Lake Wales FL, A Quintessential Character Town.

Population 2020: City 16,515; Polk County 705,735.

Founded 1911, incorporated 1917, granted municipal charter 1921.

CHARACTER.

The City of Lake Wales Florida is located in Polk County and lies among rolling hills on the highest ground in peninsular Florida. In the valleys around Lake Wales, there are many clear lakes that furnish year-round recreational opportunities. The city is located in the geographical center of the Florida peninsula, and is accessible by U.S. Highway 27 (north / south) and State Highway 60 (east / west). Interstate 4 crosses the state 25 miles north of Lake Wales, and both the Tampa and Orlando International Airports are approximately 1 hour's drive away. Check out this video at: https://lakewalesfl.gov/396/About-Lake-Wales

HISTORY.

Lake Wales, a centennial city, was founded in 1911 by the Lake Wales Land Company, a group of businessmen who purchased 5,000 acres in the hilly wilderness around Lake Wailes, a pristine lake named after Sydney Wailes, a land agent employed by the State of Florida after the Civil War. The men of the Lake Wales Land Company believed that the plentiful pine forests would form the basis of a thriving turpentine and lumber industry, the sandy soil would be ideal for growing grapefruit, oranges and other citrus, and the rolling hills would be the perfect site for a town.

SPECIAL DOWNTOWN FEATURES.

- **Lake Wales Little Theatre**
- **Lake Wales History Museum**
- **Lake Wales Public Library**

Rhodesbilt Arcade.

The J.T. Rhodes Building (235 E Park Avenue) was built in 1924 and is a relatively simple one-part Masonry Vernacular structure, distinguished by the decorative dropped cornice which is supported by 4 pairs of brackets. Patterned masonry decorations appear along the facade, just below the parapet. Jesse T. Rhodes constructed the building in 1920, 4 years before he began work on the neighboring Rhodesbilt Arcade.
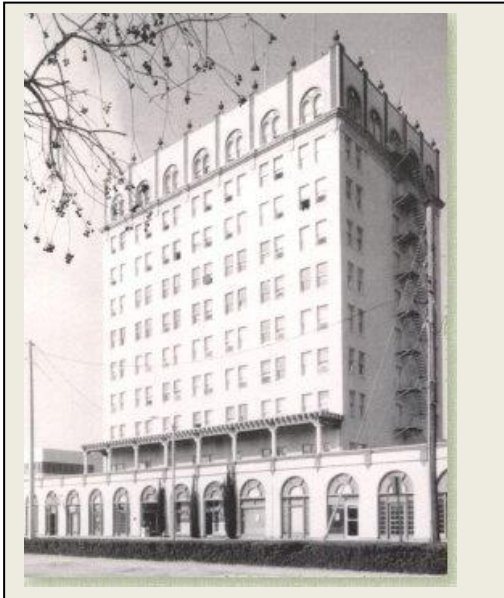
LINK:
https://www.cityoflakewales.com/524/Rhodesbilt-Arcade

- **Dixie Walesbilt Hotel [1927]**
- **Rhodesbilt Arcade**

Lake Wales History Museum
LINK: https://www.visitflorida.com/places-to-go/central/lake-wales/

Mountain Lake Community.

Welcome to a secluded place where people respect traditions and each other. An alluring and neighborly place where members know who you are, and who they are. This is Mountain Lake, the kind of community where people with shared expectations are quick to share a warm smile or a memorable meal, and where solitude and socializing, private living and community service, are not mutually exclusive.
LINK: https://www.mountainlakeflorida.com/

Bok Tower Gardens,
An Olmsted Legacy Garden
LINK: https://boktowergardens.org/

Dixie Walesbilt Hotel

Originally named the Dixie Walesbilt, the building now known as the Grand Hotel, a 10-story skyscraper, stands as enduring testimony to the spirited optimism of the Great Florida Boom Period. It is located at 115 N 1st Street. One of a small remaining number of historic skyscrapers constructed in Florida during the 1920s, the hotel, which originally cost $500,000, was financed through the local sale of stock in the enterprise. Its doors opened to the public in 1927, shortly after the boom had begun to collapse. The Dixie Walesbilt has experienced little alteration. It symbolizes the dreams of residents who thought the boom would last forever and that Lake Wales would become the great metropolis of the Ridgeland.
LINK: https://www.cityoflakewales.com/505/Dixie-Walesbilt-Hotel