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A Pedigree of Pinellas Place-names

James Anthony Schnur

Florida is known for its odd and colorful place-names. People pay millions of dollars to live in a “rat’s mouth” (“Boca Raton” in Spanish), while others call Two Egg or Sopchoppy their home. Here are some names from early settlements along the Pinellas Peninsula:

**Anclote:** The word derives from the Spanish word for a kedge or a small anchor commonly used by sailing vessels. Maps from the 1700s forward note the Anclote River. After the Civil War, Frederic Meyer left Marion County and settled on lands north of the river. By the 1870s, a small community formed along the north shore of the river, west of present-day Tarpon Springs. By one pioneer’s account, over ninety-percent of the men who came to the settlement in vessels were “of English extraction,” many of them from the British West Indies. Others came from the Florida Keys. They used Anclote as a base while harvesting sponges. Within fifteen years, much of the commerce shifted east, towards Spring Bayou. By the early 1880s, Hamilton Disston’s agents, including Anson Safford and John B. Walton, started developing the settlement of Tarpon Springs. After the Orange Belt Railway reached Tarpon Springs, the focus shifted from Anclote to Tarpon.1

**Anona:** Either Captain John Thomas Lowe or Captain Hamlin gave this name to the early settlement along The Narrows near Lowe’s Landing and across from Indian Rocks Beach. “Anonas” are sweet custard apples found in tropical climates, such as Key West. The Lowes and other early settlers who arrived from the Keys and the Caribbean brought anonas to the Pinellas Peninsula. The anonas disappeared after the freezes of the 1890s, and the Anona community became a western neighborhood of Largo after the railroad brought new settlers to “Citrus City.”

**Armour:** Named for the Armour meat-packing family, this settlement in the Rosery Road area about 1 mile north of downtown Largo included a post office and railway station by 1889. Brothers Philip Danforth and Herman Ossian Armour transformed the meat-packing industry in Chicago. The Armours had invested in Peter Demens’s Orange Belt Railway. By early 1889, Demens owed the Armours and other investors $900,000. Demens soon left Florida, and in time Armour merged into the settlement incorporated in 1905 as Largo.2

**Bay View (or Bayview):** A settlement started by members of the McMullen family in the years after the Civil War. Located near the northern end of the Bayside Bridge, James Parramore McMullen originally referred to the site as “Eagle’s Nest” for the large nest he spotted in a tree when he first visited the area in the early 1840s. Later, the area gained the name, “Swimming Pen Point,” for the many boats that came ashore to take cattle raised on farms in the region. By the 1890s, regular steamship service connected Bay View to Tampa and other coastal settlements. Bypassed by the railroad, Bay View later became part of Clearwater.

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**Disston City:** Originally named “Bonifacio” in January 1885, this settlement was planned by Hamilton Disston, a Philadelphia entrepreneur who crafted the purchase of four million acres of Florida land for $1-million. Renamed Disston City in 1889, it also was known as Veteran City before taking on the name Gulfport in the early twentieth century.³

**Green Springs:** Name given to present-day Safety Harbor during its early years. Originally known as Espíritu Santo, Spanish for “holy spirit,” at a time when many referred to Tampa Bay as Bahía del Espíritu Santo. The name changed from Green Springs to Safety Harbor in 1917 so it would not be confused with Green Cove Springs in Clay County.

**Seaside (or Sea Side):** Between Tarpon Springs and Palm Harbor, now part of the Crystal Beach community.

**Seven Oaks:** A small settlement north of Bayview, near the intersection of Alligator Creek and McMullen-Booth Road. Members of the McMullen, Booth, and Hoyt pioneer families lived in this area, close to the former Kapok Tree Restaurant. These families harvested and planted the “original” kapok tree in the area.

**Sutherland:** In 1885, Anson Safford—agent of Hamilton Disston and former territorial governor of Arizona—met with the Duke of Sutherland, a member of the English royal family. By some accounts, their negotiated land deals along the beach in the moonlight. In time, the Duke of Sutherland purchased thirty acres of land on a bluff overlooking Lake Butler (now known as Lake Tarpon). Later, the settlement south of Lake Butler became known as Sutherland. For awhile, it was home to Southern College, now Florida Southern College in Lakeland. Today, the community of Palm Harbor encompasses this early settlement.

**Yellow Bluff:** A settlement established by Walton Whitehurst in 1870. Briefly known as Bay St. Joseph in 1878, the area was named Ozona in 1879 for the gulf breezes found along the coastline. Some speculate that “Yellow Bluff” became an unpopular name given the regular frequency of yellow fever outbreaks in Florida during the nineteenth century.⁴

**Wardsville:** Early name for a handful of businesses and residences near the intersection of First Avenue South and Dr. Martin Luther King (Ninth) Street. This small settlement, anchored by E. R. and Ella Ward's small store and post office, existed in the mid-1880s. With the arrival of the Orange Belt Railway in 1888, “Wardsville” became part of a settlement that later grew into the city of St. Petersburg.⁵

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⁴ Morris, *Florida Place Names*, 188.
⁵ Arsenault, *St. Petersburg and the Florida Dream*, 57, 65.