

Journal and Newsletter of the
Triangle Inn Association

Venice Area Journal

April 2011

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Association Update

New Logo

The Board is pleased to announce that a new logo with revised lettering has been developed for the Association. The new logo will appear on the Association's membership brochure, letterhead, and other promotional materials.



New Board Members

At their March 18, 2011 meeting, the Board of Directors accepted the resignation of Board Member Jim Hanks and appointed James Hagler to complete his term. The Board also appointed Bill Jervey to serve on the Board. Both new Board Members' terms will end in November 2011.

The Board wishes to thank Jim Hanks for his years of service on the Board and for serving as President of the Association for one term. We wish him well in all his future pursuits.

Governance Committee Established

At its January meeting the Board of Directors established a Governance Committee to review the Bylaws, develop a Policy and Procedures Manual, and serve as a Nominating Committee. The first meeting of this committee was on March 10, 2011. The committee will meet on the second Tuesday of each month at the Triangle Inn. Current members of the committee are Jean Trammell, Rhonda Rogers, Marie Rust, Eric Mahaney, James Hagler, and Dorothy Korwek.

Association Announcements

Venice Area Old Timers Stories

The 2011 edition of the *Venice Area Old Timers Stories: Remembering People, Places, and Events* is now available at the Archives gift shop for \$3.00. Special thanks to Mary Charles, June Smith Gurley, Debbie Stewart, and Dorothy Korwek for preparing the booklet.

History Organizations' Booth

The Association, Friends of the Lord-Higel House, and the Venice Area Historical Society will have a tent at the downtown Farmer's Market on **Saturday, May 7, 2011**. Association member and Friends Director Lois Steketee is in charge of manning the tent which will open for business from 8 a.m. to Noon. Call Lois at 941-488-2702 if you would like to help. This event is a great opportunity for all the groups to let the public know what they are doing.

Archives Update

Garden Club Home Tour

The Triangle Inn building was part of this year's 22nd Annual Venice Area Garden Club's Home Tour. During the two day event held on Friday, March 11, 2011, and Saturday, March 12, 2011,

over 700 people toured the building. For those who wished to climb the stairs, the second floor Archives storage room was open for viewing. Special thanks to Carol Bailey for recruiting and organizing the volunteers who informed the attendees about the history of the building and pointed out its unique features. Volunteers included Mary Charles, Carol Bailey, Bob Briner, Edy Browne, Chuck Ford, James Hagler, Bruce Hamill, Pam Holic, Cheri Klose, Dorothy Korwek, Julia Cousins Laning, Jim Nemeck, Clarke Pressly, Rebecca Curry Rabinowitz, Bill Rearden, Rhonda Rogers, Synda SanGiacomo, Joanie Sómóza, Anna Smith, Debbie Stewart, and Betty Walker.

Lecture Series

Both of the scheduled lectures on the “Ancient Fossils of Venice” were well-received. The first one held at the Triangle Inn building was a standing room only affair. The second was held in Community Hall at City Hall. Special thanks to Randy Boshela and Dean Calamaras for being guest speakers.

Eagle Point Bell Dedication

On Wednesday, March 23, 2011, the Eagle Point bell that called guests to meals was dedicated at the historic Triangle Inn building. The bell was donated to the Archives by the family of Georgette Duke. Georgette Duke and her husband managed the Eagle Point Resort from 1946 until it was sold to developers in the late 1980s. Duke relative Joyce Higel Norton and James Hagler unveil the bell and descriptive plaque.



Archives Announcements

Treasurers of the Archives Exhibit

Now through the summer visit the Archives to view the latest exhibit featuring artifacts from the Collection. The exhibit includes the cap worn by Mickey Rooney in the film "The Black Stallion," a wedding dress from 1900, the gun and billy club used by the city's first law enforcement officer, and many more items. The Archives museum is open on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Dr. Fred Albee Exhibit

Coming in April, there will be a grand opening for the Dr. Fred Albee Exhibit. There will be a by-invitation-only open house for the exhibit sponsors followed by an open house for the general public on Monday, **April 25, 2011**, from 5 to 7 p.m. at the historic Triangle Inn.

COV Historic Preservation Board Announcements

Legacy Awards

At a May City Council meeting the city's Historic Preservation Board will present its annual Legacy Awards. The Awards are given to deceased individuals and/or organizations who have promoted the history and/or preservation of local historic resources. This year's recipients are Dr. Fred Albee and Dr. Douglas Murphy.

Friends of the Lord-Higel House Announcements

Dining Out Fundraising Dates

The Friends will receive 10% of all customer receipts between 5 and 8 p.m. at the East Venice Avenue **Dairy Queen** on the following Wednesdays. NO flyer needed! Tell your friends.

April 13, 2011 - May 11, 2011 - June 8, 2011

Yard Sale Fundraiser

Mark your calendars for the Yard Sale at Horse and Chaise sponsored by the Questers Historic Spanish Point Chapter on **Saturday, April 9, 2011**. All proceeds benefit the Restoration of the Lord-Higel House. If you have items to donate, drop them off at Horse and Chaise on **Friday, April 8, 2011**.

