

19.50R

95-03-e1

NOTICE OF ACTION ON PETITION TO  
DESIGNATE A HISTORIC RESOURCE

3764423

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that on April 6, 1995, the Lee County Historic Preservation Board voted to:

☒ Approve  
☐ Approve with conditions stated below  
☐ Deny

A Petition to Designate the individual historic resource described below as:

Community Church of Boca Grande (Amory Memorial Chapel)  
(HD Individual 95-03-01)

The designation is subject to the following conditions (if any):

NONE.

This historic resource is described as follows:

Address: 990 Belcher Road, Boca Grande, FL 33921

STRAP No.: 26-43-20-00-00009.0020

Legal Description: See Attachment A

A copy of the Resolution regarding this petition is attached and will be recorded in the public records of Lee County, Florida.

I HEREBY certify that a copy of this notice and the accompanying resolution has been furnished to the following persons or entities:

TIITF/DEP Division of Parks & Recreation -- Property Owner.  
Mary Gibbs--Director, Department of Community Development  
Bob Stewart--Director, Division of Codes & Building Services  
Charlie Green--Clerk of Court  
George Crawford--Director, DOT  
Ken Wilkinson--Property Appraiser

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Historic Preservation Board Chair

RESOLUTION DESIGNATING

HISTORIC RESOURCE (HD Individual 95-03-01)

WHEREAS, the Lee County Historic Preservation Board is authorized by Lee County Land Development Code (LDC), Chapter 22, Historic Preservation, to consider requests to designate archaeological resources and buildings, and structures and sites and districts as historic resources in order to preserve these resources from uncontrolled alteration or destruction; and

WHEREAS, a request has been filed to designate this resource located at 990 Belcher Road, Boca Grande, unincorporated Lee County, Florida, as a historic resource; and

WHEREAS, a designation report meeting the requirements of LDC Chapter 22, was filed with the Board on March 9, 1995; and

WHEREAS, Notice of Intent to designate the Community Church of Boca Grande (Amory Memorial Chapel) as a historic resource was mailed by certified mail, return receipt requested, on March 14, 1994, to TIITF/DEP Division of Parks & Recreation, c/o DEP Douglas Building, 3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, MS500, Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000. TIITF/DEP Division of Parks & Recreation is the property owner.

WHEREAS, Notice of Intent to designate was advertised on March 30, 1995 for a public hearing on April 6, 1995.

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that the Community Church of Boca Grande meets the criteria for designation set forth in LDC Chapter 22.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEE COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD THAT:

1. The Lee County Historic Preservation Board approves the petition to designate, as a historic resource, the Community Church of Boca Grande -- HD Individual 95-03-01.
2. All provisions of the Lee County Land Development Code, Chapter 22, as may be hereafter amended, renumbered or replaced, applicable to a designated historic resource shall apply to this property (Community Church of Boca Grande -- HD Individual 95-03-01).
3. This Resolution shall be recorded in the Public Records of Lee County, Florida within twenty-five (25) days of the date the Resolution is signed, unless a timely appeal of the Board's decision as reflected in this Resolution, is filed.

Resolution Designating Historic Resource HD Individual 95-03-01

The foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Lee County Historic Preservation Board upon a motion by Kevin Williams, and seconded by Chauncey Goss, and, upon being put to a vote, the result was as follows:

Toni Ferrell	<u>AYE</u>
Chauncey Goss	<u>AYE</u>
Annette Guilfoyle	<u>ABSENT</u>
Linda Sickler Robinson	<u>ABSENT</u>
Eugene Schmitt	<u>AYE</u>
Mercedes Vergne	<u>ABSENT</u>
Kevin Williams	<u>AYE</u>

DULY PASSED AND ADOPTED this 6th day of April, A.D., 1995.

ATTEST:

LEE COUNTY  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD

BY:

Glenn H. Sajo  
As Clerk for the Lee County  
Historic Preservation Board

BY:

Toni Ferrell  
Chairman

DATE: 24 April 95

Approved as to form by:

David E. G. [Signature]  
County Attorney's Office

(g:\hpb\petition\bgchurch.pet)

95 APR 25 PM 4: 54

ATTACHMENT A

## LEGAL DESCRIPTION

for

26-43-20-00-00009.0020

0R2594 PG3105

Commence at the southeast corner of Lot 36, Unit No. 1, GOLDEN BEACH SUBDIVISION, as recorded in Plat Book 10, pages 60 and 61, public records of Lee County, Florida; thence North 89°52'00" East along south line of said Unit No. 1, 75 feet; thence South 00°08' East, 1543.18 feet; thence South 89°43'20" East, 1017.39 feet; thence South 00°16'40" West, 165 feet; thence North 89°43'20" West, 587.88 feet along said south line of County Road as accepted by the Board of County Commissioners, as recorded in their Minute Book No. 8, page 298, this being the Northwest corner of tract, as conveyed by the Boca Grande Hotel, Inc., to the Florida Power and Light Company, as described in Deed Book 273, pages 236 and 237, dated July 5, 1957; thence North 89°43'20" West 15 feet to a point; thence South 0°39' West 400 feet to point of beginning; continue thence South 0°39' West, 95 feet to a point; run thence North 89°43'20" West, 122 feet to a point; thence run North 0°39' West, 95 feet to a point; thence run South 89°43'20" East to the point of beginning. All lying and being Government Lot No. 3, Section 26, Township 43 South, Range 20 East, Lee County, Florida.



19.50R



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  X   Approve  
      Approve with conditions stated below  
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Charlie Green--Clerk of Court  
George Crawford--Director, DOT  
Ken Wilkinson--Property Appraiser

*John Lee Fennell*

Signature of Historic Preservation Board Chair

OR2594 PG3102

## RESOLUTION DESIGNATING

### HISTORIC RESOURCE (HD Individual 95-03-01)

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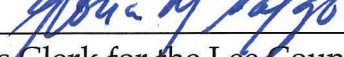
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Mercedes Vergne	<u>ABSENT</u>
Kevin Williams	<u>AYE</u>

DULY PASSED AND ADOPTED this 6th day of April, A.D., 1995.

ATTEST:

LEE COUNTY  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD

BY:   
As Clerk for the Lee County  
Historic Preservation Board

BY:   
Chairman

DATE: 24 April 95

Approved as to form by:

  
County Attorney's Office

(g:\hpb\petition\bgchurch.pet)

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0R2594 PG3105

## LEE COUNTY DESIGNATION REPORT

*This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts pursuant to Lee County Land Development Code, Chapter 22, Historic Preservation.*

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Community Church of Boca Grande (Amory Memorial Chapel)

Other Names/Site Number: Chapel, south end of Boca Grande / FSF 8LL00968

2. Location

Street & Number: 990 Belcher Road

City, Town, Zip: Boca Grande, FL 33921

STRAP Number: 26-43-20-00-00009.0020

3. Classification

				Number of Resources Within Property		
Ownership of Property		Category of Property		Contributing		Non-Contributing
<input type="checkbox"/>	private	<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)	1	building(s)	
X	public-local	X	district		sites	
<input type="checkbox"/>	public-state	<input type="checkbox"/>	site		structure	
<input type="checkbox"/>	public-federal	<input type="checkbox"/>	structure		objects	
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	object		Total	

4. Official Actions

Date of Petition for Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Date the Designation Report was filed with the Historic Preservation Board: March 9, 1995

Date of Historic Preservation Board's written resolution: \_\_\_\_\_

Resolution No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Designation is recorded: \_\_\_\_\_

Initiated by: Lee County

(NOTE: If initiated by owner or owner's agent, attach notarized letter of authorization.)

Other (as available): Variances, Special Exceptions or Rezonings granted pursuant to this application: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Designation

☒ Designated as an individual historic resource.

☐ Designated as an individual archaeological site.

☐ Designated as a historic district.

☐ Designated as an archaeological zone.

6. Individual Historic or Archaeological Buildings, Structures or Sites  
(pursuant to LDC Chapter 22)

- a. A physical description of the building, structure or site and its character-defining features, accompanied by photographs.

See attachment

Architectural Classification

Frame vernacular

Materials

foundations continuous: concrete block

walls concrete block with wooden gables

roof sheet metal

other bell tower: wooden

Photographs attached: ☒ yes ☐ no (black and white glossy, 3x5 or larger)

- b. Statement of Significance: A statement of the historical, cultural, architectural, archaeological or other significance of the building, structure or site as defined by the criteria for designation as established by LDC Chapter 22.

