

AC-0097

naplesnews.com | Naples Daily News

[Front page](#) | [Local news](#) | [Weather](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Classified](#) | [Community](#)[Naples](#) | [Bonita](#) | [Marco](#) | [Florida](#) | [Sports](#) | [Business](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Neapolitan](#) | [Religion](#) | [Homes](#)

Bonita/Lee news

Koreshan Foundation to give artifacts to the state

Wednesday, August 5, 1998

By ERINN HUTKIN, Staff Writer

An agreement between the Koreshan Unity Foundation and Florida State Parks could result in changes that will allow the Koreshan State Historic Site's artifacts to stay the same.

Florida State Parks gained ownership of Koreshan settlement land near U.S. 41 in Estero to Florida State Parks in 1961, but the agreement did not include giving the state ownership of Koreshan artifacts kept on site.

Until now.

On Aug. 20, the foundation will give the state 900 Koreshan artifacts - everything from furniture to rugs, books to washboards, all circa the late 1800s. Although these items are already housed on site, the change in owners will allow the state to have more control of the artifacts. It will enable the state to undertake projects to help preserve the items and give the site the same flavor it had as a functioning Utopian settlement over a century ago.

Although the change agreement will be signed at an Aug. 20 ceremony in the site's Art Hall, trading owners has been a long time coming. According to Koreshan Unity Foundation President Jo Bigelow, the group offered to transfer ownership of the items to the state about five years ago. After going through "a lot of red tape," the agreement will be ready Aug. 20.

However, the state will not gain full ownership right away. The foundation will hand over ownership of the items, appraised at \$250,000, over the next six years.

Bigelow said she's confident about relinquishing ownership to the state and asks only that the new owner keep the artifacts on the settlement.



"That's where they are," she said. "That's where they belong. They make the settlement more valuable."

Jennifer Jerrett, Museum Education Program Specialist at the Koreshan State Historic Site, said the artifacts will not only stay on site, but she would like to see them properly maintained so they "last forever and ever." She also hopes some items currently in storage can be used for exhibitions.

Jerrett said doing these tasks was difficult in the past because the park did not own the artifacts. She said such a switch was precedent-setting.

"I can't say for certain if a (nonprofit agency and state agency) agreement has been done in the past, which is why this is so groundbreaking," she said. "This creates a real open door between the two organizations."

Florida State parks Cultural Resources Manager Steven Martin said funding for conservation projects could come from groups such as the Citizen's Support Organization or the Koreshan Unity Alliance, which raises funds for such projects.

The foundation will review the state's handling of the artifacts every two years of the six-year period and can break the agreement if the artifacts aren't being preserved properly, Martin said. He added, however, that the foundation can add to the pool of 900 artifacts over time.

The Koreshans came to the area from Chicago in 1894. Their Utopian society was located on the banks of the Estero River until the last Koreshan died in 1982. They came to Florida with the hope of escaping industrialization and were interested in art, drama and poetry. The settlement is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Feedback

Comments? Questions? Suggestions? E-mail the website crew at info@naplesnews.com. You can also use our [directory](#) to e-mail our staff directly. Or, express your opinion in a [letter to the editor](#).



Entire contents © 1998 Naples Daily News. All rights reserved.
Published in Naples, Florida. A [Scripps Howard](#) newspaper.