# Bethel Creek House of Refuge

**Title**  
Bethel Creek. House of Refuge

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**Date:** 1990-2013  
**Accession No.**

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Library staff

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**Location**  
Archive Center and Genealogy Department, 2nd Floor  
Indian River County Main Library

**Extent**  
Two file boxes; 32 x 27 x 11 cm., 32 x 27 x 7 cm. with * manila file folders,

**Arrangement**  
2 ms box organized into * folders by name and subject content,

**Language**  
English

**Dates**  
c.a. 1850-1987

**Historical Note**  
The first House of Refuge in Florida was built at Bethel Creek near Hwy A1A by the U. S. Life-Saving Service. It was completed on February 28, 1876, taking less than 24 days\(^1\). Houses of Refuge provided a safe haven for those shipwrecked along the desolate coast of Florida. They were placed within a day’s walk (15-20 miles) from one another. All of the Houses of Refuge were built exactly alike and included the main house, a cistern, and boat house\(^2\).

John Houston, an early Florida pioneer, was the first keeper. Each keeper had to be physically sound and able to read and write. The law made them the guardians of shipwrecked property until relieved by its owners. Their annual compensation was rarely over $400\(^3\). In 1915, the U. S. Life-Saving Service became the U. S. Coast Guard.

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1 Kerber, Stephen. *The United States Life-Saving Service and The Florida Houses of Refuge*. Thesis for Florida Atlantic University, August 1976  
2 National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 26, *Records of the United States coast Guard (Life-Saving Service Stations)*.  
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Fire destroyed the main house on January 11, 1917⁴, and was replaced by a building that was removed in 1936 by a WPA project⁵. In 1929, orders were received to close the Coast Guard Station⁶. The city of Vero Beach decided to make the area into a park in 1934⁷. During World War II, the Coast Guard took over the station again and built a 40-foot observation tower to watch for submarines⁸. The park was returned to Vero Beach in 1950 for $200, and the work of beautifying the park was completed by the Jaycees in 1956.⁹

Scope and Content
Contains

Index Terms
Houston Family
Indian River County (Fla.) – Genealogy
Vero Beach, Indian River County, (Fla.) - History

Access
Unrestricted. The entire collection is open for research. Gloves and clean hands are required.

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⁴ “Fire at Bethel Creek,” The Miami Herald, 14 January 1917 [America’s GenealogyBank, Internet-Newsbank]
⁶ “Orders Received to Close Coast Guard Station.” Vero Beach Press Journal, April 26, 1929, p.1
⁷ “Council and Civil Clubs Due to Join Forces on Project.” Vero Beach Press Journal, November 16, 1934, p.1, 8
⁸ Records of the U. S. Naval Air Station at Vero Beach located at the Indian River County Main Library, Archive Center.
⁹ Vero Beach Press Journal and City County Minutes.
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

Box 1
# Bethel Creek House of Refuge

**Box 2**

## KEEPERs OF BETHEL CREEK HOUSE OF REFUGE

**U. S. LIFE SAVING STATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>1876 Oct 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McMillan</td>
<td>Preston A</td>
<td>16 Dec 1881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Alonzo W</td>
<td>12 Oct 1882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoeckel</td>
<td>Charles A</td>
<td>1885 May 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoeckel</td>
<td>Charles A</td>
<td>1888 Apr 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archibald</td>
<td>Henry B</td>
<td>1888 Apr 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archibald</td>
<td>Henry B</td>
<td>1890 Jul 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wingood</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>1890 Jul 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wingood</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>1896 Aug 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitr</td>
<td>William E</td>
<td>1896 Aug 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kemper</td>
<td>William L</td>
<td>1898 May 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlin</td>
<td>Charles R</td>
<td>1900 Sept 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’Brien</td>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>1900 Oct 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hovelsrud</td>
<td>Ludwig H</td>
<td>1900 Nov 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hovelsrud</td>
<td>Ludwig H</td>
<td>1903 Jun 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitney</td>
<td>J. C.</td>
<td>1903 Jun 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gignac</td>
<td>Luther</td>
<td>1903 Sept 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gignac</td>
<td>Luther</td>
<td>1907 Sept 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coste</td>
<td>Vincent O.</td>
<td>1907 Sept 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitching</td>
<td>Walter</td>
<td>1914 Mar 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>1918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johansen</td>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simons</td>
<td>Emmet A.</td>
<td>1923 Feb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Styron</td>
<td>Roland</td>
<td>1927</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bibliography:**


Shaw, Alan W. *House of Refuge*. Unknown date and publication. Located at the Halifax Historical Society and found in the Alice Strickland collection.

U.S. Treasury Department: Coast Guard. Register of the Commissioned and Warrant Officers and Cadets and Ships and Stations of the United States Coast Guard, July 1, 1941. Washington, DC: USGPO, 1941.
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

BETHEL – a chapel for seaman
1. A hallowed or holy place.
2. A chapel for seafarers. Chiefly British A Nonconformist chapel, especially a Baptist or Methodist one.

1831 Revenue Cutter Service
1848 construction of Life Saving Stations
1878 U.S. Life Saving Service created
1915 Revenue Cutter Service & U.S. Life Saving Service merged to form the U. S. Coast Guard

All articles are exact transcriptions from newspapers, letters and all documents and they include spelling errors. No attempt was made to correct these except for clarification.

1874

March – Contract awarded to Albert Blaisdel to build the Bethel Creek House of Refuge.

20 June 1874 – Bill proposed – General Superintendant of the U.S. Life Saving Service
Bill proposed by Sumner Kimball, Chief of the Revenue Marine Bureau of U.S. received approval from Congress to build five new houses.

18 October 1874 – Albert Blaisdell entered into contract...
Albert Blaisdell entered into contract with the U. S. Govt. to furnish materials and construct five HOR on the East Coast of Florida

1875

9 June 1875 – Construction of Houses of Refuge
Sealed proposals will be received at this department until 12 o’clock, noon, of Tuesday, the 29th day of June, 1875 for the construction of Houses of Refuge at the following-named localities on the coast of Florida to wit: One on the beach about thirteen miles north of Indian River Inlet, at the trail from Bethel Creek;...

1876

28 February 1876 – Bethel Creek house completed
According to records located by Stephen Kerber.

6 April 1876 – Albert Blaisdell

11 Letter to Secretary of the Treasury Morrill from Albert Blaisdell. Record Group 26, Records of the United States coast Guard (Life-Saving Service Stations).”
12 Kerber, Stephen. The United States Life-Saving Service and The Florida Houses of Refuge. Thesis for Florida Atlantic University, August 1976
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Albert Blaisdell submitted a bill for completing the House of Refuge #1, 2, Bethel Creek and St. Lucie Rocks for the price of $2990 each

9 October 1876 – John Houston Appointed
Capt. John Houston became the first keep of Indian River HOR later renamed in 1885 to Bethel Creek.

18 October 1876 – Signing of Contract to build HOR13
In case Mr. Blaisdell failed to complete the house on time, in total agreement with the specifications, the sum of $30 would be deducted each day from the amount otherwise payable to him. 14

1878

11 September 1878 – Wreck of French brig Sevre15
The other instance is that of the French brig Sevre, which stranded and went to pieces on September 11, in a gale, sixteen miles north of Station No. 1. There were ten persons on board. One was lost. Of the other nine, eight were found on the shore by a colored man named Peter Wright and conducted to Titusville. The remaining man was found by the keeper nearly gone with hunger and thirst, carried to the station, and kept for ten days before he was able to travel.

16 November 1878 – Letters Received, Vol. 7, John Houston – Keeper Station 1
Sept 11 1878 – Wreck report of the Brig “Sevre” (French) from Tampico to Harve, France, cargo hides, values unknown. Total loss. Ten persons, one lost.

Ezra Stoner Age 66, born Maryland, Keeper U.S. House Bethel – No family

1880

1 June 1880 – 1880 Federal Census of Brevard County, Florida16
John Houston, Jr., age 37, Keeper of the House of Refuge

29 August 1880 – Boat House was blownd down
Boat Houses at House #1 was blown down by a Hurricane per report by John Houston, Keeper 31 Aug 1880.

1881

16 December 1881 – P. A. McMillan Appointed

1882

13 National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 26, Records of the United States coast Guard (Life-Saving Service Stations).
14 Kerber, Stephen. The United States Life-Saving Service and The Florida Houses of Refuge. Thesis for Florida Atlantic University, August 1976
16 1880 Federal Census, Brevard County, page 272.
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

12 October 1882 – A. W. Masters Appointed

1885

6 April 1885 – A. W. Masters Resigned

8 May 1885 – Charles A. Stoeckel Appointed

30 June 1885 - U.S. Federal Census, St. Lucie, Brevard Co.
Charles Stoeckel, age 23, born Connecticut, Keeper House Refuge

16 July 1885 – Florida Star, p. 5
A. W. Masters, formerly keeper of the House of Refuge near Indian River Narrows stopped at this place several days last week. His position he resigned on account of his illness which necessitated medical assistance. Charles A. Stockel of Narrows is now the keeper in his stead.

23 Dec 1885 – Florida Star, p. 2
St. Lucie - The Life Saving Station at this place is progressing slowly, and will be completed in about three weeks. Com. Morgan and Col. Rains, government inspectors are superintending the construction and examine every nail and stick of timber, which must be up to contract specifications or they reject it.

1887

30 October 1887 - Weekly Transcript of Journal, Bethel Creek Station, District 7
William Stockel – At sunrise this day I sighted a steamer up the coast, apparently lying at anchor. Upon going there found that it was the Spanish Steamship Panama, bound from New York to Havana; & that she on Oct 28, at about 3 am ran ashore 9 mi. N. of this sta. And, upon throwing overboard considerable of her cargo, was got off at sunrise Oct 30. I found that keeper Archibald, of Indian River Inlet Sta. was among the first to arrive & helped save what could be. I returned to Sta. during the night and made report & sent telegram to Maritime Exchange. [Weather and condition of house is also reported.]

Another report that is mentioned in the book “Miley’s Memos”. It states that the St. Lucie County Historical Museum has the original record of shipwrecks to which aid was given by the keeper of the house during the period of Oct 28 1887 to March 23 1913.

Thirty-four “wrecks” are included in the lost reports, most of them involving small craft such as fishing boats, yachts, small schooners, etc.

But, the first one was that of the S.S. Panama, a barkentine steamer, 1,300 tons, from an unlisted Spanish port, bound from New York to Havana and Central America with a cargo of lard and general merchandise. There were between 400 and 500 passengers aboard, over 400 of them Italian immigrants.

The wreck occurred Oct 28, 1887. The ship became stranded 400 yards from shore, about 3 a.m. in nearly calm seas “within the limits of Bethel Creek House of Refuge but out of sight of the house, about eight miles off the north-westward.”

7.
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

One life was lost – the steward, who was struck by a breaking tackle and knocked overboard, failing to rise. The body was not recovered.

Cargo valued at 10,000 was saved and the ship suffered only slight damage. The wreck was discovered by Paul Kroegel (keeper of the government Pelican Island reserve) and the Keeper of the House of Refuge, H. B. Archibald.

1888

1 April 1888 – Charles A. Stoeckel Resigned

3 April 1888 – Henry B. Archibald Appointed

30 Aug 1888 – The Florida Star, p.? Melbourne – Mr. Frank P. Hassler one of the correspondents of the Chicago Inter-Ocean, who spent some time last winter in this vicinity, has returned and we hear intends to improve his homestead near the Life Saving Station at once. We hear that Mr. Hassler has “taken unto himself a wife” since he left us last spring. Allow us to tender our sincere congratulations. May your married life be as bright as our Florida sunshine, and the broomstick as soft as our balmy breezes.

1889

1889 – Official Register of the United States...17
Life-Saving Service at Large – District No. 7
Henry B. Archibald, born Ireland, Appointed Florida, employed Bethel Creek, Compensation $400

1890

1 March 1890 – U. S. Life Saving Service, 7th District, Capt. H. B. Shaw, Supt.18
6. Bethel Creek, Fla, 11 miles north of Indian River Inlet, H. B. Archibald, Keeper, P. O. Narrows, Fla.

9 July 1890 – Henry B. Archibald discharged

12 July 1890 – David Wingood Appointed

1893

1893 July – Official Register of the United States...19

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18 Unknown newspaper article.
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

Life-Saving Service at Large – District No. 7
David Wingood, born Bermuda, Appointed Florida, Employed Bethel Creek, Fla, compensation $600

1894

4 May 1894 – Steamship Ashore Near Sebastian
The British steamship Breconshire, of London, ran ashore about eight miles below here at two o'clock a.m. last Monday. All the crew were saved. She had no cargo only water ballast. Was bound for Tampa from New York. The crew of twenty-four men is quartered at Bethel Creek Life Saving Station awaiting the arrival of the underwriter’s agent. The ship is a total loss. L. D. Howard

4 May 1894 – The Trouble Was the Upper Lights Were Not Burning
Jacksonville, Fla, May 3 – A special to the Times-Union from Sabastian, Fla., says: The British steamship, Breconshire, Captain Taylor, New York to Tampa, which went ashore at Bethel Creek station last Tuesday morning, will prove a total loss The crew of 24 men were saved. The wreck was due to the fact that Canaveral light ship was undergoing repairs and had an elevation of only 35 feet for light instead of the usual 165. This caused the Breconshire’s master to err in his estimates, and he found himself ashore when he thought he was 20 miles at sea.

1896

1 August 1896 – David Wingood Resigned

7 August 1896 – Reams
David Wingood who has had charge of the life-saving station four miles below here, left on Monday for Starke, Fla. Capt White will take charge until a new appointment is made. Mr. Wingood has many friends who regret to see him leave, but we all join in wishing him success in his new venture.

