrm.org

Formerly
Naples
Military
Museum

Where: At Naples Airport, 500 Terminal Drive, Naples 34104

Get There: Airport-Pulling Road between Golden Gate Pkwy and Davis Blvd. West on North Road. Turn on Terminal Drive.

Museum is in a separate room in the main airport terminal building.

America's Military and First Responders Museum Memorabilia



Open 7 days.

Admission free.

More than 10,000 historical artifacts:

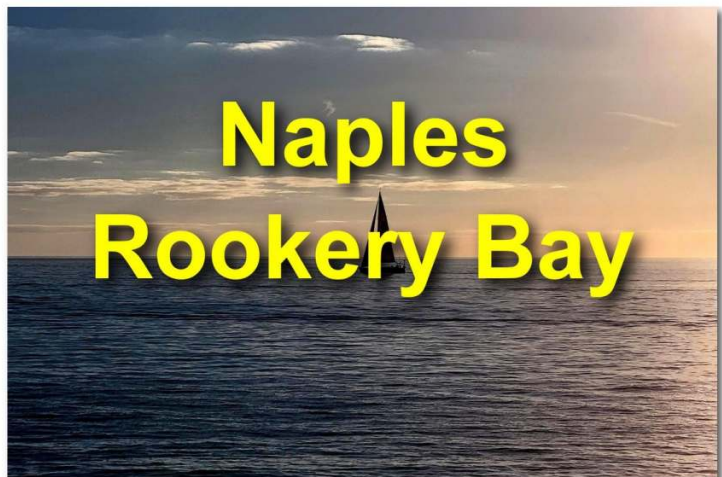
- Weapons.
- Uniforms.
- Medals and ribbons.
- Models.
- Printed materials.



Museum will be moving to 4110 Golden Gate Pkwy in new Veterans Service Center. 10X current floor space!



Naples Rookery Bay



Rookery Bay - Shell Island Hiking, Boardwalk, Nature Cruises



Rookery Bay
Briggs Boardwalk
½ Mile Loop
Completed 2009



Sabal Palm – Florida State Tree (South Carolina too)
Can Grow to 65 Ft Height.
aka Cabbage Palm, Palmetto,
Swamp Cabbage.



Our State Tree is technically NOT a tree!
It is a GRASS.

Calusa Shell Mound
1700s or earlier



Bits of History on Shell Island

1901 & 1908
Gravestones

1887 Water Tank



Naples Swamp Buggy Races



Swamp Buggy Races

Website: www.swampbuggy.com/

Where: Florida Sports Park, 8520
Rattlesnake Hammock Rd, Naples 34114.

Get There: Just east of Collier Blvd.
Turn on Lord's Way. Free parking.

When: Fall Classic Sunday, Dec 8, 2024
Winter Classic Sunday, Jan 26, 2025
Bud Cup Finals Sun March 2, 2025

Admission: Sat 11am-5pm is trials, \$10.
Sun 10:3-am-5:30pm is races, \$17.

What: Naples is the only swamp buggy
race track left in the USA. Mile O' Mud.
For over 70 years.
About 18 inches of water (much deeper
in the 'slip holes').

Track mimics the Everglades terrain.

Six categories of buggies: Ranging
from standard Jeeps with snorkels to
giant monsters with NASCAR racing
engines.

Some Examples:

Glades Buggy
Large rear tires.
Sits low in the water.



Palm Beach Buggy
High raised platform
on 4 large tires.



Edward H Frank
(born 1902) moved to
Arcadia 1914, Bonita
1921, Naples 1927.

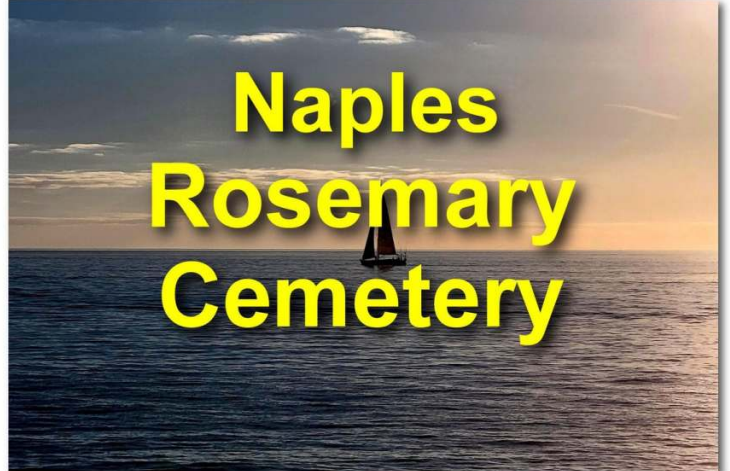
Opened Naples's first
garage (on 5th Ave)
and first restaurant.

Built the first swamp buggy 1919 for
construction in swampy terrain and hunting.

This buggy, built in 1920s, is at the Collier
County Museum.



Naples Rosemary Cemetery



Rosemary Cemetery – Naples
Corner Pine Ridge and Tamiami Trail,
next to CVS.

- Opened 1931.
- Land gift of developer Edward Crayton.
- Graves of pioneer families were moved from elsewhere.
- One section: Grave of "8 Unknown Negroes".
- Last known interment 1947.



Marco Island Historical Museum

Marco Island Historical Museum

Website: www.colliermuseums.com

Where: 180 South Heathwood Drive,
Marco Island.

Get There: Collier Blvd (SR-951) to
Marco Is. South on Bald Eagle Dr.
Becomes Heathwood Dr. Museum is on
right across from Marco Library.

