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: Full Issue

TAMPA BAY

H I S T O R Y



VOLUME 24

2010

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TAMPA BAY HISTORY

*Published through a partnership between the Tampa Bay History Center
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Cover: Frederick Yohn was one of many artists who came to Tampa during the summer of 1898 to document the tremendous troop build up that occurred just prior to the Spanish-American War. Yohn’s depiction of members of the Buffalo Soldiers running their horses in Tampa Bay is among the few images of African American soldiers in Tampa during this time.

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FROM THE EDITOR...

Winter brings with it crisp air, shorter days and another edition of *Tampa Bay History*. This is the fourth year that the Tampa Bay History Center and the University of South Florida Libraries' Florida Studies Center have partnered to produce this journal, and the twenty-fourth year of the journal's publication. As in year's past, this issue features four great articles on interesting topics in our area's history.

Leading off is this year's winner of the Leland Hawes Prize for best graduate essay in Florida history. The winning paper, "Mary Lou Baker," was written by Lois Ricciardi, a graduate student in the Florida Studies Program at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg. Ricciardi documents Baker's life, with a focus on her time in the Florida legislature and her efforts to pass landmark legislation conferring equal rights to married women. Gary Mormino, co-director of the Florida Studies Program, is proud of his student's studies and hopes that her work will make more people aware of Baker – an outstanding person in Pinellas County, and Florida, history.

Next is an essay by Roger Landers documenting the violence that gripped Hernando County following the Civil War. Landers's study extends through the Reconstruction era in Hernando (which included both Citrus and Pasco Counties at the time) and into the early twentieth century, where he finds that violence and intimidation were still in force despite the progress of time. Landers presents an interesting theory as to how Hernando could plunge so deeply into chaos, plus identifies several factors that played a role in the ultimate pacification of the county.

The third essay, written by Tom Adamich, focuses on the life of Eugene Beach. While most people likely have never heard of Beach, readers will certainly gain an appreciation for this modern Renaissance man. Adamich traces Beach's life from his childhood spent traveling with his parents – chefs who worked at seasonal hotels in both the north and the south – to his adolescence spent in Clearwater to adulthood and his careers in architecture, race car design and art. Dore Beach, Eugene Beach's second wife, is also featured in the essay, and Adamich paints a wonderful picture of a couple who both push and protect each other as they pursue their goals.

Rounding out this year's journal is an essay co-written by Pamela Gibson and editorial board member Joe Knetsch. Their essay, "White Caps and Nightmares," covers the years leading up to the Spanish-American War and tries to uncover the true causes of violence against African Americans in Florida during the 1890s. Using the presence of black soldiers stationed in southern towns, including Tampa, during the buildup to the Spanish-American War as a starting point, Gibson and Knetsch move past the simple explanation of whites reacting to well trained, and well armed, African American troops and delve deeper into the problems that had gripped Florida for decades. They also move past the most blatant form of violence perpetrated on blacks – lynching – and look at other manifestations, some overt and others subtle. Admittedly stopping short of offering a definitive study on the subject, Gibson and Knetsch instead lay the groundwork for, and offer encouragement to, future historians who wish to build on what they have begun.

No historical journal would be complete without book reviews, and this year's issue is no exception. You will find reviews for some of the most recent scholarship on Florida history, including books on race, gender, politics, women's history, and the Civil War. Included, too, is a review of assistant editor Andrew Huse's book on the Columbia Restaurant.

I hope you enjoy the 2010 edition of *Tampa Bay History*. Remember, the journal is only as good as its contributors, so if you have a paper you would like to submit, please feel free to contact me at the address listed on the inside front cover. I also encourage you to contact me if you have any questions or comments about the articles in this journal. A healthy debate about the causes and effects of historical events is one of the best ways to keep history alive.

RODNEY KITE-POWELL, EDITOR

MARY LOU BAKER

BY LOIS RICCIARDI

On April 22, 1943, a *Tampa Morning Tribune* headline announced, “Bill for Women to Serve on Juries Dies in House.” This defeat marked the beginning of a determined battle by Representative Mary Lou Baker to establish equal rights for women under Florida law. Elected just a year earlier, Mary Lou Baker was the only woman serving in the Florida legislature at that time, the second woman to ever serve, and the first from Pinellas County. In a male-dominated world replete with spittoons and cigar smoke, Baker knew that in the self-appointed task ahead of her—to establish equal rights for women including the right to serve on juries, manage their own property, make contracts, sue and be sued, and to have power of attorney—she would face many challenges and setbacks. “I may go down in defeat,” she said, “but my cause is destined to win for women will not long tolerate the unjust discrimination against their sex.”¹

Defeat, however, did not deter the remarkable woman legislator from Pinellas who crusaded for women’s rights during World War II, a war that helped redefine the role of women at home and in the workplace. Thrust into new roles as workers in industry, defense, and business and administrative fields previously dominated by men, American women found themselves serving as head of household while their husbands, fathers, and brothers fought overseas. To them fell the responsibility of managing the day-to-day affairs of the family business, often without the legal backing reserved for men.

The reform of antiquated Florida laws pertaining to married women became Baker’s primary focus after she was elected.² By today’s standards, the right of a wife to enter into contracts, manage property, sue and be sued, all without the consent of her husband, may seem routine. For wives in World

¹ “Bill for Women to Serve on Juries Dies in House,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 22, 1943.

² Ellen J. Babb, “Women and War: St. Petersburg Women during World War II,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 73 (1994): 52.

LOIS RICCIARDI is a graduate student in the Florida Studies Program at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg. Her research focuses on the historical role of women in Florida legislature and policy making. She would like to thank Dr. Gary Mormino for his advice and assistance in writing this essay.



Courtesy of the Florida State Archives

This portrait of Mary Lou Baker was taken in 1943, the same year that her landmark legislation passed the Florida Legislature.

War II Florida, however, the passage of the Married Women's Rights Act granting these privileges was, as described by the *Florida Law Journal* in July 1943, "the most historic change in the basic law of the State of Florida in the past generation."³

The May 1943 victory did not come easily. Baker's bill met repeated opposition from members of both political bodies and finally passed, by a vote of 46 to 38, on the fourth consideration of the House. Representative Archie Clement, Baker's Pinellas colleague, called it "a dangerous bill." Representative E. Clay Lewis, rules chairman, said: "This thing has more lives than my cat. . . . We've killed it three times already." Lewis went on to warn that the bill would open up to lawyers "the greatest field day they've ever had." Representatives Dave Thomas of Pensacola and Mabry Carlton of Jacksonville, however, briefly urged the House to ratify a victory already won. Through all this and with victory

finally in hand, Baker simply said, "Isn't it grand?" The legislation liberated married women from the legal disabilities previously imposed by Florida law and elevated their property rights to those of men. As the war waged on overseas, with more and more husbands departing for the battlefield, wives could now fully manage family interests on the home front.⁴

Although best known for the Married Women's Rights Act, Baker also advocated strongly for legislation allowing women to serve on juries. In spite of the rapidly changing roles of women during the 1940s, resistance to women on juries was deeply ingrained in Florida politics. Representative Warren Sanchez of Live Oak sounded the concerns of many of the male legislators with statements that "he was sure the members did not want their wives and sisters exposed to the embarrassment of hearing filthy evidence." Women, too, he said, would be worrying about the children back home and not keep their minds on the case. He cited also the added restrooms and attendants called for by the bill as "too costly." Undaunted, Baker responded, "One can hardly overestimate the ignorance of the average juror in our juries composed solely of males." A proponent of the

³ *Florida Law Journal* (July 1943).

⁴ Al Barker, "Women's Emancipation Bill Is Passed by Legislature," *St. Petersburg Times*, May 27, 1943.

legislation, Representative Walter Walker of Daytona Beach and a former public prosecutor asserted that “on juries in Florida we have the poorest class of men.” He went on to add that “women would not duck service as . . . men of equally responsible status commonly do.”⁵

The controversy over allowing women to serve on juries highlighted the juxtaposition of roles for the women of the day. On the one hand, women were expected to step up and perform the patriotic duty of assuming roles vacated by men fighting overseas. On the other hand, at the end of a workday, they were expected to return home to the children and not intrude upon the predominantly male world of legal and political matters. Male legislators argued that women belonged in the domestic sphere and that keeping them there was not only in the best interests of society but in the best interests of the women as well.⁶ While some legislators supported Baker’s fight, the legislation would not be passed until 1949. Even then change was slow to follow, ultimately resulting in the 1961 landmark Supreme Court decision, *Hoyt v. Tampa*.⁷

Baker’s activism for women’s rights caused many to label her a feminist. Although happily married to Seale H. Matthews, a captain in the United States Army, she insisted, in a move considered radical for the times, that she be known professionally by her maiden name. When challenged on this, she replied, “The purpose of a name is to designate an individual, and to distinguish that individual from others.”⁸ In a political arena entrenched with male chauvinism, and with an American public not quite ready for a feminist movement, Baker demonstrated her inherent political skill by subtly conveying her message of a woman’s right to individualism without sending a strong message of feminism.

Baker further defended her use of her maiden name by explaining: “I received my law degree and my certificate to practice as Mary Lou Baker. . . . It might even be considered unsportsmanlike for me to use the name of my husband upon the ballot and thereby borrow from the good will established by the name of Captain Seale H. Matthews. . . . Those who are acquainted with political trends and the pulse of the electorate believe that if Captain Matthews were a candidate for political office in Pinellas County, he would draw a marvellously [*sic*] large vote. On the other hand, the church membership of my husband and myself, and my own membership in the Eastern Star and other ladies’ organizations, which memberships are predicated upon Seale’s membership in the parent organizations are in a different category. There I am intensely proud to be known as Mrs. Seale H. Matthews. I hope St. Peter has the names so recorded in his big book.”⁹

⁵ “Rep. Baker Loses Great Fight for Women Jurors,” *St. Petersburg Times*, April 22, 1943.

⁶ Babb, “**Women and War**,” 53.

⁷ Gary R. Mormino, “Mary Lou Baker,” *Punta Pinal Newsletter* 24, no. 4 (Fall 2000).

⁸ “Mary Lou Baker Defends Use of Maiden Name,” *St. Petersburg Times*, February 12, 1944.

⁹ *Ibid.*

Baker's delineation of the use of her maiden name for autonomous professional activities and the more traditional use of her married name for joint activities with her husband suggests that she was not so much a feminist seeking to change the traditional roles of women in World War II as she was an ordinary woman of the day, married to a military serviceman, who recognized that current legislation did not serve women fairly. She sought to empower women within their traditional roles through the granting of legal and civil rights usually reserved exclusively for the male head of household. Still, her activities were not always admired. "Rep. Mary Lou Baker," charged the *Lakeland Ledger*, "has not given the impression of being a feminist in any sense of the word, but figures that since she is the lone woman member of the legislature, it's up to her to be the spokesman for the women of Florida. If that's not feminism, what is it—misogyny?"¹⁰ Such statements represented the viewpoint of many that, whether or not Baker was a feminist, her bill enacting equal laws for women would do more harm to women than good.

Other lawmakers felt the legislation set a dangerous precedent and ran the risk of subjecting women to a loss of rights and victimization by unscrupulous salesmen and canvassers. Typical of the times, many men felt that women could not manage property and affairs independently of their husbands' oversight and experience. Representative Archie Clement expressed arguments that the legislation was "the most unkind thing you could do to married women of this state." Clement, arguing that validation of contracts by married women might result in judgments wiping out family property, and that such legislation ran the risk of relieving men of the obligation to support their wives, closed with the statement, "Let's not get sentimental because there's a good looking lady here sponsoring the bill." It was a condescending closing statement that devalued the inherent possibilities of the proposed legislation and implied that any support for it was nothing more than a response to a pretty face.¹¹


With disregard for the paternalistic attitude of male legislators, Baker forged on working not only for women's rights but also for education reform, public health, lower taxes, veterans' benefits, and utility regulations. As a result of Baker's emancipation victory, House Speaker Evans Crary created a committee on women's rights and made Baker its first chairman.¹² By the time she ran for a second term in 1945, Baker had garnered the grudging respect of many of her male colleagues. Even those such as Archie Clement, who had opposed the emancipation legislation, insisted that "Credit should be given where it is due. . . . It was mainly through the work of Miss Baker that this legislation succeeded."¹³

¹⁰ Lee Morris, "Free Speeches," *St. Petersburg Evening Independent*, April 22, 1943.

¹¹ Al Barker, "Baker, Clement in Hot Debate on Emancipation," *St. Petersburg Times*, May 4, 1943.

¹² Paul Davis, "Mary Lou Baker," *St. Petersburg Independent*, May 10, 1965.

¹³ "Clement Credits Mary Lou Baker for Women's Bill," *St. Petersburg Times*, June 4, 1943.



Mary Lou Baker

(1914 - 1965)
Date of Admission: 1938

Mary Lou Baker studied pre-law at Florida Southern College, graduated from Stetson University College of Law in 1938, and was admitted to practice law in Florida under the diploma privilege on September 30, 1938. Her studies also included a course in journalism with Harris G. Sims, who was the editor of the Lakeland Ledger.

Mary Lou Baker practiced law in St. Petersburg and later in Clearwater with her father, Lee L. Baker, in the firm of Baker and Baker. Ms. Baker also held government and political offices. In 1935 she served as an attache at the Florida State Legislature, and in 1941 she was chief of indexers of the Florida Statutes.

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Reprinted from 150: Celebrating Florida's First 150 Women Lawyers

Admitted to the Florida Bar in 1938, Baker was not the only lawyer in her family. Her father and her brother were both attorneys and municipal judges in Pinellas County.

While representatives worried that the male-dominated citadel of the legislature would not function as effectively with a woman on board, Baker showed that she had the intellect, poise, and equanimity her elected office required. Representative Alex Williams of Indian River County paid her this compliment: "Lady, I am sincere when I say you did a swell job. Never did you ask any special favor or any extra consideration, during debate or any other time, because you are a woman."¹⁴ By 1944, the press was acknowledging Baker's accomplishments with reports such as these:

There will be more than one member of the house who will take a back seat if he matches his knowledge of law, politics and the community welfare with the woman lawyer from St. Petersburg.

Pinellas County's Mary Lou Baker, the state's only woman representative . . . is creating a favorable impression over the state because of her enterprise and ability.

Mary Lou Baker of Pinellas led a floor fight on the jury bill with such poise and ability as to prove that women can make first rate legislators. We offer her as exhibit A.¹⁵

Baker was also an advocate for education and became the first woman in Florida history to wield a gavel in the state House or Senate. In 1945, she presided

¹⁴ Davis, "Mary Lou Baker."

¹⁵ "Know the Candidates for State Representative," *St. Petersburg Times*, April 14, 1944. The *St. Petersburg Times* reprinted these statements from the *Tampa Tribune*, *Clearwater News*, and *Tallahassee Democrat* respectively. The article noted that these were just a few of hundreds of laudatory statements from various Florida publications.

over a heated debate on a school bill that proposed raising the salaries of school superintendants. In spite of opposition from smaller counties, the bill passed.¹⁶ In 1944 and again in 1946, education reform was a part of Baker's platform. During a WTSP radio talk in 1944, she stated, "The schools must have as much money as may be required to train and discipline our youth for the work that lies ahead."¹⁷ The *St. Petersburg Times* endorsed her as well, writing that Florida's education system needed overhauling and that her aggressive leadership could be useful to Pinellas County and the whole state.¹⁸ While serving in the 1945 session, she sponsored or cosponsored bills "providing an emergency appropriation to county school fund, increasing teachers' retirement pension under 1931 act, and increasing the salaries of county superintendents of public instruction."¹⁹ In 1943, Baker was named vice chairman of the Educational Committee and chairman of a subcommittee to consider a school-lunch bill.²⁰ She actively supported co-ed college education, laying the groundwork for transitioning Florida State College for Women to the present-day Florida State University.²¹

Baker's fight to provide and protect civil liberties for women, children, veterans, the elderly, and the poor belies her own background. Growing up in 1930s Pinellas County, Baker lived a comfortable life as the daughter of Judge and Mrs. Lee L. Baker. She was born in 1915 in British Columbia, Canada. The family moved to Provo, Utah, and then to Pinellas County in 1925. As one of five children (two boys and three girls), Baker attended Pinellas County schools and graduated from Clearwater High School. She went on to study pre-law at Florida Southern College and graduated from Stetson University College of Law in 1938. Her studies also included a course in journalism with Harris G. Sims, the editor of the *Lakeland Ledger*. Baker was admitted to practice law in Florida under the diploma privilege on September 30, 1938.²² No longer in use today, the diploma privilege allowed graduates of Florida law schools to practice law in Florida without taking the bar examination.

News reports of the day suggest that the Great Depression did not have a significant impact on the Baker family. Baker's father was a municipal judge in Clearwater and a partner in the law firm of Baker and Ulmer.²³ Her mother, Mary Vesgar Baker, was a Democratic Party official and civic leader in Clearwater. Mrs. Baker served as president of the Democratic Woman's Club and was twice a

¹⁶ Davis, "Mary Lou Baker."

¹⁷ "Miss Baker Says Women Belong in Politics," *St. Petersburg Times*, April 15, 1944.

¹⁸ "Here's Our Choice and Why in State Senate and House," *St. Petersburg Times*, April 9, 1944. *St. Petersburg Times*, June 8, 1945.

²⁰ Paul A. Davis, "At Tally," *St. Petersburg Evening Independent*, April 16, 1943.

²¹ Mormino, "Mary Lou Baker."

²² Wendy S. Loquasto, ed. *150: Celebrating Florida's First 150 Women Lawyers* (Charlottesville: Lexis, 2000).

²³ "Baker Announces Judge Candidacy," *St. Petersburg Evening Independent*, April 28, 1936.

delegate to the national Democratic Party convention.²⁴ Both parents were active in political and community affairs and were often mentioned in society columns. While financially stable, however, the Bakers' early years were marked by the tragic loss of one of their daughters. Nancy Lee Baker, a young child, died in 1928 in a drowning accident.²⁵ The remaining four children, Mary Lou, Robert Warren, Josef Lafayette, and Marjorie Belle all went on to distinguish themselves academically and professionally.

As a college student, Baker won two fifty-dollar prizes given by D. H. Redfearn of Miami for the best article written on a legal subject. The articles that presaged her future were "Legal Emancipation of Married Women," written in 1937, and "The Divorce Traffic: Its Cause and Cure," in 1938.²⁶ She also served as the law school secretary for three consecutive years.²⁷ During and after college, Baker began laying the groundwork for her career as a legislator. She gained experience working as the personal attaché of Judge Jack F. White in the 1935 session, as a worker for social and economic reforms including women's rights in the 1937 and 1939 sessions, and as chief of the indexers of the House and Senate Journals at the 1941 session.²⁸

On October 1, 1938, Baker married Sergeant Seale Harris Matthews. The *St. Petersburg Evening Independent* reported on the wedding, including great detail about the bride's gown of silver lace over white satin, the bridesmaids' dresses of silk net over taffeta, and the bride's traveling suit of English tea. The article went on to describe at length the details of the ceremony and reception.²⁹

The couple had one son, Lee Harris Matthews, who was born on August 18, 1944. Baker set yet another precedent for the women of her day by serving as a legislator and running for reelection while expecting her child. According to the National Women's History Museum, "Her husband had come home on leave, and she kept her pregnancy secret from him and everyone else until after her 1944 re-election."³⁰ She served her second term with her son in tow and was often tapped by the press for interviews on balancing work and motherhood.³¹ Baker's use of her maiden name for her legislative work and serving while pregnant and as a mother in the 1940s demonstrate her courage and her conviction that women could and should be equal to men in the eyes of the law.

Although happily married, Baker sought by her own actions to show the

²⁴ "Services Slated for Mrs. Baker," *St. Petersburg Evening Independent*, September 10, 1963.

²⁵ "Nancy Lee Baker Funeral Sunday," *St. Petersburg Evening Independent*, July 14, 1928.

²⁶ "Mary L. Baker in Race for Legislature," *St. Petersburg Evening Independent*, February 27, 1940.

²⁷ "Baker, Mary Lou Clearwater, Fla. L.L.B.," *Stetson Hatter Yearbook*, 1938.

²⁸ "Know the Candidates for State Representative," *St. Petersburg Times*, April 14, 1944.

²⁹ "Miss Mary Baker to Be Bride of Seale Matthews," *St. Petersburg Evening Independent*, October 1, 1938.

³⁰ "Women Wielding Power: Pioneer Female State Legislators," National Women's History Museum, www.nwhm.org/legislators/Florida.html.

³¹ Davis, "Mary Lou Baker."

world that women could do more than stay at home raising children. In this, she was staunchly supported by her husband, who endorsed her candidacy in 1944 with the following statement: “My wife, Mary Lou Baker, is an excellent housewife, an able lawyer and legislator, a prudent business woman. She possesses great beauty, poise, charm and friendliness. All who know Mary Lou love and respect her. Re-elect her and you will again be proud of the superior and distinguished service you will receive from her.”³²

While Baker distinguished herself in the legislature, Captain Matthews served his country, including an assignment in Okinawa, Japan. Shortly before the dropping of the atomic bombs and Japan’s surrender, Captain Matthews offered his view on Japan’s situation: “There is no doubt that Japan’s most powerful weapons are pretty much smashed up. The only asset that remains to her is the belief of her people that it is a thousand times better to die for the emperor than to live—even if you die uselessly. That seems to be the core of her religion.”³³ This statement supported what many Americans believed—that Japan would not surrender without a bitter fight and that the dropping of the atomic bombs was the only way to finally end the war.

Captain Seale Matthews was not the only man in Baker’s life to serve his country. Her brother, Robert Warren Baker, served in the Army Air Corps, completing fifty combat missions over Europe. Robert’s military decorations included the Distinguished Flying Cross, Silver Campaign Star, and Air Medal. After the war, he “served at the White House (1946-47) as chief of secretariat, U.S. Reparations Commission, and until August 1949 was executive assistant secretary of the Army’s Pentagon office.”³⁴

Robert urged the public to reelect his sister by using his military service as an analogy to her service in the legislature: “no matter how excellent the raw material, genuine practical experience is required to make the best soldier. Mary Lou has this experience in the state legislature.”³⁵ Robert, too, was bitten by the legal bug and earned a law degree at the University of Florida. He later joined his father’s practice and served for a time as a Clearwater municipal judge. Robert died suddenly of a heart attack in 1965 at the age of forty-two, leaving behind a wife and son.³⁶

Baker’s two other siblings did not pursue law careers. Josef Baker became an assistant professor of music at the University of Tampa. Marjorie Belle Baker attended the University of Alabama (taking a year off to serve as Baker’s attaché) and later medical school in Heidelberg, Germany, returning stateside before World War II to enter Syracuse University’s medical school as the only female

³² “Mary Lou Baker’s Husband Endorses Her Candidacy,” *St. Petersburg Times*, April 22, 1944.

³³ “South Pacific Next Stop for Capt. Seale Matthews,” *St. Petersburg Times*, August 4, 1945.

³⁴ “Robert W. Baker, Lawyer, Found Dead,” *St. Petersburg Times*, December 12, 1965.

³⁵ “Lt. Baker Speaks for Mary Lou,” *St. Petersburg Times*, April 20, 1944.

³⁶ “Robert W. Baker, Lawyer, Found Dead.”

student to be accepted at that time. Like her sister, she set out to demonstrate that women could do more than the traditional roles of homemaker and mother assigned to them in the 1930s and 1940s. Marjorie, however, did not complete medical school, saying that she “earned her M.D. the easy way” by dropping out of school to marry Dr. M. Rowland Mesick. Marjorie, more so than Mary Lou, seems to have preferred the more traditional role of wife and mother, although she used that role to stay involved with civic activities and charitable causes throughout her lifetime. She died in 2004 at the age of eighty-seven, leaving behind a son, daughter, and five grandchildren.³⁷



Courtesy of Setson University

Given the support of her family and friends over the years, along with the respect she had earned from colleagues and the successes of her emancipation legislation, it was no surprise that in 1946, Baker chose to run for a third term in office. However, the times were changing. The war was over, and as the men returned home, it was assumed that women would step back into the traditional roles of wives and homemakers. Her bid for a third term did not meet with the same enthusiasm from the voting constituency. Compounding this was a shift in support by the press, who editorialized that she had broken her campaign promise to lower utility rates. The *St. Petersburg Times* accused her of being a “grave disappointment” for voting against the establishment of a county regulatory commission to control utility rates. The *Times* went on to say that she had initially won her seat by campaigning against a former power company employee with the promise to lower power rates and had failed to live up to that promise: “Voters have long memories. Regulation will continue to be an issue until the public has a board or commission . . . checking up on the fairness of public utility rates. Miss Baker broke the faith.”³⁸ At the same time, a young lawyer and veteran, Charles Schuh, announced his candidacy as well. The *St. Petersburg Times* was quick to support for this new candidate while continuing to make unflattering reports about Baker.

Although the *St. Petersburg Times* focused primarily on the utility regulatory issue, they were quick to play the female card at a time when public opinion was

³⁷ “Mesick,” *Post-Standard*, August 24, 2004.

³⁸ “Only Issue in the State Legislature Races,” *St. Petersburg Times*, May 1, 1946.

shifting toward the belief that women needed to give up their positions in the workforce so those positions would be available for the returning veterans. In addition to reporting on Baker's "failure" to control utility rates by voting against a county regulatory agency, one editorial commented that "it has been no advantage to the best interests of Pinellas for Miss Baker to have been the only female member of the legislature . . . nor would it be any advantage in the near future. Rather, it would probably constitute a legislative liability." This was followed in the next paragraph by an endorsement of Charles Schuh: "[He] is new to public life. He is a competent lawyer with an excellent war record. His integrity, his family background, his sincerity, are all above question and beyond reproach."³⁹ Clearly, the *St. Petersburg Times* now favored Schuh over Baker, using his status as both a man and a returning war veteran to help substantiate their position that he should be elected in place of Baker.

