



MEMORANDUM
Department of Public Works

TO: A. Jerome Fletcher II, ICMA-CM, MPA, City Manager

THRU: Jason Yarborough, ICMA-CM, Deputy City Manager
Chuck Speake, Public Works Director

FROM: Rita Puglise, Real Estate Coordinator

DATE: March 22, 2025

SUBJECT: Designation of the Turpentine Dock, Biscayne Plaza, and Charlotte Harbor Railway as Historical Sites

The Historic and Cultural Advisory Board recently met on April 9, 2025, to review potential historic site designations within the City of North Port. During this meeting, the Board revisited site designation materials, including a response letter dated March 3, 2022, and discussed locations with notable ties to the City's industrial history. Following discussion and review, the Historic and Cultural Advisory Board voted to recommend that the City Commission formally designate the following sites as historic due to their significant connection to North Port's industrial past:

- Turpentine Dock
- Biscayne Plaza
- Charlotte Harbor Railway

Designating these sites as historic would help preserve history and culture of the City of North Port, support environmental conservation efforts, and promote community engagement. Should the City Commission approve the historic designation, the Historic and Cultural Advisory Board requests the City to proceed with the necessary steps to nominate these sites for placement on the National Registry of Historical Sites.

Attachments:

1. Response Letter dated March 3, 2022
2. North Port History PDF

CS/rp

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.¹
 - 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.²
 - 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.

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

² *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.³⁴ 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 50th anniversary book, *Out of the Wilderness, The First 50 Years*, is a great source for validating these sites/structures.

³ *History of Charlotte County*, Chapter 94, p. 377

⁴ 1925 List of Businesses, R.L. Polk & Co.

North Port's History

12,000 B.C.E. to 1959 C.E.



