

The Spanish River Papers

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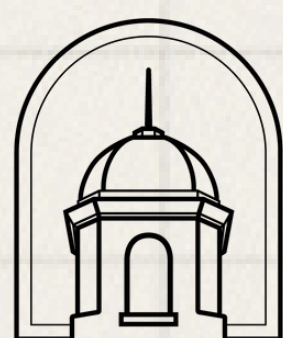
Vol. XXVII

Arvida and the Postwar Development of Boca Raton



ARVIDA

1925



2025

BOCA RATON
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Centennial Year

Arvida and the Postwar Development
of Boca Raton, Florida

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In 1956, the largest real estate deal in United States history at that time took place in Boca Raton, Florida. Arthur Vining Davis, former Aluminum Company of America (Alcoa) executive, purchased the Boca Raton Hotel & Club for \$22,500,000 from millionaire hotelier J. Myer Schine.¹ The historic deal, in fact, included more than just the hotel itself; Davis acquired roughly 1,500 acres of land in the small farming town, including a golf club, Cabana Club, a “partially completed” shopping center, and a mile of beachfront property extending to the Broward County line.² Davis then founded a real estate development firm to take charge of the newly acquired properties, and he called it Arvida. Arvida’s lengthy tenure in Florida can be traced back to this moment, and it is not until the 1980s that the development firm’s direct influence in Boca Raton, and other parts of Florida as well, began to wane. Census records show that the population of the city (within official city limits) in 1950 was 992, while only a decade later the population rocketed to 6,961 people.³ *The Miami Herald* described the city in 1972 as a “rich man’s playground, a haven for the affluent.”⁴ By that point, the population had reached roughly 28,500, a 3,000 percent increase from the 1950 numbers.

By the mid-2020s, greater Boca Raton is home to roughly 250,000 people, over twenty gated residential communities, a state university, high-end shopping centers, and carries a reputation for attracting affluent families and retirees alike. The aim of this paper is to trace the influence of the Arvida Corporation on these developments throughout the city of Boca Raton during the post-World War II years, as well as the tone and long-lasting trends set by Arvida from 1956 to the 1980s that can still be seen today. While the Arvida developments largely raised the property values and the reputation of the city, they also impacted the Black community, the environment, and the city’s historic spaces, leaving behind a precarious legacy. Davis envisioned Boca Raton as an ideal haven for the white, upper middle-class family, with all of the modern conveniences and amenities that would attract them, but he was certainly not the first.

Indeed, Boca Raton had already been “discovered” and “put on the map” as it were by famed society architect and developer Addison Mizner in the land boom of the 1920s. The advertisements for his Mizner Development Corporation, along with the many other real estate developers of the boom era, created quite the stir nationwide before the boom went bust and Mizner himself went bankrupt. In 1942, construction began on an Army Air Field base north of Palmetto Park Road, which ultimately became the Army Air Force’s only radar training base in the United States during World War II. Once again, the little farming town of Boca Raton appeared on the national stage. One can reasonably argue, however, that Boca did

not become “Boca,” for better or for worse, until the postwar era and the arrival of the Arvida development superpower.⁵

Arthur Vining Davis was born in Sharon, Massachusetts in 1867. After graduating with honors from Amherst College, he was hired as the first employee of the Pittsburgh Reduction Company (PRC). He quickly rose through the ranks of the PRC, which became the Aluminum Company of America (Alcoa) in 1907, until formally stepping down as Chairman of the Board in 1948.⁶ During Davis’s tenure as lead executive and driving force, Alcoa provided the vast majority of aluminum utilized by the United States government during both World War I and World War II.⁷ At 82 years of age, Davis moved to Coral Gables and purchased a lot of land and a multitude of businesses throughout the state under an umbrella corporation he called “Arvida,” taking the first two letters of his first, middle, and last names.⁸ In 1962, he passed away at the age of 95, having lived and operated for roughly ten years in Florida, leaving behind a fortune estimated to be around \$350 million dollars (approximately \$4 billion in 2025).⁹ Although Davis's time in Boca was somewhat short (again, similar to earlier visionary Mizner), the mark he and his development firm left on the city proved indelible.

