

Exploring Edgewood

One of Venice's first neighborhoods



Designed by John Nolen, the Edgewood neighborhood features more than 25 of its original modest homes from the 1920s.

Walking tour

By:
Sarasota Alliance for Historic Preservation,
Venice Area Historical Society
& the City of Venice Historical Resources Division

Welcome to the historic Edgewood neighborhood.

Construction here began in 1926. The community was originally outside Venice city limits. After 75 percent of the homeowners petitioned Venice City Council in 1927, this was the first area in Sarasota County to be annexed into the city.

Venice has 5 neighborhoods in the National Register of Historic Places, and Edgewood was one of the first to be listed. In 1989, 32 homes here were listed on the register as the Edgewood Historic District.

This subdivision was developed by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, or BLE, as part of a real estate project to build the new city of Venice as an investment of its employee pension plan. Nationally recognized urban planner John Nolen was hired to design the city and the BLE asked Nolen to design a modest neighborhood that railroad pensioners could afford. Deed restrictions limited buyers to "persons of the Caucasian or white race."

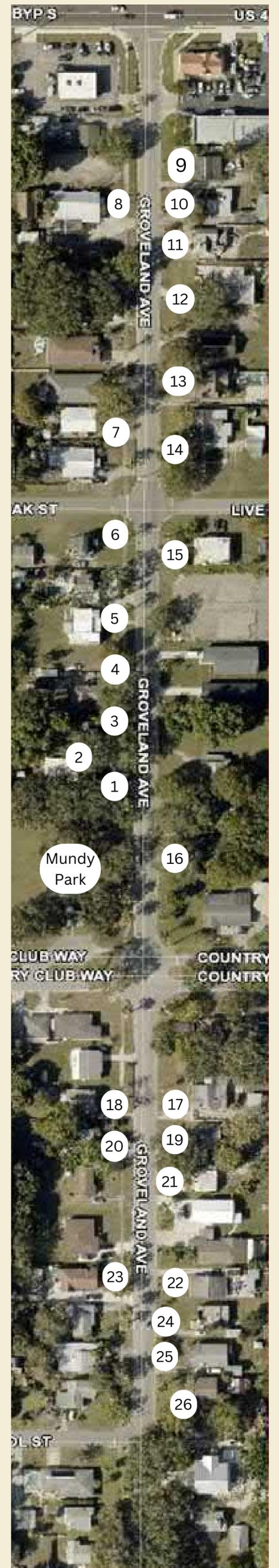
By 1928, more than 100 homes had been built in the Edgewood Section, selling from \$2,500 to \$4,050. But the BLE developers abandoned the entire Venice project that year, following slow sales city-wide and concern from union members about the lavish spending of their pension funds. After the Great Depression hit, Edgewood was left unfinished and semi-abandoned.

Homes were sold off by the dozens to real estate speculators and some were moved in the 1930s to create a beach resort near the current South Jetty or to Eagle Point.

Today, you can see many of the houses that are still standing and the neighborhood that has grown up around them. Your tour starts at Mundy Park in the 800 block of Groveland Avenue and heads west to the 700 block, then turns back east to head down to the 900 block of Groveland.

Mundy Park is named after then-City Councilwoman Mrs. H.L. Mundy, who in the 1940s donated 8 lots to the city for a playground and \$200 for play equipment.

Research by Larry Humes of the Venice Gondolier, Harry Klinkhamer, Nancy DeForge, Tommye Whittaker, Dave Baber, Lorrie Muldowney and Jan Vertefeuille.



#1 824 Groveland Avenue 1926 Mediterranean Revival

This house has a rough stucco exterior with clay tile attic vents in the gable end. The gable roof terminates in parapet walls with a gable form flattening at the two ends. This gable end parapet is unusual but can be found on several other homes in this neighborhood. The original shed roofed porch is located to the right and has been enclosed.

The home was built in 1926 by M.M. Gleichman, a Tampa home designer and developer who built several other Edgewood homes. When the BLE developers abandoned the entire Venice development project in 1928, Gleichman remained the owner of several of the homes he built. In 1937, the Venice Houses Inc. company bought up a number of the Edgewood homes, including his.

We know that the Dandridge family moved here in 1946, with Theo working at the Manhattan Produce Co., an easy walk from here to its location near the train depot, and Hazel working as a dressmaker out of her home.



