

Keystone

Lake Fern
Horse Lake
Keystone Lake
Pretty Lake

4 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.

Keystone (Keystone Park Colony)

Keystone Park Colony incorporated much of today's communities of Citrus Park, Cosme, Keystone, and Lake Fern. One of the earliest known settlers was Martin D. Patterson who migrated to the Keystone area, approximately 10 miles east of Tarpon Springs, in 1866. It was here that Mr. Patterson met and married Katherine E. Stone, a widowed mother with one daughter, on June 6, 1866. Cutting cordwood and selling it in Tampa, Mr. Patterson saved up enough money to purchase 80 acres of land at 50 cents an acre. They settled in an area around present day Patterson Road. Together, the Pattersons had six additional children, many of whom relocated to areas throughout northwest Hillsborough County and northern Pinellas County. The family subsisted on cultivated fruit and vegetables, raised farm animals, hunted game and fished. Additionally, they grew cotton to make their clothes. Other early settlers in the greater Keystone area included the Gant, Lynn, McCarty, Mobley, Moody, and Spivey families.ⁱ

In the 1880s, this vast, sparsely settled area began to take shape. Enough families with children existed in the area for a school to be created in 1883. The following year Keystone Park received a post office. As yellow fever rampaged through Florida communities during the 1880s, Keystone's post office became a mail disinfectant point for letters sent to summer visitors in the Clearwater area. Not having an understanding that mosquitoes were the cause of yellow fever, the mail was fumigated to protect people from the yellow fever "cotagion" that could possibly be transported via the mail.ⁱⁱ

An 1885 description of Keystone reveals the community's appeal and namesake. Furthermore, it reveals that the migration of northerners to Hillsborough is not a recent phenomena, but has been a foundation of the county's growth since the 19th century:

Keystone Park is situated on the mail rout from Tampa to Tarpon Springs. Fare to Tampa, \$1.50; to Cedar Keys, \$4. It derives its name from the fact that many of the settlers are from the Keystone State. Railroad prospects are very favorable, so that fast transportation is a matter of the near future. Keystone Lake, the largest in this vicinity is 4 ½ miles long by ½ mile in width, and is in the shape of a boat. There is an M.E. Church here, and a common school. Among the owners of noted orange groves are Rev. Jason Grant, Messrs. R.T Youngblood, M.D. Patterson and C.A. Nicholson. The settlers are whites, from Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Michigan, are well-to-do and industrious. Mr. J.F. Pierce is postmaster.ⁱⁱⁱ

Shortly after the turn of the century, sawmill owners began building rail lines across northwest Hillsborough to gain access to the region's vast tracts of timber. The Gulf Pine Company supposedly cut 65,000 feet of yellow pine lumber a day in Keystone mill. In 1910 the Tampa Gulf Coast Railway connected Lutz to Tarpon Springs. Other lines were constructed, and by 1915 three trains a day roared through the Keystone area, making stops at Cosme, Lake Fern, Gulf Pine, and Keystone. Trains continued to travel through Keystone until the 1960s.^{iv}

As sawmills cleared the land of trees, people began to relocate to the region. Keystone's population reached 137 in 1890, and 187 in 1900. Realizing the rural community's growth potential, the Tampa Bay Land Company filed the plat of Keystone Park Colony on September 30, 1909, encompassing a major portion of Township 27 South, Range 17 East. In addition the company platted Keystone Park in August 1909, filing the plat in the Hillsborough County Court House on January 17, 1910. Keystone Park was situated on Tarpon Springs Road, west of the present community of Keystone. Michigan Trust Company was also another large land holder in the region, selling plots to Michiganders looking for warmer climes.^v

The Tampa Bay Land Company had big dreams for Keystone Park Colony. They subdivided the nearly 10,000 acres into 10, 20, and 40-acre farms, selling the land for \$25 an acre. All one needed for a ten-acre farm was ten dollars down and the remainder could be paid off in five dollar monthly installments. For a 20-acre farm one needed \$20 down and an additional \$10 a month, while a 40-acre farm required \$40 down at \$20 a month. As a selling point, the company constructed a "bureau of information" for residents and potential buyers. The two-story colony house was located on the north end of Dakota Avenue. Additionally, the building housed a post office and a company office. The company also created a demonstration farm on the south side of the intersection of Tarpon and Tyler roads. They planted anything and everything that could possibly be grown in the Florida soil, attempting to lure potential farmers to the colony.^{vi}

