



Facts: Pocono Trail Preserve, 189 Pocono Trail E. , Nokomis FL

ESLPP 2002

<https://www.scgov.net/government/parks-recreation-and-natural-resources/things-to-know/land-acquisition-programs>

8.2 acres

Dog Friendly

First post office: Alfred Wrede 1917

Nokomis: Character in *Song of Hiawatha*, Longfellow

Dr. Fred Albee, orthopedic surgeon

bought Nokomis land from Mrs. Bertha Palmer, subdivided Nokomis,

Lived on Point o Palms

Recruited and hired John Nolan to design Venice

Bought acreage where Venice stands, built first bank: Venice-Nokomis Bank in Nokomis

with Ellis Nash built Pollyanna Inn, 35 rooms, 1922

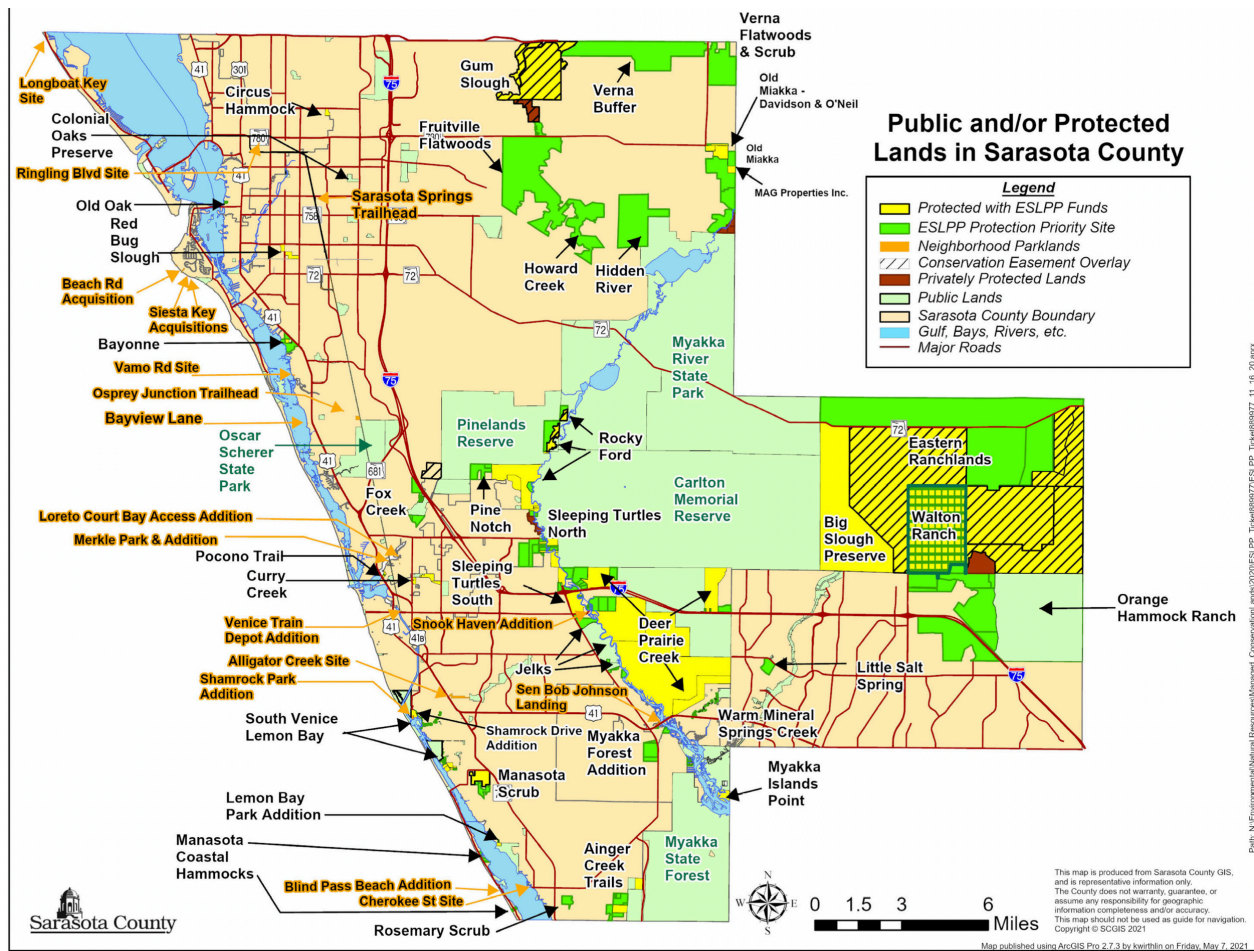
(AKA Hotel Villa Nokomis)