Applicable Criteria (check all that apply)

Section 22-204(a) ☒ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Section 22-204(b) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☒ 4 ☐ 5

Section 22-204(c) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Section 22-204(d) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Criteria consideration exceptions (check all that apply)

Section 22-204(e) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

Areas of Significance (enter categories)

cultural

Period of Significance

1950s - post WWII

Significant Dates

Post WWII

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Cultural Affiliation

African American

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Architect/Builder

Griffin Company - Builder

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Significant Person

Roger Amory - primary benefactor and president of the Johann Fust Community Library who spearheaded efforts to have the church built.

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State significance of property and justify criteria considerations and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Statement attached: ☒ yes ☐ no

- c. Description of the existing condition of the building, structure or site including any potential threats, or other circumstances that may affect the integrity of the building, structure or site.

The overall condition of the building is good. Vandalism has been a past and potential threat to the property.

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- d. A statement of rehabilitative or adaptive use proposals.

While currently vacant, future plans are underway to rehabilitate the community church. Removal of the later additions to the building are being considered for the first steps towards rehabilitation.

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- e. A location map showing relevant zoning and land use information.

Map attached: ☒ yes ☐ no

- f. Staff recommendation concerning the eligibility of the building, structure or site for designation pursuant to LDC Chapter 22 and a listing of those features of the building, structure or site which require specific historic preservation.

Staff recommends the Historic Preservation Board designate this property as HD (Individual) 95-03-01 Community Church of Boca Grande (Amory Memorial Chapel)

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- 6.a. A physical description of the building, structure or site and its character-defining features, accompanied by photographs.

#### ORIGINAL STRUCTURE

The original Community Church of Boca Grande (Amory Memorial Chapel) is a one-story concrete block frame vernacular structure built in the post WWII era of the 1950s at the southern end of Boca Grande. This building has a front-facing gable and sheet metal gable roof. Each exposed gable end is filled with horizontal wood siding and a rectangular vent near the peak in addition to finished wood rafters at the gable ends.

While most, if not all, of the openings to the church are currently boarded on the exterior to deter vandalism and protect the building and appear rectangular in shape, a view of the interior of the building provides a view of the actual shape of the original openings. All windows on the original structure appear to be 4/2 pointed sash wood frame windows.

At the western elevation which served as the entrance to the church, there is a small square wood bell-tower at the peak of the metal roof. The roof of the bell-tower appears to be covered with shingles and supports a cross at the top. Wood vertical siding fills the gable end above the concrete frame, including a rectangular vent near the peak (as described above). Two windows symmetrically border each side of the entrance doorway along the concrete block frame of the building.

Along the northern elevation, there are three window openings and a door near the northeast corner of the structure. These windows appear to be symmetrically placed in the concrete frame of the building.

The eastern elevation has two original windows and a small shed-roof wood addition (planned to be removed in a future project). In addition, another shed roof addition projects along the eastern elevation to the south, providing a door access to the structure from the rear of the building.

Along the southern elevation, it appears that originally there were also three symmetrically placed windows along the concrete frame, part of which are now covered by the addition. Sometime between the 1960s and '70s, the cinder block and wood addition was constructed on the south side and acted as a kitchen. (Removal of this addition is also planned in a future project.)

#### ADDITIONS

##### Southern (Side):

The southern addition extends the eastern elevation and covers nearly one-third of the southern elevation. Perhaps built to match in some ways the existing building, concrete block frame is used approximately two-thirds above the foundation. Vertical wood siding fills the void between the concrete blocks and the shed roof which covers the addition. Two window openings are found on the eastern elevation in a symmetrical manner. Two window openings also appear on the southern elevation of this addition. A door access is found on the eastern elevation near its conjunction with the main building.

##### Eastern (Rear):

The small eastern addition consists of a shingle shed roof and wood horizontal siding. There is a window on the east and two doors, one on the north and one on the south end. This addition served as a bathroom facility and may have been added on soon after the church was originally built. Two windows on the original building flank this addition.



## 6.b. Statement of Significance

### BOCA GRANDE

The community of Boca Grande, located on Gasparilla Island, has an early history linked to the phosphate industry. In the 1880s when phosphate rock was discovered on the banks of the Peace River, it was barged down river to Boca Grande and loaded onto schooners. This led to the placement of a lighthouse in 1890 on the southern tip of Gasparilla Island. As early as January of 1897, Albert Gilchrist (later governor of Florida in 1909) filed a plat in the south central part of Gasparilla Island.

Charlotte Harbor and Northern Railroad was completed in 1907 by the American Agricultural Chemical Company in order to more efficiently transport the phosphate to the port. Later, it was known as the Seaboard Coastline Railroad.

By 1909, the Gasparilla Inn, a resort hotel, was built. Already famous to sportsmen for tarpon fishing, by the 1920s, game fishing and tourism led to much of the development of Boca Grande during that time. An army of temporary residents in Boca Grande developed a demand for inexpensive labor. And it is within Boca Grande that a small Black community first developed.

Generally, that area beginning at the corner of First Street and Palm Avenue moving east to Tarpon Avenue (as it would logically extend) and north to Waterway Avenue, west to Palm Avenue, and south to the corner of First Street and Palm Avenue is where most Blacks in Boca Grande resided. This community consisted of blue-collar laborers serving as servants, maids, gardeners, and other tourist-related employment as well as providing a labor force for the railway.

During the late 1950s, the real estate company owned most of the property where the Black community on Boca Grande was located as described above. Demolition of residences and structures which had housed the Black community was undertaken in order for the owning real estate company to prepare for sale and development of the land.

### COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOCA GRANDE (AMORY MEMORIAL CHAPEL)

Mr. George Weymouth realized that these people would have no place to live and purchased land at the southern end of the island and developed what became known as "Tarpon Pass Estates." In 1959, Mr. Roger Amory asked Tarpon Pass Estates project manager, Mr. Homer Addison, to purchase land in the vicinity of the development in order that the Baptist Church located downtown could be moved to a location nearer the congregation. Although Mr. Addison purchased land in the vicinity of the development for movement of the church, the church was demolished at its downtown site.

Mr. Amory moved forward through an arrangement with Griffin Company to build a shell of a community church 50 feet x 24 feet with a concrete floor, concrete block, and a metal roof at his own expense. Mr. Amory hoped that this new building would be furnished and maintained by the Methodist and Baptist congregations. He then transferred ownership to the Johann Fust Community Library (of which he was the primary benefactor and President) to rent the new structure to the congregation for \$1 per year.

During the 1960s and '70s, the eastern and southern additions appear to have been added to the church building and its use as a community church continued. Unfortunately, the Tarpon Pass Estates development was constructed on low land which is prone to flooding. The "No Name Storm" of 1982 acted as a catalyst to the eviction of residents in 1983 from the Tarpon Pass Estates Development.

By 1986, the Gasparilla Island Community Improvement Association had been deeded the property which had comprised the Tarpon Pass Estates as well as the church with the intent that these properties be given to the State of Florida to augment their adjacently located park. When the deed for the church was formally presented to

the State, windows and doors of the church structure were boarded in order to discourage vandalism and transient lodging.

No structures remain from the Tarpon Pass Estates Development, leaving the Community Church the last vestige of African American heritage in Boca Grande. As such, it has significance as an integral part of our heritage not only as a physical reminder of Boca Grande's past, but also as a monument to the Black minority community who played an important role in that past.

Plans are under consideration for the rehabilitation of the church. In 1994, the State conducted an asbestos survey on the church and found the building free of asbestos. In addition, as noted before, the additions on the east and south sides of the church are planned to be removed. As always, any item designated under Lee County Land Development Code, Chapter 22, Historic Preservation will be subject to any and all required reviews and approvals.

