

Ponte Vedra Beach History

Ponte Vedra Beach has a rich and unique history. Ponce de Leon, a Spanish explorer best known for his pursuit of the legendary “fountain of youth,” is believed to have landed on what would later become Ponte Vedra Beach on April 2, 1513. A small settlement begins to take shape in the Ponte Vedra Beach area. Haciendas were built and the roots for gracious living were planted.

The area remained sparsely populated through the late 19th century... In 1914 minerals were discovered, and a community known as Mineral City grew up around the mining operations there. Titanium extraction was significant, as well as that of zircon and rutile. These minerals were recovered from beach sands by a private commercial firm called National Lead Company, directed by Henry Holland Buckman and George A. Pritchard. During World War I titanium was a component of poison gas, and therefore a strategic mineral.

After the war, mineral demand dropped, so the National Lead Company changed its focus to building a resort community. The name of the community was changed to Ponte Vedra, apparently after the city of Pontevedra, Galicia, (Spain). The actual reason is unknown, but there was a rumor that one of the developers read a newspaper article that erroneously claimed Christopher Columbus was born there.

In the early 1920s, the National Lead Company built a 9-hole golf course and 12-room clubhouse constructed of logs for the use of their employees. After the company left Ponte Vedra, that real estate became the foundation of the Ponte Vedra Club. Stockton, Whatley, Davin & Co. was a developer of Ponte Vedra Beach in the early 1930s and owned the Ponte Vedra Club.

Today, Ponte Vedra Beach is home to THE PLAYERS Championship golf tournament and its world headquarters for the PGA Tour, thanks to a now-legendary 1978 deal in which developers Jerome and Paul Fletcher “sold” PGA Tour Commissioner Deane Beman 415 densely wooded acres. The purchase price: one dollar. In addition, the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP Tour) also calls Ponte Vedra Beach home, bringing even more national and international attention to the area as a recreational Mecca.

Today, this thriving community has come to be considered one of the most luxurious and prestigious recreational and residential destinations in Florida, if not the entire country. It was voted Money Magazine’s “Best Place to Live in Florida” and among the top 50 places to live in the United States. With above average income, low crime rate and top-performing schools-This is a Great Place to Live and Work!