The Jewel of Florida's East Coast... A Tour of Historic Flagler Beach

Sun, sand, and water are the key ingredients in the creation of the historic City of Flagler Beach.

The history of Flagler Beach is synonymous with Florida folklore. Small towns born in the late 1800s and early 1900s are full of stories of hurricanes damaging waterfront communities, only to be rebuilt due to the prevailing pioneering spirit of the local residents. The City of Flagler Beach is familiar with such setbacks but has managed to survive, along with many of the descendants of the founding families: Moody, Upson, Wickline, Fuquay and Holden. These are just some of the families that were among those instrumental in the development of the region.

Today as visitors travel eastward on Moody Boulevard, they can't help but catch their breath as they look out on the Atlantic Ocean, the beach, and the small seaside community that was founded nearly 100 years ago. As you arrive, you immediately have a sense of stepping back in time. One resident of the community described it clearly, "…when I was looking for a place to relocate and came to Flagler Beach, it was as if it was the 1950s all over again and reminded me of my childhood vacations in Florida."

The history of this area, now named Flagler Beach, began in 1909 when Issac I. Moody and J.F. Lambert formed the Bunnell Development Company and started selling parcels of land, often through the mail, to families seeking a new beginning.

In 1913, A.V. Wickline and his family settled on the mainland, west of today's Intracoastal Waterway. They built a house and a general store, which also housed both the first post office and a library. Mrs. Wickline became the first postmistress in 1915 and the family helped operate the ferry that crossed to the barrier island. They later moved to the island and opened another general store.

Also in 1913, George Moody applied to homestead 169 acres on the island, east of today's Intracoastal Waterway. He had a vision of a beach resort so he subdivided his "Ocean City Beach" property and energetically pursued his dream. Mr. Moody built the first house on the beach in 1914 and built the Casino in 1916. The Casino became "the" place to go in Ocean City Beach. When Ocean City Beach applied for a new postal permit, they were told there was already an Ocean City, New Jersey and an Ocean City, Maryland, and that another one would not be accepted. In 1925, the city was instead incorporated as Flagler Beach, in honor of Henry Flagler, and George Moody became the first mayor.
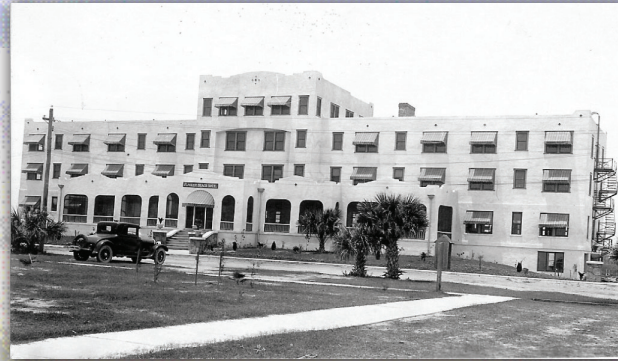
With the development of the Ocean City Casino and Flagler Beach Hotel, the Flagler Beach Pier soon followed. From that point on, residents from the mainland and visitors alike flocked to the warm sands and cool water at Flagler Beach's doorstep.

To this day, as visitors come to this community to enjoy one of its many restaurants or just spend some time fishing or enjoying the beach, they are surrounded by the history of this quaint community. Descendants of many of the original founding families still reside in the community or have been memorialized by the community through its parks and public facilities. The long, uninterrupted shoreline that is Flagler Beach, with its breathtaking vistas and long history, is what has drawn visitors to this area for nearly 100 years.

Grand Hotel on the Beach

Dana F. Fuquay and George Moody began construction on the Flagler Beach Hotel, located at Central Avenue and Moody Boulevard, in 1923. The Grand Opening was held on July 4, 1925.

It was a grand hotel for its time, having three floors of guest rooms, a lobby with a large coquina rock fireplace, a long screened porch complete with rocking chairs, a basement arcade, yellow pine floors and a formal ballroom. The current Veteran's Park, part of the original hotel property, was donated to the City by Mr. Fuquay, in lieu of taxes, with the condition that nothing would ever be built on the property that would block the view of the ocean from the hotel.

Flagler Beach Hotel

Charles Lindbergh's weekend stay was a major event for the hotel, along with the formal parties, weddings, senior high proms, and other community events held before the hotel closed its doors in the late 1930s. Mr. and Mrs. Walter Green bought the hotel in 1946 and named it "Ocean View." Sadly, in 1972 the old hotel was torn down. Today the site serves as the popular weekly Farmers' Market.

The A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway, Flagler Beach Historical Museum, and the Florida Department of Transportation have created this tour of Flagler Beach to help introduce you to this community and its proud and unique heritage. So, on your way to the beach or your favorite restaurant or store, take a moment to walk the same roads as the founding fathers and stop to appreciate the historical resources that surround you as you travel back in time along Moody Boulevard, Central Avenue and SR A1A.

Thank You for Visiting!

www.palmcoastandtheflaglerbeaches.com

flaglerbeachmuseum.com

Sponsored by:
Flagler Beach Historical Museum
A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway
and Flagler County Tourist
Development Council

Sources:
1. http://www.cityofflaglerbeach.com/
2. http://www.flagleronline.com/whattodo/wicklinepark.asp
3. http://www.byways.org
4. Holland, Mary Ketus. First Families of Flagler. 1995.
5. Wilson, Catherine Wickline. A New Beginning: A Picturesque History of Flagler Beach, Florida. 1998.

