

Lake Kathy



Aerial view of Lake Kathy (Moseley Collection)

The following narrative is based on an interview with Brandon resident Julia Moseley. The interview was conducted in her home on August 31, 2004. Julia shares with us her knowledge of Lake Kathy and how the area near the lake has changed.

Personal History

Lake Kathy, in the Brandon area behind the Regency Square Mall, bears the same name sometimes attached to Ten Mile Lake to the east. The Lake Kathy that is the subject of this narrative is the one behind Regency, not the other one which is more commonly known as Ten Mile. Julia explains the confusion:

"That one is Kathy, which is very confusing because Ten Mile is also Kathy. We try to keep them straight by calling Ten Mile, Ten Mile, and Kathy, Kathy."

The confusion began sometime in the 1950s when a property owner at Ten Mile Lake decided to have it renamed after his daughter Kathy. This was long after the original name of Ten Mile Lake had been established from the distance it lay from Fort Brooke or the old courthouse in Tampa. Ten Mile Lake was on the old road blazed across the state during the Seminole Indian wars, now State Road 60. Lake Kathy behind Regency was an unnamed lake and takes its name apparently from the time when development of Regency Square began in the 1980s. Today, Lake Kathy sits perched above the other lakes in the area, including Ten Mile, Gornto, and Chapman. Homes and apartment complexes surround the lakes and commercial development is pressing closer.

Julia has lived in the area all her life. Now it is part of the larger Brandon area, but originally, this area was known as Limona. It was one of many small communities that existed outside of Tampa where families could live closer to nature. Julia's family moved into the area in 1882, establishing a comfortable and unique homestead that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Due to Julia's long time interest in the area she grew up in she has a unique knowledge and perspective of the changes that have taken place.

History/Information



Kings Avenue in 1908 (Moseley Collection)



Kings Avenue in the 1930s (Moseley Collection)



The mail carrier "finding the road" (Moseley Collection)

Lake Kathy is part of the Delaney/Archie Creek watershed. It is 21 acres in size, fairly large compared to its immediate neighbors. Lake Kathy sits just to the north of State Road 60 (Brandon Blvd), a major artery through Brandon. State Road 60 has expanded from a shell road to a bustling thoroughfare, as has many other roads in the area, such as Kings Avenue, located just off to the east of Lake Kathy. Julia shares with us comparison photos of the changes to Kings Avenue from 1908 to 1930 to today:

"This is Kings in 1908. Now, here's the same shot from the 1930's. If you took it now from the same spot it would be vastly different because it's developed. This shows you the native growth... You can see how the vegetation has changed. This was probably logged over and what we are looking at is probably second or third growth pine. And you see it did regenerate as pine. There are a number of oaks in here, probably turkey oaks. Probably not live oaks unless you have sand live oaks because of the soil. But it's interesting that we do have a comparison picture there. That we can see the vegetation was vastly different. At the time both these pictures were taken we didn't have a fencing law and cattle roamed. Well, the cattle had a lot to do with shaping the land because they would eat the vegetation up and keep the brush low, they even ate the palmetto, you know. They were very good with keeping the land open. And, of course we had fires."

Life in this area was vastly different in the early part of the twentieth century. Julia shares with us more photographs that illustrate both the lifestyle and the environment of the area around World War I:

"This is another series of pictures, 'Finding the Road.' This was on the way to Lithia. We all used to go over there for picnics. But, in the rainy season it was hard to find. So he [pointing to the man in the picture] was going ahead of the car trying to find out if the car could get through. Now, this guy is experienced. He was our rural mail carrier for years and years. He had a long route. He had the Limona route, and it was some 67 miles in length, if I remember correctly, which would take him to Wimauma and back and almost to Mango before he would get back to the post office. He went over roads that were horrendous and he would plow through creeks with his car in high gear whether he got his motor through it or not. And, we would all go over to the post office to see about his latest adventures. Of course everybody knew him and he knew everybody on the route. He was the greatest guy. He would deliver your presents on Christmas Day."

Another favorite place to visit was the Bloomingdale Sink. Julia shares with us her photos from a visit in 1942:



Children playing at Bloomingdale Sink
(Moseley Collection)



Bloomingdale Sink in 1993 (Moseley
Collection)



Bloomingdale Sink in 1993 (Moseley
Collection)

"This is a sink hole; this is known as the Bloomingdale Sinkhole. It was a big one; it had water in the bottom and a boat was there so you could glide from one side to the other. It had mature vegetation, look at the mature trees that were in it. Now, this is back in 1942. Now, what someone like myself and my family did, we simply enjoyed it. We had permission to go in there and look when the dogwood was blooming, the place was just filled with dogwoods and it was a beautiful sight! We didn't pick anything, we just enjoyed it. I don't know when this one formed or what happened or anything. It may be that it is a very old relic sinkhole. You can see from the slope that it is very steep going down. This shows you that there were vines everywhere, and we really enjoyed swinging on the grapevines and then descending on down."

Julia returned in 1993 to see how the sink had changed:

"I went to check it out in 1993. It's more grown up, people are not visiting it, it's controlled by a private property owner, but the vegetation is immense. It's very tropical, there is a very steep path going down into it, there's still water down in it. I didn't see a boat, and the area that contained the water was much smaller than what I remembered from frequent visits in the past."

Development

Lake Kathy sits at the intersection of several major developmental changes over the last twenty years. Just to its west is Interstate 75, to its immediate south is Regency Square Mall. Further south, on the other side of State Road 60 is Brandon Town Center. State Road 60 has been widened several times, as have other major roads in the area. Housing developments and apartment complexes have sprung up.

Along with many of these changes comes human intervention to change the natural flow of water. Julia explains one change she remembers impacting Lake Kathy:

"Lake Kathy would naturally flow into Gornto Lake. Now, it no longer does that because they rearranged their drainage. They did that years ago."

One major reason that Lake Kathy would have flowed into Gornto Lake is that Lake Kathy sits at a higher elevation than the surrounding lakes. While it once naturally overflowed to the east, finding a lower elevation to Gornto Lake, it has been reoriented to the west and drainage goes into a ditch alongside I-75 and then under it. Julia explains:

"It is what I call a perched lake. It's probably sitting on top of a clay or solid organic deposit base. It's fairly large. It's very interesting because you can see how it creates its own saturation basin. I refer to it as a perched lake. I may not be correct in that, but it appears to be different from the other three lakes to the east. They are sinkhole lakes with known connections to the upper Floridian aquifer. A lake that is perched would be isolated above the groundwater table. In the 1986 study of Delaney Creek by Ghioto and Singhofen, Lake Kathy is described as a freshwater marsh surrounded by a wet prairie."

The Future

Julia's photographs illustrate the past environment and how much it has been altered. Her hope is that by sharing these she can help to foster an understanding of the environment in others:

"The chronology begins to tell a story of the land, and what I call the carrying capacity of the land. Also, it helps to develop an appreciation of the natural beauty of the land...I get into this because I grew up with the land."

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