

Eagle's First Editor Spent Most of His Life at the Koreshan Estero Settlement

Allen H. Andrews, first editor of *The American Eagle*, came to Estero from Chicago in 1894. He was the son of Dr. and Mrs. A.W.K. Andrews, longtime friends and followers of Dr. Cyrus Teed, founder of the communal Koreshan Unity. Koreshan beliefs were based on early Christianity. The two medical men (Dr. Andrews was a graduate of the medical school at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor) met in Binghamton, NY about 1871. Dr. Andrews soon became a member of the Koreshan Unity and often provided Dr. Teed with needed funds to carry on his work.

The Andrews family moved from Binghamton to the Chicago Koreshan communal home shortly after it opened in 1888. The family included the doctor, his wife, Virginia and four children — Margaret, Annie Ray, James Dudley and Allen who was then about fifteen. In Chicago, Allen learned printing at the Koreshan Guiding Star Publishing House there and never lost his love of the trade. The publishing house was moved to Estero in 1903 when it was decided to consolidate all Koreshan activities at the Florida location. It was not surprising that young Andrews, in 1906, was chosen by his fellow members to edit the paper when they decided there was a need for a Koreshan paper. He remained as editor for more than 42 years.

Andrews loved music and played in the Koreshan band and orchestra. Both musical organizations played at Koreshan festivals and at the Art Hall. They also played at Fort Myers and other nearby towns. A dedicated follower of Dr. Teed, Andrews served as president of the Koreshan Unity board for 20 years until his retirement in 1948. His book, "A Yank Pioneer in Florida" — written after his retirement and now out of print, is an interesting personal narrative of Florida from 1894 until the late 40s. His stories begin with the Koreshans leaving Chicago in 1894 via train, traveling to Punta Gorda, then the end of the railroad, and proceeding to Estero by boat.

Published in 1905, Andrews' book is filled with personal anecdotes of Florida from its northern tier to Key West. A paper in the Koreshan Library/Museum archives notes the book was published in Jacksonville by Douglas Printing Company, owned by Julius and Edward Koester. Their parents, Charles Edward and Cora Koester, were Koreshans and lived at Estero.

Andrews was born in 1873 in Binghamton, NY and died at Estero in 1951. He is buried in the Koreshan Unity cemetery in a currently inaccessible area of the property.

Although the paper's first purpose was political, Andrews became interested in tropical horticulture, and by 1922 *The Eagle* was established as one of the best tropical horticulture papers in the U.S. It carried numerous articles by some of the era's best known tropical plantmen. Andrews had no formal training in botany but developed a wide knowledge of tropical flora through observation and visits to plant nurseries all over the State of Florida. What began as a "hobby" resulted in friendship with Dr. Henry Nehrling, a famous botanist then living in Naples, and Dr. David Fairchild of Miami. Fairchild, a plant introduction specialist, had traveled the world for the U.S. Department of Agriculture before settling in Miami in 1916 to be near his wife's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone. The Bells were regular winter visitors.

Dr. Nehrling's 2-volume "My Garden in Florida" — still a standard reference — was one of many horticulture papers and books published under Andrews' editorial direction.

In 1948, *The American Eagle* was awarded the first Thomas Balfour medal for outstanding service in the field of horticulture. It was presented to Andrews in ceremonies at Fairchild Garden in Miami by Mrs. Fairchild. Andrews was, according to contemporary accounts, "nearly six feet tall and weighed 190 pounds." His dark hair turned white in later years. "He dressed well, usually in dark business suits, and was known for his witty personality."