

The Loxahatchee River Historical Society presents:

BLACK JUPITER: The Untold Stories



Dedicated to the Limestone Creek Pioneers & their Families.

OUR SHARED HISTORY

Our Shared History

Until recently, the history of African Americans living in the Limestone Creek area of Jupiter has been largely invisible. Yet, these individuals and their families are a rich part of our heritage. Many courageous pioneers, black and white, stood side by side to lay the groundwork for the town of yesterday and today.

This exhibit begins the process of collecting and sharing the untold stories of West Jupiter. The accounts are rooted in fact, but carried down through generations by the oral tradition of storytelling. We invite you to take a look into Jupiter's past through the stories of the black pioneers and their families who made this community home.



Paddlewheel steamer "St. Augustine" during the 1890s. Transported cargo and passengers from Melbourne and Titusville to Jupiter and back several times a week.

Survival and ingenuity on the Loxahatchee River

From the late 1600s until the late 19th century, runaway slaves escaped from plantations in South Carolina and Georgia, seeking refuge in Spanish Florida. These former slaves used their considerable skills to build small independent villages. Later, they joined forces and cultures with Seminole Indians, becoming known as Black Seminoles. The two groups were allies in defending their freedom against the pursuing US Army. In 1838, two of those battles took place at the headwaters of the Loxahatchee River. Their 40-year struggle lasted over three Seminole Indian Wars in South and Central Florida, finally ending in 1858.



Cypress Tiger, Jimmy Copher and Billy Stuart photographed in 1891 by William Henry Jackson on the Jupiter & Lake Worth Railroad Dock, better known as the Celestial Railroad. Mr. Jackson, a photographer for the Detroit Publishing Company, was a guest at the Carlin House.

The Wild Adventures of Young Will Bostick

Ten-year-old Will Bostick ran away from his home in Silver Springs, Florida. Working the southbound steamboats, he arrived at the Celestial Railroad Dock in Jupiter around 1879 and decided to stay. "There's work at the cowboy camps west of here," a white man on the dock told him. So, Will started walking! West towards Indiantown, he headed out and walked a good while. Tired and lost, he was amazed to encounter a Seminole Indian village.

Will was frightened at first. Had he encountered friends or foes? The Seminoles were indeed friends, welcoming Will to their camp and teaching him their language. He enjoyed 15 years of living among the Indians, and they even offered him a wife. But, he politely refused. Will and the Seminoles parted ways when the tribe relocated south to Big Cypress country. Will returned north to his first home with some wild stories of his own.

By 1895, it was time for adventurous Will to return to Jupiter- this time with his new wife, Fanny, and their six-month old daughter, Josephine. They found the beginnings of a community along the shores of the Loxahatchee River. Will and Fanny worked at the Carlin House with Fanny doing the seemingly endless loads of laundry and Will running boats.

Three busy but happy years passed and Fanny was expecting a second child. Who could blame her for wanting her folks' help when the baby came? Taking little Josephine by the hand, she returned to Lake City.

Will Bostick never slowed down and never stopped having adventures. He worked steamboats along the inland waters. He jumped at the chance to serve in the Spanish American War. But, his heart remained in Jupiter. By 1900, Will was a boarder at Fred and Ellen Carlin Aicher's home.

In 1908, Fanny returned to Will, bringing Josephine and little Susan back to Jupiter, where Will worked for 20 years as caretaker on Hooley's Point- now known as Tequesta Country Club.

1883

Jupiter Inlet Light Station Construction Crew



(Melville Spencer / US Lighthouse Society)

A team of skilled black and white construction workers pose with their handiwork: the newly completed head keeper's house. They also repaired the original keeper's house and made other repairs to the station.

Love at First Sight

Izetta Mae Hogg's first glimpse of Jupiter was from the window of the train that had brought her and her mother Lelia from Barnwell County, South Carolina. Her father Rossie had come to Jupiter ahead of the family to find a house and was waiting for them at the FEC Railroad depot.

Caught up in the excitement of travelling to her new home, Izetta dutifully helped her parents with the luggage. Just then, a young man pulled up in a convertible car full of girls.

As she left the depot with her parents, he called out to her, "Someday I'm going to marry you!" Sure enough, Izetta and Charles Bush were married in 1934.



Florida East Coast Railroad Depot was located at the southeastern span of the railroad across the Loxahatchee River.