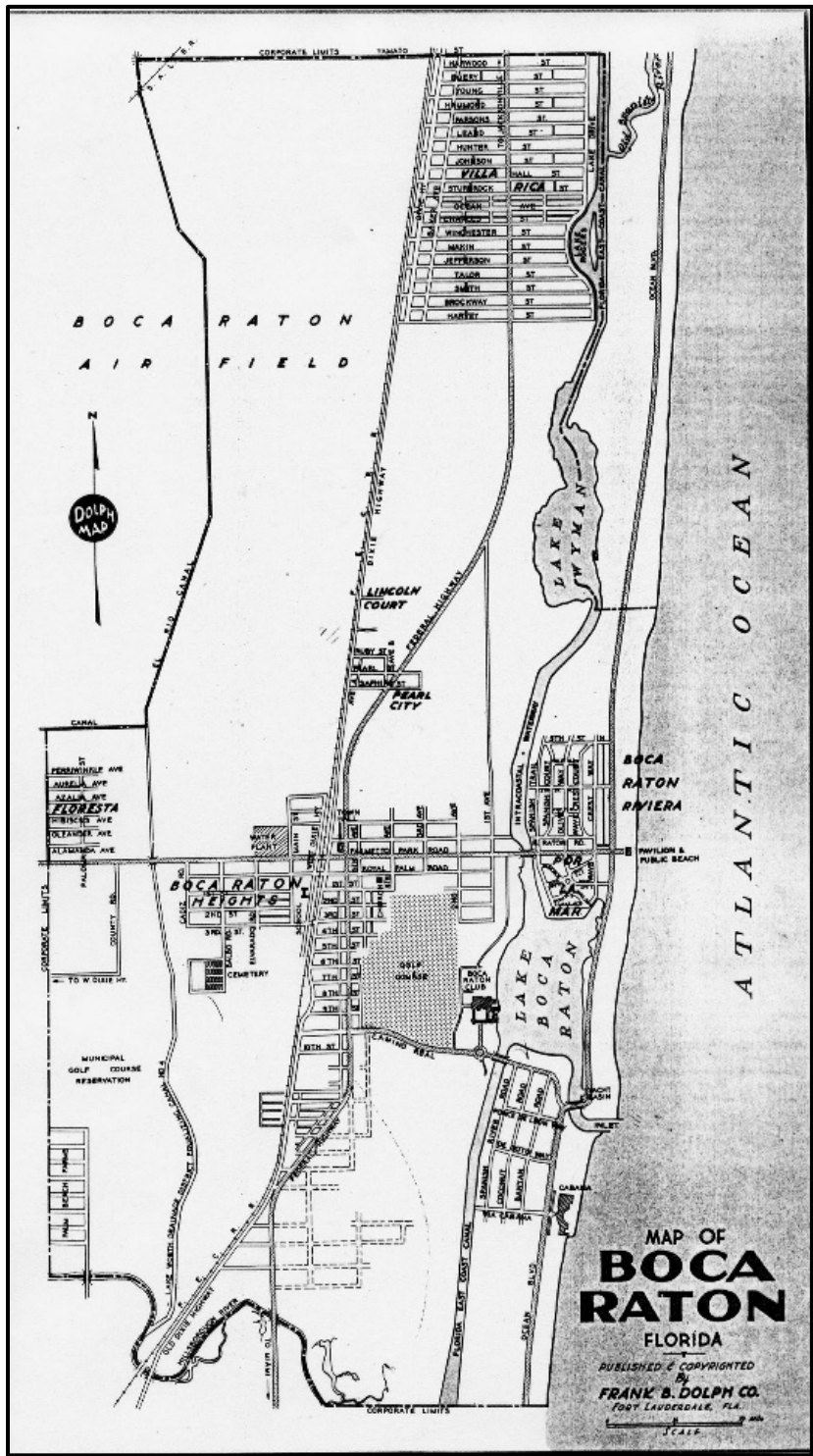


Figure 1: Dolph Insurance map of Boca Raton, Florida, ca. 1946. Courtesy Boca Raton Historical Society.

Davis's 1956 real estate deal to purchase the Boca Raton Hotel & Club marked a major turning point in the city's history. This historic property, designed by Mizner and built upon by subsequent owners such as Clarence Geist and J. Myer Schine, served as the "economic engine" of the small farming town of Boca Raton since its opening in February 1926.¹⁰ Seasonal visitors traveled to the south in large numbers, and the hotel and club employed a lot of locals, some two hundred permanent and six hundred seasonal employees.¹¹ The owner of this property, because of its inherent connections to the town's economy, tended to direct local politics. Clarence Geist for example, who owned the property after Mizner and expanded it significantly, changed the date of local elections to accommodate more of his guests (and investors).¹² As seen in Pittsburgh in its so-called "Renaissance," having economic and political clout can be incredibly helpful in facilitating development.¹³ Stepping into this role, Davis and his Arvida development corporation took to revitalizing not just the hotel, but the entire city itself. Davis wrote:

In the accelerated pace of Florida's industrial and population growth, it seems to me important to preserve some sections of the state in the atmosphere of quiet luxury which once provided the motivation here. While Florida will always offer ideal home sites for the middle-income group which constitutes the bulk of the population, our increased national prosperity dictates that we provide also for the group whose accomplishments enable them to enjoy the finest. It is in this light that we plan to develop the Boca Raton area on a level second to none in the world.¹⁴

Davis built on a long tradition of real estate development in the United States. In the late 1800s in Baltimore, Maryland, a real estate development firm called the Roland Park Company set the tone for large suburban projects throughout the country. Historian Paige Glotzer details their rise to prominence and the trends they set in terms of restrictive covenants and building standards for their developments, including the neighborhoods of Roland Park, Guilford, and others in and around Baltimore. The Roland Park Company (RPC), according to Glotzer, operated very successfully under "the premise that white neighborhoods consisting of single-family homes had high property values."¹⁵ It would be unsurprising that a shrewd businessman such as Davis would have likely observed the profitability of the RPC and others in subsequent decades following its example in their own projects. "Developers, city planners, and government officials all began to cite the [RPC] as a direct inspiration," contends Glotzer.¹⁶ In

fact, when asked about his motivation for purchasing so much land in Boca Raton and other areas of Florida, Davis replied, “making money, of course.”¹⁷

Arthur Vining Davis worked to refurbish and renovate the hotel properties while also bringing in new amenities to attract "the right kind" of people.¹⁸ Davis felt that polo, above all other sports, would accomplish just that. In preparation for the upcoming polo season, Arvida invested a large sum of money into constructing two "emerald green" playing fields, an exercise track, stables, practice fields, living quarters for staff, a locker room for players, and, of course, a lounge. This development project created a lot of publicity for Boca Raton and the hotel, while at the same time setting a new tone for the city.

The Royal Palm Yacht and Country Club (RPYCC) was the next Arvida development project that Davis undertook, a luxurious housing subdivision south of the hotel between the Intracoastal and Federal Highway completed in 1959. Arvida set "stringent architectural and building specifications" for the housing development with rules such as white roofs only.¹⁹ The residential development housed a large clubhouse, an eighteen-hole golf course, a yacht club, and an underground electrical system.²⁰ In this way, the signature style of all future Arvida developments was brewed during this project: the neat landscaping, winding curvilinear roads, and the inherent privacy granted by the elite gated community. Homes in this community ranged from \$10,000 to \$45,000 (\$100,000 to \$500,000 in 2025 dollars) and all featured either water or golf course views. Arthur Vining Davis saw RPYCC open and the first homes sell but died shortly after. Upon Davis's death, Brown L. Whatley became the new president of Arvida. Whatley and financier Milton Weir continued Davis's vision for RPYCC despite critiques from local builders struggling to uphold the Arvida standards. These critiques soon proved moot as demand necessitated a redesign from 723 home plots to 742.²¹ "The plush subdivision helped establish a new rule for the Boca Raton real estate markets: 'The bigger and more expensive they are the better they sell,'" states local historian Donald Curl.²²

Effects on the Black Community

The 2020 census reports that the number of Black residents in the city equates to 5.7 percent of the total population of Boca Raton, while the average for Palm Beach County is 17 percent.²³ “Unlike almost every other beach-side community in South Florida, Boca Raton has no vast black ghetto stretching west of the railroad tracks,” wrote journalist Nancy Beth Jackson in 1972.²⁴ This quote begs the questions: why not, and what did Arvida have to do with it?

