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

Laurel Turpentine Company / Blackburn Sawmill Quarters

Inscription. ⓘ

Laurel Turpentine Company

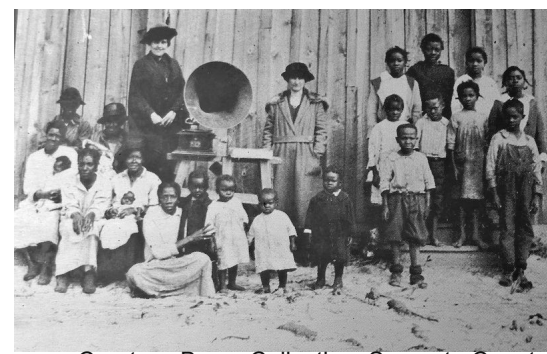
As the turpentine industry spread through southwest Florida, landowners leased turpentine rights to contractors who hired operators for camps that would harvest gum from thousands of acres of pine woods. The Laurel Turpentine Company was located on the east side of the Seaboard Air Line Railway to the north and south of present-day Laurel Road. Workers' quarters included a commissary, a cemetery and a building that served the Mt. Zion Baptist Church on weekends and elementary school students and community groups during the week.

Blackburn Sawmill Quarters

North of the turpentine complex, the J. Ray Arnold Lumber Company set up a sawmill in the mid-1920s for the Palmer family's Sarasota-Venice Company. The company had a web of rails that reached into the pine woods to haul rough-sawn timber for finer cutting. The sawmill quarters contained houses and a commissary for workers and their families.

To the west across the tracks were the Blackburn quarters. Built by Spencer Blackburn, the houses were available for rent by workers in the local turpentine, lumber and agricultural industries.

Topics. This historical marker is listed in these topic lists: [African Americans](#) • [Horticulture & Forestry](#) • [Industry & Commerce](#) • [Settlements & Settlers](#).



Courtesy Borza Collection, Sarasota County History Center

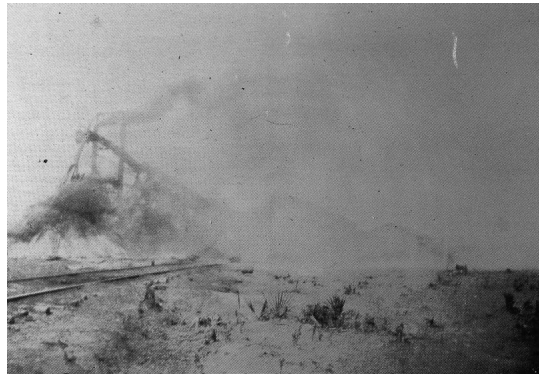
2. Marker detail: Laurel "Colored" School, 1922

Turpentine / Venice Ice House (approx. 1.3 miles away); **Knight Memorial/Area First Cemetery** (approx. 1.4 miles away); **History of Nokomis / Fred Albee** (approx. 1½ miles away); **Nokomis School** (approx. 1½ miles away). [Touch for a list and map](#) of all markers in Nokomis.

More about this marker. Marker is a large laser-printed metal plaque, mounted horizontally on a waist-high post.

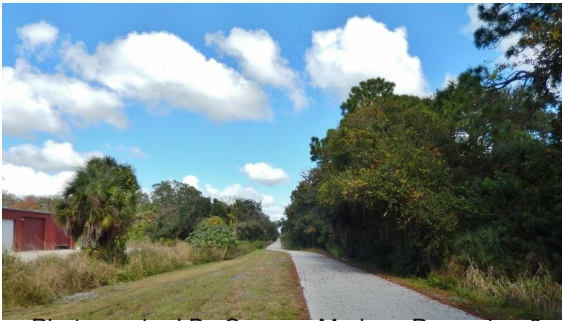
Related markers. Click here for a [list of markers](#) that are related to this marker. Laurel Turpentine Industry

Also see . . . [Turpentine From Pine Woods](#). Little remains of an industry that once spread throughout much of the pine woods of Sarasota County. The harvesting of gum from trees for the purpose of distilling it into turpentine had moved into Florida as the forests of Georgia became exhausted. In the first two decades of the last century, R.S. Hall and George McCloud, in separate operations, leased thousands of acres of pine forest from Alligator Creek south of Venice to Cow Pen Slough east of Bee Ridge. The labor force in the turpentine camps was almost exclusively African American, and many of the workers followed the industry into this region from Georgia and north Florida. *(Submitted on October 15, 2018, by Cosmos Mariner of Cape Canaveral, Florida.)*



Courtesy Venice Archives and Area Historical Collection

3. Marker detail: Arnold Sawmill



Photographed By Cosmos Mariner, December 3, 2014

4. Venice-to-Sarasota Legacy Rail Trail (wide view; looking north from marker)

Credits. This page was last revised on October 15, 2018. It was originally submitted on October 15, 2018, by Cosmos Mariner of Cape Canaveral, Florida. This page has been viewed 175 times since then and 53 times this year. **Photos:** **1, 2, 3, 4,** submitted on October 15, 2018, by Cosmos Mariner of Cape Canaveral, Florida. • Andrew Ruppenstein was the editor who published this page.

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