



(Left) Seaboard Air Line Railway President S. Davies Warfield, Governor John Martin and others gathered to welcome the Orange Blossom Special when it came through Deerfield on January 8, 1927. Pictured are the baggage area and ramp on the south side of the building, where the ceremonies were held. (Right) The station in 1999. (Photos courtesy Broward County Historical Commission)

All Aboard!

Historic Railway Station Stays on Track

The *Orange Blossom Special*, the *Silver Fleet*, the *East Coast Champion* and the *Sunset Limited*, though now just fond memories, were once the most famous trains in all of the land. What do they have in common? They all spent quality time at the Seaboard Air Line Railway Station in Deerfield Beach.

Yes, this historic station played host to these and other popular and historically significant trains passing through South Florida. Built in 1926, the station was part of the Seaboard's push into the region to compete with Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway. Passengers landed here to begin their Florida vacations or to start their search for land they hoped to purchase.

It is, in its own right, a fine example of the Mediterranean Revival style of architecture that was extremely popular during that era. Designed by architect Gustav A. Maass, the

one-story masonry building provided facilities for both passengers and freight service in a single structure. In keeping with the racial segregation laws of the era, the passenger-oriented part of the facility initially had two separate sections for black and white patrons – each with its own restrooms, waiting area and ticket window.

The structure has a primary roof system of deck-hipped roofs with clay barrel-tiled slopes and a secondary system consisting of a flat parapeted asphalt-covered roof. The foundation of the passenger station is a concrete slab, while the five-bay freight house is supported by concrete piers. It was constructed with two-inch-thick wood plank flooring and overhead retracting freight doors.

Additional significant features include square pyramid roof towers on the east and west sides of the building and an arcaded loggia that provides entry into the passenger

waiting area. Although some interior alterations have been made, the structure has remained essentially unchanged for eight decades – standing as a living reminder of the timeless look of Old Florida.

For many years, beginning in the late '20s, this railway station and the surrounding area became a center for shipping produce from the farmers in Pompano Beach and the Lake Okeechobee region to markets in the west and the north. From the 1940s thru the mid 1960s railroads continued to play a major role in the economy and commerce of the state. But all of that changed, just as the railroad industry in general changed. The structure became listed as a Historic Site with the State of Florida Department of Archives in 1974 and by 1990 had earned its place on the National Register of Historic Places.

Receiving these honors was indeed a remarkable achievement for this
Continued on page 11