

Mason and Carswell

In June 1882, Mary Flemming sold most of the southern portion of the Fitch grant to Benjamin and LaBelle Mason for \$7,500. The land on a ridge of hammock land 2,300 feet wide and 13,600 feet long, north to south. It was 10 feet above sea level along Daytona Avenue, sloping off toward the Halifax River (formerly the Mosquito River) to the east and the Florida East Coast Railway tracks to the west.

Several weeks later, the Masons conveyed a half interest in the property to Lockhart R. and Elmira Carswell of Chicago, Illinois, thereby initiating a long partnership known as Mason & Lockhart. In January 1883, coinciding with the Barbour treatise on Florida and the USCGS's charting the Halifax region, Mason and Carswell implemented a second major division of the Fitch grant. Executed under their direction and surveyed by Daytona Beach civil engineer D. D. Rogers, the extensive subdivision (Figure 10) provided relatively small lots for dwellings along the riverfront, westward from which radiated gradually larger lots for farmsteads, fields, groves, and pastures. Center Avenue extended nearly equidistant between the Halifax River and the western edge of Mason & Carswell's holdings, and east-west laterals were named for the home states in the North and Midwest from which many of the early owners and settlers had migrated. Roger's notes recorded on the plat indicated that several people had previously acquired properties from Mason and Carswell, including those held by the Hall, Jones, Wetherell, and Wilder families. Rogers also noted the location of Flemming's grove, an early landscape feature in block four west of Center Avenue. Having experienced some success with land sales, in 1884, Mason and Carswell opened a smaller subdivision which extended several blocks west of Ridgewood Avenue and north of Mason Avenue, creating still smaller lots as a plan for concentrations of commercial and residential buildings. By then, Holly Hill's southernmost street had been named for Benjamin Mason, who served as the on-site manager of the properties with Lockhart conveying him power of attorney to handle legal transactions affecting the properties. Even before the Flemming-Mason transaction in 1882, Mary Flemming had sold various small tracts to members of the Bayless and Cutler families. In the 1884 Mason and Carswell plat, Ballough and Cutler held large tracts along Mason and Ridgewood Avenues. The platting of these subdivisions in the 1880s provided a plan for development with some of the most concentrated collections of lots at the south end of the village adjacent to Daytona.