



VINELAND

BY LINDSEY GETZ



Courtesy of The City of Vineland



Courtesy of Corsiglia Vineland



Courtesy of The City of Vineland

As a rapidly evolving city of South Jersey, Vineland has a lot to offer. Even so, it still remains an affordable locale to put down roots. The median home value in Vineland is \$161,250 according to NJ Realtors®. There are quite a few factors attracting new home buyers to the area. For one, despite being one of the largest cities in South Jersey, locals say they love the “small town, suburban feel” of the area.

The easy commute to nearby Philadelphia—or to Atlantic City for that matter—makes it ideally located for those who don’t want to be too far from the action or the beach. You can anticipate equal drive time whether you want to spend a day at the beach or cross the bridge for a day in the city.

At the Heart of Vineland

Locals say the heart of Vineland can be found on Landis Avenue—which is, in fact, located at the center of the city. But it’s also where Vineland can trace its beginnings.

“Vineland was conceived as a utopian community by Charles Landis,” says Patricia A. Martinelli, curator of the Vineland Historical and Antiquarian Society,

the oldest local historical society in New Jersey, headquartered in the oldest purpose-built museum in the state. “It became a cultural mecca that was nationally known. In 1868, 172 Vineland women staged the world’s largest women’s suffrage protest the country had ever seen at the time.”

When founder Charles K. Landis used a \$500 gift from his mother to purchase 20,000 undeveloped acres in South Jersey, he began the growth of the new city through the development of Landis Avenue.

Over the years, many shops and eateries have called Landis Avenue home. In the late 1920s, the emergence of three national chains—Sears, J.C. Penney, and J.J. Newberry—gave the avenue credibility on a larger scale.

Today, the street still boasts a little bit of everything from a shoe store to a bridal shop to Landis Theater, which was originally an Art Deco-style movie theater that also featured Vaudeville acts visiting the area, including Abbott and Costello. Though the theater closed its doors in 1987, it has been reopened as part of an ongoing revitalization



effort. Thanks to the Vineland Redevelopment Plan, the Landis Theater has been restored to its original glory. "The people that live here really do care about the area and its history which has helped a lot in keeping the history alive and well," said Martinelli.

History Embraced

The restoration of the Landis Theater is just one way in which bits and pieces of Vineland’s history are still ever-present. Similarly, the Delsea Drive-In, located on Route 47, is the only remaining drive-in movie theater in the state of New Jersey.

Another piece of Vineland’s history still present today is the Palace of Depression, built by a former Alaska gold miner who lost his fortune in the Wall Street Crash of 1929. Deemed the “Strangest House in the World” by reporters, it was previously a tourist attraction for more than 30 years. Today it is under restoration, further demonstrating this is a city that cares about its roots.

Of course, it would be remiss to mention Vineland’s roots without also mentioning its grape production history. When Charles K. Landis founded Vineland, it

was his hope the region’s fertile soil would help it evolve into a grape-growing haven (hence the name Vineland). It ended up being where Welch’s Grape Juice Company had its start. Today, vinelands in and around Vineland are plentiful, including Corsiglia Vineland and others nearby.

Something for Everyone

Between its unique and embraced history, its convenient location and affordability, and its friendly small-town feel, newcomers to the area can anticipate feeling right at home. ■



Courtesy of The City of Vineland



Courtesy of The City of Vineland



Courtesy of Delsea Drive-In Movie Theatre

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