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Venice in Sarasota County, Florida — The American South (South Atlantic)

Woodmere

Inscription. • Side 1

The Manasota Land and Timber Company purchased over 80,000 acres of land and the Gulf Coast Railway Company from Southern Investment Company of Baltimore, Maryland, in 1917. This land was south of the Palmer properties in Venice and bordered Lemon Bay. In view of the estimated quarter million feet of long-leaf yellow pine timber on the land, the company began negotiations for the construction of a timber mill.

Manasota Land and Timber transferred 250 acres to the Manasota Lumber Company in 1918 for a sawmill and company town. This land was on both sides of today's SR 776, between 1 and $1 \frac{1}{2}$ miles south of US 41. The company hired Herman C. Kluge to supervise the construction of a four-story coal-fired



1. Woodmere Marker Side 1

sawmill. By 1919 the sawmill was in full operation. At its busiest, it employed an estimated 1500 workers.

Kluge also directed the laying of narrow gauge railroad tracks through the woods, over which steam engines pulled flat cars of logs to the mill. Finished lumber was then shipped via the Gulf Coast Railway to Venice, where it was transferred to the Seaboard Air Line Railway for points north.



(Continued on other side)

Side 2

(Continued from other side) In the company town surrounding the mill, substantial houses were provided for supervisory personnel. Others, including larger dormitories for single men, were built for the predominately black workers. A commissary, run for awhile by C.G. Strohmyer, then Floyd Zeigler, provided staple foods, ice, and fresh meat that came from cattle and chickens kept in the area. A large frame building served as dining hall, recreation center, movie theater, and place for religious services. Elementary school classes were also offered.

Photographed By Tim Fillmon, July 8, 2020 2. Woodmere Marker Side 2

After bootlegged liquor contributed to undesirable fights among the workers, the company installed a fence around the mill compound. No one could enter or leave after 9 p.m. except those taking the train to Sarasota on Saturday night.

In 1922 the Manasota Lumber Company became the Woodmere Lumber Company and the company town became known as Woodmere. By 1923 much of the area's timber had been cleared and lumber production diminished. Machinery was sold or moved. Some the better houses were moved to Siesta and Casey Keys, Englewood, and Venice. A fire in 1930 destroyed the mill. Little remains today of the once-vibrant company town of Woodmere.

Erected by Sarasota Historical Commission.

Topics. This historical marker is listed in these topic lists: Horticulture & Forestry • Settlements & Settlers. A significant historical year for this entry is 1917.

Location. 27° 2.146′ N, 82° 23.844′ W. Marker is in Venice, Florida, in Sarasota County. Marker is at the intersection of Englewood Road (Florida Route 776) and Rutgers Road, on the right when traveling north on Englewood Road. Touch for map. Marker is at or near this postal address: 5115 Englewood Road, Venice FL 34293, United States of America. Touch for directions.

Other nearby markers. At least 8 other markers are within 6 miles of this marker, measured as the crow flies. Joseph Daniel Anderson (approx. 2 miles away); The Circus in Venice



Photographed By Tim Fillmon, July 8, 2020 3. Woodmere Marker and surrounding area.

(approx. 3.8 miles away); Venice Army Air Base (approx. 4 miles away); 337th Army Air Field Base (approx. 4 miles away); Edgewood (approx. 4.7 miles away); Venezia Park (approx. 5 miles away); Colonel George Kumpe Bridge (approx. 5.1 miles away); Fred Albee Municipal Airport (approx. 5.1 miles away). Touch for a list and map of all markers in Venice.

Credits. This page was last revised on September 20, 2020. It was originally submitted on September 20, 2020, by

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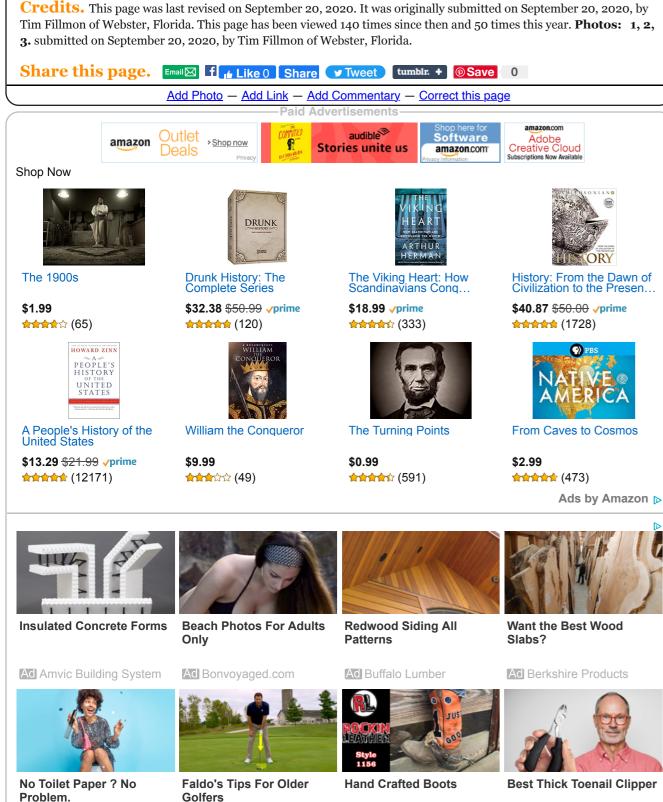




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