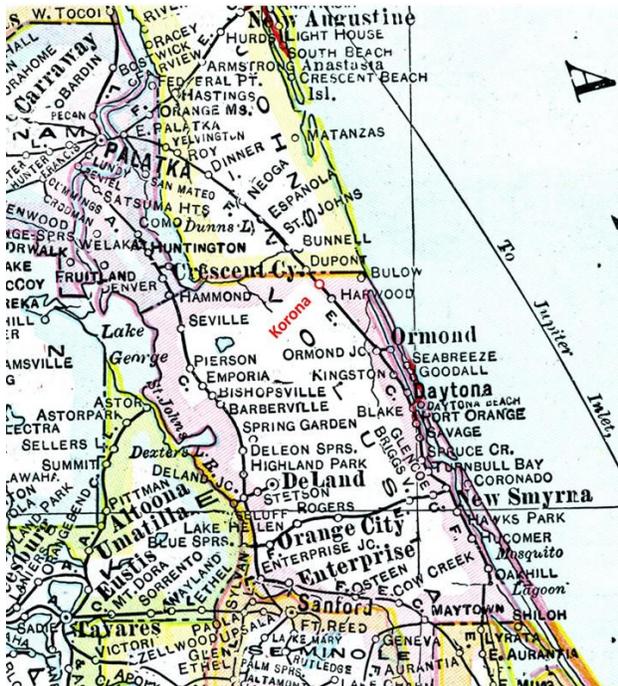


Korona's Historic

St. Mary Catholic Church (built 1914)

By Randy Jaye

Map of Volusia County (1916)

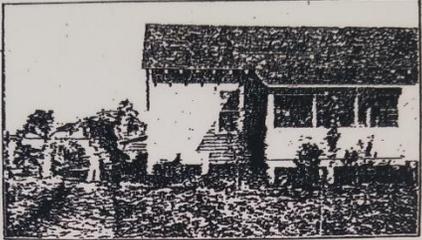


The town of Korona is marked in 'Red'

Figure 1 – Map of Volusia County circa 1916. (Note: the town of Korona and its circular location indicator, both marked in red, were added by the author). Source: Flagler County Historical Society.

The town of Korona was originally created by the Bunnell Development Company¹ to sell land mainly for farming and homestead purposes. It was settled in 1914 by Polish families, predominantly farmers, who came from northern U.S. cities including Chicago and Detroit. From 1914 to 1917, Korona was located in the northern section of Volusia County (Figure 1). On April 28, 1917, the northern section of Volusia County, including Korona, and the southern section of St. Johns County became parts of the newly established Flagler County. Today, Korona is a small unincorporated community located in southern Flagler County.

One of the reasons why Polish settlers moved to Korona was likely due to advertisements, some printed in Polish, (Figure 2) that the Bunnell Development Company used in their monthly publication, *The Bunnell Home Builder*, which promoted land as inexpensive as \$35 per acre and the potential for a year-round growing season. The Bunnell Development Company also chartered a train called the *Dixie Flyer* and sponsored round trips from Chicago to Bunnell for \$41.89 (Figure 3), so people could travel to the area inexpensively. After several Polish families decided to relocate they formed a committee and raised \$1000, prior to moving to Florida, to build a church in the town of Korona that was to be named St. Mary, Queen of Poland, Catholic Church (later changed to St. Mary Catholic Church). The first 35 families including Cyzycki, Mazurewicz, Strach, Stupecki, Trojanowski