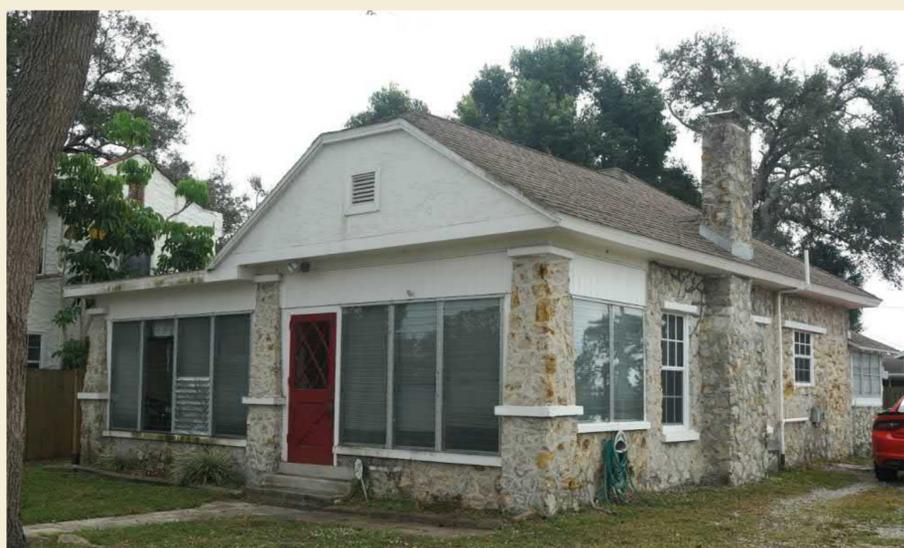
#2 820 Groveland Avenue 1926 Mediterranean Revival

This two-story home has a symmetrical form with the long side along the street and an exterior finished with a rough stucco texture. This home is another example of a gable roof terminating in parapet walls with a gable form flattening at the two ends. The house sports an unusual decorative lintel over the porch opening.

Like its neighbor at 824 Groveland, this home was built in 1926 and owned by developer M.M. Gleichman until 1937, when it was sold to Venice Houses Inc., a rental company. It took a few years after the Depression for developers to begin showing an interest in Venice again, and more than 125 houses were bought by a New York investor to rent out during the winter season for \$300 a month.

In 1950, the Ringo family lived here, with father Herbert managing a local seafood market and mother Essie raising three boys here.

In 1971, it went on the market for \$11,500, described as a "6-Room Spanish style home. Cypress beam living room ceiling. 2 bath, 2 air conditioners, basic furniture and appliances included."



#3 816 Groveland Avenue 1927 Masonry Craftsman Bungalow

There were less restrictive architectural requirements in Edgewood than in other neighborhoods designed by John Nolen, resulting in a variety of housing styles. This bungalow, for instance, is clad with randomly laid Florida limestone. The gable cross roof continues over the porch, a common attribute of the craftsman bungalow. To the east of the porch is a patio covered by a flat roof, supported by large square masonry columns. The porch and patio are both enclosed with jalousie windows.

Venice High School teacher Mildred McAmis and her family lived here throughout the 1950s.

#4 810 Groveland Avenue 1926 Mediterranean Revival

The house appears to have a symmetrical façade, which is the result of an addition to the east. The original is a cross plan with a flat main roof with parapet wall and a gable roof in the cross section. The addition has a flat roof with parapet wall creating a U-shaped plan. The space between is filled in with a patio that has been enclosed.

The house was owned by BLE Realty into the 1930s, when like so many of its neighboring homes it was sold to Venice Houses Inc. The 1950 census shows three sisters and other family members living here, including Louise Monfort Burtis, who assisted in building St. Marks Episcopal Church. She passed away in 1952 at age 80.



