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# THE SUNLAND TRIBUNE

Journal of the Tampa Historical Society



## TAMPA HISTORY MAKERS IN 1986

*GOV.-ELECT BOB MARTINEZ*

Third Tampan to be Named  
Governor of Florida

*MAYOR SANDY FREEDMAN*

Tampa's First Woman  
Chief Executive

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HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

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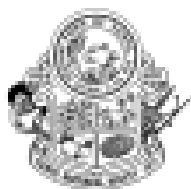
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IMARI TEMPLE URN AND JARDINIERE  
At The Henry B. Plant Museum

*Read "Japanese Ceramics at the Henry B. Plant Museum" by Dr. Daphne Lange Rosenzweig, page 3.*

*—Photo Courtesy: The Henry B. Plant Museum*



# THE SUNLAND TRIBUNE

Volume XII November, 1986

Journal of the  
**TAMPA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
Tampa, Florida

HAMPTON DUNN  
Editor

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*Our Cover: Former Mayor Bob Martinez becomes the third Tampan in history to be Governor of Florida when he takes office January 6, 1987. The others were Gov. Henry L. Mitchell (1893-97) and Gov. Doyle E. Carlton (1929-1933). Martinez is also the first Hispanic to be elected Governor. Mayor Sandy Freedman became Tampa's first woman Chief Executive when she succeeded Bob Martinez, who resigned in 1986 to run for Governor.*

The *Sunland Tribune* is the official annual publication of Tampa Historical Society, distributed to members each year. Non-members may receive limited edition issues by contacting the Society at 259-1111.

Individuals interested in contributing manuscripts for consideration should send them to the headquarters no later than August 1 of each calendar year. The *Sunland Tribune* Committee will review, accept or reject articles and will return all photographs and materials not selected for publication. All manuscripts should be no more than twelve double-spaced typed pages in length and should include footnotes, lists of sources as well as captions for all photographs submitted.

## The President's Report

### AS OUR CITY GROWS SO GROWS OUR ORGANIZATION

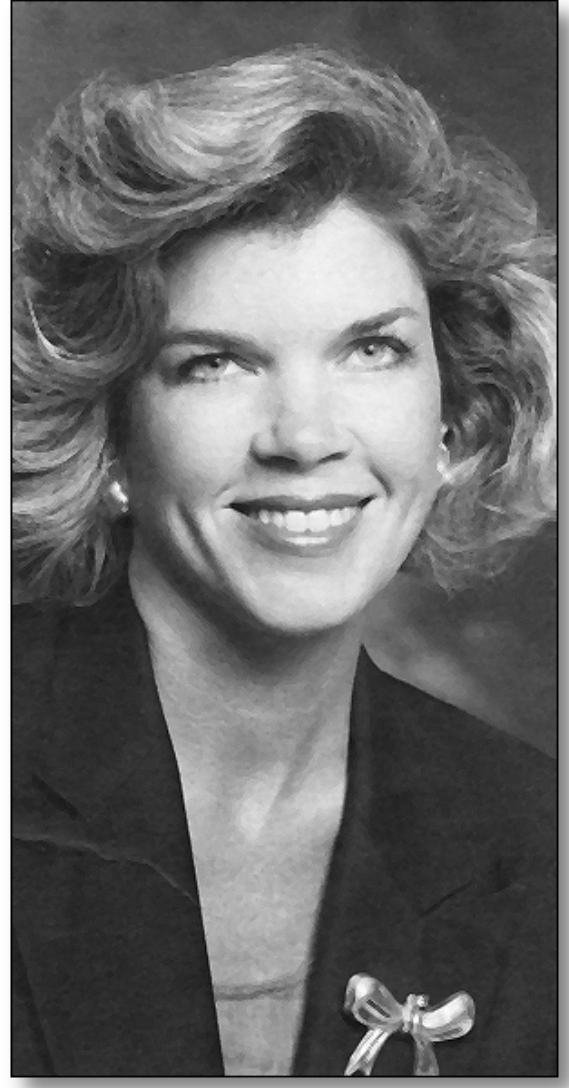
By **NANCY N. SKEMP**

Once again we come to the close of another eventful year for Tampa Historical Society. What a busy year it has been. Fascinating programs and lectures, field trips, exhibits, tours and reunions. Your board has worked hard to bring to you the membership new and different events to spark interest and participation by all.

As our city grows so grows our organization. This year we have taken a giant step forward by turning our headquarters into a museum. This phase in our development will do so much to draw us closer to the community. When we are finally ready to open our doors to the public and make more people aware of our existence I feel that we will see a great deal of growth and support from the community.

The replacement of the garage with a new building will also be a great new asset for our organization. We will have a place to hold meetings and lectures, store acquisitions and increase the museum space. These projects are very exciting and so important to the future of Tampa Historical Society.

Funding is a never ending problem with an organization like ours. All of the monies from Continental Heritage have now been collected. We have had several generous donations this year from various individuals as well as corporations. A new fund raising committee has been formed to develop a program to bring in sizable donations in order for us to build our addition, to hire and



**NANCY SKEMP**  
**President**

Tampa Historical Society

pay a qualified director and to maintain that which we already have. A membership drive is also underway with the use of our

beautiful new brochures designed and written by our own Leland Hawes.

A debt of gratitude is owed by the members to those who have worked tirelessly throughout the year to operate Tampa Historical Society: Glenn Westfall who has spent untold hours organizing and arranging the layout for the museum. Evelyn Cole has spent hours putting T.H.S. memorabilia in scrapbooks and helping to design displays for the museum. Lois Latimer's incredible efficiency and energy keeps our office and me running smoothly. Kaky Parrish, Margaret O'Donohue and Jean Marsicano spend hours preparing the bulk mail outs. Our competent directors for their dedication, service and attendance, your Vice President Sam Latimer for his counsel and Ray Miller for his efforts to oversee and balance our finances.

Our future is looking bright and hopeful. Our growth and expansion is going to be exciting and rewarding. Please continue to give our society your support so that we can all work together to achieve our goals. It has been a challenge and a privilege to serve you this year as president.

# JAPANESE CERAMICS AT THE HENRY B. PLANT MUSEUM

By DR. DAPHNE LANGE ROSENZWEIG



## VISITING ON THE VERANDA OF THE TAMPA BAY

*This rare Rafael Tuck & Sons "Oilette " post card, issued early this century shows guests enjoying the unique veranda at the Tampa Bay Hotel. Caption on back reads: "The Veranda of the Tampa Bay Hotel is like a bit of old Granada. The graceful pillars of the great porch support picturesque Moorish arches. Swinging in a hammock in a corner of this quaint veranda, with half-closed eyes, one can imagine the place Old Spain. " Si!*

-Photo from the HAMPTON DUNN COLLECTION

## THE SETTING

The Henry B. Plant Museum collections abound in examples of Japanese and Chinese furniture, ceramics, and metal

objects. The Japanese pieces are datable to the Meiji Era, 1868-1912 a.d.





**MRS. MARGARET PLANT IN HER OFFICE, ROOM 149,  
IN THE TAMPA BAY HOTEL, MARCH 1899.**

-Photo Courtesy The Henry B. Plant Museum

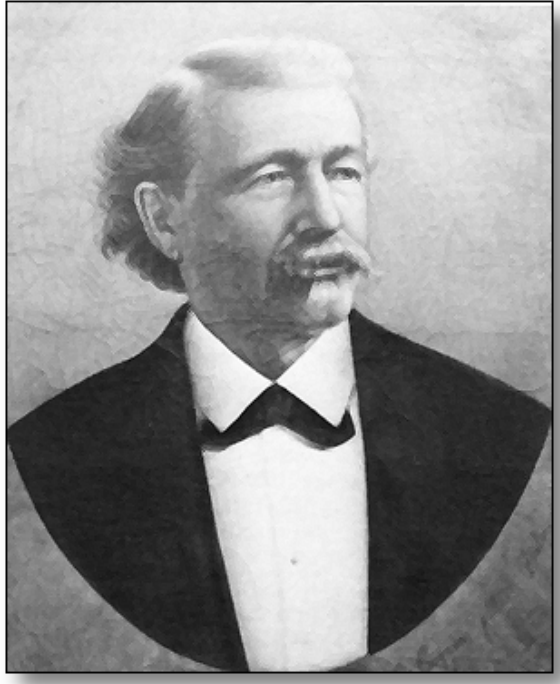
During this interesting period, many fundamental concepts of Western life were introduced into Japan at the behest of the modern-minded Meiji Emperor and his aides. These concepts affected such diverse aspects of national life as education, architecture, legislative systems, even dance forms and dress styles, food, and the manner in which food was served.<sup>1</sup>

The aesthetic principles and prejudices of Western art, as introduced by Italian art professors to art school students in Tokyo, became the standard by which art would be judged. The Western distinctions between fine arts and decorative arts (or crafts) were

accepted by the Japanese art world, as was the concept of a museum to house the arts.<sup>2</sup>

### **A MAJOR IMPACT**

While the West was directly affecting Japanese life, including its art, Japan was also having a major impact on Western life and art. The subject matter and designs associated with Japanese art appeared repeatedly in later 19th century European and American art, due in large part to the movement called "Japonisme" and to the Post-Impressionist artists. Kimonos and fans adorned famous beauties and aesthetes of



**HENRY BRADLEY PLANT**

**This portrait hangs in the Henry B. Plant Museum at the University of Tampa.**

-Photo from the HAMPTON DUNN COLLECTION

the period; their walls were hung with Japanese prints imported on a lavish scale.<sup>3</sup>

The dealer Siegfried Bing, working in Paris from the 1870s through the 1890s, built up a vast collection of Japanese art for sale to the avid Paris public; his chief source was his brother-in-law, the German consul in Tokyo. He himself spent one year in Japan, and said "I ... let it be known everywhere that a wild man had come ashore to buy up everything". Bing also published *Le Japon artistique*, 1888-1890, which introduced the styles and subjects of Japanese art to a wide audience. Van Gogh, Degas, Lautrec and Mary Cassatt were among his customers, and that they were particularly enchanted by the thousands of Ukiyo-e prints he stocked in his shop.<sup>4</sup>

The widespread knowledge of things Japanese was enhanced by the many

international expositions held in America and Europe during the latter half of the 19th century. Japan participated with great success in many of these, and the art products offered by the Japanese participants made their way into many sympathetic Western collections.<sup>5</sup>

## THE PLANTS' PURCHASES

From 1873-1910, Japan participated in at least 25 foreign expositions. The 1873 Vienna exposition revived Japan's moribund metal craft industry, and led to metal workers becoming government sponsored. A highly successful section of the 1885 Nuremberg Metal Work Exposition was the exhibit of 492 works by 99 Japanese metal artists.

Of the extant Oriental art purchases of the Plants, it is the Japanese ceramics which are most striking and interesting. It might be noted that ceramics for export purposes became an extremely important part of the Japanese ceramic industry in the latter half of the 19th century. At the same Vienna Exposition of 1873 mentioned previously, Japanese ceramics achieved great success. Western markets for Japanese ceramics mushroomed. Between 1872-81, Japanese production increased 100 times. Exports rose from 12% to 59% of the total ceramics produced in Japan during this period.

Because of the success of the overseas expositions, the Japanese government sponsored a number of domestic industrial expositions which established new sources of support for artists. Since it was the more exuberantly colored and outsized works highly decorated with views of an idealized Japan which sold in the international expositions (as opposed to simple Japanese-taste items), it was this mood of



**SOCIALIZING AT THE TAMPA BAY HOTEL**

*The caption on this early post card, probably in the 1920s, says of the Tea Garden and Jewel Box in Plant Park: "During the warm days of summer and winter this is an excellent place to spend an afternoon and evening. It is beautifully decorated and entirely surrounded with masses of natural foliage. "*

-Photo from the HAMPTON DUNN COLLECTION

'romantic exoticism' (typical of the Japonisme movement) which prevailed in contemporary Japanese ceramic decorating workshops.

### **PLANTS IN JAPAN**

When searching for furnishings for their new hotel, Henry Plant and Mrs. Plant visited Japan; although there are no known extant purchase slips from their visit, the Plants probably visited the large warehouses in Yokohama.<sup>6</sup> The Meiji-era works in the present museum represent the typical offerings of such warehouses, works which were produced to suit contemporary (and let us not forget, Victorian) Western taste. These pieces are brightly decorated with

charming motifs, executed on a lavish scale. The ceramics and metal pieces often come in matched pairs. There are few unique items; even in the current Plant Museum collections, which undoubtedly represent only a fraction of the total collection of Oriental objects found in the original Tampa Bay Hotel, many of the objects appear in duplicate, triplicate or even larger matched sets.

### **THE BACKGROUND OF IMARI AND SATSUMA CERAMICS**

From as early as the eighth century a.d., many Japanese ceramic workshops routinely turned to Chinese ceramics for their inspiration. Both designs and color palettes



were borrowed from the mainland, the Chinese celadon, blue and white, and polychrome enamel wares proving the most popular in Japan.

Japanese-produced blue and whites (of particular interest to us because of the Plant Museum's collection) are broadly termed 'sometsuke' which means 'dyed' or 'printed'. The cobalt blue is applied directly to the biscuit, then the work is glazed and fired. The first extensive use of blue and white decor came in the early 1600's, at Arita kilns in ancient Hizen Province [Saga Prefecture]. Such kilns as Kirado, Imari, Nabeshima, Arita, etc. produced wares of this variety.<sup>7</sup>

Prior to the early 1600s, the Japanese were applying the typical Chinese porcelain designs to the finest material available to them, which was a stoneware clay. It is traditionally stated that a source of the desirable porcelain clay (available in quantity in China from a relatively early period on), was first discovered in Japan in the year 1616 a.d. by an immigrant Korean potter in Kyushu. Among the highly desirable qualities of porcelain are that it may be high-fired and thin-walled, due to the great tensile strength of the clay recipe; it rings when struck; and it may be translucent. Once a Japanese source of porcelain was discovered and became available, the Chinese-style designs with which potters had been working were applied to the new porcelains.<sup>8</sup>

With the exception of Kutani on Honshu, the leading manufacturers of porcelain were located on Arita on the island of Kyushu, in an area 15 miles square. Most pieces were produced in the numerous small factories, which typically employed fewer than 10 people. Similar wares were produced by various kilns independently, and for ease in designating the variety of wares with similar

appearance, they all came to be termed 'Imari' after the seaport from which these wares were shipped to Honshu.

## IMARI

'Imari' is the most recognized name in the West for Japanese porcelain; it has become a generic name applied to Arita porcelain made for domestic use or export. There were, however, other distinct types of Arita porcelains, such as Kakiemon and Nabeshima.

The name 'Imari' is misleading in yet another way. 'Imari' is, certainly, the name of a seaport from which Arita wares (Hizen area) were exported, but the wares shipped from Imari port were the wares exported to Honshu for Japanese use. The export wares, with which we in the West are most familiar and which we call 'Imari' were really shipped from Nagasaki, not Imari. Their most reasonably correct designation is 'Arita' wares.

'Ko-Imari' is, literally, 'old Imari', and dates as early as the beginning of the 17th century. It is technically naive, the bodies laden with black dots (resulting from iron impurities in the clay), and often warped in the kiln because the clay was not highly refined. Its clear glazes also were unrefined, and tend to be greenish or yellowish, with a crackle. It is possible to discern fingernail marks in the glaze. Chinese motifs dominate the rather simply decorated works.

## SECRETS OUT

About 1643 a.d., an Arita potter learned the secrets of overglaze enamel decoration from refugee Chinese ceramicists who had

established their new home at Nagasaki. Within the era 1650-60 a.d., a red-painting quarter was established in Arita to house artists specializing in enamelling. At first, they painted without preliminary outline.

After mid-century, that is, in the post-1650 period, casual roughness was no longer highly characteristic of the production. Bodies become more uniform, glazes clearer, shapes more stable, profiles crisp, and the foot clean. The florescence of Ko-Imari came in the period from 1650 to 1750 a.d. To give an idea of the quantities produced and sold, it is said that in 1664, one Dutch ship carried 45,000 Imari pieces to Holland. These works were executed in the brocade or 'nishiki-e' style, combining Chinese and Japanese elements.

Following the famous Genroku period, 1688-1703, during which Ko-Imari as well as many other arts achieved their finest moments, there is a definite switch to more purely Japanese motifs, often based on contemporary book illustration. Charming drawings of Dutch ships and Europeans also are featured as designs.

### MEIJI RESTORATION

The Meiji Restoration began in the year 1868 a.d. The Meiji Emperor and his household moved from Kyoto to Edo, renaming Edo "Tokyo" or "Eastern Capital". Arita kilns continued their active role in export and domestic life. 'Nagasaki wares' and wares in European shapes decorated in generally poor quality of the typical Imari palette of overglaze reds and golds were routinely exported.

A German chemist named Dr. Gottfried Wagner came to the Arita area in 1870 and wrought an enormous change, a change not necessarily for the better in terms of

aesthetic sensibility, but revolutionary in terms of production techniques. He introduced modern Western factory techniques, converted the traditional wood-burning kilns to coal, and did away with the traditional clay molds, replacing them with plastic. Wagner also was responsible for the introduction of European enamel colors and glaze methods. All of these new methods led to the commercialization of the product, easily reproducible effects, and - it is said - contempt of the Japanese potters for foreign taste.<sup>9</sup>

Among the characteristics of Meiji-era Imari are its bold and elaborately organized decor, its palette of underglaze blue combined with overglaze enamels, and the touches of gold added to define blue areas which often are blurred.

### SATSUMA

Satsuma, an historically important old area in Kyushu, is now modern Kagoshima Prefecture. The kilns were established by Korean potters in the late 16th century, the Lord of Satsuma, on a raid of Korea - a land long recognized in Asia for its outstanding ceramics - having brought back 22 potter families from that country.<sup>10</sup> The potters built a kiln Korean-style, that is, a vault-shape single structure set up against a slope, running 150-200 feet long. This style kiln is fuel-efficient, and also provides a range of kiln atmospheres for wares.

The Korean potter families, incidentally, were kept separate from the local Japanese population, and it was not until the Meiji Restoration that a change in the social pattern was allowed by the government.

Satsuma ware is pottery, not porcelain, although it is sometimes called 'se mi-p orcelain', one of a series of ambiguous words used by Western authors to describe the type of high-fired stoneware typical of many major ceramic types of Asia.

'Old Satsuma' ware, or 'Ko Satsuma', was stoneware covered by a thick dark glaze, and was made for the tea ceremony. However, the name 'Satsuma' has become synonymous with finely crackled, cream-colored faience.

### **SURFACE PICTORIAL**

Satsuma produced after 1787 was ornamented with varying colored enamels and gold, in the 'brocade' or 'nishiki' style; the pieces are enriched further by their thin glaze and network of crackles. The period 1787-1800 saw the introduction of the type of decor with which we are most familiar. About 1850 a.d., human figures were incorporated and the surface became very pictorial. By 1871, 'Satsuma' was produced in many localities in Japan, so that the term 'Satsuma', like 'Imari', can be misleading. Many late 19th-early 20th century wares are properly identified "Satsuma-style" rather than "Satsuma".

From records of the Philadelphia Exposition, it is known that in 1880 there were over 1,450 potters producing so-called 'Satsuma' ware, much of it for foreign consumption. Indeed, in 1880, a massive order for 100,000 cups and saucers came in from the West, with the directive "Put in all the red and green you can". It is said that this order gave rise to contempt of the potters for foreign taste, and that boys of ten were assigned to slap on the designs, since the foreigners would not know the difference between high-quality and puerile decor. Wares of the Meiji period were generally intricately

patterned and colorfully painted, with splashes of gold and raised designs.

Events of World War I halted production of much European hard-paste porcelain, and the supply of European-manufactured porcelains on hand in America dwindled. The Japanese market responded to the demand for traditional Western-taste porcelains, and during the period 1914-18 a.d., Japanese porcelain, mostly in European style, was exported in large quantities to the United States. From 1918 to 1928 a.d., undecorated blanks were exported from Japan to America, most of these then being 'home decorated' (except for one commercial Pickard China pattern called 'Bouquet Satsuma'). Decoration on the blanks generally follows Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles, using black outlines with gold enamel; these wares are considered highly collectible.<sup>11</sup>

### **CONCLUSION**

The Henry Plant Museum is very much a product of Victorian, Western taste, with its predilection for the exotic - not only for Japanese and Chinese styles, but those of Moorish Spain and India as well. The Chinese and Japanese works in the Museum functioned as part of the overall decor of the Tampa Bay Hotel. Scale, palette, and usefulness were all considerations; small, delicately-hued objects would be lost in the vast halls of the Hotel, and therefore the Plants chose boldly scaled and painted works. They were very practical in their selection, as well as typically "Victorian" in their taste.

