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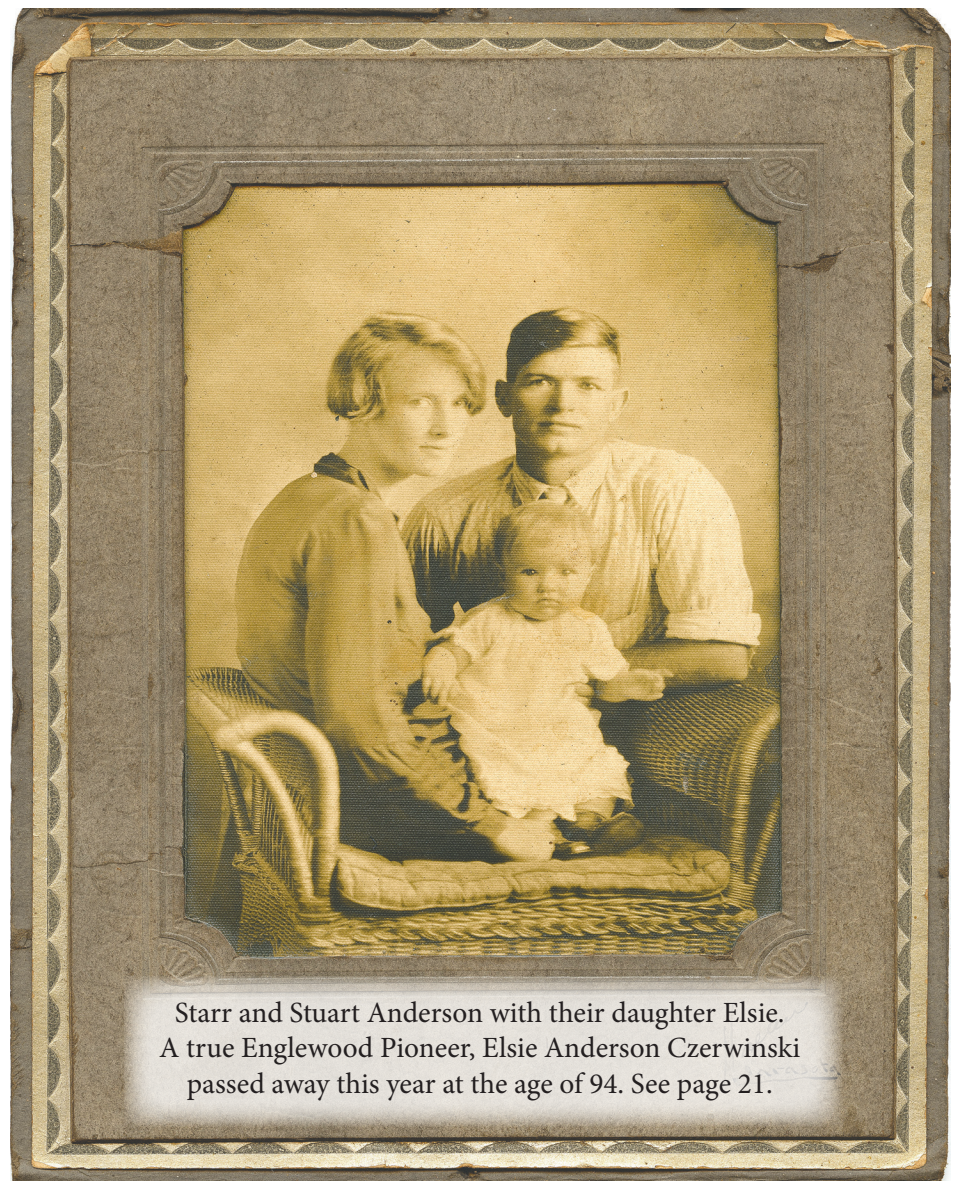
# Pioneer Days Canceled And Parade Goes Virtual

By Sharyn Lonsdale

Last year, the threat of Hurricane Dorian forced the organizers of Englewood's annual Pioneer Days to postpone the parade and most of the events from Labor Day Weekend to November. This year, the threat of COVID-19 has proven even more formidable, resulting in the cancellation of the entire festival from the cardboard boat races to the shipwreck dance. The committee is planning to hold a virtual parade yet this year. The parade will be a slideshow showcasing past parades, events and new participants. The theme continues to be Mask-arade! Instead of building a float, make your own mask & submit a photo of yourself with your mask. Share your memories in a short video, send old photos, share your artwork or chalk drawings and email your submission(s) to EPDVirtualParade2020@gmail.com. The virtual parade will have a viewing party in Dearborn Street Plaza, and will be posted on social several social media channels. No other Pioneer Days events are to be rescheduled.

For the most up-to-date information, visit Englewood Pioneer Days on Facebook or [www.EnglewoodPioneerDays.com](http://www.EnglewoodPioneerDays.com).

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Starr and Stuart Anderson with their daughter Elsie. A true Englewood Pioneer, Elsie Anderson Czerwinski passed away this year at the age of 94. See page 21.

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# This *Historic Tour* Is Always Open

By Sharyn Lonsdale

You might not be able to watch a parade, dance in the park or see babies race, but you can take in Englewood's rich history, and you don't have to wait for Pioneer Days. This self-guided tour is safe, socially distant, and because these buildings are not open to the public, totally outdoors.

The 1928 Lampp House at 604 Perry Street, is home to the Englewood Museum, which is closed for the summer. The building was officially named to the Sarasota County Register of Historic Places in 2012. Enjoy the building and make plans to visit the museum when it reopens. [www.eahmuseum.org](http://www.eahmuseum.org)

The Lemon Bay Woman's Club at 51 N. Maple Street is probably the most significant historic building in the Englewood area. Built in 1926, the Prairie style building has housed everything from a school to a library and was the first building in Englewood to be



*Lampp House*

named to the National Register of Historic Places more than 30 years ago. Park at the building and read the historic plaque. [www.lemonbaywomensclub.com](http://www.lemonbaywomensclub.com)

The Lemon Bay Garden Club building at 480 Yale Street is celebrating its 70th birthday this

year. Built as a church in 1950, it was purchased by the LBGC in 1981 and expanded to include a dining room and kitchen. [lemonbaygardenclub.org](http://lemonbaygardenclub.org)

Don't look for the Green Street Church and Museum on Green Street. Owned by the Lemon Bay

Historic Society, the building was moved to its forever home just south of the Historic Lemon Bay Cemetery at 500 N. Indiana Ave. when its lease expired in 2018. The building was built in 1928, is also on Sarasota County's Register of Historic Places, and is one of the most iconic structures in town. [Lemonbayhistory.com](http://Lemonbayhistory.com)

While you're checking out the church, you may also want to respectfully visit the cemetery where members of Englewood pioneer families, including the Goffs and Aingers are buried. That's Bill Anger's marker that is shaped like a boat. The most famous "resident", arguably, is Emile Gauguin, son of French artist Paul Gauguin

