

Guide to

MSCIT 024

**Wilson and Toomer Fertilizer Company
Records**

1925-1968, 1974, 1977, 1989, 2002

15 linear inches

Processed by: Amy Skillen, Archives Technician

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Historical Sketch:

The Wilson and Toomer Fertilizer Company was founded in Jacksonville, Florida in 1893 by Lorenzo A. Wilson and Wiley G. Toomer. In 1905, the company built one of the country's largest fertilizer plants on Talleyrand Avenue in Jacksonville. The company would later build their corporate offices there as well. The company grew into multiple locations across the state including Tampa, Orlando, Fort Myers, Bradenton, Davenport, and multiple sales offices. As part of this expansion, the company also developed multiple subsidiaries through the years including Cherokee Operating Co., Ideal Grove Service, Grapefruit Distributors Inc., Florida Agricultural Supply Co., Cartledge Fertilizer Company, and Holly Hill Grove and Fruit Company. The Wilson and Toomer Fertilizer Company remained open until the late 1950s, and the fertilizer plant on Talleyrand Avenue closed in 1978.

Additional Sources:

Hetherington, M.F. *History of Polk County Florida: Narrative and Biographical*. St. Augustine, Florida: The Record Company, 1928. https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/regional_ebooks/11.

"A Historical Stroll Down Talleyrand Avenue." Metro Jacksonville, May 29, 2012. <https://www.metrojacksonville.com/article/2012-may-a-historical-stroll-down-talleyrand-avenue/page/2>.

Scope and Content Note:

The Wilson and Toomer Fertilizer Company Records contains materials related to the company presumably collected by donor Vaughn Woods. This collection contains 6 series: **Correspondence, Financial, Holly Hill Groves & Fruit Company, Personnel, Projects, Publications by Wilson and Toomer.**

The **Correspondence** series contains letters from Vaughn Woods in regards to publications received by the company as well as a company produced memorandum in regards to a cold wave in 1948. This series was organized chronologically.

The **Financial** series contains pricing schedules for fertilizer for Wilson and Toomer as well as financial statements. This series was organized chronologically.

The **Holly Hill Grove & Fruit Company** series contains materials from this subsidiary of the Wilson and Toomer Fertilizer Company. Included are materials such as a crate label used by the company, histories of the company, as well as information about the foreclosure of the company in 1936. This series was organized alphabetically based on subject.

The **Personnel** series includes a personnel list from the 1980s that included members from the past and present as well as photographs of some personnel. This series was organized alphabetically based on subject.

The **Projects** series contains notes, reports, procedures, and photographs of experiments conducted by the company from primarily in the 1930s and 1950s. Two main projects were in fertilizer testing and soil testing. The primary researcher was soil chemist W.L. Tait with some later experiments performed by soil chemist Vaughn Woods. This series was organized alphabetically based on subject.

The **Publications by Wilson and Toomer** series contains booklets and brochures produced by the company from the 1920s to 1950s. The bulk of the publications were written by Col. Bayard F. Floyd, a horticulturalist and Vice President of the company. This series was organized alphabetically based on subject.

Restrictions: None

Permission to Publish:

Permission to publish material from the Wilson and Toomer Fertilizer Company Records must be obtained from Sarah D. and L. Kirk McKay, Jr. Archives Center or the appropriate copyright holder. Please inquire if you have questions at 863-680-4453.

Provenance Statement:

Based on Professor Thomas Mack's unpublished manuscript "Documented History of the Florida Citrus Archives," the bulk of these materials are presumed to have been donated by Janey Powell, daughter of Vaughn Woods, alongside the **Vaughn Woods Papers** collection; however, it is unknown exactly when the materials in this collection were donated to the Citrus Archives. The Thomas B. Mack Citrus Archives were transferred to the Roux Library in 2005 then to the McKay Archives Center in 2009.

Notes to Researchers:

Three figures from the company who feature prominently in this collection are Col. Bayard F. Floyd, W.L. Tait, and Vaughn Woods. Col. Bayard F. Floyd was the horticulturalist for Wilson and Toomer before later becoming the Vice President of the company. W.L. Tait was the soil chemist for the company and was based out of the facilities in Davenport until 1937. Vaughn Woods took over the role of soil chemist from Tait in 1937. For more information on the donor Vaughn Woods, please see the **Vaughn Woods Papers**. For more information on Col. Bayard F. Floyd, please see the **Col. Bayard F. Floyd Papers**.

See also the **Holly Hill Grove and Fruit Company Photographs** collection for photographs taken by the company for advertising purposes.

Box #	F#	Title
1		Correspondence
1	1	Re: Publications, 1937, 1947
1	2	Re: Cold Wave, 1948
1		Financial
1	3	Fertilizer Price Schedules, 1934, 1937, 1938, 1940
1	4	Statements, 1938-1940
1		Holly Hill Grove and Fruit Co. (Davenport, Fla.)
1	5	Crate Label, n.d.
1	6	Foreclosure Information – Correspondence, 1936-1941
1	7	Foreclosure Information – Lot Descriptions, 1936
1	8	Fruit Picking Report (Blank), n.d.
1	9	Grove/Lot Ownership List, ca. 1920s
1	10	History, 1922, 1926
1	11	History, 1977
1	12	History, 2002
1		Personnel
1	13	Personnel List (Past and Present), 1989
1	14	Photographs of Personnel, 1945, 1958, 1962
1		Projects
1	15	Fertilizer Project – Projects 1-13 Original Outline, 1932
1	16	Fertilizer Project – Experimental Projects List and Instructions, 1932-1935
1	17	Fertilizer Project – Instructions, 1932-1936 (1 of 2)
2	1	Fertilizer Project – Instructions, 1932-1936 (2 of 2)
2	2	Fertilizer Project – Lab Notes and Calculations, 1932-1936
2	3	Fertilizer Project – Outline, 1932-1936
2	4	Fertilizer Project – Individual Tree Reports and Experiments, 1933-1934
2	5	Hamlin CuKal (Copper Kal-Cite) Citrus Experiment, 1953-1954
2	6	Photographs of Projects and Experiments, 1932, 1934, 1962, 1974
2	7	Project #2-54, 1955
2	8	Project #5-55T, 1955
2	9	Project #9QR71, 1932-1934
2	10	Project #9QR71 Photographs, 1932-1934
2	11	Reports of Test Results, 1934-1935
2	12	Soil Testing – Magnesium Testing, 1934-1936, 1951
2	13	Soil Testing – Procedures, 1930s-1940s
3	1	Soil Testing – Colorimeter Procedures, 1930s-1950s
3	2	Soil Testing – B.D. Barber, 1958-1962
3	3	Weed Control Project, 1956
3		Publications
3	4	1933-1935, 1950, n.d.
3	5	By Bayard F. Floyd, 1925-1937
3	6	By Bayard F. Floyd, 1939-1943, n.d.
3	7	Company History, 1951