Archaeological sites within the city

Warm Mineral Springs



Little salt Springs

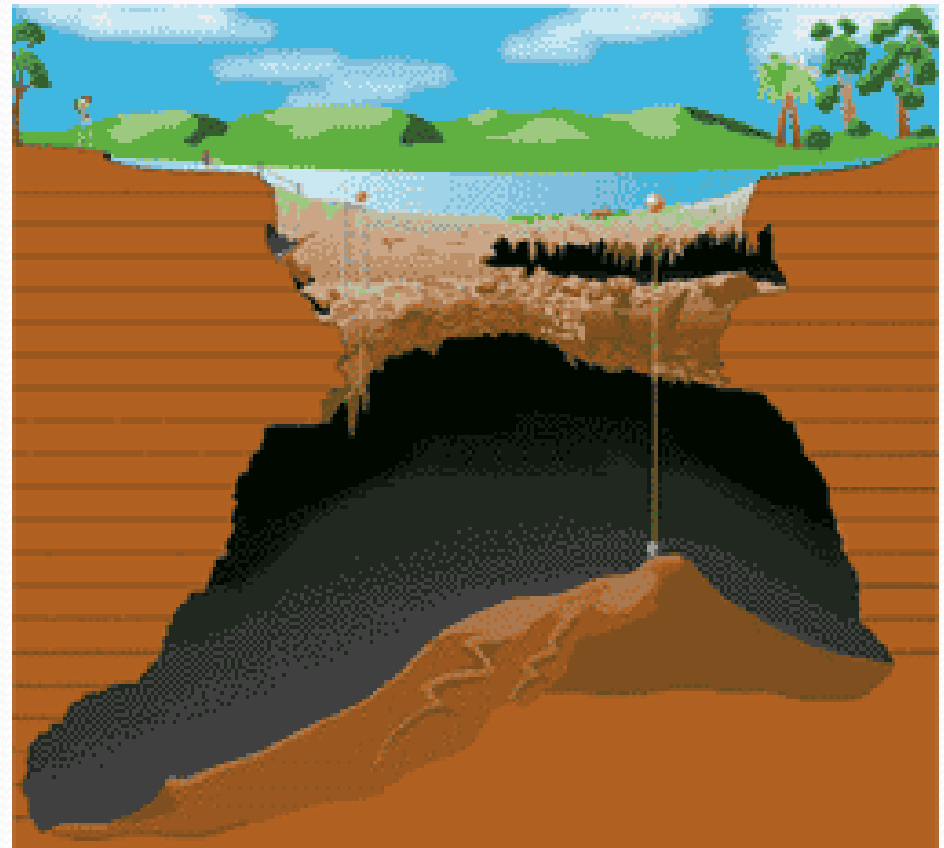


Warm Mineral springs