Whether through the Tampa Bay Land Company's efforts or because of the success of the timber industry and railroads, Keystone Park population was 304 in 1910. In 1911 Keystone Park had two real estate agents, two turpentine distillers, orange growers, a poultry breeder, and Keystone Commercial Company's general store. By 1918, citrus growers proliferated, but the turpentine distillers were not listed. Only one real estate agent, who also served as postmaster, operated in Keystone Park. However, a painter and a contractor had set up business sometime between 1911 and 1918. The prosperity bubble soon burst with the post office shutting down on May 14, 1923. The two sawmills burned to the ground in 1925. Finally, the Great Depression wiped out the Tampa Bay Land Company and its colony. The state acquired most of the company's property. The colony house was torn down for its lumber and used to erect a house on Michigan Avenue. In the 1930s Keystone and its neighboring communities chiefly consisted of isolated citrus farms.^{vii}

Until the 1970s, much of the area remained rural, with a few families either moving in or out of the community. Yet, as Tampa grew, people moved both to the north and west of the city. Consequently, while still rural in many sections, gated communities and planned subdivisions have sprouted throughout the entire northwest section of Hillsborough County. As new schools are built and the Citrus Park Mall sprouts, development pressures will continue in the greater Keystone area.

i. Binder, *History of Keystone, Odessa, and Citrus Park*, 5,12-13,23-25; Florida Land & Improvement Company, *Map of Hillsborough County, Florida, 1882* (USF Special Collections); HTHCPB, *The Cultural*

Resources of the Unincorporated Portions of Hillsborough County, 53; Paul Whitehurst, "Martin D. Patterson Family," (unpublished manuscript, Patterson family file, Hillsborough County Historical Commission, Tampa Bay History Center, 1980), 1-2; Paul Whitehurst, "Patterson-Perkins," (unpublished manuscript, Patterson family file, Hillsborough County Historical Commission, Tampa Bay History Center, 1980), 3-5.

ii. Eirlys Mair Barker, "Seasons of Pestilence: Tampa and Yellow Fever, 1824-1905," (master's thesis, University of South Florida, 1984), 48-81; Bradbury and Hallock, *A Chronology of Florida Post Offices*, 43; Binder, *History of Keystone, Odessa, and Citrus Park*, 7; Sue Carlton, "Mosquitoes were Key to Area's Name," *St. Petersburg Times* September 18, 1989; John B. Hamilton, "The Yellow Fever Epidemic at Tampa," *The Medical News* 51(16)(October 15, 1887), 458; Morris, *Florida Place Names*, 134; *When History was in the Making*, 5; John P. Wall, "The Yellow Fever in Tampa, Plant City, Manatee, and Palmetto," in *Annual Report of the Supervising Surgeon-General of the Marine-Hospital Service of the United States for the Fiscal Year 1889* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1889), 60-76; "Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1887 and 1888 in Florida—Testimony of Dr. George Troup Maxwell—Correspondence with Prof. Joseph Jones, M.D., of New Orleans, Louisiana," *Virginia Medical Monthly* 16(1889-1890), 266-286.

iii. Webb, *Webb's Florida, Historical, Industrial, & Biographical*, 58.

iv. Binder, *History of Keystone, Odessa, and Citrus Park*, 20; Tampa Bay Land Company, *Keystone Park Colony, Hillsborough County, Florida* (Jacksonville, FL: Industrial Record Co., circa 1909), 5, 7, 9.

v. Binder, *History of Keystone, Odessa, and Citrus Park*, 6; Plat Book 5, page 55 and page 68, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Hillsborough County, Tampa, FL; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Compendium of the Census, 1890, Part I - Population*, 88; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census Reports, Volume I, Twelfth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1900, Population, Part I*, 93.

vi. Binder, *History of Keystone, Odessa, and Citrus Park*, 17; Tampa Bay Land Company, *Keystone Park Colony, Hillsborough County, Florida*, 5-6, 11-13.

vii. Binder, *History of Keystone, Odessa, and Citrus Park*, 17; Bradbury and Hallock, *A Chronology of Florida Post Offices*, 43; Federal Writers' Project, *Seeing Tampa*, 149; *Florida State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1911-1912*, 245; *Florida State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1918*, 312; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910, Abstract of the Census*, 575.