Regardless of whether or not Baker received support from the Florida Power Corporation, the news reporting and allegations of broken campaign promises seriously impacted her popularity with the Pinellas voters. She sought to defend herself at a public rally: "Since this issue has come up, I think I will explain my stand. I have explained it once in a radio talk tonight but since I doubt that the newspapers will print it I will explain it again." She then said she voted against it because the commission's salaries, attorney fees, and other expenses would have come out of the taxpayers' pockets. In an earlier radio talk, she said she had voted against it because Florida Power Corporation had voluntarily reduced its rates and because she thought the regulation of power rates should be a city function rather than a county function. Her opponent, Schuh, was quick to jump on the bandwagon. At the same rally, he argued that the financial statement of Florida Power called for \$725,000 "other" and \$28,000 "miscellaneous." The commission's job, he went on to say, would be to put some of that money back in the taxpayer's pocket. "I think you'll agree with me that \$725,000 is a lot of 'other.'"⁴⁰

Baker did not win reelection to a third term. She accepted defeat gracefully, offering her congratulations to the winners. "The jury has rendered its verdict; the voters have the last word, some of the electors liked me, some like[d] me less, and some like[d] me not at all. I have gratitude in my heart and a thank-you on my lips for everyone who cast a ballot, no matter how that ballot may have been marked. Throughout the campaign I have been patient and kind and have known no envy or jealousy. I have not brooded over wrongs done me, nor become angry with anyone. There were many ardent and zealous supporters and if inadvertently any injustice to anyone was committed, I am very sorry. I like Pinellas people,

³⁹ "The Pinellas Delegation: Part I," *St. Petersburg Independent*, May 3, 1946.

⁴⁰ "McClure Charges Harris Backers 'Throwing Money Around' to Win Election," *St. Petersburg Times*, May 4, 1946.

trust them, believe in them, and am eternally grateful to them, for the favors they have shown me.”⁴¹

Baker retired from politics and joined her husband overseas in Okinawa, Japan. While in Japan, she sent back articles that appeared weekly in the *Tampa Tribune*, offering “analysis of the political alignments in force at that time and descriptions of the Japanese people that displayed a sympathetic understanding and sound discernment.”⁴² By 1948, Baker had returned to Pinellas and resumed working as an attorney in her father’s law firm.⁴³

Mary Lou Baker died in 1965. She was fifty years old. Although she never returned to politics, she achieved her original mission to change Florida laws allowing married women the same property and legal rights as men. In the words of her Pinellas colleague Representative S. Henry Harris, she “accomplished the biggest piece of women’s legislation since [Women’s] Suffrage.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ “Pinellas Gets Two New House Members as Harris, Baker Lose,” *Evening Independent*, May 5, 1946.

⁴² Loquasto, *150: Celebrating Florida’s First 150 Women Lawyers*.

⁴³ *St. Petersburg Evening Independent*, November 23, 1948.

⁴⁴ “Park Program Pays Tribute to Mary Lou Baker,” *St. Petersburg Times*, June 18, 1943.

THE “RECENT UNPLEASANTNESS” IN HERNANDO COUNTY, FLORIDA: RECONSTRUCTION, REDEMPTION, RETRENCHMENT, AND ITS LEGACY

BY ROGER R. LANDERS

In recent years, the lawlessness and violence of the Tampa Bay frontier has been well documented.¹ However, the violence that occurred following the Civil War in the plantation region of the northern extreme of the Bay area has yet to be examined. From the end of the Civil War through the periods of Reconstruction and Redemption, Hernando County was a hotbed of bitter violence and intrigue; a “code of silence” became the norm and remained so well into the twentieth century.

The violence was not as spectacular in nature as the Jackson County War of 1869.² The lawlessness in Hernando was, nonetheless, pervasive, and its impact remained through succeeding generations. Two murders—of Arthur St. Clair in 1877 and Herbert Smithson in 1931—signaled the beginning and end of an almost sixty-year period that typified the depth of local hostility.

In a May 1865 letter to Salmon P. Chase (Abraham Lincoln’s former secretary of the treasury and chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court), General Israel Vogdes, the U.S. military authority in Florida, identified a particular segment of the Florida

¹ Robert P. Ingalls, *Urban Vigilantes in the New South: Tampa, 1882-1936* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988); James M. Denham, *“A Rogue’s Paradise”: Crime and Punishment in Antebellum Florida, 1821-1861* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1997); Canter Brown Jr., *Florida Peace River Frontier* (Orlando: University of Central Florida Press, 1991), 239-54; Canter Brown Jr., “Politics, Greed, Regulators, Violence and Racism in Tampa,” *Sunland Tribune: Journal of the Tampa Historical Society* 20 (November 1994): 25-30.

² See Jerrell H. Shofner, *Jackson County Florida—A History* (Marianna, Fla.: Jackson County Heritage Association), 279-95, for information regarding the bloody conflict that occurred in north Florida’s Jackson County.

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population as the most hostile, staunch secessionists who would be the most difficult to “reconstruct”: these were the partially educated, subordinate officers of the Confederate army and women.³ Time would prove this characterization correct in Hernando County. The end of the war brought dramatic changes in the roles and relationships of former masters and slaves. During Reconstruction, Hernando County, like other rural areas of the South, saw its share of social chaos in the form of intemperance, problematic labor contracts, misapplication of the law, denial of voting rights, racism, and a bitter hatred toward those perceived as traitors of the Lost Cause.

Hernando County, organized in 1843 from parts of Hillsborough and Alachua Counties, covered a large area of approximately 1,837 square miles. The seat of local government, originally established at Chocochatte near present-day Brooksville, was moved to the Gulf Coast town of Bayport (originally spelled Bay Port) in 1852. In 1856, a new community, Brooksville, was established to serve as the county seat.

The original 101 settlers arrived in what would become Hernando County in February 1842, bringing with them 57 slaves. Within a few years, the new county boasted a number of flourishing communities, including Homosassa and Crystal River in the north; Lake Lindsey, Bayport, and Pierceville in the center; and Fort Dade in the south. In the August 31, 1854, issue of the *Jacksonville Florida Republican*, a visitor to Hernando County described the area, noting the “model plantations” of “several gentlemen,” including,

Captain Thomas E. Ellis, Captain Frederick Lykes, Judge [Perry Green] Wall, William Hope, Major [Isaac] Garrison, C. Higginbotham, and a host of others. . . . [T]he cotton stalks on the plantation of Mr. Higginbotham are grown to such a height as to require topping, and well filled with bolls of a very superior staple, and the cotton generally will far exceed in quality any previous years. The corn, sugar, cane, rice &c. have never been equaled. On the beautiful plantation of Major Garrison, a grove or orchard of 200 banana trees . . . so heavily laden with fruit, as to require propping to contain them.⁴

With 21,000 acres in cultivation, Hernando County soon represented the southernmost tip of Florida’s antebellum plantation belt, an expanse of rich, fertile land that stretched northward through Marion County to Gadsden County. By the outbreak of the Civil War, the county’s slave population was more than nine hundred—almost triple the number recorded in 1850—and represented 42 percent of the total county population. In 1860, there were forty-three slave owners, including fifteen planters. The two planters with the largest holdings were David L. Yulee at

³ Jerrell H. Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet: Florida in the Era of Reconstruction 1863-1877* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1974), 22-23.

⁴ *Jacksonville Florida Republican*, August 31, 1854.

Homosassa and the John May family at Brooksville.⁵

The 1861 Florida call to arms sent many young Hernando men to serve with the Third, Fourth, Seventh, and Ninth Florida Regiments. The hardships of war eventually forced many men to side with the Union, and some would ultimately serve in the Union army. Those who remained loyal to the South would neither forget nor forgive those who served the Union.

Although Hernando saw no significant military action, the county did have several incursions. The largest occurred in June 1864, when a Union force of 240 troops, including companies A and B of the Second U.S. Florida Cavalry, with 15 percent of the force being from Hernando, raided inland from Anclote to Brooksville and then on to Bayport. Other smaller raids took place at Crystal River, Bayport, the Lesley and Hope saltworks at Anclote, and the Yulee plantation in Homosassa.

Like much of the South, Florida was devastated by the Civil War. Soaring inflation destroyed its economy, and conscription laws had impoverished the countryside. Matters were no different for Hernando County. Within a few years of the war's end, many of Hernando's wealthier and leading citizens had abandoned the county for more amenable locations. The loss of such influential families and members of the old planter class took much of the community leadership. Thomas C. Ellis, a large landowner and planter, returned with his family to Alachua County.⁶ Some families who had fled from Hillsborough to Hernando County during the war began returning to Tampa. Most notable of these were William B. Hooker, Leroy G. Lesley, and John T. Lesley.⁷ Walter Terry Saxon, the eldest son of a prominent planter, a Confederate officer, county representative to the 1867 state legislature, and organizer of the local Ku Klux Klan, moved to Texas.⁸

Samuel E. Hope, a state legislator and Confederate veteran, moved to Anclote, in the southernmost part of the county.⁹ David Levy Yulee, Florida's first U.S. senator and the largest planter in Hernando, chose not to rebuild his war-ravaged plantations at Homosassa and remained in Jacksonville.¹⁰ Amid charges of impropriety, Judge Perry Green Wall—a planter, former county judge, and local Freedmen's Bureau agent—moved with his sons William, Joseph, and John to Hillsborough County, joining his sons-in-law Edward A. Clarke and Christopher L. Friebele.¹¹ Baptist Minister James

⁵ Tax records of Hernando County 1845-1872, microfilm; Brooksville Regional Library.

⁶ Thomas B. Ellis, "The Short Record of T.B. Ellis Sr.," Special Collection, 1913, George Smathers Library, University of Florida.

⁷ Kyle S. Vanlandingham, "To Faithfully Discharge My Duty: The Life and Career of Perry Green Wall," *Sunland Tribune: Journal of the Tampa Historical Society* 23 (November 1997): 4.

⁸ Frank W. Johnson, *A History of Texas and Texans*, ed. Ernest William Winkler (Chicago and New York: American Historical Society, 1914), 5:2518.

⁹ Joe Knetsch, "Captain Samuel E. Hope," *Sunland Tribune: Journal of the Tampa Historical Society* 20 (November 1994): 38.

¹⁰ Canter Brown Jr., *Jewish Pioneers of the Tampa Bay Frontier*, Tampa Bay History Center Reference Library Series No. 7 (Tampa: Tampa Bay History Center, 1999), 11-16.

¹¹ Vanlandingham, "To Faithfully Discharge My Duty"; Roundtree to Reed, Correspondence of the Governor, Office of the Governor, 01, Series 577, Box 2, March 21, 1870.



Courtesy of the Randolph Saxon Family

Walter Terry Saxon in Confederate Veteran Uniform.

H. Breaker, the builder of the 1855 Hillsborough Court House and a former slave owner, moved to Missouri in 1868.¹² James M. Taylor, a college-educated lawyer, brigadier general of Florida State Troops, commander at Fort Brooke, state legislator, and son-in-law of the planter Aaron T. Frierson, moved his family to Texas.¹³

The 1868 state constitution granted the governor authority to appoint all county officials such as sheriffs, judges, county commissioners, and tax collectors. This fostered the spread of Republicanism through the appointment of northerners (carpetbaggers, such as Hernando County judge Henry Roundtree), their southern white cohorts (scalawags), and blacks to these local offices, which inspired a violent backlash by southern white Democrats.

By 1875, most college-educated professionals and all but two of the old-money planter aristocracy had abandoned Hernando. While many of those citizens who remained, and the new immigrants, tried to build a positive and welcoming atmosphere in the county, others were fed by their parents and grandparents on a steady diet of the principles of southern (Confederate) nationalism. This group remained staunch in their old belief system—including the necessity and correctness of the institution of slavery and, therefore, the moral obligation of future generations to preserve the racial hierarchy that had been expressed in the master-slave relationship. Hernando, along with eight other Florida plantation counties, came to be known as a hotbed of Klan activity. “Human life is counted cheap when passion or politics call for its sacrifice,” wrote William W. Davis in his 1913 treatise *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida*. Davis theorized that such violent incidents reflected the character of the population and the local political leadership. According to Davis, Hernando County was the only Bay Area county known for a prevalence of Klan-related violent crime in the years 1868–70.¹⁴ The actual number of crimes is unknown, as the perpetrators left no record of their deeds.

Allegations of fraud were rife in the elections of 1872, 1874, and 1876, both in Florida in general and Hernando County in particular. In 1876, at the request of state officials, Sheriff Benjamin Saxon (white) and Deputy Sheriff Arthur St. Clair (black) personally delivered the certified results to Tallahassee. Fearing assassination, the two traveled at night and slept in the woods. After arriving in Tallahassee, Saxon, the youngest brother of Walter Terry Saxon, died from exposure and the stress of the trip.¹⁵

Despite the disputed outcome, the 1876 election of Governor George F. Drew brought Florida’s Reconstruction years to an end, and Redemption—the Democrats’

¹² “Our Court House,” Tampa Herald, June 7, 1854; Historical Committee, *First Baptist Church of Brooksville, Florida 1847-2002*, (Brooksville: Burns [printer], 2002), 1-22.

¹³ Ann Huddart, *The Genealogy Papers of the A.T. Frierson Family*, Brooksville, Fla., n.d.

¹⁴ William Watson Davis, *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida* (1913; reprint, Quadricentennial Edition of the Floridiana Facsimile Reprint Series, with introduction by Fletcher M. Green [Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964], 580-81).

¹⁵ *New York Times*, November 29, 1876.

retaking of control of the state from the Republicans—began in earnest. In Hernando County, however, the Democrats had never truly lost political control. In the eleven years following the war, Democrats turned “Publican”—those individuals who seemed to Republican governors to have accepted the basic tenets of Reconstruction—with few exceptions, continued to run Hernando’s government.¹⁶

During the fourteen years following the Civil War, Hernando County recorded the murders of more than forty citizens, including the 1868 murder of cotton tax inspector Marcus Brendt.¹⁷ Other violent acts, such as the attempted murder of Republican County Judge Henry Roundtree, two courthouse arsons, and eleven murders in 1878-79, prompted the Hernando County grand jury in the spring 1879 term to call for “all citizens to demand, and expect, a return to law and order.”¹⁸ The urging initially fell on deaf ears, but it eventually spurred meetings at Crystal River, Fort Dade, and Lake Lindsay aimed at ending the violence and calling for the division of the county.¹⁹ Especially significant among the acts of violence enumerated by the grand jury was the 1877 murder of Reverend Arthur St. Clair—a former slave of the John May family, a Baptist minister, community activist, and three-time Republican candidate for the state legislature. St. Clair’s murder sparked a series of events that brought state and national notoriety to Hernando.

On May 6, 1877, Reverend St. Clair officiated in the marriage of an interracial couple, David James (black) and Lizzy Day (white). The following day, four white residents—Frank E. Saxon, James M. Rhodes, and William Center, all related by marriage to the William Hope family, and James McIntosh—went to the home of the couple to warn them of impending danger. Believing the visitors intended to harm the couple, neighbors opened fire. As a result, James was wounded and neighbor Coles Feaster was killed. Three of the four white men were wounded. Community meetings were held, and both whites and blacks publicly deplored the “act of miscegenation.” The couple was allowed to remain in Brooksville until James’s wounds healed.²⁰

The marriage by St. Clair proved to be the event that set into motion the “taking control from the local Republicans.” Just over a month later, St. Clair and young Mary Turner were returning to Brooksville from a Republican meeting at Fort Dade. With cries of, “There he is!” a party of twenty men surrounded the St. Clair party. St. Clair recognized several of the men, including Frank Saxon, and called them by name. The vigilantes shot and killed St. Clair and another man in the party; Mary Turner escaped. At the inquest, Mary Turner said she could not identify any of

¹⁶ Examples of Hernando County “Publicans” include Frank E. Saxon, Benjamin Saxon and the Wall family.

¹⁷ Brown, *Jewish Pioneers*, 25-26.

¹⁸ “General Presentment of the Grand Jury for Hernando County June Term 1879,” *Sunland Tribune*, July 3, 1877.

¹⁹ “Shooting in Hernando,” *Sunland Tribune*, July 7, 1877.

²⁰ “Resolution—Hernando,” *Sunland Tribune*, July 14, 1877; “Two Colored Men,” *Sunland Tribune*, July 21, 1877.

the twenty men, and the coroner's jury determined that it was impossible to identify "the person or persons" responsible.²¹ Turner later refuted her earlier testimony; in a sworn statement given in Tampa before John A. Henderson, Turner indicated she had feared for her life at the inquest because many of those on the jury had been perpetrators of the crime. At that time, she did identify many of the men at the murder and testified that George Cross was the shooter.²² A resolution passed later at a meeting in Brooksville chiding the editors of the *Sunland Tribune* and the *Ocala Banner* for printing the "false statements" of Mary Turner. The *Tampa Guardian*, edited by James T. Magbee, had refused to publish the resolution, claiming that "it was full of d— lies." Many of the signers of the resolution were either related to or business partners of those thought to be implicated in the shooting.²³

At 1:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 29, two days before the 1877 fall term of the circuit court was scheduled to convene, fire destroyed the courthouse and all records, including the voter-registration list and the sworn statements of Mary Turner.²⁴ This event forced the postponement of both the fall term and the following spring term of the circuit court. No indictments for the murder of Arthur St. Clair and others were ever presented. Another regional editorial implored Hernando civil officials to uphold the law, stating, "Such lawlessness in Hernando County reflects poorly . . . and does have a negative effect on the potential economic development of the area including Hillsborough."²⁵

On June 22, 1878, an advertisement requesting bids to construct a new courthouse in Hernando was published; this elicited a new round of debate concerning the violence in Hernando and the possible division of the county. Crystal River led the way by questioning the location of the courthouse in Brooksville without a public referendum, followed by several letters from Ft. Dade (Dade City).²⁶ Temporary court offices were established in rented buildings in Brooksville. The circuit court disposed of only two minor criminal cases at the fall term of 1878. All other cases were continued until the spring of 1879.

In the two years during which Hernando County was without courts, local men known as "Regulators" carried out "justice" in acts of vigilantism that often exacerbated hostilities. For example, on Christmas Eve 1878, William Cray Jr. killed Louis W. Valentine during a domestic dispute. James M. Rhodes, a Regulator, apprehended Cray and whipped him. A week later, Rhodes was killed at his home near Brooksville, reportedly in retaliation for the whipping of young Cray. In a related incident on the

²¹ "Statement of Mary Turner," *Sunland Tribune*, September 29, 1877.

²² "That Mass Meeting," *Sunland Tribune*, September 18, 1877.

²³ "Another Act of Lawlessness in Hernando—The Court House Burns," *Sunland Tribune*, October 6, 1877.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ "That Mass Meeting," *Sunland Tribune*, September 1, 1877.

²⁶ "New Advertisements—Notice," *Sunland Tribune*, July 22, 1878, 3; "To the Voters and Tax Payers of Hernando," *Sunland Tribune*, June 19, 1878; Communicated—"Fort Dade, Florida," *Sunland Tribune*, September 14, 1878; "Democratic Meeting . . .," *Savannah Morning News*, October 24, 1878.

night of January 1, 1879, the wife of Anthony May was seriously wounded and their son killed as the family traveled to their home in Marion County.²⁷ The assault was said to be retaliation for May’s testimony regarding David Hope in a recent lawsuit. A warrant was soon issued for May, alleging that he was the murderer of Rhodes. Marion County investigated the claim and refused to honor the warrant.²⁸

On March 11, 1879, during the circuit court’s spring term, Hernando sheriff David L. Hedick died of pneumonia.²⁹ Court was suspended until a special session set for June. On May 1, 1879, proceedings were almost disrupted by another court fire in an apparent attempt to destroy the sheriff’s records. The Hernando County Commission offered a reward of two thousand dollars for evidence that would lead to the identification of those responsible for the second courthouse arson.³⁰

In June 1879, County Judge William Center, who had been expected to identify the persons responsible for burning the courthouse, was killed at about 8:00 a.m. near his home in Brooksville.³¹ By noon, Center’s murder had been reported statewide, despite the fact that telegraph connection did not reach Brooksville until 1884. The inquest in the case, which lasted for a week, resulted in no indictment.³²

With each successive murder or violent act, the state press would immediately publish a recap of the violent events of the past two years, beginning with those related to the interracial marriage of James and Day. A letter to the editor of the *Sunland Tribune* went so far as to call off action by “Judge Lynch” in order to restore order and end the era of violence. Hernando was becoming infamous for its lawlessness. On July 27, 1878, the *Sunland Tribune* reported, “all is quiet in Brooksville”;³³ on February 5, 1879, the same newspaper noted that “the night shooters have been quiet for few weeks. . . . [W]e hope it continues.”³⁴

In a November 1879 letter to the editor of the *Tallahassee Weekly Floridian*, a correspondent attempted to rebut the negative press about the county by touting the great agricultural opportunities in Hernando and its bountiful harvests of fruits and vegetables. Near the end of the letter, however, a telling reference to local political ideology appears: “Politics are not discussed much, though, when the time comes, this county as of yore will be found in the right place with her usual [Democratic] majority.”³⁵

²⁷ “Outrage,” *Sunland Tribune*, January 25, 1878.

²⁸ *Ocala Banner*, January 27, 1878.

²⁹ “Death of Hernando Sheriff,” *Sunland Tribune*, March 15, 1879.

³⁰ “Incendiary in Hernando,” *Tallahassee Weekly Floridian*, May 6, 1879; “\$2000 Reward,” *Sunland Tribune*, May 17, 1879.

³¹ “County Judge of Hernando Killed,” *Sunland Tribune*, June 5, 1879; “Hernando County,” *Sunland Tribune*, June 12, 1879.

³² “That Mass Meeting,” *Sunland Tribune*, September 1, 1877; “Hernando County,” *Sunland Tribune*, June 12, 1879.

³³ “Anclote Items,” *Sunland Tribune*, July 27, 1878.

³⁴ “Brooksville Items,” *Sunland Tribune*, February 5, 1879.

³⁵ “Correspondent to the Floridian,” *Tallahassee Weekly Floridian*, December 16, 1879.

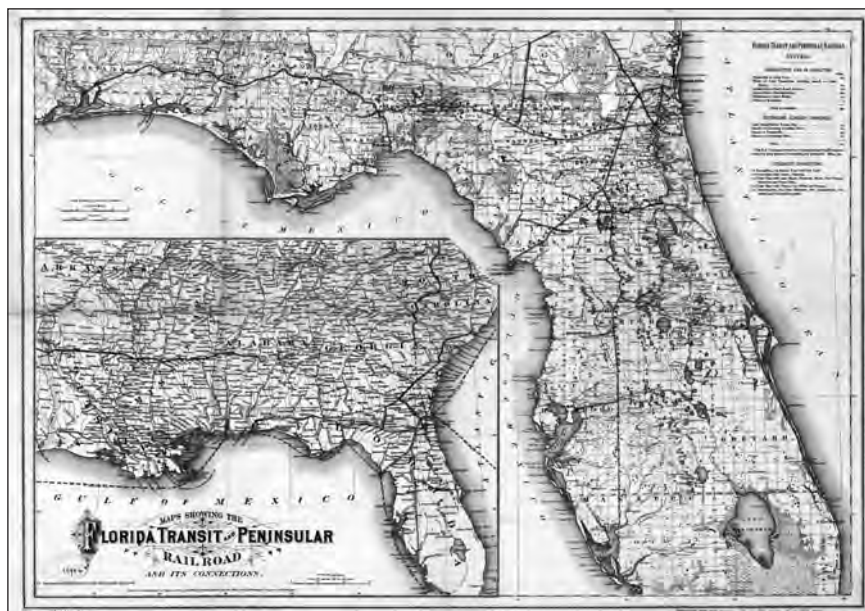
During the early 1880s, a number of similar letters were sent to the editors of various area newspapers, extolling the positive aspects of the county and encouraging immigration to the area. Unfortunately, these letters stood in stark contrast to the continued news reports of violence within the county. According to the press, more murders were committed in Hernando County than in any other county in the state. A *New York Times* article reported that five murders had been committed during a single three-week period in July 1881, adding: "There is scarcely a week that passes but what some sort of crime is committed in that county. There appears to be a dreadful fascination, with the people of that locality, both white and black, in the taking of human life."³⁶

In 1885, the revised state constitution of Florida restored citizens' right to elect local county officials, marking a period of retrenchment in Hernando County. For the next seventy-five years, the white Democratic Party would maintain total control of local elections due in part to the systematic repression of African Americans and their loss of voting rights, coupled with minimal population growth. During this time, few Republicans ran for public office, and virtually all local elections were settled in the primary election. This lasted until 1967, when two Republican members of the county commission and one school board member were elected as a result of the sizeable post-World War II growth in population, consisting mostly of Republican-leaning northerners.

During the early 1880s, a number of letters to the editors of newspapers appeared, both in the state and throughout the country, touting the positive aspects of immigrating to Hernando County, and the county's offer of free town lots for anyone willing to build a business began to pay off. The county grew in population, although its economic growth and development continued to be hampered by its lack of railroads. In late 1885, the Brooksville Railroad Association formed to promote the construction of a rail line to Brooksville. The Florida Southern Railroad connected with Brooksville by way of Ocala and Leesburg, using a one-way spur line from Croom Junction to Brooksville. The arrival of the train began to strengthen the local economy as the lumber, citrus, rock mining, and livestock industries became more profitable. One of the most prominent lumbermen was Dr. Howell Tyson Lykes, who began his empire in the cedar business. His son Fred recalled, "I've seen many as five or six thousand cedar logs piled upright in front of our house."³⁷ Dr. Lykes's sister Mary Matilda married Dr. Sheldon Stringer, a well-known physician who began his medical practice in Hillsborough County before relocating to Brooksville. Their son Frederick Lykes Stringer, a Brooksville attorney, legislator, and circuit judge, would become prominent in Hernando political affairs in the early twentieth century.

³⁶ *New York Times*, July 29, 1881; *Sunland Tribune*, July 21, 1881.

³⁷ "Old-Timers Meet Brooksville, Florida 1947," audio recording, transcribed by Roger R. Landers, 2009, Hernando Regional Library, Brooksville.



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

This 1882 map of Florida shows the size of Hernando County before it was divided into three separate counties. Note, too, the planned Florida Transit and Peninsular Railroad running down the peninsula, with a spur line to Brooksville and a terminus at Tampa, plus an extension to Charlotte Harbor.

As the population grew in the northern and southern parts of the county, pressure mounted to divide the county into smaller units. Three issues fueled this proposal: the inconvenient distance residents had to travel to conduct county business; the almost total domination of elected office by those living in Brooksville; and new residents' desire to distance themselves from the county's violent reputation. In June 1887, the Florida legislature approved an act dividing Hernando County into Citrus, Hernando, and Pasco Counties. Dade City became the county seat of the new Pasco County, with Mannsfield, and later Inverness, filling that role for Citrus County. With the division, Hernando became the smallest in land area of the three new counties.³⁸

The smaller Hernando County began moving into the twentieth century. Between 1890 and 1910, at least seventeen new communities developed around the large lumber mills, turpentine stills, and phosphate mines. At its zenith, Centralia, the best-known of the lumber communities, had a population of 1,500 and produced 100,000 board feet of lumber daily. Despite its economic growth, Hernando County's

³⁸ Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census Population of Florida, 1910.

population growth lagged behind that of Citrus and Pasco Counties, and when the supply of raw material needed to support the mills was exhausted, most of the related communities ceased to exist.³⁹ Within a few years following the division, Pasco County had three incorporated cities, with five more by 1930. Citrus County had one incorporated city in 1905, adding a second in 1917. Brooksville, incorporated in 1880, remains the only incorporated city in Hernando County.