 <p>Farma i dom pana Mazurewicza w naszej Kolonii Korona, Florida.</p> <p>wał ziemi, to za każdy akr, który kupi, dostanie nazad dolara, czyli ile akców kupi, tyle dolarów dostanie z powrotem jako kosztu podróży, to znaczy, że jeżeli Pan kupi od 60 do 80 akców, będzie miał podróz darmo tam i z powrotem.</p> <p>Warunki kupna są bardzo łatwe, a także teraz przyjmujemy Liberty Bonds jako wpłatę na nasze grunta, również mamy kilka farm z domem i po kilka akców obróbio- ne, gdzie odrazu jest zapewniony byt niezależny. Niech Pan napisze jaką farmę Pan chce, a przysłę Panu opis.</p> <p>Pozostaję, mając nadzieję, że Pan skorzysta z nadarzającej się sposobności zwie- dzenia bezpłatnie naszej Kolonii i kupienia sobie kawał ziemi.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Z szacunkiem</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BUNNELL DEVELOPMENT CO. Desk W. 108 So. La Salle Street CHICAGO, ILL.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The BUNNELL HOME BUILDER</p> <p style="text-align: center;">GRAND EXCURSION TO BUNNELL FLORIDA APRIL 17.</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">WILL YOU BE ONE OF THE PARTY?</p> <p><i>I WANT YOU TO COME WITH ME ON THIS TRIP EVEN THOUGH YOU may already have bought land in the Bunnell colony, even though you may have visited Bunnell before, even though you may have no thoughts of buying land there, you can't afford to miss this opportunity.</i></p> <p>THE DIXIE FLYER LEAVES CHICAGO AT 10.25 PM. <i>tickets sold at reduced Prices. Round trip. Chicago to Bunnell \$4.25 For full particulars regarding this delightful trip see my article on page two of this issue - "Come and See" - you've wanted to take this trip for years - Why not do it now? DECIDE EARLY WHETHER YOU WILL GO. WRITE ME AT ONCE</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">ALL ON BOARD FOR BUNNELL.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THOS. A. VERDENIUS 108 So. La Salle St. CHICAGO ILLS</p>
<p>Figure 2 – A Bunnell Development Company advertisement in Polish that offers a \$1 rebate for each acre of land purchased in Korona (circa 1914). Source: Flagler County Historical Society.</p>	<p>Figure 3 – Grand Excursion to Bunnell, Florida on April 17, 1917 onboard the Dixie Flyer. This advertisement appeared in The Bunnell Home Builder's April 1917 edition. Source: Flagler County Historical Society.</p>

and Waszewski arrived in the Korona area early in 1914. They built homes and farms but struggled to make a living as the land was harsh, full of mosquitoes and other insects, lacked adequate roads and farming tools and drainage problems caused many crops to fail. Some of the original Polish settlers returned to northern cities before the drainage problems were solved. Others who stayed in the Korona area grew potatoes and vegetable crops and later raised chickens and sold eggs to supplement their farming incomes. The Polish settlers built a duplex house for Rev. Father Andrew Baczyk (the first Catholic priest in Korona). Rev. Baczyk's house also served as Korona's first post office where the Florida East Coast Railway² dropped off mail every business day.

Construction, Architectural Attributes and Interior Features

The construction of the St. Mary Catholic Church was directed by Rev. Baczyk and built by Izydor Waszowski. Completed in 1914, the sanctuary seats 65 and the first mass was held on May

3, 1914. Over the following years the St. Mary Catholic Church was used for social, and community meetings as well as church services (**Figure 4**). In the 1930s, two extensions were



Figure 4 – Stopping for a chat after morning services at St. Mary Catholic Church on April 22, 1917. This picture appeared in *The Bunnell Home Builder's* June 1917 edition. Source: Flagler County Historical Society.

added to the rear of the building (**Figures 5 & 6**). In 1994, a larger and more modern building was constructed in the St. Mary Catholic Church complex that can accommodate up to 500 people. The original St. Mary Catholic Church (**Figures 7-9**) is now used sparingly for baptisms, funerals, weddings, weekly mass and silent prayer services. It is the oldest standing church in Flagler County.



* **Figure 5** – Left side extension built for storage.



* **Figure 6** – Right side extension built for use by the priests.



** Figure 7 – Front exterior view: Original steeple and non-original double entrance doors, concrete stairs, metal railings and gable porch.*



** Figure 8 – (Top) Front Historical Sign.
* Figure 9 – (Bottom) Full front and right exterior view.*

The architectural style of St. Mary Catholic Church (**Figure 10**) is Carpenter Gothic (sometimes



Figure 10 - Front and right side view of St. Mary Catholic Church with white picket fence - circa 1935. (Note: the picket fence was removed in the 1960s). Source: Flagler County Historical Society.

referred to as Carpenter's Gothic and Rural Gothic). This architectural style was popular in North America in the late 1800s and early 1900s and was mostly confined to small domestic buildings, outbuildings and small churches. House-carpenters used abundant North American timber for the framework and wood trim for these structures. Carpenter Gothic architecture fabricates wood features that were carved in stone in authentic Gothic architecture³. Pointed arches,

steep gables, jig-sawn wood trim details and towers were typically incorporated into traditional American light-frame construction. In most Carpenter Gothic church structures, including St. Mary Catholic Church, pointed-arch windows, jig-sawn wood trim, steep gables, board and batten siding and a steeple were incorporated into the building design.

