

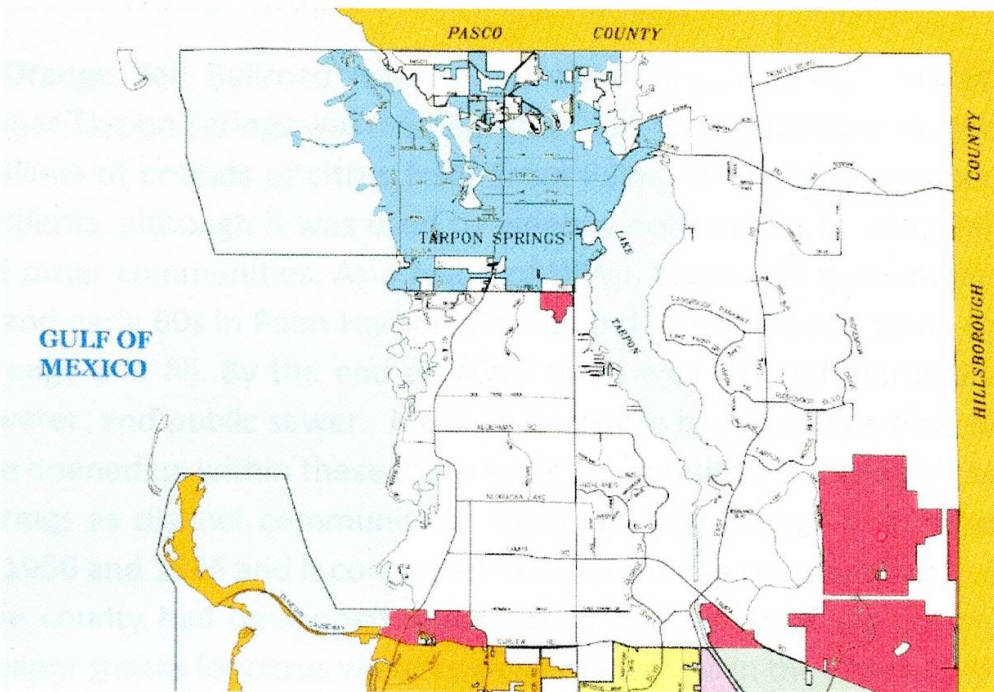
WHERE IS PALM HARBOR? A VISUAL HISTORY OF PALM HARBOR FROM THE LATE 19TH CENTURY THROUGH 2014 USING OLD MAPS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND DOCUMENTS SHOWING HOW OUR COMMUNITIES HAVE CHANGED

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INTRODUCTION

Where is Palm Harbor? Ask 25 people and you will get 25 different answers. Since Palm Harbor is not incorporated, it could potentially be the 2nd largest city in Pinellas County.

You should remember that your mailing address has very little to do with what city you live in or if you are even in a city. If you aren't in the city limits of Tarpon Springs, Dunedin, Oldsmar or Safety Harbor, you probably live in unincorporated Pinellas County. Or as most people refer to it –“Palm Harbor”.



Tarpon Springs, Dunedin, Oldsmar and Safety Harbor all have rich histories which they are proud of and want to preserve and share with their residents. So too, does Palm Harbor, it's just that most of that history was created in places called Sutherland, Yellow Bluff, Ozona, Crystal Beach, Seaside, Curlew, Wall Springs, East Lake and Boot Ranch.

Annexation has already chopped off parts (see red-shaded areas) of the unincorporated area we knew as parts of Palm Harbor. Maybe we need to incorporate before our rich history becomes a stepchild to that of existing cities.

Palm Harbor's history needs to be understood in the context of American and Florida history. You may reflect on major historical events from your personal experience, reading, and films including: Indians, British and Spanish control, Slavery, The Civil War, the Twenties, the Depression, WWII, the 1954 Supreme Court case on schools, the cold war, and massive migration to Florida. How was life similar and different in PH? The differences in PH were more pronounced before WWII, and we are less unique after 1973. Early residents came on foot, by horse or oxen and wagon, by railroad, and by car. It was a slow ride on narrow roads until interstates began construction in 1953.

We discovered some housing trends by using information provided by Pinellas County which has kept records of when every house in County was built since 1900. By the mid-50s developers created more valuable waterfront land by using dredge and fill which increased the size of subdivisions and the number

of waterfront lots along the Gulf and Lake Tarpon. Dredge and fill destroyed wetlands, shallow bays, and marine life. This environmental destruction was banned by Governor Leroy Collins in 1961. He called this "rape and monstrous desecration." Our county had few rules about building and many political leaders were corrupt. We have focused on the fifties and sixties because so little is documented about those important years.

The PowerPoint introduction begins with maps from the Pinellas Planning Department showing how rural Palm Harbor was, and how it developed to where we are in 2014.

