

Source: <http://www.floridatrust.org/about-the-trust/preservation-center>

Preservation Center



The Florida Trust House – Tallahassee

In 2005 the Florida Trust rescued the Hays-Hood House, a 1910 Queen Anne home in Tallahassee. Now called the Florida Trust House and headquarters of the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, this home is located at 906 East Park Avenue in the Magnolia Heights National Register District of Tallahassee, Florida.

Built in 1910 by Jesse and Sarah Hays, the house was one of the first homes in the Magnolia Heights area of Tallahassee. Mr. Hays chose the design from a pattern book of a house built in Chicago. Mr. Hays adapted the design to better suit the southern setting and oversaw the construction.

Listed by the Florida Master Site File as the finest structure in Magnolia Heights, the home is a one-and-a-half story structure. Typically referred to as Queen Anne style, it is actually a variant of the style called American Free Classic Queen Anne. The home features a veranda with paired columns, a turret with an ogee dome and finial, and both a bay and Palladian window.

During the 1930s, the home was converted into apartments. The Hays' children Harold and Mary acquired the home in 1945. In 1949, Mr. and Mrs. D.L. "Buck" Hood purchased the property. After her husband's death, Rebecca Hood continued to live in the home until it was sold to the Florida Trust in 2005.

The Restoration

In September of 2005, stabilization work began, and exactly two years later the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation completed the project and moved into its new home and state headquarters. The restoration totaled more than \$745,000, with the majority of funds awarded through the Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State, Special Category Grants, as well as private donations.

Phase I included stabilization and selective demolition, interior protection, removal and re-sheathing of the roof framing, interior stripping of interior drywall and paneling, removal of insulation, demolition of existing electrical and upgrades to existing mechanical systems. In addition, interior electrical rewiring, HVAC on first floor, installation of fire/sprinkler/monitoring systems, and non-period ceiling finishes were removed and restored, existing handicapped ramp was removed, the upstairs hallway closet for the mechanical systems was created and interior paint stripping began.

Phase II included insulating the exterior walls, roof and under the floor, mechanical and electrical rough-ins, installation of drywall, plaster, trim, ceramic tile, priming and first coats of paint, installation of cabinets and specialties, finishing paint application and staining, refinishing floors, installation of

doors and hardware, mechanical and electrical trimming, final inspections, handicapped parking and landscape and irrigation systems.

The Florida Trust House is an excellent living showcase of the positive impact historic preservation has not only on an individual property but also for the surrounding neighborhood and community. Especially noteworthy is the careful craftsmanship that restored the ceiling, floor, staircase, fireplace, and the unique carpentry found throughout the home.

Join the Circle of 100 today!

The year 2010 marked the 100th Anniversary of the Hays-Hood House, gem of Tallahassee's Magnolia Heights National Register Historic District. The Florida Trust invites you to celebrate the Hays-Hood House and its rebirth as the Florida Trust House by joining the Circle of 100. For more information about the Florida Trust's Circle of 100 and how you can continue to protect this architectural gem, contact "director@floridatrust.org" or call 850-224-8128.

Source: Edison & Ford Winter Estates

Winner of the National Trust for Historic Preservation Restoration Award

Preservation

The Edison & Ford Winter Estates recently underwent an award-winning multi-million dollar process in which multiple buildings and historic landscape gardens were preserved and restored. The process began in 2001 and the first phase was completed in 2009.

Through leadership fundraising by the Edison-Ford Winter Estates Foundation, City of Fort Myers, Lee County and an Emergency Restoration Grant from the State of Florida, the initial project funding of \$8.85 million was assembled. A new governing Board of Trustees of the Edison & Ford Winter Estates, Inc. was appointed and professional staff, and an impressive group of architects, consultants and restoration contractors were hired.

Other projects were undertaken simultaneously, including restoring the historic Edison seawall with a Lee County Beach and Shoreline Grant and restoring formal gardens such as Mina Edison's Moonlight Garden through the work of local and national garden clubs.

