

Journal and Newsletter of the
Triangle Inn Association

Venice Area Journal

April 2009

Association News

Archives News and Features

Activities and Announcements

(Local Historical Organizations)

Venice Area History Articles

Association Annual Meeting Update

The Annual Meeting of the Association was held on Sunday, November 16, 2008 at the Triangle Inn. New Board members elected were Marie Rust and Debbie Stewart. James Hagler, City of Venice Director of Historical Resources, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the implementation of Past Perfect cataloging software. Refreshments were served.

Following the Annual Meeting the Board of Directors meet to elect Officers: Dorothy Korwek was elected President; C. Robert Briner, Vice President; Susan Hanks, Treasurer; and Debbie Stewart, Secretary.

Archives Holiday Open House

On Sunday, December 14, 2008 the Association provided refreshments for an Open House at the Triangle Inn. Archives' volunteers had adorned the Inn with traditional holiday decorations.

Association on BLAB-TV (Comcast Channel 21)

In late November, January, and March, Dorothy Korwek represented the Association at tapings for BLAB-TV programs sponsored by the History and Preservation Coalition of Sarasota County. Coalition members had 7 minutes during each taping to discuss up coming events and provide a history of their organization. The shows can be viewed at 8 p.m. on the second and fourth Friday's of the month through May. The program is a great opportunity to get to know the 22 public not-for-profit organizations and government agencies in Sarasota County committed to preserving the county's archaeological, architectural, social, and cultural heritage. Visit the Coalition at www.historicpreservationsarasota.org and view the Association's page.

Trolley Tours – Another Successful Year



Once again the Trolley Tours of Historic Venice were a great success. Two tours were given on Saturday January 24, February 7, February 21, and March 7. Only 2 tickets were unsold.

Special thanks to Judie Bauer for organizing this event! Thank you to trolley driver Barron, navigator and color commentator Bob Briner, and tour docents Carol Bailey, Gary Youngberg, Jim Middleton, Rebecca Curry, June Gurley, Susan Horton, and Sue Chapman. This is the Association's primary fund raiser and community education outreach project. Tickets for the 2010 tours will go on sale in January.

Archives Book Signing

On the evening of Saturday, February 21, 2009, the Archives and the Association sponsored a book signing for Janet Snyder Matthews' book *Sarasota: Journey to Centennial*. Wine and food were provided by local merchants and restaurants. A large tent, setup behind the Triangle Inn, provided the perfect setting for the book signing and reception. In addition, those attending were able to view the Archives new exhibit scheduled to open to the public on Friday, February 27, 2009.

Archives Exhibit Opening

The public opening for the Archives new exhibit was held on Friday, February 27, 2009. The exhibit is titled "Opening Day at Venice: February 27, 1927, A photographic Journey by Grover Koons." The following individuals and organizations provided funding for the exhibit: Jean Trammell, Philip and Dorothy Korwek, Clarke T. Welsh III, Thomas Crosson/Marie Rust, Roberts Insurance Group, Sarasota Peridental Associates, Richard Bradway and Associates, Barbara J. Bluhm, and the Triangle Inn Association. Originally scheduled to be dismantled on April 27, 2009, the exhibit will be on display through the summer.