1 August 1896 – William E. Whitr

2 October 1896 – Reams
Mrs. White and son came down from Ormond last week, to join Capt. White, of the life saving station. We gladly welcome all the new-comers; “the more the merrier,” so say the festive mosquito.

6 October 1896 – Houses of Refuge Abandoned
Washington, Oct. 6. – The secretary of the treasury has ordered the discontinuance of the Chester Shoal, Bethel Creek and Orange Grove houses of refuge on the eastern coast of Florida. These houses were built many years when there were only three or four human habitations

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22 “Reams,” Indian River Advocate, 7 August, 1896, p. 5:1
23 “Reams,” Indian River Advocate, 2 October 1896, p. 5:2
24 “Houses of Refuge Abandones,” The Times-Demoncrat, Lima, Ohio, 6 October 1896, unk page
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

accessible for over 150 miles of beach. Within the same territory there are now about 10,000 people, and hence these houses of refuge are regarded as no longer necessary.

9 October 1896 – Three Houses of Refuge Discontinued

A telegram from Washington says that Secretary Carlile has ordered the discontinuance of the houses of refuge on the East Coast of Florida at Chester Shoals, Bethel Creek and Orange Grove. It is stated that ten houses of refuge were established along the Florida East Coast many years ago, when along its entire length of 250 miles there were not more than 75 inhabitants; but from the last report of the district superintendent, there are now over 10,000 settlers. Six houses still remain in operation.

20 November 1896 – Reams

Will some one who knows please tell us who was authority for the statement which appeared either in the Advocate or Star, a short time ago, to the effect that the House of Refuge at this place would be discontinued on Nov. 1st. We ask because the keeper knows nothing of it, and the necessary steps have not been taken by the government officials. Also please tell us of the progress of the railroad which is being built from Sebastian.

1897

26 February 1897 – Indian River Advocate, p.5

VERO – Capt. White and son Frank, of Bethel Creek house of refuge were here one day las week. They say the station is to be discontinued after April.

1898

31 May 1898 – William L. Kemper

4 November 1898 – Letters Received, Vol. 41, #64867 to H. B. Shaw Supt., 7th Dist

Ormond, Fla, Transmits application for admission to grade of surfman of W. L. Kemper who is now in charge of Bethel Creek House of Refuge. (Remarks) Nov 8, 1898 Referred to Civil Service Comm. Gen’l Supt.

1900

1 June 1900 – 1900 Federal Census

W. L. Kemper, Keeper of House of Refuge

8 September 1900 – Charles R. Carlin Appointed

16 October 1900 – Michael O’Brien

26 October 1900 – Charles R. Carlin Transferred to Jupiter Inlet Station

14 November 1900 – Ludwig H. Hovelsrud Appointed

25 “Three Houses of Refuge Discontinued,” Indian River Advocate, 9 October 1896, p. 1:5

26 “Reams,” Indian River Advocate, 20 November 1896, p. 5:1
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

1901

2 March 1901 – Vol. 48, RG26 Jan 16 19091-July 25 1901 Letters Received #73785
L. H. Hovelsruds asks leave to go and see a dentist. Supt. has granted him 3 days.

5 April 1901 – Vol. 48, RG26 Jan 16 19091-July 25 1901 Letters Received #74043
Asks for oil and paint for Bethel Creek HOR and that articles be sent by inspector LSS

5 June 1901 – Vol. 48, RG26 Jan 16 19091-July 25 1901 Letters Received #774586
Keeper of Bethel Creek HOR wants post office changed from Narrows, Fla to Vero, Fla.

1902

9 April 1902 – Vol. 50, RG26 Jan 13, 1902-June 16, 1902 Letters Received #77907
Louis Stoeckel (writer) Narrows, Brevard Co., FL, Apr 5, 1902. A water faucet loaned over 2 years ago to Keeper of Bethel Creek HOR 8th Dist has not been returned. Makes a complaint against the Keeper for starting a fire and burning up a house and property of which he had charge besides endangering other property and injuring the land for miles.

12 November 1902 – Marine: The Shipping27
Mobile Item: A bottle containing a note written by Captain Dillon, of the steamer Martinique, was dropped overboard from that vessel in latitude 25.58, longitude 81 52, on October 16. It was found on October 25, three miles north of Bethel creek, Fla., and the note was sent to Capt. Dillon at Galveston. The bottle had drifted more than 500 miles in the gulf stream in only nine days, during which there was little or no wind.

1903

June 1903 - Transcript of Journal, U.S. Life-Saving Service Bethel Creek Station, Dist. #8 L. H. Hovelsrud, Keeper

10 June 1903 - Practiced signals. West to Sebastian, taking the supply to Mr. P. Kreugil [Kroegel] to be repaired. Arrived at Sebastian at 3:30 PM. Returned on the train at 5:15 PM. Came to the station at 7:30 PM.

12 June 1903 – Practised resuscitation. West to the post office and returned. Received check for May from Capt. H. B. Sh??, Supt. At 6:30 PM two colored men came to the station, one was sick and was said he wanted a cup of strong coffee. After drinking the same, he said he felt much better and they both left.

14 June 1903 - Keeper took sick very sudden last night with chills and fever, had a very bad night. Today he is down with bad Diarrhea. Family in charge.??????? Of the day. Mr. Anderson of Vero brought the mail to night. Spoke to Mr. Anderson if he knows of a man who could take keepers place. He says everybody he knows around is engaged in work, but he would speak to Mr. Whitney of the fisherman at Vero, maybe he could come. Family in Charge.

Bethel Creek House of Refuge

17 June 1903 – Keeper is very sick. The son also in bed. Sent for Dr. Hughlet, also sent letter to Capt. H. B. Shaw, Supt. Concerning the sickness and substitute. Mr. Whitney arrived 10 a.m. He will stand as substitute if it agrees with Capt. Shaw. Mr. Whitney went to Vero in the evening and brought Dr. Hughlett to the station. Dr. found keeper in a very bad state of dysentery. Gave medicines to keeper & son. The little baby is also sick. J. C. Whitney, Substitute.

17 June 1903 – J. C. Whitney

18 June 1903 – Keeper, son and baby is no better. The Dr. left this morning 8 o’clock. Mr. Whitney carried him to the railroad station. Dr. says all this sickness is due to the drinking water from the rotten wooden tank, have to boil the water. Received answer from Capt H. B. Shaw, and he says Mr. Whitney shall enter as substitute. J. C. Whitney, Substitute.

21 June 1903 – Keeper is very weak, has not hand any rest, Herman the son is getting better, the girl also, the keepers wife is as much in bed as she is up --- Mr. Smith and wife of Oslo and Mr. J. Anderson of Vero called at the station, left at 5 pm Mr. J. Anderson came again at 8:40 P.M. to ??? Keeper during the night --- had a heavy rain during the latter part of the afternoon. J. C. Whitney, Substitute.

23 June 1903 – Keeper went to Heaven this morning at half past Seven Peace to his ashes” H.T. Gifford was over from Vero and made arrangements for the funeral. Mrs. Hovelsrud is left with seven small children. Whitney went to Vero at 8 o’clock to get Mr. Gifford. Small steamer passed about 4 P.M. going South, about 10 miles out. J. C. Whitney, Substitute.

24 June 1903 – Neighbors and friends gathered at the station to give the keeper a last farewell, Steamer launch brought the remains to Ft. Pierce to be buried there. Mrs. Hovelsrud and children went along and a few friends, Rev. Lai?? Of Sebastian preached the sermon. Heavy thunder storm from N.E. about 7:30 last evening accompanied by terrific wind. J.C. Whitney, Substitute.

25 June 1903 – Mrs. Hovelsrud and children with Mr. O. O. Helseth and Mrs. Helseth of Oslo returned 10 A.M. Mr. Helseth left 5 P.M. Went to P.O. at 5 P.M. returned at 7:30 Heavy shower from West about 3:30. J.C. Whitney, Substitute.

9 September 1903 - Treasury Department, Office of the Secretary, Washington D.C. Mr. Ludger Gignac, Care Superintendent, Miami, Florida...you are hereby designated transferred, promoted and appointed Keeper of the Bethel Creek House of Refuge, Eight Life-Saving District

1905

July 1905 – Official Register of the United States... 28
Life-Saving Service at Large-Eight District

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Ludger Gignac, Official title Keeper, Where born, Canada, Whence appointed, Mason County, MI, 9th Cong. Dist. Where employed Bethel creek, Fla, Compensation $600

1907

4 September 1907 - Vincent O. Caste [Coste] Appointed

13 September 1907 - Letter from brother of Ludger Gignac, Joseph.
My dear Ludger, It is not a little job to leave the keepership of Bethel House: it seems ten times easier to select a president for the United State than a keeper for taking your place. I wrote to captain Shaw and received a good letter from him. He told me the 2d of September: “The delay in his release has been due to a hicth (hitch) in the selection of his successor, which I believe is no removed, and I am daily expecting the appointment of new keeper. I will however write the department today to appoint a temporary man if delay is to continue.”

I hope the hicth (hitch) is removed now and I am expecting you daily to take your place. I wrote yesterday to the department a good and strong letter to have you released immediately for many reasons: if the men of the department have something of a civilized being, you will get your congé immediate. I made a mistake for not having written to the department of Washington before yesterday. For your place here, I fixed everything and we will wait for you until you come. I hope you are not to lose courage but you will fight strongly until you get your liberty.

It is a sad revelation for me, and probably for you, that you were prisoner on this awfull island. As regards the change of climate, I think you have nothing to fear, because once in Quebec you will let a good flat bien chauffé’; if you remember we don’t suffer for cold in Canada as in many places in United States. I hope this letter will not find you in Vero, that it is my last letter to that place; if by accident you are still there, put strongly in your mind that you must struggle for your liberty, the life of your wife, the education of your children, the reintegration in a civilized country to the end; never loosing courage. Of course the day will rise when they will be obliged to released you. All parents inquire frequently when you come and they eagerly expect your visit. Keep me informed, as I will myself inform you and communicate the answer of the department. Present my best affections to Mary, to the children and believe me Cordially yours,
Jos. W. Gignac

14 September 1907 – Ludger Gignac Resigned

1908

28 August 1908 – News from Other Towns: Vero
Miss Emma Matthews, of Lemon City, is visiting Mrs. Carter, at the Bethel Creek house of refuge.

1909

26 December 1909 – Boys Sharks Attack Living
Some word are unreadable. Skip 3 paragraphs...to

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29 Fort Pierce News, 28 August 1908, page 1.
30 “Boys Sharks Attack Living,” The Washington Post, 26 December 1909, Magazine Section, p.1

13.
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

A few years ago a boy, Herman Holvelsrud, son of the keeper of the Bethel Creek House of Refuge, on the east coast of Florida, was attacked by a shark, and one arm was so badly injured that amputation was necessary. I am well acquainted with the young man, whose family now lives at Miami. I cannot give first-hand testimony as to the accident, for, although I know the young man I am not personally acquainted with the shark. I have never heard the question raised as to the nature of the fish which attached him.

1910

9 & 11 May 1910 – U.S. Federal Census, St. Lucie County Election Precinct 11
Vincent O. Coste, Age 30, born South Carolina, Keeper, Life Saving Service
Helena, wife age 29, born South Carolina
Helen, daughter, age 5, born South Carolina
James, son, age 3, born South Carolina

1911

1 September 1911 – Fort Pierce News, p.?  
Mr. V. O. Coste, keeper of the Bethel Creek house of refuge, and Mr. F. C. Prang of Vero, ere visitors in the city yesterday.

1912

31 August 1912 – News of the Ships and Shipping Men
Florida-East Coast-Bethel Shoal-Gas and whistle buoy to be established---About December 1, 1912, Bethel Shoal gas and whistle buoy No. 10 cylindrical, with pyramidal skeleton superstructure...

1913

16 May 1913 – The St. Lucie Country Tribune, p.2
Wabasso - Miss Elizabeth Russell was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Coste at the House of Refuge at Bethel Creek, over the week end.

6 June 1913 – The St. Lucie Country Tribune, p.6
Capt. V. O. Coste of the Bethel Creek House of Refuge has recently purchased a residence lot from the Indian River Farms Co. and will begin improvements on it right away.

July 1913 - New Bath House to be Built on the Beach Near Vero
Capt. Coste U. S., located at the House of Refuge, has made application for us and received permission from the Department to establish a bath house on the beach opposite Vero.

It gives us great pleasure to make this announcement, as by running a gasoline launch from the County Bridge, which is within walking distance from our Hotel, through the canal and across the Indian River to the beach will make a very pleasant and instructive trip for our patrons. It is probable this bath-house will be completed for the coming Fall and Winter.

32 “New Bath House to be Built on the Beach Near Vero,” Indian River Farmer, Vol. 1, No. 8, page 7
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

1914

27 February 1914 - *Social and Personal*33
Capt. Byron L. Reed, U.S., R.C.S., Assistant Inspector of the eighth and ninth districts of the U.S. Life Saving Service, arrived Sunday and his wife and visited the Indian River Inlet and Bethel Creek stations. The inspector found both in good order and says the Indian River Station was the cleanest of any he has inspected in the two districts and paid the keeper, Capt. Byron S. Dawley a high compliment. Capt. V. O. Coste, of the Bethel Creek station, has been transferred to the Charleston, S.C., station and leaves Saturday for his new field of labor. Walter Kitching of Vero will succeed him.

