FOURTH GRADE

THE HISTORY OF FLORIDA

LESSONS

POST-WORLD WAR II TO PRESENT

The Historical Society of Palm Beach County and
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FLORIDA’S POPULATION
After World War II, the population of Florida and Palm Beach County grew quickly. Many of the soldiers stationed here during World War II saw Florida as a land of opportunity and moved here after the war. As a result, Florida experienced a second land boom, which started in the 1950s and has not stopped. There have been, however, several periods when the economy slowed down but recovered a few years later. The most recent slowdown was in 2007, when the real estate and banking industries crashed.

The state population nearly doubled from 1950 (2,771,305) to 1960 (4,951,560). The rise in population required more industry, agriculture, recreation, and housing. Every ten years, Florida becomes home to at least two million more people. Such growth requires additional resources.

As more people move to Florida, the population becomes more diverse, which means a variety of people who have different languages and cultures. Europeans, Asians, West Indians, and Hispanics have become a large part of our population. Since World War II, Florida has also become home to a large number of immigrants from Cuba and Haiti.

In 2014 the U.S. Census Bureau reported that Florida was the third most populated state, having surpassed New York. Only California and Texas have more residents. The population figure—over twenty million—does not include snowbirds. These are the people who live in Florida only during the warm winter months.

PALM BEACH COUNTY’S DIVERSE POPULATION
During the 1870s and 1880s, some of the pioneers who came to the Lake Worth region seeking a better life were Blacks. In the 1890s, many people came to work on Henry Flagler’s railroad and hotels. He also established West Palm Beach, which attracted more people looking for good jobs and better housing. Among those following Flagler were European immigrants and Blacks.

In the early twentieth century, Japanese settlers were enticed by Flagler’s Model Land Company to establish an agricultural community. This colony, Yamato, was located between Delray Beach and Boca Raton.

Hispanics have been making their homes here for at least a hundred years and are the county’s fastest growing population. But it was not until after World War II that the permanent population of Palm Beach County exploded. People came to the area from all around the globe, and continue to do so today.

BLACK RESIDENTS
By the late nineteenth century, a small population of Blacks lived on Lake Worth. When Henry Flagler started building in Palm Beach, people of many races came to work in the hotels and on the railroad. One of the earliest communities for the workers was in Palm Beach, a Black community called the Styx. In Greek mythology, the River Styx leads to the underworld.

In Palm Beach, the Styx existed from the early 1890s to about 1910 as home for many of Flagler’s workers. Several men owned parts of the land occupied by the Styx. According to a local legend, Flagler once owned the Styx property, but this is not true. In the early twentieth century, Edward and John Bradley bought the land to develop. Because the residents paid rent and did not own the land, they

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**Historical Timeline**

1947 Everglades National Park is established.

1955 Construction begins on Florida’s Turnpike.

1957 The Seminole tribe is incorporated.
moved to West Palm Beach. Many of them bought land and built homes in the Northwest District, Freshwater District, and Pleasant City neighborhoods.

Some Blacks worked on the railroad, some helped build hotels, and still others ran their own businesses. One businessman was Haley Mickens, who ran a wheelchair business in Palm Beach. Mickens was also a founder of the Payne Chapel A.M.E. Church, which is now located in West Palm Beach.

Blacks also lived in other communities in Palm Beach County. In Riviera Beach, Will Melton and the Gildersleeve family settled in the 1880s and 1890s. In the 1890s, Black farmers settled in present-day Boynton Beach. Some of Delray Beach’s settlers had come to work on Flagler’s railroad as it moved south. They settled in neighborhoods known as Green’s Corner, Hannah Town, and Davis Town. These early Black communities were located near today’s Atlantic Avenue.

In the 1920s, wealthy Blacks lived in the Freshwater District of West Palm Beach. Local Black contractors built most of the houses there. Hazel Augustus, thought to be West Palm Beach’s first Black architect, designed many of the houses and churches in the Freshwater District. He designed his own home at 615 Division Street.