### **FOOTNOTES**

<sup>1</sup> The Museum of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg owns a set of Meiji-era triptychs which depict the new

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mores' of late 19th century Japanese society. Several of these prints, and others from a large private collection are illustrated in a 1986 Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition catalogue entitled *The World of Meiji Prints: Impressions of a New Civilization* by Julia Meech-Pekarik.

<sup>2</sup> There is a vast literature which treats the introduction of Western experts and Western art Meiji Japan. For an overview of this aspect of Meiji Life, see the series *Japanese Culture in the Meiji 'Era* published in the 1950's in Tokyo, in English; or Frederick Baekeland's exhibition catalogue *Imperial Japan: The Art of the Meiji Era (1868-1912)* [Ithaca: Cornell University, 1980].

<sup>3</sup> See Elisa Evett's recently-published *The Critical Reception of Japanese Art in Late Nineteenth Century Europe* [Ann Arbor: UMI Press, Series Number 36].

<sup>4</sup> See Julia Meech-Pekarik, "Early Collectors of Japanese Prints and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 17, pp. 93-188, from which I have just quoted: and Yamada Chisaboroh, *Dialogue in Art: Japan and the West* [Tokyo, 1976].

<sup>5</sup> Iriye, Akira, *Mutual Images* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975).

<sup>6</sup> The "Yokohama Port and Warehouse" prints are a very appealing sub-category in the field of Japanese prints. Several American Museums, including Philadelphia, Honolulu, and the University of Oregon, have major collections of this type of print.

<sup>7</sup> For information, see T. Volker, *The Japanese Porcelain Trade of the Dutch East India Company after 1683* [Leiden: 1959]; and Nagatake Takeshi, *Imari, "Famous Ceramics of Japan series #6* [Tokyo, and New York: Harper and Row, 1982].

<sup>8</sup> A summer, 1986 Japan House (Japan Society, New York) exhibition titled *Porcelains of the Burghley Collection* features an unprecedented discovery of documented early Japanese porcelain lodged for centuries in an English country house. There is an extensive catalogue accompanying this exhibition, with the latest information about early Japanese porcelains.

<sup>9</sup> Irene Stiitt, *Japanese Ceramics of the Last 100 Years* [New York, 1974), p. 12 1.

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<sup>10</sup> Daimyos, the powerful territorial lords, were active patrons of the arts in the Momoyama and Edo periods. For political reasons, they built new castles and palaces, and commissioned numerous artists to complete the decor of these buildings. The daimyos of Satsuma traditionally sponsored ceramic workshops and took a keen personal interest in the products turned out by their potters. See L. Ferenczy, "The Patronage of Decorative Arts in the Momoyama and Tokyogawa Period", in William Watson, ed., *Artistic Personality and Decorative Style in Japanese Art* [London: University of London, Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, Colloquies on Art and Archeology of Asia #6, 1976].

<sup>11</sup> Sandra Andacht, "Satsuma Decorated Blanks", *Hobbles* [Sept., 1984], pp. 34-38.

# REMEMBERING HENRY BRADLEY PLANT

By HAMPTON DUNN

Over on the East Coast of Florida, Henry Morrison Flagler is a byword and there are reminders everywhere of that great developer. A county and a city are named for him, there are statues and numerous other signs of his importance to the history of that area.

Over on this West Coast, the image of Henry Bradley Plant is not so well projected. And yet, he did for the West Coast what Flagler had done for the East Coast: He brought his railroad here, built magnificent hotels, opened up the isolated section for development.

We have a museum named for Plant; his old Tampa Bay Hotel has been renamed Plant Hall by the University of Tampa; an east Hillsborough County community honors his name as Plant City. There is a monument to Plant in front of the old hotel - but no statue of him anywhere.

## ART TEACHER ACTS

Energetic, imaginative, enthusiastic Hilary Jameson is doing something to eliminate this oversight. She is an art teacher at Tampa's Plant High School, which is named in Plant's honor.

Ms. Jameson has spearheaded a movement to raise \$5,000 to erect a bigger-than-life bronze statue of Plant. She has reached her goal; well-known Tampa sculptor Carl Norton, 2nd, is rapidly finishing the project, and



STATUE OF HENRY B. PLANT



plans for the dedication early next year are well underway.

The 1980s mark the centennial of Plant's impact on the Tampa Bay area with the construction of his railroad and the elegant hotel.

### **WORD FROM MARTINEZ**

The large bas relief, which will be one-of-a-kind, will be located in the Plant High School interior main lobby. This site will assure safety and high visibility of the historic piece of sculpture. A commemorative plaque noting the names of persons and groups giving \$100 or more to the project will be on the wall beside the statue of Plant.

Plant High School is at 2415 S. Himes Avenue in the Palma Ceia section. It was opened in 1928.

In the Spring of this year, when the project was first announced, then Mayor Bob Martinez wished the sponsors success and observed that "It is most encouraging to know that the number of Tampa citizens who are interested in preserving our historical heritage is continuing to grow, and I commend their efforts."

## PROPER HOUSING SOUGHT FOR COUNTY HISTORICAL ITEMS



COMMISSIONER JAN PLATT

County Commissioner Jan Platt is spearheading a movement to provide proper housing for Hillsborough County's Historical Commission Museum and Library.

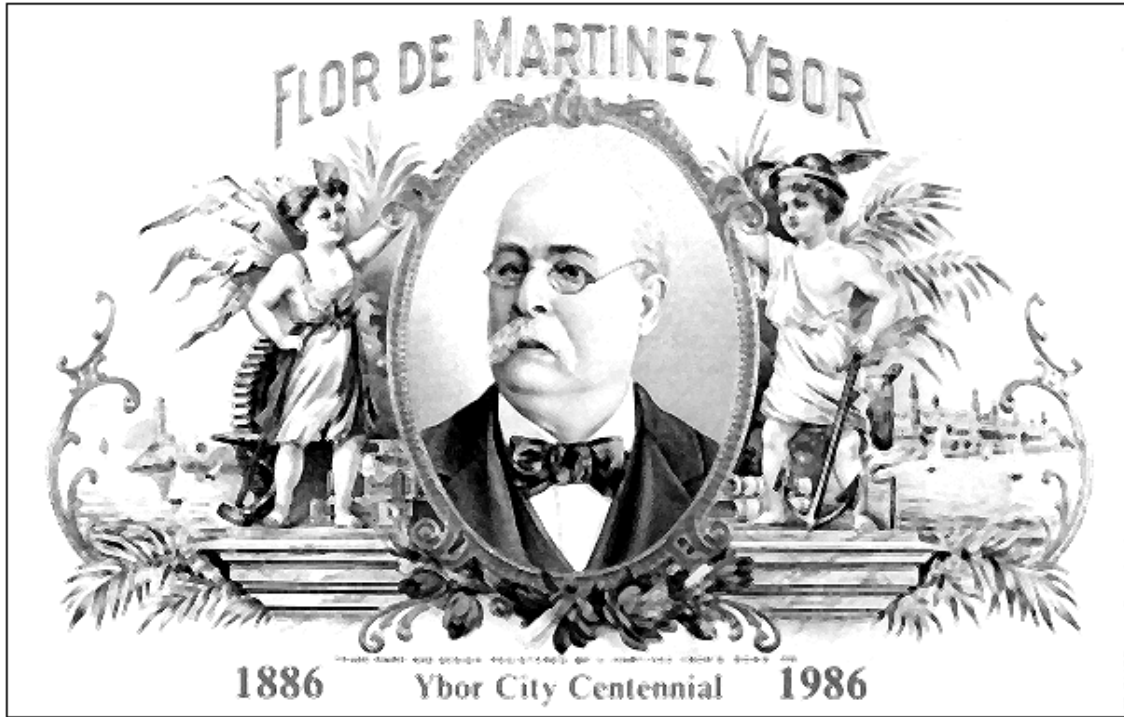
Last July, the Commissioner got through the County Board a motion directing the Interim County Administrator to establish a task force consisting of the Mayor of Tampa, the County Historian, and interested historical representatives "to locate proper housing for our community's historical exhibit." The task force membership also will include representation from Temple Terrace, Plant City and the Library Board.

In her memorandum to the Board, Mrs. Platt wrote, "In recent years, numerous County historical groups have been concerned about the limited space and difficulty in accessing the current Hillsborough County Historical Commission Museum and Library which is located in cramped quarters on the second floor of the courthouse. There are also numerous artifacts and books which are in storage because of lack of exhibition space and shelves."

Among the historical community notified of the Board's action were Herbert McKay, Hampton Dunn, Elizabeth Jones, Leland Hawes, Kenneth Mulder, Tony Pizzo, Sylvia Vega Smith, Randolph Stevens, Richard Stowers, Stephanie Ferrell, Dr. Gary Mormino and Nancy Skemp.

# THE EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF YBOR CITY

By DR. L. GLENN WESTFALL



## CELEBRATING A CENTENNIAL

This rare commemorative cigar label was made in honor of Vicente Martinez Ybor in 1904 and was reproduced as a limited edition postcard for the Ybor City Centennial in 1986

-VANCE/WESTFALL Collection

**NOTE:** This chapter is an excerpt from a book to be printed in late 1986 entitled *Don Vicente Martinez Ybor, The Man and His Empire*, published by Garner Press in New York City.

Tampa in 1882 was a sleepy fishing village with less than 1,000 residents. Located on the Gulf coast, it was relatively isolated from the rest of Florida. A stagecoach line in 1878

connected it with Dade City, then known as Tuckertown, but it was most easily reached by water until the Plant railroad arrived in 1883. In that year, Henry Bradley Plant initiated the construction of the South Florida Railway. Additional stage lines connected Tampa to Sanford where the railway terminated. The rail line was instrumental in changing Tampa from a small village into an industrial port city.

Before the disastrous labor strike in 1885, Latin businessmen living in New York



### "FACTORY #1"

Although the cigar center was named after V.M. Ybor, Ignacio Haya, the other principal founder of Ybor City, produced the first cigar in his factory, giving him the prestigious title of "Factory #1." The firm Sanchez y Haya was honored in this 1986 commemorative limited edition postcard.

-VANCE/WESTFALL Collection

frequently traveled to Key West for business or pleasure. While some traveled the allwater route down the Atlantic, others preferred to make the journey as far as they could on land. Before Plant's South Florida Railway was constructed to Tampa, a rail line running to Fernandina terminated at Cedar Key, some 100 miles north of Tampa. Passengers embarked on boats there for Key West, and some stopped occasionally in Tampa. When the railroad reached Sanford, passengers could shorten the water route to Key West by riding the train to Sanford, taking a tiresome, rough ride by coach to Tampa, where they boarded a steamer to the Keys. The railroad line did not connect with Tampa until August 20, 1885.<sup>1</sup>

## 2 CUBANS AND A SPANIARD

Early visitors to Tampa were impressed with the beauty and serenity of the village. Three of these visitors, two native Cubans and the other a Spaniard by birth, would become responsible for Tampa's transformation into

a thriving community. Bernardino Gargol was a native Cuban who lived in New York where he headed a successful import business. From his Cuban factory he shipped jellies and preserves made from the tropical guava fruit.<sup>2</sup> Gavino, Gutierrez, a Spaniard by birth and a civil engineer by training, also resided in New York. He was involved in various enterprises, including imports and liquors.<sup>3</sup> The third Latin, Eduardo Manrara, was born in Cuba. He became acquainted with Ybor in Havana, and later followed the Company to the United States where he joined the firm in 1872. Manrara, 27 years younger than Ybor, was the financial organizer and administrator of the Ybor enterprise. He was placed in charge of the Key West "El Principe de Gales" factory when it was opened in 1878, and he frequently traveled from the New York office to Florida to oversee management and production. Manrara did not like traveling by water since he easily became seasick; he avoided the Atlantic connection to Key West whenever possible.<sup>4</sup> He preferred to go by land, first by train to Cedar Key, and from there by boat to Key West. When the Plant railroad was extended to Sanford, Manrara took that route since it shortened still further the distance he had to travel by water.

Manrara first came into Tampa traveling by stagecoach over the rough overland route from Sanford. There he had the opportunity to become acquainted with that community before embarking for the final leg of his journey. Allegedly it was from Manrara's frequent visits to Tampa that the belief grew that guava trees were abundant in Tampa and the surrounding area. When Bernardino Gargol heard these rumors he envisioned producing guava products in the United States. He decided to visit Tampa and convinced his close friend and associate, Gavino Gutierrez, to join him on the trip. Since Gargol did not speak English,



Gutierrez would act as interpreter on the journey.<sup>5</sup>

### SEARCH FOR GUAVAS

In the latter part of 1884, the two men left New York for Sanford and then continued to Tampa by coach. There, they began their search for the guava trees. None of the local residents knew anything about such trees, but they directed the two Latins to a village called Peru, along the banks of the Alafia River, south of Tampa.<sup>6</sup> Just as the early Spanish conquistadors had looked for gold, the two men embarked on a search for the

trees. After a two-hour journey by steamer from Tampa, they arrived five miles up the mouth of the river to Peru, and to their dismay the search was fruitless. Returning to Tampa, they made plans to sail to Key West, but before embarking they decided to look around a bit. They were impressed with the serenity and beauty of the area. Sr. Gargol felt that Tampa had great potential as a port town, while Gavino, Gutierrez, an avid lover of the outdoors, was enthralled with the abundant wild game.<sup>7</sup> Gutierrez was especially impressed and enthusiastically discussed the idea of returning to Tampa, building a residence, a dream which he later fulfilled.



### INTERIOR OF IGNACIO HAYA MANSION

The Latin Entrepreneurs of Ybor City brought their cultural heritage with them to Ybor City. This interior view of the Ignacio Haya mansion reflects the opulence of a Victorian home in the cigar manufacturing city.

-VANCE/WESTFALL Collection

Arriving in Key West, Gargol and Gutierrez proceeded to the house of Don Vicente, whose winter residence was near the docks on Whitehead Street. They planned to visit their old friend before returning to New York. Don Vicente was entertaining Ignacio Haya, a manufacturing friend from New York, when Gargol and Gutierrez arrived. Haya, of the firm Sanchez and Haya, had come to Key West for both business and pleasure; he always enjoyed the warm Florida climate. Sr. Haya was also there to discuss business. Both he and Ybor were constantly being threatened with labor strikes which could cripple their operations. Haya saw the problem as so serious that he had already dispatched his associate, Serafin Sanchez, to search for other possible locations to open branch factories.<sup>8</sup> Don Vicente was also confronted with labor hostility in Key West, and he too wanted to move to a location where labor was not organized. They were undoubtedly influenced by other manufacturers who were forming company towns, away from the crowded cities, as a means of accelerating production and limiting union influence. Ybor and Haya sent inquiries to Galveston, Mobile, and Pensacola, expressing their interests in possibly locating in one of those cities. Don Vicente had earlier learned about Tampa from Edward Manrara, but had not yet given it serious consideration as a possible location for a branch factory; not until the visit of Gutierrez and Gargol.

### "A PORT CITY"

When the latter men arrived, they were warmly greeted by Don Vicente and Sr. Haya. Gutierrez explained their unsuccessful search for guava trees and their discovery of Tampa. Don Vicente heard Tampa described again in glowing details as Gutierrez chattered endlessly about its primitive

beauty, abundant wild game, and the potential which he believed Tampa had to offer as a port city. The more reserved Gargol reviewed the economic potential of the area, and the conversation soon excited the interests of all four men. They quickly decided a visit to Tampa was in order. If what Gutierrez and Gargol said was true, Haya and Ybor envisioned the area as the location for their factories. They boarded the next available ship leaving for Tampa and arrived at dawn the next day.<sup>9</sup>

A trip around the area was sufficient to convince Haya and Ybor of its assets. Conditions were ideal for cigar production. The climate was warm, Tampa was near Cuba so that tobacco could be easily imported, and the soon-to-be completed Plant railroad would give Tampa a more strategic location for market distribution. Although there were few local laborers available for cigar making, manufacturers did not consider this a serious problem; the new environment, they believed, would attract workers. The two industrialists hoped that in the new surroundings, the workers would be happier and that perhaps there would be less influence of labor organizations.

Although Haya and Ybor did not plan a company town when they first visited Tampa, they soon decided that such an operation might have certain advantages. There was plenty of land, and the temperate climate would make it a pleasant place to live and work. The four men returned to Key West, elated over the visit. Gutierrez and Gargol traveled on to New York, while Ybor and Haya began writing their associates about the potential of Tampa. Manrara was delighted with the news as he already tried to convince Ybor of the value of the area. Manrara strongly believed that a branch factory there would be advantageous to the



### THE GREAT YBOR CITY FIRE OF 1908

This photo, by Pathe Studio, Seventh Ave., Ybor City, graphically shows ruins of the great Ybor City fire of March 1, 1908. The post cards must have been instantly issued, because this one bears the Ybor City Station of the Tampa postoffice postmark of March 19, 1908.

-Photo from the HAMPTON DUNN COLLECTION

firm. Not only would it be an excellent business venture, but he would no longer have to travel by water.<sup>10</sup>

### BOARD OF TRADE

Haya also wrote to his associate Serafin Sanchez about Tampa. Sanchez had been told 'about Tampa earlier by Gutierrez who explained that "chickens which sold in Key West for seventy-five cents could be bought in Tampa for twenty-five," and that plenty of land was available.<sup>11</sup> Since he was already scouting for possible factory locations, he added Tampa to his itinerary, arriving in mid-July 1885. After looking over the area, he met with the newly created Tampa Board of Trade and outlined the ways they "could facilitate their enterprise and asked for such cooperation, which the

Board assured him would be cordially given.<sup>12</sup> The town was elated over the possibility of bringing a new industry into the area. The local Tampa paper stated: "The benefits that would inure to Tampa from the establishment of such an industry cannot be too deeply impressed on our citizens. The firm of Sanchez and Haya employs 125 cigar makers and can give employment to any number of little boys and girls as strippers.<sup>13</sup> The Board offered the second floor of Miller and Henderson's large stables, rent free, for a factory, but since there were no available workers the offer was refused.<sup>14</sup> Sanchez was looking for a tract of land large enough not only for a factory but one where workers' homes and other buildings could be erected. Returning to New York, Sanchez wrote Haya and Ybor in Key West. He wanted them to return to

Tampa and begin negotiations for land. By September, Haya and Ybor were in Tampa for their second visit.<sup>15</sup> After first examining the Bradenton area, Don Vicente selected forty acres northeast of Tampa where there was a fresh water well. This tract of land, purchased a few months earlier by Captain John T. Lesley, was the property Ybor wanted. Lesley was a member of the Board of Trade; other members were William S. Henderson, Thomas Carruth, and Thomas Spencer.<sup>16</sup> All were willing to sell their land, but Ybor was only interested in the Lesley property. He was offered the tract for \$9,000, a price which Ybor felt was too high; he knew that Lesley had purchased it for \$5,000 a few months earlier. Intimating that they might locate their operations in another community, Ybor and Haya left the meeting. Later, as they were walking down Washington Street on their way back to their hotel, they stopped at the store owned by Colonel William Henderson, who had become a friendly acquaintance. When Don Vicente told Henderson about their decision to leave Tampa, the Colonel became very alarmed. Don Vicente's scare strategy worked. Henderson realized the economic potential which the cigar industry would have on the future of Hillsborough County, and he was determined to do everything he could to keep Haya and Ybor in Tampa. He pleaded with the visitors to remain in town a few more days so that the Board could reconsider their offer and arrange a way for them to get Lesley's land at an agreeable price.<sup>17</sup>

### **DEAL CONCLUDED**

Henderson offered to sell them his own land which was later to become Tampa Heights, but Ybor insisted upon the Lesley property. When the Board reconvened in an emergency meeting October 5, 1885, a compromise was worked out. Ybor would

pay \$9,000, Lesley's price, but he would be reimbursed \$4,000 by the Board.<sup>18</sup> The meeting ended successfully: Lesley received his price; the Board of Trade had successfully induced the manufacturers to build in Tampa; and Don Vicente received the land he wanted. Everyone seemed satisfied, and plans were soon underway to construct Ybor's cigar factory and town.

