

EVERGLADES SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Dedicated to our Unique History

P O Box 46, Everglades City, FL, 34139

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www.evergladeshistorical.org

The **TOWN CRIER** newsletter is issued periodically to keep ESHP members and the public informed of our activities. We welcome news and feedback.

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Everglades Society for Historic Preservation, Inc. is a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation. The Society is concerned with the **preservation of all historic sites, structures, documents, artifacts, and memories** within the Everglades area.

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(renewable each January 1 except for Lifetime categories)

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TOWN CRIER

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Newsletter



NOVEMBER 2018
VOLUME 14, NUMBER 6

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Nov 11: Dedication of Veterans' Memorial

1pm, City Hall Lawn

see article below

Nov 16: Welcome-Back Historical Evening

5:30pm, Everglades Community Church

see article inside

Nov 17: Art-in-the-Glades

10am-1pm, McLeod Park, Everglades City

see article below

ESHP BOARD MEETINGS

The Board of Directors usually meets at 8:30 a.m. on the first Monday of the month. The next meeting will be held on **Monday, November 5**, in our office at City Hall. Members are welcome to attend .

MEMBERSHIP

We have 65 current members. If you join or renew now, your membership will be extended through 2019. And, if you become a Lifetime member, you'll never have to renew!

Just fill in the form on the back of this newsletter or use a debit/credit card at our website.

There were no new members since our last newsletter.

Veterans' Memorial

A plaque recognizing our local Veterans will be unveiled in front of City Hall on **Sunday, November 11**, at 1:00 p.m. during a brief ceremony. Everyone is invited.



BRICK-BY-BRICK

The Brick Campaign is back! We are again taking order for commemorative pavers to be placed on the sidewalk leading up to City Hall.

Application forms are available in City Hall at the water billing office or can be downloaded from our website. This campaign will end on February 11, right after Seafood Festival where we will be taking final orders.



ART-IN-THE-GLADES

Local history books, as well as arts & crafts, will be for sale on **Saturday, November 17**, from 10am to 1pm in McLeod Park during our first Art-in-the-Glades of this winter season.





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CollierMuseums.com



CollierMuseums.com

THE OLD BANK BUILDING

The Bank of Everglades first opened on July 9, 1923, in a small building near the river on the north side of Broadway (*photo above left*). The premises also housed the County Courthouse. A separate little wooden building was constructed on the south side of Broadway and served as the bank until the imposing two-story offices in the triangle were completed in 1926.

The architect of the Bank of Everglades Building was William O. Sparklin who also designed the Courthouse on the circle. He and Barron Collier were partners in the Sparklin-Gift Construction Company which had charge of both projects.

The first President of the Bank was Barron Collier himself but he was soon succeeded by his older brother C.M. Collier, affectionately called "Uncle Charlie" by those who worked for him in the Collier enterprises.

Head cashier in those days was Joseph M. Bryan who rose to be the first President not a member of the Collier family before he moved on in 1943. Another employee was Mildred Cooke who came to Everglades in 1944 when she was 21 years old and worked at the bank until she retired in 1958 as Vice-President. She later made history as the first (and, so far, only) female Mayor of Everglades City from 1973 to 1975.

Times were changing. In 1949 there was competition when the Bank of Naples opened to serve that growing area. And, in 1959 the County voted to move the seat to East Naples which finally happened in 1962. The Bank of Everglades relocated to Immokalee and changed its name in 1965 to Bank of Immokalee.

In the early 1970s the Bank Building was bought by swimming coach Buck Dawson who said in an interview with *Sports Illustrated* (April 29, 1974):

I'm going to make that bank into a tourist attraction. It'll include a Presidential Fishing Hall of Fame and the world's largest collection of stuffed fish.

It did not happen and by 1979 the Bank Building housed the new *Everglades Echo* newspaper and its publisher/editor Rusty Rupsis. It was also a boarding house.

The present owner, Robert Flick, bought the building in 1996 with his daughter Patricia who applied in 1999 to have it listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The old Bank was a Bed & Breakfast with spa operated by Claudia Davenport and Cheryl Henderson for a number of years and then was taken over by Patty Bowen, part owner of the Rod & Gun Club, who furnished the rooms with antiques.

Unfortunately, that enterprise was short-lived and the building has been vacant during recent years. It was considered by the County as an extension of the Museum but the cost of refurbishment was a deterrent.

What will become of this important edifice in our history?

FIRST EVENT OF THE WINTER

The Old Bank Building is the focus of our **Welcome-Back Historical Evening on Friday, November 16**, when we review the past and plan for the future. We hope to hear from local people who remember when the Bank, the first in Collier County, had money in its vault and later when it was a boarding house.

Our event takes place at 5:30pm in the Jinkins Fellowship Hall behind Everglades Community Church. It is free to the public but reservations are requested. To book your places, email us on ESH@hotmail.com or phone Marya at (239) 695-2905. You can download a poster from our website www.evergladeshistorical.org.



photo courtesy Florida State Archives

Rod & Gun Exhibit

Our oldest landmark in Everglades City is the Rod & Gun Club which started out in the 1870s as the home of early settler William Smith Allen who farmed along the river bank.

He sold out to the Storter family in 1889 so that he could retire to Key West and George Storter, Jr, became the leading citizen in this remote community, establishing a trading post with Post Office and even taking in guests for fishing and hunting in his enlarged house.

Eventually, in 1922, Storter was bought out by Barron Collier who refurbished the old home and renamed it the Rod & Gun Club. Since then, it has hosted many famous visitors and become widely known.

The Museum of the Everglades is displaying old photos and memorabilia featuring the Rod & Gun in the Pauline Reeves Gallery during the next few months. The Museum is open from 9am to 4pm, Monday through Saturday. There is no charge but donations are welcome. For info, call (239) 695-0008.

News from the Historical Library

If you still have old books, newspapers, or photos for the Historical Library on the second floor in City Hall (where they have been safe from flooding), phone Marya at (239) 696-2905.