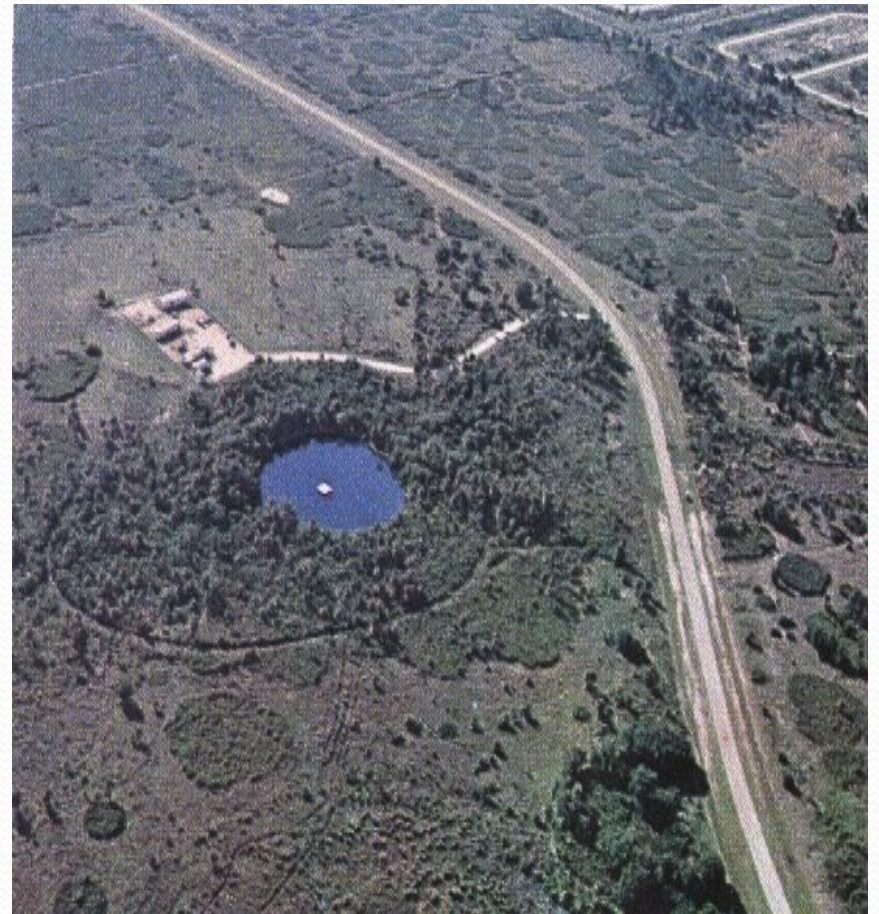
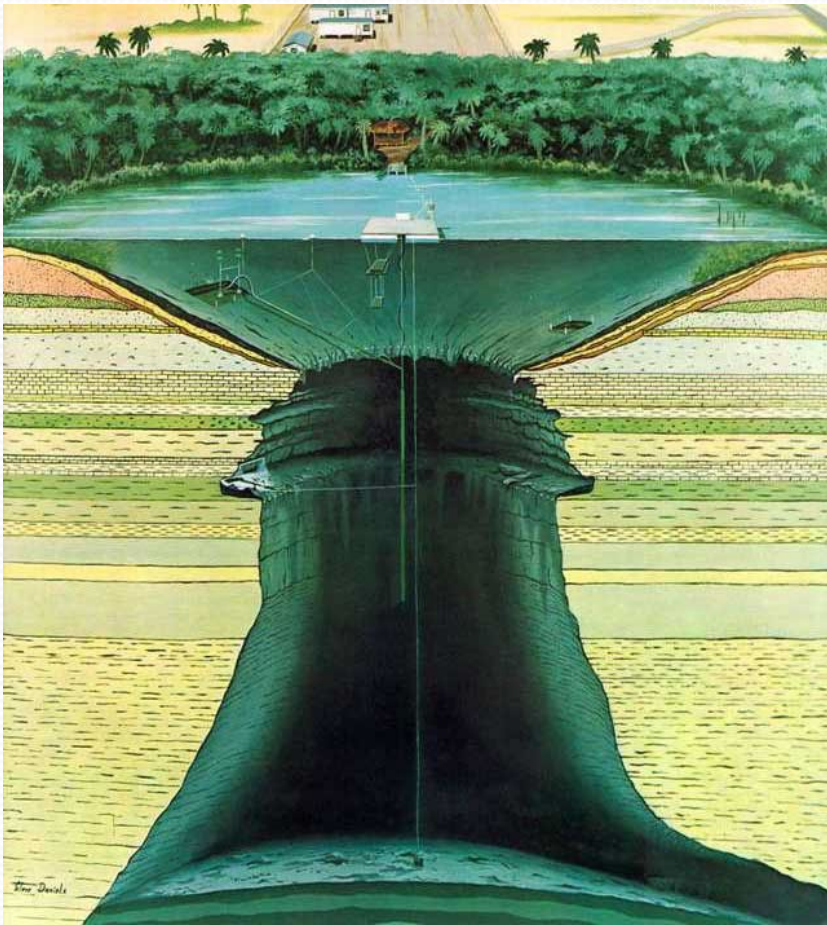
After the 16th century, for the most part, only native Americans visited this site

