

## A Historical and Natural Tour of Sarasota Bay

1. Sarasota Bay was identified as Palm Sound on one of the first charts of the area, drafted in 1771.
2. Tidy Island was once the home of prehistoric Indians. The peninsula was settled by Cornilius Thigpen in the 1880's. When the area was developed for residences, the Indian Mounds were studied and preserved and Thigpen's home was reconstructed to serve as a museum highlighting the area's history.
3. Cortez, Manatee's historic fishing village, maintains it's seafood-based tradition today, as the community resists the pressures of modern development.
4. Palma Sola Bay is home to the world's most studied population of bottle nose dolphins.
5. The first deep water channel linking Sarasota Bay to Tampa Bay was the Palma Sola Cut, dredged in 1895. Shortly after, Sir. John Savarese began operating the steamer Mistletoe, between Tampa and Sarasota.
6. Longboat Key was named for the auxiliary vessels used by the spanish explorers to navigate the shallow waters and land along the coast.
7. Between the turn-of-the-century and the hurricane of 1926, Longboat Key was extensively planted in fruit and vegetables, as the warm gulf waters provided protection from frost. At one time, the largest avocado grove in the state was located here.
8. Along the bay shore of Longboat Key is the only remaining conditionally approved shellfishing area in Sarasota Bay. In the early days a variety of shellfish thrived throughout the bay. Pioneers obtained oyster leases from the state and cultivated the oyster beds, sometimes by feeding them with cornmeal. These corn fed oysters were the perfect compliment to a mug of "Old Man" Bacon's famous corn beer, guaranteed to effect the desired dizzy.
9. Indian Beach was named in 1891 by Dr. Frederick Williams, an amatuer archaeologist who valued the region's abundance of Indian remains. Indian Beach was a tourist mecca around the turn-of-the-century, and later incorporated as a town.
10. William Whitaker was Sarasota's first pioneer, arriving in 1843. Whitaker was a fisherman by trade, and built his home along the waterfront at a site known as yellow bluffs. Whitaker rafted red cedar logs from Longboat Key, evidently to build a bug-free home. Today the City of Sarasota dumps millions of gallons of sewage effluent into Whitaker's bayou each day.

11. New Pass is said to have been opened by the 1848 hurricane, however it may have been opened as late as the 1870's. Whatever the year, it was proclaimed to be the "new pass", and the name stuck.

12. City Island was created in the 1920's from spoil material dredged from the "Million Dollar" channel through New Pass and across Sarasota Bay. The channel quickly filled in, leaving the bay shallow, and Sarasota one million dollars poorer.

13. Lido Key, named by John Ringling in the 1920's when he was developing his island property, translates to "the beach" in Italian. Thus the name Lido Beach is redundant.

14. St. Armand's Key was named for Charles A. St. Armand, a sea captain from New Orleans, who settled on the island in the 1880's.

15. Bird Key, once a mangrove rookery surrounded by productive grass flats, was developed with a single home in 1912, enlarged by John Ringling in the 1920's, and was bulkheaded and filled in 1959 to create a residential subdivision. The resulting public outcry over environmental concerns led to the establishment of Save Our Bays and provided inspiration for John D. MacDonald's novel, A Flash of Green.

16. The original Ringling Causeway, built in 1925, connected John Ringling's island development to the mainland. The original bridge was replaced by the current one in 1959.

17. Downtown Sarasota's original bayfront was a gently sloped sandy shoreline. In an attempt to "clean up the waterfront", Sarasota's first seawalls were installed along Gulfstream Avenue in 1905. In the 1950's in an attempt to show our waterfront to tourists, the shoreline was pushed out into the bay through filling, to provide for the rerouting of US-41. Soon after, Sarasota realized they missed their waterfront and created Island Park.

18. Siesta Key was originally named Little Sarasota Key, and was settled by fishermen in the 1880's. In 1907 Harry Higley platted the Siesta Subdivision at the island's northern tip, introducing residential development, and a new name, to the key. In 1917, the first bridge was built across Sarasota Bay, linking Siesta to the mainland. The current bridge is the third at this site.

19. Roberts Bay was named for Captain Louis Roberts, an early settler of Siesta Key, who ran the island's first hotel. Roberts was famous for his delicious clam chowder, while some reports credit his wife, Ocean, as the culinary expert. In either case, Louis' size reflected a definite attraction to good food.

20. Phillippi Creek is named for Phillippi Bermudez, who operated a fish camp in the 1840's, where Cherokee Park is located today.

21. Stickney Point Road and Bridge were named for pioneer "Uncle Ben" Stickney, a hotel-keeper from St. Louis, Missouri. Stickney hosted numerous community picnics, under the live oaks, at his homeplace on the key.