Burned in 1971 as a training exercise

Link to Dr. Fred Albee: <https://www.venicemuseum.org/permanent-exhibits/dr-fred-h-albee/>

Link to Shakett Creek Estuary Marker marker, Jesse Knight:

<https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=125018>



From a Coastal Indian Village to a Resort Hotel

Representative shell hammer tool used during the Manasota Period.

This site has been occupied by humans for more than 2,000 years. Some of the earliest were indigenous people associated with the prehistoric Manasota Culture (500 BC-850 AD). The Manasota Culture evolved from the earlier Archaic Period (3,000-8,000 years ago) and the Paleo-Indians who arrived in Florida 10,000-13,000 years ago. The Manasota were hunter-gatherers fully adapted to life along the coast. Their diet consisted largely of fish, shellfish, wild game and edible native plants. Ancient shell mounds, or "middens," comprised mainly of discarded oyster shells and animal bones, are found in the area and are evidence of their past civilization.

Following the Manasota Period, various groups of Native Americans, including the Calusa and the Seminole Indians, called this area home. But with the invasion of 17th-century Spanish explorers into Florida and the influx of 19th-century pioneer settlers, these native people were eventually displaced.

As new settlers arrived, they discovered local waterways teeming with fish and shellfish. The region's palmetto prairies, hardwood forests and pine savannahs had plentiful deer, turkey and other wild game. The pine forests also provided a wealth of resources for early settlers, including lumber, turpentine and resins, used in the naval stores industry during the late 1800s. In fact, a convict labor turpentine camp was located on this site during that period.

In 1922, one of our most famous citizens, world-renowned bone surgeon Dr. Fred Albee, built a resort hotel on this site, known as the "Pollyanna Inn." The white stucco Mediterranean-style hotel and golf course welcomed visitors for many years. But even that grand hotel could not withstand the test of time. Today, only forest occupies the site where this majestic resort once stood. Though the Pollyanna Inn is gone, Dr. Albee's legacy lives on. He was founder and president of the Venice-Nokomis Bank, built in 1922. The old bank building still stands at the southeast corner of U.S. 41 and Pocono Trail today.

Dr. Fred Albee 1876-1945 (photo courtesy Venice Museum and Archives)

Pollyanna Inn circa 1925 (photo courtesy Venice Museum and Archives)

Shakett Creek

The naming of Shakett Creek dates back to the arrival of Jesse Knight's family to Nokomis in the late 1860s. They traveled overland from northeast of Tampa with covered wagons, buggies and mounted horses. When the group reached a sizable creek at the head of Dona Bay, the mules pulling the lead buggy refused to enter the water. To encourage them to move, one of Knight's sons shook a dried deer hide. The resulting cracking sound so startled the animals, they plunged into the creek, upsetting several vehicles. The resulting name, "Shake-it" Creek, has survived with only a spelling change.



Jesse and Caroline Knight
photos courtesy Sarasota County History Center



Knight Family, circa 1910

Estuary, "the cradle of the ocean"

An estuary is a semi-enclosed area, such as a bay or lagoon, where fresh water meets and mixes with salt water. An estuary is a dynamic system with constantly changing tides and temperatures where waters are alternately salty and fresh.

Survival of plants and animals in estuaries requires special adaptations. The ebb and flow of tides may leave some animals and plants, such as oysters and seagrasses, temporarily exposed to air.

