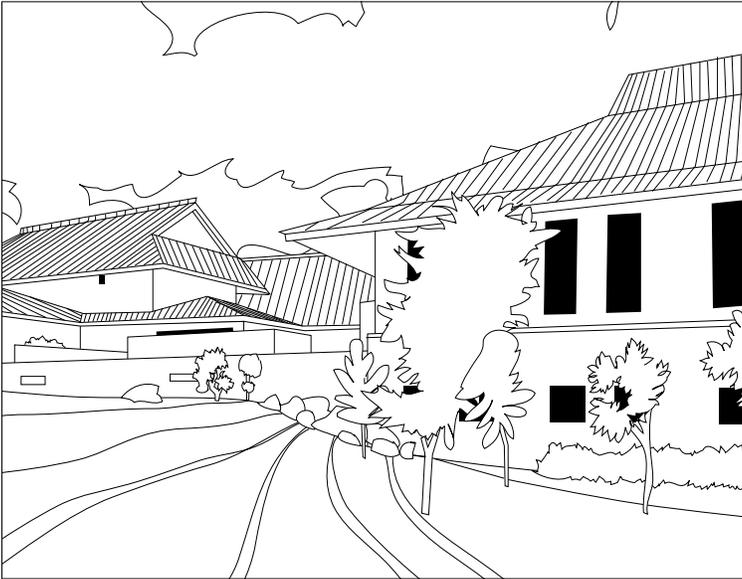


## Florida: Home to a Diverse Population

After World War II, many soldiers stayed in Florida and persuaded their friends and family to come to the Sunshine State. The railroad was instrumental in the development of cities. As the railroad expanded, so did Florida's cities. The railroad began stretching southward, creating opportunities for further growth in Florida.



**The Yamato Museum records the history of this Japanese settlement in Florida.**

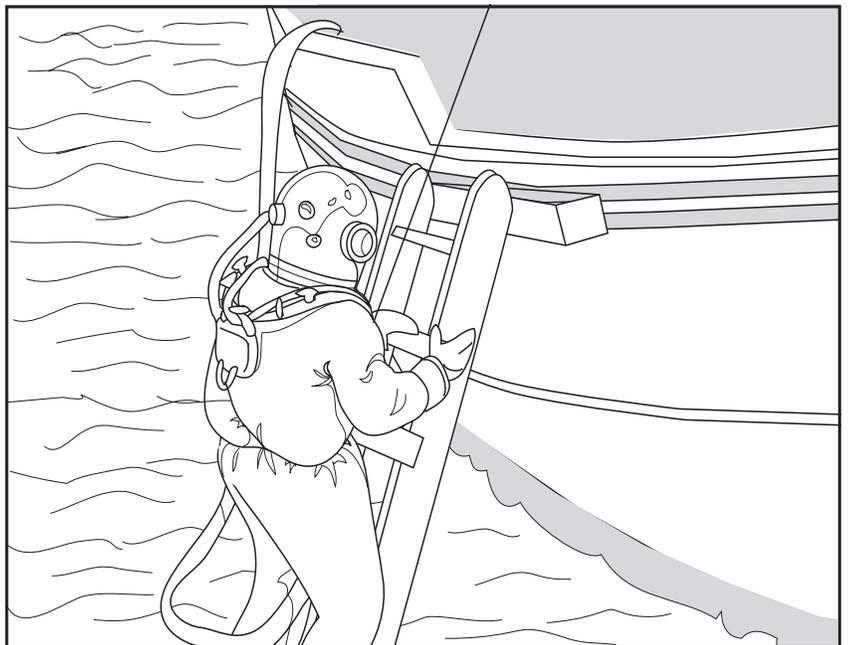
People migrated to Florida for a variety of reasons. Some came for health reasons because of the warmth of the Florida climate. Others came to start new businesses or farms, escape hardships, or to find religious freedom. People began pouring in from all around the world.

Danish immigrants founded a town south of Fort Lauderdale that they named Dania. They lived as farmers and grew tomatoes. They shipped the tomatoes by railroad to the northern United States.

Japanese immigrants established the town of Yamato where they grew pineapples. These were also shipped by railroad to the northern United States.

Another group of people that came to Florida were Greeks. Near the town of Tarpon Springs, natural sponges were discovered growing in the Gulf of Mexico. The sponges could not be gathered fast enough to meet the demand, so Greek divers were brought in to help. These divers wore special diving suits that allowed them to walk along the bottom of the sea. Because of this, they were able to work faster, which increased the supply of sponges.

As Florida grew, so did the diversity of the population. Floridians now included ex-soldiers and their friends and families and the many people who had migrated to Florida from all over the world. The Danes, Japanese, and Greeks added variety to the richness of Florida culture.



**Tarpon Springs grew as a result of the sponge diving industry.**