Black professionals came to West Palm Beach to set up businesses. Some were doctors, dentists, and pharmacists. Dr. Thomas LeRoy Jefferson was the city’s first Black medical doctor to come to West Palm Beach. Dr. Warren Hale Collie, a veteran of World War I, was one of the first Black dentists to practice in the county. In 1933, Dr. Joseph Wiley Jenkins moved to West Palm Beach, where he and his wife, Roberta, opened the Economical Drug Store at the corner of Fourth Street and Rosemary Avenue. Roberta designed their dream home on Virginia Avenue, which is now Division Avenue. In 1996, the City of West Palm Beach bought this house and preserved it as it is now the home of the Artists Showcase of the Palm Beaches.

In 2016, Bradley G. Harper became the first Black to be elected as a county judge without first having been appointed by the governor. Judge Harper is a sixth-generation native of Palm Beach County, a great-great-great-grandson of Millie Gildersleeve. Harper graduated from Morehouse College and University of Florida College of Law. He is also is active in the community, and founded the Blueprint Leadership Program and Boyz to Men Mentoring Program to expose children to the justice system and local history and to train students to be leaders.

Throughout the years, other Blacks have played important roles in the history and development of Palm Beach County. Many are prominent business owners who provide needed jobs and are involved in politics at the local, state, and national levels. Their history and continued contributions are important to the past, present, and future development of Palm Beach County and Florida.

F. MALCOLM CUNNINGHAM SR.

F. Malcolm Cunningham was a graduate of Florida A & M University and Howard University (Washington, DC), where he earned his law degree. In 1953 he became the second lawyer in West Palm Beach. Nine years later, Cunningham was the first

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Historical Timeline

- **1962** The Miccosukee tribe is incorporated.
- **1964** Martin Luther King Jr. leads civil rights demonstration in St. Augustine.
- **1971** Disney World opens.

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**Courtesy of HSPBC** Dr. Warren Hale Collie
Black elected to the Riviera Beach City Council; he was reelected twice before retiring from public office. Cunningham was also involved in the civil rights movement, fighting for equal rights for Blacks. He was a founding member of the Virgil Hawkins Florida Chapter of the National Bar Association. The F. Malcolm Cunningham Sr. Bar Association is named for him. His son F. Malcolm Cunningham Jr. followed in his father’s footsteps as an attorney.

THE YAMATO COLONY

The Yamato Colony was an agricultural settlement of Japanese farmers introduced to north Boca Raton by Joseph Sakai, who worked for Flagler’s Model Land Company. They called the land that they settled Yamato, an ancient name for Japan meaning large peaceful country. At first, the colony focused on growing pineapples because the farmers could sell the fruit for high prices. They also grew citrus and vegetables. Pineapple farming ended when the fruit was destroyed by disease and cheaper pineapples from the Caribbean made it unprofitable to grow them in Florida.

By World War II, most of the Yamato colonists had returned to Japan or moved to other states. The colony ended when the few remaining farmers were forced to leave during World War II because some of their land was needed for an army base. Yamato Road in Boca Raton is named in honor of this community of Japanese farmers.

HISPANICS OF PALM BEACH COUNTY

Hispanics are the fastest-growing part of the population, not only in Palm Beach County but in the entire nation. Between 1980 and 2010, the number of Hispanics in the county grew from 28,505 to 250,832. Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Mexicans are still in the majority, but immigrants from Central and South American countries are on the rise.

Large groups of Mexicans and Guatemalans live in Lake Worth, and there is a large Guatemalan community in Jupiter. They speak one of the many Mayan-language dialects. Puerto Ricans make up a large part of the Hispanic population in West Palm Beach, and also live in other communities throughout the county.

The Hispanic/Latin community is steadily making in-roads in all aspects of life in Palm Beach County. They own and operate their own businesses. Many work as lawyers, doctors, and in the service and agricultural industries.

In 1991, Nancy Perez was appointed the county’s first Hispanic American judge. As the twenty-first century progresses, Hispanics and Latinos will take other leading roles in the development of Palm Beach County.

