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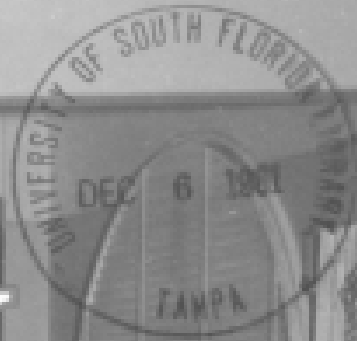
Tampa Bay History (1981) "Full Issue," *Tampa Bay History*. Vol. 3 : Iss. 2 , Article 1.
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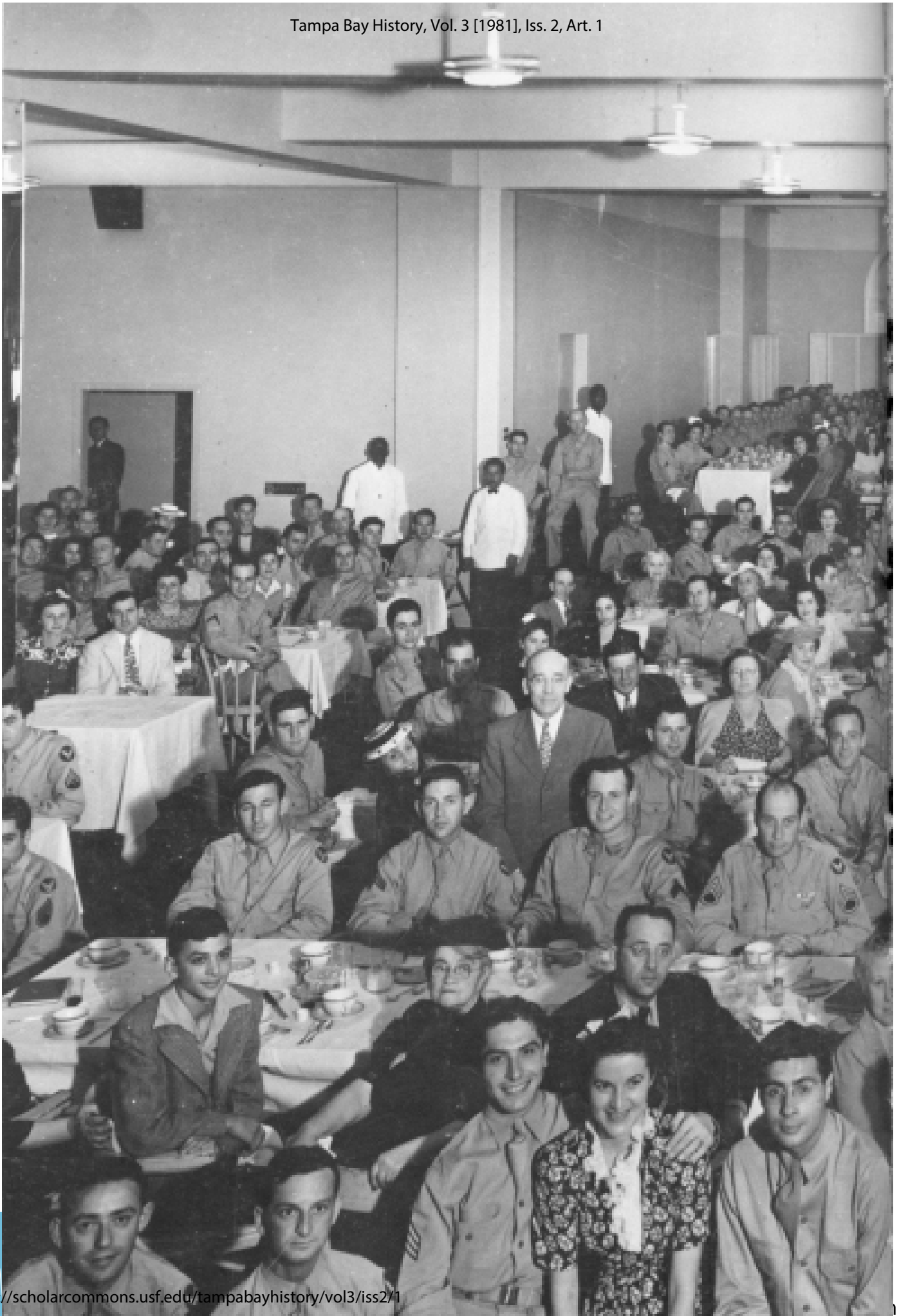
: Full Issue

Tampa Bay History

FALL/WINTER 1980



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FALL/WINTER 1981

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FROM THE EDITORS

The historian performs in a variety of roles as chronicler, analyst, and teacher, but no part is more exciting to play than that of detective. Tracking down information and gathering evidence, the historian-sleuth solves mysteries locked away in the past. In following historical trails, researchers must take advantage of all available clues. The authors of the genealogy article make this clear in their discussion of the valuable leads that can be found in funeral home records. Indeed, history may not be for the squeamish. Frank Laumer rivals Sherlock Holmes in his pursuit of the truth about Ransom Clark's survival of the Dade Massacre, a quest which eventually ended at a cemetery grave site.

Though these articles illustrate extraordinary efforts to uncover secrets of the past, other essays in this issue display the more common detective work of the historian. The Ybor City cigar strike of 1910 and the development of the Edison Park subdivision in Fort Myers come alive through the use of newspaper accounts and manuscript sources. Evidence of historical events can also be found in documents written by eyewitnesses. In a continuation of articles portraying the Tampa Bay area through the eyes of foreign travelers, *TBH* presents excerpts from a book written by a German visitor to Florida in the 1920s. Another personal memoir in the form of an oral interview exhibits the growth of Pasco County and reveals how the family of J. B. Starkey has nurtured a love and respect for the land. We hope you enjoy these historical "detective stories".

With this edition, *Tampa Bay History* completes its third year of publication. In a continuing effort to reach out to our readers, we are pleased to announce the creation of the *Tampa Bay History* essay contest as an annual event. First prize is one hundred dollars (\$100), and fifty dollars (\$50) goes to the runner-up. In addition, winning articles will be published in *TBH*. Manuscripts should be approximately 2500-5000 words and typewritten, double-spaced with footnotes at the end. Entries can deal with any aspect of the history of the fifteen county Tampa Bay region and must be based on historical research. The editorial staff and members of the advisory board are not eligible. The deadline for submission is *September 1, 1982*. For more information about the contest, contact: Managing Editor, *Tampa Bay History*, Department of History, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida, 33620.

COMMUNICATIONS

Any correspondence pertaining to the articles, reviews and other material contained in the journal may be sent to the Managing Editor.

Dear Editors:

I am a member of the Greater Omaha Genealogical Society. If it is possible, I would like to submit a query.

“WHEELER COUSINS”, a new organization, has been formed. We are looking for descendants of Thomas and Elizabeth Wheeler of Bedford County, Virginia. They were born about 1736. Children: John, born 1762, Lucy (Mrs. Benjamin Borden), William, Benjamin, Peter, Thomas, Sally (Mrs. Isaac Cundiff), Joel, Gabriel, Joicy (Mrs. Charles Craig), and James born 1788. Some of their descendants went to Tennessee, Missouri, Georgia, and other states. Anyone who thinks they are related should write to:

Marcella Wheeler
14862 “U” Plaza
Omaha, NE 68137

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Marcella Wheeler

THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES OF RANSOM CLARK

by Frank Laumer

The station wagon slowed, turned left across Route 36, pulled between the open iron gates of the small cemetery in the hamlet of Wadsworth, Livingston County, New York. The car pulled forward a hundred feet, snow creaking under the tires. The exhaust rising in the clear cold air abruptly vanished. The car sat silent, alone among the crowded headstones.

A door opened, then another. Four men got out, a woman, two children. They were dressed in sweaters, coats, boots, scarves. The temperature was 22°. The woman stood by the car holding one child, the other huddled against her. Three of the men spread out walking among the stones, brushing away the snow, reading the names. The fourth man opened the tailgate, lifted out shovels and picks, leaned them against the car. He closed the gate, spoke quietly, his voice carrying clear in the still air.

“He’s supposed to be here by the drive. His father was Benjamin Clark. His stone is leaning over. Ransom is beside him.”

Silence. Then, “Here he is. Behind this big one.” The men gathered at the find, the woman coming more slowly, leading and carrying the children through the snow. They read silently.

RANSOM CLARK

DIED

Nov. 18, 18409

Aged 28 years

& 3 m’s.

In 1835 Florida was a wilderness. Purchased from Spain in 1821, the United States had established a handful of forts, cleared roads between them, allowed white settlers to immigrate and blamed the Seminole Indians for making trouble. The Seminoles were not native to the Territory. They had come here a hundred years ago themselves from the Carolinas, ex-Creek Indians who were discontented with Creek ways. By and large the Seminoles were willing to share the land, quite lacking in the notion of private ownership of the earth; however, for white men, owning land gave a feeling of security that could be achieved in no other way. Conflict was inevitable. In 1835, the friction was producing intolerable heat; on June 18th a party of militia captured, disarmed and horsewhipped a group of Indians on the claim that they had killed some cattle belonging to a settler. Other Indians arrived, opened fire; three whites were wounded, one Indian killed.¹ Two months later on August 11th, Private Kinsley H. Dalton, U. S. Army, carrying the mail from Fort Brooke (Tampa) to Fort King (Ocala) was stopped by Seminoles, killed, mutilated and thrown into a pond.²



The headstones of Ransom Clark and his father Benjamin Clark, Livingston County, New York.

Photograph courtesy of Frank Laumer.

Having created a collision course the white men now pursued it. Dormant forts were reactivated, new forts planned, troops dispatched from New Orleans and Charleston. Meanwhile a show of force with the troops on hand occurred. Two companies of United States regulars dispatched from Fort Brooke headed for Fort King, the northern terminus of the Fort King Road. The distance was one hundred miles, and the officer in command was Brevet Major Francis Langhorne Dade, 4th Infantry.

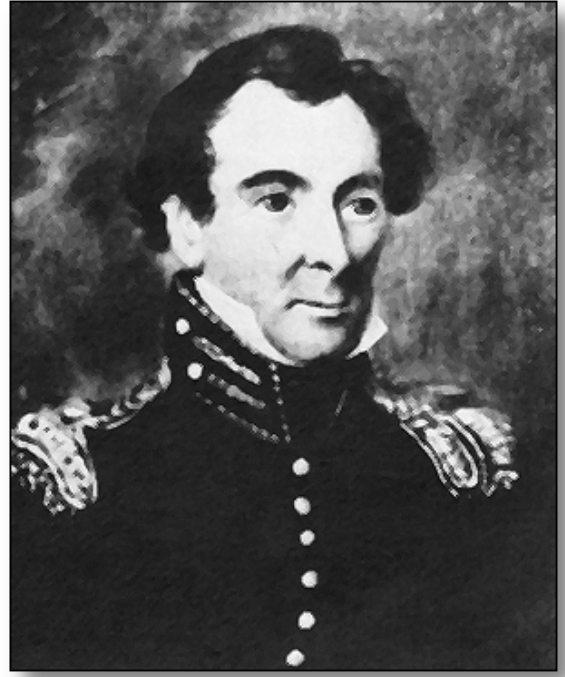
On the 23rd of December they left Fort Brooke: eight officers, ninety-eight men, an interpreter, a small cannon and a supply wagon. Traveling seven miles the first day, they encamped on the south bank of the Little Hillsborough, sleeping by roaring fires with the shouting and threats of Seminole Indians coming clearly out of the night.

Fifteen miles the second day, skirting cypress swamps, the double column of men marched along slowed by the dumpy little cannon towed at the rear like an anchor. Finally at sundown they reached the Big Hillsborough and a burned bridge, blackened pilings pointing like great dirty fingers at the sky.

Christmas day. A cold, wet crossing, men waded chest deep, muskets above their heads, vulnerable. The cannon floated over on a log raft, slipping, falling. More delay while men pulled and pushed, coaxing and cursing the weapon out of the river, up the north bank. Private John

Thomas, injured in his back from the strain, was unable to continue. He was left with his musket and six dollars to make his way back to the fort alone.³ Delayed by the river the command made only ten miles this day, stopping for the night on high, wooded ground, out of the river swamps, perhaps a little safer.

An early start on the 26th and good marching, the troops crossed the remaining twelve miles between the Hillsborough and the Big Withlacoochee. They encountered a bridge burned like the last, and made a hurried crossing and walked two more miles to high ground again. They set up fires for cooking and drying wet clothes and constructed the usual pine log barricade. Captain Upton S. Fraser wrote a somber note to his friend Major Mountfort (assumed to be close on their trail with reinforcements) and tucked it between the logs.⁴



Captain Upton S. Fraser.

Photograph courtesy of Frank Latimer.

On the fifth day, December 27, they zigzagged along from knoll to knoll skirting the marshy areas. Their path seemed more like a tunnel than a road with saw grass shoulder high. A good place for an ambush. Finally they reached the Little Withlacoochee, no more than fifteen feet wide at this season, animals wading, foot soldiers crossing on a log. This was the last river and beyond it high ground all the way to Fort King. Two miles beyond the river and the advance guard came upon what Lt. Robert Rich Mudge called "the round clay sink."⁵ Another barricade, another night.

December 28, 1835. The four rivers safely behind them, high open pine land loomed ahead. Only forty miles to go. Dade ordered the men to carry the five foot muskets under their greatcoats to keep the powder dry against the drizzle of rain that fell like cold sweat from a sky the color of a dirty sheet. There were no flankers that day. Just move out, and fast.

Two columns of some fifty men each followed the advance guard. Behind them the supply wagon, cannon and rear guard. The early morning rain dissipated, the sun broke through, shining down on a quarter mile of black leather caps, dark blue greatcoats and sky blue trousers scissoring endlessly against the tall wet grass.

Private Ransom Clark, detached from Company B, Second Artillery Regiment, trudged along near the head of the right hand column. Twenty-three-years old, five feet nine inches tall, hazel eyes, black hair, Clark had enlisted in Rochester, New York for a three year term on August 9th, 1833.⁶ Now he marched with Major Dade, three days from the nearest fort, deep in the heart of

Seminole territory [twenty miles north of present-day Dade City], a day that Clark would remember well.*

“It was eight o’clock. Suddenly I heard a rifle shot in the direction of the advanced guard, and this was immediately followed by a musket shot from that quarter. I had not time to think of the meaning of these shots, before a volley, as if from a thousand rifles, was poured in upon us from the front, and all along our left flank We were surrounded by about 900 Indians and 100 Negroes who had run away from their masters’ plantations and joined themselves to the savages. With demoniac yells and shouts, they commenced a brisk and galling fire upon us.

“At this time we were in a path, or trail, on the border of a pond, three miles from the spot where we had bivouacked on the night previous. The pond was on our right, and the Indians were scattered round, in a semi-circle, on our left, in the rear, and in advance – reaching at the two latter points to the edge of the pond; but leaving an opening for our entrance on the path, and a similar opening on the other extremity for the egress of our advanced guard, which was permitted to pass through without being fired on, and of course unconscious of the ambushade through which they had marched. At the time of the attack this guard was about a quarter of a mile in advance, the main body following in column, two deep. When the firing commenced, the advance guard wheeled, and in returning to the main body, were [sic] entirely cut up.

“A moment before we were surprised, Major Dade said to us, ‘We have now got through all danger; keep up good heart, and when we get to Fort King, I’ll give you three days for Christmas.’ At the first fire, one-third of the detachment, and Major Dade and Captain Fraser were killed, and Lt. Mudge mortally wounded. I looked around me, and it seemed as if I was the only one left standing in the right wing. Neither could I, until several volleys [sic] had been fired at us, see an enemy – and when I did, I could only see their heads and arms peering out from the long grass, far and near, and from behind the pine trees. The ground seemed to me an open pine barren, no hammock near that I could see. All around us were heavy pine trees, very open, particularly towards the left, and abounding with long, high grass. The first fire of the Indians was the most destructive, seemingly killing or disabling one half our men.

“We promptly threw ourselves behind trees, and opened a sharp fire of musketry. I, for one, never fired without seeing my man, that is, his head and shoulders – the Indians chiefly fired lying or squatting in the grass. Lt. [Williams Elon] Basinger, who had charge of the cannon and also the rear guard then came up and the piece was brought to bear upon the enemy. [He] fired five or six rounds of cannister from the cannon. This appeared to frighten the Indians, and they retreated over a little hill to our left, one half or three quarters of a mile off, after having fired not more than 12 or 15 rounds.

“Some of us went forward to gather the cartridge boxes from the dead, and to assist the wounded. I had seen Major Dade fall to the ground by the first volley, and his horse dashed into the midst of the enemy. Whilst gathering the cartridges, I saw Lt. Mudge sitting with his back

* The following account has been pieced together from a variety of sources as indicated in footnote eight at the end of the text.

reclining against a tree – his head fallen, and evidently dying. I spoke to him, but he did not answer. I assisted [him] from the ground and placed him in a sitting position against a tree

“We immediately then began to fell trees, and erect a little triangular breastwork. We had barely raised [it] knee high, when we again saw the Indians advancing in great numbers over the hill to our left. [They] came on like devils, yelling and whooping in such a manner that the reports of the rifles were scarcely perceptible. They came on boldly till within a long musket shot, when they spread themselves from tree to tree to surround us.

“A part of our troops fought within the breastwork, and a part outside. [The latter] immediately extended as [L]ight [I]nfantry, covering themselves by the trees, and opening a brisk fire from the cannon and musketry. I had stationed myself in a clump of pine bushes and had several times fired off my piece, doing deadly execution each time . . . I know well that I killed three men. I fired also forty or fifty rounds, and never, as I have said, without covering my man, and I am a pretty fair shot.

“About eleven o’clock a ball from the enemy struck my right leg above the knee and broke it, and I fell to the ground. I then commenced crawling towards the little breastwork and while on my way I saw an Indian a few rods off attentively observing me. I drew up my rifle as well as I could to shoot him, but he being too quick for me in my then situation discharged his piece first at me, and his ball passed through and broke my right arm between the elbow and shoulder. I then continued crawling on my left hand and knee to the breastwork, and in attempting to get over it, I received two other shots in rapid succession, one in my right shoulder that passed into my breast, and another of a charge of buck-shot that entered and lodged against my breastbone. I then scrambled over the breastwork

“Captain [George Washington] Gardner, Lt. Basinger, and Dr. [John Slade] Gatlin, were the only officers left unhurt by the volley which killed Major Dade. Lt. [Richard] Henderson had his left arm broken, but he continued to load his musket and to fire it, resting on the stump, until he was finally shot down towards the close of the second attack, and during the day he kept up his spirits and cheered the men. Lt. [John Low] Keais had both his arms broken in the first attack; they were bound up and hung in a handkerchief, and he sat for the remainder of the day, until he was killed, reclining against the breastwork – his head often reposing upon it – regardless of everything that was passing around him [T]he main body of our troops kept up a general fire with musketry . . . as cool as if they were in the woods shooting game. Dr. Gatlin . . . was kneeling behind the breastwork, with two double barrel guns by him, and he said, ‘Well, I have got four barrels for them!’ The enemy by degrees surrounded us, and [those] who had been behind the trees, being uncovered, fled to the breastwork.