The Hermitage Artist Retreat at 6660 Manasota Key Road, is home to several restored historic buildings and is best seen by parking at Middle Beach and

*Continued on page 6*

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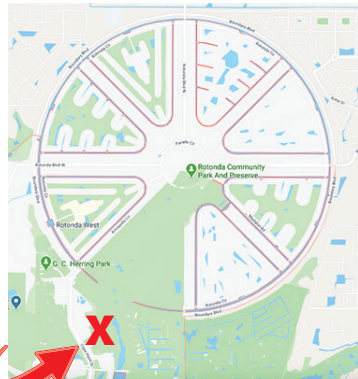
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Cookie House

walking south on Manasota Key Road. You can also get a feeling for the campus as you walk along the beach. The Hermitage House is the most familiar building on the campus and is on the Sarasota County and the National Register of Historic Places. [www.hermitageartistretreat.org](http://www.hermitageartistretreat.org)

Our one stop in Charlotte County will take you to Cedar

Point Environmental Park, 2300 Placida Road, and the last remaining "Cookie House" in the area. The house was built at the old Bass Biological Lab and earned its nickname for the construction of cement and sand that resembles a row of cookies. Take a little extra time here and end your day with a leisurely trail walk.

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# First Pioneer Days Celebration Was A Huge Success

by Ken Kocab

In 1956 Jo Cortes, local journalist and community activist, came up with the idea of "Pioneer Days." The purpose was to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of Englewood and to honor local pioneers. Summer was a slow time in Englewood and a festival like this would also bring many people into town to help local merchants. Jo, and over 40 others serving on various committees, planned for the first Pioneer Days Celebration to last three days, starting on August 17 (the date that the first lot was platted in Englewood in 1896).

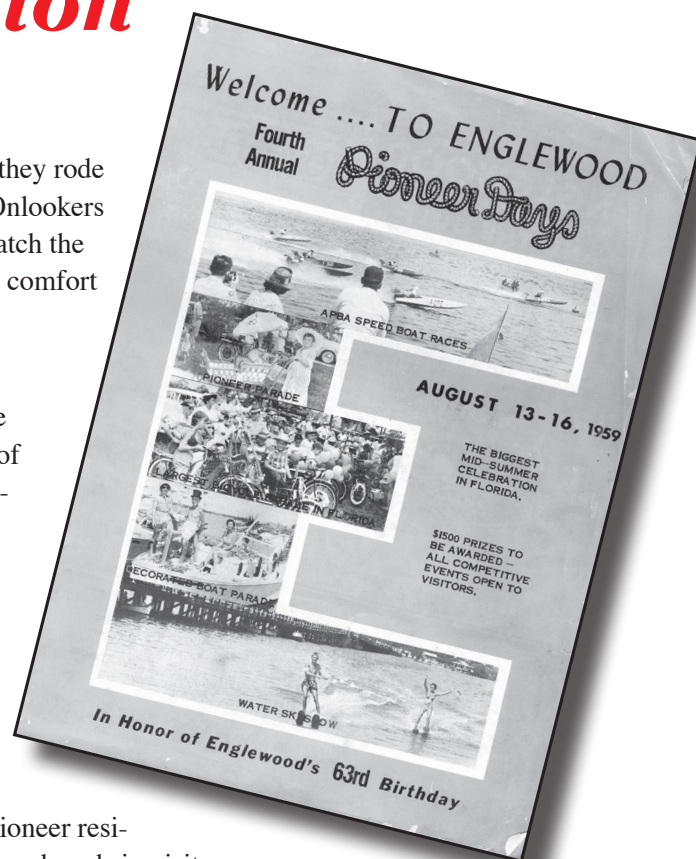
One of the most important ground rules during this first Pioneer Day Celebration, was that all males in town had to wear a specific type of derby on their head, and females had to adorn themselves with prescribed headpieces. Violators would be taken

to a make-shift jail by either a beautiful young female deputy, or a bearded male deputy, and pay 50 cents to be released.

A "Pioneer Day Parade" started off the activities on Friday at 9:30am. Thirty eight local children bought out every roll of crepe paper from local merchants, and decorated their bikes to the hilt. Every type of wheeled vehicle imaginable was included in the parade, including bicycles, tricycles, carts, floats, and even doll carriages. All children were presented a real silver dollar for riding in the parade. All boats participating in Saturday's children's sailing regatta were pulled on trailers in the parade. It started at what was then Don's Bakery, and worked its way to Veteran's Park on McCall Rd. Unfortunately a storm started just as the parade was underway, and the crepe paper made a mess of the bikes and floats. The rain didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the

participants, as they rode on with pride. Onlookers however, did watch the parade from the comfort of their cars.

Once the parade reached the park, Chamber of Commerce president Robert H. Waddle gave a welcoming address to all those in attendance. A luncheon was held to honor 50 year pioneer residents of Englewood, and six visitors from Englewood, TN, who had won an essay contest that asked, "Why would you like to spend a week in Englewood Florida?" Each of these six winners won an all-expenses paid week-long trip to our town.



The 36-page program from the 1959 Pioneer Days Celebration was filled with advertisements from local merchants.

After the luncheon, there was a water ski show at 2:30pm near the "Big Bridge," which is now the Tom Adams Bridge on Beach Road. The rain amazingly stopped just in time for the 20 or so skiers to put on a great show for over 200 spectators. From 5:30 to 7pm, a community-wide seafood dinner, that only cost one dollar, was held at the American Legion Hall. The final event on Friday was a jam-packed street dance, in the parking lot of Ainger's Market on McCall Road, currently the location of the Gulf Coast Hardware store.

Saturday featured a busy schedule that kicked off with swimming races from Beryl Chadwick's dock. The event featured 12 classes and included both children and adults. After the swimming races, the children's sailboat regatta was then held. Competitors had to not only sail their boats, but also rig up masts, install centerboards, and prepare their crafts for the races. The Englewood Lion's Club later sponsored a spare rib barbecue dinner at 5:30pm at Calhoun Field. After dinner, Lion's



The first Pioneer Days street dance was held in the parking lot of L.A. Ainger's store.

Continued on page 7



# In Honor of Laverne Annette Dignam (1942-2020) A true Englewood "Pioneer"



Tom, Leslie, Annette & David Dignam



Annette & Tom at Englewood Beach



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*Continued from page 7*

Club members played baseball. The highlight of Saturday's events had to be the "Shipwreck Dance" held at Wood's Cocktail Lounge near the current Merchant's Crossing complex. The music was presented by The Lee County Playboys. No admission was charged, and prizes were given for the best costume showing how one would look if their ship was wrecked.

The final activity on Sunday was a huge regatta, which planners said included the biggest number of boats ever assembled on Lemon Bay. All participants decorated their crafts, and local merchants provided cash prizes ranging from \$3 to \$50 for the best decorated boats. All kinds of craft showed up, including slave ships, pirate ships, canoes and even commercial boats.