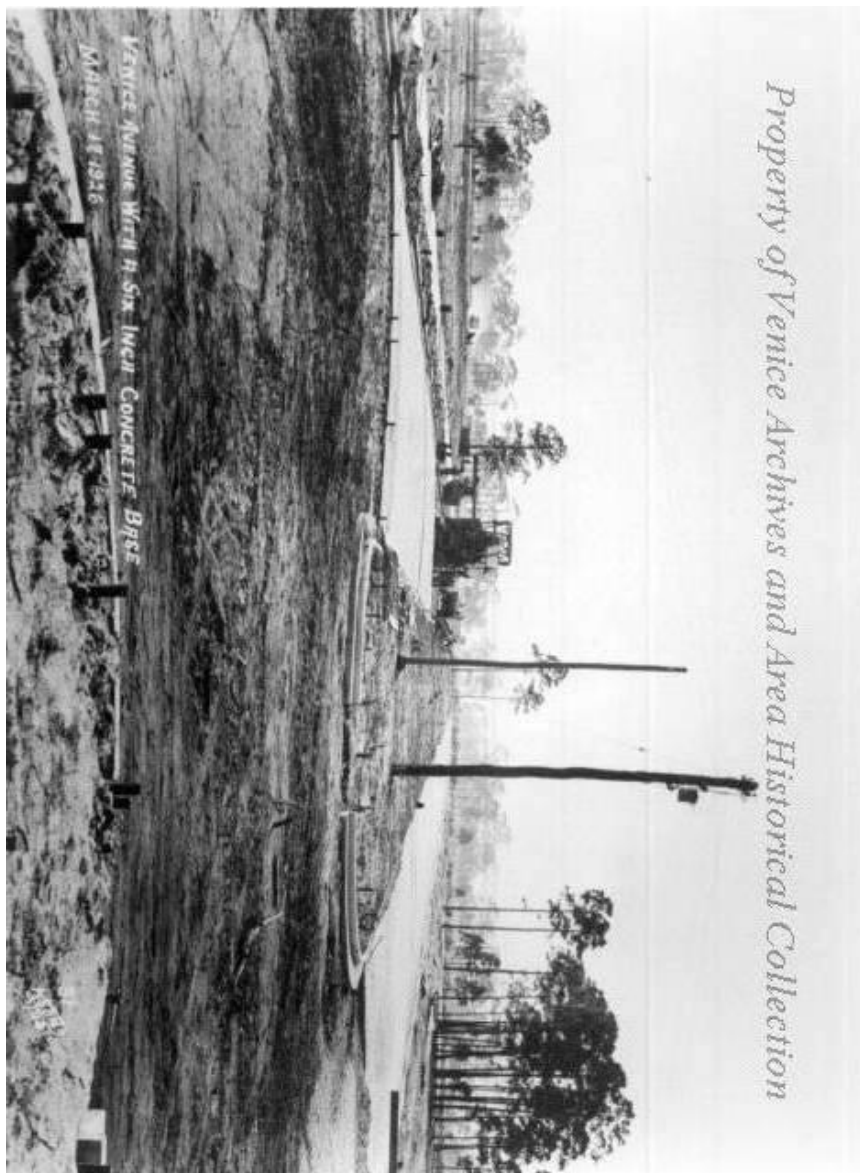
If you have not seen the exhibit, make plans to view it.

Archives On-Line Database

Sarasota photographer Grover Koons took over 80 photographs of the construction of the City of Venice during 1926. To view the Koons photographs and other images from the Archives Collection visit the Archives' on-line database at <http://venicefl.pastperfect-online.com>. This is a searchable database. As time and money are available more information from the Archives Collection will be put on-line. View several images from the on-line collection on the next pages.



Street paver laying concrete street – March 13, 1926
Photograph by Grover Koons



Venice Avenue with six inch concrete base – March 17, 1926
Photograph by Grover Koons

Association Members Only Open House

Save the date, Sunday, May 17, 2009, for a member only Open House at the historic home of John and Carolyn Shrauger located in the Venezia Park National Register Historic District. Watch for your invitation.

Association Fundraising Trip

Enclosed find a flyer for a trip to the Tampa Bay History Center on Saturday, May 30, 2009. Included in the trip will be a tour of the "stacks" and a stop at the Tampa Ikea Store. Cost is \$35 with lunch on your own.

Other Historical Organizations Activities and Announcements

Venice Area Historical Society May Meeting

At the Tuesday, May 26, 2009 meeting of the Society, there will be the premier showing of the video produced by Barbara Woody's seventh grade class from Venice Middle School. The students interviewed members of local pioneer families and have produced this educational video to relate what it was like during Venice's early years. This project completes the Society's *Year of the Pioneer* series of lectures and interviews. The Society meets at 7:00 p.m. at Village on the Isle in the Mark Building which is the building closest to the Lutheran Church. Turn onto Plaza Mayor from Tamiami Trail then left into the church parking lot.

