

Journal and Newsletter of the  
Triangle Inn Association

# Venice Area Journal

October 2010

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(Local Historical Organizations)

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## Association News

### Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Triangle Inn Association will be held on Sunday, November 14, 2010, at 2:00 p.m. at the historic Triangle Inn. Following the election of officers and other Association business, our guest speaker will be local circus aerialist Tito Gaona. Tito will speak about the Circus Arts Foundation and its plans for the Venice Circus Arena, as well as his life as a circus performer.

### Sun Fiesta 2010 – October 16-17

Stop by the history booth at this year's Sun Fiesta featuring materials provided by the Friends of the Lord-Higel House, the Triangle Inn Association, and the Venice Area Historical Society. The tent will be manned on Saturday, October 16 and Sunday, October 17 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

### Gamble Plantation Trip

Enclosed is a reservation sheet for the Association's trip to the Gamble Plantation on Saturday, November 6, 2010. Gamble

Plantation is the only surviving ante-bellum plantation in South Florida. Following a tour of this State Park site, the group will have lunch at the Bradenton Yacht Club overlooking the Manatee River. After lunch we will stop at the Palmetto Historical Park that includes a historic church, school, and post office, as well as displays and local archival materials housed in an early Twentieth Century Carnegie Library.

### **Holiday Parade – Saturday, November 27, 2010**

Again this year the Friends of the Lord-Higel House, the Triangle Inn Association, and the Venice Area Historical Society have rented a trolley and will participate in the annual Holiday Parade. Call the Archives at 486-2487 if you would like to ride on the trolley. Members of all sponsoring organizations are welcome.

### **Trolley Tours of Historic Venice**

The Association has secured dates for the 2011 Historic Venice Trolley Tours. Two tours, one at **9:30 a.m.** and one at **11:00 a.m.**, will be available on each of the following dates: **January 8, January 22, February 12, February 26, March 12, and March 26.** The tickets are just \$15.00 per person per tour and can be purchased at the Triangle Inn / Venice Archives, located at 351 South Nassau Street beginning Tuesday, January 4, 2011. The Archives is open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from January through April and Monday and Wednesday from May through December.

## **Association/Archives Update**

On Tuesday, September 21, 2010 the Archives and Association sponsored a fundraiser at the Saltwater Café to raise money for and awareness of the new permanent **Dr. Albee** exhibit to be installed at the historic Triangle Inn in early 2011. The evening generated about \$2,000 in donations. To date, about \$33,000 has been collected for the exhibit. The goal to complete the exhibit is

\$60,000. Please contact Director James Hagler (941-486-2487) if you wish to make a contribution.



Archives volunteers at the Saltwater Café. From left Debbie Stewart, Bob Briner, Toni Minnick, Sydna SanGiacomo, Barbara Dein, Dorothy Korwek, Patrick Lawlor, Clarke Pressly, Marie Rust, Rhonda Rogers, Jack Smith, and Steven Short. Partially hidden in back Erin Mahaney and Gareth Wyatt.

## **Archives Announcements**

### **Postcard Exhibit**

From Monday, September 27 through Friday, November 12, 2010 the Archives will feature postcards from its collection. A wide range of subjects and time periods are included.

### **Christmas Exhibit**

The Archives volunteers will begin assembling materials for the annual holiday exhibit at the “Inn” on Monday, November 15, 2010. On Saturday, December 11, 2010 the Archives will hold an open house from 5 to 7 p.m. in conjunction with the Venice Area Beautification (VABI) Tree Lighting Ceremony in West Blalock Park.

### **Private Opening of Dr. Albee Exhibit**

Mark your calendars for this special event on Thursday, February 24, 2011. A date for the public opening of the exhibit is yet to be determined. Watch for announcements in the local media.

## Venice Area Historical Society Announcements

Starting in October the Society will begin its monthly programs on Venice Area history. All programs are free and open to the public.

Date: Tuesday, **October 26, 2010**, at 7:00 p.m.  
Program: **Bertha Palmer and the Venice Railroad** (This is a joint program of the Society and the Suncoast Chapter National Railway Historical Society.)  
Presenters: Ted Cover of the Railway Historical Society will present **“Bertha Palmer: Extension of the Seaboard Railway Line to Venice 1911.”** Following this presentation, Bertha Palmer interpreters and Society members Sue Chapman, Betty Intagliata, and Claire Suter will tell anecdotes about her life.  
Where: Village on the Isle, Mark Manor building, Renaissance Room #1. Village on the Isle is located at 920 South Tamiami Trail in Venice.

Date: Tuesday, **November 16, 2010** at 7:00 p.m.  
Program: **Serving the Public at the Venice Depot: A Portrait of Two Station Agents**  
Presenters: Mary Huba and George Miller will describe the role of the station agent at the Venice Depot and provide a portrait of two of Venice’s agents, Devon Hough (1949-1956) and Donald DeCoster (1963-1975).  
Where: Village on the Isle, Mark Manor building, Renaissance Room #1. Village on the Isle is located at 920 South Tamiami Trail in Venice.

