

TIMELINES

FRIENDS OF THE COLLIER COUNTY MUSEUM

JULY 1999

3301 Tamiami Trail East

Naples, Florida 34112

(941) 774-8476

Volume V, No.3

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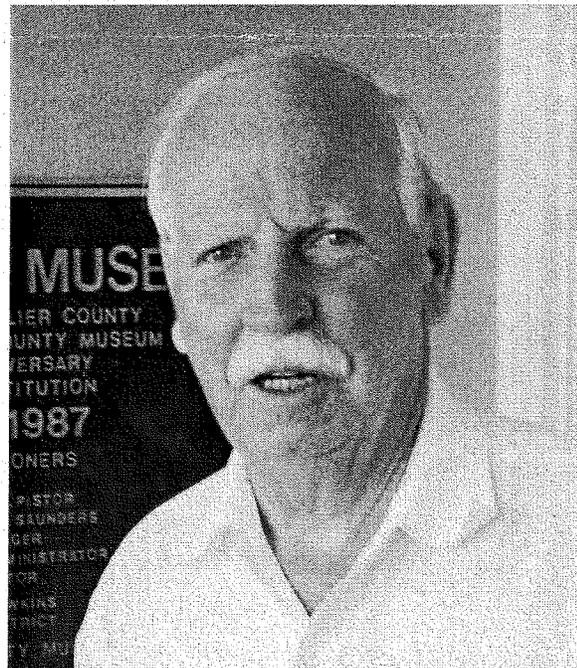
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Timelines is published quarterly by the Friends of the Collier County Museum
Editor: Arthur R. Lee

This is a special edition of *Timelines* to honor a man who has been a great benefactor to the Friends organization and to the Museum.

CHARLES BAIRD PRICE JR. 1920 1999



Naples has lost one of its firmest links to its beginnings, and the Collier County Museum and its support organization, the Friends of the Museum, a firm friend. Charles Baird Price Jr. died suddenly at his home in Louisville, Kentucky, July 14; he was 79. A memorial service was held there July 19.

The great grandson of Walter N. Haldeman, Naples' founder, Price, like many of his family for five generations, passed many of his winters here and on his retirement more than a decade ago made the preservation of its history a major interest.

A wartime artillery officer and a businessman, Price's interests took a practical turn. Naples historic showcase, the county museum, at the time he retired was inadequate and needed more space and a larger building, all of which required money. It was thanks in good part to his efforts that the necessary funds were raised, and that practical interest continued—only months ago he played a major role in the establishment of a designated endowment fund, a device to provide a continuing income for the museum.

Price was a native of Louisville and had retired as board chairman and chief executive of Booker-Price company, a furniture wholesale firm he had founded with a friend after 12 years in a hardware company, of which he was a director.

Please turn to Page Four, Column One

Charles Price Shares His Memories

Timelines had been running a series of features about officers and others important to the Friends of the Collier County Museum organization and Charlie Price's turn came with the winter editon of 1998. These are his words:

Although I was born in Louisville, Kentucky, my ties have long been to Naples. My mother was a Haldeman and for many years we spent our vacations in Naples in the house built by her grandfather. Those vacations were limited to the two or three weeks allowed my father and I was always reluctant to put on a suit and board the north-bound train.

My grandfather, Bruce Haldeman, was a fine quail hunter who owned some excellent dogs. I hunted with him and will never forget the large rattlesnake that I killed just where the third green of the Naples Beach Hotel golf course now is located.

On to Prep School

After eight years in a progressive grade school headed by a close friend of Eleanor Roosevelt, I spent two years in Louisville Male High School, a very large public school in town. Moving from a class of 21 to one in the hundreds was a challenge but I did well there until my father attended his 25th Yale reunion. His Yale friends advised him to send me east to prep school and so I went to Phillips Exeter Academy. It really was a shock but one that made a man of me . . . one determined to succeed against huge scholastic odds.

Success came and I sailed

into Yale for four good years. Graduating in June of 1941, I went straight into the US Army.

