

# Evelyn Luettich Horne



*Classic Recipes and Memories of*  
**AN ESTERO LEGEND**

*by Darlene Horne Johnson*



**THE ESTERO HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESS**



ROBIN TINAY SALLIE/News-Press

Evelyn Horne has fond memories of the days when she met numerous famous people.

# A life full of memories

## Estero's Evelyn Horne remembers early life on Mound Key

By **BUNNIE NICHOLS**  
News-Press Staff Writer

**E**velyn Luettich Horne of Estero — who was born on Mound Key in 1922 and has been the Koreshan Unity's "Girl Friday" since 1940 — is living history says Fort Myers Beach author and historian Rolfe Schell.

Horne says life's greatest gift to her has been the wonderful memories she has of special people and places.

She said her childhood memories include things such as her chats with Thomas Edison every Sunday at her Estero home, a shiny new dime she received as a Christmas gift from Henry Ford at a holiday program in Fort Myers, mouth-watering Koreshan fish fries on Fort Myers Beach and eating delicious biscuits with one of the area's most famous pioneers and best cooks, Grandma Johnson of Mound Key.

Her later memories, she said, are just as special — learning to bake bread

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Schell's book, which discusses the ancient Calusa Indians' habitation of the key as well as the Spanish explorers, pirates and pioneer settlers who lived there, contains an old plat that shows the island acreage homesteaded by Horne's grandparents — Antonio and Mary Fernandez and Carl and Rose Luettich.

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Key in the early 1920s — a skeleton of a Calusa Indian," Horne said. "The skeleton, which was found four-feet down in the key's 40-foot-tall Calusa Indian shell mound, was sent to the Smithsonian."

Horne said she was born Aug. 11, 1922, aboard the houseboat. She said her two sisters, Henrietta Luettich Davenport and Mary Luettich Carter, were also born on the houseboat several years before her.

"My sisters were educated at Damkohler's School on Mound Key," she said. "The tiny wooden schoolhouse opened about 1918 and closed in 1925. All that's left of it now is a pile of rubble."

Horne said her family moved to a house in Estero when she was 3 because her brother, Charles Jr., was about to be born. "My father became the fishing guide for the Estero Inn, which burned long ago, during the winter season and also pursued his interest in plants," she said. "When I was 10, Thomas Edison began coming to our home every Sunday

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Her later memories, she said, are just as special — learning to bake in the Koreshans' bakery, serving dinner to Marjorie Stoneman Douglas in 1945 in the communal dining room, meeting John Pennekamp during his visit to the utopian settlement, talking with Leonard Bernstein at the unity's Rising Tide Cottage on Fort Myers Beach, writing a column called "Around Estero" for the Fort Myers News-Press for 15 years and studying horticulture and cooking with the last Koreshan — Hedwig Michel.

Horne said she talked with Schell, author of "1000 Years on Mound Key," when he lectured on the history of the key at the Koreshan Library-Museum in Estero recently. "He told me I was living history," she said.

Most of 125-acre Mound Key in Estero Bay and the Koreshan settlement in

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Horne said her grandfather was a member of the second group of Koreshans who came to Estero in 1894 from Chicago. She said soon after his arrival at the settlement, he moved to Mound Key with his wife and son, Charles, to become the fisherman for the pioneer community.

"My father, Charles, also a fisherman, married Dora Fernandez, Antonio's daughter, in 1913 and left the Koreshan family," Horne said. She said they bought a 40-foot houseboat and docked it on the south side of Mound Key.

"My dad and an archeologist, Dr. Rasmussen, made one of the most unusual archeological finds on Mound

Key in the early 1920s — a skeleton of a Calusa Indian," Horne said. "The skeleton, which was found four-feet down in the key's 40-foot-tall Calusa Indian shell mound, was sent to the Smithsonian."

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She said she remembers Edison's beautiful white hair. "And, he was so warm and friendly," she said. "He held my hand when he talked to me."

Horne said her father still spent every summer fishing Estero Bay and her whole family stayed with him on the Mound Key houseboat.

"I have a lot of very fond memories of Mound Key," she said. "Those were fantastic summers. Living on Mound Key, with the settlers, was just like being part of one big family. We all looked out for each other. I learned how to swim, fish and boat there and fell in love with the outdoors."

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# STYLES

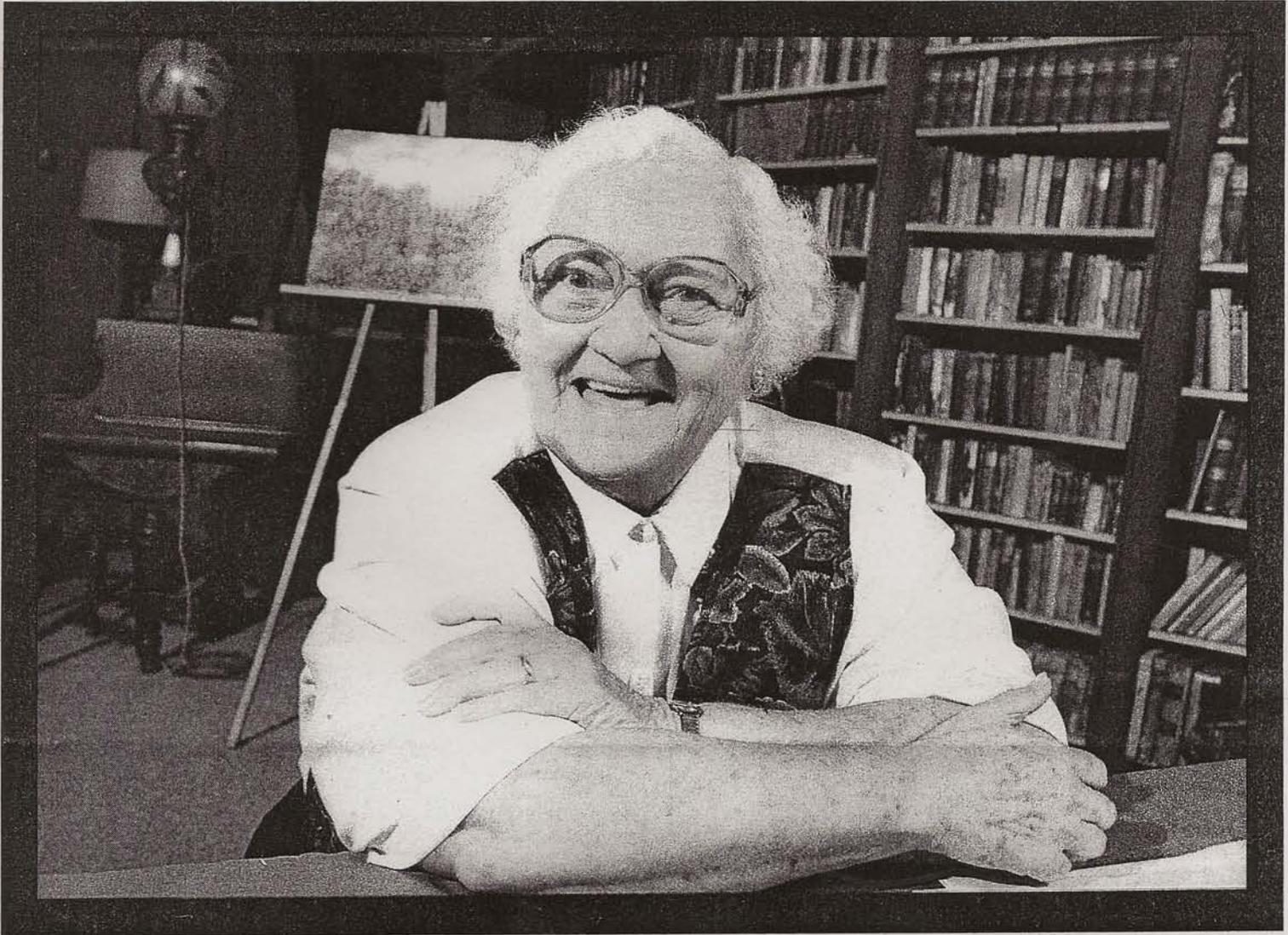
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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 19

1993

## IN A STATE OF CHANGE

# *Living History*



BRUCE FINE / News-Press

**EVELYN HORNE**  
 KORESHAN UNITY GUARDIAN

After 53 years of keeping tabs on the Koreshans, Evelyn Horne knows where everything is.

# "I'VE ALWAYS CALLED MYSELF THEIR GIRL FRIDAY"

By AMY BENNETT SHEEHAN  
News-Press staff writer

Evelyn Horne hurries down concrete stairs into a windowless room, past bookcases stuffed with folders and envelopes, around tables stacked with thick leather-bound volumes, to the back wall of the room, where she leans over a low shelf and eases out a framed piece of fabric. Gently, she places it on top of a pile of folders.

"Here it is," she says, touching the glass that covers the pale cloth. "My pride. It's the Koreshan flag."

