

# **Riverview**

---

## **Alafia River Six Mile Creek**

4 pgs

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

Submitted to:  
**Florida Department of State  
Bureau of Historic Preservation**

**October 1998**

Prepared by:  
**Hillsborough County Planning & Growth Management  
601 East Kennedy Boulevard, P.O. Box 1110, Tampa, Florida 33601**

---

\* 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.

## *Riverview*

Because of the difficulty of crossing the Alafia River by ferry to reach Peru, people began settling on the northern bank of the river. As companies began mining phosphate out of the Alafia and people flooded into Riverview, the Alafia Hotel was built for Peruvian Mining Company workers. Seeing an economic potential, Isham E. Copeland and F.S. Morrison platted Riverview on July 14, 1891. Several months later Mr. Morrison started Riverview's post office on November 19, 1891. After the bust of the phosphate boom, Mr. Morrison bought the hotel. Further signifying the area's growth, in 1895 Leslie Chapel moved from Peru across the river because the majority of its congregation resided in and around Riverview.<sup>i</sup>

Riverview's general store served as one of the community's social centers. Not only could someone buy nearly everything a person could need, but also local men would gather at the store to catch up on the day's events. This may have been due to the owner of the store who also served as the settlement's postmaster. Riverview's general store changed owners several times during its operation, but, interestingly, two families sold the store back and forth to each other. By 1902, William Moody and W.T. Williams purchased the Alafia Hotel from Mr. Morrison and converted it into a general store, selling everything from dry goods to men's suits. Mr. Moody bought out his partner's shares in the business by 1903 and also served as postmaster. In 1908 F.S. Morrison bought the general store from Mr. Moody and within ten years O.W. Moody, William Moody's son, purchased the store, providing goods to Riverview's sixty residents. Not only operating the general store and serving as postmaster, Mr. Moody also bred live stock. Shortly thereafter, Mrs. Rena Thomason -- daughter of F.S. Morrison -- and her husband, J.L. Thomason, purchased the store and moved it south of the river, along with the post office. This move caused such a fervor among Riverview residents that they demanded the post office be relocated to the north side of the river, which it eventually was.<sup>ii</sup>

Truck farming and citrus growing dominated much of Riverview's agriculture produce in 1918. Out of the community's 100 residents, J.W. Brandon, E.H. Rawls, and W.F. Tate were the most prosperous truck growers. S.E. Mays, H.J. Moody, and W.F. Williams were the area's largest orange growers.<sup>iii</sup> Mrs. E.E. Lillibridge's 1927 description of Riverview reflects the dominance of agriculture:

The settlement of Riverview, formerly Peru, is situated about 15 miles southeast of Tampa on the banks of the Alafia river. State Highway No. 5 between Six-Mile creek and Sarasota and the new road No. 10, in place of the old shell road to Boyett and Balm, both run through Riverview.

Riverview is a settlement of about five hundred, with two hundred and fifty voters. The first settlers came here in 1856 and many of their descendants still remain.

The soil here is well adapted to the growing of all kinds of vegetables and citrus trees, as

well as bananas. There are many acres of orange and grapefruit trees, which bear excellent fruit.<sup>iv</sup>

From her description it also becomes evident that by 1927 Riverview had already swallowed up Peru, its southern neighbor. Riverview businesses included Mrs. Thomason's general store, O.P. Buzbee's grocery, and the B&B Garage. The garage survived from traffic traveling along two of the county's major roads that passed through Riverview: State Highway No. 5 and State Highway No. 10. Also known as Riverview Road, State Highway No. 5 was originally the first shell road built in Hillsborough County during the 1870s. It began in Tampa and ended around Wimauma. In 1914, the Edwards Construction Company improved the road with vitrified brick and a wood curb for \$139,277.77. Having a length of 12.57 miles, the road headed in a southerly direction extending from the Plant City-Manatee Forks near Orient to just south of Riverview. Eight years later, the section of road south of Riverview to the Manatee County line was paved with 2 ½-inch asphalt block with a concrete curb for approximately \$223,600. The state rebuilt the road in 1926. Today, the road is known as U.S. 301.<sup>v</sup>