After all was said and done, Jo Cortes, organizer of Pioneer Days, said that she was more than satisfied with success of the affair, and predicted it would become an annual event. Little did she know that we would be celebrating Pioneer Days Celebration 60 plus years later. Although some of

the events, locations, and dates have changed from this first Pioneer Days Celebration, the friendly atmosphere found among all those present has never changed. Thank you Jo, for a great idea that really brings Englewood together!

*I would like to credit the following sources for help in the writing of this article:*

*"Pioneer Days Open Today," Saint Petersburg Times, August 17, 1956*

*"Englewood Pioneer Days continue through this Sunday," by Ben Marthaler, The Englewood Sun, (date unknown)*

*"A salute to Englewood's pioneers," by Diana D. Harris, The Englewood Sun Herald, August 20, 1997*



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# Memories of Josephine Cortes

By Ruth Matsinger Chapman

*The following article was published in the September 1992 issue of IMAGES Magazine.*

*Jo Cortes was a leading personality in the early days of Englewood. She was a unique individual. Ruth Chapman shares some memories of her friendship with this true Englewood Pioneer.*

My first impression of Jo Cortes was a small, but dynamic person. She sparkled with animation, overflowed with enthusiasm and spoke with intelligence and wit. Her personal well-being seemed to be the last thing on her mind. She was constantly looking out for someone who needed help. Her ability as a journalist was always evident.

Jo came to Englewood in 1954. She had worked for some time for the United States Office of Education in our nation's capital. A change in her personal life created a need for a new challenge - so here she was in the tiny village of Englewood with a young daughter and son to provide for. That same year she became a reporter for the Sarasota Herald-Tribune and the Punta Gorda Herald. A year later she helped establish the Englewood Herald, working both jobs and taking great interest in the history and development of her adopted hometown. I first met Jo in 1956. We both were rooting for our children at the baseball field. The teams played on a vacant lot north east of McCall Road, across a ditch (that is now Indiana Avenue about where Winn Dixie used to stand.) Between innings, Jo was lining up help for a project. She had researched the growth of Englewood, searching the archives in Manatee County Courthouse, and found recorded there the first signing of the Plat of Englewood, dated August 16, 1896. Her idea was to have a 60th birthday party for the town and honor the pioneer settlers of the area.



*Jo Cortes and Floyd Potter living it up at the Lasbury home on Southwind Drive.*

Jo's enthusiasm quickly caught the imagination of the townsfolk. My husband and I were new residents with four young children. We volunteered to handle a bicycle parade. Each youngster to enter would receive a shiny silver dollar, with a special prize for the best decorated bike or tricycle. Others volunteered ideas and manpower. The business people offered contribution of money, prizes and "specials" from their inventory. A street dance, boat parade, musicale, fish fry, ball games and many other events were planned. Jo's research uncovered six other Englewood's in the United States. Residents from these towns were invited to submit letters on "Why I would like to spend a week in Englewood." Local motels offered free accommodations for the winning family.

The name adopted for the celebration was Pioneer Days, with the featured event being a supper to honor Englewood's

pioneer families. This whole gala occasion was so successful, it has continued each year on Labor Day weekend, with new events added as imagination widened. Jo served as General Chairman for Pioneer Days for several years.

There were some changes in ownership of the Englewood Herald and Jo struck out once more on her own. She started her own Englewood newspaper. Remembering that I could type,

she asked me to learn how to operate her rented varitype machine. With the instruction book beside me, I typed the columns of news she had collected. My husband set the headliner for her and we became a team, publishing the "best fishwrapper in Englewood." At times Jo and I would each cover events that were going on simultaneously.

The paper was put together in the big, two-story, white columned house that originally belonged to a Coates and Clark executive. The large parlor was piled with newspapers, clippings, reams of paper for the varitype, a desk piled high with fillers and pictures, leaving just enough room to type. The headliner was on a sideboard. It all looked like utter confusion but Jo knew exactly where everything was. We always worked up to the last minute on a press day. Then Elmer would drive Jo and her neat pile of final layouts to Palmetto where the copies were reproduced by photo offset.

That picturesque house is gone. The Englewood Bank occupies the property now. Jo's paper was popular, but there wasn't enough advertising in the little town for two local papers. She finally gave up and went to work then at the Englewood Post Office.

Jo was still active in town. She was Chairman of the yearly Pioneer Days celebration. She spoke at various meetings on early Englewood and it's pioneers, never needing notes and able to parry any questions on the subject. She was constantly spearheading some movement to better the community or help an individual. During the bitter days in Poland, Jo personally gathered box after box of donated clothing and shipped them to those who needed them through relatives she had there.

Jo had two books published, one "The History of Englewood" is about the pioneer families, and one, "It Happened in Englewood" is a compilation of her columns from the Sarasota Herald.

To be Jo's friend was not easy. She constantly involved her friends in whatever new problem she was arbitrating. You could not be neutral, and if you chose a side, either for or against her, she pushed you to speak out. Be heard. Don't sit back and complain. Do something. Through her efforts in this fashion she brought about the demise of the Port Authority Bill that would have established a dictatorship in the area. She and Leah Lasbury started the Women Taxpayers League, a loose organization that met only when there was an important issue at hand. Then look out. They came out in united force.

My memories of Jo Cortes are filled with humor, pathos, prickly issues and real compassion. I miss her, friend, counselor and compatriot.

# The J.D. Anderson Family Has Proudly Served The Englewood Community Since The 1880's.



Early Englewood settler, J.D. Anderson stands in front of his boys Stuart, Charlie, Phillip and Clyde on their 100 acre family farm east of Manasota Beach Road and SR 776 in the early 1900's.



Stuart Anderson formed the Lemon Bay Fisheries in the 1920's. After operating from a couple of locations the fishery finally ended up at the end of Wentworth Street as seen in this 1940's photo. Lemon Bay Fisheries operated until the late 1960's.

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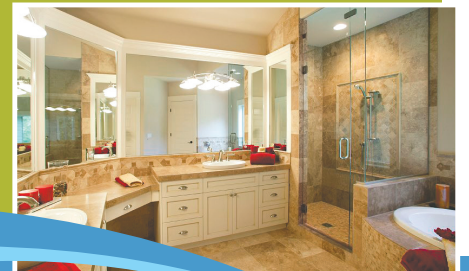


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# An Interview with L.A. Ainger

The following are excerpts of an interview of L.A. Ainger by Bud Mizell in 1992.

**“Was Ainger Creek named after your dad?”**

Yes, he homesteaded on Ainger. Back then you called a creek by who lived on it. He lived on it so it's called Ainger. Gottfried settled on Gottfried Creek.

**“Tell me a little bit about growing up and education.”**

There was a one-room schoolhouse. There was one room and one teacher. In those days a student with high school education could get a job teaching school.