HD (Individual) 95-03-01  
COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOCA GRANDE (Amory Chapel)  
STRAP No. 26-43-20-00-00009.0020



Western (front) elevation of the church



Detail of wood front gable

HD (Individual) 95-03-01  
COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOCA GRANDE (Amory Chapel)  
STRAP No. 26-43-20-00-00009.0020



Close-up of Bell Tower



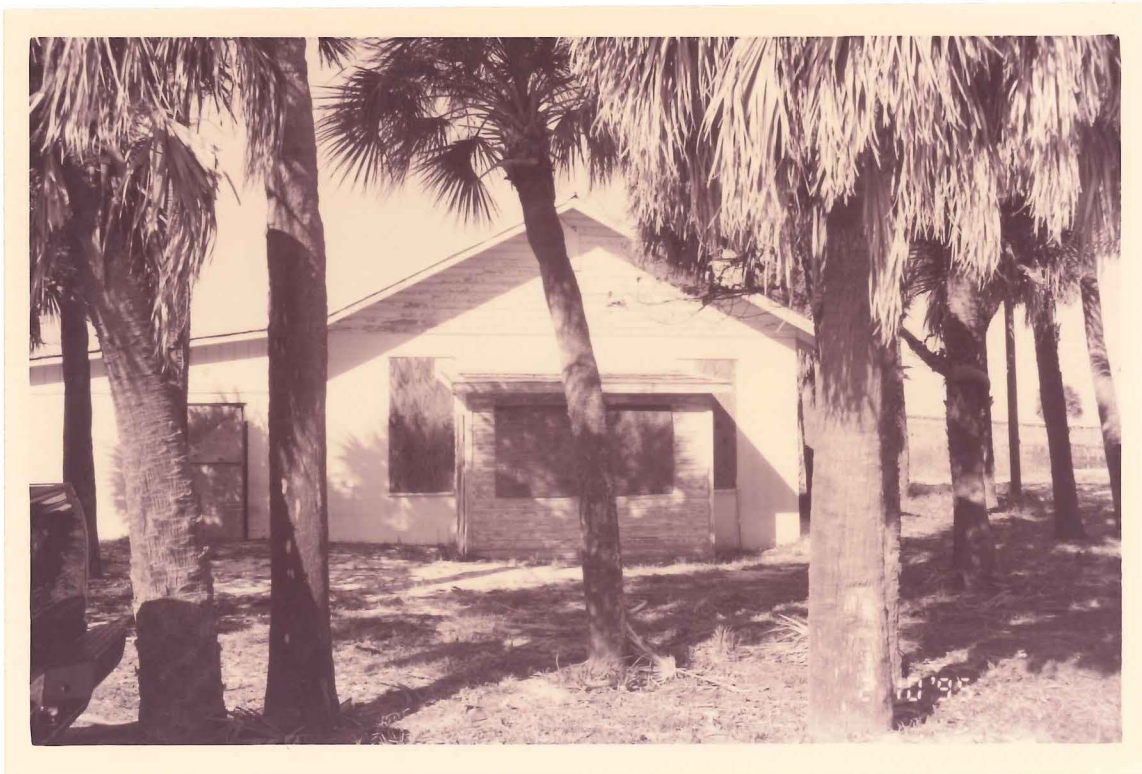
Southwestern elevation, showing southern addition



HD (Individual) 95-03-01  
COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOCA GRANDE (Amory Chapel)  
STRAP No. 26-43-20-00-00009.0020



**Western elevation of southern addition**



**Eastern (rear) elevation, showing small shed addition**



HD (Individual) 95-03-01  
COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOCA GRANDE (Amory Chapel)  
STRAP No. 26-43-20-00-00009.0020



Northeastern elevation, showing rear and side

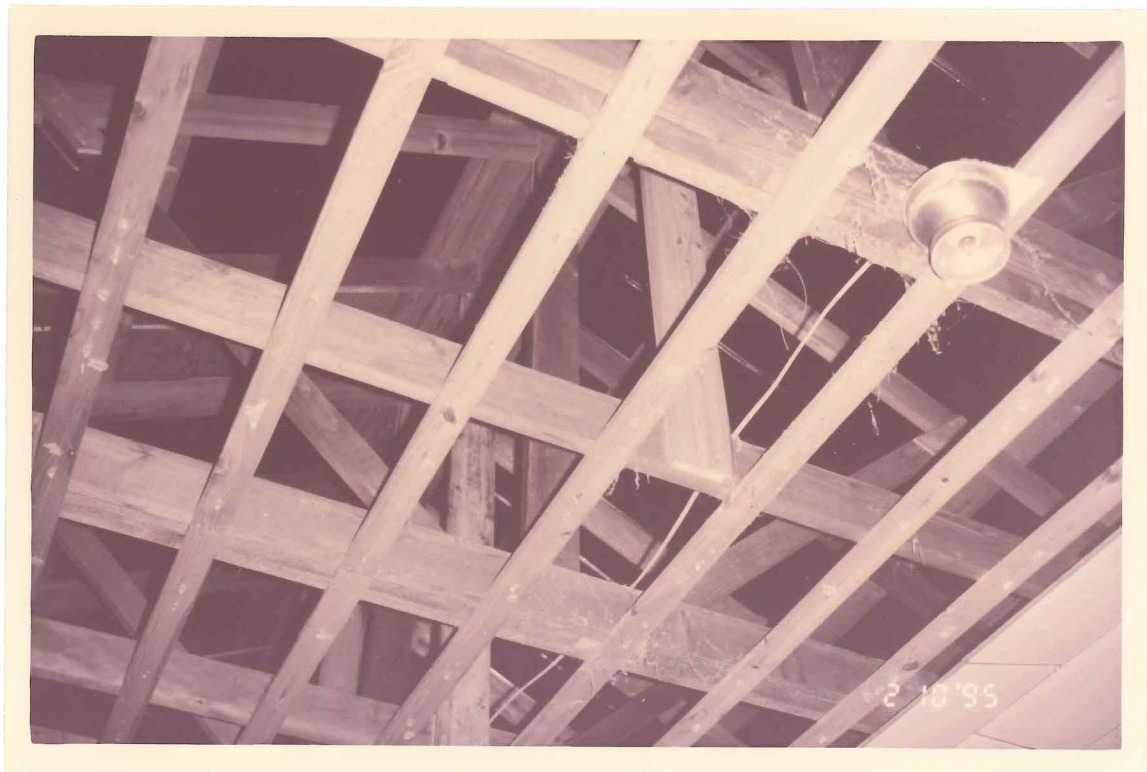


Close-up of open wood rafters on northern elevation

HD (Individual) 95-03-01  
COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOCA GRANDE (Amory Chapel)  
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Northwestern elevation, showing side and front



Detail of interior rafters



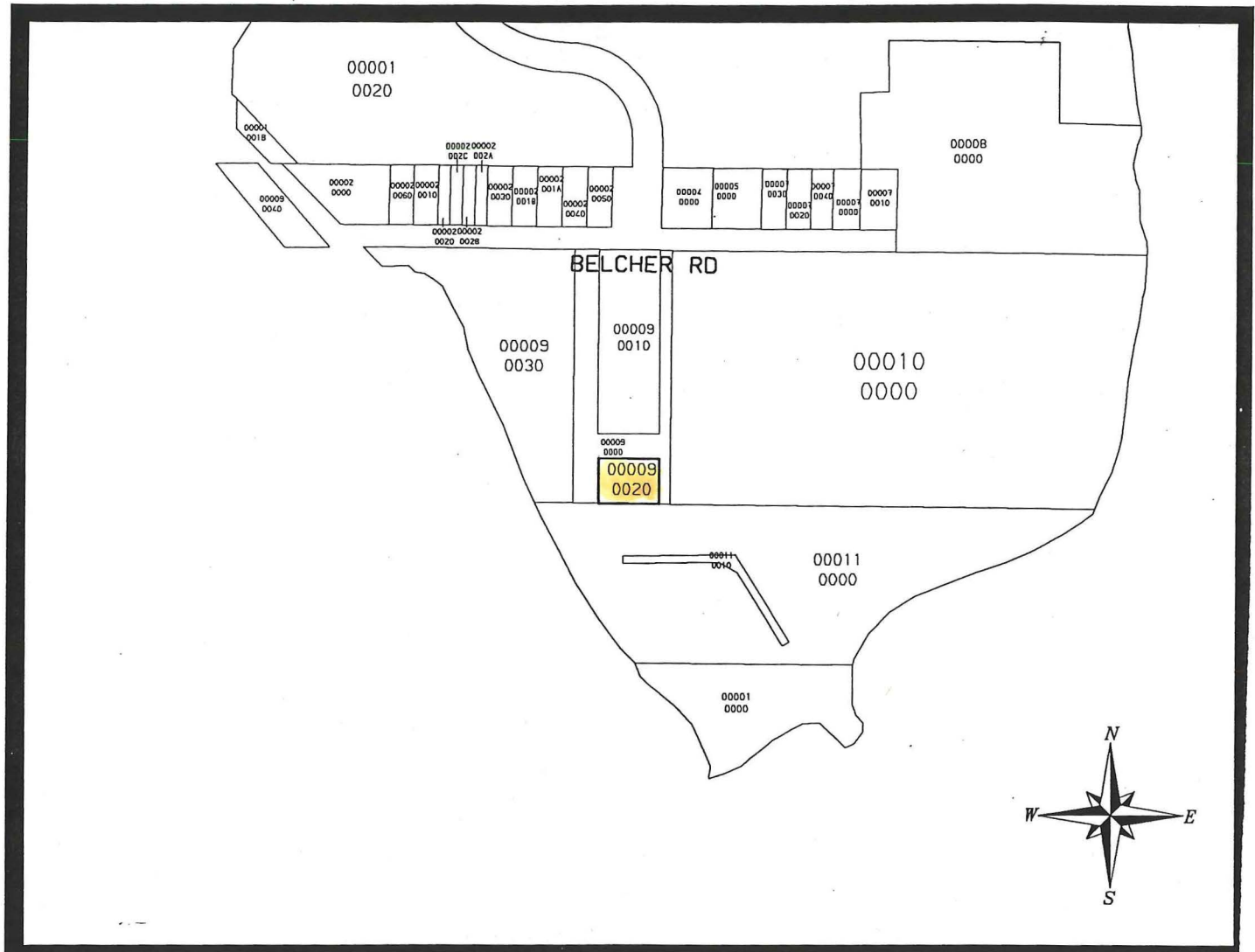
HD (Individual) 95-03-01  
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STRAP No. 26-43-20-00-00009.0020