Stitched into the fabric is a spiderweb design, the layout of New Jerusalem, the paradise city the Koreshan settlers intended to build in Southwest Florida.

For more than 50 years, Horne has been one of the principal guardians of the legacy of this idealistic, communitarian sect, which followed its dazzling leader Koresh to the banks of the Estero River at the end of the

■ This is part of a yearlong series of stories on change in Southwest Florida.

■ Every month, the News-Press will profile someone who has been part of the area's history and has seen the changes in the past decades.

last century and the beginning of this one.

Dedicated to living peaceful, culturally rich lives, the Koreshans believed in a mother/father God, and that the universe was a hollow sphere, with mankind inhabiting the inner surface of the globe.

Granddaughter of an early member, Horne never was a Koreshan herself, but she helped keep the group going as its aging membership dwindled in the '60s and '70s until the last living Koreshan died in 1982.

"Honey, I don't know anything else. I've always called myself their Girl Friday," she

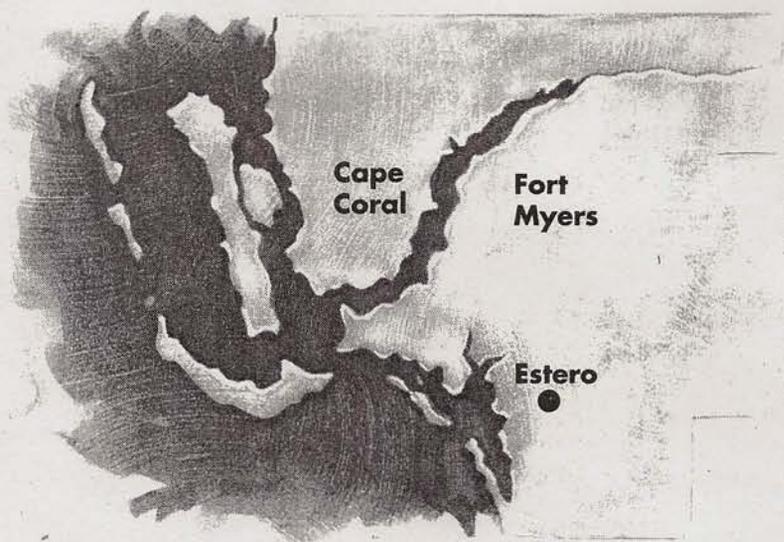
says. "At first, I took care of the five elderly ones and drove their big black Cadillac around for them. They were very warm, very loving people. It was a very close-knit family."

Horne also has served as cook, tour guide, office help, librarian, nurse, storekeeper and ambassador for the Koreshans. She still publishes the column "What's Cookin?" for the twice-yearly Koreshan paper, *The American Eagle*. Her husband, George, has been there almost as long, as the maintenance supervisor.

Now that the Koreshans themselves are gone, the Hornes work for the Koreshan Unity Foundation, across the street from the Koreshan State Historic Site off U.S. Highway 41 in south Lee County. Here, much of the group's library, archives and artifacts are kept, and here is Horne's domain.

"We're going to get this all on microfilm,

See HORNE / 4D



## WHERE SHE LIVES: ESTERO

Evelyn Horne lives in southern Lee County, close to the Estero River, which flows to the Gulf of Mexico. Near the site of the new university and large developments such as Three Oaks, it's one of the fastest-growing areas in Lee County.

- Population: 12,441
- Median age: 32
- White: 97.8 percent
- Black: 0.6 percent
- Hispanic: 3.2 percent

- Median household income: \$34,057
- Median rent per month: \$445
- High school degree or higher: 79.8 percent
- Graduate/professional degree: 2.4 percent

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

## EVELYN LUETTICH HORNE

- **Age:** 71
- **Born:** in a houseboat off Mound Key
- **Occupation:** "Girl Friday" for the Koreshan Unity for 53 years
- **Family:** Married, two children
- **Priorities:** Family, community service

Here are some of the front-page headlines that appeared in the Fort Myers Press in 1922, the year Evelyn Horne was born:

- Ticks Keeping Florida Cattle in Quarantine
- Thomas A. Edison Arrives Here, Face Wreathed in Smiles As He Steps on Familiar Soil
- Big Land Clearing Machine on Way Here
- President Harding is in Florida
- Lee County Has 'Em All Beat As a Playground
- Brain Surgery Performed Here is Successful
- Better Citrus Club Organized Up Olga Way
- Beauty of Stars These Evenings is Pointed Out

*Tasty treats from the*

# KORESHAN KITCHEN

*Just in time for the Lunar Festival, a member's granddaughter shares recipes*

**By RACHEL KEARNS**

Food Columnist

Those who treat themselves to the Lunar Festival at the Koreshan Unity in Estero next Saturday will get a double treat — a good program and a taste of old Koreshan recipes.

The treats will be made by Evelyn Horne, who has a true stake in keeping alive the culinary heritage of the sect: Her grandfather was a Koreshan member and she has worked for the foundation for 55 years, her husband George for half a century.

Horne says she'll be "baking for a week" to make the refreshments for the Lunar Festival, but she has no complaints.

Cooking for a crowd is a labor of love for her.

Last weekend, in fact, she made 13 gallons of baked beans and 40 pounds of cole slaw for the Missions Dinner held at the Estero United Methodist Church.



I've done it for 15 years and I wouldn't trade it for a thing," she said.

Her daughter, Darlene Johnson of Estero, helped her fix that meal and will pitch in for the Lunar Fest feast.

Many of the recipes Horne uses come from a handwritten cookbook brought to the Koreshan settlement by a member who traveled from California to join the sect.

And many also rely heavily on tropical fruits that the sect members grew. But the Koreshans also liked their meat: Horne can remember feasting on lamb at Easter, beef, chickens and turkeys as big as 30 pounds.

Bountiful. "I've fed 300 lots of times," said Horne

And beautiful.

Said Evelyn Horne: She and her daughter not only fix good goodies, "We set a beautiful table ... Crystal, yellow napkins, a big punch bowl ..."

□□□

Preview the Lunar Festival feast with these recipes supplied by Evelyn Horne.

Many of us have Surinam Cherry bushes in our Southwest Florida yards as ornamentals, but have you ever eaten the fruits? They're delicious and nutritious — and make a tart-sweet punch that the Koreshans served often.

Evelyn Horne saves the harvest — and they're "settin' fruit" right now — and freezes it in half-gallon milk jugs.

Here's her advice for making Surinam Cherry Concentrate:



**Evelyn Horne, the granddaughter of a Koreshan, displays some goodies she makes for Koreshan festivals, such as the Lunar Fest coming up this weekend. Staff photo by Ben Gray**

"Wash cherries. Pour in large stainless steel kettle and pour in cold water to cover. Bring yto a good boil, and simmer for 30 minutes. Strain in jelly bag. Cool. Pour into container, Freeze."

### Surinam Cherry Punch

½ gallon Surinam cherry juice  
1 quart lemon-lime bottled drink  
1 quart ginger ale  
3 lemons, juiced  
3 oranges, sliced, an floating in bowl  
1 cup sugar  
Mix well and serve in large 1-quart punch bowl.

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### Hermit Cookies

1 cup butter  
1 cup sugar  
1 cup brown sugar  
2 eggs  
2 teaspoon vanilla  
2 cup plain flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon salt  
2 cup oatmeal  
1 cup coconut  
1 cup raisins  
1 cup chopped walnuts  
2 tablespoon molasses

Cream butter, sugar, eggs and vanilla. Sift flour, salt and baking

powder, then add to creamed mixture. Stir in oatmeal, coconut, nuts and raisins. Bake at 350 degrees for 10-12 minutes.

This cookie keeps well for weeks stored in tins and the recipe yields 6 dozen cookies.

### Easter Cupcakes

3 eggs  
1 cup sugar  
½ cup oil  
2 cups plain flour  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon vanilla

Mix eggs, sugar and oil together well. Then add flour, salt, baking powder and vanilla. Mix well. Pour into paper liners. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes.

**Frosting:** In saucepan, melt 2 tablespoons of butter. Add 1 ½ cups powdered sugar, ½ teaspoon vanilla, 1 tablespoon cream. Mix well and frost cupcakes.

**For topping:** To shredded coconut, add a drop or two of food coloring (yellow or green, for Easter) in a pint jar and shake, then spread on frosting. Place three tiny jelly beans on top.

Pretty and good, says Evelyn Horne!

□□□

Horne also writes a column for

the twice-yearly "American Eagle" newspaper published by the Koreshan Unity Foundation, and the newest issue includes recipes that utilize local fruits.

Mango jelly she described as "a favorite at the Koreshan Unity. We just served it at a luncheon for friends from neighboring museums. For dessert, serve with whipped cream and Koreshan Hermit Cookies."

### Mango Jelly

2 cups sliced mango  
¼ cup sugar  
1 large package lemon jello  
1 ½ cups boiling water

Prepare Jello as directed on box. Add four ingredients together. Chill until firm. Serve with whipped cream.

Serves 10 to 12.

