

Naples, Florida

Naples Train Depot



Naples is a city in Southwest Florida. It is located Collier County along the Gulf of Mexico. It's population numbers over twenty thousand people. Naples was established in 1886. Naples is 109 miles from Fort Lauderdale, 127 miles from Miami, 152 miles from St. Petersburg, 205 miles from Orlando, 357 miles from Jacksonville, and 434 miles from Tallahassee, Florida.

Native Peoples in Southwest Florida

Earliest human contact in the region was about 10,000 years according to archaeological evidence. The Calusa Indians, also known as the "Shell Indians," (shell collectors) lived and sailed along the coast of Florida. Calusa means "fierce people." During the 1500s the Spanish explorers did not find the Calusa friendly. Archaeologists found Calusa mounds filled with shell tools, weapons, and other artifacts. Their major waterway away from the ocean was the Caloosahatchee River which means "River of the Calusa." The tribe's demise came during the 1700s. This was due to fighting enemy tribes and diseases transmitted by Spanish and French explorers. In 1763, the Spanish turned Florida over to the British. <fcit.usf.edu>

Establishing Naples

"In the late 1800s, during U.S. surveys of Southwest Florida, a senator from Louisville, General John S. Williams, was spellbound by descriptions of the area and planned to visit Southwest Florida, buy land and develop a city.

He recruited Walter Haldeman, the owner of the *Louisville Courier Journal* newspaper, for the expedition. In 1885, the men chartered a boat and sailed down the coast looking for a piece of mainland where they could establish their city. As they sailed by the location of present-day Naples, they noticed the miles of beaches, and when they discovered a bay just behind the beach, they thought they had found paradise.

The Naples Town Improvement Company was founded in the autumn of 1886 to establish a town named Naples, reminiscent of the Italian peninsula, and develop it as a winter retreat."

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By 1889, the Naples Town Improvement Company built a hotel and homes on the beach. Financial problems caused the company to be sold at an auction in 1890. Walter Haldeman was the winning bidder. People during that period came to Naples by a steamship called "Fearless." Haldeman promoted Naples, but then sold it to Ed Crayton, a wealthy land developer from St. Petersburg, Florida. The growth of Naples saw many improvements during his tenure. Crayton died in 1938. His wife, Lindsey, controlled the estate until her death in the 1950s.

"While Haldeman and Lindsey Crayton developed Naples, Barron Collier, a self-made advertising millionaire, also made several investments in Naples FL in the early 1900s. At that time,



The family of Bruce Haldeman posed for this souvenir photo at a Jacksonville studio on the final, three-day leg of their journey to Naples in the early 1900s. Potted palms, a stuffed alligator and ostrich provided the appropriate Florida setting.

there wasn't a connecting road from the east coast of Florida to the southwest coast and the state of Florida didn't have the funds to cover the construction. Barron Collier stepped in to finance the project and, in 1923, construction began on Tamiami Trail. As a thank you for his willingness to fund the road, the state of Florida carved out Collier County from the south end of Lee County. Tamiami Trail would take 13 years, \$8 million dollars, and some help from Ed and Lindsey Crayton to build, but it opened Naples FL and the rest of Southwest Florida to the many people that would later discover our paradise coast. Barron Collier also brought paved roads, telegraphs, and new businesses to the area."

<blog.mediterranaples.com>

Growth issues that impacted Naples, Florida

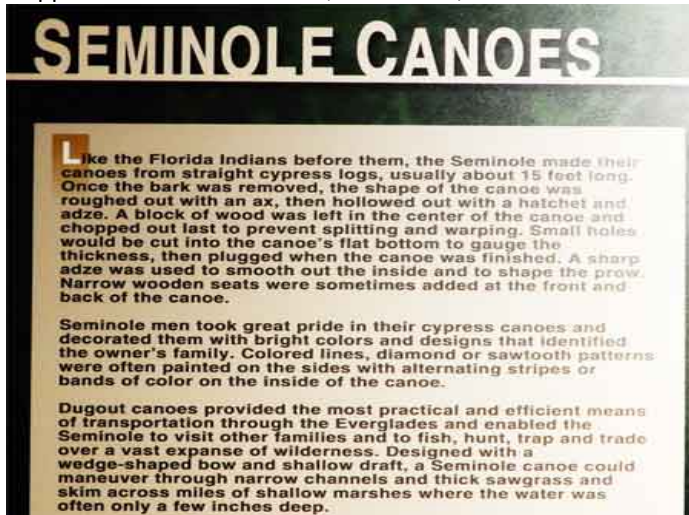
Naples experienced both positive and negative issues during its development. Positive aspects included electric power in 1926, the rail service in 1927, and the completion of Tamiami Trail in 1928 (U.S. Route 41) and later Alligator Alley in 1968 (I-75). Conversely negative issues also affected Naples development. Two were the 1929 stock market crash and World War II. The Tamiami Trail helped Naples develop the region's agricultural and resort capabilities.

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This photo program displays some scenes taken during our visit to the Naples Depot Museum at 1051 Fifth Avenue South Street. It also includes a YouTube train display inside the museum. Other photos include those taken during a Trolley Ride and stop at Tin City.