Date: Wednesday, **December 1, 2010**, 11a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
Program: **A Salute to the White Capped World War II Nurses of Venice** (This is style show fundraiser featuring fashions from Patchington.)  
Where: Venice Yacht Club  
Tickets: \$30 per person. Available at Collectors Gallery & Framery, Paper Pad, and Venice Stationers.

## **Friends of the Lord-Higel House Announcements**

### **Dining Out for a Cause**

The Friends will receive 10% of all customer receipts between 5 and 8 p.m. at the East Venice Avenue Dairy Queen on Wednesday, **October 6, 2010**. No flyers needed!

### **Dinner Show at Bird Bay Village Clubhouse**

On Friday, January 28, 2011, at 6:00 p.m. the Friends will sponsor a dinner show featuring "Honest Deceptions," the magic of ILAN. This event is BYOB with buffet dinner provided by Affordable Custom Catering The Bird Bay Clubhouse is located at 606 Bird Bay Drive S., Venice, FL. Tickets are \$30 per person and will be available from November 27, 2010 to January 18, 2011 at the Collectors Gallery & Framery, Paper Pad, and Venice Stationers.

## Local History Articles

Because 2010 is the Centennial Celebration of Bertha Honoré Palmer's arrival in Sarasota County, this year's local history articles feature information about Mrs. Palmer. This issue of the *Journal* features an article written by former Sarasota County History Center historian Ann Shank describing Mrs. Palmer's interest in gardens and agriculture.

### **PALMER'S PRESENCE REMAINS EVIDENT**

When Bertha Honoré Palmer arrived in Sarasota in the winter of 1910, she was preceded by her reputation as a keen businesswoman, a patron of the arts, an international socialite and the widow of Chicago millionaire Potter Palmer.

In response to a newspaper advertisement extolling the beauty and quality of land in the Sarasota Bay District, Palmer visited Sarasota with her brother, father and sons.

Based at the Halton Hotel, which was on the bayfront and had been converted from a sanitarium, the family spent more than a week touring the area. Before the year was over, they had begun purchasing the nearly 90,000 acres they would acquire in the Sarasota-Venice region of what was then Manatee County.

Palmer purchased Lawrence Jones' two-story house on Little Sarasota Bay, just north of the homestead established by John and Eliza Webb, the first settlers of Osprey, and renamed it The Oaks. With assistance from Thomas Reed Martin, a Chicago architect who had moved to Sarasota, Palmer added rooms and columns to The Oaks and surrounded it with formal gardens, walkways, ponds and buildings for servants and work crews. A water and irrigation system and electric plant supported the estate.

Although she had at least two architects design a new house, Palmer never built it. A Chicago journalist wrote in 1915 that Palmer was “wrapped up in (her) gardens” and would not replace her “bungalow” until the garden setting was complete.

Palmer’s Sarasota Bay holdings provided a setting for her new interest—agriculture. Not only did she enjoy watching the beauty of her gardens unfold, she took on the challenge of improving the quality of livestock and crops grown in Southwest Florida.

To her ranch along the Myakka River, Meadowsweet Pastures, Palmer brought new cattle stock and new practices. She fenced the range, which had been open for pioneer cattlemen. To eradicate the Texas fever tick, she built concrete dipping vats and bathed her cattle in an arsenic and soda solution. Established cattlemen criticized both practices, but the *Sarasota Times* called the first dipping in November 1915 “more important in the history of Manatee County than any corner-stone laying or other imposing ceremonial.”

The newspaper also noted the shipment of 1,000 cattle that year from the Palmer ranch. It was the largest shipment ever from Manatee County and required 31 rail cars. Palmer ordered a great variety of flower, fruit, and vegetable plants and seeds from nurseries across the country, sometimes seeking out unusual kinds to try on her Florida properties.

From the U.S. Department of Agriculture Bureau of Plant Industry in Brooksville, she obtained two boxes of sprouted chayotes. Along with instructions for planting the squash-related vegetable that is native to Central America, she kept recipes that varied from chayote soup to chayote custard pie. Palmer placed her name on a list of those wishing to receive samples of new plants being introduced by the Agriculture Department. At times her inquiries regarding the best varieties to grow in south Florida resulted in the response, “We do not know,” so she experimented.

After her death in 1918, her sons continued her agricultural interests with the development of the Palmer Farms and Experimental Station in Fruitville. Today, visitors can see the re-creation of some of her Osprey gardens at Historic Spanish Point and read about her Florida life in Janet Snyder Matthews' *Venice* and Isabel Ross' *Silhouette in Diamonds*.

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