

FLORIDA FANTASY

have been a bit unusual, but he was way ahead of his time in technology. Koreshan had electricity long before most places, and the type of steam generator they used is on exhibit here.

Under Teed's leadership, Koreshan was transformed from a wilderness into a thriving town. Nearby farms raised produce that was sold in the community store.

Koreshan grew and prospered under Teed's leadership until 1908 when, despite his belief of being immortal, he died. Without their charismatic founder, the group began to decline in numbers. Another factor was that anyone joining the religious order had to be celibate—despite the fact that Teed was married and had a son. Families could join the cooperative order, but not the religious group.

Fifteen buildings in the historic site have been restored, each with a different story. Ranger-guided tours are conducted Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Campfire programs are held on Saturday nights. "Ghost walks," with living-history participants, are planned for weekends in January and February, to coincide with the full moon. The Solar Festival, in October, celebrates Teed's birthday. November's Music, Arts and Trades Festival features Native Americans, artists, musicians, special crafts and food.

Don't be surprised to see some gopher tortoises ambling across the grounds. This rare species is thriving here, along with burrowing owls, plus a variety of birds and butterflies.

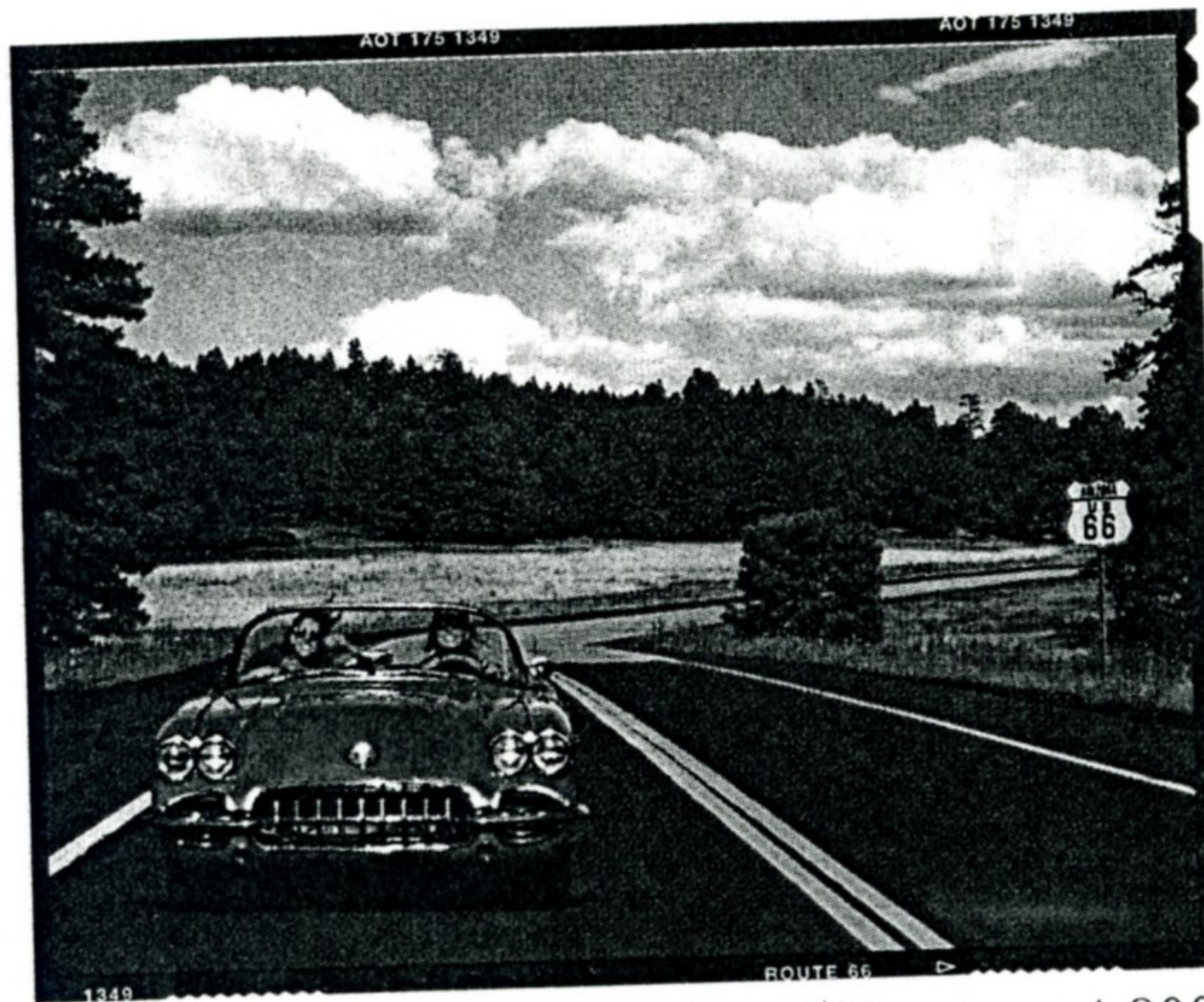
Koreshan is close to the Sanibel Island beaches, and birds abound at Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge. Inventor Thomas Edison's home is a must-stop. Shell shops, wilderness safaris and boat trips to Mound Key can add adventure to your visit.

