



## FLORIDA PIONEER MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

August/September, 2010  
M.C. Bardsley Editor

### ***SPECIAL EDITION CELEBRATING FLORIDA CITY'S 100 YEARS!***

Sincere thanks is extended to Larry Wiggins (retired Comptroller South Dade News Leader) and Vice President of the Florida Pioneer Museum, for his extensive research for the following articles celebrating Florida City's 100 Years. It is a fascinating story of the beginnings of Florida City.

#### **Beginnings of Florida City Took Place 100 Years Ago**

This summer marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the settlement of Florida City. J.H. Tatum and Company, a pioneer Miami realty and development company had acquired a track of land consisting of more than 9,000 acres below Homestead. During the winter season of 1909-1910 the company leased some of the land to experienced Homestead farming pioneers to grow crops on it. These farmers were successful in their efforts and provided letters to that effect that the company would later use in promoting the land for sale.

J.H. Tatum and Company was reincorporated as the Tatum Bros. Real Estate and investment Company as was reported on page one of The Daily Miami Metropolis on May 20, 1910. The new company was composed of brothers: J.H. Tatum, B.B. Tatum and S.M. Tatum. Six days later on May 26, 1910, the newspaper ran the advertisement that is transcribed below, it appeared on the following day in The Metropolis' weekly edition. This was the first public announcement that the property was now available for sale to future settlers.

The development would be named "Detroit" in August 1910 and Tatum Bros. would reincorporate into a company named "Miami Land & Development Company" in March 1911. Incorporation would come on December 28, 1914 after enough settlers arrived and the new town was christened "Florida City" rather than "Detroit". It seems that the citizens were tired of having large amounts of both mail and shipments of supplies mistakenly directed to the towns more well known Michigan namesake. Here is a transcription of the first part of the original advertisement that appeared on May 27, 1910 in The Weekly Miami Metropolis (the second part consists of the letters from the first farmers and will follow in a later newsletter).

May 27, 1910

**Best Land Proposal Yet Put on the Market in Florida  
Is offered by  
Tatum Bros. Real Estate and Investment Co.  
Miami, Florida**

This firm has been doing business in Florida twenty-eight years, and ought to know what lands are good and profitable and when titles are perfect. As evidence of our knowledge and experience, we respectfully submit with much pride that we have sold during the past few months, since we took up the sale of Everglade and marl lands, 288,000 acres of land, amounting in purchase price to \$1,060,000.00; and we have yet to find a single dissatisfied customer, or one who has not received a perfect title and an abstract showing same to be free from encumbrance.

**NOW COMES AN UNPRECEDENTED PROPOSITION:**

This track of land consists of 9,000 acres situated at Homestead, Florida, which is 27 miles south of Miami, and the Florida East Coast Railroad runs directly through the land.

In view of the fact that other land companies are offering good lands on easy terms in Dade County, which merit the attention of those seeking homes, we have determined to go them SEVERAL BETTER, so that we may be able to close out the 900 CONTRACTS IN 90 DAYS. We therefore submit as briefly as possible what these lands are, and why you should buy these lands.

The entire track is known as inland or marl prairie. This is not in the Everglades proper, but lies adjacent to them, having been at some remote period inundated by water; but the water from the Glades does not now overflow them, having no connecting channel to them except at the extreme Western end of tract through which flows the Manatee Creek, and we will not now put this part of the land on the market.

Now every acre offered to you is either marl, muck or hammock. About 90 per cent of it being marl, 5 percent hammock lands and balance muck. The marl lands as a rule are of a bluish cast, and resemble clay somewhat, and are from two to six feet deep in soil. Marl is firm, therefore holds moisture well. In fact, at least 80 percent of all vegetable crops now made or that have been made in Dade county, are grown on exactly similar soil.

The muck lands are scattered here and there over the tract, and are black in color and likewise very productive, as they are shallow in muck and underlaid mostly with marl. The islands contain from one to ten acres, and are some of the most sought after, having a small growth of hardwood on them. There islands are hammock land and are scattered throughout the tract. They are the natural home of all citrus fruits.

This tract is practically free from all frost as it lies only from three to five miles from the salt water of the Atlantic Ocean. Within a few miles of the shore the Gulf Stream flows in a Northerly course, having a current varying from three miles upward per hour. This stream is three miles deep and about forty miles wide, and has a temperature of about 78 degrees both summer and winter; hence the breezes off this great stream, together with the trade winds coming from its warm surface, drive back the cold waves from the States, and it is due largely to this local reason that Dade county is the only county in Florida or the United States where sugar cane will go to seed or thoroughly mature, and where the citrus trees and tropical plants grow all the year.