COV Historic Preservation Board - Legacy Awards

At the Tuesday, June 9, 2009 City Council meeting, the City of Venice Historic Preservation Board will present two Legacy Awards. The Awards are given in memory of deceased individuals and/or organizations for exceptional contributions in the field of history and historic preservation in the Venice Area. This year's

recipients are Rollins. W. Coakley and Venice Main Street, Inc. Mayor Ed Martin will read the proclamations prepared by the Board describing the recipient's contributions. The awards are presented at the beginning of the Council meeting which starts at 1:30 p.m.

Friends of the Lord-Higel House Fund Raiser

On Thursday, July 23, 2009 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m., the East Venice Avenue Dairy Queen will be donating 10% of their proceeds to the Friends for the restoration of the historic Lord-Higel House. You do not have to be a member of the Friends to participate in this fund raiser. Anything purchased at the Dairy Queen during this time period will be credited towards the money given to the Friends. Invite family and friends to participate.

Local History Articles

With this issue of the Association newsletter, the editor is including articles on Venice Area History. The first article titled "History of Venice City Government" was written by Association member and former COV Historical Commission Chair Betty Intagliata. If there is an interest, the editor would like to include more local history articles in future issues. Members wishing to submit articles can e-mail the editor at suntracker@msn.com. Please use "TIA Newsletter" in subject line. Articles can also be mailed to: Triangle Inn Association, 351 South Nassau Street, Venice, FL 34285, attention: Newsletter Editor.



History of Venice City Government

By Elizabeth J. Intagliata, February 2002

Prior to the incorporation of Venice, the area now included in the city, was governed first by Manatee County. When Sarasota County became a separate entity from Manatee County in 1921, the Venice area was then governed by Sarasota County. The building of Venice by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) commenced in 1925 and the Union went to the Florida Legislature for incorporation.

The “town” of Venice was incorporated at Tallahassee in a 1925 special session of the Florida Legislature. The act, approved on November 30th, called for Venice officials to be appointed by the governor. Governor John Martin appointed the first mayor of Venice Edward L. “Ned” Worthington, as well as three councilmen. The councilmen were, Ralph Welliver, Charles S. Brearley, and H. N. “Bud” Wimmers. All four of these men were BLE development officials. All four were sworn in by a Notary Public at the first town council meeting held December 9, 1926 at the temporary office of the council in the Hotel Venice. At that first meeting, Mayor Worthington, with his fellow councilmen’s approval, appointed G. M. Breen as temporary Town Clerk, Tax Assessor and Tax Collector. The following seven appointments were also made: Luke J. Murphy as Town Treasurer, George C. Duncan as Town Marshal, John C. Haladay as Fire Chief, J. C. McCrea as City Engineer, H. N. Hall as Building Inspector, Prentiss French as Superintendent of Public Grounds and Buildings, and Dr. W. C. Page as Public Health Officer. All were to serve without

compensation except the Town Marshal and the Fire Chief who would each receive \$200 per month. Rules and regulations governing the Town Council's procedures were also approved.

On May 9, 1927, the Venice Charter was amended by the Florida State Legislature changing the word "town" to "city". Some of the ordinances passed by the City Council in May 1927 were: an ordinance that governed horse-drawn vehicles, autos, trucks, bicycles, taxis and heal lamps; one that outlawed privies; one that established a town pound for stray cattle; and one that created a 76 page building code. The council also designated Pete Edge to act as a deputy marshal.

The first election in Venice was held on December 6, 1927 and designated the first polling place as the San Marco Hotel on Tampa Avenue. Out of 168 eligible voters, a total of 160 votes were cast. Ned Worthington, with no opposition, was elected mayor. Lyman Dawson and William Schoolcraft wee elected councilmen. The third council seat, held by Ralph L. Welliver, would not be an elected seat until December 1928. On May 28, 1928, Welliver resigned. George Hauser was appointed and later elected to Welliver's seat.