In 1934, following the land boom and well before Arthur Vining Davis purchased the hotel, an ordinance limited the “colored section” to three blocks in the northern portions of the city.²⁵ This area of Boca Raton was already known as Pearl City (founded 1915) and mainly housed farmworkers who labored on local winter vegetable fields owned by white settlers. In 1947, Federal Highway (US-1) was built on the eastern margin of historic Pearl City, which "not only removed land from [the Black neighborhood] but also created an effective barrier to black expansion eastward."²⁶ Integration became the legal standard for the nation following the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, therefore informal agreements among landowners restricted the sale of land to people of color outside Pearl City.²⁷ One Boca resident was quoted as stating, "blacks have been contained in Pearl City" since before the Second World War.²⁸

In 1956, the Arvida Corporation entered the Boca Raton real estate market with the purchase of the hotel and in the early 1960s “The Wall” was built along the northern border of the historic Black community. Many local residents viewed the wall as a physical barrier to prevent new white homeowners in Boca Raton from having to see Pearl City and its surrounding areas. Arvida’s vision for Boca as an elite enclave for the white, middle- and upper-class family certainly held no space for a Black community. The wall prevented black neighborhoods from expanding in any direction. In fact, in addition to the wall's existence as a symbol of discrimination, it is important to note that the wall also violates code with a height far too tall for city ordinances.²⁹

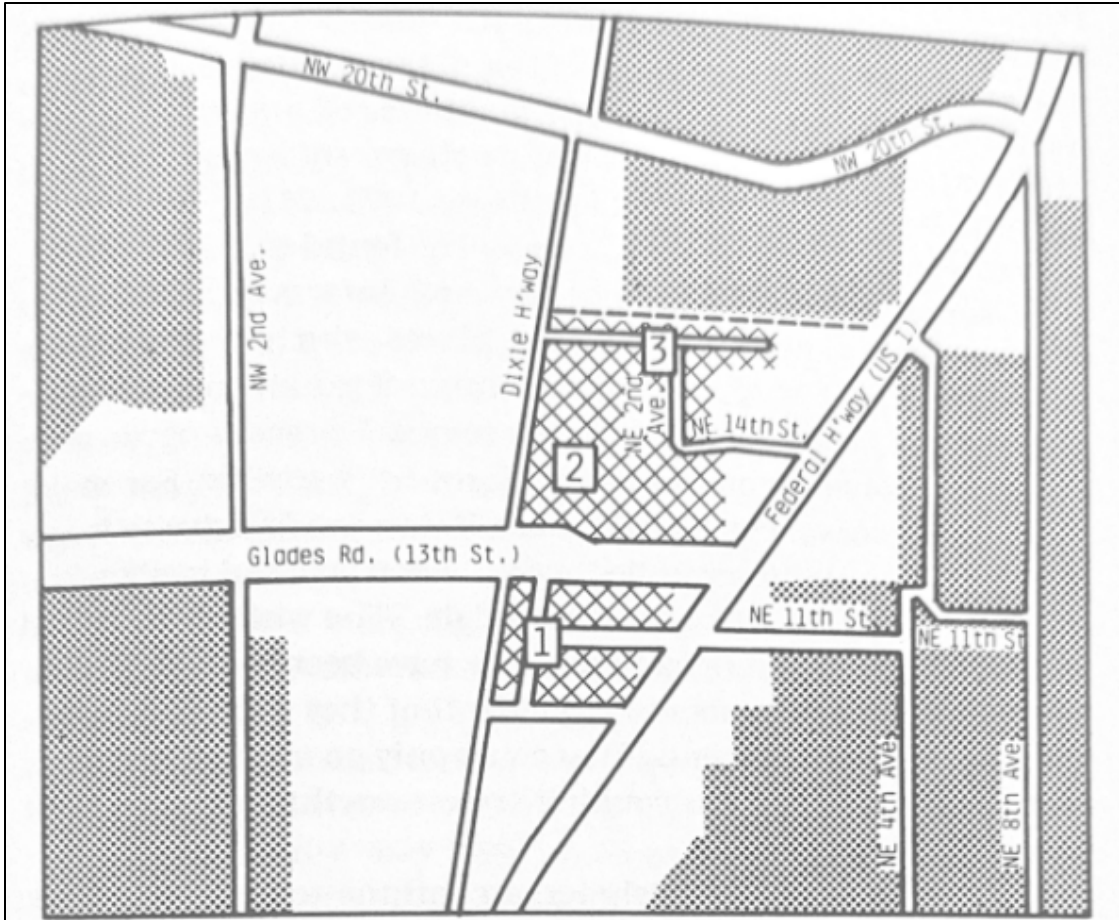


Figure 3. Ethnic Neighborhoods of Boca Raton.