The period of interpretation was established as 1929 and a Master Site Plan was developed providing direction for the restoration as well as for site enhancement and future development. The original project grew to nearly \$10 million. Work was overseen by the Florida State Preservation Officer and Florida State Architect and, as such, complied with the Secretary of Interior's Standard for Restoration of Historic Buildings as well as the Standards for Restoration of Cultural Landscapes.

It was decided that the project would adhere to Edison's and Ford's philosophy of ingenuity, sustainability of natural resources and environmental considerations. Replica shutters for the Edison buildings were constructed following the original design and met with Miami-Dade hurricane codes; lattice building skirts that met the ground were designed and constructed as the originals and made of recycled plastic; the original Edison design copper gutter and downspout system connected to an underground drain field providing water for the gardens as Edison planned; and shell tabby pavers were selected to recreate the appearance of the historic pathways and to meet accessibility needs. Considerations of sustainability, conservation and preservation of the historic landscape and buildings are apparent throughout the site.

By 2006 the restoration of the Edison buildings neared completion and the planned transition from city management was in place. The new private corporation, the Thomas Edison & Henry Ford Winter Estates, Inc., completed its first year separate from city management with a strong operating statement and stable visitation.

Subsequently, another several million dollar project was completed to restore the Ford home including the installation of a fire suppression system. In 2010 and 2011, work has focused on the most important building on the site, the Edison Botanic Research Laboratory. The first phase includes a new roof and structural improvements and replication of the nearby botanic research activity.

During the past several years, the restoration project has received many awards and recognition for preservation, architectural management and design, building and garden restoration, and construction. With the recent completion of restoration, the Edison & Ford Winter Estates, City of Fort Myers, Edison-Ford Winter Estates Foundation, Lee County, State of Florida and hundreds of

private and corporate donors all have a great deal of which to be proud. This has been achieved along with the transformation to private management, with dramatic growth of programs and education; and with the creation of a well designed and flexible plan for Master Site Development and Restoration.

In addition to the restoration achievements and program growth, the site remains one of the most visited historic homes in America and a national treasure committed to innovation, invention and preservation.

Source: National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington DC 202-588-6038

Bouncing Back to Life

"Restoring the Florida laboratory where Thomas Edison sought a substitute for rubber"

By Carlos Harrison | From *Preservation* | November/December 2011

In the final years of his life, Thomas Edison searched for an alternative source of rubber with the same burning intensity he'd demonstrated in pursuit of a reliable light bulb. The locus of his efforts was a site he called his "jungle," a lush waterfront corner of southwest Florida where he wintered with his wife, Mina, and eventually grew thousands of plants that played a crucial role in his experiments.

Now the facility where Edison conducted his studies is being restored to the way it looked prior to the inventor's death in 1931. The Edison Botanic Research Laboratory will be formally dedicated in February.

Edison first visited Fort Myers, Fla., then population 349, in 1885, identifying it as an ideal place to grow bamboo. (He believed bamboo fibers had potential as filaments for light bulbs.) The inventor bought 13.5 acres straddling a cattle road, mapped out research gardens for cultivating promising plants, and quickly converted the property into an invention factory.

Bamboo filaments never caught on with the American public. But Edison continued to escape to the estate during the cold months. His good friend Henry Ford eventually purchased a house nearby.

Lab Restoration Initiated: June 2010

Estimated Date of Completion: February 2012

Total Cost: \$850,000

Funders: HUD Economic Development Initiatives Grants; Edison & Ford Winter Estates, Inc.; Edison-Ford Winter Estates Foundation; The 1772 Foundation; State of Florida, Historical Resources Division Grant

Project Architect: Wiley Parker, Parker/Mudgett/Smith Architects

In 1927, he and Ford teamed with Harvey Firestone to seek a commercially viable domestic alternative to rubber, essential for everything from Firestone's tires to Edison's phonograph. Together, they established the Edison Botanic Research Corporation and, in 1928, built a laboratory where

Edison conducted rubber research surrounded by assistants, a secretary to type his notes, and a glassblower to modify labware on demand.

"It's a magical building," says Chris Pendleton, president and CEO of the Edison & Ford Winter Estates. "This little place that [local residents] thought was Edison's getaway actually was a unique tropical research facility."