When: Tuesday-Sat 9am to 4pm.

Admission: Free.



What: Traces the settlement of Marco from Calusa (500 AD), to Spanish, to Seminoles (and Seminole Wars), to permanent settlement in 1870.

From there, the museum covers Marco's:

- Agricultural history (fishing, clamming, and pineapple farming).
- Growth of the village (early 20th c).
- Major property development (1920s and again beginning in 1960s).

- **Agricultural history (fishing, clamming, and pineapple farming).**
- **Growth of the village (early 20th c).**
- **Major property development (1920s and again beginning in 1960s).**



Museum has extensive history of the Calusa and other early native Marco Island people including 200 pre-Columbian artifacts.

**The Calusa
Carved Wood
Marco Cat
Dated Between
500 and 1500 AD.
Discovered 1896.
Long-term loan
from the
Smithsonian.**



Only 6 Inches Tall

VILLAGE HISTORY

Collier City (Marco Island) in 1928



Historic Overview

Collier City was a village on the south end of Marco Island, Florida, established in 1928 by the Collier Brothers. The village was named after the Collier family, who were prominent in the area. The village was a small settlement with several buildings and a road. The village was a small settlement with several buildings and a road.

In 1920s, Barron Collier renamed Marco as Collier City. Renamed back to Marco Island in 1957.



Robert's Bay, Barfield Bay, Collier City, Collier Brothers' Plantation, Collier Brothers' Plantation, Collier Brothers' Plantation.

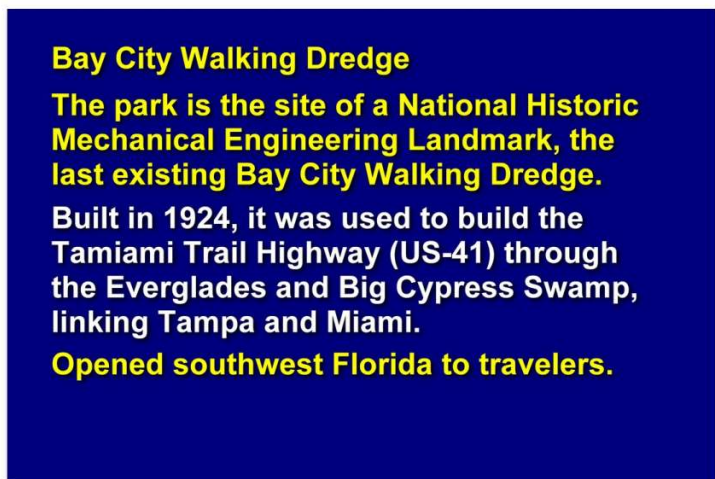
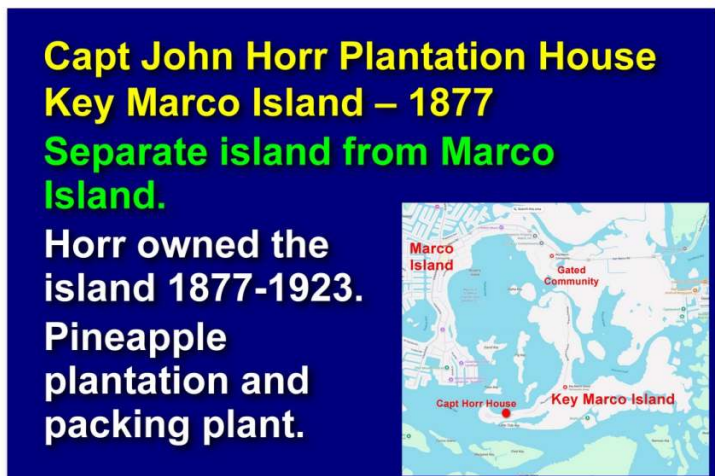
The Atlantic Coast Line completed its track into Collier City (now Marco Island) in 1927.

ACL terminated all South Florida passenger service in 1971.

Ticket, Train
Atlantic Coast Line Railroad
December 31, 1930
An Atlantic Coast Line Railroad ticket like this one would have been used by passengers traveling to Collier City (Marco Island).

Schedule, Train
Atlantic Coast Line Railroad
This Atlantic Coast Line Railroad schedule includes a stop in Collier City (Marco Island).

Collier City was the official name.



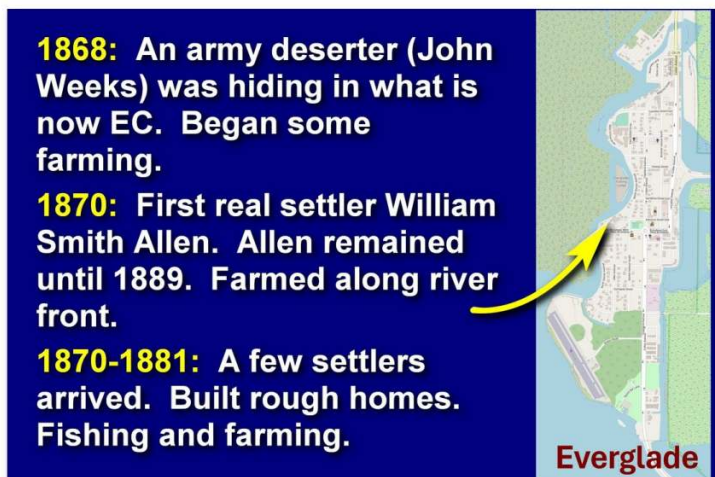


Today both are small, isolated towns of about 400 people. Populations:

Everglades City		Chokoloskee	
1930	172	2000	404
1940	518	2010	359
1950	625	2020	346
1960	552		
1970	462		
1980	524		
1990	321		
2000	479		
2010	400		
2020	352		

Collier County total population 2020: 375,752

Until 1962 Everglades City was the Collier County Seat.