Following the halt of construction in Venice by the BLE, real estate values dropped. Buyers of property dried up, workers left town and businesses closed. The population of the city began to dwindle downward. Mayor Worthington's name does not appear in any of the council minutes after May 1928. A "special election" calling for the election of a mayor and once council seat was held on January 29, 1929. James T. Blalock was elected mayor, a post he was to hold until 1941, and Thomas Kelso replaced Councilman Lyman Dawson. During the Depression years, the population of Venice was approximately 300-350 persons.

A Sarasota Herald article in October 1931 stated that Mayor Blalock had suspended all departments of the city government of Venice and that the move was necessitated by the city's difficult financial situation arising from non-payment of taxes. The mayor stated that, when payment of taxes rendered the situation more favorable, city departments would be reestablished. Meanwhile the city expected to retain its charter and would continue to operate under it, keeping its offices open.

After World War II, Venice once again experienced a "building boom" that led to an increase in property taxes and an increase in services demanded of the city. Except for raising the number of city councilpersons to five, no major changes had been made in the city's government until 1967 when the City Council established the office of City Administrator. The part-time mayor, who had his own occupation, could no longer oversee all of the city's increased operations. Under this system, the mayor appointed the city administrator with the approval of city council. City officers who still reported directly to the mayor were Police and Fire Chiefs, City Clerk, and Treasurer. The first city administrator was Paul Youngberg (1967-1975), and the second and last was Dale Rieth (1975-1977).

In 1975, a Charter Review Committee began to compare the city's strong mayor/council/administrator form of government with that of council/manager form. Ultimately, a referendum was called. Proponents for a new form of government felt that the problems being encountered by a growing city needed the attention of full-time manager, city clerk, city attorney and finance director.¹ Each would be appointed by and report to the City Council. On June 22, 1977, Venice voters overwhelmingly

¹ City's Charter was changed so that the finance director now reports to city manager.

voted for the change. The new Council/Manager form of government was adopted along with an increase in city council members to seven. Dale Rieth, the city's administrator, now became Venice's first city manager and served until 1986 when he was replaced by John McLean. McLean served until 1991 and was replaced by current city manager George Hunt.²

The Council/Manager form of government continues to serve Venice today. The mayor and six councilpersons are elected them. The mayor and council members are elected for three-year terms which are staggered. Each member is limited to three consecutive terms. Elections are held on the first Tuesday in November. The city manager is a full-time executive whose job is to administer city policy as established by city council. The manager is responsible for the daily operations of most departments in the city and one of his duties includes the preparation of an annual budget which council may approve, disapprove or modify.

² Mary Black replaced Hunt in 2003 and Isaac Turner replaced Black in 2009.

Did You Know . . .

After World War II many of the barrack buildings at the Venice Army Air Base became private residences. The following excerpt from a May 15, 2002 article in the Englewood Sun by Diana Harris tells the story of one barrack residence. The following story was related to Diana Harris by Leah Lasbury.

“We lived in Connecticut. My husband Clyde was making a great deal on money in tobacco. Then he lost everything! So I called my father, J.E. Bartlett, who owned a large amount of property here in Florida. I asked him if he had any place where we could live. He said, ‘I do own a little G.I. barrack, sitting on an acre of land down in the middle of Englewood. We could fix it up so it’s livable.’ So that’s how we came to Englewood in 1950.

“We tinkered with the barracks building and we got electricity in it, among other things. We squeezed in a bathroom and a half. We were coming from one of those big New England jobs – the house had ivy all over it, and we had three acres of lawn, so it was a bit of a change. But we lived in the barracks and very happily, I might add. Really, we had more fun in those barracks.

“I must tell you that we had a houseboy when we lived in the barracks. He cleaned, he did everything. He was a deaf-mute man of about 40 years who had worked for us in Connecticut. He lived with us here for years. I’m sure I’m the only one that ever lived in one of those barracks that had a houseboy.

“I don’t know how many barracks my father bought – more than one, I know. He would put them on a piece of his land and then try to sell parcels as little farms with a house.”