

Southwest Florida History

Dr Paul Pacter

www.PaulVisits.com

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Class 2 History

City of Naples

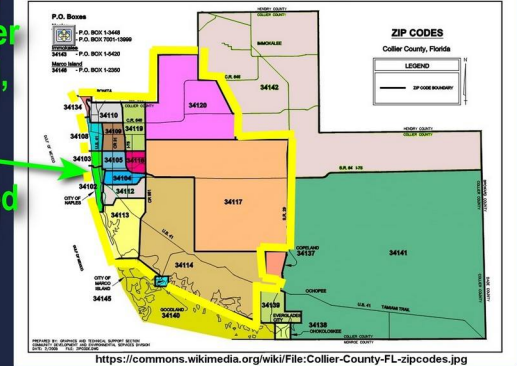
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Six class meetings [Download PDF of slides: www.PaulVisits.com](http://www.PaulVisits.com)

- Class 1 Historical Overview
- **Class 2 History City of Naples**
- Class 3 South and East of Naples
- Class 4 Major Parks & Preserves
- Class 5 North of Naples
- Class 6 *A Land Remembered* by Patrick Smith & Other Resources

Collier County and the City of Naples
Yellow is Naples mailing address.

Map shows entire Collier County and, in bright green, incorporated City of Naples



Historical Census Population

City of Naples

Collier County

Year	Pop.	% Change
1930	391	—
1940	1,253	220.5%
1950	1,465	16.9%
1960	4,656	217.8%
1970	12,042	158.6%
1980	17,581	46.0%
1990	19,508	11.0%
2000	20,981	7.6%
2010	19,539	-6.9%
2020	19,115	-2.2%

Year	Pop.	% Change
1930	2,883	—
1940	5,102	77.0%
1950	6,488	27.2%
1960	15,753	142.8%
1970	38,040	141.5%
1980	85,971	126.0%
1990	152,099	76.9%
2000	251,377	65.3%
2010	321,520	27.9%
2020	375,752	16.9%

<https://data.census.gov/>

Historical Census Population

City of Naples

City of Fort Myers

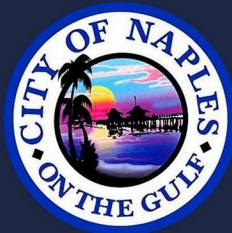
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Year	Pop.	% Change
1900	943	--
1910	2,463	161.2%
1920	3,678	49.3%
1930	9,082	146.9%
1940	10,604	16.8%
1950	13,195	24.4%
1960	22,523	70.7%
1970	27,351	21.4%
1980	36,638	34.0%
1990	45,206	23.4%
2000	48,208	6.6%
2010	62,298	29.2%
2020	86,395	38.7%

Land area Naples: 12 sq mi
Land area Ft Myers: 40 sq mi.

www.census.gov

Let's look at some places where we can see or learn about the History of the City of 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.

Buildings include:

- Main gallery: 10,000 sq feet of displays.
- Native gardens.
- Restored Naples cottages.
- Archaeology lab.
- Seminole Wars army fort.
- Calusa Indian camp.
- Original Keewaydin Ferry Boat to Keewaydin Barrier Island (still accessible only by boat today).
- Everglades cabin.

Collier County Museum Government Center - Naples Main Exhibit Building



10,000 Square Feet of Displays

Pre-History

Southwest Florida was once home to some of the most exotic and fascinating land animals that ever lived. Mastodons, mammoths, sloths, horses and huge armadillos, covered the rich wetlands in 10 to 15 feet long, grassy meadows. Many of these animals were much larger than modern day species.

7 foot Giant Sloths

SOUTH FLORIDA'S FIRST PEOPLE

Mammoths

Walked across from Asia

In SW FL just 10,000 years ago!

Sample Exhibits

JUAN PONCE DE LEON

PEDRO MENENDEZ DE AVILES

Ponce de Leon

Seminole Wars

WWII

Collier County During World War II

GROWTH OF SPORTS TOURISM

Hitting and Having Opportunities Made Southwest Florida a Sportsman's Paradise

Sports Tourism

PREHISTORIC LAND

Pre-History

on the Florida Frontier

Florida Frontier

Pre-History

Seminole Crafts

Moviemaking

Early Settlers

Spanish Exhibits

Undersea

Logging

Barron Collier

Tamiami Trail - Now US-41

Blazing the Trail

The Trail Builders

Florida's Applan Way

Tamiami Trail Played a Huge Role in Naples' Development. Details in Class 3. Brief Overview:

1915: State wanted road from Tampa to Miami – economic development. Ordered each county to build its part. Lee County did not have \$\$.

1923: Barron Collier offered to build and pay IF State would split Lee County in two and name the lower half Collier County. State agreed.

1923-1928: Road cost Collier \$13 million to build.

1923-1928: He built Everglades City. County Seat to 1962. A planned town that never happened.



Barron Collier Memorial Collier-Seminole State Park

Hurricanes



Naples Army Air Field WW2



Huntoon Cottage 1940s



George Huntoon worked for Collier. Avid outdoorsman. This cottage is his collection of SW Florida wildlife.