**“The old building, how far did you have to walk from home to get to it?”**

It was about a mile and a half or two miles. A lot of those days I walked 5 miles or maybe 6 or 8 miles to get to school for the simple reason, there were no fence laws in Florida. Cattle ran free and the turpentine still worked on a lot of mules and they'd turn them loose and they'd run free. Well, you know, I was scared of cattle, being six years old. I was scared of them big ole' bellowin' bulls and those mules that would come down the road four abreast. You better give them plenty of room. I'd walk a million miles around a bunch of cows and those mules. I went to that school for the first three years.

**“Is it anywhere near where 776 is now?”**

It's pretty much the same roadway. The school was this side of where Tiffany Square is now. Vineland ran past where the Tringali Center is now and came back this way to Ainger Creek.

**“Did they move that school or did it burn**



In the late 1910s turpentine trucks served stills in Vineland and Woodmeere.

**down?”**

All of the early buildings built were built out of pine and they all had cypress shingles. Well, the cattlemen ruled the roost as far as land was going and they wanted pasture land. There was no fence law. If you didn't want the cattle getting in your garden, then you built a fence to keep them out.

That's the way it was. The cattlemen burnt the landscape every year in the winter when everything was dry. They just set fire and they didn't care where it went. If you didn't want your house burnt down it was up to you to keep it out. Our house caught fire three or four times. It wasn't unusual. You didn't take a garden hose. You just got up there with a bucket. Our house caught fire one time and it took six rows of roofing. We thought the whole house was going to burn down.

**“Did you have a volunteer fire department?”**

No.

**“You looked after your own problems?”**

Where we were, there were a lot of men

working in the woods, checking trees for turpentine stills they had put the cup on. Then when the cup filled up, they came by their wagons with the barrels on them and emptied them. If they saw smoke up around somebody's house, they would all come in and help out.



The Manasota Lumber Company in 1919.

Everybody helped everybody. We never had a lock on our house. You didn't lock anything up. If a neighbor needed to borrow something, he would, and then replace it later. That's the way it was.

**“Where did you complete your education?”**

I never did complete it. I'm still working on it. We moved to Englewood and my father built a house. The location is where the True Value Hardware Store is now. (Gulf Coast Hardware now) The house was where the parking lot is now. After a year or so, father who had been in the mercantile business before, decided to open a store in the house. It was a pretty big house and in one room downstairs he opened a little store. Then he built onto the side of the house. It was a small store- 14'x 28'. That's what I inherited. My father was getting pretty old when we moved there. I was ten years old at the time so that carried him right up to 76 years old. He was hard of hearing. He had malaria that affected his hearing. He had good eyesight, though. He read the Tampa Morning Tribune cover to cover when he could get it. You didn't get it every day like you do now.

**“Tell me about the Woodmere development.”**

Woodmere was not just a sawmill. It was one of the biggest sawmills east of the Mississippi river at the time it was in full bloom. They had railroads all through the woods and were cutting timber from around Venice all the way over to Arcadia and Desoto County. They worked a lot of people. It was dandy.

Continued on page 13



Continued from page 11



*The Chadwick Bridge across Lemon Bay.*

“That brings up something you and I were talking about once before. Someone told me that all the oak trees that used to be here were cut down. I think that they were thinking of Woodmere as having been the place that took them down. But you don’t recall really seeing a lot of oak trees other than the ones we had at the beach or lost to the storm.” Most of the oak trees I know of were on the Key. Very few.

**“So people didn’t cut them down?”**

No. Now, if you go over to Arcadia, you get a different type of oak. The type of oak we had here with the exception of a few (the nice big ones they call water oaks or big oaks) was called a scrub oak. The scrub oak wasn’t much of a tree.

**“Getting back to Woodmere, they had a dance hall, didn’t they?”**

Well, it was an opera house. Movie theaters weren’t very prominent. Now I’ve been exposed to this information, but I can’t recall all of it. They had some very prominent movie stars that broke champagne when they dedicated the building. I understand Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks and those kind of people. Some of them had bought property here.

**“This is right out north of Englewood where the dome is on 776?”**

Yes. Right in that area. You see, Englewood was laid out for a college and a lot of things. Buchan’s airport all the way down to Gottfried Creek was all laid out to have quite a cultured future. The sawmill cut all

the timber out and then the saw mill closed. The land boom busted and Sarasota decided that the Tamiami Trail, that came through Englewood, was a lot of unnecessary road repairs. So they cut off at South Venice and went to Myakka River. That left Englewood down here. The road was still there. It wasn’t Tamiami Trail or US 41 or State Road 25.

**“A lot of people don’t know that 776 was the Tamiami Trail.”**

It definitely was. Well Englewood went back to a sleepy little fishing village. There was a lot of bartering done. The people were honest. I doubt if there were a half dozen houses that even had a lock on the door. I had several good business deals that were done on a handshake. Everyone was happy and satisfied.

I know all the stores ran charge accounts for fishermen. Not that they were able to. I know I wasn’t, but my suppliers gave me credit and I passed it on to the consumer. When a run of fish came in, the fishermen were happy. Now they might run down to Whiskey Corners and tip a few, but they would come in and pay their accounts first. They were so happy because they were able to pay it.

**“Who were the big land owners at that time. Do you recall?”**

Not really. Stanley Lampp was a big property owner. Leah Lasbury’s father. Mr. Bartlett. One of the greatest assets of Englewood at that time was the Chadwicks. Steve Chadwick married the Johnson’s only daughter. Owned a little piece of the Key that ran from just north of where the state park is now to point



*The Royal Casino was on Lemon Bay off from Buchan’s Landing.*

of beach - the pass. During those days, they built some property over there. The old Chadwick house and the Hermitage had been built years before, but there was no bridge over there. Mr. Chadwick decided to build that Key property, and he built a toll bridge. It was privately owned by Chadwick, and it went across Lemon Bay. They built a Casino over there where the Captain’s Club is now. It was a wooden building up on pilings.

**“The bridge was where the Tom Adams Bridge is now?”**

Yes. Of course, that should be called the Chadwick Bridge. Tom Adams never did anything for Englewood. He used to come down here and have a good time. Anyway, Chadwick built the bridge. He built several cottages over there on the beach and this nice big casino. It was a beauty. It had a big porch. They used to have dances there. It was quite a going place.

One thing that sticks in my mind is a wooden building he built that was stuccoed. You know how they used to build the framework and put up the chicken wire? They went a step further, After they put the stucco on the outside they showered it with coquina shells. It was the prettiest thing and those coquina shells would just shine in the sun. I don’t know how they put them on there. It was down near the Captain’s Club at that time.

Well, things rocked along. At the corner of Perry and Old Englewood Road, we had our first Englewood Bank. The building is still there today. It’s a home now. We got a bank and a Chamber of Commerce and we had a city. A mayor. The Chamber of

Commerce was chartered. The bank was chartered, a state bank. Things were looking pretty good. They had built a casino down from Buchan’s Landing where they used to have some prominent bands that played there for dances and things.

