

Walk or bike this tour of
Anna Maria City and learn about
the rich history of our people
and our island

Presented by the Anna Maria Island Historical Society

402 Pine Avenue
Anna Maria City, Florida 34216
Trolley Stop 42 • AMIHS.org
(941) 778-0492

Historical Society Museum Hours:

January through April: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. May through December: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Closed the month of September

©2015, Anna Maria Island Historical Society

We recommend that you begin your tour at Bayfront Park where public parking and restrooms are available.

Stroll north on North Bay Boulevard to the second stop on the tour, Rod & Reel Pier. Follow the map in the center, pages 12-13.



1. North Bay Boulevard, Bayfront Park

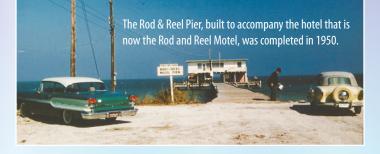
In the late 1920s, the Anna Maria Beach Company, which was established to turn the north end of the Island into a resort community, was going bankrupt. It deeded this land to Anna Maria City in place of paying back taxes. In 1952, the City established this land as the Bayfront Park.



2.875 North Shore Drive, Rod & Reel Pier

In 1947, John Stanley decided to build a fishing dock along side his hotel, the present day Rod and Reel Motel. In 1950, the Rod & Reel Pier was completed. (See photo above right.)

The most famous owner of the pier was Frank Cavendish, who operated it from 1962-1982. He was known for his wild fishing stories and for diving off the pier to entertain tourists. Under his ownership, the pier became a social hub where local fishermen would gather to play poker and fish for sharks.



3. Near the intersection of Alamanda Road and North Shore Drive

This site is where George Emerson Bean, the first homesteader on the Island, built his home using lumber shipped from Tampa. He also built a dock near the current location of the Rod & Reel Pier so that ships from Tampa could drop off supplies on their way to Cortez.



This drawing depicts the house that George Emerson Bean built when he moved to the Island in 1894.

4.808 North Bay Boulevard, Anna Maria Motel

The Anna Maria Motel, built by Irene and Carlos Wells, was the first motel on the Island. In 1949, Paul Carlisle, a recently retired engineer, moved to the Island with his wife, Norene. They bought the six-unit building for \$27,500 and charged guests \$5 a night. Guests woke up to the daily paper and a fresh grapefruit on their doorsteps every morning.

Paul served as the president of the Island Chamber of Commerce from 1953 to 1954. In 1954, he was elected mayor of Anna Maria City. As mayor, Paul helped bring the Manatee, Cortez and Longboat Pass bridges to the Island.

In 1982, the motel was passed down to the Carlisles' daughter, Margaret, who remodeled it and ran it for another seven years before selling it.



The Anna Maria Motel (above and below), built in 1949, was the first motel on the Island. The Carlisle family ran the motel for almost 40 years, from 1950 to 1989.



5. 207 North Bay Boulevard, Coconut Grove

This cottage was built in 1912 and served as the home of Charles Roser, a partner in the Anna Maria Beach Company. The company built vacation cottages, designed a water system and laid out streets and sidewalks. Local lore says Roser's investment money came from the invention of the Fig Newton cookie. Roser and his father are rumored to have sold the cookie to the company that became Nabisco for \$1 million. Roser's parents lived in Roser Cottage on Pine Avenue. (See photo above right.)



Coconut Grove Cottage in 1924. Coconut Grove was built in 1912 for Charles Roser, a partner in the Anna Maria Beach Company.

6. 100 South Bay Boulevard, City Pier

In 1911, the Anna Maria Beach Company built the City Pier to accommodate steamships bringing hundreds of tourists from Tampa, St. Petersburg and Sarasota.

The pier was once home to two vacation cottages. Lotus Cottage, ca. 1913, and Belle Haven, built in 1920. Both fell into the Bay in 1926 after their pilings rotted. Lotus Cottage was lost, but Belle Haven was rescued and would eventually become part of the Anna Maria Island Historical Society Museum complex (#12 on the tour).

