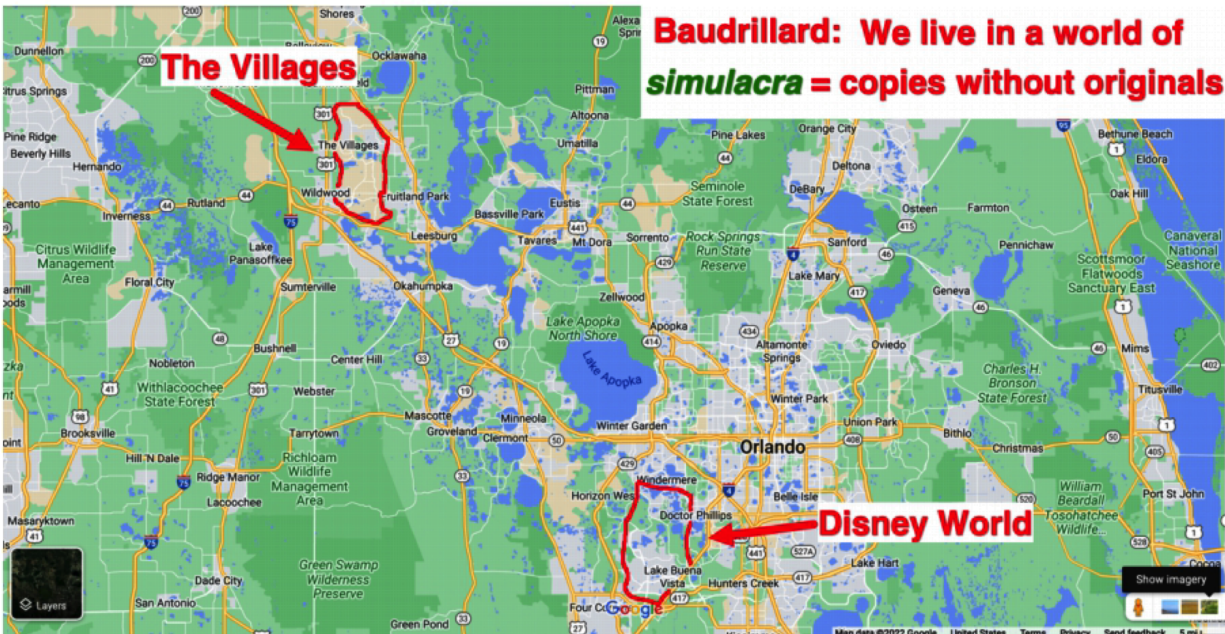


# The Villages, Florida

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Villages,\\_Florida](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Villages,_Florida)



"The Villages is a 55+ community made up of a collection of quaint neighborhoods located in the heart of Central Florida. We're nestled between two beautiful coastlines, ports of travel, and theme parks. The Villages is a fun, affordable community where everything you can possibly ever want, need, or dream of is only a golf car ride away. The Villages is designated the #1 Master Planned community in the nation."

<https://www.thevillages.com/faq/>

"What became The Villages was gradually built up between the early 1970s and the early 1990s. In 1992 the development was officially named "The Villages" and is under the control of the descendants of its original developers Harold Schwartz & H. Gary Morse (Schwartz' son). In the 2020 census, 79,077 people lived in The Villages and the racial/ethnic makeup of The Villages included 75,374 (95.32%) Whites, 525 (0.66%) Black/African Americans, 616 (0.78%) Asians, and 1,410 (1.78%) Hispanic/Latinos of any race. Over 16% of its population are military veterans.

**Fictitious historical markers and architectural details provide an atmosphere for the residents. One historian wrote, "The Villages' faux history gives a patina of stability and continuity to a highly volatile region and stage of life." Many plaques represent the "downtown areas" as if events derived from notions of an idyllic small town in the 1800s had occurred there. Such "American myths" feature in the designs for Brownwood, Lake Sumter Landing, and Spanish Springs.** [Wikipedia]

Illustrations below from Brian, Amanda M. (2014). The faux history of The Villages, Florida. *Southern Cultures*. 20(4): 58–71. <https://doi.org/10.1353/scu.2014.003>