“The Indians chiefly leveled at the men who worked the cannon. Lt. Basinger first tended the piece; when he was disabled Captain Gardner supplied his place. After being severely wounded, [he] cried out, ‘I can give you no more orders, my lads, do your best!’ We gave them forty-nine discharges from the cannon; and, while loading our fiftieth, the last shot we had, our match went out. The last round, the cannister of which had been lost, was in the piece when she was taken. The cannon was necessarily fired at random, as only two or three Indians appeared together. It is not in my power to say that [it] did the enemy much mischief.

“Our men were by degrees all cut down. The battle lasted until about four in the afternoon, and I was about the last one who handled a gun, while lying on my side. At the close I received a shot in my right shoulder, which passed into my lungs; the blood gushed out of my mouth in a stream, and dropping my musket, I rolled over on my face. Lt. Basinger was the only officer left alive, and he severely wounded. He told me as the Indians approached to feign myself dead. I looked through the logs and saw the savages approaching in great numbers. A heavily made Indian, of middle stature, painted down to the waist [assumed to be Micanopy] seemed to be the chief. He made them a speech, frequently pointing to the breastwork. At length they charged into the work; there was none to offer resistance, and they did not seem to suspect the wounded of being alive – offered no indignity, but stepped about carefully, quietly stripping off our accoutrements and carrying away our arms. Then they retired in a body in the direction from whence they came.

“I lay in this situation until about nine o'clock at night when, on emerging from the breastwork I put my hand upon the body of a soldier who I found was still alive. I roused him up, though he was badly wounded and together we commenced crawling toward Fort Brooke, then a distance of 65 miles. We knew it was nearest to go to Fort King, but . . . we had seen the enemies retreat in that direction. This soldier's name was [Edwin] De Courcy. [We] got along quite well until the next day, when we met an Indian on horseback with a rifle, coming up the road. Our only chance was to separate. We did so. I took the right and he the left of the road. The Indian pursued him. I had escaped into a clump of thick bushes and thus eluded him. Shortly afterwards I heard a rifle shot, and a little after, another. After awhile [I] saw the Indian pass, looking for me. Suddenly, however, he put spurs to his horse, and went off at a gallop toward the road. When [he] had passed on, I followed up the trail of De Courcy and found his mutilated body.

“I then resumed my way towards the fort alone. I traveled five days and nights without food, my many wounds festering and becoming inflamed to a degree that rendered my agony excruciating. On the fifth day,⁷ I arrived within three-quarters of a mile of the fort, when from loss of blood, hunger and exhaustion I sank upon the ground to die. I was discovered in this situation a short time afterwards by a friendly squaw, who assisted me to the fort.”⁸

When I first visited the battlefield (Dade Battlefield Memorial Park just south of Bushnell, Florida), and read that Clark was virtually the only white survivor of a command of one hundred and eight officers and men I was fascinated. How had he managed it? I sought for histories of the battle but there were none. I dug deeper, going to general histories of Florida, of the Seminole Wars. What few of these there were gave little specific information on the battle; the color, the sound, the feel of it. Yet these men had been flesh and blood, had marched and fought and died here, and by dying, had brought about the Second Seminole War, the longest fought military struggle in United States history. My interest grew in direct proportion to my frustration.

And what of Ransom Clark? Had no one cared to trace the history of this survivor? A man who could crawl sixty miles with a broken arm and broken leg, cross four rivers and do it in three days? Where had he come from? Where had he gone? No one knew.

I began writing letters. To the state library in Tallahassee. To the Library of Congress, the National Archives, West Point (six of the eight officers had been graduates). Each response gave

further leads, prompted more letters. Thus fed, my interest grew. What about their uniforms, the road they had traveled, the weather? And what about the victors? What did the Seminole Indians today know of this battle, the high military point of a heartbreaking history?

Information from a hundred sources here and abroad began to fill in sometimes surprising detail of this day, this battle, and of Ransom Clark. Among other items I found a pamphlet entitled *The Surprising Adventures of Ransom Clark*,⁹ Among the Indians in Florida published in 1839 and written by Clark himself. *Incredible Adventures* would have been more appropriate. He wrote:

“While at [Fort Morgan, near Mobile, Alabama, in February 1835], Lt. Chandler, Quartermaster of the regiment, went with a boat and a crew of 15 soldiers, myself among the number, up the bay to Mobile for the purpose of drawing the army pay and to procure provisions, et cetera, for the soldiers. When returning, about 6 miles from Mobile, at about nine o’clock in the morning, a flaw of wind struck the sail of our boat and upset her. Lt. Chandler and the whole crew, except myself, after struggling some time in the water and holding onto the capsized boat, all finally let go their hold and were drowned. I continued to cling to the boat during the whole of that night and until nine o’clock the next morning, when the steamboat *Watchman* . . . picked me up.”¹⁰

From Fort Morgan he was transferred to Fort Brooke and assigned the job of mail carrier between that post and Fort King; replacement for the unfortunate Private Dalton. Clark claimed to have been taken prisoner by a party of Seminole warriors but made his escape within two weeks. Taken prisoner a second time he was held in captivity for eight months. Taking advantage of a time when he was left with a guard of seven Indians, he led them to a buried cache of rum and molasses, encouraged them to drink freely and then, “. . . I got hold of their most ponderous battle axe and dispatched them one by one”¹¹

Had these “adventures” really happened? What manner of man was this? Could the life force burn so strongly in a man that he was simply invincible? Or was he like the German soldier Munchausen, merely a teller of tall tales?

I went to Francis B. Heitman’s *Historical Register and Dictionary of The United States Army 1789-1903*, a biographical compilation of all men who had served as officers.¹² Thirteen men named Chandler could not have been Clark’s Lt. Chandler judging by their rank or date of death. Then came the fourteenth and last Chandler, Walter Scott. “Cadet MA [Military Academy] 1 July 1826; bvt 2 Lt 2 art [brevet 2nd lieutenant, 2nd artillery] 1 July 1830; *drowned* 25 Jan 1835.” The same rank, and regiment, the same fate that Clark had given.

As I had come to learn, one clue led to another. George W. Cullum’s *Biographical Register of Graduates and Former Cadets of the United States Military Academy* lists, in several volumes, vital statistics on every graduate.¹³ Cullum confirmed that Walter Chandler had drowned in 1835. He added one more critical fact; the place had been Mobile.

Finally, a search of old newspapers of the time turned up the following item in The Columbus [Georgia] *Enquirer* under the dateline of February 20, 1835:

A sudden wind upset a small boat about two miles from Mobile in route to the Fort at Mobile Point, all aboard except one was either an officer or private at the fort . . . Surviving was private RANSOM CLARKE. Dead were W. L. Chandler, Lt. . . .”

So he *had* been the only survivor of a disaster prior to Dade’s battle. The article indicated that there were only five other men aboard, not fourteen, but that he was the only survivor seemed to be confirmed.

What then of his capture and subsequent escape from the Seminole Indians? Military records confirmed that Private Dalton had been “Murdered by Indians when riding express,” but the date of death was August 11th, 1835¹⁴ If Clark was his successor he could not, if captured, have been kept prisoner for eight months since Dade’s battle occurred only four months after Dalton’s demise. Clark’s memory of the time involved, like the number of men in Chandler’s boat, may have been in error without invalidating the episode, but no other record yet found made any reference to his capture or escape.

At this point then I had one adventure confirmed and one in doubt. What of his version of the “Dade Massacre?”

Every primary source known to exist made it clear that Clark was in fact a part of Dade’s command. As to his participation in the battle, Captain Francis S. Belton, in command at Fort Brooke, writing to the Adjutant General on the 1st day of January, 1836 (only four days after the battle) stated, “. . . yesterday Ransom Clarke with four wounds very severe came in and stated that an action took place on the 28th”¹⁵ Clark went on to give Belton and others substantially the same account of the battle that he would later write in his *Surprising Adventures*. In private diaries and letters several officers recounted the harrowing details of the entire day as related to them by Clark. In these tellings and retellings during the days immediately after the battle one might expect some embellishment as the enlisted man was questioned over and over by anxious officers who had served with Dade, Gardner, Fraser and the rest. Yet as he lay in the hospital, in bandages and pain, his story was remarkably consistent. But was it true? According to Captain George A. McCall, “. . . with bleeding and unstanched wounds he crawled . . . with one knee on the ground, from which he was unable to raise it, and . . . in this condition at last reached Fort Brooke on the third day after the battle. His sufferings from hunger and thirst, as well as from his wounds and from the laborious mode of traveling his wounds compelled him to adopt, are almost incredible. But he related them to me in a quiet, simple way that would have carried conviction of his truthfulness to the most skeptical listener.”¹⁶

The severity of his wounds at least was not in question. John Bemrose, a hospital orderly wrote, “He was a fearful fellow, swearing most terribly and continually whilst under the surgeon’s hands, and when any broken bones were removed from his lacerated shoulders asking if they would not make good soup.”¹⁷

On the 12th of February, 1836, General Edmund P. Gaines marched from Fort Brooke with some thousand men for Fort King. On the morning of the 20th they approached the battleground. It was fifty-four days since the battle. Lt. James Duncan wrote in his diary: “. . . first indications of our proximity were soldiers shoes and clothing, soon after a skeleton, then another, then another! [S]oon we came upon the scene in all its horrors. Gracious God what a sight.”¹⁸

If Duncan or others had questioned whether Clark had indeed taken part in the battle, had seen and done all that he had described to them, they found evidence on every hand; bodies scattered up and down the road, the barricade, Henderson with his left arm broken, and Dade, lying with the advance guard, a single bullet hole in his side, “shot probably through the heart.” Captain McCall reported that Dade’s “body was stripped of coat and shirt, and although the flesh had shrunk, the skin was sound and as hard as parchment.” McCall continued:

I carefully examined our poor dear fellows, both officers and men, as they lay within the little fort, in posture either kneeling or extended on their breasts, the head in very many instances lying upon the upper log of their breastwork; and I invariably found the bulletmark in the forehead or the front of the neck. The picture of those brave men lying thus in their ‘sky blue’ clothing, which had scarcely faded, was such as can never be effaced from my memory.¹⁹

Ransom Clark had taken part in the battle, had fought through the day while over a hundred men were cut down around him, had suffered severe wounds, made his way through sixty miles to safety where “under the skillful treatment of the very eminent army surgeons at the fort and through the extreme care and kindness of my fellow soldiers, I recovered from my wounds within the space of six months”²⁰ Six months? Less than two months had passed when he stood (it is hardly possible to imagine that he would have been carried on a litter) with the other men of Gaines’ army and looked once more upon the ruin of Dade’s command. His earlier account of the battle was confirmed not only by the scene before them but a few days later by a man who had served with the Seminoles. August, a Negro who had escaped from slavery and served with the Indians, had given himself up to the officers at Fort King. McCall had known him well and considered him “an honest, truthful fellow.” August had been present during the battle “and he corroborated Clark’s account in every particular.”²¹

On May 2nd, 1836, Clark received his discharge from the army at Fort Brooke. He made his way home to Greigsville, New York, a pensioner on total disability at eight dollars a month. Two years later he married Eunice Luceba French. During the same year he began giving lectures on his adventures in Florida, and charged an admission of 12½ cents. In August 1839 Eunice gave birth to a girl named Caroline. A year later, Ransom Clark died.²²

In fourteen years of research, I had found enough to convince me that Ransom Clark was a remarkable man. Bemrose described him as a “light, thoughtless wretch . . . [who], although mercifully allowed to creep home . . . with five wounds in his body, had not learned to be thankful.”²³ I had come to see him quite differently. Here was a man who epitomized the American folkhero: self-reliant, imbued with the intelligent stubbornness that is commonly referred to as courage, and utterly incapable of giving up.

LECTURES.

MR. RANSOM CLARK,

The only survivor of Major Dade's
ill-fated command in Florida, proposes to deliver lectures of the
above character at _____ o'clock, in the evening, on _____
th, 1839.

Mr. CLARK was employed to carry the U. S. Mail from Fort
Brook to Fort King, taken prisoner by the Seminoles, and held in captivity eight months;
escaped by killing seven Indians who were left to guard him, resumed his post as mail
carrier, with a guard of 116 men, under the command of the gallant Major Dade, who
were massacred by the Indians, December, 28th, 1835. During the engagement, Mr. Clark
was severely wounded, the marks of which he now bears upon his person, and have been
exhibited to respectable persons in this place. He has also abundant certificates from offi-
cers of the army and others to substantiate his tale of blood and suffering.

His lectures will embrace a description of the local scenery of the
country which has been so long the theatre of a sanguinary contest, with the fate of his
countrymen in that horrid massacre, and a sketch of the disastrous campaigns of 1835 and
1836,—and in connexion he will relate his own adventures.

— Wherein he'll speak of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field,
Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,
Of being taken by the savage foe
And held in slavery, — of his escape from thence,
And with it all his travel's history."

Ladies and gentlemen are respectfully invited to attend.

Tickets, 12½ cents, to be had at

Poster used by Ransom Clark to announce his lectures.

Photograph courtesy of the National Archives.

And yet I wondered about his wounds. To have survived the battle and returned would have been a feat in itself, but with a broken arm and broken leg?

In November, 1977, I was granted permission to open his grave. With my wife, my son and two small daughters, my brother and John Papworth, a friend and attorney who had arranged the court order, I went to Greigsville, New York. On the 6th of December we stood in a light snow around the grave of Ransom Clark. The frozen clay yielded slowly; three feet, four feet. We

probed lightly, searching for anything that offered more resistance than the earth itself. Then we reached him. Using a trowel, John exposed the left shin bone. Carefully we expanded the hole, widening it to expose the entire remains. Dr. Amir Djavaheri, a pathologist, made an examination of the remains in place. Among the bits of cloth covered casket the skeleton of Ransom Clark lay complete, more at ease than he seemed ever to have been in his twenty-eight years of life. Then gently, bone by bone, we took him from the grave and carried him across the street to a heated garage where the bones could be cleaned and examined. As the doctor turned each bone in his hands, his photographer taking picture after picture, he muttered again and again, "very solid, very well preserved." If he had known Ransom Clark as I did, he would not have been surprised.



Mrs. Ruth Fitzsimmons, great-grandniece of Ransom Clark, with Frank Laumer.

Photograph courtesy of Frank Laumer.

He picked up the right humerus, turned it this way and that while I leaned close, tried to follow his comments. "This is the head end, the shoulder. You see this?" He pointed to a groove in the bone that even my untrained eye could see was not natural. "A large concave indentation at the posterior aspect which involves the greater tuberosity extending transversely. One third of the humerus is fractured and shows deterioration." He picked up another piece. "The adjacent corresponding parts of the scapula, including the spine of the right scapula, have been fragmented into several pieces."²⁴

Dr. Djavaheri knew nothing at this time of the history of Clark. I asked him what conclusion he would draw from the evidence in his hands. The doctor replied: "These findings could possibly be as the result of a severe trauma to the right shoulder."

I picked up the humerus, lay my finger in the slot that ran across it. I think what he had said meant that Clark had been hit in the shoulder with a bullet.

He picked up the ribs one by one, the photographer snapping away, making a permanent record for me of every bone from three different positions. "You see here?" He held up several short, curved bones, one at a time. "The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd right posterior ribs." He pointed. "Here, and here. These show an area of peculiar fracture. It is possible that the right lung also had been injured." Clark had said, "At the close I received a shot in my right shoulder, which passed into my lungs"²⁵

His right arm and shoulder then had been out of commission and quite probably one lung. What about the leg? Dr. Djavaheri explained: "Here are the right and left ileac [pelvis] bones.



Frank Laumer and Dr. Amir Djavaheri removing the skull of Ransom Clark from his grave.

Photograph courtesy of Frank Laumer.

You see the difference? The right bone shows a fracture at the superior ramus of pubis.” No damage to the major bones of either leg. Just a fractured pelvis. In the noise and confusion of battle, in the fear and pain it might be difficult to sort things out. When the bullet hit him his right leg would have given way, he would have fallen. Broken leg? Fractured pelvis? If Clark’s spirit were around us I would not have argued with him. He had still covered sixty miles with the use of only one leg.

The examination was done. I took up the skull for a moment. It was well intact, the black hair long since gone, the teeth well preserved and showing no evidence of decay. Through the hazel eyes that once had rested in these staring sockets had come the light of other days, the dark faces of outraged Seminole Indians who tried to kill him on a winter’s day in far Florida. These were the jaws through which had passed the childhood words, the oath of an enlisting soldier, the gasps of pain in battle, the vows of marriage. Carefully we gathered the remains for reinterment.

Captain Francis S. Belton in his official report of the burial of Dade’s command in 1836 had addressed himself more to the dead than to the living:

Your agonized limbs were decently adjusted by affections unrevolted hands, and with reverence, as if your spirits were around. And although the pomp of the Soldiers laurelled here, was absent, yet sympathy mourned and sorrow wept.²⁶

We stood for a moment around the raw frozen chunks of clay mounded over the grave, the grey stone set straight, falling snow covering the new scar in the earth. In silence we said goodbye and went away.

¹ Mark F. Boyd, "Florida Aflame," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXX (July, 1951):55.

² Myer M. Cohen, *Notices of Florida and the Campaigns* (Charleston, S.C., Burges and Honour, 1836), reprinted in the Floridian Facsimile and Reprint Series, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), p. 66.

³ Surgeon's Certificate for Pension included in John Thomas' file, National Archives and Record Service, Washington, D.C.

⁴ Report of Capt. Francis S. Belton to Adjutant General R. Jones, Ft. Brooke, Florida, 1 January, 1836, National Archives and Record Service, Washington, D.C.

⁵ Account of Ransom Clark in *Portland Daily Advertiser* (no date given), as quoted in "The Personal Reminiscences of William Starr Basinger, 1827-1910," a manuscript in the University of Georgia Library.

⁶ Registers of Enlistments in the United States Army, 1798-1914 (Microcopy M233, Roll 19, 1833, p. 39, no. 162), National Archives and Record Service, Washington, D.C.

⁷ The fifth day after the battle would have been the 2nd of January. Actually, Clark arrived in Fort Brooke on the afternoon of the 31st according to Capt. Francis S. Belton (Report of Belton to Jones, Fort Brooke, Florida, 1 January, 1836).