Mina Edison bequeathed the lab and its surrounding estate—which included a 6,000-square-foot residence and guest house, plus the research fields and gardens—to the city of Fort Myers in 1947. The nearby Ford Estate was incorporated in 1988.

For almost 50 years, officials treated the prized laboratory as "a city facility, rather than as a historic landmark," Pendleton says. An asphalt parking lot covered the former site of the research gardens, and the ground-level laboratory was elevated and placed atop concrete piers. The prevailing philosophy was one of deferred maintenance: "Fix it when it's an issue," says Pendleton.

By 2003, the property required emergency intervention. Termites had turned structural corner posts at Edison's house into hollow shells. Invasive trees were growing up through the porch. The Edison & Ford Winter Estates board, Edison-Ford Winter Estates Foundation, and the city of Fort Myers launched a \$10 million effort to rescue the residences. The National Trust recognized that effort with the 2008 Trustee Emeritus Award for Excellence in the Stewardship of Historic Sites.

Bringing the lab and surrounding gardens back to their 1929 state was an \$850,000 continuation of the restoration project.

Edison's Quest for Rubber

The soaring cost of rubber during World War I convinced Edison, Ford, and Firestone that an independent source of latex was vital for America's future. To that end, the three men put up \$25,000 each and created the Edison Botanic Research Corporation.

Edison planted a total of 2,200 plant species at the Fort Myers estate and tested 17,000 plant samples before settling on the ubiquitous herb goldenrod as the most viable alternative to the famous Brazilian rubber tree. He even developed his own latex-rich goldenrod strain, *Solidago edisoniana*, which grew 12 to 14 feet tall.

He received his 1,090th patent for the process of extracting latex from goldenrod. Work on the project continued at the laboratory after Edison's death, but the Department of Agriculture relocated the entire operation to Georgia in 1936. —C.H.

One of the biggest problems preservation experts faced at the lab was encroaching vegetation. A banyan sapling planted in 1925 had grown into one of the world's largest specimens, with almost 400 aerial roots snaking down like a tangle of trunks. "It's like this progressive army," says Pendleton, "and it's marching toward all the structures around it."

Remediation required cutting away the roots under the building and installing a barrier to prevent further intrusion from the prized tree. Asbestos had to be removed, and lingering arsenic, used to preserve plant specimens, forced the teams to treat the building for hazardous materials.

Then came the work to stabilize the building's foundation and supports. Crews did not have to deal with the termite issues that plagued Edison's home, probably because the inventor built his lab of native pine instead of New England white spruce, but workers did find wood rot. They also restored or replaced siding and refurbished the windows, most with original 1920s glass. Then they removed an asphalt roof built by the city and installed a metal roof similar to the original. Soon, Pendleton says, "We're going to be tearing out the asphalt parking lot and restoring portions of that early garden."

Wiring inside the lab required updating, so the restoration team took the opportunity to re-create the original lighting scheme—an ingenious system of hanging lamps that could be raised or lowered by sliding a cord through a wooden toggle. "It hasn't had that lighting in years," Pendleton says.

When it is dedicated in February, Edison's lab will appear as it did 80 years ago, down to the hand-cranked coffee mills and the buckets of stones his researchers used to grind plant material for testing. As Curator Alison Giesen says, "It will look like the workers have just stepped out for a brief moment."

Miami-based writer and editor Carlos Harrison is a frequent contributor to Preservation.

Edison & Ford Winter Estates Awarded \$50,000 Grant

Posted by Edison Ford Winter Estates On August 19, 2014

"The Edison & Ford Winter Estates has been awarded a \$50,000 preservation grant for restoration of the Edison Botanic Laboratory by the Florida Legislature through the Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State, assisted by the Florida Historical Commission. The Edison Botanic Laboratory is located at the Edison & Ford Winter Estates in Fort Myers, Florida.

"The Edison Botanic Laboratory was a project of Thomas Edison, Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone who were searching for a viable source of organic rubber which could be grown and produced in Southwest Florida. Through their work, they discovered that goldenrod leaves would produce the latex to be distilled for a commercial source of rubber. The Laboratory and the surrounding research gardens were active in the 1920's and 1930's and established the winter homes of the two inventors as a center for plant research. Today, the site is one of the most visited historic home sites in America and serves more than 200,000 visitors and school children every year.