Seminole Indians in Naples area

"Historical records indicate that fewer than 200 Seminoles remained hidden in the Everglades and Big Cypress region of Florida at the end of the Seminole wars in 1858. The rest had been killed or captured or had surrendered, and those in federal custody were shipped off to Oklahoma." <naples.floridaweekly.com>



For Seminole history see:

<http://www.stofthpo.com/History-Seminole-Tribe-FL-Tribal-Historic-Preservation-Office.html>

<https://dos.myflorida.com/florida-facts/florida-history/seminole-history/>

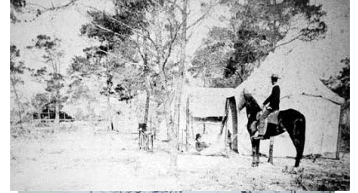
<https://www.semtribe.com/stof/history/timeline>

Naples 1880s – 1920s

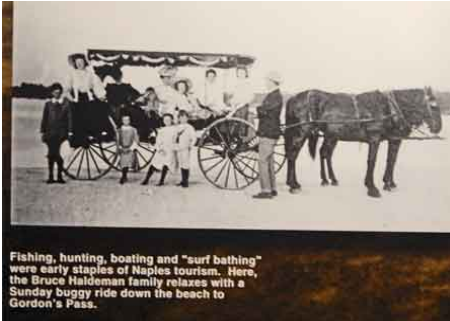
For much of its early history, Naples remained an isolated and obscure speck on the raw edge of a vast Florida frontier, accessible only by boat. The only sign of civilization was a small hotel and a handful of beach cottages clustered together at the foot of a rough wooden pier. Behind them, the empty pine and palmetto backcountry seemed to go on forever.

The first newcomers to Naples were not typical pioneers, but a combination of tourist, adventurer and frontiersman all rolled into one. Most were prominent mid-westerners of some wealth, education and sophistication who returned faithfully each year to treat themselves to the luxury of a rustic winter vacation or seasonal home in Naples.

From the very beginning, visitors lost their hearts to Naples and returned home with vivid memories of unspoiled beaches, scarlet sunsets, and the simple charm of boating, fishing, hunting, swimming and beachcombing with friends and family.



New and Fast Propeller Steamer



Fishing, hunting, boating and "surf bathing" were early staples of Naples tourism. Here, the Bruce Haldeman family relaxes with a Sunday buggy ride down the beach to Gordon's Pass.



By the end of the 1920s the pier's importance had shifted to recreation and social gatherings, with dances, fishing and sunset watching becoming its chief activities.



The Train Depot

One of the nation's largest railroad contractors, Foley Brothers, Inc., of Saint Paul, Minnesota, was brought in to begin grading and laying track on February 8, 1926 for the Seaboard's new 36-mile extension from Fort Myers to Naples. The last spike was driven in December 1926. Six steam locomotives, a Roberts track-laying machine and more than 500 men were needed to build the line.

In 1979 the track's last owners, the Seaboard Coastline Railroad, abandoned the Naples line and removed the rails.



BLACK PASSENGER WAITING ROOM

Strict segregation laws applied fully to all railroad companies and passenger train accommodations south of the Mason-Dixon Line. This room was originally used as a separate waiting area, restroom, and ticket counter for African American passengers arriving or departing Naples.

The practice of separating railroad passengers by race originated in the early 1800s in the northern states where blacks were required to ride in separate cars. At first, Southern blacks were permitted to ride in coach with white passengers, provided they paid the full fare. After the Civil War, racial segregation of train passengers ended in the North but continued in the South where it was mandated and enforced by state "Jim Crow" laws.



THE GREAT TRAIN RACE OF '26



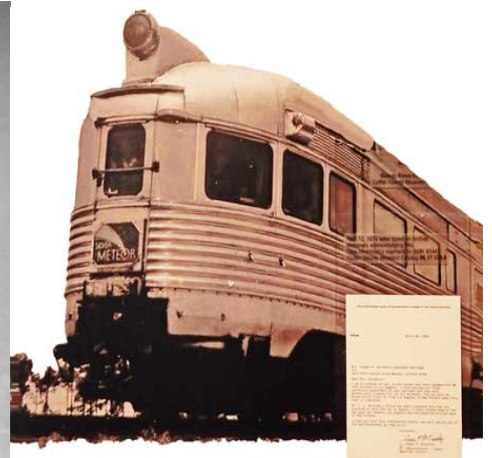
Budd Car #6601

Often operated as the last carriage of a passenger train, observation cars were very popular in the 1940s and early 1950s. With their abundance of windows and creature comforts, these cars offered travelers a unique experience while riding along America's rail lines.

Built in 1947 by the Edward G. Budd Company, Budd Car #6601 was originally used on the Seaboard Airline's Silver Meteor and Silver Star series from New York to Miami. Its warm tropical motif welcomed visitors to the Sunshine State and helped create a cheerful atmosphere for the thirty-hour ride ahead. The car is comprised of observation, bar, and lounge areas able to accommodate fifty-eight passengers.