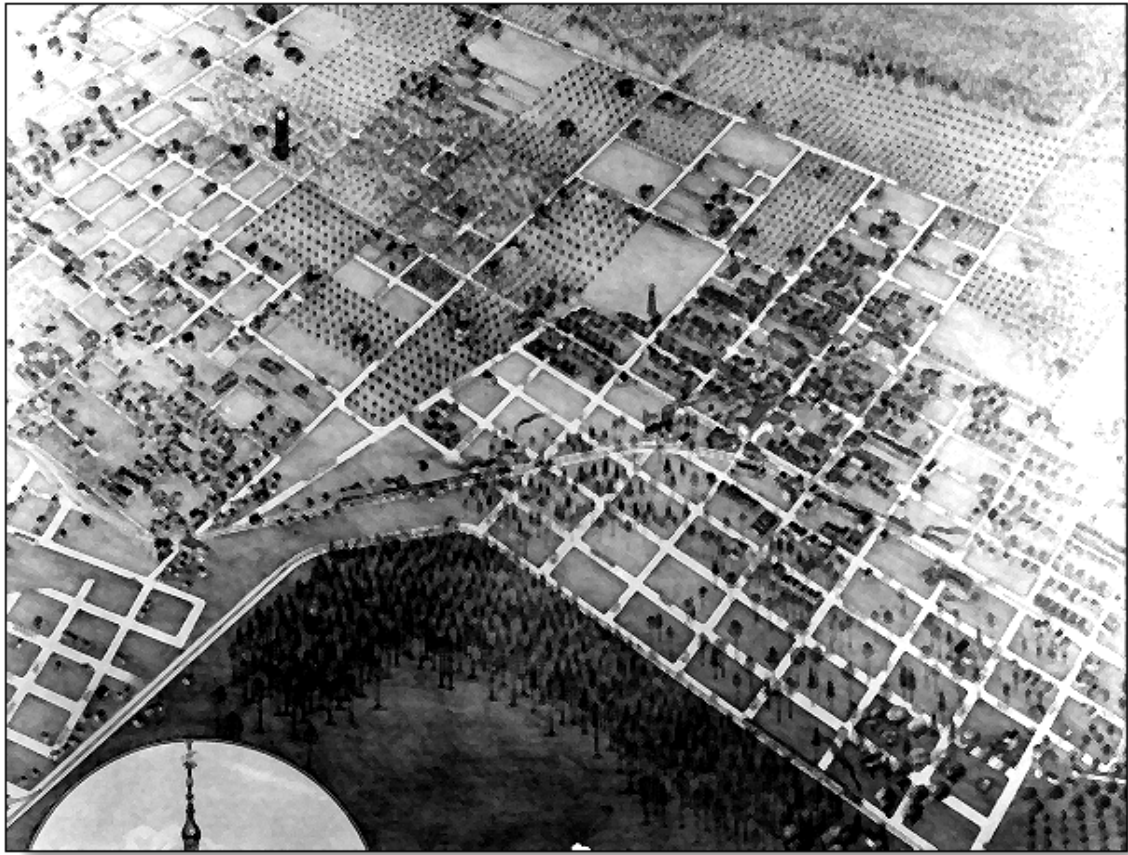
At first, Haya remained in the background, but once definite plans for the construction of the factory began, he purchased land adjacent to Ybor's and started his own factory. Although Haya was one of the original founders of the cigar industry in what was to be called Ybor City, the honor of beginning the company town went to Don Vicente.

Ybor did not at first announce whether he intended to construct a company town or a pilot factory northeast of Tampa. Judging from the amount of land he purchased it seems as though he intended to begin a small factory and if it succeeded, to expand production. Ybor still maintained his "El Principe de Gales" operation in Key West while the wooden structure was being built on the outskirts of Tampa. He even considered expanding his Key West business by attempting to purchase an extension of land called "La Saline" in Monroe County, but the price was too high, and he gave up that idea.<sup>19</sup> The disillusionment over not purchasing the La Saline land was minimized by a more catastrophic event.

### **KEY WEST FIRE**

On April 1, 1886, a devastating fire in Key West destroyed many buildings, including Ybor's factory.<sup>20</sup> Had he been able to purchase the La Saline land, perhaps he would have maintained production in Key





#### A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF YBOR CITY

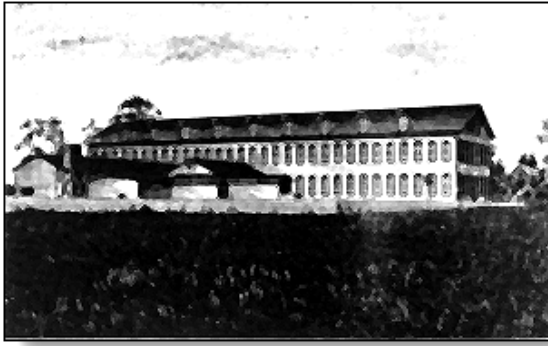
This bird's eye view of Ybor City was sketched in 1892. In the center of the photograph is a train connecting downtown Tampa (to the left) with the cigar center Ybor City (to the right).

-Photo courtesy Dr. L. Glenn Westfall

West. Now, Don Vicente decided to leave south Florida and transfer all of his operations to his Tampa site. He was sixty-eight years old when he began building a factory and laying out a town which was to make Tampa one of the leading cities of the South.

Although Ybor did not have an elaborate master plan for Ybor City in the beginning, he quickly developed one. He was influenced by the trend in some American industries where manufacturers developed their own functional communities. These company towns, constructed to support the operations of a single company, included

homes for the workers and commercial buildings.<sup>21</sup> George Pullman had established such a town in Illinois, and it served as a model for other businessmen. Although Ybor's city was not on the massive scale of Pullman's settlement, it was developed with the hope of providing a good living and working environment so that labor unions would have fewer grievances against owners. It would also operate as a profit-making venture, like the southern cotton mill towns. Ybor had purposefully selected land somewhat distant from the community of Tampa. This isolation would have a major social importance to the workers - primarily Cubans, Spaniards and



### OLD FACTORY STILL STANDING

The El Recurso cigar factory built in 1890 is the only remaining early wooden factory still standing. It is located on Palm Avenue, directly behind the Ybor City State Museum.

-WESTFALL Collection

Italians. The isolation allowed Ybor to more easily control the lives of the workers, a characteristic of several other company towns in the United States.<sup>22</sup> Don Vicente had earlier mentioned that his only problem would be finding a source of labor. Now he felt that the cost of living, lower than that in large cities and Key West, would be an inducement to workers to move to Ybor City.

Ybor hired Gavino Gutierrez as a civil engineer to survey the land and to oversee construction. Workers and supplies came first from Savannah.<sup>23</sup> Ybor was so anxious to start that he initiated construction even before he received his \$4,000 from the Board of Trade. Work began October 5, 1885. Land was first cleared so that Gutierrez and his surveyors could divide the property into plots for sale.<sup>24</sup>

### MORE PROPERTY

Don Vicente quickly added to his original forty acres by purchasing land from John Lesley, Stephen M. Sparkman, Thomas Spencer, and he also bought land from Gavino Gutierrez who had secured it earlier.<sup>25</sup> Ybor also purchased an additional

adjoining fifty acres which ran from Tampa Heights to the edge of the Hillsborough Bay.

The first city plan gave numerical designations to streets running north and south; those running east and west were named after states of the union.<sup>26</sup> Later, most streets and avenues were given numbers. There were considerable changes in the original terrain during the development of Ybor City. The northern lands were high, palmetto covered sands, surrounded to the east and west by forests. To the south were swampy marshes which drained into Tampa Bay.<sup>27</sup> Wildlife was abundant, and even after the town was constructed, alligators from the southern marshes sometimes crawled through the streets at night.<sup>28</sup> The marshlands in the area between the Bay and Sixth Avenue were one of the earliest problems that needed solving. Thousands of loads of sand and sawdust were brought in, but this landfill operation was only partially successful because of the size of the water-soaked area.

C.F. Purcell, a local building contractor, received the contract to construct a three-story wooden cigar factory and houses for fifty workers.<sup>29</sup> Local lumber was used. The buildings constructed were set on a foundation of brick pillars which raised them out of the damp, sandy earth, and made them less susceptible to the insects and small rodents which inhabited nearby thickets and swamps.

### "SOMETHING NEW"

The construction of the city was viewed as a marvelous undertaking by the local newspaper.

If a person would visit this place every day there would be something new to see, some

new evidence of the substantial growth and development. But when a person goes out there only once in two or three weeks, astonishment meets the eye and it is difficult to understand how much can be done in so short a time. And when one remembers that less than six months ago this site was a forest, the transformation furnishes a matter for interesting consideration. A person cannot fail to be impressed until the idea that the enterprise is backed by immense capital and at the same time is being directed by master minds. Apparently not a single mistake has been made, evidence of business sagacity and worthy ambition abound on every hand. The senior member of this great firm is Mr. V. Martinez Ybor.<sup>30</sup>

With his temporary wooden factory construction underway, Ybor had a larger, more commodious brick factory begun on the corner of Ninth Avenue and Fourteenth Street. Even before it was completed, the Tampa Guardian recorded:

The mammoth three story brick cigar factory of Messrs. V. Martinez Ybor and Company is nearing completion; there is not a more substantial structure in the State of Florida. None but the very best material has been used in any part and no expense spared to make it both handsome and convenient. The Company has provided for emergencies and convenience by constructing two flights of stairways from the first to the third floor, besides, a large elevator goes from the bottom to the top. There is a large handsome observatory on the top from which a most magnificent view can be taken, embracing the two cities of Tampa and Ybor, the country on the north and west, and the grandure of the bay on the east.<sup>31</sup>

Ignacio Haya, the silent fellow manufacturer in land negotiations, was convinced that Ybor City would be a success, and he

purchased ten acres of land adjacent to that owned by Ybor. He constructed his own factory and several workers' homes. His factory was a two-story wooden frame building located between Sixth and Seventh Avenues on Fifteenth Street. Work started approximately the same time as Ybor's buildings, and a race began to see whose would be finished first. By the beginning of 1886 both wooden structures were ready, and plans were made to open them the same day. Circumstances prevented Ybor from opening his factory as planned, and the first cigars in Ybor City were produced by Sanchez and Haya's "Flor de Sanchez y Haya" factory. Ybor had ordered bales of unstripped tobacco from Key West, and this caused his delay; Sanchez and Haya used tobacco which already had the stems stripped from it.<sup>32</sup> It was also claimed that Ybor was unable to begin production as he had planned on March 26, 1886, because the Cuban workers employed in the new "El Principe de Gales" factory refused to work under the newly hired Spanish foreman. Cubans had brought their resentment of Spaniards with them from Key West and Cuba.<sup>33</sup>

## REAL ESTATE PROFITS

With construction under way, several contracts were awarded by Ybor to A.P. Gladden, a Tennessee contractor and builder, whose total work amounted to \$81,000 during 1886 and 1887.<sup>34</sup> This included furnishing 1,100 pairs of window blinds for workers' homes.<sup>35</sup>

As Ybor City grew, its founders carefully planned its expansion so that they could realize profits not only from cigars but also from real estate. On October 15, 1886, Ybor and his associates formed the Ybor City

Land and Improvement Company. Shortly afterwards another land and real estate company was organized by Sanchez and Haya.<sup>36</sup> Ybor's company was the largest of the investment companies. Its charter outlined its function as buying selling, and improving real estate.<sup>37</sup> After land companies were formed, construction expanded rapidly. Both the Ybor and Sanchez and Haya companies built workers' houses, and factories, and induced other manufacturers to move to Ybor City. By May 1886, Ybor and his partners had constructed eighty-nine houses, including thirty-three two-story family dwellings.<sup>38</sup> Ybor brought in his own materials, labor, and supplies. By the end of the year, he erected a total of 176 dwellings. These houses were small, built of upright boards, and were sold from \$750 to \$900, depending on location.<sup>39</sup> Each house had two to three rooms, and families shared outside privies. The white-painted picket fences which outlined the properties added a pleasant atmosphere to the streets. The houses were considered superior to worker dwellings in Key West or Havana, and were part of the inducement to draw workers to Ybor City.

Several serious problems confronted Ybor and his contractors in the development of the city. Besides the marshlands, sewage ran directly into the lowland areas south of Seventh Avenue, polluting much of the potable water. There was only one deep well which supplied water for many people, and it was difficult to carry the water long distances over the sand-covered roads. The Key West population had always been faced with a shortage of water, and so they resorted to draining rain water from roofs and collecting it in barrels. When workers arrived in Ybor City, they used these same means of collecting water, but they found that the process of straining out thousands of insects from the water barrels was a difficult

task.<sup>40</sup> Hand pumps later provided some water, but mud, sand, and pieces of rock had to be filtered out. The marshes were breeding grounds for gnats and mosquitos, and along with an inadequate sewage system, they created a danger to health. Malaria and yellow fever were commonplace, and Sr. Ybor brought in a doctor from Cuba to care for his workers. Other physicians soon arrived and organized a social welfare organization called La Iguala (The Equal). Workers paid a weekly fee of ten cents for medical care. This was the prelude to several Latin medical centers which organized as the population of the community increased.<sup>41</sup> Although neighboring Tampa had physicians, most of them were unavailable to Ybor City residents. Some refused to treat Latins, or else they closed their offices on Sunday, the only day the cigar workers had free.

## TRAVEL BY FOOT

Producing sufficient food was still another problem. The workers were not accustomed to growing their own crops for consumption, and in the first few months residents had to rely upon outside distributors. A Cuban, Santos Benitez, imported commodities which were distributed to the settlers.<sup>42</sup> By the middle of 1886, several grocery stores were in operation. M.M. Castillo's store carried a full stock of family groceries. Garner and Son was another popular establishment, and there were meat markets, ice cream and cold drink emporiums, drug stores and restaurants.<sup>43</sup>

Early transportation was veritably nonexistent. Most people traveled by foot since the thick sand made other modes of transportation difficult. According to one early resident, in order to walk from one end of the village to the other, a person had to



prepare himself as though he were making a journey across a desert.<sup>44</sup> Sand was a problem for building constructors; wheels easily bogged down, making it frustrating to transport building materials. An attempt to solve this problem was made by lining Seventh Avenue with wooden blocks. Sidewalks were also made of wood blocks, but when they were wet they would swell, only to fall back into place when they had dried out.<sup>45</sup> Sawdust, and later oil, was placed on the streets to keep the dust down, but it was not until nearly the beginning of the twentieth century that streets were paved with bricks.

To light the houses, Ybor first distributed candles. When there were kerosene lamps available, he personally distributed them to the workers' homes.<sup>46</sup> Lighting the cigar factories by artificial light was an impossibility, so large windows were placed on each floor. Laborers started to work early in the morning and remained until sunset to take advantage of the available natural light. On extremely cloudy or rainy days, the workers who sorted tobacco leaves into various qualities according to color were often sent home since they did not have sufficient light to do their jobs.

## LATIN CULTURE

Coffee houses, clubs, and theatres were important to the Latin culture, and once Ybor's factory was completed, he turned over his wooden factory building for use as a theatre. Later it became known as Liceo Cubano, and was used as a club for the workers.<sup>47</sup> There were not many women in Ybor City to begin with. Some workers sought wives in Key West or Havana, and many frequented the "Scrub" area of Ybor City, where a group of prostitutes resided. Long lines gathered, particularly on

weekends, and the women made a very profitable living from their activities.<sup>48</sup> Even after families moved in, "visiting the houses" was an active weekend pastime.

In the first few months of its history, work went slowly because of the natural problems encountered in forming a new community, and Haya decided to put up his entire property for sale. This, in turn, discouraged Ybor, and each man was fearful that the other would leave. According to Tobacco, Mr. Gutierrez, an employee of Ybor's, worked out a scheme which, as it turned out, worked.

He went to Mr. Haya, and very seriously told him that he had a buyer for all his property. "Who is it?" says Mr. Haya. Mr. Gutierrez told him that it was Mr. Ybor. "You don't tell me!" said Mr. Haya; "why if he stays, I'll stay too." When Mr. Gutierrez told Mr. Ybor that afternoon, Mr. Ybor said: "No, no, I don't want to"; but when it was explained to him he chuckled, and told Mr. Gutierrez to go with him to Mr. Haya. When Mr. Ybor made the same proposition, Mr. Haya replied that if Mr. Ybor was going to stay he did not want to sell anything but would also stay. They both acknowledged their fear of the other's leaving. They shook hands, and that night a champagne supper decided the question of their staying. Such was the casting straw which settled the question for Tampa's prosperity.<sup>49</sup>

A streetcar began operating between Ybor City and Tampa, running on narrow-gauge rails and pulled by little dummy engines. When Tampa backers of the project questioned its success, Ybor and Manrara, who felt the railroad was a necessity, bought controlling interest on November 14, 1885. The following April, it was in full operation.<sup>50</sup> At first there was no regular schedule, but soon it was running hourly between communities. The engines were

named after the prominent ladies of Ybor City; the Fannie, after Mrs. Ignacio Haya, and the Jennie, Mirta and Eloise for Ybor's daughters.<sup>51</sup>

### "LITTLE HAVANA"

With the streetcar in operation, it soon became a popular weekend pastime for the Latins to visit the parks of Tampa, while Tampa residents enjoyed visiting the foreign atmosphere of the cigar community. They called Ybor City "Little Havana" and delighted in weekend dining at the Latin restaurants. These were the few major cultural contacts between the Latins and the Anglos; most of the time each community remained isolated from the other, preserving their own traditions and cultures. Only among the wealthier classes were there occasional social exchanges.

In spite of the early hardships, the cigar city was a success; Cuban, Spanish, and later Italian immigrants came to Ybor City by the thousands. During the first few years, the city faced the growing pains typical of new settlements. A serious problem was that there were no police; this was one of several reasons the city of Tampa was interested in annexing Ybor City. A small guard force was hired by Ybor and other manufacturers and they tried to assure domestic order, but the detachment was too small to maintain law and order in a fast-growing community.<sup>52</sup>

As the town expanded, the Tampa Board of Trade urged legislation to extend Tampa's boundaries to include Ybor City. Ybor strongly opposed annexation; he argued that the municipal laws and taxes of Tampa would hinder his operations. There would be very few benefits for the Latin community through annexation, he felt, and his

company had already improved the streets, provided lighting, and laid the sidewalks.<sup>53</sup>

In spite of his protestations, on June 2, 1887, Ybor City was incorporated into the City of Tampa, becoming its fourth ward. Although economic benefits of annexation to Tampa were obviously an advantage, the Tampa Tribune noted one of the major changes was the appearance of Tampa policemen which calmed down the wild frontier town, making it a more respectable place to visit on Sundays.<sup>54</sup>

Even after annexation, Ybor City retained its ethnic identity and traditions; it was a city within a city. Local Tampanns began to share in the wealth of the city founded by immigrant capital, and Ybor and his associates continued to expand their economic interests. The sleepy coastal village was fast becoming a major urban community.

### FOOTNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Grismer, Tampa: A History, 175.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Pizzo, "Gutierrez Descubre a Tampa," *Tropico: Revista Mensual Ilustrada al Servicio de Hispano-America* #9 (March, 1955), 115; June Connor *The SZ of Tampa* (Tampa, 1927).

Connor, an early resident of Ybor City, personally knew several of the prominent Latin manufacturers and worked in the Ybor-Manrara factory as a bookkeeper for a few years. She wrote several articles for local newspapers, tobacco trade journals, and compiled a personal collection of papers donated to the Tampa Public Library. Much of her materials were plagiarized by the Federal Writers Project writers. Mrs. Connor wrote under the pseudonym of "Quien Sabe," which she translated to mean "the one who knows."

<sup>3</sup> Pizzo, "Gutierrez Descubre a Tampa," 5; Trow's *New York Directory*, New York. Although Gavino Gutierrez was not listed as a civil engineer in the directory, his activities for the following years included: 1875, owner of a liquor distributorship at

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415 5th Avenue; 1876, 1887, 1888, a merchant at 84 Duane Street.

<sup>4</sup> Durward Long, "The Historical Beginnings of Ybor City and Modern Tampa," Florida Historical Quarterly XLV (July 1966), 32.

<sup>5</sup> Jesse Keene, "Gavino Gutierrez and His Contributions to Tampa," Florida Historical Quarterly, XXXVI (July 1957), 37.

<sup>6</sup> Pizzo, "Gutierrez Descubre a Tampa," 13.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 17. An August 16, 1893 article in the Tampa Morning Tribune is devoted to the attractions of Peru, Florida. It mentions the steamer, "Antique City," and local sources claim this was the same steamer which took Gutierrez and Gargol to Peru.

<sup>8</sup> Rivero Muniz, "Los Cubanos en Tampa," 12.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>11</sup> "New York, Tobacco Leaf, July 12, 1895.

<sup>12</sup> Minutes of the Tampa Board of Trade, Tampa Chamber of Commerce, Tampa, July 15, 1885.

<sup>13</sup> Tampa Morning Tribune, July 16, 1885.

<sup>14</sup> "New York, Tobacco Leaf, July 12, 1895.

<sup>15</sup> "Rivero Muniz, "Los Cubanos en Tampa," 13.

<sup>16</sup> "Grismer, Tampa: A History, 180.

<sup>17</sup> "Connor, The Story of Tampa, 10.