During this era, an ill-fated effort was made to heal old North-South wounds. In August 1887, a group of Hernando County Civil War veterans organized to “demonstrate civility, healing and understand within the community.” Twelve former Confederate and three former Union soldiers met and adopted by-laws for their association. The organization extended honorary memberships to a number of former general officers and national political leaders from both the North and the South.⁴⁰ Within two years, however, the United Veterans of the Blue and Gray was superseded by the United Confederate Veterans (UCV) and, in Pasco County, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). So ended the bold attempt to promote healing in the community. The Hernando camp of the UCV became the third organized in Florida. In 1896, women of Brooksville organized Chapter #71 of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the fourth chapter in the state. On June 3, 1916, the birthday of Jefferson Davis, Chapter #71 erected a monument in memory of the “Lost Cause” on the southwest corner of the courthouse lawn. An estimated audience of three thousand, including a military band from Tampa, attended the unveiling of the only such monument in Citrus, Pasco, and Hernando Counties.⁴¹

In the years between 1880 and 1930, Florida recorded the second-highest per-capita rate of lynching among the states in the South.⁴² Charles S. Johnson’s 1941 study of recorded lynchings revealed that from 1900 to 1930, Hernando County had the highest per-capita rate of lynching in the state and more than eight times that of Florida itself.⁴³ Former City of Brooksville police chief W. D. “Bill” Cobb Jr., son of Sheriff W. D. Cobb, recalled five lynchings between 1920 and 1925. The local newspapers reported two additional incidents. One was the 1929 lynching of Buster Allen, an accused rapist who was jailed in Hillsborough County for safety. Six days later, a group of “Hernando deputies” with a release order took custody of Allen, brought him to the Croom area of Hernando, and hung him. The release document

³⁹ *Thirteenth Census of the United States*, vol. 2, *Population*, Reports by States for Counties, *Fourth Census of the State of Florida*, 1915, 16.

⁴⁰ Record Book and By-Laws of the United Veterans of the Blue and Grey Association, 1887, Special Collection, George Smathers Library, University of Florida, Gainesville.

⁴¹ “The Florida District,” *Confederate Veteran* 24, 516, 517.

⁴² Paul Ortiz, *Emancipation Betrayed: The Hidden History of Black Organizing and White Violence in Florida from Reconstruction to the Bloody Election of 1920* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 270.

⁴³ Charles S. Johnson, *Statistical Atlas of Southern Counties, 1900-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 77.

presented in Hillsborough was forged and written on stolen stationery, according to Sheriff Cobb. The grand jury in Hernando found no "evidence for indictment."⁴⁴

An unpublished 1923 photograph of the locally strong second Klan (1915-44), taken on the south lawn of the courthouse, depicts ninety mostly hooded members. The photograph is clearly intended to emphasize the Klan's law-abiding nature. The costumed members carry signs such as: "WE stand for clean politics"; "WE assist local law officers in performing their official duties"; "Jurors do your duty"; and "Bootleggers beware."⁴⁵ One older resident stated, "the Klan was likened to a civic organization, and if you were not a member, you supported their position." He also reported that it was not unusual for the Klan to enter a church service in full regalia and make a donation to the building fund.⁴⁶ The Klan's emphasis on law and order is paradoxical in a community unwilling to accord its citizens the protection of the law against vigilante violence.

In "Bootlegging in the Backwater: Prohibition and the Depression in Hernando County, Florida," Richard Cofer describes the production of moonshine and smuggling of liquor as a new industry and an economic boon for locals. Almost everyone was touched by this industry. According to Cofer, "the entire county's social and political structure was infused with the illegal liquor trade." One old-timer quoted by Cofer said, "there were so damn many moonshiners in Hernando County they had to sell to each other to stay in business."⁴⁷

In 1922, William D. Cobb, the son of John P. Cobb, a former Confederate colonel and former Hernando tax assessor, defeated Sheriff W. E. Law, a member of one of the oldest families in Hernando. W. D. Cobb Sr. held to the belief, "sometimes to a fault," that "a friend was a friend no matter what."⁴⁸

In December 1931, a heinous crime occurred that would eventually bring Hernando County to the realization that its "code of silence" must be broken. In the late 1920s, the county's heavy trafficking in illegal liquor brought with it allegations of violence, lawlessness, and corruption. Brooksville attorney Herbert Smithson became involved in a push to investigate these allegations. As the investigation progressed, in June 1931, Governor Doyle E. Carlton, "in the interest of the people of Hernando County," transferred a local circuit judge, Frederick Lykes Stringer, to the Alachua County circuit.⁴⁹ Governor Carlton appointed Judge John U. Bird and District Attorney J. R. Kelly for the October session. Before the session, Smithson had

⁴⁴ Dan DeWitt, "Past Pain Still Present: A Study of Recorded Lynching in Hernando County Reveals It Had the Highest Per Capita Rate of Violence against Blacks in the United States," *Hernando Times*, *St. Petersburg Times*, July 5, 2005.

⁴⁵ Haskell, "Brooksville Klan," unpublished photograph, November 25, 1923 (author's collection).

⁴⁶ Monroe A. Coogler Jr., conversations with the author, May 2009.

⁴⁷ Richard Cofer, "Bootleggers in the Backwater: Prohibition of the Depression in Hernando County Florida," *Tampa Bay History* 1, no. 1 (Spring/Summer): 17-23.

⁴⁸ William D. Cobb III, conversations with the author, October 2008.

⁴⁹ Doyle E. Carlton, Governor, June 6, 1931, Resolution State of Florida, Series 13, Carton 9, Florida State Archives.

late-night meetings with several unknown men at his home and told his neighbor, William R. Bailey, that he feared for his life.⁵⁰

On the evening of October 12, Smithson met with Judge Bird and District Attorney Kelly at the Tangerine Hotel. Smithson advised them that in addition to corruption, he wished to charge Sheriff Cobb for the December 2, 1930, fatal shooting of his friend and business partner John Warren Springstead.⁵¹ Springstead had been involved in a protracted domestic dispute with his own wife, who was reported to be living at the home of Sheriff and Mrs. Cobb. Judge Bird left the meeting to inform the clerk that he had more business with the grand jury. Returning to the hotel before 8:00 p.m., Judge Bird had a brief exchange with Kelly and Smithson and then retired to his room. Shortly thereafter, Lewis Finley came to the hotel lobby asking to speak with Smithson.⁵² After a few minutes, Smithson returned visibly shaken and told Kelly that his life had been threatened, saying, "They are going to get me tonight," and "they had put a friend on the spot." Kelly offered to let Smithson stay in his hotel room for the night, but Smithson refused, indicating that he must warn his friend. Just before 9:00 p.m., Smithson left the dining room, met briefly with some acquaintances in the hotel lobby, then walked to his car, where he was gunned down.

Judge Bird commented, "that [was the] hottest spot I was ever in," and District Attorney Kelly admitted that after the murder, he "got out of town as fast as [he] could go."⁵³ Many residents were too frightened to aid in the investigation. The *Brooksville Journal* maintained that the shooting of Smithson was related to moonshine and liquor smuggling.⁵⁴ For nine days, the coroner's jury heard testimony from twenty-one witnesses, but the jury failed to identify the perpetrator. Brooksville resident Frances Lingle Sibert recalled the night Smithson died: "We lived not a block away—I remember the gun blast. . . . [W]ithin an hour my father was asked to serve on the Coroner's Jury. My father was [always] very heartsick about the continued activities of the KKK in the county and mother persuaded him not to serve."⁵⁵

Although the Smithson family offered a reward of \$1,900 for information, and the governor appointed a special prosecutor, L. Grady Burton of Nineteenth Judicial Circuit, to investigate the murder, the case went cold. Almost a year and a half later, one Brooksville citizen, James Cager Rogers, began to brag that he knew who had killed Smithson. On the night of May 5, 1932, Rogers returned home very intoxicated; Sheriff Cobb was summoned, and following an altercation in the dining room of the Rogers home, Rogers was mortally wounded.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ William R. Bailey to Sholtz, Correspondence of Governor (Hernando County), Series 278, Carton 55, File Folder 6, Department of State, Tallahassee.

⁵¹ "Springstead Dairy Granted Charter" *Brooksville Journal*, February 1, 1930.

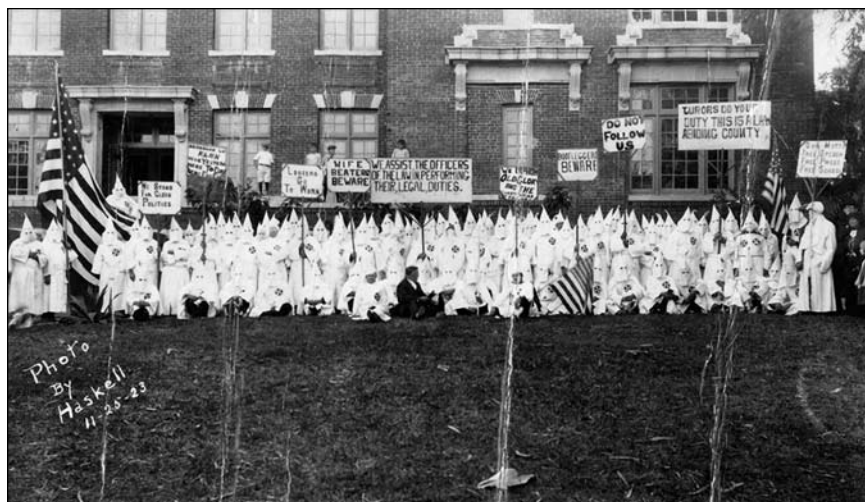
⁵² L. Grady Burton to Sholtz, Correspondence of Governor (Hernando County), Series 278, Carton 55, File Folder 6, Department of State, Tallahassee.

⁵³ Algernon Keathley to Sholtz, Correspondence of Governor (Hernando County), Series 278, Carton 55, File Folder 6, Department of State, Tallahassee.

⁵⁴ "Grand Jury Charges Three Men with Killing Smithson," *Brooksville Journal*, April 14, 1935.

⁵⁵ Frances L. Sibert, *The Era of Main Street* (Brooksville, Fla.: privately published, 2004), 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 73; "Sheriff Shoots J. Cager Rogers," *Brooksville Sun*, May 6, 1932; "Cobb Is Exonerated in Fatal Shooting of J. Cager Rogers," *Brooksville Journal*, May 5, 1932.



Courtesy of R.G. Martinez Publisher of *Old Brooksville in Photos and Stories*

Klan Demonstration south side of Hernando County Courthouse, ca.1923.

The rival newspapers the *Brooksville Journal* and the *Brooksville Sun* often took opposing views of many political issues. While Editor Edwin Russell of the *Journal* often reported a minimum of information about such questionable conspiracies and violent acts, Algernon Keathley, editor of the *Brooksville Sun*, would not let the community forget the “gangland-type crimes” perpetrated in Brooksville. Keathley wrote an annual editorial calling for the continued investigation and prosecution of Smithson’s murder.⁵⁷ The morning following the publication of his October 6, 1933, editorial, a hangman’s noose was found dangling over the door of the *Brooksville Sun* office. This prompted Keathley to send an impassioned letter to Governor David Sholtz, reminding the governor that several of his predecessors had called for an outside investigation into violence during the last ten years, as all too often the local investigators were themselves members of “the gang” in question. He asked Governor Sholtz not to share his letter with anyone for fear of reprisal.⁵⁸ Sholtz responded immediately, once again assigning L. Grady Burton as his special prosecutor. Less than one week later, Keathley published another editorial asserting that the “lawless element” controlling the county must be held accountable for their crimes, and that despite the “hush-mouth” code of silence within the community, the *Sun* would not be intimidated.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ *Brooksville Sun*, May 6, 1932.

⁵⁸ Keathley to Sholtz, Correspondence of Governor, Series 278, Carton 55, File Folder 6, Department of State, Tallahassee.

⁵⁹ “Editorial—Muzzle the Press,” *Brooksville Sun*, October 13, 1933.

In March 1934, G. R. Ellis, a member of the local “establishment,” wrote a letter to Governor Sholtz in which he tried to deflect reports that had “given Brooksville a bad reputation,” referring to writings by Keathley, who, Ellis wrote, was “known as the agitator.” Ellis continued: “I will tell you that we have had some very unfortunate things here . . . but nothing more than has happened in any other community. . . . [E]verything has been fully investigated. . . . [O]ur officials have gone to the bottom of every crime. . . . [O]ur officials have the respect and the confidence of the people. . . . [W]hen anyone says that investigations have been whitewashed . . . and crime has been covered up and ignored, [that] is nothing more or less than a most damnable lie.”⁶⁰

After more than a year of investigation, Burton reported to the governor that he and “undercover agent” Polk County constable Frank Williams had met with witnesses concerning the case and discovered the identity of the person who shot Smithson. He was therefore confident in his ability to prosecute James Kirk (the driver), Gordon Mondon (the front-seat passenger), and Henry L. Croft (the shooter, originally from Citrus County, then living in Hillsborough) as those responsible for the murder.⁶¹ In January 1935, Burton and Neil Law, who had replaced Sheriff Cobb, traveled to Milledgeville, Georgia, to interview witness Lewis Finley, then an inmate in the Georgia State Prison.⁶² In a 1935 letter to Governor Sholtz, Brooksville resident William R. Bailey, a witness at the coroner’s inquest, stated that Smithson had been in the process of filing conspiracy charges against Sheriff W. D. Cobb in relation to the death of John Warren Springstead, and the conspiracy charge was “the motive for the killing of Herbert Smithson.”⁶³

In April 1935, the *Brooksville Sun* reported that the investigation of corruption and the shooting of John Warren Springstead could not be considered separately.⁶⁴ On April 13, 1935, James Kirk, Gordon Mondon, and Henry L. Croft were charged with



Courtesy of the Highlands Historical Society.

L. Grady Burton (1893-1981) State Attorney
19th District.

⁶⁰ G. R. Ellis to Sholtz, Correspondence of Governor

⁶¹ Burton to Sholtz, Correspondence of Governor, Series 278, Carton 63, File Folder 3, Florida State Library, Tallahassee.

⁶² Neil Law Jr., interview by the author, September 2008.

⁶³ Bailey to Sholtz, Correspondence of Governor, Series 278, Carton 63, File Folder 3, Florida State Library, Tallahassee.

⁶⁴ “‘Smithson a Noble Citizen,’ Said State Attorney Kelly; He Wanted to Save Another Man’s Life,” *Brooksville Sun*, April 19, 1935.

the murder of Smithson.⁶⁵ As anticipation of the coming trial grew, the *Brooksville Sun* chided the citizens of Hernando for being “hush-mouthed,” saying that “politics is the strongest thing in this county, or has been, and politics, mixed up with liquor, put the poor misguided attorney [Smithson] on the spot.”⁶⁶ At the next term of the 1936 circuit court, material witness James Sassaman was hospitalized in Alliance, Ohio, and therefore absent, forcing Burton to ask for a continuance until the fall term.⁶⁷ Though the continuance was granted and the trial scheduled for the fall term, the trial never took place; the murder of Smithson remains unsolved.⁶⁸ Gordon Mondon, one of those charged in the shooting, told his son before his death that “Smithson needed killin’. I didn’t kill him, but I know who did.” But Gordon Monson never revealed the killer’s name.⁶⁹

In 1935, Prosecutor Burton indicted former Sheriff William D. Cobb for the December 2, 1930, shooting of Springstead. Cobb stood trial in October 1936, and the jury, after deliberating for only thirty minutes, acquitted him.⁷⁰

From 1931 to 1935, incidents that suggested collusion and mutual support among some elected county officials and others became evident. In October 1932, the *Brooksville Sun* reported that Deputy Sheriff Gordon Mondon and his brother, Chief Deputy D. G. Mondon, had both been charged on federal warrants for bribery in the illegal liquor trade. The investigations were said to have begun in March 1931.⁷¹ Interestingly, the *Sun’s* rival paper, the *Brooksville Journal*, did not carry the story. Harry Mickler, Hernando clerk of the circuit court, and other prominent businessmen posted the two deputies’ bonds. The outcome of their arrests remains unreported.

The Democrats’ primary election of 1932 was hotly contested. The election for sheriff pitted W. D. Cobb Sr. against Neil Law Sr., a former special agent for the federal Department of Revenue and a one-time deputy for his father. Law, the son of former sheriff W. E. Law, unseated Cobb. The 1932 elections were tainted with ballot tampering in four precincts, and only the *Brooksville Sun* carried the story. A year later, as Lillie Sewell, registrar (supervisor of elections), walked to the courthouse, her neighbor Judge Stringer offered her a ride. In the course of conversation, Stringer asked her about the 1932 ballot tampering. She replied, “You should ask Gordon Mondon.” Within an hour, D. G. Mondon, Gordon’s brother, arrived at her office and verbally threatened her over the accusation. In another incident, also involving the judge, local minister E. B. McGill was slapped during a heated argument with

⁶⁵ “Grand Jury Charges Three Men with Killing Smithson,” *Brooksville Sun*, April 13, 1935.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ *State of Florida vs. Henry Croft, Gordon Mondon and James Kirk Defendants*, 1936, Miscellanea File, Clerk of Court, Hernando County.

⁶⁸ Hernando County Circuit Court Criminal Docket 1935-37.

⁶⁹ Tom Mondon, conversation with author, September 3, 2009, Brooksville, Fla.

⁷⁰ “Jury Acquits Former Sheriff W.D. Cobb after Short Deliberation,” *Brooksville Sun*, November 13, 1936.

⁷¹ “Hernando Deputies Arrested on Bribery Charge,” *Brooksville Sun*, October 14, 1932.

former sheriff Cobb. When McGill asked Judge Stringer for advice about the incident, Judge Stringer replied that McGill “should drop it—Cobb was now satisfied.”⁷² Such was the continuing lawless nature of the community.

The county populace began to speak out at the ballot box. Most, if not all, of the old-time politicians had been replaced by the mid-1940s. Growth and development in the county remained very slow during the two decades between 1930 and 1950, 14 and 18 percent, respectively. The correlation between Hernando County’s delayed population growth and development with its long history of violence publicized across state and national media can only be a matter of conjecture. By the 1960s, though, change came to the community.

In 1966, the Mackle Brothers Corporation purchased several thousand acres in the western portion of the county. Within ten years, the population of the corporation’s developed community had reached more than six thousand residents. Other changes included an end of the local financial control by Hernando State Bank when First National Bank at Brooksville (1966) and First American Bank (1969) opened in west Hernando County. The *Brooksville Sun* and the *Brooksville Journal* merged in 1959 as the *Sun Journal*; in 1965, Jim Talley, a “Brooksville outsider,” purchased the newspaper.⁷³ The public schools fully desegregated in 1969, though not without incident. When black students began a protest of perceived unfair treatment at the local high school, the local community and school leaders reacted—some positively through the ministerial associations and student leadership teams. Some negative reactions included the arrest and three-month confinement of NAACP leader David Reese on a traffic citation and the psychological intimidation of a black student leader by sheriff’s deputies.

In 1993, when a white student was killed in a fight with a black student on a Saturday evening, fear of a major racial uprising seized Brooksville. Again, clearer heads prevailed, and the event passed with little notice, although the occasional rumor of racial tension at some schools still prompts many parents to keep their students at home.

The fears of “old times” still haunt many longtime county families. It is said that young lawyers and other newcomers who will be involved with the general public are often admonished “to take care with idle conversation about old Hernando families.”

Hernando County, the southern tip of antebellum Florida plantations, saw the violent side of postwar Florida Reconstruction. In the ten years that followed Democratic Redemption, Hernando gained statewide and national notoriety for continued violence that seemed to become an accepted way of life. The postwar loss

⁷² Keathley to Sholtz, March 6, 1934, Correspondence of Governor (Hernando County), Series 278, Carton 55, Folder 6, Department of State, Tallahassee.

⁷³ Richard J. Stanaback, *A History of Hernando County 1840-1976*, Bicentennial edition (Brooksville, Fla.: Action '76 Steering Committee, 1976), 235, 105-22, 171-75.

of most of the “cool heads”—the former leading families—left Hernando guided by the “under educated . . . the most difficult to reconstruct” and new immigrants. As the roles and relationships changed between former masters and slaves, Hernando became entangled with the need to maintain its perceived Old South ideals. The resulting lawlessness, whether related to race, personal enmity, or inadequate or nonexistent law enforcement, began a spiral into the abyss of a culture of lawlessness sanctioned by community officials. The negative characterization of the county in the press further limited future development. This, coupled with a tendency to minimize lawlessness and violent local affairs, produced an entrenched environment filled with a fear of retaliation for speaking out against those in political and financial control. Into the 1930s, Brooksville continued to be known as a volatile, “violent” place.

With the rapid population growth (consistently over 50 percent growth in population every ten years from 1950 - 2000) and a shift in the local political and financial power structure in the mid-1960s, the county moved slowly and often unwillingly from its traditional and difficult past. At a 2004 gathering, longtime County Judge Monroe W. Treiman (1948-76) remarked: “The day I qualified for office, Henry C. Mickler, an old-time politician and former Clerk of Court, gave me some advice: ‘If a young fellow wants to stay in office [in this county] . . . [y]ou have to have two qualities, a thick hide and a short memory.’” Treiman, speaking of his experiences as a county judge, remarked that his mother had carried a pistol in her apron pocket most of her life. The judge, when pressed to reflect on the violent history of the past one hundred years, simply referred to it as “the recent unpleasantness.”⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Monroe W. Treiman, “A County Judge Remembers,” presentation at the Old Hernando History Roundtable, February 19, 2004, Brooksville, Fla.

G ENE BEACH, FLORIDA'S WEST COAST RENAISSANCE MAN

BY TOM ADAMICH

*I*n descriptions of the concept of “art,” the terms “movement” and “motion” often feature prominently. Movement and motion are synonymous with Gene Beach. Beach was an auto-racing pioneer, a self-taught architect, and the quintessential visual artist. This essay details Beach’s accomplishments. Also included in Beach’s colorful story is information about the people associated with both Beach and the significant cultural and social movements that took place on Florida’s West Coast during the 1960s and 1970s. The abstract impressionist artists Jasper Johns and William Pachner, the theater pioneer Francis Wilson, and the noted educational psychologist and women’s rights activist Dore Beach (who was also Beach’s second wife) all play a part.

Early Years

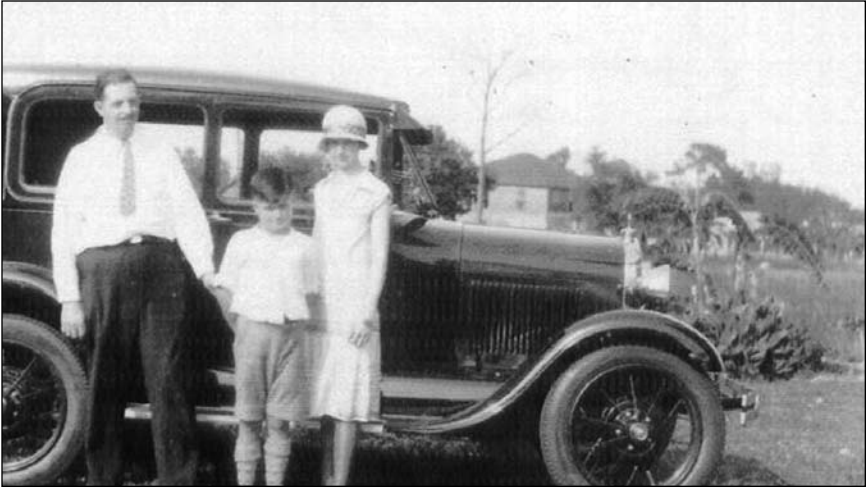
Born in Battle Creek, Michigan, on November 17, 1919, Eugene Hamilton Beach learned at an early age how to creatively engage his curious mind to entertain himself.¹ Beach was the only child of traveling chefs (Alexander Hamilton Beach and Gladys Beatrice Cook Beach) who traversed the East Coast working at such prominent resorts as New York’s Blue Lake Mountain Resort.² Their winter employment brought them to Florida’s West Coast in the 1920s, which was rapidly becoming a popular area for wealthy winter residents. Many of the resorts catering to this group were located in St. Petersburg.³ Two examples are the Jungle Country Club Hotel, developed and built by Walter Fuller in 1925 and now the Admiral

¹ Eugene H. Beach, funeral card (source: Dore Beach).

² Dore Beach, interview by the author, April 13, 2010.

³ Dore Beach, e-mail to the author, April 23, 2010.

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Courtesy of Dore Beach

Gene Beach poses with his parents by their car in this 1927 photograph. The Beach Family led a very nomadic lifestyle during Gene's early years.

Farragut Academy;⁴ and the Roylat Hotel, developed and built by “Handsome” Jack Taylor and now home to the Stetson University College of Law. The following description of the Roylat project from the *St. Petersburg Evening Independent* suggests why the Beaches may have considered Florida's West Coast a prime area to work: “The Roylat will not be the usual type of hotel. . . . It will be a rambling group of buildings around a large court, or as the Spanish call it, ‘Plaza Mayor,’ resembling a medieval Spanish town of the fourteenth and fifteenth century with towers, turrets, balconies of wood and masonry.”⁵

Since children of nomadic parents often move to the next location before they can develop real friendships, Beach spent hours alone drawing and designing. According to his wife, Dore, art and design came naturally to Beach. In Clearwater, where the Beach family eventually settled, Beach won an art contest at North Ward Elementary, where he depicted a detailed scene from the famous story “Hans Brinker.” Dore also notes that Beach spent an entire winter alone at the New York Museum of Natural History exploring and examining the exhibits while his parents worked in a posh New York hotel.⁶

In Clearwater, the family built a modest Sears Catalog–type factory home

⁴ Jerry Blizin, “Unforgettable Fuller,” *St. Petersburg Times*, December 13, 2009, www.tampabay.com/features/humaninterest/developer-walter-fuller-wore-many-hats-colorfully/1058133.

⁵ [“Proposed Hotel Roylat for Pasadena Estates”], *St. Petersburg Evening Independent*, January 3, 1925, http://www.tampabay.com/google_archive/search.php.

