

Preservation News

A Publication of the Lee Trust for Historic Preservation • Winter 2005

Phone (239) 344-0100

Plaques for Preservation

One of Lee Trust's current sponsorships is a bronze marker program for designated historic structures. The beautiful 5 x 6 inch plaques identify and recognize buildings whose architectural style contributes to the historic character of our community.

Initiated in early 2004, the program identifies buildings by their "historic" names; that is, the original owner of the home or building. The program also serves as an incentive for property owners to designate and identify his or her property as an important local resource.

The City of Ft. Myers Downtown Merchants Corporation purchased 26

of these plaques for buildings in the Downtown Fort Myers Historic District. The plaques can be seen on buildings such as the Heritage Square office building, the Franklin Arms Hotel and the Bradford Hotel.

If you are interested in designating your structure, please contact the Lee Trust for more information regarding designation. Lee Trust will assist property owners through the designation process with the applicable agencies. The property owner will then be eligible to receive a plaque to be mounted on a publicly visible area of the building. A \$100 donation to the Lee

Trust is requested to cover expenses for the designation and plaque. For more information please contact plaque coordinator, Gina Sabiston, of the Lee Trust at 337-7796.



Untold Stories of Southwest Florida

The Lee Trust is a proud sponsor of the locally-produced series, "Untold Stories of Southwest Florida." This series, originally intended for just a few 30-minute episodes, has been so popular on the local PBS television station WGPU-TV that the producers have expanded the project to include 30 programs. In addition, an hour-long special on Thomas Edison will be produced for a national audience.



Documentary Film Maker Samuel Koltinsky, Christine Hause of FGCU, Director of the Fort Myers Historical Museum Matt Johnson, and Terry Brennen of WGPU.

Members of the Lee Trust were invited to the two premieres of the "Fort Myers" segments, held at the Southwest Florida Museum of History in March and at the Imaginarium in November. At the November premiere, Lee Trust members were treated to an advance showing and were able to meet the film's director, Samuel Koltinsky. This segment featured Fort



LTHP Bd. Members
Gina Sabiston
and Mary Rawl

Myers after World War II and highlighted local citizens such as Barbara Mann, Tom Smoot,



LTHP Bd. Members
Bill and
Susan Grace

and John Sheppard, who were in attendance at the premiere. This program airs locally on Friday evenings and is also available for purchase through www.wgcu.org.



LEE TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION, INC.

The mission of Lee Trust is to preserve the sites and buildings of historical, archaeological and architectural significance to Lee County through both advocacy and acquisition.

Lee Trust for Historic Preservation

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Lee Trust for Historic Preservation Inc was founded in 1993 and is dedicated to preserving and developing the heritage of Lee County and its municipalities.

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Preservation News is published quarterly in March, June, September, and December.

Contributors for this issue include:

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Mary Rawl

Gina Sabiston

Designed by:

Grafix Shell, Inc. Design Studios

Coloring outside the lines.

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Fort Myers Amends its Historic Preservation Ordinance

The City Council of the City of Fort Myers recently revised its Historic Preservation Ordinance. The city's rules governing historic preservation had undergone a lengthy and extensive review by Historic Preservation Commission members, staff, and interested parties. The resulting 100-page ordinance reflects hours of discussion and consideration.

While a large number of changes serve to clarify the ordinance and make it more understandable, there are some policy changes. An important new provision in the ordinance addresses "demolition by neglect." This means that an owner that fails to maintain or protect from destruction his or her property may be cited. The citation may result in fines.

Perhaps most importantly, the ordinance now provides that applicants wishing to appeal a decision of the Historic Preservation Commission appeal to the City Council. Previously, applicants had to file a suit in circuit court. This change in the process now means that a political body may overrule a decision of a board comprised of professionals and experts.

If you are interested in reviewing a copy of the ordinance, please contact Anne Mullins, City of Fort Myers Principal Planner, at (239) 461-2696.