<sup>18</sup> Minutes of the Tampa Board of Trade, Tampa Chamber of Commerce, Tampa, October 5, 1885. Although a \$4,000 inducement was promised to Ybor, he had a difficult time collecting the money from the Board of Trade, a point of much irritation for the manufacturer. Failure to pay Ybor and Company, and an apology for not inviting Ybor to a banquet in honor of Henry B. Plant were topics of the Tampa Guardian Supplement, May 5, 1886, approximately eight months after the money was to have been paid. Two months later, the money was not yet collected by the Board, and a special committee was formed to hasten the collection of funds. (Records of the Tampa Board of Trade, July 21, 1886.) By December 15, 1886, the Board still had a

small amount to collect; by the end of the year, lands valued at \$3,300 and \$700 cash were paid to the V. M. Ybor and Company. (Minutes of the Board of Trade, December 15, 1886.) Durward Long, "The Historical Beginnings of Ybor City and Modern Tampa" lists private source, as responsible for paying the remaining amount of money owed to the manufacturer.

<sup>19</sup> "A History of Ybor City," W.P.A. Federal Writers Project for the State of Florida (Tampa, n.d.), 34. Hereafter, W.P.A. writings will be listed as W.P.A. Federal Writers Projects.

<sup>20</sup> Rivero Muniz, "Los Cubanos en Tampa," 16.

<sup>21</sup> James B. Allen, The Company, Town in the American [Vest (Norman, Oklahoma, 1966), 4.

<sup>22</sup> Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, s.v.. "Company Towns," by Horace B. Davis.

<sup>23</sup> Emilio del Rio, Yo Fui uno de los Fundadores de Ybor City (Tampa, n.d.), 8.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Gilbert Flores, Architect, Tampa, Florida, April 3, 1976. According to Mr. Flores, the Ybor City grid layout was based on 200-ft.-wide by 350-ft. blocks with 50-ft. right-of-ways and 10-ft. alleys, running through the middle of the blocks. By adding two 50-ft. right-of-ways to the 200-ft. width, and one 50-ft. right-of-way to the 350-ft. length, a dimension of 300 ft. by 400 ft. is obtained, which forms a simple 3-4-5 triangle, a basic triangle commonly used in surveying. This information allows us to know what type of layout was used by Gavino Gutierrez in surveying Ybor City.

<sup>25</sup> "Map of Ybor City," March, 1886, Plat Book 1, Hillsborough County Clerk of the Circuit Court, Tampa, 11.

<sup>26</sup> Pizzo, "Gutierrez Descubre a Tampa," 17.

<sup>27</sup> D. Paul Westmeyer, "Tampa, Florida, A Geographic Interpretation of Its Development." (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Florida, 1953), 17, 58.

<sup>28</sup> Fernando Lemos, "Early Days of Ybor City," W.P.A. Federal Writers Project (Tampa, n.d.), 22

<sup>29</sup> Rivero Muniz, "Los Cubanos en Tampa," 15.

<sup>30</sup> Tampa Guardian, May 5, 1886.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., June 9, 1885.

<sup>32</sup> Long, "The Historical Beginnings of Ybor City and Modern Tampa," 35.

<sup>33</sup> Rivero Muniz, "Los Cubanos en Tampa," 16.

<sup>34</sup> Tampa Weekly Journal, May 26, 1887.

<sup>35</sup> Tampa Journal, January 26, 1887.

<sup>36</sup> Wells to Sanchez and Haya, December 16, 1886, Deed Book R, Hillsborough County Courthouse, Tampa, 256. Sanchez and Haya purchased an additional 10 acres of land, substantially increasing the holdings of their Land Company in Ybor City.

<sup>37</sup> Articles of Incorporation, the Ybor City Land and Improvement Company, October 10, 1885.

<sup>38</sup> Long, "The Historical Beginnings of Ybor City and Modern Tampa," 35-36.

<sup>39</sup> "Ybor City, 1884-1935," W.P.A. Federal Writers Project (Tampa, n.d.), 4.

<sup>40</sup> "A History of Ybor City," W.P.A. Federal Writers Project (Tampa, n.d.), 4.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 36: -Ybor City, General Description, Latin Population," W.P.A. Federal Writers Project (Tampa, n.d.), 4.

<sup>42</sup> Fernando Lemos, "Early Days in Ybor City," W.P.A. Federal Writers Project (Tampa, n.d.), 19.

<sup>43</sup> Tampa Guardian, June 9, 1886.

<sup>44</sup> Jose Rivero Muniz, "Tampa at the Close of the Nineteenth Century," Florida Historical Quarterly XLI (April 1963), 337.

<sup>45</sup> "A History of Ybor City," W.P.A. Federal Writers Project (Tampa, n.d.), 5.

<sup>46</sup> Lemos, "Early Days of Ybor City," 18.

<sup>47</sup> Dcl Rio, Yo Fui uno de Los Fundadores de Ybor City, 11.

<sup>48</sup> Jose Garcia, "The History of Ybor City," W.P.A. Federal Writers Project (Tampa, n.d.), 10.

<sup>49</sup> New York, Tobacco Leaf, July 12, 1895.

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<sup>50</sup> Grismer, Tampa: A History, 191.

<sup>51</sup> Ybor City, General Description, Latin Populations," W.P.A. Federal Writers Project (Tampa, n.d.), 165.

<sup>52</sup> Tampa Guardian, October 27, 1886.

<sup>53</sup> Florida Senate Journal (Tallahassee, 1887), 273, 275.

<sup>54</sup> Tampa Tribune, October 13, 1887.



## **DR. SAMUEL PROCTOR IS 1986 WINNER OF D.B. McKAY AWARD**



**DR. SAMUEL PROCTOR**

Dr. Samuel Proctor, a native Floridian (Jacksonville), holds his undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Florida. He is Distinguished Service Professor of History and Julien C. Yonge Professor of Florida History at the University. Dr. Proctor is editor of the Florida Historical Quarterly, general series editor of the Bicentennial Floridiana Facsimile Series (25 volumes), and editor of the Florida Bicentennial Symposia Proceedings (five volumes). He is Curator of History at the Florida State Museum, director of the Center for the Study of Southeastern Indians, director of the University of Florida's Oral History

Program, director of the Center for Florida Studies, and the historian for the University of Florida.

Dr. Proctor is a past president of the Oral History Association, former member of the governing Council of the American Association for State and Local History, and is on the editorial board of the Pantan-Leslie Papers, being published under the auspices of the National Historical Publications Commission. He is a member of the Academic Council of the American Jewish Historical Society, a trustee of the Southern Jewish Historical Society, and a member of the Board of Directors for the Florida Historical Society. He is also a member of many professional and scholarly organizations.

He serves on a number of state advisory committees, including the Florida Review Committee for the National Register for Historical Places, and is chairman of the state advisory committee for Archives and Records. Dr. Proctor is the author of five books, over 80 articles, and the editor of 35 books.

# TWO HUNDRED ITALIANS CAME TO FLORIDA TO GROW GRAPES

By TONY PIZZO



After the Gulianos arrived in Tampa from Ocala, their daughter Isabel married Higinio Fernandez Diaz, a cigar factory executive. The above photograph shows Mr. and Mrs. Diaz, front row, right, their daughter Adela (Mrs. Manuel Tuero, Sr.) and their son Manuel Fernandez Diaz.

This is a little known story of Italian immigration to Central Florida on a grape-growing project in 1885. From among this group several families moved to the environs of Tampa to make significant contributions in the betterment of Tampa life. Some of them are the Toffalettis, Pasettis, Ghiottos, and Gulianos.

The Toffaletti brothers, Rinaldo, Joseph and Antonio, settled in Port Tampa City. For

many years they ran a grocery store in the magnificent building of the defunct Port Tampa Bank. Two of Rinaldo's daughters served in World War 11. Edith, a graduate of the first class of the Women's Auxiliary Corps (WACS), became a lieutenant colonel. She was assigned to the Filter Center charting flights in Florida. Lillian served in the Ordnance Department as a lieutenant in the Far East. She followed General MacArthur on his return to the Philippines.

The notable offspring of the Pasetti family are Victor, who served as secretary of the Cuban Club for many years, and Louis, a dentist, who has received national recognition by his profession and has rendered many years of service to the civic life of Tampa through the Civitan Club.

The Ghiotto family for years was involved in an automobile agency. Jim Ghiotto has served as an executive of the Florida State Fair and in other premier firms of Tampa.

Descendants of the Guliano family are Manuel Tuero, general manager of Tampa Wholesale Liquor Co., and a member of the Rotary Club of Ybor City. His uncle, Manuel Diaz, was the president of Wesson Tool Companies, headquartered in Detroit.

Here is the genesis of these Italian grape growers, as it appears in "Catholics of Marion County," an excellent history of the oldest Catholic community in Central Florida, by Jan Quinn.



#### THE PASETTI FAMILY OF TAMPA

Photo taken circa 1920

Seated in front are Mr. and Mrs. Louis Pasetti, the progenitors of the family in Tampa. Louis was a native of Verona, Italy, and Mrs. Pasetti before her marriage was Magdalina Guliano. She came to Ocala with her parents from Santo Stefano in the Piedmont region of Italy. Ten of the eleven children appear in the above photograph. From left: Edward, Joe, Ted, Clementina, Lawrence, Alexander, Concepcion, Victor, Luisa, and Peter.

"In December, 1885, an immigration agent brought two hundred Italians directly from Italy to Welshton, to attempt to grow grapes. A small wooden chapel was built for them and a diocesan priest was sent to Welshton. He was Dominique Andre Gaetan Bottolaccio, born at Bonifacio, Corsica, France, on March 22, 1844. He was destined later to become the Catholic priest of the horse and buggy days in Ocala. But during his first venture into Marion County, Father Bottolaccio served mainly the Italian-speaking parishioners of the Welshton station. After accepting the early hospitality of Captain Welsh's family, the

priest left their house and lived in Ocala near the new chapel that Father Kenny had erected. The agricultural venture for the Italians failed and the colony dispersed, with families moving on to Green Cove Springs, Palatka, Mandarin and Ocala.

"Among those who went to Ocala to become parish pioneers were Giuseppe and Maria Ghiotto, who lived to be elderly residents, and the Toffaletti family. Father Bottolaccio returned to St. Augustine in 1886.

"Louis Toffaletti and Victoria Ghiotto Toffaletti were born in Santo Stefano in northern Italy. In 1885, when they decided

to go to America to buy farm land, they crossed the Alps to board a German ship that sailed out the English channel across the Atlantic. The ship landed passengers at Philadelphia, and then they took a ship to Green Cove Springs in Florida. The two hundred people gave the captain their money and valuables to turn into American currency, but he never returned and they were left destitute. The men had to cut trees to make shelters for the nineteen families who lived in Green Cove Springs for a while. The children attended school while there."

Several of the families moved to Marion County, where they bought property in Marti City. Some farmed, and a number of the young men worked building railroads in parts of the state.

Marti City was a cigar making community established by Tampa cigar workers on the outskirts of Ocala. Joe Marti, the Cuban revolutionist, had visited the cigar community in the early 1890s, and the Cuban tobacco workers honored him by naming the little cigar center in his honor.

After the devastating freeze of 1895, the cigar making enterprise came to an end. The cigar makers packed up their worldly belongings and headed back to Tampa, being joined by several of the Italian families who had come to Florida to cultivate grapes.



**LOUIS AND VICTORIA TOFFALETTI**



## The Charlie Spicola Story

# THE SON OF AN ITALIAN IMMIGRANT TELLS OF BOYHOOD IN YBOR CITY

By DR. ROSE F. SPICOLA



Joe, Charlie, Angelo and Tommy in 1914. Rosina Spicola kept her son Tommy's hair long for several years, trying to preserve her only daughter, Maria Giuseppa, who died in her teens.

On March 3, 1900, there was much cause for celebration in the household of Gaetano and Rosina Spicola in Tampa, Florida. A "figlio maschio", Carlo (Charlie), had been born. A male heir was, and still is, highly prized in Sicilian families.

Charlie would witness some amazing changes during the Twentieth Century, a century of tremendous growth. Tampa had a population of about 16,000 people in 1900.

Three fourths of Tampa's population in 1900- was made up of immigrants and a few Afro-Americans. Charlie was born in Ybor City, a multicultural community where a few Anglos dwelled among a large number of Cubans, Spaniards, and Italians, each community striving to maintain a rich cultural heritage while adapting to life in a new country. Because over 3,000 Cubans had settled in Tampa's Ybor City, it was nicknamed "Little Havana". The cigar industry dominated Tampa's economy.

Gaetano and Rosina, the proud parents, had been born in Santo Stefano, Sicily-Gaetano on March 15, 1871 and Rosina on July 21, 1879. Both came to America in their teens, part of a large group of Sicilians who emigrated late in the nineteenth century. Most of Tampa's Italians came from a small group of villages in the mountainous interior of Sicily. The promise of a new world, a new beginning, a promise of wealth untold, had brought these Italians to America. They had heard of "the streets lined with gold". Many planned to come to America, make their fortunes, then return to their native land.

### VOYAGE ACROSS A HARDSHIP

The voyage across the Atlantic was long and full of hardship. Many became ill and died on shipboard. To her grandchildren, Rosina would describe vividly the harsh conditions on the ship where dried lentils and fava



**G. C. Spicola & Sons, 1925. The store on 1907 7th Avenue was designed by M. Leo Elliott, a Tampa architect. Total cost was \$7800**

beans helped them survive. She remembered how frightened she was of the rats running all over the ship.

Gaetano had traveled from New York to Chicago, to St. Louis, and to New Orleans, working at various jobs with the railroads and finally cutting sugar cane in Louisiana for fifty cents a day. When Hamilton Disston decided to open up a sugarcane plantation in St. Cloud, Florida, grandfather came to Florida.

*An excerpt from a biography, The Life of Charlie Spicola: Native Tampan By Dr. Rose F Spicola, published by Axelrod Publishing of Tampa Bay, The Lozano Building, 1410 North 21st Street, Ybor City, Tampa, Florida 33605. Copyright 1985 by Rose Spicola.*

Gaetano landed in Tampa in 1891, at the age of twenty. At dockside, representatives of the newly established cigar industry were waiting to recruit workers. They convinced him to work for the cigar company for \$2.00 a day, a large sum of money in those days!

### **ROUGH RIDERS ANTICS**

Cigar work, however, soon lost its appeal for Gaetano. He opened up a store near the Fortune Street Bridge, selling groceries of all kinds. He founded the Ybor City Bottling Works, in conjunction with the Florida Brewing Company. Gaetano even invented a bottled drink, which he named Spi-Cola. He made and distributed ice cream and wine along with the soda, and delivered these



**Charlie, Joe, Gaetano, Angelo and Tom Spicola at opening ceremonies dedicating Spicola Hardware Company on June 3, 1953. Gaetano died eight months later.**

goods to merchants in Tampa and West Tampa.

Charlie enjoys telling an amusing story connected with these deliveries during the period of the Rough Riders' encampment in Tampa. Gaetano, with his wagon drawn by a horse, also named "Charlie", was making a delivery when some of Teddy Roosevelt's soldiers set about to remove all the nuts from the wagon wheels. When Gaetano started to drive away, the wheels fell off and dumped the delivery wagon and all the contents on the ground. Fortunately, an officer saw the incident and made the soldiers replace all the nuts, put the wagon back together and pay for all the damages.

Another amusing incident gives credence to tales of the Rough Riders' antics during their short stay in Tampa. Rosina was doing her wash in an old iron pot in back of the store on Fortune Street. A drunken Rough Rider kept jumping his horse over her wash, rousing Rosina to a frenzy. Her brother-in-law, Giarolamo, kept threatening the soldier and finally ran into the house, got

a shotgun loaded with birdshot, and chased the laughing soldier away.

### 'MORE SENSIBLE SUITOR'

Gaetano sold his interest in the Ybor City Bottling Company, and for a short time was part owner of another bottling company in Ybor City. In 1915 he bought a half interest from Vito Licata, who owned the Moon Saloon on the corner of 17th St. and 7th Avenue.

.At the age of 26, Gaetano was still a bachelor, but a romantic event soon changed that status. His best friend had been planning to marry a young, attractive girl by the name of Rosina Locicero. But when his friend made the error of asking Rosina's father for a small loan, Papa became enraged and threw him out of the house. The door was open for a more sensible suitor, and within three months, Gaetano and Rosina were married on February 21, 1897. Rosina was 17 years old.

On December 15, 1897, a daughter was born and named Maria Giuseppa. Then came a procession of boys, Carlo, Angelo, born in Palmetto Beach, July 7, 1902, Joseph, born on September 26, 1905, in Ybor City, and Gaetano (Tom) born on June 20, 1909, also in Ybor City. In all, my grandmother, Rosina, had nine pregnancies, but was able to bring only five to full term. All the babies were delivered by a midwife.

The Spicolas were renting houses, usually shared with another family, for about two dollars a week. Most immigrants were locked into a difficult struggle to make ends meet, and so sharing the homes was an economic necessity (not unlike what many people face in today's economy). When they lived on 6th Avenue, the house had two doors, similar to our duplexes today,

Gaetano and Rosina, with their young family, lived downstairs, and his brother Giarolamo and his family lived upstairs. Eventually Giarolamo moved, and Gaetano took over the entire house.

### **GREAT YBOR CITY FIRE**

On March 1, 1908, when the family was living on 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, a terrible fire swept Ybor City. Charlie, who was going to be eight years old, still remembers watching the fire burn only one block from where they lived. Fortunately, the wind blew the fire in the opposite direction, and the Spicolas' house was spared. Over 17 square blocks were destroyed, causing property losses of more than one million dollars.

Young Carlo and Angelo attended an Italian school, because their father still had the dream of returning with his family to Santo Stefano. At one time there were about a half dozen Italian schools in Tampa. Carlo did well in school, but freely admits he would have preferred to be with his father, doing more interesting things like selling soda, delivering ice cream and just going places, so he frequently skipped school. He went to school during the morning and then worked for his father in the afternoon. Many times Carlo would accompany his Uncle Giarolamo on his wagon trips. He remembers that each time they stopped his Uncle would buy a half pint of gin. By the time they had made the swing through Palmetto Beach, Ybor City, and West Tampa, Giarolamo could barely stand up! It was a wonder that they got back safely.

Charlie remembers learning to read by reading the Bible in Italian to his grandfather, Carlo, who must have known the Good Book by heart. Whenever Charlie tried to skip a word or phrase the old man

would catch him and make him reread the passage correctly.

One afternoon when Carlo was about eight years old, and riding with his father down Grand Central Avenue in the wagon, Gaetano stopped to light his pipe. Somehow the horse became startled and lunged forward, throwing Carlo off the wagon. Because of the heavy sand in the street, he was not seriously injured, although a wagon wheel went over his leg. His father was very upset, but everything turned out all right and Carlo didn't let the mishap keep him from riding in the wagon.

### **TO AMERICAN SCHOOL**

When Carlo and Angelo were in the upper elementary grades, their father decided to send them to an American school. Perhaps Gaetano realized that they now were in America to stay. Carlo and Angelo both made the transition from the Italian to the American school without failing-to the astonishment of the teachers. Carlo remembers that he spelled words in Italian first, then put them into English. Both he and Angelo attended Gary Elementary School and graduated from the sixth grade.

At Gary, they had their first encounter with "cracker" and "Anglo" prejudices against "Latinos". There were daily fights at school (perhaps better described as wars). The Anglos usually had the advantage in fights at school, where they outnumbered the Latinos. During the weekends, however, when the Anglos came to Ybor City to go to the movies, the tables were turned. The Latino boys got their revenge, beating up the Anglos. Charlie has often said that many of the young boys involved in these fights later became his good friends.



When Carlo and Angelo graduated from Gary Elementary School, they immediately had to go to work full time to help the family financially, so the possibility of further schooling seemed remote. Charlie tells an interesting story about how his younger brother Joe was able to go to college. Joe wanted very much to go to college and become a lawyer, but Gaetano did not feel that he could afford to send him. Carlo and Angelo said that they would work extra hours to earn the money needed, and convinced their father to send their brother Joe to college. Joe finished his law degree in three years and graduated with honors from Stetson College of Law. Later Tom, the youngest, followed in Joe's footsteps and also became a lawyer, graduating from the University of Florida.

### "CAFE CON LECHE"

Charlie described growing up in the Spicola household as busy and noisy. There was always "café con leche" with bread for breakfast. The aroma of huge pots of meat soup with potatoes, ribs, and many kinds of homemade pasta filled the house. Gaetano always ate his meat first, his pasta next, and his salad last. There was always homemade vino that grandfather had made himself. Gaetano would cut up fresh peaches or other fruit and put them in his vino, a practice that Charlie continues today.