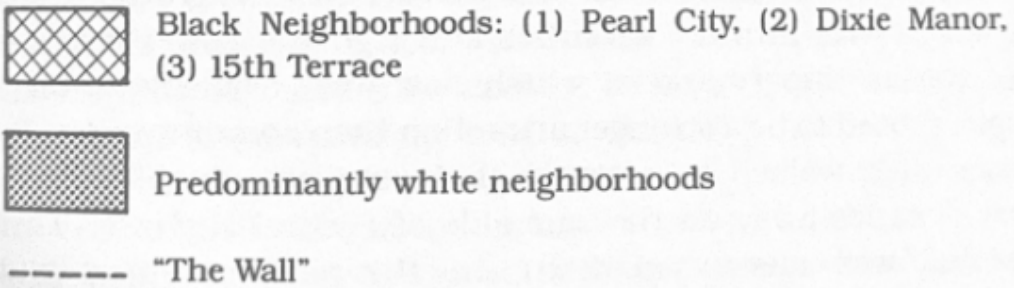


Figure 2: Map of cultural neighborhoods in Boca Raton, Florida. Dr. Arthur Evans, Florida Atlantic University.

In the mid-1980s, Dr. Arthur Evans, a sociologist at Florida Atlantic University, conducted an oral history project with the intent of documenting the folk history of Pearl City, ultimately publishing in 1990 his analyses of the residents' stories. While specific restrictive covenants may not have existed on paper, with property values on the rise, certain areas of Boca simply became inaccessible for Black homeowners or renters. "That eliminates the blacks from there because then the whites are buying, so you are out," explained Lois Martin, namesake of Lois Martin Way in Boca Raton, in her oral history interview.³⁰ "Arthur Vining Davis thought he was going to buy us out one time...move us out...they told us what they would give us would be enough to pay for a new lot and house up in that area." This proposed new residential area lay farther west of the city limits, on 51st Street "about where IBM is" and was underdeveloped compared to Boca proper, therefore proving unattractive to the residents of Pearl City close to downtown amenities. Molly Rich, another resident, recalled, "We met with the President, or whoever represented Arvida, and he said he would build low-cost homes for [the residents of] Pearl City, but they said at that time there were no stores out there."³¹

"I wouldn't sell this place for nothin' in the world... I worked hard and I got it, and I am going to keep it," Idella Glades recalled defiantly.³² It was this firm resistance in the face of the almighty Arvida Corporation that retained Pearl City, or what was left of it after the completion of Federal Highway. This contrasts with other areas of the country during the push for downtown redevelopment where relocation destroyed historically Black communities in the name of development for affluent white families.³³ Although the residents of Pearl City refused to sell and were determined to stay, issues arose that still made life difficult for them.

Living conditions within Pearl City, particularly the apartment housing development called Dixie Manor, fell far below the standards that Arvida set for its white, middle- and upper-class residential communities. A *Boca Raton News* article from 1966, the height of Arvida's development in the city, reported sewer line issues causing "serious health hazards" for residents of Dixie Manor. The article also reported that the Boca Raton city council voted not to remedy the situation with city funds, quoting one councilman as saying, "that's your problem."³⁴ Despite this bid for help, just one year later in 1967, city manager Alan Alford initiated "daily tours" of the Dixie Manor apartment complex to inspect for sub-standard plumbing features and issue citations.³⁵

These citations fell in line with a long history of nuisance laws and other restrictive legislation throughout the United States to push out or keep out communities of color from certain areas or developments. "So central were sewers

to the creation of segregated suburbs,” writes historian Paige Glotzer, that they factored heavily into developers’ efforts to accomplish their goals.³⁶ The Roland Park Company, operating in Baltimore in the early twentieth century, realized the utility of these ordinances and employed them in their development projects.

One could reasonably conclude that the actions of the city officials in combination with the efforts of local developers, including most notably Arvida, constituted an attempt to “sanitize” Boca Raton. "The people shouldn't be pushed to get rid of their property if they don't want to," stated Pearl City resident Jacqueline Harvey.³⁷ By either attempting to buy out Black neighborhoods or harassing them with code violation citations that cost time and money to rectify, the goal appears to have been excising the Black community from Boca's elite enclave. "Florida Atlantic University and IBM found it very difficult to recruit black professionals because they could not find housing in Boca Raton," reported Virginia Snyder in her *Boca Raton News* article.³⁸ The lack of diversity and abundance of “snooty” attitude in Boca featured in a *New York Times* article in 1973 reading, “black children are bused in to provide an aura of desegregation.”³⁹

Arvida developments, most notably RPYCC, raised property values in Boca Raton to figures unattainable by those who were not affluent, and more insidiously those who were not white. The long-lasting effects of the efforts of Arvida and city officials can still be felt today. A housing equity study completed in the summer of 2023 by the Jorge M. Pérez Metropolitan Center at Florida International University concluded that there was a lack of affordable housing in Palm Beach County.⁴⁰ The scholars and professionals involved in the study traced the history of segregation, redlining, and zoning ordinances and its continuing impacts on communities of color. Unsurprisingly, based on the information presented in this paper, Pearl City is mentioned numerous times as a prime example illustrating these factors.

Push Westward

Arvida had officially set the tone, or the gold standard, for future development in Boca with the high-end, gated residential community of Royal Palm Yacht and Country Club. Next, Brown Whatley oversaw the construction of five luxury condominiums, including Sabal Point right on the beach. In 1966, throughout the city of Boca, \$19.4 million dollars were spent on private construction followed by \$15.4 million the following year.⁴¹ Arvida, being the largest developer in Boca at the time, most certainly made up the vast majority of that private construction. In January of 1967, Whatley announced that Arvida had purchased 1,800 acres of land west of the city limits.⁴² Davis had paid for the Florida Turnpike’s Glades Road exit, dedicated in 1961, which served his future developments in Boca West and University Park.⁴³

With the prime real estate in Pearl City near downtown proving unattainable, Arvida looked to the western provinces. Construction on the newest Arvida development, Boca West, began in late 1968 and continued into 1969, with the gated residential community and country club opening in 1974. Arvida also began an expansion of the Boca Raton Hotel & Club, requiring the demolition of one of the more historic quadrants of the property. The new project culminated in 1969 with "The Tower," a twenty-seven-story building right on Lake Boca Raton with 257 guest rooms and a restaurant on top. The Tower was briefly the tallest inhabited building between Jacksonville and Miami, and was meant to "enhance the hotel's reputation for glamour and luxury."⁴⁴