Palm Point on the southwest fork of the Loxahatchee, just west of Pennock Plantation

Robert Preston in the Bama

Born in 1881 in Putnam County, Florida, Robert Thomas Preston was a young father when he came to Jupiter with his wife, Viola and family. He soon found work with Mr. Pennock at the Pennock Dairy, known locally as "the Bama". They moved into the worker's housing on the property, where their 2 youngest daughters, Josephine and Ella, were born. Four years later, Viola died of complications after the birth of their youngest son, leaving Robert to raise 14 children by himself. He remarried in 1937 and lived at the Bama until Mr. Pennock moved the workers off the property. Fortunately, they were allowed to take the house with them, and they did. It was moved twice and remains part of Leroy and Ella Preston Rollins' home today.



CREEK

First Families: Homesteading

Steam from the engines of trains and steamboats, traced the journey of black pioneers migrating from the Deep South. Word traveled through friends and family back to the black communities in Georgia and South Carolina. "Here is a chance at a new life. "We'll help you find work. You can even own land!"



Jupiter and Lake Worth Railroad, known as "Celestial Railroad" Engine #2, Milton Messer polishing headlight about 1890.



Turner Quay Ferry located on Center Street taken in the 1930s. Many Limestone Creek residents were employed here and in other ferries in the area.

West of Pennock Point, the clear, crystal water of Limestone Creek branched off the Loxahatchee River providing freshwater necessary for the homesteader's survival. The bountiful creek was a steady food supply of oysters and fish so plentiful "you could walk on them." Nearby orange groves, ferneries, dairies, sawmills and farms were a source of income, and sometimes housing. The little settlement of Limestone Creek flourished as homes, small businesses and streets were built in the woods.



Postcard showing Hull's orange grove just west of Limestone Creek.

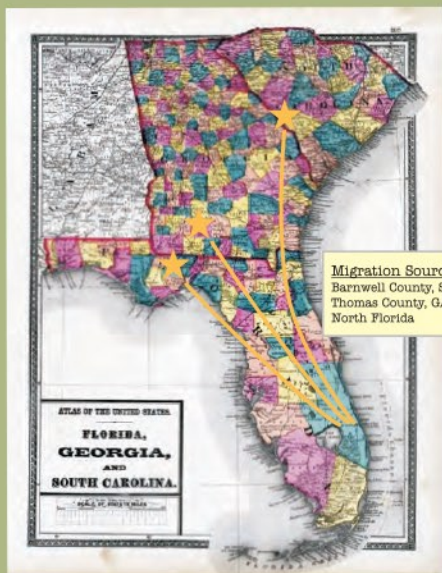
Sapp, Ford, Bush, Hogg, Campbell, Humphry, Simmons, Davis, Frinks, Glover, Robinson, Vickers, Gordon, Killingsworth, Hay and Hunter. Together, these black pioneer families established one of the oldest settlements in Palm Beach County.

BLACK HOMESTEADERS IN LIMESTONE CREEK

Philip Simmons	160 acres	1904
William & Annie Davis Roundtree	80 acres	1905
Moses Sapp	80 acres	1914
Will Bush	160 acres	1914
Glover & Sheldonia Sapp	80 acres	1915
Louis M. & Mary Davis	160 acres	1915
William C. Davis	80 acres	1915
Govan Bush	160 acres	1916
Isaac J. Frinks, Jr.	160 acres	1917
Jefferson Frinks	40 acres	1917
Grant Bush	40 acres	1918

A homesteader was anyone who applied to the US Land Office for up to 160 acres, paid a \$10 fee, and promised in writing to live on, cultivate, and improve the property exclusively for their own use. After five years, the applicant could receive title to the homestead, or they could purchase the land to receive title before the five-year provision was up.

g along Limestone Creek



Migration Sources:
Barnwell County, South Carolina
Thomas County, GA - Early County, GA
North Florida



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Jupiter's first Florida East Coast Railroad Depot was located at the southeastern span of the railroad across the Loxahatchee River. E. Frank Bowers store is the white two-story building on the right in 1911.

A New Start for L.M. Davis

Georgia in the late 1800s was no place for a black man who had killed a white man- even in self-defense. Fearing he would not get a fair trial, Samuel Brown took his sister Hannah Davis' last name and became Louis Moseley Davis. Then, L.M. Davis walked south to Jupiter and created a new life.

That new life included a home in the close knit Limestone Creek community, his good friend Philip Simmons for a neighbor and work on the railroad. All L.M. was missing was a wife. He asked Philip's wife Rebecca if she had any sisters and it was his lucky day. L. M. began a correspondence turned courtship with Mary Lee Anderson, Rebecca's sister living near Tallahassee. In March 1903, he traveled to Tallahassee to meet and marry his bride all on the same day!