CHAPTER ONE: LATE 19TH CENTURY THROUGH WORLD WAR II

The Pinellas Trail was originally the Orange Belt Railroad running between Tarpon Springs and St. Petersburg which opened in 1887, the year Tarpon Springs was incorporated. The Orange Belt connected with railroads going north allowing millions of pounds of citrus fruits from Palm Harbor to be shipped north. It was seldom used by local residents, although it was used by wealthy northerners to visit Wall Springs, Crystal Beach, Sutherland, and other communities. As a result of WWII, there was tremendous growth of new homes in the 40s, 50s, and early 60s in Palm Harbor, Ozona, and Crystal Beach, some by the water on land created by using dredge and fill. By the end of WWII there was little infrastructure planning which includes roads, public water, and public sewer. Most homes were built one at a time or in small groups when new sections were opened up within these three small communities resulting in the disappearance of Curlew and Wall Springs as distinct communities. Citrus groves acreage in Pinellas County fell by more than half between 1956 and 1966 and it continued to decline while the development of subdivisions increased. Most of the county had developed much earlier while part of the county remained rural through the fifties. Tar paper shacks for citrus workers were still around in the fifties. Until the fifties, North County was rural agriculture and people lived a pretty simple life without much money and few roads. Palm Harbor was somewhat isolated from the rest of the county until the sixties. There were few families and little need for street maps. Many of these trends were similar in other parts of the United States.

CHAPTER TWO: WORLD WAR II THROUGH 1973

From 1946 through 1950 two hundred thousand people moved into Florida ushering in a new era of development in the Palm Harbor area. Prior to this time large subdivisions often unrelated to the coastline were developed from Dunedin south to St. Petersburg, while in Palm Harbor, Crystal Beach, and Ozona, the norm was building one house at a time. The increasing population resulted in developing new land through dredge and fill, creating new water front, water view, and water access subdivisions. Starting in the late fifties the first canal subdivisions in north county included about 2000 single family and mobile homes on the west side of Lake Tarpon and about 1500 single family and mobile homes along the Gulf. We will examine many of these in close detail with a focus on why they developed so slowly. County water and sewer were not yet developed, and there were few county building regulations. You are seeing those early developments along the Gulf including for example Baywood's 750 homes, Wall Springs Mobile Home Park, Indian Bluff 130 homes (fifty less than the developers dreamed about), Crystal Bay Travel Park almost 300 lots, etc. and along Lake Tarpon, Lake Shore Estates 500+, and Lake Tarpon Village Mobile Home Park 500+ lots and many unnamed subdivisions with canals. Frequent building moratoriums occurred as private septic tanks and wells failed. Building permits were not issued until public water and

sewer became available in the 1970s. This was resolved in the early 70s when public sewer and water was provided by Pinellas County.

CHAPTER THREE: 1973 THROUGH 2014

The first very large subdivision was Highland Lakes, which you can see was beginning of the first phase in 1973, and you see nothing but citrus groves all around the first 95 acres, and by the 80s there were 2500 homes. It was built by a large national builder, US Homes, whereas the earlier subdivisions were built by smaller builders from Michigan and Virginia. Highland Lakes was the beginning of a transition to planned county development with lots of open space.

US Homes purchased all the existing citrus groves and created a beautiful park on Lake Tarpon. The Highland Lakes development was planned development in Pinellas County where the County built all the roads, installed the sewer and water systems before development began. This began the planning practice by Pinellas County for future subdivisions and industrial developments including the Innisbrook resort.

The US Corps of Engineers tried to dump dredge spoils from the Intracoastal Waterway into the end of Crystal Beach. Crystal Beach fought the Corps and won all the way to the Supreme Court. The proposed spoil site became Point Seaside and Sutherland Crossing in Crystal Beach.

The population of the state increased by 3 million people during each of the decades beginning in 1970. By the seventies, there was a building boom because of a growing demand by families and retirees moving south. Multi-family housing began to outpace single family homes and there was a tremendous increase in condominiums creating a need for county-wide comprehensive planning and zoning plan. There was an immediate need for public sewer and public water which were not available for most subdivisions built from the mid-fifties through the late sixties. A county-wide master plan was developed including green space, schools, churches and synagogues, shopping centers, medical facilities, parks and recreation, libraries, sewage treatment plants, drinking water, and recycled water. US 19 became miles of strip malls, after it was zoned "commercial" for 500 feet east and west of the roadway. Beyond that 500 feet, zoning was mostly residential.

Parts of Boot, Jackson, Bryan Dairy and W.D. Saul's ranches ran into Pasco and Hillsborough counties. Everything changed when the 1949 Florida Fence Law required the ranches to fence their property and prohibited free range cattle. This forced many ranchers to eventually sell out to developers and changed the entire character of the land around Lake Tarpon.

(Maps of Lake Tarpon and Brooker Creek Preserve were provided by the Pinellas County Parks and Conversation Resources Department.)

