



Historic Floral Bluff

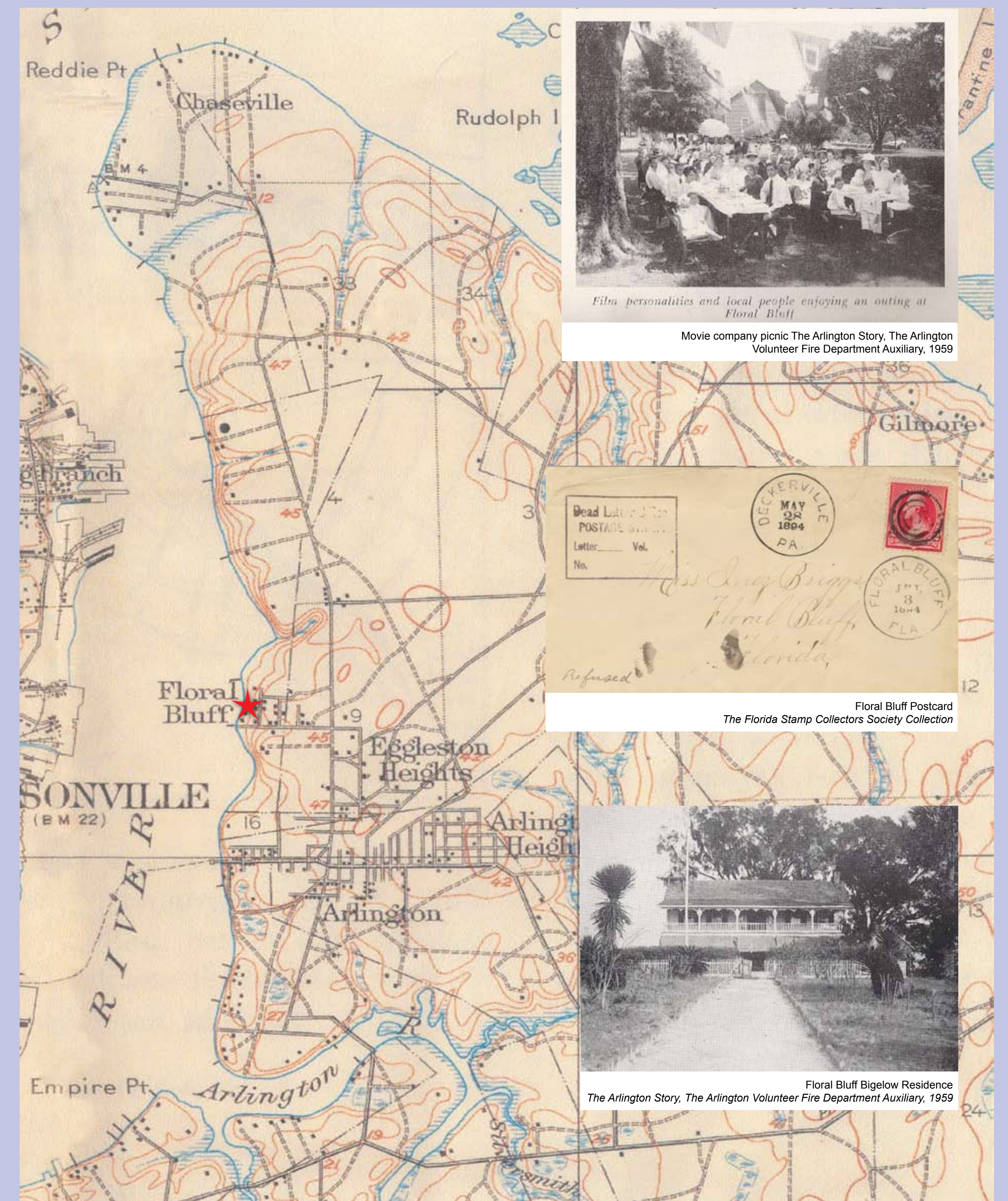
Floral Bluff Plantation, originally part of land granted to Italian immigrant Francis Richard by the Spanish government in the 1790s, occupied over a half mile of riverfront property. Robert Bigelow, a Connecticut native and graduate of Yale University, and his new wife Elizabeth Ann Richard, granddaughter of Francis Richard, moved on the land shortly after their marriage in 1832. Although a slave owner, Robert Bigelow took no part in the Civil War and died shortly after the war in 1868. He and Elizabeth and other family members are buried in the family cemetery on the plantation property.

The Bigelow family occupied several houses on the land throughout the years, but the home locally referred to as the Bigelow Mansion was situated on top of the bluff overlooking the St. Johns River near what is now Plantation Drive. The home was featured in silent movies filmed in the area in the early part of the twentieth century, and burned on Christmas Eve in 1950.

In 1887 a portion of the land was subdivided and developed by Gilbert H. Shepard, who also served as the first postmaster for the community he named after the plantation - Floral Bluff. The town's dock, located at the end of Floral Bluff Avenue, became the center of activity. Albert Frieeseke owned and operated a general store. Women of the community formed their own club and met in a building on the dock. Horses and buggies were often left all day, patiently awaiting their owners' return from Jacksonville.

The Floral Bluff post office closed in 1919 and Frieeseke's store moved to the corner of Floral Bluff Avenue and Chaseville Road (now University Boulevard.) That location later was also the site of several small grocery stores including Ethers, Cottons, and Brinsons. Eventually, like other small but once vibrant communities in the Old Arlington area, Floral Bluff slowly lost its separate identity. In 1997 twelve homes in the Floral Bluff community were documented with the State of Florida as historic resources, including one dating back to 1887.

1918 Arlington Map



For more historic marker locations, visit www.OldArlington.org

This marker erected in 2009 with a grant from **Comcast** through Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.