

## BRYAN HOUSES TIMELINE

P.N. Bryan builds a wood frame hotel on the north bank of the river	1900-	
Ed King builds the New River Hotel (Inn) for Philemon Bryan	1905-06-	-1903 P.N. Bryan hires Ed King to build two houses for sons Reed & Tom
Reed Bryan's 1 <sup>st</sup> wife dies and he sells house to J.C. Ewing, 1 <sup>st</sup> treasurer of Broward County	1909-	-1905-06 Gov. Broward hires Reed Bryan to build dredges to build the 1 <sup>st</sup> New River canal
City establishes H-1 Historic District to protect historic fabric	1975-06-	-1940s In WW II the Reed Bryan house is converted to a duplex and later to a 5 unit apartment. The Tom Bryan house remains a single family home.
The City advertises for a commercial tenant for the Bryan Houses	1978-	-1976-77 City of Fort Lauderdale acquires the Bryan Homes
The City renovates the Bryan Homes	1981-	-1980 A fire in January severely damages the Reed Bryan House
The restaurant wins a Community Appearance Award	1983-	-1982 The houses are leased by a restaurant; a contemporary addition links the two buildings. A commercial kitchen addition is built
The Bryan Homes restaurant owners, Chart House Inc., apply for Certified historic status from the Secretary of the Interior; they are turned down although they later appeal.	1989-	-1985 The Bryan Homes rehab wins a Preservation award from the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation

## BRYAN HOMES NARRATIVE

Philemon Nathaniel Bryan of New Smyrna, with his two sons, Reed and Tom, came to the little New River settlement in 1895. Bryan, a major citrus groves man and owner of packing houses in the New Smyrna area had been wiped out by the 1895 freeze that struck the northern section of the state. Bryan was able to obtain a contract from Henry Flagler to build the section of roadbed for Flagler's railroad extension to South Florida from the New River north to Pompano. Bryan hired some 400 workers which he sent down to the New River by boat; he sent his youngest son, 18 year old Tom, with some of the workers on one boat along with the payroll. Near Delray Beach, Tom decided to get off the boat and telling the workers that if they wanted their pay they should continue on without him, Tom then walked to what was going to become the City of Fort Lauderdale. As part of his compensation from the railway P.N. Bryan was allowed to purchase lands including the future sites of the New River Hotel (Inn), the Reed and Tom Bryan Homes and the Philemon and Lucy Bryan Home. The Bryans became one of the founding families of the city.

Another groves man from New Smyrna, Edwin Thomas King, came to the New River around the latter part of 1893. King and his brother Richard camped near the Tarpon River, which the small community began to call Kings Creek. King had carpentry skills and made his living building what the little community needed. He later added boat building and coffins to his resume. He acquired farmland further south on the creek and built an impressive house. Although unlicensed, Ed King became the town's first building contractor building homes for the first families of Fort Lauderdale and Broward County.

At some point, Ed King worked for Henry Flagler in West Palm Beach. While there he worked on Flagler's Royal Poinciana Hotel, honing his construction skills. While in the area, King helped build the Bradley Casino in Palm Beach.

Ed King was a self taught builder. He had a good eye and his buildings resemble the iconic building styles of the southern states and the Caribbean, but his methods were his own. He paid close attention to local conditions such as tropical storms and the yearly fires that swept through the glades and the pine lands. At some point, Ed King became interested in concrete block as a fire proof method of construction. Block molds and even a block making machine were available through Sears Roebuck, but whether King

used such a contraption or made his own molds is unknown. Using river water and beach sand, King began building with block around the turn of the century. His first big project was a hunting lodge on the beach for John McGregor Adams, Hugh Taylor Birch's partner. The lodge, which was built in 1898, eventually became the Las Olas Inn.

The 1903 Tom and Reed Bryan Homes are two story gravity built structures, which means that exterior walls and most interior walls are load bearing. The hollow concrete blocks, which were made on site, are rusticated, meaning they have a rough surface meant to resemble natural stone. Philemon Bryan worked closely with King on the construction of the houses. According to family members the blocks were made in iron molds by African American workers.

The Tom Bryan house is described in the Florida Master Site File as Simplified Classical Revival in style. The house has a rectangular footprint with a one story irregularity on the north side. There is a wrap-around porch on the south, east and west sides and a two story porch at the south entrance. Distinctive style elements are the multiple cast concrete columns with Doric capitals; there are two story columns with Doric capitals flanking the front entry porch. The southwest corner of the building is rounded.

The Reed Bryan house is Masonry Vernacular style. The house has a T shaped footprint; the exterior walls are built of smooth faced block with a beveled edge. This house has a two story wrap-around porch on three sides with multiple cast concrete balusters.

The Tom and Reed Bryan houses are significant in the context of the pioneer settlement of what eventually became the incorporated City of Fort Lauderdale (1893 to 1911).