There were many festive activities in which the family took part. In 1891, the Spanish leaders had organized Centro Espanol, which was the first social and cultural club in Ybor City. L'Unione Italiana was started in 1894; the present building on Seventh Avenue was completed in 1918. Charles remembers enjoying the many festivities at the different clubs, taking part in musical choruses and productions. When Tito

Schipa, the famous singer and entertainer, came to Tampa he visited with the Spicolas, who were then living on Gordon Street in Palmetto Beach.

The family would drive to the east side of the bay to catch crab and stingray. The stingray was cut into small pieces and fried. Gaetano, who could be very stubborn, always had to be driven on these expeditions, since he absolutely refused to learn to drive an automobile.

Of all the family, Charlie had the greatest appetite and ate the most, but he didn't seem to gain any weight. His father became concerned, and took him to many doctors in Ybor City to see what the problem was; he even tried a Seminole Indian doctor, who prescribed sunflower seeds. Charlie had to raid the icebox, or he would have starved to death on a diet of sunflower seeds.

### A FAMILY TRAGEDY

Tom recalls how he wanted a tricycle but his father said he could not afford one. Tom was really surprised when his two brothers, Charlie and Angelo made him one, and gave it to him for Christmas!

Tragedy struck the Spicola household in 1913. Maria Giuseppa (Josephine), Rosina's only daughter, contracted typhoid fever. Soon Charlie, Angelo, and Joe also became ill. Josephine appeared to recover and diligently helped her mother care for the boys, but became ill again and died, at just fifteen and a half years of age. From that loss, Rosina never really recovered; she never forgot that her only daughter, trying to help care for her younger brothers, gave up her own life. In an attempt to preserve her memory of her daughter, Rosina had Tom, the youngest child, wear his hair in long

curls for several years after Josephine's death.

The Spicola boys enjoyed going to Sunset Beach, in Beach Park, with their friends. They loved swimming. Here again, prejudice ran against them; the Anglo boys objected to the Latinos and Jews, and ran them off the beach. The Spicola boys started going to the Gulf beaches. For many years afterward, and to this very day, all of the Spicolos enjoyed taking their families to Pass-A-Grille, Indian Rocks and Clearwater beaches. They would rent beach cottages and stay the whole summer, the men commuting back and forth to work.

I remember the "expeditions" to Pass-A-Grille very well. A huge beach house was rented because there would be many relatives coming. At times, the family goat was also taken so that we could have fresh milk. There were also rods and reels, crab nets, buckets, and swimming gear for everyone. We stayed almost all summer, so we would get very tanned. Mother loved to fish, and was always having to be dragged in from the docks, where she was trying to catch a large snapper or grouper, to prepare supper. Gaetano wanted his pasta promptly at 6:00 P.M. each evening. In those days, the bays and Gulf waters were teeming with fish and shellfish. We caught snook, snapper, grouper, blue crabs, clams, stone crabs, oysters and scallops.

### **DELICIOUS COQUINA SOUP**

One of the special dishes we had was coquina soup. All of the children would help dig up the small, beautiful, multi-toned coquinas, which were burrowed in the sand at the edge of the Gulf waters. We rinsed them over and over, until all the sand was washed away. The coquinas were then boiled in water until the shells popped open.

Mother would add tomatoes, onion, pepper, basil, and garlic to the broth, and serve it with noodles; it was delicious!

Charlie worked hard at a number of different jobs, and also helped his father at the saloon. Then he got a steady job at Diaz's garage on 8th Avenue and 15th Street, pumping gas and changing tires. He worked there one year. One day, Mr. Garcia from the cigar factory asked Charlie to gas him up. He wanted to tip Charlie \$.25 (a lot of money in those days), but Charlie refused the tip. Later, his boss, Mr. Diaz, told him always to accept a tip when one was offered. Father said he never forgot that lesson in courtesy.

When the Prohibition Amendment went into effect, Gaetano had to close the Moon Saloon. He and Licata sold all the liquor they could. Gaetano poured much of the liquor and wine into wooden casks and buried them. Alas! When he went to dig them up later, he discovered it had all seeped into the ground.

### **BEGIN HARDWARE STORE**

Actually, prohibition was the turning point in Charlie's life. Forced to look around for another way of earning a livelihood, Gaetano cast his eyes on a hardware store owned by Vitali Cagnina, at 1815 Seventh Avenue, in the heart of Ybor City. Cagnina had lost interest in his store and wanted to get rid of it.

He asked his sons, Charlie and Angelo, if they wanted to invest in the store. Gaetano had \$5,000 in cash. Charlie had \$600 and Angelo had \$400, which he had saved from his work in a tin shop. Grandfather also informed them that they would have to do all the work at the hardware store.

Charlie and Angelo decided that they could do it. On April 15, 1919, Gaetano and his two sons bought the hardware store for \$5,458 and named it G.C. Spicola & Sons. It was a bold and courageous step. It also turned out to be a timely decision. Tampa was beginning its journey toward becoming a modern city. There were electric lights, a sewage system, paved streets, sidewalks, and a trolley system. The pioneer days were long behind. The Florida Boom of 1920-1925 was not far away.

There are now 66 years of Charlie's life invested in the hardware store. The promise of a new world did come true for this son born to Italian immigrants.

# ROBERT AMBRISTER'S REPUTED STORE AT TAMPA BAY

By **DR. JAMES W. COVINGTON**  
Dana Professor of History  
University of Tampa



**GEN. ANDREW JACKSON**

In several of the various books written about Florida since 1817, there are mentions of a store that was established by Robert Ambrister at Tampa Bay. It is the object of this article to examine the available facts and make a conclusion concerning the existence of such a store.

In the book *Territory of Florida* published by John Lee Williams in 1837 there is a statement that lying between "Oyster River" and another river on the southwestern side of Tampa Bay is Negro Point. According to Williams, Arbuthnot and Ambrister had a plantation there cultivated by 200 blacks and the ruins of the cabins can still be seen.<sup>1</sup> In a book published in 1986, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands* written by William S. Coker and Thomas D. Watson there is a statement that Robert Ambrister established a small settlement at Tampa Bay in March, 1818.<sup>2</sup>

## BRITISH DEFEATED

In order to fully understand this matter of Ambrister and Arbuthnot at Tampa Bay, the events that took place in Florida during the War of 1812 should be reviewed. In November 1814 the British established a fort at Prospect Bluff some 30 miles up the Apalachicola River from its mouth where food, clothing and arms were distributed to the Indians and Blacks.<sup>3</sup> Such efforts represented a desire that the Indians and Blacks would harass the American frontier while the British made a landing to destroy the American army. Of course, these efforts were in vain for the British suffered several defeats including one at New Orleans and the peace treaty previously signed at Ghent relinquished all British claims to southern land. By June, 1815 the British had left

Florida and the Blacks and Indians had no foreign allies.

Brevet Captain George Woodbine of the Royal Marines who had trained the Blacks and Indians at Prospect Bluff, returned to Nassau but still entertained a desire to make a successful conquest of Florida. In June, 1817 a force led by an adventurer Gregor McGregor captured Fernandina and raised a Green Cross flag to proclaim the establishment of a new state but, becoming discouraged with discipline and financial problems, left the scene with his followers for Nassau.<sup>4</sup> Back in Nassau McGregor met with Woodbine and the two worked out a plan by which they would conquer Florida. An army composed of British veterans would be raised in the Bahamas and landed at Tampa Bay where, assisted by a combined force of Blacks and Indians, the army would march over land and capture St. Augustine from the small Spanish garrison. Tampa Bay was selected as the landing spot, for it had one of the largest harbors along the coast and was within the land reputedly given by the Indians to Woodbine during his War of 1812 service.<sup>5</sup>

The first step in his plan took place when Woodbine was able to get passage aboard the schooner of Alexander Arbuthnot, a Scottish trader who was opening a store on the Suwannee River. When the schooner was anchored at the mouth of the river, Billy Bowlegs, leader of Indians in the area, and men loaded in five canoes came aboard and talked with Woodbine all night. On the following days Woodbine met with Cappachimico and other Indian leaders from northern Florida. During this voyage Woodbine may have left some Blacks brought from the Bahamas at Tampa Bay. Arbuthnot was not pleased with his passengers Woodbine and the Blacks for they paid no money and were given a trip

and food for more than two months. So far as can be determined, Woodbine's trip was purely a preliminary one to lay the groundwork for the second and more decisive phase.

The second phase of the Woodbine-McGregor plan called for a landing at Tampa Bay and the mobilization of the joint Indian-Black force. Plans were set for the landing of a force under McGregor on May 1, 1818 at the middle island at the entrance to Tampa Bay, the reading of a proclamation to the people of Florida and subsequent march towards St. Augustine. Robert Chrystie Ambrister who had served at Prospect Bluff as an officer returned to service with the British Army and was wounded at Waterloo. After the battle, victory and return to Nassau he met Woodbine and McGregor. The adventure in which Florida would be conquered thrilled Ambrister and he joined the Woodbine--McGregor force where he was given the commission of captain. It was to be Ambrister's job to train the Blacks and Indians for their role in the conquest of St. Augustine. The invasion of Florida in the spring of 1818 by Andrew Jackson with eight hundred regulars, 900 militiamen and 300 Indians crushed the planned seizure of Florida. On April 6, Jackson's army captured St. Marks and from there units raced for the Suwannee River where Black and Indian settlements were believed to be located.

### MOVES FROM TAMPA

Ambrister who had come to Tampa in March, 1818 to gather up the Blacks left there by Woodbine in the fall of 1817 and his men moved northward to the mouth of the Suwannee River where the anchored schooner Chance owned by Arbuthnot was seized.



Ambrister and the Blacks sailed the Chance to St. Marks where they hoped to capture the place but were prevented by an American blockade. When the schooner returned to the Suwannee for a trip to Tampa it was captured by Andrew Jackson's men on their way to destroy Black and Indian villages along the river and used to carry the wounded and sick to St. Marks.

### TAMPA STORE DOUBTFUL

More evidence as to the duration of Ambrister's stay in Florida was disclosed at his trial in April, 1818 at St. Marks. In the hearing Ambrister claimed to have come to Florida on or about March 1, 1818 and it was on March 20 that he seized the Chance. Consequently, there was little or no chance to establish a store at Tampa Bay in 20 days. Woodbine had more time but his dependence upon Arbuthnot's schooner both in 1817 for himself and 1818 for Ambrister shows that he had limited means of transportation. There was no available evidence to show how many Blacks Ambrister picked up at Tampa from the earlier Woodbine visit but it certainly was not a large number. There is considerable evidence that Black people fleeing slavery established villages at or near Tampa Bay in the 1810-1820 period and these inhabitants fled south or to the Bahamas when the United States took over in 1821.

Altogether, it seems that the Woodbine-McGregor plan failed because few or no veterans could be recruited in the Bahamas, sufficient funds could not be raised to create a suitable naval force and the invasion of Florida by Andrew Jackson stopped all assistance by the Seminoles. Tampa had lost a chance to be where

McGregor could have proclaimed the creation of another Republic of Florida.

### FOOTNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> John Lee Williams *The Territory of Florida* (New York, 1837), 299-300.

<sup>2</sup> William S. Coker and Thomas D. Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Borderlands* (Pensacola, 1986), 320.

<sup>3</sup> John Sugden "The Southern Indians in the War of 1812: the Closing Phase," *Florida Historical Quarterly* (January, 1982), 299-300.

<sup>4</sup> Charlton W. Tebeau *A History of Florida* (Coral Gables, 1971), 112.

<sup>5</sup> *Niles Weekly Register* (Microfilm) X111 January 18, 1818 Letter of Thomas Wayne to Benjamin Homans September 17, 1817.

# REVOLTING TAXES AREN'T NEW

By LU DOVI

Revolting taxes and irate taxpayers are indeed nothing new. Recently I discovered among some old papers a complaint, dated 1899, addressed by a relative of mine to the City Council of Tampa.

My relative, James Jackson, was the brother of my great grandfather, John Jackson, who surveyed downtown Tampa, named the streets, served several terms as mayor and owned a mercantile business. At one time the same Jacksons owned a great deal of property in this area and some Jacksons still do on the east side of Lake Carroll.

So I was particularly interested in James' complaint in which he stated:

"I have found, on careful inspection of the City Tax Books, that my property is valued excessively. On Franklin Street, for instance, where the average Real Estate valuation is \$120 per front foot, I am assessed at \$190. In other Parts of the City, where I own property, the same inequality in taxation is to be found. My improvements have, likewise, been valued in excess of what is right and just; in some instances, at more than their actual cost. I also find that I am assessed with \$8 personal tax; whereas I reside outside the City limits ... On examination of my Tax Receipts, for the last five years, I have ascertained that in the year 1892, the total tax on my City Property was \$435.85; and that this amount has steadily increased, beyond just needs, until the present year it has reached the outrageous volume of \$1041.45. Viewing the foregoing facts, and feeling that I am justified in

asking your protection against such unjust discrimination and excessive increase in taxation, I respectfully petition your Hon. Body, to reduce my assessment, for the year 1898, the sum of \$350."

"Respectfully yours,  
James A. Jackson  
Tampa, Florida  
Feb. 23, 99"

I don't know how the matter turned out.

## HILLSBOROUGH HIGH SCHOOL: THE FIRST ONE HUNDRED YEARS



**HILLSBOROUGH HIGH LOOKS LIKE A COLLEGE  
... The Present School in 1941.**

-Photo from HAMPTON DUNN COLLECTION

In the beginning, Hillsborough High School was a department of the Tampa Graded School System which was organized in 1885. It began in a livery stable on Franklin Street with nineteen students and one teacher, Mr. B.C. Graham, who also served as the principal. The first four students graduated in 1886.

In October of the same year, the location of the school was moved to an eight room school building on Sixth Avenue. Here it remained for six years. While in this building, Mr. Graham taught the eighth grade and the high school together in the same room. A little later the high school department was moved to a room on the



**PROF. E.L. ROBINSON**  
...Early HHS Principal.

-Photo from HAMPTON DUNN  
COLLECTION

west end of the building, but was not yet separated from the grade school.

In 1892, the high school department moved into an old primary school building and had two regular teachers. Soon afterwards the high school was permanently separated from the grade school. During its four years in this building the library had accumulated a nice collection and such chemical apparatus as needed for experiments in chemistry.

### **OLD CHURCH BUILDING**

In 1897, by relocating the high school in an old Baptist church, students found themselves in nearly the center of Tampa's business community.

Both the School Board and the students wanted something they could call their own, and their wish was realized in the form of a lease. The students, however, were happy to learn that it was a short term lease, for the property which they had obtained consisted of four rooms on the upper floor of the Wright Building, the remainder of which was occupied by The Tampa Times office and on the first floor was the post office. The school remained in this location for two years. During the first year the high school occupied three rooms, but in the second year, four were needed. This showed an increase in enrollment and led to the addition of two new teachers and additional course requirements. It was in this atmosphere that the school newspaper, then called the Donnybrook, was established.

A school building was needed but there was no legal way of raising money for building purposes, except to save it from the general school fund. After the freeze of 1895, by careful management, money was saved and the first county high school was erected. At a contract price of \$5,100 dollars, a well-planned, two-story wooden building with science laboratories, a library and an auditorium was built large enough to accommodate as many as 250 high school students.

### **FUNDS DONATED**

The school opened October 22, 1900 to 125 students. Chairs were used to seat the pupils since there were no desks. Furnishings and equipment were purchased by the faculty through money raised by donations and school entertainments.



### **LIBRARY, HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL**

**... View in the Early Days.**

-Photo HAMPTON DUNN COLLECTION

As the town began to grow into a city, the enrollment increased and the need for a larger, more modern school building became apparent. Another era in this school's history came to pass.

In 1908, land was purchased on Highland Avenue as a site for a new building. Construction was not begun until December 1910.

The cornerstone was laid February 17, 1911. In it are the names of all the enrolled students written on a parchment. The stone had been removed from the old Masonic Temple to be placed in the building.

The new building was completed on October 2, 1911, at a total cost of \$60,000.

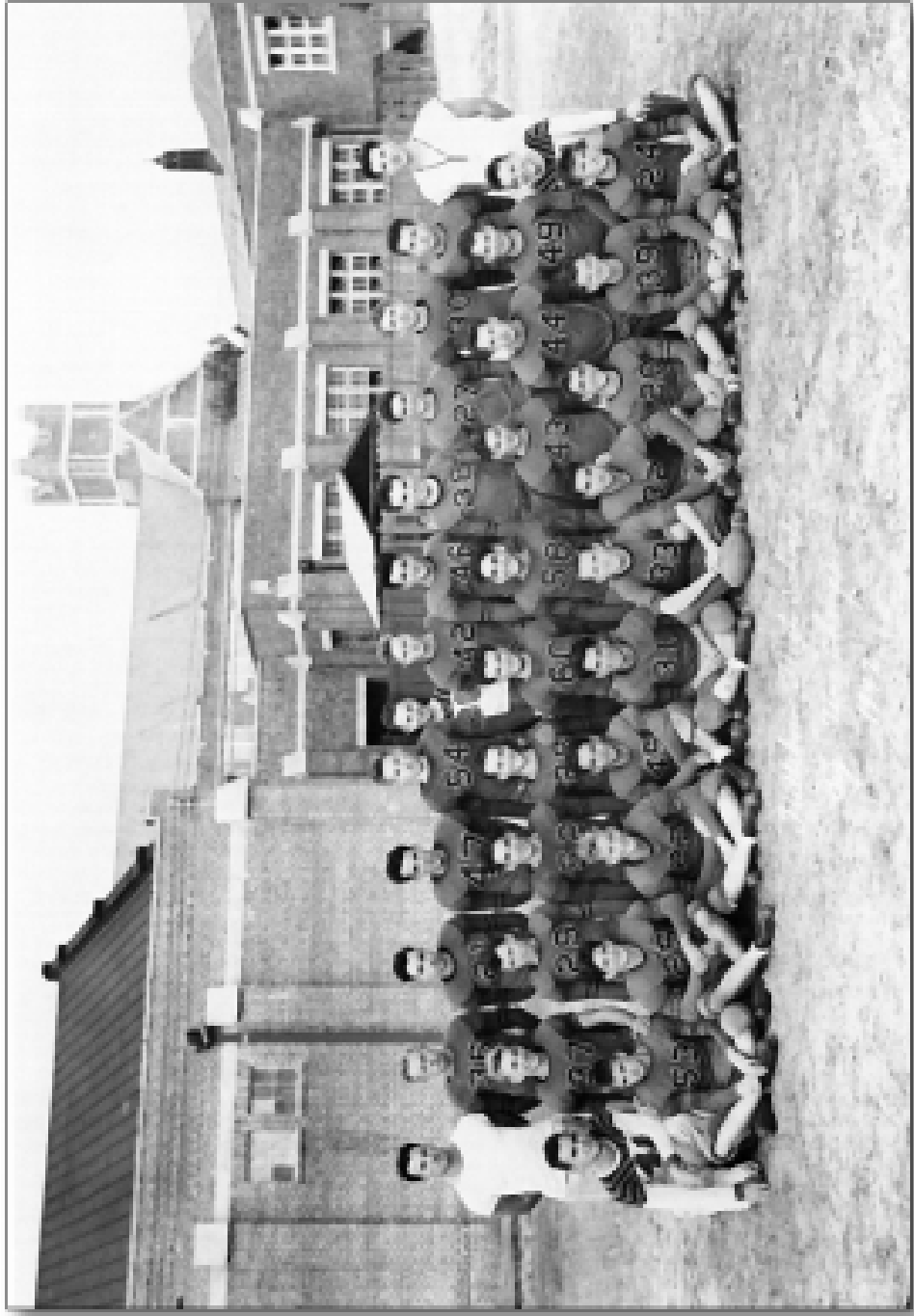
### **ENROLLMENT SWELLED**

There were a total of fourteen teachers and 63 regular seniors. The school was ranked high with other high schools of the United States. It stood among the first of the Southern high schools. At this time, lunches were served at Ed's Lunch Stand and students ate on the school grounds.

In 1925, cafeteria style of serving was introduced and has continued since.

Until 1925, Mr. E. L. Robinson was principal. He resigned his office to become county superintendent. Mr. F.J. Spaulding succeeded him.





**HSS BIG TEN CHAMPIONS, 1942**

**...J. Crockett Farnell, extreme right, Head Coach; Dick Spoto, extreme left, Assistant.**

-- photo from HAMPTON DUNN COLLECTION

The enrollment soon swelled beyond the capacity of the building, and it became apparent that yet another, larger school would be needed.

In 1925, land was purchased for a new high school building. The Gothic style of architecture was designed by a man named Dr. Strayer. At a faculty beach party he drew his version of the present school in the sand with a stick. The School Superintendent expressed satisfaction with his idea and was very impressed. Construction began in 1927 and was not completed until September of 1928. The total cost of building the school was \$757,000 dollars.