Returning to Jupiter, they lived and worked at Pennock Plantation until 1915. That year L.M., Mary and their young son Abe moved west to Limestone Creek and became one of the first black families to own land there, homesteading 160 acres. Seven more children were born at this home, the youngest of which was Nancy Thompson Davis Young.

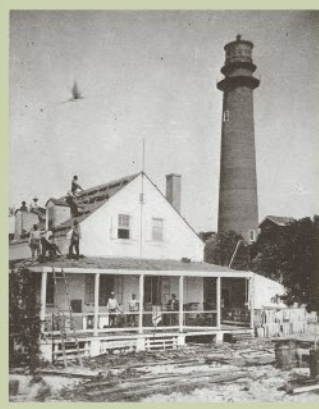
Over the next 30 years, life in Limestone Creek was never dull. Nancy, Abe and the rest of the Davis family were busy just keeping food on the table. Their garden yielded collard greens, tomatoes and green beans. Chickens and hogs were raised and the meat was preserved on-site in a smokehouse. Fish caught in the nearby creek were eaten fresh or preserved by salting. By 1940, Mary's oldest children were sent walking four miles east to "downtown" Jupiter for supplies. Thank goodness for Sundays! The family always prepared a special dinner of fresh meat, cornbread and rice to enjoy the rewards of their hard work.

Louis Moseley and Mary Davis homesteaded Limestone Creek with courage and gave to their new community from their hearts. When the 1928 hurricane flattened the Jupiter Colored School, they donated an acre to the Palm Beach County Board of Public Instruction for a new school site. L.M. transported black students in the area to school to make sure they would have an education. His pay in 1931 was \$30 a month. In 1956, nine years after his death, the new school's name was officially changed to L.M. Davis, in honor of the man who came to Jupiter and created a new life.



Copyright of the Florida Photographic Collection, Thomas State Archives

Ella Louise Davis McNeely, Elton Brown and Gladys Davis Alleyne at the old Davis home place on Limestone Creek Road in the 1930s. Ella and Gladys were the daughters of L.M. and Mary Davis and Elton was L.M.'s brother.



Copyright of the Lighthouse Museum, Jupiter, Florida

Workers repairing Lighthouse Keepers Quarters at Jupiter Light Station in 1983.

RS IN LIMESTONE CRE

The Unflappable Aunt Becky

1904...what an eventful year. Seventeen-year-old Rebecca became a mother, a widow, and then new wife to Philip Simmons. Philip had homesteaded 160 acres on the north fork of the Loxahatchee. The only black family on Riverside Drive, they raised 7 children.

Sunday...what an eventful day. The children woke up to face a loving, but stern mother who patiently dressed each child in their starched Sunday best. Mt. Carmel Missionary Baptist Church in Limestone Creek was an 8-mile walk and boat ride from the Loxahatchee's north shore! A little wetter and muddier than when they left home, the Simmons' were first to arrive and would ring the church bell. Rebecca's faith was strong and must have helped her endure so many of life's challenges.

Laundry was a tedious daily chore that black pioneers took on not only for themselves, but the white community too. Rebecca, known as "Aunt Becky," did the Rood family's laundry. Her daughter Idella remembers the backbreaking chore: cutting wood, starting a fire and heating the wash water in an iron pot. Then, scrubbing clothes across the washboard, rinsing and hanging them up, filling lines with drying clothes.

Black and white pioneer children played together, swimming and boating in the river, and Idella Simmons' playmate was Roy "Buster" Rood. Once, Aunt Becky asked Buster to get wood for the fire, but he wouldn't do it. Asked again, he still refused. Rebecca turned to Mrs. Rood who advised her to stand her ground, so she gave naughty Buster one last chance. He climbed a tree to escape. So, she got an axe to chop it down. One chop, two chop... Buster scrambled down. After that, he was happy to cut wood for Rebecca whenever she asked.

Unflappable Aunt Becky was a survivor who worked for many of the white pioneers, including the Carlin, Jackson, Zeigler and Young families, and Dora and Captain Seabrook at the Lighthouse.

After 22 years of marriage, Rebecca's life took another turn when Philip died in 1926. She watched as her children and her small community of Limestone Creek grew to be surrounded by the present Town of Jupiter. Rebecca Anderson Harris Simmons died in August 1968.

What an eventful life!



Rebecca Anderson Simmons, Mary Anderson Davis and Emma Anderson Herman.

