

Bloomingtondale

**Alafia River
Buckhorn Creek**

5 pgs

The following is an excerpt from:
**HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY
HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT**

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* These excerpts have been taken from the Historic Resources Survey Report with permission given by the Hillsborough County Historic Resources Review Board on December 15, 2003. The intention is to help provide targeted historical information on the water bodies in Hillsborough County.

Bloomingdale

Bloomingdale is located north of the Alafia River in the vicinity of Lithia-Pinecrest Road (County Road 640), Bell Shoals Road, and Bloomingdale Avenue. Two early settlers of the area included John Vickers and John Carney. According to the 1850 Census, John Vickers was a 22-year-old Georgia born farmer, married to Betsy Vickers, age 25 also from Georgia. The couple had a year old daughter named Catherine. In 1850, John Carney was a 46-year-old Florida born farmer married to Susan Carney, a 23-year-old Georgia native. They had six children ranging in age from two years to seventeen years, five of which had attended school during the year. Mr. Carney's life ended abruptly during the ensuing Third Seminole War (1855-1858). On April 16, 1856, Carney heard strange sounds around his home. Consequently, he sent his family away for safety and Carney went to his neighbor's, John Vickers, home for protection. The following day, while plowing his fields, Carney was killed by Seminole Indians. Capt. L.G. Lesley, and his son, John T. Lesley, found Carney's body on April 18. The Lesleys and others followed the Seminoles, eventually catching up to them in Manatee County and killing everyone involved except one.ⁱ

After the close of the Third Seminole War in 1858, other homesteaders began migrating to the Bloomingdale area. Beginning on February 21, 1872, the Hendrix family moved from Alabama to Hillsborough County. Moving first to Tampa, which they found too populous, they soon journeyed south to Peru, on the Alafia River, in search of a more suitable place. After leaving Peru, the family followed the Alafia River in an easterly direction. When they reached the area that would become Bloomingdale, the family fell in love with it. Because wild flowers were in bloom throughout the "hills" and "valley," the family christened the area Bloomingdale Valley.ⁱⁱ

The Hendrix family consisted of the patriarch James, along with his daughters, their husbands and children, and James' three sons, Reuben, Pete, and Noah, their wives and children. Upon arriving in Bloomingdale, each family head either homesteaded 160 acres or bought property from farmers already working the land, thus becoming one of the prominent family names in the area. While the general conception of homesteading families of the 19th century is that of a male headed household with wife and children, this is only part of the picture. The recently widowed Sarah Stearns along with her three sons moved from Marion County, Florida, to Bloomingdale in 1878. Mrs. Stearns and her boys settled near John Carney's old homestead, hiring two men to help her build a one-story frame dwelling for herself and a separate house for her sons. Shortly thereafter, she began growing corn, oranges, sweet potatoes, and sugarcane.ⁱⁱⁱ Others soon followed in the footsteps of these early pioneers, and residents actively solicited hard working, industrious settlers:

While we have a great many progressive citizens in our community, we have room for many more, and will gladly welcome all honest, industrious and enterprising settlers in our midst, but for those who do not possess these qualifications we have no room to spare.^{iv}

By 1883, Bloomingdale's 22 farmers worked a total of 2608 acres and patronized a postmaster, a mason, an attorney, a horticulturist, a blacksmith, a wheelwright, a carpenter, a physician, and two Methodist and one Presbyterian reverend. Farms ranged in size from A.F. Bernier's 20 acres to A.A. Mansel's 320 acres, with the typical farm averaging 119 acres. Most farmers were self-sufficient, raising cattle, chicken, and pigs, as well as growing cabbages, oranges, peas, sugar cane, tomatoes, and even cotton. Children, both boys and girls, as well as the adults, actively participated in the daily duties, from herding cattle to collecting chicken eggs. Many families only traveled into Tampa once a month for such items as coffee and flour.^v

Two years later (1885) Bloomingdale residents supported a Presbyterian, a Catholic, a Methodist, and a Baptist church. Dr. Raymond was principle of Bloomingdale's grade school which was established September 23, 1884. The school came to fruition through the efforts of Ludwig Wilhelm Buchholz, a recent German immigrant, who began petitioning settlers for a school in 1883. Not only did the residents raise money for the school, they procured the materials and built the school and its furniture. Professor Buchholz, who bought John Carney's homestead in 1884, taught in the one-room school from 1884 to 1886. C.E. Worth, L.W. Buchholz, and Joe Bell served as the school's trustees. Through this effort and others, Professor Buchholz became County Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1887. After the turn of the century he taught at Florida State College at Tallahassee and University of Florida. Of the area's 300 residents, the principal orange growers were G.W. English, P.D. Hendrix (240 acres), Fred Worth (162 acres), and Mrs. M.L.E. Mott.^{vi} According to J.J. Boyett, a resident of Peru, Bloomingdale farmers grew more than citrus:

We pass through the Bloomingdale locality, where we find good lands, and a large population of industrious and respectable people, who besides their groves have good gardens and are extensively engaged in growing and shipping vegetables to the Northern markets.^{vii}

Mr. C.E. Worth, while not tending his duties as school trustee, served as the community's postmaster. The post office was started on August 25, 1879, on Little Road, and later moved to Bloomingdale Avenue.^{viii}

During Buchholz's first month as Superintendent he founded the state's first county teachers' institute in Bloomingdale. Operating for two months in Bloomingdale school, 22 teachers attended the normal school, as it would later be called. Attendance rose with an average of 54 teachers who came from as far away as Gainesville and Dade County. Consequently, the normal school left the small school building for Bloomingdale's Presbyterian Church. Eventually Buchholz relocated the normal school to Plant City and then to St. Petersburg, presumably for easier accessibility for traveling teachers.^{ix}

