Seabreeze Boulevard was once the center of the town of Seabreeze

MARK LANE | *THE DAYTONA BEACH NEWS-JOURNAL* | 10:20 am EDT June 14, 2021

Crowds gather on the beach to watch the Clarendon Hotel Fire, Feb. 14, 1909. This was on the site of the present-day Plaza Resort & Spa. FLORIDA ARCHIVES

Cars and a Wright airplane parade on the beach next to the newly rebuilt Clarendon Hotel in 1911.
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The Seabreeze Post Office about 1900. The building was put on rollers and moved to what was then Ocean Boulevard from the Main Street area to help with the volume of mail generated by Helen Post's newsletters and caused some resentment from the next town over.
NEWS-JOURNAL FILE PHOTO

The Seabreeze Recreation Center in the 1950s. It was demolished in 1970 to make way for the widening of State Road A1A. The place had a colorful history. "From clubhouse for a gentlemen's private golf link to a dice-and-dance club run by hoodlums to a municipal recreational center tor teenagers and oldsters," News-Journal Sports Editor Bernard Kahn wrote. It was raided by police in 1949 during a crackdown on beachside gambling. The city bought it in 1952.
NEWS-JOURNAL FILE PHOTO

A woman cycles down Seabreeze Boulevard, then called Ocean Boulevard, in an early 1900s postcard. Note the rows of palm trees. NEWS-JOURNAL FILE PHOTO

The home of Helen and Charles Post on Ocean Boulevard about 1908.
NEWS-JOURNAL FILE PHOTO

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Ocean Boulevard looking west from the Clarendon Hotel, 1902.
FLORIDA ARCHIVES

The Seabreeze Boulevard district in Daytona Beach has been getting new attention lately as city officials, merchants and hospitality industry leaders look to keep the entertainment district economically active and appealing.

Seabreeze Boulevard used to be the center of the town of Seabreeze, a town that merged with Daytona Beach and Daytona to form an expanded Daytona Beach in 1926. The street was originally called Ocean Boulevard.

Helen Wilmans Post fell in love with the place at the turn of the 20th century. She and her husband Charles C. Post, the town of Seabreeze's first mayor, bought land around Sea Breeze — at first, she wrote it as two words — and laid out Ocean Boulevard as a broad dirt road lined with palm trees. The town of Seabreeze incorporated in 1899.

Post was a writer, publisher, New Thought Movement entrepreneur and a mail-order psychic healer. She and her husband printed and sold pamphlets, books and a weekly newspaper. They built a hotel and store and had plans for a "university of psychical research," which is why University Boulevard is called that.

U.S. Post Office stopped delivering mail to her business in 1901 and charged her with mail fraud for claiming to provide healing energies by mail. The case was tossed out by an appellate court, but she was convicted again in 1906 and died the following year.

Nevertheless, once established, the place thrived. The Clarendon Hotel at the eastern end of the street, started as a beach cottage in 1888 and was enlarged and combined with an existing hotel in 1904. A fire destroyed the place in 1909 and it was rebuilt and reopened in 1911.

For many years, the area was famed as a winter season playground for the rich. John D. Rockefeller looked into moving his winter home there before he decided on Ormond.

-- *Mark Lane*

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