In 1928, the bankrupted Anna Maria Beach Company gave the pier to Anna Maria City to satisfy its tax debt.

The City Pier in the early 1920s. Lotus Cottage can be seen to the left, the bait shop in the center, and Belle Haven to the right. In 1926, a storm blew the two cottages into the Bay.

Page 4 · Historic Anna Maria City Tour



Roser Cottage in the early 1920s. Roser Cottage was built in 1912 for John and Caroline Roser, rumored inventors of the Fig Newton cookie.

7. 519 Pine Avenue, Roser Cottage

Built in 1912, this cottage was once the home of John and Caroline Roser, the rumored inventors of the Fig Newton. They retired to St. Petersburg in 1904 and moved to the Island in 1911. Caroline died just a year later. While napping on the front porch of this cottage, John dreamed that he built a church across the street as a memorial to his wife and so he commissioned one.

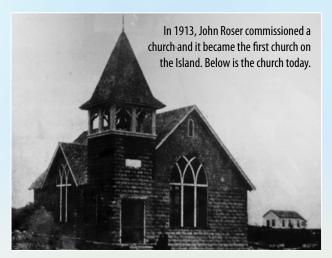


Pine Avenue in 1924. Roser Church can be seen to the left and Cozy Corner Cottage can be seen to the right. Below is Roser Cottage today.



8. 512 Pine Avenue, Roser Memorial Church

In 1913, John Roser hired Mitch Davis, a builder for the Anna Maria Beach Company, to build a church. To pay for the construction, Roser brought a steel safe with \$3,100 in cash to the Island by boat from St. Petersburg. The total cost for the church ended up being \$5,000. This was the first church on the Island. Ministers from all denominations came by boat to conduct services. The pastors would spend the night with Island families and return to the mainland the following day. The church was, and continues to be, non-denominational. A new sanctuary has been built around the historic chapel, but the original chapel is still used for weddings, funerals and special events.





9. Historic Green Village on Pine Avenue

The Historic Green Village on Pine Avenue was established by entrepreneurs Lizzie Vann and Mike Thrasher. The goal of the village is to blend historic preservation with green practices. The historical structures have been remodeled for use as commercial buildings and are run on solar power and rain water. The Historic Green Village is one of only 100 places worldwide to achieve both 'Net Zero Energy' and LEED Platinum – the highest possible standard for green buildings.



Sears Cottage in 1996. Sears Cottage, built around 1935, was once located at 308 Pine Avenue, but in the early 2000s, it was moved to its current location to become part of the Historic Green Village. Sears Cottage in 2015 below.

505 Pine Avenue, Sears Cottage

This cottage was moved from its original location at 308 Pine Avenue in June 2010 to become a part of the Historic Green Village. It is believed to have been constructed in 1935 using a kit purchased from the Sears Roebuck & Company catalog. In the late 1950s, it was home to Rev. Richard Wiggins, a pastor at Roser Church.



503 Pine Avenue, Cozy Corner Cottage

Mitch Davis built this home in 1913 for George Wilhelm "Will" Bean. Bean was the son of the first homesteader on the Island and the president of the Anna Maria Beach Company. Davis was a builder for the company and constructed many of the buildings along Pine Avenue. Davis used the same shipment of cement blocks, bought from Sears and barged over from Tampa, to build Roser Church and Cozy Corner. These blocks are a distinctive architectural feature known as rusticated concrete, popular from about 1905-1930. The blocks were inexpensive, but the imitation stone texture made buildings appear luxurious. Another example of rusticated concrete can be seen next door at Thelma by the Sea, which was also built by Davis. Cozy Corner Cottage is now home to the Anna Maria General Store.



Cozy Corner Cottage in 1946. Mitch Davis, a builder for the Anna Maria Beach Company, built this cottage in 1913 for Will Bean. Below is the cottage in 2015.

