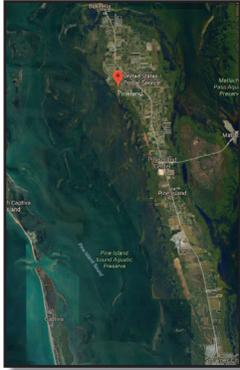


# PINELAND

## *A City of Many Names on the Shores of Charlotte Harbor*

*By SueAnn Germani*

The area now known as Pineland was actually established over 2,000 years ago with the most notable inhabitants being the Calusa Indians. The Calusa culture endured for over 1,500 years until the arrival of the Europeans. Spanish settlers in an attempt to interpret what they thought the Calusa natives were saying called the area "Tanpa" meaning sticks of fire. This may have referred to the numerous lightning strikes the area suffered during the summer months.



Then later when an English map maker by the name of Bernard Romans mistakenly penned the location of Tanpa further north rather than at Charlotte Harbor the city of Tampa came into being, on of course the Tampa Bay. Pineland was also known as Barney's Landing after William Batty purchased 142 acres of land for orange groves in 1885, but it was Minta Martin who gave Pineland it's name. Minta Martin was the wife of Henry Martin and they owned the general store in Bokeelia. Henry purchased some land for agriculture use at Barney's Landing in the early 1900's. While



mail boats came into the Pier at Bokeelia, Minta decided to petition for a post office at Barney's Landing. The US Postal Service required that the location of a Post office have a name so Minta named the area Pineland due to all the pine trees. In 1902 Minta was granted her post Office and it was located on a Calusa shell mound across from the general area of where the Tarpon Lodge is today. In 1920 as roads were being built many of the shell mounds were torn down to use as fill and the little post office was moved eastward down the new roadway. In 1922 Ruby Vance Gill and her husband Percy moved and built a home in Pineland. Ruby became the postmaster of the tiny post office. In 1925 a horrific storm literally blew the post office apart. Ruby then rebuilt the little post office next to their home where both still stand today. The Ruby Gill House is now a part of The Randell Research Center. The Pineland Post Office is one of the smallest US Post Offices in the United States and is owned by Lee County and leased to the US Postal Service. It is still the original 1925 structure and it still has the original post boxes in it. Such a rich cultural area! A culture from 2,000 years ago surrounded by our present day. Drop by and see this city of many names.



*Pineland Post Office*



**Saint James City Civic Association**

**A PLACE OF COMMUNITY**

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