I had gone through Yale ROTC and as a newly-minted second lieutenant I went to the Field Artillery School at Fort Sill and from there to the First Armored Division at Fort Knox.

Some four years later, three of them in Tunisia and Italy, I came home a lieutenant colonel at age 25. Having spent so much time abroad, I had accumulated four months of "terminal leave" which I determined to spend in Naples.

Bachelor's Paradise

Naples in the spring of 1945 was a paradise for a young bachelor. Despite the heat (there was no air conditioning then) and the mosquitoes (there was no mosquito control) I loved it. I hunted quail, fished and swam. Snook and redfish literally played in the waves lapping the beach. John Pulling and I had a fish-catching contest on the Pier; I think we each caught five fish in five minutes, mostly jack but there were also mackerel runs, and mullet came down by the mile.

After a jaunt to Jamaica and Grand Cayman, I went back to Louisville to sell hardware for a large jobber. My territory was Tupelo, Mississippi, a town I loved. I spent four years there,

then back to headquarters to buy sporting goods. I spent 12 years at Belknap Hardware, eight as a director. In 1958 I joined a life-long friend to start a wholesale furniture company, the Booker-Price Company in which I spent 21 years before retiring

Raising a Family

Charlotte and I were married in 1950. We lived in Tupelo for a short time. A daughter, Ann, was born in 1951, followed by our son, Charles, in 1952 and daughter Liz in 1958. We now are proud grandparents of two teenagers, one in college and three sub teens. Ann and John Davis live near us in Louisville and Liz and her husband, Leonardo Diaz, live in Philadelphia.

Upon retirement, I came to spend more time in Naples. Curiosity about the city's past led me to Deed Book I at the Collier County courthouse. There I met Ron Jamro, our museum director. Impressed by his scholarship (Queen's college in Belfast and Trinity college in Dublin) I determined to help raise the funds to move the Museum building and to greatly enlarge its scope. Thanks to an enthusiastic and hard working board, I was successful on both counts and now can see the marvelous result: "the best kept secret in Naples."

The Haldeman Family of Naples A Community is Born—A Tradition Continues

In the foreword of a book* written by a friend, Charles Price's mother, Florence Haldeman Price, traces the founding of Naples to an 1885 sailing junket down the Gulf coast by her grandfather, Walter N. Haldeman, and friends, in the course of which the publisher of the Louisville *Courier-Journal* was enchanted by the charm of the land and its stretch of empty beach.

Another member of the boat's company was a fellow Kentuckian, General John S. Williams, nicknamed "Cerro Gordo" for Mexican war exploits, who is credited with having organized the trip; he was looking for land on which he could raise two crops of tobacco a year.

As noted by Ron Jamro and Gerald L. Lanterman in the book *The Founding of Naples* the land that interested General Williams and Publisher Haldeman had been brought into the commercial sphere in 1881 by Philadelphia entrepreneur Hamilton Diston and subsequently re-parceled. To exploit it, the Naples Town Improvement Company of Tallahassee was organized in 1886 and by 1887 its direction had fallen to Richard Goldsborough Robinson, a Kentuckian. General Williams that same year bought shares in the corporation along with a number of lots for himself and another 48 lots on the instruction of publisher Haldeman, who became a majority stockholder.

In October, 1887, the real estate firm underwent major reorganization under a board of directors dominated by a core of Louisville businessmen, including Haldeman, and paring its name down to "The Naples Company." By December the firm, with Haldeman directing much of the work, was prepared for full-scale building and development.

The following year, 1888, in a flurry of activity the company bought the steamship *Fearless* to provide communication with the outside world. By April a 20-room hotel was built; a post office was estab-

lished, streets were laid out, and a lavish sales brochure had come off the presses of Haldeman's *Courier-Journal*. Another product of that boom year was the construction of some private homes, including a tabby concrete cottage built on a lot owned by Haldeman—now restored and preserved as Palm Cottage. Capping the accomplishments of that strenuous year was the construction of a pier extending 600 feet into the gulf to accommodate sea-going vessels. The year was one of great accomplishment, but also of great expenses. To help finance construction Haldeman purchased more Naples Company stock and loaned it operating funds.