Rediscovered in the 1920s

Warm Mineral Springs Illustration



Little Salt Springs





Peoples who inhabited the North Port Area

Paleo/Archaic Indian cultures



Peoples who inhabited the North Port Area

Timucuan Confederacy
Mogoso and Ocita Tribes



People visiting the North Port area

The Europeans

1509 – Friar Juan Ortiz visits Warm Mineral Spring

Ponce de Leon may have visited

1539 – Juan Anasco explores the area of North Port

1560s – Juan Menendez d'Aviles explored up both the Myakka and Peace Rivers and the territory in between (the North Port area)



Next arrivals to the North Port Area The Seminoles

Arrived in early 18th Century



People of the North Port Area

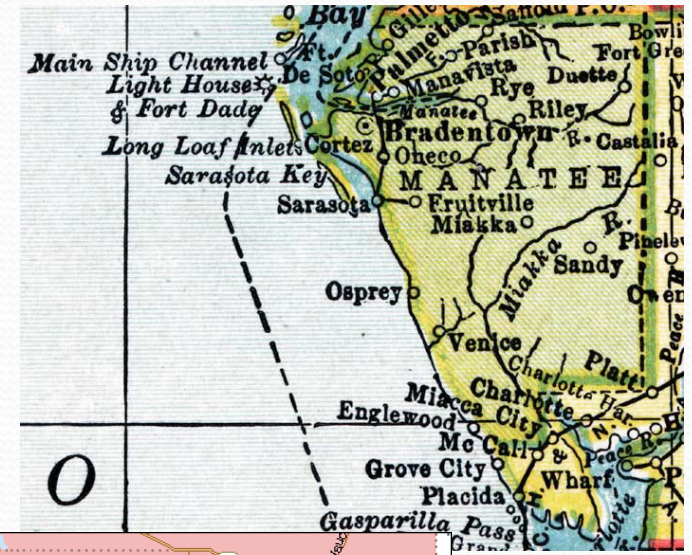
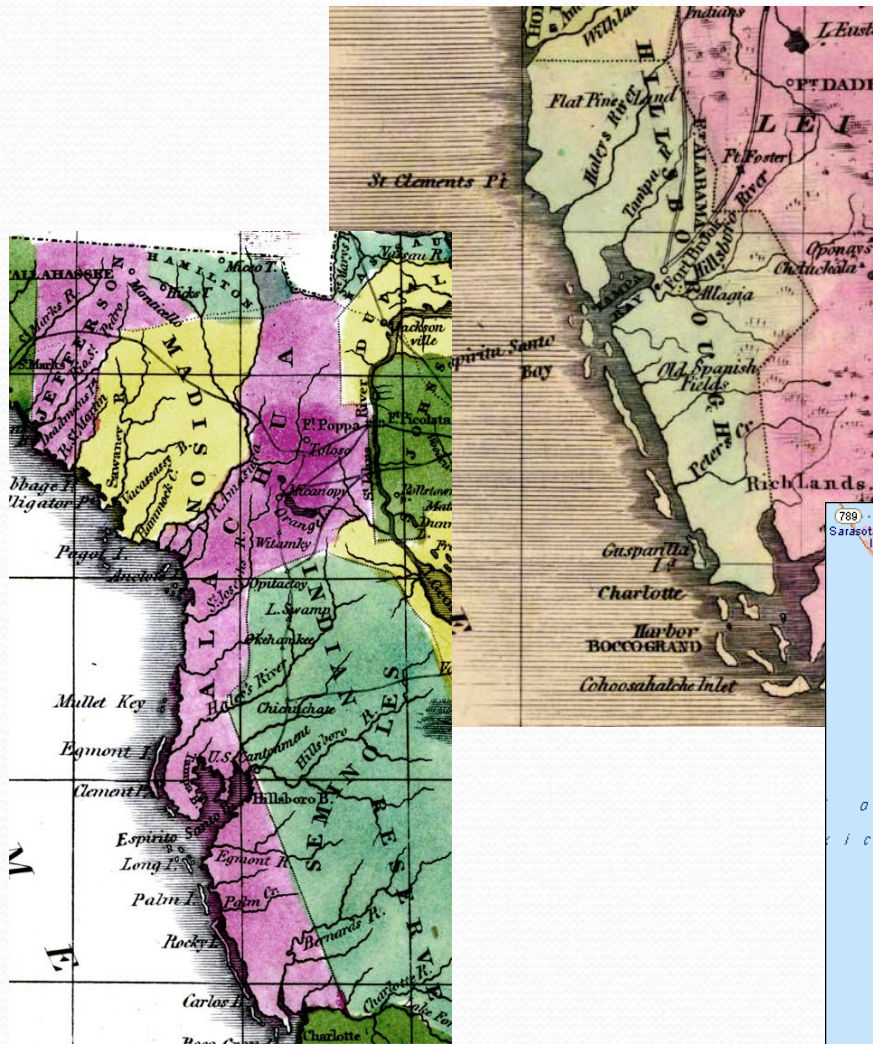
The Americans Arrive

United States acquires Florida from Spain – Adams-Onís Treaty in 1819

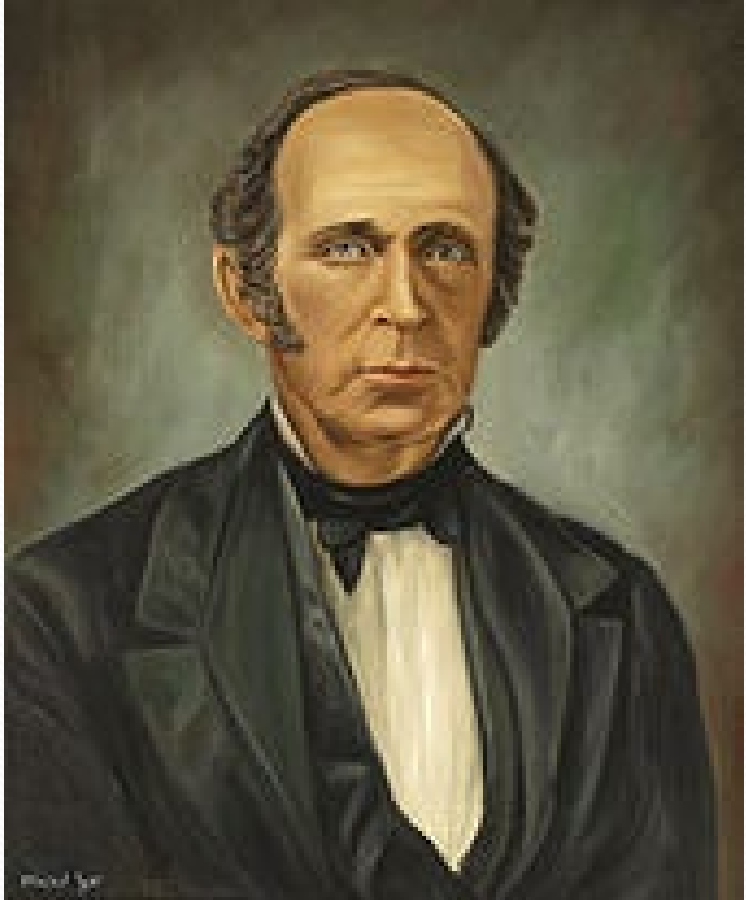
American settlers began arriving in the 1830s and 1840s