Courtesy of Georgia Lake Drive Water Conservancy



Rebecca Anderson Harris Simmons, ca 1950s



Little Peoples, Nancy Davis (Young), Rosalie Haines and Mary Anderson Davis



Typical laundry day August 1928.

Courtesy of The Florida Photographic Collection, Paine Staff Archives



The Second Deadliest Storm in U.S. History

1928 HURRICANE

On September 16, 1928, a devastating hurricane slammed into Palm Beach with a fifteen-foot wall of water and 150 mile-per-hour winds. Across most of the county, west to the Everglades, homes and communities were destroyed. Nearly 3000 people lost their lives. Unlike today, there were no advanced preparations made. Most of Florida's residents were in the dark about the impending disaster. Those who survived have recounted extraordinary experiences.

Cow Saves a Life

Nancy Davis Young was six years old when the hurricane struck in 1928. Her family sought shelter with others in the schoolhouse next door to their home. As the wind blew harder and the building swayed, her father L.M. left to find a more secure refuge. The others stayed, huddled on the floor between desks. The schoolhouse collapsed, but the sturdy desks protected those underneath.

Unable to see in the wind and rain, L.M. wandered into a pasture. He dropped to the ground and held onto a cow's legs to keep from being blown away. Most of his clothing was torn away by wind and debris, but he made his way back to find his family safe and their home still standing.

Riding Out the Storm in a Model T

A grandson of former slaves, Tom Hay brought his family to Jupiter in 1922. When the hurricane struck, the winds were blowing so hard, their house lifted off the ground. In the dark, Tom loaded his family into their Model T Ford and tried to drive them to town. With boards flying everywhere and the water too high to drive, the family waited out the storm inside their car. After the storm, they found only the framework of their house survived. They sought shelter at the new Jupiter School building on Loxahatchee Drive with many other refugees, black and white.

The Struggle for Education

The residents of Limestone Creek placed an extremely high value on education.

In 1905, William and Annie Davis Roundtree donated one acre of land off Limestone Creek Road to build a "colored" school. After it was flattened by the 1928 hurricane, L.M. And Mary Davis donated one acre of land from his homestead in 1929 to build a new school. Ella Preston Rollins remembers a typical day at school during those years, learning math, science, reading and writing. The school had two teachers: one for the younger children and another for the older children. From a small kitchen, Daisy Sapp Williams and Eunice Moore served hot lunches while students sat at their desks.



Rosenwald School plans and drawings.

In the 1960s, desegregation was enforced in Palm Beach County. Iris

Hunter Etheredge became the first black student to attend Jupiter School, transferring from Lincoln High in Riviera Beach. Despite disrespect from her fellow students, she earned the teachers' respect and support by excelling in school. Iris's friends from Lincoln High attended Graduation night, helping with her cap and gown.



Thelma's Vision

In 1965, Thelma Baxter Pittman was the mother of nine children, four under six years of age. Thelma searched for local childcare facilities, and most had space. When she would respectfully let them know she was black, or would show up with the children, the space was suddenly no longer available. Integration was the law, but segregation was still practiced. Realizing the need for children of every background and race to have a place to learn, Thelma and others in the Jupiter-Tequesta area opened Jupiter Preparatory School, the first integrated school in Palm Beach County.



Jupiter High School, built in 1927 on Loxahatchee Drive pictured here in 1962, the year Iris Hunter graduated.

1930s

Turner Quay Fernery Workers

Pennock Plantation and smaller ferneries like Turner Quay depended on African American workers to raise, harvest, and ship asparagus plumosus fern.



(Loxahatchee River Historical Society, Gailin Collection)

The Backbone of the Railroad

The Celestial Railroad and Flagler's Florida East Coast (FEC) Railway were built and maintained predominately by black laborers. For the FEC these included section gangs



(Loxahatchee River Historical Society, Ray Kenny Collection)

based out of houses spaced along the line. In the first half of the 20th century, a typical section gang consisted of 4-8 black workers and 1 white supervisor. Here workers cleanup the aftermath of a 1935 train wreck in Jupiter. African Americans also worked as railroad firemen and porters, but were denied access to higher-level positions like foremen, conductors, or engineers.