March 1914 – *Clippings From Vero*34
Captain Coste of the House of Refuge had quite an experience the other day while crossing the Indian River in his launch. He encountered a deer which was swimming the river, and, as is usually the case at such times, he had forgotten his gun. He tried to kill it with his boat hooks, but it got away. It would be hard to find a more disappointed man than the captain. He takes his gun with him every time he leaves his house now. That deer is never going to catch him unawares again.

June 1914 – Walter W. Kitching35
Walter W. Kitching, keeper of the government house of refuge at Vero was married June 20 to Miss Anna Ford of Ft. Pierce. In addition to his other duties, “Captain” Kitching has charge of the Indian River Farms Company’s bath house on the beach near the house of refuge and he is known to most of the visitors to Vero during recent months.

August 1914 – (This may be the St. Lucie newspaper. A copy was given to Pam Cooper by Sandra Thurlow who is researching the Houses of Refuge in Stuart)
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Kitching, of the Government House of Refuge, across the river from Vero, were among the visitors in the city Saturday and Sunday, spending Sunday with Mrs. Kitching’s mother, Mrs. A. A. Ford.

1915

5 February 1915 - *Vero, The Modern City*36 - *House of Refuge Becomes Coast Guard Station*
By a law just passed by the lower house of Congress, the Bethel Creek House of Refuge on the ocean beach opposite Vero becomes a Coast Guard Station and will henceforth be known by that name.

The new law combines the life saving service, of which the house of refuge was a part and the revenue cutter service under the name of the Coast Guard. In time of war the Coast Guard will be under the jurisdiction of the Navy Department.

33 *Fort Pierce News*, 27 Feb 1914, page unk.
36 *Fort Pierce News*, 5 Feb 1915, p. 3
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

Walter Kitching, keeper of the station, takes the rank of a warrant officer in the revenue cutter service, under the new law. It is not known whether any changes will be made in the equipment or force of the station, when the law takes effect May 1.

5 February 1915 - Vero, The Modern City37 - Former Keeper Here
W. L. Kemper of Lebanon, Ohio accompanied by his step son, H. C. Hearne, also of Lebanon, arrived in Vero this week for a stay of several months. Mr. Kemper was one of the first keepers of the house of refuge opposite Vero. He is the owner of 120 acres of land on the peninsula, which he contemplates developing.

5 February 1915, The United State Revenue Cutter Service38
The United States revenue cutter service, organized when Alexander Hamilton was secretary of the treasury, passed out of existence Friday of last week and was replaced by the United States coast guard. The change carries into effect a measure recently passed by congress and signed by President Wilson, merging the revenue cutter and the life-saving service. The new service becomes a part of the country’s regular military establishment and in time of war passes under direct control of the navy department.

12 February 1915 - Vero, The Modern City39 - Flies Old Flag Over Land Bought Many Years Ago
An American flag that floated over the same spot thirty two years ago is flying today at the mouth of Bethel creek on the peninsula just north of Vero. It was placed there by W. L. Kemper of Lebanon, who owns a tract of 114 acres of land on the peninsula, which includes the point at the mouth of the creek.

Thirty two years ago Mr. Kemper and his father sailed down the Indian River in the elder Mr. Kemper's schooner yacht Cygnus and anchored at this point. When Mr. Kemper arrived from Ohio last week to spend several months on his property he brought the Cygnus' old flag and hoisted it on a cabbage palm tree at the point.

The spot was as inviting thirty years ago as it is today and Mr. Kemper's father bought the 114 acre tract from "Hermit" Estes whom he found living there. Estes has the land direct from the U. S. Government and Mr. Kemper now has in his possession the old patent give to Estes and signed by U. S. Grant who was then president.

At the time the land was bought by Mr. Kemper the two bearing Cocoanut trees growing the farthest north in the United States stood near the old hermit's house. They have since disappeared as have all traces of the palmetto shack occupied by "Hermit" Estes. Who was for years a widely known character in this section.

26 February 1915 - Vero, The Modern City40 - Capt. Kitching Captures Escaped English Buoy

37 Fort Pierce News, 5 Feb 1915, p. 3
38 St. Lucie Co Tribune, 5 Feb 1915, p.12
39 Fort Pierce News, 12 Feb 1915, p. 3
40 Fort Pierce News, 26 Feb 1915, p. 3
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

A large iron buoy washed ashore near the Coast Guard station last Sunday and was captured by Keeper Walter Kitching. It appeared to be an English buoy and has probably washed in from the Bahamas.

The Water Fox, a thirteen ton yacht owned by James H. Egan of Charleston, S.C., ran on a bar near the mouth of Bethel Creek last Saturday. Capt. Kitching came to the rescue with his launch and after four hours work the Water Fox was gotten afloat.

Capt. Berry, inspector for the Eighth and Ninth districts visited the Coast Guard station last Sunday on a regular inspection trip.

23 April 1915 - Vero, The Modern City 41 - Make Big Catches in Outside Fishing
Walter Kitching and W. F. Kemper have gone into the fish business at the Coast Guard station opposite Vero and are having big success in deep sea fishing. One night last week they brought in 1,000 pounds of mackerel and bluefish. They have provided themselves with a complete outfit of boats and nets and intend to fish regularly on the outside.

With an inlet here Vero would undoubtedly become one of the biggest fishing points on the East Coast as well as headquarters for pleasure fishermen. It has been estimated that an inlet could be cut from Bethel Creek to the ocean at less expense than at any other point along this part of the Coast. There has been much talk lately of trying to have the inlet opened and it is possible that some action in the matter will be started soon.

June 1915 – More Possibilities of the Vero Section 42
Long article. ...Engineers who have looked into the matter say that just north of Vero near the U.S. Coast Guard Station, formerly known as the House of Refuge is the most favorable location for an inlet on the Indian River.

16 July 1915 - Vero, The Modern City 43 - Mysterious Schooner Lay Off Bethel Creek 10 Days
Mystery surrounds the presence of the four masted schooner that lay for ten days, fifteen miles off the Bethel Creek Coast Guard station.

The schooner was plainly visible from the station and after seeing her in the same position for several days Capt. Walter Kitching, keeper of the station came to the conclusion she was in distress and began to make plans to go to the rescue. He first attempted to reach her in his row boat and went out several miles before it became apparent that she was too far away to be reached in that manner. On Saturday Capt. Kitching took his launch from the river to the ocean beach and accompanied by four others started for the schooner.

They covered the distance safely but accomplished nothing by their trip except having their curiosity partly satisfied. The captain gave them no information except to say they were waiting for wind and tide. The visitors thought this rather curious in view of the fact that there had been a strong wind from every point of the compass during the week. They saw the boat was heavily

41 Fort Pierce News, 23 April 1915, p. 3
43 Fort Pierce News, 16 July 1915, p. 3
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

loaded but were unable to determine the nature of her cargo. The captain extended no information to come aboard and after satisfying themselves that no assistance was needed the "rescue party" headed back for shore.

Early Sunday morning the mysterious schooner set sail and started southward. Some think it was a part of the rumored Mexican filibustering expedition and others think it might have been a German spy boat.

13 August 1915 – United States Coast Guard Service has announced that seven powerboats will be distributed. 44

The United States Coast Guard Service has announced that seven power boats, costing approximately $500 each, will soon be distributed to the houses of refuge along the East Coast of Florida. These boats are all of the lifeboat type, practically unsinkable and can be managed and navigated by one man.

1916

21 January 1916 – Permit to Dig Inlet at Vero Also Denied45

22 January 1916 – Permit to Dig Inlet at Vero Also Denied46

Following closely the announcement of adverse action on the application for permission to dig an inlet opposite Sebastian, the War department also announces its refusal to act favorably on the application of the Vero Inlet Committee for permission to dig an inlet at or near Bethel creek to connect the waters of Indian river with the ocean. It will be recalled that a committee of Vero citizens informally presented the proposition to Major W. B. Ladue at the time of the recent inlet hearing in this city, following which profiles were prepared and formal application made.

Cause for the refusal of the War Department to grant the permits asked for is not given in either case. It is probable that the strenuous opposition offered by some of the property holders on the island opposite Sebastian was a contributing cause of adverse action in that case.

The official notice relative to denial of the Vero application, addressed to the Vero Inlet Committee, follows:

"Jacksonville, Jan. 15, 1916.

"Referring to the application of the Vero Inlet Committee for permission to construct a canal or inlet from the Atlantic ocean to the Indian River at a point of immediately south of the Bethel Creek Coast Guard Reservation, I am directed by the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, to advise you that at present, the Department is not willing to give favorable consideration to the application of the Vero Inlet committee for permission to cut an inlet to the sea at or near Bethel creek.

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44 St. Lucie Co. Tribune, 13 August 1915, p.2
45 St. Lucie Co. Tribune, 21 January 1915, p.8
46 The Fellsmere Tribune, 22 January 1916, p.7
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

“Please take notice that under the provisions of the Act of March 3, 1899, the cutting of such a canal or inlet without the permission of the War Department is unlawful.

“W. B. Ladue,
“Major, Corps of Engineers.”

11 February 1916 – The Fort Pierce News, p.3
M’Conville Trying for Life saving Station Located Here – Judge and Mrs. Daniel M’Conville of Washington, D.C., stopped in Vero last Sunday night on their way to Fort Pierce and spent Monday here. They will remain in Fort Pierce several weeks while Judge M’Conville looks after the improvement of some of his property on the peninsula.

He brought the news that he had made application for the establishment of a life saving station at the Bethel Creek Coast Guard Station. He took the matter up with treasury department in Washington, personally and was given the promise that it would be given consideration.

Judge McConville has always taken great interest in matters in connection with this station and it was through his influence that Captain Kitching was furnished with a fine new boat last spring.

Another thing that Judge McConville has taken up in Washington that will be of interest to the people of this section is an investigation of the mosquito problem. At his request the department of health has promised to send a trained man here to study the problem of doing away with the mosquitoes. There can be no doubt that such a thing is possible, but the government has never before given any attention the mosquito problem in Florida.

1917

11 January 1917 – Bethel Creek HOR Burned at 3:00 AM

12 January 1917 – The Fort Pierce News, p.?
Coast guard Station Destroyed by Fire
Fire at an early hour Thursday morning completely destroyed the Bethel Creek Coast Guard Station on the coast opposite Vero.

The origin of the fire is unknown. Capt. and Mrs. Walter Kitching, the keeper and his wife and Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Kemper, who occupy the house were awakened at 3 o’clock to find the building flames. They had only time to escape with a portion of their clothing. None of the contents of the house were saved.

The Bethel Creek station was built about 30 years ago and is one of the landmarks of this part of the coast. Under a new law enacted about two years ago its name was changed from House of Refuge to Coast Guard Station. Captain Kitching has been keeper of the house for nearly three years. His family together with Mr. and Mrs. Kemper are living at Live Oak Inn.

14 January 1917 – Fire at Bethel Creek\(^\text{47}\)

\(^\text{47}\) “Fire at Bethel Creek,” The Miami Herald, 14 January 1917 [America’s GenealogyBank, Internet-Newsbank]
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

The Bethel Creek Coast Guard station on the coast opposite Vero was destroyed by fire Thursday morning.

Capt. And Mrs. Walter Kitching, the keeper and his wife, and Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Kemper, who occupy the house, were awakened at 3 o’clock to find the building in flames. They had only time to escape with a portion of their clothing. None of the contents of the house were saved.

The Bethel Creek station was built about thirty years ago and is one of the landmarks of the coast. Under a new law enacted about two years ago its name was changed from House of Refuge to Coast Guard station. Captain Kitching has been keeper of the house for nearly three years.

13 April 1917 – The Fort Pierce News, p.?

Life Guards of Vero to Patrol the Atlantic Coast

Vero will have a crew of life guards as a result of the war with Germany. Walter Kitching, keeper of the Coast Guard Station has been appointed chief surfman and a crew of five men will be placed under him to patrol the coast. They will camp temporarily on the site of the burned Coast Guard station. An effort is being made to enlist a crew of men in this vicinity. No announcement has yet been made as to whether the Coast Guard station buildings will be rebuilt.

13 April 1917 – Vigorous Vero Waxing Patriotic and Warlike

Vero responds to the spirit of patriotism sweeping the country and consequence flags are flying from various buildings and fluttering from automobiles. Sleepy-Eye Lodge has two attractive flags of generous size flanking the front entrance to the screened porches, besides other smaller flags in evidence. Most attractive of these demonstrations of patriotism is the large, 8 by 15 foot flag which floats in the breeze high over Edgewood Garage during the day, and at night a cluster of electric lights in Tri-color tops the flagpole, a lone beacon noticeable for long distances. These lights were placed Tuesday and lighted up that evening, area regular nightly feature.

Over on the beach Uncle Sam is showing his care and protection by increasing the coast guard by the addition of men and surf boats. Capt. and Mrs. Kitching have been living in a houseboat since the burning of the life-saving station early in the year, and will care for the first relay of the increased crew until they can erect quarters, which will be accomplished as rapidly as possible.

20 April 1917 – Five Men Pass Exam. For U.S. Coast Guard Service

Edward Davis, of St. Lucie, Felix Poppell, Jr., of Quay, Mr. Bowland, of Vero, Frances Richards and Daniel Hine of this city passed the rigid physical and medical examination for the coast guard service conducted here Monday and the same day went on service at the U. S. coast guard station near here, of which Captain Byron Dawley is in charge.

Aside from patrolling the coast the recruits will be given a thorough training in the handling of boats and in other phases of coast guard service.

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48 St. Lucie Co Tribune, 13 April 1917, p.7
49 St. Lucie Co Tribune, 20 April 1917, p.1
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

The number of men at each guard station is being increased, five having also been added to the Vero station this week. This is the line with general defense measures.