## LOCAL COLOR



CLINT KRAUSE/  
The News-Press

8-25-02

Esterero resident Evelyn Horne has lived in her home on Corkscrew Road for 50 years. Horne worked at the Koreshan settlement and was known as "The Girl Friday." She explained that she did all of the odd jobs from working in the general store to chauffeuring aging Koreshan members to doctor appointments in a black Cadillac.

# First lady of Esterero

# Evelyn Horne has spent all of her 80 years in Southwest Florida, crossing paths with some of the area's most notable figures. She has seen it go from desolate to bustling.

By **CATHY CHESTNUT**  
Special to The News-Press

**E**velyn Horne remembers when Corkscrew Road was just dirt.

Cars traveling four paved lanes today whiz by the home she built in 1952. They're on their way to the interstate, out to new gated developments, and around the red-hot community of Estero — by some estimates the fastest-growing area in Lee and Collier counties.

But she doesn't worry about all the change.

"What can I do? Nothing. Let it grow," she says. "I've watched it grow all these years. I've seen the Koreshans come and go."

Horne turned 80 Thursday.

She was born Aug. 22, 1922, on her parents' 40-foot houseboat anchored

at Mound Key, near the mouth of the Estero River, a third-generation pioneer on the isolated island. She's been fond of saying through the years: "We were poor by some standards, but we were rich in other ways."

With a lifetime of unique memories and rich experiences — from learning to bake biscuits to meeting Thomas Edison to being a caregiver to the last of the Koreshans — she simply doesn't fret about the way things are now.

Horne's grandparents, Antonio and Mary Fernandez, and their three daughters, left their home in Portugal in 1898 as Catholic missionaries and arrived in Key West. A man named Frank Gomez brought them to Mound Key. (According to family history, Gomez may have been a pirate

who abandoned them on the island.)

Fernandez survived as a fisherman, and the family learned from well-established, neighborly island inhabitants, Molly and Frank Johnson, how to plant and work a sweet potato garden and collect and cook native berries and fruits.

Mary Fernandez had six more children.

Horne's father, Charles Luettich, was a fishing guide for tourists visiting the no-longer-extant Estero Inn, and he put fresh seafood on his family's table. (His own family had followed Dr. Cyrus Teed to the Koreshan Unity in 1894 after hearing him preach in California.)

Her mother, Dora Fernandez, worked after marriage — on a houseboat dressed in lace curtains — to scratch out all

manner of delectable recipes: cactus jelly, home-baked bread, fish chowder, gopher tortoise, dumplings with cinnamon-guava sauce, and sweet potato and Key lime pies.

When Horne was 3 or 4 years old, her family moved from the houseboat to five acres in Estero so that she and her two older sisters could go to school. Two more brothers were born in town.

Each summer, the family returned to Mound Key. "We went back to the island for vacation to learn to swim and play tag or fish," she recalls.

Her father had an avid interest in botany and planted exotic specimens. His botanical hobby piqued Edison's interest, and he visited their home to discuss botany on Sunday evenings.

She recalls one Christmas when Edison's close friend, Henry Ford, gave her a shiny dime as a gift.

Upon graduating from

Fort Myers High School in 1940, Horne was asked to work at a Koreshan Solar Festival to serve food. It was a one-time job that stretched into 58 years when Horne became a "Girl Friday" who cooked and served food in the dining room and worked in the nursery, general store, at social events, and later as a historian. She wrote a regular column for the Koreshan's newspaper, American Eagle, and for 15 years supplied "Around Estero" to The News-Press. Her various roles enabled her to meet such fascinating figures as Marjory Stoneman Douglas, John Pennekamp and Leonard Bernstein among them.

Albert George Horne, Evelyn's husband of 58 years, also worked at the Koreshan Unity. He co-founded the Estero Volunteer Fire Department and was its first fire chief. He served as chief for 20 years.

George Horne died in February but was honored earlier this month

with the unveiling of the new George Horne Fire Station in Estero.

Today, there are more than 100 Fernandez descendants living in Southwest Florida, and more than half still call Estero and Bonita Springs home. With her two grown children and their offspring living in Estero, Horne is surrounded by family.

Although time has slowed her down in the kitchen, she relishes thoughts of cooking for big events and, like her mother, she learned to make pies, jams and jellies and chutney from just about anything. "I could cook for 300 tomorrow if you wanted," she declares.

She continues to grow ornamental plants and orchids in her two greenhouses and savors an Estero that has provided her generations of bountiful experiences, especially she says, "meeting all the people who came. I cooked for them."

# Evelyn Horn has spent a lifetime helping others

By TSANI 'BEAR' YONAH  
Staff Writer/Columnist

Evelyn Luettich Horn is not only a lady with a very interesting background, she's been a good neighbor to folks in Estero and around Bonita Springs for most of her life.

Evelyn was "almost" born on Mound Key, which perhaps requires some explanation. Her grandfather, Carl L. Luettich, heard Cyrus Teed, called "Koresh," speak in California and was totally convinced by the man's philosophy. He followed him to Chicago to hear his lectures, and in 1894, he left his wife and four daughters, and with his 8-year-old son Charles, followed Koresh to Estero. Luettich became a fishing captain, helping to feed the Koreshans, and young Charles attended Gustaf Damkohler's school on Mound Key.

Charles married Dora Fernandez, a lovely Portugese girl, in 1913, and they bought a 40 foot houseboat which was tied up in the water at Mound Key. That was where Evelyn was born in 1922. After she was

born, however, the Damkohler school closed, and her family moved to Estero so the children could get an education.

Although neither Evelyn nor her mother were ever Koreshans, she has been associated with the settlement since childhood. Right after she graduated from high school she went to work at Koreshan Unity, and has worked there in one capacity or another for more than 50 years.

There is little that happens in Estero that Evelyn or her husband George aren't involved in. She is known by most of the folks in the community, and they frequently seek her out for help or advice. She has been an active member of the Estero United Methodist Church for 56 years, and is active in church home missions work. Almost every time she cooks a meal, she shares part of it with friends and neighbors who are no longer able to cook for themselves, and her home is always open to a needy friend. Evelyn remembers one occasion, dur-

ing Hurricane Donna, when there were 22 people taking shelter in her house, and she still found time to cook hot soup and take it—during the eye of the storm—to the old women who were living at the Koreshan settlement.

Evelyn, who has recently become a great grandmother, is

modest about her good deeds. "Heck, you ought'a write about George," she said. "He's always doin' something for somebody!"

Maybe we will, Evelyn, but this is your week, and *The Banner* is very proud to acknowledge you as friend and Good Neighbor.

## MEET OUR 'GOOD NEIGHBOR'



**EVELYN HORN**  
A Bonita Banner Good Neighbor

# Koreshan Unity's Horne is someone worth meeting

**H**istory buffs and culinary artists who attend the Koreshan Unity's Solar Festival at 10 a.m. Saturday at the Koreshan Historic Site in Estero should try to meet Evelyn Luettich Horne.

Those of you who're lucky enough to find Horne, the Koreshan Unity's culinary artist, could spend some time chatting with her.

If you don't find her, make sure you hear her speak about life with the Koreshans at the 11 a.m. dedication of the newly restored founders House.

She's always delighted to share some of her magical memories — such as her chats with Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Marjorie Monahan Douglas, Leonard Bernstein and John Pennekamp.

Horne, who has been the Koreshan Unity's "Girl Friday" since 1940, is described as "living history" by many area residents.

According to Horne, life's greatest gift to her has been the memories she has of special people and places — especially the Utopian settlement of Koreshan, which was founded on the banks of the Estero River in 1894 by



## CLOSE UP

BUNNIE NICHOLS

Cyrus R. Teed, a charismatic religious visionary.

Saturday's festival is being held to commemorate Teed's 153rd birthday.

Horne said her early childhood memories include things such as chats with Edison every Sunday, getting a dime from Ford for Christmas, playing at mouth-watering Koreshan fish fries on Fort Myers Beach and eating delicious biscuits with the area's most famous pioneer, Grandma Johnson.

Her later memories, she said, are equally

special — learning to bake in the Koreshan bakery, serving dinner to Douglas in the settlement's dining room, meeting Pennekamp during his visit to the highly cultural community, talking to Bernstein at the unity's Rising Tide Cottage on Fort Myers Beach, studying horticulture with Hedwig Michel — the last Koreshan, and of course, the annual celebrations such as the Solar Festival.

"Friends and family came from far and near for the Solar Festivals," Horne said. "Grown-up Koreshan children always came for a visit during this grand celebration to see life-time friends they grew up with."

Horne said she still prepares culinary creations from the Koreshan's original festival recipes for delights such as seagrape jelly, guavas and dumplings, batter-fried redfish, applesauce fruit cake and key lime pie.

This Saturday, she said, festival-goers will be able to sample ginger and sugar cookies and other refreshments made from these historic recipes.

Horne said her priceless memories also include her relatives, who played an important part in the area's history, especially at the Koreshan settlement.