### **BUILDING TOO LARGE?**

Since Hillsborough had a reputation of outgrowing its buildings, this school was built extra-large with the idea that the students would not be able to outgrow it easily. It was originally built with fifty-six classrooms, a five hundred and ninety foot corridor, a spacious library which contained over eight thousand books, two large study halls, a school bank, a complete home economics unit which included a three room apartment, and a Gothic styled auditorium with a seating capacity of about twelve hundred. The campus alone covered a space of about twenty-three acres, and the building had a roof space of about three acres.

The building seemed too large for the expected enrollment of thirteen hundred. It was built to accommodate two thousand students.

On January, 28, 1927 the cornerstone was laid. In September the first classes were enrolled. It was dedicated in December of

that year, and was one of the four largest high schools in the South.

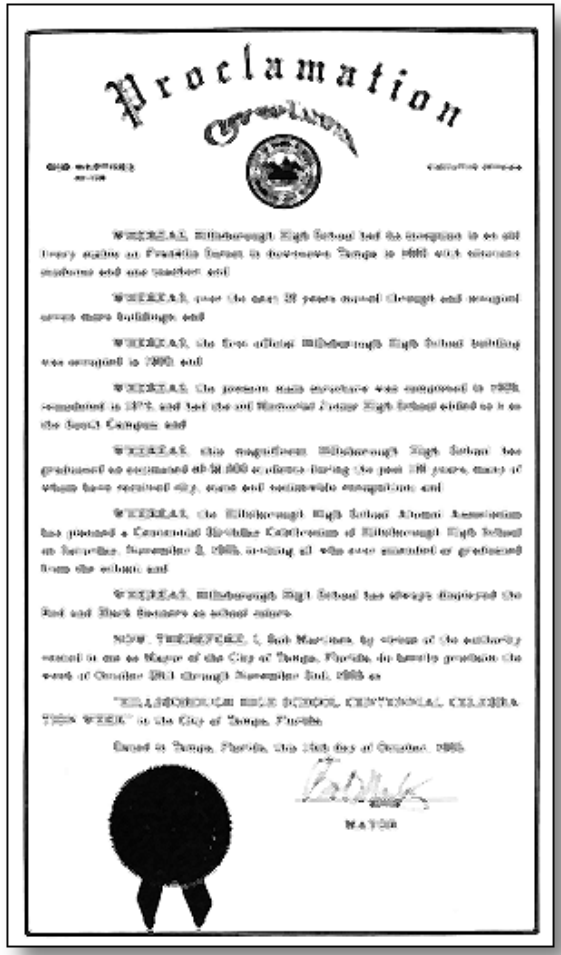
When the school opened in 1928, Mr. F. J. Spaulding was principal. A fountain was purchased in his honor and placed in the middle courtyard. It was later moved to the side entrance of the auditorium in an area entitled Spaulding Court. The fountain was removed and replaced with a tree that was brought from Spain as a seed. It died and was replaced with a Florida palm.

### **ENTER VIVIAN GAITHER**

In 1933, F.J. Spaulding resigned as principal to become full-time president of the University of Tampa. Mr. Vivian Gaither succeeded him and remained principal for thirty-three years. The football field was renamed in his honor but was changed back to Terrier Field with the opening of Gaither High School.

After war was declared on Germany in the spring of 1917, several boys of the school organized a military company and began drilling during lunch. The principal, Prof. Robinson, paid little attention thinking it would wear out. However, a few weeks passed and the enthusiasm of the boys had not lessened. Prof. Robinson took notice and requested Coach Freeman to instruct the boys in drill, at the same time lengthening lunch by twenty minutes to allow them time to drill.

Upon the opening of school the next year, a meeting of the boys was called and the company was reorganized. After a few weeks of drill, the School Board took notice of their work and secured a drillmaster to instruct them. Coach Freeman had since been commissioned by the Army. J.W. Dyke, formerly a lieutenant in the Florida



National Guard, was secured and they made rapid progress.

### R.O.T.C. FORMED

In 1935, the U.S. Army took sponsorship of the corps and they then became the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps. (J.R.O.T.C.) This organization has been a source of constant pride and admiration since its establishment in this school. They have been outstanding both in this county and state, winning such an excess of awards that some of the recent awards must be given away due to lack of space.

The Drum and Fife Corps was organized in 1914 under the supervision of Dr. S. L.

Lowry, and with the material aid of the Tampa Gasparilla Association and the County School Board. The first appearance of the corps was made during the 1915 Gasparilla Carnival after only six short weeks of practice. This corps was the forerunner of the present day marching band and the J.R.O.T.C. Drum and Bugle Corps.

The patio was renovated in 1950 so it could be used for dances and barbeques. The sacred "H" was dedicated in 1974 to Mr. Hamilton for his service to the school. Pride dictates that it may not be walked upon.

The music building was completed in 1952 and the display cases were added to the center hall.

### A SOUTH CAMPUS

Statues could be seen throughout the first and third floors but they were later moved into the library. During the renovation of 1975, they were removed from the school with the intention of replacing them. They were never recovered and their whereabouts are unknown.

The renovation of the school was the end to the last link of the past. Years were swept away. The ceilings were lowered, and elevator installed and a new library built. The terrazzo floors were carpeted, the marble partitions in the restrooms were removed and replaced with wooden stalls. The carved and polished wood which lined the walls of the library were ripped out and replaced with plaster as it was transformed into biology rooms.

The addition of Memorial Junior High as a south campus insured a vocational education to some students.

In 1949 the clock in the tower was purchased in honor of those who lost their lives in World War 11. A list of names of the Hillsborough students who were killed was placed on a plaque under the tower. Chimes are played at Christmas and on Memorial Day.

The Alma Mater, the "Red and Black," was written by a teacher and some students in 1923. The tune has since been revised.

### **THE 'BIG RED'**

The Terrier Creed was written in 1954 entirely by the students. It was the only one of its kind in the South and it received much publicity. The idea for the creed was prompted by Mr. Hamilton.

The bronze terrier that stands guard over the trophy case was originally placed in the courtyard in 1955. Due to considerable torment, it was moved inside.

The beautiful stained-glass windows in the auditorium have been purchased by different groups. They were completed in 1963.

"Through these portals pass the greatest athletes in Florida."

(This sign was posted in the varsity dressing room.)

At Hillsborough, one of the strong points in both spirit and pride has always been in athletics. This began as early as 1906 with the formation of the 'Big Red' football team and cheering squad. By 1910 Hillsborough gained gridiron supremacy over the other state high school teams and clenched the state championship for the first time after a relentless battle with Rollins College. Those

were the days when pads, helmets, and waterboys were obsolete.

The 'Big Red' team was a member of the Big Ten Conference and played against such opponents as the University of Florida and Stetson University.

In 1948 the Terriers won the Big Ten Conference title for the fourth time in seven years.

### **ALUMNUS DWIGHT GOODEN**

The basketball team has also won its share of competitions. It, like the football team, was a member of the conference and has won the title as well. The gym they presently use was not built until 1936.

The baseball team has earned considerable respect and is still one of the three major sports of the school. Baseball did not exist from 1921-1926 since it could not support itself by gate receipts. This problem was a direct effect of the World War that was raging across Europe. Hillsborough had some of the best athletes and coaches in the state in 1931, in spite of the fact that they did not have adequate training rounds nor a field.

The baseball team owes much of its popularity to one of its most famous alumni, Dwight Gooden, who is a phenomenal rookie pitcher for the New York Mets...

Hillsborough has had many graduations in its past and all of them have been unique. From the first graduating seniors in 1886 to the class of 1985, there have been drastic changes. The first graduating class consisted of four seniors, three girls and one boy. The extent of their education is unknown. There was no formal ceremony.

The next year, five girls graduated with a formal ceremony at the old Tampa Bay Opera House. Each girl read her graduating speech by the light of oil lamps which hung along the walls.

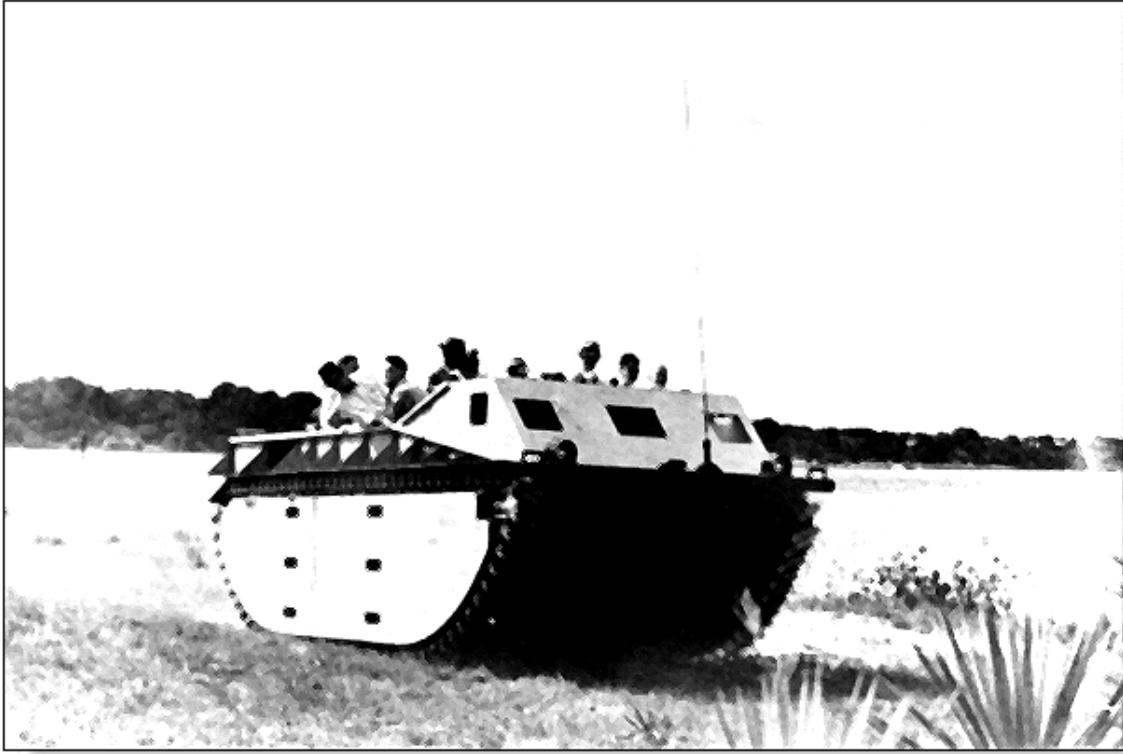
Every year afterward there has been a graduation with the exception of years when there were no graduates due to yellow fever and course extensions.

Hillsborough has had an illustrious alumni due to the fact that it was the sole high school for a period of many years.

Graduations have been in various locations all over Tampa Bay.

After moving into the present school building, graduations were held on what is now the football field. When bad weather prevailed, the ceremonies were in the auditorium...





**Byron Bushnell designed the hull for Donald Roebling's "Alligator " amphibious tank. The No. 1 of a contract for 200 steel Alligators is shown on its Navy trial run in July, 1941. Admiral Ernest King and U.S. Senator Claude Pepper of Florida were among the dignitaries on the demonstration.**

-BURGERT BROS. Photo courtesy of Eleanor Lehner.

## **HIS HIGH SCHOOL ANNUAL FORESAW BYRON BUSHNELL AS 'GREAT ENGINEER'**

**By ELEANOR B. LEHNER**

Byron Earl Bushnell was named for his grandfather, a 19th century Florida pioneer who homesteaded in several parts of the state, including what is now downtown Bradenton.

Although he was born in Minnesota, the young Byron was brought to Tampa as a child. He attended local schools and graduated from Hillsborough High

School in 1913. One of his classmates was his future wife, Estelle Byrd, the daughter of Benjamin Franklin Byrd and Eleanor Carpenter Byrd of Virginia. Among friends who graduated with them were Blackburn Lowry, Rex Farrior, and W.B. Henderson. Also Melvin Asp, who became a World War I Army pilot, and Rondo Hatton who, after being injured



**Byron Earl Bushnell served as Regimental Executive of the 116th Field Artillery from 1934 until 1941 when he was temporarily transferred to Navy duty. His military service began in 1916 on the Mexican border. He was on active duty in both World Wars and retired in 1946 as a Colonel**

in the war, became a Hollywood celebrity.

In 1916, between his junior and senior years at the University of Florida, Byron responded to the suggestion of his friend, future General Sumter Lowry, that serving on the Mexican border with the U.S. Army would be a great "summer job." World War I broke out that summer, and Byron did not get back to Gainesville until the fall of 1919. By then he had a wife and baby daughter to support. And since there was no GI bill in those days, he had to borrow money for tuition and expenses.



**Barges built for the U.S. Navy by Bushnell-Lyons Iron Works during World War II were christened with beer instead of champagne.**

### 'A GREAT ENGINEER'

His high school annual had described him in these words:

*His few, pointed words leave a greater impression than the long speeches of others, his stately bearing and gentlemanly manners have made his presence in the class a pleasure to his fellow-students. Byron's head is full of mechanical ideas and we expect to hear of him some day as a great engineer.*

Byron Bushnell was also an outstanding high school and college athlete. (He played football for Florida in the days when players had to buy their own uniforms.) (He preferred, and specialized



**BYRON EARL BUSHNELL**

in, gymnastics.) And he did receive his engineering degree in 1920. But, in addition, The Seminole listed him as President of the Senior Class and of the Student Body and Chairman of the Honor Committee.

After several years as a U.S. Government engineer Byron brought his wife and daughter, Eleanor, back to Tampa to live. As an employee of Ingalls Iron Works, he continually criss-crossed the state's bumpy roads in his Model T, procuring contracts and designing structures. And as a member of the National Guard he was on call in emergencies, such as the Lake Okechobee (Sept., 1926, Miami and Moore Haven) hurricane in the twenties and the election day hurricane in Tampa in 1935. It seemed to his family that he almost never slept.

## **DESIGNED KRESS STORE**

His unprecedented design for their new Tampa store excited Kress officials to such an extent that they engaged him to spend a year in New York city designing similar structures for other stores around the country. His was the first store building designed without any interior columns.

When the boom ended and the depression began, the demand for tall buildings supported by steel beams came to an end. In 1935, like so many other families, the Bushnells abandoned the Palma Ceia home they had purchased ten years earlier and rejoined the Byrds in the house they had acquired early in the century. In those days they had lived next door to Judge Shackelford, up the street from the Nelsons, around the corner from Hutchinson House and the big Lowry family. And a trolley car or a bus could take them wherever they wanted to go.

Two years later, without a penny of investment capital, Byron resigned from Ingalls and signed an agreement that would give him ownership of the local Lyon's Iron Works (Steel when you want it) if ever he could manage to pay off its massive debts. To manage the office he brought his father (Frank Bushnell, formerly of Tampa and Dade City) to Tampa from North Carolina where he had been living with one of his daughters after retiring as a wholesale grocer.

Ingalls promptly sent a replacement to Florida. He departed before a year had passed.

## SERIOUSLY ILL

Saved by the reputation he had earned as a brilliant engineer and a tireless worker, able to take on jobs that were too small for Ingalls, and helped by loans from a banker who trusted him, Byron eventually managed to extricate himself from what had appeared to be an almost hopeless situation. His friend and future Florida Steel partner, Sam Flom, impressed by this example, decided to take a chance on starting a business of his own. He said he never would have dared to try if Byron hadn't shown it could be done.

Somewhere along the way Byron became a director of the Exchange National Bank and a founding member of the University Club (among other things).

Early in the 1960s it became evident that he was seriously ill. He was one of the hundreds of people who became victims of a malady that at that time had no name. Every family touched by it had to handle it without any support from the medical profession or from community agencies. Except for a brief period when he was hospitalized, his wife Estelle cared for him at home until his death in 1970. Their daughter and her husband (Eleanor and George Lehner) bought property in Tampa and began building a home to move into as soon as he could arrange to retire early from his teaching job at UCLA (Professor of Psychology). She commuted back and forth as often as she could. Few of the family's associates realized the seriousness of his illness. Today, fortunately, this disease has a name, Alzheimers, and relatives of contemporary victims can mutually

assist one another. (Estelle Bushnell died in 1981.)

Old friends and even strangers often tell Eleanor how much they admired and loved her father. And, in a way, she feels that the Tampa Theater and Kress building are his lasting monuments.

## **CULBREATH WROTE 'SAVAGE LETTER' ABOUT FIREBUG**

Melvin O. Culbreath, 2627 Prospect Road, member of an old Tampa family, has submitted to The Sunland Tribune some amusing material concerning "irresponsible firebugs" plaguing the property of his kinsman, Col. H.C. Culbreath, over 100 years ago.

First, an editorial by J.P. Wall, editor of the original The Sunland Tribune, published Feb. 12, 1882:

Several parties in this vicinity had more or less fencing destroyed by fire last Sunday; and in another place will be found a rather savage letter from our old friend Col. Culbreath on the subject. An irrepressible conflict between the woods burners on the one hand and the farmers and fruit growers on the other, it appears, will be inaugurated unless some legal remedy can be provided. If there is any law on the subject it is hoped that the grand jury's attention will be called to it at the next term of the court. Men cannot afford to have their fencing destroyed by these irresponsible fire-bugs.

The "rather savage letter" referred to in the editorial was written by Colonel Culbreath from his home, Edgefield Grove, in what is now Beach Park and Culbreath Bayou. It tells the editor:

I desire in as few words as possible to tell you of the workings of the fire-fiend. On last Monday 7th inst., and you will please note the course and velocity of the wind on that day, some hell deserving scoundrel being instigated by the Devil, and not having

fear of the rope before his eyes, did between the hours of 10 o'clock in the morning and one o'clock in the afternoon, set fire in various places in the woods, east and south-east of our place, distance from one-half to one mile of us, which came down like an avalanche of devouring flame as it was. No help but a kind neighbor, his wife, Joe and myself, we were as powerless to stay the flames as that hell bound wretch will be to extricate himself from his sufferings when he is safely housed in his place of destination. Result: The laying waste our entire farm by destroying one whole line of fence. May I ask, is there no redress? Waiting your advise, will answer, there is a remedy. The determined will of the masses will do it and I do hereby and herein promise and swear, that I will make one of the requisite number to stop the evil complained of, or lynch all offenders. I am fully persuaded that this same fire-fiend is he who killed or caused to be killed, a fine milch cow in our pen, and subsequently poisoned and killed our hogs by the dozen. I subscribe myself, yours in the bonds of anger and affliction.



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## **FORTY YEARS OF THE TAMPA PORT AUTHORITY**

**By THOMAS J. O'CONNOR**

The Tampa Port Authority marked its 40th anniversary on Nov. 16, 1985. In the first part of a two-part story, veteran Tampa writer and longtime Tampa Port Authority staff member Thomas J. O'Connor recounts the port authority's first 40 years.

Forty years ago World War II finally had come to an end. The relatively small city of Tampa, Florida, had experienced a degree of prosperity during the war years. Two principal U.S. Army Air Corps bases and shipyards had been located in Tampa.



**AN OVERVIEW of the busy Tampa port looking southeastward from the old Tampa Electric Company power plant toward the Platt Street Bridge, newly filled-in Davis Islands, Seddon Island (now Harbour Island), east bank of Hillsborough River between Platt St. and Lafayette Street (now Kennedy Blvd.). Photo probably taken in the late 1920s.**

-BURGERT BROS. Photo from HAMPTON DUNN COLLECTION.

Anyone who wanted to work could find a job. This was in profound contrast to the years between 1927 and 1941 when Tampa languished in the depths of economic depression, an almost forgotten city struggling to stay alive.

The influx of money provided by the war effort gave Tampa a new lease on life. Civic leaders, on the verge of discouragement for many years, regained their optimism and were determined the momentum of

prosperity, though brought on by war, should not be lost.

The city's Chamber of Commerce recognized the opportunities available and moved on several fronts. Among these was a determination to take advantage of physical assets left over from the war, including the port and the aviation facilities abandoned by the military.





**SPESSARD L. HOLLAND**, then Governor of Florida and later U.S. Senator, was speaker at ceremonies at which Tampa Shipbuilding Company, Inc., received the coveted Army-Navy “E” Award on July 7, 1944.

## **PORT AUTHORITY IS CREATED**

During the state legislative session in the spring of 1945, two laws were passed, one establishing the Hillsborough County Port Authority and the other, the Hillsborough County Aviation Authority.

Given the political environment of the times, the legislators were reluctant simply to enact the creating legislation. Attached to the bills was a provision calling for a referendum to ratify the decisions of the lawmakers. The referendum was held October 16, 1945 and passed overwhelmingly.

One month later, on November 16, 1945, the Hillsborough County Port Authority held its organizational meeting in the old Chamber of Commerce building located at the corner of Morgan and Lafayette Streets (now Kennedy Boulevard).

