

Jungle Prada

by Bob Miller



Some of the following excerpts were taken from a document describing the Jungle Prada history remembered by Edna L. (Harmon) Finkbone. Edna moved to 2000 Park Street in 1936

The original owner and builder of a log cabin at 2000 Park Street was Herman Feucht and his wife Jenny Sarah. They built a log cabin that was completed in 1918. He would carry water from the natural sulfur springs that was located at the Prada site. In 1921 a hurricane destroyed the original Jungle Pier.



In 1925, Walter Fuller constructed the Jungle Prada Building and the Jungle Prada Auto Hotel. Over the years this complex has served as a full service garage complete with gas pumps, a grocery store, a soda fountain and apartments

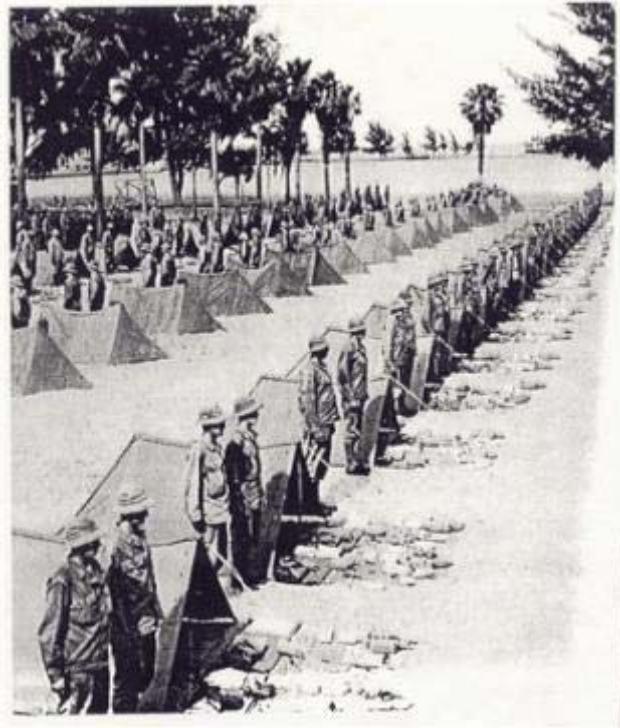
The West end of the building had an open deck with a boat bow shape and concrete walls and seats and floor.





During the 1920's, clubs and dance halls were popular in St. Petersburg. Popular spots were the Golden Dragon at the Northeast corner of Central Avenue and Fifth Street, the Green Lantern on the North Mall, and the Gangplank at Jungle Prada. Spanish Bob's atop the Snell Arcade at Central Avenue and Fourth Street pictured at left.

World War II recruits flooded into St. Petersburg beginning in mid-1942 for six weeks of basic training. They filled the city's hotels and rooming houses and overflowed into camps called "Tent City." The largest camp was some 10,000 recruits in the Jungle area of St. Petersburg. By August 1943, all military personnel had moved on, mostly to overseas assignments.



Because of the trolley service to and from downtown and a connecting round trip bus service to Bay Pines Hospital, the WWII use of Admiral Farragut for U.S. Serviceman, the influx of winter tourists, and the fishing industry, this area has had lots of activity.

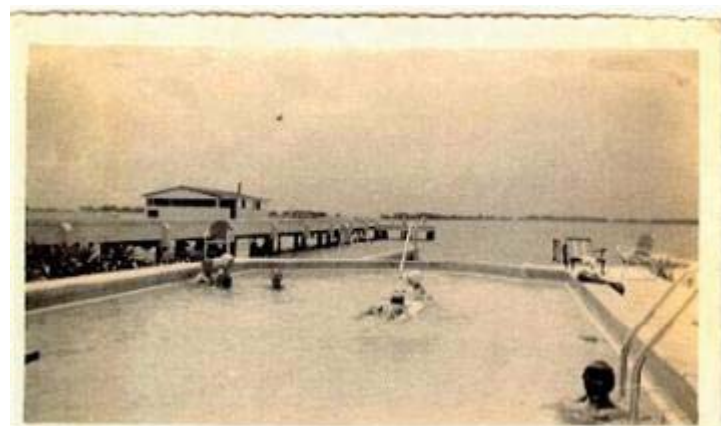
This sign on Park Street marks the site of a village that archaeologists believe was occupied by Panfilo de Narvaez's expedition after its landing in April 1528.



About 1950 Edith Holbert assumed ownership of the Jungle Prada, converting the garage portion to apartments and a large lounge with fireplace. The grocery was converted to lobby and restaurant space. On the waterfront, a pool and pavilion were added. On the North, 16 efficiency apartments were constructed.



Post Card from around 1970



Pool and tennis courts with pier in the background. Dates unknown.



Old photo of the “Al Capone” dining room



Count Bassie and Duke Ellington played at the Gangplank (Jungle Prada) and Babe Ruth was married there. Rumor has it that during the prohibition era, there was a secret underground tunnel leading from the bay to Jungle Prada which was used by bootleggers. In the 1920's, the land where Tyrone Square Mall is now located was an airport. Al Capone and other notorious characters used the airport for easy access to the Jungle resort area. According to legend, Al Capone was a part owner of the Jungle Prada nightclub. Saffron's Restaurant has an un-opened safe (left) that is claimed to date back to the Al Capone days.



A Jungle Terrace member, Saffron's is the restaurant located in the Jungle Prada complex today. Saffron's has a tropical atmosphere and Caribbean cuisine. Edyth James brought her restaurant to this site in 1994.



A boat ramp that is maintained by the City of St. Petersburg is available to pleasure boaters at the Jungle Prada site.