⁶ Dore Beach, interview by the author, April 13, 2010.

at 2011 S. Osceola Ave.⁷ Alexander and Gladys Beach had been working at the Washburn Inn, which, according to Clearwater historian Mike Sanders, was renamed the Grey Moss Inn in 1933. Owned by the John Welsh family until the early 1980s, the Washburn/Grey Moss Inn was Clearwater's main hotel for prominent guests until the larger, nearly twelve-story Ft. Harrison Hotel was built across the street in 1926.⁸ The Grey Moss was later razed to make room for what is now the Church of Scientology's Super Power Building (a construction project started in 1998 and halted in 2003).⁹ In many respects, Beach's strong desire to become a self-taught architect may have originated from the nomadic lifestyle of his early years—from what Dore refers to as “not having a home.”¹⁰ Of course, Beach would not begin to create homes for himself and others until after he married for the first time, attended the University of Florida, and served in World War II.¹¹

Gainesville and the War Years

In 1938, Beach began to study industrial engineering at the University of Florida and participated in ROTC. According to Hugh I. Kleinpeter in “Of Begra's, Beach's, and Grady Sports Racer,” Beach, like many college students during wartime, was called to active duty shortly before graduation. His initial assignment as a first lieutenant in an artillery unit led to a transfer to tank destroyer development duty in Texas and, subsequently, to Army Air Corps flight school, for which he was stationed at Andrews Air Force Base outside of Washington, D.C.¹²

While Beach was on a June 2, 1944, flight training mission, the engine in his P-47 fighter jet quit at an altitude of 1,500 feet. Beach was forced to eject at less than 500 feet from the ground (due to the rapid descent of the aircraft) and broke his back upon impact.¹³ According to Dore, Beach spent nearly two years encased in a full-body cast at Washington, D.C.'s Walter Reed Hospital recovering from his injuries. The experience proved to be a motivational period of reflection and mental development for Beach:

There is no doubt in my mind (as a psychologist) that Gene's WWII injury gave him the motivation to prove (to himself) that he could have a “normal” life. He was married [Beach's first marriage] and had one child before the injury. During his stay at Walter Reed Hospital, he saw many amputees and men with very serious burns that were

⁷ Ibid.. The home still exists; however, the model type and catalog number for the home have not been identified.

⁸ Mike Sanders, interview by the author, April 23, 2010.

⁹ “Super Power Building,” Wikipedia.

¹⁰ Dore Beach, interview by the author, April 13, 2010.

¹¹ Beach married Lillian Speights in 1942; they divorced in 1955.

¹² Hugh I. Kleinpeter, “Of Begra's Beach's and Grady Sports Racer: Sports Racing Cars Designed and Built In the 1960s by Gene Beach and Henry Grady,” *Victory Lane* 10, no. 6 (September 1995): 44-47, reprinted at Vintage Sports Car Racing, <http://www.virhistory.com/beach/beach/mag/v195.htm>.

¹³ Ibid., 44.



Courtesy of Dore Beach

Beach is pictured in this 1935 photograph at age 16 in a racing boat he built with his father.

worse off than he was. He was determined not to spend his life in a wheelchair. During his rehabilitation, he had occupational therapy and he learned how to work with metal (silver) and leather. When he returned to Clearwater he opened a small leather goods shop with his father. In his later years he made me beautiful gold jewelry.¹⁴

Thus, Beach's metal/leather crafts appear to have provided him the opportunity to develop mechanical skills that would, combined with his penchant for design and art, prepare him to become both a renowned architect and automobile racing engineer.

Following his release from rehabilitation, Beach returned to the University of Florida and obtained a bachelor of industrial engineering degree in July 1946.¹⁵ After graduation, Beach returned to the Washington, D.C., area and service in the Army Air Corps as a part of his treatment (and to fulfill an ROTC reserve requirement). After receiving a comprehensive medical evaluation and completing his reserve duties, Beach left the military in 1947, receiving the rank of captain. He was formally discharged on May 23, 1953.¹⁶

Beach returned to Clearwater to work with his father in a small leather goods shop. Beach's demonstrated talent for designing and creating visual images (coupled with the mental toughness and determination he developed while in traction) would prove to be the catalyst for what would become his most noteworthy and celebrated contributions—as an architect and race-car designer.

¹⁴ Dore Beach, e-mail to the author, April 27, 2010.

¹⁵ Dore Beach, e-mail to the author, April 29, 2010.

¹⁶ Dore Beach, e-mail to the author, April 30, 2010.

In Clearwater, Beach sought to assimilate back into mainstream life. His first architectural job was as a draftsman expeditor for a Clearwater-based building contract firm, where he reviewed and edited basic structural plans and drawings. This experience led Beach to accept a more profitable job with Juice Industries in Dunedin, a building-construction firm that specialized in erecting structures for Florida's iconic citrus industry. His task there was to design processing plants and storage warehouses for frozen orange juice, which was then a recent innovation.¹⁷ While the original process of creating frozen orange juice concentrate was developed by Dr. J. E. Crump of the United States Department of Agriculture in Winter Haven during the 1920s, in 1944, three men—Dr. L. G. MacDowell, Dr. Edwin L. Moore, and C. D. Atkins—developed an improved process, which was patented in 1948.¹⁸

Although Beach's talent for visual design proved useful during his Juice Industries years, designing processing plants and storage warehouses offered him limited opportunity to express his multifaceted artistic ability. However, Beach took what he learned at Juice Industries and applied that to his next goal, one that would require the mental toughness and determination he had developed during his recovery—to become an architect.

Midcentury Modern

Dore Beach recalls the self-imposed "architecture curriculum" Beach pursued: "While working at Juice Industries, Gene knew he really wanted to pursue architecture. He remembered from his University of Florida days that a bookstore in Gainesville had an extensive collection of architecture books. He traveled back there several times, bought a number of books, and began to teach himself the fundamental concepts of architectural design."¹⁹ As Beach progressed in his architectural education, he became knowledgeable about a number of important architectural styles and their significant creators. One style influenced Beach to the point that it became his signature style—the rapidly developing "midcentury modern."

Defined as the influence of modern design on architecture and urban development from 1933 to 1965 (and identified by a phrase coined by Cara Greenberg in 1983 in her book *Mid-Century Modern: Furniture of the 1950s*), the midcentury modern style has been aligned closely with Frank Lloyd Wright's principles of organic architecture—which include a strong awareness of the land and natural surroundings as influences on design decisions—as well as with elements of the International and Bauhaus styles.²⁰ Structurally, midcentury modern architecture features the use of post-and-beam design, which eliminates support walls in favor of incorporating open spaces, and the use of walls that appear to be made of glass.²¹

¹⁷ Eugene H. Beach, "Profile: Eugene H. Beach," unpublished document, 1993.

¹⁸ Vitamix Corporation, 2010, "History Notes from Frozen Orange Juice Concentrate," www.practicallyedible.com/edible.nsf/pages/frozenorangejuiceconcentrate#ixzz0w0zIHLuC.

¹⁹ Dore Beach, interview by the author, April 13, 2010.

²⁰ "Mid-Century Modern," Wikipedia.

²¹ Ibid.

Midcentury modern architecture has also been referred to as the “California style.” As Beach began his architectural studies, one of his great influences, according to Dore, was Gordon Drake, a California-based architect and leading proponent of the California style whose promising career ended when he was killed in a skiing accident in 1952. Drake designed such notable homes as Edward Kennedy’s northern California home and his signature “unit house,” which became one of the foundations for the development of both the California style and, later, Sarasota modern (or the Sarasota school of architecture).²²

Gordon Drake and the California Style of Architecture

Gordon Drake, according to a biographical article published in 1952, was a prolific architect who designed nearly sixty homes and six commercial buildings during his short career.²³ According to fellow landscape architect Douglas Baylis, an associate: “He [Drake] would work fifteen or sixteen hours a day. . . . We were all starry-eyed, but Gordon was the most starry-eyed of us all.”²⁴

Drake’s aforementioned “unit house” demonstrates what are considered the four key principles of what became known as the California style:

- outdoor living
- modular structure
- the architectural use of light
- precise elegance²⁵

Drake’s interpretation of outdoor living included the use of multiple terraces that could be adapted as the family changed (for example, as children were added, which would have been of special interest during the post–World War II baby boom).²⁶ His use of modular design promoted the benefits of including prefabrication and building integration into modern construction. In order to achieve this, strict use of discipline and order was incorporated—a departure from “rambling, close-to-nature” houses of earlier time periods. For example, the “unit house” design used a 3-foot dimensional standard (the width of a standard door plus frame) to enable a modular’s size to range from a one-room apartment to a two-bedroom house.²⁷

Drake made architectural use of natural light by including such light-gathering structural elements as clerestories, glass gable ends, translucent screens, and large walls made solely of plate glass.²⁸ These were supplemented by artificial light elements which were incorporated into the structural frame as means to accentuate a space’s direction or illuminate important structural patterns.²⁹ Beach’s designs and his

²² “Gordon Drake,” Archiplanet.

²³ Schulman, Julius. “Gordon Drake 1917-1952,” *House & Home*, March 1952, 95-103.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 95.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 96.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 98.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 100.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

impressionistic use of light, as influenced by Drake, include unique interpretations of Drake's light-enhancing vision (particularly those that maximize Florida's abundant sunshine).

As Beach developed his own architectural style, both his ability to analyze his surroundings and his own keen awareness of the visual once again became a dominant elements in his work. Beach brought the same skills and quality of attention to bear in learning about architecture that he had applied in his childhood study of the exhibits of the New York Museum of Science and Natural History. In so doing, he developed an apparent affinity for particular design elements as well as admiration for the leading architects who created and developed those genres.

The Sarasota School of Architecture/Sarasota Modern

While there is strong evidence that Gordon Drake's interpretation of the California style of architecture and thoughtful awareness of midcentury modern design elements and principles influenced Gene Beach's Florida West Coast architectural style, there is also important evidence that Beach contributed indirectly to the activities associated with the Sarasota school of architecture. Also referred to as "Sarasota modern," the Sarasota school of architecture is an interpretation of midcentury modern design that originated on Florida's West Coast and was centered in Sarasota. Generally active from 1941 to 1966, the Sarasota school architects followed both midcentury modern and the California style in its promotion of architecture responsive to climate and terrain.³⁰ Featuring the use of oversized sliding glass doors, large awnings/sunshades, walls of jalousie windows (movable parallel glass panels set in a frame that provided both ventilation and unobstructed views), and floating staircases (in multilevel examples), the Sarasota school of architecture consisted of several key figures, including Victor Lundy, Philip Hiss, Paul Rudolph, and Gene Leedy.³¹

Paul Rudolph was a protégé of Ralph Twitchell, who participated in the 1938 Works Progress Administration (WPA) Lido Casino project on nearby Siesta Key and was considered a follower of Frank Lloyd Wright.³² It was Rudolph (in partnership with Twitchell) who brought the residential designs of the Sarasota school to life in significant volume, designing and building experimental and speculative homes for family and friends. In 1952, Rudolph split from Twitchell and started his own firm. Later, Leedy joined Rudolph as one of his first employees; the pair took on larger projects, in addition to homes, including Sarasota High School and Sarasota City Hall.³³

One of the most notable residential examples of the Sarasota school was the Umbrella House. Designed by Hiss and Rudolph, the Umbrella House is

³⁰ "Sarasota School of Architecture," Wikipedia.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Andrew Weaving, *Sarasota Modern* (New York: Rizzoli, 2006), 14.

³³ Ibid., 15.

an interpretation of midcentury modern design elements and principles within a subtropical climate context.³⁴ According to the online “History of the Umbrella House,” the entire north and south exposures of the house were constructed of jalousie windows (to promote natural cooling from both the Gulf of Mexico and Sarasota Bay breezes), and the home was covered with a wooden trellis structure, which shaded both the home and the pool area—hence the use of the term “umbrella” to describe the dwelling.³⁵

The design elements of Beach’s numerous residential and commercial projects show the influence of the Sarasota school/Sarasota modern design elements, while remaining distinctively “Beach” in their function and theme. In addition, his sensitivity to both the desires of the client and to professionalism in client interaction enabled Beach to develop an impressive and unusual skill: according to Dore, “he could print and draw plans in reverse so clients sitting across the table from him could read them.”³⁶

Early Tampa Bay Designs

One of Beach’s early designs, a single-family residence, was located in Belleair, at 240 Garden Circle, and was known as “Seven Pines.” Recently listed for sale by a real-estate agent specializing in Sarasota school homes, “Seven Pines” is attributed to Beach in 1957.³⁷ The multilevel home remains true to the Sarasota school’s use of post-and-beam construction and includes terrazzo flooring, clerestory windows, and Ocala block walls (tan-colored concrete blocks that were often glazed and, in this instance, produced in Ocala—part of a network of Florida-based producers of concrete blocks whose unique colors, shapes, and designs were identifiable to the customer by the towns and cities where they were produced).³⁸ Also in accordance with the design precepts of Sarasota modern (and with Beach’s sensitivity to his surroundings) is the home’s use of large expanses of glass, which maximize the flow of light into the home and provide impressive views of the tropical landscape and gardens that surround the home.

Another early Beach building design was the North Greenwood Branch of the Clearwater Public Library. Opened in September 1962, the library, located on Palmetto Street (next door to what was the Pinellas High School), originally held fifteen thousand volumes and today includes the holdings of the Edward Allen Henry, Jr. Special Collection on Negro Culture and History.³⁹

³⁴ The Umbrella House, <http://www.umbrellahouse.com/history.html>

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Dore Beach, e-mail to the author, May 29, 2010.

³⁷ Amy Cook, “Home Tour: Mid-century Modern Beauty in Belleair, Fla.,” The Design File, <http://www.thedesignfile.net/thedesignfile/2009/12/home-tour-midcentury-beauty-in-bellaire-fla.html>.

³⁸ Robert McCarter, “Concrete Places in a Landscape of Illusions,” The Architecture of Robert Singer, <http://www.broward.org/library/bienes/lii11504.htm>.

³⁹ Clearwater Public Library, “The History of the Clearwater Public Library System,” <http://www.clearwater-fl.com/cpl/general/cplshist.asp>.



Courtesy of Vincent Ciulla – Vincent Ciulla Design

Sarasota's Umbrella House featured several innovative design elements, including floor to ceiling jalousie windows and a wooden trellis that covered the whole structure like an umbrella.

Beach would design numerous other Sarasota school/midcentury modern structures, including his own home, located in Lutz, Florida. According to Dore, construction began on the post-and-beam structure in 1978. Beach favored both the post-and-beam construction technique and Sarasota school/midcentury modern design even though both had fallen out of favor by the early 1970s.⁴⁰ Beach and Dore moved into the home on March 18, 1980. The home is situated on a lake and is a multilevel, open-concept design. According to Dore: “People who visit the house describe it as *magical* [emphasis added] because it looks out on a beautiful lake. . . . The roof is blue glazed ceramic tile. There are several buildings in Sarasota with the same tile.”⁴¹

Gulf Coast Plantation Style

Later Beach designs would reflect both changing tastes and modified Florida building requirements. The Mellish/Bostow House, located in Tampa, was completed in 1986.⁴² Featured in the March 1990 issue of *Florida Home & Garden*, this Beach creation is an interpretation of the Gulf Coast plantation style.

Because the home is located in a flood zone (approximately one block from Hillsborough Bay), local building codes required the living area to be 16 feet above ground level. Both Hartley Mellish and his wife, Diane Bostow, were University of South Florida professors (and were also, at the time, colleagues of Dore Beach), and they had definite ideas as to the type of home they wanted: “There’s a house on Cabbage Key that has many of the design features we were looking for—the large overhanging roof, lots of painted wood, porches, and the fairly simple straight vertical lines.”⁴³ Built in phases over a five-year period, the home Mellish and Bostow built had a small guest house, adjacent to the main house, where the couple lived during the main construction phase. That strategy also enabled Bostow to act as general contractor.⁴⁴

While the Mellish/Bostow House is most closely related to the Gulf Coast plantation style, both Beach and Dore confirm that the house design is definitely a “Gene Beach original”: “It has a formal appearance, with the precisely spaced exterior columns, traditional doors and windows, and the very steep and sheltering roof. Other elements—the furnishings, the molding and trim, for instance, give it an English elegance.”⁴⁵ Dore states: “The owners of the ‘Florida House & Garden’ house [were] colleague[s] of mine. The couple became aware of the work [Beach] was doing in Temple Terrace[,] which is near USF. Gene’s interpretive style was ‘Gulf Coast

⁴⁰ Dore Beach, e-mail to the author, May 24, 2010.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Terry C. Hunter, “Masterful Plan: Surprises and a Sense of Fantasy in Tampa,” *Florida Home & Garden*, March 1990, 50.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 52.

Plantation Style.’ . . . The owners had very definite ideas about what they wanted the house to look like from the outside. It was built on 3 lots and the pitched roof is copper. It is reminiscent of the plantation homes built around the entire Gulf Coast in the early 1800–1900s. Gene, at the time, said that it was not easy to label its style. Throughout the entire design process Gene ‘educated’ the clients on what they could and couldn’t do. He spent many months on the design process.”⁴⁶

Beach continued: “I like to have some historical reference in the homes I design. . . . This [home] shows the islands’ influence, where many of the houses have elements of the original settlers’ homelands—the Dutch, French, Spanish, or English, for instance.”⁴⁷

Another important element of Beach’s contribution to the Mellish/Bostow House was his attempt to remain true to his midcentury modern/Sarasota school of architecture roots by using post-and-beam construction, which yielded the following results, as detailed by Beach: “That’s one of the cupola’s two functions . . . as a ventilator. The fan draws air up through the house, cooling it as Caribbean houses are often cooled. And it answers the need for fantasy. When you go up onto the deck area, you feel as if you’re in the crow’s nest of a ship. The stairs are a ship’s ladder, which adds a bit of romance.”⁴⁸

Another unique aspect of Beach’s design of the Mellish/Bostow House was the design process he used, which involved both the use of detailed drawings and educating his clients. According to both Mellish and Bostow, the results of Beach’s efforts were extremely beneficial, aesthetically and financially:

Mellish: A good architect is also an artist with a sense of proportion that builders don’t necessarily have.

Bostow: Gene added the style and grace. . . . For instance, the fanlight over the doors, the curved staircase. I could walk around this house and show you exactly what saved us money and time. We had just one change-order from the original plans [which ran approximately 75 pages]. . . . When I figured out my accounts at the end, I was within one-half of one percent of our original budget.⁴⁹

Beach’s ability to celebrate important architectural design movements using his own interpretations of each genre—be it the California school of architecture, the Sarasota school of architecture, or the Gulf Coast plantation style—illustrates his awareness of both his clients’ design preferences, as well as what he felt was important to the overall structural integrity, the surrounding natural landscape, and unique artistic details of the design. It was his attentiveness to others’ expectations and his own keen sense of individuality that would lead him to his next major artistic endeavor—as race-car designer and builder.

⁴⁶ Dore Beach, e-mail to the author, May 24, 2010.

⁴⁷ Hunter, 53.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 102.

Race-Car Design

Not only did Beach incorporate his unique interpretation of midcentury modern design elements and principles to produce homes and public buildings that could easily be branded as uniquely “Beach,” he created a whole line of race cars that, to this day, are known worldwide in the vintage racing community. These cars, part of the Formula Vee class of sanctioned, Sports Car Club (SCCA) vehicles, are known as “Beach cars.” According to Alice Bixler in her 1966 *Road & Track* article entitled “America’s Race Car Builders: Beach Cars”:

It is to Gene’s everlasting credit that he has avoided naming his cars anything but Beach (and perhaps an occasional number if he remembers). With manufacturers tacking such designations as “Malibu,” “Catalina,” and “Riviera” on their models and with such an adaptable last name as his, it must have been a terrible temptation to tag the cars with such titles as the “Daytona Beach”, the “Miami Beach”, ad infinitum (the world is full of “beaches”). . . . Occasionally, a few soundly-trounced soreheads refer to the hard-to-catch Beach buggies as “Sons of Beaches”—or something like that!⁵⁰

Wally Korb, in his article entitled “Formula Vee,” felt it was imperative to “recognize the beastie before it rears back to snap at us.” Thus, he describes the Formula Vee (also known as the Super Vee) in the following terms: “Essentially, the machine is based on a sturdy tubular space frame, modified [but basically derived] VW [Volkswagen] running gear, and very stringently controlled VW powerplant and transaxle.”⁵¹ The concept behind the development of the Formula Vee appears to have been to build a race car using relatively simple structural and mechanical design components that would be easily accessible to those of modest means who wanted to race cars, but who could not afford the high cost and maintenance of custom design. Korb adds: “You can tune it for racing, but don’t change the basic intent of the design. . . . Generally, they [the Formula Vee specifications] are aimed at making the car as interesting and competitive as possible while being restrictive in certain key areas . . . to insure some degree of success in this type of Formula.”⁵²

Earlier attempts at creating an affordable Formula racing class (identified by Korb as “Formula Junior”)⁵³ had proven to be less than successful due to the high cost of maintaining an individual, custom design. Since the Formula Vee design promotes interoperability with respect to the use of existing parts and design, the use of inexpensive Volkswagen components seemed logical.

Beach became one of the leading designers of this new “affordable Formula

⁵⁰ Alice Bixler, “America’s Race Car Builders: Beach Cars,” *Road & Track* 20, no. 10 (October 1966): 83-86.

⁵¹ Wally Korb, “Formula Vee,” *Sports Car Graphic* 4, no. 10 (October 1964): 52-55.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 53.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 55.



Courtesy of Dore Beach

The Beach Type II was one of Beach's open wheel designs. His designs were immediately popular in the U. S. and eventually caught on in Europe as well.

racing class.” His Beach Formula Vee Type 5C, as profiled in a 1964 brochure, could be purchased unassembled for \$1,250; completely assembled (but without an engine—identified as a Stage One car) for \$2,150; completely assembled (including a Volkswagen engine—designated as a Stage Two car) for \$2,450; and completely assembled (with the addition of a dyno-tuned Volkswagen engine/exhaust system—branded as a Stage Three car) for \$2,750. A top-of-the-line Stage Three Beach Formula Vee race car would also include track testing (this feature could also be purchased at the Stage Two level). To complete the package (and maintain affordability), a Beach race-car trailer was available for purchase, priced at a mere \$325.⁵⁴

According to Kleinpeter, Beach's 1964 designs and race-car production company, Competition Components, Inc. (located at 2032 Gentry Street in Clearwater), began life as a hobby for Beach in the late 1950s. It was then that he met Henry Grady, who owned Vitesse Sports Cars, located at 1401 S. Fort Harrison Ave. in Clearwater.⁵⁵ Grady and Beach partnered to create an early version of the Formula Vee using components from a Fiat 600. Once again, Beach utilized his well-

⁵⁴ Eugene H. Beach, Beach Formula Vee Type 5C (brochure), (Clearwater, FL : Competition Components, Inc., [ca. 1964]), 2.

⁵⁵ Advertisement for Vitesse Sports Cars, Inc., No. A-117C, in Southern Bell Telephone Directory, Pinellas County, ca. 1959.



Courtesy of Dore Beach

Beach designed both open and closed wheel race cars. This one, which had a two liter BMW engine, raced on the track in Nassau.

developed architectural and artistic abilities to create in yet another medium—vehicle body design. According to Kleinpeter: “The chassis of this car was a space frame of welded up square milled steel tubing. The suspension pivot points were identical to the Fiat 600. The attractive and aerodynamic body of this car was aluminum, and was personally created by Beach, who had no experience at all at this craft, by hammering it out over the famous ‘stump.’”⁵⁶

The Beach/Grady design (collectively called the “Begra”) ran its first SCCA race at Cocoa, Florida, in 1959. It was on the Cocoa course that, with Beach at the wheel, the Begra design won its first SCCA-class victory. The victory began what was to become an uninterrupted string of SCCA victories for the Begra design that spanned nearly five years.⁵⁷

Later Begras continued to use Fiat 600 components (as well as some Saab engines, which included limited engineering support from Saab’s corporate design headquarters). These cars logged impressive wins at Sebring and at the Nassau Bahamas’ Speed Week. These cars also represented Beach’s desire to achieve design perfection; he substituted some Triumph vehicle components in later Begra designs in order to improve on the overall suspension design and handling characters of these cars.

During this period, Beach was still actively working as an architect and participating in Florida’s West Coast architectural scene. However, it was also at this time that Beach began to build the Formula Vee in small numbers, which eventually

⁵⁶ Hugh I. Kleinpeter, “Of Begra’s Beach’s and Grady Sports Racer,” 2.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

led to Grady and Beach abandoning their partnership and Beach's sole dedication to Formula Vee production.⁵⁸

Beach gained an international reputation as one of the Formula Vee's top designers. After achieving a level of success similar to the Begra designs at several SCCA sprint-car venues (including Nassau, Sebring, and Watkins Glen), Beach's Formula Vee garnered the attention of Porsche executives in Zuffenhausen, Stuttgart, Baden-Württemberg, Germany. They wanted to introduce the Formula Vee to European racing audiences as well as provide average Europeans who wanted to race with a low-cost racing option. To achieve that end, Porsche requested an initial order of 63 Beach Type 5 kits to be delivered to the Porsche Assembly Plant in Zuffenhausen, where Porsche engines would be added and assembly completed. These kits, identified as "open-wheel" designs (that is, sans fenders and bumper assemblies), consisted of a frame, suspension, and body components. This initial order led to a total production of nearly four hundred Beach cars at the Clearwater Competition Components factory.⁵⁹

While today's Formula Vee remains true to its initial mission of being affordable for the average person to build, maintain, and race, Beach's own participation in the design and manufacture of Formula Vee race cars waned in the early 1970s. Changing economics on Florida's West Coast and personal circumstances encouraged Beach to return to architecture as well to pursue another talent noted earlier in this essay—art. With his painting, Beach would once again make a significant impact on Florida's West Coast communities through his ability to creatively interpret a genre and actively participate (as well as lead) within emerging cultures and communities.

The Artist and Dore Beach

While Beach's successes as both a race-car designer/builder and an architect testify to his status as a renaissance man, it is in his ability as a visual artist that he begins to reveal both his vast talent and his human side, from both a professional and a personal point of view. It is also at this point that Beach reveals the role that another individual plays in his success, both as admirer and muse: the multitaled Dore Beach.