Friends of the Lord-Higel House Update

“Thermometer Style” Sign Installed



On Friday, February 18, 2011, the Lord-Higel House restoration progress sign was installed in Centennial Park near the intersection of Venice and Nokomis Avenues. The sign was designed by Friends Co-chair Jack Bauer and fabricated by H & H Signs. Special thanks to the Venice Area Historical Society for funding the project.

Work Day

From left are Jerry Valencia, Jack Bauer, Paul Scarpellini, Robert Brooke, Ron Higel, Jim Middleton, and Mickey Higel who volunteered for the first “work Day” at the Lord-Higel House on March 12, 2011, to stabilize the windows.



Venice Area Historical Society Announcements

The 2011 Lecture Series of the Society will examine the 1930s. Funding for some programs provided through a grant from the Florida Humanities Council. All programs are free and open to the public.

Date: Tuesday, **April 26, 2011**, at 7:00 p.m.
Program: **Artists on the Dole: How the Federal Arts Projects Supported and Encouraged the Arts in Florida and Saved Key West.**
Presenter: Diane Craig, B.S. History, Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, Florida; Graduate Student in Florida Studies, University of South Florida.

Date: Tuesday, **May 24, 2011**, at 7:00 p.m.
Program: **Civilian Conservation Corps of the New Deal**, a PBS documentary film (50 minutes), plus a local speaker discussing the restoration of the CCC cabins at Myakka State Park.

Where: Village on the Isle, Mark Manor building, Renaissance Room #1. Village on the Isle is located at 920 South Tamiami Trail in Venice.

Local History Articles

This issue of the Journal reprints part of the John Nolen Plan of Venice Historic District National Register Nomination that describes John Nolen's background and planning philosophy.



John Nolen 1869 - 1937

John Nolen's Life and Career

The creator of the Venice Plan was John Nolen, a pioneer in the American city planning movement. Nolen was born in Philadelphia on June 14, 1869, the son of John Christopher and

Matilda Thomas Nolen. His father, a carpenter and member of the Democratic Party, died of a gunshot wound inflicted by a Republican judge during a meeting to certify a vote of a disputed election before Nolen was two. His two older sisters having passed away and his mother having remarried, the Children's Aid Society in 1878 placed the young and presumably castoff Nolen in the Girard School for Orphaned Boys. He graduated first in his class in 1884. In 1891, after working as a grocery clerk and as a secretary to the Girard Estate Trust Fund to accumulate money, he enrolled in the Wharton School of Finance and Economics, a branch of the University of Pennsylvania heavily influenced by German pedagogy and economic theory. He was graduated from the school in 1893 with a bachelor's degree in philosophy.¹ Even by the time of his graduation from the University of Pennsylvania, Nolen had already determined that administrative problems were the most critical crisis in city government. In 1895, he indicated his perception of this problem: "The problems of the day . . . which demanded our attention are not so much national as municipal. Life in its most complex relations is now in the cities; the vilest criminals, the purest saints are to be found in the great centers of population."²

Nolen worked as the administrator of the Society for the Extension of University Teaching, one of many late nineteenth century adult education programs. The program sponsored lectures and classes taught by leading public and educational figures with stimulating discussion on a wide range of social issues.³ He decided to become a landscape architect when, after marrying Barbara Schatte in 1896, he and his wife visited England, France, Belgium, and Germany. This was Nolen's second trip to Europe. In 1895, he had gone to England to attend the 7th Annual Conference of University Extension at Worcester College, Oxford, which had aroused his curiosity about architectural and landscape matters.

John Hancock, Nolen's biographer, noted that the reason for Nolen's eventual move into city planning was because he visualized city planning as a profession which must consider "all that affects the happiness, usefulness, and virtue" of men. Nolen, as many in his generation, became a social reformer. He sought reform, not through single-issue political or esthetic reform but through comprehensive city planning. Such an approach was not generally advocated by leading reformers, architects, or landscape architects of the era.⁴

After ten years, Nolen left the Extension program and entered the School of Landscape Design at Harvard University in 1903. This followed a yearlong visit in Europe from June 22, 1901, until June 18, 1902.⁵ It was during his third trip to Europe in 1902 that Nolen appears to have decided to become a professional city planner. He prepared for a change in careers by studying German art and architecture, Italian culture, and the art history of the Renaissance at the University of Munich. His mastery of the German language greatly assisted him in this task. In 1902, at the age of thirty-three, John Nolen sold the house he had built and the garden he had planted at Ardmore, Pennsylvania, and with the proceeds enrolled in a class of eleven students at the School of Landscape Architecture at Harvard University. One year later, he and his wife moved close to Harvard Square, Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he opened a landscaping office. His instructors at Harvard were Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., Arthur Shurtleff, and B. M. Watson. In 1905, he received his Master of Arts degree and became a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects.⁶ There is an extensive analysis of Nolen's motivations for this new career that concludes that he saw landscape architecture as a natural profession for him that would support his desire to work with community planning.⁷ His bias was not that of the more artistically inclined landscape architects, such as Olmsted, but was a socially conscious approach that applauded

economical and practical industrial city planning such as Düsseldorf's parks, fountains, playgrounds, belt lines, and zoning.