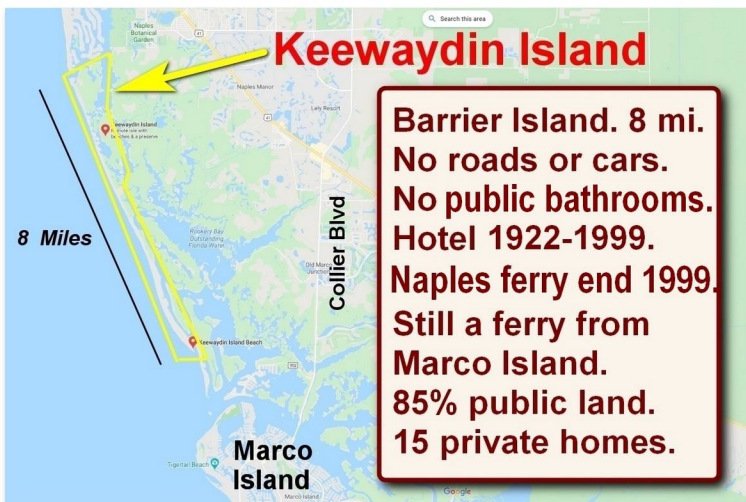
Local Fish and Birds



Florida Panther, Bald Eagle

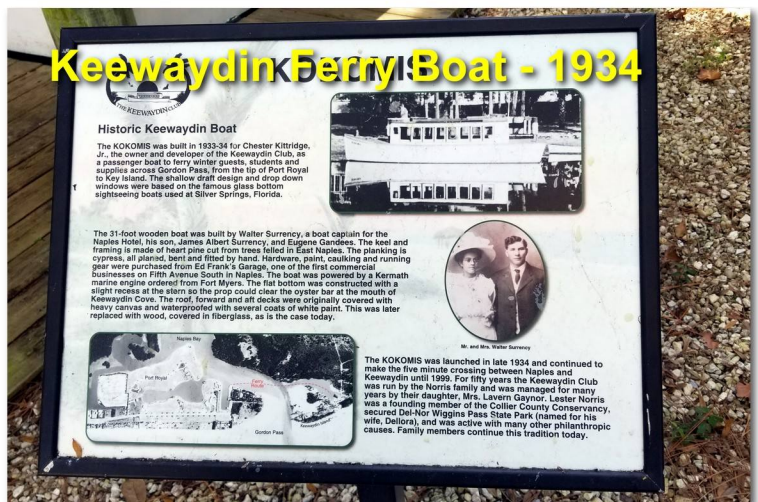


Keewaydin Island



Barrier Island. 8 mi. No roads or cars. No public bathrooms. Hotel 1922-1999. Naples ferry end 1999. Still a ferry from Marco Island. 85% public land. 15 private homes.

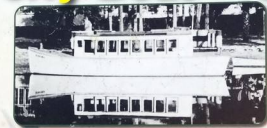
Keewaydin Ferry Boat - 1934



Historic Keewaydin Boat

The KOKOMIS was built in 1933-34 for Chester Kittridge, Jr., the owner and developer of the Keewaydin Club, as a passenger boat to ferry winter guests, students and supplies across Gordon Pass, from the tip of Port Royal to Key Island. The shallow draft design and drop-down windows were based on the famous glass bottom sightseeing boats used at Silver Springs, Florida.

The 31-foot wooden boat was built by Walter Surrency, a boat captain for the Naples Hotel, his son, James Albert Surrency, and Eugene Gaudies. The keel and framing is made of heart pine cut from trees felled in East Naples. The planking is cypress, all planed, bent and fitted by hand. Hardware, paint, caulking and running gear were purchased from Ed Frank's Garage, one of the first commercial businesses on Fifth Avenue South in Naples. The boat was powered by a Kermath marine engine ordered from Fort Myers. The flat bottom was constructed with a slight recess at the stern so the prop could clear the oyster bar at the mouth of Keewaydin Cove. The roof, forward and aft decks were originally covered with heavy canvas and waterproofed with several coats of white paint. This was later replaced with wood, covered in fiberglass, as is the case today.



The KOKOMIS was launched in late 1934 and continued to make the five minute crossing between Naples and Keewaydin until 1999. For fifty years the Keewaydin Club was run by the Norris family and was managed for many years by their daughter, Mrs. Lavern Gaynor. Lester Norris was a founding member of the Collier County Conservancy, secured Del-Nor Wiggins Pass State Park (named for his wife, Delora), and was active with many other philanthropic causes. Family members continue this tradition today.



Keewaydin Ferry Boat - 1934



**Typical Naples Cottage of 1920s
Built 1926. Pine.
Originally stood Airport Rd at US 41.**



Sherman Tank - WW2



**Seminole Wars between US
Army and Seminoles 1817-1858**

Seminole War Fort



Seminole Camp



**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



Everglades Cabin



Sugar Cane Press - 1914

Turned by mule, ox, or small tractor

Naples Pier History

- Original 600-foot pier built 1888 by the Naples Co. Passenger and freight dock where goods, mail, and people arrived by boat from Punta Gorda to Naples. **T-shaped.**
- Pier had footpath plus tram rails to take goods to hotel and store.
- In those days, 12th Ave South was named Pier Street.

Naples Pier History - continued

Damaged by storms and rebuilt in: 1910.