17 May 1917 – At Coast Guard Station

On Saturday, Mrs. Walter Kitching and Mrs. R. C. Bragg joined theirs husbands at the Coast Guard Station, the old bath house having been remodeled into dwelling. Quarters have been erected for the guard also, so that now the boat house, formerly occupied by all, is now used as the mess hall. It is generally believed that a substantial permanent Coast Guard station will be erected by the government soon, to replace the one burned during the winter.

22 June 1917 – St. Lucie County Tribune, p.7

Mr. and Mrs. R. C. Bragg and children, of Vero, were in Fort Pierce Tuesday afternoon, that being Mr. Bragg’s day off from duty as coast guard.

29 June 1917 – St. Lucie County Tribune, p.7

Felix Poppell had a leave of absence from coast guard duty for several days this week on account of an m?? to his eye, sustained on Sunday ??, a group of young people were playing ball on the beach.

13 July 1917 - St. Lucie County Tribune, p.7

Felix Poppell, member of the coast Guard has been transferred to coast guard service at Key West, leaving on Wednesday evening for that point.

20 July 1917 - St. Lucie County Tribune, p.7

Backus and Son have just finished building some roller skids for the federal government to be used in the Coast Guard service at the station near Vero. They were loaded on a boat and taken up to Vero Tuesday, where they were turned over to the officer in charge of the station at that place. Backus & Son are skilled on all kinds of work pertaining to boat building and even the federal government knows where to get a good job when it is needed.

24 August 1917 – St. Lucie County Tribune, p.10

Another progressive enterprise is the government telephone system being established between the Brevard county Telephone system at Vero and the Coast guard Station, No. 205. Capt. Walter Kitching and his crew of guardsmen have finished laying 2700 feet of cable and are now completing the setting of poles and stretching three and a half mile of phone line. This will be a welcome convenience – in fact a necessity for the Coast Guard these war times.

14 September 1917 – St. Lucie County Tribune, p.9

The number of the Coast Guard stationed at Bethel Creek Station No. 502, has been increased by one new member, L. L. law, of Oslo, being the new recruit.

21 September 1917 – St. Lucie County Tribune, p.5

Spencer Fromberger stopped in Jensen a few hours Saturday, renewing old acquaintances. He is now in the coast guard service at Vero.

50 St. Lucie Co Tribune, 11 May 1917, p.3
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

12 October 1917 – St. Lucie County Tribune, p. 10
Coast Guard Station 205 Now Thoroughly Equipped
Coast Guard Station, No. 205, which is situated opposite Vero, is now thoroughly equipped by Uncle Sam for coast defense, and the boys forming the crew are very proud of their present arrangement. Besides the crew of seven men and a fleet of staunch surf boats and guns forming the original guard, a number of worthwhile items of equipment have been added recently.

Telephone communication, cables for which were laid some time ago, will be completed to Vero this week, connection with the outside world being through the Western Union Telegraph office here at present. As soon as a telephone exchange is established here, with underground system complete, connection will be made through the Brevard County Telephone Company’s long distance to the world about us.

Last week a new beach cart, with full equipment, arrived and was put into service.

The first of this week the boys were made glad by the receipt of two Indian motorcycles for beach patrol. These are in regulation army colors of khaki and black. Capt. Kitching and his boys are quite proud of their new equipment.

14 December 1917 – St. Lucie County Tribune, p.7
Mr. and Mrs. L. L. Law have moved to the ocean beach, Mr. Law being one of the Coast Guard crew stationed there.

1918

1918 – Possibly Charles Nelson was the new keeper at the station.\(^{51}\)
Per oral history tape in the library of Mrs. Mamie Nelson “when the war came he didn’t want to be sent away from home so he volunteered for the new Coast Guard station which was set up near John’s Island.” He died ca. 1918.

20 August 1918 – A Coast Guard Tragedy Saddens the Community\(^ {52} \)
29 August 1918 – The St. Lucie County Tribune, p.6
A Coast Guard Tragedy Saddens the Community
L. Law member of the crew of Coast Guard Station No. 205, was accidentally shot Friday about noon, dying from the effects of the wound twenty-four hours later. The funeral took place Sunday in the early afternoon, at Oslo. [Five more paragraphs are in the article.]

30 August 1918 – The St Lucie County Tribune, p.6
Birthday dinner Party for Miss Frances Dodot
About fifteen of the young friends of Miss Frances Dodot gave her a picnic dinner party at the Vero Coast Guard station last Sunday, going over for the day.

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\(^{51}\) Oral History located at the IRC Main Library, Archive Center.
\(^{52}\) The St Lucie County Tribune, 20 August 1918
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

The girls took along an excellent picnic dinner and invited the Coast Guard boys to be their guest for dinner. The Coast guards assured the young ladies that the dinner was the best they had yet had the pleasure of partaking of over there.

There was music at the station, bathing in the surf and a general good time for all.

Miss Dodot received a number of attractive gifts in honor of the occasion.

10 September 1918 – The St Lucie County Tribune, p.6
Various Vero Farm Topics
A contractor placing machinery on the new school house grounds used his machinery to finish drilling a well at the Coast Guard station. This well is 620 feet deep, but the water is salty.

20 September 1918 – The St. Lucie County Tribune, p.6
Roy Woods, of the Coast guard, is moving his family to the beach. Mrs. L. Laws is moving into his house.

24 September 1918 – St. Lucie County Tribune, p.6
Last Wednesday a steamship ran ashore one mile north of Melbourne. The Vero Coast Guard was called in for assistance and a government tug boat was sent for and the steamer pulled off Friday and proceeded on its way.

22 October 1918 – St. Lucie County Tribune, p.6
The Coast Guards at the Vero station subscribed the amount of $800 to the Fourth Liberty Loan. As a result the boys are not broke, but badly bent.

11 November 1918 – Schooner Asta Goes Down53
Vessel Loaded with Crossties, Springs Leak Off the Coast of Florida.
Vero, Fla, Nov 10 – The three masted schooner Asta, bound from Brunswick to Havana, Cuba, with a cargo of cross ties, sprang a leak and sand 20 miles off the coast here early Saturday morning. Captain Fodling and the seven members of the crew reached Bethel creek coast guard station early this morning in a fourteen foot life boat after being adrift 24 hours without food or water. They are now waiting at the coast guard station to hear from the owners of the vessel, the American Tie and Timber Company, of Jacksonville.

12 November 1918 – The St. Lucie County Tribune, p. 5
Shipwreck Crew of Asta Reaches Land Near Vero
Capt. Fodling and the crew of seven men of the three-masted schooner Asta, bound from Brunswick to Havana and loaded with a cargo of crossties; landed Sunday morning at the Coast guard station.

On account of a leak the schooner had to be abandoned twenty miles off the coast and the shipwrecked crew was adrift for the twenty-four hours without food and water.

Bethel Creek House of Refuge

15 November 1918 – The St. Lucie county Tribune, p.6

Tales of Shipwrecked Men of Schooner Asta
When the three-masted schooner Asta went to pieces and sank near Vero it finished a career of over 40 years and went to a deserved eternal rest. Unfortunately for the crew, the schooner carried its two boats down when it decided to commit suicide, but a number of railroad ties floated loose and gave the men a chance to save their lives. The breaking up of the big boat brought one of the smaller boats to the surface and two men bailed out the water by means of their boots.

After the crew of eight men got into the 14-foot boat night came on and as none of the men was familiar with the cast it was decided to spend the night near the wreck and to pull for the shore in the morning. In leaving the wreck the crew discovered the ship’s mascot, a Cuban dog, sitting on one end of a tie, while the other end of the same tie was held down by a big rat.

In pulling to the shore the boat overturned again and Capt. Folke Odling lost his pocketbook, but after another hard struggle the boat was righted and the crew landed near the Coast Guard Station, where they received attention and presented the mascot to the captain of the Coast Guard.

While in Vero the Asta’s crew was entertained by S. E. Ttwichell, and on arrival of their money were fitted out at a local store.

20 December 1918 – St. Lucie County Tribune, p.6
EARL EMERSON, of the Vero Coast Guard, is ill at the home of his parents with appendicitis.

11 April 1919 – St. Lucie County Tribune, p.6
MR. MEADOWS, one of our Coast Guard boys, has been confined at home by sickness. Under the care of Dr. Grossman he is somewhat improved.

28 March 1919 – Coast Guard Officer Has Praise for Splendid Work

Lieut. John W. Richardson, district superintendent of the U. S. coast guard service in this district, with headquarters at Jacksonville, was in the city Wednesday on official matters connected with Coast Guard Station No. 206, opposite the city.

Among other matters, he visited the boat building plant of Backus & Son for the purpose of inspecting the boats under construction by that firm for use in the coast guard service. In discussing the matter with The Tribune reporter, he expressed himself as perfectly satisfied with the work. “I inspected every detail of the work in the boats already completed and in those in various stages of construction, from those just begun to those completed, but lacking the paint and finishing. It is all good, honest work and that is what we want in our service, what we must have.

“The Backus firm is doing first-class work, using first-class material, and I am sure their boats will add to and maintain their fast growing reputation for reliable boats.”

54 St. Lucie County Tribune - 28 March 1919, p.1
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

23 September 1919 – Coast Guard Inspection: Capt. J. H. Quinan Here

There are nine Coast guard stations on the East Coast of Florida, Ormond, Buelow, Oak Hill, Titusville, Vero, Fort Pierce, Stuart (Gilbert’s Bar), Hillsboro and Miami.

Capt. Quinan is now upon the retired list and is inspecting the Coast Guard stations from Cape Fear river to Pensacola.

He leaves for the southern stations today, traveling by cutter when the weather will permit. He looks the part of a seasoned officer, genial and courteous, and bears evidence of long service. There is an air of gentility about him which is refreshing.

31 October 1919 – Coast Guard Station No. 206 Practically Discontinued

All of the Coast Guards at station No. 206 have been discharged excepting Captain Syax and Oscar Lennard. This will leave the station practically inactive excepting that these few remaining will care for the government’s property until such time as the post is discontinued and the equipment removed.

This seems to be the plan of the government all along the Atlantic coast and one by one those stations which are not actually necessary for the patrolling of the coast will be discontinued and the men of the Coast Guard discharged.

1920

1920 Census of Vero, St. Lucie, County
Johansen, Andrew & Ruth. B. Norway Occupation: Coast Guard

14 February 1920 - Vero Press, Page 2
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Hanson are the proud parents of a new ten pound boy. Mr. Hanson is in charge of the coast guard station on the Vero Beach. [NOTE: This has to be Mr. Johanssen. They did have a son born in 1920.]

28 August 1920 - Vero Press Page 2
Mrs. M. E. E. Guldbransen and little son Godberg of Titusville spent a very pleasant Sunday visiting in Vero. She was surprised to see so many fine buildings in the business section. She is traveling south to visit her sister, but hopes to come back to see more of Vero later. She spent the day with the Nielsen family and at the U.S. Coast Guard station.

1921

29 January 1921, Vero Press, Page 1
President-Elect Harding Plays Golf on Vero Course
...Mesrs. Weston and Zapf of the Vero Beach Co. were busy all the morning before the arrival of the Victoria (Harding’s boat) making arrangements for the landing. The dock at Vero Beach has a

55 St. Lucie County Tribune – 23 September 1919, p.5
56 St. Lucie County Tribune – 31 October 1919, p.1
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

large flag pole and Captain Johansen of the Coast Guard Station, demonstrated his ability as a sailor to Messrs. Zapf and Weston in climbing and assisting to put up an American flag, also the banner bearing the words “Vero Beach” in large letters which greeted the yacht on its arrival. The Captain also piloted the yacht to the dock, using a U.S. Coast Guard launch to point the deep water channel.

5 February 1921 - Vero Press, Page 2
Sunday was an ideal day for outings and everyone and all his friends went picnicking. Picnics, too many for individual mention, made up the day. Vero Beach, East View, the Coast Guard station, Ten Mile Creek and every other favorable spot were sought out by the multitudes, and from each group comes a report of happy hours, big eats and a general good time.

24 November 1921 - Vero Press, Page 2
FOR SALE – Sea skiff, length 23 feet, Palmer marine engine one cylinder, four-cycle 5.6 horse power; all in excellent condition. Phone 26 or write A. Johansen, Box 33, Vero, Florida

Captain Kitching moved Tuesday into his new residence in East Vero, near the river.

29 December 1921 - Vero Press, Page 4
United States Coast Guard Station, No. 205, which guards the ocean beach opposite Vero, now maintains a motor truck for the hauling of supplies. The construction of roads towards the station from Vero Bridge has done away with the hauling of necessities by boat as was the custom only a short time ago.

1922

9 March 1922, Vero Press Page 1
Dies of Heart Failure While Bathing
Frank Divine of Greenwich, Conn., chauffeur of Winchester Fitch for the last three seasons, died of heart failure while bathing at Vero Beach last Friday morning. He made no signals of distress, but it was discovered that he was floating and Alex McWilliam and David Sawyer went out and got his body to the shore. Capt. Johansen of the U. S. Coast Guard Station, No. 205, had also noticed and hurried to the spot and the government resuscitation methods were immediately applied. Dr. Harrell was sent for and he used a pulmotor, but very little water was found in the lungs, making it evident that heart failure was more responsible for death than drowning.

Owing to the illness of his wife Mr. Fitch was unable to accompany the body. J. C. McCann undertook the sad mission, and he was met in New York by Mr. and Mrs. Hotchkiss, a daughter of Mr. Fitch and they accompanied it to Greenwich where interment was made.