The following winter season saw the new hotel open to a capacity clientele, including Walter Haldeman with his wife, Elizabeth, daughter "Belle" and son William Birch. But lots were not selling as rapidly as had been hoped, and the need for rail service had become apparent—the line ended at Punta Gorda. Haldeman and 16 others began negotiations to extend it to Naples, but that goal was not reached until the 1920s, long after his demise.

Meanwhile, the piper had to be paid for the company's expenditures. Haldeman repeatedly made personal loans to satisfy creditors and matters were brought to a head when a creditor foreclosed on a \$3,000 loan. In desperation the directors resolved to sell the firm's assets at auction. At the sale January 30, 1890, Haldeman was the only bidder, in essence taking over the company's assets—including the town of Naples—in satisfaction of money he already had advanced in one form or another.

Walter Haldeman died in a street-car accident in Louisville in 1902. His two sons, William and Bruce, and their sister Isabel in 1913 joined with other investors to form the Naples Improvement Company, which resumed development under the leadership of Edward Crayton.

The relationship between the family and Naples has continued; members still make Naples their winter home and their interest has not flagged, witness Charles Baird Price Jr.'s contribution to its history and well-being. Of that his daughter, Liz Price, commented: "Charlie loved Naples from the time he was a little boy. His incredible curiosity and zest for life led him to be a great naturalist and historian of this area. He recognized that Naples would not stay the same and was willing to accept the tremendous changes that took place there during his lifetime. The museum was dear to his heart because it preserves the natural and cultural history of Naples for future generations. He was devoted to everyone who joined him in working so hard for its creation."

* *Peacocks Were Roasted and Mullet was Fried* by Doris Reynolds

A Genealogical Note:

The Haldeman-Prices

The founder: Walter N. Haldeman.

His children were: Willie, John, Isabel, Lizzie, and Bruce, who married Annie Milton and spent every winter in Naples after his retirement.

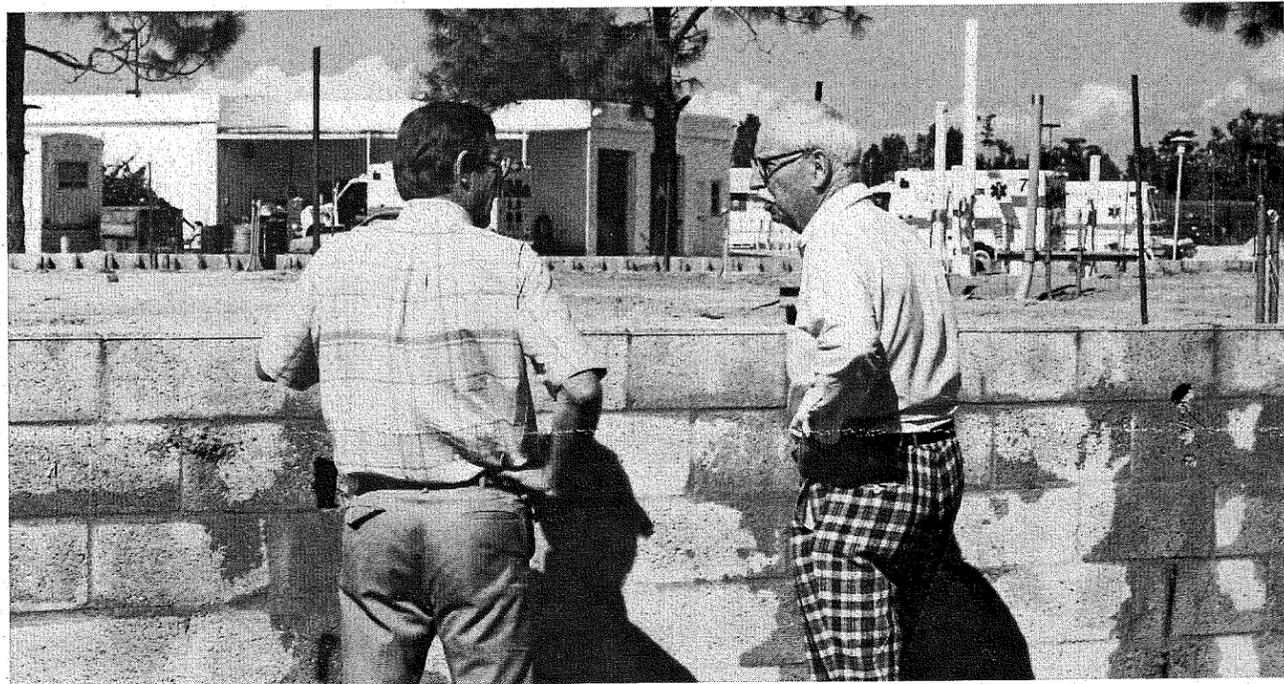
Bruce's children were Walter N. Haldeman II, Anne Bruce, Elizabeth, and Florence who married Charles B. Price and spent every winter in Naples.

