

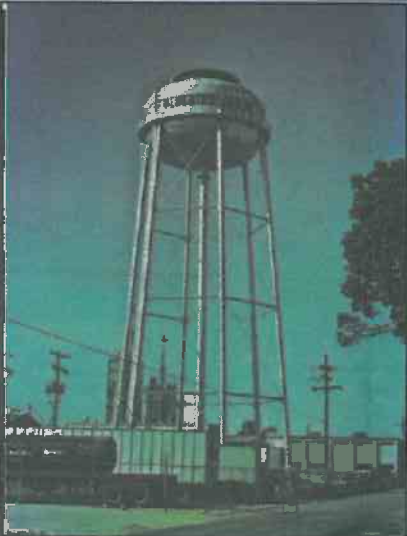
# Area History



Southern Fruit Distributors and Pineloch Management Corporation began on April 28, 1902 when 12-year-old Philip Caruso arrived in the United States from Sicily. Starting as a produce huckster in the New York, by 1924 Philip had the largest single produce wholesale company of fruits and vegetables in the country.

In 1925, he moved to Florida and began purchasing fruit and shipping it to his companies' New York branches. In 1926, Philip Caruso organized and incorporated Southern Fruit Distributors, Inc., purchased the patent and copyright of the Bluebird label, and opened his first fresh fruit packing house in Lisbon, Lake County, Florida, to buy and pack citrus for New York distributors. Other packing houses in Alturas and Winter Garden were added, as well as a small canning plant. By 1940, space was limited in Winter Garden and the processing plant was moved to its present location in South Orlando. After World War II, Caruso's sons and son-in-law joined business. By 1946, Austin was President (age 32, chief administrative officer, supervising production, sales and administration), Joseph was Vice President (age 31, grove operations including cultivation & harvesting, supervising truck & garage operations, John Walsh was Vice

**The Blue Bird Processing Plant was a landmark on Orange Avenue for nearly 50 years. Located at the Corner of Orange and Pineloch Avenues.**



President (age 33, supervising plant maintenance, repairs, new construction and canning plant production) and Philip Peter was Secretary and Treasurer (age 27, supervising warehouse shipping operations and sales and warehouse stocks in the Southeastern US).

Philip Caruso died 1963 at the age of 72. In 1987 he was inducted into the Mid-Florida Business Hall of Fame.

By 1986, Southern Fruit reported \$95 million in sales and was ranked number five on the "Golden 50 of Central Florida", a listing of the top firms in the area. The citrus industry began changing with global competition, freezes, environmental issues, and urbanization. The plant site was now in downtown Orlando. A decision to sell was made by the Caruso family, and on its 60th Anniversary in 1987, Southern Fruit sold its rights to the Bluebird label and its marketing operations to Citrus World of Lake Wales, processors of Donald Duck brand juice.

With the remaining assets, the third generation helped change the landscape in South Orlando. Pineloch Management Corporation was incorporated in 1987 and three Caruso family members provide the current management team: Jim Caruso, President; Phylis Caruso, Vice President; and Paul Caruso, Facilities Director. Other family members help guide the business through the Board of Directors.

Today Pineloch is a diversified leader involved in real estate leasing, management, and agriculture, including top-tier diversified properties throughout Central Florida such as The Market at Southside, Southgate Commerce Center and Pineloch Business Park, and Pineloch Industrial Park in Winter Garden.