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## From Strikes to Scourge: Tampa in 1887

Tampa Journal

Tampa Tribune

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## FROM STRIKES TO SCOURGE: TAMPA IN 1887

*Editors' Note:* In 1887 Tampa was in the midst of a boom. Fueled by the recent arrival of the first cigar factories in the new town of Ybor City, Tampa's growth was spectacular. From less than 1,000 in 1882, its population surged to over 5,000 by 1890. New residents included Cuban and Spanish cigarworkers who flocked to the factories built in neighboring Ybor City by Vicente Martínez Ybor and the firm of Sánchez and Haya. Wages from the cigar industry flowed into the stream of Tampa commerce which included everything from haberdasheries to saloons. The expanding prosperity of downtown Tampa was reflected in the new brick buildings and in the glare of the city's first electric street lights.

Life, however, was not all sweetness and light for either old or new residents. Living conditions were still primitive and even dangerous. Growth also brought social conflict and unexpected crises during 1887. The year began with a series of strikes by cigarworkers who were members of the Knights of Labor, a large national union. By the end of the year, Tampan faced the scourge of a yellow fever epidemic that took some one hundred lives. In an effort to improve control over both health and safety, Tampan adopted a new city charter under which Ybor City was annexed during the year. This event provides the basis for the current centennial celebration.

A variety of surviving sources, including minutes of the city council, document life in Tampa during 1887, but newspapers reveal the most about daily events. The Tampa press covered everything from local business and political news to society and personal items. From today's perspective the selection of material to print in editions ranging from four to eight pages appears random and even arbitrary, often reflecting the interests and biases of the editor who did most of the writing with little effort to distinguish between fact and opinion.

At the time the city boasted two weekly newspapers, the *Tampa Journal* and the *Tampa Tribune*. The former first appeared in late 1886, and it had several different owner/editors during 1887. The *Tampa Tribune* had a longer history, but no connection with the current paper of that name. Although both papers were openly Democratic, they differed on a number of local issues, especially temperance. The debate over the prohibition of alcohol was excited during 1887 by a public referendum in Hillsborough County which then included all of today's Pinellas County.

The following excerpts from the *Journal* and the *Tribune* give some insight into local events that dominated the Tampa press during 1887. The lighter side of the news from that year can be found in the extracts that appear as "fillers" throughout this issue of *Tampa Bay History*. Microfilm copies of both newspapers are located in the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System.

*Tampa Tribune*

January 22, 1887

### COWARDLY AMBUSH

The Strike at Ybor Followed by a  
Fusillade in the Dark-Five Men  
Shot-Two Arrested

Trouble broke out last Monday at the factory of Martinez Ybor & Co., a portion of the workmen taking it into their heads to run the institution in a way at which the others rebelled. It seems that a feeling of ill will had been brewing for some time. Several months ago the employes struck against the foreman of the factory and the principals pacified them by sending the

obnoxious man away, substituting for him Santos Benitez, a Knight of Labor on whom all hands settled as their choice. Lately there have been signs of dissatisfaction and much murmuring on the part of those employes who are Knights of Labor against this very Benitez, they charging that he has been unfaithful to their interests in several respects. On Thursday the trouble culminated in a demand by the dissatisfied men, about one-third of the whole number employed, that Benitez should be discharged. On the other hand; the larger portion of the men are in favor of his retention. The firm, under the circumstances, left the rival factions to settle the matter among themselves. Meanwhile work is suspended, but it is to be hoped that the trouble will all be over to-day and that work will be resumed at the latest by Monday.

After the above was written on Thursday the strike culminated in a cowardly ambush in which five men were wounded, one very seriously. The last mentioned is at present in a very precarious condition and expected to die at any moment. A meeting of the Knights of Labor was called for 7:30 p.m. Thursday in which fifteen persons participated, five of whom were Americans from Tampa Lodge, five Spaniards and five Cubans from the Ybor lodge. They had met as an arbitration committee and were consulting with Santos Benitez, the foreman referred to above as the one about which the factory difficulty centered. A party of unknown persons ambushed the Mascotte saloon, over which the meeting was being held, and fired some fifteen or twenty shots into the room. . . .

The town is all excitement this morning, very few of the men are at work. They are gathered in little groups all over the streets discussing the situation with more anxiety than is usual for them. What the outcome will be is not known but more trouble is expected.