**“Was that out over the water?”**

That was all on the water. It was real nice. They had the kitchen downstairs and the lazy suzy that brought the food up. Good name bands. All lit up. Electricity, telephones, we were on the way up. We had some pretty good land sales. The prices of course sky rocketing. We thought they were high. Now we’ve seen some recent property prices.

**“Tell me about Mr. Buchan, the Vanderbilts, the Jergens.”**

Andrew Jergens owned a place here and his sister did too. They were here to enjoy the climate and fishing.

Mr. Buchan was very prominent in the growth of Englewood. He lived in Englewood until his daughter was in high school and then he moved to Tampa. Now I don’t know what the reason was. He leased the store to Tate and several people ran the store and the post office was there and living quarters up there. That’s all Buchan’s Landing where it is now. In the ’21 hurricane they were living there. They had to leave by crawling down on bedsheets into a boat because the water was in the bottom story. A lot of food goods were washed out of the store and all up and down the beaches. That was one of the bad hurricanes that came through this area.

Continued on page 16

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*Continued from page 13*

**“Had he done any land developing at that time?”**

He wasn't a developer. He owned land and sold it. He was a businessman. He was on the Sarasota County Commission. Buchan's Airport is named after him. There are several parcels of land he owned. I'm not sure if he owned the land where Buchan's Airport is or not. If he did, he sold it to the county. He was instrumental in naming it and keeping it as county property.

**“When did the Vanderbilts come into the picture?”**

Much later on. Let's go back to the land boom, when the boom busted in the late 20's or 30's. Well, it started just before Roosevelt was elected. You won't remember this.

**“I read about it.”**

I remember it from my dad's experience with it. Roosevelt was elected for president, and one of the first things he did was declare a bank holiday. You've heard of that?

**“Oh Yes.”**

That was supposed to be a three-day bank holiday where every bank in

the nation was closed, and they were supposed to be examined, and only if they were on solid footing could they reopen for business. That's where my father and a lot of people went broke. Well, our banker, Mr. Silkey, skipped town one night with everything that was in the safe.

**“You'd say Mr. Silkey was slick?”**

Well, I don't know how slick he was. He got as far as Atlanta where he spent several years.

**“They took him there?”**

Yes, he was a guest of the government for a number of years. That was the end of our first Englewood Bank.

**“The Stump Pass was open at that time. Wide open. It was also open just north of Middle Beach. Is that so?”**

There was an opening. Now a lot of that land was pumped up when they cut the inlet waters. There's been many times that the water ran through there. I don't know if it's been open for any length of time. I think it could have been. I think Lemon Bay would be better off. A lot of property owners

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A group of businessmen at the Englewood State Bank. Abner Silkey is on the porch and Stanley Lampp is 3rd from the right.

wouldn't agree to that. I don't know why you couldn't have a pass and a bridge like they do on the east coast. (But if you had a good stream of water coming in there and down at Stump Pass.) Stump Pass originally was just below the Sea Star. It's got moved south. It swallowed up Boat Seller Pass and Gasparilla Pass. All the little passes have closed up. That's another story - the development of the key.

**"Did you have a winter season of visitors back then?"**

Yes. The tin can car tourists came to Florida to begin with. They came down in homemade trailers. Some converted trucks into motor homes. They weren't manufactured like that. They were all over the coast. There was a big one in Arcadia.

**"Were there some small hotels along here, like mom and pop hotels, like large homes that would accommodate these people?"**

There were several that took in a few or had some special friends that came down and stayed with them. Stanley Lampp owned one, I don't know who ran it. There was a hotel in Englewood that burned down just like the one in Grove City. There were a few homes. People started coming in, and you could put up a real inexpensive house or live in trailers.

Then there was the beach. I need to talk about the beach being sold. After the boom busted and Chadwick could no longer afford to maintain that bridge and the property was no longer selling there, there was a time, if you were a good friend of the Chadwicks,

they'd give you a lot if you'd build a house. They wouldn't give you waterfront, but they were trying to get activity on the beach.

There was a man that used to come down here called Lou Woods. He was with the Royal Americans. When he came to Englewood, they winter quartered in Tampa. Lou said, "I'm going further south. I'm going to Naples. It's a coming place." They asked, "How do you get to Naples?"

He said, "You take 41 and you drive south and take every road that turns right on the right hand side, the Gulf of Mexico is there. Eventually you'll get to Naples." Well, he came down through Venice and got to what is 776 now and took a right and came through Englewood. He got to McCall Road and took a right and when he got to the beach, he took a right like they told him to. Then he ran into a toll bridge and he paid his 50 cents and drove on over to the beach. It was late in the evening. He told Anna, his wife, that they would spend the night. They had their camping gear so he pitched a camp and they fixed supper. Lou told me personally that he didn't get a wink of sleep all night. "There was something out there. I thought it was a bunch of pigs or cattle out there in the water. And you know what it was? It was a Snook striking at shrimp. He kept me awake all night long," he told me. They got up the next day and continued their trip to Naples. They got to Punta Gorda and were halfway to Fort Myers when he looked over at Anna and said, "What are we doing?" She said, "I don't know. It was such a

*Continued on page 18*

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*Continued from page 17*

pretty place.” So they turned around and drove back. They stopped at the bridge and asked about going over there and camping, which he did. In a few years he bought the beach.

My recollection of one of the first very important things was the bridge across to the beach. Chadwick built that. They gave 4 lots as a park and built the bridge. They had a fish house about where Weston’s is now. They wanted to get there to fish. After the boom busted, they couldn’t maintain the bridge any longer and sold their fish business. But they were broke so they decided to get back into business. Instead of going to Punta Gorda, they went to Sarasota and opened a fish business there. It was going along fine. They take real good care of their fishermen, you know. They’d furnish the nets and boats and everything else until you caught fish and then you’d pay them off.

When they couldn’t maintain the cost of the bridge, they struck a deal with Charlotte County. So Charlotte County took over the bridge. But the bridge was getting into repairs and Charlotte County took care the best they could. After a number of years

it became a financial burden, so they convinced the state to help take it over, with some political help. That’s why the state road goes to our beach. Some of our politicians pointed out to the cabinet in Tallahassee there was no record of any state-owned public beach that didn’t have a state road going to it. That’s when they built Tom Adams Bridge and put in the state road to the beach. But before, when the county owned the bridge, Lou Woods, and some of his associates, bought quite a bit of property from Mr. Chadwick. Not all the way to the pass but quite a bit of the southern part there with the little bridge. He advertised the beach considerably on his tours. The Royal Americans covered all the United States and part of Canada.

**“What are some of your early recollections of Englewood when it was taking shape?”**

I spent a lot of time on the water - on Lemon Bay, a beautiful body of water. It always has been. After the bridge went across, the one that Chadwick built, I spent a lot of hours on Lemon Bay. The thing I remember is the long green ribbons of grass that

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used to flow with the tides and the fish that you could see in that grass. Trout and redfish on the bottom, you'd see the stone crabs and blue crabs and horseshoe crabs. It was just alive with life. A couple of times a year we would have a run of scallops. You think of scallops as shellfish you grow somewhere and it stays there. When I was growing up, scallops would travel in schools. There would be schools of scallops; they'd come in the bay and go out on the flats, and they would cover the whole place. Soon word got around there were scallops in the bay, and everyone would go pick up scallops. These little dickens would pinch you if they could. But it would take no time to get all the scallops you would want.