Detail from interior of windows



HD (INDIVIDUAL) 95-03-01  
COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOCA GRANDE  
(AMORY CHAPEL)  
STRAP: 26 43 20 00 00009 0020



# MEMORANDUM FROM DIVISION OF PLANNING

Date: May 23, 1995

To: Jon Davis  
Property Appraiser's Office

From: Karen Hutcherson *Karen*  
Secretary III

## RE: HISTORICAL STRAP NUMBERS

Per this memorandum, please add the following STRAP number(s) to the Property Appraiser's Information Screen as "Historical." Your assistance in maintaining these files is greatly appreciated.

34-43-24-01-00038.0190

26-43-20-00-00009.0020

21-43-27-00-00005.0000

copy: *Gloria Sajgo, Principal Planner, Division of Planning*  
*File HD (Individual) 95-02-01*  
*File HD (Individual) 95-03-01*  
*File HD (Individual) 95-03-02*



**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

P.O. Box 398  
Fort Myers, Florida 33902-0398  
(813) 335-2111

**(813) 339-6200**

*Writer's Direct Dial Number*

John E. Manning  
*District One*

Douglas R. St. Cerny  
*District Two*

Ray Judah  
*District Three*

Andrew W. Coy  
*District Four*

John E. Albion  
*District Five*

Donald D. Stilwell  
*County Manager*

James G. Yaeger  
*County Attorney*

Diana M. Parker  
*County Hearing Examiner*

**VIA CERTIFIED MAIL**

**April 24, 1995**

TIITF/DEP Division of Recreation & Parks  
c/o DEP Douglas Building  
3900 Commonwealth Blvd., MS500  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000

**To Whom It May Concern:**

This letter serves to inform you that the Community Church of Boca Grande (Amory Memorial Chapel) in Boca Grande (HD Individual 95-03-01) has been designated as a historic resource by the Lee County Historic Preservation Board on April 6, 1995, pursuant to Chapter 22, Historic Preservation, of the Lee County Land Development Code (formerly known as the Lee County Historic Preservation Ordinance 88-62, as amended).

Please find attached a copy of the Lee County Historic Preservation Board's Notice of Action on Petition to Designate a Historic Resource and a written resolution approving the subject designation.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to call me at 339-6206.

Sincerely,

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

GLORIA M. SAJGO, AICP, Principal Planner  
Division of Planning

*copy: Mary Gibbs, Director, Department of Community Development, c/o Pam Houck  
Bob Stewart, Director, Division of Codes and Building Services  
Charlie Green, Clerk of Court  
George Crawford, Director, DOT  
Ken Wilkinson, Property Appraiser*

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            Approve with conditions stated below  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Historic Preservation Board Chair

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WHEREAS, Notice of Intent to designate was advertised on March 30, 1995 for a public hearing on April 6, 1995.

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that the Community Church of Boca Grande meets the criteria for designation set forth in LDC Chapter 22.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEE COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD THAT:

1. The Lee County Historic Preservation Board approves the petition to designate, as a historic resource, the Community Church of Boca Grande -- HD Individual 95-03-01.
2. All provisions of the Lee County Land Development Code, Chapter 22, as may be hereafter amended, renumbered or replaced, applicable to a designated historic resource shall apply to this property (Community Church of Boca Grande -- HD Individual 95-03-01).
3. This Resolution shall be recorded in the Public Records of Lee County, Florida within twenty-five (25) days of the date the Resolution is signed, unless a timely appeal of the Board's decision as reflected in this Resolution, is filed.

Resolution Designating Historic Resource HD Individual 95-03-01

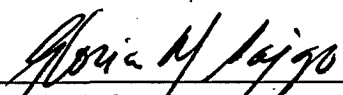
The foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Lee County Historic Preservation Board upon a motion by Kevin Williams, and seconded by Chauncey Goss, and, upon being put to a vote, the result was as follows:

Toni Ferrell	<u>AYE</u>
Chauncey Goss	<u>AYE</u>
Annette Guilfoyle	<u>ABSENT</u>
Linda Sickler Robinson	<u>ABSENT</u>
Eugene Schmitt	<u>AYE</u>
Mercedes Vergne	<u>ABSENT</u>
Kevin Williams	<u>AYE</u>

DULY PASSED AND ADOPTED this 6th day of April, A.D., 1995.

ATTEST:

LEE COUNTY  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD

BY:   
As Clerk for the Lee County  
Historic Preservation Board

BY:   
Chairman

DATE: 24 April 95

Approved as to form by:

  
County Attorney's Office

(g:\hpb\petition\bgchurch.pet)

## **ATTACHMENT A**

### **LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

**for**

**26-43-20-00-00009.0020**

Commence at the southeast corner of Lot 36, Unit No. 1, GOLDEN BEACH SUBDIVISION, as recorded in Plat Book 10, pages 60 and 61, public records of Lee County, Florida; thence North  $89^{\circ}52'00''$  East along south line of said Unit No. 1, 75 feet; thence South  $00^{\circ}08'$  East, 1543.18 feet; thence South  $89^{\circ}43'20''$  East, 1017.39 feet; thence South  $00^{\circ}16'40''$  West, 165 feet; thence North  $89^{\circ}43'20''$  West, 587.88 feet along said south line of County Road as accepted by the Board of County Commissioners, as recorded in their Minute Book No. 8, page 298, this being the Northwest corner of tract, as conveyed by the Boca Grande Hotel, Inc., to the Florida Power and Light Company, as described in Deed Book 273, pages 236 and 237, dated July 5, 1957; thence North  $89^{\circ}43'20''$  West 15 feet to a point; thence South  $0^{\circ}39'$  West 400 feet to point of beginning; continue thence South  $0^{\circ}39'$  West, 95 feet to a point; run thence North  $89^{\circ}43'20''$  West, 122 feet to a point; thence run North  $0^{\circ}39'$  West, 95 feet to a point; thence run South  $89^{\circ}43'20''$  East to the point of beginning. All lying and being Government Lot No. 3, Section 26, Township 43 South, Range 20 East, Lee County, Florida.



HD 95-03-01

Is your RETURN ADDRESS completed on the reverse side?

**SENDER:**

- Complete items 1 and/or 2 for additional services.
- Complete items 3, and 4a & b.
- Print your name and address on the reverse of this form so that we can return this card to you.
- Attach this form to the front of the mailpiece, or on the back if space does not permit.
- Write "Return Receipt Requested" on the mailpiece below the article number.
- The Return Receipt will show to whom the article was delivered and the date delivered.

I also wish to receive the following services (for an extra fee):

1. ☐ Addressee's Address
2. ☐ Restricted Delivery

Consult postmaster for fee.

