

# EARLY SETTLERS

**In the mid-1700s,  
Florida was primarily inhabited  
by the Seminole tribe.  
Archaeological findings suggest  
this site may have been a  
temporary home for the tribe.**



◀ Seminole family in dugout canoe, circa 1916  
Photo courtesy of State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.

By 1858, white settlers had begun arriving to the area around the natural bridge and Arch Creek. Settlers built a coontie mill at the natural bridge to grind the native coontie roots into starch. The town of Natural Bridge (later known as the town of Arch Creek) grew and prospered in the early 1900s. A group of people from Elmira, New York, established a winter colony where they grew grapefruits and tomatoes. They are credited with being the first organized settlement in the area.



◀ Tourists from Henry Flagler's Royal Palm Hotel, picnicking at Arch Creek natural limestone bridge in 1897.



▶ Car driving over natural bridge, 1924

By 1920, the town of Arch Creek had a population of 307 residents.

A real estate boom in the mid-1920s transformed the small community into a fast-paced city. Arch Creek was incorporated into the town of Miami Shores in 1926 and later the city of North Miami.

The park's building that functions as a museum and nature center. It is designed as a replica Florida wood frame style home traditional of early settlements in this region of Florida during the late 1800s.

▶ Edward DeVere Burr family home, 1907. Photo courtesy of Robert Burr



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