The interior of the church (**Figures 11-14**) features solid wood pews (long benches with backs) on each side of the central aisle, a staircase to the choir chambers (which is no longer in use due to questionable stability of the upper walls), and a pulpit. Various statues, pictures and other church-related artifacts adorn the interior spaces.



** Figure 11 – Full view from the front door looking toward the pulpit.*



** Figure 12 – Right view of the pulpit.*



** Figure 13 – Left front view - staircase to the choir chambers.*



** Figure 14 – Left view of the pulpit.*

Current Structural Condition and Questionable Future

Most of the exterior left wall of the building is considerably buckled due to debilitation of the



* **Figure 15** – *The interior ceiling of the church is showing water damage. The upper level's open area is the choir chamber.*

foundation. There is some water damage evident on the interior ceilings (**Figure 15**), and there has been some past termite activity which have contributed to the weakening of the structure. The church now has regular pest control spraying, so hopefully no additional damage due to insects will occur. The building is now waiting for a structural engineering inspection and analysis that will most likely determine its future. Hopefully,

the Roman Catholic Diocese of St. Augustine (the official owner of the St. Mary Catholic Church in Korona) will be able to allocate funding to repair the building, now more than 100 years old, so future generations can enjoy this important historical link to Volusia and Flagler County's past.

St. Mary Catholic Church Contact Information

Mailing Address:
89 St. Mary Place
Bunnell, FL 32110

Phone Number:
386-437-5098

Website:
<http://www.stmaryccfl.net/>

End Notes

* **Figures 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14** and **15** were photographed by the author on February 1, 2018.

¹ **The Bunnell Development Company** was chartered in June 1909 and maintained offices in Bunnell, Florida and Chicago, Illinois. In December 1912, the Chicago office began the publication of a monthly periodical called *The Bunnell Home Builder*. This periodical had the slogan "The Truth about Florida" which ran stories, in English and Polish, of inexpensive land,

no snow or ice and a fabulous year-round growing season that the Bunnell area had to offer. The company sponsored a special chartered train called “The Dixie Flyer” and charged \$41.89 for a round-trip from Chicago to Bunnell for prospective land buyers to visit the area. They also owned a hotel in Bunnell named the Bunnell Hotel (later the Halcyon Hotel) that accommodated up to 75 guests at \$3 per night for a room.

² The **Florida East Coast Railway** (FEC) was incorporated in 1885 by Henry Morrison Flagler (1830–1913) a business magnate, real estate developer and partner of John D. Rockefeller (1839–1937) in Standard Oil. Flagler had a vision to modernize the east coast of Florida with a solid transportation system. He purchased various local railroads in the northeast Florida area including the Jacksonville, St. Augustine and Halifax River Railway (JStA&HR), the St. John's Railway, the St. Augustine and Palatka Railway, and the St. Johns and Halifax River Railway and converted them into standard gauge. By 1889, FEC had railroad service connecting Jacksonville to Daytona. In 1912, the Over-the-Sea Extension was completed which cost \$50 million and connected the entire east coast of Florida to Key West. Its construction cost the lives of hundreds of workers. The FEC is still operating today but ceased passenger service in 1968. Currently, its major income-earning source is rock trains which primarily transport limestone.

³ **Gothic architecture** originated in the 12th century in France and spread around Europe lasting into the 16th century. This architectural style is known for its pointed arches, ribbed vaults, and flying buttress features. Many of the great cathedrals, abbeys, castles, palaces and churches of Europe were built using Gothic architecture styling. It is also the architecture style of many less prominent structures including town halls, guild halls, universities, private dwellings and smaller churches.

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