Nolen was a product of the Reform Era in American history. He early recognized the problems of cities and of the poor. He was critical of conditions, but unlike many of his contemporaries, he saw solutions. He was optimistic that planning was the answer. In 1909, Nolen wrote the lead article in the first issue of *The American City*, a publication devoted to city government and planning. In that article Nolen shows that he was not merely a city designer. His first sentence indicates his far-reaching ideas: "City Planning is simply recognition of the sanitary, economic, and aesthetic laws which should govern the original arrangement and subsequent development of our cities."⁸

Nolen's concept was indeed a comprehensive one. He insisted that sanitary, economic, and aesthetic laws were interdependent and could not be dealt with separately. He also recognized that each city was different according to its surroundings, economy, and population. As such, planning had to be customized to each. He was also one of the first planners in America to propose the use of zoning, which had become popular in Europe. This proposal in 1909 was a full two years before the first zoning law was passed in America, in New York City.⁹

After graduating from Harvard, Nolen received several commissions, including the job of advisor to the Park and Tree Commission of Charlotte, North Carolina, and later developed a complete city plan for Savannah, Georgia. Both were City Beautiful approaches with embellishment, large public buildings and tree-lined streets.¹⁰ They were his last of that sort. From that point on, he expanded and built on his philosophies, moving cautiously toward comprehensive problem solving that included not only beautification, parks, and playgrounds but also addressed traffic problems; uncontrolled overlapping of industrial,

commercial and residential uses; the conflicting roles of government and business; and housing and social welfare responsibilities.

In 1919, Nolen observed, "City Planning is . . . not a movement to make cities beautiful in a superficial sense . . . [but] for the common good, that concerns everybody."¹¹ Nolen's philosophy centered more on the concepts contained in the Garden City movement. The most famous example of this approach was Ebenezer Howard's Garden City in Letchworth, England. It was developed as an alternative to the Victorian industrial city. The principles of the movement were much more comprehensive than the City Beautiful movement. These included: 1) urban decentralization, 2) the establishment of cities limited in size with a balanced agricultural-industrial economy, 3) use of a surrounding greenbelt to limit size, 4) cooperative land holding to insure community benefit from rising land values, and 5) the economic and social advantage of large-scale planning. Roy Lubove observes that this philosophy, which generally was a stimulus for limited residential and industrial decentralization, did not catch on in America.¹² It has not been demonstrated that Nolen was aware at first of Howard's activities. John Hancock suggests that Nolen was formalizing similar concepts on his own and eventually incorporated many of Howard's concepts in his writing.¹³

Based on his philosophy, Nolen established one of the most diverse private planning practices in the country. Between 1915 and 1930, he undertook some 450 projects, ranging from private homes to metropolitan regions of several million persons. His practice included full-scale comprehensive plans for 29 cities, 27 new towns (including several for the federal government), and seventeen state and regional studies. He also planned projects for factories, colleges, public and private housing projects, traffic and transportation networks, and administrative studies for various

governmental agencies. His projects outside of Florida included Roanoke, North Carolina, and San Diego, California, in 1907; Madison, Wisconsin, in 1909; Bridgeport, Connecticut, in 1915; Kingsport, Tennessee, in 1916; Farm City, North Carolina, in 1921; and Mariemont, Ohio, in 1924.¹⁴ In a 1927 address to the 19th National Conference on City Planning, John Nolen stated that more than 35 new towns had been created and that 390 cities had planning commissions.¹⁵

¹ Richard W. Amero, "John Nolen," 1-2,
http://members.cox.net/ramero/john_nolen.htm.

² John Nolen, from original notebook draft of his Alumni Address to the Girard College Class of 1895, in John L. Hancock, "John Nolen: The Background of a Pioneer Planner," *The Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, Vol. 26 Nov 1960, 305.

³ Hancock, "John Nolen: The Background," 305-306.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 309.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 306-307.

⁶ Amero, "John Nolen," 1-2.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ John Nolen, "City Making," *The American City*, 1 (September 1909), 15.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ John Nolen, *New Ideals in the Planning of Cities, Towns and Villages* (New York City: American City Bureau, 1919), 7.

¹² Roy Lubove, "The Roots of Urban Planning," in *The Urbanization of America: An Historical Anthology*, ed. Allen M. Wakstein (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1970), 321-323.

¹³ Hancock, "John Nolen: The Background," 308.

¹⁴ *The National Cyclopedic of American Biography*, Volume XXVII (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1967), 319. John L. Hancock, *John Nolen: A Bibliographical Record of Achievement* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1976), 14.

¹⁵ Hancock, *John Nolen: A Bibliographical Record*, 11.