Burroughs Home Advisory Board Disbanded

After 22 years, the City of Fort Myers has disbanded its Burroughs Home Advisory Board that has historically supported the home. The Burroughs Home Advisory Board consisted of citizens who served on a voluntary basis to advise the city on matters involving the historic home. The group coordinated with the Burroughs Home Society which conducted fundraising events and was instrumental in securing important furnishings and other items that were on display in the home.

Instead of operating the Burroughs Home as a stand-alone historic venue, a popular site for weddings and similar events, the Home will be operated as a property of the Harborside Convention Center. Two representatives of the Burroughs Home Society shall serve as members of the Center's 15-person board.

The Burroughs Home is undergoing a long-delayed renovation necessitated by a rain event almost four years ago which, because of roof leaks, severely damaged the interior. The furnishings and fixtures, all of which were donated or purchased by the Society and other entities, were

removed prior to the renovation. Many items were determined by city staff to be unsuitable to be returned. Those furnishings were stored at the City's Exhibition Hall which also experienced rain damage due to roof leaks.

When Society members learned that the furnishings were stored at the Exhibition Hall, they visited the site and found the items on the floor of the lobby area of the Hall. Many items were wet and others were damaged as a result of improper handling. Furnishings purchased pursuant to the Ponce Plan for interior restoration were missing, including curtains, valances and window seat cushions. Society members said "the disrespect on the part of city staff for the items and the people who labored to acquire them was palpable."

Society members have requested an inventory of all items to determine what has been lost and who is responsible. To date, the City has not undertaken an inventory in spite of the fact that Society members have volunteered to do the work.

Koreshan Bakery Restoration Plan Complete

The Koreshan Unity Alliance, the citizen support group for the Koreshan State Historic site in Estero, has completed preparation of a Restoration Plan for the Bakery. The Koreshan State Park site contains the remnants of a turn of the 20th century communal village. Twelve of the original structures remain.

One of the original structures is the 1903 Bakery, a two-story structure which housed the community's baking facilities and also had living quarters on the second floor. The ovens no longer exist, but the Bakery remains as an example of the industrial spirit of the people of the Unity. The Bakery provided bread for Unity residents as well as the surrounding community. At its peak, the Bakery had the capacity to produce 600 loaves of bread per day.



The \$27,000.00 Restoration Plan calls for the structure to be returned to its original appearance. The ovens will not be reconstructed but will be interpreted on site. Stevenson Architects prepared the Plan which includes a study of the history of the structure, structural systems review, restoration approach, design development drawings, and projected costs for restoration. Funding for this Restoration Plan was provided by the Koreshan Unity Alliance and the Florida Department of State Division of Historic Resources.

Koreshan Art Hall Restoration in Final Phase

Koreshan Unity Alliance President Bill Grace has announced the receipt of state funding to complete the restoration of the Art Hall. The Art Hall is one of the twelve surviving buildings of the Koreshan community in Estero. The Koreshans were an early 20th century communal society founded by Cyrus Teed. Koreshan State Park houses the remnants of the Koreshan community.

The Art Hall, constructed in 1904, housed the Koreshan collection of paintings by Douglas Arthur Teed, the son of Cyrus Teed. It became the center for cultural, social, educational and religious activities in the settlement. Today, the building contains many of Teed's paintings and Koreshan artifacts such as the globe depicting the Koreshan belief that we live inside the earth.

The Art Hall restoration began in 2000 and is being conducted in phases as funding becomes available. The roof has been replaced, including the replacement of the monitor architectural feature that had been lost over the years. New HVAC systems, fire suppression systems, alarm systems, and lighting have been installed. The \$261,000.00 grant from the Florida Department of State Division of Historical Resources

will fund the final phase of restoration. In this final phase, the foundation will be reinforced, exterior and interior walls will be repaired, and the porches will be returned to their original configuration.