Koreshan State Historic Site is a good place to reflect on the past while you enjoy the warm sunshine of southern Florida. ■

For additional information, contact: Koreshan State Historic Site, P.O. Box 7, Estero, Florida 33928, (941) 992-0311; or the Florida Tourist Bureau, (888) 246-8728.



I could get my kicks driving another route, but it wouldn't be the same.



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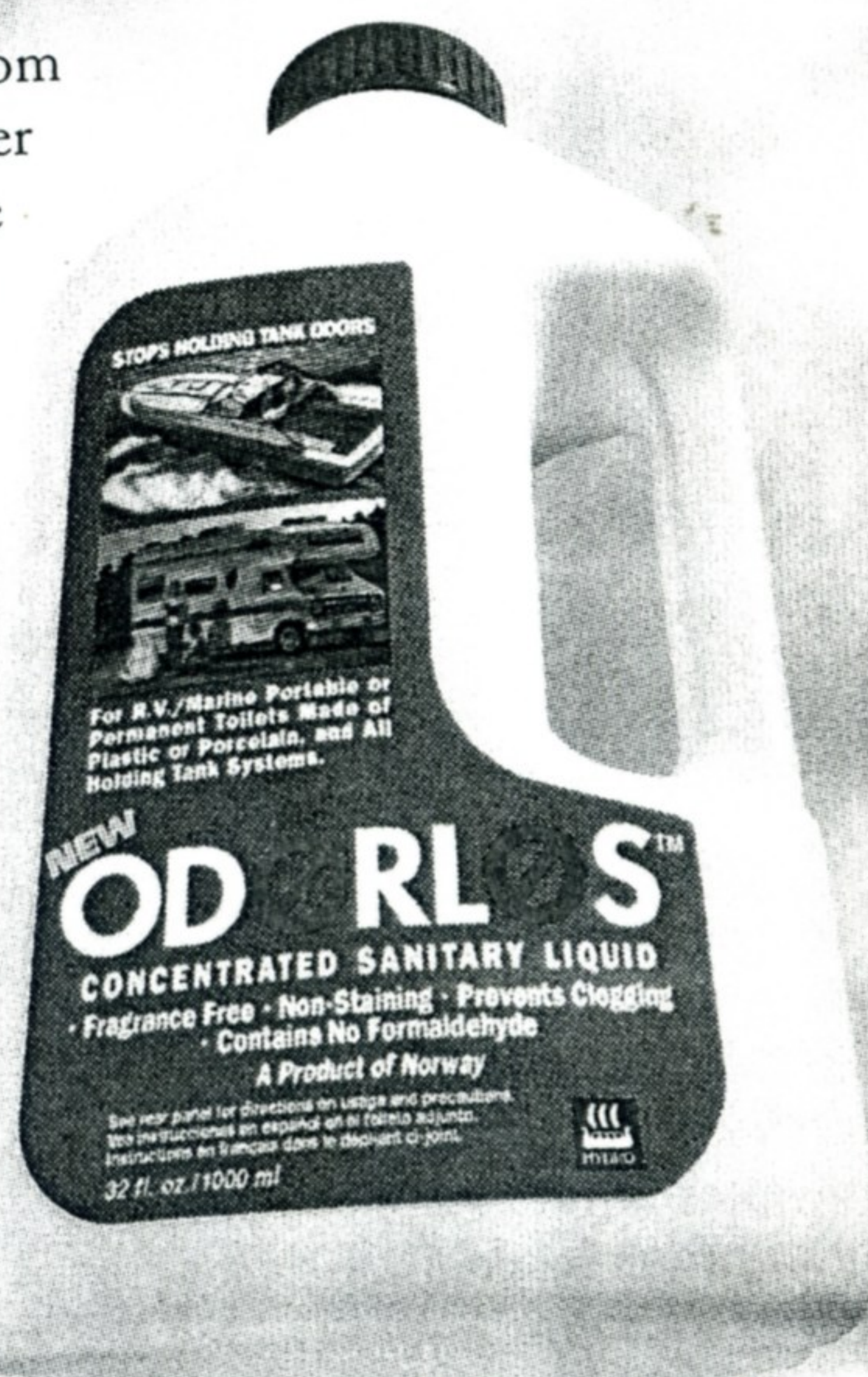