George W Storter's Home Allen River, Everglade, 1910s

Residence Business



Storter Trading Post Everglade, 1915



Barron Gift Collier

- Born Memphis 1873. Died 1939.
- Made \$1 million in street lighting by age 26. Then printing and streetcar advertising.
- Visited SW Florida 1906. Loved it.
- By 1916 had bought 1 million acres of land.
- He became the largest landowner and developer in Florida.
- He also owned a chain of hotels, bus lines, banks, newspapers, telephone company, steamship line.



Collier's 1 million acres cost him between 12 cents and 30 cents an acre.

In 1922, Barron Collier bought out George Storter and virtually the whole Everglade village.

- Renamed the Allen River the Barron River.
- Added an s to the town's name (Everglades).

At that time only one dozen resident families. Plus a few fishing and hunting cabins owned by non-residents.



Everglades area prospered under Collier's leadership in the 1920s.

- Planned community including shops, hotels, school, bank, churches, public utilities, courthouse, hospital, newspaper.
- Created Collier County separate from Lee.
- He brought a passenger and freight railroad into Everglades.
- He built the Tamiami Trail.
- He built County and State Road 29 north Everglades to Immokalee.

Everglades, Florida – April 26, 1928



Amid all the development in Everglades, there were major hurricanes in 1926 and 1928:



Everglades City Museum of the Everglades

Museum of the Everglades



Websites: www.colliermuseums.com
<https://evergladesmuseum.org/>

Where: 105 West Broadway, Everglades City.

Get There: South on US-41, right on US-29. 35 miles from central Naples.

Admission: Free.

When: Tues-Sat 9am to 4pm.

What: History of Everglades City including:

- People of the Everglades: Calusa and Seminoles.
- Founding and History of Everglades City.
- Building the Tamiami Trail.
- Illegal Trades: Moonshine.
- Opening Everglades National Park.
- Fishing.
- The Python Problem.
- Several excellent videos.

Museum of the Everglades Old Laundry Building - 1928



Story of Barron Collier



Building the Town History of Everglades City



Illegal Trades Moonshine and Drugs



1970s-80s Everglades was drug smuggling capital of USA! 80% of adult males were arrested. But still too sensitive for the museum to display.

Everglades City Rod & Gun Club



Rod & Gun Club
200 W Broadway, Everglades City.
On Barron River.

1870 first settler William Allan built his house on this site.
George Storter Sr settled 1881. In 1889 he bought out Allen.

At some point Storter started offering meals and taking overnight guests.
His son George Jr continued ownership.

1922 Barron G. Collier bought the property and renamed it Rod & Gun Club.

- He operated it as a private club.
- He hosted international dignitaries and several United States presidents.

In 1972, the Bowen family, from Michigan, bought the Club and is still operating it today.

Rod & Gun Club Today



Celebrity Guests at Rod & Gun Club:

Presidents: Theodore Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, Herbert Hoover, Richard Nixon.

1942: John Wayne, Ernest Hemingway.

While on location filming:

- 1945, "Winds Across the Everglades": Burl Ives, Gypsy Rose Lee.
- 1983, "Cannonball Run": Kate Jackson, Burt Reynolds, Sally Field.
- 1994, "Just Cause": Sean Connery.
- 1997, Walt Disney's "Gone Fishing": Danny Glover, Joe Pesci.

David Carradine
Eddie Arnold
Phil Donahue

Roy Clark
Jack Nicklaus
Marlo Thomas

Mel Tillis
Peter Jennings

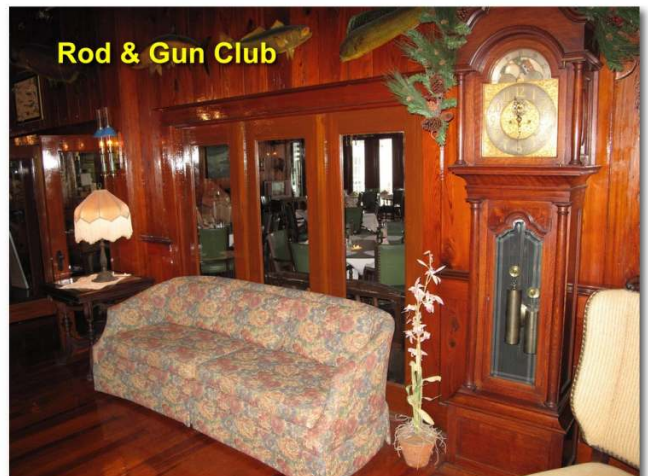
Dwight and Mamie Eisenhower at the Rod & Gun Club – 1951



With long-time Rod & Gun Club manager Claus 'Snooky' Senghaas →



Rod & Gun Club



Everglades City Other Historic Sites

Everglades City Community Church 1940



Bank of the Everglades - 1926
Founded by Barron G Collier.
Only Bank in Collier County Until 1949.

February 2025 work
 began to convert the
 bank building into
 an Everglades City
 visitor center and
 museum.

First Baptist Church of Everglades City - 1923

Atlantic Coast Line Railway Depot - 1928 Badly in Need of Restoration

Everglades City Hall
Built 1928 as Seat of Collier County
Government and Courthouse

Became City Hall in 1962 when Collier
 County seat was moved to East Naples.