THE FANJUL FAMILY

One of the largest sugar cane growers in Palm Beach County is the Fanjul family. The island of Cuba used to be a large supplier of sugar to the United States. Then Fidel Castro took control of Cuba and established a Communist government. The United States was against communism and stopped buying sugar from Cuba. The Fanjuls were growing sugar on thousands of acres. Their company also was growing rice as a rotation crop. The family has about 3,000 employees, owns several sugar mills, and owns companies in the Dominican Republic.

THE HAITIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

In small and large numbers, Haitian immigrants have come to Palm Beach County since before 1980, seeking a better life. Since 1980 there have been three waves of migration. (1) In 1986, at the end of the Duvalier regime, many settled in Delray Beach, Boca Raton, and Boynton Beach. (2) In 1991, another mass migration took
place. (3) After the devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti, many more Haitians moved to Florida. One particular subdivision in Delray Beach called Osceola Park has been the home of Haitian Americans since 1980. Delray Beach has the largest Haitian population in the United States. In 2013, it was estimated at 95,000.

Mack Bernard, born in Haiti, graduated from Florida State University and University of Florida College of Law. In 2008 he served as deputy vice-mayor and a city commissioner of Delray Beach. A year later he was elected to the Florida House of Representatives and served as president of the Palm Beach County Caucus of Black Elected Officials. In 2016 he became the first Black male and Haitian American elected to the Board of Palm Beach County Commissioners. Bernard, an attorney, is also active in community organizations, including the Toussaint L’Ouverture High School for Arts & Social Justice and the Color of Hope Foundation. In just over thirty years, Haitians have become an integral part of the county’s cultural landscape.

JOSEPH BERNADEL


Palm Beach County’s Jewish Heritage

Jews have been settling in Florida since the late eighteenth century. For much of the early years, they lived in north Florida and Key West. When railroads opened up south Florida, they also moved here. The recorded history of Jews in Palm Beach County dates back to at least the early 1890s when Henry Flagler began to develop the area. When West Palm Beach incorporated, businessmen of Jewish descent opened shops in the new town. Their stores sold everything from clothing to hardware.

Jews have made other contributions to the county. In West Palm Beach, the residents elected Joseph Mendel, the city’s first Jewish mayor, in 1923. The Jewish community founded its own newspaper in the 1930s. Others have served in various leadership roles, including as mayors and city and county...
commissioners. For many years, Jews have been involved in helping communities in the county. They have donated millions of dollars to support many cultural arts organizations. They also have supported educational institutions and agencies providing help to the less fortunate.

The Jewish population in Palm Beach County remained small from the 1890s until after World War II. In 1940 the county’s Jewish residents numbered about a thousand, a very close-knit community. They often came together for social and religious events. Following the war, there was a surge of Jewish migration to south Florida, primarily to Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties. By 1950, the Jewish population had grown to about 3,000 in Palm Beach County. Thirty years later, it had risen to 89,000. In 2018, there were 134,200 Jewish adults and children living in 69,000 households in Palm Beach County.

Jews are involved in every part of life. Their history has added to the cultural diversity of Palm Beach County.

JOSEPH MENDEL

Joseph Mendel was born in Albany, New York, on November 17, 1866. His doctor recommended that he live in a better climate for his health, so in 1908 he moved to Florida. In 1923, he was elected to the West Palm Beach City Commission, which eventually appointed him as mayor. With the appointment, Mendel became the first Jewish mayor of West Palm Beach. After his public service, Mendel became involved with banking and real estate.

PIONEERING WOMEN OF PALM BEACH COUNTY

Women as well as men helped to shape Palm Beach County. A few of the pioneering women were Lillie Pierce Voss, Susan Sanders DuBois, Eva Williams Mack, Nancy Perez, and Catherine Link Strong.

In 1876, H. D. Pierce’s daughter, Lillie, was born at the Orange Grove House of Refuge. She lived in the south end of the county all her life. Her mother taught her to read and write, but she admitted that no one could teach her “figures” (math). Lillie grew up as a tomboy. As an adult, she wore a pistol on her hip so she could shoot rattlesnakes on her property. One day in the 1920s, the sheriff warned Lillie to stay inside because the Ashley Gang—known for robbing banks and trains—was rumored to be in the area. That didn’t scare Lillie Pierce Voss. She grabbed her shotgun and sat in a chair in the middle of the road, determined to protect her property.