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*Tampa Journal*

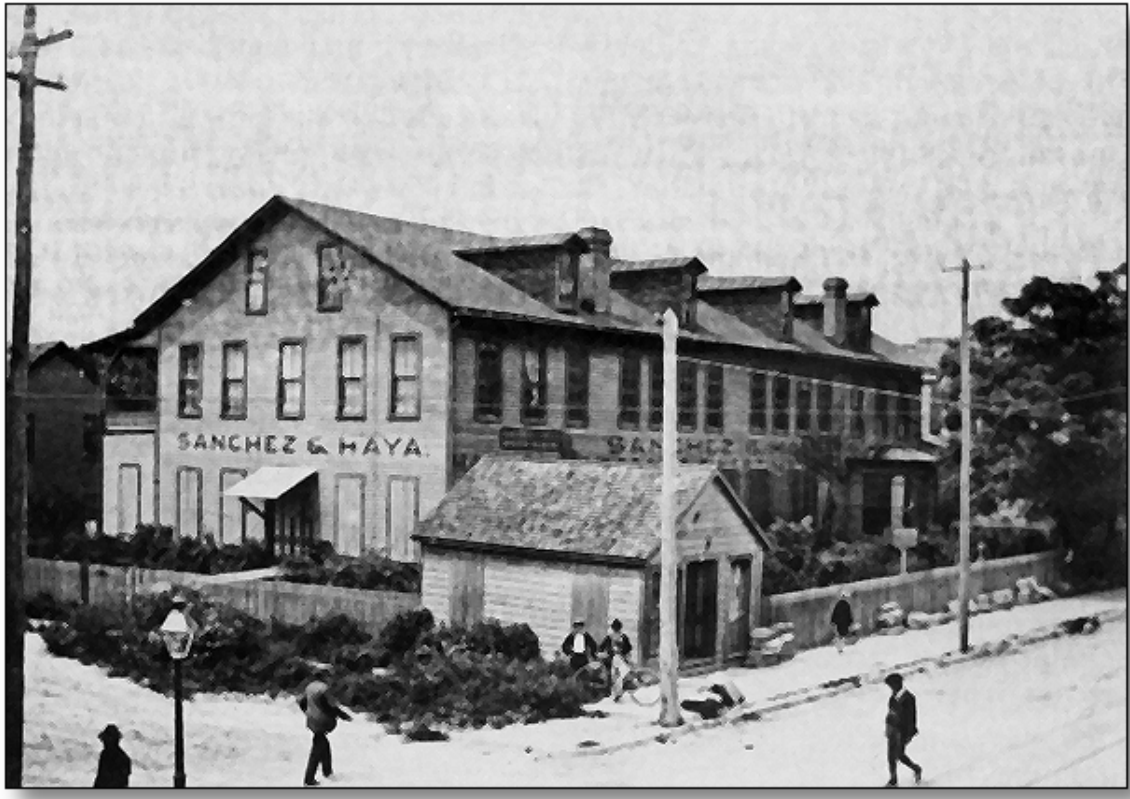
January 26, 1887

That very great and cowardly crimes were committed last week at Ybor City is patent to all. For the reputation of the people generally, both Cubans and Spaniards, the instigators and perpetrators of these crimes should be detected and punished, and it is clearly the duty of all good people, of whatever nationality, to lend every assistance possible towards such purpose. The *Journal* does not know nor pretend to say who the villains are, but it does say, "let no guilty man escape." And we further urge upon the Cubans and Spaniards to stop their foolishness and curb their prejudices, shun the advice of all men who desire to prompt further antagonism and strife, stop all agitation of political questions and engage only in legitimate avocations. Do this and you will prosper. Continue in your present excited state, and you will only succeed in heaping trouble and sorrow upon your families and the indignation of all good people upon yourselves.

*Tampa Journal*

February 9, 1887

The *Journal* is pleased to announce that peace, quiet and work has been fully resumed at Ybor City. There are but few, if any, idle people there now. Those who did not leave the place have returned to work in the cigar factory and everything is running smoothly again. . . . Mr. Ybor is now master of the situation in his factory and proposes to run his own business in the future. Business in Tampa is getting better since the strike ended.



**The first factory building of Sánchez & Haya, where Tampa's first clear Havana cigars were produced in 1886.**

Photograph courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System.

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*Tampa Tribune*

March 12, 1887

### THE TROUBLE AT YBOR

The Dove of Peace has once more stretched its wings over our Cuban suburb and quiet again reigns.

For some weeks past a gang of bandits and dynamiters have by their threats and actions done much to terrorize the proprietors of the cigar factories and the law-abiding citizens who reside there. This state of affairs has been going on ever since the strike which occurred a few weeks ago until at last the proprietors of the cigar factories at Ybor City appealed earnestly to the citizens of Tampa for aid in ridding their town of these characters. A special meeting of the Tampa Board of Trade was called last Tuesday for the purpose of taking such steps as might be necessary to rid our sister community of its lawless element, and its prompt action in calling a mass meeting of our citizens and placing them in possession of all the facts which had come to their knowledge served effectively to put a quietus on matters at Ybor and will no doubt have a

most salutary effect upon any other Cuban citizens of anarchial [sic] tendencies who may still be lurking in our midst.

A committee representing some of our most prominent citizens was appointed at the citizens meeting and without delay they waited upon the outlaws at their supposed headquarters and notified them to leave at once. . . .