Charles and Florence's children were Mrs. Hugh Cort Jr. of Huntsville, Alabama; Mrs. Sydney S. Combs of Naples, and Charles B. Price Jr., who married Charlotte Williams and wintered in Naples.

Charles Jr. and Charlotte's children are Elizabeth Price Diaz and Ann Price Davis who once calculated that of her first 24 years she had spent 17 winters in Naples.

Elizabeth and Ann have five children.

BUILDING ANEW TO SAVE THE PAST



Charles Price discusses progress of the new Museum building with then treasurer Gerald Lanterman of the Friends organization. Price provided not only inspiration but financial advice and impetus.

Charles B. Price Jr. (from Page One)

During World War II he earned a Bronze Star for service in Tunisia and Italy with the First Armored Division, retiring as a lieutenant colonel.

At his death he was the Founding Chairman of the board of the Friends of the Collier County Museum, and a member of the Collier County Historical Society. In Louisville service to civic organizations included being a director of the Cave Hill Cemetery, the Downtown YMCA, the Community Chest, the Jefferson County Park and Recreation Board, the Kentucky Division of the American Cancer Society, and Belknap, Inc. He had been president of the Louisville Country Club, and was a member of the Filson, Salamagundi and Speakeasy clubs.

Survivors include his wife, the former Charlotte Williams, who has been active in the Friends organization; his daughters Ann Price Davis and Elizabeth Price Diaz, five grandchildren and sisters Mrs. Sydney S. Combs of Naples and Mrs. Hugh Cort Jr., of Huntsville, Alabama.

he "will still be contributing"

Ron Jamro
Director of the Collier County Museum

A man who had been an enthusiastic winter visitor in the Collier County Museum vowed to me one day in 1984 that the next time he was in town he would do something about improving the Museum's cramped quarters. As was his nature, Charles Price kept his word and, as it turned out, transformed the Museum into an overnight success and made everyone increasingly aware of its great potential.

What the Museum needed most of all, he pointed out in an informal gathering of guests in 1985, was a public service auxiliary of concerned citizens—the Friends of the Museum—who would be willing to give their time and attention and spread the word about the Museum in the community. "That's great, Charles," they said, "You do it." He did, and less than a year later rallied together a nucleus of friends whose abilities,

talents and personal commitment would prove as valuable as a million dollar endowment.

Undaunted by the challenge and absolutely serious about what he was doing, as chief fund raiser Charles Price immediately began the uphill push that would forever change not only the physical state of the Museum, but also the public's view of it.

A true and generous giver, Charles Price knew that it was a rare day indeed in the life of a museum when all work is done. Quiet, kindly and always eager to share his nimble sense of humor or some nugget of long forgotten local history, he gave all of us a glimmer of what the Museum's future can be. As long as excited children and their families continue to walk its galleries and discover their heritage, Charles Price, my dear friend, will still be contributing.