Now these lands lie immediately adjacent to these waters; have no pine lands or timber to obstruct the wind currents; hence they are warm in winter and cool in summer.

**IMPORTANT FACTS:** This land is already dry, except for the rains falling on it in summer; and in order to make this flow off immediately we are now digging at our own expense ditches on the high side

of the lands to the railroad running through the middle of the tract, which has large canals on each side of the roadbed, which canals lead into the Bays of the Atlantic.

In addition to this, we are building a road, from the farthest portion of the land offered, to the railroad at our expense. Also, notice that EACH AND EVERY TEN ACRES FRONTS ON A ROAD. We bed these roads up so that it leaves two shallow ditches around every 169 acres, which lead into the main drains. We also propose to give the purchasers of each 640 acres a six-inch centrifugal pump and gas engine all complete so that everyone can irrigate by letting the water flow down between the cultivated rows, should it need water. However several parties farmed on this identical land (see letters from some of this year's croppers) and notwithstanding this was an extremely dry season, they did not need water; or as you will notice, they actually made more products and money to the acre than was made elsewhere in the States.

SOME OF THE REASONS why you should buy a home where you will succeed if you can do so anywhere. First, there is no land known where you can produce more money in less time with less labor. Remember when you visit Dade county, you will find that more than 80 per cent of successful farming is done by our home people on similar lands. It is nearer the Gulf Stream and has no timber to obstruct the warm winds which drive away the frost. It is diversified soil, having muck, marl, and hammock.

THE RAILROAD PASSES DIRECTLY THROUGH IT, HENSE A SHORT HAUL SAVING MUCH EXPENSE.

WE DITCH LANDS, BUILD ROADS ON EVERY TEN ACRES AND FURNISH MACHINERY FOR IRRIGATING IF NEEDED.

But the main object of the machinery is to furnish water to flood land planted to rice after the vegetables have been gathered, thus making two crops annually. And while the rice crops require less labor and one fourth the cost of trucking crops, the profit expected will be from \$200 to \$500 per acre.

ON ACCOUNT OF OUR LAND BEING DITCHED NOW, WE GUARANTEE THAT YOU CAN GO ON YOUR LAND AND PLANT AND MAKE CROP NEXT SEASON FROM ONE TO TWO MONTHS EARLIER THAN OTHER FARMERS, HENCE GET BETTER PRICES.

THIS TRACT LIES FURTHER SOUTH THAN ANY TILLABLE LANDS IN FLORIDA ON THE MARKET, WHICH IS ANOTHER REASON FOR FREEDOM FROM COLD.

WHEN YOU GET READY TO SEE YOUR LANDS, WE WILL SHOW YOU THE EXACT CORNERS OF EVERY TRACT, AS IT IS SURVEYED AND THE CORNER POSTS ALL UP, AND HAVE YOUR NUMBERS ON EACH STAKE.

WITH YOUR ROADS BUILT, YOUR DITCHES DUG, YOU HAVE NOTHING TO DO EXCEPT STICK A MATCH TO THE GRASS AND GO TO PLANTING.

You do not break up your land, simply plow a furrow for your plants and about three weeks after planting put another furrow and your plowing is over; although some farmers plow a third furrow. The best tomatoes raised this season were plowed out only every other middle, as they claimed the unbroken middle held all the moisture needed to make crops, and we recommend this to the new farmer.

ANOTHER UNHEARD OF THING:

WE GIVE TO EVERY PURCHASER A CERTIFIED COPY OF A GUARANTEED ABSTRACT TO HIS LAND. THIS WILL SHOW YOUR TITLE CLEAR TO ANYONE IN THE UNITED STATES.

Now, as to what you can make on these lands, we are giving herein letters from farmers who cultivated these lands this year (the land was only rented to a few home people as we were not ready to place it on the market), also a few letters from other farmers all of whom you may write if you like, about any statement made herein.

BUT WE GO FURTHER:

WE GUARANTEE YOUR LANDS TO BE JUST AS REPRESENTED, ANY TIME WITHIN 90 DAYS AFTER YOUR PURCHASE, IF YOU ARE DISSATISFIED WE GUARANTEE IN YOUR CONTRACT TO REFUND ALL MONEYS YOU HAVE PAID US WITH 6 PER CENT INTEREST TO DATE. Not only this, but when you come to see your land, if you like some other tract better than the one you have selected, we will let you select any tract remaining unsold and exchange with you. We do not hesitate to do this as all the tracts are good.

Another feature not heard of is the fact that as we know this to be the most beautiful place in the world, we have decided to agree to PAY YOUR DOCTOR'S BILLS incurred by reason of chills, fever or malaria contracted from local cause; and we never expect to have a bill to pay.

