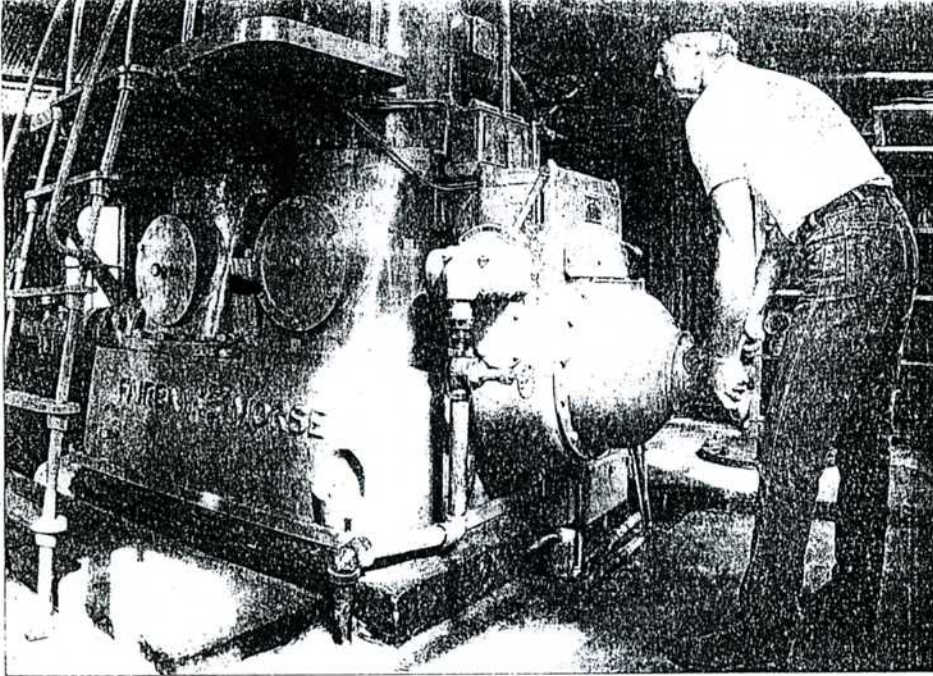


KSHS
 200-211-3300
 AC-0037
 NEWS PRESS (BONITA ED.)
 APRIL, 1998



MARC BEAUDIN/News-Press photos

A CLASSIC: Volunteer Jim Purcell estimates he has spent about 1,600 hours working on this 1929 Fairbanks Morse generator, identical to one the Koreshans used to power their settlement and other Estero homes earlier this century.

Generator brought back to life

Thousands of hours were spent to get 1929 unit running

By ANDREA STETSON
News-Press staff writer

ESTERO — Three years ago, an 18,000-pound hunk of cast iron was slowly slid into a tin-and-wood building at the Koreshan State Historic Site.

Since then, two volunteers and one park worker have each spent more than 1,000 hours restoring the rusty, broken generator.

Finally, just two weeks before this weekend's annual Antique Engine Show at the park, workers turned a wheel, opened some valves, pushed a lever and the engine started. The 8-ton piece of machinery with its 6-foot flywheel and 80-horsepower diesel engine will be up and running during the show.

The 1929 Fairbanks Morse generator is identical to the one the Koreshans used to power their settlement and other homes in Estero from 1925-1946. The engine was found in a field in Belle Glade and brought to the park piece by piece with a crane and truck hauling the main section.

"The hardest part was getting it into the building. It took three weeks to lift and twist inch by inch," said volunteer Jim Purcell, 56, who estimates he spent about 1,600 hours fixing the generator.

There were other challenges such as finding a rod cap wick, which spreads oil on a beam. When that 70-year-old part couldn't be located, Purcell had to improvise by attaching a tiny piece of sheet metal and two springs to a small chalkboard eraser. Using archive manuals, the workers were able to fit the pieces of the generator puzzle together.

"We never knew if it would work,"



UP AND RUNNING: Jim Purcell, pictured above, and co-workers Jim Glenn and Wayne Gallinger finally got the 8-ton, 80-horsepower diesel engine with its 6-foot flywheel to start up two weeks ago.

said Jim Glenn, 39, a park employee who says he spent more than 1,000 hours working on the engine. Then a few weeks ago, the engine started.

"It was a real sense of accomplishment after all these years," said Purcell, a retired military man with a lifelong love of engines.

Volunteer Wayne Gallinger, 52, who spent about 700 hours repairing the engine, was asked why he spent so much of his retirement time on the project.

"I'm not a golfer," he said. "It's more fun than chasing a white ball around a field."

IF YOU GO

- **WHAT:** Antique Engine Show
- **WHEN:** 8 a.m. to dusk Friday and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday
- **WHERE:** Koreshan State Historic Site, Corkscrew Road just west of U.S. 41, Estero
- **COST:** Admission to the park is \$3.25 per vehicle.
- **INFORMATION:** 992-0311