Issues '05 Conference

The regional Legislative Delegation from the five-county area of Southwest Florida (Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Hendry, and DeSoto) took part in a conference to solicit pre-legislative input from local citizens and interest groups. This conference was held on Friday, December 10, 2004, at Florida Gulf Coast University. Presentations and discussion focused on education, the economy, growth management, natural resources and transportation, as well as legislative initiatives that may impact these issues during the 2005 legislative session. This conference reflects a growing interest to approach issues with a regional perspective

and is modeled after the seven-county project in Central Florida called "My Region" (www.myregion.org). The Central Florida project spanned three years and involved 3,000 people representing 300 interest groups.

One of the regional issues discussed at FGCU was "Tourism/Economic Development" and the first point was that "Culture and History can have a strong and powerful influence on the Community." The Lee Trust participated in the Southwest Florida conference and will continue to monitor the progress of this effort.

Lee Trust Note Cards Now Available

The Lee Trust is offering a beautiful set of note cards depicting six historic landmarks in our community. The cards were created by Architect Toni Ferrell and printed on recycled paper. The set of twelve cards with envelopes is a thoughtful and unique gift for that person who has everything. The note cards are available for \$8.00 from Mary Rawl (332-1469) or Bill Grace (936-3536). Proceeds from the sale of the cards benefit the Lee Trust for Historic Preservation.



Randell Research Center Holds Grand Opening

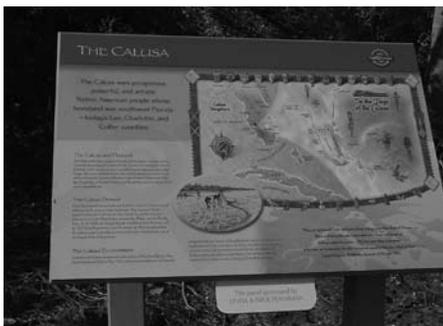
The Calusa Heritage Trail at the Randell Research Center in Pineland, Pine Island officially opened on December 10, 2004. The Calusa Heritage Trail is a 3,700-foot interpretive walkway that leads visitors through the mounds, canals, and other features of the Pineland archaeological site. Signs along the improved trail provide visitors with detailed information regarding the Calusa Indians who inhabited the Pineland site, their culture and environment, and the history of Southwest Florida after the Calusa. The trail also features observation platforms atop the site's tallest shell mound, in addition to a boardwalk and bridge over low-lying areas.

The Calusa Trail is open daily from 10 to 4. Parking is available inside the main gate to the Randell Research Center at 13810 Waterfront Drive, Pine Island, Florida 33945. For more information, the phone number is (239) 283-2062

and the website is: www.flmnh.ufl.edu/RRC
The Randell Research Center is a program of the Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida.

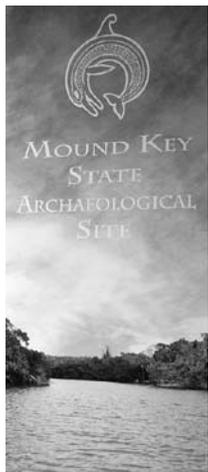


This fragment of a deer bone pin was found at the Pineland site and is 1,100 years old. The bird image was probably carved with a shark tooth knife and may represent a merganser. (Photo by Pat Payne as published on page 103 of *The Calusa and Their Legacy - South Florida People and Their Environments* by Darcie A. MacMahon and William H. Marquardt, 2004 University Press of Florida.)



Mound Key Designated State Archaeological Site

To safeguard this part of Florida's past, most of Mound Key has been designated the Mound Key State Archaeological Site is a detached portion of the Koreshan State Historic Site just across the bay in Estero. Mound Key is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. (For more information on Mound Key refer to the brochure on Mound Key available at the Koreshan State Historic Site at the intersection of Corkscrew Rd and US 41 in Estero, Lee County Florida, 239 992 0311)



The first settlers arrived on Mound Key about A.D. 100, when the flat mangrove-and-oyster bar island must have barely risen above the shallow waters of Estero Bay. All along the coast of southwest Florida, people were settling other islands too. By the 16th century, hundreds of mangrove-and-shell islands were inhabited. Fish were plentiful and oysters were abundant in the shallows around the islands. The islanders called themselves Calusa, "the fierce people".