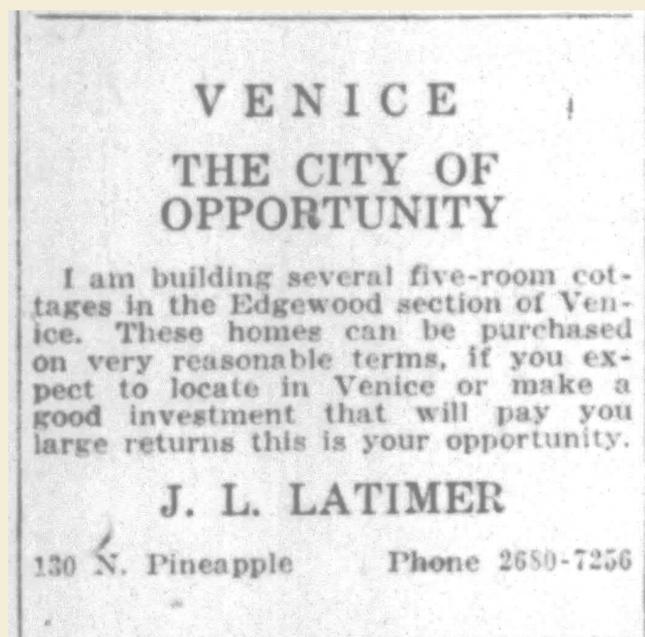
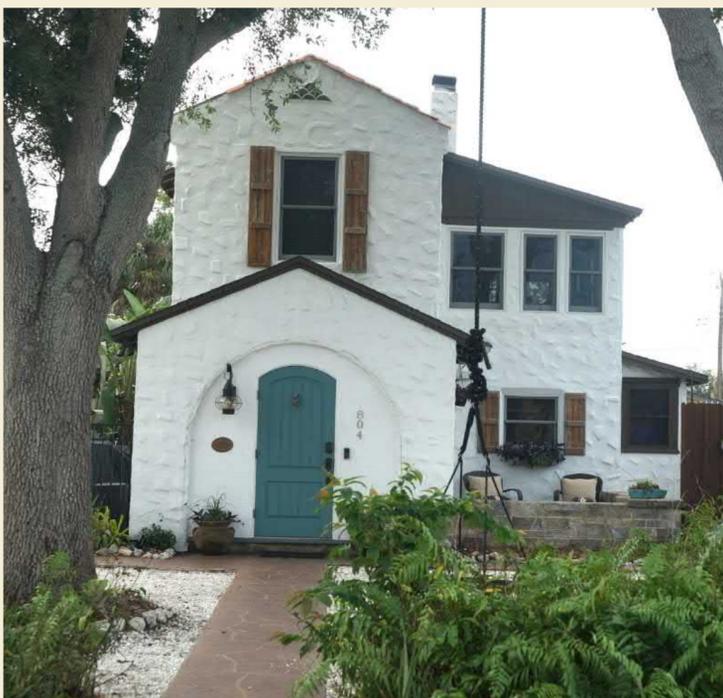
#5 804 Groveland Avenue 1926 Mediterranean Revival

This two-story home has a gable roof projecting to the street with a rough stucco texture intended to suggest the wall structure is rubble stone with a skin coat of stucco. The projecting large arch is the original porch and was enclosed sometime after 1985.

This home, like several of its neighbors, was built by M.M. Gleichman and sold to Venice Houses Inc. in 1937.

The homes in Edgewood were mass constructed with as many as a half dozen built simultaneously by the same builder. Building materials varied from one-story wood framed structures, to hollow clay tile or poured concrete with a smooth textured stucco finish.

In 1968, local news reports that resident John Wilson founded the Wilson Refrigeration service.



#6 800 Groveland Avenue 1926 Mediterranean Revival

This home has a symmetrical elevation and heavy stucco, similar to 820 Groveland, which was built by the same developer. The gable roof has raised parapets at gable ends.

This house spent its first several decades as a rental property, sold by the developer to Venice Houses Inc. in 1937, which sold it to Venetia Inc in 1947.

Both Venice Houses Inc and Venetia were owned by New York capitalist and attorney F. Kingsbury Curtis, who was hailed as a savior for the area's economy after he purchased 125 homes in Venice a decade after the Florida land bust left a partially built and hurting city.

Bud and Tamara Devine bought the house in 1949 as a "handyman special." Bud became Venice's fire chief in 1963.

While Edgewood had less restrictive architectural requirements than other Venice neighborhoods, there was a mandatory setback from the property line of 25 feet for all homes. This resulted in a uniform street appearance for the neighborhood regardless of the buildings' design.



