

April 2015  
INITIAL PRESS RELEASE  
Bealsville, Incorporated  
5104 Horton Road  
Plant City, FL 33567

The community of Bealsville will host its 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday with national fanfare June 25-28, 2015.

The SESQUICENTENTIAL Celebration will be highlighted with a Saturday Evening Gala at the TECO Expo Hall, Florida Strawberry Festival Fairgrounds. Publix Supermarket Charities has agreed to be one of our two title sponsors presenting Gala and various dignitaries will be in attendance for presentations and proclamations. A Souvenir Heritage Book is being produced to commemorate this mark in history.

The founding of the community of Bealsville coincides with the national signing of the Emancipation Proclamation signed in **January 1863** by President Lincoln. News of the proclamation didn't make its way to parts of Florida until **1865** thus the founding of so called "black colonies" months later. This **year** the country will recognize **150 plus** years of this signing and the historical accounts of Bealsville are a part of that national celebration. Originally known as Howell's Creek founded in 1865 the community was officially named Bealsville (1923) in honor of Alfred Beal, who is credited with helping to keep ownership of area properties in local hands.

Bealsville not only has a rich heritage and played a big role in Florida's history, its also home to William A. Glover School Campus. The school was named after William A. Glover, son of a freed slave whom donated land and property for the school.

All out invitation includes those who taught or attended Glover School which had over 5,000 students from all backgrounds and areas to include Keysville, Hopewell, Coronet and Turkey Creek.

The agricultural reputation of this area in regards to mining and farming goes just as far back in history with Mosaic Company. A number of Bealsville residents and families have sustained a living and sent their children to college thanks in large part employment/retirement at Mosaic (Mr. White, Mr. Randolph, Mr. Bagley, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Thomas).

The community of Bealsville had signs of integration long before desegregation became law. "The legacy of Bealsville represents the true values of the American Dream" stated Henry Davis, President Bealsville, Inc. "Whether you lived here, farmed here, worked or taught here, employed/hired residents from here, we invite those survivors and their families to come join us".

Established in the late 1800s Glover School at 5104 Horton Road served as a community, segregated, and farming school as well as after desegregation a middle school and 8<sup>th</sup> grade center prior to closing in 1980. The 11 acre school property and 8 buildings was returned to the community and is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places with over a million dollars invested towards restoration.

Besides Glover School, there are a number of other significant sites and structures founded by descendants of original settlers such as Ruby Lee's Fruit Stand, Antioch Church founded in 1868, Recreation Center, generational farmers and two civil war era cemeteries.

Thursday June 25<sup>th</sup> through Sunday June 28 will include activities ranging from a Thursday Reception, Historic Bus Tours, Gala, and quarter mile walk to a outdoor Sunday Faith Service. This celebration is being organized by volunteers with Bealsville, Incorporated, the non-profit responsible for operating Glover School. With exception of the Gala, all other activities will held at Glover School or Bealsville Recreation Center.

Thanks in large part to outreach efforts with the Smithsonian Institute, Plant City Photo Archives & History Center, Hillsborough County, State Legislators and Florida's African American Historic Preservation Network (FAAHPN) the visibility regarding the historic significance of this community has quadrupled.

"If you want to make a comparison to get a true understanding; the first documented municipality in America was the Town of Eatonville near Orlando Florida founded in 1887", stated William Thomas Jr., a volunteer with Bealsville, Inc. "Though Bealsville never became incorporated, the 150 years of documented history is extraordinary."

Tickets go on sale May 1, 2015. For more information or sponsorship opportunities call Bealsville, Incorporated at 813-737-1352 or visit [www.Bealsville.com/150Years](http://www.Bealsville.com/150Years).

**William Thomas Jr.**

cc:

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Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners  
Office of Representative Dan Raulerson  
Office of State Senator Tom Lee  
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