

Did You Know...



House of Refuge No. 3

To provide shelter for shipwrecked seamen along the desolate Florida east coast, the U.S. Life Saving Services constructed five houses of refuge on the Atlantic coast of Florida in 1876. The House of Refuge No. 3, known locally as the Orange Grove House of Refuge because of a nearby old sour orange grove, was constructed on the beach just north of present day Atlantic Avenue and A1A. The first keeper (1876-1877) of the refuge was Hannibal D. Pierce. His daughter Lillie would be born in 1876 at the house of refuge. Englishman Stephen N. Andrews took over as the second and last keeper (1877-1898). Andrews' wife, Annie, served from 1888-1892 as post mistress of the Zion Post

Office located at the refuge. In 1898, after two decades as keeper of the Orange Grove House of Refuge, Andrews left to be with his family at Lemon City to the south. The house was closed and in 1927 it burned to the ground. A Florida State historical marker now stands in the area where the house once stood.

West Settlers Historic District

The following is a transcription of the Florida State historical marker located at NW 4th Avenue and NW 2nd Street. A second marker, with different text, is located at NW 5th Avenue, approximately 50 feet north of the intersection of NW 5th Avenue and Atlantic Avenue. The markers were dedicated in 2009.

The West Settlers community, established in 1894 as Delray Beach's first African-American community, was self-sufficient with commercial buildings and churches serving its residents. Originally N Blackmer Street, NW 5th Avenue was the hub of business and social activities. The building at the northwest corner of NW 1st Street and NW 5th Avenue was known as "The Fountainette" and contained a soda fountain, doctor's offices, and a pharmacy. The pharmacy, run by Dr. Simon Barnes, was the only one to serve the African-American community. The former residence of Delray's most prominent black educator and community leader, Solomon D. Spady, is located at 170 NW 5th Avenue. The circa 1926 Mission Revival structure is now a museum primarily dedicated to African-American history. One of the community's earliest builders was William Robinson who developed the property at 315-317 NW 1st Street for his wife, Essie, in 1902. The Robinson homestead, one of the first in the area to have electricity, running water, and a telephone, was designated an official Red Cross hurricane shelter in the 1940s. In 1997, the community was locally designated the West Settlers Historic District.



The History behind the Name:

Lake Ida: William S. Linton named this lake after his wife Ida.

Linton Boulevard: Named after William S. Linton, founder of the city. Delray Beach was once named Linton but was later renamed Delray Beach.

Pompey Park: Named in honor of C. Spencer Pompey, prominent African American educator, football coach, civil rights activist, and former president of the local NAACP chapter, and co-founder of the Palm Beach County Teachers Association.

Catherine Strong Splash Park: This park is named for Delray Beach's first female mayor (1955). She also served as council woman in 1955, 1956, and 1957 and was city clerk before running for city council.

Swinton Avenue: This major thoroughfare in downtown Delray Beach is named after David Swinton of Saginaw, Michigan. Swinton came to Florida in 1895 with William Linton to purchase land that would become Delray Beach.