#7 740 Groveland Avenue 2005 Neo-Mediterranean Revival

Surprise! This one isn't an original model, but a newer home that is a great example of infill development sensitively designed to fit the neighborhood. The triple front windows and the parapet wall reflect the historical architectural style of the neighborhood, while the smooth stucco texture is a nod to current design trends.



#8 716 Groveland Avenue 1926 Wood Frame Vernacular

This house has been significantly altered, but the original wood frame structure remains visible with the gable end to the street. The original full-width porch has been replaced with an enclosed gable-roofed front entry porch centered on the north elevation and there have been several additions.



N. Y. CAPITALIST IMPROVES BLOCK OF VENICE HOMES

F. Kingsbury Curtis Shows
His Faith in County By
Investing Thousands

Realizing that Florida, and particularly Sarasota county, is among the leaders in the march to recovery, F. Kingsbury Curtis, prominent New York attorney and capitalist, several months ago acquired a large number of modern dwellings in various sections of Venice, and today practically every one of these homes is either occupied or in the process of thorough renovation and repairs.

With an investment running into the hundreds of thousands of dollars, Mr. Curtis, through his company, Venice Houses, Inc., has taken upwards of 125 homes off the delinquent tax rolls and thus eased the burden for the other taxpayers of the county by listing the property on the live rolls.

These homes have been thoroughly inspected, every repair and needed improvement noted, and then turned over to carpenters and other skilled craftsmen who have put them in excellent condition for permanent occupancy.

Since April of this year Venice Houses, Inc., has maintained a repair schedule calling for thorough and painstaking work with the view of permanency. Workmen have been employed since that time and there is considerable work yet remaining on the schedule.

An inspection of many of the homes made livable by Mr. Curtis' interests has shown that they are among the best of their class in this section of the state with every modern improvement and convenience.

No matter what the prospective Sarasota county citizen may want in a home, it will be found in the Edgewood development of Venice or in other homes scattered throughout the city.

L. H. Kramer, general manager for the Curtis company, said yesterday that no expense had been spared, under direct orders of Mr. Curtis, in rehabilitating the houses. They were originally well constructed and although many of them have been vacant for varying periods every one of the dwellings were found to be in a good state of preservation. No deterioration had set in and with modernizing of features most of them were ready for immediate occupancy. Others required major repairs—and not a cent was spared in doing the work properly.

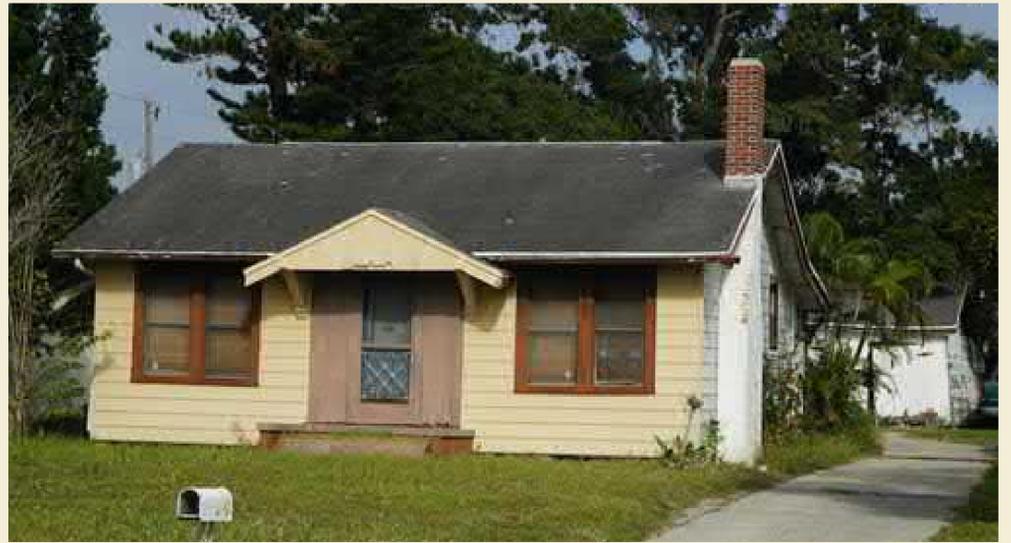
It was said that local labor and material purchased from Sarasota county business houses was used wherever possible. This factor has done much, in itself, to alleviate the unemployment situation in this county—giving laborers of the skilled and unskilled type work during the summer months.

