

## Ocean Ridge



*An aerial looking north with Boynton Beach on the left side of the canal and Ocean Ridge on the right side, ca. 1920s-1930s.*

Courtesy HSPBC.

**Ocean Ridge** lies between the towns of **Briny Breezes** to the south and **Manalapan** to the north, just below the **South Lake Worth (Boynton) Inlet**. The town's land area of just less than one square mile includes three adjacent islands at its north end in the **Intracoastal Waterway**, connected to Ocean Ridge by bridges. Sabal Island, in the center, formed naturally; the other two were the result of fill deposited when the **South Lake Worth (Boynton) Inlet** and **Intracoastal Waterway** were dredged.

In 1877 **Dexter Hubel from Michigan** filed a homestead claim for the oceanfront land on the ridge, now near the east end of Ocean Avenue. No lumber was available to build, and Hubel gave up the homestead before 1880. **Major Nathan Smith Boynton**, also from Michigan, purchased the property in 1894 and built the 45-room Boynton Beach Hotel just south of what is now Ocean Avenue. The first bridge over the **East Coast Canal** (now part of the **Intracoastal Waterway**), in 1911, connected Ocean Avenue on the mainland to the beach.

When the Town of **Boynton** was incorporated in 1920, residents approved a bond issue to purchase an oceanfront park. About that time, Palm Beach architect **Addison Mizner** wanted to build a hotel on property he owned near the present Ocean Club; he encountered strong resistance from residents and built in **Boca Raton** instead.

Due to a tax dispute, in 1931 the owners of the oceanfront land along **A1A** in **Boynton** separated as **Boynton Beach**; there were twelve homes in town at the time. Boynton retained ownership of the municipal casino built in 1928 on the present site of the Boynton Beach municipal beach; it was razed in 1967.



*Looking south along Ocean Ridge.*

Courtesy HSPBC.

In 1937 the town commission held a contest to change the name of **Boynton Beach**; Marion White Bird, the mayor's daughter, won with the name of Ocean Ridge. After 14 residents voted to approve the change, it became effective in 1939. In 1951 residents voted 10-7 against changing the name to **South Palm Beach**; just a few miles to the north, another town claimed the name in 1955.