Everglades National Park

Everglades National Park

- Legislation passed 1934.
- 1.5 million acres of land acquired 1934-1947.
- Dade, Monroe, Collier Counties.
- Largest subtropical wilderness in US.
- Elevation 0 to 8 feet.



Everglades National Park opened in 1947.

- Dedication ceremony in Everglades City.
- Attended by President Harry Truman.

**UNESCO World
 Heritage Site 1979**

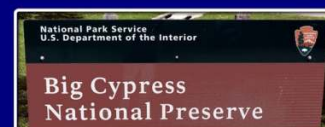


1947

Big Cypress National Preserve Abuts Everglades National Park.

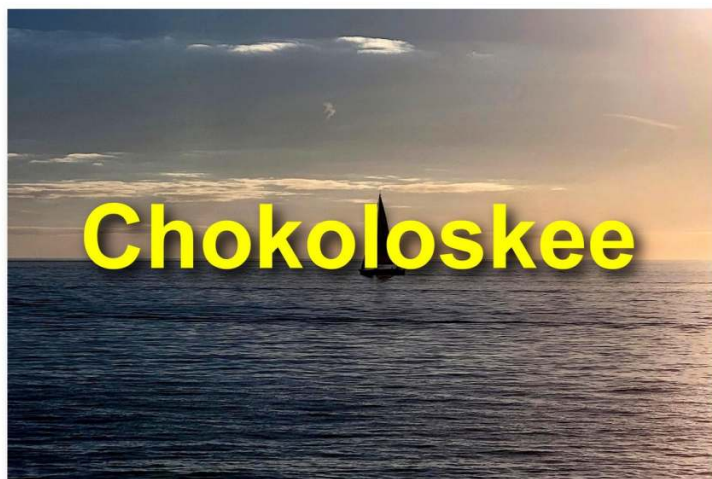
Established 1974. Adds 729,000 acres.
Very similar topography.

Classification as Preserve is political.
**Preserve allows more commercial
 and recreational activity than Park.**



Everglades National Park Gulf Coast Visitor Center destroyed by Hurricane Irma in 2017. A temporary replacement visitor center was destroyed by Hurricane Ian in 2022.

New visitor center is under construction. Opening late 2025.



Chokoloskee Island. One of the Ten Thousand Islands. **The only one now inhabited.** Connected by causeway since 1956. Only 150 acres: 0.22 sq mi. But has up to 20 foot height: Calusa shells discarded 500 BC-2000 AD. Height offered protection from floods.

Settled early (1880s): 20 ft elevation big asset. **Population today:** 346.



Why visit?

- History – Ted Smallwood's Store.
- Murder of Edgar Watson 1910.
- Fishing Trips.
- Lunch at Havana Cafe (seasonal).

Smallwood Store
Est. 1906 by Ted Smallwood
National Register of Historic Places
This building 1917.

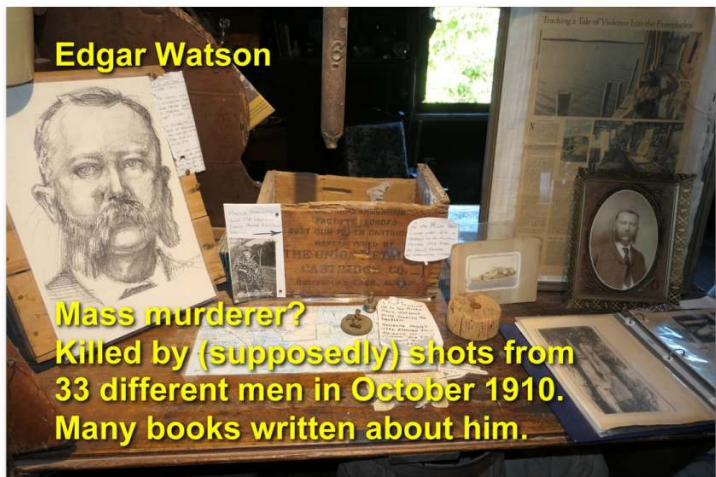


Ted Smallwood Store
National Register of Historic Places
360 Mamie Street, Chokoloskee
Daily 11am to 5pm, \$5
www.smallwoodstore.com



Edgar Watson

Mass murderer?
Killed by (supposedly) shots from 33 different men in October 1910.
Many books written about him.



Havana Cafe
Cuban and Cracker Cuisine
Roughly October thru May



Copeland

Copeland Baptist Church was built in 1947 of local cypress during the peak of the logging period.

Served the families of black loggers, who did not feel welcome at other area churches.

Ochopee

Ochopee, Florida on Tamiami Trail
Smallest Post Office in USA

United States
Post Office
OCHOPEE, FL 34141

US-41 36 miles east of Collier Blvd.

1953

CollierMuseums.com

Immokalee Pioneer Museum - Roberts Ranch

Immokalee Pioneer Museum at Roberts Ranch



Website: www.colliermuseums.com

Where: 1215 Roberts Avenue West, Immokalee.

Get There: Immokalee Road east from Naples. Left on W. Main St, Immokalee.

When: Tuesday-Sat 9am to 4pm. Closed Sun and Mon.

Admission: Free.

What: Immokalee is Collier County's largest inland community. Sprawling cattle ranches and agriculture.