When Mr. Curtis first undertook the Edgewood rehabilitation pro-

#9 713 Groveland Avenue 1926 Wood Frame Vernacular

This wood frame vernacular home has craftsman bungalow attributes. The symmetrical plan with a gable roof has the long side to the street. The center door is flanked by mullion windows and the front door originally was a 10-light glass door flanked by 10-light side lights that have been boarded over. The doorway is capped by a gabled hood supported by decorative angled brackets. The original clapboard has been covered with aluminum siding. An early garage is to the rear.

Like many of its neighbors, the home was bought by Venice Houses Inc. in 1937 and rented by the investor-owned company. In 1937, the family of Michael Evans moved in. He was the manager of the Camp Eagle Point Hotel, which also was owned for some time by Venice Houses Inc. owner F. Curtis Kingsbury. Members of the Evans family remained there through at least 1950, according to census records. In 1956, it was listed for sale for \$7,950.



#10 717 Groveland Avenue 1926 Mediterranean Revival

This home with smooth stucco texture has a hip roof along the long plane, with a cross gable projecting to the street. An open masonry gateway with arch opening projecting from the southwest corner remains intact, as does the south wall chimney with a small niche recessed into it. The home now has replacement aluminum awning windows.

In 1954, this home was the residence of Helen and Claude Briner, who won the Venice Gondolier's Christmas lighting contest that year.



#11 721 Groveland Avenue 1926 Tudor Revival

The home has an asymmetrical layout and a steeply pitched gable roof. A smaller gable roof entry is recessed from the large gable to its left. A massive, tapered fireplace chimney is located on the front to the right of the entry.

Census and newspaper records show that members of the extended Moore family, including D.F. and Rhoda Moore, lived here from 1935 to 1964.



#12 725 Groveland Avenue 1926 Mediterranean Revival

This home has a semi-symmetrical facade with a central doorway flanked by mullion windows to the east and west. It has a flat roof with parapet wall. The left section of the façade projects out towards the street, with a parapet over this section that is articulated and stepped in a gable form in the center. Rectangular scuppers provide drainage to the flat roof. The central front porch has an arched opening and is capped with a tile shed roof. Simple diamond tiles decorate the façade.

The fireplace chimney on the east wall has a small recessed niche and behind the chimney is an appropriately designed addition set back from the front, with a similar design to the original home. The garage located behind the addition makes it visually disappear.

The home was owned by Royal Dibble in 1927 and by 1937 it was in the name of Tyler Dibble. A 1947 ad announced: "Two bedroom Home on Groveland Ave. Newly decorated. New roof. Nice size lot." The home was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Ray E. Dolson from Cleveland, Ohio. In 1964, a \$100 reward was offered for information leading to the conviction of any person involved in vandalism or sabotage of work by Custom Drywall Construction Company at 725 Groveland.



#13 737 Groveland Avenue 1926 Craftsman Bungalow

This house has a common bungalow layout with a steeply pitched gable roof along the road and clapboard siding with stucco on the gable end. Original four-over-one double hung windows remain and a large wraparound porch projects from the south and east sides.

The porch roof is supported by massive, stucco masonry piers supporting tapered wood columns, while the porch itself has been enclosed with aluminum awning windows over knee walls of horizontal boards. A chimney of random laid stone projects up the east wall. The large front dormer has replacement windows.

In 1946, the Gondolier noted that Mrs. D.F. Moore lived here. Miss Bina Moore left in September 1946 for a job in Washington D.C.



#14 741 Groveland Avenue 1926 Wood Frame Vernacular

This home has a simple design with a gable roof and a corner porch on the southeast corner. The large double-stepped brick chimney is unusually high. The original wood siding has been replaced with Hardie board clapboard siding and there is a flat roof addition to the rear.

Ruth Swales, who won the Charleston dance contest at the Venice-Nokomis Theater in 1927, lived here until at least 1930.

#15 801 Groveland Avenue 1926 Mediterranean Revival

This house is remarkably intact and original, with a semi-symmetrical elevation and a moderate stucco texture. It has original 6-over-6 double hung wood windows and double mullion windows to the left. The house has an open recessed porch in the center with a barrel tile shed roof and open patio steps to the right, with an original stucco knee wall and covered by an aluminum shed roof. The flat roof with a flat parapet wall is capped by barrel tile with a triple round clay tile scupper in the wall.