The Francis Wilson Playhouse is an example of the impact of the 1920s Florida land boom. Located at 302 Seminole Street in Clearwater and opened in 1930, the playhouse is named in honor of Francis Wilson, a successful Broadway actor and producer in the early twentieth century. Wilson is considered one of the founders of the Actors Equity Association, whose affiliation with the American Federation of Labor (AFL) led to one of the first actors' strikes to achieve better working conditions for vaudeville and stage actors of the time.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Eugene H. Beach, *Beach Formula Vee Type 5C*, 3.

⁶⁰ Neil Robinson and Ann McKenzie, *But Who Was Francis Wilson?* (brochure). (Clearwater, FL : Francis Wilson Playhouse, ca. 1993), 4.

Wilson retired from acting in 1920, at the age of sixty-six, to write. However, his status and activity in New York's arts and cultural community allowed him to spend winters in Florida—specifically the Clearwater area. It was there that he became active in developing what is often known as the “Little Theater” in Clearwater.⁶¹ Wilson sought the best of national and local talent for his plays and productions. One of the local participants in early “Little Theater” productions was Dorothy Dean Dimmitt, whose family is best known on Florida's West Coast for their large Chevrolet and Cadillac auto dealerships. Although Dimmitt was an emerging actress at the time (1933), she was able to meet Wilson's high standards and appeared in several Wilson-led productions.⁶² Dimmitt was fortunate to have worked with Wilson, who died unexpectedly in New York on October 7, 1935, as a result of complications from surgery.⁶³

Nearly thirty years later, another actress successfully auditioned at what was renamed (in 1937) the Francis Wilson Playhouse.⁶⁴ Dore was a relatively recent transplant to Florida, having arrived in 1957 from Brooklyn, New York. Known in those days as Dorothy Mattson, Dore had been an active spectator in the New York art scene. She and her first husband had moved to Florida and had two children. Although Dore was aware that most of the arts culture in the region was based in Sarasota, she made an effort to seek out the few bright spots in the developing Tampa Bay arts scene, including the Francis Wilson Playhouse.⁶⁵

Dore had acted in several local productions (beginning at the Footlight Theater in Largo in 1963). A reporter for the *Clearwater Sun*, Eric Adkins, encouraged Dore to join a summer theater group (at the time, he was directing *Major Barber*, the play by George Bernard Shaw).⁶⁶ She decided to try out for a part at the Francis Wilson Playhouse after being approached by one of its directors at the time, Dorothy Ellison. While attending a cast party following one of those productions, Dore met a handsome gentleman who had designed the sets for that particular production. She was struck by his good looks and unassuming nature. That man's name was Gene Beach.⁶⁷

Beach's first words to Dore were, “You're an anomaly!” Thus began what would become a thirty-nine-year arts (and life) partnership, as well as the beginning of their mutual admiration. Beach and Dore would make important contributions to the growth of the Tampa Bay arts community, and Dore worked actively, on the local and national level, to develop equal rights for women.

Beach's ability to identify how people's qualities and characteristics might

⁶¹ Ibid., 2.

⁶² Mike Sanders, e-mail, May 19, 2010.

⁶³ Robinson, Neil and McKenzie, Ann. “But Who Was Francis Wilson?” 3.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Dore Beach, interview by the author, April 13, 2010.

⁶⁶ Dore Beach, e-mail to the author, June 1, 2010.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

contribute to the success of a particular endeavor, certainly were demonstrated with respect to Dore. A few years after their marriage on October 9, 1967, at the Manatee County Courthouse in Bradenton (and recognizing both Dore's intelligence and potential), Beach encouraged Dore to return to college to complete her bachelor's degree (a pursuit she had suspended when she became a mother during her first marriage).⁶⁸

Choosing to attend the University of South Florida, she received a bachelor's degree in counseling in 1970. When Dore then applied to the Graduate School at USF, she was told that the school "did not take married women [because] they did not complete graduate degrees." As a result of that experience in discrimination (and, once again, mostly due to Beach's encouragement), Dore chose to enter USF's guidance/counseling program (housed in the College of Education) and completed her master's degree. She later pursued a Ph.D. in behavioral science at Nova University. Dore was hired by USF in 1972, where she worked as a counseling psychologist and faculty researcher for thirty-one years until her retirement in 2003.⁶⁹

Dore became a leader in analyzing the role of ethical conduct as it applies to research – understanding what motivates individual scholars to create and identify what belongs to them (that is, their personal intellectual property) as well as recognizing the individual contributions of others (for example, using credible information, properly citing another's work, avoiding plagiarism). Her book, *The Responsible Conduct of Research* (1996), examines such issues as intellectual property as well as an array of other ethical research issues in the areas of scientific research, moral reasoning, research grants, and research misconduct.⁷⁰ Dore also wrote (with Elaine Fantle Shimberg), *Two for the Money: A Woman's Guide to a Double-Career Marriage* (1981), in which Dore and Shimberg discuss strategies for working spouses to manage both the demands of a career and a marriage/family life. The book was one of the first to explore the "two-income household" and identify ways to make successful what was at the time a relatively new phenomenon.⁷¹

In both instances, Gene Beach acted as Dore's muse and supported her during the long hours of research and editing associated with both publications. It was also Beach who both encouraged and supported Dore's efforts to help found Tampa's Centre for Women and serve as a charter member of the Athena Society. Originally called the Woman's Survival Center, the Centre for Women was founded in 1977 by a group led by Dore Beach. According to the Centre for Women Web site: "The Centre for Women serves over 3,000 individuals and families in Hillsborough County each year. From substance abuse treatment and employment services for women, to

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Dore Beach, *The Responsible Conduct of Research* (Weinheim, Germany: VCH, 1996).

⁷¹ Elaine Fantle Shimberg and Dore Beach, *Two for the Money: A Woman's Guide to a Double-Career Marriage* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1981).

family counseling, services for seniors, and programs for girls, the Centre ensures help is here for those who need it most.”⁷² Dore adds: “The Centre for Women was originally designed to help the displaced homemaker who is either down on her luck or finds herself having to reenter the job market after being a homemaker for several years.”⁷³

With respect to the Athena Society, Dore writes:

The Athena Society is an organization of Tampa Bay professionals who have both demonstrated leadership in the community and committed themselves to promoting equality and opportunity for women. Started in 1976 to support passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, it remains true to its purpose today. I was the second president (1978-1979) and one of the original 20 members that helped set up our Mission Statement, By-Laws, and requirements for membership, which is by invitation and limited to 160. From the beginning, Athena members have worked to improve the status of women by producing programs and forums designed to assist women who were in or returning to the work force. The organization has developed position statements concerning such public policy issues as choice [*sic*], day care, tolerance, nonviolence, pay equity and affirmative action. Today, The Athena Society is a member of The International Alliance for Women, an organization that links business and professional individuals and women’s networks around the globe.⁷⁴

In both the Athena Society and the Centre for Women projects, Dore consulted extensively with Beach about details associated with the initiatives as well as the impact that Dore’s involvement in both organizations (considered by some at the time to be somewhat controversial) might have on her career as well as Beach’s (who had returned to architecture full-time in 1969).⁷⁵ Dore had to consider what was, at the time, the couple’s significant role in the developing Tampa Bay arts scene and, in particular, Beach’s growing presence as an artist and the ever-increasing influence of the Gulf Coast Art Center and its programs/artists.

The Gulf Coast Art Center

The year 1957 marked the beginning both of Beach’s development as an abstract expressionist artist and his involvement at the former Gulf Coast Art Center in Belleair (now known as the Gulf Coast Museum of Art and located in Heritage Village in Largo).⁷⁶ Founded by Mrs. Georgine Shillard-Smith, a noted patron of the arts in Belleair who had donated seven acres of land to house an arts center in 1944,

⁷² Centre for Women, <http://www.centreforwomen.org/>.

⁷³ Dore Beach, e-mail to the author, June 1, 2010.

⁷⁴ Dore Beach, e-mail to the author, 21 April 2010.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Town of Belleair, Florida, “A Brief History of Belleair,” Town of Belleair, <http://www.townofbelleair.com/about.html>.



Courtesy of Dore Beach

In addition to his abilities as an architect and race car designer, Beach was also an accomplished artist.

the Gulf Coast Art Center was home to several emerging artists and artist colonies, including the abstract expressionist artist William Pachner, whose Studio 1212 was a quaint Spanish building located on Gulf Coast Museum of Art property where local women and men attended the famous artist's classes.⁷⁷ Beach, a student of Pachner, later purchased that building, once located at 1212 S. Myrtle Avenue, to house the offices for Competition Components, Inc. Beach later sold it to create space for a condominium development project.⁷⁸

Pachner also invited the noted New York art critic Clement Greenberg and notable fellow abstract-expressionist artists Robert Rauschenberg⁷⁹ and Jasper Johns⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Mike Sanders, e-mail, May 27, 2010.

⁷⁸ Dore Beach, e-mail to the author, May 27, 2010.

⁷⁹ "Robert Rauschenberg," Wikipedia.

⁸⁰ PBS, "Jasper Johns," PBS American Masters, <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/episodes/jasper-johns/about-the-painter/54/>.

to establish a presence at the Gulf Coast Art Center. While the two artists were visiting the Clearwater area during those early days, Beach invited them to stay at his Clearwater home.

While the Gulf Coast Art Center/Gulf Coast Museum of Art and William Pachner served as guiding forces for Beach as he was developing his own painting style (as did Dore's inspiration and the couple's friendship with Lorraine and William Pachner, as Dore notes),⁸¹ Beach's interpretation of abstract expressionism led to his broad use of color and dimension in his art. According to Dore, Beach later embraced color field painting, which incorporated the use of a house painter's brush, ordinary house paint, and a large canvas. Beach, like Pachner, experimented in artistic styles other than abstract expressionism, creating works in the areas of portraiture and realism. Beach also made use of what had become a vast library of art books—which motivated him to study art with the same passion and dedication he had brought to his study of architecture. Dore writes that “as a result [of his experimentation with a variety of painting techniques and styles], it is difficult to label his [Beach's] style.”⁸²

Other influences on Beach's art include the changing demographic in the Tampa Bay area. As Dore notes: “My view on the developing arts culture on the west coast, is that when I arrived in Clearwater in 1957, everything that was happening was in Sarasota. The Fine Arts Museum in St. Petersburg did not exist; however[,] Tampa had an ‘Art Center.’ There was, as I have said before[,] a paucity of culture. However, having said that, when I look back it is unbelievable what has happened since then. In 1957 the majority of the population in Clearwater/Belleair were mainly winter residents. When Honeywell located in Clearwater the population changed.”

Tampa Bay Now and in the Future

In this essay, I have attempted to offer insight into the talents and contributions of Eugene H. Beach as artist, race-car designer, and architect, and to document Beach's participation in the cultural, social, and political landscape of Florida's West Coast during the past century. Beach's accomplishments, in many cases, represent the transition of Florida's West Coast from a seasonal resort-style location (where neighborhoods often could be found empty from the months of April through November) to a year-round cosmopolitan community—one that has transformed Florida's West Coast (and the Tampa Bay area in particular) into a leading cultural and economic center. While such changes don't occur without compromises and change, including threats to the region's fragile environment, the cultural, social, and artistic influences of Eugene H. Beach, and those with whom he lived, worked, and played, created a strong, progressive foundation for the Tampa Bay area's future cultural, social, and artistic growth.

⁸¹ Dore Beach, e-mail to the author, May 26, 2010.

⁸² Ibid.

*W*HITE CAPS AND NIGHTMARES:
PRELUDE TO VIOLENCE AGAINST BLACKS IN
FLORIDA DURING THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

BY PAMELA N. GIBSON AND JOE KNETSCH

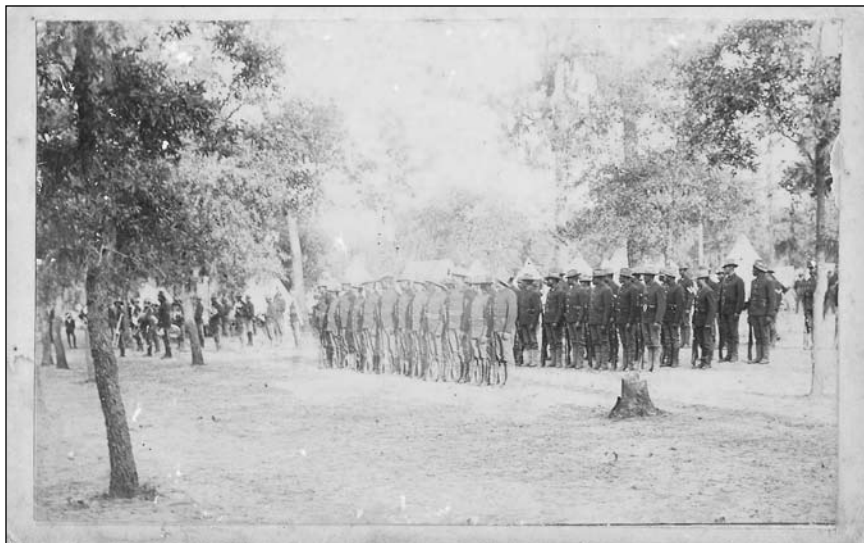
*There is about as much respect for the constitution of the United States
in the southern states as there is for the Bible in Hades.*

The editorial statement above from the *Kansas City American Citizen* was made in reference to the murder of a black postmaster in South Carolina but was equally applicable to most of the southern states in the era of the “Redeemers” and their compatriots.¹ As the same newspaper noted in its February 24, 1898, issue: “The southern statesmen who plead for Cuba could learn a valuable lesson by looking around their own bloodcurdling confines of butchery.” With a few exceptions, the African American press of the day was not eager to see blacks sent off to fight for Cuban freedom when they were lacking the guarantee of these same freedoms in America. It seems ironic, from the perspective of the twenty-first century, that the country could ask its black citizens to risk life and limb for the freedom of Cuba but deny the same to its own black population. As historian Rayford Logan has noted, the 1890s marked the nadir of race relations in the United States and was the decade with the highest number of recorded incidents of violence against African Americans. At the same time the United States was asking its “colored soldiers” to help liberate Cuba, it tolerated the passing of the Grandfather Clause in Louisiana, the growth of Jim Crow laws everywhere in the South, and the approval of the Sheats law in

¹ *Kansas City American Citizen*, February 24, 1898. Quoted in *The Black Press Views American Imperialism (1898-1900)*. Edited by George P. Marks III. New York: Arno Press, 1971. 11.

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Dr. Joe Knetsch, a resident of Florida for over thirty-five years, holds a Ph.D. in history from Florida State University. Knetsch, a Government Analyst II within Florida's Bureau of Survey and Mapping, Division of State Lands, has authored numerous articles on Florida topics, with an emphasis on Florida's pioneer era and military history.



Tampa Bay History Center Collection

African American soldiers in the 24th and 25th Infantry regiments were camped near their white counterparts in Tampa Heights during the buildup before the Spanish-American War. Members of one of those regiments are pictured here standing behind a row of white soldiers.

Florida, which punished white teachers for attempting to educate black students.

Florida's role in the Spanish-American War era did not reflect well on the state. Almost everyone is familiar with the famous story told in *The Little War of Private Post* about Post's duty in Lakeland and the response of the sheriff to any attempt to put down what he perceived as black violence. The sheriff's policy was, "plenty of bourbon for the white man, but no gin for the nigger."² Tampa experienced more than one explosive incident when the black troopers arrived. One of the more infamous took place when an Ohio volunteer unit made a sport of shooting at a two-year-old black child to see how close they could come without hitting him. When the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Infantry units heard of the shooting, they went on a rampage, trying to find the culprits and teach them a lesson. A Georgia volunteer unit was called in to put down the riot, which saw many businesses burned down, and the outnumbered Buffalo Soldiers took some casualties, with thirty injured, some seriously.³ The *Brooklyn Eagle* reported on May 25, 1898, that the situation in Key West was basically a "Reign of Terror" and that there was a call for martial law. All of this was reportedly caused by "Jackies, negroes and roughs of many classes."⁴

² C. J. Post, *The Little War of Private Post* (Boston: Little Brown, 1960), 53.

³ Robert B. Edgerton, *Hidden Heroism: Black Soldiers in America's Wars* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2002), 49.

As these few examples demonstrate, there were real problems for African American troops coming through Florida to fight for Cuba's freedom, problems that were deep-seated and also those of recent origin.

More recent scholarship by Dennis Halpin clearly demonstrates Tampa's reaction to the arrival of armed black troops in its midst. Noting that much of Tampa's white population refused to give up its time-honored segregation, the black soldiers confronted their opponents in a number of ways. Some took to writing letters that reached national audiences, others bore themselves proudly in public and carried their arms, and still others sometimes forcibly attempted to flout the laws and enter all-white establishments and insist on service. As Halpin states: "During their stay in Tampa the racial tensions inherent in the Jim Crow South exploded onto the public stage. Black troops shot out a barber shop's windows; destroyed bars and saloons during a race riot, and with the help of sympathetic white troops, flagrantly violated Jim Crow mores." Confrontations also occurred during their passage back north after the war, mostly in attempts to free fellow soldiers and citizens they believed unjustly imprisoned.⁵ David Work has shown that the regular black soldiers, in this case the Tenth Cavalry, were viewed as a threat to the Jim Crow order of Tampa, and that the willingness of these armed, assertive men to flout every convention of the day served to infuriate much of the white population.⁶ The "Buffalo Soldiers" had experienced great acceptance and appreciation in the West, but they had not served east of the Mississippi River since Reconstruction. They and their white detractors were not prepared for the clash that came with the mobilization for the Spanish-American War. But was there more to the story than simple race prejudice?

Following the Panic of 1893, two devastating freezes decimated Florida's winter crops. In the midst of these economic disasters, beginning about October 1894 and lasting until late 1896, there occurred a series of violent assaults against African American laborers and other minorities. Our analysis of these incidents leads us to believe that the stresses caused by the sharp decline in economic opportunity became a major causal factor in the increase in violence against African Americans during this brief period of dislocation. Much of the reported violence took place in the surviving citrus-growing areas or against workers in the timber or related industries, the traditional fall-back employment of working-class Floridians.

The Panic of 1893 has been described by one historian as a "spectacular financial crisis."⁷ The Reading, Erie, Northern Pacific, Union Pacific and Santa Fe Railroads were sent reeling into the hands of receivers, and before the panic had run its course, nearly one-fourth of the railroad capitalization in the country was

⁴ *Brooklyn Eagle*, May 25, 1898.

⁵ Dennis Halpin, "'Race Riot,' 'Midnight Melee,' and Other 'Crimes' Reconsidered: African-American Soldiers' Protest in 1898 Tampa," *Gulf South Historical Review* 20 (Spring 2005): 39.

⁶ David Work, "A More Deadly Enemy: The Tenth Cavalry in the South, 1898-1899," *Gulf South Historical Review* 20 (Spring 2005): 65.

⁷ Elmer Ellis, *Dictionary of American History*.

in the hands of bankruptcy courts and 60 percent of railroad stocks had suspended dividend payments.⁸ The nation's financial affairs were in near chaos with a highly restrictive tariff and the repercussions of the Bland-Allison Act of 1878 and the Sherman Silver Purchase Act of 1890. Confidence in the currency coupled with a severe balance-of-payments problem led to a rapid decline of gold reserves and an increase in foreign demand for gold in payment for goods and services. A prolonged agricultural recession, beginning in the late 1880s, simply added to the depth of the short, but brutal, depression.⁹ Increased labor violence, prolonged strikes, the rise of the silverites, and the march of Coxey's Army on Washington, D.C., marked the panic as an epic in American economic history.

For Florida, the arrival of the panic in the spring of 1893 coincided with the end of a superlative winter citrus crop and an abundance of vegetables like celery, tomatoes, and lettuce. By virtue of this oversupply and the general deflation caused by the government's gold policy, the prices for and profits from these cash crops were lower than expected. The credit crunch put extra pressure on Florida's agriculturalists and forced many into short-run default on their loans. With a gloomy economic picture ahead, many Floridians were worried about the 1893-94 crop.

But not all Floridians were depressed by the short turn of fortune. In its editorial for September 21, 1893, the Bradenton-based *Manatee River Journal* summarized its views:

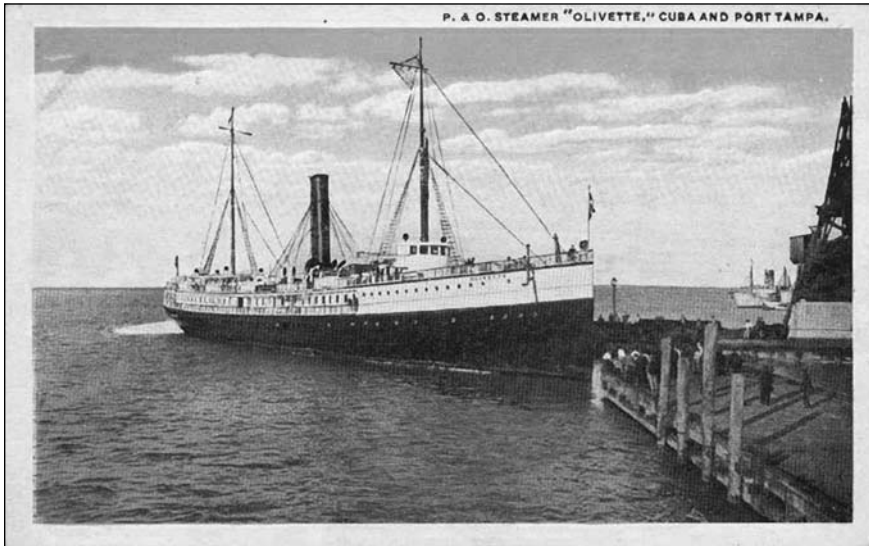
The following figures broaden our idea of the financial panic of 1893, now drawing to a close, three great railway systems have passed into the hands of the receiver, two more are on the verge of bankruptcy, all other railroads have taken off many trains and discharged hundreds of men. Five hundred banks have closed, 800 manufactories have shut down, 6,000 merchants have failed and 900,000 operators have been thrown out of work. It was terrible: we are not yet out of the woods. But the prospects are that money will be more plentiful for investment in goods, loans and industries than ever before.

This optimism was brief, and by February 1, 1894, the editor of the same newspaper warned of "Bad Summer Prospects":

It is well that the people of this county realize, during this, our most prosperous season, that the summer of 1894 cannot open with the most brilliant prospects. The necessary extension of credit during the phenomenally hard year which has passed has exhausted the capital

⁸ Samuel E. Morison and Henry Steele Commager, *The Growth of the American Republic*, vol. 2. 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 250.

⁹ Jonathan Hughes, *American Economic History*, 2nd ed. (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1987), 360-61. A good contemporary debate on the causes of the financial woes can be found in William M. Springer, H. W. Cannon, and J. Stirling Morton, "Our Financial Muddle," *North American Review* 359 (February 1895): 129-56. The congressman, banker, and secretary of the treasury all had strongly differing views as to the cause of the Panic of 1893 and offered different financial remedies.



Tampa Bay History Center Collection

The *Olivette* was one of the larger steamships in the Plant Steamship Line. Henry Plant's companies held a virtual monopoly on shipping in the Tampa Bay area in the mid-1880s and early 1890s.

of the country. For provisions, grain, fertilizer, farming tools, crate materials and interest on loans, we are seriously in debt beyond any time in the past within the next three months, taxes must be paid. The orange crop brought on this year's sale even less than last year. On account of the poverty of the North this winter, there is every reason to expect prices of vegetables will be disastrously behind in proportion. And out of what we do get, we must pay about \$10,000 higher freight than last year. This is a plain statement of the financial prospects of the summer before us.

Just ten days prior to the publication of this editorial, the *Manatee River Journal* had complained to its readers about the increase of fifteen cents per crate and thirty cents per barrel now charged by the Plant Steamship Line. This line controlled much of the shipping out of the Manatee River vicinity, and the editor believed that the line was gouging the local growers-shippers.¹⁰

The dominance of the Plant Line and the increased costs to shippers led to an open meeting of the local fruit growers that soon became statewide. The growers began to seriously organize in early 1894, and, at their second meeting they elected

¹⁰ *Manatee River Journal*, January 22, 1894.

Judge E. M. Graham of Manatee as president, and A. T. Cromwell of Bradenton [Braidentown] was named secretary. The primary resolution of the meeting declared: "the recent action of the Plant Line in raising the freight to the west via Mobile, in the present stringency of the finances of the country, will result in taking from us our just reward of our toil, and under the circumstances becomes a matter of hardship and oppression." The group then pledged themselves to patronize any other carrier who would offer reasonable rates.¹¹

It may illustrate the burden felt by these operators to note that through January 1, 1894, the Manatee area shipped 200,000 crates of fruit and vegetables. Their freight and wharfage averaged about seventy-five cents per crate, or approximately \$150,000 spent simply to ship the fruit to market. The increase in the freight charge, coming in the midst of a severe depression, added an additional \$30,000 to the costs, with little hope of return. In its editorial for February 1, 1894, the *Manatee River Journal* concluded: "If we cannot combine to protect our products there is one other course open. We must raise what we can eat, if the most rigid economy and frugality are not practiced this spring and summer, there will be homeless families in Manatee County and greater suffering than we have ever known. We cannot afford to pass this summer in idleness. This must be a year of summer crops, a year to measure the fairest possibilities of the country."

Manatee County native M. E. Gillett led the statewide campaign to organize the citrus and vegetable growers and met with some initial success.¹² Yet, the severity of the depression made any organizing difficult. The *Jacksonville Florida Times-Union*, the state's leading newspaper, noted that large numbers of people were being displaced by the economic downturn and that unemployment in twenty southern cities had reached approximately 42,000, with 122,000 dependents or family members added to the mixture of sufferers.¹³ C. Vann Woodward described the scene in neighboring Georgia as follows: "Banks failed, money disappeared, factories closed, unemployed workers returned to the family farm to add burden to its meager larder, and the mortgage foreclosures went forward at an accelerated pace. Families of Negro and white tenants walked the roads seeking relief. At no time since the devastation of Georgia by an invading army was acute poverty, hunger and misery so widespread among the people."¹⁴ Many of these wandering relief seekers came to Florida where, after the immediate depression subsided, citrus, railroads, lumbering, truck-farming, phosphate mining, and the growing tourist industry offered some hope of economic independence.

¹¹ Ibid., February 1, 1894.

¹² *Jacksonville Daily Florida Citizen*, June 2, 1894. This particular article concerns Gillette's successful meeting in Hawthorne, in Alachua County. Throughout the 1894-95 period, the Jacksonville papers covered his exploits and the increasing power of the organization. Its time was cut short by the severity of the freezes and the loss of membership because of people leaving the citrus industry and giving up their farms.