⁸ Clark account in *Portland Daily Advertiser*, Ransom Clarke, *The Surprising Adventures of Ransom Clarke Among the Indians in Florida* (Binghamton, New York, J. R. Orton, 1839), pp. 13, 14, 16; Clark account in *The Boston Post* (date unknown), quoted in *The Daily National Intelligencer* (June 14, 1837); "The Personal Reminiscences of William Starr Basinger"; Charles H. Coe, *Red Patriots* (Cincinnati, 1898), p. 61.

⁹ This is one of many sources that add an "e" to Clark. The author has accepted Clark without an "e" of the basis of many official documents: the Will of Benjamin Clark, enlistment record of Ransom, application for Bounty Land by Eunice Clark (wife of Ransom), and finally, headstones of both Benjamin and Ransom.

¹⁰ Clarke, *The Surprising Adventures*, p. 7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹² (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), reprinted by University of Illinois Press, 1965.

¹³ (West Point, New York: West Point Alumni Foundation, Inc., 1960.)

¹⁴ Duncan Lamont Clinch to Adjutant General R. Jones, September 12, 1835, *American State Papers*, VI (Washington, 1861): 80.

¹⁵ Belton to Jones, 1 January, 1836.

¹⁶ General George A. McCall, *Letters From the Frontiers*, 1868. Edited by John K. Mahon, Floridian Facsimile Series (Gainesville: The University Presses of Florida, 1974), pp. 306-307.

¹⁷ John Bemrose, *Reminiscences of the Second Seminole War*, edited by John K. Mahon (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1966), p. 65.

¹⁸ Lieutenant James Duncan, an unpublished diary in the collection of the United States Military Academy Library, West Point, New York.

¹⁹ McCall, *Letters From the Frontiers*, pp. 304-305.

²⁰ Clarke, *The Surprising Adventures*, p. 16.

²¹ McCall, *Letters From the Frontiers*, p. 307.

²² Registers of Enlistment in the U.S. Army.

²³ Bemrose, *Reminiscences*, p. 65. Application for Bounty Land in the Clark file, National Archives and Record Service, Washington, D.C.

²⁴ Protocol prepared by Amir A. Djavaheri, M.D., F.C.A.P., for the author relative to the examination of the remains of Ransom Clark on December 4, 1977.

²⁵ *The Daily National Intelligencer* (June 14, 1837).

²⁶ Belton to Jones, March 25, 1836.



**The A.B. Ballard and Company Cigar
Factory.**

Photograph from *Tampa Illustrated*, c. 1903.

¡ ALERTA TABAQUEROS ! TAMPA'S STRIKING CIGAR WORKERS

by George E. Pozzetta

Tampa, Florida, is a city that has had its essential character shaped by a single industry – the manufacturing of high-quality, hand rolled cigars. To be sure, other aspects of the city's past loom as significant (the railroad, the river, the port), but none can compete seriously with the central and all pervasive role played by the cigar industry in defining Tampa's personality. This is especially true of the city's labor and immigrant history. So much of what Tampa has been and is today can be traced to the presence of an ethnically diverse work force in the cigar factories and the long, unusually turbulent record of labor relations characterizing the industry. This article focuses on one aspect of this fascinating story – the general strike of 1910 – and places it in the context of the broader historical patterns at work in Tampa.

During the late nineteenth century thousands of Cuban, Italian, and Spanish immigrants came to the small coastal town of Tampa, and did much to transform this settlement into a thriving commercial and manufacturing center. Drawn primarily by the attraction of cigar manufacturing,

these new immigrants underwrote the success of the city and its principal industry.¹ This achievement, however, was not accomplished without considerable labor strife. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, cigar worker unions in Tampa participated in two general strikes (in 1901 and 1910) and numerous lesser walkouts.² Tampa's *tabaqueros* proved to be a contentious lot indeed.

Many cigar workers arrived in the city imbued with conceptions of themselves as workmen that were framed by pre-industrial notions of craftsmanship. These age-old work patterns and rhythms created a fierce sense of independence and pride in individuals possessing craft skills. Any threats to these familiar patterns were sure to place workers in an adversary relationship with their employers. Also affecting labor relations was the popularity of radical social ideologies (socialism, anarchism) among workers, which served to intensify a sense of labor militancy.³ For their part, factory owners were increasingly feeling the pressures of modern corporate development. Many believed that it was necessary for them to modernize operations to remain competitive in a changing marketplace. Consequently, as the nineteenth century neared its end, their paternalistic policies of an earlier age were passing away and being replaced by the more impersonal demands of profit and ledger book.⁴ The inevitable clash between these contradictory sets of perceptions and expectations explains much of the conflict that has characterized Tampa.

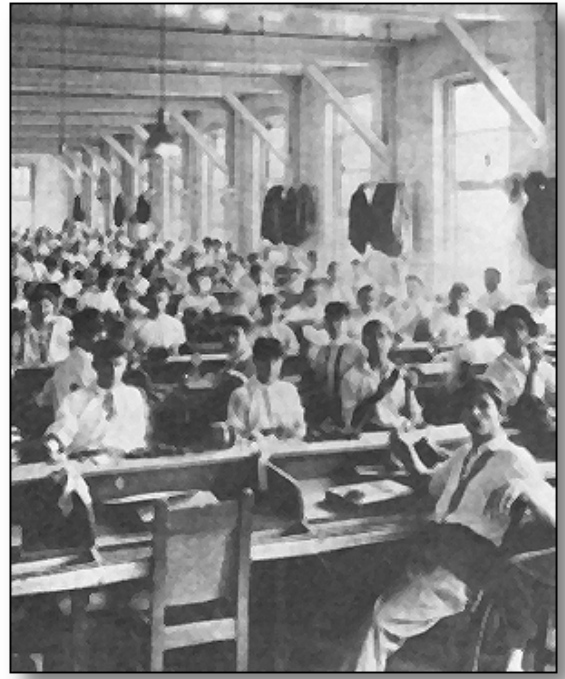
Tampa's cigar workers followed the direction of their own independent union, popularly known as La Resistencia, in the general strike of 1901. This organization, created and led by immigrants and closed to native American membership, was able to capture the loyalties of cigar workers despite the presence of several other unions in the city, including locals of the Cigar Makers International Union (CMIU), an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor (AFL). La Resistencia's goals and methods represented a repudiation of the AFL's brand of trade unionism. The union was solidly tied, instead, to the cultures and ideologies of its immigrant membership. Though specific "bread and butter" issues were contested by La Resistencia, the union also viewed its fight as part of the larger struggle pitting the proletariat against the forces of capitalism.⁵

The major dispute in 1901 involved efforts of manufacturers to establish branch factories in Pensacola and Jacksonville. The union interpreted these moves as an attempt to maintain an open shop policy and struck to force a closing of these operations. Strike leadership was in Spanish and Cuban hands, but Italians were active in the ranks and in supplying street-corner oratory that helped to maintain worker solidarity. Appeals to the strike cause were effective in prompting numerous workers to leave Tampa and find employment elsewhere in an effort to send back support.⁶

The strike's most dramatic episode occurred in early August when a self-appointed citizen's committee induced police to seize thirteen strike leaders. The abducted men were put aboard a steamer, warned never to return to Tampa, and dropped off on a deserted stretch of the Honduras coastline.⁷ One contemporary claimed that Tampa businessmen paid ten thousand dollars for the favor. With the strike leadership emasculated, city authorities and manufacturers increased their pressure by rigidly enforcing vagrancy laws and importing extra strikebreakers. The CMIU played an important role by refusing to aid or amalgamate with La Resistencia, while

simultaneously offering to supply workers for the factories. On November 28, 1901, La Resistencia capitulated.⁸

The defeat and rapid dissolution of this immigrant union left the CMIU locals alone in the Tampa labor field, and they were not long in capitalizing on the situation. In early 1902 James Wood of the International arrived to plan a recruiting campaign. He found that immigrant cigar workers had not abandoned unionism as an answer to their problems. As one cigar maker claimed after the 1901 defeat, "They have vanquished us, but not convinced us."⁹ In 1903 workers created a Joint Advisory Board (JAB), composed of three members from each local, to coordinate union policy in the industry. By 1910 the union contained over 6,000 members and was solidly represented in the city's largest factories.¹⁰



Cigarmakers at work, c. 1910.

Cigar workers claimed that owners precipitated the general strike of 1910 as a means of testing their open shop demands and squelching the growing union strength. The first direct confrontation came in June when manufacturers belonging to the Clear Havana Cigar Manufacturers Association (the "Trust") began dismissing selectors who were members of International Local 493. Owners alleged that selectors had reneged on earlier agreements allowing for additional apprentices to be trained in the factories. Grievances accelerated as manufacturers began to violate the provisions of the cartabón, a wage and price scale negotiated earlier in the year. One JAB member claimed on July 13 that owners had discharged over 4,000 men in the last twenty days, and he urged that Tampa's citizens investigate for themselves the true causes of the labor problem. By late August the strike was in full force with over 12,000 men out of work.¹¹

Despite strong union solidarity and encouraging support from other quarters, cigar workers girded for a long struggle. Numerous workers voluntarily left for Cuba and locations in the northeast in search of employment. These individuals sent funds back to aid those left behind. Relief payments of money, food, and clothing soon began flowing into the city. Sympathetic cigar workers in Havana and Key West also made periodic collections to assist their friends in Tampa. In a move to reduce further the number of dependents on hand, the union published an announcement promising free transportation to Cuba for any workers who registered at the Labor Temple.¹² The impact of these developments was not lost on city businessmen and boosters who were becoming increasingly concerned that the strike would be a long one and that Tampa would suffer economically. A growing pattern of scuffles and beatings on the picket lines added to their list of worries.



Political cartoon from *The United States Tobacco Journal*, September 10, 1910.



Political cartoon from *The United States Tobacco Journal*, September 17, 1910.

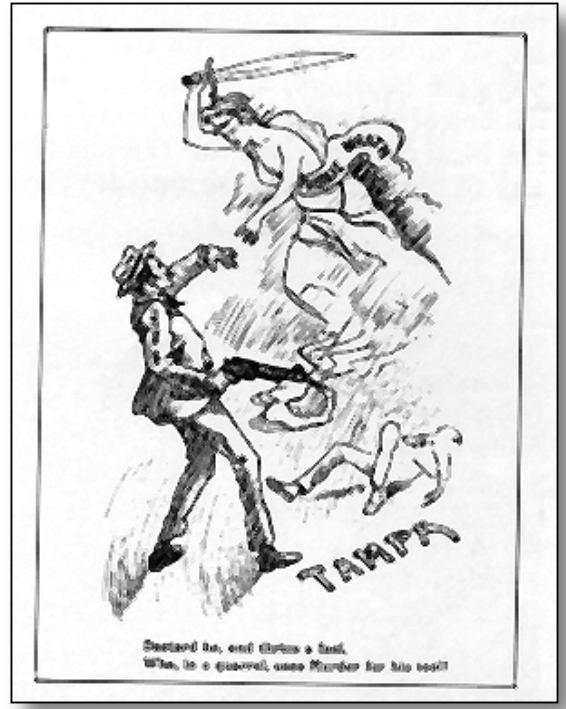
Worker hopes were heightened on August 11, when other unionists in the city staged a mass demonstration in support of the cigar strike. Thousands of machinists, carpenters, longshoremen, and others marched to Ybor City from the downtown area. At the corner of Florida and Nebraska they were met by over 2,000 cigar workers and “beviess of gayly dressed Spanish, Cuban and Italian women [who] waved their handkerchiefs and showered applause as the marchers passed by.” At the parade’s end a crowd of some 5,000 people listened to speeches, including a stirring oration delivered in Spanish and Italian by José de la Campa, chairman of the Joint Advisory Board. Undoubtedly remembering the vigilante actions of 1901, Campa ended his talk with the admonition, “Go in peace and show the people of Tampa that we are law-abiding.”¹³

Against a backdrop of increasing unrest throughout Ybor City and West Tampa, a decisive turning point in the strike came on August 23. On this day, the JAB formally rejected a proposal from manufacturers which granted many union demands (but not recognition) and possessed the endorsement of the Tampa Board of Trade. From this time forward, Tampa’s business and professional communities turned their complete support to the side of management. In an emotionally worded editorial entitled “Open the Factories,” the *Tampa Morning Tribune* clearly signalled the changed situation. Deriding the JAB’s “sophomoric declaration that recognition of the union means ‘life and liberty,’” the paper pledged protection to any worker who wanted to return to the factory benches.¹⁴

Manufacturers soon attempted to break the stalemate by opening several large factories and issuing a call for workers to return. Not a single cigarworker reported, and these attempted openings were often the scenes of ugly confrontations between strikers and police. When the

giant A. Santaella factory in West Tampa tried to resume business, for example, a “great crowd” turned out to protest, and a number of beatings took place. West Tampa Mayor Brady sent the fire company to disperse the assembly with fire hoses.¹⁵ Mobs of strikers also regularly gathered at the docks and railroad stations to discourage strikebreakers. As further evidence of worker solidarity, a strike vote conducted on September 31 recorded a total of 3,446 to 15 in favor of continuing the walkout.¹⁶

As much as sporadic violence worried city residents, they proved far more concerned about reports of manufacturer efforts to move factories away from Tampa. This trend, businessmen warned, “will mean permanent death to Tampa.”¹⁷ Factory owners were not unaware of the power these threats exerted on the local citizenry. Indeed, they were able to exploit this fear throughout the strike period and successfully engage the loyalties of community institutions and officials.



Political cartoon from *The United States Tobacco Journal*, September 24, 1910.

As economic dislocations resulting from the strike became more acute, native Tampanians reacted angrily. Most local leaders believed that the majority of workers were anxious to return to work, but were prevented from doing so by labor radicals.¹⁸ In reaction to the alleged influence of socialist and anarchist “agitators,” business and professional elites formed another citizens’ committee. Membership in this organization swelled as confrontations became commonplace and the sound of gunshots rang through the city. On September 14, Tampa’s attention was galvanized by the news that James F. Easterling, an American bookkeeper employed at Bustillo and Diaz Company, had been seriously wounded. The shot which struck Easterling came from a crowd of Italian and Cuban strikers gathered at the factory.¹⁹

Authorities soon arrested two Italians on suspicion of complicity in the shooting, but before they could be brought to trial, a mob seized them and lynched both.²⁰ Tampa’s two daily newspapers pictured the men as hired assassins, “tools of the anarchistic elements in the city.” Frantic editorials pointed out that Easterling was the “first American to be attacked,” and city leaders publicly resolved that he would be the last. The press launched an increasingly emotional campaign against “agitators,” who were described as being solely responsible for the continued strike and the accelerating violence.²¹

On October 4, Balbin Brothers’ factory was burned to the ground by arsonists, and the *Tribune* building narrowly missed the same fate. The next morning, papers decried the “presence in this community of an anarchistic law-defying element who stop at nothing to accomplish their hellish purposes.” José de la Campa, who had been very active working the picket lines and speaking to



Latin cigar workers and children gathered in front of the first Labor Temple, Ybor City, c. 1910.

Photograph courtesy of the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System.

workers' rallies, received several murder threats through the mail, and was repeatedly labeled as an anarchist. He was soon arrested along with four other strike leaders on charges of "inciting a riot and being accessories before the fact to the murder of Easterling."²² Warrants had been sworn out for the entire JAB membership, but most had escaped arrest by leaving Tampa.

Induced by pledges of protection, thirty-six of Tampa's largest factories reopened on October 17. Tampa Mayor D. B. McKay recruited several hundred special police from areas surrounding the city to aid the citizens' committee in keeping order. The new additions were organized into a force of fifty patrol cars, each carrying from three to five heavily armed men, and given the mission of patrolling West Tampa and Ybor City.²³ By providing "absolute protection" to willing workers and intimidating the strike leadership, the patrols hoped to break the strike soon. Arbitrary arrests, illegal searches, routine physical beatings, and flagrant violations of civil rights characterized the actions of the patrols. These excesses were excused as necessary measures by the local citizenry. As the *Tribune* phrased it, "It will be a mere technicality if any of the actions of the squads of citizen deputies are declared illegal."²⁴

Branded by socialists as the "Cossacks of Tampa" these patrols remained active even after three of the arrested strike leaders were convicted and received sentences of a year on the chain gang. The patrols were particularly vigilant in their efforts to disperse union meetings. On one occasion they entered the Labor Temple in Ybor City, broke up a meeting in progress, smashed

furniture, confiscated records, and nailed the door shut with a sign overhead reading, “This place is closed for all time.”²⁵ When the union newspaper *El Internacional* continued to print articles critical of the citizens’ committee, a delegation raided its office, destroyed its presses and intimidated employees found on the premises. On December 22, Tampa’s police further attempted to silence the labor press by arresting *El Internacional*’s editor, J. M. Gil, on two counts of conspiracy to prevent cigar workers from working.²⁶

Meanwhile, the citizens’ committee stepped up its campaign of vagrancy arrests. One citizen saw the matter clearly. “Whenever a woman or child is found begging – and there have been many in the past few weeks,” he pointed out, “able bodied men who are not at work should be arrested. There would soon be no vagrants [as] they would prefer the factories to the street squads.”²⁷

These tactics were having an effect on strikers. As early as October 27, José de la Campa sent an appeal to unionists elsewhere in America telling of many families evicted from their homes and subsisting on little food. One striking family had allegedly not eaten in three days. With the coming of cold weather, union problems intensified. By December, the JAB approved a measure allowing some men to work on Sundays so as to buy clothing for the children. When the police learned of the purpose of this move, they invoked a nearly forgotten blue law prohibiting work on the Sabbath and stopped all Sunday labor.²⁸

Owners repeatedly attempted to split workers along ethnic lines in an effort to divide and conquer. They clearly viewed Italians as the key to their campaign. On November 18 manufacturers sent an open letter to Italians in the city, warning that they would have no work in the future unless they immediately abandoned the strike. The appeal urged them to reject the advice of “agitators” and return to work. Late in December another approach was tried. Manufacturers circulated a bogus manifesto allegedly signed by Italians which proclaimed their intention to return to work shortly on the owners’ terms. They hoped that this would begin a stampede back to the factories. Italian cigar workers hurriedly distributed a counter manifesto signed by 460 of their number (lack of space reportedly required leaving off several hundred additional names) which labeled the first document “utterly without foundation in fact.”²⁹

City officials were chagrined in late November when news of Tampa’s troubles was given national publicity by Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor. Addressing the AFL annual convention in St. Louis, Missouri, Gompers condemned the lawlessness and mob rule present in Tampa and captured headlines across the country. To



Political cartoon from *The United States Tobacco Journal* October 6, 1910.