Mr. Divine was very popular among the people of Riomar and Vero and his death was a shock to all. He leaves a wife and four small children and other relatives to mourn his untimely death.

18 May 1922, Vero Press, Page 1
Shelling Beach Road
Hard, surfacing of the stretch of bad road on the island north from the Coast Guard station was started this week. With the shelling of one and a half miles the road will be placed in good
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

condition as far north as Wabasso. Frank Forster has charge of the work, which being done by the county.

15 June 1922, Vero Press, Page 1
Legion Plans for Big Crowd
...It is announced that bathing facilities for 5000 people will be provided at Beachland Casino, the basket system being used. Captain Johanssen of the Coast Guard station has volunteered to act as life guard at the beach that day so that ample protection the bathers will be provided.

22 June 1922, Vero Press, Page 1
Will Decorate for July 4th
... Evidence that no detail is being overlooked by the Legion to make the occasion a success in every way is the announcement that a first aid station will be maintained at the beach with a doctor and nurse in charges. Walter Kitchen, former coast guard captain, will be on duty with Captain Johansson of the Vero Coast Guard station as life guards at the beach all day.

21 August 1922, Vero Press, Page 1
Last Sad Rites for Paul Nisle
Funeral services for Paul H. Nisle, Jr., who was drowned at Vero Beach Thursday afternoon while attempting to rescue his sister Marcia, were held Saturday afternoon at 2:30 o’clock at the Methodist Church. ... Help was immediately sent for and a boat was brought with which to search for the body. Nearly an hour later it was located and brought to shore and a fight to resuscitate the boy began. Under the director of Captain Johannsen of the Coast Guard station, and Drs. Grossman and Harrell, assisted by a number of others, including Paul H. Nisle, Sr. the efforts at resuscitation were continued without a stop for four hours, before hope was abandoned. The body was then brought to the Nisle home in Vero.

7 September 1922, Vero Press, Page 1
Adrift 3 Days in Gulf Stream
SUBTOPIC: Part of Miami men reach shore here in famished condition.
Made desperate by hunger and thirst Hazel and J. H. McQuaide, Jr., left the yacht Sunday morning 14 miles off shore, in a small skiff with only one oar to seek assistance at the Vero coast guard station, which they had located on their chart. The sea being calm they finally reached shore and at 4 o’clock Sunday afternoon arrived at the Coast Guard station, more dead than alive, having walked the entire distance from the point where they landed.

Capt. Andrew Johansen provided the men with food and clothing and taking a supply of food and water for the others, went back to their boat with them in his truck. In the meantime, The Eleanor III had drifted out of the Gulf Stream and been blown in close to shore. The three passengers were brought in and later a motor boat for which Capt. Johansen had telephoned to the Backus boat yard in Fort Pierce, arrived and towed the disabled yacht to Fort Pierce. Capt. Johansen then took the five men to Fort Pierce in his truck.

31 December 1922 – Andrew Johansen

1923

8 February 1923 - Vero Press, Page 1
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

Johansen to leave Coast Guard Station
Andrew Johansen, who has charge of the Bethel Creek Coast Guard station for the last three and a half years, will leave shortly for Baltimore to report for duty as warrant officer on a revenue cutter. Mr. Johansen took the examination for the service last July and was one of the successful candidates to pass. He has now received his appointment and as soon as relieved here will depart for Baltimore for duty.

Mrs. Johansen will accompany him as far as Charleston, S. C., where she will stop for a visit with her family. Mr. Johansen had several years of sea duty before being sent to Vero to take charge of the local coast guard station. He has not been advised who will succeed him here.

15 February 1923 - Vero Press, page 8
E. A. Simons of False Cape, Va., has been appointed to succeed Andrew Johannsen in charge of the Bethel Creek Coast Guard station here. Mr. Johannsen will leave Friday for Baltimore.

16 February 1923 – Emmet A. Simmons

1 March 1923 - Vero Press, Page 2
A. Johanssen for three years in charge of the Bethel Creek Coast Guard station here is now in Baltimore and has been assigned to duty as warrant officer on the revenue cutter Apache. Mrs. Johanssen and son stopped over in Charlestown for a visit with her family.

1925

19 March 1925 - Plan District to Open Inlet at Bethel Creek
Several paragraphs long...Bill will be introduced during coming legislative Session. Chamber of Commerce lays groundwork for establishment of deep water Harbor at Vero. ..In order to make it possible to construct an inlet at the mouth of Bethel Creek, opposite Vero, a bill authorizing the establishment of a special inlet district will be introduced in the coming session of the legislature.

6 August 1925 – Notice
Bids will be received at the office of Carr & McFadden, Civil Engineers, until 12 o'clock noon of Tuesday, Aug 11, 1925 for the clearing of 100 acres of land, located on the peninsular, just south of the U. S. Coast Guard Station, and known as the north part of Sections 31 and 32, Township 32 South and Range 40 East.
Carr & MFadden, Inc., Civil Engineers, Roach Bldg. Vero Beach, Fla.

5 November 1925 - Yacht Goes Aground on Local Beach
SUBTOPIC: Genesee, Beautiful 120-Foot Washington Pleasure Yacht, Being Torn to Pieces by Unmerciful Ocean Surf – Crew is Taken Off ---Ship Abandoned Wednesday Afternoon at Five O'Clock after Futile Effort to Save the Luxuriant Craft
...The coast guard station wired into Vero Beach Wednesday morning that a ship was sighed grounded a short ways off shore and asked for rescuers.

57 “Plan District to Open Inlet at Bethel Creek,” Vero Press, p. 1:8
58 “Notice” Vero Beach Press, 6 August 1925, p. 4:2
59 “Yacht Goes Aground on Local Beach.” The Vero Beach Press. 5 November 1925. P. 1:3
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

1926

14 January 1926 - Cleveland Man Firm Believer in Vero Beach

...Upon Arrival and inspection keen vision and foresight prompted him to take steps for the purchase of peninsular property in the vicinity of the coast guard station, a deal for the consummation of which the original Vero Development company was formed.

19 January 1926 - Subdivision on Market at Early Date – Wagg Organization, Inc to Handle Sales of Vero Mar

...The development known as Vero Mar and bounded by the Atlantic ocean on the east and Indian river on the west, Bethel creek on the north and the Vero Beach Estates development on the south will become of the finest of its kind north of Palm Beach.

2 March 1926 - (very difficult to read) Coast Guard Tract Request for Park

A ??? move backed by the city planning and zoning commissioners ?? ?? to have the city council request Senator Fletcher? And the representative Sears place ??? the federal government the desire Vero Beach that the ?????????????

Representative Sears was ????????? the government ?????? ??? of this nature regarding when ??? property at Jupiter ??? ???? that the ???????? ????

This would ?? ???? ??? of the land, but with government ????? the property would be beautified and developed counting a great stride toward a condition that is vitally necessary to the growth of our city, namely the development of the ocean front.

A triangular piece of property located about on-half mile north of the coast guard station will also be included in the petition.

31 March 1926 - Vero Beach Press Journal, page ?

Vero Beach When it Was Called Vero

Interesting interviews of Famous Men that remember Vero Beach When it was Called Vero...Among Mr. Rabbits remembrances, was the fact that he and the “gang”, occasionally boarded a small motor boat, owned by the Knight Brothers, and ventured up river to a point opposite the Coast Guard Station, there was located the “ole swimming hold.” No such thing as a bridge over the river or a bathing beach were thought of at that time.

3 June 1926 - Vero Beach Press Journal, page ?

FOR SALE: Motor boat, 18 feet long ½ feet wide equipped with 5 horsepower 4 cycle motor in first class condition. Price right. Call Coast Guard Station.

15 November 1926 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 1

Coast Guard Official is Visiting in City

Capt A. Johannsen formerly in charge of the Coast Guard station here is visiting in the city for several days. Capt. Johannsen is now in charge of the Coast Guard base at Charleston, S. C.

60 “Cleveland Man Firm Believer in Vero Beach.: The Vero Beach Press. January 14, 1926, p. 3:3
61 “Coast Guard Tract Request for Park.” The Vero Beach Press. 2 Marcy 1926. P. 2:2
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

where four vessels are stationed. For three years after leaving the local station he served on a cutter at Baltimore having been transferred to Charleston about a year ago. This is the first time he has returned to Vero Beach and he expressed himself as greatly impressed with the improvements that have taken place.

1927

13 January 1927 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page ?
*Peninsula Road is Closed to Traffic*
County Engineer Dan Leisher wishes it to be announced that the shell road leading northward on the peninsula from the Coast Guard station is being torn up in preparation for making the new highway. Persons who have been accustomed to driving over this route will find it impassable until the rock surfacing has been placed in position and rolled. It is not anticipated that the road will be closed longer than a few days.

13 June 1927 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page ?
*Peninsula Road is Closed to Traffic*
County Engineer Dan Leisher wishes it to be announced that the shell road leading northward on the peninsula from the Coast Guard station is being torn up in preparation for making the new highway. Persons who have been accustomed to driving over this route will find it impassable until the rock surfacing has been placed in position and rolled. It is not anticipated that the road will be closed longer than a few days.

20 August 1927 – Roland Styron

30 August 1927 - Citizens Desire Restored Coast Guard Station\(^62\)
Established more than 50 years ago performs important service.

The existence of a coast guard station on the ocean beach, a short distance north of the new casino, has been brought to the attention of hundreds of citizens of Indian River and adjoining counties since the ocean drive to Winter Beach bridge has been opened to public use.

There now exists little on the ocean front to suggest that a branch of one of the federal government’s most important arms of service has been established at this point on the East Coast for more than half a century. Since the original building erected on the site burned in January 1917, a dwelling house back a little from the beach at the head of Bethel Creek has been the dwelling place of the coast guards.

A tract of a little more than eight acres extending across the peninsula from the beach to the Indian River is owned by the government. Were it not that fire destroyed the records of the station many stories could be written of the heroic service that has been rendered shipwrecked sailors and others from this station. *The unmarked mounds in the burying grounds furnish mute evidence that not always were efforts to save life successful.*

The suggestion has been made that the federal government be petitioned to restore the buildings and convert the site into a station in keeping with its importance to this section of the

\(^62\) “Citizens Desire Restored Coast Guard Station,” *The Vero Beach Press Journal*, 30 August 1927, p. 1:1
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

cost. As policemen of the Atlantic Coast the members of the guard represent an increasing branch of the federal defensive service as evidenced in the recent fight at Ft. Lauderdale where three members of the guard were murdered in the performance of their duties.

The coast guard station at the beach has been recently assigned a new officer in charge. Capt R. Styron transferred from Fort Macon, North Carolina. The captain is planning to have his family join him at the station in a few days. The accommodations at the stations could be very materially improved upon at no great expense. With the increasing menace of smugglers of liquor, narcotics and aliens seeking landing places along the East Coast the duties of the guard become greater and more hazardous.

Originally the station was established to warn vessels of the shoreline and to render aid in saving life and property of those driven ashore. Since the war the coast guard has been made a part of the law enforcement arm of the service in one of the most dangerous fields of the service having to deal with organized crime in its most desperate form. With the rapidly growing population of the East Coast cities this service constantly assumes great importance.

The maintenance of the coast guard station at its present site in a manner in keeping with its importance is of much interest of this section of the East Coast.

1928

28 February 1928 - Vero Beach Press Journal, page 1
*Seeks Promotion from Constable to Sheriff*

The entry of Capt. Walter Kitching in the race for the nomination for Sheriff for Indian River County stimulates interest in the coming campaign. Mr. Kitching has resided on the East Coast for the past thirty-five years, the last twenty years having been spent in this community. His home is located on the peninsula. He is an extensive fruit and vegetable grower. He served as Captain of the U. S. Coast Guard station here for seven years having a dozen men on his coast patron during the war. Elected constable at the last election he has rendered considerable service as a law enforcement officer. His aspiration the office of Sheriff will be encouraged by his many friends.

1929

26 March 1919 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.1
*House of Refuge at Bethel Creek Established 1884 – Station Much in Need of Modernization and Improvement*

A crew of linemen in the employ of the U. S. Coast Guard service is engaged in rebuilding the telephone line from Vero Beach to the Bethel Creek Coast Guard Station. The line cuts across the country north of the Main canal and connects with a cable on the west bank of the Indian River a short distance north of the bridge. The cable carries the lines under the river to the mouth of Bethel Creek on the peninsula.

The hurricane last fall nearly destroyed the service line. They old poles are being replaced by heavy creasoted? poles that will last for many years. Nearly one hundred poles will be required to complete the line. Where the line crosses the Royal Park Golf Course a change is being made in the route to remove the wires from the front of the tees.

31.
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

The Bethel Creek Station, or House of Refuge, as it is known to older citizens, was established in 1884 with Louis and Charles Stegel in charge. [NOTE: actually 1878 and Houston was first keeper.] The records reveal the a number of rescues of ship wrecked sailors have been made in past years. The station has burned and been rebuilt twice since it was established.

There has been agitation for many years to have the government establish a fully manned station at this point. At present only one guard is on duty: although last year a crew of five and six was maintained with a cutter at their command. The local station is known to all seamen who ply the coast, and with a signal light and weather signal service and a cutter with crew established here it would be a point of distinction on the coast.

26 Apr 1929 - Vero Beach Press Journal, page 5
Orders Received to Close Coast Guard Station
Orders have been received by Capt. Rolland Styron of the Bethel Creek Coast Guard station transferring him to the station at Port Smith near Portsmouth, N.C. The orders direct him to close up the local station Wednesday, May 1st. Whether or not the station is to be permanently closed has not been announced by the U. S. Coast Guard Department.