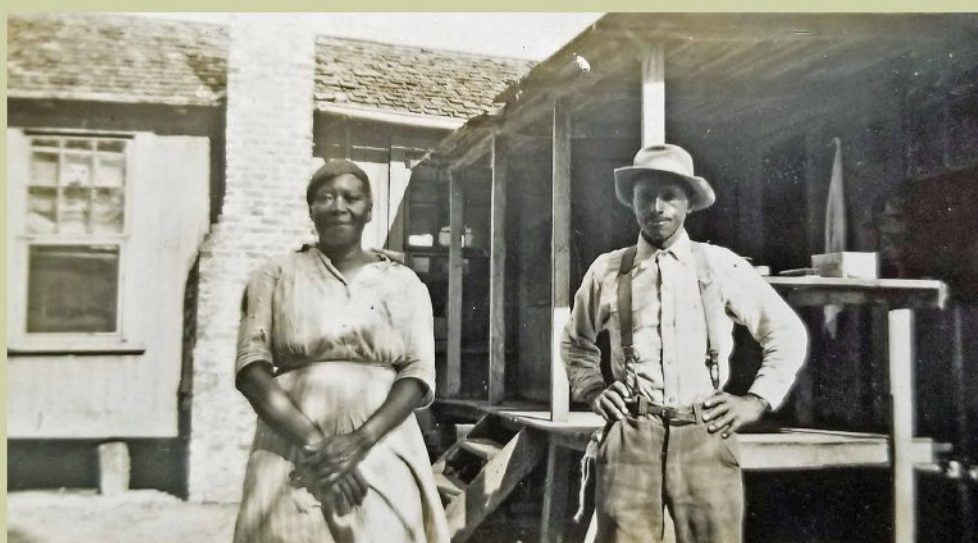
1930s

Dimick Grove Worker



(Lanahatchee River Historical Society, Dimick-Reese Collection)

Dimick Grove Caretakers



(Lanahatchee River Historical Society, Dimick-Reese Collection)

Families like the Lainharts, Dimicks, and Hulls employed black laborers at their Jupiter Farms citrus groves. African Americans also worked as caretakers and butlers of cottages and winter homes, from Jupiter Farms to Hooley Point (now Anchorage Point) to Jupiter Island.

Limestone Creek Community: An Island in Time

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The recent past has brought many changes to the community of West Jupiter. In order to protect a growing number of homes and businesses from flooding, the Army Corps of Engineers converted Limestone Creek into the C-18 Canal in the late 1950s. Since then, rapid development has surrounded the few remaining families. And like many small towns across the country, the quiet voices of the past have become more difficult to hear.

Today's residents still focus their lives around the same values on which their pioneer relatives built the community – church, family and education. Their shared stories enrich our lives and remind us of times not too long ago in Jupiter's past, when neighbors helped each other survive challenges and the quality of life was made richer by a true sense of community.



Thomas Hay, Jr., 1967



Stine's Jupiter Sundries, located on the south side of Center Street and Old Dixie Highway opened for business in August 1949.



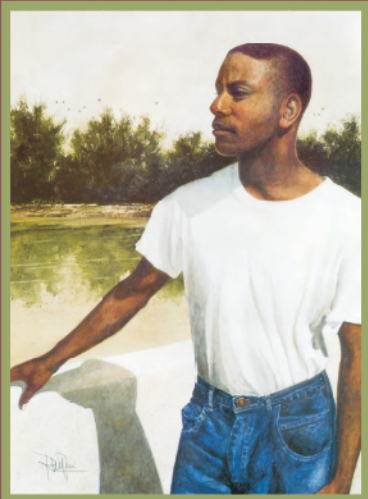
Thomas Hay Sr. (father), Lottie Mae Hay (daughter), Thomas Hay Jr. (son), Maebelle Glover Hay (mother), and two grandchildren.



Grace Hinson Hunter & daughter Beverly Hunter at home on 2nd Street in 1963.



Kay and Stephen Hunter visiting Okeechobee in 2004.



Johney Walker and L.J. "Fats" Young clearing land in Limestone Creek in the late 1950s. (Husbands of Georgia Mae Davis and Nancy Davis)



Shuey's Inn, located on the northwest side of the US highway #1 bridge, employed many residents in the late 1930s.



Hunter family's new house on 2nd Street off of Limestone Creek Road, May 1961.



Good Friends: Ella Preston Rollins and husband Leroy Rollins, Louis Hunter Sr. with wife Grace Hinson Hunter and Thelma Baxter Pittman with husband Charles J. Pittman.



Abe Davis Jr. pulling a wagon with brothers Marvin and Charles Davis with a friend, in 1949 on Military Trail.



Beverly Hunter and three friends.



Kay Ford & Stephen Hunter enjoying Jupiter High School Prom Night on 1978-79.