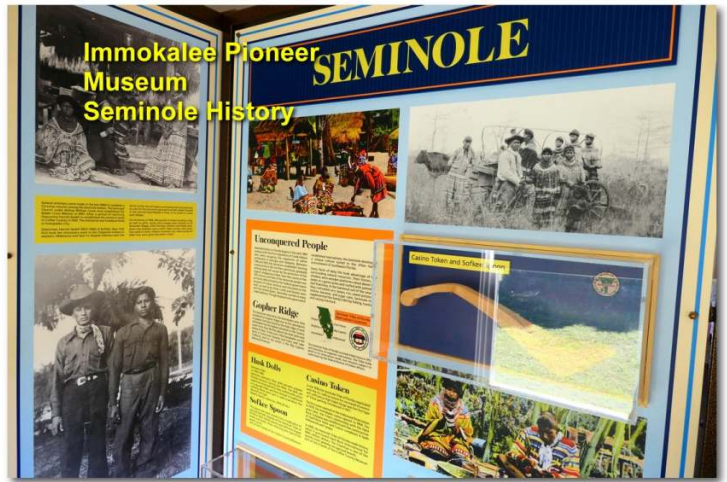
First occupied by the Calusa Indians and later by the Seminole, the area has seen a colorful mix of hunters, trappers, cowmen, missionaries, and Indian traders since it was first settled in 1872.

Early pioneers renamed the town "Immokalee" in 1897 after a Seminole word meaning "my home" or "his home."

**Pioneer Museum at Roberts Ranch
Immokalee
Main exhibit hall
Built as 1st Baptist Church 1916**



**Immokalee Pioneer
Museum
Seminole History**



**Roberts Ranch
Robert and Sarah Roberts**



**Roberts Family Home
1924**



**Roberts Family Home
Kitchen
1924**



**Roberts Family Home
Living Room
1924**



**Roberts Ranch
Horse Stalls and Barn
Early 1940s**



**Roberts Ranch
Smokehouse
1926**





Roberts Ranch
Bunk House
1930s



Roberts Ranch
Well - Dates from 1870s



Immokalee Oil Well Park

Immokalee Oil Well Park

Where: SR 29 between I-75 & Immokalee.

When: Daily Dawn to Dusk. Free.

What: 1940s oil derrick that pumped oil.

- Oil discovered near Immokalee 1940s.
- First well drilled 1943.
- To date, 297 wells drilled.
- Only 5 remain active. Aug 2024 output:
 - 16,000 barrels of oil.
 - 725,000 cubic feet of gas.



Oil Well Park
1940s Oil Derrick



Bonita Springs Historic Downtown Area



Bonita Springs - Liles Hotel - 1927
Now Historical Society Museum

"Temporarily closed" since Hurricane Ian!



Bonita Springs
Liles Hotel 1927

HISTORIC BONITA SPRINGS

Imperial River - Bonita Springs, Fla.

Bonita Springs Lifes Hotel 1927



Bonita Springs Former Atlantic Coast Line RR Station 1925



Bonita Springs Artists Cottages 1945



Bonita Springs 1940s Water Tank



Bonita Springs First United Methodist Church 1923



Bonita Springs Elementary School 1921



Bonita Springs Wonder Gardens



Wonder Gardens

Website: wondergardens.org

Where: 27180 Old 41 Rd, Bonita.

When: Daily 10-4 (9 to 4 in season).

Entry: Adults \$15. Seniors \$13.

What:

- 300 resident animals including birds, reptiles (alligators, tortoises).
- Banyan trees and other plantings.

Wonder Gardens History

Established 1936: Piper Family.

"Reptile Gardens". Then "Wonder Gardens".

April 2013 Piper family closed the Gardens.

Non-profit formed: Rent from Pipers and run it.

2015 City of Bonita Springs loaned non-profit around \$3 million to buy Gardens.

Loan default. City took over property.

Non-profit operates under contract with city.

Wonder Gardens Entrance, Old 41 Road



Wonder Gardens Flamingoes Over 50 years old



Wonder Gardens Parrot



Estero Koreshan State Park



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.

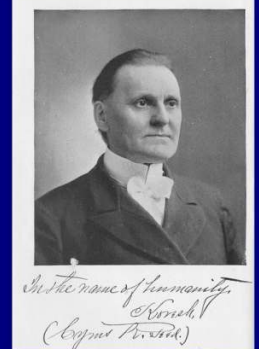
What: Village was the home of a unique and eccentric pioneer group of 200 people that chose to live on the banks of the Estero River.

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.

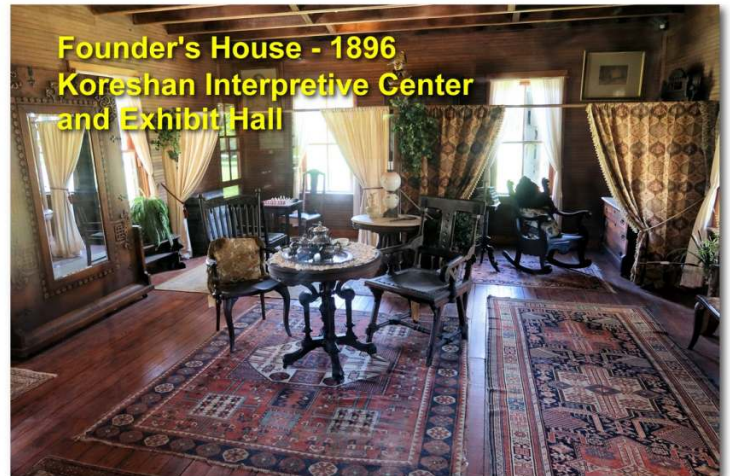
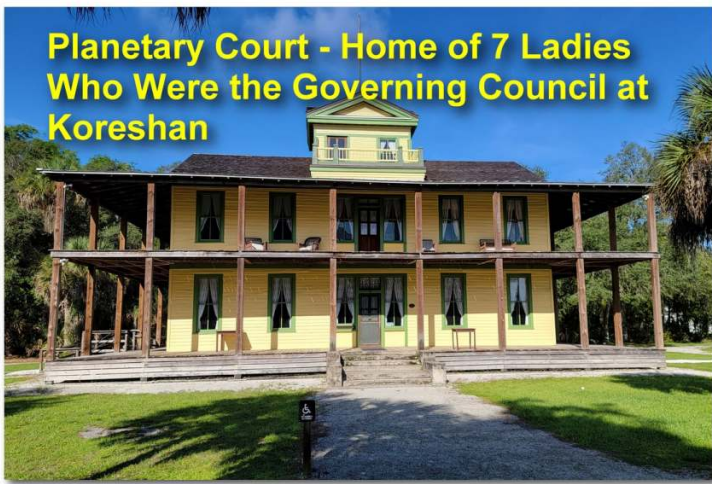
The enterprising Koreshans established a farm, nursery and botanical gardens. Also a bakery and public store.

