

Our Water History: The Hillsborough River



Throughout the centuries, the Hillsborough River has seen lots of change, growth to industrial activity. Geological data suggests that the Hillsborough River has been flowing for about **27,000 years**. Humans first made their way to this area 12,000 -15,000 years ago.

Our river has many names, depending on who lived in this region. The Timucua, who lived in the area now known as Tampa, called their town, Mocosó, and the river, the “Mocosó River.” The Spanish christened it the “River of San Julian de Arriaga.” The Seminoles called the river, Lockcha-Popka-Chiska, the river “one crosses to eat acorns.” The first survey of the river was completed in 1757 by Don Francisco Maria Celi, pilot of the Spanish Royal Fleet. Don Francisco ventured up to the Temple Terrace area in search of longleaf pine to use as masts for his ships. Francisco named the pine forest of the area “El Pinal de la Cruz de Santa Teresa” or “The Pines of the Cross of Saint Teresa”. In 1772, a map was drawn and sent to English Earl of Hillsborough, Governor of West Florida, and shows the river named as the Hillsborough.



We begin to see industrial activities along the Hillsborough River in 1846, when the first ferry crossing on the Hillsborough River is established. This improves transportation and widens the growth of Tampa to both sides of the river. In 1897, at a cost of \$150,000, an **electrical dam** is built on the river by Consumers Electric Light and Street Railway Company. On December 13, 1898, the dam is dynamited by cattle barons angry at the loss of grazing land. They tried three times. The first on January 8, 1897, shortly after construction was completed. When the water is low, remnants of the dynamited dam can be seen. In the late 1700s the watershed of the Hillsborough River was a land covered by a rich, old growth forest.

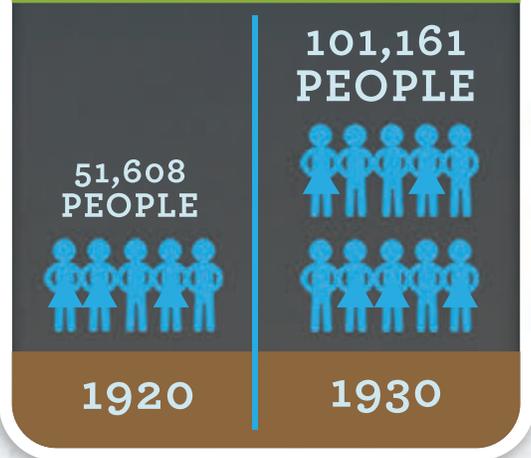


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Majestic bald cypress, longleaf pine, and sand live oak were hundreds of years old (and in the case of cypress, thousands of years old). In the mid to late 1800s to about 1913 the watershed of this old growth forest began to be logged. As a result of this lumbering activity, most of the trees within the Hillsborough River basin are now less than one hundred years in age. The harvesting of the old growth trees altered the ecosystems they dominated. Trees such as water ash and water locust were able to quickly grow in the sun-lit spaces created when bigger trees were removed. The riverine swamp forest we see today has a much different ecology than the ecosystem that had existed along the Hillsborough for the previous ten to fifteen thousand years.

TAMPA POPULATION 1920 & 1930



Because of all the industrial activity in the region, the City of Tampa saw an increase in population and growth. The 1920 census shows **51,608 people** in the region. Just 10 years later, in the 1930 census, the population doubled to **101,161 people**. Because of this growth, the City needed to provide a dependable alternative to a scattered system of poor quality wells. In 1924, the David L. Tippen Water Treatment Facility was created. This plant included its own stream plant, electrical generators, and steam-driven pumps. It could supply 20 million gallons of water per day. In 1948, new additions were completed and could then handle 35-45 million gallons per day. While they thought this would be enough for the next 10 years, in the 1950's, large industrial areas developed in the area and their water demands were high. In 1959, the plant was again expanded and could now handle **71 million gallons per day (mgd)**. Using much of the existing structure built in 1924, the plant today houses new technology and Florida's only municipally-owned, state-certified, complete drinking water laboratory.

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Short Answer: 3-5 Sentences Each

1. How did the different tribes of the region and the subsequent colonization by the Spanish and the English impact the City of Tampa?

2. What impact did the logging and dam have to the Hillsborough River?

3. What benefits do we derive by having a ground water source for our drinking water?

4. Based on the information given, describe the future water needs of the City of Tampa.

Creative Writing:

Tell the story of living along the Hillsborough River. Your story can take place in any of the time periods listed above. Be sure to describe who you are, where you live, what time period you live in and how you depend on the Hillsborough River for your survival.