In 1972, Charles Cobb assumed the helm at Arvida and "embarked on an aggressive development program."⁴⁵ Both he and new CFO John Temple came to Boca from California and headed the company's major developments in the western provinces of the area throughout the 1970s, including the planned residential communities of Estancia (1975), Paseos (1976), Timbercreek and Millpond (1978). These subdivisions followed the successful model that RPYCC set nearly two decades prior. Houses in Timbercreek, for example, started at \$90,000 which equates to about \$500,000 in 2025 figures. Advertisements for the Timbercreek community boasted eleven acres of "private leisure parks," lush landscaping, "sidewalks that line every street," and a convenient location to shopping and schools.⁴⁶ Homes in Estancia sold for \$229,000 by 1979 (\$1.2 million in 2025).⁴⁷

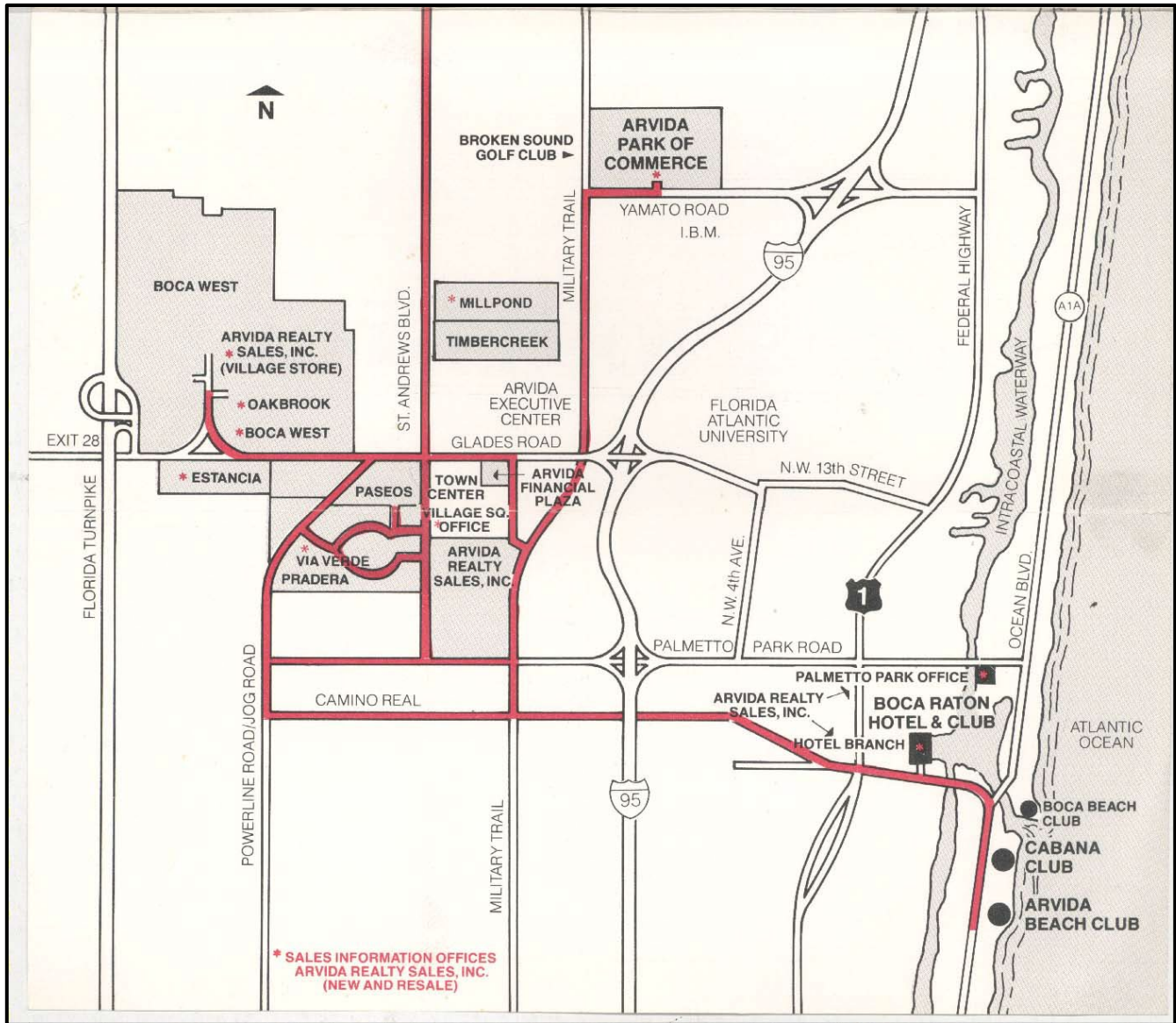


Figure 3: Map of Arvida developments in Boca Raton, FL. Courtesy Boca Raton Historical Society (2016.72.21).

University Park

“It was what they called a paper city,” Joan Styers recalls in her oral history interview for the Boca Raton Historical Society in 2024.⁴⁸ In 1961, she received a letter from her bosses at Arvida stating that she was now the clerk of the city of University Park. The real estate development company had created its own municipality out of land west of the city limits of Boca Raton. All of the city officials were Arvida employees, including the mayor (Milton Weir), city council members, and city clerk, Joan Styers, who was usually the executive secretary to the top echelon of Arvida executives. Dorothy Wilken, future mayor of Boca Raton, lived on land that was owned by Arvida and now part of the new city of University Park, and soon found herself frustrated with the lack of transparency.⁴⁹ Wilken stated that the city council meetings were not public, or at least the details were not made public, which she felt was intentional. “It was far more convenient to be incorporated as a municipality” than it was to be a private corporation “dealing with other municipalities” and their zoning ordinances and density ceilings.