Inside of a cigar factory.

counter this unfavorable publicity, Florida Governor Albert W. Gilchrist visited the city for a week in early December to act as a mediator and conduct an “impartial” inquiry. Gilchrist’s final report completely exonerated both the citizens’ committee and city government of any wrongdoing. There was “no foundation for Gompers’ complaint,” it concluded, and violence was attributed solely to “the acts of strikers or their sympathizers.”³⁰

With citizen patrols guarding the docks and railway stations and physically intimidating the picket lines, the flow of strikebreakers into the city increased substantially during December and January. By the first of the year, approximately two hundred cigar workers per week were being placed in the factories. Most of these workers were Cubans imported from Havana or made available from local sources. The union newspaper took pains to report in detail the many problems that owners experienced with these workers, ranging from inferior workmanship to repeated fights amongst themselves.³¹ One enterprising strikebreaker, Charlie Kelley, apparently made scabbing into something of a trade. According to union sources, he “organized about fifty degenerate negroes into a band of strikebreakers” and moved from factory to factory in an effort to extract the most concessions.³²

With at last the tacit complicity of federal immigration officials in Tampa, manufacturers determined to crush the strike in January with massive additions of strikebreakers. During the strike’s early months, cigar workers from Havana had been deported by immigration officials as contract laborers. The citizens’ committee had complained bitterly of this “over-zealous application” of immigration laws, and on several occasions individuals had apparently threatened local immigration officers.³³ On January 20, a large group of Cubans arrived and immediately

took their places at the work benches. Four days later two hundred more stepped off a steamer at Port Tampa, and newspapers observed that “every boat coming in from Havana and Key West” brought more. Finally, on January 25, 1911, after seven months of struggle, the JAB called the strike at an end with the prophetic words, “We simply give up the fight.”³⁴

Thus, Tampa’s second general strike in a decade again came to an unhappy end for the cigar worker unions. Defeated, but still defiant, workers returned to the factories. In the end they were unable to withstand the onslaught of powerful forces arrayed against them. Manufacturers were able to enlist the support of Tampa’s business and professional communities, its municipal authorities, (police, board of trade, mayor’s office) the local press, the state’s court system and government, and ultimately the immigration office proved compliant. When the local community felt that its vital interests were threatened, it quickly resorted to vigilante justice and rigorous suppression to force the union into submission. Viewed in this light, the wonder is not that the strikers returned to work, but that they held out so long.

The events of 1910 can also be seen as a further step in a process of grudging accommodation on the part of cigar workers to the demands of the modern industrial world. Early labor conflicts in the city were frequently sparked by real or imaginary threats to traditional privileges and work styles. One pre-1900 walkout, for example, began in reaction to owner demands mandating the use of scales to weigh out the filler tobacco given to workers at the beginning of each day. Relatively unimportant in an economic sense, this change struck at the old custom of allowing workers to make an unlimited number of cigars for their own use.³⁵ The strike of 1901 saw the establishment of a formal union structure and the utilization of tactics that recognized the existence of the modern corporation. La Resistencia, with its immigrant membership and radical ideology, can be understood as a transitional organization. By 1910 Tampa’s cigar workers were still in a situation of flux, with competing ethnic, cultural, and union loyalties, but the majority appear to have accepted the lure of American big labor by joining AFL’s Cigar Makers International Union and supporting its organizational goals. In this important respect, the cigar workers who took to the streets in 1910 were quite different from their predecessors twenty years earlier.

Unlike La Resistencia, the International Union did not disappear following its defeat in 1911. Instead, it remained and slowly rebuilt its strength. In 1920 it would lead Tampa’s cigar workers in another general strike, this time in a struggle that would last ten months. Once again, factory owners and the wider Tampa community found themselves allied against the ranks of Latin cigar workers.³⁶ The full story of Tampa’s continuing efforts to find a satisfactory resolution to labor unrest and ethnic tensions awaits further inquiry. Any attempt to understand the complex past of Tampa, however, must take into account the events and historical trends just described.

¹ Figures for the year 1908 show that the cigar factories employed over 10,500 persons and generated a weekly payroll of \$200,000, representing seventy-five percent of the total payroll of the city. Spanish, Cubans, and Italians comprised nearly ninety-five percent of the work force in the cigar factories. Immigration Commission, *Immigrants in Industries*, Pt. 14, (“Cigar and Tobacco Manufacturing”) (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911), 187.

² Although the term general strike usually applies to work stoppages throughout a community, it was used by cigar workers in Tampa to refer to strikes covering the entire cigar industry.

³ Joan M. Steffy, “The Cuban Immigrants of Tampa, Florida, 1886-1898” (M.A. thesis, University of South Florida, 1975), 63-64; Salvadore de Madariaga, *Spain* (New York: Creative Age Press, 1943), pp. 117-26, 150-51.

⁴ L. Glenn Westfall, "Don Vicente Martinez Ybor, The Man and His Empire: Development of the Clear Havana Industry in Cuba and Florida in the Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1977), 154, 155, 157.

⁵ Durward Long, "'La Resistencia': Tampa's Immigrant Labor Union," *Labor History*, VI (Fall, 1965): 195, 198. For evidence of radical activities, see runs of two Italian language anarchist papers printed in Tampa, *L'Alba Sociale* and *La Voce dello Schiavo*, located at the Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

⁶ Long, "'La Resistencia,' " 203. These events are also reported at some length in *L'Alba Sociale*, July 15, August 1, 1901.

⁷ *L'Alba Sociale*, August 15, 1901, contains a long article entitled "The Seizures" describing the kidnappings. Also see, Long, "'La Resistencia,' " 207.

⁸ Long, "'La Resistencia,' " 205-13.

⁹ Tampa *El Internacional*, June 10, 1905; José Yglesias, *The Truth About Them* (New York, 1971), pp. 208-10.

¹⁰ At the eve of the 1910 strike, workers were organized into five locals of the CMIU. These were 336 (cigarmakers), 440 (packers), 462 (cigarmakers), 493 (selectors), and 500 (cigarmakers). For organizational work by the CMIU see, George Perkins to Samuel Gompers, October 26, 1909; Samuel Gompers to George Perkins, October 28, 1909; George Perkins to Samuel Gompers, December 7, 1909, Cigar Makers International Union Papers, "National and Internationals File," AFL-CIO Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

¹¹ Tampa *El Internacional*, June 3, August 5, 12, 1910; *Tampa Morning Tribune*, June 30, July 13, 14, 28, August 3, 1910. The manufacturers' position is outlined in New York *United States Tobacco Journal*, July 16, 1910. The union's position is seen in JAB to Gompers, June 27, 1910; December 11, 1910, CMIU Papers.

¹² Tampa *El Internacional*, August 5, 12, September 22, 30, November 25, 1910; *Tampa Morning Tribune*, August 2, 23, September 14, 1910. On August 3 the Tampa unions received a telegram from the CMIU, pledging the "entire Treasury of the International" if needed.

¹³ *Tampa Morning Tribune*, August 12, 1910.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, August 23, 24, 1910. A subsequent editorial added the ominous warning that "Disorder of any sort will not be tolerated by the people of Tampa."

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, August 29, 30, 1910; New York *United States Tobacco Journal*, September 10, 1910. The press again served to inflame emotions. "This has ceased to be a question of the preservation of any organization," the *Tribune* claimed, "it is a question of the preservation of Tampa."

¹⁶ *Tampa Morning Tribune*, August 26, September 10, October 1, 1910; New York *Tobacco World*, October 1, 1910.

¹⁷ *Tampa Morning Tribune*, September 10, 22, 24, 1910. Mobile, Alabama, was particularly anxious to lure factories away from Tampa and sent several delegations to open talks.

¹⁸ New York *Tobacco World*, September 19, 1910; *Tampa Morning Tribune*, September 28, 29, 1910.

¹⁹ *Tampa Morning Tribune*, September 15, 16, 1910.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, September 21, 1910. A sign attached to the feet of the men and signed by JUSTICE read as follows: "Others take notice or go the same way. We know seven more. We are watching you. If any more citizens are molested, look out." Investigations by the police yielded no arrests or convictions in connection with the lynching.

²¹ *Ibid.*, September 22, 23, 1910. Gaetano Moroni, Italian Vice-Consul at New Orleans, visited Tampa and conducted a confidential investigation. His conclusions probably come as close to the truth as possible. He stated that “the lynching itself was not the outcome of a temporary outburst of popular anger, but was planned, in cold blood . . . with the intention of teaching an awful lesson to the strikers of the cigar factories . . . and, at the same time, of getting rid of two ‘terrible ruffians.’ ” See, Gaetano Moroni to Marquis Cusani Confalonieri, October 11, 1910, p. 1, Records of the Department of State, State Decimal File, 1910-1929, “Tampa Lynching Incident,” Box 3671, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

²² Tampa *El Internacional*, June 3, 1910; *Tampa Daily Times*, October 4, 9, 18, 1910. *Tampa Morning Tribune*, November 25, 1910, for example, referred to Campa as a “youthful anarchist whose career in Tampa has been characterized by the most flagrant disregard of the rights of life, person, and property.”

²³ *Tampa Morning Tribune*, October 17, 18, 1910. The patrols in West Tampa were under the command of Col. Hugh C. MacFarlane, chairman of the citizens' committee; those of Ybor City were under Col. C. C. Whitaker.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, October 18, 1910. The citizens' committee posted several thousand placards around the city reading: “We, the Citizens Committee, guarantee absolute protection to anyone who desires to go to work in any of the cigar factories of this community both in going to and from work and to their homes.”

²⁵ Tampa *El Internacional*, October 21, 1910; *Tampa Morning Tribune*, October 17, 18, 1910.

²⁶ Tampa *El Internacional*, December 23, 30, 1910; January 20, 1911.

²⁷ *Tampa Morning Tribune*, October 18, December 14, 1910; Tampa *El Internacional*, December 16, 1910.

²⁸ Tampa *El Internacional*, October 27, December 16, 1910. Ever since the cigar industry came to Tampa, cigarmakers had worked on Sundays during the weeks before Christmas in order to fill holiday orders.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, November 18, December 30, 1910; *Tampa Morning Tribune*, November 19, December 30, 1910.

³⁰ *Tampa Morning Tribune*, November 26, December 1, 3, 7, 1910; Tampa *El Internacional*, December 16, 1910.

³¹ *Tampa Morning Tribune*, December 26, 1910, January 1, 2, 3, 10, 16, 1911; Tampa *El Internacional*, December 23, 1910, January 20, 1911.

³² Tampa *El Internacional*, December 23, 1910.

³³ Factory owners were particularly anxious to acquire selectors for their businesses and were outraged when these individuals were deported. On August 28, for example, Manuel López, a Cuban selector, was returned to Havana on board the steamer *Olivette* for being in violation of the alien contract labor law. *Tampa Morning Tribune*, August 28, 1910, January 27, 1911.

³⁴ *Tampa Morning Tribune*, January 25, 26, 1911.

³⁵ Long, “‘La Resistencia,’ ” 193-94.

³⁶ For details of the 1920 strike see, Durward Long, “The Open-Closed Shop Battle in Tampa’s Cigar Industry, 1919-1921,” *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 47 (October, 1968): 101-21.



The Entrance to Edison Park as it appears today. Originally planned as a nude, the statue was draped when Mrs. Edison protested the display of nudity.

Photograph courtesy of Prudy Taylor Board.

EDISON PARK: LIVING AND LEARNING IN FORT MYERS

by Prudy Taylor Board

Edison Park, one of Fort Myers' oldest, most prestigious subdivisions, is an important testimony to the pervasive influence famed inventor Thomas Alva Edison has had on this city.

To reach Edison Park, you must travel south on palm-bedecked McGregor Boulevard, one of the city's main thoroughfares, to the entrance of Edison's winter home. Directly across the Boulevard is Edison's laboratory and a few hundred feet further south is the entrance to Edison Park.¹

The entrance is marked by the statue of a Grecian maiden holding an urn and was modeled after the famous gate in Chestnut Hill, a wealthy suburb of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Developer James D. Newton officially unveiled the statue and the subdivision on April 7, 1926.



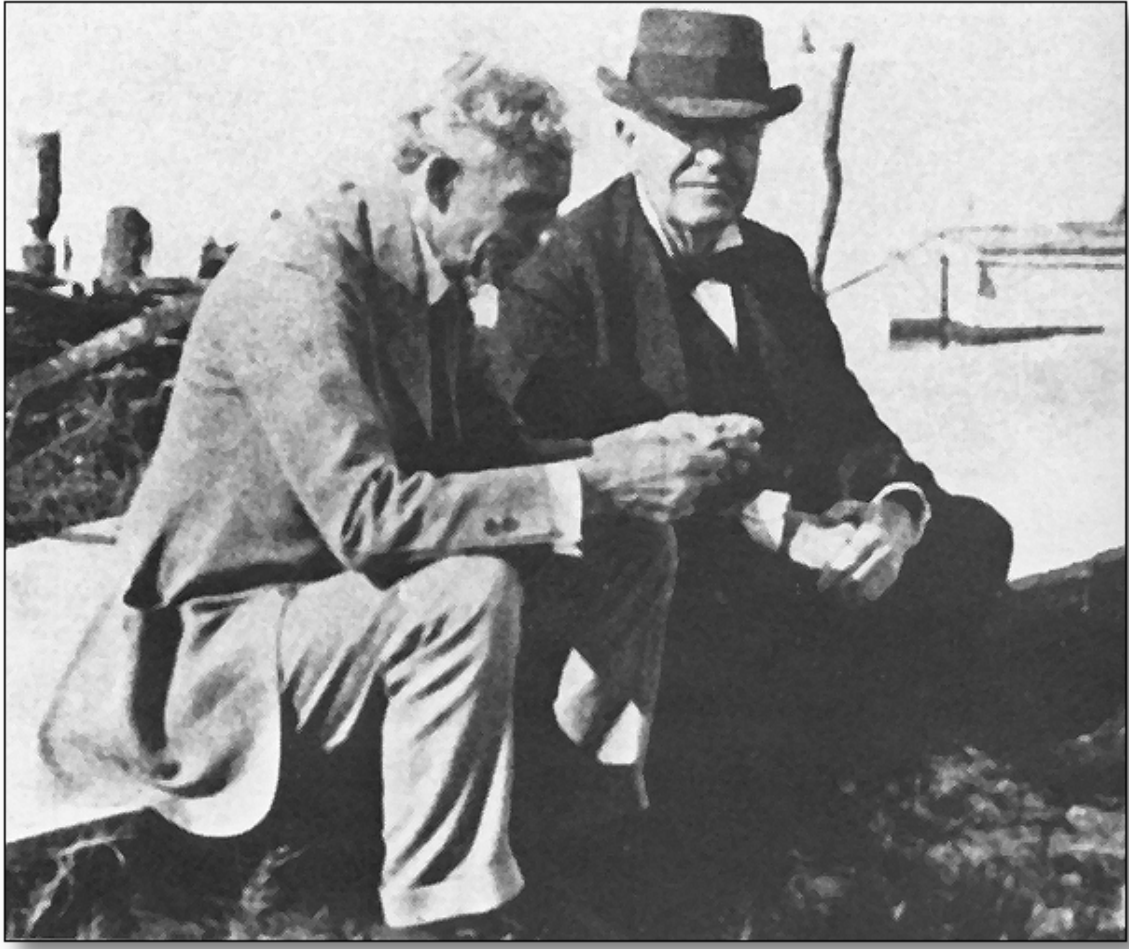
James Newton at the Entrance to Edison Park.

Photograph courtesy of Prudy Taylor Board.

It was indeed an occasion. Mina Edison officiated, accompanied by her ailing husband who had risen from his sickbed to attend. Another dignitary on hand was New York State Senator Charles Stadler. Stadler, in addition to being a legislator and millionaire, was active in real estate and developed several subdivisions in Lee County including Stadler's Central Heights, Seminole Park, York Manor Park and Stadler's Farms.² The three were friends of Newton.

Newton, still active in real estate development in Lee County today, moved to Fort Myers from Philadelphia in 1924 when he was about nineteen. Newton's friendship with Edison began after the two met for the first time while Newton was developing Edison Park, his first business venture in Lee County. Newton recalled recently: "Many times I worked right along with the crews and one day I was down in a ditch along McGregor Boulevard shoveling dirt. I'd just dug down and gotten a shovelful and was hefting it up over my shoulder. I looked up and saw Mr. Edison in his Model T Ford looking down on me. Noting the shovel in my hands, he smiled and from then on, we became good friends. I think he liked people who weren't afraid to spit on their hands and pick up a shovel and do a little hard work."³ Newton still cherishes an inscribed photograph of Edison which reads: "All things come to him who hustles while he waits. To my young friend, Jimmie Newton." It is signed "Thos. A. Edison."

Despite the almost manic quality of the times, for it was the height of the boom in Florida, Newton established a reputation for integrity and excellence. Homes built within Edison Park's fifty-five acre site were either Moorish, Spanish or Italian in design. Lots averaged



Thomas Edison and Henry Ford.

Photograph courtesy of James D. Newton.

two-and-a-half acres. Sidewalks were six feet wide. Eight-foot parkways between the curbs and sidewalks were planted with palms, hibiscus, crotons, and bougainvillea. Each owner received a written guarantee that the developer would provide curbing, city water and sewers, gas and street lights. The local press heaped praise on Newton for his work. One editorial gushed: “Edison Park stands out today as an example to all would-be developers of the past and all developers who may come to this city in the future. . . . [It was] built by men who kept faith. You developers, old and new, go and do likewise.”⁴

Newton did, in fact, decry the puffery and flummery of the era, for in his sales brochure describing Edison Park, he wrote: “To the visitor who thinks of Florida as a land of artificiality and real estate booms, the first glimpse of the palm-lined avenues and the homelike character of Fort Myers, the northernmost tropical city in the United States, comes as a distinct surprise. There is none of the feverish excitement, the glitter and bombast one has come to believe is the Florida of today.”⁵



The Thomas A. Edison Congregational Church, situated on Alhambra Drive in Edison Park, was known as the Community Congregational Church until 1964 when members of the congregation received permission to change the name. They sought to honor Edison in this way because in 1925, he donated two of the five buildings on which the church is built, also because he and the founding minister, Reverend Orvis T. Anderson, were such close friends. The actual building was completed in 1931, less than a month after Edison's death in October of that year.

Photograph courtesy of Prudy Taylor Board.