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CAMPING WORLD

Koreshan State Historic Site is an 'ideal' place to visit the past

■ JULIE HOTCHKISS



Pineapples were sold in the community store to provide income. The campground's secluded sites nestle among palms, pines and live oaks. Buildings such as Planetary Court—home of the seven women on the governing council of Koreshan—featured wooden cisterns outside, which stored water for the residents' use.



The founders of Koreshan wanted to live in a community where there was no crime, tobacco or drugs. Not a bad idea in 1894—or even a century later. Koreshan State Historic Site, south of Fort Myers, Florida, is where they settled. The old buildings mark the town where their belief in communal living and religious ideals were put into practice for more than 60 years.

In 1982, the last resident died, and the property was



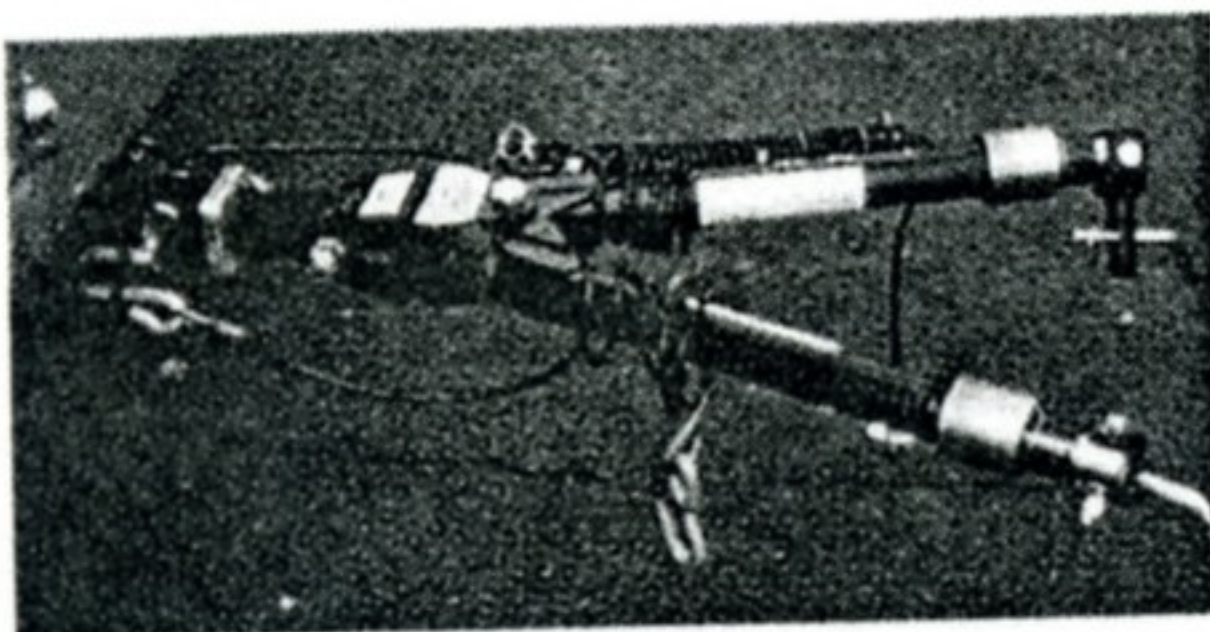
donated to the state of Florida. The buildings have been restored, so you can tour the grounds with a self-guided map, walk through the houses and imagine what life must have been like in this early utopia. Take a few days to relax—fish, hike, bike, canoe—and explore Koreshan.