Ultimately, the city was annexed into Boca in April 1971 after twelve years of existence. It is not entirely clear why Arvida came to support the annexation. A *Boca Raton News* article from the month prior titled “Arvida Supporting Annexation Plan,” clearly demonstrates that Brown Whatley was working with the Boca Raton city council and other officials to facilitate the process, but it does not shed light onto possible reasons why. It is certainly possible that the costs of supplying all of the services a city is expected to provide to its residents may have proved too overwhelming. In the Wilken interview, the interviewer posits that Arvida may have run out of “extensions granted by the State” of Florida.⁵⁰ What certainly is clear is that Boca’s size increased significantly, and that following a major legal battle, Arvida wanted to de-annex what was University Park.

The Superpower Faces Pushback

“Rich Boca Raton Decides It’s Time to Stop Growing,” declared *The New York Times*. The February 1973 cover featured a dapper gentleman selling champagne out of an ice cream cart on the Royal Palm Polo Fields.⁵¹ With all of the growth and development in the city, much of it under Arvida's purview, it is unsurprising that the historical narrative leads to fervent resistance from certain sectors of the local community. This resistance, however, certainly exposed the classism and elitism brewing within the "clean" gated communities of Boca.

Norman Wymbbs, who had served on Boca's city council, and Dorothy Wilken, concerned about "over-development, harm to the environment, and increasing unavailability of resources," formed Citizens for Reasonable Growth (CRG) in 1972.⁵² After gathering over five thousand signatures on a petition, the organization proposed for referendum a growth cap of 40,000 "dwelling units," the first of its kind in United States history.⁵³ The referendum ultimately passed and went into effect that same year. Local courts were soon flooded with lawsuits against this growth cap, most notably from the area's major developers, including, of course, Arvida. The Palm Beach District Court was soon faced with hearing these lawsuits and making a decision on the future of development in Boca Raton.

Overall, the growth cap litigation ultimately came down to two major arguments. The conservative CRG and similar proponents of the legislation argued that the limits on development would prevent "Browardization" of Boca Raton and the tainting of the city's reputation as an elite area. These views highlight the elitism, and to a certain extent racism, so ingrained in Boca's culture which were fostered during the Arvida years. "Thank God... if Arvida hadn't bought up enormous tracts of land, we could have had a Pompano here," reflected a local business owner.⁵⁴ On the other side of the debate, the developers (Arvida included) argued that while the population of Boca had indeed risen rapidly, the living conditions of its residents were never compromised. The new construction projects were luxurious by any standards, and the city of Boca Raton "provided reliable infrastructure along with clean water and air."⁵⁵ The circuit court judge on the case ultimately ruled in favor of the developers, reiterating that the growth cap itself was not constitutional as it did not protect anyone's safety, but instead served to feed into conservative's fears regarding natural forward progress. The case was appealed and taken to not just the Florida State Supreme Court but the Supreme Court of the United States, both of which refused to hear it and upheld the previous rulings.⁵⁶

While the growth cap proved to be unsuccessful, it certainly marks a turning point for Boca Raton. After years of unchecked development and growth, mostly at the hands of Arvida, the citizens had certainly become concerned about things going too far too quickly. After all, Boca Raton prided itself on its status as a bastion of the privileged and, in their eyes, they had a vested interest in keeping it that way. Amidst the growth cap battle, a prominent local banker stated, "I don't think it's necessary for every community to be a stratified cross-section of the United States. The community should and can well be selective."⁵⁷ The citizens of Boca simultaneously enjoyed the developments and additions to the community brought by Arvida, and fought to prevent any additional people from entering the city and enjoying them. With this mindset, and despite the failure of the growth

cap legislation deemed unconstitutional, the city adopted a land use plan which ultimately placed density ceilings on properties within the city limits. Unluckily for Arvida, their most profitable developments on the western edges of the city which were formerly part of their “paper town” University Park had been annexed into Boca Raton in the early 1970s. As a result of the density ceiling ordinances in Boca, “changing development plans from 16,000 units to 8,000 was typical” stated John Temple in a 1993 interview for the *Boca Raton Business Journal*.⁵⁸ Less units meant less profits for the real estate developer. Arvida executives did initiate the process of de-annexing their holdings, but this proved resoundingly unsuccessful. “I just laughed and laughed and laughed... I’m still laughing,” concluded Wilken.⁵⁹

In 1980, Arvida opened its Town Center Mall, one of its last major contributions to Boca, to accommodate the residents of their westerly developments. Boca Raton’s Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) was created the same year to address the fact that these projects pulled businesses and families to the western edges of the city rather than the downtown area. The rest of the original downtown area had also fallen into disrepair by the late 1970s and was in need of revitalization. Clearly this need was large enough that the citizens of Boca Raton voted in a referendum to fund the development of a new shopping and dining district in this area. The plans soon grew to include a cultural center featuring a theater, an amphitheater, and an art museum, too, all with the goal of bringing business and economic foot traffic back to downtown. The referendum passed 7,000 to 4,212 and the resulting Mizner Park opened in 1991. Interestingly, though created as a remedy to Arvida development out west, the CRA followed the same stringent aesthetic curated by Arvida and continued to allow it to define Boca into the 1990s: no automobile dealerships can locate in the city and no McDonald’s restaurants may display their signature golden arches.⁶⁰

Another notable community response to the rapid development of Boca Raton involved purchasing beach land to preserve for posterity. Sabal Point and the Boca Inlet buildings, both Arvida projects, were just two of many luxury condominiums built on the city’s coastline during the late 1960s. Six bond issues passed through city council with funds to acquire Red Reef, Spanish River, and South Beach to create parks and simultaneously prevent more condominiums from springing up, destroying the natural environment, and blocking locals’ beach access.⁶¹ In 2025, these remain the only open spaces along the coast of the city untouched by developers.