- 1926. **After Hurricane Donna**
- 1935. **Donna**
- 1944.



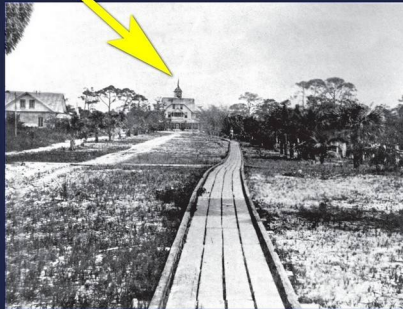
1960: Hurricane Donna, total destruction.
2017: Hurricane Irma.

2022: Major damage from Hurricane Ian. Pier being totally reconstructed.

Walkway from Pier to the Naples Hotel

Built 1889
Torn Down 1950s

1900



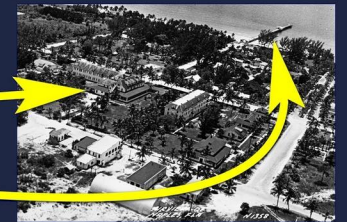
1906

The Naples Hotel - 1929



Aerial View of Naples 1948:

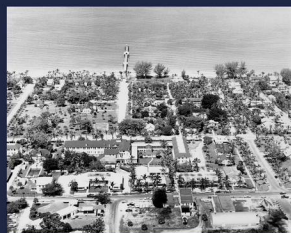
Hotel
Naples Pier



Naples Pier - 1947



Naples Pier - Early 1950s



Naples Pier Over the Years



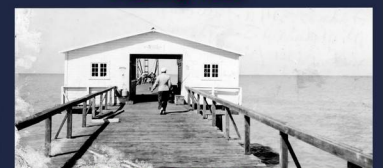
1913 Waiting at the pier for the boat to Punta Gorda



Fishing 1925



After the 1944 Hurricane



Naples Pier 1948

Naples Pier 2020 Before Hurricane Ian



Naples Pier – Hurricane Ian 9/28/2022

30 pilings collapsed.

Half the pier is missing.

New pier: \$26 million.

FEMA and State pay \$13 million.

Army Corps of Eng. has approved.

Dec 2025 FEMA signed off on \$\$.

Next: – Demolition 6 months. Started Jan 2026.

– Construction 18 months.

Open early 2028?



Pier Two Weeks After Hurricane Ian



Final Approved Pier Design



Naples Depot

Museum is about both Naples railroad history and general city history.

Set in restored 1927 Seaboard Air Line and Atlantic Coast Line Railway passenger station.

Passenger service ended 1971.

National Register of Historic Places.

Recently restored after significant Ian damage.

Naples Depot Museum



Website: www.colliermuseums.com

Where: 1051 Fifth Ave South at 10th St, Naples. Just off US-41.

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

Same Site: Naples Lionel Train Mus. (private): \$7 adults, \$3 kids. Fri and Sat 10am to 2pm in Season. Model Railroading.

Naples Depot Museum - 1927 Building



Trains arrived in Fort Myers in 1904. But the train line from Fort Myers south to Naples was not built until 1926, First trains 1927.

Robert M. La Follette, Inc., of Saint Paul, Minnesota, was brought in to begin grading and laying track on February 6, 1926 for the Seaboard's new 36-mile extension from Fort Myers to Naples. The last spike was driven in December 1926. Six steam locomotives, a Roberts track laying machine and more than 500 men were needed to build the line.

In 1979 the track's last owners, the Seaboard Coastline Railroad, abandoned the Naples line and removed the rails.



Tea/Coffee Service on the Seaboard Air Line Trains to Naples



Naples Depot Handled Both Passengers and Freight

THE NAPLES TRAIN DEPOT

FREIGHT ROOM

The Naples Depot was planned and built as a "combination" station to handle heavy freight as well as passengers. Railroad box cars were loaded with barrels of iced fish, tomatoes, citrus and other locally-grown produce through the single loading dock located on the east side of this room.

Although the station remained closed during World War II, on Saturday nights the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad opened the freight room and loading dock for dances and USO shows to entertain the servicemen stationed nearby at the Naples Army Air Field. It was the biggest form of wartime entertainment in what the soldiers jokingly referred to as "the gigantic town of Naples."

A committee of civilians formed by Mrs. Stephen F. Briggs recruited the town's women and young ladies to help prepare refreshments for the troops and decorate the Depot with fishing nets and paper cut-outs. Music was provided by a juke box loaned by local businessman, Dan House.

The Saturday night dances were moved to the Naples Country Club in November 1944.

1927

Segregation continued until the early 1950s

THE NAPLES TRAIN DEPOT

BLACK PASSENGER WAITING ROOM

Strict segregation laws applied fully to all railroad companies and passenger train accommodations south of the Mason-Dixon Line. This room was originally used as a separate waiting area, restroom, and ticket counter for African American passengers arriving or departing Naples.

The practice of separating railroad passengers by race originated in the early 1800s in the northern states where blacks were required to ride in separate cars. At first, Southern blacks were permitted to ride in coach with white passengers, provided they paid the full fare. After the Civil War, racial segregation of train passengers ended in the North but continued in the South where it was mandated and enforced by state "Jim Crow" laws.