Friends Remember a Lost Friend

*"we will
.. meet again"*

Ron Mangold, president,
Friends of the Collier County
Museum

It was November, 1993, at the Old Florida Festival when I first met Charlie Price. I'll never forget the first greeting he gave me: he made me feel like I was someone important. What I came to realize was that Charlie made everyone feel they were important, and the best part is that he meant every word.

There are times in our lives when we meet someone who makes an impact on who you are and what you do. Charlie Price was one of those people for me. I had recently retired and was looking for a way to "give something back," so I asked if I could volunteer at the Collier County Museum. Becoming a volunteer and joining the Friends of the Collier County Museum led me to the Old Florida Festival and meeting Charlie Price.

Charlie and I became very good friends. I found out how important the museum was to him, and through him the museum became important to me. We would meet at his condo or have lunch at the Yacht club and discuss ways to continue the success of the museum. If it was on a fishing trip to the Ten Thousand Islands or at dinner with our wives, Charlie and I would eventually discuss business. That was how the Friends of the Collier County Museum Endowment Fund came to be.

Charlie Price became a Dutch uncle to me. His stories about Naples never ceased to entertain me. He knew everyone and everything about them. He loved his wife Charlotte, his dog Caroline, his family and his friends. He loved life and lived it to the fullest, and in return he was loved by all of us. Some day we will meet again.

*"I Can Still
Smell His Cigar"*
Jack Lieber, construction
phase and current Friends
board member

I first became acquainted with Charlie Price when I became a member of the Founding Board of Directors of the Friends of the Collier County Museum in 1987. Through all those years Charlie was always there when we needed him. Just his presence was always reassuring. And then, there were those times when his presence helped temper and get us through our "in house" conflicts.

I last visited with Charlie days before he left for Kentucky this year. I was soliciting his counsel on a local history-related issue in which I was involved. He listened and I came away encouraged with the mission I was about to set out on. I can still smell his cigar as we reminisced about the years we had known together.

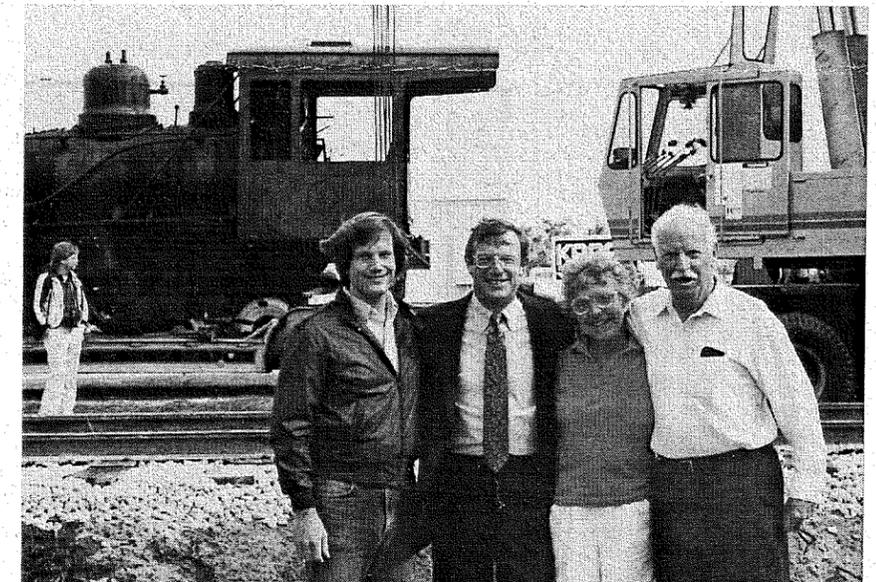
I am going to miss you, Charlie Price.

