



CITY OF BARTOW
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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Marker to Honor Rich History of the City of Bartow

(Bartow, FL - May 14, 2025) - Officials from the City of Bartow and Polk County will celebrate the dedication of a historical marker honoring the City as a Polk County Heritage Site in Civic Plaza Park, 200 E. Davidson Rd., on Friday, May 16 at 11 am.

City of Bartow Mayor Tanya Tucker will give opening remarks, followed by Rick Wilson, Chairman, Polk County Board of County Commissioners, Denise Bohde, Chairperson, Historical Marker Committee, Polk County Historical Commission and William Lloyd Harris, Historian, Polk County Historical Commission.

The two-sided plaque reads as follows: "Settlement of the City of Bartow began in 1850 with the arrival of James D. and Eliza W. Green. In 1851, the Blount family, led by patriarch Reading Blount, settled near the site and eventually purchased the Green homestead. This site would become the homestead for members of the Blount extended family and twelve enslaved persons forming the earliest pioneer community at what was then known as Peas Creek.

The Third Seminole War (1855-1858) brought renewed uncertainty to the growing community. Families sought safety in numbers prompting the construction of a block house at the Blount family homestead, leading to the area being known as Fort Blount.

On July 1, 1882, twenty-two male residents of the community, both black and white, voted to incorporate the City of Bartow. These residents adopted a city seal to include the Latin phrase, "Rus In Irbe," which was later rewritten to "Urbs In Rure" meaning "town in the country."

1882 Incorporation Voters:

F.F. Beville, S.C. Cochran, W.P. Ferrell, J.F. Gatlin, C.C. Gresham, G.A. Hanson, D.K. Hodges, D. Hughes, J. Humphries, P. Johnson, J.M. Lewis, L. Lytle, T. Mimms, P. Moore, S. Newman, T.C. Pearce, W.H. Pearce, E.S. Roden, G.W. Smith, J. Snoddy, T. Tucker, F. Wilson.

During the American Civil War, the post office at Fort Blount was named Bartow in recognition of war veteran Francis S. Bartow (C.S.A). In 1866, wealthy cattle baron, Jacob Summerlin donated 120 acres of his land in Bartow for public use. Summerlin's land grant included 40 acres for a courthouse, establishing Bartow as the seat of government for Polk County."

The purpose of the Polk County Historical Marker program is to recognize and encourage the preservation of local history. The program is sponsored by the Polk County Historical Commission, through the Polk County Board of County Commissioners.

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