The campground is just a short walk from the village, or you can rent a canoe and paddle

up the winding Estero River to Bamboo Landing, like the settlers did. There are 60 spaces, with electricity and water, neatly tucked into secluded sites amid the palmettos, pines

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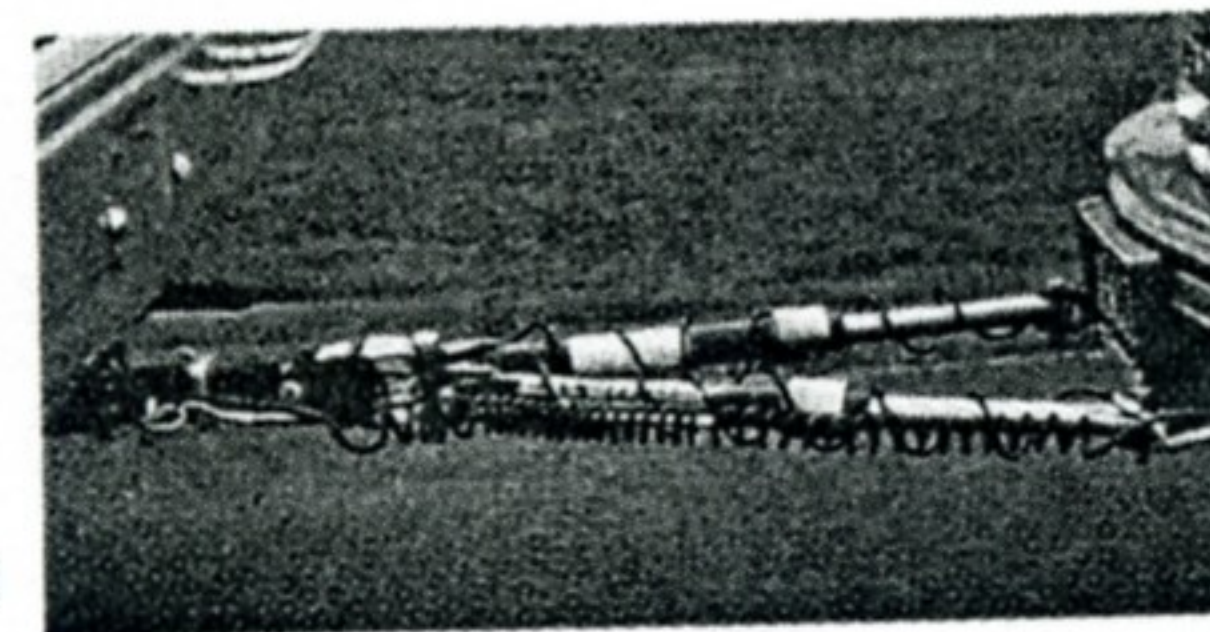
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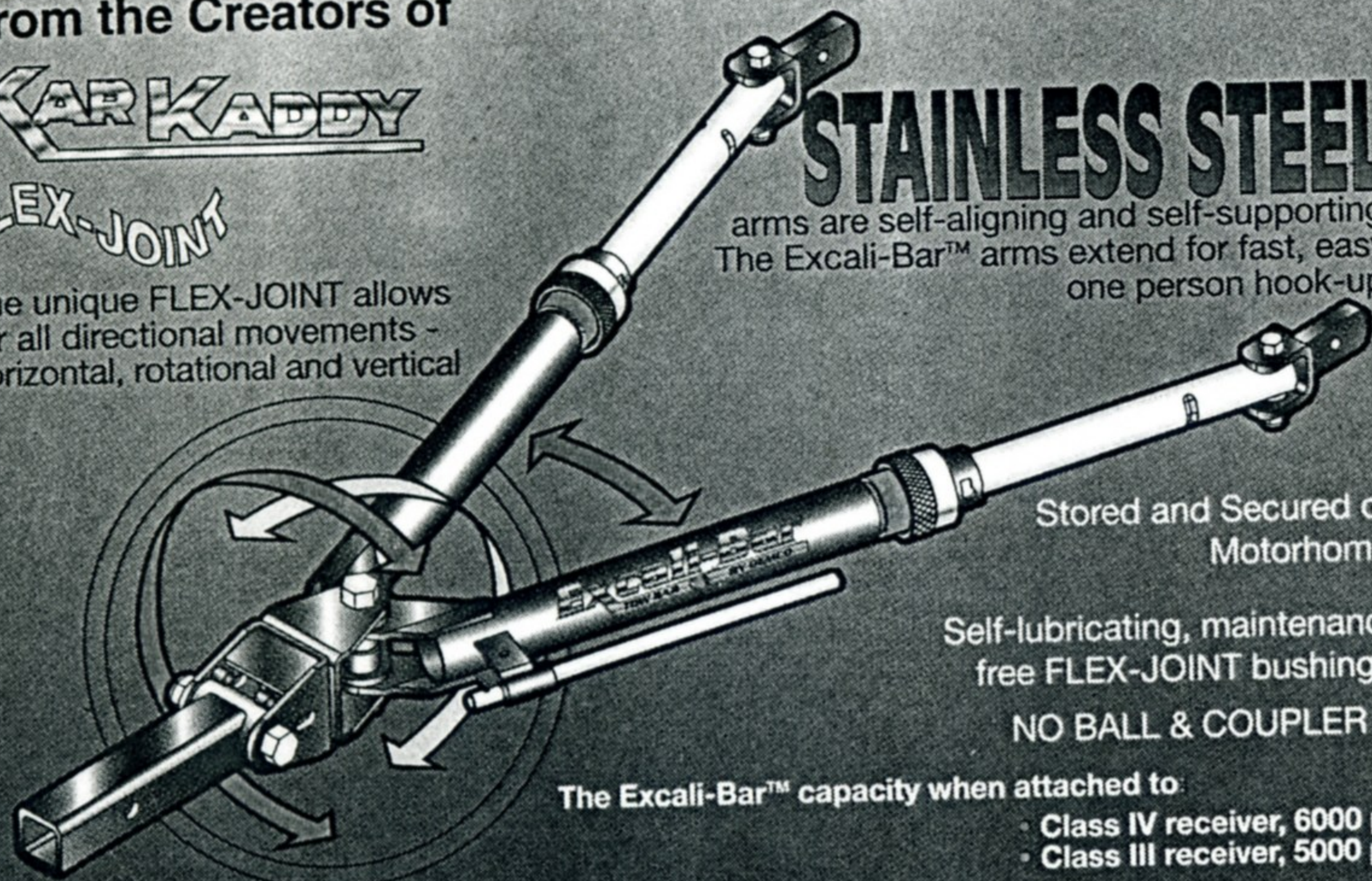
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and live oaks. You would be wise to make reservations if you plan to stay overnight during the Christmas holidays or the winter season, as it is a popular place. Half the spaces are on a first-come basis, but you have to be there early in the day.