1927

The Calusa Indians lived in SW Florida from at least 5th century BC. In early 18th century, Creek Indians (aka Seminole) invaded from Georgia and Alabama. The Calusa either were killed or fled by late 18th c. Below are Calusa artefacts from Naples area.



THE SEMINOLE
Seminoles
Three 19th c. Seminole Wars (against US Army) killed or evicted most of the 6,000 Seminoles. Only about 300 survived the 3rd Seminole War 1855-58.

The Seminole Wars were a series of three conflicts between the Seminole and the United States Army in the 19th century. The first war (1817-18) was the result of the Seminole's resistance to the removal of their people from their ancestral lands in Florida to Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma. The second war (1835-42) was the result of the Seminole's resistance to the removal of their people to the reservation at Ft. Marion, Florida. The third war (1855-58) was the result of the Seminole's resistance to the removal of their people to the reservation at Ft. Marion, Florida.

1817-18

1835-42

1855-58

Settlement of Naples

1874: First white settler was Roger Gordon. (Gordon Pass, etc.). Until road from Fort Myers opened 1914, only way into Naples was by boat.

1876: Naples' first year-round residents John and Madison Weeks.

1881: Hamilton Disston purchased 4 million acres of Florida land from the government. **Largest land purchase in world history! But none in Naples.**

1887: Two Kentucky businessmen purchased the land that is now downtown Naples, named it Naples, and began selling lots. Developed a winter resort.

Naples was settled in an age of water transportation. Lacking both roads and railroads, the first pioneers depended on schooners, flat-bottomed boats, and small craft to carry their goods and passengers to the coast. For almost 80 years, nearly all trade and communication with the interior passed through the Gulf of Mexico.

Roger Gordon was probably the first white settler to make his home here. He set up a trading camp around 1874, near the area that still bears his name. Further inland, he established another trading post, both near and west of a small trading post, both built on piles on a short time later.

In 1876, Naples acquired its first year-round residents John and Madison Weeks, just down roads and called a path to the land. They were succeeded by some families from the coast of Florida. In 1881, Hamilton Disston purchased 4 million acres of Florida land from the government. The largest amount of land ever bought by a private individual in U.S. history. He used the state from bankruptcy and eventually opened the way for a group of Kentucky businessmen to buy, name, and develop a winter resort at what would become downtown Naples.

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. "Cerro Gordo" 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. Haldeman, 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, six beach cottages, and a 600-foot pier to bring in construction crews, passengers, and cargo. A wooden tramway 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, newspapers to sell the idea that Naples offered the same exotic beauty, relaxation and warmth of southern Italy. A 2-page sales pamphlet, titled "A Lush Landscape of Palms and Pines, trees and promised invite a chance to escape the "chilling blasts of winter" while curing their bronchitis, asthma and hay fever.

John Stuart Williams 1817-188

Walter N. Haldeman 1817-188

History of the Naples Pier - First Built 1888-1889

THE NAPLES PIER

A Quick History of the Naples Pier

The pier was first built in 1888-1889 by the Naples Pier Company, which was organized by a group of local businessmen. The pier was built on a site that had been used for a long time as a landing for small boats. The pier was built to provide a place where larger ships could dock and where passengers could get on and off. The pier was built on a site that was owned by the Naples Pier Company, which was organized by a group of local businessmen. The pier was built to provide a place where larger ships could dock and where passengers could get on and off. The pier was built on a site that was owned by the Naples Pier Company, which was organized by a group of local businessmen. The pier was built to provide a place where larger ships could dock and where passengers could get on and off.

Naples Mule-Drawn "Taxi" 1915



The Original Naples Hotel and Naples Beach Hotel

NAPLES BEACH HOTEL & GOLF CLUB

The depth of the Great Depression, Christmas season and winter. Alvin J. Jones, head of the Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club, was a real-estate developer and built the Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club. The hotel was built on a site that was owned by the Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club. The hotel was built to provide a place where larger ships could dock and where passengers could get on and off. The hotel was built on a site that was owned by the Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club. The hotel was built to provide a place where larger ships could dock and where passengers could get on and off.

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

NAPLES IN THE AUTO AGE

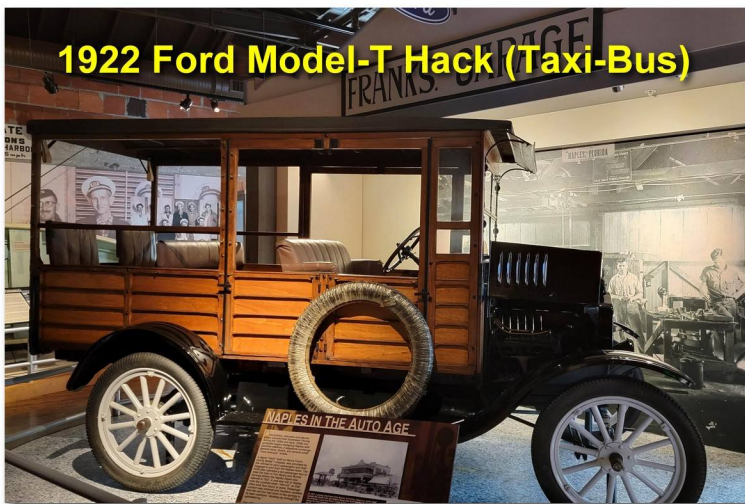
Automobiles, railroads and electric power transformed Southwest Florida during the 1920s and early 1930s and gradually began reshaping Naples with gasoline stations, a telephone exchange, general stores, diners, and several small "mom-and-pop" hotels.