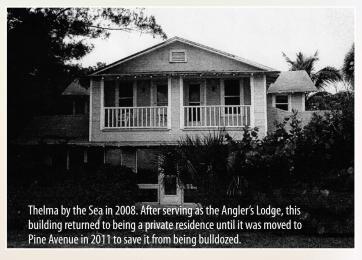


501 Pine Avenue, Thelma by the Sea

This building was once located on the Lake LaVista Inlet at 117 North Bay Boulevard. Mitch Davis, a builder for the Anna Maria Beach Company, built it around 1913 for the Wood family of Ellenton, Florida. J.R. Wood was a vegetable broker and owned several packing houses and farms. At one time he was the mayor of Ellenton. The Woods named their new home "Thelma by the Sea" after their daughter who was a model for the first Anna Maria Beach Company brochure. For a few years, the building served as the Angler's Lodge, a boarding house for fishermen on the Island. In 2011, the Historic Green Village partnered with the Anna Maria Island Preservation Trust to move the building to Pine Avenue to save it from demolition.



Thelma by the Sea was built around 1913 for the Wood family. It was named for their daughter Thelma. Originally located at 117 North Bay Boulevard, it served for a time as the Angler's Lodge, a boarding house for fishermen.





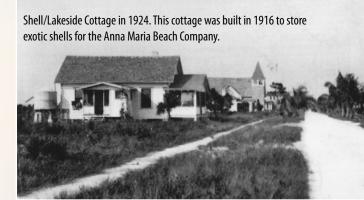
Thelma by the Sea in 2015.

10. 428 Pine Avenue, Shell/Lakeside Cottage

Around 1916, Mitch Davis built this cottage on Magnolia Avenue for Will Bean, president of the Anna Maria Beach Company.

Bean used the one room house to secretly store exotic shells that he collected from around the world. Bean had the shells scattered on the beach at night while everyone was sleeping. When the unsuspecting tourists walked the beach in the morning, they found the beautiful shells. Bean's hope with this ruse was that Anna Maria Island would become known as a shell collectors' paradise, thereby increasing tourism.

A few years later, Mitch Davis bought Shell Cottage from Bean to use as storage space for sales goods. Davis used horses to roll the house on poles to its present location alongside Lake LaVista on Pine Avenue. In 1933, it became storage for Roser Memorial Church. In 2008, it was renovated and now serves as a rental cottage.



Page 10 • Historic Anna Maria City Tour



11. 417 Pine Avenue, Shady Mango

Originally called Conch Cottage, this home was renamed the Shady Mango in 2004, when new owners gave it a fresh start. The house was built in 1925 using heart of pine lumber barged to the City Pier and carried by horse-drawn lorry to Pine Avenue. When Bob and Betsy Hills purchased the house in 2004, it was in great need of repair. While the floors, roof, windows and several walls had to be replaced, the Hills maintained the original layout and character of the home. The cedar shingle shake siding on the house is retained from the original structure. The Hills also added personal touches, such as displaying their collection of 17th century Delft tiles in the kitchen.



The Shady Mango in 2015. This home was built in 1925. The cedar shingle siding is original to the house.



When the Shady Mango was built in 1925, Pine Avenue was a narrow sand-andshell street designed for horses and carts. This postcard shows Pine Avenue as it would have looked for those staying in the Shady Mango in the mid-1900s. The first bridge had come to the Island in 1922 and soon cars arrived and roads were paved.

12. 402 Pine Avenue, Anna Maria Island Historical Society Museum

The Anna Maria Island Historical Society (AMIHS), which maintains the museum complex, was founded in 1990 by Pat Copeland, who worked for the Anna Maria Islander Press, and Carolyne Norwood, who worked for the Islander newspaper. They were concerned that the Island's unique history would be lost without an organization to document it.

