

The Kenilworth Lodge

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Kenilworth's historic designation unveiled

By: Hope Cross - News-Sun Friday 26 January 2001

Sebring - The Kenilworth Lodge's addition to the National Register of Historic Places became official Jan. 19 with a bronze plaque unveiling ceremony hosted by the owners, Mark & Madge Stewart.



A crowd of nearly 300 gathered on the front porch of the Kenilworth Lodge Jan 19 to watch the bronze plaque unveiling ceremony officially marking the grand hotel on the National Register of Historic Places. The ceremony was hosted by owners, Mark and Madge Stewart of Sebring.

A crowd of nearly 300 supporters of Sebring's original grand hotel, gathered on the Kenilworth Lodge's front steps to witness history in the making. George Sebring (portrayed by Bill Farmer), the founder of the town, attended the ceremony with the honor of unveiling the plaque.

"I've been invited here today to reveal to you a marker - the significance of which you may or may not be aware. Mr. Mark Stewart and his wife, Madge Stewart, herself a student of history, pressed forward with the project to recognize the significance of this building," Sebring (Farmer) said. "The result is that the United States Department of the Interior has named - and worthily so - the Kenilworth Lodge to its prestigious National Register of Historic Places."

The Kenilworth Lodge was listed on the Register in June 2000, joining several other Highlands County buildings, one of which is The Hotel Jacaranda in Avon Park.

According to Madge Stewart, the Kenilworth Lodge was built in 1916, opening for its first season in the winter months. The hotel is equipped with 117 rooms in the main lodge and 440 windows, 90 percent of which still have their original

hand blown glass. There are 26 villas, apartments and cabana units directly behind the hotel along with a heated pool for guest use.

Throughout the years, the Stewarts and previous owners have put endless efforts into preserving the historic atmosphere of the 85-year-old hotel, the oldest standing in Highlands County. The Stewarts, taking over the ownership of the lodge from Tom, Jeri and Majori Wohl in 1996, plan to continue conversation through their efforts in the years to come.

The husband and wife team first became affiliated with the hotel when they went to work for the owners in 1985. In 1987 they went on to lease it and within 11 years they were the owners.

"The former owners knew we wanted to own the hotel; we had talked about it for years," Mark Stewart said. "They asked us if we would like the opportunity to purchase it and the timing was right."

Now that the Stewarts have reached their initial goal of owning the hotel, and have received the prestigious honor of being listed among the National Register of Historic Places, the owners plan to continue the preservation of the lodge and its history.

"I am very excited. I feel like the Kenilworth Lodge's history has been established," Madge Stewart said. "We just want now, to continue to improve the hotel and keep it maintained and make it a tourist Mecca."

For additional information about the history of the Kenilworth Lodge or to make reservations, call 863-385-9111, or visit it at 836 SE Lakeview Drive, Sebring, Florida



Madge Stewart, owner of Sebring's Kenilworth Lodge, welcomes nearly 300 guests to the bronze plaque unveiling ceremony

[Home](#)