

THE GEO-SAMPLER

With the exciting news that Geotechnics has opened our fifth location—in Lakeland, Florida—we in the lab, of course, started to daydream about sunny days and citrus. Seeing as how that became a bit of a distraction, we dug into learning more about our new home in central Florida. Lucky you, our valued *GeoSampler* readers, you get to join us on this geographical journey. Welcome to Lakeland!

LAKELAND, FLORIDA: GRAPEFRUIT, TIGERS, AND GEOTECHNICS, OH MY!

Prior to the arrival of Geotechnics, several notable events shaped the city. The first was on January 1, 1885, when Lakeland was incorporated. Founded by Abraham Munn, a Kentuckian who purchased 80 acres in what is now downtown Lakeland and platted it, today's residents are fortunate that none of the other proposed names stuck, considering it would now be called Munnville, Red Bug, or Rome City.

Also built by Munn in 1885, the Tremont Hotel was said to be the nicest hotel in all of Central Florida. As Lakeland's first bathtubs were housed at the hotel, you can imagine how fancy it was. It was relocated in 1911, which made way for the Lakeland Terrace Hotel to take its place in 1924. You can still book a room there, tubs included.

City leaders really knew how to deal with crime in early Lakeland. In 1886, they passed an ordinance prohibiting "straggling around" town. The report for 2Q 1886 shows 36 arrests; offenses included fighting, gambling, boisterous cursing and swearing, public drinking, lewd conduct, discharging firearms, sanitary violations, petty larceny and peddling without a license. And yes, that was clearly before the arrival of Geotechnics, though we do occasionally enjoy boisterous cursing.

The fruity era

Many know that the Marsh Seedless Grapefruit is a leading commercial cultivar worldwide, owing to its high juice content, balanced tart-sweet flavor and delightful lack of seeds. But fewer know that it was born on a tree just north of Lakeland in 1887, by a nursery owner named Ed Tilson who sold his nurseries to C.M. Marsh who, in turn, named the citrus after himself.

A mere year later, another grower demonstrated the profitable character of the strawberry crop by netting more than \$600 from a single acre, thus originating the strawberry industry in the county. By 1894, Lakeland was shipping more strawberries than any other place in the state.

The boom and the bust

The Florida land boom of the 1920s became Lakeland's golden age. It saw the construction of many significant structures, several of which are still on the National Register of Historic

Places. It saw the introduction of the Cleveland Indians, who held spring training from 1923 to 1927. And it saw two Lakeland residents nearly make aviation history when they attempted to be the first man and woman to fly across the Atlantic. It seems, shortly after Lindbergh's inaugural feat, this enterprising duo attempted to recreate it. They successfully departed from



That moment when your steak is on the grill and you can already feel your mouth watering. I wonder if vegans feel the same when mowing their lawn.



NEXT STOP

Boring, Oregon & Dull, Ohio

Yes, they are sister cities.

Why, Arizona

Located at the Y-intersection of State Routes 85 and 86.

WhyNot, North Carolina

Good question.

Tightwad, Missouri

Named by a postman who was charged an extra 50 cents for a better watermelon.

Two Egg, Florida

Known for the "Two Egg Stump Jumper" (a local Bigfoot-like creature)

Monkey's Eyebrow, Kentucky

Named for how the river bend looked to settlers.

Slicklizzard, Alabama

Named because local miners became "slick as a lizard" crawling through muddy passages

Chicken, Alaska

Named because residents couldn't spell "ptarmigan"

Hell, Michigan

Famous for freezing over in the winter

Zzyzx, California

Located in the Mojave Desert, designed to be the last word in the English language



New York, but engine trouble caused them to splash down a few hundred miles shy of Spain. Fortunately, they were rescued by a tanker and received much fanfare in Europe and back home in Lakeland.

Lakeland wasn't able to avoid the hardship of the Great Depression, but bounced back thanks to a couple of unlikely events. First, the Detroit Tigers arrived in 1934 for Spring Training, which continues to this day though Lakeland is renamed "Tigertown" for the annual event. Famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright arrived in the 1930s at the invitation of the president of Florida Southern College. Wright worked on this "true American campus" for 20 years, completing 12 structures (and leaving six on the drawing board). The architect called his project "A Child of the Sun," and today it's the largest collection of Wright-designed structures in one location in the world.

Lakeland played a key role during World War II, too, as it was home to the training of several thousand men

flying for the U.S. Army Air Corps, the R&D location for amphibious tanks, and the site on which B-24 bomber crews also trained. After the war, George Jenkins rapidly expanded his Publix grocery store chain, locating his headquarters in Lakeland, eventually leading to the famous "pub sub," a sandwich that embodies the store's motto: "where shopping is a pleasure."

Which brings us squarely back to ... fruit. (You thought we were going back to bathtubs, didn't you?) Citrus growth and production made this area the "World's Citrus Center." Through the 1980's Lakeland and its surroundings produced 25% of the nation's citrus. The Florida Department of Citrus and Florida Citrus Mutual are still located here.

Come visit

We're thrilled to have opened our fifth facility in Lakeland. Though you can call it Munnville if you like when you call us. Specifically, you

can find us at 4190 Waring Road, Suite 112. Or you can reach us by phone at (863) 315-9006. Come visit; we'd love to show you around. And the citrus is on us!



Thank you.

We are grateful for the people we've had the opportunity to work with over the past 40 years that entrust us with their geotechnical and geosynthetic testing and field services.

As much as our work centers on data and testing, it's really all about people. Our employees. Our partners. Our clients. Thank you!



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