

Sanford, a Brief History...

Sanford is located on the south shore of Lake Monroe at the headwaters of the St. Johns River. During the Seminole Wars of the 1830's, the area was the site of a U.S. Army post named Fort Mellon. As settlers moved into the area, the town of Mellonville was established. With the advent of commercial steamboat service the town became a distribution point for goods essential for the growth of Central Florida. When Orange County was created in 1845, Mellonville became the county seat.

In 1870, Henry Shelton Sanford purchased the land west of Mellonville. He planned "The Gate City of South Florida," which he believed would become the transportation hub for all of southern Florida. In 1877, the City of Sanford was incorporated and Mellonville was annexed six years later. In 1880, Henry S. Sanford formed a land company in London to encourage investments in the new city. That same year construction began on the South Florida Railroad with a terminus in Sanford. By 1884, Sanford was a prosperous town with wharves, a railroad station, and a large hotel.

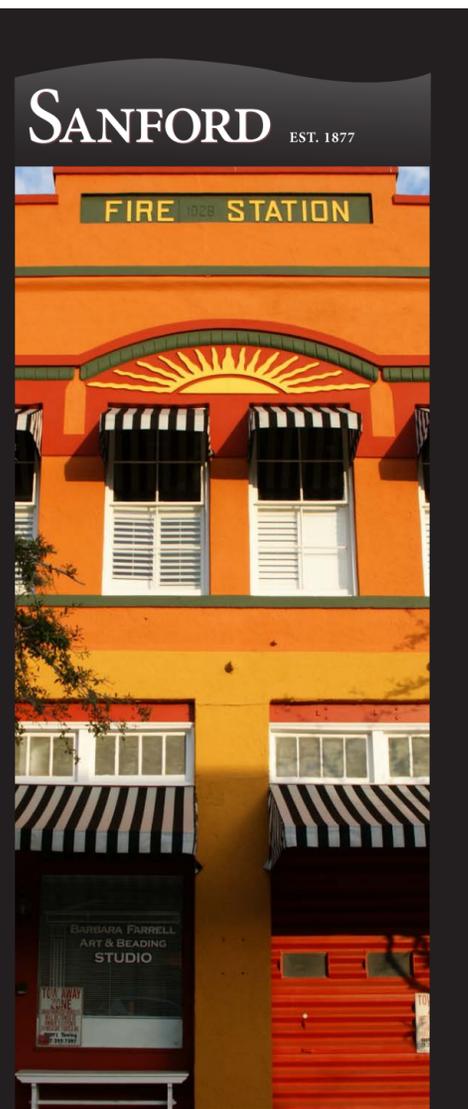
Mr. Sanford's greatest interest in Florida was the development of Belair, a citrus grove and experimental garden near Sanford. More than 140 varieties of citrus, including the Valencia orange, were tested for adaptability to the Florida climate.

In September 1887, a bakery on 1st Street caught fire. The blaze spread rapidly through the wooden buildings on the east side of town until stopped by the volunteer fire department. When the town was rebuilt, the new structures were made of brick.

During the winter of 1894-95, the citrus industry received a serious blow when freezing temperatures destroyed the year's entire crop. Many citizens faced economic ruin and left the area. Those who stayed harnessed artesian wells and developed a sub-irrigation system that permitted commercial agriculture. By the first decade of the 20th century, Sanford was one of the largest vegetable shipping centers in the United States and received the nickname "Celery City" for its most successful crop.

On April 25, 1913, Seminole County was officially established with Sanford as the county seat. In the boom and bust years that followed, Sanford shared in the growth of Central Florida.

From 1942 to 1968, the Sanford U.S. Naval Air Station drew many residents away from agriculture and brought new people to the city. Today the old station is Sanford's international airport.



Commercial Historic District Walking Tour

How To Enjoy The Walking Tour...

This walking tour of Sanford's Commercial Historic District will take about one hour. It includes examples of diverse architectural styles and building materials. The buildings on the walking tour that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places are indicated with a gold frame around their photos and those buildings are designated with a bronze plaque. Other buildings of notable interest are indicated with a silver border around their photos.

The starting point of the tour is in the center of town where the clock is located at Magnolia Avenue and 1st Street. The clock originally adorned the First National Bank building (#5). In 1931, A. H. Moses donated the clock to the city. It was placed at the intersection of Park Avenue and 1st Street where it remained until 1961 when it was moved to the Elks Club on 2nd Street. On July 9, 1985, the renovated clock was installed at its present location to once again serve as the focal point for downtown.