"The grant from the State of Florida is part of a total \$630,000 project for restoration of the original 1928 laboratory structure. Additional funds have also been received from The 1772 Foundation, HUD EDI grants, the Edison Ford Winter Estates Foundation, and the Edison & Ford Winter Estates, Inc. It is planned that the laboratory building will remain open throughout the project. Architects for the project are Parker Mudgett Smith. Chris-Tel Company is the restoration contractor.

"Last year, the Edison & Ford Winter Estates received the top award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation for restoration of the Edison and Ford buildings along the river, and this year

the site received the top national award for restoration of the historic landscape from the National Garden Clubs Inc."

Source: The National Trust for Historic Preservation

"Edison & Ford Winter Estates

Recipient of The 2008 Trustee Emeritus Award for Excellence in the Stewardship of Historic Sites

Thomas Edison and Henry Ford aren't the only innovators associated with this place. When the \$10 million restoration began in 2001, the nonprofit organization that owns the estates realized their project could be enlightening for all. Instead of closing work sites, which included seven buildings and 10 acres of gardens and walkways, the staff made them part of the public tour of the estates. These areas remained open throughout the five-year process, allowing visitors to witness and learn about the restoration. The Edison Estates, originally opened in 1947, purchased the neighboring properties of Henry Ford in 1989. Like their former occupants, the staff here is always thinking ahead. 'This award is so very important to us,' says estates president and CEO Chris Pendleton, 'because it shows our strong commitment to preparing the site for future generations.' Some of the continuing efforts even incorporate green initiatives. Ford and Edison would be proud."

Source: Bonnet House Museum & Gardens Newsletter October-December 2013
(A Property of the Florida Trust)

"Bonnet House offers its sincerest thanks to all the members of the Bonnet House Alliance who worked so diligently to raise funds to support Bonnet House in the 2012-13 Fiscal Year. As a result of their efforts with Entirely Entertaining and other initiatives, the Alliance was able to make a commitment of \$45,000 to Bonnet House. These funds will cover a variety of restoration projects including adding climate control, a drop ceiling, and a new bridge to the Island Theater, new dining room lighting (already installed) and carpentry projects in the Main House. The Bonnet House Alliance is comprised of members who host events to raise awareness about Bonnet House, raise funds for restoration projects at the estate, and provide camaraderie for the many volunteers that make operating Bonnet House possible. Membership is open at no additional cost to any active member of Bonnet House. Visit www.bonnethouse.org/alliance for more information."

Bonnet House Museum & Gardens Newsletter October-December 2014

"Bonnet House is Facing a Costly and Unexpected Expense. Recently, the Welcome Center lost power. Electricians have diagnosed the problem as a fault in the electrical cable and/or conduit that run from the main gate, under the parking lot, and to the Welcome Center. This cable is about 25 years old and galvanized pipe was used as conduit then. Due to the distance to the Welcome Center --700 feet-- the gauge of electrical cable needed contains a large amount of copper, and the price of copper is very high these days.

"Our electrical contractor is estimating a cost of \$36,000 to install new cable and conduit. We have no choice but to go forward with this repair and expenditure. Please consider making a special gift to help Bonnet House defray this expense. Every gift, whatever the amount, will help. Our volunteers and visitors will be most grateful to have an air conditioned, fully functional Welcome Center back. To make a tax-deductible gift please visit our website at bonnethouse.org/donate. Checks are welcome too!"

Restoration

Courtyard and Veranda Painting Project

Mike Nucci of Nucci Painting and Carpet and his crew of seasoned painters have been busy this summer at Bonnet House Museum & Gardens. This experienced group of painters have painted other historic sites such as the

1927 Hollywood Woman's Club in Hollywood, Florida, the 1850 Teddy Roosevelt's summer residence located in Morristown, New Jersey, the National Archives and the 1983 renovation of the Old Post Office both located in Washington, DC.

If you have some time take a moment to appreciate the freshly painted Veranda and the east side of the Courtyard interior. The blue ceiling with the yellow beams especially stands out. The next phase of restoration will include the areas of the Courtyard with the blue walls.