Michael Wayne Corradino moved here in 1967 and ran for mayor in 1969. He also wrote for the Venice Gondolier and founded the Florida Monkey Sanctuary, which in 1970 had 23 primates it had rescued from pet owners who were unprepared to meet the needs of these wild animals. Corradino said at the time that he hoped to raise enough money to expand the sanctuary to take in a greater number of unwanted pets and allow them to live in a natural-setting sanctuary off Jackson Road in Venice.



“There were only about four families that stayed in Edgewood all summer long. There was open range just outside our yard. Cows would walk under our windows, as well as wild cats, alligators and rattlesnakes.”

– Irene Chenault, who moved to 833 Groveland in 1945

#16 833 Groveland Avenue 1926 Masonry Craftsman Bungalow

This house has a simple bungalow form with the gable end facing the street and a smooth stucco surface. The nearly full-width porch has a stepped-down gable roof and the porch roof is supported by large square masonry columns with stuccoed knee walls between them. The original openings were screened. The porch is now enclosed by filling in the spaces between the columns with sliding windows in a configuration that matches the original screen frames.

The Chenault family lived here from 1945 into the 1960s. In 1958, A.L. Chenault is identified as Past Commander of No-Vel Post 159 American Legion and in 1959, he started Chenault's Painting Service. In 1964, Jan Chenault was crowned Poppy Queen by the Auxiliary Members of the No-Vel Post of the American Legion. In January 1969, the house was bought by Elizabeth North.



#17 909 Groveland Avenue 1926 Wood Frame Vernacular

This simple wood frame house has been skim coated with a smooth stucco texture. It has a cross gable layout and replacement six-over-six aluminum single hung windows. The area to the left of the projecting gable roof section has been added.

In 1946, the house was owned by Mr. and Mrs. John L. Chenault. A baby shower was held for Mrs. John Chenault in 1947 and Darrell Ray was born on June 5. By 1950 Mr. and Mrs. M.C. Scales and daughters lived here, with M.C. Scales selling lots in Edgewood in 1956. In 1958, Memnon C. Scales advertised from Tallahassee that the 3-bedroom, 2-bath house was for rent for \$75 a month.

In 1959, Sam and Joan Dillon celebrated their 14th anniversary at the home. Listed were 4 children: Jan, Wendy, Bruce, and Keith. Sam was a reporter for the Sarasota News and Joan performed at the Venice Little Theatre. In 1961, they rented the house out for \$75 a month.



#18 908 Groveland Avenue 1925 Mediterranean Revival

This house has a symmetrical layout and originally featured a flat roof with a parapet wall. Triple scuppers served to drain the flat roof. A shallow gable roof was installed above the parapet wall prior to 1985. A center front porch with gable barrel tile roof and arched openings is prominent on the façade. A fireplace chimney is located on the west side. The house now has replacement aluminum awning windows.

Like many in the neighborhood, this home was managed as a rental unit into the 1940s by property companies owned by New York City capitalist F. Kingsbury Curtis. Tax rolls indicate that William Roberts lived here in 1930 and '31 and that Joseph Kona resided here in 1958.



Lamolithic Houses

Lamolithic homes were built by Sarasota concrete supplier John Lambie, originally of Cleveland, and describe houses made from his unique method for poured concrete residences. This building technique created thin ceilings and walls for homes that were extremely strong, as well as affordable. Several Lamolithic houses were constructed by renowned architects Paul Rudolph and Ralph Twitchell, pioneers of the Sarasota School of Architecture style, and some still remain on Siesta Key.

Lambie created the Lamolithic Housing and Development Corporation and through that company built eight Lamolithic homes in the 900 block of Groveland Street.

#19 913 Groveland Avenue 1925 Mediterranean Revival

A 2001 Venice Gondolier article by Kim Cool reported that 913 Groveland was known as the “bunker house” as it was built of poured concrete by John Lambie, making it “hurricane proof.” Like No. 908 across the street, 913 originally had a flat roof with a parapet wall, though a newer gable roof and shed roof on the center porch were both added after 1985. The chimney on the east side has been raised to increase the draft since the original would have been too low once the roof was increased. The decorative band terminates shortly after wrapping around the sides.