Another young woman, Susan Sanders, came to Florida in 1897 at the age of twenty-one. Her first teaching assignment was west of Stuart, where the school was held in an 8-by-10-foot palm-thatched hut. It had a dirt floor and benches along the sides for the students. Sanders was paid $40 per month, from which she paid $10 per month for room and board while living with a family of seven and two male boarders. The house had only one room, with a bed in each corner and one in the middle. Sanders shared a bed with the family’s daughter. The daughter and mother shared a pair of shoes. The men in the family went barefoot. Most important though, the children received an education.

The School Board eventually transferred Sanders to the school in Jupiter, where she met John DuBois. After they were married, Susan used her salary to buy a cow, a dozen hens, and an old rooster. Her husband built them a three-room house atop the shell midden that Jonathan Dickinson had visited when he was shipwrecked in the 1690s. The house is still there and is open to the public.

The DuBoises cleared land for a large garden and grew pineapples as a cash crop. They had several children, so they had to add on to the house. Susan said they never went hungry because she always had eggs, fresh vegetables from her garden, and fish.

Eva Williams Mack was born in Alabama in 1915. She earned a nursing degree at Simmons College in Boston, trained in Atlanta, and earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Columbia University. After completing her education, Mack moved to West Palm Beach in 1948 and worked as a public health nurse with Dr. Carl Brumback, Palm Beach County’s first public health director.

Mack was the first health specialist for the Palm Beach County School Board, and founded the Sickle Cell Disease Foundation of Palm Beach County in 1979. A year
earlier, she and Ruby Bullock became the first Black city commissioners of West Palm Beach. Mack was the first Black to be elected mayor of West Palm Beach, in 1982, and served two terms of one year each.

Judge Nancy Perez was one of eleven children of Puerto Rican migrant farm workers. She was born near Buffalo, New York, because her mother was picking strawberries and cherries there at the time. Nancy started work picking tomatoes in New Jersey at the age of eleven. Then her father decided his children could move beyond migrant farming with education, and relocated the family to the Fort Myers area. The children no longer missed school to pick crops. Most of them graduated from high school, and four earned college degrees.

With an excellent academic record, Nancy received scholarships that put her through Edison Community College and Florida State University, where she received a bachelor’s degree in business and accounting. She went on to law school in part, she said later, to improve the treatment of migrant workers that she had seen first-hand. Perez worked for the Migrant Farm Workers Division of Georgia Legal Services before becoming a supervisor for the Association of Migrant Associations in Tallahassee. After passing the Florida Bar in 1983, Perez worked as an assistant public defender in West Palm Beach. She began serving as a judge in 1991, becoming the first Hispanic American judge in Palm Beach County.

Catherine Strong was born Catherine Elizabeth Link in New York and moved to Delray Beach with her family about 1920, when her father was a craftsman with Mizner Industries. In 1923, he became general contractor for Del-Ida Park and built the family home there, at N.E. Second Avenue and Dixie Boulevard. When she was sixteen, Catherine played trombone in the Women’s Business Band. She married Milton J. “Jack” Strong in 1939.

Strong was the first woman in Palm Beach County to be called for jury duty, in January 1950. She started as a clerk at Delray Beach City Hall and was elected to the city commission three times, from 1953 to 1957, moving officials to change the title city councilman to city commissioner to resolve the gender issue. Elected mayor in 1954, she initiated the recruitment of light industry to Delray. As mayor and commissioner, Strong was consistently a minority voice helping the black community receive fair treatment; in 1956 she successfully fought an attempt to change the city limits aimed at eliminating all black neighborhoods.

Strong was honored with her name in three places: a wing at Bethesda Memorial Hospital, where she had served on the founding board; a community center in Delray Beach; and a fountain at Delray Beach Memorial Gardens.

These pioneering women made a difference in Palm Beach County. They may seem ordinary, but they provided stability to the growing community. Many other women have made, and will continue to make, positive differences in Palm Beach County.