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 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 "sinking 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.



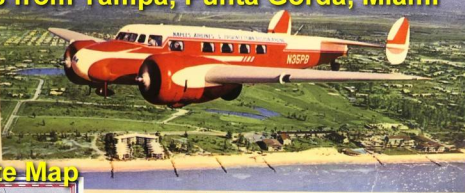
1922 Ford Model-T Hack (Taxi-Bus)



Naples Airport was established in 1942 as Naples Army Airfield by the US Army Air Forces. Used for pilot and gunnery training. Privatized in November 1945



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



1977 Route Map



The traffic to Naples had reached a respectable 8,000 year. The demand for service was so great that bought an extra, ten-seat Lockheed 10 Electra. By per 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 Intang Douglas DC-3s were added in 1968 when the airline 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 out over the Naples with Naples Airport in the background.

ALLIGATOR ALLEY Construction of Alligator Alley Now I-75 1964-1968

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the idea for a new highway across the Everglades gained popular support in both Collier and Broward Counties, despite opposition from a powerful group who felt the Tamiami Trail should be improved before road monies were spent elsewhere.

Opponents to the new road included the American Automobile Association which threatened to route its members clear of the proposed highway. The AAA dubbed the road "Alligator Alley" as an expression of supreme contempt for the two-lane highway which it said was "designated with a flagrant disregard for safety...and that charged a toll besides." Newspapers applied the name "Spurricane", "Death Row" and "Chicken Quicks" among others.

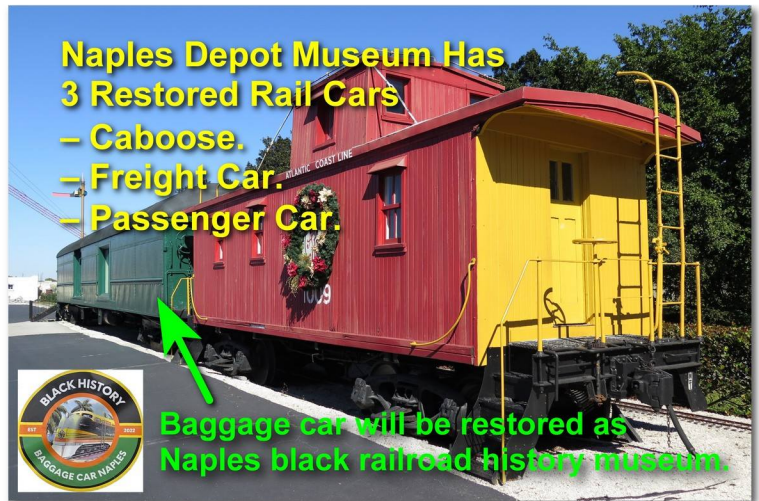
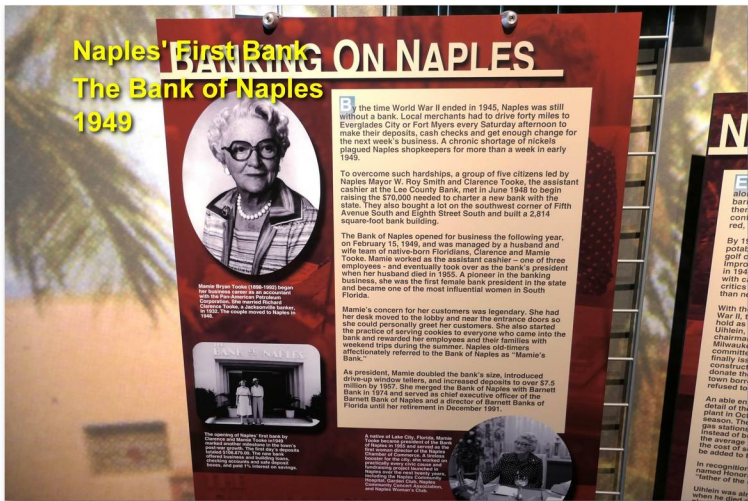
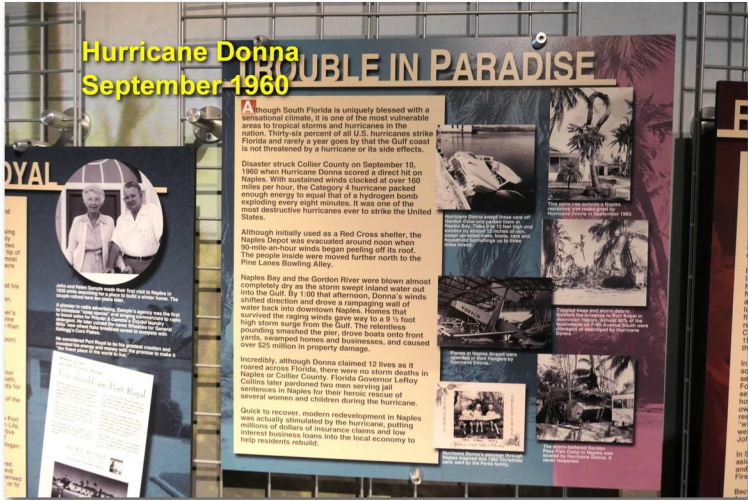
When suits were brought to stop construction, the Seminole Tribe of Florida successfully intervened in support of the road as a valuable element in establishing business in the Big Cypress Reservation.

