

built a small cottage for his daughter Corella. It was here in this cottage that Corella would practice piano and eventually as a young woman give piano lessons. In the front of the cottage Corella sold candies to the locals. One can just imagine her young students leaving with a sweet in hand after their lesson thus making Corella Piner's music room the first candy store in Matlacha!

By the early 60's the dredging for Sanibel bridge and causeway pretty much destroyed the scallop and crabbing industry Piner had built. After his death, his wife Mary attempted to run the business but eventually sold it to Jesse Padilla. Jesse ran the business for a few years and then he too sold not only the seafood house but also his marine supply store, fish company and ice house. Today where Piner Seafood Company stood is the Matlacha Wellness Center and the office for the seafood company that sat in front of it is now a Century 21 real estate office. The Pine Island Marine Supply building is now the Hook Restaurant. Their outside dining area was where the Pine Island Fish Company stood. The buildings that housed Mr. Padilla's freezer and icehouse are now occupied by Island Treasures Tropical Clothing and Gifts and Hamilton-Franklin Realty. Finally, across the street The Piner home and cottage have become one building. Mary Piner lived in the home until the late 60's and then rented the buildings up until the 70's when she finally sold the property. In 1992 the cottage was connected to the main house and today the beautiful little bungalow boasts Charlie's Tropicals, an art gallery specializing in local art and stained glass.

While our beautiful, colorful, artsy island of Matlacha is not an old town, it has a very colorful and rich history. From our Calusa Indian heritage, to pre-and post-World Wars I and II, we have always seemed to attract very forward-thinking individuals. Men and women who sought to make a better life and set the wheels in motion to create a sustainable community for many years to come. As you stroll the street in front of our quaint shops try to picture lories loading the fish and seafood, horses and mules hauling dry goods to consumers and the sounds of fishing boats going through the pass. The fill has become a very different place from those days of the Piners and the Padillas, but we are still a community of open and creative individuals. We paint and sculpt our history, we toast our forbearers with an ice cold beer or a crisp glass of wine, we dine on the fish caught by our captains and as the day ebbs into the evening we stand at the water's edge remembering. Please, come see us and spend a day in Matlacha!

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Photo's courtesy of Mike Shevlin*



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