

It Was a Time Like No Other!

By Jerry Smith

In the 2003 Summer issue of the Pine Island Real Estate Guide, my wife and I noticed a new listing for a very old home. Where is that? It says it is in Bokeelia! That can't be in Bokeelia, we know every place in Bokeelia.



Photo Credit: Jerry Smith

Built in 1910-1911 by Frank Adams, the Adams House wasn't visible from the street. It topped an Indian Mound, and was said to be the highest residential structure in Lee County. Situated on more

than seven -acres, the property was bordered on the South by the Calusa waterway.

We bought the Adams house, and began renovations. It certainly had history, and more, to keep our interest. Frank Adams had partnered with John Smith to have a sawmill at the corner of Robert Road and Pineland Drive. Wood was cut for the school, post office, and other structures. But Adams loved horticulture, and mango varieties were grown, and certified, on the property. Sunset, and Cogshall mango to name two. Thomas Edison's Gardner was a frequent visitor.

We learned that animals on the property were special. Giant Iguana Lizards over six feet in length lived around the pond, and Marmosett monkeys looked down from trees above. Great horned owls stood on the roof, and their offspring flew in the house from time to time. Pokey, the long black indigo snake may still be on the property, but in the early 2000 years he hung out on the roof. He was friendly with the rooster Hank, and his chickens. Eagles in the yard are a common sight in the Winter and Spring. Gopher tortoises go about their business all over the mound, not shy of the above ground owners.

Living in the old island wood home on the Indian



Photo Credit: Mike Shevlin

mound was, and is, the experience of time. Voices and ghosts, you ask? Axe heads, and shell tools from days past? The feeling? Well, as it is said, simple pleasures are life's treasures.

When built, the Adams House had an outdoor kitchen, and two cisterns. Today, it still has the original roof, and the kitchen is enclosed. The French doors were added in the 1990's.

In one period, the home and adjoining structures, were home to a religious type of commune. Those structures include a lower house/garage, which was once three separate storage buildings, and an up the hill guest cottage, once a goat shed.

On August 13th, 2004, Hurricane Charley put his eye right on the Adams House, and shook the house until it chattered on its standing blocks. Nineteen people sought shelter there, many of whom we had brought in from Cayo Costa and Captiva. For six weeks afterwards we bathed using the artesian well on the property, and washed our clothes there as well. After Charley, the view was almost unobstructed, and many neighbors had no roof or major damage. The Adams house had moved fourteen inches, but it stayed on the blocks, just barely. Jacking each frame, I moved the blocks back to the center positions.

More than thirteen years in the Adams home on the Indian mound, a labor of love. Privacy, and history were the comforts of the Home that time forgot. We stayed in Bokeelia, and live in sight of the artesian well, and the cypress slough, and behind those tallest trees. It was a time like no other.

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