Historic Walking Tour

City of Flagler Beach

Flagler Beach Pier ~ circa 1960

Welcome to the Flagler Beach Historical Museum & Flagler County Visitor's Center
Open 7 Days: 10am-4pm

Enjoy a self-guided stroll around friendly Flagler Beach with this walking tour brochure. For guided tour information, call 386-517-2025. Or stop by the Museum Welcome Area for more brochures and advice about the many great attractions of Flagler County.

Tour Sites

1. Flagler Beach Historical Museum (207 S. Central Avenue) – This building was built for the Flagler Beach Volunteer Fire Department in 1965. It housed three bays for fire trucks. When the Fire Department moved to its current location, the building was renovated for the Museum. All items, photographs and artifacts have been donated by friends of the museum. The grand opening was in September 2001.

2. Upson House

2. Upson House and Real Estate Office (200/202 S. Central Avenue and 205A S. 2nd Street) – Luther and Ida Upson, early residents of Flagler Beach, were active contributors to the formation of the community. The small commercial building at the front of the property was built by Mrs. Upson in 1925 to house her real estate office and later was used for other businesses and as a meeting place for the City Commission. When the Town of Flagler Beach was incorporated in 1925, Luther Upson was elected as one of the first Commissioners. Their home was completed in 1926 and the adjoining building on S. 2nd Street, now commercial, was built as their garage.

4. Holden Pharmacy

5. Ranger Apartments

7. Wickline Store

3. Golden Sands Apartments (209 S. Second Street) – In 1947, Pal and Irma Parker, encouraged by her brother Walter Green who then owned the Flagler Beach Hotel, moved from Atlanta to Flagler Beach. Their Golden Sands Apartments were intended for vacationers and advertising touted the central location of Flagler Beach to "North Central and East Florida" attractions, as well as the 652-foot fishing pier and the beach.

4. Holden Pharmacy (301 S. Central Avenue) – Tom Holden and his wife Ethel lived in Bunnell, the Flagler County seat, but provided pharmacy services throughout the area. Completed in 1925, this building housed the pharmacy downstairs, and offices and apartments on the second floor. Mr. Holden later moved the pharmacy to the Moody Hotel; at which time, the building was sold to Dick and Mariel Ranger Mosby who ran a grocery store and lived upstairs.

5. Ranger Apartments (305 S. Central Avenue) – The Ranger family came to the area in 1926. Their apartments were joined to the old Holden Pharmacy building (see #4) and the complex became an apartment hotel. Mr. Ranger became the second postmaster in 1927, when Mrs. Etta Wickline retired.

6. Babbitt House (211 S. 3rd Street) – Arthur Babbitt and his wife Luna (daughter of George Moody) moved from Georgia to Flagler Beach in 1944. Mr. Babbitt was a plumber. The original City water system and turn-off valve and gauges can still be seen in what was once the kitchen of their home. While waiting for their home to be completed, the Babbitt's lived on the first floor of the Flagler Beach Hotel.

7. Wickline Store (411 S. Central Avenue) – In 1925 the Wickline family moved to the east side of the Intracoastal Waterway and opened the first general store there. A.V. Wickline and his son George bought a "block machine" from a catalog and made the concrete blocks for their new store. Etta Wickline was appointed postmistress in 1915 and served until 1927. The post office was located in the store and the family lived in the apartment upstairs. After the Wicklines closed their business in Flagler Beach, the south side of the building was used for city business until the current City Hall was built in 1965.

8. Luther Price House (202 S. Daytona Avenue) – Currently a commercial property, the Luther Price House is one of the oldest existing structures in Flagler Beach, built in the early 1920s.

9. George Moody House (312 S. Central Avenue) – George Moody is from the prominent Moody family of Flagler County. Mr. Moody and his wife Bettie homesteaded 169 oceanfront acres in 1913, which he subdivided as "Ocean City Beach." After his first home burned, he built this house in the early 1920s. At that time, there was no public utility company in the area and the Moody home featured a generator for the production of electricity. Mr. Moody was elected the first Mayor of Flagler Beach in 1925.

Areas of Interest for the Walking Tour

10. Flagler Beach School (Daytona Avenue between 8th and 9th Streets) – The original one-room schoolhouse, built in 1916, was updated by George Moody in 1923 and the new school opened in 1925. The school was closed for a time after World War II. When it reopened, one or two teachers would teach there, depending on the enrollment. The school was permanently closed in the mid-1970s. With the help of a State Historical Grant, the school property was acquired by the City of Flagler Beach to be developed as the Wickline Community Center. Today it houses the Flagler Beach Library, the Flagler County Council on Aging, and Adult Education classrooms surrounded by a city park. The community center adjoins the Betty Steflik Memorial Preserve.

11. Flagler Beach Pier (S. 3rd Street) – The original Pier was built in 1927 by the City of Flagler Beach and celebrated with a grand opening on July 4, 1928. Destroyed by storms and rebuilt several times, the Pier is a great spot for fishing, birding, and whale watching.

8. Luther Price House

12. Zoee's Z Wave Shop (400 S. SR A1A) – The original house was built as a summer home in 1920 by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Owen. The house still has its original chimney and cypress shingles on the exterior. Mr. Owen also built the 2-story garage apartment and little side house in the back. All three buildings were sold after World War II. The house was converted into the Z Wave Shop in 1988.

10. Flagler Beach School

11. Flagler Beach Pier