WE GO STILL FURTHER AND GUARANTEE TO ANY AND ALL PURCHASERS THAT SHOULD THEY DIE AFTER MAKING HALF OF THEIR PAYMENTS WE WILL MAKE FREE DEED TO THEIR LEGAL HEIRS WITHOUT FURTHER PAYMENT.

Now, to hasten sales and save advertising and agents' costs to us we agree to deed FREE OF COST a large, high residence lot adjacent to the railroad station to the first one hundred purchasers of land; deed to be made when final payment is made on farming tract.

FINALLY, impress upon your mind that this offer is the only one in the world where each and every ten acre fronts on a public bedded and graded road with your lands ditched and machinery furnished for irrigation. If you did these things yourself, would it not cost you more than we ask you for the land?

Yet, by doing this with machinery and being satisfied with a small profit, and having purchased these lands when the cost was low, we are able to do this for you and guarantee that you can go to work this season. Then think what your town lot will be worth when nine hundred families locate here.

PRICES AND TERMS:

OUR AGENT WILL SHOW YOU MAPS, AND YOU CAN SELECT YOUR EXACT FARMING LAND AND LOT, AND NOW LISTEN TO PRICES AND TERMS. ONLY \$50 AN ACRE FOR TEN-ACRE OR LARGER TRACTS, AND WE SO WELL KNOW THAT YOU WILL KEEP THE LAND WHEN YOU BUY THAT YOU CAN PAY ONLY ONE DOLLAR PER ACRE CASH, AND ONE DOLLAR PER ACRE EACH SUCCEEDING MONTH WITHOUT INTEREST OR TAXES UNTIL PAID FOR. We will allow 5 per cent discount for those who wish to pay cash.

Now we mean for you to buy today, not tomorrow. For this reason we submit letters from Bankers who have dealt with us for years and who vouch for us. If there is any doubt in your mind, or if you want further information, wire letter at our expense, not write. Buy while you can select, and while you get your residence lot free.

TATUM BROS. REAL ESTATE & INVESTMENT CO., Tatum Building, 214 12<sup>th</sup> St. Miami, Florida.

References:

FIRST NATIONAL BANK, MIAMI, FLA

BANK OF BAY BISCAYNE, MIAMI, FLA.

MIAMI SAVINGS BANK, MIAMI, FLA.

BANK OF TAMPA, TAMPA, FLA.

For Absolute Proof as to the profitableness of growing crops, we are hereto appending a few letters from persons who actually farmed on this land this season, and in fact have not finished shipping yet, nor have they received full returns from shipments yet. You will notice that each farmer, after paying expenses netted about \$500.00 an acre. You are privileged to write to any or all of these people, who are actual residents of Homestead, Fla.

SPECIAL EDITION: FLORIDA CITY 100 YEARS AGO.  
LETTERS

Homestead, Fla., May 17, 1910.

Tatum Bros. Real Estate & Investment Co., Miami, Fla.

Gentlemen:

In answer to your personal inquiry as to how I succeeded on the ten acres of land which I rented of you and farmed this year, will say that I planted the same mostly in tomatoes. However, I planted a considerable area in Onions, Beets, Cabbage, Sweet Potatoes, English Peas, Irish Potatoes and other crops, in order to determine for myself which would be the more beneficial crops to plant.

I am frank to say that all crops turned out well, and although it was very dry we did not suffer for moisture and we had no cold, as you know, here. Therefore, we were satisfied with the results all round. We have shipped about 2,500 crates of tomatoes outside of other crops. We will cheerfully answer any inquiries from your customers and are glad to know that you are finishing surveying the land, building ditches and grading roads, and putting this land on the market; and we renters will be glad to welcome any newcomers here and do not hesitate to say that they will succeed not only in farming, but that we consider this the best place for oranges, grapefruit and other tropical fruits that there is in the State of Florida.

Yours truly,

L. S. Mowery (Signed)

FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS NET PER ACRE

Homestead, Fla., May 17, 1910.

Tatum Bros. Real Estate & Investment Co., Miami, Fla.

Gentlemen:

In reply to your letter, will state that I planted five acres in tomatoes on your marl lands at Homestead, and have already shipped more than 2,500 crates and have received returns of \$1,700.00 net, and expect when I have finished gathering and received all returns that they should net me about \$1.00 per crate.

I have lived and farmed here for six years, and do not hesitate to advise anyone to come here, and know that they will succeed here if they will anywhere. We have never had any damaging or killing frost, and the marl land makes good crops without artificial irrigation.

Yours truly,

W. D. Horn (Signed)

ALL MADE BIG MONEY

Homestead, Fla., May 17, 1910.

Mr. J. H. Tatum, Tatum Bro. Real Estate & Investment Co., Miami, Florida.