There were in all eleven of these suspects.

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*Tampa Journal*

March 12, 1887

We all breathe easier now since this disturbing element have left our midst; business has been resumed with increased earnestness at Ybor City and we doubt if the tactics resorted to by the departed agitators will be again repeated. And the committee [members] deserve the thanks of every law abiding citizen for the prompt, effective and successful manner in which they executed their instructions.

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*Tampa Tribune*

April 22, 1887

#### EXTENSION OF CITY LIMITS

The extension of our city limits is a matter of prime necessity to insure better law and order and the enforcement of proper sanitary regulations in our suburbs. While it is a matter of pride as well as interest to the city proper, it is of more vital importance to the outlying sections proposed to be incorporated.

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*Tampa Journal*

May 5, 1887

The temperance movement in Tampa is represented by sixty regular members of the W.C.T.U. [Women's Christian Temperance Union], and twenty-four members of the Y.W.C.T.U., and one hundred and twenty-four of the Juvenile "Legion of Honor," which makes a grand total of two hundred and sixty-eight earnest workers, and the number is being certainly increased by new recruits. The purposes of these people are noble, and their responsibilities great. The *Journal* wishes these workers success in their battle for "God, home and native land."

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*Tampa Journal*

May 12, 1887

If the *Journal* is not wrongly informed and very greatly mistaken more than one of Tampa's saloons are doing a lively Sunday business through the side and back doors. It is also noticeable that the saloon men are becoming more bold and reckless in the manner in which their houses are run. Drunkenness and disorder are on the increase. The sidewalk along the "saloon row" is nearly always crowded with reeling wrecks, loud and vulgar mouthed negroes and whites, who make it disagreeable for decent men, much less ladies, to pass along on that side of the street.

The *Journal* desires to warn the proprietors of the saloons that there is a probability of their running the business too far. They can only claim the tolerance of the people and the protection of the law so long as they keep within the bounds of the law, and by overreaching their rights they do a great injustice and harm to the community. We hope this temperate allusion to this matter will serve as a check to the increasing irregularities of the traffic, and that the saloons will be run as orderly as possible.

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*Tampa Journal*

May 26, 1887

The latest report from Key West is assuring that there will be no further spread of yellow fever. However, the precautions taken at Tampa have been wise, and will be of great benefit to the community.

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*Tampa Journal*

June 9, 1887

#### TO THE PEOPLE OF TAMPA

There will be found in every community, an element of alarmists, people who become excited and frightened almost out of their wits on the slightest excuse. Unfortunately Tampa has quite a number of this nervous and excitable class, and they succeed in creating no little amount of sensation and uneasiness throughout the city and community by their constant talk about yellow fever. Reports and rumors are frequently started that have not the least foundation on facts, and even some of the most improbable stories are often believed. The people of Tampa want to keep cool and free from excitement: we are in no immediate danger from yellow fever; while it is possible, it is not probable that the disease will make its appearance in Tampa at all. Keep your premises and persons clean; do not gorge your stomachs with unwholesome food; permit the warm sun to shine into your sitting and sleeping apartments a few hours each day; listen not to the excitable and improbable reports of alarmists, and above all do not repeat them. The public can depend upon the *Journal* to report any case of yellow fever that should appear in the city, or to warn them of any impending danger, by an extra edition that will be promptly issued if occasion should demand it.

\*\*\*

*Tampa Journal*

June 9, 1887

Tampa's new charter, creating it a city and extending the corporate limits, marks another era in our rapid strides on the road to greatness. The fact that the new charter provides for an election of city officers on the second Tuesday in July is of serious moment to our interests. Candidates for various offices are coming forward. The *Journal* suggests that a public meeting of citizens be held in due time and a full ticket be nominated. It should be composed throughout of our best and most progressive citizens-men who will do their duty to the public interests without fear or favor.

\*\*\*

*Tampa Journal*

June 9, 1887

Tampa will require a Mayor next year of the highest qualifications, character and dignity. . . . The salary should be increased to an amount adequate to the work to be performed, and a man of energy, liberality, honesty and ability be selected.

\*\*\*

*Tampa Journal*

June 16, 1887

The yellow fever scare is rapidly dying out in Tampa: the subject is seldom mentioned now on the streets, and the people are laughing at their own foolishness. . . .

Of course there is a *possibility* that yellow fever may reach the mainland of Florida. There is also a *possibility* that we all may be wiped from the face of the earth by a tornado.

\*\*\*

*Tampa Journal*

June 16, 1887

### TAMPA'S NEW CITY CHARTER

Elsewhere in this issue of the *Journal* can be found the new City Charter printed in full. There are contained in it many good features and with the exception of the boundary lines and one or two other sections, the document will give general satisfaction.