The Bethel Creek station has been in service for more than fifty years and is the only station on the coast between the Indian River Inlet station at Fort Pierce and the Chester Shoals station at Titusville. Only last week the telephone line was rebuilt to the station by the Coast Guard Department. The citizens of Indian River county expressed a desire to have the station raised to a regular house of refuge standing with a complete life guard crew in service.

The federal government holds title to about 11 acres of land on which the Bethel Creek station is locate. Capt. Styron has been in charge of the station since August 1927. At various times the crew at the station has numbered two to six men.

Since its establishment the station has been called to render relief to a number of vessels that have become shipwrecked or stranded on the beach.

1930

1930 Census of Charleston, SC
Johansen, Andrew, Ruth, Ar????, (born Florida, probably Vero) Julian, Ev???? Occupation: Warrant Officer, U.S. Coast Guard

1931

3 April 1931 - Vero Beach Press Journal, page ?
Society News
Captain Andrew Johansen, U. S. Coast Guard, Mrs. Johansen and their children were over night guests of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Guthrie on Tuesday night. Mr. and Mrs. Johansen will be remembered by their many friends while in charge of our local coast guard station a few years ago. Captain Johansen was transferred from here to Charleston, S.C. and is now transferred to U.S. Base No. 6 Ft. Lauderdale, where he and his family will make their home.
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

1 May 1931 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 3
*Notice of Sheriff's Sale*

28 September 1931 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 3
*Scientist Visits Indian Shell Mounds*
Fulfilling a desire that he has cherished for the past twenty-five years, Dr. Thomas G. Lde, professor of anatomy in the University of Minnesota, visited the Indian shell mounds on the peninsula near the coast guard station. Tuesday morning, Dr. Lee, a winter resident at Babson Park, accompanied by S. L. Kelly and G. B. Rockwell of Frostproof, spent Monday and Tuesday in Vero Beach visiting the places of interest in the vicinity. Dr. Lee is a nationally known scientist. He is a graduate of Harvard and studied abroad taking degrees at Munich and Wesburg. He is associate editor of the Anatomical Record a member of the American Society of Naturalists and American Society of Zoologists. He is president of the Quest Society, an association of men interest in scientific matters in Florida. The visit to the McKee Jungle gardens was greatly enjoyed. There stay in Vero Beach was a most pleasing and enjoyable part of their month’s tour of the state.

1934

16 November 1934 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 8
*Council and Civic Clubs Due to Join Forces on Project*
The council placed its stamp of approval on the proposal that the coast guard property on the peninsula be turned over to the city for park purposes under a revocable license. A letter from Fred L. Wells, Boatswin, of the United States Coast Guard service, acting commander of the second district, stated that the had recommended that the property be turned over to the city. Official notice of the offer has not been received from the coast guard commandant in Washington.

28 December 1934 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 1 & 8
*Number of FERA Projects Under Way in Section*
...Just as soon as papers are signed by the federal government and city covering the transfer of the Coast Guard property on the beach the local FERA office will make it a project and start work beautifying the area, it was said by Mr. Gove. (Henry S. Gove, Director of Operations for FERA.)

1935

18 January 1935 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 1
*Improvement of Coast Guard Tract to Begin*
SUB TOPICS: Bowling Court in Pocahontas Park to be Installed; 10-Acre Area at the Beach made into Public Park; Under Lease to City; Ditch on Highway at Winter Beach to be Filled

FERA projects due to get under way the coming week or shortly thereafter include cleaning up and beautifying the U. S. Coast Guard tract on the peninsula, construction of a lawn bowling court in Pocahontas Park, and filling in of the drainage ditch on the east side of the Dixie highway at the Winter Beach school, it was announced Thursday by Henry S. Gove, Directory of Operations in Indian River County.....
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

Under an arrangement between the City of Vero Beach and officials of the U. S. Coast Guard Service, the 10-acre Coast Guard tract will be leased to the city on a revocable basis. It is planned to convert the place in a veritable beauty spot, adding another park and playground to the many now in use here.

The tract fronts on both the Atlantic ocean and Indian River, being located a short distance north of the Beachland Casino. It is covered with tropical trees and shrubbery and there is a flowing artesian well as well. It is expected that a month’s time will be required to put it in shape.

26 July 1935 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 1
Coast Guard Park Project is Given Approval by WPA
The division of applications and information of the Works Progress Administration announced Tuesday that President Roosevelt had approved an allotment to Florida in federal funds for works projects, including one project for Indian River County.

Local project approved is for the completion of work on the Coast Guard tract on the peninsula at Vero Beach, being made into a city park. A portion of the work has been done on the project by the FERA.

Federal allotment of funds for the work was given at $795 and sponsors contribution, $181.50.

Another project covering work on the Wabasso school grounds, has been approved by states, headquarters of WPA and forwarded to Washington.

9 August 1935 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 1
WPA Program Starts Here; 36 Assigned to Coast Guard Project
With the inauguration of the Works Progress Administration program on Wednesday, the local WPA office assigned 36 workers to the Coast Guard park project, which was recently approved in Washington.

13 October 1935 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 5
Herbert F. R. Reck, FWPA Director in City on Tuesday
Herbert F. R. Reck, West Palm Beach district director of the Florida Works Progress Administration District 3, spent Tuesday morning in Vero Beach, in conference with Henry S. Gove, assistant engineer in charge of the Indian River county WPA office.

Mr. Reck and Mr. Gove inspected the coast guard park, Sebastian airport and Wabasso school grounds projects Tuesday morning. A crew of 50 men is at work on the Sebastian project and 17 on the Wabasso project.

29 November 1935 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 1
75 Now Employed on WPA Projects
SUBTOPIC: Marked Improvement in Employment Status is Reported
Approximately 75 men are now being employed on Works Progress Administration projects in Indian River county. It was announced this week.
Twelve projects have been approved by the Washington WPA office and funds allocated with which to carry on work on them.
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

Projects for which Federal funds have been allocated are as follows: Sebastian airport, Federal funds, $13,196.10; Fellsmere airport, Federal funds $1,521.50; Coast Guard Park, Vero Beach, Federal funds, $795, sponsor’s funds, $181.50; Wabasso school grounds, Federal funds, $1710, sponsor’s funds $2112.85; ...

1936

24 January 1936 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 1
Local Business Leaders Attend Inventory Party

18 September 1936 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 1
Group to Study Possibility of Dredging Inlet

1937

1 January 1937 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 7 (this is an estimated date due to the fact that no dates were included on any page. Check before and after if not found on original microfilm.)
Located In All Areas Including 2 Facing Ocean
SUBTOPIC: City Park Board Has Jurisdiction Over All of Them
... The latest park of importance to be acquired by the city

1945

14 December 1945 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 1
Shipshewana Shore at Wabasso Beach Opens on Saturday
Mr. & Mrs. E. O. Culbertson of Dayton, O., former residents of Fellsmere, are opening Shipshewana Shore, eating and dining place on the beach at Wabasso, this Saturday. Special dinners will be served.

The Culbertson’s have leased the former Coast Guard building at Wabasso beach from the county and have remodeled the property. Soft drinks, sandwiches, ice cream, etc., will be served at all hours.

1946

1 November 1946 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 4A
H. E. Bahner caught a 25 pound sea bass while surf fishing near the Old Coast Guard station Wednesday. The fish measured 41-1/2 inches.

1947

10 October 1947 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 3
Digging of Shallow Channel Inlet Here Now Being Proposed

1948

3 July 1948 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 3
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

30 July 1948 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 6A
Properties

30 July 1948 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 2B
Roadside Parks

6 August 1948 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 5B
Coast Guard Park

13 August 1948 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 1
City Wants Coast Guard Site and New Industries

13 August 1948 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 3B
Roadside Parks

30 August 1948 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 2B
Beach Development

30 August 1948 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 2B
Bethel Creek Inlet

28 November 1948 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 1
City Seeking to Acquire Coast Guard Property

3 December 1948 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 3A
Application Filed for C. G. Property

10 December 1948 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 1
Coast Guard Park to be Cleaned Up

24 December 1948 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 1
Coast Guard Park Work is Given Green Light by City

24 December 1948 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 1
Special Committees Will Handle Various Projects

1949

14 January 1949 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 3A
Coast Guard Park Site is Endorsed by IR Garden Club

21 January 1949 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 8A
Beautiful Coast Guard Park Site Being Improved

11 February 1949 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 5A WHERE??
Joseph W. Walton Real Estate, Realtor
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

2130 15th Ave. Phone 3161

Resort Possibility
Former U. S. Coast Guard Station offered for sale at $15,000. Should make one of the finest resorts on the Florida East Coast; many possibilities to developer. Original Coast Guard house directly facing ocean has 30’x40’ living room, large dining room, kitchen, and several other rooms with large porches, etc. Original cost of building $28,000; strongly constructed for permanent use. Approximately 10 one-story buildings about 30’x110’. Wide walks, large area which has been cleared. Over 300’ on the ocean and through to Indian River, with harbor facilities on river. Beautiful beach with fine bathing and fishing. Located on A1A about half way between Vero Beach and Fort Pierce. Buildings and lots --- and this amazing resort possibility!--- for only $15,000.

19 February 1949 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 1
Veromar Beach Subdivision is to be Promoted

25 February 1949 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 4B
Public Beaches

15 April 1949 - Vero Beach Press Journal, Page 1 and 4A
City Rushes Deal to Acquire Coast Guard Park Site

21 October 1949 – Vero Will Acquire Former Coast Guard Site for New Beach Park
City council Wednesday night on recommendation of acting Mayor Charles C. Jewett, instructed the city clerk to immediately forward a check in the amount of $200 to the Treasury Department to cover purchase of the Coast Guard property which the city is purchasing from the Federal government. Legal notice appears in today’s paper. The Planning and Zoning Commission recommended purchase of the property. [Several paragraphs.]

30 December 1949 – Advisory Group – Page 6A
7 Improvement of Bethel Creek Coast Guard park site. Suggesting that it be made a project for Beautification Day and referring the matter to the Junior Chamber of Commerce, Park Board and Beautification Society, and commending the Jaycees for their revival of Beautification Day, Approved unanimously.

1950

14 April 1950 – Realtors Told of City Projects by Mayor MacWilliam – Page 7B
Improvement of existing public recreational parks, development of a new park near the old Coast Guard station and Bethel Creek,...

21 April 1950 – Bethel Creek Park Site Deeded to Vero Beach by the Federal Government
Official transfer of the Bethel Creek Coast Guard property, containing 8 acres, to the City of Vero Beach from the Federal Government occurred this week.

28 April 1950 – Park and Picnic Grounds – Page 2B
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

The acquisition of the Bethel Creek Coast Guard property by the City of Vero Beach from the Federal Government for park purposes happens to be one of the most important things accomplished by this community in many moons.

Undoubtedly one of the most beautiful natural sites for a park, it can be developed into one of the most popular picnic areas on the East Coast---and one of the topmost showplaces in the entire state.

City officials are to be highly commended on acquiring this park site.

23 June 1950 – Council Orders Action on Plans of New Projects – Page 1
5. Instructed City Engineer Damerow to prepare an estimate of cost covering construction of an ocean fishing pier, preferable at the Coast Guard Park.

12 July 1950- Vero Beach Press Journal, p.8b
Stopped by the new Firestone store the other day and watched James I Leyburn busily unpacking crates of new merchandise...Leyburn, a lot of you will recall, was commanding officer at the Coast Guard Station during the war.

6 October 1950- Vero Beach Press Journal, p.2b
Did you ever stop to realize that we have one very short stretch of seaside drive...directly on the oceanfront...in all of Indian River County? Yes, a very short stretch at and adjoining Bethel Creek Park in Vero Beach. That is all.

15 December 1950 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.2b
2. Development of public parking facilities directly on the oceanfront at Bethel Creek park and southward to a point where the county road turns west. (This is the only remaining area available for this purpose).

1951

22 February 1951- Vero Beach Press Journal, p.2b
Boosting the Beach Section
The beach area needs a great many things if it is to keep pace with the current development program...a large parking section directly on the oceanfront at and directly south of the Bethel Creek park.

14 June 1951 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.2b
3. The City of Vero Beach has acquired title to the Bethel Creek Coast Guard property which will be developed into an attractive park and picnic ground.

6 September 1951 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.1
Conn to Develop 80-Acre Oceanfront Tract; Public Beach, Boulevard Slated

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63 Press Journal-23 June 1950, p.1
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

A new 80 acre oceanfront development project, located between the East-West county road and Bethel Creek Park, was announced Wednesday by J. H. Conn, of Vero Beach. As of yet unnamed the new subdivision has a frontage of 1,800 feet on the oceanfront and extends westward for a distance of 2,000 feet. It also has a frontage of 1,000 feet on Bethel Creek.

1952

5 June 1952 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.7a
Lost: Tortoise rimmed glasses with sun glasses attached on beach near old Coast Guard Station.

2 October 1952 – Vero Beach Press Journal, Sports p.1c
Plans for Fishing Pier Being Drawn; Army’s Okay Given
Plans for the proposed ocean fishing pier north of the old Coast Guard station are now on the drawing board, according to Clark Rice, who plans to build the pier.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Jacksonville has given him permission to construct the pier whenever he wants to he said.

The notice of application for Army permit, released this week, states that the “timber pier… would extend into the waterway about 650 feet from the mean high-water line…terminating in a T-shaped head 100 feet long and 14 feet wide. The pier would be approximately 14 feet wide with the deck 20 feet above mean low water”.

No public hearing is proposed by the Corps of Engineers and October 30 was set as the deadline for receipts of protests.