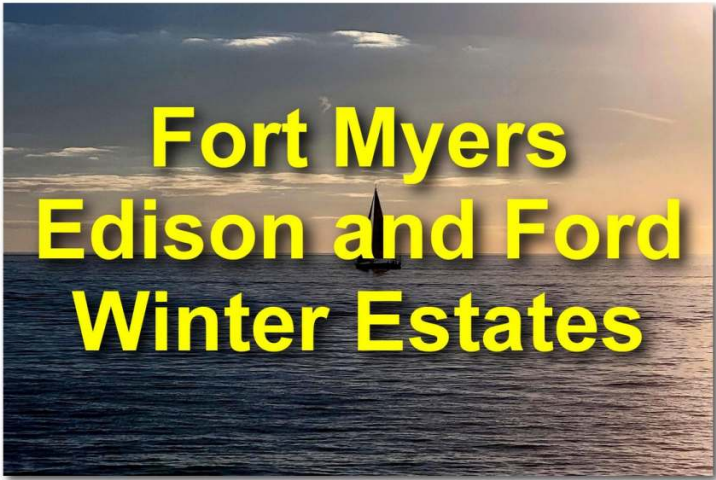
Koreshan State Park has 11 immaculately restored historic buildings erected by the Koreshans between the late-19th and early-20th centuries.

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



Cyrus R Teed
Alias "Koresh"





Fort Myers Edison and Ford Winter Estates

Edison and Ford Winter Estates Fort Myers

Website: www.edisonfordwinterestates.org/

Where: 2350 McGregor Blvd, Fort Myers 33901.

Get There: I-75 to Colonial Blvd Exit #136. West on Colonial Blvd about 6 miles to McGregor (just before The Gulf). Right on McGregor. About 3 miles, on left.

When: Daily 9am to 5:30pm.

Admission:

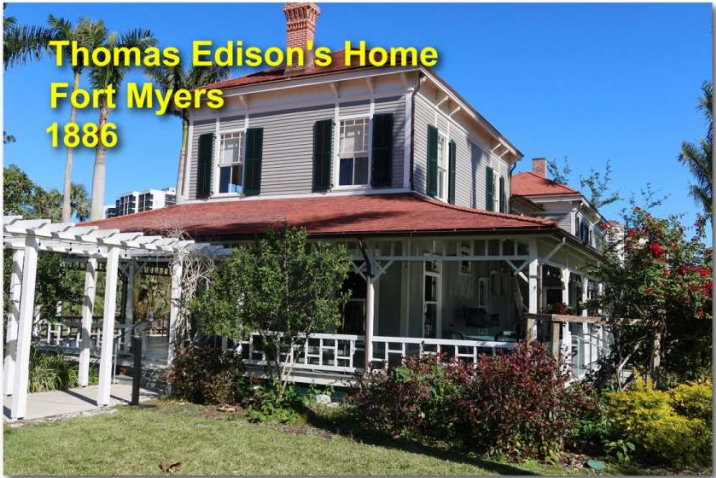
- \$25 self-guided tour. Download Internet app. 25 stops.
- \$30 tour led by site historian.

Both include the historic homes and gardens, and admission to Museum and Edison Botanic Research Labs.

On these tours you do not go into the houses. You look in.

Edison's Winter Home:

- 14-acre Site on Caloosahatchee Riv.
- Queen Anne New England Style.
- Built 1885 in parts in Fairfield, Maine.
- Sent to Fort Myers on 4 sailing ships.
- Assembled in Fort Myers in 1886.
- One of the first pre-fabricated buildings in America.