**"You could see because the water was so clear?"**

You could see them, and you had to run them down sometimes because of their snapping action. They could get away from you pretty good. They could pinch you too.

**"Could you see the snook around the bridge?"**

Well, around the bridge in the shadows they'd be stacked at certain times of the year. A lot of people from Arcadia would come here to fish and to get clams and oysters and scallops. They would get all they could use. There was an orphanage in Arcadia, and they kept them in seafood.

**"Did you have many commercial boats coming in?"**

Not in my lifetime. As soon as they got the bridge and the roads. That was one of the greatest things.

**"So they really weren't bringing anything into Buchan's Landing?"**

No, that was before my time. Before the bridges were built, Mr. Buchan got supplies out of Tampa by boat. The bay had been deeper than it is now, so the boats could get in all the way up to Buchan's Landing. That's the way I remember early Lemon Bay and the people that lived on it.

**"L.A., there's one school you haven't mentioned. It has a familiar ring to the name. I saw it being built when I came here. And I remember the man that turned the first spade. What a nice compliment to someone who really deserved it. Someone who spent so much time and gave so much time to the school board. They usually name those after people after they're gone. They seldom name after people who are still alive and kicking. What a tribute."**

I have several pet things as far as education. I don't have enough of it myself, but I want everyone to have all the opportunities they can. It was very dear to me - the vocation school. I want every child to be real proud of themselves and to work to their full potential. This is important. We had a junior and senior high. What happens when you have any kind of outing or you invite the public and the parents in a junior/senior high school? The seniors get all the notoriety. It makes the junior feel like a second class citizen so we wanted a junior high school, and that's the one that's named after me. It's a beautiful school. I think it's the prettiest junior high school ever built in the state of Florida.



L.A. Ainger, 3rd from left, at the ground breaking for the L.A. Ainger Middle School in Rotonda West.

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## The Passing of A Pioneer

### Annette Dignam ... One Classy Lady

By Sharyn Lonsdale

It's fair to say that if you've lived in Englewood long enough, you knew or at least met Annette Dignam. She may have chaired a fundraiser, or attended your fundraiser, taught you or your kids in school, had lunch with you at the Elks or chatted with you at one of her grandchildren's graduations, games and school plays.

It's also fair to say that the Dignams are not only Englewood pioneers, but Englewood "royalty" and nobody represented Englewood with more grace and class than Annette, who passed away after a long illness on June 13 at 78.

"Laverne" Annette was born in Huntsville, Alabama and met Tom Dignam at Auburn University. They graduated in 1966 and moved to Englewood so Tom could work at his dad, George's, business, Key Agency. David Dignam recalled how his mother taught second and third

grade in one room at the old Lemon Bay School, and how for a time, she was his teacher.

When Annette and a few other women realized that some children did not have the skills needed to succeed at school, they formed the Youth Enrichment Society and in the early 1970s, started a preschool at the old Englewood Methodist Church.

Annette stopped teaching full-time when her daughter Leslie was born, but continued to substitute and volunteered as Leslie's Girl Scout leader. Leslie Edwards recalled her mom using very creative methods to help her earn her badges, tying boxes of cereal to trees for the "search for food" badge.

When Tom Dignam established the Englewood Elks Lodge and became its first Exalted Ruler, Annette became active in the Does. When Tom became involved with the Hermitage Artist Retreat, Annette was by his side.

Annette's passion for education continued after she left teaching. She became involved in Manatee Community College, now State College of Florida, serving on the Committee for the school's Evening Under the Stars fundraiser, and on the Education Foundation Board for more than 20 years. She and Tom funded scholarships, two classrooms, and other education initiatives. The faculty conference room is named for her and there is also an SCF writer's residency in her name at the Hermitage.

Community, as important as it was to Annette, came second to family. David recalls beach buggy trips to Stump Pass, bonfires and outdoor activities, adding, "She always made sure that we experienced things that she didn't growing up; culture, music, and especially the library."

David and Leslie always lived close to their parents, and after college, their three came back to Englewood too. The only "bad" thing about growing up, Leslie said, was "I couldn't do anything wrong. Everyone knew my parents."

When their children had children, Annette was always there. When David's wife, Laurie, started working as a nurse, Annette and Tom watched Brandon and Ashley. Leslie said, "They watched Taylor every day until she went to Kindergarten, and then they picked her up from school every single day after that. Taylor has never ridden the bus." She said that Annette made sure Taylor did her homework. She put labels on items around the house to help her learn to read and taught her to swim.

"My favorite thing was going to the library when you could read to a dog, and Wednesday mornings at the library where we did crafts," recalls Taylor Edwards, 23. "Anything I wanted, Grandma made it happen."

David said that his mom was also known for her cars, the teal Barracuda with a stick shift that Tom taught her to drive on a then unpaved Beach Road, and a metallic "pea green" Cutlass.

She loved clothes and was known for her style but was also a bargain shopper. Whether at a big-ticket fundraiser or on the beach,



Annette always looked elegant. "She was just so classy all the time," recalled Leslie.

When Annette was diagnosed with Ataxia, a degenerative disease of the nervous system, she stayed active. She and Tom loved to travel, but as she became more reliant on a cane, then wheelchair, they opted for RV trips and cruising.

"The last few years were rough" said Leslie, who with Laurie Dignam and home health workers, helped care for her mom. "She was in good spirits until the last couple of months." She also insisted on maintaining her signature red hair color. "Even though she was ill, she would say, 'I think we should color my hair.'"

David and Leslie said it's been rough for their dad. Their parents were married for 57 years and Tom is recovering from a hip replacement and spine surgery. But just like he and Annette were always there for their kids, Tom's children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, are there for Tom.

"She taught me that family comes first, and family is everything," said Taylor. "She was one of the most beautiful people you could have ever met."

Meanwhile, David and Leslie continue their mom's legacy with their own decades of community service. "She was a very caring person with a passion for people," said David. "I think the community's a little better for all the things she did."

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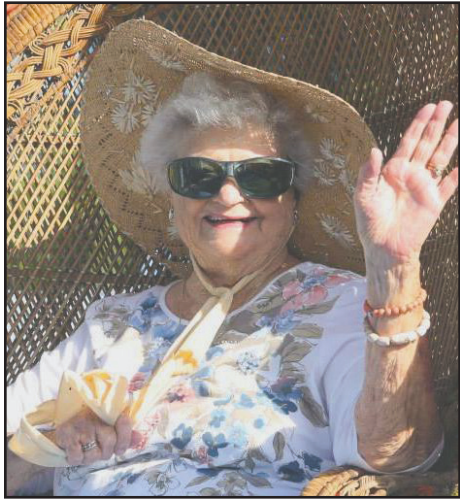


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# The Passing of A Pioneer

## Elsie Czerwinski ... Fourth Generation Englewoodian



Englewood lost a champion and pioneer when Elsie Anderson Czerwinski passed away at 94 on June 3, 2020. Elsie was the daughter of Stuart and Starr Anderson, owners of the Lemon Bay Fisheries and Seafood Market, and fourth-generation Englewoodian.