Dr. Cyrus R. Teed came to Estero, Florida, from Chicago. Teed's "divine illumination" to found a "New Jerusalem" took him to this spot in 1893, and he returned with his group the following year. He believed everyone should work hard to lead a useful, happy and productive life, so he insisted on a good education with job training. Children went to school and learned a trade, while adults worked at various positions in the print shop, machine shed, boat works, farms, bakery or store. The Art Hall was the literary center for the community, hosting band concerts, plays, readings, literary discussions, art lessons, classical music and courses in higher mathematics to improve the mind.

Teed wanted to change the world through a peaceful revolution in the industrial system that would have its center in Koreshan. (*Koresh* means Cyrus in Hebrew; hence the name of the group.) Landscaping plans, with a variety of fruit and nut trees, duplicated the many kinds of plants in the Garden of Eden, as described in *Genesis*. Teed made contact with leading horticulturalists to exchange information and plants. His desire to bring in new plants made it a unique botanical treasure of beauty and diversity, which can still be enjoyed today.

Teed believed the world was inside out, and we are living on the inside. He went to great lengths to prove this theory and was obviously very convincing to some people. His many followers provided money to buy more than 7,000 acres, including an old Indian mound where Calusa Indians once had visions of a totally different world.

Seven women were the planets in the Planetary Court, where the governing council lived. Teed was the sun, Victoria Gratia the moon, and the planets revolved around them. Teed's idea of the solar system may

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