During your walking tour of the Sanford Commercial Historic District, please visit some of the many merchants for a variety of goods and services.

1 DeForest Block 121 East 1st Street

Known locally as "Touchton's," this brick structure is one of Sanford's oldest commercial buildings. It was built in 1887 by Henry L. DeForest and is one of the few survivors of the fire of 1887. Built as a general store, the building was renovated in 1917 by the Seminole County Bank. The building was purchased in 1933 by W. C. Touchton and housed Touchton's Drugs for 61 years.

2 McCrory 5 & 10 Building 105 East 1st Street

Built circa 1906, this brick block first housed a grocery store owned by N. O. Garner and J.D. Roberts. J.G. McCrory's 5&10 moved into the building circa 1917 and remained there for more than seventy years. The metal marquee awning across the front was typical of awnings found on downtown stores during the early 20th century.

3 First National Bank No. 2 101 East 1st Street

This six-story building, designed by Mowbray & Uffinger of New York, was Sanford's first "skyscraper." Constructed in 1922 by George A. Fuller Co., the building is limestone, brick, and hollow tile on a steel skeleton. The First National Bank was located here from 1923 to 1929. The building has served continuously as home to a bank since 1938.

13 Meisch Building 224 East 1st Street

This building was designed by W. B. Talley and constructed by R. J. Gallespie in 1923 for John Meisch, president of the Sanford Investment Company. Sanford's first cafeteria, Lu Beth's, and Piggly-Wiggly grocery store were among the first tenants. The façade has not been significantly altered since construction. The building is built of reinforced concrete faced with tapestry brick, Arnold ornamental stone, and stucco. The windows are copper trimmed with a Vermont marble base. Red and white decorative terra-cotta mission tile is on the façade parapet.

14 U.S. Post Office 230 East 1st Street

This building was constructed in 1917 as a U.S. Post Office and has an intact original façade and two original lamp posts. James Wetmore was the supervising architect for the building. The Classical Revival building is constructed of red pressed brick trimmed in Georgia sandstone. In 1962, a new post office opened nearby and this building became the Sanford Library. Today, the building is home to the Historic Sanford Welcome Center.

15 Bishop Block 301-309 East 1st Street

This block was built in December 1887 for J. N. Bishop and was part of the reconstruction of Sanford's commercial district following the great fire of September 1887. The Romanesque Revival building was constructed by Capt. J. O. Northesag of New York and is distinguished by a low broad arch over the main entrance on 1st Street. The façade is mostly original but a cone shaped roof over the northwest corner was removed.

16 Hester and Shepard Block 109 South Palmetto Avenue

This building was constructed for M. K. Hester and Mr. Shepard after the September 1887 fire that swept through downtown Sanford. The building originally had three floors, however, the top floor was condemned and removed in 1928. This block served as Sanford's fire station from 1890 to 1974. The building also served as the City Hall, Police Station and Jail. The only legal hanging in Seminole County occurred behind this building in 1923. After housing Sanford Dry Cleaners for many years, the building was renovated as a private residence in the 1990's.

4 Henry B. Lord Building 112 South Park Avenue

This one-story brick building has housed a jewelry store for most of its history. Believed to have been built circa 1895 for Henry B. Lord, an early Sanford jeweler, this building became McLaulin's jewelry store in the 1930's. Henry McLaulin learned jewelry making from H. B. Lord; he sold the business to W. E. Kader in 1943. Kader's remained at this location until 1992.

5 First National Bank No. 1 101 West 1st Street

This 1883 brick building was originally constructed as the Lyman Bank and is the oldest brick building in Sanford's downtown Commercial Historic District. The front door, which originally faced Park Avenue, has been moved twice. When the bank was reorganized as the First National Bank in 1908, the building was faced with marble and the door was moved to the corner. A later remodeling moved the door to its present location facing 1st Street. The organizational meetings to create Rollins College were held in this building. The city clock, which now sits in Magnolia Square, was originally purchased for this building.

6 PICO Block 114 West 1st Street

The PICO (Plant Investment Co.) Block was built in 1887 by Henry B. Plant to house his company's Sanford offices. It is part of a complex of buildings constructed when this area was the center of Sanford's railroads. The remains of a carriage way may be seen on the Oak Avenue side of the building. The brick façade of this L-shaped structure was covered with stucco in the 1920's when it became the Welaka Apartments. In the 1980's the stucco was removed from the first floor.

