

# History

## Sewall's Point

### The History of a Peninsular Community on the Florida's Treasure Coast

Based on "Sewalls Point: The History of A Peninsular Community";

by Sandra Thurlow published 1992.

Henry Sewall, one of the heirs to the Hanson Grant, arrived with his wife in 1889 and gave a permanent name to the peninsula. In the beginning Sewall's Point meant exactly what it said, the point of the peninsula that belonged to Henry Sewall. He built his home on the riverbank and established the peninsula's second post office in 1891. His dock jutted out into the Indian River at its confluence with the St. Lucie River, and, once it was in place, everyone traveling north or south stopped there. The accounts of the arrival of the early settlers of Stuart and Palm City tell of disembarking at the Sewall's Point dock.

Charles Racey, who also inherited large tracts of land, arrived with his family the same year Henry Sewall established his post office. The Raceys built a large home on the summit of Mt. Elizabeth, the Indian mound located on their property, which later became the Florida Institute of Technology campus. Soon after he arrived, Charles Racey subdivided some of his land into ten-acre tracts that ran from river to river. The plat of the Arbela subdivision on south Sewall's Point was recorded in 1891 and is comprised of 26 parcels. In 1893 sixty acres on north Sewall's Point were divided into ten-acre tracts and are referred to as Racey's subdivision. These are among the earliest recorded subdivisions of land in South Florida. Sewall's Point was located in Dade and Brevard counties in the 1890s, with the common boundary line of the two counties bisecting Sewall's Point. The Arbela subdivision was recorded in Dade County and Racey's subdivision was recorded in Brevard County.

By the turn of the century a number of settlers, including several English immigrants, found their way to Waveland and purchased land from Racey. In 1897 the Rev. J.A. Panter of Edfordshire dropped off his 16-year-old son, Hubert, who suffered from respiratory problems. He hoped that Hubert would learn to cultivate pineapples and improve his health at the same time and wrote shortly after his trip: "Waveland is a colony of English all living in wooden houses and all without servants: so life is like a continual picnic."

Property records tell that many of the English settlers besides Panter were the offspring of clergymen, among them Aston, Andrews, Tyndan and Willes. Edgar and Katherine Harmer, Beaumont Harrison and R.M. Hebbert were also from England. Many were related to each other when they arrived or soon became so through marriage.

The first homes were constructed from lumber salvaged from wrecks that washed up on the ocean beach. Later, some of the settlers had their lumber shipped from Titusville and points farther north. Benjamin Hogg, one of the early sailing merchants, established a sawmill on his property, now known as Castle Hill. Later, Sam Matthews had a milling operation on his property on south Sewall's Point.