¹³ *Florida Times-Union*, January 8, 1894.

¹⁴ C. Vann Woodward, *Tom Watson: Agrarian Rebel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 249.

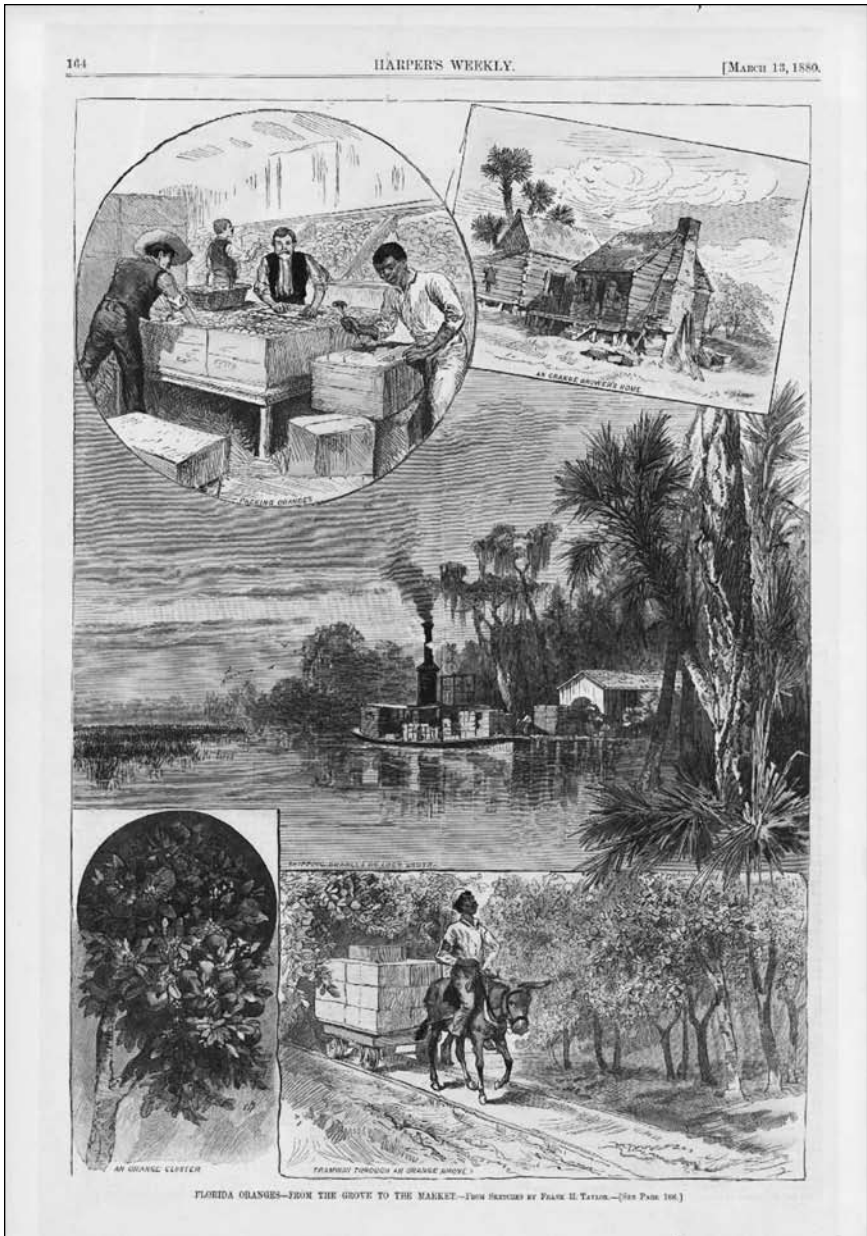
Other factors were also sending African Americans to Florida in record numbers. The rise of the Populist movement throughout the South raised the specter of a united front between white and African American tenant farmers and sharecroppers. The dominant Bourbon factions and others immediately put out the cry of “Negro domination,” which quickly reinjected the race question into all levels of partisan politics. The “white supremacy” argument always carried the frightened Negrophobe at the polls and helped to defeat the Populist tickets in many southern states, especially Georgia, where race always trumped class-consciousness.¹⁵ The political scene was not improved for African Americans by the rejection of the so-called Force Bill plank put forward by the Negro Alliance, the Colored Farmers Alliance, and the Cooperative Union at the Populists’ Ocala Convention. The White Alliance men simply refused to protect the rights of their African American colleagues through federal action, opting instead for a weakly worded resolution asserting their commitment to protecting “the Negro’s right to vote.” The irony here was that, as Herbert Shapiro pointed out, “the Populists were for using federal machinery to protect the general economic interests of agrarians; they would not use that machinery to protect the constitutional rights of Negroes.”¹⁶ Similar incidents occurred, and the message that many African Americans took away was that the Populist Party would not be protecting their voting or any other rights. The violence associated with many of the elections held during this period sent many African Americans on the road, hopefully wending their way to freedom from racial attacks and want.¹⁷

The well-documented and known racism of northern labor unions precluded African Americans from entering many of the more lucrative trades there. This, coupled with the unfamiliar colder climate of the northern cities, acted as a deterrent to any major northward migration of African Americans during the 1880s and 1890s. Word of these conditions filtered back home from those who had first attempted this transition. The disrespect or outright contempt for African American leaders such as Booker T. Washington or Frederick Douglass, especially by the Populists,

¹⁵ Charleton Mosely, “Latent Klanism in Georgia, 1890-1915,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 56 (Spring 1972): 368. See also Francis Wihoit, “An Interpretation of Populism’s Impact on the Georgia Negro,” *Journal of Negro History* 52 (April 1967): 116-27; and Clarence A. Bacote, “Negro Proscriptions, Protests, and Proposed Solutions in Georgia, 1880-1908,” *Journal of Southern History* 35 (November 1959): 471-76. Finally, see William Warren Rogers et al., *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1996), 305-19. The authors note that politics in Alabama had become, “a wild three-ringed circus.” Not surprisingly, the African American vote went to the Bourbon candidates and not to the Populist, led by Reuben Kolb.

¹⁶ Herbert Shapiro, “The Populists and the Negro: A Reconsideration,” in *The Making of Black America*, ed. August Meier and Elliott Rudwick (New York: Atheneum, 1969), 32-34.

¹⁷ Lawrence Goodwyn, “Populist Dreams and Negro Rights: East Texas as a Case Study,” in *African Americans and Southern Politics from Redemption to Disfranchisement*, ed. Donald G. Nieman (New York: Garland, 1994), 1435-56. See also Goodwyn’s *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978). One should also consult two standard histories of two important leaders of the agrarian movement: C. Vann Woodward’s *Tom Watson: Agrarian Rebel*; and Francis B. Simkins’s *Pitchfork Ben Tillman: South Carolinian* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 195-233.



Tampa Bay History Center Collection

This page from the March 13, 1880 issue of *Harper's Weekly* magazine depicts the citrus industry "from the grove to the market." Though the image is from 1880, the process was basically the same through the end of the 19th century.

demonstrated to many the gap that remained to be bridged, even by highly regarded African Americans.¹⁸ The well-publicized failure and ridicule of the “Back to Africa” movement also showed that this option was probably closed to those willing to leave home. Thus, it is not surprising that African Americans migrated to Florida in large numbers; indeed, six times as many blacks came to Florida in the 1890s as did whites.

This influx of unemployed African Americans began putting strains on Florida. As early as December 1893, a racial disturbance took place in the railroad junction town of Wildwood that caused consternation across the state. The report filed on January 3, 1894, indicates the intensity, if not the cause, of the event:

It is fortunate that the revolt against legal authority at Wildwood was suppressed with so little bloodshed, and the ringleaders who tried to set law at defiance are safely behind bars. It cannot be fairly considered a race war, although the revolt was headed by members of the colored race. It was an outbreak of lawlessness on the part of a few colored persons who have hitherto been inclined to resent the interference of law when it interfered with their doing as they pleased. It was aimed at authority rather than at whites as such. That it is now over is a cause for congratulation, and it is hoped that another insurrection will not occur.¹⁹

It was not unusual for editors to make a story of this kind “disappear” by placing it in the middle of the paper. Florida newspapers sought to focus instead on the optimistic forecast for the coming year’s crops.

As the dispossessed tenants of other southern states moved into Florida, other disturbances were reported. On January 13, 1894, St. Augustine was reported to be experiencing trouble with “tramps.”²⁰ Eleven days later, at Anthony, nine so-called tramps were released to a mob by the local Marshall. According to the account, a crowd of “hoodlums” gathered around the jail, whereupon “the Marshall unlocked the door, ordered the poor fellows out and told them to run. It is also said the Marshall told the boys, who had sticks in their hands, to go for the tramps.” Not until a brave, unnamed, soul stepped in to stop the beating did the assault end.²¹ At the other end of the state, riots took place in Key West, as Cuban cigar makers tried to earn a living in the face of local opposition. The fact that many of these men and women were dark-skinned led the *Florida Times-Union* to run the headline “Key West’s Race Clash.”²² With the winter crops beginning to come to market, these were not headlines that owners and shippers wanted to see.

The winter crop season of 1894-95 was supposed to be the savior of many citrus growers. However, even before the freeze hit the state, labor violence between

¹⁸ See Robert Saunders, “Southern Populists and the Negro, 1893-1895,” *African Americans and Southern Politics from Redemption to Disfranchisement*, ed. Donald G. Nieman (New York: Garland, 1994), 240-61.

¹⁹ *Florida Times-Union*, January 3, 1894.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, January 13, 1894.

²¹ *Ibid.*, January 24, 1894.

²² *Ibid.*, January 18, 1894.

the races had begun in Manatee County. In late October, two African American employees of the Manatee Lemon Company were assaulted by three white men while walking along a public road in Palmetto. The three young white men proceeded to strike their black victims several times and shot one in the leg as he attempted to run away. The local manager of the Manatee Lemon Company, a Mr. Larson, encouraged one of the workers to sign an affidavit, and the three white men were arrested. However, as was typical when black victims sought legal redress for such crimes, the victims were said to have failed to properly identify the perpetrators, who were then released. In a seemingly bizarre twist in this case, the victims, as well as the alleged criminals, were required to post bond to guarantee a court appearance, and when the victims could not produce the required fee, they were jailed! The justice of the peace, a Mr. Wright, soon learned that he had overstepped his authority and released the victims. No record exists showing that the assailants were ever brought to trial or justice rendered to the two African Americans.²³

Shortly thereafter, the “Great Freeze” of 1894-95 began, with the last four days of December seeing the majority of citrus trees in northern Florida die under the killing frost. Vegetable crops also suffered greatly in the northern part of the state. Although some damage was sustained in Hillsborough and Manatee Counties, the region survived the first freeze with relative ease. Captain C. O. Muller, a longtime resident of Manatee County, during an interview with the *Manatee River Journal*, had actually observed the freezes of 1866, 1874, and 1886, and each, he implied, was worse than the one most recently experienced.²⁴ The greatest loss was sustained by the nurserymen, like the Reasoner Brothers, who lost over 15,000 buds. Although the more southerly sections of the state were to experience some of the damage of the second freeze, of February 8, 1895, the northern portions of the state were now facing severe choices; bankruptcy, emigration, and stiff economic competition with the largest group of the most recent immigration, the African Americans.²⁵

The economic damage is easily estimated; however, the costs to the social fabric of Florida were much greater. The “Great Freeze” had wiped out many of the smaller and poorer citrus growers. Many had packed up their meager belongings and left the state. Others, with a longer commitment to Florida and stronger family ties, attempted to maintain themselves by moving farther south and harvesting the crops grown in this area or by attempting to fall back on more traditional cash-producing occupations, like tie-cutting and lumbering. In this latter, concentrated mostly in the northern portion of the state, these newly displaced individuals came in direct competition with the newly arrived African American laborers. One of the first

²³ *Manatee River Journal*, November 1, 1894.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, January 3, 1895.

²⁵ For information on the nurserymen, see *Manatee River Journal*, January 3, 1895. For the effects of the freeze on Hillsborough County, some of which were positive for later growth, see Joe Knetsch and Laura Etheridge, “A Brief Outline of the Agricultural History of Hillsborough County: 1880-1940,” *Sunland Tribune* (Tampa Bay Historical Society) 19 (November 1993): 19.



Courtesy of the Florida State Archives

The Freeze of 1894-95 was one of the most devastating natural disasters to strike Florida in the 19th century. Countless groves and growers were impacted, and the “freeze line,” an imaginary line that dictates the northernmost limits for citrus growing, shifted dramatically to the southern portion of Central Florida.

serious incidents of violence against this group came in Westville, in rural Holmes County. In that section of the state, Graves and Beatty had “large lumber interest” and had constructed a tram road into the heart of their holdings from the banks of the Choctawhatchee River. Several of the tram cars were fitted with bunk beds for the use of the African American labor force. About one o’clock on Sunday morning, September 8, 1895, the workers awoke “to find the leaden missiles of death whistling all about them.” The shooting and the subsequent screams of the wounded aroused the white foreman from the nearby house, and his arrival on the scene caused the masked assailants to flee. One man died instantly at the scene and another shortly thereafter, while “several” were reported wounded. The report continued: “The negroes are in terror, fearing they will be murdered, and they have refused to work any longer. Many of them have left and come to towns along the railroad where they can secure protection.”²⁶ The outcome was exactly what the “masked men” had wanted from the blacks—terror and flight.

A second incident took place at Moss Bluff, on the scenic Ocklawaha River. Here, W. Allsop, described as a “merchant and tie contractor of Wiersdale,” had hired a number of African American tie cutters to fulfill a contract in the Long Swamp and Moss Bluff areas. The report filed in the *Florida Times-Union* stated: “These had not

²⁶ *Florida Times-Union*, September 10, 1895.

been at work over a day, when the white laborers took exception. That night a party of white men riddled the cabins of the dusky sleepers with bullets. The result is that the colored tie cutters are missing. The hint was sufficient and they did not stand on the order of their going.²⁷ More than two weeks later, on December 5, 1895, the same paper, under the headline "Whitecaps Prevent Work," reported Allsop as saying that the White Caps "had so successfully intimidated the negroes that he could not get one to cut a tie for him."²⁸ Like the night riders of the old Klan, the cowardly attacks by whites on the African American laborers worked to intimidate them and to prevent them, this time from working.

One of the most instructive incidents of intimidation took place in the citrus-growing town of Fort Myers. The evidence at hand indicates that the steamer *Lawrence* was sent to Fort Myers with a number of laborers on board, designated to pick oranges. On December 7, 1895, the *Tampa Morning Tribune* reported:

The big crowd of would-be orange pickers who went down to Fort Myers on the first trip made by the steamer *Lawrence* last Sunday are having a rough time of it, if all accounts are correct, and the speculators who are responsible for the trouble should be promptly called to account. There were about 175 people on board the boat, about 75 being negroes, who had been scraped up in Tampa by a genius of a speculative turn of mind who had agreed to take them down and find them steady employment for \$1.00 a head and 10 per cent of their first week's wages. When the *Lawrence* and her darkeys tied up at the dock she was met by a deputation of prominent citizens who politely, but firmly informed the people in charge of the expedition that while the white men were welcome, the negro laborers could not land. In the meantime, the unfortunate darkeys had managed to reach the wharf, and while the controversy was going on between the citizen's committee and the speculator, the steamer quietly pulled out and left them in the lurch. In explanation of the action of the citizens of Fort Myers it should be said that the town is already so well supplied with laborers who have more time than money that the people in that neck of the woods are strongly prejudiced against "foreign pauper labor."²⁹

Two days later, the *Florida Times-Union* picked up on the story with a slightly different twist. Quoting an interview with Lee County resident F. A. Lane, the paper noted that "something of a reign of terror" was taking place with the "inevitable shotgun accompaniment." A second, unnamed source described the situation in similar fashion: "As near as I can make out, there is a regular organized movement on foot down there to keep out negro laborers. Eight prominent men are known to be at the bottom of the trouble, but the people who know who they are, and who want to put a stop to their lawlessness are not in a position to [do] anything about it but keep their mouths shut." The motive for this action, according to this source, was

²⁷ Ibid., November 17, 1895.

²⁸ Ibid., December 5, 1895.

²⁹ *Tampa Morning Tribune*, December 7, 1895. The authors would like to thank Gary Mormino for finding and sharing this source with us.

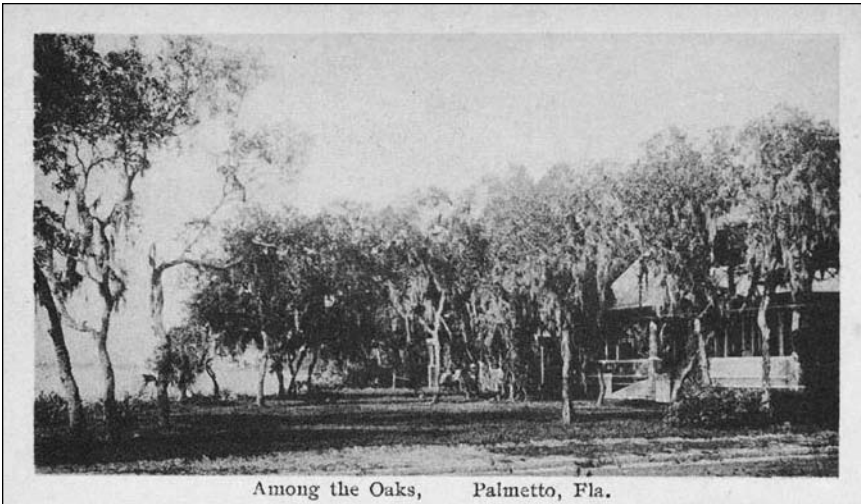
to keep Lee County away from citrus growing. The freeze had not affected the crop there, and many from the ruined area, especially Citra, were trying to speculate in Lee County land; if they were successful in shipping out the crop, then others would be attracted to the area, and the existing power structure would be threatened. In another attempt to drive out the pickers, a camp of orange pickers, allegedly housed in an old homestead, had thirty-eight rounds fired into it in.³⁰ The struggle here indicates that there was much more than simple racial prejudice behind the move to rid Lee County of African American laborers.

The crowning reportage of this incident came with the headlines in the *New York Times* on December 10, 1895. The main headline read: "War Against Florida Negroes," with the subtitle continuing: "Twelve Drowned While Fleeing from Their Persecutors—Alleged Conspiracy Against Owners of Cotton Groves." Aside from the "cotton groves" miscue, the article also quoted Mr. Lane, who reiterated that "the camps of orange pickers have been fired into frequently recently." But the drowning of blacks was not reported in the Florida papers. According to the *Times* source(s): "The negroes say they were not allowed to get anything to eat, and as the guards were firing at all times they feared they would be killed. Twelve negroes, in their terror, jumped into the river, and, it is thought, were drowned. The negroes brought back circulars which the whites of Lee County have issued warning the negroes to keep away." Reporting in a vein similar to the *Florida Times-Union*, the New York paper referenced a conspiracy to prevent the picking of oranges so the owners would have to abandon them and the conspirators would then get the land cheaply.³¹ The idea of a conspiracy of landowners appears to be a valid explanation for the intimidation of African American workers in the context of the day; however, the fact that white workers were allowed to land, pick oranges, and go about unmolested flies in the face of this "logic." Blatant racism and economic competition would better explain the actions of the "prominent citizens" of Lee County, primarily because they had an alleged surplus of labor on hand. Whether there was a conspiracy afoot is open to debate; however, the actions against the African American laborers aboard the *Lawrence* speak volumes about the racial attitudes of the perpetrators.

In the spring of the following year, 1896, conditions on the citrus- and truck-farming frontier appeared to be promising a new and abundant harvest. In April of that year, Henry B. Plant and colleagues took a cruise up the Manatee River, passed Braidentown (Bradenton), Manatee, and Palmetto. It was described by the *Jacksonville Citizen* in the following glowing terms: "The Manatee region of Florida is indeed a fairyland. A trip down Tampa Bay to the mouth of the Manatee River and up that pretty stream is like a jaunt in the land where Arcadian and Utopian visions dwell." It further reported that, "that part of Florida bears no sign whatever of any disastrous freeze a year ago." The Plant Line and the growers, according to this report, could look forward to a good season in 1896.

³⁰ *Florida Times-Union*, December 9, 1895.

³¹ *New York Times*, December 10, 1895.



Among the Oaks, Palmetto, Fla.

Tampa Bay History Center Collection

The violence that struck the town of Palmetto, on the northern banks of the Manatee River, was in stark contrast to the Jacksonville Citizen's cheery description of the area as a "fairyland."

Once again, the dreams of a peaceful season were destroyed by the uprising of alleged White Caps and others. On May 17, 1896, a headline in the *Florida Times-Union* read: "The Negroes Terrorized: An Ugly State of Affairs in Manatee County: Whitecaps Post Warnings." The subheading noted that the "Laborers Are Rapidly Leaving." An attempted arrest of one Jack Trice and others in the alleged shooting of three whites was the stated cause of the disturbance. However, even the newspaper was getting wise to this deception and reported: "It is now said a number of white men have taken advantage of the affair as a pretext to run the negroes out of the place. They have been going around to different places notifying the negroes to leave, or take the consequences." The timing, as in the incidents in Fort Myers and elsewhere, could not have been worse for the growers, who were in the midst of the harvest. As the *Times-Union* observed: "The shipping season is at its height and the loss will be very heavy to the growers on account of their being unable to hire help to gather their crops." Again, guns were fired into the houses of the African American laborers, and some, including one on the mayor of Palmetto's own property, had their homes burned and everything destroyed. The Sunday report noted that the reign of terror had been ongoing since the previous Wednesday and that "nearly all of the negroes had left the vicinity." And, once again, there were reports, all unconfirmed by the paper, of deaths from the violence. The hardest-hit firm, the Manatee Lemon Company, was notified that if it attempted to hire any African Americans, it would suffer the consequences. Its manager, Mr. C. L. Harvey, had his life threatened. Despite the protest of the "best element of Palmetto," the strife continued.³²

³² *Florida Times-Union*, May 17, 1896.

The local *Manatee River Journal* responded to this outbreak of negative news with editorials and reporting of its own. No one, of any race, it maintained, had been killed in Palmetto, despite the reports appearing in the Tampa papers. It heatedly decried the “Race War” charges of the other newspapers across the state and nation. It quoted Dr. John C. Pelot, one of the area’s most respected leaders, as writing to Governor Mitchell and informing him of the truth of the matter. Pelot did, however, admit to some signs being posted, two or three cabins being burned (for allegedly hiding Trice or his accomplices), and the fact that nearly twenty-eight African Americans had left Palmetto. Yet, the newspaper was steadily maintained that no one was killed, that Negroes were returning to work unmolested, and that few actually resided on the north side of the river. The negative image was totally unwarranted, according to the *Manatee River Journal*.³³ Yet, even the staunchest defender of the local actions had to admit that intimidation was being employed to frighten off African American workers. One must continue to ask, Why?

Almost every study of the postwar South and race relations has concentrated on either economic growth, peonage/sharecropping, or lynchings. What has been lacking is a study of violence unrelated to lynching and its causes. We believe that the evidence presented above shows that such a study is needed in Florida and the rest of the South. However, we would caution that Florida is different.

In the 1890s, Florida experienced a very large increase in African American population, whereas the rest of the South, excluding Texas, saw a decline in this segment of the population. Florida also was undergoing a tremendous transformation in its transportation system, a phosphate “boom,” a rapid growth in citrus- and truck farming, an explosion in the yellow pine and cypress timber industry, a shifting of resources to the developing tourist industry, and an opening up of vast new acreages through drainage and development. Yet, at the same time, citrus- and truck farming suffered a dramatic freeze which displaced thousands of workers and family grove owners.

The Panic of 1893 shook some of the financial basis of the state’s growth and caused many to lose their farms and some of the railroads to fail. A key indicator of the severity of the panic and freezes upon the state was the average annual income for Florida’s laboring masses. As economist William Stronge has pointed out in his recent volume on Florida’s economic growth since the Civil War: “The average annual labor income in Florida was \$119.72, the lowest of any state or territory. Florida’s average labor income was less than half the level in the country as a whole and just over 70 percent of the level in the other South Atlantic States. The low Florida level reflected the capital losses farmers suffered when the value of their farms declined.”³⁴ In some cases, the income simply disappeared. Added into this mixture was the immigration

³³ See the *Manatee River Journal* for May 21 and 28, 1895. The editorial pages were filled with this type of defense.

³⁴ William B. Stronge, *Sunshine Economy: An Economic History of Florida since the Civil War* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), 65.

of thousands of African Americans, Cubans, Italians, and others who took jobs like citrus and vegetable picking, tie-cutting and lumbering to establish a foothold in their new residence. These jobs, the fall-back employment of many affected by the severe economic dislocations of the 1890s, were the source of some of the violence registered above. As the jobs “created” by the Spanish-American War were of short-term duration, the social strain of having black, armed soldiers in their midst added greatly to the social and economic dislocations of the day. The economic competition of these diverse elements in the strained conditions of the times brought out some of the more violent responses of the age. More research into these causes of racial violence must be done before we can present an evenhanded picture of the Gilded Age in Florida and the South.

BOOK REVIEWS

Old South, New South, or Down South?: Florida and the Modern Civil Rights Movement. Edited by Irvin D. S. Winsboro (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2009. viii, 206 pp. Preface and acknowledgments, introduction, afterword, contributors, index. \$24.95, paper)

Florida's civil rights historiography is something of a late bloomer. As recently as 1984, the field was literally barren. Not a single scholarly monograph on the subject had appeared in print, and there were only a handful of journal articles and graduate theses that even acknowledged the existence of a civil rights movement in the Sunshine State. Thankfully, this is no longer the case. During the past quarter century, a growing number of historians and political scientists have turned their attention to various aspects of the civil rights struggle in Florida, producing several fine books ranging from David Colburn's *Racial Change and Community Crisis: St. Augustine, 1877-1980* (1985) and James Button's *Blacks and Social Change* (1989) to Glenda Rabby's *The Pain and the Promise: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Tallahassee, Florida* (1999) and Ben Green's *Before His Time: The Untold Story of Harry T. Moore* (1999). We even have Tananarive Due and Patricia Stephens Due's searing memoir, *Freedom in the Family: A Mother-Daughter Memoir of the Fight for Civil Rights* (2003), Ray Mohl's revealing *South of the South: Jewish Activists in the Civil Rights Movement in Miami, 1945-1960* (2004), and Michael D'Orso's harrowing *Like Judgment Day: The Ruin and Redemption of a Town Called Rosewood* (1996) to help us make our way through the thicket of history and memory related to the movement in Florida.

