

Journal and Newsletter of the
Triangle Inn Association

Venice Area Journal

October 2011

Association News

Archives News and Features

Activities and Announcements

(Local Historical Organizations)

Venice Area History Articles

Association Update

Annual Meeting

Triangle Inn Association

Thursday, **November 10, 2011**, 4:30 p.m.

At Triangle Inn building

Please plan on attending

Immediately following will be a reception and book signing for

John Nolen Plan of Venice, Florida

See details below

Book Signing

John Nolen Plan of Venice, Florida

Dorothy Korwek and Carl Shiver



On Thursday, **November 10, 2011** from 5 – 7 p.m., the Association is sponsoring a reception and book signing for the newly published book *John Nolen Plan of Venice, Florida*. This book is a limited edition (200 copies), hard bound, coffee-table size book with 109 color and

historic black/white photographs of features in the Venice Plan and over 40 drawings prepared by Nolen as part of his contract with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers to design the Venice Plan.

The book includes the entire text of the National Register Nomination for the “John Nolen Plan of Venice Historic District” that was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 8, 2010. Also included in the book are related historic information and materials that could not be included in the nomination but that are central to understanding John Nolen’s role in the early development of Venice.

John Nolen was one of the first Americans to identify himself exclusively as a city planner. He wrote and lectured extensively on city planning in the early part of the 20th century. The Nolen Plan for Venice integrated a functional street layout and park system with a comprehensive zoning plan to create a sense that “things are where they should be.” The Nolen Plan gives Venice its distinctive “sense of place.”

The book is available for \$65 plus \$4.55 sales tax (\$69.55). Make checks payable to the Triangle Inn Association. All proceeds from sale of the book benefit the expansion of the Venice Archives.

Archives Announcements

“Old Florida – Wish You Were Here . . .” Exhibit

The Archives latest exhibit can be viewed through November 23. The exhibit features fun and funky nostalgic items, collectables, and souvenirs from 1930 to 1960. This amazing collection of Florida themed items is from the collection of a local resident. Items on view include tablecloths, ceramics, jewelry, figurines, brochures, menus, and motel literature.

Christmas Exhibit – November 23 to January 23

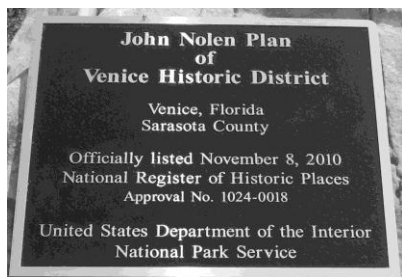
Mark your calendars for the Archives’ annual Christmas exhibit. On December 9, 2011, the Archives will host an open house in conjunction with the tree lighting ceremony in West Blalock Park.

Needlework Exhibit – February 18 to May 30, 2012

Coming next year to celebrate the 85th Anniversary of the City of Venice, the Archives will feature needlework created by Venice pioneer families.

COV Historic Preservation Announcements

Nolen Plan District Plaque Dedication



On Tuesday, January 10, 2012, at 1:00 p.m. (immediately before the City Council meeting), the John Nolen Plan of Venice Historic District plaque will be dedicated by the Mayor and Council. The plaque is mounted on a rock located in front of City

Hall, 401 West Venice Avenue. All are invited to attend.

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.

October 12 – November 09 – December 14

Lord-Higel House merchandise

Wooden house miniatures of the Lord-Higel House are available for \$20.00 at Triangle Inn, Island Gift Nook, Altheas, and the Venice Depot.

T-shirts with an image of the Lord-Higel House are available for \$15.00 each - all sizes - by emailing jbauerx2@verizon.net or calling 941-488-1937.

Day Trip

On Saturday, **October 29, 2011**, the Friends of Lord-Higel House invite everyone to participate in a Day Trip to visit several beautifully restored historic buildings.

Docents will lead tours of the historic Bidwell-Wood House and quaint Crocker Church located in Sarasota's Pioneer Park and the Valentine House in Bradenton next to the Robinson Preserve. (This house was 'floated' down the Manatee River to its' current resting place.) There is no charge for visiting these buildings, but if you feel inclined to make a donation of appreciation—please do so. **Bring your lunch and drink** to eat on the spacious back porch of Bidwell-Wood House before continuing onto Bradenton.

We will leave at **10:00 a.m.** and carpool from the parking lot north of the Triangle Inn. This will be a trip of inspiration and vision for historic homes restoration!

Please **RSVP** by email to jbauerx2@verizon.net

Venice Area Historical Society Announcements

History Booth at Sun Fiesta – October 15 and 16, 2011

Once again the Historical Society, the Friends of the Lord-Higel House, and the Association will be manning a booth at Sun Fiesta. Brochures, books, and historic themed items will be available for purchase.

2011-2012 Lecture Series

All lectures are held at the Renaissance Room, Mark Manor, Village on the Isle Center, Tamiami Trail, Venice, Florida, and are free and open to the public.

Date: Tuesday, **October 25, 2011**, at 7:00 p.m.
Program: **Excavations and Memories at the Venice Train Depot**
Presenter: Uzi Baram, Ph.D., Professor of Anthropology, New College, Sarasota, FL, Founding Director of New College Public Archaeology Lab. Author of “Transformative Transportation: The Early Twentieth-Century Railroad on the Southwest Florida Frontier,” *International Journal of Historical Archeology*, May, 2011 (Features Venice Depot).

Date: Tuesday, November 15, 2011, at 7:00 p.m.
Program: **Florida on Maps: 1507 through 1819**
Presenter: Joel Morrison, Ph.D.; former Chief of Geography Division of the U.S. Bureau of the Census; former Director of Center for Mapping at The Ohio State University; and currently Associate Editor of the six volume *History of Cartography* in process. Dr. Morrison is a resident of Venice.

