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► **Local & State** - January 27, 2005

## Profile: The Koreshan's Daughter

Published by **news-press.com** on January 23, 2005

• Name: Lorraine Norman

• Age: 79

• Born: In a little house on Palm Beach Boulevard in east Fort Myers.

• Ties to the past: Grandfather Ulysses Grant Morrow was the Koreshan who invented the rectilineator, a device sect members used to "prove" that humans inhabit a hollow globe.

• Favorite place: Anywhere near the Caloosahatchee River.

Though her grandfather was one of the cornerstones of Estero's Koreshan community, most of what Lorraine Norman learned about the utopian group came from her own research as an adult.

Small with the bright-eyed intensity of a starling, Norman extracts a photo of a mustachioed, bow-tied man from a sepia-toned stack.

"My grandfather, Ulysses Grant Morrow, was a very busy little man — very educated. Interesting, too. He typed everything in purple ink. He called himself a geodetic engineer," she says. "He also worked as a newspaper writer and editor, as well as an inventor and poet and he received his Ph.D. from the College of Higher Science in Chicago, which is where he met up with Cyrus Teed," Norman says with a smile and a sigh.

A charismatic visionary determined to build a New Jerusalem on the banks of the Estero River, Teed called himself Koresh — Hebrew for Cyrus — and preached that the Earth is a 7,000-mile diameter hollow sphere and that all living things inhabit its inner surface.

Morrow believed that, too — and he offered Teed the means to "prove" it. Morrow designed a huge implement he called the rectilineator. The Koreshans, who had moved from Chicago to Estero in 1894, contracted with the Pullman company to produce it. Disciples hauled the device to Naples Beach and set it up along the Gulf in 1897, so they could document the Earth's hollow nature.

Morrow lived in Estero for about a decade more; his son, Harry (Norman's father) was born in 1889.

"He used to say when the bears roared in the woods at night, that the dogs just trembled," Norman says.

Morrow and Teed had a falling-out around 1907, and Morrow packed up his family and left. He spent the rest of his life teaching, writing and editing newspapers and died in New Orleans.



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His son returned to Florida and worked as a fishing guide. But beyond occasional recollections, he didn't talk much about his Koreshan childhood.

"One reason is because Mother disapproved of it. She always just called them 'those people down in Estero.' Plus, she was a neat housekeeper and she tossed a lot of his things, his father's papers," Norman says.

Norman grew up in east Fort Myers, married and had a daughter and three sons. She spent most of her professional life in banking in trust and commercial loans but when she retired, she went to work for the Koreshan library in Estero — the private remnant of the original Koreshan group.

For five years, Norman worked as a writer, tour guide and general assistant, reading everything she could about the group and filling in the gaps of her knowledge about her grandfather.

"The Koreshans were immensely advanced in what was at the time, really a frontier area. They were so well-educated; they had electricity before Fort Myers did, they put on classical music concerts and plays that people would come from all over to see. They had a huge printing press, a commercial laundry, a bakery and a store — it was amazing."

Norman realizes Koreshan beliefs may sound bizarre today. But in many ways, they were progressive, offering women and blacks more power and influence than they could ever have in society at large.

"Plus they were good people — good, moral people who believed in what they were doing."

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