Further on in the brochure, Newton suggested that Florida was a state in transition, and he emphasized a home in Edison Park as an investment in living. The brochure declared: "Think what it means to be able to live out of doors all the year 'round – to play golf or tennis or go swimming at Fort Myers Beach *every day in the year!* Think what it means to see children's eager faces tanned as brown in January as in July! To be able to sit in your patio in the evening, looking up at the Southern Cross in the heaven above, while soft breezes, from the Gulf stir the fronds of towering palms"⁶

Ever the good businessman, Newton did not neglect the financial aspect. "From the viewpoint of investment, Edison Park offers the best opportunity for sound financial profit in the whole state of Florida today," he wrote. Echoing a problem that is only today being rectified, Newton asserted:

For years the development of Fort Myers lagged, because of the handicap of poor roads. Since 1920, when new roads began to be built, the population has increased over 300 per cent. To show that this increase represents permanent and not speculative growth, the number of building permits increased 800 per cent in the



\$200,000 school under construction near the Tamiami Trail Entrance of Edison Park.

Photograph courtesy of James D. Newton.

same period. In the first fourteen weeks of 1925, five hundred and nineteen building permits were issued, an increase of 1000 per cent in three and one-half months, as compared with the whole twelve months of 1924!⁷

At the same time Edison Park was being developed, Fort Myers was suffering, as reflected in part by the statistics above, and from still another problem which Lee County has only recently alleviated – overcrowded schools. The *Fort Myers Press* reported in January 1924: “Overcrowded schools are now a big problem. There is one building short and overflow is mostly local. There are 10 to 40% more pupils in every building than should be there. Soon it will be tourist season to add to the overcrowding. There are 8 buildings now in use.”⁸

In September of the following year, double sessions were scheduled at Gwynne Institute – Lee County's first modern school building, constructed in 1911 – because of a lack of schoolrooms for the more than 2000 students then registered.⁹ According to “The History of Old Lee County Schools,” compiled by historian E. H. “Ned” Loveland, 2290 school children were enrolled in school during the 1924-25 school year. The following year that number had grown to 3104.¹⁰

However, plans involving Edison Park were underway to solve the problem. During 1925, Lee County voters adopted a \$350,000 bond issue to build two schools – Edison Park Grammar School and another designated simply as “Colored School.” By October, local architect I. W.

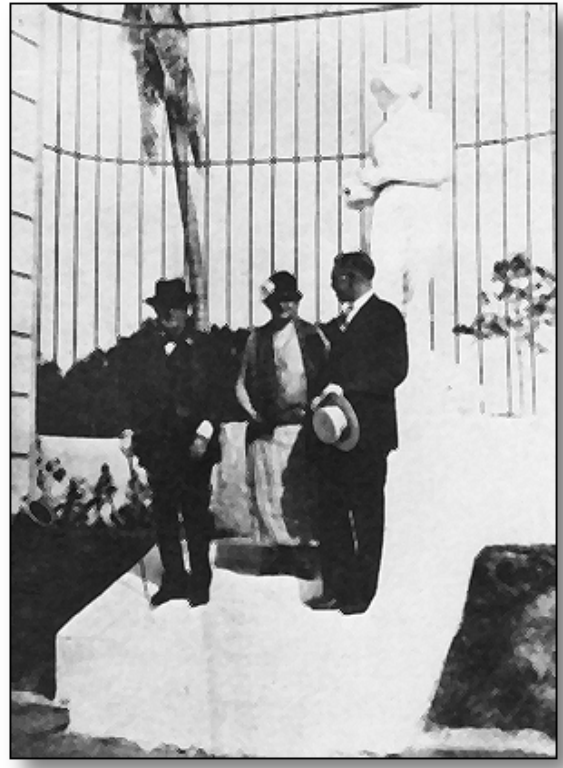
Iredell had completed the plans and specifications which were advertised in newspapers in Florida, Baltimore and Georgia.¹¹

According to the January 1926 minutes of the Lee County Board of Public Instruction, the J. M. Lawton Company won the contract with its bid of \$149,500 to build Edison Park. Completion was scheduled for August 1st.¹² By March, the School Board had settled on property in Edison Park as the site and voted to buy the entire block 25 from Newton's firm, the New Home Development Company, for \$68,000.¹³ James D. Newton remembered that transaction. "The School Board didn't have much money so we took school warrants," he remarked.¹⁴ Records indicate the Board paid \$26,500 in cash and the balance in \$500 installments due at six-month intervals. There were delays in completing the building. In fact, the school did not open until March 30, 1927; however the cornerstone was laid on March 13, 1926.

The laying of the school cornerstone was an event rivaling the opening of the subdivision in importance. According to an article in the *Fort Myers Tropical News*, all the schools in the city were closed at noon so schoolchildren could take part. Masons of Tropical Lodge 56 were in charge and visiting Masons were instructed to meet at the Elks Club to form a procession of cars to the school site. Music was provided by the Fort Myers Concert Band.¹⁵

On hand were City Superintendent of Schools Howell L. Watkins and County Superintendent J. Colins English. (English who has an elementary school named after him on Pine Island Road in North Fort Myers, went on to become State Superintendent of Schools.) According to Newton: "The Edisons and I were present at the laying of the school cornerstone. In it were placed a photograph of the unveiling of the Edison Park entrance along with a coin."¹⁶ These items, the coin was a dime, were removed in ceremonies commemorating the school's 50th anniversary in 1977. Also enclosed were lists of students and faculty. A Cuban Laurel tree, donated by the great inventor was planted on the school grounds that day. Today's schoolchildren are shaded by that same tree as it has flourished over the decades.

In the years that followed, the school became a center of activities not only for its school body and the residents of the subdivision, but also for the community which attended its 700-square foot auditorium, the largest in Lee County. The Lions' Club Minstrels were put on there each year along with little theatre productions, dance recitals by Betty Satchell's students, fish fries,



Thomas A. Edison, James D. Newton and Mrs. Edison at the entrance of Edison Park. This picture was placed in the cornerstone of the Edison Park school.

Photograph courtesy of James D. Newton.



Edison Park Elementary School which still serves its community fifty-four years after the formal opening in 1927.

Photograph courtesy of Prudy Taylor Board.

fashion shows and concerts. A recent issue of the Fort Myers *Sun* praised Edison Park for its contribution to civic affairs: “It was in the pleasant auditorium of that school that ‘Miss Effie’ Winkler Henderson McAdow, who taught piano and voice to three generations of the community’s children, the late Harry Fagan (president of the First National Bank) and Mrs. George Mann (wife of contractor George Mann and mother of State representative Frank Mann) . . . staged the first events which began the powerful and prestigious Community Concerts.”¹⁷

The roster of former Edison Park PTA presidents reads like a local who’s who. It includes Chesley Perry, president emeritus of the *Fort Myers News Press*; Frank Watson, attorney for the City of Fort Myers; Circuit Court Judge Robert Shafer; deceased architect and builder William Frizzell; former County Commissioner Walter Shirey; bank president Chad Wiltshire; advertising executive Dan Harlacher, and local attorney and former member of the Board of Trustees of Edison Community College Travis Gresham, to mention only a few.

Local architect Bill Rivers graduated from Edison Park in 1945. He remembered both the tension of the war years and the flavor and character of life in Fort Myers. The moral code was simple and rigidly enforced. He recalled an incident which took place on the school playground. “I said something like, ‘Damn, I don’t want to do that,’ meaning play soft ball or something similar and one of the kids heard me. Whoever it was told our sixth grade teacher, Mrs. Redmon,



Built in 1886, the Thomas A. Edison winter home on McGregor Boulevard in downtown Fort Myers is one of that city's oldest homes and also one of the first prefabricated houses built in this country. It was constructed in Fairfield, Maine of spruce and shipped to Fort Myers on four sailing schooners, then assembled on its present site. It is a fine example of early Florida architecture with its excellent ventilation accomplished by its typically high ceilings and open porches on four sides.

Photograph courtesy of Edison Winter Home.

and she took me straight to our principal, Miss Bullock. I had to stay after school in Miss Bullock's office for an entire week."¹⁸

Sexual permissiveness was a phenomenon of the far distant future, because Rivers also recalled trying to kiss a third grade girl, now a teacher in Lee County, whose name was Jenny Lee Hanshaw. The result? "She slapped me," he reported with a laugh.¹⁹

Those years were tense, as another incident Rivers recounts demonstrates. "We went there during the war years and it was an extremely sensitive time," he says. "Many of the teachers were the wives of pilots stationed at Buckingham Air Force Base in East Fort Myers. I remember one day I heard a rumor the war had ended. This was long before it actually did, but I came back from lunch and told some of the kids. The teachers descended on me and pulled me aside they were so anxious to hear what I had heard."²⁰

Lee County Superintendent of Schools Ray Pottorf was principal of Edison Park School from 1960 through 1964, and he termed those years as "some of my most satisfying professional experiences. It was a close knit community and extremely supportive of the school," he asserted.

“Parents were very involved with their children, the school’s activities and the PTA. Parents were also concerned about their children’s educations.”²¹ Some of that cooperation was demonstrated when Edison Park teachers, residents and PTA members along with now retired School Superintendent Ray L. Williams and then Deputy School Superintendent Pottorf built a block-long sidewalk which runs along Edison Avenue. It took them three years to raise the money for construction materials and then they built it themselves.²²

Former third grade teacher Mattie Belle (Mrs. Charles) Gibson also shared fond memories of the school. She taught there from 1929 until 1963, with the exception of eight years leave she took to raise her child. “Fort Myers was small and Edison Park was a new school and, of course, it was a very good neighborhood. Many of the privileged children went there,” she reminisced. “Many of the young people attending Edison Park have remained here and have their careers here.” She praised Miss Pearl Bullock, now deceased, who was the principal from the school’s opening in 1927 until her retirement in 1959. “Miss Bullock was the very best principal,” Mrs. Gibson noted. “She knew the background of every student, the parents, even the grandparents and she ran the school well.” (Miss Bullock herself was a product of Lee County Schools graduating from the Fort Myers High School class of 1915.)

One of Mrs. Gibson’s most vivid memories and favorite stories centers on Doug Grace, an attorney who today lives on Marlyn Avenue in Edison Park. “Doug Grace,” she recalled in an amused voice, “was one of my third graders. And one day he got caught in his seat and we had to call the janitor to free him. Poor Doug was very upset because he thought the janitor was going to have to saw off his arm to free him. Nothing we could say would reassure him.”²³

The Halgrim family – including Bob, Sr., Robert C. Halgrim, for years curator of the Edison winter home, who received his diploma from Edison on the school’s stage – are among the Edison Park alumni. Today Halgrim’s son, Robert P. Halgrim, has taken over as curator of the Edison home. Another son, Tommy, is principal of Harlem Heights Elementary School in Lee County.

Edison Park has lived up to developer Jim Newton’s sales slogan, “Built To Endure,” but in enduring it has changed. It remains a desirable neighborhood, but it is no longer populated entirely by long-time residents. This is reflected in the school as well, for the principal no longer knows each pupil and his or her background.

Today this historic subdivision with its fine school, its winding, neatly landscaped streets and gracious homes dozes in the sun expressing, as Newton once put it, “none of the feverish excitement, the glitter and bombast one has come to believe is the Florida of today.”²⁴

The graceful maiden with the urn stands as a symbol of what Edison Park was and is.

¹ In 1947 Mrs. Mina Miller Edison donated the Edison Winter Home and Laboratory to the City of Fort Myers which opened it to the public as a museum. It is open every day of the year except Christmas.

² Karl H. Grismer, *The Story of Fort Myers*, (Florida: St. Petersburg Printing Co., Inc., 1949), pp. 222, 245.

³ Vince Smith, “Go Placidly,” *Lee Living Magazine*, (February 1979): 42-44.

WAR AND PEACE ON THE SUNCOAST: A PHOTO ESSAY

At midnight on December 31, 1939, crowds jammed Times Square in New York City to usher in a new decade. Five years later, on May 8, 1945, throngs lined the same streets to celebrate VE (Victory in Europe) Day and the beginning of a new era. During those momentous years, Americans fought in a second world war, the Great Depression ended, and peace returned. By New Year's Eve 1945, Pearl Harbor, Normandy, Guadalcanal, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki were reminders of war that were being put behind. Whereas the first half of the forties meant sacrifice and dislocation, the second half offered an opportunity to rebuild. Newspaperman Jonathan Daniels emphatically declared: "The twenties are gone with self-indulgence. The thirties have disappeared with self-pity. The forties are here in which Americans stand on the continent as men."¹ This exuberance would not last long as cold war confrontation abroad and strife at home seriously diminished postwar tranquility. However, for the generation of Americans which had survived breadlines and enemy attacks, the period following the war was "The Best Years of Our Lives," as the title of the 1946 Academy Award winner proclaimed.²

Floridians found themselves caught up in this intense, vibrant decade. The dangers of war were felt close to home as German submarines sank ships off the state's Atlantic and Gulf coasts, German spies snuck ashore at Jacksonville (they were soon caught), and the national government established military training camps all over the state. Though the war threatened to destroy Florida's economic foundation, tourism, shrewd public officials convinced the military to make use of Florida's sunny climate and natural resources for training personnel and providing recuperation for returning veterans. New camps, airfields and naval bases brought thousands of soldiers to Florida. Here, they lived in college dormitories, tents erected on golf courses, and in luxury hotels. Around 1943, training activity declined, and the end of the war found Florida's hotels used for hospitals, convalescent homes, and redeployment centers.

The state also contributed to the war effort in the area of agriculture. Its citrus industry grew significantly during World War II. By 1945, citrus shipments had increased twenty-nine million boxes over the 1941 season, and during the war the military requisitioned all canned and processed fruits. The federal government, needing large quantities of concentrated orange juice, jams and marmalades to be sent overseas, loaned money to the concentrate industry for expansion. Florida citrus growers and packers began large scale processing of concentrated juice and made heavy capital investments that would bring increased revenues in the postwar years.

Along with victory celebrations, the end of the war spurred a migration of people to Florida. By the end of the 1940s, Florida's population had increased forty-six percent, and a crucial housing shortage had developed. Many of the newcomers were veterans who had spent part of the war in Florida and brought their families to the state after returning home. A recent graduate of the University of South Florida recalled that his father and uncle, ex-trainees of the Merchant Marine, chose to stay in St. Petersburg after they were discharged in 1945: "They were so taken with the area that they persuaded their parents and a younger brother to move down and settle here. In early 1946, a fourth brother mustered out of the Navy and immediately came to St. Petersburg to complete the clan. Prior to the war, the . . . family had been sharecroppers,

descendants of generations of people who followed mules on other people's land, shovelled dirt, chopped wood, and grew the food they ate. The brothers now had enough money saved from their service pay to build their parents a home of their own in the Gulfport area of St. Pete and then commenced to construct their own lives."³

New and old residents alike joined in attacking the problems of restoring public services and facilities which had deteriorated under the strain of depression and war. In 1945 and 1947, the Florida legislature initiated a forty million dollar building program to expand government offices, educational centers, highways, bridges, and prisons. By the end of the decade, the Sunshine State was on its way toward dynamic growth.

The following photographs depict the area of central and southwest Florida during war, peace, and recovery of the 1940s.



As the 1940s opened, war clouds were on the horizon but the United States remained at peace. This Cities Service Station west of Auburndale on Highway 92 was selling gas for 19¢ a gallon and giving away free glasses.

Photograph courtesy of the Polk County Historical Society.



The lunch counter at Newberry's Department Store in downtown Tampa offered a variety of delights at bargain prices.

Photograph courtesy of Hampton Dunn.



Sarasota County's last Armistice Day Parade before the United States marched into a second world war was held in Five Points in 1941.

Photograph courtesy of the Sarasota County Historical Archives.



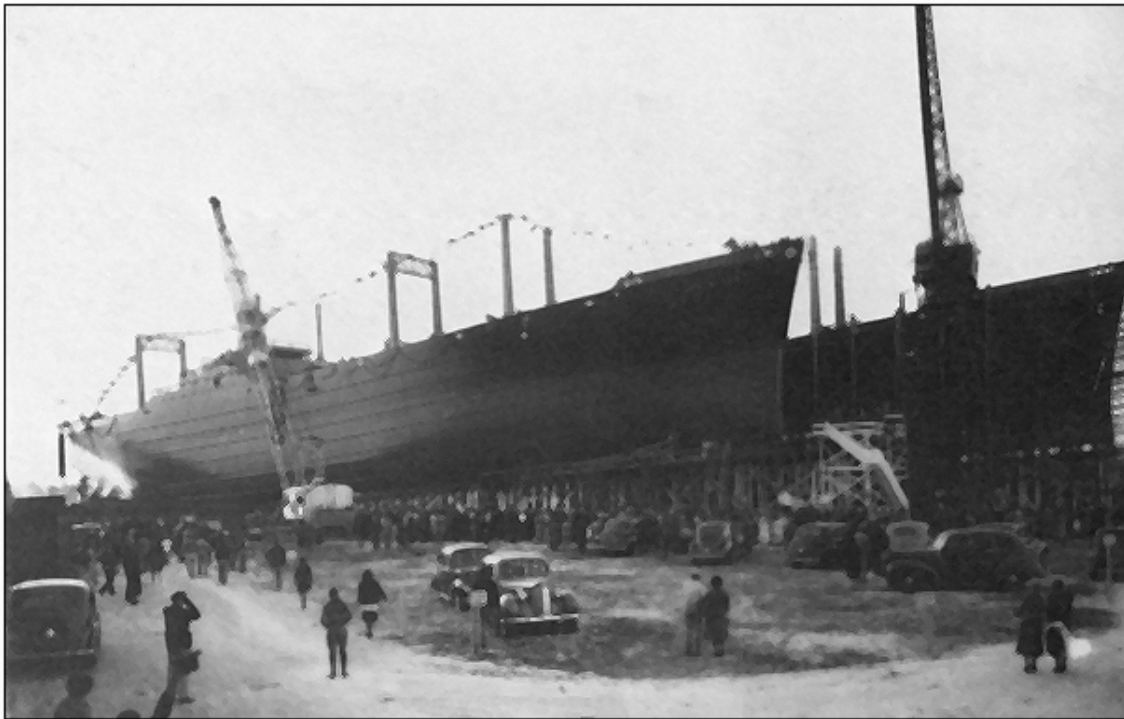
When the United States entered the war after December 7, 1941, it joined the British on the allied side. Since July, 1941, cadets of the British Royal Air Force's Flying Training School had been using the facilities at Riddle Field in Clewiston.

Photograph courtesy of the Calusa Valley Historical Society.



During the war, the Bay area contributed to military production keeping American forces prepared to fight the enemy. The prototype of the Alligator, a landing craft used by the allies, was tested by designer, Donald Roebling, at Clearwater Harbor.

Photograph courtesy of Pinellas County Historical Museum.



The Tampa shipyards worked at a bustling pace to produce vessels like the Sea Witch. Signs in the foreground indicate the security-conscious nature of the installation. No cameras were allowed and the area was reserved for card holders.

Photograph courtesy of Hampton Dunn.

The residents of Indian Rocks Beach were protected by this Air Raid Warden's Tower in case of attack from the skies.