When the Europeans encountered the Calusa, they ruled all of south Florida. Towns and villages from miles away sent offerings of fruit, feathers, roots, mats, hides and even an occasional Spanish captive to the Calusa king or cacique.

Mystery surrounds the purpose of the water courts found at many shell mound sites. Once filled with water, they may have been stocked with fish, or perhaps they were places to tie up canoes. Today the mangrove have invaded the main water court at Mound Key.

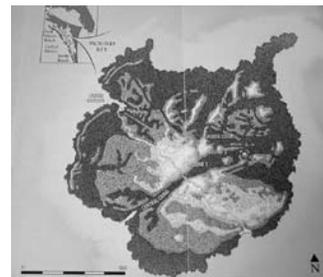


The cacique ruled his far-flung domain from an island known as Calos. It was at Calos that the cacique received the Spanish colonial governor in 1566. It was also at Calos in 1567 that Jesuits founded a short-lived mission, San Antonio de Carlos, in a vain attempt to convert the Calusa.

Researchers believe that Calos stood on Mound Key. Here's what

they think it looked like:

High on Mound 1, the cacique's house towered above the town. Across the central canal, in the court of the cacique (Mound 2), the Jesuits built their mission. To the northeast, on Mound 3, stood the Calusa temple, never to be conquered by the Christians. And all around the island on shell ridges and high spots were the houses of the 1,000 people who lived at Calos.



By the 1750s the Calusa were gone, victims of warfare, slavery and disease. By the eighteenth century the island was home to several Cuban fishing families. Later some of the settlers were members of the Koreshan Unity, a turn of the century communal society formed in Chicago that established a community by the Estero River. In 1961 the last Koreshans donated their Mound Key property along with their settlement property off of US41 to the state of Florida so that a historical and archaeological park could be established.



A shell path toward the summit of Mound 2 where the mission of San Antonio may have stood.



Framed in forests of mangrove trees, the shell mounds of Mound Key rise more than 30 feet about the waters of Estero Bay. The highest point for miles around, the island is almost all an artificial creation, resulting from nearly 2000 years of human activity.



Looking to the future with an eye to the past...

P.O. Box 1035 • Fort Myers, Florida 33902-1035

Reserve the Date

Mark your calendar and reserve the date: The Annual Meeting of the Lee Trust for Historic Preservation, Inc., is scheduled for February 18, 2005.

Details of the season's premier social event will be coming soon. Please make sure we have your current contact information by paying your 2005 Dues!

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for 5:30 pm on January 11, 2005, at 2449 First Street in Downtown Fort Myers.



Membership Application/ Renewal Form

Name _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

E-Mail Address _____

Save a stamp and email my meeting notices.

I am a: New Member Renewing Member

Level of Membership:

- Benefactor - \$500 and up Contributor - \$50
- Patron \$250 Family - \$30
- Sponsor \$100 Individual - \$20

In addition to my gift, a matching gift will be made by: _____

Make checks payable to Lee Trust for Historic Preservation and send to:

Lee Trust for Historic Preservation - Membership Chair
P.O. Box 1035 • Fort Myers, Florida 33902-1035

Membership is for the calendar year. Dues are payable on January 1 and are considered delinquent after the annual meeting in February of each year.

2005 Dues Are Due!

Tired of seeing our historic buildings torn down? Want to know more about historic preservation? Then join Lee Trust!

Lee Trust is a nonprofit organization formed to promote preservation and assist our community when historic resources are threatened. We have a Revolving Fund Program to buy threatened historic structures. We also provide assistance and seek to educate the public about our community heritage. Our primary sources of funding are membership dues, gifts and fundraising events organized by volunteers.

Please fill out this form and send it in with your check. In addition to selecting your membership level, you may elect to be notified of meetings and events via email, saving the Trust the cost of postage. Consider an additional donation as a Contributor or Sponsor and help increase our Revolving Fund. For more information about Membership contact Susan Grace at (239) 939-3579 ■