

Historic Kenwood's Bungalow Fest to feature 12 homes

By Luis Perez, Times Staff Writer

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ST. PETERSBURG

Growing up in Kenwood in the 1950s, David McDaniel remembers a patch of farmland at Central Avenue and 34th Street where locals raised produce. Swamps were not far, beneath what is now Interstate 275, and screen doors on homes were for both air conditioning and security.

Most of those things are not part of today's Historic Kenwood. But some remain the same.

"People today are still friendly. You can still walk around the neighborhood and meet everyone," said McDaniel, who in 1950 was a year old when his father bought a Craftsman bungalow at 20th Street and Second Avenue N. McDaniel lives there today.

On Saturday, McDaniel and a handful of other longtime residents will give oral history presentations during the 11th annual Bungalow Fest tour of homes. Volunteers will record their stories as part of a history project organized by the Historic Kenwood Neighborhood Association. The association is looking for more people to provide accounts of the early days.

The festival celebrates the architectural legacy of a neighborhood that contains the largest number of Craftsman bungalows in the state and also is recognized as a national historic place. A goal of the event is to show people who might be interested in restoring a home how easily it can be done.

"We wanted to bring people into the neighborhood who cared about the architectural history and legacy of the place," said Bob Jeffrey, an association board member. "Our hope is that will encourage other people who may want to move into the neighborhood and help them realize that it's an attainable goal."

Bounded by First and Ninth avenues N, 34th Street and I-275, the neighborhood was developed in 1912 by Charles Hall, who also founded Lakewood Estates. About 170 of the bungalows there were transplanted from other parts of the city.

Will Michaels, president of St. Petersburg Preservation, will give a talk about the area's history at Seminole Park at 10 a.m. Saturday. Michaels noted that Kenwood has gone through a renaissance in recent years, with new homeowners who restored hundreds of homes to their original architectural splendor.

"You have folks who have moved in and have given these homes tender loving care," Michaels said. "It speaks to the endurance of not only that neighborhood but also the bungalow style of homes there."

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David McDaniel, who will give a history talk Saturday, stands in Kerwood's Seminole Park. He lives in the bungalow his father bought in 1950.