Photograph courtesy of the Pinellas County Historical Museum.



The Harbor Patrol kept watch in Tampa Bay. The crew posed in front of the *Jose Gaspar*. The ship was not in operation during World War II as the Gasparilla celebration was suspended from 1942-1946.

Photograph courtesy of Hampton Dunn.



Women on the home front served the war effort in many different ways. These women volunteered as nurses aides in Tampa under the instruction of Mrs. Norma McMullen.

Photograph courtesy of Hampton Dunn.



A contingent of the SPARS, the women's auxiliary unit of the United States Coast Guard, and some Guardsmen, put in an appearance at the Tampa Theatre on December 20, 1944, to push the 6th War Loan Bond Drive. They were greeted by theatre manager, O. G. Finley, left at the bottom of the stairs.

Photograph courtesy of Hampton Dunn.



This display in Woolworth's store window urged passersby to help win the war by buying bonds.

Photograph courtesy of Hampton Dunn.



Across the bay in Clearwater, the city also held a war bond rally in the Municipal Park.

Photograph courtesy of the Pinellas County Historical Museum.



These Sulphur Springs' residents helped Uncle Sam by contributing old aluminum for scrap.

Photograph courtesy of Hampton Dunn.



For the weary servicemen stationed throughout the Tampa Bay area and vicinity, great efforts were made to provide entertainment and relaxation. The Hi-Hat Night Club in the DeSoto Hotel, in downtown Tampa was a gathering place for off-duty airmen. This photograph was made on October 5, 1942 while Lou Figuerdo was the operator.

Photograph courtesy of Hampton Dunn.



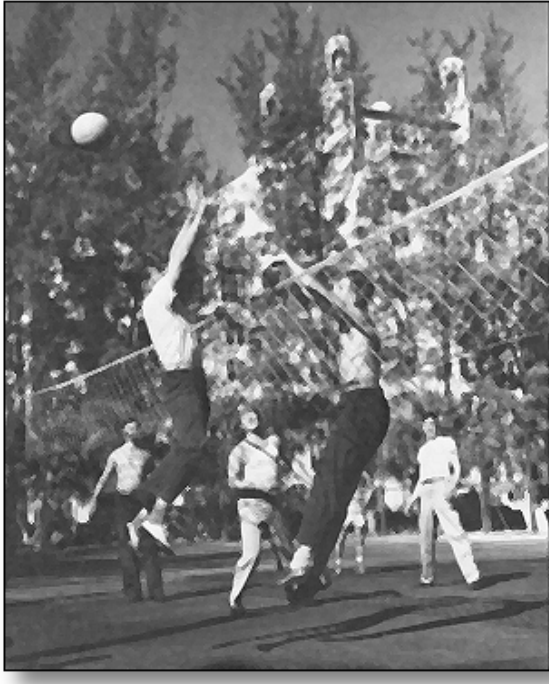
Homesick servicemen stationed in the Tampa area during World War II often spent some of their leave time to make a telephone call to the folks back home. This was the scene in the public booths room of the Peninsular Telephone Company (now General Telephone) in June 1942.

Photograph courtesy of Hampton Dunn.



The USO was perhaps the most active organization catering to the social needs of the GIs. This photograph was taken on July 28, 1944, the third anniversary of the organization.

Photograph courtesy of Hampton Dunn.



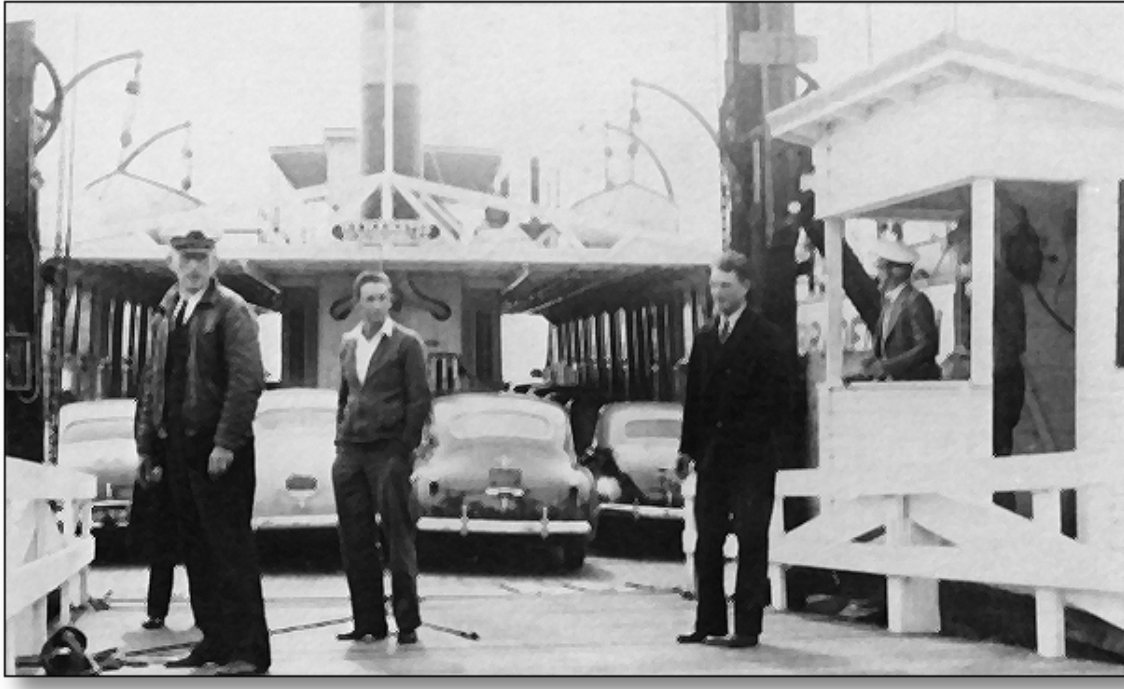
Those military personnel unfortunate enough to sustain injuries during the war, could recuperate their way back to health under the warm Florida sunshine amidst the pleasant surroundings of the Don Cesar Hotel of St. Petersburg Beach.

Photograph courtesy of Frank T. Hurley.

The Vinoy Hotel was another Pinellas County hotel used to contribute to the war effort. The Vinoy was the head quarters for the Army Air Force men who trained in St. Petersburg during World War II. This is one of the publicity photos taken during that time.

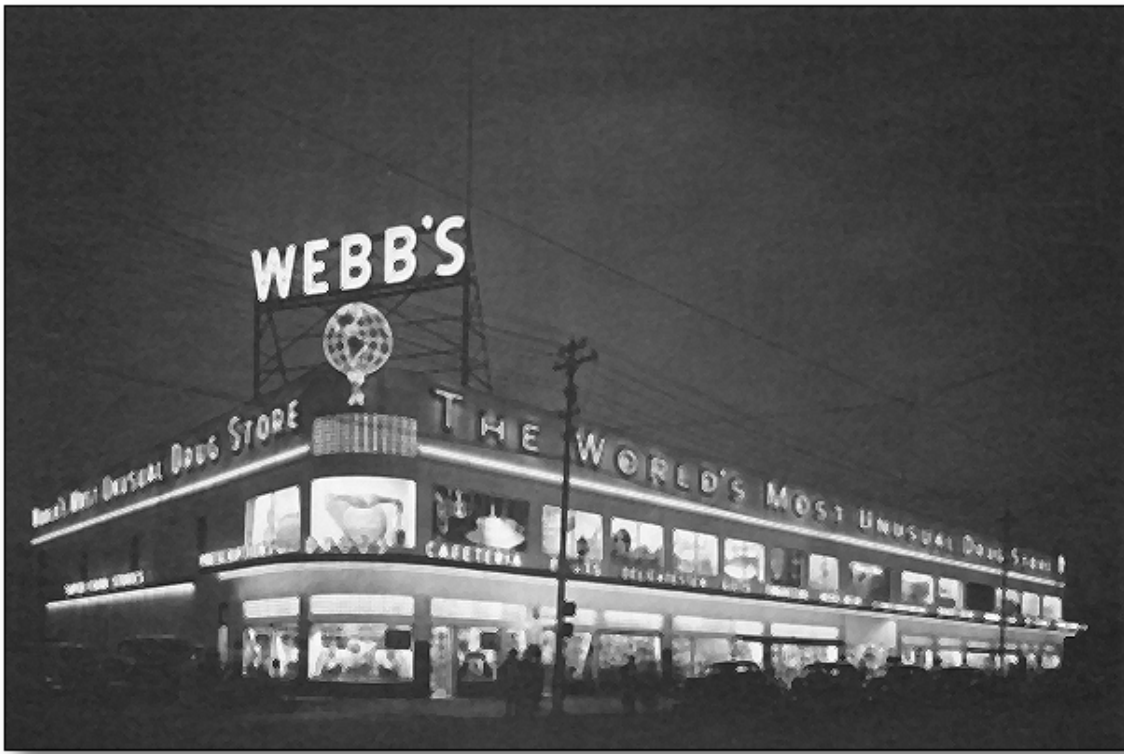
Photograph courtesy of Hampton Dunn.





Prior to the construction of the Sunshine Skyway Bridge, The Bee Line Ferry ran between Piney Point in Manatee County and Pinellas Point in St. Petersburg and provided transportation to travelers across Tampa Bay. During the war, the army commandeered the ferry. This photo shows it in 1942.

Photograph courtesy of Manatee County Historical Society.



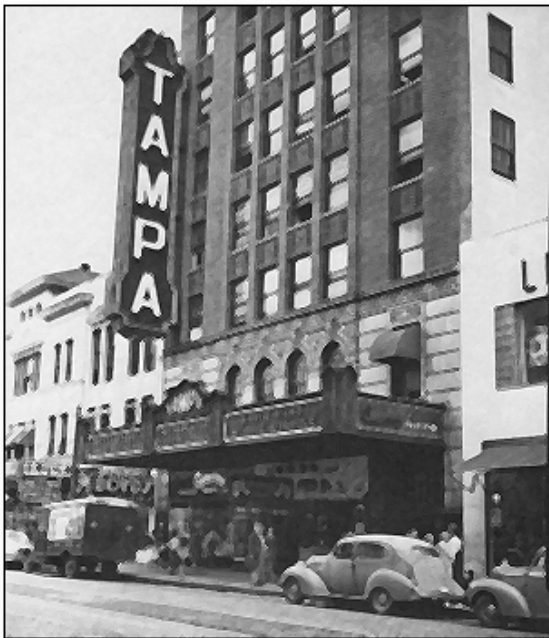
Civilians and military alike who lived along the Suncoast patronized popular area business and entertainment establishments. In 1945, “Doc” Webb celebrated the twentieth anniversary of his drug store. This 1942 photograph shows the “World’s Most Unusual Drug Store” at night before additional stories were later added.

Photograph courtesy of the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System.



Since 1935, Tampa has had the Lily White Pallbearers, a unique organization which assures its members a dignified and fitting funeral. Its members are all black. The group was formed by J.W. Brown, B.C. Cohen, Mrs. Corrine Alexander, Will James, Mrs. A.D. Heygood, Mrs. Bessie Barefield and Mrs. Selma Smith. One of the early leaders was C. Blythe Andrews, publisher of a black newspaper, the *Florida Sentinel*. Besides assuring decent burials for its members, the organization also has operated a hospital for a short time, a nursing home, and sponsored Progress Village and Tampa Bay Apartments. This photograph shows the headquarters of the Lily White Pallbearers in August, 1942.

Photograph courtesy of Hampton Dunn.



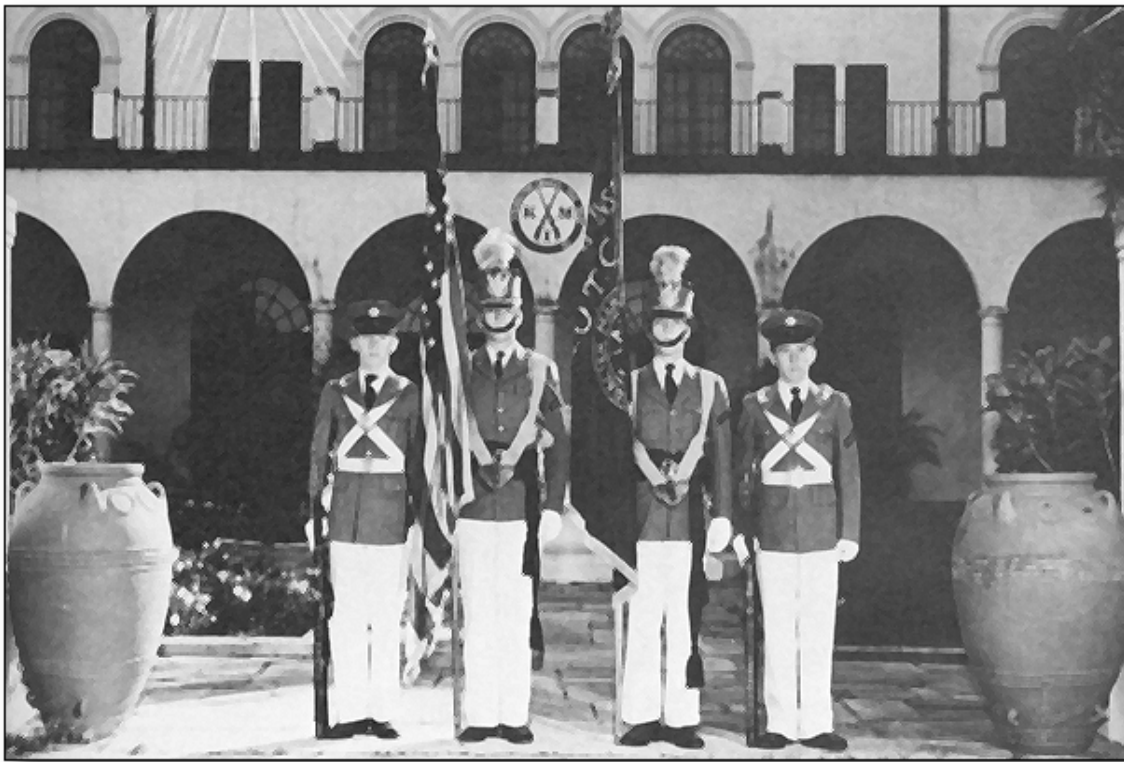
As late as 1947, Tampa had a wide variety of movie houses all enjoying heavy patronage. A photographer roaming around the city on October 1 of that year snapped the Tampa Theatre on Franklin Street where Betty Grable was starring in “Mother Wore Tights” and organist Eddie Ford was featured at the console.

Photograph courtesy of Hampton Dunn.



These smiling ushers, today an extinct breed, greeted patrons of the Seminole Theatre on May 25, 1945.

Photograph courtesy of Hampton Dunn.



These young men, perhaps destined for military service, received training at the winter home of the Kentucky Military Institute in Venice. The school's color guard posed for this picture in 1942. The Kentucky Military Institute's former home in Venice is currently under restoration and will be used in the future for office buildings.

Photograph courtesy of the Manatee County Historical Society.



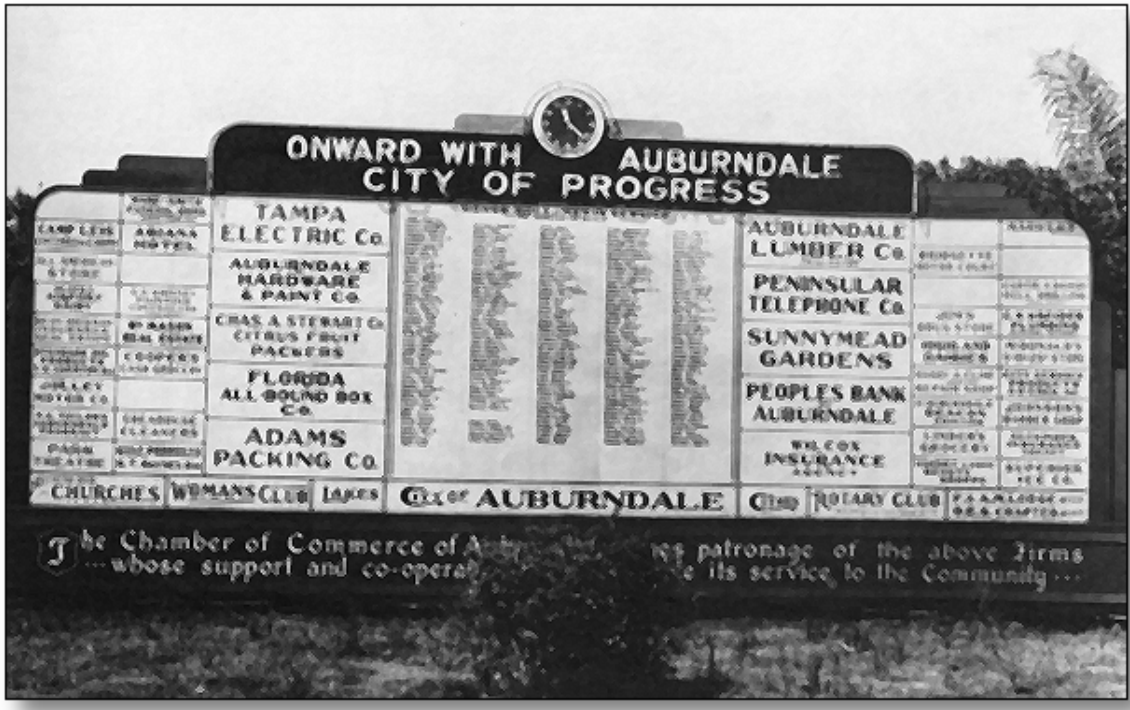
While crowds reveled in Times Square, these Tampans celebrated the end of the war on August 14, 1945 at Eighth Avenue and Eighteenth Street in Tampa.

Photograph courtesy of Hampton Dunn.



Returning veterans utilized the GI Bill to go to college. The University of Tampa attempted to attract these veterans with this 1946 publicity photo.

Photograph courtesy of Hampton Dunn.



While the city of Auburndale looked to the economic future, it remembered the recent past in its honor roll of World War II veterans.

Photograph courtesy of the Polk County Historical Society.



Commerce Park was one of the first housing developments in Bartow following the close of World War II. It was located in the western part of Bartow and was so named because the Chamber of Commerce encouraged the development. This view taken in 1954, looks to the east. A corner of Wildwood Cemetery may be seen at the left.

Photograph courtesy of the Polk County Historical Society.



Postwar Fort Myers returned to normal as tourists once again flocked to the area. A New York couple wintering on their boat at the Fort Myers Yacht Basin were two of the 9,064 tourists to register at the headquarters of the Chamber of Commerce in 1948. The man behind counter is Chamber Secretary Tony Dweyer, public relations officer at Buckingham Air Force Base during World War II.