She said one of her grandfathers, Antonio Fernandez, was an emissary from a Portuguese church who came to Mound Key in 1889 with his wife, Mary, and three daughters to provide religious guidance to fellow settlers, but ended up becoming a fisherman to survive.

"My other grandfather, Carl Luettich, met and heard Teed speak in 1893 in San Diego," Horne said. "He followed Teed back to Chicago and joined the Koreshan Unity to help plan a Utopian community in Estero. He was in the second group of Koreshans who came to Estero in 1894 from Chicago."

Soon after his arrival, she said, he moved to Mound Key with his wife, Rose, and son Charles to become the fisherman for the Koreshan settlement.

The Koreshans' fishing fleet was based on Mound Key, Horne said, and most of it was given to the state by the unity as part of the Koreshan State Historic Site.

"My father, Charles, also a fisherman, married Dora Fernandez, Antonio's daughter, in 1913 and left the Koreshan family," Horne said. "They bought a 40-foot

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# KORESHAN: Horne's ties to group strong

From Page 1E

houseboat and docked it on the south side of Mound Key."

Horne was born Aug. 11, 1922, aboard the houseboat.

"My father became the fishing guide for the Estero Inn, which burned long ago, and also pursued his interest in plants," she said.

"When I was 10, Edison started coming to our home on Sundays to talk to my father about botany. He had beautiful white hair and a warm personality. He always held my hand when he talked to me."

Her father, she said, still spent every summer fishing Estero Bay and her whole family stayed with him on the houseboat. Horne, who has two large greenhouses at her Estero home, said she developed her life-long interest in botany from her summers on Mound Key.

"Things really grew there," she said. "The settlers planted many rare fruit trees. We took nature walks on the island that taught me about plants, animals, shells and birds. It was a fascinating place to grow up."

According to Horne, a college-educated home economist, her life-long interest in cooking also began on Mound Key.

"As a child, I knew one of the area's most famous pioneers and best cooks, Grandma Johnson," Horne said. "Her husband, Frank, was the first modern settler to homestead Mound Key in 1891. I used to sit in her window and watch her cook. She was always ready to feed visitors a fantastic dinner."

Grandma Johnson was called one of the most interesting of Lee County's pioneers in a 1906 edition of the Koreshan Unity's "American Eagle."

"After I graduated from Fort Myers High School in 1940, Allen Andrews, editor of the "American Eagle," asked me to help with the Koreshan Solar Festival," Horne said. "I've been working for the unity ever since. Before the unity donated the settlement to the state, I worked in its general store, dining room, nursery and gardens and helped with social events."

"I was friends with 50 Koreshans and helped care for the last five during their final years, she said. "It was the least I could do to repay those loving people. They gave me an incredible education and my best memories."

— Bunnie Nichols is a News-Press columnist.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CLUBS, CLASSES AND ACTIVITIES, SEE OUR DATEBOOK PAGE/3E



JOHN SEVERSON/News-Press

**STILL TOGETHER:** George and Evelyn Horne hold hands as they reaffirm their wedding vows during their 50th wedding anniversary celebration in the Friendship Center at the Estero United Methodist Church on Sunday. The Hornes are lifelong Estero residents.

## Estero pioneers celebrate their 'unity'

By KATHY BECKER  
News-Press staff writer

Sunday there were Hornes a plenty in Estero.

And George and Evelyn Horne would have it no other way as the pioneer couple gathered with more than 150 relatives and friends to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary at the Estero United Methodist Church.

Not only do the childhood sweethearts have the distinction of being married 50 years.

they also have been life-long residents of the Estero area, with George Horne born on a citrus farm, and Evelyn Luetich Horne born on Mound Key.

Both work for the historic Koreshan Unity — Evelyn for 53 years for the Koreshan Unity Foundation in archiving and George for more than 40 years in maintenance.

Evelyn Horne is known as one of the people who remembers life at the Koreshan settlement, founded on the banks of the Estero River in 1894 by

Cyrus R. Teed. Her memories include chats with Thomas Edison every Sunday, playing with the Koreshans at fish fries on Fort Myers Beach, learning to bake in their bakery, serving dinner to Majorie Stoneman Douglas in the dining room and learning horticulture from the last Koreshan.

George Horne helped start the Estero Fire Department and served as the chief for the department for 20 years. He's now on the department's board.

"We're pioneers," she said.

But on Sunday the focus was on the couple's history. The two went to school together. Before Horne left to serve in World War II, he proposed.

"He said he was off to war, and I needed to marry him now or never," she said.

The couple was married Jan. 3, 1944.

They have two children, three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

"We made it," she said. "Now it's time to go home and play with my garden."

# Special service honors fire chiefs

By ERINN HUTKIN  
Staff Writer

Evelyn Horne sat in the front row of a crowd Sunday morning at the Naples Beach Hotel. A photo of her now-deceased husband, George, stood mounted on white posterboard and an easel, staring back at her.

For 20 years, Horne watched her husband race to fight flames as Estero's first fire chief. She and the ladies auxiliary brought Horne and volunteer firefighters sandwiches when flames raged along U.S. 41.

George Horne, 81, died of kidney cancer in February. There was a funeral. An obituary in the paper. Friends and relatives to say good-bye.

But Sunday morning, Horne and five fire chiefs who died in the past year were honored with a memorial service during the Florida Fire Chiefs' Association's annual meeting and executive development conference at the Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club.

The six honored men were retired. All traded their titles for gold watches long ago. Yet the memorial was a way to say thank you, a way to let families know their loved ones' work was appreciated — and remembered.

"The one thing it basically says is, 'We have not forgotten you,'" said Ragan Vandegriff, an Orlando-based chaplain for the Florida Fire Chiefs' Association. "To me, it's a nice touch to the families."



**Fire Chief Julius Hallas of the Long Boat Key Fire Department and president of the Florida Fire Chiefs' Association, gives Evelyn Horne a firefighter's helmet in memory of her husband, George Horne, who was Estero's first fire chief. Horne, who passed away earlier this year, was one of six fire chiefs honored during a special memorial service Sunday. Photo by Romain Blanquart**

Following a prayer breakfast at the Naples hotel, about 200 fire service employees and relatives gathered for the 30-minute memorial. At the front of the room, behind a table draped in black, stood photos of each fallen chief. The pictures, the frozen-in-time smiles taken in their younger years, were printed with each chief's name:

■ Robert Stoddard, retired chief for Lake Mary.

■ Edward B. Smith, retired from Martin County.

■ Frank Hill Jr., former chief in San Antonio.

■ Gilbert "Gibby" Gates, one-time fire chief in Key West.

■ Roderick Anderson, a chief in Fort Myers.

■ George Horne, Estero.

With the dong of a bell, with the reading of each name, a gleaming white fire helmet was handed to a relative. Wives, sons and co-workers accepted hats from honor guard members with solemn faces and handshakes. Light snuffles were sometimes audible in the otherwise quiet room.

"Thank you," Evelyn Horne said simply when handed a helmet in honor of her husband.

In 1964, George Horne stepped into the job of Estero fire chief after a brush fire hopped across the Estero River four times. Today, the

south Lee County community is growing like wildfire. Back then, Estero was a small, sleepy town with few modern-day conveniences.

When Horne was chief, the organization was all volunteer. Community ladies held dinners and bake sales to raise money so the men could build a fire station. Two stations now stand in Estero, with a third on the way. The department is now a paid organization offering fire protection and medical services.

"He organized the fire department," Evelyn Horne said. "It's a great organization. As you can see, it's lasted this many years."

Horne's son, Bill, 54, was a teen-ager when his dad became chief. He remembers an alarm rang throughout town when there was a fire. The first volunteer to reach the fire station drove the truck. Bill Horne recalls sometimes landing in the driver's seat himself.

As he sat with his mother Sunday, Bill Horne said it felt good seeing his dad honored.

"He would be proud," he said. "He just always thought of the community."

George Horne will be honored, elsewhere, too. Next month, the Estero Fire District will open a new station at U.S. 41 and County Road. The building will be named for Horne, the community's first fire chief.

# Couple reflects on growth of Corkscrew Road area

## Road closed for two weeks as part of widening project

By VICTOR EPSTEIN  
Special to the Banner

When George and Evelyn Horne moved into their Corkscrew Road homestead 45 years ago it literally was the end of the road — in their case a narrow dirt lane that ran from their front door to U.S. 41.

Interstate 75, which now fills the eastern horizon, wasn't even a dream at the time.

Today, the Hornes live in the middle of a construction site. Work crews are expanding the final two-lane section of Corkscrew Road to four lanes as part of a \$3 million project. The Hornes, who have been married 55 years, live within a few feet of the road. Their front walk is filled with mounds of freshly turned soil and piles of pink and purple pipes line the opposite side of the road.

"There was no Corkscrew Road at all when I was born," said George Horne, 79. "When we moved out here in 1944 we were the boondocks, the end of the road. I remember thinking at the time that we'd never have to worry about traffic or construction again, but man how times have changed."