Dear Sir:

At your request, I take pleasure in making statement that I went with you personally over all the lines and lands which you own at Homestead, Florida, and which you are putting on the market. And I gladly say that the entire body is composed of rich marl and muck lands with quite a number of small hammocks scattered here and there over the tract.

I do not know of a better tract of land in the State, as it is all good for producing tomatoes, sweet potatoes, cabbage, onions, beets, English peas, Irish potatoes, clover, both white and red, rice, sugar cane and in fact, everything in the vegetable kingdom. I have either raised myself or seen raised by others on these lands, all of the above crops; and do not hesitate to

recommend the purchase of these lands to any and everyone.

The usual yield is from \$400.00 per acre net profit, upward. Now that you are ditching, diking, building roads, and irrigating the lands, you will no doubt increase the yield very much and can harvest two or three crops each year if you care to do so. We had no frost here this season, and notwithstanding it was an unusually dry spring, all of the farmers on your land made good crops and big money. I will certainly write to anyone who desires further information, in order to aid them and yourself, although I have no land for sale whatever.

Yours truly,

D. W. Sullivan (Signed)

OVER 500 CRATES TO THE ACRE

Homestead, Fla., May 17, 1910

Tatum Bros. Real Estate & Investment Co., 214 Twelfth Street, Miami, Florida.

Gentlemen:

At your request, I take pleasure in stating to you that I grew a small crop of three acres of tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, and general garden truck on land adjoining yours, which is identically like your land. Up to date I have shipped over 1500 crates and have netted so far over \$1,300.00. I will gladly assist you in every way I can in colonizing this valuable tract of land.

Yours truly,

R. E. Caves (Signed)

General Merchant.

FIVE THOUSAND CRATES ON TEN ACRES

Homestead, Fla., May 20, 1910.

Tatum Bros. Real Estate & Investment Co., Miami, Florida

Gentlemen:

In answer to your letter of inquiry as to our success with the tomato crop planted on your land this year, we will state that we planted ten acres of land and have shipped five thousand (5,000) crates off of the tract up to date.

This land is known as the marl prairie land, although it is firm and can be plowed and there can be any kind of vegetables grown on the land. But the way we planted our tomatoes, we just dug small holes with a hoe and set out the plants, and then as we fertilized we hoed them, dragging the dirt up to them.

We consider all your lands here are equal in value to that we planted. We will further state that we had no frost on the crop, and made the crop without irrigation.

Trusting this information will help you out, and adding that we will be glad to answer any questions in regard to these lands, we are,

Yours very truly,

Sullivan Bros. (Signed)

REPORT OF OUR SURVEYOR

Homestead, Fla., May 17, 1910.

Tatum Bros. Real Estate & Investment Co., 214 Twelfth Street. Miami, Florida.

Gentlemen:

In making my report to you upon your 9,000 acre tract of land situated at Homestead, Florida, which you are now putting on the market, I will state that I have almost completed surveying out the ditches and roads, putting down the corner stakes to every ten acres therein, which makes six miles of road and eight miles of ditches to the mile square, for every 640

acres of land.

This places every ten acres so that it will front on a graded road. The ditches will certainly carry off all rain water which falls upon these lands, and there is a high ridge of pine land lying between them and the Everglades proper, ranging from eight to fifteen feet in height, which prevents at all times any overflow from the Glades, thus leaving only the rainfall less evaporation and absorption to be carried off, which is very small as you already know.

The same ditches and dikes will also hold water sufficient for the irrigation of rice and other crops. You will not have to pump any water more than eight feet deep, where there is an inexhaustible supply. The small drains empty into your larger drains, and these empty into the railroad canals, which empty into the waters of the Atlantic. Therefore your drainage is a sure success, there being an average of about seven feet fall in a distance of four to seven miles.

The soil is marl and muck with a few scattered hammocks. It needs no clearing except to strike a match and burn it off; so that when you have completed your ditches and dikes, it is ready for planting. I sounded the lines of every ten acre tract as requested, and found this soil averaging from two to nine feet in depth, having no rock upon the surface anywhere, thus making it easy to plow and dig your drainage ditches.

I found that all the farmers who were cropping on your land this season have almost completed picking and gathering their crops. I did not find a single person who made less than \$400 to \$500 per acre net on their crops this season. I will add that this is the largest body of good land in Dade county, and I do not fear to recommend it to the fullest extent to anyone seeking a home, as success on these lands is sure. I state this after having been county surveyor of Dade county for eight years, and having a thorough knowledge of what it takes to constitute perfect land.

Yours truly,

Geo. L. MacDonald (Signed)

We want a live agent in every state. Write for terms and exclusive territory.

Tatum Bros. Real Estate and Investment Co.