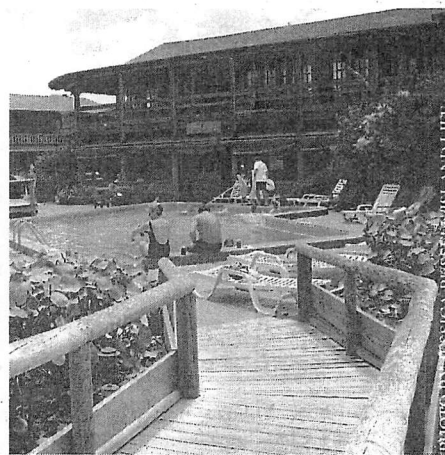


WALDO'S WORLD

Intriguing landmarks distinguish Vero Beach



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Mankind's relationship with architectural endeavors has symbolized the advent of societal

progress throughout history. From timeless, world-renowned entities like Egypt's Great Pyramids to the modernistic residential designs of legendary American stylist Frank Lloyd Wright, architecture should offer lifestyle functionality with artistic purpose.

Vero Beach's fabled Driftwood Inn, SR 60's enchanting Patio Restaurant, and the seaside Ocean Grill are three remarkable examples of classic structures set among the "characterless concrete" and often-uninspired edifices of prevailing culture. This is the endearing architecture of Waldo Sexton.

Indian River County pioneer Waldo Emerson Sexton (1885-1967) arrived in Vero Beach on Nov. 6, 1913. An unconventional visionary with seemingly endless reserves of creative energy, Sexton soon realized that Florida's "Treasure Coast" was an untapped agricultural bastion yearning for development.

Raised in Buzzard's Glory, Indiana, young Sexton and his siblings gained valuable knowledge of farming under the tutelage of their father, Isaac (1845-1915). Learning all aspects of the trade through comprehensive instruction and hard work, Sexton soon acquired a managerial position on O.C. Barber's Ohio dairy farm for \$125 per month.

Ironically, it was during Sexton's tenure at the successful ranch that he became fascinated with antiques, artwork, and the "finer things" in life. Barber carried himself with sophisticated dignity, and his mansion was filled with priceless artifacts, which Sexton quickly learned to appreciate. His "city manners" were polished among an exquisite collection of paintings, sculptures, and wood works.

Sexton's assiduous efforts helped "put Vero Beach

Waldo Sexton's architecturally interesting Driftwood Inn in the 1950s ... and now.

on the map." The entrepreneur was an accomplished businessman with multiple ventures, including both commercial and residential development, wildlife conservation, and real estate.

He established the Vero Beach Realty Co. in 1914, and immediately began contacting northern associates in search of investment capital. Consequently, hundreds of local acres were transformed from barren, mosquito-infested swamplands to useful, revenue-producing parcels. Sexton's instincts were correct, and his reveries of progress soon became tangible actualities.

The Driftwood Inn (circa 1934)

"...a carnival of sea fragments and castle of discarded used parts."

Known informally as the "Breezeway," the Driftwood's original building was a two-story, four-room dwelling with a downstairs, open-air patio facing the Atlantic. Constructed in part with oversized planks of cypress, the Driftwood would become one of the Southeast's most visually intriguing architectural statements. The guest suites were adorned with handmade wooden furniture designed and finished by Sexton himself. Fashioned with rich, imported mahoganies and

"...a carnival of sea fragments and castle of discarded used parts."

walnuts, the Driftwood's fixtures remain characteristic Sexton masterpieces.

After turning a \$500 profit in year one, the Driftwood was targeted for expansion in 1936.

Sexton and longtime friend/contractor Walter Sheil added four more rooms, and in 1938 the Driftwood matured with the addition of a south wing, bringing the total number of rooms to 14. Public-use amenities included a locker room, and the hotel was jam-packed with exotic, one-of-a-kind antiquities like wrought-iron sculptures, bells from Henry Flagler's "Key West Train," tables from infamous casino houses, and office appointments collected from "presidents, bishops, and swindlers."

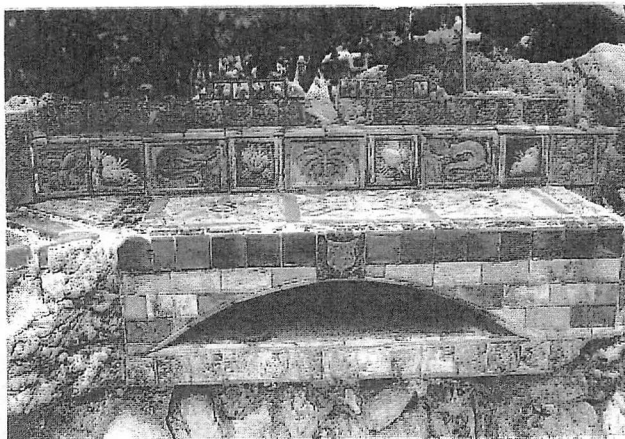
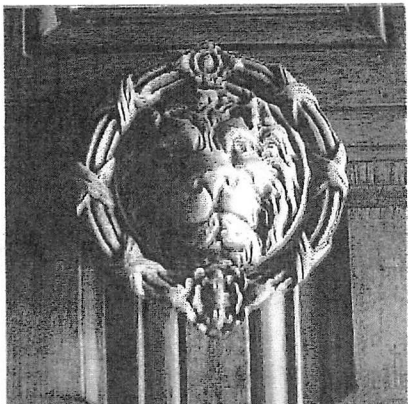
In 1947, the Driftwood rode the post-World War II wave of economic prosperity, upsizing once again to accommodate Florida's growing influx of tourism. Sexton added a restaurant to the resort (now called Waldo's), and guests were soon treated to dinner while seated at colossal wooden tables that measured 25 feet in length. An office and customer-friendly gift shop were added in the early 1950s, and the Driftwood's "back yard" was eventually finished with a swimming pool and studio apartments.

