

## Response to the North Port City Commission Regarding the Significance and Validation of Suspected Historical Sites within the City

In response to the City's request for validation of the suspected historical sites within the city, dated 3 March 2022, the following is herewith presented:

### Turpentine Still Base and Dock

- 1) A cursory research of the available documentation resulted in the following:
  - a. The area of North Port in Sarasota County, between 1921 and the early 1950's, was only addressed in the property rolls for the county as farm land and cattle range. Much of the land now occupied by North Port was purchased by A.C. Frizzell in the 1930s. He initially engaged in turpentine production, then when the pine trees died from over extraction of pine sap, he sold the lumber. When the land was cleared of lumber, he began raising cattle.<sup>1</sup>
  - b. In the early 1950s, Frizzell sold all of his land except 40 acres around Murdock, to the Yellowknife Bear Mines. Through a number of land sale transactions of various corporations, the land, approximately 80,000 acres encompassing both southern Sarasota County and northern Charlotte County, wound up in the ownership of General Development Corporation.<sup>2</sup>
  - c. The above accounts for the existence of turpentine production in the area. In order understand the status of the suspected turpentine still along and dock along the Myakkahatchee Creek, an explanation of the operation of turpentine production.
  
- 2) There is a misconception that all turpentine was distilled in one location. This was impractical as it would require the transportation of the pine sap to a central location for distillation and then transportation to the distribution point. In order to preclude a double transportation, smaller stills, such as the one along the Myakkahatchee, were built. Thus the sap would be distilled into turpentine, barreled, and shipped to the distribution site.

The validation of this site requires examination by a qualified archaeologist and/or a comparison of the still base with pictures and design drawings of an original turpentine still.

As for the dock suspected of being used as a departure site for turpentine barrels, it can only be authenticated by a qualified archaeologist from pictures taken in 2008 and 2011, by a member of the Historic and Cultural Advisory Board.

The significance of these structures is their tie to the City of North Port's historical link to the past history of one of the United State's most unique industries.

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<sup>1</sup> Roxann Read, *Images of America, Port Charlotte* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 45-54

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 55-59

## Charlotte Harbor and Northern (CH&N) Railway

- 1) The CH&N Railway was established in 1905 by the Peace River Phosphate Mining Company and ran from the now extinct town of Liverpool in Desoto County to the loading docks on Gasparilla Island (Boca Grande). According to a 1926 map of Sarasota and Charlotte Counties, the rail line ran through southeast corner of Sarasota County. The rail bed can be followed through Sarasota County from the county line at Hillsborough Blvd, along Raintree Blvd and continuing straight northeast after going under I-75 until reaching the Desoto County line. Also shown on the map is the rail stop, Evaland, within the confines of the county and along the rail line. According to several sources, Evaland was a discontinued post office, turpentine still and CH&N flag stop.<sup>34</sup> While the location of Evaland in Sarasota County is questionable, the rail line is not.

The validation of this site is obvious. The rail bed (without rails or ties) still exists. As for the flag stop, Evaland, an archaeological research must be made as to its applicability as a historic site in North Port.

Again, the significance of this site is its tie to the City of North Port's historical link to the past history of one of the United State's most important industries.

In response to Manuel Abreu's memorandum dated 18 December 2024, herewith replied:

## Reasons for designating Biscayne Plaza and Homes Built by General Development as Historical Sites/Structures

Rather than develop an entirely new rationale for why the City of North Port should designate and preserve sites and structures, I took the liberty of using some of the guidelines I was directed to follow when I was a member of the Sarasota County Historic Preservation Board. I believe it defines the rationale for why the City should make such designations. It also provides some methods and processes for doing so with the definitions.

We must keep in mind that the City is now over 50 years old, which is normally, both at the local, state, and national level, when many sites and structures are deemed historic. Marshall Groves' North Port's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary book, *Out of the Wilderness, The First 50 Years*, is a great source for validating these sites/structures.

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<sup>3</sup> *History of Charlotte County*, Chapter 94, p. 377

<sup>4</sup> 1925 List of Businesses, R.L. Polk & Co.