

# I'On's Founding Ceremony—April 30, 1995

I'On was founded on April 30, 1995 at about 8:30 in the morning when Vince Graham and other participants in the planning "charette" traveled from Charleston to the vicinity of Shelmore Point. They walked into the marsh somewhat to the South and West of the Creek Club where they prepared a mixture of soil from surrounding communities. Some material indicates wine, seawater and milk were also included.. They anointed each other with this mixture and committed themselves to the creation of a community radically different from anything being built in the area. A prayer and literary readings were presented while standing in the marsh. While the ceremony was unusual, I'On was one of only a handful of New Urbanist Traditional Neighborhood Developments planned in the United States at the time and this ceremony was conceived as a conscious beginning of our community. Places like I'On were regarded as impractical and few of the existing TNDs had been around long enough to demonstrate such ideas could actually still work.

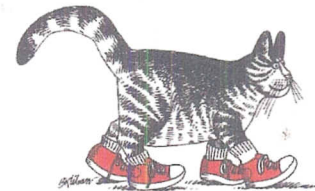
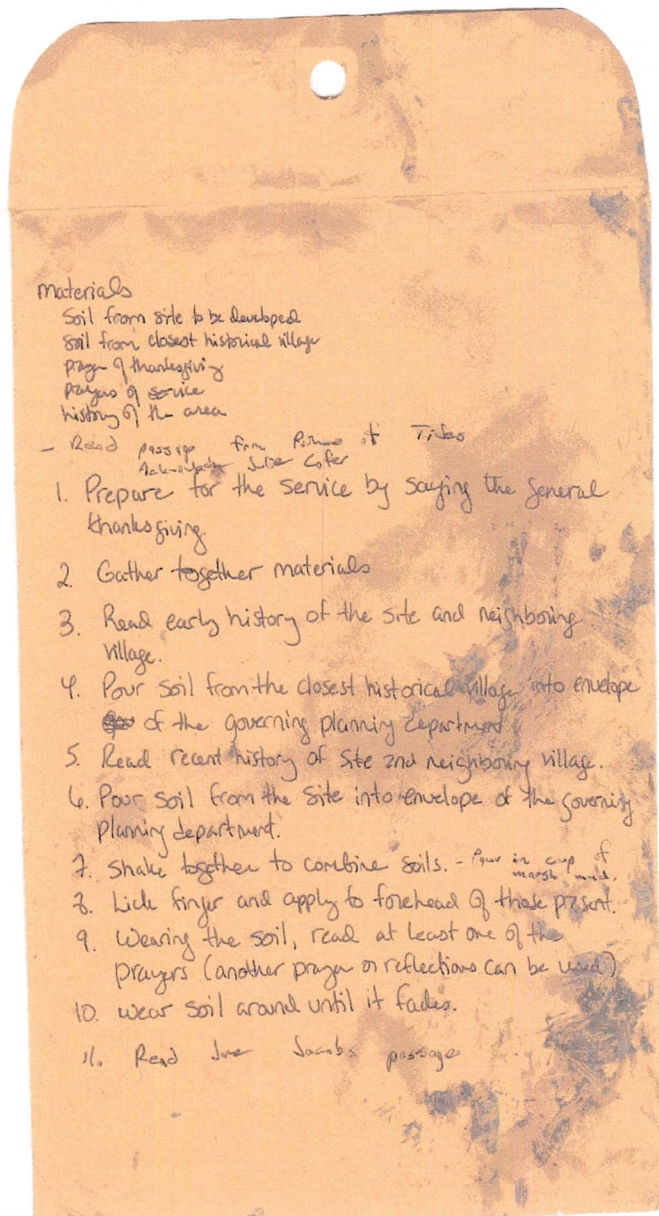
It is important to understand that on that date I'On was a collection of neglected fields dotted with piles of rusting equipment and junk and two large, muddy lakes. Thus this moment is a visionary commitment to the possibilities of our community.



Left— the program for the ceremony was written on the front of an envelope used to mix the soils which still shows stains from the pluff mud.

Below— Words from Author and Critic Jane Jacobs read at ceremony.

Both from the files of The I'On Company courtesy of Vince Graham.



A city cannot be a work of art. We need art, in the arrangements of cities as well as in other realms of life, to help explain life to us, to show us meanings, to illuminate the relationship between the life that each quest embodies and the life outside us. We need art most, perhaps to rescue us of our own humanity. However, although art and life are interwoven, they are not the same things. Confusion between them is, in part, why efforts at city design are so ~~set~~ disappointing.... To approach a city, or even a city neighborhood, as if it were a larger architectural problem capable of being given order by converting it into a disciplined work of art, is to make the mistake of attempting to substitute art for life.... Instead of attempting to substitute art for life, city designers should return to a strategy ~~enriching~~ both to art and to life: a strategy of illuminating and clarifying life and helping to explain to us its meanings and order.

Jane Jacobs  
 The Death and Life of Great American Cities



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Prayers (Suggested)

Almighty God, whose loving hand nurtures us all that we possess; Grant us grace that we may honor you with our substance, and remembering the account which we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of thy bounty; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Lord Christ, when you came among us, you proclaimed the Kingdom of God in villages, towns and lonely places: Grant that your presence and power may be known throughout this land. Have mercy upon all of us who live and work in rural areas especially the Graham tract; and grant that all the people of our Nation may give thanks to you for food and drink and all other bodily necessities of life, respect those who labor to produce them, and honor the land and water from which these good things come. All this we ask in your holy Name. Amen

Almighty God, in giving us dominion over things on earth, you made us fellow workers in your creation: Give us wisdom and reverence so to use the resources of nature, that no one may suffer from our abuse of them, and that generations yet to come may continue to praise you for your bounty; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.  
in your name we pray

Left- Prayers read at ceremony. The third (checked) is believed to be the one used.



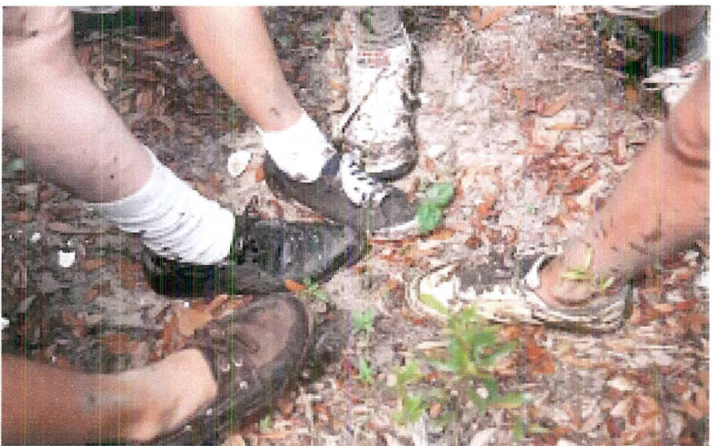
Ceremony Participants standing in the Marsh. Among the books read from was the Prince of Tides by Pat Conroy.



Some watched from high ground. Nationally acclaimed planner Andres Duane is shown in this group. Much of the basic plan for I'On was developed by his firm. Apparently at this moment the group has realized those in the marsh are sinking in the soft mud. Below, the mud stained shoes.



Left, Mixing the Materials, envelope and note on page one are visible.



Captions and commentary by William Hamilton