

FOR INFORMATION:

Emilie Alfino, Museum Manager  
(239) 472-4648 museum  
(239) 357-1644 cell

HISTORICAL VILLAGE HAS HISTORY OF ITS OWN

For 30 years the Sanibel Historical Museum and Village, its volunteers, staff and directors, have worked to preserve the essence of life on Sanibel from the 1880s through the 1940s. Its buildings and their contents tell the stories of typical “Cracker” life, from fishing to farming. Visitors learn how they shopped, how they lived, and how residents learned. Village docents volunteer their time to bring to life pioneer days on Sanibel.

The village, in partnership with the city of Sanibel, is a 501(c)3 entity and is managed and operated by its board. The city owns the land and buildings and provides budget support for maintenance and some staffing.

Since 1984, when the Rutland home stood alone as the island’s history museum, the museum has grown into what it is today, a village of 11 buildings that attracts 10,000 visitors annually.

How did the single-house museum become today’s Historical Village?

After the city of Sanibel was incorporated in 1974, a Historical Preservation Committee, led by Elinor Dormer, resident of Shore Haven and founder of the museum, set about saving historical buildings. After Clarence Rutland died in 1982, the Muench family, who had purchased his home, donated it to the village.

★ The museum opened in 1984 after some renovation work was completed. It was open just one day each week.

★ In 1991-92, the Bailey family donated Bailey’s General Store, Miss Charlotta’s Tearoom and the Old Post Office, all dating from 1927.

★ In 1998, Burnap Cottage , a fishing cottage from Woodring Point that was built in 1898, was donated.

★ In 2001, Morning Glories, a 1926 Sears Roebuck kit home, was moved to the village.

★ In 2002, the “Schoolhouse for White Children” arrived. This school was in use until the 1960s.

★ In 2012, Shore Haven and its Caretaker’s Cottage were donated and moved to the village.

Shore Haven, a Sears Roebuck kit home from 1924, will become the museum’s welcome center with displays of new or traveling exhibits.



*The Rutland House, the only building in the village until 1992, under renovation in the early 1980s*



*The Rutland House today, one of 11 buildings that now constitute the Sanibel Historical Village*

The museum's volunteer staff has grown to over 80 volunteers and docents, without whom the village could not operate. Docents lead full tours twice a day.

Fourth graders from the Sanibel School come at least twice during the school year. Fourth grade is the year they study local history, making their tours that much more meaningful and educational.

Twilight Talks began several years ago, with two or more events each month in season. Here, speakers present topics of historic interest.

Special tours are offered as well. Approximately 600 people took part last year, including groups from around the world.

The Heritage Garden has been planted and cared for by volunteers and represents the typical truck farm of a Sanibel resident. At one time, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, and watermelon all grew abundantly in Sanibel's rich soil. The garden is a major attraction for visitors.

It's costly to maintain and improve the historical village. Ramps are being built in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Old Bailey's Store recently got a new roof, and Morning Glories' porch was completely repaired. New plantings and paved walkways are also planned throughout the village to improve the visitor experience.

As the village begins its 31<sup>st</sup> year, everyone is looking forward so visitors will always be able to look back.