The five civic leaders appointed by Governor Millard Caldwell had a wealth of experience in various spectra of business and politics. They knew what they had to do. Their mission was to develop a Port to create jobs and continue the momentum which had been established by the war.



The five men who gathered in that old red brick building, long since torn down, were Morris White, attorney and veteran of World War 1; Richard E. Knight, real estate broker and appraiser; Bruce Robbins, lumber company executive; Captain F.M. Hendry, a former mariner and operator of a dredging company; and Byron Bushnell, a steel company executive.

### **MORRIS WHITE CHAIRS**

White was elected chairman; Hendry, vice chairman; Knight, secretary treasurer, a post he held for 14 years until he resigned in June 1959. Knight was a driving force behind the authority for these formative years and devoted endless hours to the authority's progress.

Also present were Chamber of Commerce executives, a representative of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Jim Quinn, a certified public accountant who, until a few weeks before, had been the governor-appointed harbor master for the port. His job had been abolished by the new act.

For many years the port had been administered by the harbor master. Before that it was administered by the city commission and previous to that, by a board of port commissioners. These entities had performed very well over the years. They had sponsored several harbor improvement projects with the Federal government. The basis for a modern port was in place.

Only one of these first commissioners, Morris White with the law firm Fowler, White, Gillen, Boggs, Villareal and Banker, remains alive today. The other four would be proud of what has been accomplished in 40 years. The Port of Tampa has risen from

virtual obscurity to one of the top ten in the United States.

Tampa had not always been a backwater port. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries there was heavy activity. Coastwise U.S. flagships called regularly with goods from the industrial north and returned with Florida agricultural products. There also was limited commerce with the outside world. Trade was heavy with Cuba and products of Florida forests found their way to world markets through the port. Since the war had disrupted much of this trade, a new start had to be made.

The five new port authority commissioners knew that a new era in shipping was at hand. They sensed the nation and the world would change profoundly following the devastation of war. Thus, one of the first items they tackled was obtaining authorization from Congress to deepen the harbor channels from 28 feet to 34 feet.

### **FIRST PRIORITIES**

Such details as employing a port manager, H. Barton Lewis at a salary of \$3,400 a year, were disposed of quickly. There was little money. The law provided that the authority could receive one-eighth mill in ad valorem taxes. It also provided for a harbor master fee of \$10 for ships in domestic trade and \$20 for ships flying foreign flags. On April 1, 1946, after taxes had been received and harbor master fees paid, Lewis reported the authority had \$769.50 in the bank and \$269.45 in bills payable.

The second most important item addressed by the board was the acquisition of the McCloskey Shipyard at the southern tip of Hooker's Point. This yard, which had produced a limited number of concrete ships during the war, had been declared war



**WITH \$900 in the bank and a lot of courage, these original port board members and dignitaries laid the groundwork for what is today one of the country's top ten ports. Left to right, they are E.L. Pritchard, Barton Lewis, Carl A. Widdell, Richard E. Knight, Mayor Curtis Hixon, Ray C. Brown, Morris E. White, Byron Bushnell and Bruce Robbins.**

surplus. Although it was a hodgepodge of derelict lumber, it contained shipways in which ships had been constructed and it was seen as a location for a new port complex.

Tampa Attorney Ray Brown, one of the authors of the Port Authority Act, and the late State Senator Raymond Sheldon were engaged to work out the details for the purchase of the yard which would become part of the public domain of Hillsborough County.

In 1948 Brown and the board worked out a complex arrangement for obtaining the McCloskey Shipyard. They convinced the legislative delegation to increase the tax millage to a half mill and then convinced the city to advance \$340,000, the purchase price, to the War Assets Board with the promise the authority would repay the city. The yard was purchased on March 25, 1948.

From the very beginning the shipyard began to produce revenue as eager tenants moved in. The debt to the city was paid over a period of years.

The largest tenant was Tampa Ship Repair and Drydock Company, founded by Sam Davis. Davis saw the possibilities of using the graving dry dock which was still operable for dry-docking ships. After 30 years of operation the company later was sold to The American Ship Building Company of Cleveland, Ohio, whose chairman is George Steinbrenner. The facility became Tampa Shipyards, Inc. and was improved vastly as a ship repair and building enterprise.

### **HARBOR DEEPENING NEEDED**

By this time, 1949, another knotty problem had arisen. It was discovered that the Port of Tampa was at a distinct disadvantage from

other Gulf and South Atlantic ports to the north in that import-export rail freight rates were higher to and from Tampa.

The authority entered into protracted litigation before the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC). This litigation dragged on for more than 11 years, and finally in the early 1960s the ICC ruled that Tampa was entitled to equalized rates in certain areas of the Midwest. While this was considered extremely important at the time, actual tangible results were negligible.

On May 17, 1950 Congress authorized the deepening of the Tampa Harbor channels to 34 feet. The only problem remaining was to obtain the necessary funding to accomplish the project. The late U.S. Senator Spessard L. Holland was asked to push for the appropriations, which he did, and by 1960 the work was completed at a total cost of \$15 million.

No sooner was the project completed, however, than the authority realized 34 feet was not deep enough. Phosphate shipments were increasing along with vessel drafts and sights already were being set on 40-foot deep channel.

### **SHRIMPING INDUSTRY FLOURISHES**

During the late 1940s and early 1950s a discovery was made which had a profound effect on the next few years of authority operation. Shrimp in great abundance were found in the Gulf of Mexico off Key West and in the Gulf of Campeche off Mexico. To shrimpers the discovery was a bonanza because the development of freezing would make it possible to market the product nationwide.

Tampa was the logical port to house the huge fleet of boats that appeared in the Gulf. Shrimpers moved their operations from the northeast Florida coast and Georgia seeking dock space in Tampa. The authority had the space. Three long slips bulkheaded and lined with concrete were available. Dockside operations were set up to receive the product. Ancillary facilities including boat and engine repair and fishing supply houses sprouted up.

Chief among the shrimpers was a man named Henry Singleton. Singleton was a small-scale St. Augustine shrimper when he moved to Tampa. He saw possibilities beyond merely producing a product; he ventured into packing and processing. Others followed and Tampa soon had, and still has, the largest shrimp processing industry in the nation, employing thousands of persons.

In the mid-1970s Tampa Shipyards, Inc., the subsidiary of American Ship Building, needed room to expand. The only room to do so was where the shrimpers were located. With the aid of grants from the U.S. government and the State of Florida plus some ad valorem tax funds, the authority constructed a shrimp port, a model of a modern facility on the 22nd Street Causeway, where the shrimpers were relocated.

In the early years of the 1950s the authority realized that in order to develop the port, it needed to provide financial assistance to private industry. The port authority act was amended by the Florida Legislature to give the Tampa Port Authority the ability to issue special purpose bonds. The idea was to lease land and finance improvements with a tax-free bond issue with the tenant assuming the debt service. Through the years many important projects were completed through

the use of these bonds, providing the community with an enormous economic impact in the form of new jobs and new business opportunities. By 1980 the economic benefits provided by port activities were estimated at over \$1 billion annually, and employment of over 36,000 directly and indirectly.

Barton Lewis resigned as port manager in November 1952 after six years and Jack P. Fitzgerald was named manager, a post he held until 1968. Guy N. Verger, a retired Air Force colonel, took over the post which he held until 1978.

### **PORT AUTHORITY BUYS SHIPYARD**

During the early years 1950s the Korean War was intensifying, but it had little impact on port development. Funds for harbor deepening were appropriated annually despite the war effort. Also during this period the U.S. Navy took possession of another shipyard, Tampa Shipbuilding on Hooker's Point, and held it as a Navy Reserve Shipyard. Although dozens of ships had been built in the yard during World War II, none were built during the Korean conflict.

In 1955 the Navy offered to sell the yard to the authority. The authority demurred, stating it would cost a tremendous amount of money to rehabilitate the yard to provide for industrial development. It also objected to a provision that the Navy could "recapture" the yard in the event of a national emergency. At the same time the authority stated publicly it would keep its options open.

Eight years of off-and-on negotiations took place before the authority finally purchased the yard for \$1,555,000 in 1963. By this

time the Federal Grant Services Administration had taken over the yard and the recaptive provision was dropped. The yard was renamed the George B. Howell Maritime Center, and the authority took possession in June 1963, relocating its headquarters to the former administration building where they have remained to the present day.

George B. Howell was president of Tampa Shipbuilding during the war and his management brought it to peak efficiency. Howell later founded the Marine Bank and Trust Company. To name the industrial facility for the man seemed a fitting tribute.

The yard contained 50 acres, 60 buildings, five concrete shipbuilding ways and a great deal of machinery which had been abandoned when the yard closed after World War II.

The authority did not have the funds to purchase the yard, so the Marine Bank advanced the purchase price, which was eventually repaid with the proceeds of a port authority revenue bond issue.

Another significant event occurred in 1963. At the request of the authority, the enabling act was amended to change the name from Hillsborough County Port Authority to Tampa Port Authority. It was felt the name would gain the port and the authority better recognition.

In 1956, ten years after the authority's first organizational meeting, the board decided its revenues were sufficient to operate the authority and informed the Board of County Commissioners it no longer needed to ask for ad valorem tax money. For ten years thereafter no county funds were sought.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES SURFACE**

Since the act which created the port authority conveyed the bottom lands in the port district to the authority, it fell upon the agency to administer those lands. In the early years after the war, Tampa began to grow and waterfront land was highly valued. As a result, many developers purchased uplands adjacent to bottom lands and sought to extend land seaward by dredging and filling. This was particularly common in Old Tampa Bay.

At the time, development appeared to be desirable and the authority often conveyed bottom lands to developers with little or no problem. It soon became apparent to the authority, however, that the bay bottoms, the nursery grounds for many species of marine life, were being destroyed and could never be replaced.

With this in mind, the board established a lands committee which took upon itself the job of setting so-called bulkhead lines beyond which dredging and filling would no longer be allowed.

Understandably, this action was not met with complete approval by the development community; however, the emerging environmental community backed it to the fullest extent. The rules adopted had some flexibility and the lines could be changed under certain conditions.

All dredge and fill was effectively halted in December 1970, however, when the lines were put at the mean high water lines.

The recognition that random dredge and fill was detrimental and that the natural environment was a paramount concern to the authority brought about the adoption of a

board resolution in March 1970, which read in part:

"... The Tampa Port Authority in order to emphasize the importance to environmental considerations in the development of Tampa Harbor hereby reiterates its policy to continue to work to create the best possible environmental conditions in Tampa Harbor and to work in close cooperation with all responsible agencies, governments and parties . . ."

This important step led to several developments. Under the auspices of the authority, the Tampa Oil Spill Committee was formed with members from all of the petroleum terminals in the port. Each terminal contributed to a common fund which was used to purchase containment and oil spill cleanup gear. Since then petroleum spills in Tampa Harbor have been rare.

The authority, one of the first ports in the nation to do so, took the step of employing a professional environmentalist for its permanent staff. During his 10 years with the authority, William K. Fehring, Ph.D. was instrumental in writing a law which protected the environment and established rules and regulations regarding dredge and fill and the construction of docks and wharves in the port district.

These important advances in the environmental area were fostered by the late Delmar B. Drawdy, a port authority commissioner, who was among the first to recognize the important issue.

## **COLORFUL TIMES**

Politics in the traditional sense were extremely unusual throughout this history of the authority. As members of an



autonomous body, the commissioners resisted political pressure.

One anecdote, however, bears repeating.

In 1961 Farris Bryant was the recently-elected governor of Florida. During the regular June meeting of the board, Chairman James Ferman expressed indignation at reports that the local patronage committee (which makes recommendations for political appointments to the governor) was insisting upon replacing three commissioners whose terms had run out. No new appointments yet had been made.

Ferman stated that he had learned the patronage committee would agree to the reappointment of three members, Paul LeBlanc, R.F. Agee and W.A. McLean, if the board would fire Norman Brown as authority attorney. (Brown had replaced his father, Ray Brown, when the elder Brown died.)

Ferman said he had no part in the negotiations and stated: "I will leave the room now and ask Mr. Brown to join me so that you may carry out any, and I trust all, commitments you have made."

With that he and Brown left the room.

W.J. Barritt took the chair and McLean moved that Brown be asked to resign. The motion was carried with Barritt, McLean and LeBlanc voting yes and Agee voting no.

Brown sent a message from the outside that he refused to resign and Ferman refused to reenter the room until the matter was resolved. The three then voted to dismiss Brown. Ferman returned to the room and declared he was not a candidate for reelection and left again.

Barritt was then elected chairman and Ferman returned, commenting as he sat down, "A man has to do what he had to do."

What the flap was about is vague, but there were rumors Brown worked for a candidate for governor other than the newly-elected Bryant.

# THE AFTERMATH EFFECTS ON CULTURE IN FLORIDA BY THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

By MELORA MILLER

La libertad! La justicia! Santiago! Cuba libre! These were "gritos de guerra" or long distance war cries and distress signals of the Cubans that traveled across the ocean to reach Florida and the ears of many Americans. The Cubans wanted independence from Spanish rule that became quite oppressive because Spain was afraid of losing one of her last possessions in the New World and one of the last reminders of the once great Spanish Empire. , Thus the Spanish became quite harsh and cruel to the rebels and American journalists wanted excitement so they created war where and when there was none.

When news reached the United States of these events many were sympathetic to their cause, which was similar to the American colonies with Britain, and they wanted to leap to Cuba's aid. After the mysterious explosion of the battleship Maine, President William McKinley reluctantly asked for a declaration of war against the Spanish from Congress. Even though there is much debate whether the U.S.'s entry into the war was for the noble reasons of freedom and democracy, or for more selfish reasons such as the growing fever of imperialism, or just so the American business men and the American people could have something to do, the short war was one of the most glorious, well-fought, successful wars of United States history as the U.S. emerged as a world power, but much of the benefits of the war are more cultural than weight and strength.



**GENERAL GEORGE WYLER**

-Photo from HAMPTON DUNN  
COLLECTION

## UNIQUE MELTING POT

For the war was fought from Port Tampa in Florida which was closest to Cuba and of Spanish descent, and the Cuban immigrants that were a result of the war for independence brought with them a culture full of rich traditions that went into the making of Florida, more specifically in Tampa's Ybor City. In Ybor City there is intermingling of cultures and the Spanish-Cuban element is another ingredient with rich flavoring that adds to the overall taste of the unique melting pot of the city

and state within the even larger melting pot of the United States.

Florida was under Spanish rule before it became a part of the United States, so its Spanish heritage runs deep-in fact it was discovered by the Spanish conquistadors. At one time the Spanish Empire of Carlos V was the greatest military and political power among civilized men including many other vast areas of the New World (Lodge 2).

### **MANY ARE PLEASED**

Many people viewed the Spanish-American War with great pleasure and joy that the last of the once-great Spanish Empire full of splendor and grandeur was being divided. For instance, one person's opinion of Spain losing the war and territory to the U.S. is:

The final expulsion of Spain from the Americas and from the Philippines is the fit conclusion of the long strife between the people who stood for civil and religious freedom and those who stood for bigotry and tyranny as hideous in their action as any which have cursed humanity (Lodge 5).

These ill feelings towards Spain stemmed mainly from the Yellow Journalism created by the roving reporters or filibusters who flocked to Florida in search of adventures and exciting stories. These reporters flocked to Florida with or without assignments hoping to get Cubans to join insurgents in the field (Brown 64). These were the romantic escapades of danger and intrigue that added to the whole romantic allure of the war. The more famous accounts of overseas adventures to Cuba were those of the two filibusters Paine and McCready. They told of their secret expeditions on ships and special projects and missions (Brown 65-67). Another person who joined

the excursions and recorded events was the famous novelist Stephen Crane, author of *The Red Badge of Courage*. Employed by the *Bachelor Syndicate*, Crane's narrative relates his experiences aboard the ship *Comodore*, and life in an open boat (Brown 69-74).

### **"OUTRAGEOUS" STORY**

In continuation of the effects of the war on Florida and Yellow Journalism Richard Harding Davis and Frederick Remington are two reporters to gain fame publicizing the Spanish atrocities mainly by General George Weyler "The Butcher." One outrageous story and picture of theirs is a picture of civilian women being brutally strip searched and abused by three male Spanish officers, but the truth was the search was conducted by one female Spanish officer without brutality (Brown 82). Therefore, Yellow Journalism was the start of furnishing news and stories where there are none. Later when Davis was interviewed on the subject he said skeptically that he:

Had been kept sufficiently long in Key West to learn how large a proportion of Cuban War news is manufactured on the piazzas of that town and or Tampa by utterly irresponsible newspapermen who accept every rumor that finds its way across the Gulf to the excitable Cuban cigarmakers of Florida and who pass these rumors on to some of the New York papers as facts and as coming direct from the field (Brown 82-83).

Speaking of Tampa, a town in Florida chosen for the central concentration point of the war, the effects were more lasting in its development and culture than on the state, because nothing in Tampa's history approached the rush of publicity generated by the Spanish American War. Tampa was selected over Miami, Pensacola, and New



**LANDING OF GENERAL SHAFTER'S ARMY NEAR SNTIAGO, CUBA**

--Photo from Hampton Dunn Collection

Orleans for its natural resources including rail and port facilities and its proximity to Cuba (Mormino, 114). The long channels and the bays made the area reasonably safe from being attacked by the Spanish Navy (Covington 3). During this time Tampa had to stage over some 30,000 troops for shipment to Cuba to wage war (Dunn 19). The fine hotel that served as headquarters for the Army brass was the Tampa Bay Hotel, built by Henry B. Plant.

### **ROCKING CHAIR PERIOD**

This disproportionate structure in the middle of a city ankle deep in sand, and where the names of avenues are given to barren spaces of scrubby undergrowth and palmettos and pines hung with funeral moss" (Davis 32), was the setting for the best days of the war

called the rocking chair period. This was the time of waiting and it was called the rocking chair period because all the soldiers gathered together to discuss the potentials of the war and just to socialize while rocking rhythmically on the wide sunny verandas of the big hotel. It was a leisurely period of meeting new and old acquaintances and a time to reflect which often isn't given in war time on the piazzas of the hotel. "A place to meet old friends listen to good music and learn the latest gossip concerning the place in Cuba where the force would land" (Covington 4). But most of all it was a time for the army to shine and polish, to show off. The military group that outshines the rest was of course the cavalry unit called the Rough Riders who stayed in Tampa roughly a week but whose presence lives on.

The Rough Riders were commanded by Colonel Leonard Wood and assisted by the dynamic Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt. The regiment was very special in its unusual and wide range of recruits. For instance, there was a Harvard quarterback, world class polo players, some genuine cowboys, a son of a Pawnee chief and maybe a few Democrats. The mascots of the Rough Riders included a mountain lion, an eagle and a dog named "Cuba" (Mormino). Roosevelt's horses were named "Rain in the Face" and "Texas," and all this caused Tampa's inhabitants and all the other soldiers to gaze spellbound at the spectacular cavalymen. The children tried to imitate them and some of the young men tried to enlist but there were no more places left (Covington 4).

### **"YELLOW RICE BRIGADE"**

One of the most memorable spectacular episodes involving the Rough Riders was "The Charge of the Yellow Rice Brigade," where they drove their glamour, skill, and friends - their horses, through the Las Novedades Restaurant's door. The good-natured owner Mendoza laughed and bought everyone a round of drinks on the house. Roosevelt describes his story in Tampa and the hotel: "Over in Tampa town the huge winter hotel was gay with general officers and their staffs, with women in pretty dresses, with newspaper correspondents by the score, with military attaches of foreign powers and with onlookers of all sorts, but we spent very little time there " (Roosevelt 132). Then on June 7th the future war hero and president along with his troops received orders to report to Port Tampa where the expedition to Cuba was to start the next morning. "The troop-ships were packed tight like sardines with poor rations and sheltering in the

intense heat of the Tampa Harbor" (Roosevelt 135). Roosevelt describes these conditions and mentions their only form of amusement often indulged in was bathing over the side, and many men from the Far West had never seen the ocean before.

Thus, this is Tampa, the "cradle of Cuban liberty" (Mormino 114), and because of the war the public became eager to learn about the city known only for cigars. Tampa was criticized heavily for its semitropical horrors such as its rustic wild surroundings including mosquitos and alligators. Roosevelt himself remarked on the "pinecovered sand flats" where everything was in such an inextricable tangle. There was no one to meet them, tell them where to camp, or issue food for 24 hours and Roosevelt commented on the jam and confusion, but then again it's understood because the town and the port, like any of the others, was not prepared for the crowding and many other problems the war brought. Tampa also had semitropical charms like the hotel and many other natural fixtures that attracted the soldiers and others back to live after the war, thus creating a distinct town and culture. During the war Tampa attracted celebrated individuals who were devoted to the Cuban cause and preached to the factory workers. Among these were Jose Gomez Santayo, Ramen Rivero, and the brothers Elgio and Nestor Carbonel who organized movements. The Spanish General Martinez Campas cursed Tampa as "the very heart of the American conspiracy" (Mormino 112).