3. Article Addressed to:

TUTTF/DEP Div. of Parks & Rec  
90 DEP Douglas Building  
3900 Commonwealth Blvd.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000

4a. Article Number

Z 0 38 707 266

4b. Service Type

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Registered              | <input type="checkbox"/> Insured                        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certified    | <input type="checkbox"/> COD                            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Express Mail | <input type="checkbox"/> Return Receipt for Merchandise |

7. Date of Delivery

8. Addressee's Address (Only if requested and fee is paid)

5. Signature (Addressee)

6. Signature (Agent)

*Tallynnecher*

PS Form 3811, December 1991

☆U.S. GPO: 1993-352-714

**DOMESTIC RETURN RECEIPT**

Thank you for using Return Receipt Service.







BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

P.O. Box 398  
Fort Myers, Florida 33902-0398  
(813) 335-2111

(813) 339-6200

*Writer's Direct Dial Number*

John E. Manning  
*District One*

**VIA CERTIFIED MAIL**

Douglas R. St. Cerny  
*District Two*

Ray Judah  
*District Three*

March 14, 1995

Andrew W. Coy  
*District Four*

John E. Albion  
*District Five*

Donald D. Stilwell  
*County Manager*

James G. Yaeger  
*County Attorney*

Diana M. Parker  
*County Hearing  
Examiner*

TIITF/DEP Division of Recreation & Parks  
c/o DEP Douglas Building  
3900 Commonwealth Blvd., MS500  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter serves to inform you that the Community Church of Boca Grande (Amory Memorial Chapel) in Boca Grande (STRAP: 26-43-20-00-00009.0020) has been filed for designation as a historic resource pursuant to the Lee County Land Development Code, Chapter 22, Historic Preservation. The Historic Preservation Board will consider the designation at its meeting on April 6, 1995 at 4:00 p.m. in the East Room of the newly restored Old Lee County Courthouse, second floor, in downtown Fort Myers, Florida. Your presence at this meeting is not mandatory.

Enclosed please find a copy of the designation report and Chapter 22 (Historic Preservation) of the Lee County Land Development Code.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to call me at 339-6206.

Sincerely,

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

GLORIA M. SAJGO, AICP, Principal Planner  
Division of Planning

*copy: Chauncey Goss, GICIA*

HD 95-03-01

Is your RETURN ADDRESS completed on the reverse side?

**SENDER:**

- Complete items 1 and/or 2 for additional services.
- Complete items 3, and 4a & b.
- Print your name and address on the reverse of this form so that we can return this card to you.
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I also wish to receive the following services (for an extra fee):

1. ☐ Addressee's Address
2. ☐ Restricted Delivery

Consult postmaster for fee.

3. Article Addressed to:

TIITF/DEP Div. of Parks & Rec  
c/o DEP Douglas Bldg.  
3900 Commonwealth Blvd. MS600  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000

4a. Article Number

Z 038 707 248

4b. Service Type

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Registered           | <input type="checkbox"/> Insured                        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certified | <input type="checkbox"/> COD                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Express Mail         | <input type="checkbox"/> Return Receipt for Merchandise |

7. Date of Delivery

MAR 17 1995

5. Signature (Addressee)

8. Addressee's Address (Only if requested and fee is paid)

6. Signature (Agent)

Tallymoller

PS Form 3811, December 1991 ☆U.S. GPO: 1993-352-714

**DOMESTIC RETURN RECEIPT**

Thank you for using Return Receipt Service.



# Department of Environmental Protection

Lawton Chiles  
Governor

Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building  
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000

Virginia B. Wetherell  
Secretary

February 24, 1995

Chauncey P. Goss, Executive Director  
Gasparilla Island Conservation and Improvement Assoc., Inc.  
PO Box 446  
Boca Grande, Florida 33921

Dear Mr. Goss:

I have reviewed the preliminary drawings submitted to us on the community church restoration. I was happy to see the two additions removed. The two possible restroom additions both look good and each has advantages and disadvantages.

My preference is the first location because of the location of the AC System, but either will work well. The decision on which location should best be made by your organization and the Park Manager.

The drawings appear to have been very quickly and efficiently prepared, you have a good Architect. Reviews of final drawings will need to be made by our Bureau, the State Fire Marshall, and the Department of Management Services. The Fire Marshall will require two (2) sets of signed and sealed documents along with a check for his fee, D.M.S. will require one (1) set not signed and sealed. D.M.S. will review the drawings and then submit review comments back to your Architect. After he responds to these comments, an approval letter will be sent to him. At that time you should send three (3) sets signed and sealed along with a check for your state building permit.

I am enclosing fee schedules for both the Fire Marshall and D.M.S. If you have any further questions, please contact me at (904) 488-1141.

Sincerely,

*William R. Bean*

William R. Bean, A.I.A.  
Architect  
Bureau of Design and Construction  
Division of Recreation and Parks

WRB/cb  
Enclosures

"Protect, Conserve and Manage Florida's Environment and Natural Resources"

Printed on recycled paper.

209 6000

LEE COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER - NAME & LEGAL

STRAP: 26 43 20 00 00009 0020  
 TIITF/DNR REC + PARKS

C/O DNR DOUGLAS BLDG  
 TALLAHASSEE

DOR...: 82 FOREST, PARKS, RECREATIONAL  
 LOC...: LEE COUNTY UNINCORPORATED  
 LEGAL1: PARL IN S E 1/4 SEC 26  
 LEGAL2: TWP 43 R 20 DESC IN  
 LEGAL3: OR 1897 PG 1186

FL HWDWXA  
 32399 N/R: 000040

UNIT MEAS.: SF #UNITS: 11,590.00  
 1ST TAX YR: FRONTAGE: 0  
 YR SPLIT...: 00 DEPTH...: 0  
 YR CREATED: 00 E/I NUM.: 00000000  
 ENERGY CD.: S/D VAL.: 0.00  
 ENERGY YR.: S/D CODE:  
 APRVED BY.: 31 DSC.....  
 TAX AUTH...: 005 ZONING...: TFC2  
 PRIOR DOR.: 71 PEND.....  
 PRIOR STRP: - - - - .

\*\*\* VALUES \*\*\* \*\*\* EX VALUES \*\*\*  
 JUST: 68,450 AG.: 0  
 ASSD: 68,450 HX.: 0  
 TXBL: 0 WID: 0  
 BLDG: 10,500 DIS: 0  
 LAND: 57,950 WLY: 68,450  
 NCST: 0 ENG: 0  
 PVAL: 62,660 WDR: 0

SITE: 990 BELCHER RD 33921

# SALE PRICE D.O.S. BOOK PAGE TC VI PAGE: 00015  
 1: 100 03/88 1983 0684 01 I LINE: 830  
 2: 100 01/87 1897 1186 01 I  
 NBHD CODE: 09-109-0.00 HIST DIST: N  
 NBHD DESC: BOCA GRANDE GULF SIDE SOUTH {DRY}

MAINT DATE  
 SITE: 04/29/92  
 NAL.: 07/23/93  
 MAF.: 08/10/94  
 PAV.:



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

P.O. Box 398  
Fort Myers, Florida 33902-0398  
(813) 335-2111

(813) 339-6206

*Writer's Direct Dial Number*

John E. Manning  
*District One*

**VIA CERTIFIED MAIL**

Douglas R. St. Cerny  
*District Two*

Ray Judah  
*District Three*

February 23, 1995

Andrew W. Coy  
*District Four*

John E. Albion  
*District Five*

Donald D. Stilwell  
*County Manager*

James G. Yaeger  
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Diana M. Parker  
*County Hearing Examiner*

TIITF/DEP Division of Recreation & Parks  
c/o DEP Douglas Building  
3900 Commonwealth Blvd., MS500  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter serves to inform you that the Community Church of Boca Grande (Amory Memorial Chapel) (STRAP: 26-43-20-00-00009.0020) has been requested to be filed for designation as a historic resource pursuant to the Lee County Land Development Code, Chapter 22, Historic Preservation, as petition HD (Individual) 95-03-01, Community Church of Boca Grande. The Historic Preservation Board will consider filing of this designation at its meeting on March 9, 1995 at 4:00 p.m. in the East Room of the newly restored Old Lee County Courthouse, second floor in downtown Fort Myers.

Upon filing of a designation, the Historic Preservation Board may initiate the designation process which includes holding a public hearing. The owner of the property will be notified of this public hearing.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (813) 339-6206.

Sincerely,

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

GLORIA M. SAJGO, AICP, Principal Planner  
Division of Planning

*copy: Chauncey Goss*

Is your RETURN ADDRESS completed on the reverse side?