The "Alley" was built from both ends toward the middle. For five months survey crews equipped with helicopters, all-terrain and amphibious vehicles labored to mark out and align the roadway through one of the most impenetrable areas in the country.

Actual construction began in 1964 when huge dredges started stripping away the top layers of sawgrass and muck. Barges carrying dynamite drills were floated in behind the dredges to blast lime rock out of the solid Everglades floor. The dynamite rock was scooped up, crushed and stabilized to form a compacted roadbed 8' thick. Over this, the final surface material was laid. Sixteen small bridges had to be built to permit the natural flow of water to the south, southwest.

The "Alligator Alley" was officially titled, was dedicated on February 11, 1968. Construction had taken a little over five years, a remarkable feat compared to the thirteen years it took to complete the Tamiami Trail.

This road sign was presented to Margaret T. Scott, Collier County's Clerk of Courts, by the Florida State Road Department on February 16, 1968.



Naples Lionel Train Museum

Naples Lionel Train Museum

What: Model train exhibits. 8 trains running simultaneously. HO and O scale. Plus an outdoor mini train ride.

Where: Rear Naples Depot Mus Bldg.

Website: naplestrainmuseum.org

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

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





Naples Train Museum



**Naples Train Museum
Outdoor
Train Ride**

Palm Cottage

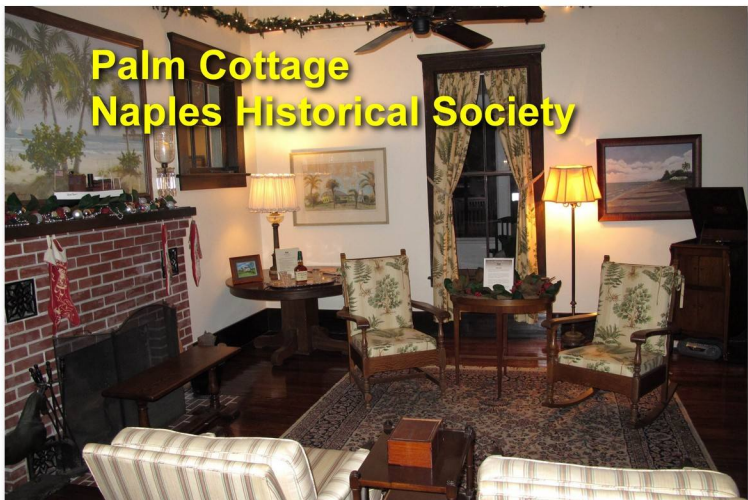
Palm Cottage
Naples Historical Society
Website: napleshistoricalsociety.org
Where: 137 12th Ave South, Naples. Near Naples Pier.
Admission: \$13.
When: Noon to 4pm Tues-Fri.
 1pm to 4pm Sat. Guided tour (calendar online) or self-guided.



What: Naples' oldest house. Built 1895. 3,500 sq ft. Tabby mortar construction. Filled with antiques.
National Register of Historic Places.
Tours. Lecture programs. Gardens.
 Winter home of Henry Watterson, 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**



**Palm Cottage
1895**



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

Exhibits on Naples History

Naples Zoo

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 to run.



Some Naples Zoo Facts:

- About 70 species. Not all on display at any given time.
- Main path is about a mile long.
- 375,000 visitors a year.
- Visitors can feed giraffes.
- Visitors can cruise on Lake Victoria to see primates on islands.
- Education and conservation activities.
- Dining. Gift shop.

Main Exhibits – 1

Alligator Bay: American alligators

North America: Black bears, Coyotes, Florida panther.

South America: Giant anteater, Tapirs, Capybara, Coati, Agouti, Tamarin, Hornbill, Toucan.

Africa and Asia: Orangutan, Bongo, Hyena, Cheetah, Tiger, Lion, Zebra.

Flamingos.

Main Exhibits – 2

Giraffes: Visitors can feed them.

Primate Expedition Catamaran Cruise: Monkeys and apes.

Exotic plants, birds, and gardens

Note: Main exhibits change from time to time.





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 4pm Mon-Fri.

Admission: *Paved Trails 9/11 Memorial Boardwalk* Free.

What: 50 acre wetlands.