Photograph courtesy of Marian Godown.



Styles of the late 1940s can be seen in the 1947 Fashionola, Tampa Women's Club's annual fund-raising event.

Photograph courtesy of Hampton Dunn.



Although one war was over, a cold war had begun, and customers of the Florida National Bank in Bartow were reminded in 1948 to buy United States Savings Bonds.

Photograph courtesy of the Polk County Historical Society.

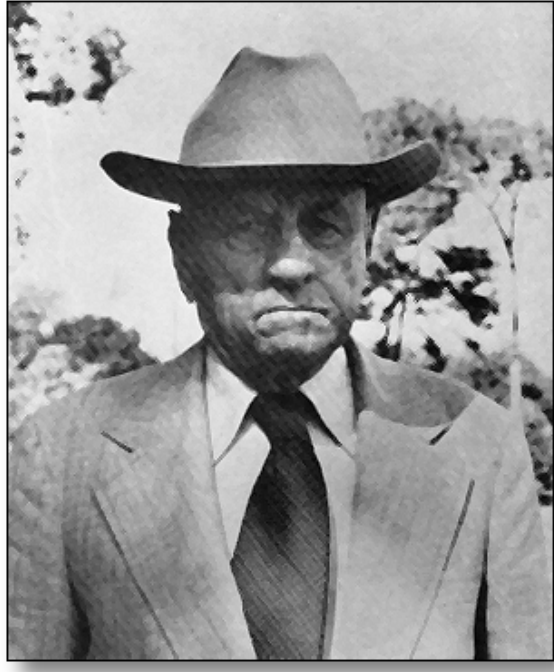


Meanwhile, Bartow veterans remember their fallen comrades while unveiling this War Monument, which was originally placed between the city hall and the post office. The Monument now stands in front of the post office.

¹ Richard Polenberg, *War and Society: The United States, 1941-1945* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1972), p. 2.

² Joseph C. Goulden, *The Best Years, 1945-1950* (New York: Atheneum, 1976), p. 5.

³ Arnold Mitchell quoted in Louis A. Pérez, Jr. and Steven F. Lawson, "History in Tampa Bay," *Ex Libris 2* (Fall, 1978): 9.



Jay B. Starkey, Sr.

Photograph courtesy of the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

PRESERVING FOR THE FUTURE: AN INTERVIEW WITH THREE GENERATIONS OF THE STARKEY FAMILY

At age eighty-six, Jay B. Starkey can look back over a successful career as cattle rancher, businessman, and public official in Pinellas and Pasco Counties. A resident of St. Petersburg since 1899 when he arrived there at the age of four with his family from St. Cloud, Minnesota, Starkey is well-known for his integrity, reliability, and hard work. During his youth, the open range was still common in the Tampa Bay area, and Starkey occasionally rode herd with the cowboys who worked for Lykes Brothers, the largest cattle ranchers in central Florida. Upon graduation from St. Petersburg High School in 1914, young Starkey took a job with the Post Office, but he did not sever his ties with his first love – herding cattle and riding horses. During the real estate boom that swept through the state in the early twenties, he quit the Post Office and started the Ulmerton Ranch where he had over 600 head of cattle in 1924. Starkey weathered the precipitous collapse in land values after 1925, and he continued to add to his Ulmerton Ranch land holdings. His reputation for honesty and good business sense also earned him a political career, and in 1936, he was elected Tax Collector of Pinellas County, a post he held until 1949.



J.B. Starkey, Sr. and J.B. Starkey, Jr. in Dutch Clover, 1959.

Photograph from the Starkey Family Scrapbook.

Nevertheless, the Great Depression tested the strength of millions of Americans like Jay Starkey. He recalled those trying times:

At the end of each year, for several years, I could not show where I had made any money more than a bare living. I could look at some more cleared land and an increased number of cattle and hogs, but with value probably less than the end of year previous. At the end of each day when I got home in town, I would be so tired I could go to sleep. The men who did not have something to do besides worry about being broke were the ones who suffered most.*

Thus, through exhausting work he survived the hard times. In 1937, when informed of the availability of some Pasco County property, Starkey was ready to buy. Joining him as partners in the deal were Ernest Cunningham, the Sheriff of Pinellas County, and his brothers, Dave and Howard. Starkey reminisced about his desire to undertake the venture: "I was somewhat familiar with the area, having camped on the Cootee River for several days in 1933 helping two old

* All quotations are from J. B. Starkey, Sr., *Things I Remember* (Brooksville: Southwest Florida Water Management District, 1980).

friends gather their cattle in the area. I was interested in that land, make no mistake about that. It was close to home and good range and timberland.” On the day of the purchase, Starkey predicted to his partners “that in ten years we could sell the timber and pay for the land. As it turned out, in 12 years the timber would have paid for the land eight times.” But they had no intention of selling, and within thirty years the Anclote River Ranch sprawled over 16,000 acres situated twenty miles north of Tampa and five miles east of New Port Richey.

The Starkeys have been interested in more than increasing the profitability of the land, and they have worked hard to restore the area as much as possible to its natural state. Sections stripped of trees sixty years ago are now covered with woods. The family only clears pastures needed for production and uses burning methods to keep the woods free from underbrush. Trees chosen for sale as lumber are carefully selected and marked. Wildlife has returned to the area. The lakes, especially Grass Lake, contain bass and bream. The fences have protected deer, turkey, squirrels and other animals from hunters. The Starkeys only allow hunting on their property when natural selection does not curb animal population. In the early 1960s, Starkey allowed the Florida Game Commission to net turkeys for transfer to various parks. In return, the Commission exchanged two deer for every turkey trapped. Through these methods, the Starkeys have worked to preserve the environment of their property.

Both J. B. Starkey, Sr., and his son J. B. Starkey, Jr., who runs the ranch, realized that even their best efforts might not enable them to keep intact the wilderness they owned. As ranchers on all sides of them sold their land and development approached from Tampa in the south and New Port Richey to the west, the men looked to a government agency to turn the area into a wilderness park. In 1975, the elder Starkey began selling portions of his land to the Southwest Florida Water Management District. To date, SWFWMD has purchased 5200 acres in the northwest section of Starkey’s vast land holdings. As part of the purchase agreement SWFWMD promised to maintain the land in its natural state. Unlike most of the land in Florida, the 5200 acres comprising the Starkey Wilderness Park will be saved from the bulldozers of construction crews. Future generations of Floridians will be able to view the land as their great-grandparents might have seen it.

The following interview conducted with J. B. Starkey, Sr., his son, J. B., Jr., and grandson, Frank, reveals the strength of the love and respect for the land that has been passed down through three generations of the Starkey family. The conversation begins with the eldest Starkey.

Interview with the Starkey Family

TBH: Mr. Starkey, can you tell us when you first saw the land in Pasco County which became your ranch?

JS: I am not positive if I saw this very area, but I was within a half a mile of there anyway. The first time was in October of 1916. That was in the fall before I went into the army the following June. I rode a horse from St. Petersburg to Webster. Coming back, I came down the railroad quite a ways and came into Odessa, that was when they had the big sawmills. There was a big commissary down there, and I came by the sawmill, where a store is now, and where the post office was for sixty – seventy years. I got there along



Group of riders from north Pinellas County resting their horses on Thirty-eight Avenue North, St. Petersburg, en route to a parade in St. Petersburg, 1939.

Photograph from the Starkey Family Scrapbook.

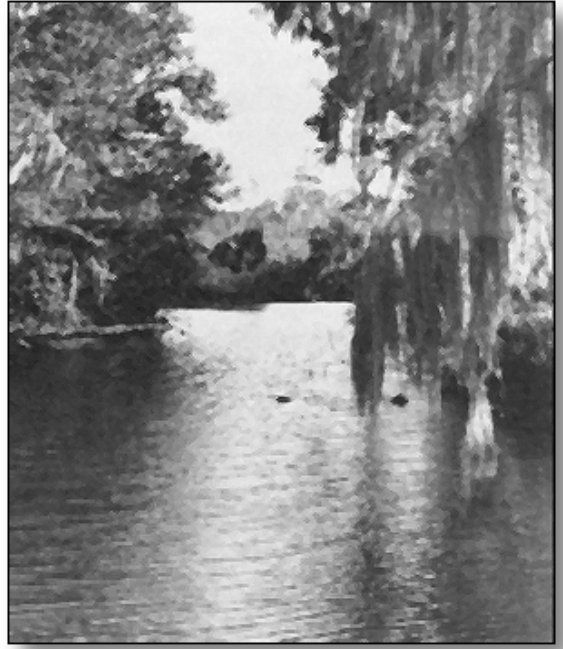
late afternoon. On the way back to St. Petersburg, I spent the night with Mr. Jackson, within a half a mile of the property. That was actually the first time that I ever saw it from a horse's back. When I first rode in this area, I feel sure it was in summer of 1931, it was before the compulsive tick eradication had reached the area and a good many of the cattle had been moved out. Open range men had sold their cattle and moved them out rather than have to go through that compulsory dipping. And I was up here with a man who had some cattle that ranged from Oldsmar up to Highway 41 on a two day trip. During that time we rode through all that area. I remember the first night we camped at Seven Springs about four miles from there. There weren't many cattle because many of them had been moved out. Those that were there were in exceptionally good shape, real good condition, and they were very attractive to a man that likes to see good cattle. That was in the summer of 1931.

TBH: When did you first purchase the Pasco property that became the Pasco Ranch?

JS: I think we signed the contract for purchase in April, 1937. The deal was probably completed in June.

TBH: Why did you first buy the land?

JS: I knew a man who was a land surveyor in Pinellas County and back in the Depression days. I was riding in the summer time, and it was hot as blazes. The horse was awful hot and there were no houses in that country. I rode up to this little office just off Highway 19 east of Largo. Inside was a man that I had known in the American Legion here in St. Petersburg. I'm a charter member of the Post 14. I got off the horse, asked him for a drink, and he gave me a drink of cool water. We visited for a while while my horse was cooling and as I got on my horse to start off, I said: "Well, of course I love the cattle business but cattle in Pinellas County will soon be a thing of the past. There will be no place for it." We parted, but when I was the county tax collector, he walked in the office in April 1937, and asked me if I remembered a conversation he and I had down in the woods three or four years before. I said: "I remember it very well." "Well," he said, "I have got what you are looking for." I had been up in that country in 1932, I think, and camped nearly a week in section six at the old Lawrence Anderson place. At that time the only thing left was a little log barn, probably ten feet wide and twelve or fourteen feet long. It had a floor and five or six of us camped there for nearly a week. The week we camped there, I saw a good bit of that country and kind of liked it because I had been in Pinellas County since I was born and it was close to home and attractive. I had a good friend who was Sheriff at that time. His brother and I were already partners out on Starkey Road. It was more money that I could afford to buy by myself. I talked to these other three brothers and they were all interested.



The Anclote River on the Cunningham Starkey Ranch, 1940.

Photograph from the Starkey Family Scrapbook.

TBH: *Is that Cunningham? Is that how you got the name for the ranch, CS, Cunningham/Starkey?*

JS: That's right, CS, that's right.

TBH: *Do you remember what the price per acre was back in those days?*

JS: I remember quite well. It sounds ridiculous, on the other hand if you lived here in the '20s and the '30s, there were millions of acres of land in Florida that was better ranch land than that that sold for about the same price. The price quoted us was \$1.40 an acre, and we assumed the taxes. The taxes had accumulated. There were millions of acres of land in Florida in those days that had reverted to the state for nonpayment of taxes.

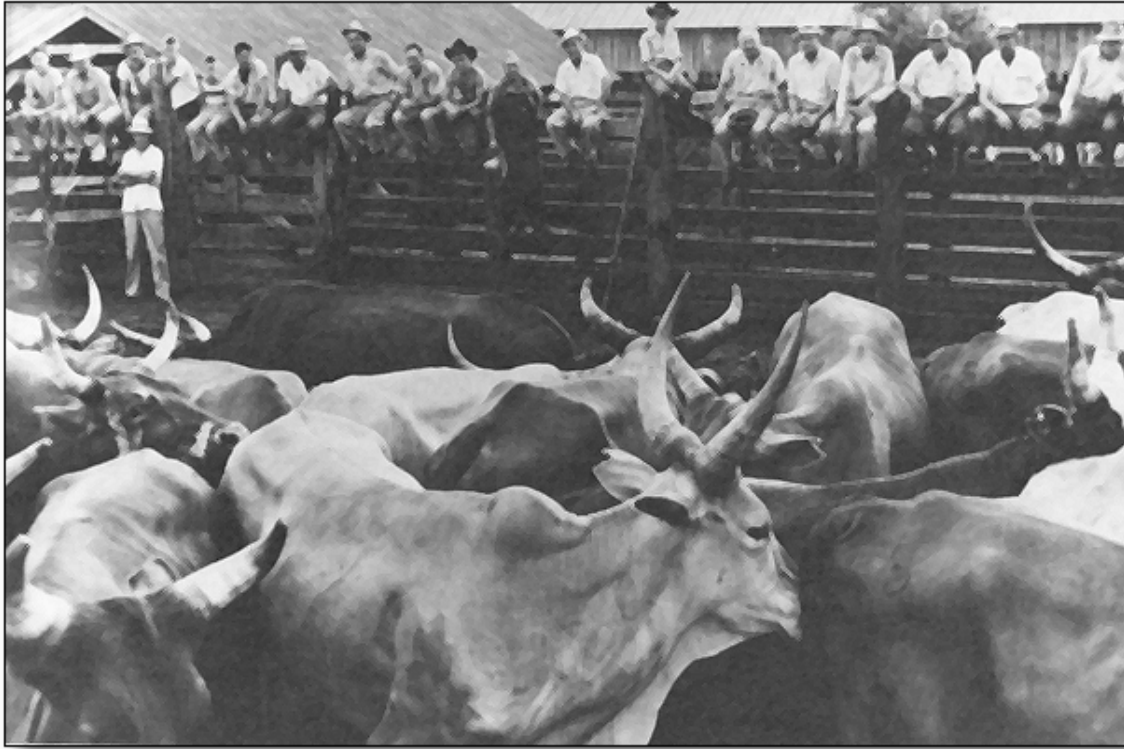


Early days roundup on the Ulmerton Ranch in 1929.

Photograph from the Starkey Family Scrapbook.

Originally, the turpentine and sawmill people came in to Florida and bought many millions of acres of land. They worked the timber for turpentine and naval stores. Then, they sawmilled it, and after sawmilling, they would not pay the taxes on it. In those days we had a state property tax, so it reverted to the state. There were many millions of acres of land in Florida that be longed to the state. One of the bigger land owners was the Consolidated Naval Stores Company in Jacksonville that at one time owned three million acres of land. In June of 1937, the legislature passed a bill known as the Murphy Act or House Bill 296. This bill allowed the original owners to advertise the property that they had owned and had reverted to the state. It would go up for bid at a certain date at the courthouse steps. The owner, the real owner, could go to the courthouse steps and bid that land at anything he wanted to bid. In most cases the property sold for the cost of advertisement, plus any amount bid. I know the naval stores company did a lot of that and a lot of many many other big landowners did, too. In the year 1938 they sold to Florida cattlemen, in round figures, a million acres of land, and the average price was \$1.50 an acre. A lot of it was much better ranch land that we bought. Some of it had a greater potential for timber than ours, but on the other hand, ours did have a potential for timber that turned out to be real good business for us. Remember when we bought the land there were no improvements. All the cleared land on the ranch has been cleared by us.

TBH: You mentioned the open range. What was it like to be riding on the open range in Pinellas County and Pasco County and part of Hillsborough County? For instance, how would you get from your ranch in Ulmerton to the area in Pasco?



Local cattlemen looking at thin C-S steers just sprayed for horn flies at Ulmerton, 1954.

Photograph from the Starkey Family Scrapbook.

JS: Well at the time the Ulmerton ranch was started in Pinellas County, the open range was about a thing of the past there. They still had open range in a good part of the state. Afterwards, certain counties enacted what was known as the No Fence Law and, finally, they made it No Fence Law statewide. No Fence Law means that the property owner did not have to fence cattle out. That came about probably the early 1940s. When we brought cattle to the Pasco ranch Christmas week, of '37, between Christmas and New Year's Day, we drove cattle from what is now Starkey Road through Pinellas and Pasco Counties. We drove them on highway part of the way, but mostly through the woods. Some places you'd bring them, you'd be on the highway awhile, but not with any large bunch of cattle; somewhere, I believe, in the neighborhood of 300 head. If you'd have had a real big bunch of cattle you'd have had more problems with traffic, but traffic was no problem in 1937 as compared to 1981.

TBH: *What kind of cattle did you have?*

JS: Well, all the cattle, most cattle in Florida, on ranches or in open range were originally native cattle that came here, brought here by the Spaniards 430 or 440 years ago. Over a long period of time they had been improved and crossbred with other kind of cattle. In the very late 1920s there were a good many Brahman cattle. Brahma bulls in particular

were imported to this state, and most of the range men had some Brahma breeding in their cattle. The fact was that the Brahma were more hearty, and could withstand more hard winters or more droughts, more floods, and more ticks in those days than any other pure bred cattle. Most of the cattle on ranches in south Florida in the late 1930s had a little bit of Brahma blood in them.

TBH: How many cattle did you have at the Pasco Ranch?

JS: We started out with about 150 or 160, and within the first year we probably had something over 600 head. And our present herd was built from that.

TBH: Did you slaughter them?

JS: No we sold ours. In those days we would keep a steer until he was probably three or four years old. We sold them to a slaughterhouse and occasionally we would sell cows that got considerable age on them and were in good shape. That was pretty much the way that other cattlemen in Florida operated in those days. That was before we had the quality calves that they have today that they sell as feeder steers to ship. They put them in the feed lot in Florida or ship them all over the United States. In the last 20 years, we sold calves that went from Georgia to California.

TBH: Did you encounter any particular problems in raising cattle? You've mentioned ticks.

JS: Of course, I have been working with cattle and owned cattle since I was nineteen years old. Of course all cattlemen have problems, but back in those days Texas fever ticks were something Florida cattle could live with but they were a detriment. At times, winter time or a bad year, a lot of ticks on a cow would help them kill her. Sometimes malnutrition and ticks worked together. When we went to Pasco, they had completed the eradication of Texas fever ticks in the state of Florida. The government and the state together started at the Alabama line and dipped all the cattle and horses in Florida from there to the Everglades. We did have a screwworm that was a terrible menace for a good many years. We got rid of those in the late 1950s. That was something we had to put up with. They've had them in Mexico for hundreds of years and still have them. At certain times of the year, they still have some problems with cattle and horses and transporting back and forth down to the Mexican border. That was the only menace that was really on a statewide basis, and everybody in the cattle business had that to contend with. The biggest problem we had with screwworms were in baby calves. If you did not find a calf and treat his naval cord with pinetar oil, or something before it got dry, the chances were that a fly would lay eggs there. They lay eggs on any warm blooded animal in open flesh or bloody areas. The screwworms would eat that calf up if we didn't find him in time. In the early 1930s, they had a terrible drought in the West, and the government shipped cattle from Texas into Florida and turned them over to the Seminole Indians. They brought a lot of screwworms, flies and eggs with them. They experimented a long while. I was chairman of the state livestock board for six years. They established a laboratory in an air base at Sebring and raised flies by the millions and treated those male flies with cobalt. They sterilized the male flies. Female flies breed one time, so out of airplanes all over the state

of Florida they dropped sterilized males in little boxes, and the box hit the ground and burst open. Those male flies mated with those female flies who laid eggs that were sterile.