Thomas Edison's Home
Fort Myers
1886



Thomas Edison's Home
Living Room



Thomas Edison's Home
Dining Room



Edison and Ford Museum
Some of Edison's Inventions



**Edison and Ford Museum
Edison's Own 1916 Model T**



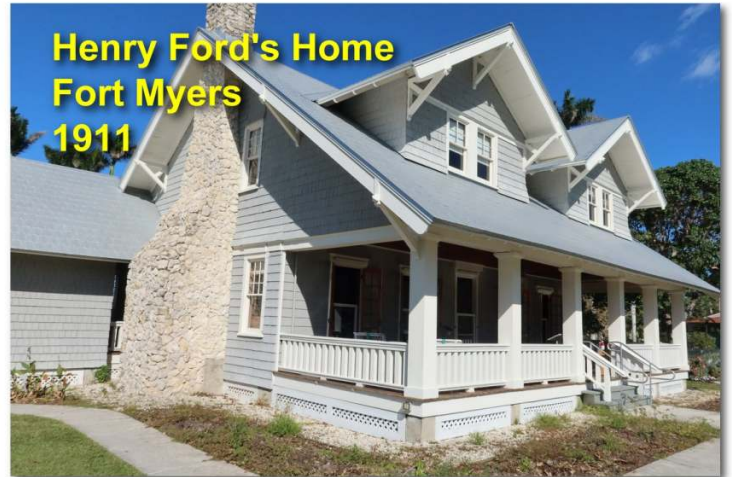
**Edison's Botanic Research Laboratory
Goal: Find a US plant that could
produce rubber in case of foreign
shortage.**

Ford Home:

Edison's good friend Henry Ford bought the house next to Edison's in 1916. It was built 1911. Named "The Mangoes".

Henry Ford manufactured the first automobile that many middle-class Americans could afford, starting 1910. The car became a practical conveyance that profoundly affected 20th century society worldwide.

Ford died In 1947.



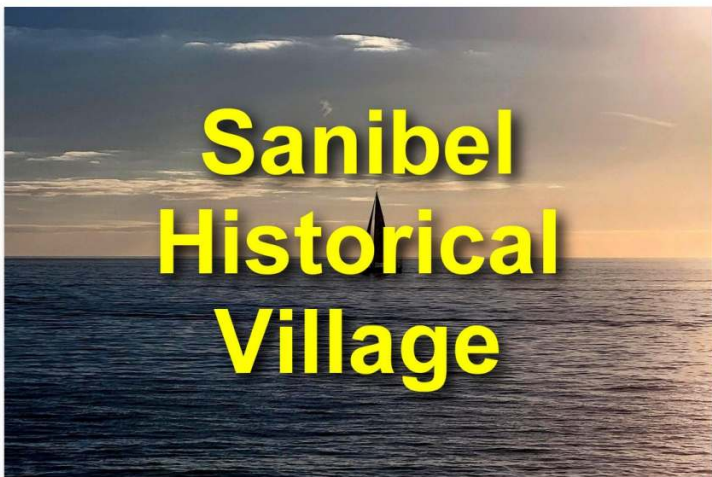
**Henry Ford's Home
Fort Myers
1911**



**Henry Ford's Home
Living Room**



**Henry Ford's Home
Dining Room**



Sanibel Historical Village

Sanibel Historical Museum and Village

Website: sanibelmuseum.org/

Where: 950 Dunlop Road, Sanibel, FL.

Get There: Cross Sanibel Causeway. Right on Periwinkle 2.5 miles.

When: Mid-October through April (Seasonal): Tues.-Sat. 10 am to 4 pm.

May through July (Summer): Tues.-Sat. 10 am to 1 pm.

Admission: Adults \$15. Under 18 free.

**Ten historic Sanibel buildings (1896-1927)
restored to their original state.**

- Shore Haven (1924).
- Bailey General Store (1927).
- Caretaker's Cottage (1925).
- Morning Glories Cottage (1925)
- Sanibel Packing House (1900)
- Sanibel School House (1896).
- Post Office (1926).
- Burnap Cottage (1898).
- Miss Charlotta's Tea Room (1926).
- Rutland House (1913).



*Sanibel Historical
Museum and Village*

**Sanibel Historical Museum and Village
Shore Haven - 1924 - Sears Roebuck kit home
Beachfront Home**



**Sanibel Historical Museum and Village
Bailey General Store - 1927
Was originally near the ferry dock.**



**Sanibel Historical Museum and Village
Morning Glories - 1926
Beachfront Cottage**



**Sears kit home. Came in 30,000 pieces
on a truck delivered on a barge in 1925.**

**Sanibel Historical Museum and Village
Miss Charlotta's Tea Room - 1926
Built by Bailey Brothers at the Ferry Dock
as a Temporary Store**



**Sanibel Historical Museum and Village
Sanibel School House - 1896**



**Sanibel
Ding Darling NWR
Calusa Shell
Mound**

**J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife
Refuge**

US Fish and Wildlife Service

Website:

www.fws.gov/refuge/JN_Ding_Darling/

Where: On Sanibel Island.

Get There: I-75 or US-41 to Sanibel
Causeway (toll \$6). Right onto Periwinkle.
At end of Periwinkle, right onto Tarpon Bay
Rd, then left onto Sanibel-Captiva Road.

When: Daily except Fridays and national holidays.

Admission: \$10 per car to drive 4-mile Wildlife Drive. \$1 for hikers or bikers.

What: 6,400 acres of mangrove forest, submerged seagrass beds, marshes, and hardwood hammocks.

One of America's largest undeveloped mangrove ecosystems.

4 mile one-way drive with spectacular views of lakes and bayous.

Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge

- Habitat of 245 bird species.
- Many birdwatching opportunities. Especially December through March.
- Home to raccoons, bobcats, river otters, alligators, and marsh rabbits.
- Hiking trails.
- Small exhibit building.