AMIHS members began collecting family heirlooms, photographs, newspaper articles, land deeds and other objects and documents relating to Anna Maria Island's history. In 1992, the AMIHS began leasing the current museum building from Anna Maria City to display its collections. The AMIHS continued to grow and now it uses three historical 1920s era buildings to tell the story of Anna Maria Island: the museum, the old city jail and Belle Haven cottage.

The museum building, built in 1920, houses exhibits on Anna Maria Island's prehistoric past, first homesteaders, history of development, fishing stories and time as a winter home for professional baseball players. The museum includes an archives room where visitors can use newspapers to research their family or a business. The old city jail, built in 1927, shows visitors the one and only jail ever built on the Island. Belle Haven cottage, built in 1920, was once a vacation home on the end of the City Pier. It is now on museum property and it is furnished with heirlooms and antiques that demonstrate early island life. The surrounding historical park is planted with drought and disease resistant plants that are native to Anna Maria Island, showing visitors a garden that does not require watering or pesticides.

All three historical buildings on this property were built by Mitch Davis. Davis was a boat captain, builder, and Anna Maria City's first mayor. He was originally from Palmetto, Florida and moved to the Island in 1908 as a caretaker for summer cottages. A few years later, Davis accepted an invitation from Will Bean to become a builder for the Anna Maria Beach Company. Davis went on to construct many of the cottages along Pine Avenue.

Anna Maria Island Historical Society Museum:

Mitch Davis constructed the current museum building in 1920. He originally designed it as an icehouse, but over the years it has served as an automotive garage, a city office and fire department and a sea turtle hatchery called "the Turtle House." In 1992, the AMIHS renovated this building and turned it into a local history museum.



The AMIHS building was constructed in 1920 for use as an icehouse.





The current museum building served many functions over the years, ranging from an automotive garage to the Department of Public Safety, until it became the museum in 1992.

City Jail at Historical Society Museum Complex:

In 1927, Davis built the city jail to hold rowdy drunks from the local tavern and dance hall. The jail had a roof, a door, and bars on the windows, but the windows had no screens or glass. It was a hot, miserable, mosquito-filled place to spend the night that was an excellent deterrent for crime. In the 1940s, the city jail burned during a storm. In the 1950s, the remaining concrete structure was turned into a tourist attraction with the same slogan you see now. It remains the one and only jail to have been built on the Island.



City jail in 2015. The city jail was built in 1927 to hold rowdy drunks. The jail has been painted with the slogan you see now since the early 1950s.



On November 27, 2001, Belle Haven cottage joined the museum and city jail at 402 Pine Avenue. The Anna Maria Island Historical Society brought this historical cottage to the museum complex to save it from demolition. The museum building, painted turquoise in the early 2000s, can be seen in the background of this photograph.

Belle Haven at Historical Society Museum Complex:

Davis built Belle Haven cottage on the City Pier in 1920 for use as an icehouse. Belle Haven was later used as a rental cottage before it fell into Tampa Bay in 1926. A local man bought the cottage for \$125 while it floated in the Bay. He salvaged it, had it barged around the north end of the Island, used mules to drag it to Palmetto Avenue and made it his home. It served as a family home and vacation rental until 2001 when new owners decided to bulldoze the cottage. The Anna Maria Island Historical Society moved Belle Haven to Pine Avenue to save it from demolition.



Belle Haven, ca. 1920-1926. Belle Haven was built on the City Pier in 1920. In 1926, the cottage was blown into the sea during a storm. It was rescued, used as a family home for many years, and then moved to the museum complex in 2001 to save it from demolition.



Belle Haven in 2004 at the ribbon cutting ceremony. Belle Haven was moved to the historical complex in 2001. The AMIHS raised funds not only to move the cottage, but also to repair it and restore it to its ca. 1920 appearance. After three years of work, Belle Haven opened to the public in 2004.