**MODERN ECONOMY**

Florida’s economy changed following World War II. Many types of industries have employed thousands of Florida residents, including tourism, agriculture, construction, real estate, and services. In recent years, the fields of aeronautics, computers, plastics, and medical research have been added to that roster.

Tourism provides nearly 1.5 million jobs in the state. Each year,
popular tourist sites bring nearly fifty million visitors to Florida. Fun places such as Walt Disney World and other Orlando theme parks attract many vacationers. Cities like Miami Beach, St. Augustine, and Tampa also bring crowds. Do not forget the seemingly endless miles of beaches that attract vacationers. Tourists spend billions of dollars on shopping, entertainment, and outdoor activities.

The U.S. space program run by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) operates at the Kennedy Space Center on Cape Canaveral. NASA has launched satellites and spacecraft, and sent space shuttles into space to do scientific research. The space program provides many jobs and adds nearly a billion dollars each year to the state economy.

The agricultural industry continues to earn money for Florida. Modern machines make planting, harvesting, and processing farm products quicker and easier. Florida’s agricultural products include citrus, cattle, dairy products, poultry, vegetables, and sugar cane. In this state, about one out of every six people works in agriculture.

PALM BEACH COUNTY TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE

Many cultures work and live in Palm Beach County, providing diversity that makes south Florida an exciting place. Everyone has the opportunity to learn from people of different backgrounds. Nearly every country in the world is represented in the schools of Palm Beach County. These students speak 135 languages.

What does the twenty-first century hold for Palm Beach County and Florida? According to statistics, 15,600 new residents moved to Palm Beach county in 2018. This growth stresses the county’s supply of natural resources—water, land, air, and wildlife—and government services, such as emergency services, health care, roads, government, and waste disposal.

When people move west, it puts stress on farmlands and what is left of the Everglades. Eventually, there will be no land on which to build. Development also ruins the natural habitats that provide homes for the variety of wildlife living in the county. In some cases, new construction erases the historical past of Palm Beach County. A greater demand for water is using up the fresh water supply that is already limited. More automobiles will continue to crowd the busy roads, leading to more construction of roadways and greater amounts of air pollution. Waste disposal becomes a huge concern. What do we do with all our trash? The next generation of voters will need to make educated decisions about these issues. These decisions will make a difference for future residents and visitors to Palm Beach County and Florida.

In the future, how will students view the county’s next hundred years of history? What will your role have been to preserve the environment and the history of Palm Beach County?
THE EVERGLADES

The distinctive Everglades is the largest subtropical wetland in North America. Formed between 5,000 and 6,000 years ago, it once covered over eight million acres, or much of south Florida reaching into present-day Palm Beach County. Before humans began draining the wetlands of south Florida, the Everglades was fed by water flowing south from the Kissimmee River into Lake Okeechobee. Water then overflowed the lake’s southern shore, creating a sheet of slow-moving water over low-lying land that slopes less than two inches per mile. The sheet of water continued moving southward for about a hundred miles, eventually emptying into Florida Bay, Ten Thousand Islands, and Biscayne Bay.

The Everglades is a combination of sawgrass marshes, cypress swamps, prairies, ponds, sloughs, pinelands, and forest hammocks. It is a balanced yet fragile ecosystem that includes mammals, a variety of birds, fish, reptiles including alligators and crocodiles, insects, microorganisms, and plants. The introduction of invasive species, like the python, is endangered the ecosystem.

In the late 1800s, man began draining the land for agriculture and for living space. Large-scale draining efforts in the following century seriously affected the Everglades and other wetlands, destroying at least 50% of them in south Florida. Because of the drainage, the water flow that is important to the Everglades has been interrupted. Water is now drained from Lake Okeechobee through the Caloosahatchee River and St. Lucie Canal systems, then south to Florida and Biscayne bays through a system of canals and water management areas.