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*Tampa Tribune*

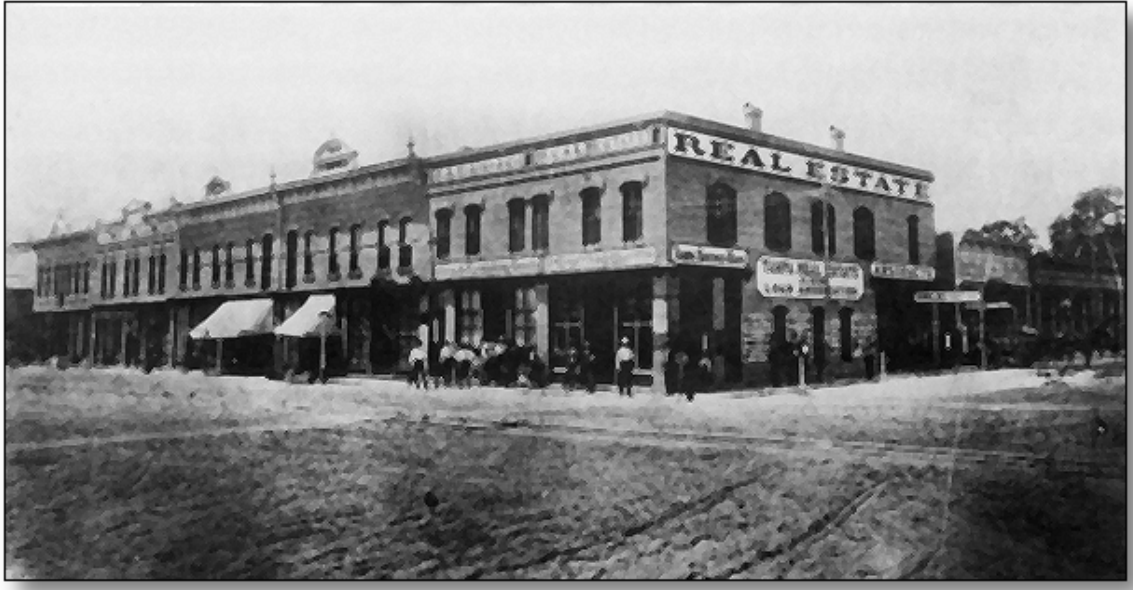
June 24, 1887

Candidates for the various municipal offices of our city are as thick as leaves in Valambrosa. The idea cannot be too often or too forcibly impressed upon the minds of our people of the great importance of the coming election. Tampa is in a growing condition that demands men of business, energy, foresight and responsibility at the head of her affairs. We don't want men who will recklessly tax the people for questionable improvements and throw our money away without adequate results. Neither do we want men who are too conservative in their views, and would be so contracted in their ideas that at the end of their term of office they could point to no work of public good or permanent improvement made or inaugurated by them. Let us have men of liberal business capacity and responsible property holders-men who are interested in the future of Tampa, who know her wants and feel a pride in her growth, and will thrive in her prosperity. Such men are needed to keep our town on its steady march of progress. . . .

\*\*\*

*Tampa Tribune*

July 15, 1887



**Franklin Street, the center of Tampa, as it looked in 1885.**

Photograph courtesy of Florida State Archives.

Our city election on last Tuesday was probably the most exciting one that ever took place in our town, and the result shows one of the most closely contested. The old ring cry was raised against the successful ticket, but it was like the cry of stop thief, intended to divert the eyes of the tax payers from schemes that certain parties were interested in carrying through if the proper ticket had been elected. The people of Tampa can now rest assured that with the present Mayor and City Council that there will be no unloading of unprofitable stock upon them, no taxes for experimental water works, no expensive and useless improvements simply for the purpose of making expenditures, no extravagantly [sic] high salaried City Attorney or officials. The tax payers will be protected, and the best interests of the city looked after. . . .

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*Tampa Journal*

July 21, 1887

Tampa is now ready to do something, and there is certainly much to be done. Too long already has much important work been neglected. It is now a city in name, but it is highly important that it shall be a city in fact. We believe that the new council will be equal to its responsibility and duty. Chief among the enterprises that demand early consideration are a system of water works, building a bridge across the Hillsborough river, improving the streets, and intelligent and efficient system of sanitation. These are all matters of the utmost importance. These are crying needs. Let the council do its whole duty, and thereby give Tampa such a solid boom that her future greatness will be put beyond cavil forever.

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*Tampa Journal*

August 4, 1887





**Hillsborough County's first courthouse, built at Florida Avenue and Madison Street in 1855, as it looked in 1886.**

Photograph from *Yesterday's Tampa* by Hampton Dunn.

