

Sulphur Springs and Spring Hill – North Tampa, Florida Communities

<p>1855 Tampa incorporated</p>
<p>Segregation ‘Jim Crow’ Period (1883-1964)</p>
<p><u>1880s-1890s</u></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The spring at Sulphur Springs becomes a popular picnic and outing spot for the residents of Tampa.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1881 J.H. Krause is deeded 100 acres of land around the spring.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1889 Tampa commissioners contracted the Berlin Iron Bridge Company of Berlin, Connecticut to build a bridge to cross the Hillsborough River at the county road.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1891 Berlin Iron Bridge Company bridge is completed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late 1890s John Mills purchases Sulphur Springs (100 acres between Florida and Nebraska from Hillsborough River to Waters Avenue) from J.H. Krause.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1898 Spanish-American War. Tampa used as a major port of embarkation to Cuba. Many black soldiers with the ninth Calvary participated with Teddy Roosevelt’s “Rough Riders”; some decide to settle in Tampa following the war.
<p><u>Early 1990s</u></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of today’s black neighborhoods around Tampa (i.e., West Tampa, Belmont Heights, Hyde Park/Dobyville, Robles Pond, Spring Hill/Sulphur Springs) begin to be populated.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Mills opens Sulphur Springs Park, which includes a rustic swimming pool and bathhouses for changing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1906 Josiah Richardson purchases Sulphur Springs from John Mills.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1907 Plans and map of location of the Tampa and Sulphur Springs Traction Company bridge are approved. The bridge is to be located over the Hillsborough River near Nebraska Avenue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1908 Tampa and Sulphur Springs Traction Company built a trolley line to Sulphur Springs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1911 Sulphur Springs is platted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1911-1920 Numerous black families settled in the Spring Hill community, which consists of five streets (labeled 1st – 5th). According to oral history, the first settler to inhabit the Spring Hill area of Sulphur Springs was Reverend Henry Mansfield Dillard who lived on the corner of 3rd Street (now Humphrey) and Central Avenue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1913 “The Birth of a Race,” directed by John W. Noble begins filming in Sulphur Springs. Hundreds of African Americans in the Tampa area are extras. The film was considered an early response to T.F. Dixon’s play, “The Clansman,” adapted to the stage in 1910 and a forerunner to D.W. Griffith’s film, “Birth of a Nation” produced in 1915.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1918 Seventeen cabins, called The Live Oak Cabins, one of the first motels that

served the tourists visiting Sulphur Springs, were built.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1919 “The Birth of a Race” is released and premieres at Tampa’s Strand Theater.
<u>1920s</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1920 Federal Census: Total population of Sulphur Springs is 591 people – White: 82.74%; African American: 16.92%; “Mulatto”; 0.33%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richardson transforms Sulphur Springs Park into a tourist mecca featuring walking paths, elaborate bath houses, an alligator farm, a restaurant, dock, and toboggan slide.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring Hill is not part of the incorporated City of Tampa.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first school for black children in Spring Hill was believed to be held at Spring Hill Missionary Baptist Church and was started by Rev. H.M. Dillard. The Spring Hill School was also known by many residents as the “Brown Derby”.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1925 Richardson begins construction on the Arcade.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1927 The Arcade is completed. It housed a hotel, apartments, shops, post office, barbershop, sheriff, jail, and bank. Recognized in <i>Ripley’s Believe it or Not</i> as an entire city under one roof and the first mini mall in American.
<u>1930-1950s</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1931 The 1931 Sanborn map lists and labels the Spring Hill School, which was relocated to Okaloosa Avenue, as the “Colored school”.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1933 Tampa Electric Company dam collapses and floods Sulphur Springs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1937 The tourist clubhouse (The Harbor Club) is founded by a group of Michigan and Ohio tourists. People identified as non-white are excluded.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1946 The 1946 School Building Survey judges the Springs Hill School, located on Okaloosa Avenue, as 87th from the bottom on a scale of 1000. The school is described as, “one of the poorest buildings in the state,” with approximately 100 students attending grades 1-9 in September of that year. In the same year, the school designated for white children in Sulphur Springs receives a score of 650 on the same scale.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1948 “WHBO-1050 Tampa” was noted for being the first radio station in Florida to broadcast country music full time. Tampa’s WHBO came on the air in 1948 with 250 watts of power and its studios were located in the Sulphur Springs Arcade on North Nebraska Avenue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1950 The 1931-1955 Sanborn map identifies the location of Dillard Elementary (the Sulphur Springs Negro School). This school replaced Spring Hill Elementary, formerly located on Okaloosa Avenue. Today the Okaloosa site is located under Interstate 275.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1956 Josiah Richardson passes away in a nursing home at the age of 84. His daughter sprinkles ashes at the Sulphur Springs water tower.
<u>Civil Rights Period (1960-1968)</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1961 Berlin Iron Bridge Company bridge is torn down. • 1967 The old pavilion at the Sulphur Springs pool is torn down and replaced with a “modern” building with dressing rooms for swimmers, food concessions and offices of the North Tampa Chamber of Commerce.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1967 “Sulphur Springs Pool” changes its name to “North Tampa Beach.” • Around 1968 Dillard Elementary is torn down. Today the site is a parking lot on Yukon just behind the Home Depot Store located on Florida Avenue.
<u>1970s-2000</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1974 Arcade sold to Tampa Greyhound by J.T. Hendrick.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1976 Arcade demolished.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1984 Membership at the tourist clubhouse dwindled to 100 and the club was disbanded. The building has undergone many different uses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1984 Population of Sulphur Spring is 7,500.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1984 Twelve Protestant churches exist in Sulphur Springs, most Baptist and fundamental.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1990 Mean home price in Sulphur Springs is \$40,000 to \$45,000.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1995 Fifth Annual Reunion, Spring Hill Community Association (August 10-13).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2000 Federal Census: 29.88% or 1,885 citizens of Sulphur Springs listed as white and 59.67% or 3,764 citizens listed as African American.

Sources: Jackson, Antoinette (2009) “Conducting Heritage Research and Practicing Heritage Resource Management on a Community Level - Negotiating Contested Historicity.” *Practicing Anthropology* 31(3):5-10.

Spillane, Courtney (2007) “Reconstructing the Past: Heritage Research and Preservation Activities in Tampa Bay Communities.” M.A. thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of South Florida.