Annual Style Show

The annual style show will be on Wednesday, **November 30, 2011** at the Venice Yacht Club from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This year's theme is ***Happy Birthday Venice, Celebrate the History***. The event will honor the 85th Anniversary of Venice becoming a "city," the John Nolen Plan of Venice, and Dorothy Korwek, former Director of Historical Resources for the City of Venice. Fashions will be from Patchington's. Tickets are \$30 and available at Paper Pad, Venice Stationers, and Collectors Gallery and Framery.



Local History Articles

This issue of the Journal highlights 1920 era homes in the Gulf View and Venezia Park sections (subdivisions) of Venice. The text is a reprint of material from the Association's popular trolley tours conducted during the winter season.

General Description of Venezia Park houses

The homes in Venezia Park have irregular floor plans and shapes. Patios, courtyards, and projecting balconies are common features. The homes are either hollow tile (clay or concrete) or frame construction with smooth or textured stucco finish.

Applied plaster or concrete "relief" medallions, embedded glazed, multicolored terra cotta tiles, and elaborate moldings and keystones around doorways are common exterior features. Arched windows and doors are important elements, as are elaborate door surrounds.

Many interiors have beamed cathedral ceilings, oak floors, and wrought-iron banisters. Fireplaces are common features in the living areas and are often massive in scale. Chimneys are capped with arched tile structures, and even the simplest have decorative moldings. These details demonstrate the quality and craftsmanship of Venice's builders.



317 Ponce de Leon, 1940s



317 Ponce de Leon, 2006

This house at **317 Ponce de Leon** was constructed in 1926 by H. Mays Home Builders, Inc. The firm secured a building loan of \$9,300 and a separate loan of \$2,915 for the land from the Venice Mortgage and Securities Corporation. In the late 1950s the building housed Venice's first nursing home, Allen Convalescent Home. Subsequently it was converted to an Independent Living Facility called "Elmar Guest Home" – meals and room provided. Although the house has been remodeled, it retains many of its original architectural features and is a fine example of the Mediterranean Revival architectural style that was required during the development of the city. (Elmar was a name derived from the first letters of the names of the ladies who ran the guest house, sisters Elizabeth and Martha.) In the fall of 2002, it became a bed and breakfast called "Horse and Chaise Inn."



519 South Harbor Drive, 1927



519 South Harbor Drive, 2006

This house at **519 South Harbor Drive**, known as the “Banyan House,” was built for Bob and Dorothy Marvin in 1926. Mr. Marvin was an engineer who managed The Venice Company’s home department. The house has three (3) unique fireplaces. The most ornate one is located in the large living room and was imported from Italy. The second was constructed in an adobe-style in the corner of the first floor den. The third is located in the second floor master bedroom suite and is faced with pink marble and pink ceramic tiles in the front of the hearth.

When the BLE left Venice in 1928, the elegant home was vacant until 1935 when it was purchased by Virginia Greenway Wilson. Mrs. Wilson had two children to support and engaged in various businesses to support herself and her family during the Depression.

She rented rooms in her home, first calling it the “Copper Kettle Inn,” but eventually naming it the “Banyan House” after the large tree in the side yard said to have been given to the previous owner by Thomas Edison.

She also ran a nursery school called the “Venice Country Day School” from the house and transported children in a station wagon with a surrey-fringe attached to the top. Because the house had the first, and for a long time the only, swimming pool in the city, many children learned to swim in it.

In her spare time, Mrs. Wilson operated the city’s first taxi service, charging 10 cents for a ride anywhere in the city.

At one time she also operated a tea room called the “Copper Kettle” in a downtown building that now houses Luna’s Restaurant. During the Second World War, the Banyan House served as the unofficial USO (United Service Organization) for personnel stationed at the Venice Army Air Base.

Margaret Thomas purchased the house from Mrs. Wilson in 1960 and established a shark’s tooth and fossil museum in the house. She wrote a book on fossil collecting that is still available today, and took many children on fossil collection expeditions. She sold the house in 1976. Today the house is operated as a bed and breakfast.



500 South Nassau Street, 1927



500 South Nassau Street, 2007

The house at **500 South Nassau Street** was built for Prentiss French and his bride in 1927. French was a Harvard educated landscape architect who was hired by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) on Nolen's recommendation, and arrived in Venice in January 1926 before the first street was paved. (**Remember** that both John Nolen and Dr. Fred Albee were Harvard educated.)

French was hired to oversee the landscape plans for the public spaces, and establish a nursery to provide plants for landscaping businesses and homes. Having traveled in Spain, he was familiar with Mediterranean garden design and stocked thousands of Italian Cypress and exotic plants in the nursery. He specified that Live Oaks be planted along West Venice Avenue. These trees were FINALLY planted 20 years later, after World War II.

Mr. French's father was Director of the Chicago Art Institute for 30 years and his uncle, Daniel Chester French, sculpted the Lincoln Memorial. (The statue fountain in the front yard is the "Greek God Pan with Flute." Pan was the God of flocks and pastures, forest and their wild life; patron of shepherds, hunters, etc.)

French's wife, Helen, who was also trained as a landscape architect, served on various civic committees and sponsored a Camp Fire Girls troop. French hired Harold Heller, another Harvard graduate, to help with landscape design. As mentioned earlier, Heller designed the fountain and planting beds for the patio of the Hotel Venice. French and Heller served on the BLE Architectural Review Committee that enforced the "Northern Italian" architectural theme for the city. French wrote Nolen frequently and noted that it took the "skills of a diplomat" to preside over the review process.