2 October 1952 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.1
450’ Pier to Be Constructed at Cost of $65,000
Construction of an ocean fishing pier in Vero Beach by Clark B. Rice is scheduled to get under way within eight months.

Council approved a 25 year lease, with an option for another 25 years, on city-owned oceanfront property located a short distance north of Bethel Creek Park. The tract has a frontage of 500 feet on the ocean and a depth of 210 feet. The lease rental is $5 per year.

18 December 1952 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.1
First Pilings for Pier to be Driven Before January 1
The first pilings for Vero Beach’s proposed ocean fishing pier should be driven into the ocean bed before the first of the year, builder Clark Rice said this week.

The plies are being processed in Jacksonville, and the first batch should be on hand within a very short time.

All machinery and lumber are now on the spot, adjacent to the old Coast Guard tower near Bethel Creek Park.

The 450-foot, T-shaped pier is a structure long-sought by the area’s fishermen.
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

Besides the pier, Rice also plans to erect a motel, tackle shop; and restaurant.

1953

29 January 1953-Vero Beach Press Journal, Sports 
Piling for Ocean Fishing Pier Are Now Being Driven
First piling of the new 500-foot ocean fishing pier in Vero Beach was driven last Monday morning and the work is progressing at a fast rate, according to Clark B. Rice, owner.

Mrs. Rice had the honor of operating the pile driver for the first piling.

Creosoted piling, ranging in length from 29 to 60 feet, is being used in constructing the new pier. Starting from the shoreline Monday, 15 piling had been driven Wednesday, reaching to the ocean itself.

The firm F. F. Fletcher and Son is handling the construction job for Rice.

The new fishing pier, located a short distance north of the Bethel Creek Park, will be the only ocean pier between Juno Beach and Daytona Beach.

Rice leased the ocean fishing pier site from the City of Vero Beach on a long-term basis.

12 February 1953-Vero Beach Press Journal, p.1
Ocean Fishing Pier Construction Progresses
Bird’s Eye View of Clark Rice’s new Ocean Fishing pier being constructed north of Bethel Creek Park. The pier will extend 450 feet into the ocean, with a T on the end. (Picture)

30 July 1953 –Vero Beach Press Journal
Advertisement
Dinner by the Sea NOW OPEN and serving from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Bethel Shoals Restaurant, Specializing in Sea Food. Located at Bethel Shoals Fishing Pier

27 August 1953 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.2b
Take It Away
The old Coast Guard tower – what is left of it – at Bethel Creek Park on the Beach is an eyesore, and a dangerous one.

Recently a man was injured when he fell from the tower and it is not difficult to imagine that the incident might easily be repeated, with even more serious result. The tower is a natural temptation for children who like to climb-a factor which makes its’ presence a danger.

In addition to the safety consideration, there is another reason why something should be done about the tower. It is an ugly wreck located very near a new subdivision.

Certainly the dilapidated remains of this old tower cannot enhance the appearance of the area. Very likely it would be a discouragement to a potential builder who might wish to erect a house in the area. Who would want his view of the sea marred by the old wooden skeleton?
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

The tower is on city property but belongs to the U. S. government. Therefore, it is suggested that the city contact the proper government agency and request, either that the tower be repaired and maintained, or that permission be granted the city for removal of this dangerous eyesore.

1955

10 March 1955 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.9a
1. Parks
Bethel Park should be developed, with the future consideration of abandoning Ocean Drive as a thoroughfare when A1A is opened. This could actually be accomplished at any time in the near future. A planting and parking strip should be provided adjacent to the south boundary of the pard and continuous along the ocean side of Ocean Drive south to the northernmost privately owned property on the ocean front. (Several more paragraphs).

27 April 1955 – Vero Beach Press Journal
5 Years Ago 1950
Official transfer of the Bethel Creek Coast Guard property, containing eight acres to the City of Vero Beach, from the Federal government occurred this week. Patent conveying the property was received last Monday by Charles C. Jewett, president of the city council.

3 November 1955 –Vero Beach Press Journal, p.8c
Notice
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:
The following property, owned by Ross a Ellwood and wife and described as Lots 1 and 2, I.D. Jandreau Subdivision, located in Vero Beach, Indian River County, Florida on the Beach Road North of the old Bethel Creek Coast Guard Station and the present location of the Ebb Tide Apartments, together with all of the chattels, equipment, furnishing, goods, wares and merchandise located thereon, has been sold.

1956

19 January 1956 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p. 10c
Dust Clouds on Beach Streets Bring Protests
Long Debate on Dusty Subject Solved as WTTB “Pays Off”
A proposal to develop the former Bethel Creek Coast Guard property on the Beach. Into a beautiful park, presented by the Junior Chamber of Commerce to City Council Tuesday night, was approved by the city fathers.

Known as Bethel Creek Park, the tract of more than eight acres is located just north of the Bethel-by-the-Sea subdivision and a short distance south of Rice’s ocean fishing pier.

The property was acquired by the City of Vero Beach from the United States Government for park purposes. It has a frontage of 538 feet on the ocean and the same amount on Bethel Creek.

The Jaycees propose to begin at once a continuing project which will result in a landscaped park containing bath houses, rest rooms, picnic tables and outdoor fireplaces.
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

TOO MUCH DUST....
????and ruts on ?????beach area streets brought on a lengthy debate.

Mrs. J. W. Adderley represented a delegation of Council meeting from many dust-covered homes along Mockingbird Drive and A1A north of Beachland Boulevard. The Council agreed that all they said about the intolerable situation was true, but pleaded inability to grant much relief.

17 May 1956 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.8a
Chitchat......
The Jaycees are busy working on their new project the park at Bethel Creek....When completed it’ll be a nice addition to the city.

17 May 1956 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.9a
Jaycees “Break Ground” On New Beach Park Project
A Pioneering Squad of nine Vero Beach Jaycees with pick, shovel, machete knife and what not, risk jungle and perspiration damage to “store” clothes at a ground breaking start on the new Bethel Creek City Park which the Jaycees are spearheading. This start took place last Saturday afternoon. Incoming Jaycee President Buck Hart calls it a two-year project, which will cost not less than $15,000 in money besides many times that many manpower hours in men and machines. Bathhouses, rest rooms, park benches, picnic table and outdoor fireplaces are amount the facilities to be provided in the oceanfront, eight-acre park just north of Bethel-by-the-Sea. Jungle-clearers, left to right are: Carl Pease, Hugh Baker, Fred Fair, Hugh Corrigan, Ed Schlitt, Frank Schlitt; wearing sports garb suggestively similar to workhouse stripes. Bob Cavender, Joe Ingalls, Buck Hart, and George Loy.

26 July 1956 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.1
Jaycee Progress Report- Development of City’s New Beach Park Gets Going; Plans Divulged
EDITOR’S NOTE-This is the first of a series of reports on progress being made on the new beach park by the Junior Chamber of Commerce.
(by Buck Hart) The Vero Beach Jaycees have tackled a big one this time. ????their long-time project to develop the?? ??? oceanside park between Bethel Creek and the ????? north city limits.

We will present to the public a layout drawing of our plans ????can learn from State Road Department engineers ????exact routing of Highway A-1A which will skirt ????Bethel Creek.

Work to Date
Donors
Park Committee
Finest Park
Long article with the above headings

9 August 1956 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.2b
An Excellent Project
Improvements now being made to the city park in the Bethel Creek area by the Junior Chamber of Commerce will make this one of the most popular recreational spots in the middle East Coast section.
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

Local Jaycees have tackled a big job this time...the biggest, in fact, to date. It involves the complete renovation of an 8-acre tract lying between Bethel Creek and the Atlantic Ocean.

Without a doubt, it is one of the most beautiful park sites on Florida’s East Coast, and when completed will be a monument dedicated to the efforts of the Jaycees and the City of Vero Beach.

Plans include bath houses, and a combination lifeguard and first aid station, picnic areas, modern rest rooms a board walk with benches facing the ocean, and eventually, a pavilion and stage for musical and other public entertainment.

In this connection, plans should already be in the making for the extension of the proposed boardwalk at the Bethel Creek site southward along the public beach in front of the Bethel-by-the-Sea subdivision. This long stretch of public beach has the added advantage of a 100-foot boulevard (Ocean Drive), much of which can be used for parking space.

Congratulations to the Jaycees!

18 October 1956 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.6a
Council heard Jaycee President Buck Hart describe progress made at Bethel Creek Park, Hart also outlined future plans concerning the park.

25 October 1956 – Vero Beach Press Journal, front page
Vandals Destroy Equipment In New Jaycee Park
BOILING MAD could best describe the feelings of Vero Beach Jaycees when this act of vandalism was perpetrated last week. Police are investigating the matter. The concrete tabletop weighs about 1,000 pounds, and it took eight men to put it up. Two concrete seats were also broken.

25 October 1956, Vero Beach Press Journal, p.8a
Here’N There...
We’d give plenty to get our hands on a certain individual or individuals, whatever the case may be. George Loy was telling us that a couple of the new concrete picnic tables, erected by the Jaycees at the new Bethel city park, have been damaged, evidently by vandals. Our Jayces put in a lot of hard work and money on that park project and it seems a shame that some irresponsible nincompoop would stoop to vandalizing this worthy project. We’d sure like to get our hands on the person (or persons) who pulled this lousy trick. There is nothing more unexplainable than trying to say anything in favor of a vandal. Why anyone sets out to deliberately wreck our mar public property is something that we jusy can’t comprehend. A person who wantonly destroys is the possessor of a sick mind. Better get off this subject because the blood pressure is soaring. All we can say is – it was a dirty, lousy trick.

1957

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Bethel Creek House of Refuge

13 June 1957 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.8b
Major Projects
2 – Ocean Drive from Greytwig Road to South Line Jaycee-Bethel Park.

18 June 1957 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.8b
Thumbnail Editorial
It is hoped that our new city manager will give high priority to a study and recommendation to the City Council for additional lifeguard service...a lifeguard on duty daily between flags flown at the Jaycee Bethel Creek Park beach.

11 July 1957 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.8b
Vacate Ocean Drive
City Council passed an ordinance to abandon Ocean Drive from the south line of Bethel Creek Park northerly to a point just west of the ocean fishing pier property, effective when the new A1A Highway is constructed.

The deal will provide street access from the new A1A to the ocean fishing pier and beach area.

25 July 1957- Vero Beach Press Journal, p.1
(Photo) This NEW BUILDING is being converted into dressing rooms and rest rooms. Open area shown on front is being enclosed and will be the dressing room section. Other buildings are contemplated in the future. (Photo by Skiscim)
Progress On Jaycee Beach Park Reported by President Schlitt
Jaycee Prexy Ed Schlitt has handed the Press-Journal a progress report on the new Jaycee Beach Park, being developed by the Junior Chamber of Commerce on the eight-acre, city-owned reservation just north of Bethel-by-the-Sea and extending from Bethel Creek to the Atlantic Ocean.
A perspective drawing by Architect John Marfleett, showing a view of the new park such as might be seen from a helicopter hovering over its southwest corner when the Jaycee dreams for the park have been completed, shows an improvement in parking area plans over. Those previously presented at City Council meetings.
The latest plan allows traffic to enter the parking area both from Highway A-1A, which runs through the park, and from the northern end of Ocean Drive which will end at the new park. The actual ocean frontage of the new park is understood to be approximately the same as Humiston Park beach, whose modern bathhouses, were a Jaycee project three years ago.
Here is Prexy Schlitt’s report:
“The rest rooms are in final stages of completion and can now be used. Logs have been placed around entire parking strip areas and are awaiting shell which has been promised by the city of Vero Beach. The reason for the delay is that its authorization was made subject to use of equipment and vehicles when not needed elsewhere. Water has been connected and several faucets are now provided throughout the park area, as well as electrical service in the rest rooms.
“Items remaining to be done before the Jaycees plan to turn the park back to the city is spreading marl over the entire front area of the park, and sprigging or seeding grass and various forms of landscaping carried out throughout the park, concentrating in the front area of the park and around parking strips.
“If there is a possibility of getting a lifeguard for that area, a lifeguard tower will be constructed for his use. The items not planned for completion prior to turning it back to the city and which
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

will be done by either the city or the Jaycee Administration will be the boat dock, the concession building, shuffleboard and handball area, and some of the symmetrical walkways to be constructed throughout the park.

“These final items which will develop the park to its proposed reality probably will not take more than a couple of years to complete. With city co-operation on the shell and the possibility of getting adequate marl, we should have the park completed to the point of turning it back to the city within six to eight months.

Frank Schlitt has been named as over-all chairman of the park development and has been commended for doing an outstanding job.”

22 August 1957 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.1
New Route Open North on A-1A
The new route slices through the middle of the new Jaycee Bethel Creek Beach Park, and permits the closing of the narrow roadway along the dunes from Ocean Drive to Rice’s pier.

19 September 1957 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.1
Jaycee Park Development Taking Shape
The Vero Beach Jaycees with the co-operation of the city and county, are moving rapidly with the new Bethel Creek beach park development. Since the last progress report, the city has placed shell in the parking strips and lined them with the large palm tree trunks provided by the Jaycees.

The county has provided marl and during the past week, the Jaycees have been busy sprigging grass over the entire front area of the park surrounding the recently completed restroom facilities.

The Jaycees have purchased 4,000 square feet of bitter-blue grass which they feel will be enough for sprigging approximately one third of the park area.

During the past Sunday’s work detail, the Jaycees ran into a little difficulty as a result of the weather. However even though they had to work in the rain during half of the afternoon, they got quite a large area of the park sprigged.