## TAMPA SCORCHED

### Thirty Business Houses and Residences Burned

Estimated Loss \$50,000—No Insurance

About two o'clock this morning a fire broke out near the center of what is known as "Rotten Row," composed entirely of one and two story wooden buildings, and occupied mostly by small tradesmen such as fruit stalls, retail groceries, barber shops, etc. on one side of the street, and principally by saloons on the the other. The fire seems to have originated either in Cole's restaurant or Thomas' barber shop, the flames spreading rapidly each way from the starting point and soon enveloping the entire block in flames. It was some time before any kind of effort could be made to control the fire, and for a time it looked as though the whole business part of the city must surely go, and the absence of any wind was probably what saved the best portion of it. The fire department, however, soon got down to business, and by the almost superhuman efforts of the firemen the flames were prevented from being communicated to the buildings across

Lafayette street, extending north, thus saving the Operahouse, Gunn & Seckinger's large grocery store and other valuable business blocks. . . .

It was the prevailing opinion that nothing could be done to save the buildings on either side of Franklin street between Lafayette and the ditch, and all the efforts of the firemen were directed to preventing the spread of the flames to the adjoining blocks, and that they were successful in this measure was certainly not due to the completeness of our water works system, but to the untiring efforts of the people. The old hand engine did good service as long as water could be had, when bucket brigades were formed and the sides of the buildings kept thoroughly drenched. . . .

By 4:30 o'clock the two blocks above mentioned were burned to the ground, very little of the contents being saved, although the utmost good will prevailed, and everybody did what they could to assist their more unfortunate neighbors.

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*Tampa Journal*

August 4, 1887

### THE FIRE

The *Journal* deeply sympathizes with all who lost their property in last night's conflagration. . . . But aside from the hardship entailed upon those who directly suffered loss, the effect upon the city can not fail to be otherwise than beneficial. Two of the finest business blocks in the city are now open for substantial and valuable improvement. The real value of these blocks this morning is greater than it was yesterday; and we believe that within one year from this date, instead of the former shanties that stood yesterday [as an]. . . eyesore to the citizens of Tampa, will tower magnificent brick blocks.

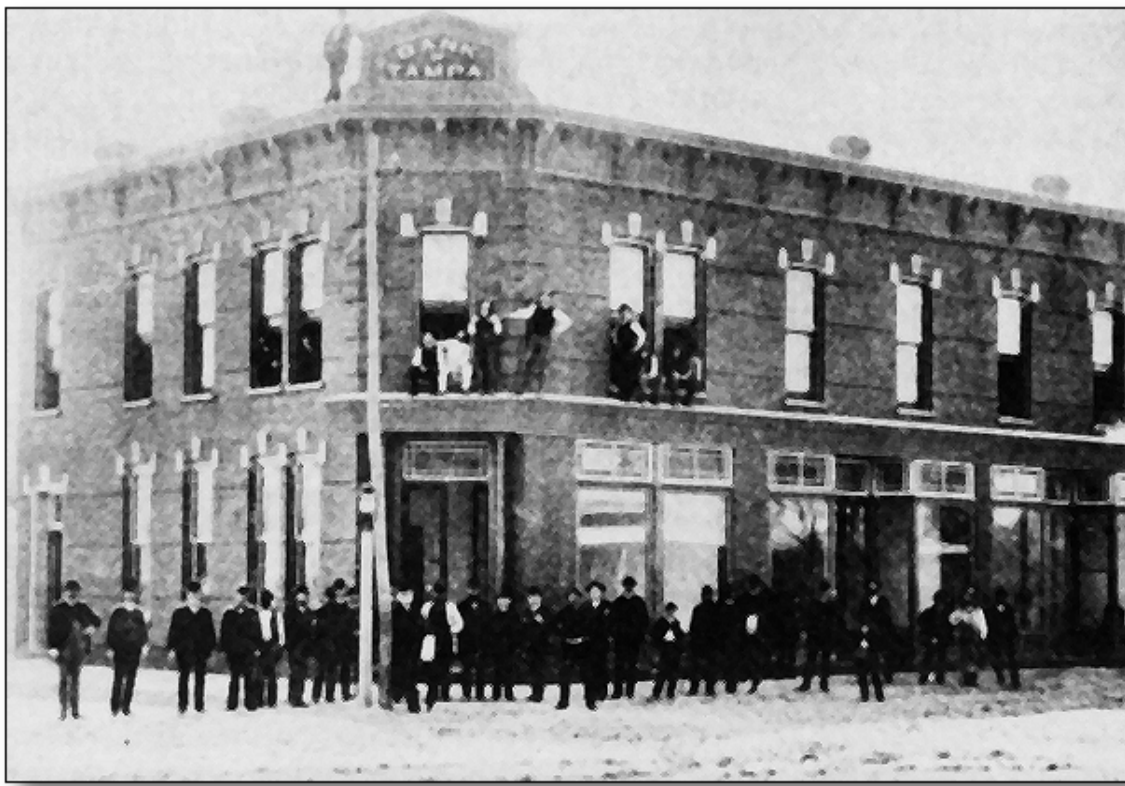
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*Tampa Journal*