North Port Area's evolving landscape



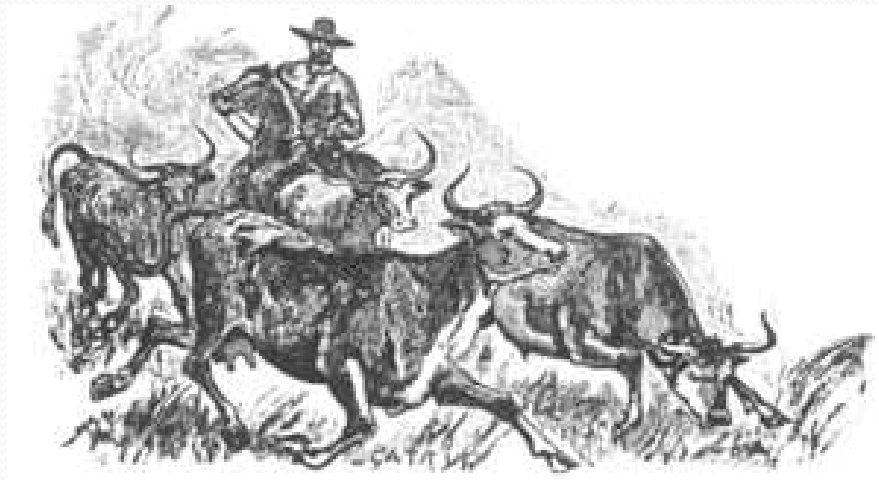
Statehood



The Civil War years 1861-1865

Yankees in the South

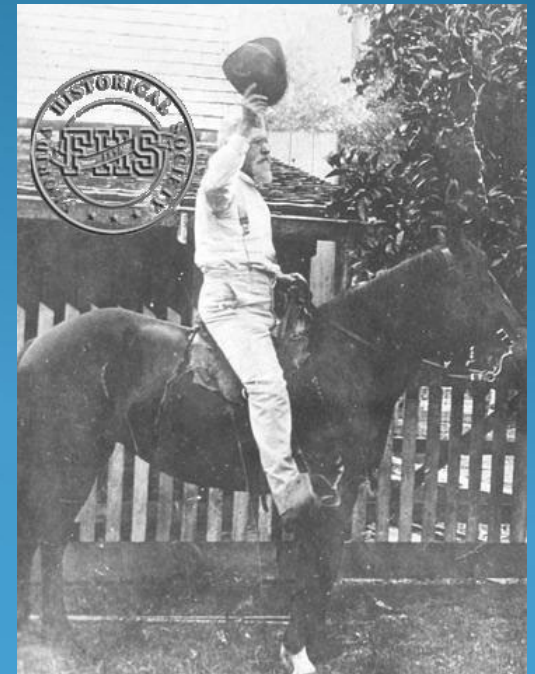
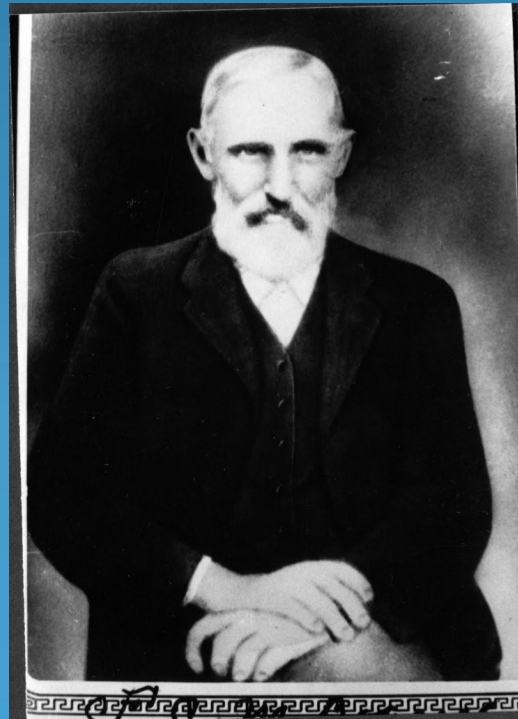
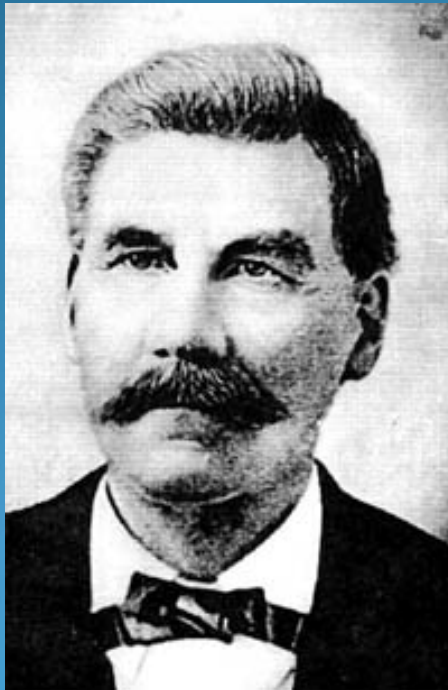
Confederate Meat Provider



Land grab and settlement in the North Port area

During the mid to late 1800s there were several possible owners of land in the North Port area:

Ziba King (shown), Joel Knight, James Whidden, Francis C.M. Boggess (shown), Joseph Durance, Francis A. Hendry (shown)



Land grab and settlement in the North Port area

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, much of the land in Northern Charlotte County and the North Port area was acquired by the Florida Land and Improvement Company.



Early land barons in Northern Charlotte County and North Port Area

John M. Murdock



A.C. Frizzell



A.C. Frizzell's North Port Lands

Frizzell's timber land



Big Slough, better known as the
Myakkahatchee Creek



A.C. Frizzell's North Port Lands

Little Salt Spring



Myakkahatchee Creek
From another angle



A.C. Frizzell's North Port Lands

Frizzell engaged in cattle raising, turpentine production, and lumbering. Many of these enterprises occurred in the North Port area.



Warm Mineral Springs in the 20th Century

Florida land boom of the 1920s

1920s – Warm Mineral Springs was purchased by Mrs. Lilly G. Brown

Mrs. Brown sold her holdings to two real estate developers in 1946

Warm Mineral Springs was again sold in 1955

The city of North Port and Sarasota county purchase the Springs in 2011



Tamiami Trail (US 41) Through North Port

Construction of the trail began
in Miami in 1916

282 miles from Tampa to
Miami

Completed on April 25, 1928

Main commercial artery
through North Port



What are some of the historic or potentially historic sites in North Port?

Already Noted:

Warm Mineral Springs

Little Salt Springs

Native American villages/campsites along the
Myakkahatchee Creek

Little known or unknown sites...