The Driftwood has persevered through rampant beachside development and inclement weather, generating more than \$2 million in revenue per year. It has been recognized by substantial publications like the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was listed in the National Registry of Historic Places in 1994. The Driftwood has played host to countless celebrities during its existence, providing solace for well-known individuals like Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Eddie Rickenbacker, and Leopold Stokowski.

The Driftwood Inn is located at 3150 Ocean Drive, Vero Beach. Call (772) 231-0550 for more information.

Please see **WALDO**, 9

Waldo FROM 8



Examples of some of the unique and visually stimulating details found throughout the property.

The Patio Restaurant (circa 1935)

Constructed to be a multi-use facility containing a fruit stand, gift shop, and real estate office, The Patio was often referred to as Sexton's "flea market," due to his use of the building as a warehouse for left over parts from dismantled projects.

By 1959, The Patio had become an open-air restaurant sporting hand-carved wood, wrought iron grillwork, and centuries-old ceramic tiles imported from France and Spain by renowned architect Addison Mizner. Sexton's hodgepodge of Patio building materials also included garage door sections from Palm Beach's Stotesbury estate (bar walls and east facade), and chandeliers from the homes of prominent families like the Rockefellers.

The Patio Restaurant is located at 1103 21st Street, Vero Beach. Call (772) 567-7215 for more information.

The Ocean Grill (circa 1941)

One of the finest restaurants on Florida's East Coast, Sexton's Ocean Grill was originally a beach-side hamburger and hot dog stand. With a "thrown together" appearance fabricated once again by wooden planks and other interesting "left over" items, the quaint café provides an unobstructed view of the rippling surf as it crashes ashore in a fury of crisp, salty



Waldo Sexton relaxes in his 'Flea Market' at the Patio in the 1960s.

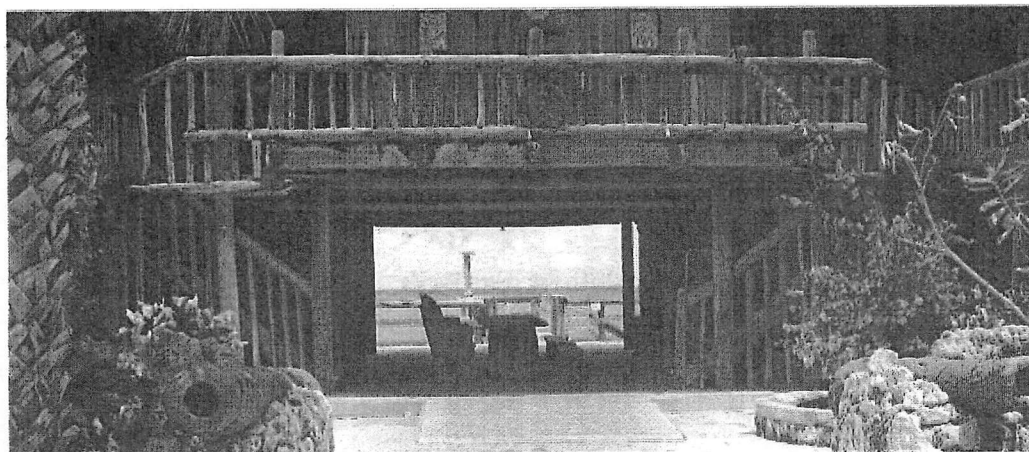
spray.

Guests have enjoyed gourmet food at the Ocean Grill for 50 years. Like the Driftwood, the intimacy of the building is augmented by Waldo's "treasure chest" of goodies. Tiffany lamps, retrospective paintings, complicated ironwork, and nautical artifacts decorate the main dining room, which proudly features the world's second largest round table. The enormous mahogany slab had once belonged to the president of the Philippines during the Spanish-American War.

The restaurant has thus far outlasted nature's wrath, refusing to succumb to constant beach erosion and violent hurricanes. It remains one of the area's busiest tourist destinations.

The Ocean Grill is located at 1050 Sexton Plaza. Call 231-5409 for more information.

Embrace the architectural gifts bestowed upon Indian River County by Waldo Sexton. A man whose understanding of Florida's economic potential was far ahead of its time, Sexton brought cattle, citrus, real estate, and tourism to Vero Beach. His decades-long exertions helped convert an undiscovered town into a viable community. His progressive architecture remains the signature of a resourceful thinker whose only direction was forward.



Driftwood Inn is located just steps from the Atlantic's crystal waters.