This past week’s work crew included: Frank Schlitt, chairman of the park development; Frank Sapp, state vice president; Ed Schlitt, president’ Earl Groth, first vice president; Buck Hart, past president; Buddy Cooksey, John Jewett, Ralph Fox, James Henderson, Don Templin, Phil Barth, and Hugh Corrigan.

17 October 1957- Vero Beach Press Journal, p.9a
Beach Park Work Progressing; Jaycees (Photo)
Vero Beach’s beautiful new park, fronting on the Atlantic Ocean and Bethel Creek, now being developed by the Junior Chamber of Commerce. At left are the parking areas, and the excellent beach is in the foreground. Highway A-1A traverses the park area along the edge of Bethel Creek, shown in background. (Air photo by Skiscim)

Development of New Park Area Stated in ’56
Editor’s Note: Jaycees Prexy Ed Schlitt has prepared a progress report on the development, for a wide assortment of recreational purposes, of the new Jaycee Beach Park, a beautifully created nine-acre tract immediately north of Bethel-by-the-Sea, and extending from the ocean to Bethel Creek. Prexy Schlitt has taken great pains to give credit to the many individuals, business and governmental bodies contributing to each stage of the development to date. The Press-Journal is pleased to publish this report, which marks an interesting chapter in Vero Beach progress, and should form a bright page in the Jaycee scrapbook.
END NOW IN SIGHT
The end is now in sight for the Vero Beach Jaycees in their development of the new nine-acre
Park that is presently being developed stretching from ocean to Bethel Creek.
During the latter part of 1955, this project was born through a small group of Jaycees upon
learning that the Federal Government deeded to the city of Vero Beach this valuable tract of
ocean frontage to be used solely for park purposes.
During the early part of 1956 a committee of four was appointed by Jaycee President Robert
Cavender for the purpose of securing city permission to allow the Jaycees to develop the
property. This committee was composed of George Heath, Ed Schlitt, Frank Sapp, Carl Jones,
and Bill Taylor who supplied architectural drawings.
During the first six months of work which was done entirely on Sunday afternoons by Jaycee
volunteers, the dense underbrush was gradually cleared away. No heavy equipment was used
until all of the underbrush had been removed so that none of the large, desirable, natural
landscaping was injured.
Through the co-operation of Bud Sawyer, John Knight, Hugh Corrigan, Cy Cruze and Jesse
Swords, George Lambeth who contributed equipment and in some cases men to run the
equipment, the parking lots were cleared. Others donating time and equipment are Cole
Plumbing, Dellerman Plumbing, McCullers Septic Tank, Bud Jenkins, Hugh Baker, Philip Helseth
and Glenn and Mike Landscaping.
The lion’s share of this development came during the term of Buck Hart’s presidency from June,
1956 to June, 1957.
A park development committee for planning and designing were Frank Sapp and George Heath;
Landscaping, Ed Schlitt and Frank Schlitt; Construction Orval Shelton and Earl Groth; Equipment,
Ed Dancy and Reed Knight.
With the area finally cleared the rest rooms and shower facilities were then begun and have just
recently been completed and are now in use. June 1957, under the presidency of Ed Schlitt, a
new park committee was formed with Frank Schlitt as general chairman. Through the co-
operation of the city, the parking areas were shelled and cabbage palm tree trunks embedded
around the entire parking area, which will easily park 250 automobiles, with an addition space
available in the adjoining area for 350 more.
The County also co-operated to the extent of providing marl as a top dressing for the entire
park, which was necessary to insure development of the grass to be planted over the entire area
of the park.
With the rerouting of A-1-A along the creek side of the park, the Jaycees were able to close off
the ocean drive area as a safety precaution.
A total of 4,000 square feet of bitter blue grass was then purchased for the purpose of planting
plugs in the entire park area. Approximately 3,800 hours have been spent in the development
of the park to its present stage by Jaycee members. A handful of Jaycees has continuously
worked on the park area from the inception to the present date, and has become more
enthusied as the development nears completion. The four who have accumulated the highest
number of working hours during the entire period of development are Frank Schlitt, Buck Hart,
Ed Schlitt, and Earl Groth.
This is the largest project ever undertaken by the Vero Beach Jaycees and one of the largest
undertaken by any of the organizations in the state. As the development of the park neared the
stage where the buildings would have to be located and over-all development of the park
approved by the City Council, John Marfleet supplied park layouts for city acceptance. His
knowledge and experience in architecture and park designing have been very helpful.
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

Plans are being made for dedicating the park during the week of January 19th through the 25th, which is “Jayce Week” over the entire country. Items to be completed prior to dedication are the construction of a lifeguard tower, additional barbecue pits and trash burning containers, a pavilion, completion of the planting of grass and landscaping. Plans are being made for a large dedication ceremony to be held with state officials in attendance.

The Vero Beach Jaycees are truly proud of developing this dense jungle into a beautiful city park. Future plans, after dedication, call for a concession building, kiddie rides, shuffleboard and handball courts, a boat dock on the west side of the development as well as picnic facilities for boaters. These items will be taken up by future Jaycee administrations to complete those phases that they desire to handle.

The entire funds have been raised through various moneymaking projects carried out by the Jaycees. However, no special gifts or donations have been requested.

31 October 1957 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.12c
“Mead-ium Done”
We have a work for the folks who think Vero Beach is booming now. It’s this “You ain’t seen nothin’ yet” to use the vernacular of the theatre. In our opinion, growth in the past can be classed as “moderate”. From now on out, it’s going to be even bigger and better.

One development slated to get underway in January – or February, at the latest, is the $1,000,000 co-operative apartment, called “Sexton Manor” to be located between the Ocean and the Jaycee’s new beach park, just north of Bethel Creek park-and across the road from Waldo E. Sexton’s “mountain”. Units will contain from one to three bedrooms (with a bathroom for each bedroom) and will be available from $20,000 to $60,000 on a 99-year-lease basis.

It was our pleasure Saturday to meet the developer of this new 64-unit residential apartment for Vero beach-Warren O. Windle of Fort Lauderdale. He’s a down-to-earth person, and has successfully developed three such projects in Lauderdale. “Naturally, I love Lauderdale because it is my home, but Vero Beach is my second choice. That’s why I chose it for the location of our fourth co-op apartment.

This type of development that will quickly change the complexion of Vero Beach. Folks who can afford to buy into one of these co-ops do not drive secondhand cars nor live on canned beans. They have money – lots of it – and they will bring it with them and spend it here. As a result, the whole community will benefit financially.

The success of Sexton Manor will spawn more of the same type of development. An artist is now busy making drawings of a projected marina to be constructed on Bethel Creek at the base of Sexton’s mountain – and immediately across A-1-A from the new co-op apartment. Major oil companies are dickering for its establishment in that location. Waters in Bethel Creek at that point are some 23 feet deep enough to accommodate some of the biggest luxury yachts.

1958

12 January 1958 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.2b
City Council
Council heard Jaycee President Buck Hart describe progress made at Bethel Creek Park. Hart also outlined future plans concerning the park.

20 March 1958 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.1b
Beautiful New Park
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

A cordial welcome to Governor LeRoy Collins and congratulations to the Vero Beach Junior Chamber of Commerce.

Dedication of Vero Beach’s new Jaycee Beach Park on Saturday of this week will go down in history as a real “Red Letter” day in the history of this community.

The dedication will mark the culmination of two years of hard work by the Junior Chamber of Commerce. The park area consists of nie acres, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to Bethel Creek.

Here is the schedule of Saturday’s big event:
12:30, free fish fry; 2:30 p.m., dedicatory program.

Improvements completed at the Jaycee Beach Park, include: restroom and shower facilities, two large pavilions, over a dozen picnic benches and tables, barbecue pits and trash burners, and a parking area for 250 cars. An additional 350 cars can be parked in the adjoining area.

Beautification of Jaycee Beach Park has been enhanced by the planting of bitter blue grass in marl that was spread over the entire area.

Future plans included utilizing the Bethel Creek side of Highway A1A for a picnic area for boatsment and their families, with docking facilities.

Congratulations are in order to Frank Schlitt, Jaycee Beach Park chairman, and all members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, and to all others who participated in the park project.

Be on hand for the Saturday program: free fish fry at 12:30, and dedicatory ceremonies at 2:30.

3 April 1958 – Vero Beach Press Journal
Old Coast Guard Area Transformed Into One of VB’s Beauty Spots
Article too long. See file.

7 June 1958 – The Stuart News, Stuart, Martin County, Florida
It’s Definite: Coast Had Ten ‘Houses of Refuge’
The first five built, in 1875 and 1876, were as follows: No. 1, “13 miles north of Indian River inlet” (later called Bethel Creek station);

1959

1 January 1959- Vero Beach Press Journal
(Photo)
GOVERNOR LeROY COLLINS (right) and Ed Schlitt, Jaycee president, shown at dedication of the new Jaycee Beach Park last March. The junior Chamber of Commerce developed the park area located between Bethel Creek and the Atlantic Ocean.

1960

3 November 1960 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.d1
Playground in Jaycee Beach Park Completed
The city’s newest playground in the beach area, Jaycee Park playground, was completed last Friday with six pieces of equipment. All equipment was donated by the Vero Beach Jaycees for all the children of Vero Beach.

This playground in the future promises to be Vero Beach’s best and most modern as the Jaycees plan to add to it each passing year. Other pieces to be added later in the year will be playground equipment constructed of concrete.

Children are invited to come out and enjoy the new playground at Jaycee Park.
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

1961

8 June 1961 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.8a
The Summer Recreation Program
Day Camp
Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 12 noon – ages 6 through 13 – Jayce Park.
Every day a different program packed with surprises. Swimming the ocean under life guard supervision- supervised cook-outs, hikes and trips, fishing from the pier, Indian lore, Indian dancing, music, nature, athletics, trampoline, games, crafts (charges for materials used), archery, air rifle target shooting, story-telling, special events, treasure hunts, carnivals, contests and awards.

29 June 1961 – Vero Beach Press Journal
“Pioneer Chit-Chat”
X 1874 – Contract awarded to Albert Blaisdel to build the Bethel Creek House of Refuge. 5th Inst., March 2

1966

8 September 1966 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.6a
Jaycees A Happy But Bruised Lot
More than two-dozen Vero Beach Jaycees had bruises on their arms and legs when they wound up their Labor Day festivities at Jaycee Ocean Beach Park Monday afternoon, but they were a mighty happy bunch of young men, all in all. (Long story see file)
The bruises had come from colliding with a high hinged seat as they plunged, without warning, into the Dunk-a-Jaycee canvas-framed bathtub. Just about every Jaycee there, including President Chester Clemtook his turn, and even a few former Jaycees, past the legal age limit for unceremonious dunking, took turns at this sport that everybody except the victim enjoys.
Here are some of the many triumphs on the bright side of the ledger:
The Biggest Crowd- No Jaycee Labor Day Weekend has ever seen such a great turnout. (Long article, see file)
It Paid Off – To the delight of the Jaycee leaders and members, the big crowd and the thirst-producing weather, the many concessions at the Park netted the Jaycee treasury between $400 and $500.
This goes into the Jaycee Park Fund to reduce the remaining indebtedness on the new Welcome Station overlooking Bethel Creek, and to help furnish the building. (Additional excerpts of article too long too long and see file.

1970

1 January 1970- Vero Beach Press Journal, p.3a
House of Refuge Has Long History
The piece of ocean frontage near Indian River Shores recently declared surplus by the U. S. Government has a long history.
Due to the fact that the original surveyor, in 1850 failed to find Bethel Creek, it looked, in 1876, like a likely spot for “life saving purposes”: and a notation was added to the 18?? Map in 1875 reserving it for a House of Refuge.

49.
Bethel Creek House of Refuge

It wouldn’t be fair, considering his troubles with mosquitoes, sand flies, snakes, palmetto and marsh, to mention the name of the original surveyor. A carefully drawn map of Township 32 South, Range 40 East, State of Florida, Tampa Land District, was done in strict conformity with the field notes of the surveyor and filed in the Surveyor general’s office at St. Augustine on December 26, 1850. (Long article, see file)

1986

7 December 1986 – Vero Beach Press Journal, p.1a
Shipwrecked Sailors Sheltered At Refuges

During the 1800s, the United States government established houses of refuge along the coast of Florida at distances of about 25 miles for the purpose of aiding survivors of ship wrecks. The east coast of Florida was considered dangerous because of storms, rocks, shoals and other hazards. It had long been believed that a Spanish merchant fleet had been lost in a hurricane – which indeed it had in 1715. It’s known as the Spanish Plate Fleet. The keeper of a house of refuge was not required to go into the surf to assist in rescue; he was required to aid survivors who made it to shore and house them, give them food, clothing, and such first aid as he could, and help them get on their way. Buildings were located on the barrier island at points where it seemed easiest to get the unexpected guests to the mainland, or to put them aboard river boats. The most visible, and for many years the most talked about, reminder of the danger to ships passing near the Indian River County coast was the boiler of the Breckenshire – still visible off Sexton Plaza. A number of years ago, there was apportion of the mast was visible, also. (Long article, see file)

1987

4 January 1987-Vero Beach Press Journal, p.3a
House of Refuge Offered Aid

Editor’ Note: This is the second part of a story written by Miss Lockwood about the House of Refuge, once located on the barrier island at what is now Jaycee Beach Park. Such structures were built by the government in the late 1800s and early 1900s along the Florida coast. They provided shelter and minimal provisions for travelers and shipwreck victims. The House of Refuge that was here is long gone, but a like shelter in Martin County at Gilberts Bar stood much longer. It’s now a museum and sea turtle research office. (Long article and photos, see file)