A 1954 ad had Gary Koch selling hamsters and W. J. Koch selling air conditioners here. A January 1957 ad states: “MODERN 5 Room, all concrete poured house, asphalt tile floors. Paved street, nice yard. Good neighbors. Completely furnished.” In 1958, the rent was \$75 a month, listed by Joe Kona.



#20 912 Groveland Avenue 1925 Mediterranean Revival

This home has an asymmetrical form and L-shaped layout. The exterior has a medium stucco texture with a flat roof with a flat parapet wall and scuppers. A porch fills in the area inside the ell and projects out toward the street has a lower parapet wall capped with barrel tile. The large porch openings are arch topped and have been enclosed with casement windows. A breeze block screen wall has been built at the rear of the driveway, providing privacy behind it.

Mr. and Mrs. William Hale of Washington D.C. purchased the home in 1950. By 1958, William H. Johnston was listed as residing here.



BUILDING

The inauguration of a second building program of 25 homes in the Edgewood section of Venice was announced this week by Carey and Walter, local builders, who to date have the unique record of having contracted for two-thirds of the total number of residences now completed in Venice. The firm has also constructed seven stores, two business and office structures, four apartments and several farm houses.



#21 917 Groveland Avenue 1926 Mediterranean Revival

This Mediterranean Revival cottage is another Lamolithic home. The front porch on the left side originally opened to the front and ran along the side yard to. That porch access is now enclosed with a window also now enclosed. The house has a flat roof with parapet wall and smooth stucco. The house has replacement one-over-one single hung aluminum windows. The exterior chimney is a primary feature facing the road.

The home was owned into the 1940s by Venice Houses Inc., with members of the Jassart family living there from at least 1935 to 1945, including plumber Joseph Jassart and his wife Mary Jassart and their three children.



#22 927 Groveland Avenue 1926 Mediterranean Revival

This home has been altered with the addition of a large gable roof that changes the look of the Mediterranean Revival style of the original building.

In 1963, the house was listed as a two-bedroom for rent for \$75 a month.



#23 928 Groveland Avenue 1925 Masonry Craftsman Bungalow

The full-width front porch incorporated under the main roof is a hallmark of the bungalow style, with the porch remaining open. The house has a steep gable form with the gable end to the street. There is a fireplace chimney on the west side.

In a neighborhood with so much turmoil and ownership changes in its earliest days, this home appears to have been continuously occupied by the Niesz family from 1927 to 1937, with George and Annie Niesz listed on the tax rolls.



#24 933 Groveland Avenue 1926 Mediterranean Revival

This house was used to promote the Edgewood neighborhood to rank-and-file members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. The large open porch is loaded on the right side and wraps around the south and east sides. The corners of the openings have an ogee shape.

In 1930, the McCrackens and their five sons lived here and paid \$15 a month rent. In 1946, the youngest McCracken son, Lt. Richard McCracken, was killed at Turner Air Field in Athens, Georgia, when a plane crashed. A 1966 listing for sale: "2-Bedroom, 1-Bath - Kitchen, Dining room, Living Room, Florida Room and Screened Porch, \$7,500.



#25 937 Groveland Avenue 1926 Mediterranean Revival

This simple Mediterranean Revival cottage had a flat roof with parapet wall. At some point between 1974 and 1986 the gable roof was added. The original front porch off center to the right, now enclosed, had a large opening facing the street with ogee decorative detail. An exterior chimney is located on the east side.

In 1956, the Wimbish family resided here, with family members working at the Gulf Theatre. Son Bill Wimbish became an Eagle Scout and in 1958, Jon Wimbish was named "most valuable athlete of the year" and "most valuable football player" at Venice High School.



#26 941 Groveland Avenue 1926 Mediterranean Revival

This Mediterranean Revival cottage is another Lamolithic home. Originally, it had a flat roof with parapet wall. At some point between 1974 and 1986, the gable roof was added. The original form had an asymmetrical elevation with a center chimney on the front. The entry porch is at the right side, accessed from the front and runs along the side of the house.

Auto mechanic Marvin Ziegler purchased the home in 1934 and opened a filling station across from the Venice-Myakka Hotel the following year.