August 11, 1887

Tampa has more than once or twice or thrice shown the solid metal of which her people are made. . . . Her cigar factories have achieved an international reputation. She has eight new brick blocks, a national bank, which occupies its own handsome brick building, an opera-house lighted by electricity, two kinds of electric lights; three weekly papers, unsurpassed in point of literary and typographical merit, and one daily; street-cars impelled by steam, and will soon have a thorough system of water-works. Her stores and other buildings would be an honor to Jacksonville or any other city, whatever its size; while from her beautiful bay go out regular lines of ocean steamers to Pensacola, Mobile, New Orleans, Havana, Bermuda, Key West and other points. Her importance as a commercial city is patent from the fact that she is also a port of entry. Tampa is the terminus of the South Florida railway, and will soon be of the F. R. & N. system; besides other roads have been projected and surveyed to the same point. She is now entering upon a new era; old-timers and new-comers work together in harmony, and many new improvements have been recently inaugurated.

Tampa has long been regarded as a legal center, her bar ranking with the most eminent in the country. Her new Mayor, G. B. Sparkman, Esq., is a well-known attorney, and a descendant of one of the first families in Florida. Tampa's Board of Trade is composed of her most prominent and eminent citizens—men who realize that life means real, earnest work—and other cities in



**Tampa's first brick building, the Bank of Tampa, was built in 1886 at the southwest corner of Franklin and Washington streets.**

Photograph from *Yesterday's Tampa* by Hampton Dunn.

Florida which have entered the lists of friendly rivalry must look to their laurels or Tampa will bear away the larger share.

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*Tampa Tribune*

August 11, 1887

#### WET OR DRY

The Board of County Commissioners, upon the petition of one-fourth of the registered voters of the county, has appointed Tuesday, September [30th], to hold an election. . .to determine whether license shall be granted in this county to sell intoxicating liquors. While we feel satisfied that a majority of the voters of Hillsborough county are opposed to prohibition on principle, they are willing to give the experiment a trial, and they will vote dry.

\*\*\*

*Tampa Journal*

September 15, 1887

#### THE GREAT ISSUE

The *Journal* does not view the present agitated state of the public mind in Tampa and Hillsborough county on the temperance question with as much alarm as seems to have taken hold of a number of our citizens. . . . We have faith in the intelligence of the voters of Hillsborough county, and believe that they are capable of weighing argument and of deciding on the side of right. The temperance side of the issue has nothing to fear from a fair and full discussion of the question now before the people. . . . We believe that the suppression of the liquor traffic in Tampa and Hillsborough county will save several thousand dollars annually to the tax-payers; we believe that its suppression will elevate the status of the rising as well as the present generation of our people; we believe that its successful and permanent suppression will attract and bring into our borders the very best class of people from other sections of the country who are seeking homes in our favored and fair Florida. For these reasons the *Journal* supports the prohibition of the sale of liquor. . . . We do not believe that the closing of the saloons will drive any desirable citizen from our midst. It is our opinion that Messrs. Ybor & Co. view with unnecessary alarm the result upon their business. There is nothing in the Prohibition law that prevents the importation for private use, and the drinking of wines and liquors; the sale of it in saloons and drug stores is what is prohibited. We are also informed that quite a temperance sentiment is developing among the Cubans, and that a temperance society has been organized among them. If there were no saloons in Tampa and Ybor City it might prove that they would have less trouble with their operators. . . . But the *Journal* has faith in the future of Tampa and Hillsborough county whether it goes “wet” or “dry” on the 30th of September, and those men who are predicting such dire results to our city if the county goes “dry” will have to eat their own words in less than a year.

\*\*\*

*Tampa Tribune*

September 15, 1887

### BUSINESS IS BUSINESS

What has [*sic*] the cigar factories done for us? This is an important inquiry and deserves careful consideration.

They have turned about two hundred acres of almost worthless land into improved and valuable tax-paying real estate, worth hundreds of dollars per acre.

They have erected nearly half a million dollars worth of buildings, giving employment to hundreds of mechanics and laborers and saw-mills.

They have built a city of three-thousand inhabitants, adding this much to the population to our town, our county and our State.

They help maintain our Steamship line to the West Indies, which adds so much importance to our port, and advertises us throughout the Union, and brings hundreds, if not thousands, of visitors to our city.

In addition to the thousands of dollars invested here and the improvements of real estate, with its enhanced values, which helps pay our State and county taxes, they have caused an advance in

value of all surrounding real estate, including the whole of the city of Tampa, of from fifty to one thousand per cent, adding thus indirectly thousands of dollars to the taxable values of our county.

They distribute from \$8,000 to \$10,000 weekly among their employees in the shape of wages. This money is spent among our merchants and people for clothing, food, fuel, etc. These people have to be fed, and they make a market for our beef, and for everything our farmers can raise.