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

Wildlife I have seen there include:

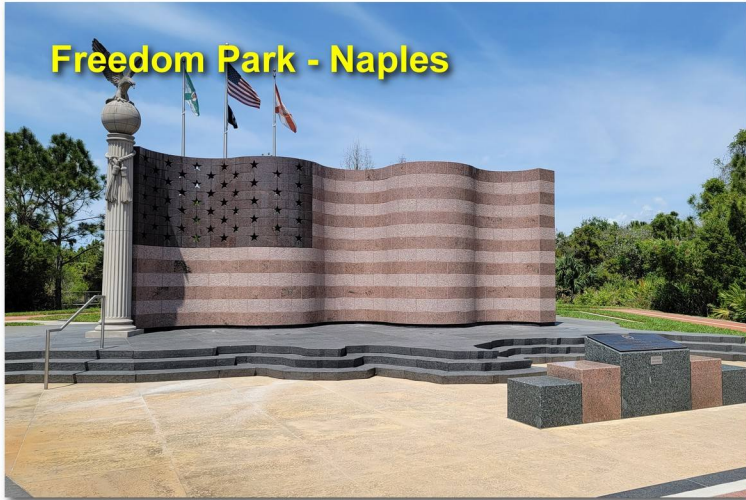
Birds: Anhingas, egrets, herons, gallinules, woodpeckers, limpkins.

Reptiles: Alligators, turtles, frogs, iguanas, snakes.

Others: Blue crabs, marsh rabbits, raccoons, tilapia.

Park website also claims: Armadillos, otters.





Four famous prior owners of the park land

the Naples you see today and each of these entrepreneurial and unique Collier County residents help create

E.W. "Ed" Crayton (1870-1938)
Shaping the Naples' Community
 A successful land developer in Ohio and St. Petersburg, Ed Crayton acquired 4,500 acres of land (most of what is now the City of Naples) from Walter Haldeman in 1912. Four years later he subdivided some of the land, including the Freedom Park property, into the Naples Improvement Company's Little Farms Subdivision. Back Bay was renamed Crayton Cove in honor of Ed Crayton.

Ed Frank (1900-1981)
From swamp buggies to shopping, constructing here at Collier County's swampy pastures.
 At age 12, Ed Frank worked as an apprentice machanic. In 1927, at age 25, he opened The Ed Frank Garage on the road that would become Tamiami Trail (completed in 1928). Soon to follow was Frank's car dealership, restaurant, and the first commercial building on 5th Avenue South. He is perhaps best known as "the creator of the swamp buggy." In 1930, Ed Frank acquired the northern-most portion of Freedom Park in 1930.

Stephen F. Briggs (1889-1976)
Beatrice "Bea" Briggs (1893-1979)
A healthy Naples for humans and wildlife
 Stephen Briggs, co-founder of the Briggs and Stratton Motor Company, and his wife Bea became seasonal Naples' residents in 1935. In 1947, Stephen co-founded the Naples Yacht Club. Bea was instrumental in the creation and growth of Naples Community Hospital, and both Stephen and Bea were noted supporters of the Conservancy - now known as The Conservancy of Southwest Florida. In 1943, the Briggses purchased a portion of Freedom Park from Lindsay Crayton, and in 1944 the northern-most portion from Ed Frank.

Julius "Junkie" Fleischmann (1900-1968)
From Vacationer to Naples Visionary
 Julius K. Fleischmann, whose grandfather established Fleischmann Yeast, came to Naples from Cincinnati as a winter visitor in 1946. This first visit led to his many notable projects throughout the city, such as the Third Street South Shopping District. Fleischmann revived legendary Henry Neuhoff's artesian well in 1952, renaming it Caribbean Gardens from The Naples Zoo. He added animal attractions to the Gardens, and his "Vaudeville Ducks" television appearances on the Ed Sullivan Show and Paris' famous Champs Elysees put Naples on the international map. Julius Fleischmann acquired the Freedom Park property in 1960. Collier County then acquired the land from his heirs in 2004.

CONSERVATION COLLIER

Growing Freedom Park

The property that you are currently standing on once looked much different from the view you see today. The remnants of those groves remain until Collier County developed the park in 2008.

Former owner Ed Frank started Naples' first garage and built the first swamp buggy

Swamp Buggy
 In 1918-1919, combining parts from a Model-T Ford and a bucket seat from a WW I airplane, Ed Frank created the first swamp buggy. Over the years, he improved his design using airplane tires and incorporating four-wheel drive with interlocking front and rear wheels. This photo appeared on the front page of the Collier County News in 1948 and signified the birth of the Swamp Buggy Races. Left to right: Paul Frank (Ed's son), Henry Espenlaub (Ed's brother-in-law), Ed Frank & Roy W. Smith (Naples longest serving mayor from 1946 to 1960).

Photo Courtesy of the Naples Historical Society

Freedom Park Sign Locations

Cambier Park

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

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



Veterans History Museum

Veterans History Museum
veteranshistorymuseumnaples.org

Where: Collier County
Government Center, 3331
Tamiami Trail E, Naples, FL

**Previously housed at the
Naples Airport terminal.**

Phone: 614-205-0357

When: 10am to 4pm Tuesday to
Saturday.

Admission: Free.

What: Stories of our country's
veterans through military artifacts
from the Revolutionary War, War
of 1812, the Civil War, World War
I, World War II, and the Korean,
Vietnam, and Gulf wars.

6,000 historical artifacts dating from
1775 to the present.

Artifacts include: Printed materials
(letters, books, drawings and
posters), weapons, uniforms,
medals, ribbons and models.
And a monumental 1861 34-star
original American flag.

Events: Presentations relating to
military history.