The KKK had been active in Palm Harbor for decades with billboards on Alt. 19 and U.S. 19 and marches throughout the area. In 1977 with 9,000 members and 40,000 sympathizers, they leased six acres for a new state headquarters, bookstore and Klan-related church near Palm Harbor.

Where is Palm Harbor? In part because Palm Harbor is not incorporated, many people disagree where Palm Harbor starts and ends. Starting at Klosterman and the Dixie Highway (now alternate 19), go south, just to the east of Wall Springs, Crystal Beach, Palm Harbor, and Ozona to the Pinellas Trail Bridge just north of the Honeymoon Causeway, and then east to County Road 1 (Omaha) and then continue east on Curlew, named after Curlew Creek, then north on McMullen Booth which becomes East Lake. Palm Harbor includes everything on both sides of the Lake Tarpon Outfall Canal and Lake Tarpon and everything on both sides of East Lake Road.

Traveling north on East Lake Road, Palm Harbor ends on the west side at Ridgeline Blvd. and on the east side at Pine Ridge. Everything north of this line is unincorporated Pinellas County. Palm Harbor runs through the northern end of Lansbrook to Pasture Fence Point on Lake Tarpon, and then across the lake to Klosterman. Palm Harbor then continues west on the southern side of Klosterman and back to Dixie Highway and the Gulf of Mexico. In the past Palm Harbor continued to the north at the Pasco County Line and to the east at the Hillsborough County Line. What is now Brooker Creek Preserve may have been Palm Harbor.

THE PALM HARBOR MUSEUM IS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO HELP IMPROVE AND COMPLETE THIS PROJECT:

1. Original copies of neighborhood and subdivision sales brochures and the names of older residents;
2. Additional photographs and documents and we need help integrating them into this project;
3. Technical help from photographers and computer experts;
4. Interviewing and filming older residents;
5. Information about businesses, churches, and synagogues so they can be included;
6. Bright Futures Scholars;
7. Donations to the Museum for this project and others.

FOR MORE INFORMATION YOU MAY WANT TO CONSULT THE FOLLOWING SOURCES:

HISTORY STORIES from the Palm Harbor Museum web site which is also a good source for thousands of old photographs and documents

PALM HARBOR, AN HISTORICAL SKETCH, Michael L. Sanders, Palm Harbor Chamber, 1978

OLD DOWNTOWN PALM HARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT 1888-1925, Palm Harbor Historical Society, 1993

A BRIEF HISTORY AND PICTORIAL TOUR OF HISTORIC PALM HARBOR, Nancy Bishop and Rheba Sutton, Palm Harbor Historical Society, 1996

AROUND PALM HARBOR, Winona Jones, Arcadia Publishing, 2005

HOW OZONA DEVELOPED AND CHANGED, 1868—2014, Terry Fortner, Palm Harbor Museum, 2014

YESTERYEAR I LIVED IN PARADISE, THE STORY OF CALADESI ISLAND, Myrtle Scharrer Betz, University of Tampa Press, 2009

INDIAN BLUFF ISLAND WAS BUCHANAN ISLAND: A CENTURY OF WALL SPRINGS AND FLORIDA HISTORY, Tom Rose, PhD, Palm Harbor Historical Society, 2012

PINELLAS COUNTY HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, Pinellas County Planning Department, Third Edition, 2008

HISTORIES OF AAA and how they developed maps, are available online.

VISIONS OF EDEN, R. Bruce Stephenson, Ohio State University Press, 1997

CRYSTAL BEACH ON THE GULF, Brochure originally published in 1927, reprinted 2012 by the Crystal Beach Community Association

HISTORIC PINELLAS COUNTY, A CENTENNIAL HISTORY, James Anthony Schnur, Pinellas County Historical Society and Heritage Village, 2012

PALM HARBOR PAEAN, Francine Coleman Larson & Raymond E. Hall, Palm Harbor, 2013

DEVIL IN THE GROVE, THURGOOD MARSHALL AND THE GROVELAND BOYS, Gilbert King, 2012

THE INVISIBLE EMPIRE, THE KU KLUX KLAN IN FLORIDA, Michael Newton. University Press of Florida, 2001

PHOTOGRAPHS OF FLORIDA, Michael Carlebach and Eugene Provenzo, Jr. University Press of Florida, 1993

CRYSTAL BEACH SPRING EXPLORATION BUBBLING UP 1000 FEET OFF POINT SEASIDE, DVD, 1994

IT'S NO BULL!, THE TRUE STORY OF THE TAMING OF NORTHEAST PINELLAS COUNTY, Arthur F. Olds, Boot Ranch Publishing Company, 1992

CRYSTAL BEACH HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS discovered in 2013 by Tom Rose are to be found under Stories, on the Palm Harbor Museum website

FROM YELLOW DOG DEMOCRATS TO RED STATE REPUBLICANS, FLORIDA AND ITS POLITICS SINCE 1940, David Colburn, University of Florida Press, second edition, 2013

THE NEW HISTORY OF FLORIDA edited by Michael Gannon, paperback 2013