Life in an estuary is naturally adapted to withstand ranges in salinity, tides, sunlight and temperatures. They must, however, have a balanced flow of fresh and salt water. This balance can be upset if too much fresh water enters the estuary.

Estuaries, considered "the cradle of the ocean" are home to more than 95% of Florida's recreational and commercial juvenile fish, crustaceans and shellfish.



Salt Marsh

Link to Knight Memorial, Area First Cemetery (side 1 and 2)
<https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=146124>

Knight Memorial

The original settlers of the area were Jesse and Rebecca Knight who came to the Venice area in 1868 with their children and 300 head of cattle. The Knight family settled south of Shakett Creek and north of this marker. Their cattle grazed freely throughout the entire region. As more settlers to the area a school was needed and in 1897 Jesse Knight donated a one acre school site. The school yard was located 1/8th of a mile east of this marker. The school served as this area's church on Sundays. Many of the early sermons were delivered by Knight, an unordained



Methodist Preacher.



As the community grew, Knight saw the need for a separate church building and on October 22nd, 1903, he donated 1/2 acre for a Methodist Episcopal Church. The church, a wood frame structure, was located east of this cemetery. Knight donated the one acre cemetery plot to the church. While owned by Knight, this site had served as a cemetery since the 1880's, in the area then known as Venice. In 1904, the cemetery was

known as Venice Cemetery and the church was known as Knight's Chapel. The original trustees of both the church and cemetery were Jesse Knight, Alfred Wrede and Charles Curry.

Link to History of Nokomis, Fred Albee
<https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=124898>

History of Nokomis

The early community between Dona Bay and Roberts Bay was part of a larger community known as Horse and Chaise. The name came from clumps of trees that reminded sailors of a horse and chaise (two-wheeled horse-drawn wagon). When a post office was opened in 1888, the name was changed first to Curryton and shortly thereafter to Venice. In 1915 the Sarasota-Venice Company, a Palmer corporation, platted the Town of Venice south of Hatchett Creek. The Palmer family lobbied the U.S. Postal Department to move the Venice post office from its original site south of Shakett Creek to the new subdivision. In spite of much opposition from the pioneer families, the post office, and with it the name of the community, was moved south. The original community then selected Nokomis for its new name.

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Venice Post Office
Courtesy Venice Archives and Area Historical Collection

Fred Albee

After visiting the Nokomis area in 1917, world-renowned orthopedic surgeon Dr. Fred Albee and his wife purchased land for development. They eventually purchased land north and south of Nokomis from the Sarasota-Venice Company and advertised the entire area as the "Pearl City" because of the proposed smooth white stucco on the Mediterranean-style buildings. Albee hired city planner John Nolen to design plans for Bay Point and Venice. Albee established the Venice-Nokomis Bank, built the Villa Nokomis along the Sarasota-Venice road and donated land for the Venice-Nokomis Methodist Church as well as the Nokomis School. Colonia Lane was named for Albee's hometown in New Jersey.



Villa Nokomis
Courtesy Sarasota County History Center

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2. Marker detail: Venice Post Office