Individually and collectively, these books testify both to the bleak racial heritage of Florida and the continuing struggle to bring racial tolerance and equality to the state. No one familiar with this literature could characterize Florida as anything other than a southern state burdened with the same basic racial pathology and challenges as Deep South states such as Alabama and Mississippi. In terms of demography and migration, Florida may have experienced more diversity than its Deep South neighbors, and it may have developed its own distinctive subregional markers related to the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico. But its people have wrestled with essentially the same racist demons that have plagued the rest of the slavery-haunted, ex-Confederate South.

Irvin Winsboro's edited volume *Old South, New South, or Down South?* purports to be a sharply revisionist anthology of articles detailing the dark history of racism in Florida. The various articles in the volume do indeed provide evidence

of Florida's racialist past, and as such they are welcome additions to the growing literature on race and civil rights in the state. But the editor's revisionist claims are at odds with the reality of extant historiography. In the world of popular culture, it may still be fashionable to accept the misguided notion that Florida has been a land of racial moderation largely unconnected to the white-supremacist traditions and regimes of the Deep South. But this viewpoint has not held sway in the academic world for decades. The major source of the notion that Florida has been the land of the moderates is V. O. Key's classic *Southern Politics in State and Nation*, published in 1949 and long ago superseded by a shelf full of books on southern politics.

Despite its questionable framing, the collection includes several eye-opening and insightful essays: Leonard Lempel on the local civil rights movement in Daytona Beach; Connie Lester on Florida's independent black farmers; Amy Sasser on Virgil Hawkins's attempt to desegregate the University of Florida law school; Irvin Winsboro on school desegregation in Lee County; and Gregory Bush on Virginia Key Beach and historic preservation. Abel Bartley's essay on Haydon Burns's 1964 gubernatorial primary campaign against Robert King High, a relatively liberal reformer from Miami, offers a useful narrative but comes to the strange conclusion that this contest confirmed Florida's status as an unreconstructed, racist state. The ardent segregationist Burns won, of course, but the fact that High waged a spirited campaign for a southern governorship in 1964, something that would have been all but impossible in Mississippi, Georgia, or Alabama at that time, suggests that there was a difference in degree, if not in kind, between Florida politics and the situation in the Deep South.

This lack of attention to nuance and irony is, I am afraid, symptomatic of an anthology designed to be revisionist. A far better approach would have allowed for a range of essays exploring the complex and sometimes contradictory aspects of race and regional culture. Forcing Florida history into one side or the other of an absolutist dichotomy inevitably limits the value of research and scholarship and retards the process of understanding. In a carefully crafted and useful afterword, Paul Ortiz urges us to "honor the known and still-to-be-discovered heroes and heroines of the Florida civil rights movement by redoubling our efforts to dig deep" (238). He is right: digging deeper and wider in the well of history will surely reveal enough challenging questions and tentative answers about race, culture, and politics to keep Florida historians busy for years to come.

RAYMOND ARSENAULT

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The Odyssey of an African Slave. By Sitiki. Edited by Patricia C. Griffin. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009. xii, 211 pp. Preface, introduction, B&W photographs, illustrations, maps, epilogue, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$24.95, cloth)

The Odyssey of an African Slave is an autobiography, told in the former slave's own words, that covers the approximate time period 1790-1882 and survives as the result of the extensive scholarship of the editor, anthropologist Patricia Griffin. Its historical interest alone makes Sitiki's *Odyssey* a treasure, but this firsthand account also reads like a novel in its own right. There is much more between the covers of this book, however, than Sitiki's dramatic account of his own life story.

Sitiki narrated the remarkable description of his extraordinary and long life to his former "owner" (Buckingham Smith) between 1869 and 1871. That makes the original document nearly 140 years old. The account traces his life as a free child living with his family in an African village, his capture in the interior of Africa by other Africans, the intriguing relationships between the slave traders and slave masters, and then Sitiki's "adventure" as a slave traveling across Africa to the Atlantic seacoast. His narrative further recounts his travel across the ocean to the New World as a slave cabin boy, his experiences in New England, and eventually his life as an adult in the St. Augustine, Florida, area. The dictated account of "Uncle Jack," as Sitiki came to be known, concludes with a discussion of his life as a freedman after the Civil War and then as the first Methodist minister in St. Augustine.

More than twenty years ago, an acquaintance of Patricia Griffin tracked down a copy of the handwritten manuscript to the New-York Historical Society. A second version of the manuscript was subsequently discovered along with notes and fragments of a third copy. Ever since then, Griffin has been researching, documenting, and correlating the observations in the narrative to the history of the period and Sitiki's geographic settings in both Africa and America. As Sitiki describes the architecture and social life of his surroundings, Griffin explores and evaluates the actual archaeological and historic evidence to collaborate and verify his story.

In the first half of *Odyssey*, Sitiki's two autobiographical narrative manuscript versions are correlated by the editor and then synthesized with the fragments and remains of the third version. Griffin then brings Sitiki's vibrant story to life. Occasionally, she makes an editorial note relevant to the manuscript, explaining, for example, why certain wording is likely to be the transcriber's and not Sitiki's, especially if the versions differ.

The second half of *Odyssey* is another, relatively separate work of scholarship. Griffin goes back to the beginning of Sitiki's account and breaks down all of the elements of his story. She analyzes the African words and customs he recalls as a boy and then attempts to match Sitiki's remembrances to what she can determine to be his actual African language, his religion, and possible native country at the time of his capture. She goes through the same meticulous research with all other aspects of Sitiki's recollections, including the architecture and location of the buildings

he describes, the military equipment he visualizes, the industry and machinery in his surroundings, and the clothing styles and food preparation that he recalls. Additionally, she analyzes the traditions and the way of life that Sitiki describes in his firsthand account, especially around the St. Augustine area.

This book is highly recommended for anyone who dares venture into the experiences of a young child captured and forced into the barbaric world of human bondage. This recounting of his “adventures” spans nearly one hundred eventful years across two continents. First-person slave accounts are extremely rare, especially narratives from Florida, thus making *Odyssey* historically relevant as well. The book is also recommended for individuals who want to learn more details about the early setting, history, customs, and architecture of St. Augustine, “America’s Oldest City.”

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Thunder on the River: The Civil War in Northeast Florida. By Daniel L. Schafer (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010. xi, 348 pp. Preface, maps, photographs, illustrations, acknowledgments, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95, cloth)

Readers of Florida history over the past generation or so have become familiar with the scholarly inquiries of the University of North Florida historian Daniel L. Schafer. Although his studies have extended to a variety of times and subjects within the general context of northeast Florida’s experience, many would point to his innovative – not to say pathfinding – works on race relations, slavery, and African American heritage as holding special interest. Schafer’s commitments to these subjects and to creative, in-depth research perhaps found their greatest expressions in his *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley: African Princess, Florida Slave, Plantation Slaveowner* (2003).

Two decades prior to the publication of Anna Kingsley’s biography, however, Schafer teamed with the local historian Richard A. Martin to hone the Civil War-era portion of a two-volume Martin manuscript on Jacksonville’s past. Their collaboration resulted in the publication of *Jacksonville’s Ordeal by Fire: A Civil War History* (1984). That volume ranked upon its release as Florida’s most ambitious examination of the Civil War experience within a local community or region. Little wonder that its print run of five thousand sold out within five days.

Now, Schafer has revisited that earlier effort in order to present its story “with a more scholarly focus” (ix). Had he done nothing more than add an index to a new printing of the difficult-to-obtain older volume, his undertaking would have been applauded. Fortunately for Florida and Civil War history enthusiasts, he has done much more.

First, a word of caution. The book's subtitle suggests that it covers the Civil War in all of northeast Florida, but that is not quite the case. As with its predecessor volume, the narrative focuses primarily on Jacksonville, although care has been taken to offer supplementary material addressing the various military initiatives and activities directed from or to that war-beleaguered community. The reader seeking detail on Fernandina, St. Augustine, Palatka, Lake City, and other locales outside Jacksonville must continue to look to other sources.

Fans of Schafer's work will not be disappointed in how he addresses the material he does include. His signature in-depth research shines through with utilization of rarely cited and previously unknown sources. He states that he has endeavored "to balance use of Confederate and Union sources" (x), although the reader is left to resolve whether such a balance of sources actually furthers the author's scholarly purpose.

The book's impact comes most profoundly in its vivid exposure of the myriad complexities inherent in one community's Civil War travails as well as the pitfalls inherent in any historian's failure to recognize change over time or in otherwise oversimplifying history's stamp. As would be expected, Schafer's exploration of those complexities tellingly involves black people, whether slaves, soldiers, or refugees. He has added a helpful final chapter entitled "A Troubled Transition to Freedom: Life for Jacksonville's Black Residents during the Federal Occupation," which concisely addresses the subject while sprinkling related material through his narrative. Similarly, a penultimate chapter entitled "'The Storm Has Ceased': Life for Jacksonville's White Residents during the Federal Occupation" points toward the signal importance of social history as a necessary component of any wartime study.

Tampa Bay-area readers will find little of direct relevance to their region's Civil War experience. Schafer does incorporate references to issues involving supply of central and south Florida beef to Confederate armies. He points out that, while beef supply operations factored into Union decision making, they often took a subordinate place to other factors or, put another way, offered an excuse for a predisposition to act. This particularly becomes important for the author when analyzing Brigadier General Truman Seymour's decision to advance toward the Suwannee River in February 1864, an initiative that resulted in disastrous defeat at the Battle of Olustee. Included also is helpful context on the spring 1864 Seventy-fifth Ohio Mounted Infantry expedition to the headwaters of the St. Johns and Kissimmee rivers.

Thunder on the River by no means constitutes the final word on the Civil War in Jacksonville or northeast Florida. It does immediately emerge, however, as the starting point for all serious inquiries on those subjects. It comes as a welcome addition to Florida's Civil War historiography and stands as a distinct credit to its respected author.

CANTER BROWN JR.
Fort Valley State University

The 57 Club: My Four Decades in Florida Politics. By Frederick B. Karl (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010. xiii, 343 pp. Foreword by David R. Colburn and Susan A. MacManus, preface, B&W photographs, appendices, acknowledgments, index. \$40.00, cloth)

How Florida Happened: The Political Education of Buddy MacKay. By Buddy MacKay with Rick Edmonds (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010. xv, 260 pp. Foreword by David R. Colburn and Susan A. MacManus, B&W photographs, acknowledgments, index. \$32.00, cloth)

This year, the University Press of Florida published political memoirs by Frederick B. Karl and Buddy MacKay, Floridians with long and distinguished records of public service. Both books provide insightful and entertaining accounts of Florida politics in the second half of the twentieth century, when Florida emerged from the rural poverty of the Old Confederacy to become one of the nation's most populous and cosmopolitan states. Together with LeRoy Collins, Reubin Askew, Lawton Chiles, Bob Graham, and other Florida reformers, Karl and MacKay exemplified an honest, progressive brand of leadership that defeated the politics of fear, bigotry, and corruption in the early decades of the cold war. As today's progressives confront a political environment in which honesty and moderation are at risk, they would do well to study Karl's and MacKay's thinking and tactics.

Although they shared the same political philosophy, Karl entered Florida politics about a decade ahead of MacKay. A highly decorated veteran of World War II, he was elected to the Florida House in 1956 and began serving in 1957. At the time, North Florida conservatives who staunchly defended racial segregation, legislative malapportionment, and a system of public finance that favored rural over urban interests generally dominated the legislature and state politics. Serving first in the House and then in the Senate (and later as a justice on the Florida Supreme Court), Karl stood strong for desegregating public schools, properly apportioning the state legislature, increasing funding for education at all levels, and extending home-rule powers to counties as well as cities. Highly regarded for his honesty and integrity, Karl was often picked to direct inquiries when a legislator was accused of ethical misconduct.

As a freshman in the House, Karl led other freshman in opposing a series of bills proposed by the notorious Florida Legislative Investigation Committee chaired by Senator Charley Johns. Established in 1956, the "Johns Committee," as it was nicknamed, brought McCarthyism to Florida. The committee targeted university professors, journalists, and civil rights leaders and organizations.

MacKay joined the Florida House in 1969. By then, the progressive reformers were ascendant in Florida politics. The legislature had been reapportioned to meet the requirements of U.S. Supreme Court rulings mandating population-based districting. The Florida constitution of 1968 had also been adopted, which, among

other things, strengthened the office of the governor, added the office of lieutenant governor, initiated annual legislative sessions, and consolidated executive agencies. In MacKay's words: "When I came to the Florida legislature, the 'Old Guard' had been decimated as a result of the historic reapportionment battle. The iron grip of the rural legislators had been broken and the Pork-Chop Gang no longer existed. The special interests that had historically controlled Florida politics were reduced to fighting a series of holding actions like a defeated army in retreat. Although I did not realize it at the time, it was not a single revolution, but a series of intertwined changes all taking place at the same time" (40).

Together, reapportionment and constitutional reform ushered in an era of political progress in which MacKay (and Karl) figured prominently. The reforms of this era included judicial restructuring, a corporate income tax, increased and equalized funding for public education, growth-management legislation, no-fault insurance, and more.

In their books, Karl and MacKay offer numerous anecdotes about Florida politics. Many of their stories convey in concrete terms the reactionary, racially prejudiced politics of Florida in the 1950s and 1960s. For example, Karl relates a story that he "believed to be true" about Farris Bryant in the 1960 gubernatorial contest. Bryant, who had cultivated a reputation for opposing racial integration, was accused of "speaking to an organization of African Americans in Jacksonville." Later, to set the record straight, "Bryant is reported to have admitted to attending the meeting and making a campaign speech, but denied sitting down at the table or eating with them" (190).

MacKay provides some new insights about the disputed 2000 presidential election. Specifically, he explains that many of the problems with ballot design and voting equipment in 2000 had also occurred in the U.S. Senate race in 1988, when MacKay lost to Connie Mack by 35,000 votes out of more than 4 million votes cast. In the heavily Democratic counties of southeast Florida, a total of 210,000 ballots contained "undervotes" (votes that could not be read by electronic tabulators). Sandy D'Alemberte urged MacKay to file suit in federal court, but MacKay declined because he was "exhausted, out of money, and sick at heart." In retrospect, he says, if he had followed D'Alemberte's advice, he "might have been a U.S. senator, and Al Gore might have been spared the same fiasco twelve years later" (117).

The political struggles of Karl and MacKay offer valuable lessons for contemporary Florida moderates and progressives. Perhaps most important of these is how to respond to demagogues who appeal to people's prejudices, misconceptions, or wishful thinking. The demagoguery of the 1950s and 1960s played to racial bigotry. Karl and his fellow moderates dealt with it by being direct and candid and framing issues in terms of what was morally right and best for Florida.

They were also prepared to put their principles ahead of their political careers. Karl cites the example of Jack Orr, a state legislator who in a special legislative session in 1956 was alone in speaking against efforts in the House to impede school

desegregation following the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Karl and the other newly elected House members who would take office in 1957 sat in the audience. Although Orr was soundly defeated the next time he ran for reelection, his 1956 speech, which is included in the appendix of Karl's book, was an inspiration to the incoming freshmen. In Karl's words: "Jack Orr's integrity and eloquence set the tone for those of us at the threshold of legislative service. Frankly, it was an inspiration to many of us and helped us find our own courage when the emotionally charged issue of race relations forced many of us into situations similar to the one he had faced" (18-19).

MacKay suggests that the politics of bigotry was replaced in the 1970s by a politics of deception. Opportunistic politicians began to sell Floridians a "fairy tale" – the idea that Florida is uncomplicated and needs little from government. MacKay offers a blunt assessment of how this has played out: "Since the election of Reubin Askew, no candidates except Askew, Bob Graham, and Lawton Chiles have been able to be elected governor based on reality. To make matters worse, compromise was increasingly portrayed as less than honorable and a new fantasy, ideological purity, was becoming accepted in lieu of bipartisan, nonideological problem solving" (236).

Like Karl, MacKay stresses the value of putting principles first. For example, he explains that LeRoy Collins took positions on civil rights that probably cost him election to the U.S. Senate in 1968 but nevertheless served as a standard for others.

Of course, this is also true of Fred Karl and Buddy MacKay. Even when they lost elections, they won hearts.

LANCE DEHAVEN-SMITH
Florida State University

The Columbia Restaurant: Celebrating a Century of History, Culture, and Cuisine. By Andrew T. Huse with Recipes and Memories from Richard Gonzmart and the Columbian Restaurant Family (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009. vi, 314 pp. Acknowledgments, introduction, family tree, illustrations, color photographs, epilogue, subject index, recipe index. \$40.00, cloth)

The photograph that illustrates the cover of Andrew T. Huse's centennial history of Florida's historic Columbia Restaurant is powerful beyond words. Like military troops posed for inspection, almost two hundred employees and family members stand proudly before the historic façade of the Columbia Restaurant in Tampa's Ybor City. The assembled group of accountants, bartenders, busboys, cashiers, chefs, dishwashers, flamenco dancers, maitre d's, musicians, restroom attendants, singers, sommeliers, valets, waiters, sons, daughters, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren

form the backbone of a business that illustrates the twentieth-century history of Florida. In the early 1900s, the patriarch of the Columbia Restaurant, Casimiro Hernandez Sr., came to Tampa's Ybor City – an enclave of urban immigrants from Cuba, Italy, and Spain who worked in the district's cigar factories – and saw an opportunity that emanated from hunger.

Up and down the urban east coast – from New York's Lower East Side to Miami – immigrant men and women like Hernandez rented pushcarts and fruit stands, opened cafes, coffee houses, and saloons where their working-class compatriots could find both refreshment and the tastes of home. Inspired by a popular song of the day, "Columbia, Gem of the Ocean," Hernandez and a partner started the Columbia Café in 1905, offering hearty fare for the local workforce – Cuban sandwiches, strong coffee, sweet pastries, liquor, and cigars. In this richly illustrated volume, Huse sensitively documents the history of four generations of the entwined families who created the Columbia Restaurant.

As both a librarian and a culinary historian, Huse is well suited to write this family and business history. He understands the cultural and social history that lies within the food dynasty of the Columbia Restaurant. As he explains: "Restaurants are sensitive barometers of culture. The Columbia's history is not one of staid, changeless uniformity, but quite the opposite: to prosper, the restaurant has undergone nearly constant change, much like Florida" (ii). He integrates evocative photographs and ephemera from the Gonzmart-Columbia Restaurant Collection, now housed in the Special Collections Department at the University of South Florida Tampa Library, as well as interviews from the Columbia Restaurant oral history project, available through the library's online catalogue. One section of the volume includes favorite recipes from the Columbia Restaurant such as the "Original 1905 Salad," Spanish bean soup, arroz con pollo, and Sangre de Toro sangria.

Family is at the center of the Columbia Restaurant's history, and Huse uses it as a touchstone to move through the evolution of this Tampa institution. The book is divided into chronological sections associated with the four generations of the Hernandez-Gonzmart family, allowing the reader to explore the history of Tampa through the lens of food, labor, and the immigrant experience. As Huse explains, the Columbia Restaurant is "Ybor City's virtual axis, economically, culturally, and historically" (ii). The many-layered story that revolves around the Columbia involves the coming of the railroad, industrialization, tourism, Prohibition, the Florida land boom, organized crime, the Great Depression, the world wars, rationing, labor unions, baseball, and the culture of celebrity and entertainment. One of the most interesting stories told here is that of the Columbia Restaurant's dedicated and talented workforce. More detail about these workers would better reveal the complicated intersection of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and labor in the segregated South. Women play a central role in the history of the Columbia, and Huse does an excellent job documenting the strength, influence, and style of Adela Hernandez-Gonzmart and the generations of young women who followed in her path.

The Columbia Restaurant was the place to be seen in Tampa, and no more so than in the 1950s, as the illustrations chosen for this volume so vividly depict. This was the heyday of the glamorous floor show at the Columbia, of exotic dining in the Patio Room, and dancing in the Don Quixote Room to the music of Cesar Gonzmart's Continental Orchestra. Politicians, the State Elks Association, Hollywood movie stars, and hundreds of honeymooners and families on vacations made their way to the Columbia, including my own parents. My mother remembers enjoying a "very fancy" meal with my father, and taking home a matchbook and menu to mark their special evening in February 1947. I imagine them dining on one of the Columbia's specialties – pompano en papillot, paella Valenciana, or steak capuchina – and ending their meal with a creamy flan, a bowl of coconut ice cream, and a café con leche. The restaurant has never lost its appeal for those in love. In 2004, *Southern Living* magazine chose the Columbia as its "favorite romantic restaurant."

Perhaps because the events it documents occurred so recently, the last section of the volume, "The Fourth Generation, 1980-2005," lacks the historical context and analysis of the rest of the book. Although the final chapter feels a bit weighted down by family drama, these stories do reveal the challenges of running a family business. Each generation placed "family first" but also understood the heavy responsibility of being born into a restaurant family; and spouses learned what it meant to be married to the family business. Ultimately, this is the poignant story of an American family shaped by their Cuban and Spanish heritage and their love for the worlds and people of Florida, whom they so deeply touched through a magical creation of food and entertainment.

MARCIE COHEN FERRIS

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Ditch of Dreams: The Cross Florida Barge Canal and the Struggle for Florida's Future. By Steven Noll and David Tegender. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009. xi, 394 pp. Foreword by Raymond Arsenault and Gary R. Mormino, introduction, maps, photographs, illustrations, appendix, acknowledgments, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95, cloth)

The story of the Cross Florida Barge Canal reads like an epic, a tale spanning centuries and filled with avarice, courage, determination, hubris, and a heroine out of central casting. Steven Noll and David Tegender leave no stone unturned in their outstanding rendering of this most peculiar episode of Florida's often-shameful environmental history. Theirs is a masterful work, a prodigiously researched account that serves as the final word on the subject. But the authors aim higher still, as they posit that "the history of the Cross Florida Barge Canal . . . is not just another story

about modern Florida – in many respects it is *the* story of modern Florida” (7).

It is difficult to quibble with this broad assertion. The first Europeans to settle in Florida began immediately to search for a way to bifurcate the peninsula’s unique geography, setting in motion a quest that still haunts the state today. The reasons given in the sixteenth century remain unchanged into the twenty-first: a canal would aid in defense and boost commerce. Noll and Tegeder brilliantly recount the various incarnations of these twin enticements proffered by canal boosters, even as the context for the canal changed. Adolph Hitler, Fidel Castro, the Great Depression, and the Great Society each figured in the calculations of those who fervently fought for a waterway across the state. But until the 1930s, supporters were stymied by not only Florida’s hydrology but also its lack of political muscle, their efforts meeting defeat time and again.

Noll and Tegeder excel at exploring the political momentum required to get a canal approved. They skillfully weave together the various threads that stretched from the newspaper office of Bert Dosh in Ocala to the congressional offices of Charles Bennett in Washington, D.C. When the Roosevelt administration finally approved a ship canal in 1935, backers in north Florida rejoiced – only to see the project wither under the exacting scrutiny of anti-New Deal Senator Arthur Vandenburg. Precious little of the ship canal was built before the money ran out, but a route had been selected, one that would connect the St. Johns River to the Gulf of Mexico via the Oklawaha and Withlacoochee rivers. This decision would have a far-reaching impact on the future of modern Florida.

When the canal was reborn in the 1960s as a barge canal, having been blessed by the Army Corps of Engineers with a positive cost-benefit ratio, a small band of like-minded people in and around Gainesville took notice and did what they could to alter the course of the canal. Led by David Anthony and especially Marjorie Carr, “the housewife from Micanopy,” this group evolved into the Florida Defenders of the Environment, and by 1971 they persuaded the Nixon administration to halt construction of the canal in the name of saving the Oklawaha River. Noll and Tegeder show that some canal opponents such as John Couse came to their convictions through a more conservative vision that opposed federal boondoggles. Others, tied to the railroad and citrus industries, had their own agendas. Still, the authors assert that “on a deeper level, many of the assumptions behind canal construction were parallel in some ways to America’s experience in Vietnam” (199), an analogy that helped frame the battle over the canal.

Although Carr and others successfully terminated the canal, their efforts met with a cruel irony. Their main goal had been to prevent the destruction of the Oklawaha River, one of the most beautiful in the hemisphere, but in that they failed. The Rodman Dam (later renamed the Kirkpatrick Dam) interrupted the free flow of the river, and despite the intense efforts of many, including Bob Graham and Jeb Bush, the dam remains in place today. Noll and Tegeder, to their credit, do not shy away from this controversy but dutifully document the sometimes maddening

process that allowed for the dam's continued existence. Therein lies the real strength of this book: it captures the promise and the paltriness of modern Florida, where an artificial lake can become a treasured "ecosystem" deserving protection, while the natural, the real, must languish despite the best efforts of the well-intentioned.

The Kirkpatrick Dam stands as one of the canal's most visible legacies, but Noll and Tegeder rightly seize upon another: the 107-mile Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway that sits as a linear oasis amid of sea of suburban sprawl. The story of the Cross Florida Barge Canal offers no easy answers, and Noll and Tegeder have done the state a great service by writing this book. It is hard to imagine a better telling of this tangled tale.

LEE IRBY
Eckerd College

A Place to Be: Brazilian, Guatemalan, and Mexican Immigrants in Florida's New Destinations. Edited by Philip J. Williams, Timothy Steigenga, and Manuel A. Vásquez (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2009. ix, 238 pp. Acknowledgments, tables, contributors, index. \$25.95, paper)

This excellent collection of essays on the lives and struggles of recent immigrants in Florida joins a new generation of scholarship that explores immigration in nonconventional destinations outside of gateway cities such as New York, Los Angeles, and Houston. The authors employ rigorous ethnographic, oral history, and social science methodologies to illuminate the experiences of people who come to work in Jupiter, Immokalee, and Deerfield Beach, among other towns. This book will be eminently useful for readers interested in understanding both the historical as well as contemporary dimensions of immigration in Florida.

A Place to Be places Florida squarely within the rapidly changing *Nuevo* New South. At the same time, authors build on seminal works by Alejandro Portes, Leon Fink, Alex Stepick, and other scholars who situate the region in a much broader framework of globalization and neoliberalism that is having a profound impact on the working class throughout the entire Americas. The underlying premise of *A Place to Be* is that we cannot understand the Sunshine State – or the state of the American Dream – in the twenty-first century without understanding the aspirations that Brazilian, Guatemalan, and Mexican immigrants bring here.