A push for historic preservation also developed among the citizens of Boca. The Junior League, a volunteer organization composed of affluent housewives,

played a large role in the formation of the Boca Raton Historical Society (BRHS) in 1972. Communities across the country (including Boca), confronted with the bicentennial of the United States, were filled with a newfound respect for saving historical properties as a means of preserving sense of community and local history. Developers like Arvida were seen as a threat to such goals. Between 1972 and 1975, the BRHS fought for historic designations and preservation of historic properties throughout the city including Town Hall (which is now a history museum and home of the Historical Society), the F.E.C. Railway Station, and the Mizner Administration Buildings. Interestingly, however, Pearl City's historic neighborhood designation was not attained until 2000.

In 1984, Arvida Corporation was acquired by Walt Disney after a hostile buyout.⁶² The company continued to exist, mostly on paper, for quite some time after but its direct role in Boca's development had come to an end. While Arthur Vining Davis was only involved directly in Boca Raton's development for a few years before his passing in 1962, it is clear to see that he and his real estate development firm had a remarkable impact on the city between 1956 and 1984. Despite the immense growth and development, Arvida's legacy is not undisputed. Beautifully planned residential communities and high-end shopping centers captured the luxurious vision of a leisurely, affluent lifestyle in the city. The promotion of these developments projected an image to the rest of the country as a "rich [white] man's playground" which was fostered under the Arvida years. This ethos, and the physical styles of the Arvida projects, remain in the city to this day. The effects on the Black community of Boca, however, were just as long-lasting as proven by a recent housing equity study. Likewise, the pushback from the community against Arvida's actions beginning in the late 1960s continuing into the 1980s and 90s also contributes to the narrative of its disputed legacy in Boca Raton, Florida. In short, Arvida's role in the growth of what was once a small farming town simply cannot be overstated.

¹ J. Gwendolynne Berry, "Inside the Boca Raton Resort & Club," *The Palm Beach Post*, February 21, 2012 <https://rb.gy/n3cu19>; Nancy Beth Jackson, "What Boca Raton Does Not Have," *The Miami Herald*, October 15, 1972, 52.

² Donald W. Curl, *Boca Raton: A Pictorial History* (The Donning Company Publishers: 1999), 150.

³ Census records, City of Boca Raton, Boca Raton Historical Society Collections.

⁴ Jackson, "What Boca," 52.

⁵ Boca Raton Historical Society, "Our History," www.bocahistory.org/our-history. Accessed June 21, 2025.

⁶ The Arthur Vining Davis Foundation, “Founder & History Timeline,” <https://www.avdf.org/about/founder-and-history>. Accessed June 21, 2025.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ “Arthur Davis Forms Company to Develop Vast Florida Lands...,” *The New York Times*, September 19, 1958, 37.

⁹ According to the online U.S. Inflation Calculator, <https://www.usinflationcalculator.com>; “Arthur Davis Feeling Fine,” *The Palm Beach Post*, January 14, 1960, 10.

¹⁰ Susan Gillis, *Boomtime Boca: Boca Raton in the 1920s* (Arcadia, 2007). eBook.

¹¹ Many of these employees were African Americans who resided in Pearl City and who performed jobs such as golf caddy, dishwasher, room cleaner, waiter/bar staff, etc., at the Hotel & Club: see both Curl, *A Pictorial History*, 150, and Evans and Lee, *Pearl City: A Black Community Remembers*, 25 and 27 and 71.

¹² Curl, *A Pictorial History*, 86-90; Jumping ahead quite a bit into the history, Arvida’s dealings in Florida real estate continued to prove inherently political into the George H. W. Bush administration. According to Arvida executive John Temple’s autobiography (page 209), Arvida investors included Jeb Bush (Florida governor) who was involved in the Arvida ‘Cocoplum’ development in Miami. Arvida president Chuck Cobb, and his wife Sue, were named ambassadors to Iceland and Jamaica, respectively, during the first Bush administration.

¹³ Mark H. Rose and Roger Biles, *A Good Place to Do Business* (Temple University Press, 2022), Introduction and Chapter 1.

¹⁴ Subject file: Arvida, n.d. Boca Raton Historical Society collections.

¹⁵ Paige Glotzer, *How the suburbs were segregated* (Columbia University Press, 2020), Introduction. eBook.

¹⁶ Glotzer, *Suburbs*, Introduction. She also discusses J.C. Nichols and his role in Kansas City in this work.

¹⁷ “Arthur Vining Davis Termed Fabulous Genius,” *The Palm Beach Post*, July 8, 1956, 42; Encyclopedia.com, “Arthur Vining Davis,” <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/arthur-vining-davis>. Accessed July 10, 2025.

¹⁸ Curl, *A Pictorial History*, 150.

¹⁹ Royal Palm Yacht & Country Club, “History” webpage. <https://royalpalm.com/rpycc-history/>. Accessed June 26, 2025.

²⁰ Curl, *A Pictorial History*, 152.

²¹ RPYCC, “History,” <https://royalpalm.com/rpycc-history/>.

²² Curl, *A Pictorial History*, 151.

²³ United States Government, Census Data, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/bocaratoncityflorida/PST045223>. Accessed June 23, 2025; Census report for 1970 does not include racial breakdown, but in 1980 the percentage of residents who identify as Black was 1.9% of the city’s population. The state of Florida’s average was roughly 14%. https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1980a_flABCs1-02.pdf, 7-8.

²⁴ Jackson, “What Boca,” *The Miami Herald*, 11.