As of Tuesday, Corkscrew Road will be closed to outside traffic for two weeks to expedite construction, which includes insertion of a box culvert for the section of the Estero River that runs under the roadway. The 1.2-mile project will complete the expansion of the two-mile roadway between U.S. 41 and I-75.

Corkscrew project manager Randy Cerchie of the Lee County Department of Transportation

said the closing will allow construction to be completed sooner. The project should be done by November.

"It takes longer to whittle away at a project when you have to maintain traffic flow," Cerchie said. "Closing the road will let us get a lot more done. Now that there are no hockey games at Everblades Arena and fewer students and tourists it's a good time to tear into Corkscrew Road."

The new four-lane Corkscrew Road is needed to accommodate the growth of nearby Florida Gulf Coast University, according to Meg Venceller, chairwoman of the Estero Civic Association. The two-year-old school has

3,000 students and enrollment there is expected to reach 13,000 students in 10 years.

FGCU's evolution is being paralleled by the surrounding Estero community. Venceller predicts that the Estero population, which now numbers 4,000 full-time residents, will top 75,000 residents within 10 years. Her estimate is based upon the 20,000 residential units approved for Estero by the Lee County Commission.

"When the Hornes first moved into their Corkscrew Road home there was no FGCU, no Miromar Outlet mall, no I-75, no Florida Everblades Arena, no nothing," said Venceller, who also heads the Estero Chamber of Commerce.

"We've experienced tremendous growth in Estero over the last 10 years and we're poised for truly explosive growth, she said. "Between all the construction vehicles and the new resi-

dents it can take 10 to 15 minutes to make the two-mile drive between I-75 and (U.S.) 41 on Corkscrew right now. We need the four-lane expansion for both the present population and the future residents."

Estero is one of Southwest Florida's oldest communities, dating back to 1896; 10 years ago its full-time population numbered 1,500 residents.

When Evelyn Horne married George Horne in 1944, the population numbered about 300 people. Since then, the couple has raised two children and their Corkscrew Road home has played host to three grandchildren and six great-grand children. The family has no plans to move.

Evelyn Horne can remember when there were no cars on the road. Now the traffic passing outside the couple's front yard is bumper-to-bumper at rush hour, but unlike some of her longtime neighbors, the 76-year-old isn't frightened by the growth and doesn't expect it to alter her hometown's character.

"We don't care about the growth one way or the other, but we're not moving," said Evelyn Horne. "We were here first."

# Fire dept. history recalled

## Estero residents chart progress

By **DAN YOUNT**  
Staff Writer

Before everybody had telephones, and way before there was a 9-1-1 emergency dispatching service, the only way Estero's early volunteer firefighters knew that they needed to report to a fire call was when the bell rang in Koreshan Unity's Gardens.

"The bell rang at 7 a.m. for breakfast, 11:30 a.m. for lunch and at 5 p.m. for dinner, and any ringing of it in between those times meant there was an emergency. You had better come running," said Evelyn Horne, the granddaughter of a member of the Koreshan Communal Colony established in Estero by Dr. Cyrus R. Teed 100 years ago.

Horne's husband, George Horne, served 19 years as the first and only fire chief of the district, even as a non-paid chief for several years after the department was re-organized by the Florida Legislature in 1976 and until volunteer Joe Linzalone was named the first paid chief in 1982. Horne has served a number of years as fire commissioner and board chairman of the chartered district.

In addition to Chief Horne, Estero's first volunteers included board President King Schermerhorn, Ruby Mathis, secretary and treasurer, and Tom Fernandez, Olen Mathis, Clyde Patterson, Robert Davenport, Sonny Schermerhorn, Scott Schermerhorn, Billy Horne, Jim Horne, Tim Fernandez, Herb Johnson, Bill Crews

The district's first fire truck was purchased in 1964 from volunteer Ray Trebell. It was a 1945 GMC military 6-by-6 wheel truck with a 1,000 gallon capacity.

But Estero experienced three major fires before the community had its own fire department, Mrs. Horne recalls.

The first big fire occurred in 1949 at the Koreshan's Guiding Star Publishing House print shop, located across U.S. 41 on the bank of the Estero River.

That fire started after Koreshan Jessie Putnam came in around 5:30 a.m. to melt the lead into pigs (bars) for the Linotype machines. Putnam went across the highway to the gardens for breakfast. Around 7 a.m., colony President L.W. Bubbett started to cross the road, noticed the smell of smoke coming from the shop, and went to the general store to call the Fort Myers and Bonita Springs fire departments from one of three telephones in the community.

Ray Alvaraz drove a truck, and J.W. Carter and Charlie Luettich, Horne's brother, helped fight the fire, which totally destroyed the two-story building as Mrs. Horne watched.

Also in 1949, firefighters from 30 minutes away in Fort Myers and Bonita were able to save most of the magnificent, 17-room Boomer Estate mansion on the river north of the settlement. The wooden shake roof caught on fire after March winds blew ashes onto it from a fire burning cuttings from

helped get about 10 of the sisters out of the gardens.

Wildfires were always a threat to the historic Southwest Florida community. One of the worst, Mrs. Horne recalls, was in 1960, when 70 acres west of the gardens burned. Also, a brush fire in 1965 burned a large area between Williams and Coconut roads.

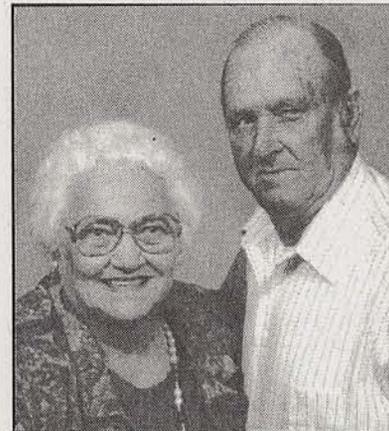
And last year, a wildfire burned through the center of the community near The Vines and The Breckenridge developments, causing more than 500 residents to evacuate.

In another historical note, Ruby Mathis, who managed the Bamboo Tavern in Bonita Springs, was the only woman to serve on the board before the district was re-organized under state law.

Inspector Fernandez said the department's second truck was a 1942 Chevrolet Class A pumper purchased from the Venice fire department for \$1,000. It could pump 500 gallons per minute and stored 500 gallons.

A John Bean quick attack, high pressure Ford truck was purchased in 1976, about the same time the Division of Forestry loaned the district two brush trucks to replace the old GMC.

The '42 pumper was replaced in 1982 with a modern Emergency One, which had pumped 1,000 gpm and had a 1,000-gallon capacity. Another Emergency One truck was purchased in 1987, the same year the department received a tanker truck from the forestry division.



**Estero's George and Evelyn Horne, long involved in Estero Fire Department activities, were fighting fires in Estero even before the community had a department. / Photo special to the Banner**

there were times when only one person would be at a fire or emergency.

Fernandez became the first fire inspector in 1991, and Jimmy Wright was appointed assistant chief in 1993. Linzalone resigned this year, and Wright is serving as acting chief until the board names a permanent replacement.

The Koreshan bell that served as Estero's first fire alarm was eventually replaced by a telephone system manned by auxiliary members who called each other over the volunteer network. After the taxing district was established, a siren was installed in 1977. A sound received from the county emergency dispatch tripped the siren, and the men hurried to the station to learn

## Evelyn Frances Horne

August 11, 1922  
November 18, 2007

I am in Heaven, dear ones,  
Oh, so happy and so bright!  
There is perfect joy and beauty  
In this pain and grief is over,  
Every restless tossing passed;  
I am now at peace forever,  
Safely home in Heaven at last.  
Did you wonder how I so calmly  
Trode the Valley of the shade?  
Oh! But Jesus' love illuminated  
Every dark and fearful glade.  
There is work still waiting for you  
So you must not idly stand;  
Do it now, while life remaineth-  
You shall rest in Jesus' land  
When that work is all completed,  
He will gently call you Home;  
Oh, the rapture of that meeting,  
Oh, the joy to see you come!

National Cremation Society  
North Fort Myers, Florida

### EVELYN FRANCES LUETTICH HORNE NOVEMBER 18, 2007

Evelyn Frances Luettich Horne, a native of Estero, Florida went to be with the Lord Sunday, November 18, 2007. Evelyn was born August 11, 1922 on Mound Key.

Mrs. Horne is survived by her children, Darlene Johnson and Herby of Estero and Billy Horne and Linda also of Estero. Grandchildren include, George Johnson, Angel Wilson, Blake, Heather Madden and Eric. Great-Grandchildren include Alexis, Chrissandra, Ashley, Dani O'Connor, Jasmine Horne, Paige and Peyton Madden.

Memorial Services will be held at Estero United Methodist Church on Saturday, December 1, 2007 at 1:00 PM. Memorial Contribution may be made to Joanne's House (Hope Hospice) in Bonita Springs or Estero United Methodist Church.