In 1900 Bloomingdale's population reached 429, but its days were marked. Ten years earlier, Florida Central and Peninsular Railroad connected Plant City and Tampa, bypassing Bloomingdale by going through Brandon. Consequently, Bloomingdale residents like D.J. Galvin, who established a feed store at the intersection of Durant and

Pearson Roads, moved to Brandon.^x

On August 31, 1910, the community's post office closed, and in the same year 364 people lived in Bloomingdale. Ten years later, the settlement lost its school and students were transferred to Brandon. Bloomingdale continued to decline. In 1930, only 342 people resided in the area and several years later was described as a scattered community of isolated farm houses with a small store and filling station at the corner of Bloomingdale Road and Lithia Road. Despite a rural and somewhat isolated setting, World War Two impacted the small settlement by drawing residents into wartime production at Tampa shipyards. Beginning in the 1960s, Bloomingdale has become a bedroom community of Tampa. Its population reached 13,912 in 1990.^{xi}

i. Marlene Boggs, "Tombstone Marks Farmer's Death," *Tampa Tribune* October 5, 1990; Bruton and Bailey, *Plant City, Its Origin and History*, 43; Covington, *The Story of Southwestern Florida*, Volume I, 122-126; *Hillsborough County, Florida, 1850 Census* (Jacksonville, FL: The Southern Genealogist's Exchange Society, Inc., 1975), 21,30; Norma Goolsby Frazier, "The Blossoming of Bloomingdale," *The Sunland Tribune* 16(1)(November, 1990), 10; D.B. McKay, "Bloomingdale Cemetery Holds Grave of Hillsborough Pioneer Slain by Indians," *Tampa Tribune* May 31, 1953, 4E; Carol Neef, "John Carney... 'Cruelly Massacred...'" *Tampa Tribune* August 20, 1970, 3-B; Harry A. Peeples, *Twenty-Four Years in the Woods, On the Waters and In the Cities of Florida* (Tampa, FL: Tribune Printing Co., 1906), 104-109.

ii. Frazier, "The Blossoming of Bloomingdale," 7-8.

iii. Frazier, "The Blossoming of Bloomingdale," 7-8; U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States, "General Land Office, Automated Records Project, Pre-1908 Homestead and Cash Entry Patents;" Martha M. Parr, "Homesteading in Hillsborough County," *Sunland Tribune* 8(1)(November, 1982), 38-39.

iv. Don Carlos, "Bloomingdale, May 28, 1880," *The Sunland Tribune* June 3, 1880, 3.

v. Don Carlos, "Bloomingdale Items," *The Sunland Tribune* February 26, 1881, 3; March 30, 1882, 2; April 13, 1882, 2; August 17, 1882, 3; *Florida State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1883-1884*, 355-356, and notes from; Frazier, "The Blossoming of Bloomingdale," 10; Leland Hawes, "Manuscript Recalls Childhood on Farm in 1890s," *Tampa Tribune* January 23, 1994, 4-Baylife.

vi. Laurie Chamlin, "School may be Designated Historic Site," *Tampa Tribune* October 27, 1983, 1EH,2EH; *Florida State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1883-1884*, 355-356; Frazier, "The Blossoming of Bloomingdale," 10-11; Karl Grismer, *Tampa, A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida*, (St. Petersburg, FL: The St. Petersburg Printing Co, 1950), 336; HTHCPB, *The Cultural Resources of the Unincorporated Portions of Hillsborough County*, 31; Robinson, *History of Hillsborough County Florida*, 200; Webb, *Webb's Historical, Industrial and Biographical Florida, Part I*, 57; When History was in the Making, 1.

vii. "Peru, Florida," *Tampa Weekly Journal* June 23, 1887.

viii. Bradbury and Hallock, *A Chronology of Florida Post Offices*, 9; Frazier, "The Blossoming of Bloomingdale," 10-11.

ix. *A History Maker: L.W. Buchholz* (Tampa, FL: Hillsborough County Schools, 1976), iii-iv, 1-2, 15, 19-20; Bruton and Bailey, *Plant City*, 272; Robinson, *History of Hillsborough County Florida*, 200.

x. HTHCPB, *The Cultural Resources of the Unincorporated Portions of Hillsborough County*, 31; George W. Pettengill, Jr., "The Story of the Florida Railroads 1834-1903," Bulletin No. 86 (Boston, Mass: The Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, Inc., July, 1952), 53-57; Richard E. Prince, *Seaboard Air Line Railway, Steam Boats, Locomotives, and History* (Green River, Wyoming, 1962), 77; Robinson, *History of Hillsborough County Florida*, 77; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census Reports, Volume 1, Twelfth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1900*, William R. Merriam, Director, *Population, Part I*, 93.

xi. Bradbury and Hallock, *A Chronology of Florida Post Offices*, 9; Laurie Chamlin, "School May Be Designated Historic Site," *Tampa Tribune* October 27, 1983, 1E; Federal Writers' Project, *Seeing Tampa*, 126; Parr, "Homesteading in Hillsborough County," *The Sunland Tribune* 8(1)(November, 1982), 40; The Planning Commission, *1990 Census Population and Housing by Place* (Tampa, FL: The Planning Commission, 1991), 1; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, Population Bulletin, Second Series, Florida Composition and Characteristics of the Population*, 51; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910, Abstract of the Census*, 575.