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- ²⁵ Arthur S. Evans, Jr., and David Lee, *Pearl City, Florida: A Black Community Remembers* (Florida Atlantic University Press, 1990), 135; Boca Raton, Ordinance #112, “An Ordinance of the Town of Boca Raton, Prescribing the Limits wherein Persons of the Ethiopian or Negro Race May Reside and Prescribing the Penalty of the Violation of Same,” adopted August 13, 1934. Boca Raton Historical Society collections.
- ²⁶ Evans and Lee, *Pearl City Remembers*, 135.
- ²⁷ Ordinance #112, which created the color line, was repealed by the passage of Ordinance #253, adopted February 28, 1956. Boca Raton Historical Society collections.
- ²⁸ Jackson, “What Boca,” *The Miami Herald*, 12.
- ²⁹ Virginia Snyder, “The Wall,” *Boca Raton News*, August 12, 1973; Evans and Lee, *Pearl City Remembers*, 136.
- ³⁰ Lois Martin oral history interview, conducted by Dr. Arthur Evans of Florida Atlantic University, 1984-85, BRHS Collections (2018.082.017).
- ³¹ Molly Rich oral history interview, conducted by Dr. Evans, BRHS Collections (2018.082.015).
- ³² Idella Glades oral history interview, conducted by Dr. Evans, BRHS Collections (2018.082.008).
- ³³ See Rose and Biles *A Good Place to do Business* as well as the Black Bottom Archives for additional examples of Black community destruction for real estate or highway development.
- ³⁴ “‘That’s Your Problem,’ Council Tells Landlord,” *Boca Raton News*, May 19, 1966, cover.
- ³⁵ “City Cracks Down on Housing Area,” *Boca Raton News*, May 9, 1967, 1.
- ³⁶ Glotzer, *Suburbs segregated*, Chapter 2. eBook.
- ³⁷ Oral history interview transcript, Jacqueline Harvey, conducted by Dr. Arthur Evans of Florida Atlantic University, 1984-5, BRHS collections (2018.082.010).
- ³⁸ Virginia Snyder, “The Wall,” *Boca Raton News*: August 12, 1973.
- ³⁹ Jon Nordwimer, “Rich Boca Raton Decides to Stop Growing,” *The New York Times*, February 9, 1973, 37.
- ⁴⁰ Ned Murray, et al. “Palm Beach County Housing Equity Study.” Florida International University and the Housing Leadership Council of Palm Beach County, June 2023. https://www.hlcpbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Palm-Beach-County_HousingEquityStudy07142023.pdf
- ⁴¹ “City Building Tops \$15.4 million,” *Boca Raton News*, January 1, 1967, cover.
- ⁴² “\$5.3 Million Purchase Announced,” *Boca Raton News*, January 22, 1967, cover.
- ⁴³ Debra Banerjee, “A Century in the Making.” *The Boca Raton Observer*, June 9, 2025. Accessed June 21, 2025. <https://bocaratonobserver.com/culture/features/a-century-in-the-making/>; “Arvida Officials Ask...,” *The Palm Beach Post*, October 27, 1959, 23.
- ⁴⁴ Boca Raton Historical Society, “Those were the days” virtual exhibit; Curl, *A Pictorial History*, 157.
- ⁴⁵ Curl, *A Pictorial History*, 158.
- ⁴⁶ Timbercreek residential community advertisement, Arvida Corporation, *Boca Raton News*, December 17, 1978, 15C.

⁴⁷ “In the Heart of Estancia” advertisement, Estancia residential community, Arvida Corporation, *Boca Raton News*, July 22, 1979, 20D.

⁴⁸ Joan Styers oral history interview, 2024. Boca Raton Historical Society collections (2024.191.001).

⁴⁹ Dorothy Wilken oral history interview, conducted by Thomas Wood and Christian Robinson, June 26, 2024. BRHS collections. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1rqHH4eTCng&t=22s&ab_channel=BocaHistory

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Nordwimer, “Rich Boca Raton,” *The New York Times*, February 9, 1973, cover and 37. <https://www.nytimes.com/1973/02/09/archives/boca-raton-decides-to-stop-growing-the-masses-unwanted.html>

⁵² Water quality tests were conducted by county officials on canals throughout Palm Beach County and it was determined that Boca Raton was one of the county’s highest polluters (*Boca Raton News*, January 31, 1971). Many local residents blamed Arvida and the waste produced by their rapid development for the pollution. City councilman Norman Wymbs ran on a platform that focused on preserving the natural beauty of Boca Raton in 1971. In response to the array of accusations regarding pollution, Arvida released a documentary short titled “Boca Raton In Harmony with the Environment,” a heavy-handed publicity piece clearly intended to counteract their souring reputation. <https://youtu.be/oPym0XrEtw>.

⁵³ Christian Robinson, “The Population Bomb: How National Anxiety about Population Growth Fueled Boca Raton’s Growth Cap Legislation,” *Spanish River Papers* 26, February 2025: 1.

⁵⁴ Jackson, “What Boca,” *The Miami Herald*, Oct 15, 1972, 11/293; Pompano Beach is a nearby city in neighboring Broward County with a 27.6% Black population (as of 2020). Deerfield Beach is the other major city between Pompano and Boca and it has a 24.8% Black population (as of 2020), *US Census Records*.

⁵⁵ Robinson, "Growth Cap," 10.

⁵⁶ Robinson, "Growth Cap," 11-12.

⁵⁷ Jackson, “What Boca,” *The Miami Herald*, 11/293.

⁵⁸ “Land Use Wars Dominate,” *Boca Raton Business Journal*, December 20, 1993, 23.

⁵⁹ Wilken oral history, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1rqHH4eTCng&t=22s&ab_channel=BocaHistory.

⁶⁰ Curl, *A Pictorial History*, 171-173.

⁶¹ Boca Raton Historical Society, “Those Were the Days” virtual exhibit, <https://www.bocahistory.org/those-were-the-days> ; *Boca Raton News*, “Growing Beach Demand,” April 10, 1969.

⁶² Joan Styers Oral history interview for Boca Raton Historical Society, 2024; Kathryn Harris, “Arvida Appears a Hit for Disney,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 30, 1986, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1986-03-30-fi-1901-story.html>. Accessed July 21, 2025.