Arrangements by National Cremation Society, North Fort Myers, FL

## A Memorial in Honor of Evelyn Horne Saturday, December 1, 2007 1:00 p.m.

### Greeting

"In the Garden"

Jonathan Henderson

"What a Friend We Have"

Hymn

What a friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and grief's to bear!  
What a privilege to carry,  
Everything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit,  
O what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry  
Everything to God in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden,  
Cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Savior, still our refuge;  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?  
Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
In his arms he'll take and shield thee;  
Thou wilt find a solace there.

Message

Rev. David Harris

### Time of Sharing

(those who wish are invited to share memories)

"What a Wonderful Day That Will Be"

Hymn

There is coming a day when no heartaches  
shall come,  
No more clouds in the sky  
No more tears to dim the eye;  
All is peace for evermore  
On that happy golden shore  
What a day, glorious day, that will be.  
What a day that will be  
When my Jesus I shall see  
And I look upon His face  
The one who saved me by His grace:  
When He takes me by the hand,  
and leads me through the Promised Land,  
What a day, glorious day, that will be.

"It Is Well"

Jonathan Henderson

Prayer

Rev. David Harris

Invitation to the releasing of a dove, followed by refreshments in the Founder's Hall for an opportunity to express your condolences to the family. All are invited to participate.



# HISTORY

**REMEMBER** | DO YOU KNOW THIS PERSON?

## Estero readers shared memories of Evelyn Luettich Horne

**CATHY COTTRILL**

cccottrill@bonitanews.com

Last week's photo of Evelyn Luettich Horne brought a flood of phone calls and warm remembrances about the Estero resident who is renowned for her cooking.



"I know this lady really well," said Betty Hodges. "She is my aunt. She's the finest cook."

Ruth Mason calls Horne, who was born on Mound Key, "a marvelous cook." The Estero Historical Society, in fact, compiled a book of Horne's recipes, "The Evelyn Horne Cookbook" and sells it as a fundraiser.

Longtime local resident Mimi Straub said Horne cooked for the Koreshans for many years and worked for Hedwig Michel, the woman known as the last Koreshan. "Evelyn was Hedwig's 'Girl Friday,'

" said Straub. Horne's husband, George, took care of the grounds of the historic settlement.

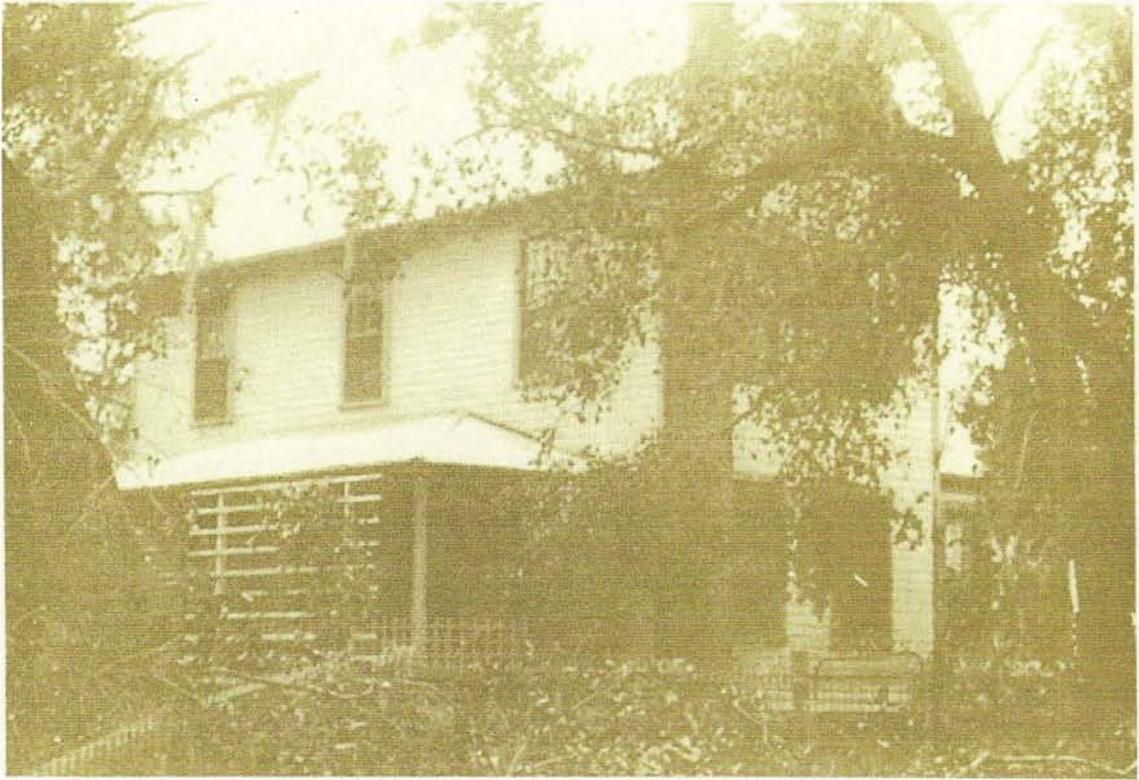
One of her fondest memories of Horne centers around voting in Estero. Horne worked the polls and greeted all the voters with a friendly, "Hello. There's food out back."

"She was the head of the voting precinct," said Straub. "It was like no other place I'd voted before, because she had food cooking in the back. I never went any place where I was fed to vote!"

"I have known Evelyn for 80 years," said Helen Horne, 89, a 70-year resident of Estero who is Horne's sister-in-law. "We met in 1927 when Evelyn was 4 years old. We were friends long before we married brothers."

Friends and family describe Evelyn Horne as a warm, friendly woman who always had a kind word and something delicious cooking. Now in a nursing home in Fort Myers, her health is failing.

"She is one of the treasures of Estero," said Straub. "A wonderful person."



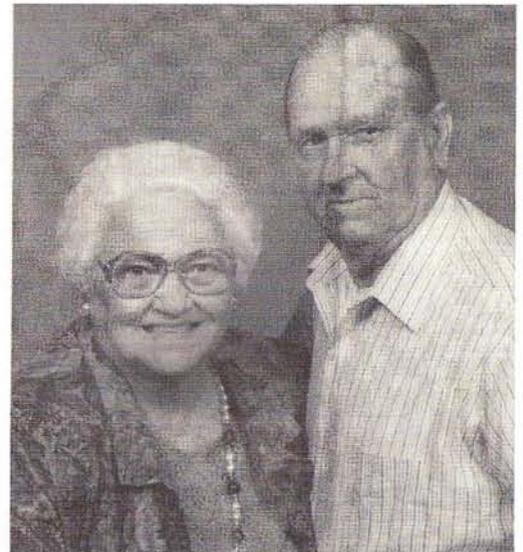
**The Horne Home ~ Floweree**



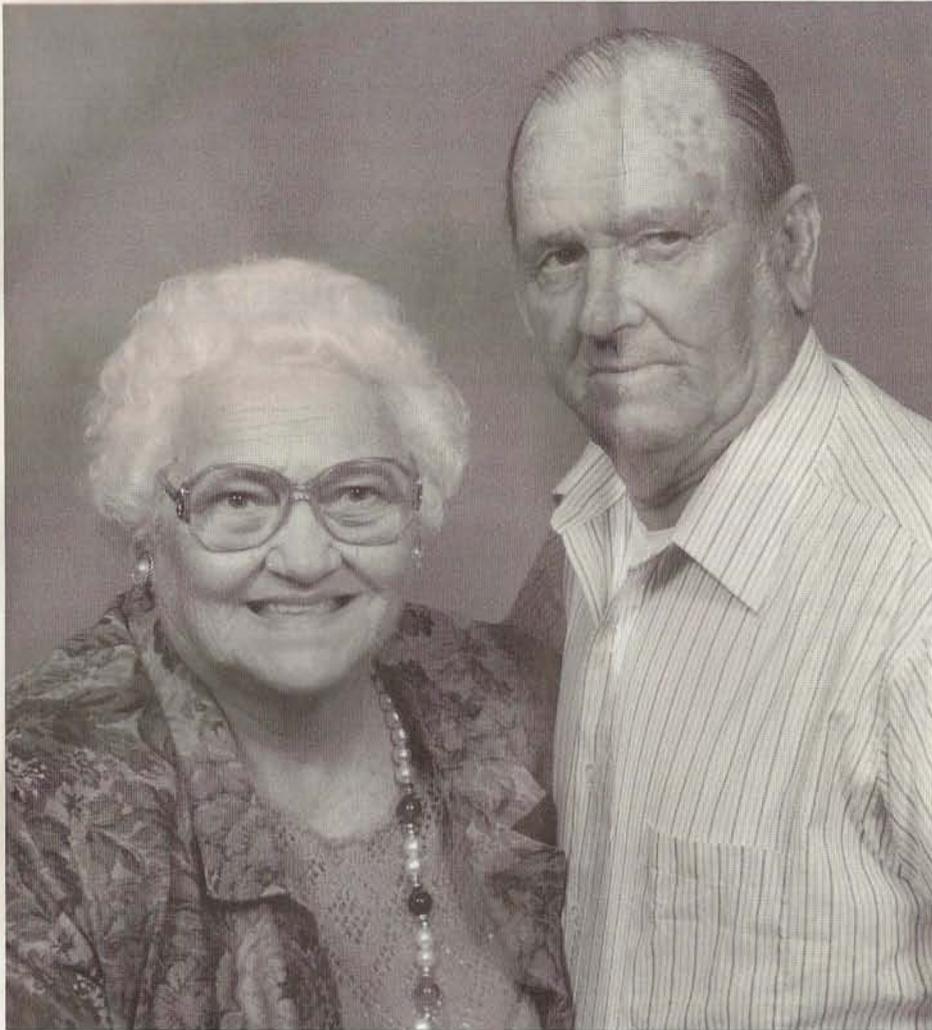
**Evelyn Horne**



**Evelyn Horne**



**Evelyn and George Horne**



Mr. and Mrs. George Horne

## Half A Century with the Hornes

By Sara Rea

Over the course of the last half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century the United States was known as the "melting pot of the world". And it was never more so than during those years that George and Evelyn Horne's ancestors joined the millions leaving the old world for the new.