Little Known or Neglected Historic sites

Turpentine Dock along the Myakkahatchee Creek



Little Known or Neglected Historic sites

Turpentine Still foundation in close proximity to the Dock



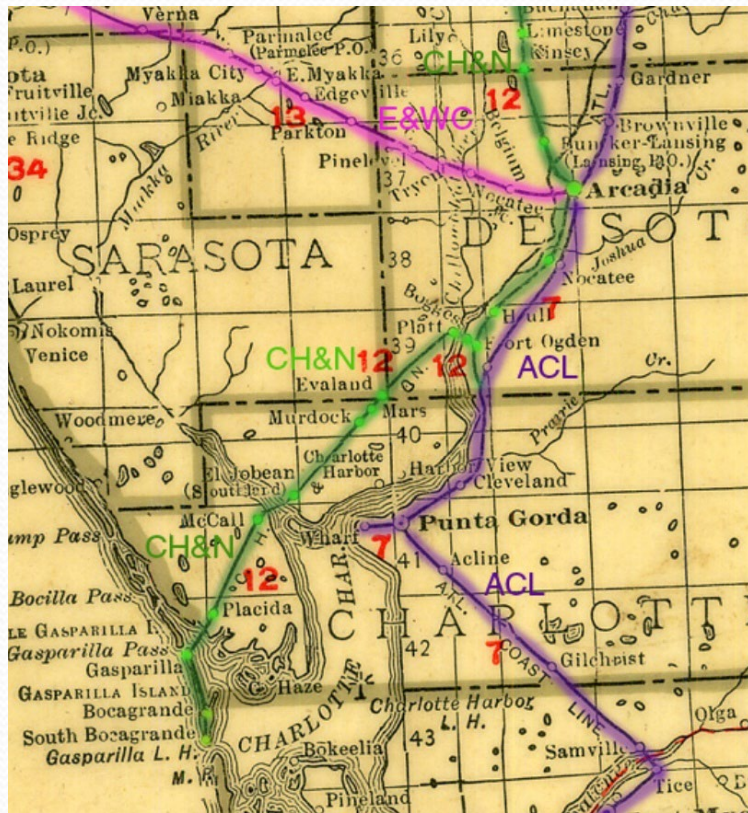
At left – 1920s Turpentine Still
Below – Foundation of Still



Little Known or Neglected Historic Sites

Charlotte Harbor and Northern (CH&N) Rail Line through North Port

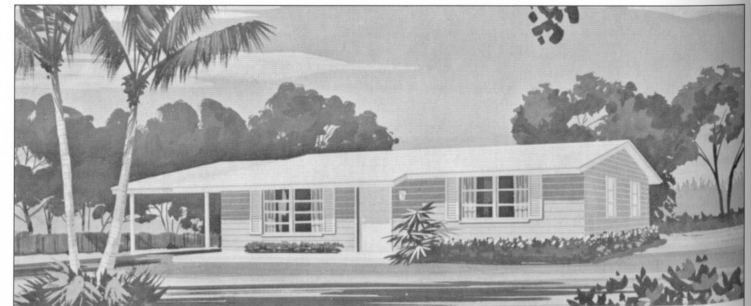
CH&N Rail bed along both Yorkshire and Raintree Streets in North Port



The Architecture of the 1950s



These illustrations were printed in brochures advertising the different housing types that Mackle Brothers Construction built in Port Charlotte. These typically 800-900-square-foot homes boasted one, two, and three bedrooms with carports, patios, and porches. A variety of housing styles were offered. In planning Port Charlotte, the Mackle Brothers utilized 1960s state-of-the-art city planning tools. Along with single-family retirement homes, they planned and constructed parks, churches, shopping centers, golf courses, boat ramps, roads, and water, sewer, gas, and power lines. Franchised sales offices began to spring up in late 1957. By 1958, there were 26 sales offices in more than 100 northern cities. (Both courtesy of Carolyn Depenbrock.)



**2 BEDROOMS, 1½ BATHS,
PATIO, OPEN FRONT PORCH, CARPORT**

Two-car carports, one-car garages, two-car garages are optional on all houses. See optional extra list for prices.

CENTURY LINE MODEL 100-A

The floor plan shows a rectangular layout. On the left is a CARPORT. Moving right, there is a LIVING ROOM, a DINING ROOM, and a KITCHEN. The kitchen is connected to a PATIO. At the back of the house are two BEDROOMS and a BATH. A central HALL connects the bedrooms and bath to the living and dining areas. There is also a BREAKFAST ROOM and a CLOSET area.