*"He Will Be
Greatly Missed"*

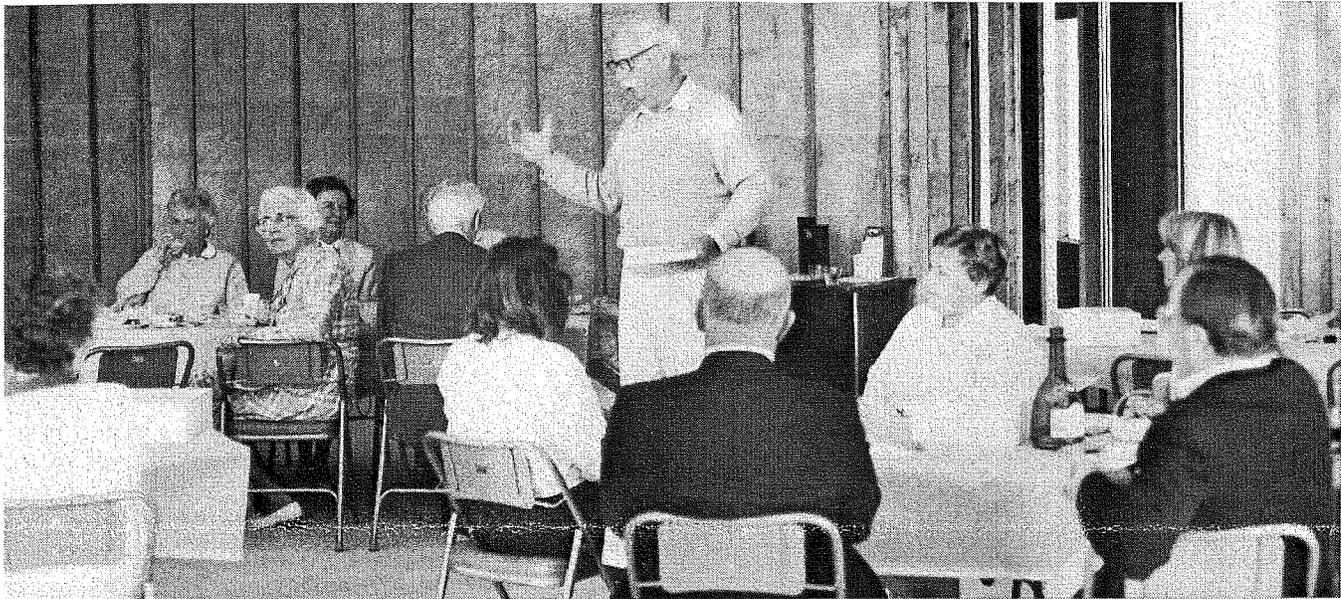
Acting President
Nancy J. Gibbs

Charlie was a true gentleman with a rare, positive energy and personality that made you feel comfortable, and made him captivating to listen to. It was evident he had the wisdom that comes from experience, and his guidance will be greatly missed by the Friends. Charlie cared about preserving the history of Naples for future generations, and gave his time and guidance generously to the museum for many years, most recently actively working to start the endowment for the Friends with the Community Foundation. His efforts have made a permanent mark on the museum, and he will be greatly missed. The Friends have lost a wonderful friend.

ANOTHER PHASE ACCOMPLISHED



Ron Jamro, Gerald Lanterman, Charlotte and Charlie Price celebrate the placement of a new exhibit—a logging days railroad engine



Charles Price, a businessman and former army officer, was a practical man; here he is addressing an early fund raiser in behalf of the program to build a new, larger, county museum.

Memorial Contributions

The Price family has requested that memorial donations be made for the benefit of the Collier County Museum. They should be made out to the Friends of the Collier County Museum.

The address is Post Office Box 2181, Naples, Florida, Zip Code 34106.



JUST THE FACTS



The COLLIER COUNTY MUSEUM

Address: 3301 Tamiami Trail E,
Naples, FL 34112
Hours: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.- Friday
Admission: FREE
Phone: (941) 774-8476 *FAX:* (941) 774-8580

The Museum is wheel chair accessible

The FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM

Monthly Meetings: Second Thursdays
Time: 6 p.m.
Place: Museum library
All members are welcome
Internet: www.colliermuseum.com
Address: P.O. Box 2181, Naples, FL 34106
Phone: (941) 774-8724

FRIENDS OF THE COLLIER COUNTY MUSEUM
P.O. Box 2181
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