They make possible a progress and improvement we could not make without them and we can scarcely estimate their value to our town and county.

Drive these factories away from here and we would have to depend for our money upon the crop of winter visitors.

The merchant would miss them, the farmers' truck garden would be worthless without them, all would feel their loss.

The more factories we have, the greater our progress and greater the benefits to be derived from them.

Let Tampa and Hillsborough county do everything possible to encourage those we have, and to add more to their number.

In this connection we would call attention to the following correspondence. Let every one read it and give it the consideration it deserves: . . .

Tampa, Fla., Sept. 13, 1887

Dear Sir—We have before us your letter of this date in which you ask us our opinion as to the probable effect of the prohibition movement, if successful, upon our business interest. We briefly state in reply that if prohibition means to deprive our workmen of the facilities to get, at the restaurants and other places, the light wines which they have been accustomed to use in their meals from their childhood, the effect would be in our opinion a general exodus to other shores where people are not dictated to as to how they are to dress and what they are to eat or to drink.

Yours respectfully,

V. MARTINEZ YBOR & Co.

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*Tampa Journal*

September 29, 1887

#### PROHIBITION vs. ANTI-PROHIBITION

Perhaps the largest crowd that ever assembled in Branch's Opera house was there last Monday night to hear the joint discussion on the Prohibition question.

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**Branch's Opera House was a three-story building on Franklin Street. It opened in 1884 and was used for both cultural and political events.**

Photograph from *Tampa: A Pictorial History* by Hampton Dunn.

*Tampa Journal*

October 5, 1887

## A GREAT BATTLE

### The County Goes Wet by Twenty-five Majority

The oldest inhabitants tell us that never in the history of Tampa has there been an election like the one held yesterday. The people were awakened at 5 o'clock in the morning by the ringing of church bells which was a signal for a congregation of the women and children who were to give their work and influence on the side of Prohibition during the day at the polls. By 7 o'clock the women were on the court-house square putting up banners and preparing for the contest. Later about fifty children came marching down Franklin street with flags and banners flying, and making the air ring with temperance songs. Men were at work raising a large tent, preparing tables, etc. The white and colored bands, employed by the Antis were soon on the ground, and for a time the wildest confusion and almost deafening noise prevailed. The women went to work early, pinning "dry" badges upon the coats of Prohibition voters and distributing tickets. The Antis marshaled their forces and for a time the court house square was a regular pandemonium.

But it was soon evident that the women and children “had come to stay” and were prepared to brave any amount of indignity that they might be called upon to encounter. At 8 o’clock the polls opened and both sides got down to business.

\*\*\*

*Tampa Journal*

October 5, 1887

### THE LATEST

The County Commissioners met on Tuesday and canvassed the vote of the county and declared the results below:

PRECINCTS	“WET”	“DRY”
1. Pinellas	30	38
2. John’s Pass	17	12
3. Taylor’s School House	65	68
4. Curlew	5	81
5. Hermitage	19	24
6. Tampa	367	251
7. Peru	52	29
8. Moody’s School House	0	19
9. Alafia	27	31
10. Thonotosassa	59	39
11. Cork	33	27
12. Little Manatee	7	3
13. Hurrah	15	12
14. Tarpon Springs	6	43
15. New Hope	39	72
16. Sidney	19	37
17. Keysville	8	24
18. Keystone Park	10	12
19. Plant City	57	153
20. Ybor City	229	61
	1064	1036

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*Tampa Tribune*

October 13, 1887

### THE SITUATION

The appearance of things at this place, looked at calmly and rationally, is not half as alarming as some people think. Out of a population of 7,000 in a period of five or six weeks there have been forty cases of sickness, counting everything that could come under that head, from a bad cold to yellow fever, and seven deaths. Of the forty cases of sickness at least one-third have entirely recovered and are now out attending to business, and a great many of the balance are in a fair way to recover.

Business has received a severe check—in fact, for a while is paralyzed, and our city is desolate and distressfully quiet. Nearly all the business houses have closed and at first some people complained of a difficulty in securing even the necessaries of life, but no trouble is experienced on that account now. . . .

In the past day or two things have assumed a decidedly more hopeful aspect, and the few people left here are more cheerful.

\*\*\*

*Tampa Journal*

October 20, 1887

There is no reason why this disease [of yellow fever] can not be stamped out entirely within three weeks. There is but one reason why it has not been stamped out by this time, and that is because the officials have been slow and derelict in doing their duty. For a whole week after the epidemic first started simply nothing was done.

\*\*\*

*Tampa Journal*

October 27, 1887

Unquestionably a great scourge has been resting upon the city of Tampa for nearly four weeks, causing the greatest suffering, the most intense anxiety and the most fearful consequences. It is a source of congratulation, however, that so many will have lived to tell the tale, that comparatively so few have been forced to surrender to the ruthless demands of the dread monster [of yellow fever]. . . .