SENDER: HD 95-03-01

- Complete items 1 and/or 2 for additional services.
- Complete items 3, and 4a & b.
- Print your name and address on the reverse of this form so that we can return this card to you.
- Attach this form to the front of the mailpiece, or on the back if space does not permit.
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1. ☐ Addressee's Address
2. ☐ Restricted Delivery

Consult postmaster for fee.

3. Article Addressed to:

TIITF/DEP Rec & Parks  
DEP Douglas Bldg.  
3900 Commonwealth Blvd.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000

4a. Article Number

Z 038 706 450

4b. Service Type

- ☐ Registered ☐ Insured  
☒ Certified ☐ COD  
☐ Express Mail ☐ Return Receipt for Merchandise

7. Date of Delivery

8. Addressee's Address (Only if requested and fee is paid)

5. Signature (Addressee)

6. Signature (Agent)

Tallymother

PS Form 3811, December 1991 ☆U.S. GPO: 1993-352-714

DOMESTIC RETURN RECEIPT

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*significance*

History of the "Community Church"  
Gasparilla Island, Lee County, Florida

- 1958      During the late 1950's the real estate company that owned most of the property where the black community on Boca Grande was located (downtown area east of Community Center) began demolishing residences and structures in preparation for sale and development of the land. Mr. George Weymouth, realizing that these people would have no place to live, purchased property at the south end of the island and developed what came to be known as "Tarpon Pass Estates."
- 1959      Mr. Roger Amory asked Mr. Homer Addison, manager of the Tarpon Pass Estates Project, to purchase land in the vicinity of the development so that the Baptist Church could be relocated from its downtown location to the vicinity of Tarpon Pass Estates. In a March 22 letter to Mr. Addison, Mr. Amory writes that he is "very interested in seeing that the colored colony not be deprived of their church."  
Mr. Addison proceeded to purchase land from the Boca Grande Hotel Company for Mr. Amory adjacent to Tarpon Pass Estates. Unfortunately, although Mr. Amory had an agreement to the contrary, the Baptist Church was demolished at its downtown site. Mr. Amory then informed Mr. Addison in an April 1 letter that he had "arranged with Griffin Co. to build a shell of a community church 50 x 24 with a concrete floor, wooden sides and a metal roof at my expense [it should be noted that the walls were constructed of cinder block and not wood]." It was Mr. Amory's hope that the existing congregations of the Methodist and Baptist Churches that had been demolished would furnish and maintain this new church. He transferred ownership to the Johann Fust Community Library, of which he was the primary benefactor and President, with instructions that the church should be rented to the congregation for \$1 a year.
- 1960-1970?      At some point a cinder block addition was constructed on the south side of the structure and acted as a kitchen. A small bathroom was also added to the east side of the structure, but this may have been done at the time of original construction. These additions need further research. It is reported that there was a congregation of about 30 people and that a Methodist Service was held every other Sunday. This report may only be valid for

the last few years of the church. This subject should also be researched further.

- 1983 One of the primary problems with Tarpon Pass Estates and the church was that the land on which they were constructed is quite low and prone to flooding. The "No Name Storm" of the previous year tended to act as a catalyst for the owners of the Tarpon Pass Estates Development, and in May, the residents were issued eviction notices by the owners.
- 1985 During the fall, the property that had comprised Tarpon Pass Estates was given to the Gasparilla Island Conservation and Improvement Association, Inc. (GICIA) with the intent that this not for profit property owner's association turn the land over to the State of Florida to augment their adjoining park.
- 1986 In the late fall, the Johann Fust Community Library gave the Community Church to GICIA with the intent that the structure (the only remaining structure of the Tarpon Pass Estates community) and the land be given to the State also.
- 1988 On March 17, the final Warranty Deed turning ownership of the church over to the State was signed by the GICIA. Subsequently, the State boarded the windows and the doors of the structure to discourage vandalism and transient lodging.
- 1994 On May 2, the State conducted an asbestos survey on the structure and found that the building is free of asbestos.





**This Special Warranty Deed** Made the 17th day of March A.D. 1988 by

GASPARILLA ISLAND CONSERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, INC.

hereinafter called the grantor to BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT TRUST FUND OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA

whose postoffice address is Department of Natural Resources  
3900 Commonwealth Blvd., Room 412  
hereinafter called the grantee Tallahassee, Florida 32399

(Wherever used herein the terms "grantor" and "grantee" include all the parties to this instrument and the heirs, legal representatives and assigns of individuals, and the successors and assigns of corporations.)

**Witnesseth:** That the grantor, for and in consideration of the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ and other valuable considerations, receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, hereby grants, bargains, sells, alien, releases, conveys and confirms unto the grantee, all that certain land situate in Lee County, Florida, viz:

Commence at the southeast corner of Lot 36, Unit No. 1, GOLDEN BEACH SUBDIVISION, as recorded in Plat Book 10, pages 60 and 61, public records of Lee County, Florida; thence North 89°52'00" East along south line of said Unit No. 1, 75 feet; thence South 00°08' East, 1543.18 feet; thence South 89°43'20" East, 1017.39 feet; thence South 00°16'40" West, 165 feet; thence North 89°43'20" West, 587.88 feet along south line of County Road as accepted by the Board of County Commissioners, as recorded in their Minute Book No. 8, page 298, this being the Northwest corner of tract, as conveyed by the Boca Grande Hotel, Inc., to the Florida Power and Light Company, as described in Deed Book 273, pages 236 and 237, dated July 5, 1957; thence North 89°43'20" West 15 feet to a point; thence South 0°39' West 400 feet to point of beginning; continue thence South 0°39' West, 95 feet to a point; run thence North 89°43'20" West, 122 feet to a point; thence run North 0°39' West, 95 feet to a point; thence run South 89°43'20" East to the point of beginning. All lying and being Government Lot No. 3, Section 26, Township 43 South, Range 20 East, Lee County, Florida.

SUBJECT TO restrictions, reservations, easements of record, but this provision shall not operate to reimpose the same.

ALSO SUBJECT TO the following use restrictions which shall run with and attach to the title of said land for a period of 50 years from and after the date of this deed:

**Together,** with all the tenements, hereditaments and appurtenances thereto belonging or in anywise appertaining.

Documentary Tax Pd. \$ 55

**To Have and to Hold,** the same in fee simple forever.

**And** the grantor hereby covenants with said grantee that the grantor is lawfully seized of said land in fee simple; that the grantor has good right and lawful authority to sell and convey said land, and hereby warrants the title to said land and will defend the same against the lawful claims of all persons claiming by, through or under the said grantor.

**In Witness Whereof,** the said grantor has hereunto set hand and seal the day and year first above written.

Signed, sealed and delivered in our presence:

*Patricia A. Lowe*  
*William G. Lerchen*

*William G. Lerchen* (S)  
*Patricia A. Lowe* (S)  
GASPARILLA ISLAND CONSERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, INC.

STATE OF FLORIDA,  
COUNTY OF LEE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this day, before me, an

officer duly authorized in the State aforesaid and in the County aforesaid, to take acknowledgments, personally appeared

WILLIAM G. LERCHEN, JR. PRESIDENT

to me known to be the person described in and who executed the foregoing instrument and acknowledged before me that executed the same.

WITNESS my hand and official seal in the County and State last aforesaid this 17th da, of March A.D. 1988

*Patricia A. Lowe*

PATRICIA A. LOWE  
State of Florida  
My Comm. Exp. June 19, 1991

This instrument prepared by:

Address Department of Natural Resources  
3900 Commonwealth Blvd., Room 412  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

DSNL \*\*\*\*\* LEE PROPERTY APPRAISER (NAME-ADDRESS-LEGAL) \*\*\*\*\*

STRAP: 26 43 20 00 00009 0020

TIITF/DNR REC + PARKS

C/O DNR DOUGLAS BLDG

TALLAHASSEE

FL

32399

N/R:

HWDWXA

000040

DOR...: 82 FOREST, PARKS REC

LOC...: LEE COUNTY UNINCORPORATED

LEGAL1: PARL IN S E 1/4 SEC 26

LEGAL2: TWP 43 R 20 DESC IN

LEGAL3: OR 1897 PG 1186

\*\*\* VALUES \*\*\*

JUST: 68,450

ASSD: 68,450

TXBL: 0

BLDG: 10,500

LAND: 57,950

NCST: 0

PVAL: 62,660

\*\*\* EX VALUES \*\*\*

AG.: 0

HX.: 0

WID: 0

DIS: 0

WLY: 68,450

ENG: 0

WDR: 0

SITE: 990 BELCHER RD

33921

# SALE PRICE D.O.S. BOOK PAGE TC VI PAGE: 00015

1: 100 03/88 1983 0684 01 I LINE: 830

2: 100 01/87 1897 1186 01 I

NBHD CODE: 09-109-0.00

PF1=FORWARD PF2=BACKWARD PF7=DSNM PF8=DSAD

UNIT MEAS.: SF #UNITS...: 11590.00

1ST TAX YR: FRONTAGE: 0

YR SPLIT...: 00 DEPTH...: 0

YR CREATED: 00 E/I NUM...: 00000

ENERGY CD.: S/D VAL...: .00

ENERGY YR.: S/D CODE:

APRVED BY.: 31 DSC.....:

TAX AUTH...: 005 ZONING...:

PRIOR DOR.: 71 PEND.....:

PRIOR STRP:

MAINT DATE

07/23/93

\*\*\*\*\*

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# There was always something for kids to do in paradise

*Editor's note: We offer the conclusion this week of former islander Jerry Duport's memories of growing up in Boca Grande in the 1950s.*

## Playtime on the island

Besides playing on the beach at our end, we boys from the south end would come uptown on our bikes to swim and play. We began our summer days by riding all over the island gathering mangoes, papayas, spider bananas, oranges, lemons and limes, and we knew all the spots to find sugar cane. The best sugar cane was found at Mr. Murdock's place, but we had to sneak to get it. A few of us would keep him busy in the store while the rest of us would sneak into the cane patch.

When we found coconuts we opened them on the sidewalk by banging the ends until the hull split. Then we'd drink the juice and chew up the meat and play a game called "rain or snow," where we would spit it on each other.

One of our special treats was picking seagrapes that we would eat or take home to our mothers to make jelly out of. They grew all over the island, but the best spot was the land between the Sharp estate and the bowling alley. Cocoa plums grew at the south end by the Johnsons' places (the harbor pilot family) and we loved eating those too. They are hard to find now on the island.

I'll never forget my first solo horseback ride at Ann and her brother Dumpy Wheeler's place. Ann allowed me to ride her brown and white pinto. When he broke into a gallop I lost control of the reins and he took off for home with me holding onto the saddle horn for dear life while my friends cheered the horse on. Boy, what a ride that was! Ann and Dumpy still let us ride their horses, even after this happened.

At the south end we'd go into the bayous to play on homemade rafts made out of railroad cross ties and old lumber, with a long pole for steering, just like Huckleberry Finn did in the books we read at school. Those bayous are now pumped out, but there were two of them at our end of the island, separated by the train tracks. When we were tired of the rafts we would climb up onto the top of the railroad cars and run down the cat walks and between the cars playing "hide and seek."

Other days we played among the mangroves that grew in the swamp and watch all the different birds that lived there, like eagles, herons, great white cranes and kingfishers. Sometimes flamingoes and spoonbills stopped to feed, in huge flocks that would fill the sky when they were flying.

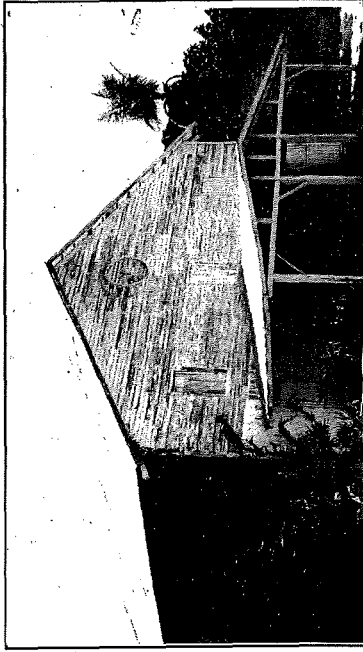
Angelo Bell had a boat dock in the bayou with a couple of row boats tied up that we would "borrow." Then we would go to his "secret" oyster and clam beds with a bottle of tabasco and a knife and feast ourselves. Once we were caught and he chased us, so after that we always had to have a lookout when we did this. We also used to steal the shrimp from his bait boxes that were tied out in the water for our fishing.

We sure were little devils about getting into things around the island in a day's fun! But we often got caught because everyone knew us and our parents. We got our share of punishments for the things we did.

Many of us were taught how to swim by my stepfather, Albert McCall. He did this by taking us to the end of the pilot boat dock and throwing us in and telling us to swim! It worked with most of us and we became very good swimmers. We swam all around the phosphate dock, clear to the very end sometimes, unless there was an outgoing tide. My stepfather was the diver who placed the cables to pull the train out of the harbor when it went off the end of the dock. He was known to be one of the best swimmers on the island.

Sometimes Robert Johnson, as a young pilot, gave us young boys rides out to sea on the pilot boat. We thought this was so exciting — to pull alongside these huge ships and watch the harbor pilot climb the swinging rope ladder up to the ship to guide it through the swift currents of the channel.

Some of my favorite memories are of the great cookouts we had on the beach. The whole south end community would join in. During the summer



*The old San Marco Theater building was built in 1928. In 1944 a bad storm ripped the roof off. It was finally closed in 1973 and sat looking like this until being renovated into the Old Theatre Mall in 1982.*

*Beacon file photo*

months when everyone came home we would take tubs of blue crabs out of the surf and cook them under the banyan tree in front of our house. Mr. Gene Bowe would always come down and check out the cooking and join us.

## The San Marco Theater

On movie nights all the islanders would gather at the theater — blacks, white, rich and poor. We all shared this place together. There was no concession stand, just a popcorn machine. Mr. Murdock, the black peanut vendor, would call out, "Get your hot daily roasted, get them while they're hot or I'll eat them myself!" We also could take a short walk to Fugate's Drug Store to buy other goodies like ice cream, pop and candy from a beautiful young lady named Kate Tucker who worked the soda fountain.

In the mid-1950s the price of going to the theater was 25 cents for a child and 50 cents for an adult. We blacks entered through the side door and went up the stairs to the balcony. The balcony was divided in half by the projection house placed in the middle. On cold nights the projectors kept it warm upstairs.

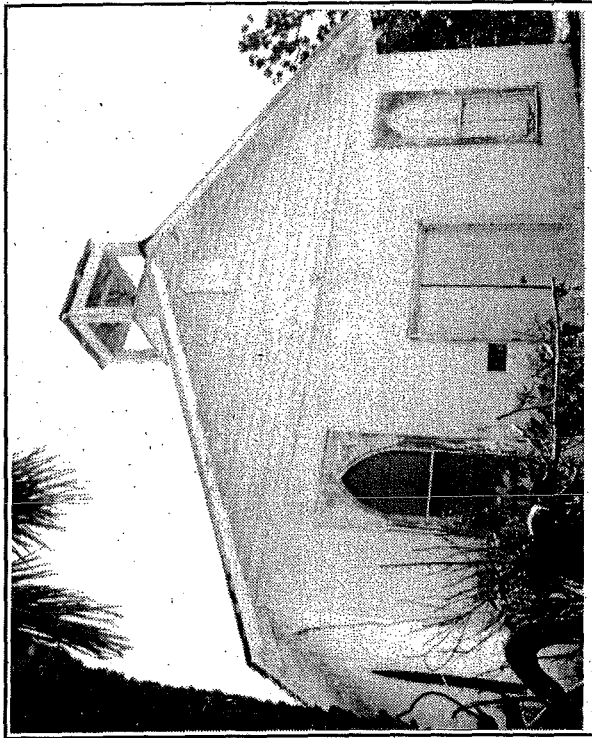
Mr. Willey Crews was the operator of the projector

## MEMORIES

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## MEMORIES

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*Amory Memorial Chapel is abandoned and forlorn looking today, but plans are in the works to renovate it into a community meeting place.*  
Beacon file photo

and other machines. I remember him as an older gentleman with gray hair and a slender build who was kind to everyone. I would peep into the projection room to see all the machines with their red and green lights. I was very impressed with all those machines and lights.

We had individual wooden theater seats up in the balcony, but downstairs the audience only had green wooden park-like benches arranged in rows down each side. The adults and babies always sat on the right side of the balcony and the teenagers and older children sat on the other side.

The white people sat downstairs where the main entrance was; the young people sat in the rows down in front. Behind them, on the right side, were the more wealthy winter residents, with the others on the left side of the theater.

The floor was covered with white beach shells. They were very noisy when walked on or shuffled, in the front rows in particular! The theater also had a

tin roof and when it started raining during a show we couldn't hear anything! During warm nights the windows would be opened wide for a breeze, but then the mosquitoes would come in and eat us up.