**Veterans History Museum
Collier County Government Center**

Attached to Collier County Museum

Veterans History Museum



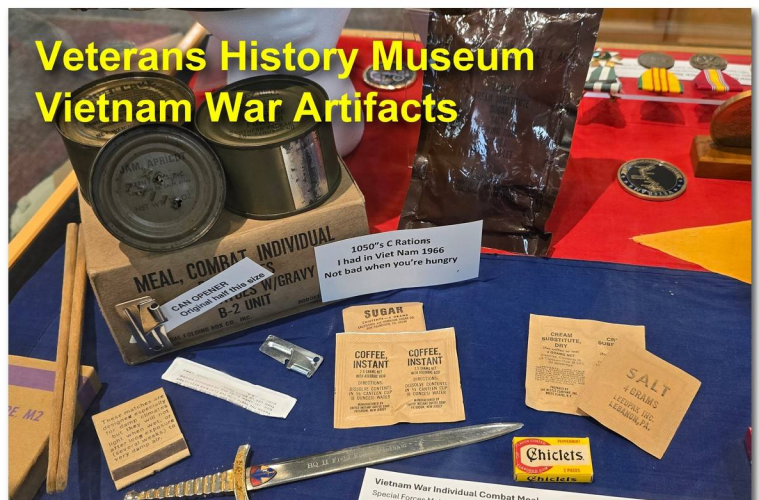
**Veterans History Museum
Nazi Artifacts**

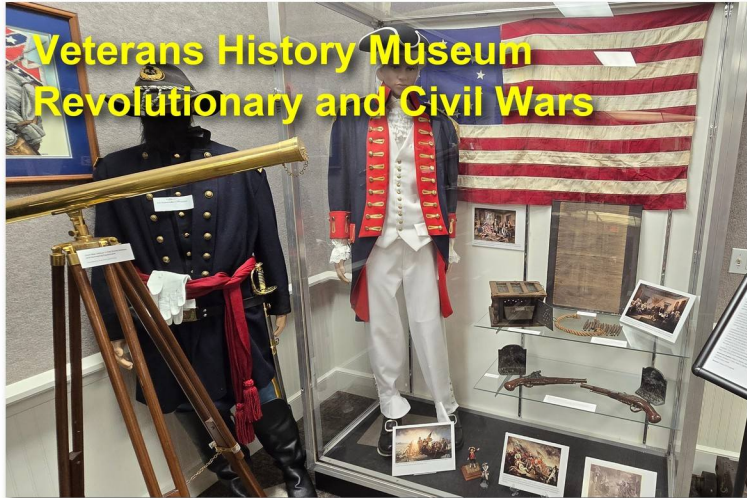


Veterans History Museum



**Veterans History Museum
Vietnam War Artifacts**





Veterans History Museum
Revolutionary and Civil Wars



Veterans History Museum
Civil War Artifacts



Historic 34-Star US Flag 1861



Swamp Buggy Races

Swamp Buggy Races Information

Website: www.swampbuggy.com/



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

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

When: **Winter Classic Sun, Jan 18, 2026**
Spring Classic Sun, Feb 22, 2026
Bud Cup Finals Sat, Apr 4, 2026

Admission: Sat trials \$10. Sun 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 Everglades terrain.

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

What is a swamp buggy: A purpose-built or modified motor vehicle that can move on dry land, shallow mud, sand, shallow water, and sometimes deep mud. Designed for fun or racing.

- 4, 6, or 8 cylinder.
- 2 or 4 wheel drive.



Generally 2 or 3 buggies race at a time. More for Jeeps.

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 Naples 1927.

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

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

This buggy (1920s) is at Collier County Museum.



Rosemary Cemetery

Rosemary Cemetery

Pine Ridge Rd corner US-41, next to CVS.

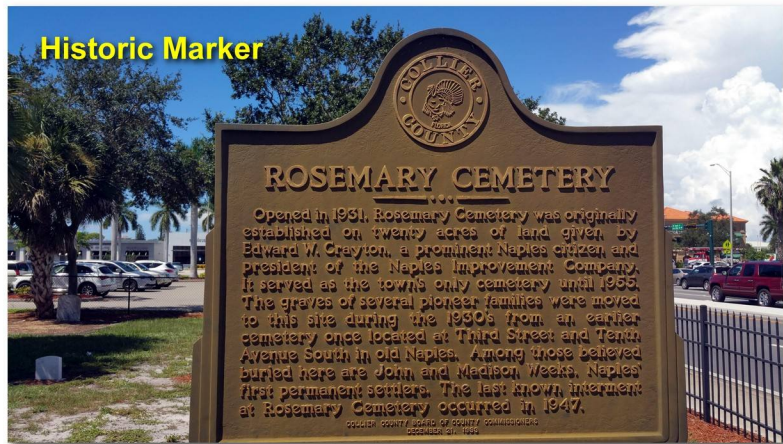
Established: 1931.

Relocated graves: Many of the city's earliest settlers, including Naples' first permanent settlers John and Madison Weeks.

Interred here: Other early Naples families.

One section: "8 Unknown Negroes".

Last known interment: 1947.



Coming Up:

- ~~— Class 1 Historical Overview~~
- ~~— Class 2 History City of Naples~~
- **Class 3** South and East of Naples
- **Class 4** Major Parks & Preserves
- **Class 5** North of Naples
- **Class 6** *A Land Remembered* by Patrick Smith & Other Resources



End of Class 2

Southwest Florida History

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