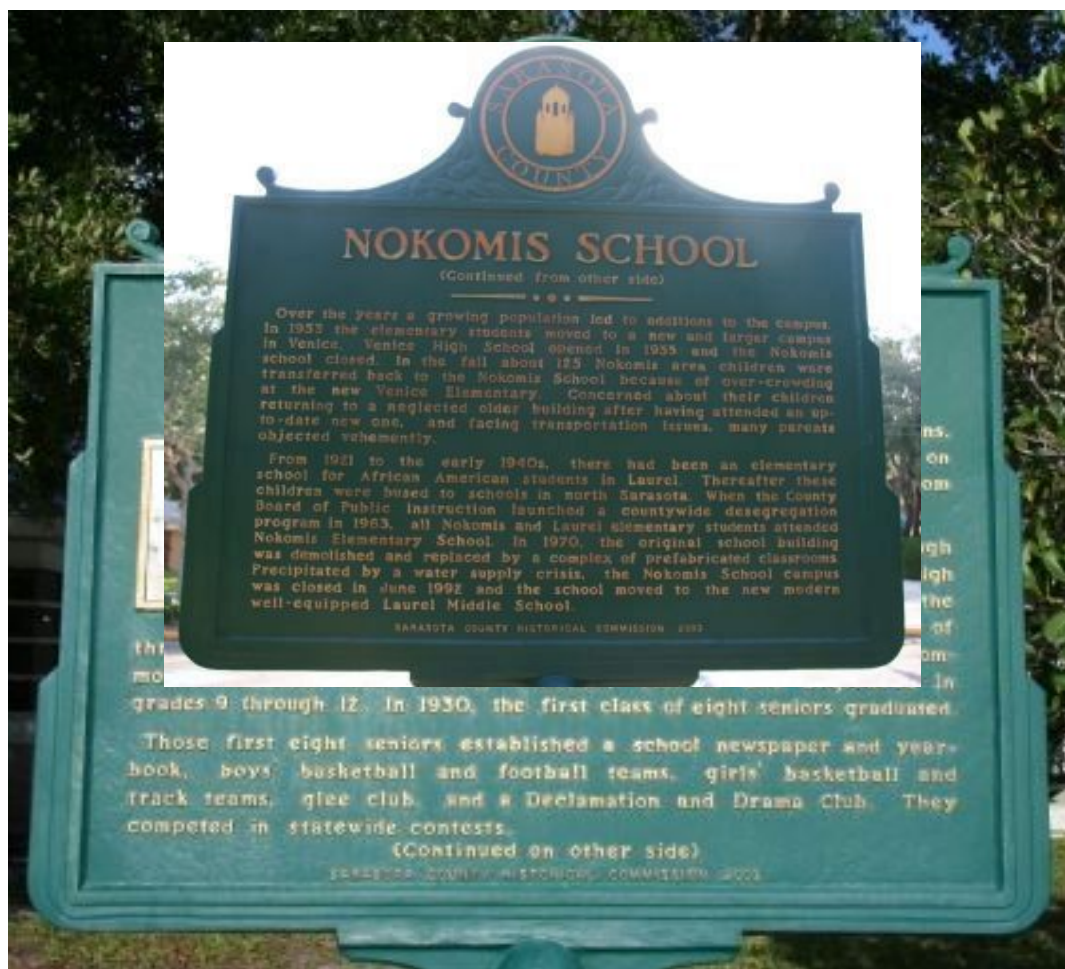
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Link to Nokomis School: <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=38372>

One of the area's oldest educational institutions, the Nokomis School, was built in 1924 on Nippino Trail. The photo shows the two-room Mediterranean Revival style school.

Originally, children in grades one through eight attended the school. A bus carried high school students to the only high school in the county, Sarasota High. In 1927, two wings of three classrooms each were added to the original structure to accommodate students from Laurel, Nokomis, Venice, and Englewood in grades 9 through 12. In 1930, the first class of eight seniors graduated.

Those first eight seniors established a school newspaper and yearbook, boys' basketball and football teams, glee club, and a Declamation and Drama Club. They competed in statewide contests.



Nokomis School side 2

Over the years a growing population led to additions to the campus. In 1953 the elementary students moved to a new and larger campus in Venice. Venice High School opened in 1955 and the Nokomis school closed. In the fall about 125 Nokomis area children were transferred back to the Nokomis School because of over-crowding at the new Venice Elementary. Concerned about their children returning to a neglected older building after having attended an up-to-date new one, and facing transportation issues, many parents objected vehemently.

From 1921 to the early 1940s, there had been an elementary school for African American students in Laurel. Thereafter these children were bused to schools in north Sarasota. When the County Board of Public Instruction launched a countywide desegregation program in 1963, all Nokomis and Laurel elementary students attended Nokomis Elementary School. In 1970, the original school building was demolished and replaced by a complex of prefabricated classrooms. Precipitated by a water supply crisis, the Nokomis School campus was closed in June 1992 and the school moved to the new modern well-equipped Laurel Middle School.