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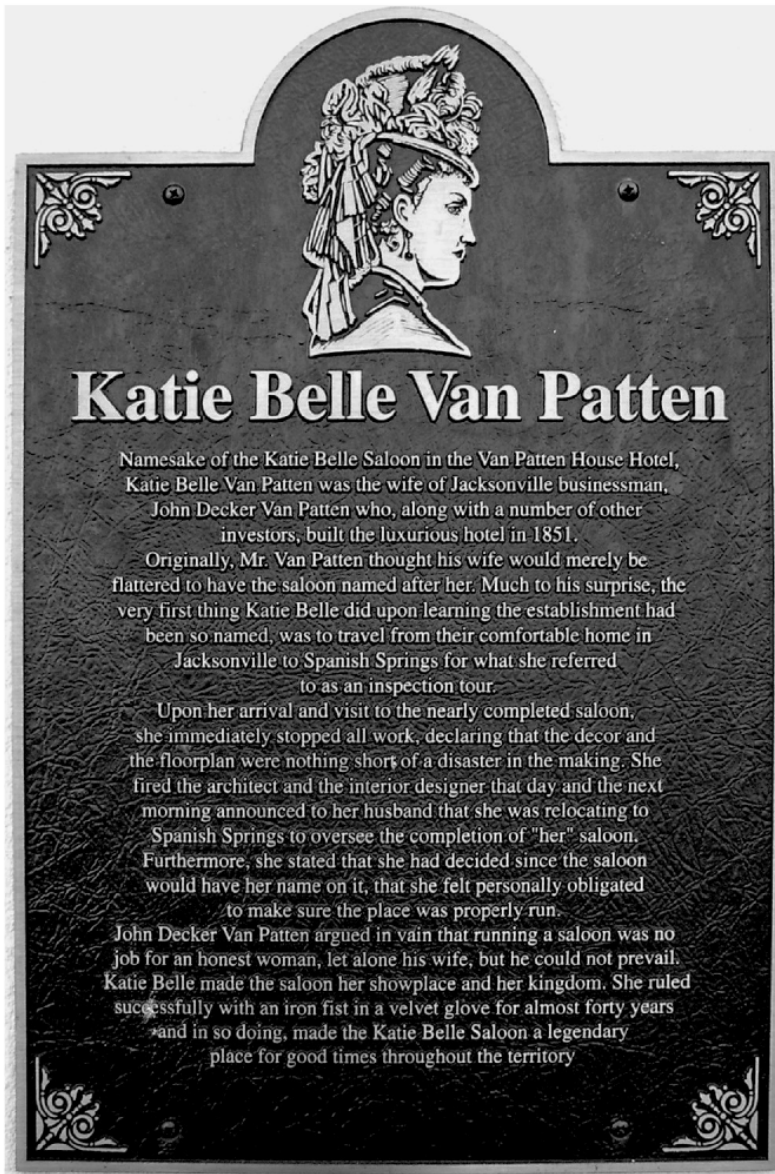
## The Faux History of The Villages, Florida

by Amanda M. Brian



*The Villages was born out of Florida's population boom following World War II and catered to numerous coming-of-old-age Americans. Having created and promoted its own historical fiction that wiped the past away, it now exists in stark contrast to other southern cities like Charleston and New Orleans, which were revived and remarketed—not created from scratch—by historical preservation projects in the late twentieth century. The building that houses a Kilwin's Chocolate chain and a collectibles store is labeled the "Cattlemen's Association of Spanish Springs," complete with a prominent "Est. 1868" sign. All photos courtesy of the author, December 2010.*

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*Van Patten is the invented namesake of Katie Belle's, a nightclub for residents of The Villages. According to its sign, the Katie Belle's building has been a "legendary place for good times throughout the territory."*



*A “reminder of a bygone era,” the downtown’s plaques decorate pastel-colored buildings that include an ersatz tavern, bank, schoolhouse, general store, playhouse, fire station, barberdshery, lighthouse, boarding house, hotel, and bait and tackle shop. These elements collectively produce the supposed quintessential small town, albeit without signage for a city hall, courthouse, or jail.*



*Research on tourism has shown that people are drawn to places with history, particularly a well crafted and easily delivered story. To appeal to older Americans seeking leisure in retirement, The Villages’ developers tapped into such desires. But to do so they did not preserve the local past; they obliterated it. In its place, they offered entertainment: amusingly told stories and aesthetically pleasing remains with generic geographic references.*