White Ibis



Ding Darling 4-mile Wildlife Drive

Wulfert Keys Trail
Calusa Shell Mound
Observation Tower
Cross Dike Trail
Mangrove Overlook
Indigo Trail

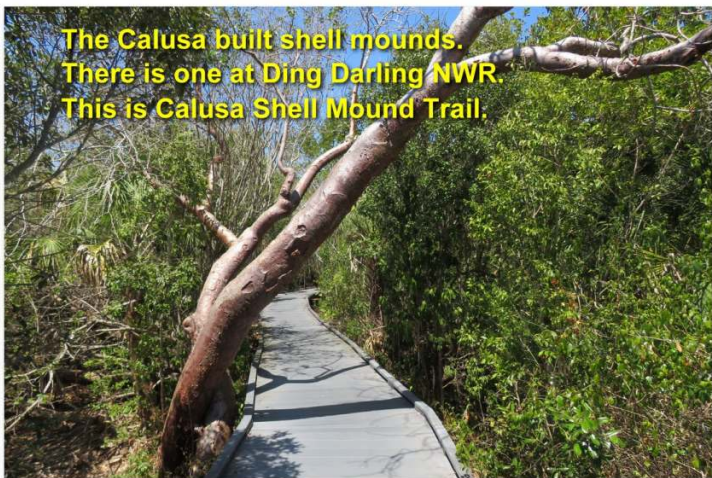


Start of Drive

Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge



The Calusa built shell mounds.
There is one at Ding Darling NWR.
This is Calusa Shell Mound Trail.



Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge
Calusa shell mound.



Sanibel Bailey Homestead

Bailey Homestead Preserve, Sanibel
Managed by Sanibel-Captiva Conservation
Foundation.

Website: <https://www.sccf.org/preserves/bailey-homestead-preserve>

Get There: 1300 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel, FL 33957.

When: Trail open dawn to dusk.

What: Historic home, garden center, 0.9 mile walking trail, preserved land.

28 acres of which:

- Front 9 acres include the Homestead, retail garden center, the Shipley Trail.
- 19 acre wildlife corridor that includes freshwater wetlands and interior ridges.
- Historic 1896 Bailey family home and 1908 windmill.
- The Baileys were Sanibel farming pioneers, business people (packing house, grocery, hardware store), and conservationists.
- Home is open only for events.

Bailey Homestead - 1896



1908 Windmill

Sanibel Lighthouse

Sanibel Lighthouse
98 Feet.
First lit 1884.
Still operating.

Damage from Hurricane Ian (incl replacement of one of the four legs) has been repaired.

Sadly, the lighthouse keeper's cottage was lost to Ian.

Sanibel Lighthouse - 1884
Operated by US Coast Guard.
Grounds open to public.
Lighthouse itself not open.

This historic lighthouse keeper's cottage is gone

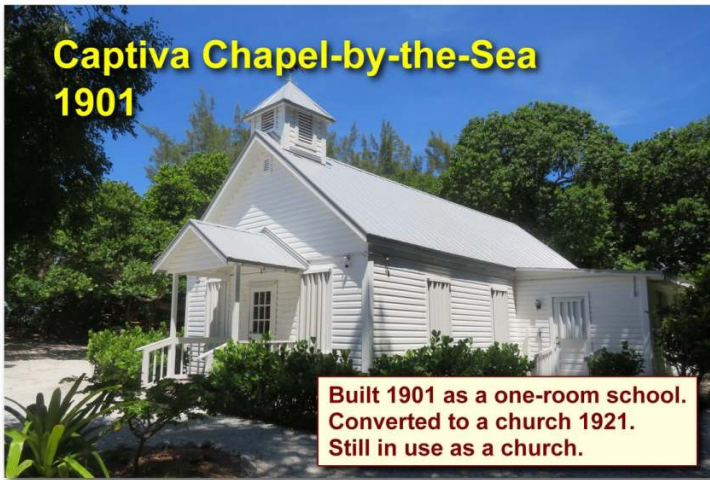
Captiva Cemetery and Chapel-by-the-Sea

Historic Captiva Cemetery
First Interment 1897

Historic Captiva Cemetery

LEWIS AUSTIN
DOANE
BORN IN NORTH
DANA, MASS.
MAR. 1844
DIED
APR. 17, 1921
HIS WIDOW
JENNIE UPTON
DOANE
BORN
IN PRESCOTT
MASS. 1852

Captiva Chapel-by-the-Sea 1901

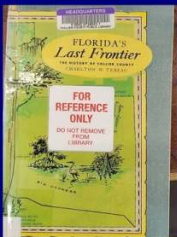


Built 1901 as a one-room school.
Converted to a church 1921.
Still in use as a church.

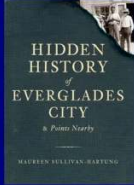
Some Resources



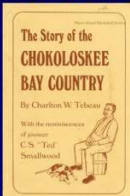
Recommended References



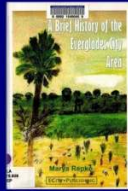
Florida's Last Frontier by Charlton Tebeau. My opinion: The best of these.



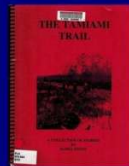
Hidden History of Everglades City & Points Nearby by Maureen Sullivan-Hartung



The Story of the Chokoloskee Bay Country by Charlton Tebeau.



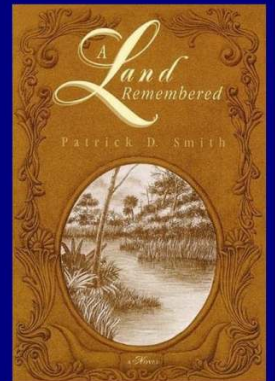
Marya Repko



Maria Stone

A Land Remembered - Patrick Smith Outstanding!

"The story of three generations of the MacIveys, a Florida family who battle the hardships of the frontier to rise from a dirt-poor Cracker life to the wealth and standing of real estate tycoons."



The End And Thank You!

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www.PaulVisits.com

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