



Historic Clifton Community

After more than eighty years as part of the Strawberry Plantation, the beautiful point north of the Arlington River now known as Clifton was sold by plantation owner John Sammis in 1873 to the Ocean Grove Association, a religious group from New Jersey. Part of the land was divided into lots to be sold for winter residences and the former Sammis plantation home was turned into a hotel by adding a two story wing to the building. The sectarian resort, known as "The Florida Winter Home," was short-lived perhaps due to its exclusiveness.

William Matthews, a Philadelphia businessman and financier of the resort project, gained title to most of the land and subsequently formed the Arlington Bluff Association, thus the first known use of the name Arlington in the area. A published plat showed a layout of lots advertised with a selling price of \$100, with a certain portion of the proceeds to be devoted to the support of the Cookman Institute for the education of colored teachers. A promotional postcard for Arlington House, the former Sammis home, mentions that the steam ferryboat Clifton made four trips daily to Jacksonville "in the interest of the house." The ferry landing became known as the Clifton Landing and the surrounding area ultimately known as Clifton. Matthews cultivated a large orange grove on the property, and in 1880 the family began spending winters in a home adjacent to the old Sammis residence. A devastating freeze during the winter of 1895 wiped out the grove, but street names Orange Avenue and Grove Street still mark its existence.

Between 1892 and 1900 the Jacksonville, Mayport and Pablo Railroad connected Clifton with the beaches and South Jacksonville, crossing the Arlington River near the Clifton pond. A post office named after William Matthews opened in 1894. In 1912 the post office was moved to the foot of Arlington Road and renamed the Arlington Post Office. Though now a part of the consolidated City of Jacksonville, Clifton, unlike other small communities of Old Arlington, has retained both its name and separate identity.

1918 Arlington Map



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