Alexander Horne and Isabella Cata met and married in Aberdeenshire, Scotland around the turn of the century, and their union was blessed with eight children—seven sturdy sons and one daughter. Before the Hornes emigrated to America in 1846 four of the boys—Jack, Bill, Jim and Frank—and daughter Belle

leaves, George swept Evelyn off her feet, proposed, was accepted, and sent her an engagement ring enclosed in a letter.

Evelyn and George have now been married over fifty years, and most of those years were spent in service to the Koreshan Unity. Of course, many other interests occupied their time during those years. Their daughter, Darlene, was born in 1946 and son, Bill, arrived the following year. Both married and have presented George and Evelyn with grandchildren and great grandchildren.

The Hornes are members of 58 years standing of the Estero United Methodist Church. Evelyn has donated many hours of her time at the church on various committees, cooking and baking and serving delicious foods, and helping in a myriad of ways. George was always available to lend a helping hand whenever and wherever needed.

As life-long residents of Estero, both of these generous, hard-working people have contributed greatly to the growth and well being of their community. George was a 20 year member of the Estero Volunteer Fire Department, and was fire chief until he retired from active duty. Since then he has served as a fire commissioner, having been elected again last November. George insists this is the last time. He was a member and held office in a number of civic associations, among them the Lions Club and Mosquito Control Board.

Evelyn has been a member of the Estero River Garden Club, the Estero River Homemakers, Lion's Club and Firemen's Auxiliaries and various school and church groups. She also took art classes and has some lovely paintings to her credit if you can persuade her to show them to you. She also taught art classes at different times, both in her home and at the church. Evelyn deservedly was presented with a Good Neighbor's Award not so long ago by the Bonita Banner.

The Hornes have survived illnesses, deaths of family members and friends, hurricanes, fires and all the other calamities that can befall mankind as well as the turning over of the Koreshan utopian settlement to the state. George and Evelyn continued serving the last Koreshan, Hedwig Michel, until her death in 1982. George chauffeured her about town in the Koreshans' vintage black Cadillac during those final years. Hedwig's transition marked the end of an era. Since then, George continues maintenance of the Koreshan Unity Foundation properties, and Evelyn is still girl Friday for the foundation, if on a part-time basis.

However, as have most folks, the Hornes have been blessed with many of the good things in life also. George and Evelyn's greatest joy is in their family, and they derive much pleasure working on their 2-acre mini-estate, keeping it in a park-like condition. Dear to George's heart is his rose garden, which he tends with loving care. And lately he has brought home some calves, ostensibly to raise for beef. However, they seem to have almost become members of the family.

These days Evelyn is still cooking, baking and preserving the fruits of local tropical plants. She is often asked to speak at luncheons and meetings of various clubs and civic groups. People are always interested in meeting a "Koreshan granddaughter" and hearing her stories about the Koreshan Unity.

George and Evelyn recently celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary at the Estero United Methodist Church. Many friends and relatives were there to toast this momentous occasion as well as their half-century of service to Estero and the Koreshan Unity. Both now in their 70s, they have no intention of retiring. Evelyn can still be found at the Koreshan Unity headquarters on most mornings during the week, and George is mowing grass, clearing brush or doing his building maintenance chores as always.

had made their entries into the world and accompanied their parents on their voyage across the ocean to America.

It was in New York, after being processed through the Ellis Island rituals, that the young Horne family was met by a group of Koreshans, including Peter Campbell, Lawrence Bubbett and Claude Rahn. With them the Horne family made its way to Florida, settling first at Fort Myers Beach. Alex, Alfred, Jack and George were born in Florida. At this writing, George and his brothers Bill, Forbes, Alex and Alfred still live here.

Karl Luettich, some years earlier, made his way from Bavaria, Germany to California where he lived with his family in the Los Angeles area. It was there he first heard Dr. Cyrus Teed (Koresh) speak and decided to cast his lot with the Koreshans. Mrs. Luettich did not want to leave California and she and the children, except one son, Charles, stayed there. In 1889 Karl and Charles headed for Chicago where they became members of Dr. Teed's utopian community, the Koreshan Unity. When the Koreshans moved to Estero, Florida in 1894 the two Luettichs came too. Karl served as the colony's fisherman and was a faithful follower of Koresh all his life.

Meanwhile, Rosa and Antonio Fernandez had joined the exodus to the new world, leaving Lisbon, Portugal to seek their fortunes in the United States, settling in the Mound Key area of Florida. Their family consisted of nine children, Anna, Rosa, Dora, Joe, Lena, Lenora, Mary, Buck and Lewis.

From this blending of people and nationalities came George and Evelyn Horne. Charlie Luettich married Dora Fernandez and began wedded life aboard a houseboat anchored at the south end of Mound Key. They had five children: three girls, Henrietta, Mary and Evelyn, born on the houseboat, and two boys, Charles and Arthur, born in Estero.

George Horne went to school in Estero where he met his future bride, Evelyn Luettich. Evelyn graduated from Fort Myers High School in June, 1940, and in October of that year Allen H. K. Andrews, then president of the Koreshan Unity, asked Evelyn to come work at the Unity to serve the Solar Festival dinner. And thus began a long association which is still strong today.

When Evelyn began working at the Koreshan Unity store, George Horne was already employed at the Unity. His jobs were many and varied. Over the years he was a landscaper, gardener, mason, electrician, carpenter and plumber. He was in charge of maintenance at the Koreshans' Estero River Trailer Park, and for some years managed the Standard Oil Gas Station on Koreshan property across the road from the store. He also chauffeured Hedwig Michel and other elderly Koreshans for several years.

There were only thirty members of the Unity left when Evelyn's affiliation with the Unity began. When the restaurant was established along the side of the store building overlooking the river, Evelyn's mother, Dora, was the head cook. She continued there, cooking delicious meals, until her death in 1954. Evelyn went right on working for the Koreshan Unity until 1962 when the Koreshan settlement and 300+ acres of land were given to the state of Florida to be preserved and developed as an historic site as well as a state park.

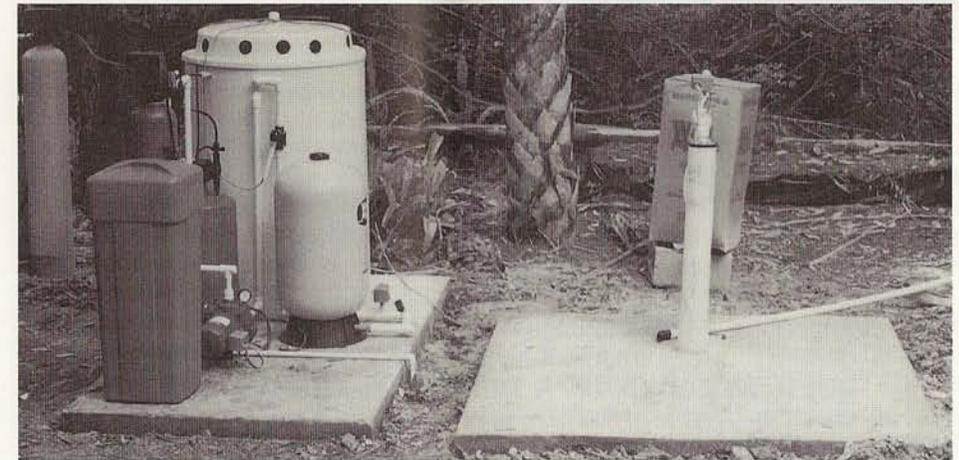
George Horne spent most of his adult life serving the Koreshan Unity and its successor, the Koreshan Unity Foundation, taking four years off for his stint in the army during World War II. He earned a Bronze Star medal as a member of the 7th Armored Tank Division at the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium. On one of his

Life is good for George and Evelyn Horne, and the Koreshan Unity and the community of Estero salute them.