7 PICO Hotel, Restaurant, and Stores 209 North Oak Avenue/200 North Park Avenue

Built as a hotel in 1887 for Henry B. Plant, President of the Plant Investment Co. (PICO), this building served as a terminal hotel for the railroads and river steamboats that served Sanford. The architect was W. T. Cotter of Sanford (designer of the Cathedral of St. Augustine) and the builder was H. M. Papworth Construction Co. (Papworth was also Sanford's Fire Chief). The Turkish style resembles Plant's Tampa Bay Hotel. An onion dome originally topped the corner tower and a striped metal awning surrounded the first floor. For many years Bertha Takash ran a restaurant in the hotel. The brick building next door was also built by Mr. Plant in 1887 as additional retail space.

17 E. E. Brady Livery Stable 113 South Palmetto Avenue

Built between 1890 and 1895, this small building originally housed a blacksmith and wagon shop. From 1910 to 1914, E. E. Brady ran a livery, feed, and sales barn here. Brady was one of the areas important celery growers. By 1916 the building served as the Seminole County Jail. It later served as the County Health Department. The original brick façade has been altered significantly. The shed roof across the front was removed and the brick façade was masked by stucco.

18 Whaler's Saloon 112 South Palmetto Avenue

Built in 1887, the Whaler's Saloon was built by Colonel A.M. Thrasher, President of the Sanford Ice and Cold Storage Company. It originally housed a saloon and a sporting goods store. The Romanesque Revival architectural style is typical of many small brick commercial buildings of the late 1800's and is distinguished by its shallow decorative brickwork. The ground story façade was plain brick, now covered.

19 Hotchkiss Block 213 East 1st Street

The original 1886 brick building at this location was destroyed by the great fire of 1887. Local legend has it that rubble from the first building was embedded in the pediment on the corner of the roof of this Romanesque Revival building when it was constructed for Frederick Hotchkiss in 1887. For many years this housed Manuel Jacobson's department store.

20 Peoples Bank Building and Block 201 - 203 East 1st Street

The Peoples Bank opened its doors on August 30, 1906. The bank was built with pressed white sand brick and stucco by contractor W. G. Hammond. The building has lost much of its exterior decoration over the years. The block next door on 1st Street was built by the Peoples Bank in 1910 and was used for bank offices and the home of the Howard-Packard Land Company.

All buildings from this location east were destroyed in a devastating fire in 1887.

8 Masonic Lodge #62 212 North Park Avenue

Sanford Lodge #62 F&AM (Masons) built this structure in 1924 at a cost of \$45,000. The building was designed by local architect Elton J. Moughton, one of Florida's first licensed architects. The lodge room is on the second floor. The Lodge's cornerstone, which conceals a time capsule, is located on the northeast corner of the building's façade. Sanford's Masonic Lodge was chartered in 1872 in Mellonville and is one of the oldest lodges in Florida.

9 Brumley-Puleston Building 100 East 1st Street

Contractor George A. Fuller, builder of the Lincoln Memorial and New York's Flatiron Building, started construction on this building in 1922 for Dr. L. A. Brumley and Dr. Samuel Puleston. The building is constructed of Greendale rug-faced brick trimmed in artificial stone. Only the street level façade has been altered since construction.

10 DeForest Building 104 East 1st Street

Constructed circa 1890, this was the second brick commercial structure built by Henry L. DeForest on 1st Street. The façade was significantly altered in the 1950's. Henry L. DeForest came to Sanford as a young man recovering from tuberculosis. He worked as an agent for Henry S. Sanford and went on to become a prominent local merchant and grove owner.

11 Rand Building 108 East 1st Street

This building was constructed just after the fire of September 1887. It is named for Frederic H. Rand, the general manager and attorney for the Florida Land and Colonization Co. and general freight agent of the South Florida Railroad. The offices of Sanford's first newspaper, The Sanford Journal, were located on the second floor during the 1890's. Sanford's early telephone exchange was also located here.

12 N. P. Yowell and Garner Woodruff Buildings 200 - 208 East 1st Street

These adjoining buildings were constructed for N. P. Yowell, N.H. Garner and Frank L. Woodruff in 1910. Very similar in appearance, the Garner-Woodruff building to the east has corner quoins and rusticated cornices above the windows. The architect was W. B. Talley of Jacksonville and the builder was George Venable. The Woodruff and Watson clothing store was located here for many years.