The Andersons owned property from Yale Street to Wentworth Street and a cabin in Colorado where they spent many summers. Elsie grew up on Lemon Bay. She and her late husband Joe were married in the Historic Green Street Church, raised their children Michael and Nancy on Wentworth, next door to her sister Evelyn Anderson Desmarais and her family. Evelyn's daughter Carolyn Pope said that when her mother died, "Aunt Elsie" took on the role of mom. "She was the matriarch of our family and she loved everyone."

"Uncles, aunts, both sets of

grandparents, we all lived close together," said Mike Czerwinski from Colorado, about 200 miles from that old log cabin, where he's lived since 2003. He remembers fishing with his family and throwing mullet nets while his mom "supervised." Mike said that church and Sunday school were important to Elsie, but so were birthdays, where there would be three-decker cakes and occasionally, fireworks.

"She was well respected and always pitched in and helped," said Mike. When Englewood needed a teacher, Elsie stepped up and when nobody volunteered to lead Mike's Cub Scout Troop, Elsie took that on as well. Because she was such an experienced cook, she and Joe would volunteer at the food booth at festivals at Englewood Elementary School.

Mike and Carolyn both said that Elsie had an extraordinary memory and could tell stories about almost everyone she met and everything she did in Englewood, from the time she was a child. "She loved the beauty of the town and the community," said Carolyn, who regrets that her aunt never wrote down or recorded her stories.

Her son-in-law Michael Looney, who was married to Nancy Czerwinski Looney from 1983 to her death in 2012, agreed, "She remembered everything. She knew the town and she loved it." He said that Elsie told him about the days when she rode a horse to the beach

with a pair of old binoculars to look for enemy submarines during World War II. "She made the best Key Lime Pie I've ever had and of course she knew how to cook seafood," recalled Looney, who remained close to Elsie until her death.

But even though she "knew everything about everyone," Carolyn said, "I never once heard her say one bad word about one soul on this good earth, ever." Mike Czerwinski said that went both ways. "I don't know of anyone who ever said a bad word about mom."

"She set the example for all of us on how to live," said Carolyn. "She never forgot a birthday or holiday. We always received something from Aunt Elsie."

Michael Looney said that his mother-in-law instantly made him feel like a member of the family. "She was like a mom to me. My mom and her became friends. She had the



biggest heart in the world."

Mike Czerwinski, now 70, said it was his mother's heart and her faith that got her through the tragedy in her life, especially the death of her daughter. "She believed in God. She was singing psalms and reading the Bible the day before she passed."

However, it might be this memory from Michael Looney that best describes the spirit of Elsie Czerwinski. "When we were in Colorado in 1991, she had a major heart attack", he said. "The next morning she's laying in the hospital in intensive care on a ventilator and she's trying to talk and I'm finally able to make out what she's saying ... 'There's lasagna in the freezer and clean towels in the cupboard.' What does that say about her? I will never forget that."



*Elsie Czerwinski discusses Englewood History at Englewood Elementary.*






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# Geraldine Scott Collects Post Cards

By Sharyn Lonsdale

Geraldine Scott has been collecting postcards of her adopted home of Englewood for the past 20 years. Scott moved to Englewood from New York in 1984. She met her husband Bob at Saint Raphael's Church. Bob, a charter member of the Englewood Moose Club, is a bit of a pioneer himself, calling this town home for more than 50 years. Geraldine and Bob got married 30 years ago and raised a blended family of five children, all who graduated from Lemon Bay High School.

Scott started her quest for cards by scouring antique stores from Dearborn Street to Punta Gorda and Sarasota. Her friend Les Apathy helped her along by giving her postcards from the Sea Star Motel that his parents owned at one time, and Bart Tracy and others have given her more current cards. But Scott, 76, had better luck finding the vintage cards on eBay, where she's picked up about 200 cards from \$1 to as much as \$20. Several declare the scenic wonders of "Punta Gorda Beach on Englewood Beach."

"I especially like cards with words on them, messages,"

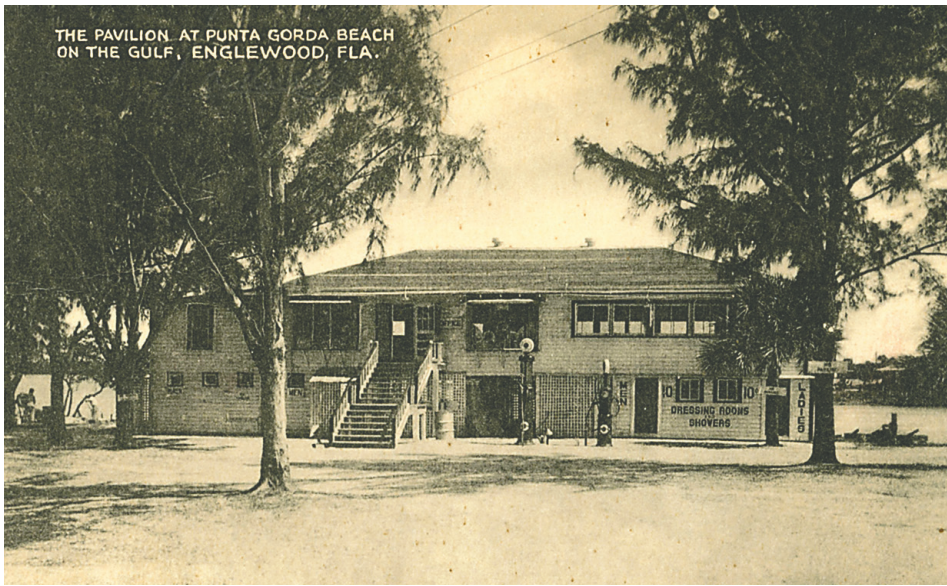
said Scott. Her cards and books have been on display at Elsie Quirk Public Library and at the Englewood Museum and said "when Betty Nugent went through them, she knew some of the people's names." One postcard featured the Dignam family, another Realtor Jack Stanford. When Scott started sharing the images on the "Remember in Englewood, When? Facebook page, other members helped her identify people on the postcards.

A self-proclaimed "collector," Scott is always on the lookout for Occupied Japan miniatures, dollhouse furniture and dollhouses (she has 58) as well as vintage swizzle sticks. When asked if he collects anything, Bob replies, "dust."

When she's not collecting, Scott says she and Bob are looking forward to being able to go back to the drum circle, Moose and Elks. Meanwhile, if you have Englewood postcards or swizzle sticks, you can reach Scott at [geraldine@collector.org](mailto:geraldine@collector.org).