Including people on both sides of the river, Riverview's population in 1930 was 882. By 1935, G.E. Adams owned and operated Adams Lumber Company which manufactured doors, window frames, and cabinets. Both turpentine and lumbering were important industries in the woods surrounding Riverview. The woods also provided another industry to prosper during Prohibition: moonshine.<sup>vi</sup> The Federal Writers' Project left out this industry when they wrote:

Today the town is a popular spot for fishing and picnic parties, and a center for the local truck farming and citrus industries. There are many old citrus groves near Riverview. The grove of S.E. Mays, planted in 1878, is one of the oldest producing groves in the county.<sup>vii</sup>

As people around the world cheered the end of World War II, Riverview's 1245 residents joined in the celebrations. The area was still rural, but its population was increasing. By the 1970s Riverview began feeling pressure from the southernly growth of Brandon. While still rural with many people growing citrus and raising cattle and horses, people attempting to escape the hustle and bustle of Tampa fueled the suburban development that started eating away at the area's edges, a process that continues to the present. Today, 6578 people call Riverview home.<sup>viii</sup>

---

i. Bradbury and Hallock, *A Chronology of Florida Post Offices*, 71; E.E. Lillibridge, "Riverview is a Rich Agricultural Section with Interesting History," *Plant City Courier* September 27, 1927; Carol Neef, "First Settled in 1842, Riverview Rolls Along," *Tampa Tribune* January 17, 1971, 3-B; Plat Book 1, page 48, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Hillsborough County, Tampa, Florida; "Post Office Dedication Stirs Memories for Some," *Brandon News* June 28, 1967, 3-B; Robinson, 81; Tein, n.p.

ii. *Atlas of Hillsborough County Florida*, 100; *Florida State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1918*, 497; Norma G. Frazier, "Riverview 'Hotel' Still a Landmark," *Brandon News* February 19, 1972; Norma G. Frazier, "Alafia Hotel was a Riverview Landmark," *Brandon News* March 30, 1977; "Post Office

---

Dedication Stirs Memories for Some," *Brandon News* June 28, 1967, 3-B

iii. *Florida State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1918*, 497.

iv. Mrs. E.E. Lillibridge, "Riverview is a Rich Agricultural Section with Interesting History," *Plant City Courier* September 27, 1927.

v. *District Road & Bridge Map, Hillsborough County, Florida* (Tampa, FL: County Engineering Department, 1927); Federal Writers' Project, *Florida, A Guide to the Southernmost State* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1939), 392; *Florida State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1925*, 786; Aleta Jonie Maschek, "A Piece of History...From Peru to Riverview with the Moodys Help," *Shopper Observer News* May 19, 1990, 1; Robinson, 121-122.

vi. Burgert Brothers Photographs 1708, 2428, 2913 (Tampa, FL: Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library); Florida State Chamber of Commerce and Florida Emergency Relief Administration, comp., *Industrial Directory of Florida, 1935-36* (St. Augustine, FL: The Record Co., 1935), 151; George Schlaughenhaupt, "Riverview: Rural, Spacious, but Fighting for Its Survival," *Tampa Tribune* August 28, 1978, 2B; 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.

vii. Federal Writers' Project, *Seeing Tampa*, 120.

viii. Carol Neef, "First Settled in 1842, Riverview Rolls Along," *Tampa Tribune* January 17, 1971, 1B,3B; The Planning Commission, *1990 Census Population and Housing by Place*, 2; George Schlaughenhaupt, "She's Seen Her Town and River Change Over Three Decades," *East Hillsborough Tribune* February 6, 1978; George Schlaughenhaupt, "Riverview: Rural, Spacious, but Fighting for Its Survival," *Tampa Tribune* August 28, 1978, 1B,2B; *The Seventh Census of the State of Florida, 1945*, 32.