21 Sanford Herald Building 107 South Magnolia Avenue

This two-story building was built in 1910. It served the Sanford Herald as offices and printing room. The architect and builder was W. G. Hammond. The Sanford Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) moved from Cypress Avenue to this building in 1933. Construction is of rusticated concrete block and has the appearance of a small sixteenth century Florentine palazzo. The two-story porch was constructed in the 1990's.

22 Imperial Opera House 119 South Magnolia Avenue

The Imperial Opera House opened June 15, 1910. The contractor, W. G. Hammond, built the building for owners T. J. Miller and son. Attorney George A. DeCottes was the first lessee. The building is constructed of rusticated concrete in the Florentine Palazzo style with a flat roof and parapet. The original exterior has been covered with stucco and the mezzanine windows and the arched doors have been enclosed.

23 Milane Theatre 201 South Magnolia Avenue

The Milane theater was built in 1922 for Frank L. Miller and Edward Lane who combined their names to form the Milane Amusement Co. During its early years, the theater was home to vaudeville and Chataqua as well as movies. From 1941 to 1964 the theater operated as the "Ritz" and was the heart of downtown Sanford. The old theater slowly declined until the 1990's when community efforts towards restoration began. The theater is brick, hollow tile, and stucco. The high multi-level roof was built to accommodate the lifting of stage backdrops.

24 Hill Hardware Building 108 South Magnolia Avenue

The Seminole County Bank erected this building in 1917 shortly after the adjacent bank building facing 1st Street was completed. It was constructed of brick and stucco and intended to provide room for two stores downstairs and offices upstairs. It was first occupied by Hill Hardware, owned and operated by Mr. W. J. Hill. Hill was an enterprising Englishman who enjoyed telling people he had lived in a packing crate upon his arrival in Sanford.

Due to its position on the St. Johns River and its location as a terminus for steamships from the north, Sanford became one of the largest vegetable shipping centers in the United States by the first decade of the 20th century.

Waterfront Development

Sanford's military history began with the creation of Fort Mellon, a U.S. Army post during the 2nd Seminole War. In 1942, Naval Air Station Sanford opened and was in operation during World War II, the Korean War, the Cold War, and the Vietnam war.

In 1877 a plat was created of newly incorporated Sanford. The city was laid out on a grid, with land set aside for churches, schools, and parks. Many of the original parks still exist today.

Historic Parks

Henry S. Sanford dubbed Sanford "The Gate City of South Florida." Transportation dominated Sanford's early development with riverboats and railroad lines that established the city's importance as a transportation and agricultural center.

Transportation History

Goldboro was one of the first incorporated African-American towns in Florida. The town was annexed by Sanford in April 1911. Goldboro is home to Cromb's Academy of Information Technology, founded in 1926 as a high school for African-American students.

Historic Goldboro

City founder, Henry Sanford, established the Georgetown neighborhood for the many African-American citizens seeking opportunity in the new city. The neighborhood contains two sites on Florida's Black Heritage Trail.

Historic Georgetown

The historic homes in this district represent a number of different time periods and architectural styles. The buildings within the district were primarily constructed during the city's period of prominence as an agricultural and transportation center.

Residential Historic Homes

The Downtown Commercial Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, contains 25 buildings. The tour includes examples of various architectural styles dating from 1883 through 1925.

Commercial Historic District

P A T H W A Y S O F H I S T O R Y

25 Sanford Museum 520 East 1st Street

The Sanford Museum is a division of the Recreation and Parks Department of the City of Sanford and is located in Fort Mellon Park on Sanford's historic waterfront. The Mediterranean Revival building was completed in 1994 and surrounds an earlier structure built in 1957 and expanded in 1974. Established as a memorial to the city's founder, Henry S. Sanford, the museum today houses exhibits dealing with the history of the city as well as the life and times of its founder. A local history archives and research library is also available to the public. The Sanford Museum is open Tuesday-Friday, 11AM - 4PM and Saturdays 1AM - 4PM. Admission is free. Group tours by appointment.

26 Hotel Forrest Lake 1000 East 1st Street

Popularly called the "Mayfair," this large brick and stucco hotel was designed by Sanford architect Elton J. Moughton. The hotel was built in 1925 for Forrest Lake, Mayor of Sanford, and was part of waterfront beautification plans which led to the construction of Seminole Boulevard. Like the boulevard, the hotel sits on reclaimed land in an area that once separated the City of Sanford from the town of Mellonville. In 1930 the failed hotel was purchased by the City and renamed the Mayfair Hotel. In 1948, the hotel was purchased by the New York Giants. From 1963 to 1977 the building housed the Sanford Naval Academy and the interior was significantly altered. The hotel is now the international headquarters of the New Tribes Mission. The exterior is largely original.