*"1. Captain's Club Restaurant, 2. White Elephant Marina, 3. Charter Boats, AdaMarie, 4. Englewood Beach Lounge, 5. Englewood Beach Condominium Villas, 6. Gulf of Mexico Beaches, 7. Lemon Bay"*



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PAVILION, PUNTA GORDA BEACH ENGLEWOOD, FLORIDA

H. ASHLEY PHOTO

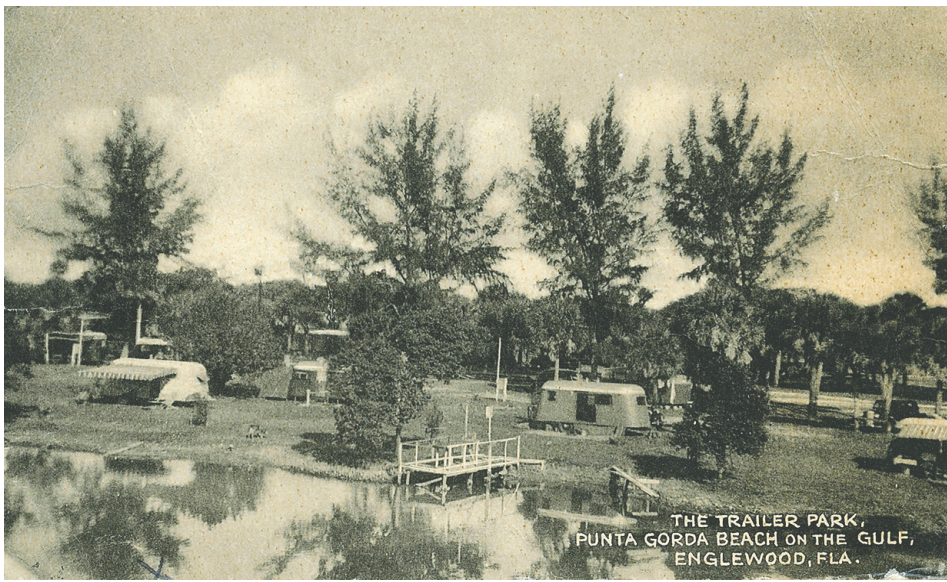


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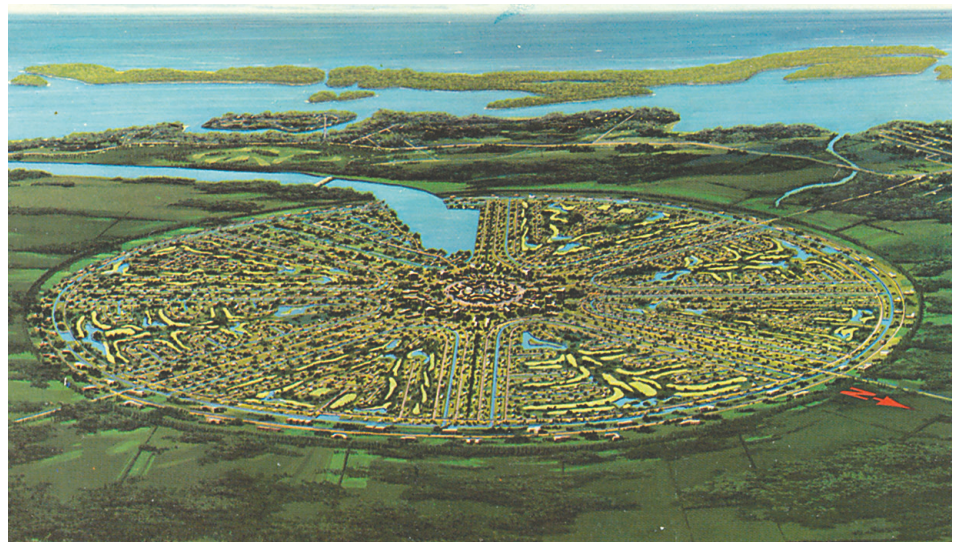
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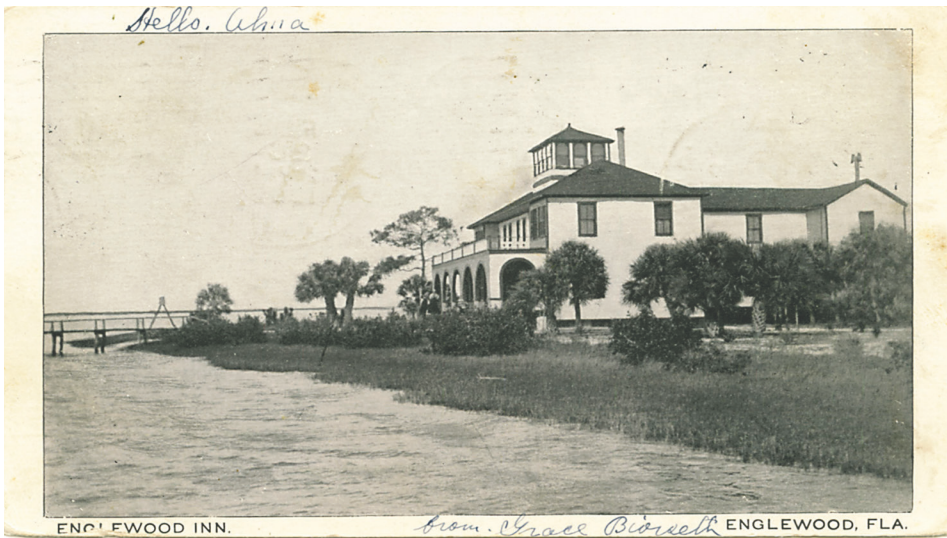
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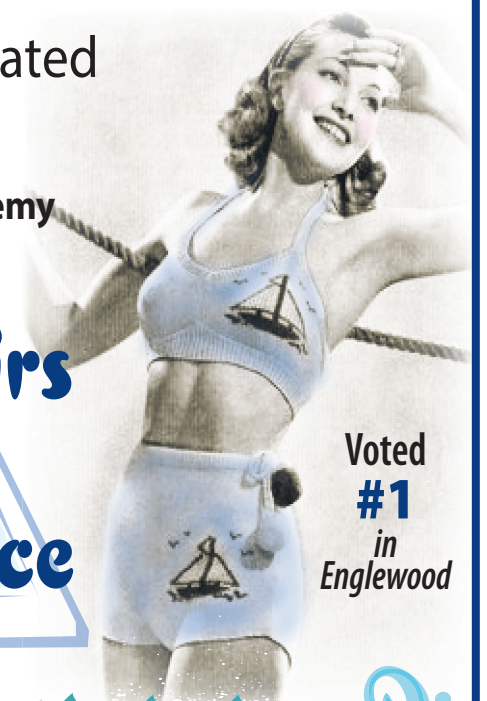
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