#### **HURRICANE PROTECTION.**

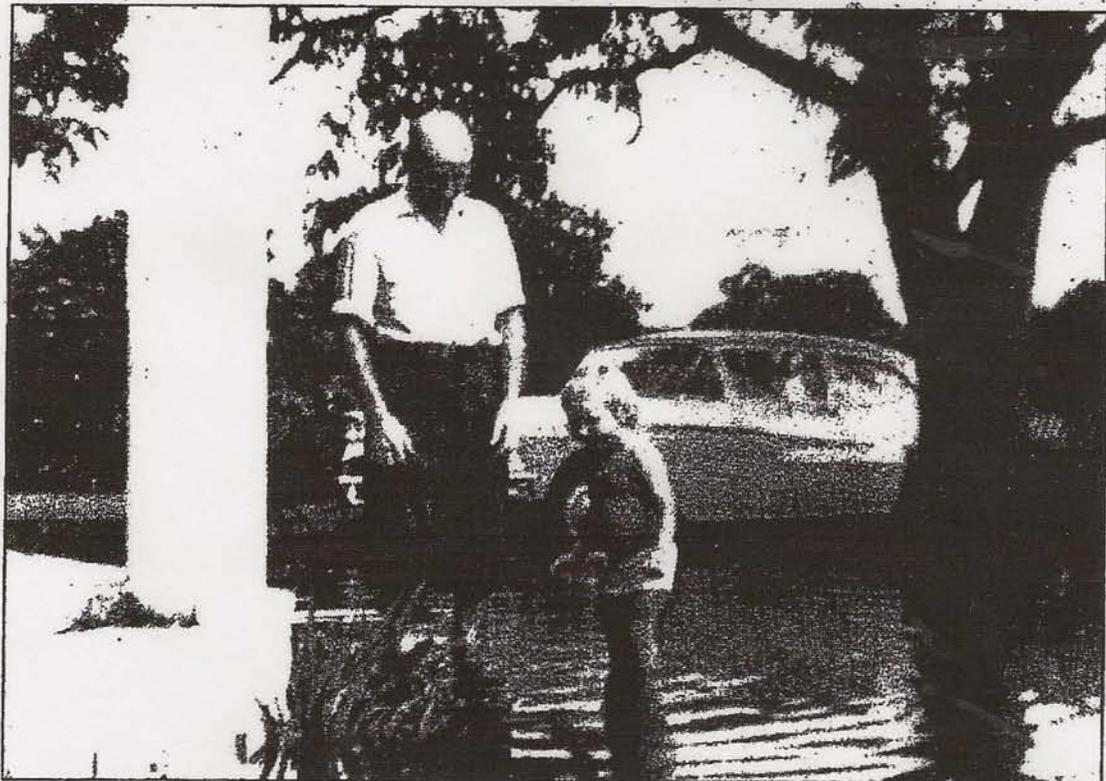
*One of the first improvements to the Koreshan Headquarters building was shutters for protection should a hurricane come this year. Hedwig Michel, who devoted the last 40 years of her life to the preservation of the Koreshan heritage, built the headquarters building in 1979. She died in 1982 and is the only Koreshan buried in the Koreshan State Historic Site.*



#### **NEW WELL.**

*The Foundation became acquainted with most of the rules and regulations concerning potable water for the county when it put in a new well for use at the Headquarters building at Corkscrew Road and US 41. Started in mid-January, the water is still undergoing testing but should be approved in time for the Festival April 9.*

**LOOKING BACK WITH THE HORNES**



Photos special to the News-Press

**FLOOD OF MEMORIES:** The Horne property flooded in the summer of 1959 when this photo of Forbes Horne and his granddaughter, Gayle Horton, was taken.

# Pioneers ran citrus grove

By **ANDREA STETSON**  
News-Press staff writer

The wide, deep Estero River was a playground for Forbes Horne and his brothers and sister as they grew up as one of the area's first families.

The children would swim a mile downstream, then hop on a steel drawbridge and wait for the citrus barges. As a vessel passed under the bridge, the youngsters would leap down on to the empty orange crates and ride the barge back up the river.

Other times, Horne would find old pieces of tin that had blown off rooftops.

"We'd fold it, fix it and float down the river," he said.

These makeshift boats would have an orange crate inside with the tin roof pieces wrapped around it.

The youngsters swam in the river year-round. They swam when it was cold and swam with alligators. The Horne kids knew every nook and twist of the winding waterway.

The Hornes, native Scots, ended up in Estero when Horne's uncle, John, decided to look for adventure in the new world. Horne's father William and oldest brother Jack soon followed in 1912. One year



F. HORNE

later, Isabella Horne left their native Aberdeen, Scotland, and made the one-month boat crossing with her young daughter and three small sons.

Forbes was only 18 months old when they began the journey. They arrived on Ellis Island, then took a train to Florida and a boat to Fort Myers Beach.

Once reunited, the Horne family moved to Estero, where William bought 10 acres of land and managed the 240-acre Flowerree citrus grove.

Isabella was glad to start a new life in the new world, but she was saddened by the loss of the precious memories of her life. During the Atlantic crossing, the special chest that held Isabella's photographs, jewelry, special mementoes and the address of her father — who also had moved to the United States — was stolen.

Without that address, Isabella was never able to find her father. She had nothing remain-



**THE HORNES:** This family photo of the Hornes was taken in Fort Myers in 1915. Front from left, Bella, James and Forbes; back, mother Isabella, father William and William Jr.

ing from her native Scotland except memories.

But the Hornes built new memories.

They had three more sons and kept busy with their eight children and their pioneer life.

"It was pretty rugged," Forbes Horne said.

His father would plow the

fields using a mule and a horse named Grace and Pat. Once a month, the animals would take his parents along a very rugged trail to Fort Myers for supplies.

In 1915, the Hornes piled four of their children — into a mule-pulled wagon for a day-

See **PIONEERS** / 2F

# PIONEERS: Family portrait taken on trip to Fort Myers

From Page 1F

long trip to Fort Myers, where they had their photograph taken. Going to town was a big treat for the Horne children. Their parents went once a month, and the youngsters took turns accompanying them. Forbes Horne said when it was his turn, he would get all dressed up for his journey to Fort Myers.

But in Estero, every day was an adventure for the pioneers. The children walked two miles each way to get to and from the two-room schoolhouse on Highlands Avenue. During the rainy season they got wet, but rain wasn't their biggest problem.

"We had to run sometimes to school the mosquitoes were so bad," Forbes said. "It was like a black cloud with them falling."

Summer vacations were much longer back then, so the children could help with the crops. Forbes was 8 when he began helping to pick oranges, and it became a lifetime career. When his father retired and his two older brothers moved on to

groves of their own, Forbes took over management of Flowerree and retained that position until the grove closed in 1974.

But Forbes almost never made it to grove manager. He almost didn't make it to his young adult years, when he courted his wife during romantic drives on Bonita Beach. And he almost didn't make it to his childhood days of swimming and boating in his beloved Estero River.

When Forbes was a child, the mosquitoes were so bad, the family lit fires wherever they went to keep them away. On the beach they'd have huge bonfires to sit by and socialize.

"They were the days," Forbes said. "We built bonfires and would barbecue beef or steak."

At home, they would burn palmetto leaves to keep the bugs away.

"One time I got a little too close to it," Forbes said. "My nightgown got on fire and I ran."

As the flames raced across his

**PROFILE**

■ **NAME:** Forbes Horne and Forbes "Buddy";

■ **AGE:** Will be 84 on Aug. 13

■ **FAMILY:** Parents William and Isabella; siblings Jack, Bella, Bill, James, Alfred, George and Alex; wife, Helen, children Dorothy

clothing, burning the 5-year-old's skin, Forbes' older brother Bill raced to save the youngster's life. He threw his little brother to the ground and rolled the flames out.

There was no hospital, so Forbes' parents took him to a doctor.

"They told my mother and dad to take me home," Forbes explained. "They said there's nothing we can do. He won't make it."

But Isabella was not about to give up. She nursed the injured boy back to health.

She nursed him again when

he dove in the Estero River one day and his nose hit on a stove pipe that someone had discarded in the water.

Forbes Horne had some other close calls. One time his brother was cutting logs and also cut Forbes' hand. Another time, before he learned to swim, he almost drowned in the Estero River, but he was pulled to safety by a young girl.

"I was always doing something to myself," Forbes said.

Scarred but healthy, Forbes grew up to live through the flood of 1936. His family had to aban-

don the first floor of their 1902 wooden home and move to the second story for a while after two feet of water soaked into their house.

He lived through World War II when he heard a German submarine being sunk in the Gulf not far off Coconut Road. And he lived through several hurricanes, including Donna in 1960.

Five generations of Horne have lived on the Horne land in Estero. Three generations still live on the property off River Ranch Road.

Forbes' two children followed in his footsteps, making the boats from rooftops to raft down the river, but his great-grandchildren see a much different water way and a much different Estero

Gone is the smell of orange blossoms and hundreds of acre of tightly packed citrus trees. Gone are the barges that used to come up a much wider, deeper river. And gone are the days when children spent their time swimming, hitching rides on orange crates and building rafts to forge the Estero River.