Sanford's Historic Districts

The Historic Preservation Board administers Sanford's historic districts. Board members are citizens appointed by the Sanford City Commission.

Sanford has two historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Commercial Historic District, with 25 buildings, was listed in 1976 and the Old Sanford Residential Historic District, with 434 houses, was listed in 1989.

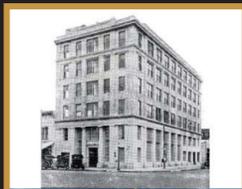
Are you interested in learning about Sanford's residential historic district? If so, scan the QR code on the back cover of this brochure or visit: www.sanfordfl.gov/PTH-OldSanford.



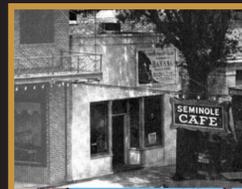
1. DEFOREST BLOCK -1887
121 EAST 1ST STREET



2. MCCRORY 5&10 -1906
105 EAST 1ST STREET



3. FIRST NATIONAL BANK
No. 2 -1922
101 EAST 1ST STREET



4. HENRY B. LORD BUILDING -1895
112 SOUTH PARK AVENUE



5. FIRST NATIONAL BANK
No. 1 -1883
101 WEST 1ST STREET



6. PICO BLOCK -1887
114 WEST 1ST STREET



26. HOTEL FORREST LAKE -1925
1000 EAST 1ST STREET



25. SANFORD MUSEUM -1957
520 EAST 1ST STREET



24. HILL HARDWARE BUILDING -1917
108 SOUTH MAGNOLIA AVENUE



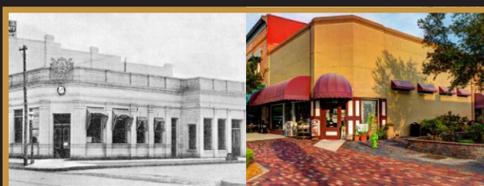
23. MILANE THEATRE -1922
201 SOUTH MAGNOLIA AVENUE



22. IMPERIAL OPERA HOUSE -1910
119 SOUTH MAGNOLIA AVENUE



21. SANFORD HERALD BUILDING -1910
107 SOUTH MAGNOLIA AVENUE



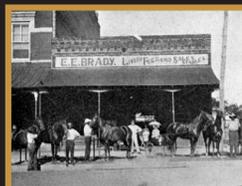
20. PEOPLES BANK BUILDING AND BLOCK -1905-1910
201-203 EAST 1ST STREET



19. HOTCHKISS BLOCK -1887
213 EAST 1ST STREET



18. WHALER'S SALOON -1887
112 SOUTH PALMETTO AVENUE



17. E.E. BRADY LIVERY
STABLE -1890
113 SOUTH PALMETTO AVENUE



16. HESTER & SHEPARD
BLOCK -1887
109 SOUTH PALMETTO AVENUE



15. BISHOP BLOCK -1887
301-309 EAST 1ST STREET



13. MEISCH BUILDING -1923
224 EAST 1ST STREET



14. U.S. POST OFFICE -1917
230 EAST 1ST STREET

PATHWAYS TO HISTORY



Commercial Historic District Walking Tour

LISTED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

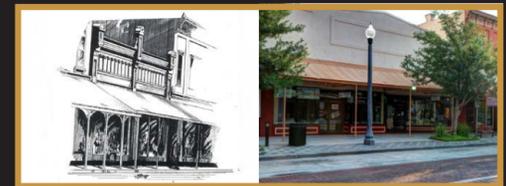
BUILDING OF NOTABLE INTEREST



8. MASONIC LODGE #62 -1924
212 NORTH PARK AVENUE



9. BRUMLEY-PULESTON BUILDING -1922
100 EAST 1ST STREET



10. DEFOREST BUILDING -1889
104 EAST 1ST STREET



11. RAND BUILDING -1887
108 EAST 1ST STREET



12. YOWELL & GARNER WOODRUFF BUILDINGS -1910
200-208 EAST 1ST STREET



13. MEISCH BUILDING -1923
224 EAST 1ST STREET



14. U.S. POST OFFICE -1917
230 EAST 1ST STREET