To *live* upon yellow fever for a month or six weeks; to sleep with it; to be plied with questions from early morn till dewy eve: “How many new cases? Who’s dead? Who is expected to die?” To think of it by day; to dream of it by night; to realize that millions of “microbes” inhabit the blood of your veins; to feel that each day is one mile post passed and that each night is two, is enough to quake the courage of any ordinary mortal, and he who goes through this trying ordeal must be a man of iron nerves and brass-lined stomach.

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*Tampa Journal*

November 10, 1887

Our citizens, who fled at the outbreak of the epidemic, and only remember Tampa with its bustling, business activity, its crowded streets, its happy, hopeful and prosperous people, will never fully appreciate and understand the gloom that has hung like a pall over the city for the past six long weeks. Franklin street, with its former bright electric lights in street and stores, has been the gloomiest place of all. After sunset the policeman’s solemn tread has been the only sound to break upon the deep stillness, save the old town clock, when it struck the long lonely hours; not even the watchman’s familiar “all’s well” followed. The only ray of light to be seen was reflected from the dim lamp that hung in the undertaker’s window. Not unfrequently was the sound of the funeral hearse heard as it bore some poor victim to the silent city of the dead. But the worst is over; the death clouds of danger are dispersing; the bright sunlight of hope is dawning upon us once more; but the sad picture that Tampa has presented to those who have looked upon it, has made impressions that will long remain in the memories of us all.



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*Tampa Journal*

November 24, 1887

### FAIR WARNING

Our absent citizens must not be allowed to return yet, even if we have to quarantine against them. No doubt many of them think that the frost Monday put an end to all danger—but such is NOT THE CASE. A few mild cases still exist and in a few days, if no material appears for the fever to feed on, we will be entirely free of the pest. But if any more unacclimated persons come to town now it is likely to hang on indefinitely.

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*Tampa Tribune*

December 1, 1887

### LOOK AHEAD

Two months ago no town in the State was growing more rapidly or had better prospects for the future than Tampa. Everything gave promise of a winter of unusual prosperity in every branch of trade and business—our town was on a boom. The scourge struck us and for six weeks, in a business point of view, we have been a dead town. Our citizens have been scattered, our stores closed and nothing done. Our town, thank God, will in a few days be once more free from infection and the wheels of business again unloosed ready to move forward.

The question for us to meet now is shall we look backward and mourn over the “might have beens” or shall we courageously look to the front at the shall be? It is only too true that we have met with a great calamity, but it is not irreparable, if we meet it with courage and energy. The same conditions that raised us up from a small hamlet to one of the most important and prosperous cities of the State are still in existence, and will still carry us forward in the march of progress if we but use the same energy in the future that has characterized our people in the past.

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*Tampa Journal*

December 29, 1887

### THE OLD AND THE NEW

Ere another issue of the *Journal* will have been made, the year 1887, with its record of good and bad and its freight of success and failures, of joys and sorrows, will have passed away, and 1888, freighted with its responsibilities and duties, its hopes and fears, will have been ushered upon us. . . .

Coming down nearer home, to Tampa, fair “Queen of the Gulf,” to many of us a spot most dear, the year 1887 will long linger in our minds. Just as we had budded into cityhood, just when our people were preparing to garner the fruit of a season’s hard labor, a cruel enemy invaded our borders and for three long, dreadful months has it been the monarch of the field, inflicting untold suffering upon our people, disturbing our peace and prosperity and remorselessly destroying the lives of many of our fellow citizens. Christmas was not so merry with our people as “it might

have been,” and the New Year will not dawn upon many so brightly and so happily as it would have done had the cruel monster called y.f. come either earlier or later, or had departed sooner, or had passed us by altogether. But there seems to be something appropriate in the coincidence that the scourge dies with the dying year. The sighs that follow in its wake are not sighs of sadness, but of thankfulness and joy. Sleep on, thou ruthless monster, Sleep on, and may thy resurrection come not.

But the year 1887 has not been all dark and dreary. During the first nine months Tampa flourished. Business of every kind prospered and her people were courageous and happy. New avenues to wealth were opened; her population steadily increased; commodious brick blocks were constructed, and to use a familiar term, “Tampa boomed.” And notwithstanding the fact that Tampa has received a temporary check, yet, there is much in the situation to inspire a renewal of confidence and courage. The possibilities of 1888 are hardly limited. . . . Tampa, located as it is, in such a fine and fair section of the country, the capitatal [*sic*] of one of the richest and best counties in the State, with its favorable and promising possibilities of being the great commercial metropolis of South Florida, with its energetic, enterprising and intelligent population, can not fail to attain the goal of its loftiest ambitions, and to realize the dream of its most sanguine admirers.