

2004 AWARDS COMPETITION WINNERS



# Heaviest Structure Moved On Rubber-Tired Dollies



**Flint and Doyle, Inc.**  
Fort Myers, Florida



Larry Cline

The Kingston-Langford Mansion, built in 1919, has architectural characteristics of the Chicago Bungalow Style commonly seen in works by famed Chicago architect Frank Lloyd Wright. The Mansion includes a large front porch with massive supports, a front stoop and an impressive grand staircase. Construction is mostly brick. Interior features include pre-cast ornaments, fireplaces, wrap-around porches, marble staircases, elevated and

coffered ceiling, oak flooring and original tile in the bathrooms and kitchen. The Fort Myers News-Press reported in 1919 the house was the most substantial house ever built in Ft. Myers. The original owner and builder was a bank president in Ft. Myers but died one year after the structure was completed. The next owner George Kingston invented the carburetor for Henry Ford's Model T engine who had a winter residence in Ft. Myers,



*Dignitaries, galore break ground for the new foundation for the Mansion.*

next door to another famous inventor, Thomas Edison.

The First Methodist Church of Ft. Myers purchased the house in 1953, ceased occupancy in 1996 and wanted the building removed from the property. For six years, however, church members disagreed over disposition of the structure. Some members wanted the house demolished while other members wanted the building to remain in its original location for historical significance. When the Methodist Church applied for a demolition permit, court injunctions filed to stop demolition of the house by some members of the congregation created another three-years delay. In an effort to resolve the issue a representative of Flint and Doyle, Inc., a local structural moving company, contacted a church member about the possibility of moving the structure, thereby saving the building for pos-



*Even though much clearing was required before the structure could be moved, the trip was a short one—just across the street.*



*Architectural characteristics similar to works by Frank Lloyd Wright.*

terity. This incident was blamed for yet another three-years delay during which some members moved membership to alternate locations of worship. The members remaining agreed to give the structure to any third party who would assume obligation for removing the building without cost to the church. Problem solved? Not really.

Once news of the decision reached the streets in Ft Myers Flint and Doyle, Inc. received multiple calls, many of which held a naive belief the 5,000 square-foot solid brick house could be moved as easily as driving a truck down the street. Their hopes and dreams of owning a historic mansion were quickly shattered when told the cost for such a move and that the structure could be relocated to only one place – across the street – no exceptions. Two legitimate prospects emerged. The reality of costs for relocating the building and restor-

ing it to its original condition proved to be too much for an individual.

One morning in 2003 Flint and Doyle, Inc. president Thomas F. Doyle, III sat down at a breakfast with Ft. Myers Mayor Jim Humphrey to discuss relocation of the mansion. Doyle suggested the city move the building for historical purposes directly across the street from another historical home the city owned and that the two buildings be used for public events. Mayor Humphrey agreed. The city applied for a grant from the State of Florida and a local historical preservation association, Lee Trust, and received ...

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*Non-use and no maintenance for eight years left foliage to find its own way. Cracks in walls were evident in several locations.*