13. 10009 Gulf Drive, Island Players Theater

This building was originally the home of the William H. Gillet family of Parrish, Florida. In 1912, it was sawed in half and carried on a barge down the Manatee River to Anna Maria Island. When it arrived on the Island, it became the Anna Maria Tourist Center, which greeted day-trippers who came from Tampa and St. Petersburg on excursion boats.

In 1923, when Anna Maria City was incorporated, the building became the center of city business. It was also a community hall, a church, a schoolroom and an event space for social functions. In 1949, it became the Island Playhouse, a showcase for community theater.



In 1912, this building was sawed in half and barged to the Island to serve as a tourist information center. It is now the Island Players Theater.



Gulf Drive in 1914. This photograph was taken facing north on Gulf Drive. The building in the background is the Tourist Center.



Intersection of Gulf Drive and Pine Avenue in the late 1920s. The Island Players Theater building can be seen in the back right of this photograph. At this time, it was serving as a city business center.

14. 101 Spring Avenue, Sandbar Restaurant

The Sandbar Restaurant sits on the site of one of the first bathhouses on the Island. In 1910, the Anna Maria Beach Company built a bathhouse for visitors. In the years that followed, it was expanded to include a restaurant and a small hotel. In the 1920s, the building was used as a tavern and dance hall.

In 1946, the building burned to the ground. Two army barracks were placed on the site of the burned building and the Sandbar was established. The Sandbar went through many renovations, but over the years it offered a restaurant, a dance floor, and a bar and lounge. In 1979, the Chiles Family bought the Sandbar and continues to own the restaurant today.



The Gulf Beach in 1916. The building in the background is the combined bathhouse, restaurant and hotel that the Anna Maria Beach Company built at the end of Spring Avenue, where the Sandbar Restaurant stands today.



The Sandbar has gone through many renovations, offering a restaurant, a dance floor, and a bar and lounge over the years. The name, however, has remained the Sandbar since the late 1940s.



In 1946, the original bathhouse building burned to the ground. This photograph shows the Sandbar Restaurant that was built, soon after, on the site of the burned building.



The interior of the Sandbar in the mid-1900s. The Sandbar has been a popular gathering place since its opening in the 1940s.

WANT TO SEE MORE Island SITES?

Anna Maria City has many interesting historical buildings. Not all could be included on this booklet, so we have created a printable list of supplementary sites. You can access this document on the "About Us" page of our website, amihs.org.

Important Tips To Make Your Tour More Memorable

This tour covers an area of about 1.5 miles. It will take approximately 1.5 hours.

Come prepared with water bottles, sunscreen and any other necessities. Water fountains and public restrooms are available at the Bayfront Park on North Bay Boulevard.

We recommend parking at the Bayfront Park. Some street parking can be found along Pine Avenue, but please be advised that parking lots are mainly reserved for businesses. Check for signs before parking.

These historical buildings are businesses and homes. This walking tour does not grant entry into these places. Please be respectful in taking photographs. Please do not trespass onto private property.

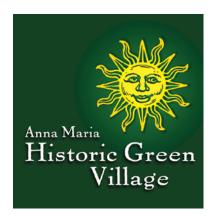
Thank you for taking the Historic Anna Maria City Walking and Biking Tour.

We hope you enjoy a short trip back into old Florida. For more information about the history of Anna Maria Island visit our museum. Also check out our website, amihs.org, to learn more about our scavenger hunts, Settler's Bread sales and Heritage Day festival.

This walking tour was made possible by donations from many fantastic sponsors. The Anna Maria Island Historical Society Museum is entirely volunteer-run and relies on donations to stay free and open to the public. If you are interested in supporting our museum by becoming a donor, member and/or volunteer, please contact us at (941) 778-0492 or AMIHS4315@gmail.com, or visit the "Join Us" page of our website, amihs.org.



Thank you to our wonderful sponsors who made this tour possible. We appreciate their support and dedication to preserving the unique history of this island.











Loving Christ • Sharing His Grace • Serving All





Island Faces Finding Island Places