Through its long service history on the SAL to its final journeys on Amtrak, this symbol of American ingenuity has traveled hundreds of thousands of miles across the United States. After its retirement, it began a new life as an attraction to the newly opened Naples Depot Cultural Center in April 1978.

For nearly four decades the Budd Car offered Depot visitors a unique glimpse into the history of the railroads, but as the years wore on the car began to show its age and the effects of the harsh Southwest Florida weather. In 2015, with support from the Board of Collier County Commissioners, Depot staff began an extensive three-year restoration that would stabilize the car and bring it back to its 1947 roots.



[Hear and watch a steam engine come into the train station. Click here or either photos below.](#)



The Orange Blossom Special, named after the citrus it carried, served Naples beginning in January of 1927. The last train was in April of 1971. The depot was to be demolished, but locals helped preserve the historic property. Today it is part of the Collier Museum centers.



Sport and Commercial Fishing was an important part of Naples' economy...before refrigeration, salt cured & drying were used to preserve them for market and general use. Shrimp, mullet, kingfish, mackerel, bluefish, & other ocean fish were caught. In 1995, Florida banned gill netting. <NaplesDepotMuseumSignage>



Captain Charles Stewart used the Bon Temps (Fair Weather) boat during the winter (1905-1919) to transport guests, cargo, and the mail between Fort Myers (43 miles by land) from Naples. The trip would take a day or more. Stewart was the postmaster/caretaker of Haldeman cottages. <NaplesDepotMuseumSignage>

The Naples Pier Built in 1889, with a 1,000-foot walkway it is the city's popular fishing spot.



Since its construction it has experienced six major hurricanes including fire, reconstruction is something locals expect for the iconic historic pier.



With his pole angled out over the rails, a fisherman enjoys the sunshine on Naples pier while waiting for a bite in this view from the early 1940s.



This 1948 view shows the bait shop and concession stand that were added at the pier's mid-point.



A photographer from the Miami Herald newspaper, Gene Kennedy, looks over the wrecked Naples pier after Hurricane Donna in 1960.



Transportation & Tourism



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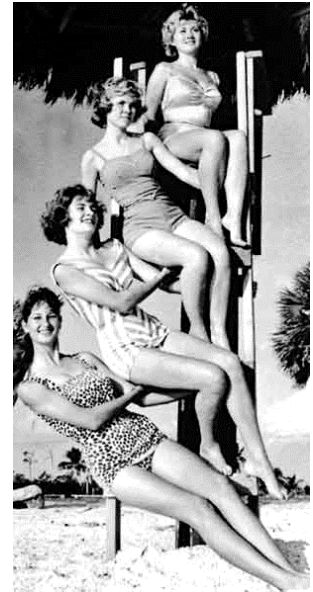
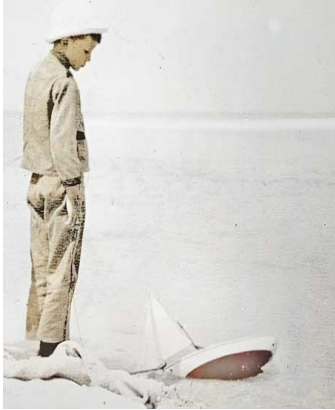
OTHER ROUND TRIP RATES

	Single Engine	
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Sources: <https://colliermuseums.com/locations/naples-depot-museum>, <http://floridahistory.org/naples.htm>, <https://www.tincityofnaples.com/history>, <https://www.paradisecoast.com/article/quick-history-naples-the-paradise-coast>, <https://fcit.usf.edu/florida/lessons/calusa/calusa1.htm>, <https://www.calusalandtrust.org/who-were-the-calusa>, <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/257366>, <https://naples.floridaweekly.com/articles/part-1-delving-into-the-seminole-indians-story/>, <https://www.royalshell.com/best-vacations/things-to-do/history-of-the-naples-pier/>, <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/naples-depot>, https://www.coastalbreezenews.com/opinion/columnists/the-calusa-tribe/article_632abfd4-24c4-5029-bbfe-4787088a20b5.html, <https://naples.floridaweekly.com/articles/the-old-naples-historic-district-has-a-history-of-its-own/>, <https://themihis.info/calusa-period/>, <https://www.museumoffloridahistory.com/exhibits/permanent-exhibits/world-war-ii/historical-sites/southwest-listing/collier-county-museum/>, <https://www.royalshell.com/best-vacations/things-to-do/history-of-naples-florida-and-the-surrounding-areas/>, <https://www.naples-florida.com/hiscul.htm>, <https://www.naples-florida.com/hiscul.htm>, <https://www.vhmagazine.com/blog-1/2018/8/9/our-hometown-narrative-a-history-of-naples>, <https://napleshistoricalsociety.org/>, <https://www.divinenaples.com/a-brief-history-of-naples-florida/>, http://www.world-guides.com/north-america/usa/florida/naples/naples_fl_history.html, <https://blog.mediterranaples.com/the-winter-retreat-history-of-naples-fl/>, <https://colliermuseums.com/>, and <https://www.naplesfloridatravelguide.com/blog/museums-in-naples-florida>.

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Naples History at the Train Depot Museum