### **YBOR CITY ACTIVE**

This statement is true; but if Tampa was the heart of the conspiracy, the very soul was in a little section of Tampa by the name of Ybor City. "War might be hell for soldiers



but it was heaven for businessmen" (Mormino 103). The Spanish-American was very profitable for almost all businessmen large and small from Henry B. Plant to the owners and founders of Ybor City. Don Vicente Martinez Ybor, Ignacio Haya, and Gavino Gutierrez recognized Tampa's potential and financed its development into a cigar community. The three purchased the land and christened it Ybor City and watched the explosion of growth of the city especially during the Spanish-American War.

Ybor City had a variety of ethnic groups but the most prominent were the Cubans who were factory workers before the war, and then during the war many more escaped from Cuba and made their homeland in Ybor City; therefore this was the logical place to go in search of funds and support for "Cuban libre." This is precisely what Jose Marti, Apostle of Cuban Liberty, did making inspiring energetic moving speeches to the Cuban factory workers all over the city. The classic beginnings of one of his speeches is "Para Cuba que suffre la primera palabra" (for Cuba that suffers the first word) (Mormino 100). Marti's tremendous success inspired nationalism and pride among the Cubans, that many gave a day's earning or even enlisted to fight for their homeland's freedom (Dunn 30).

### "LA ROSA BLANCA"

Marti was also recognized for his literary works including the poem "La Rosa Blanca." Marti's influence was so great on the people of the city there still stand many tributes to him. On the front door of Ybor Square is a bronze plaque that reads:

From these steps in the year 1893 Jose Marti, Apostle of Cuban Liberty, asked with eloquent words the Cuban tobacco

worker emigres to aid him to win his country's independence by furnishing men, arms, and money. Many of the workers ex-changed their cigar-making knives for machetes, others gave hundreds of thousands of dollars to the fight against the oppression of the people and to create a Republic of Cuba (Harner 27).

There Is also In Ybor City a park called the Park of the Friends of Jose Marti which is a salute to Cuba's great liberator. The site is on the grounds of the family that gave refuge to Marti when Spanish assassins were pursuing him. There was also an attempt on Marti's life by the Spanish people living In Ybor City who tried to poison him because of their anger at his presence and success.

"Ybor City is Tampa's Spanish India ... What a colorful, screaming shrill turbulent world" (Mormino 96). Ybor City was, during the war, a chiaroscuro of hope and despair filled with new fortunes being made and tragic endings being reached. The community exuded romance and realism, an offering of sweetened cafe con leche and acrid cigar smoke a Tampa version of bread and roses" (Mormino 96). The romance and realism is provided by the colorful ethnic groups with their "tantalizingly" different customs and their unique "folkway" which is called "Latin." The Latin culture is composed of the Cubans, Spaniards, Italians, and a few Black Cubans, but the Cubans were the most numerous groups whose numbers reached over 3,000 in the city by the year 1900. This vast majority is due to many factors, such as the proximity of the island to Florida making immigration short, easy, and inexpensive. The Tribune even complained that the Cubans "come and go like blackbirds" (Mormino 98). Also because of the Cuban victorious end of the Spanish-American War many Cubans

returned to their homeland only to be disillusioned by the economic chaos and political embitterment instead of independence. Thus the Cubans returned to Tampa and were glad to get back to using their extraordinary talents into building a community which was their new home and the home of many generations of descendants.

### STILL CULTURAL CITY

Ybor City . . . "A world within a city" is still the geographical and cultural center of Tampa today (Alvarez 4). Forgotten for years, Ybor City began to draw in people such as artists who are starting revitalization for the brick town. It recently celebrated its centennial or 100 year anniversary with its unique treasures and gifts overflowing. The artists opened galleries such as the Florida Center for Contemporary Art and the J. Lazzara Gallery (Alvarez 4). There are countless little specialty shops for browsers in search of rare and unique styles of art. These items include pottery, jewelry, air-brushed quilts, sculptures, and many other exquisite crafts to delight tourists. Other exclusive stores found in Ybor City are the clothing stores which have old-fashioned antique clothing to fun fashions, and even just plain weird! The established ones include: La France, Reminscence, and Uptown Treads and the name gives away what kind of clothing or "threads" (Alvarez 4).

The other cultural element and perhaps the most enjoyable element of Ybor City is the food. A restaurant already mentioned earlier, the Las Novedades, was of course famous for the Spanish (Cuban) dish arroz con pollo (rice with chicken) which many Floridians try to imitate but for some reason it just doesn't taste the same. The rice is yellow

from saffron and garnished with olives, green peas, and other delectables (Harrier 21). Another famous restaurant is the Columbia founded in 1905, which is one of Tampa's principal tourist attractions. Decorated very elaborately with Spanish tiles, with Spanish entertainment including strolling violinists, and with the tremendous food, it makes for a romantic meal with elements of the past flair alive and unmatched anywhere. But don't forget about the little eating cafes and shops like J.D.'s sandwich shop and many others which feature the Cuban sandwich (Harning 23). "Tampa's Latin Loaf," Cuban bread, was an invention of Juan Mori who was forced to convert the shape to make it more practical for the shortages during the war. Thus, Cuban bread was a child born of the revolution for Cuban freedom. Mori returned to Tampa with his own recipe for Cuban bread called Pan-cubano which is still popular to this day (Mormino 122). "Cuban bread is like no other loaf in the world. It is leavened with emotion, flavored with tradition, and eaten with a large helping of nostalgia." Many people have expressed pleasure in the taste of this bread from the famous Teddy Roosevelt (Covington 4) to Florida's own governor Bob Graham (Alvarez 4).

### ASTOUNDING EFFECTS

In conclusion, the Spanish-American War had astounding effects on the U.S., especially Florida, Tampa, and Ybor City. Listed they are: it enriched Tampa's coffers, ended the Cuban revolution and renewed their commitment to building an immigrant community. Nationally, the war healed the wounds of the civil war uniting the nation and it fueled Roosevelt's rise to the presidency. Internationally, America was in the position of world authority.

Also locally, Tampa's role as an international center increased proportionally and Tampa was transformed into the "Queen City of the Gulf braced for the 20th century" (Mormino 128). But more important, this war left Florida with a heritage worthy of pride for all native Floridians and Tampans or descendants of the freedom fighters. It is a subject that has interested tourists and historians indefinitely. As long as people can walk through the brick streets of Ybor City visiting restaurants and cigar factories and looking at the University of Tampa, the former Tampa Bay Hotel, the past still lives combined with the present skyscrapers; and it is still easy to see the old soldiers rocking on the verandas of the hotel, the magnificent Rough Riders displaying their skills, and the eloquent Jose Marti inciting the Cuban workers into a frenzy of emotion and loyalty. This is the true spirit of Tampa for Americans everywhere alive eternally for all generations to believe in and experience for themselves.

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## INDIAN RAIDS OF 1856

### From Capt. J.T. Lesley's Diary

**(Editor's Note: This interesting recital of an event during the last Indian War is excerpted from Twenty-Four Years in Florida by Harry A. Peeples, published in 1906 by the Tribune Printing Co., Tampa)**

Late one evening during the Seminole war, in the year 1856, Capt. L.G. Lesley and Jno. T. Lesley, started out from Tampa, where they had spent a day or two on business, connected with the service, to meet their command then stationed at Alafia, now known as Old Alafia Post Office.

Just about where the water tank now stands on the A.C.L. Ry. they met several negroes belonging to a Mr. Cross, who had a plantation near Turkey Creek. The negroes said they had heard shooting near the Carney place, and had seen Indians running through the woods.

Capt. Lesley gave the negroes a note to some friends who were still in Tampa telling them to follow at once. They then hastened on in the direction of the Carney place and arrived there about nine o'clock at night. Before they got within a quarter of a mile of the place, they could hear the dogs howling most pitifully. One of that silent, solemn crowd remarked it was a bad omen. When they rode up to the house, although perfect strangers to the dogs, they met them with a friendly whine and tried to lick their hands. There being no light about the place they hallooed, and receiving no answer, dismounted, went into the yard and knocked at the door but no response came.



**JOHN T. LESLEY**

#### UNPLEASANT TASK

They then decided to strike a match, but to their surprise neither of them had a match. Capt. L.G. Lesley then suggested his son, Jno. T. Lesley, climb in a window and feel all through the room for a dead body, while he, the captain would stand guard at the window. It was anything but a pleasant task to the young man, yet he could not afford to refuse. Taking his pistol in his hand, he climbed into the room, which was pitch dark. No moon, not even a star, to furnish a glimmer of light in that dark and gloomy room. He crawled all over the room on his hands and knees, even searching the corners, expecting every minute to hear the crack of





### RUINS OF THE BRADEN CASTLE AT BRADENTON

**This is how the old Braden Castle ruins looked during the horse and buggy days of the early part of this century. Some of the ruins are still visible today. The structure was mentioned in the story on Captain Lesley.**

-Photo from the HAMPTON DUNN COLLECTION

a rifle from the hand of some savage hidden around the premises. As he came out from the room, they, knowing it was useless to search longer in the dark, remounted their horses and rode on toward their camp. They had gone about one mile, when they came to the Cross plantation. Here was discovered a small light, and silently they approached, and were hailed by one of the guards. Recognizing the voice they made themselves known, and found it to be a detachment from their company. They laid down for the night, and arose with the dawn of day. After feeding their horses and breakfasting, at sunrise they started back for the Carney place. About two hundred yards before they reached the field of Mr. Carney

they beheld the gruesome sight of a dead man lying stretched out, face downward. It was the dead body of John Carney. His



**TALKING WITH THE GREAT SPIRIT**



scalp had been taken, and was then probably dangling from the belt of a savage, who was smiling with pride over his grewsome trophy of cowardice, having killed a defenseless man, as he walked between his plow handles, and left a helpless widow and orphans in that humble but God-loving home.

### **FAMILY PRAYER**

The trail of the Indians was followed all that day, then the party began to scatter, each one going a different direction, with the understanding to meet at a certain time and place.

A few days after, they and the other commands were notified the Braiden home on the Manatee river had been visited by a band of Indians; that negroes, mules and provisions had been taken, and the Indians were journeying northward. These troopers hastened to the Braiden home, to learn that two nights before-a dark, rainy night-the family, consisting of Dr. Braiden, his wife, son and two daughters, the latter aged thirteen and fifteen years, respectively, and the old house servant, were all inside of the dwelling house, a two-story house built of mortar and shells.

They were a very religious family. It was a custom each night for one of the family, taking it by turn, from the oldest to the youngest, to lead in prayer before going to bed. On this eventful night the youngest daughter was kneeling with her face toward was one of the west windows of the upper story of the house. She was an especially bright, intelligent Christian child.

Just before closing her prayer her attention was attracted by a slight noise at the window she was facing. Looking up, she beheld a

savage, bedecked in hideous warpaint, with his tomahawk ready in his hand, bent on massacre. She also heard others, they having placed ladders against the house, and were climbing up to the windows. Instead of this little Christian child of God screaming out, as most grown people would have done, she clasped her hands above her head and prayed more earnestly than ever before. Calling upon her maker to protect that almost defenseless home from the cruel savage foe. Again looking up she saw the window partially open. Instead of going, according to habit, and kissing her mother good night, she hastened to her father, and told him what she had seen. He, of course, was inclined to make light of it and treat it as imagination. He started to the window, but she held him back, and begged him not to go, as he would be killed, saying, "Father, I am not excited. I know what I saw." He then saw the open window and the ladder, and knew there was no mistake. He and his little sons got their guns and closed and barricaded the doors and windows as best they could. Naturally, they sat up the remainder of the night.

The next morning every thing seemed quiet, but after cautiously coming out they discovered three mules, four or five negroes and a lot of provisions were missing. These things the troops learned on their arrival at the Braiden place. The troops at once hastened on. At noon they neared Oak Creek, which is east and south of Peace Creek. Here they halted in the pine timber to consult as to what was best to do.

Seeing a smoke across the creek or river and there being an open prairie between the creek and the troops, they decided to divide into three squads, one going to the right, one to the left and one straight ahead. Then on they rushed. Strange to say, the Indians never seemed to have heard them until they

were right among them, shooting and yelling. The Indians, instead of putting up some show of fight, began jumping into the creek to save themselves, but out of eleven Indians ten were killed. The negroes and mules were secured and returned to Mr. Braiden, and others to whom they belonged.

One Indian escaped, but a little later was shot and captured. He confessed that he was one of the party who went to the Braiden home. On being asked why they did not massacre the family, he shook his head and said: "No killie Piganinnee when she talk to the Great Spirit. Good Spirit, same to red man as to white man."

On returning some time after to the place where the ten Indians had been killed, it developed that the members of the tribe had buried them and put poles around the graves. Also a small copy of the New Testament was placed on the graves, showing that savages though they were, they still had faith in the Word of God.



COVINGTON



DUNN



LASSWELL



M. MILLER

## Meet The Authors

**DR. JAMES W. COVINGTON** is Dana Professor of history at the University of Tampa and a past president of Tampa Historical Society. He received the D. B. McKay Award for his contributions to Florida history. Dr. Covington has written five books — the most recent *The Billy Bowlegs War* — and many scholarly articles.

**HAMPTON DUNN** has more than 50 years experience in the communications fields of journalism, radio and TV broadcasting and public relations in Florida. He retires this year as an executive of the Peninsula Motor Club (AAA) and editor of the *Florida Explorer*. He is author of a dozen books on Florida history. He is chairman of the Historic Tampa/Hillsborough County Preservation Board, past president of the Tampa Historical Society, is vice president of the Florida Historical Society and past recipient of the D. B. McKay Award, and is editor of *The Sunland Tribune*.

**FRED LASSWELL** is a Tampa-based artist who draws the nationally-syndicated comic strip “Snuffy Smith” which appears in *The Tampa Tribune* and about 775 other newspapers nationwide. He has lived in Tampa since he was 8 years old. He was only 17 when his work was spotted by Billy DeBeck, the creator of “Barney Google,” a forerunner of “Snuffy Smith.” Lasswell took over after DeBeck died in 1942. Lasswell got his start on *The Tampa Daily Times*. He drew a salute to Tampa’s “birthday” for this issue of the *Sunland Tribune*.

**ELEANOR BUSHNELL LEHNER** attended Florida State College for Women, Fairmont Junior College and the University of Georgia School of Journalism. She was a staff writer for *The Tampa Daily Times*. Later she lived for 28 years in California, where husband George taught at UCLA. She is active in numerous cultural, educational, and civic organizations.

**MELORA MILLER**, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel C. Miller, is a senior in Brandon High School who loves writing, reading and researching Florida history. She got an “A” for her article on the Spanish-American War which is published in this issue of the

*Sunland Tribune*.

**THOMAS J. O’CONNOR**, a native New Yorker, came to Tampa in 1945. He went to work as a reporter for *The Tampa Tribune* and joined the staff of *The Tampa Daily Times*, rejoined the *Tribune* in 1953. He joined the staff of the Tampa Port Authority in 1986 as director of administration. He is married to the former Jacqueline Holdstock of Tampa.

**TONY PIZZO**, first president of Tampa Historical Society and a recipient of the D. B. McKay Award, is a native of Ybor City and author of *Tampa Town 1824-1886* and co-author of *Tampa, The Treasure City*. He is a retired executive of Fruit Wines of Florida. Pizzo named Tampa’s outstanding citizen by the Civitan Club in 1956 and Ybor City’s “Man of the Year” in 1954, 1976 and 1985. He holds the official designation County Historian.

**DR. DAPHNE LANGE ROSENZWEIG** is on the faculty of the University of South Florida and is an internationally recognized authority on Oriental art which qualifies her to discuss the Japanese ceramics at the Henry B. Platt Museum. A native of Illinois, she is married to Dr. Abraham Rosenzweig, a mineralogist and crystallographer. She has become a consultant to numerous museums, including the Plant Museum (Meiji-era art).

**DR. ROSE SPICOLA**, a native Tampan, earned her B.A. degree from Tulane and her master’s and doctorate from Florida State University. She was a charter member of the University of South Florida faculty, has taught at Longwood College, Farmville, Va., and for the last 20 years has taught at Texas Women’s College in Denton, Texas, presently as professor of curriculum and instruction. She is the daughter of Charlie Spicola, whose biography she wrote.

**DR. GLENN WESTFALL** is a charter faculty member of Hillsborough Community College and past president and now Executive Director of the Tampa Historical Society.



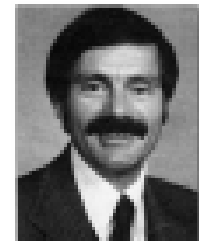
O’CONNOR



PIZZO



ROSENZWEIG



WESTFALL

WHAT'S SNUFFY  
DOIN' FOR THE  
100th ANNIVERSARY  
OF TAMPA'S CHARTER,  
LOWEEZY?

HE'S COOKIN' UP  
A SPECIAL BATCH OF  
HISTORICAL PUNCH,  
ELVINEY



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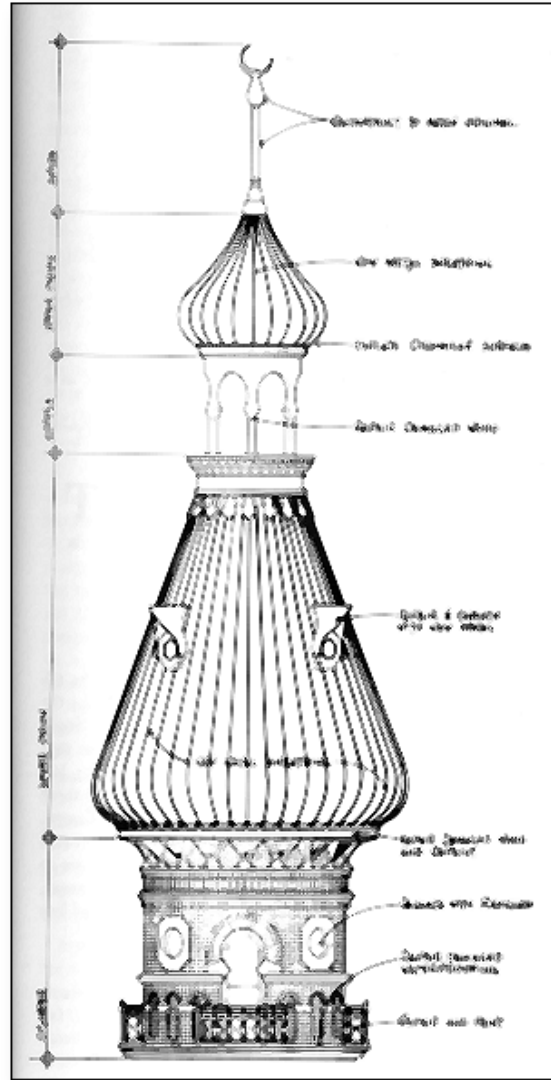
MANY HAPPY RETURNS FROM THE BARNEY GOOGLE AND SNUFFY SMITH GANG  
AND FRED CASSWELL



**GEORGE B. HOWELL**, president of Tampa Shipbuilding Co. in World War II, coaches Mrs. Stella Meek, sponsor of the launching of Tampa Hull #151, on how to swing the champagne bottle. Ceremony occurred March 17, 1945. (Read about Tampa's Port, page 36)

- U. S. Navy Photo





## LANDMARK MINARETS GETTING REFURBISHED

*There are 13 minarets on the old Tampa Bay Hotel, now the University of Tampa's Plant Hall. They represent the months of the Moslem calendar. The building was erected in 1891 and the curious onion shaped domes have been a familiar landmark all these years. They got a little shabby in recent times and sadly in need of repair. Former Mayor Bob Martinez, an alumnus of Tampa U., ordered the restoration of the distinctive minarets. Architect for the project is James Robbins. The first minaret was scheduled for completion this November and the entire restoration project will be finished in 1987. The City of Tampa will pick up the tab for the \$1.6 million project.*

## **D. B. McKAY AWARD RECIPIENTS**

1972 Frank Laumer

1973 State Senator David McClain

1974 Circuit Judge James R. Knott

1975 Gloria Jahoda

1976 Harris H. Mullen

1977 Dr. James W. Covington

1978 Hampton Dunn

1979 William M. Goza

1980 Tony Pizzo

1981 Allen and Joan Morris

1982 Mel Fisher

1983 Marjory Stoneman Douglas

1984 Frank Garcia

1985 Former Gov. LeRoy Collins

1986 Dr. Samuel Proctor