As the once vast wetland shrank, the Everglades National Park was established to save what was left of it. It covers 1.5 million acres (20% of the original Everglades) in southwest Florida. President Harry Truman dedicated the park on December 6, 1947. In Palm Beach County, portions of the original Everglades still exist. Grassy Waters Preserve in West Palm Beach provides drinking water to the city and covers twenty-three square miles. West of Boynton Beach is the Arthur R. Marshall National Wildlife Management Area, which covers 221 square miles. The public can visit both of these parks.

ANSWERS FROM PAGES 6-7

Horse Conch  Agatized Coral  Sabal Palm  Coreopsis  Alligator  Manatee  Largemouth Bass  
Florida Panther  Zebra Longwing  Mockingbird  Sailfish  Orange Juice  Orange Blossom  Porpoise
Instructions: Read "Post-World War II To Present" and answer the questions below in a separate document. When you are finished, submit your answers to your teacher.

Name:

1. Choose three influential figures from the text and describe the contributions they made to Palm Beach County.

2. In your words, explain why having a diverse population is important.

3. Why are the Everglades an important natural resource?
**POST-WORLD WAR II TO PRESENT**
**ACTIVITIES FROM PAGE 3 OF**
**THE HISTORY OF FLORIDA**

**Instructions:** Read "Post-World War II To Present" and answer the questions below in a separate document. When you are finished, submit your answers to your teacher.

**READING CHECK:**
1. What is Florida’s rank in population in the U.S.?

2. Make a list of names and occupations of the Blacks mentioned in this section.

3. Where did the people of the Yamato Colony come from? What happened to them?

4. Where is the largest Haitian population in the United States?

5. What types of contributions have people of Jewish heritage made in Palm Beach County?

**AS YOU READ:**
1. In the text, list groups that are part of Palm Beach County’s diverse population.
Instructions: Read "Post-World War II To Present" and answer the questions below on a separate document. When you are finished, submit your answers to your teacher.

MAP SKILL:
1. Using a world map, identify the countries that the different Hispanic groups are coming from.

MATH PRACTICE:
1. What is the difference between the number of Jews in Palm Beach County in 1950 and 2018?

IMAGINE THAT:
1. Write a fictional story about the Pioneer Era with either Lillie Pierce Voss or Susan Sanders DuBois as one of the main characters.

SHORT ANSWER (PAGE 5):
1. List some of Florida’s modern industries.

DISCUSSION:
1. How will residents of Palm Beach County and Florida deal with continued growth?

READING CHECK:
1. Who are the Fanjuls? Where are they from? What kind of business do they operate? What crops do they grow?
POST-WORLD WAR II TO PRESENT
QUIZ

Instructions: Read "Post-World War II To Present" and answer the questions below in a separate document. When you are finished, submit your answers to your teacher.

Name:

1. The second Land Boom in Florida ranges from about:
   A) 1920 to 1930
   B) 1930 to present
   C) 1950 to present
   D) 1960 to 1990

2. A population explosion occurred in Florida when:
   A) the population decreased between 1920 and 1930
   B) the population increased between 1940 and 1980
   C) the population doubled between 1950 and 1960
   D) the population tripled between 1950 and 1960

3. As more people come to Florida, the population becomes more diverse. Floridians now include people from all over the United States and the world. Which of the following words is most like the word diverse:
   A) varied
   B) similar
   C) populated
   D) comparable

4. The Apollo 11 launched from Cape Canaveral in:
   A) 1896
   B) 1969
   C) 1970
   D) 1987
POST-WORLD WAR II TO PRESENT
ART ACTIVITY

MATERIALS:

• 8x10 copy paper, pencils, erasers, markers, crayons, and color pencils.
• Example of advertisement (page 12)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Have you seen any advertisements for the major industries in Florida? If so, which ones?
2. Have you thought of becoming a graphic designer? Web designer? Do you have a favorite Florida advertisement?
3. Design an ad for one of Florida’s industries using your art supplies.
4. Before you begin, research the industry that you are making the advertisement for. The ad should have accurate information and pictures or sayings regarding the subject matter being advertised.
5. Give a presentation using your ad in video format, submit to your teacher, and be prepared to answer questions regarding the particular industry you selected.