



Quality of Life

Yes, on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Grass Lawn: Building Blocks of Beauty

On January 14, 2009, a hopeful crowd stood among building blocks and oak trees to celebrate the return of Grass Lawn, a historic beachfront home in Gulfport, Mississippi that was swept away by Hurricane Katrina. For several decades prior to the storm, Grass Lawn served as a favored spot for weddings, receptions and other celebrations. Three years after it was destroyed, the Gulfport City Council announced approval for the rebuilding of the house to its original design. The new Grass Lawn will be constructed using funding from insurance money, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and FEMA, totaling just over \$1.6 million.

Grass Lawn began in 1836 as a summer home for Dr. Hiram A. Roberts, a Louisiana resident and surgeon. The 235-acre property was subdivided in 1905 and purchased by John Kennedy Milner, who eventually became the owner of Coast Coca-Cola Bottling Company. In 1972, Grass Lawn was placed on the National Register of Historic Places, and then bought by the City of Gulfport in 1973.

Antebellum in design and layout, Grass Lawn served as a popular venue for entertaining. All 3,200 square feet will be rebuilt exactly as they were before the storm. The interior of the mansion included three 20-by-20 foot rooms on each of the two floors. The mantels in both rooms on the west side were made of white marble, while those in the east rooms of black marble. This identical configuration lent an air of seamless uniformity and elegance to the interior, while the exterior was punctuated with columns encasing the structure. The house was further complemented by the surrounding acres of orchards, gardens and oak trees.

Grass Lawn once stood as a beacon of history and splendor; its new foundation now represents hope for future growth and grandeur along the Gulf Coast. The anticipated date of completion is late summer of 2009.



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