It's a little sad that now the only thing left of the old theater is the shell of the building and a few of the old benches.

### The A.M.E. and Shilo Baptist churches

There were two black churches located uptown on the island, the African Methodist Episcopalian (A.M.E.) and the Shilo Baptist. We attended both. Sunday school and holiday programs were held in both church buildings, but services with a pastor alternated between the churches.

One week the Methodist would have a pastor and then the next week the Baptist would have one. These pastors would arrive on the ferry to conduct services on Sunday morning and then spend the night and share meals on the island with different families in the church, returning to the mainland on Monday morning.

The Methodist pastor was Reverend Turner from Palmetto and the Baptist pastor was Reverend Smith from Arcadia. Most of the time Rev. Turner stayed with Mr. Barry and Lucy Bryant, and Rev. Smith stayed with Deacon Scott. Each church had youth groups. All the black kids attended church with their families.

The A.M.E. Church was located just on the other end of the black community uptown, next to the Bryant's large house. Its bell support was built in a Banyan tree next to the church.

The Shilo Baptist Church was a small white building in the uptown area on First Street close to Sam Whidden's marina. Its bell hung from cross beams supported by standing beams just outside the building. Deacon Coleman or Deacon Joseph Foster would faithfully ring the Shilo bell to call us to wor-

ship every Sunday. Other people that I remember from the Baptist Church were Deacons Willie Brown and Sam Mack Sr.

After Sunday School we kids would walk to Fugate's for treats and then we south end kids would catch the passenger train to ride back to the end of the island.

Sometime during the '50s the black community was relocated to the south end of the island. At this time a new church was built near the Coast Guard Station for us to attend. At this church, Amory Memorial Chapel, the services also alternated between Methodist and Baptist. After Rev. Smith retired, Rev. John L. Nixon took over the Baptist services and Rev. Sapp conducted the Methodist services. We never did have a resident pastor in our community.

### Black-owned businesses

There were some blacks who ran small businesses on the island. Besides Fred Lee, who had the boarding house, Mr. M.D. Landcaster had a dry-cleaning business, Boca Grande Dry Cleaners, that was located in the building across from the old train station that now houses a real estate office. Prather Laundry would send a service truck twice a week to the island, but many of the islanders, both black and white, used Boca Grande Dry Cleaners.

Other blacks, including Willie B. Brown, Mr. Scott, Henderson McCulla and Thomas Philpot, ran "car rental businesses" that catered to the winter visitors to the island. They would buy new cars for themselves and then rent them out during the season for enough to make the payments for the rest of the year. Meanwhile, they drove their service trucks or older cars until the season was over.

Willie B. Brown also was the island's garbage man, servicing mainly the beach estates. As kids, we loved going to the dump with him. We found all kinds of treasures! He also ran a taxi service for us kids and black merchant seamen from the ships. He would charge us a quarter for a ride uptown. He always had the nicest car on the island.

*Hist. of Boca  
Grande from  
"Guidelines"*

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BOCA GRANDE'S DEVELOPMENT  
AND INFLUENCES ON ITS ARCHITECTURE

The Boca Grande Historic District is situated in the center of Gasparilla Island, a seven mile long barrier island in Charlotte Harbor. Two-thirds of the island lies in Lee County; the northern one-third lies in Charlotte County. Throughout the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century there were three separate and distinct villages on Gasparilla Island. On the north was the village of Gasparilla where most of the island's commercial fishermen resided. In the center was the village of Boca Grande, home of the Gasparilla Inn and haven for wealthy winter residents. In the south was Port Boca Grande which is one of Florida's deepest natural passes.

The story of Boca Grande is closely related to phosphate rock. In the 1880s phosphate rock was discovered on the banks of the Peace River, north of Arcadia. Phosphate was barged down the Peace River to Port Boca Grande and loaded onto four and five masted schooners. In 1890 a lighthouse was erected on the southern tip of Gasparilla Island to aid this industry.

By 1900 the American Agricultural Chemical Company (AAC), which dominated the phosphate industry of Central Florida, determined that a railroad would be more efficient in transporting phosphate to the port than the river barges. The AAC determined that the proposed terminus of the railroad should be located about a quarter mile north of the lighthouse on the harbor side of Gasparilla Island. The Charlotte Harbor and Northern (CHN) railroad was completed in 1907.

Prior to the discovery of phosphate, Gasparilla Island was a government reserve. In 1878 the central section of Gasparilla Island was released from reserved status. The homestead lands conveyed from the federal government to various individuals eventually were all acquired by either John Wall, an attorney in Tampa, or by Albert Gilchrist, a Punta Gorda politician (who became governor of Florida in 1909). In January of 1897 Gilchrist filed a plat consisting of six blocks along the Gulf front in the south central portion of Gasparilla Island, where the island is widest and best suited for residential development. In 1907, Wall and Gilchrist teamed up with officers of the AAC (among them Peter Bradley) and formed the Boca Grande Land Company as part of the AAC corporate entity.

In 1909 the officers of the Boca Grande Land Company decided to build a resort hotel on Gasparilla Island. This was to be the Gasparilla Inn. By that time the Charlotte Harbor area, specifically the area south of Gasparilla Island, was known for unexcelled tarpon fishing and was famous among sportsmen. By 1912 the officers of the company decided to change the Gasparilla Inn from a small hotel housing visiting directors and company officers to a world class hotel. The renowned architect Francis J. Kennard of Tampa, Florida designed the enlargement. The hotel was such a success that in 1915 Kennard was called again to draw plans to double the size of the Gasparilla Inn. Hotel

clients came year after year; for many of them staying at the Gasparilla Inn became life-long habit.

In 1914 a casino was built near the Gasparilla Inn, and a boat house on the bayou. Gilchrist Avenue was lined with coconut palms and hibiscus as was Palm Avenue south of the Inn. The block between Gilchrist Avenue and Park Avenue on Second Street was lined with banyan trees. (Today this is known as Banyan Street.)

The Boca Grande School was built in 1911. A second story was added to the building in 1914 so that the school could qualify to be a junior high. It was closed in 1929 when the new Boca Grande School was built. This was designed by architect N. G. Walker and was built of stucco in the Mediterranean Revival style popular in the 1920s. In 1936 a 2-room addition was built. The K-12 school was closed in 1964 because of declining enrollment. Today it serves as Boca Grande's Community Center and central focus for the island's recreation programs.

The architecture of Boca Grande was influenced by a number of physical and social issues. The early buildings are a compilation of these many influences. Being remote from the mainland, early buildings relied on simple designs to make this subtropical environment habitable. Wide eaves, covered porches at the main entrances and louvered shutters were common characteristics. The early buildings were commonly raised above the ground to allow for circulation of breezes and the passage of water under the house during times of high tides or storms. Ceilings were typically high and open, allowing for hot air to escape during the day. Another climatic factor was the lack of fresh water. This required the use of gutters, which funneled the water rain into cisterns for future use.

Game fishing and tourism are responsible for most of the development during the 1920s. By 1925 more and more Florida east coast residents were becoming disenchanted with the Florida boom and wanted to give up their east coast homes for more quiet, more quaint atmospheres. Since Boca Grande had remained unspoiled and exclusive, it attracted many tourists from the northeast and, with the added attraction of unparalleled tarpon fishing, Boca Grande became a very desirable location.

The Gasparilla Inn and other hotels accommodated the tourists and winter residents who enjoyed fishing and participating in the social life of Boca Grande. Many of these visitors remained and built waterfront estates along the Gulf of Mexico, introducing a wider variety of decorative architectural styles, but mostly building in the Mediterranean Revival style.

Boca Grande also had a demand for worker housing. As a result, bungalow style houses were concentrated to the south of the commercial district; many of these houses were built by the railroad to house the railroad workers. This style of architecture borrowed from the early vernacular housing, such as the raised floors, covered porches and high ceilings. One of the reasons it was such a popular style was because it was available

through mail order plans and was simple and inexpensive to build. On some of these structures it is common to see more decoration than would be observed on vernacular homes, such as trim elements on the gable ends, dentils and wood window surrounds.

As with other communities across the state, development tapered off after the Florida Land Boom. But because of the many attractions that Boca Grande and the surrounding area still offers, Boca Grande continues to grow. Fortunately, due to the sensitivity of the island's residents, much of the early architectural heritage still remains today.