The essays in *A Place to Be* grow out of a collaborative and interdisciplinary research project initiated by scholars and immigration experts in Florida, Brazil, Guatemala, and Mexico. The works are organized thematically around three critical concepts: transnationalism; collective mobilization, and lived religion. The introduction is lucid and presents the major case studies of the book: Guatemalans

and Mexicans in Jupiter; Mexicans and Guatemalans in Immokalee; and Brazilians in Pompano Beach and Deerfield Beach.

Offering much more than a study of immigration in local settings, the essay authors use a transnational approach that involves conducting ethnographic fieldwork in Florida as well as in Latin America in order to arrive at a nuanced understanding of the ways that immigrant groups forge solidarities, cultural identities, and a sense of community across national boundaries. *A Place to Be* gives readers the intellectual tools they need to avoid the pitfalls that plague much of the contemporary policy debates about immigration. The essays demonstrate that Florida's newest immigrants are anything but homogeneous. Indeed, there is an enormous diversity in occupational mobility, religious orientation, as well as gender and ethnic backgrounds – among other differences – that must be dealt with if one is to come to grips with the contemporary immigrant experience.

A Place to Be pays careful attention to historical context. The writers demonstrate that newer migrants from Mexico, Guatemala, and Brazil face an especially hostile social climate marked by the rise of anti-immigration groups such as the Federation for American Immigration Reform and other nativist organizations that are becoming increasingly active in Florida. Nevertheless, this is not a study that frames immigrants as victims. Working from a “globalization from below” framework, the authors unearth impressive examples of ethnic and cross-class mobilizations that have improved the lives of countless individuals in the Latina/o Diaspora.

The book will also appeal to students of social movements. In an intriguing comparative essay on Jupiter and Immokalee, Steigenga and Williams consider the role that the Pan-Mayan movement in Guatemala plays in immigrant collective action in Florida. The authors also explore the rise of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), which has become one of the best-known labor organizations in the South. The CIW is composed primarily of Mexican, Guatemalan, and Haitian farmworkers. The authors argue that this group has been able to achieve improved working conditions for agricultural workers through building alliances with student and religious organizations outside of the immediate region. In contrast to the CIW's multiethnic model, new immigrants in Jupiter have used the annual Fiesta Maya to create a model of community organizing more focused on identity and culture. The Fiesta Maya is essentially a restaging of La Fiesta de la Virgen de Candelaria in Guatemala, and it has led to the creation of local soccer leagues, religious organizations, and even a resource center that serves the needs of the local migrant community in Jupiter.

Much has changed since Edward R. Murrow's 1960 *Harvest of Shame*, a stunning documentary exposé of migrant farm labor conditions in Florida and other states. Immigrant workers now use cell phones, the Internet, and radio to create transnational networks of mutual aid and belonging throughout the hemisphere; however, the same individuals continue to face low wages, racism, and anti-immigrant hysteria in the Sunshine State. *A Place to Be* helps explain the challenges that today's

immigrants experience, their survival strategies, as well as the ways in which they are helping to build a new Florida.

PAUL ORTIZ

University of Florida

Category 5: The 1935 Labor Day Hurricane. By Thomas Neil Knowles (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009. xxviii, 350 pp. Preface and acknowledgments, maps, prologue, B&W photographs, epilogue, exhibits, selected bibliography, illustration credits, index. \$29.95, cloth)

Hurricanes are among the most powerful forces found in nature. When they strike land, they reshape local geographies and terrains in a matter of hours. They also have profound economic and social consequences. The financial losses from Hurricane Katrina in 2005 were approximately \$100 billion. Massive population shifts took place as well, with hundreds of thousands of people leaving the Gulf Coast area and permanently relocating themselves in other parts of the country.

While storms such as Katrina are fascinating as natural events, they are even more interesting as forces that reshape local communities and, sometimes, even national politics. Thomas Neil Knowles, in *Category 5: The 1935 Labor Day Hurricane*, skillfully takes into account the natural events, social consequences, and politics in his comprehensive history of the Category 5, Labor Day Hurricane that struck the Florida Keys in 1935.

Born and raised in Key West, Knowles is a thorough historian who draws on a wide range of personal accounts, as well as newspapers and government documents, to chronicle the history of the storm. With winds estimated as high as 225 mph, the 1935 Labor Day Hurricane was the first recorded Category 5 hurricane in the United States. With its extraordinary winds and seventeen-foot storm surge, the storm caused the deaths of more than four hundred people.

Knowles's contribution to hurricane history includes not just his description of the storm and its immediate impact, but also the role played by the federal weather service in warning people of potential hurricane threats and the need to evacuate. Contained within Knowles's history of the storm is an equally interesting chronicle of the development of weather-forecasting services in South Florida and the beginnings of the less-than-perfect art of storm forecasting.

Knowles constructs much of his history by interviewing eyewitnesses who survived the storm. In doing so, he brings to life many aspects of life in the Florida Keys, its isolation and poverty, as well as its simplicity and closeness to the natural world.

While the 1935 Labor Day Hurricane will continue to be of interest to

historians simply because of its magnitude, it has another part of American history because it caused the deaths of hundreds of World War I veterans who had been sent to three camps in the Keys to work on the construction of roads and bridges as part of the economic recovery efforts of the Roosevelt administration. In spring of 1933, disgruntled, out-of-work veterans had begun to reassemble in Washington, D.C., to resume the “bonus” payment protests begun under President Hoover the previous summer. Franklin D. Roosevelt was now in the White House, and he did not wish to repeat the embarrassment of sending armed troops against former veterans. Steps were taken to incorporate veterans into the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and to employ them in various public works projects around the country. A further plan set up work camps for veterans in Florida, where they assisted with building roads and bridges in places such as the Florida Keys.

As a result, by the end of August 1935, a total of 1,358 war veterans were assigned to seven camps around the state. A total of 707 men were sent to three camps in the Upper Keys, working primarily on road and bridge projects. Veterans at the camps received thirty dollars a month for their efforts, as well as cots, tents, and food. The federal government perceived many of the people sent to Florida as troublemakers, and the government’s attitude was one of “keep them happy and keep them out of Washington.”

When the hurricane hit in early September, the results were devastating for the veterans in the camps. Evacuations prior to the storm had been limited. The storm had its greatest impact directly over the site of the camps. Of the 485 persons killed in the storm, 228 were civilians and 257 were veterans. The tragedy of the hurricane and its impact on the people living in South Florida and the Keys became a national issue, one concerned with the thoroughness of federal weather reporting, the types of warnings sent out, and the evacuation procedures provided to the veterans prior to the storm. What began as a public works project to deal with a group of volatile war veterans became a national tragedy.

In summary, Knowles’s book is a useful contribution and provides a unique perspective on an important episode in the state’s history that had not just local but national consequences. While his research provides the reader with considerable insight into life and culture in the Florida Keys during the 1930s, it also speaks significantly to how storms such the Labor Day Hurricane of 1935 or, more recently, Hurricane Katrina have the potential to become national issues.

EUGENE F. PROVENZO JR.
University of Miami

And They Were Wonderful Teachers: Florida's Purge of Gay and Lesbian Teachers. By Karen L. Graves (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009. xxi, 186 pp. Preface, acknowledgments, table, map, conclusion, notes, index. \$65.00, cloth; \$25.95, paper)

Denison University Professor of Education Karen Graves has thoroughly documented the removal of gay and lesbian schoolteachers during the notorious nine-year reign of the Johns Committee (1956-65). Officially known as the Florida Legislative Investigation Committee (FLIC), this arm of the legislature attempted to quash the civil rights movement, curtail academic freedom, and expose any activity that threatened the political hegemony of Senator Charley E. Johns and his Pork Chop Gang colleagues. After the FLIC's attempts to shut down NAACP branches in Florida and connect "race agitators" with a larger communist conspiracy had failed, investigators launched probes between 1957 and 1963 against a "homosexual menace" that focused on schoolteachers.

Graves effectively incorporates sources from the rich, even if redacted, Johns Committee records that became available to researchers in July 1993. She built upon earlier studies of the FLIC and similar state-sponsored, cold war-era witch hunts written by Stacy Braukman, John D'Emilio, and David Johnson – scholars who have enriched Florida's historiographical record by examining the notable intersection of social, political, ethnic, and queer history that defines the FLIC's contemptible legacy. An educational historian by training, Graves understands that many of her colleagues in the areas of social and historical foundations of American education have avoided exploring issues of sexuality and queer theory even as a growing number of social historians have embraced these topics. By realizing that the persecution of gay and lesbian educators often eclipsed the purges of suspected Communists, she views her study as a way to bring this story out of the closet for educational historians who "want to know how political-economic changes influence sexual identity" (viii).

The author acknowledges the complex nature of the Johns Committee's history. She introduces elements of earlier and concurrent investigations targeting members and supporters of the NAACP, students and instructors at Florida's colleges and universities, and others called to give testimony. Utilizing surviving committee transcripts in the State Archives of Florida, Graves clearly compares the similarities and differences between the civil rights and academic freedom probes with the closed-door sessions of eighty-seven schoolteachers known to have appeared before FLIC. Describing these educators' dilemmas as a story of "stealth, silence, control, and resistance" (xv), she explains that even though the Johns Committee employed extreme tactics to fire and remove teachers under investigation, this agency's practices did not represent an aberration or deviation from the status quo: Indeed, since the expansion of free public education during the days of Horace Mann, educators have endured restrictions and prohibitions not mandated universally across other segments of society.

Capitalizing on the fear that gay and lesbian teachers might “pervert” their students or recruit them into acts still deemed as “crimes against nature” by the larger culture, the FLIC’s probes believed that they had a right to regulate private and consensual adult behaviors for the public benefit. As Graves later reveals in her narrative, the Florida Department of Education (DOE) and Florida Education Association (FEA) often assisted the Johns Committee’s investigations and ultimately embraced the FLIC’s tactics by codifying elements of them into practices that have long outlived Charley Johns and his committee. Indeed, during the early 1960s, the DOE and FEA even viewed the FLIC as a partner that could help local districts sniff out suspicious characters, such as single men of “marriageable age” in elementary schools and others who matched certain stereotypes.

In her valuable study, Graves correctly views the FLIC investigations as part of a larger attempt by Florida’s political and educational leaders to confront the changing social landscape as newcomers swarmed to the Sunshine State. She understands the peculiar nature of Florida’s Pork Chop Gang politics under one-party rule. As Florida recruited elsewhere in order to meet an unprecedented demand for educators, teachers recruited from outside the state aroused suspicions, and this in part helped to explain how they could become a target for the FLIC. Graves’s discussion of Thomas Bailey, the state superintendent of public instruction from 1949 through 1965, enhances an understanding of this era by revealing the complex nature of state-sponsored investigations of educators and affirming that complicity went beyond the Johns Committee.

JAMES A. SCHNUR

University of South Florida St. Petersburg

A Consummate Lawyer: William Reece Smith, Jr. By Michael I. Swygert (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2010. xvi, 237 pp. Foreword, acknowledgments, photographs, selected list of awards, countries visited, bibliography, index of names. \$25.00, cloth)

A recent biography entitled *A Consummate Lawyer* portrays the life and work of William Reece Smith Jr., one of Florida’s and the nation’s most prominent lawyers and citizens. Its author, Michael I. Swygert, is a professor of law emeritus at Stetson University College of Law and the author or coauthor of several other books. In this biography, he reviews Smith’s life and work in an orderly, chronological sequence that provides valuable insight into the character and achievements of a remarkable individual. Anyone interested in the practice of law and the administration of justice will find this biography to be of great interest.

Raised in Plant City, then a small town in central Florida, Smith enjoyed

the benefits of relatively well-educated and successful parents and grandparents, especially a talented grandmother who was perhaps the most important person in his upbringing. His early life was well rounded, and he enjoyed participation in high school athletics and other activities. Others with a positive influence in Smith's life during this period included some outstanding teachers and an exceptional coach. Upon graduation he attended the University of South Carolina. There he became the starting quarterback on a Gator Bowl-bound football team.

After graduation he served as an officer in the United States Navy, with the majority of his service on a light cruiser. A combination of circumstances then encouraged Smith to study law, and he enrolled at the University of Florida College of Law, where he compiled an outstanding record. He graduated in 1947 at the top of his class with high honors. Like other returning veterans and fellow students – members of the “greatest generation” – Smith became increasingly interested in the advancement of civil rights. His early study, thoughtful analysis, and concern for high ethical standards and equal rights became the common themes of his career as a lawyer.

Upon graduation he was selected for a prestigious Rhodes scholarship at Oxford University in England. There he honed his personal and scholarly interests and adopted a more global perspective. Following his final year at Oxford, Smith accepted an invitation to return to the Florida College of Law as a member of the faculty for one year. He then joined a major law firm, Mabry, Reaves, Carlton, Anderson, Fields and Ward, in Tampa, Florida.

This biography reveals how his early life in Plant City, at the University of South Carolina, in the United States Navy, at the University of Florida, and as a Rhodes Scholar provided a strong foundation for what would become a most successful law career. As a lawyer, Smith made his mark in a number of important legal cases before the United States and Florida Supreme Courts involving public policy issues such as reapportionment, federalism, the Bill of Rights, interstate commerce, and antitrust matters.

Subsequent chapters detail a variety of his activities as Tampa city attorney, including his work to better race relations. Also reviewed are his outstanding leadership and achievements as president of the Hillsborough County Bar Association, the Florida Bar Association, and other professional organizations.

Then, except for a year apart from the practice of law to serve with distinction as the interim president of the University of South Florida, Smith advanced to a national stage when he was elected president of the American Bar Association. Nonlawyers may be especially interested in the role of law associations and Smith's leadership at each successive level in securing greater access to legal aid, a stronger commitment to legal ethics, equal rights, and a strengthened judiciary.

In September 1988, Smith was elected president of the International Bar Association and thereby reached the pinnacle of his profession – the first American lawyer to serve as president of his local, state, national, and the international bar

associations. These positions are far from just honorary. The author describes how Smith exercised leadership as head of the global bar successfully to advance the rule of law and liberty in many parts of the world during and after his two-year term.

The final chapter focuses on Smith's continued dedication to and teaching of the professional responsibilities of a lawyer. The qualities of character, competence, and commitment that Smith has consistently modeled and taught typify his life and career.

This biography will help the reader understand the many ways in which this remarkable individual, now chair emeritus of the Carlton Fields law firm in Tampa, has worked to make our world a significantly better place.

T. TERRELL SESSUMS, ESQ.
Tampa, Florida

A Small but Spartan Band: The Florida Brigade in Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. By Zack C. Waters and James C. Edmonds (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010. xii, 254 pp. List of illustrations, foreword by Robert K. Krick, introduction, B&W photographs, maps, illustrations, acknowledgments, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95, cloth)

On July 22, 1863, Council A. Bryan, a Confederate captain from Florida, explained to his wife, "When the Secret history of the war is Known – then we will get justice I hope" (3). In their book, Zack C. Waters and James C. Edmonds chronicle the relatively unknown military experiences of the fifteen thousand Floridians in gray in General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.

The authors note correctly that historians tend to remember Florida's Confederate troops as "being harbingers of bad fortune" and "for an embarrassing spate of desertions that plagued the unit during the siege of Petersburg." About the most authoritative conclusion Waters and Edmonds can offer about them is that Florida's contingent in Lee's army "fought well in some battles and poorly in others" (3). "Perhaps the oddity is not that so many deserted," they argue, "but that so many remained in the ranks" (167). "They [*sic*] Floridians were certainly not the best brigade in Lee's fabled army, but they generally fought bravely and don't deserve neglect" (194). Few readers will consider such analysis satisfying or worthy of publication by a university press.

That said, with limited source materials at their disposal, the authors nonetheless do their best to narrate the service of Florida's Confederate units from mobilization in 1861 to demobilization in 1865. These troops served with mixed results in the Peninsula campaign, Second Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, North Anna, Cold Harbor, Petersburg,

and operations thereafter.

Waters and Edmonds maintain that the Second Florida Infantry fought valiantly at the bloody Battle of Seven Pines, Virginia, May 31 - June 1, 1862. The battle, however, virtually crippled the unit. It suffered a 45 percent casualty rate: 198 casualties among the 435 effectives. The regiment's officer corps succumbed to extreme losses. Ten of the eleven company commanders either received wounds or died.

Assessing the Florida brigade's performance at Antietam poses more problems. Though General Lee found little to praise in the Floridians' fighting at Bloody Lane, Waters and Edmonds blame the troops' lackluster performance on the inept leadership of Virginia General Roger H. Pryor (who at a critical moment replaced the wounded South Carolina General Richard H. Anderson) and the inordinate number of casualties to the Floridians' officer corps. "For a while a lieutenant directed the Second Florida Regiment and noncoms commanded several companies. Still, the casualties suffered by the Florida units seem to indicate that want of courage had not been the reason for the failure to hold the sunken road" (39). The gray-clad Floridians lost approximately 50 percent of their force as casualties.

Captain William Baya's poor leadership, some said cowardice or insubordination, at Fredericksburg led to the capture of twenty-two of his Floridians and the captain himself. Though Waters and Edmonds conclude that "Baya's contingent certainly set no standard for steadfast heroism" during the battle, they place partial blame for Baya's weak performance on Mississippian Andrew R. Govan's command. According to the authors, while Govan sheltered his troops in Fredericksburg, he "essentially pinned a bull's-eye on Baya's unit, stationing it in an open, unprotected area where it would be the focus of enemy fire" (44).

Unquestionably Florida's gray coats fought tenaciously at Gettysburg, again in spite of inconsistent leadership and high casualties. On July 2, Colonel David Lang's men overcame the Yankees at the Emmitsburg Road but a day later experienced embarrassing defeat during General George E. Pickett's inglorious charge. On July 3, another 20 percent of Lang's thinning ranks were killed, wounded, or captured. "It seemed that any evil that could befall a soldier in combat was visited upon the men from the southernmost state," Waters and Edmonds assert (78-79). Floridians endured the highest casualty rate of any of Lee's units during the general's Pennsylvania invasion. Perhaps it is this to which the authors refer when they mention that Florida soldiers "developed a healthy streak of paranoia" (3).

Unfortunately, the authors tell their story in a herky-jerky fashion. Their narrative relies on quotations and lists of officers and units. Battle summaries highlight troop movements, comment on changing commanders, and enumerate casualty figures. The conclusion profiles influential soldiers who survived the war. *A Small but Spartan Band* thus resembles a parochial regimental history, including its use of such language as the "War Between the States" and "Marse Robert." Small errors mar the maps. The index references "Black Confederates" but omits slavery

and the U.S. Colored Troops.

Waters and Edmonds thus succeed only partially in making known the “secret” history of the Floridians’ war.

JOHN DAVID SMITH

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

The Life of Ruth Bryan Owen: Florida’s First Congresswoman and America’s First Woman Diplomat. By Sarah Pauline Vickers (Tallahassee: Sentry Press, 2009. xviii, 231 pp. Dedication, acknowledgments, preface, introduction, B&W photographs, bibliography, index)

Every Floridian should know Ruth Bryan Owen: she was the first congresswoman from the South, and Florida voters elected her in 1928. That was just eight years after Florida women got the vote via the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution – which Florida did not ratify until May 1969. Sally Vickers, who earned both a Ph.D. and a J.D. from FSU, recently published a biography of Owen. This work begins to fill a void on Owen’s fascinating life but still leaves room for more extensive exploration.

The problems begin with the subject’s name. Writers of women’s history deal with this difficulty every day: Thomas Jefferson, for example, is Jefferson all his life, but many women have three or four surnames during the course of their lives. In this case, the biography’s subject was Bryan at birth; Leavitt after her first marriage (which ended in divorce); Owen after her second (when she was widowed); and Rohde after her last. Which name to use indeed poses a problem, but the bottom-line rule is consistency. Vickers instead uses as many as three variants on a page – a real frustration for those new to the subject.

If readers can get past such editorial neglect, Owen’s life is well worth examination. She was the daughter of the famed William Jennings Bryan and Mary Baird Bryan – and her mother’s life also merits attention. Mary Baird Bryan earned a law degree from the University of Nebraska in 1888 when Ruth was three years old. The very first law degrees granted to women were in 1871 (by Washington University in St. Louis), and it was extremely unusual for a married woman to go to college at all in this era, let alone a young mother. This milestone of educational history, however, goes unexplored, as do other aspects of young Ruth’s formative years.

Even such basics as the place being discussed require the reader to put in effort: in her first pages, Vickers refers to “Jacksonville” several times without adding the state, and only when the Bryans move to Nebraska does it become semi-clear that the biography begins in Jacksonville, Illinois. Nothing is said about family life in Washington during Ruth’s childhood in the 1890s when her father served in Congress,

and her college years in Illinois and Nebraska are covered in two paragraphs.

Her first marriage, to William Homer Leavitt, an artist much older than she, also is quickly dismissed, and the chronology is further confused by skipping forward to mention the 1943 accidental death of her second child. A more ambitious biographer might have tracked down the birth date of the Leavitts' first child: they were married on October 3, 1903, and both Vickers's book and other short encyclopedia biographies say that the baby was born in 1904, sans birthday. This is another example of how women's history requires deeper probing and more curious biographers: Vickers simply dismisses the marriage as "willful," "defiant," and "naive," leaving unmentioned the possibility that young Ruth Bryan wed because she was pregnant.

The couple divorced in 1909, and according to Ruth's biography in the standard Harvard-published *Notable American Women*, she went to Germany to study voice, where she met the British army officer Reginald Owen. Vickers's book does not mention this and offers no explanation of how the couple met, beyond: "iconoclastic almost to the point of recklessness, Ruth fell in love." They married in 1910, and Ruth accompanied Owen to assignment in Jamaica, where, without knowledge of her experience in Germany, the reader would be left to wonder how she "talked German all the afternoon" with diplomats.

She bore her third child in England in 1913, and stayed there while her husband was assigned to Egypt. After a course in nursing, she followed him there and nursed in a Cairo hospital during World War I. He contracted what would turn out to be a fatal illness, and at the war's end they moved to Coral Gables, where her parents had retired in 1916. A fourth child, Helen Rudd, was born there in 1920.

William Jennings Bryan, of course, was celebrated for his oratory, but Mary Baird Bryan also was an outstanding speaker. In 1917, while her daughter Ruth was in Egypt, Mary Baird Bryan lobbied for women's right to vote in Tallahassee. Legislators were so excited about her appearance that the *House Journal* contained seven separate entries on her upcoming speech, and the *Tampa Tribune* said that the lawmakers listened intently as she spoke for an hour and a half. Ruth Bryan Owen inherited that ability, and for the rest of her life, she supported her children by working the national lecture circuit. The detailing of her speeches and the tough travel schedule that they required form the best part of Vickers's book.

William Jennings Bryan died in 1925 and Reginald Owen in 1927. In the years between and after, the two widows plotted strategy for winning a seat in Congress. The 1926 race against the incumbent, William J. Sears, was not successful, but Ruth Bryan Owen defeated him in 1928. Florida's population at the time was so small that it was entitled to only two House seats, and the district ran along the eastern side of the state from the Georgia border to Key West.

With two female aides often accompanying her, she drove her own car, which still was something of a novelty. "The Spirit of Florida" was emblazoned on its rear spare tire, and it and she attracted much attention. Floridians elected her in the

Democratic primary – the only election that mattered at the time – but Sears argued that she was ineligible because she had lost her citizenship when she married an Englishman. The 1922 Cable Act had corrected that particular injustice for women, but he made a legalistic case that the seven-year waiting period for citizenship had not yet been met. Her congressional colleagues did not buy the argument, but the issue nonetheless was a distraction during her first term.

The year in which Owen was elected, 1928, brought victories for three congresswomen named Ruth – Ruth Bryan Owen of Florida, Ruth Pratt Sears of New York, and Ruth Hanna McCormick of Illinois. The relationship between the women from Illinois and Florida would have been a wonderful addition to this book, as Ruth Hanna McCormick was the daughter of Republican boss Mark Hanna, who had managed the presidential campaign of William Jennings Bryan's old nemesis William McKinley. Both Ruths had grown up immersed in their father's politics, and how they dealt with each other in Congress could make a fascinating read. Unfortunately, McCormick's name doesn't even make the index of this book.

Having lived and traveled around the globe, Owen was an excellent choice to be the first woman on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. She also presciently advocated a cabinet-level Department of the Home and Child, and she played a strong role in the preservation of the Everglades – a longtime legislative goal for her mother, her aunt May Mann Jennings, Tampa's Kate Jackson, and other members of the Florida chapter of the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

When her 1932 reelection campaign was not successful, the new Democratic president, Franklin Roosevelt, appointed Owen as the nation's first female ambassador. The chapters on her service in Denmark are the most thorough of the book, and Vickers especially shines when she discusses Owen's lectures on that nation back in the United States.

Marriage, however, again proved an impediment to her career. While in the United States in July 1936, Ruth Bryan Owen wed Borge Rohde, a Danish noble, at Hyde Park, New York, with the president and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt in attendance. According to Danish law, she automatically became a Danish citizen with marriage, and therefore no longer could serve as an ambassador. Vickers does a good job of documenting the objections that Secretary of State Cordell Hull had in regard to her continued service, and the upshot was that she was forced to resign. Instead of returning to Denmark, she and her new husband spent their honeymoon campaigning for Roosevelt's 1936 reelection.

That tale is well told, but the last eighteen years of her life are covered in a nine-page chapter – and much of that is devoted to explicating Hitler's rise. Both Roosevelt and his successor, Harry Truman, appointed Ruth Bryan Rohde to positions that dealt with the founding of the United Nations, and Vickers does give a nod to that, but again the biography lacks detail on its subject's life, while using space to retell well-known history.

Two sentences are all that we find on the wartime service of her husband

and son, and virtually nothing is said of how she spent her war years. She died in 1954 of a heart attack in Copenhagen, where she had gone to accept an award from the Danish government. The proclamation accompanying the award, which Vickers quotes, includes a tantalizing suggestion of wartime service in thanking the former ambassador for her “contributions ... especially during the occupation.” It would be interesting to know more about that, but once again a piqued appetite goes unfilled.

Sally Vickers appears to have devoted much of her professional life to the memory of Ruth Bryan Owen: the 1995 edition of the Florida Humanities Council’s *Forum*, which celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment, included an article on Owen by Vickers. She clearly has done a great deal of research: although the book’s bibliography is padded with irrelevant titles, it nonetheless contains evidence of many trips to archives. It is to be hoped that she will tackle the topic again – this time with a more capable editor. As it is, the biography has the feel of a master’s thesis turned into a book: the middle of the sandwich has fine filling, but the bread surrounding it, at the beginning and the end, lacks substance.

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