TBH: What was a roundup like?

JS: Well, a roundup on a ranch that size was a small roundup as compared to many ranches in Florida. It would take us about four or five days to get all our cattle in and whatever we were going to do. In the spring, we would mark and brand the new calves, we would spray for horn flies which were a menace. Then along about June, if we had some cattle we wanted to sell and brand the calves that we had missed in the spring. We would have several fellows, friends of ours down in St. Petersburg, and different places around that like to ride, and like to camp, and we would go up there and camp. We had a cook and camped generally about three or four nights, or four or five days until we got through.

TBH: How many hours a day?

JS: I had a partner that had used an expression that pretty well covered it. In many cases we worked "from can to can't," meaning from the time that you can see to the time you can't see. That was the program a lot of cattlemen used in those days.

TBH: How many fellows did you have with you doing the roundup?

JS: Well we would have sometimes between eight or ten. In a good many cases, they were men friends of ours who liked to get out every so often and camp and ride. Back then we just had one man to start with that worked all the time. He and one or two of his boys and I always rode and maybe one or two men that worked for us down at Ulmerton we would take up there. The other fellows would be friends that wanted to ride.

TBH: When you first bought the land what was the wildlife like?

JS: Well, the wildlife in the middle 1930s would be quite different than it is now. As a matter of fact, in open range days and no fences, everybody hunted when they wanted and where they wanted. We got this property fenced in the winter of 1937 and '38, and the first turkey I saw was in August of 1943. We didn't see a deer until several years after that. After we fenced this property, turkeys began to do real well in this area. We fenced the first tract of land of any size between Highway 19 and Highway 41. Way back in the boom days there was about 5600 acres of land over in the Moon Lake area that was fenced. It was a game preserve, but that had been abandoned at this time. And there was a whole lot less game when we started than there is now. We made an agreement with the Freshwater Fish and Game Department a good many years ago where they came here and trapped, netted I should say, a good many turkeys and they brought us two deer for every turkey they took off. The hunting had been restricted to a great extent so that we have more game now than we did ten years ago.

TBH: Tell us a little something about the logging and sawmilling that used to go on around here.

JS: The original big tracts of land in south Florida were bought by a big sawmill company, a naval stores company. They turpentine the timber and usually built sawmills near railroads. Soon after the turn of the century, most of this timber through this country from here on back toward Tampa was sawed out by two mills. When we bought it the virgin timber had been cut. However, there was a good bit of timber that had grown a lot in twenty years, and there is still quite a bit of timber here. We have sold several million feet of lumber since 1937.

TBH: How did they get the logs from the areas around here to the sawmills?

JS: Well, of course, the big mills like those in Odessa near here and a lot of them in the state built what they call tram roads. The two big sawmills in the area were owned by the Lyon Pine Company in Odessa and the Dowling Company in the Lutz area of Hillsborough County. They had a little railroad, and they were built out across the woods. They would come right up, where the mill was. There were two tram roads that went through this property, one went pretty near due north and one northwest. In some places where there were a lot of swamps, they used lots of oxen to pull those logs out of the swamp. In some places, they used mules. They hauled these logs in there on these tram cars. They sawed that lumber, loaded the lumber on cars and shipped a world of it to St. Petersburg, down the Coast Line Railroad and loaded it on schooners at the end of the Coast Line Pier and that was shipped all over the world. Some of it may have gone to Jacksonville, some to Tampa. And most of the big mills were on the railroad. No use cutting a piece, cutting a lot of timber way out in the country somewhere and can't get it to a market, so they build them on the railroad. And those mills cut the timber and were out of business long before the purchase. Now, we bought it in '37 and I'm not sure of the year but it was in the middle '50s we sold a good bit of timber. And the man we sold it to had a sawmill at Palm Harbor and they trucked those logs from here to Palm Harbor. However, before he finished, he had what they call a portable sawmill, which used to be common all over Florida, a little mill that they'd set up out in the woods and where they wouldn't have to pull the log or haul a log maybe half a mile to a mile. When they cut that out they'd move the mill somewhere else instead of hauling a log five miles they'd move the mill two or three times and that's the only kind of mill that's been on our property since we had it. And they had three different locations, I think, while they were there, but most of the logs they trucked out.

TBH: How much did you get involved in timber business?

JS: On the way home after originally looking at the Pasco land on Sunday. Howard and Ernest Cunningham and I made a forecast that in ten years we could sell the timber and pay for the land. At that time, timber was about three or four dollars a thousand board feet. It took a lot of timber to make a thousand and of course the virgin timber was cut soon after the turn of the century. A lot of timber had grown since then and there had been a lot of it stolen off the property before we got it. We have sold a lot of timber since

we have owned it. The timber grows fast and in that many years you have a good growth of timber. We always practiced control burning. You can't keep a piece of land without burning it at all, because you'll get a fire sometime.

TBH: What kind of trees did you cut down?

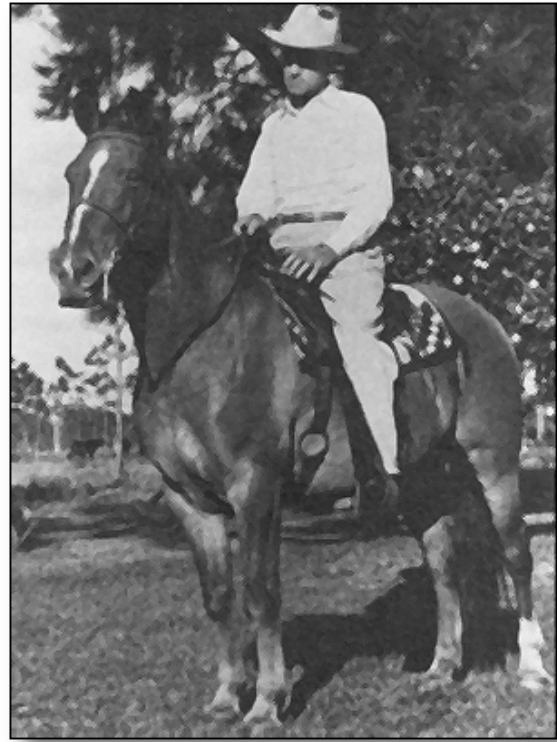
JS: The main timber in most parts of south Florida was either long leaf yellow pine or slash pine. Around acres of swamp on low ground, most of the timber is slash; on higher ground, it's long leaf. Of course on our place, we had a good bit of cypress. The main timber in most areas is pine.

TBH: What was it like to camp up here on the property?

JS: Well, different people camped, I understood before we bought the property, when it was open, at certain times of the year there was a lot of fishing up here in the Anclote River. Up in the northwest area there's a place that's called Grass Lake, it's probably an eighty or ninety acre lake. It got its name because grass covered most of it. There's just a few big open holes in it. When the people came up from Largo, Clearwater, St. Petersburg, or Tampa, they came by automobile or truck. Back before that they came in horse and wagon and some of them may have had tents. Probably most of them just had a lean-to. Water was plentiful, and you used water wherever you camped whether it was a lake or a river, pond or creek.

When we bought the property, people were traveling by automobiles and trucks at that time. I know a man at Safety Harbor that was raised there that used to come up in this country a little east of here about four miles. He came every year deer hunting, that was a good many years before we owned it. Of course in those days you came for two or three days. They came driving a couple of horses hooked to a wagon and when they put up their camp they'd take those horses and put saddles on them and ride them following their dogs. After we bought the property and fenced it, that pretty well eliminated camping. We let people, oldtimers that we knew, who had a good reputation, come in and fish, but they did not do any hunting except quail hunting for several years.

TBH: What kind of fish?



J.B. Starkey, Sr., on his horse, Senator, in 1949.

Photograph from the Starkey Family Scrapbook.

JS: Mostly large mouth bass, perch, bream, in the river. Very few speckled perch were caught in this area, I understand. In the river there were the trash fish, mostly gar fish. There were a lot of those at one time.

TBH: *What did you do, when you were up there and not working, what did you do for entertainment? Was it real isolated?*

JS: Well, my entertainment was not hard to come up with. If I could saddle up a horse in the morning and start riding, I had all the entertainment I wanted. If I was working with cattle in the spring of the year, checking them for baby calves and screw worms or just riding. You could saddle a horse every day for fifty years and start out tomorrow morning and something new would happen to you. Something may happen today that you never saw happen before. That's the thing about a cowman's life in the woods or on the ranch that does not happen in too many other lines of business. But to answer your question about entertainment, that's all the entertainment I ever needed. There were other fellows who might have had to have a little more entertainment, but that satisfied me.

TBH: *How much contact did you have with the surrounding communities?*

JS: Well, of course, at Odessa, at that time the sawmill was closed up and most everybody had gone out. After the mills closed, I think in the twenties a lot of citrus was planted up there and there was just a few families living in the Odessa area. Mr. Anderson was one of them; he worked for us. They still had a post office there. The post office was right on the railroad line, the railroad was the main line from Jacksonville to St. Petersburg. And the postmaster had a little store there, a little commissary, they sold a few groceries. And we gradually got acquainted with the community on south of there, down at the edge of Hillsborough. There were a good many groves and good many people lived there, grove people mostly. Some of them might live out there on a lake and work in Tampa; but I know around Seven Springs two or three old families. Mr. Del Clark lived there, his family was one of the oldest families in that country. His grandfather was Mr. Jim Clark who was one of the old time cow men, used to ride with us back after he retired just for the pleasure he got out of it. And the man over there that worked for the sawmill people many years, Mr. Jim Bosley; he's an old timer who ran the locomotive that pulled the logs out of the woods to those sawmills.

TBH: *In 1974, there was an article in the St. Petersburg Times, which said, that you had a genuine love for the land. How do you think you got that way?*

JS: Well, I do not know, that's something I think you don't develop, you inherit it, I suppose. I was raised in St. Petersburg and just always loved to be in the woods. When I was a kid I used to walk clear out around Sawgrass Lake. It's just something I inherited, I guess. There are some things that you acquire, some things you study, and some things you learn about, but when it comes to nature and loving nature, I think you inherit that or you don't inherit it. A friend of mine was talking to me a year or two ago, and I told him I was probably the only man he ever knew who did not make any progress in eighty years.

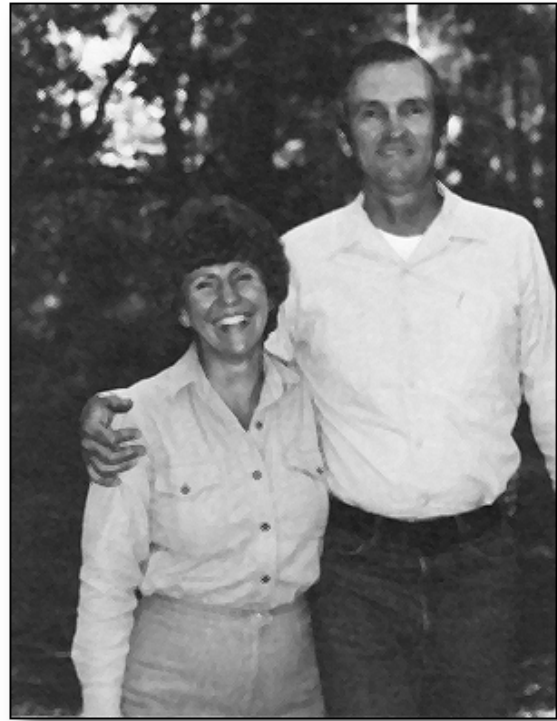
He said; “What do you mean?” I said; “When I was five years old, I wanted to be a cowboy, and I’m eighty-five and still want to be a cowboy.”

TBH: Why did you sell the Pasco land to the Southwest Florida Water Management District?

JS: Pasco County, as you well know, and west Pasco in particular, are growing awful fast and conditions are changing fast. You can’t have development without having to have improvements and improvements have to be paid for with taxes. I realized that the days of a ranch in West Pasco County probably was like it was in Pinellas County when I moved up here, days were somewhat limited. I wanted to have a place in this area that could remain in its natural state as much as it was at that time, at least. I had made an offer to the state a number of years before whereby I would give them some land and sell them some, provided they would keep it as a wilderness park. Two or three different committees came here and looked at it; I had in mind at that time about four sections up in the northwest area. They were interested, but they really were looking for land on the water. I couldn’t blame them for that. They wanted it on a big river, a lake, ocean or gulf. I was talking one time to Mr. Dale Twachman, the executive director of the Water Management District at that time and told him what I’d done. He said: “Mr. Starkey you know the district owns a lot of land. Maybe they might be interested in something of that kind.” In due time, they looked at it and I made them an offer whereby I’d give them some acres of land, and sell them so much providing they allowed me to put in the deed that it could not be developed. It would have to be used for water only such as wells, reservoirs, dams, and lakes, and kept in its natural state and used as a wilderness park. They agreed to do that.

TBH: It’s going to be used as a wilderness park and there are going to be many people coming through and looking at it and enjoying it. What would you say to the future generations, particularly the young people as they come and look at the place, what would you want them to know about it?

JS: I think it would be nice for them to go to a place that looks similar to what it did when the pioneers came to this state. The virgin timber has been taken off. However, it grows back pretty fast. The timber is not as big, but it is the same kind of timber. The same kind of pine, cypress, bay, and various kinds of hardwood that were here a hundred years ago. I



J.B. Starkey, Jr., and his wife, Marsha.

Photograph courtesy of J.B. Starkey, Jr.

think it ought to be a place where children can go and see what the state looked like a long while ago. The state of Florida has a good bit of that kind of land, and there's a lot more of it out West, but in an area that's thickly populated as the Tampa Bay area is, some people are not able to go any great distance. A man can take his children most anywhere in the Tampa Bay area and in a short time he could be on this property. Future generations could know something about what it looked like. I think a good many people are interested in what it was like when the pioneers came here. When I was a kid the whole country was open. If you wanted to go camping you just took your pack and camped where you wanted to. Of course those days are pretty well gone; the state of Florida is mostly fenced now. In those days there was no fences. And I just felt like there were a lot of people, and children coming along that couldn't visualize what the country was like unless there was some of it left.

TBH: Now we're going to talk with your son, Jay B. Starkey, Jr. Mr. Starkey can you give us some of your early boyhood memories about being up there on the ranch, anything that stands out in your mind?

JS, Jr: Well, the first memory I have of the ranch was while we lived on Starkey Road near Largo. We would come up here and fish and camp. I remember catching my first fish in the Anclote River on a piece of fried chicken skin. I was five or six years old at the time. My grandmother Starkey was with us.

TBH: Besides fishing, what else did you do as a young boy?

JS, Jr: Well as I got a little older, I would participate in the roundup which we had two or three times a year. The big roundup was usually in June. We would come up with the older men and camp here in the bunk house for a week. We would ride horses, round up the cattle, brand and mark the calves, work the pens and we usually got in some fishing along with that, too.

TBH: Could you tell us what it was like to have been in a roundup, to be a cowboy?

JS, Jr: Well, there was a lot of excitement. Of course, being a kid among all the men was a thrill. There was a lot of joking that went on and everybody seemed to have a lot of fun. Most of the men who helped with the roundup were doing it because they enjoyed it. We had a lot of fun times and a lot of hard work too. I remember riding horseback and being so tired and sore when I got home, getting caught in the rain, being hot and being cold and drinking water right out of a puddle out in the middle of the woods knowing there was nothing to pollute it and taking a drink out of the river and not worrying about it. I'd be afraid to do that now.

TBH: You run the ranch now. What is it like to operate a ranch like this?

JS, Jr: An awful lot different than it was in those days. Then we had probably 1100 head of cattle of all ages on the whole ranch and very few acres of improved pasture. Now we have over 2600 acres of improved acres and about 600 acres of that is irrigated. We have

around 2500 head of cattle, and so it's a lot more intensified operation and requires a lot more knowledge of breeding and fertilization, and management. There is just a lot more involved to it. It is more time consuming than it was in the old days.

TBH: Have there been big changes in the land itself since you remember it back in the late 30s early 40s?

JS, Jr: Of the things I do notice the most is it's dry. There's not as much water as there was in those days. The ponds do not stay as wet. I guess the droughts we've had for the past years have helped cause that. Lakes we used to get fish in have dried up. The river has gotten lower than it used to. On the other hand, the trees are bigger, the ecology, the plant community seems to be changing. Our palmettos are bigger and the woods are just getting rougher and more dense than they were when I was a kid. That's changed the wildlife too. We have an abundance of deer and turkey now which we did not have in those days, even when there were fewer people here. There was less game than there is now.

TBH: How would you contrast your life today with your father's life back in the days of the open ranges?

JS, Jr: Well it's like everybody else's life. Everybody's life has changed over the last fifty years. We don't think of it much, but there's no doubt that work and living conditions are a lot easier now in many ways than they were in those days. Of course, they are attendant with the pressures and the hustle of modern life. It's easier in some ways and it's probably harder in other ways.

TBH: How is it harder?

JS, Jr: Well, I think there's more pressure to make decisions on a year-round basis. For example, what kind of winter program you are going to be using for your cow herds and fertilization and breeding programs and things that have long-range consequences. It has become more intensified and the decisions have more importance. They can make you or break you a lot faster. There's more money at stake. We are using more fertilizer and buying more feed and things like that.



Seepage Irrigation Ditches following contour lines on the C-S Ranch, 1958.

Photograph from the Starkey Family Scrapbook.

TBH: Are things more mechanized?

JR, Jr: Yes we have, we try to keep our equipment at a minimum, but we have to have equipment to operate and that means more maintenance.

TBH: Is there any one thing that your father gave you that you are most pleased about?

JS, Jr: Well I like to think that I would have the integrity that he has. I think the respect for the land and for our heritage and people that have gone before us are traits that are good and I am proud to have them. I have learned them from him.

TBH: Do you think it is more difficult or the same to instill that in your children as it was for your father and mother to instill that in you?

JS, Jr: It seems like it is more difficult. Only time will tell that. Kids raised on a farm or on a ranch face the pressures that I wasn't faced with, certainly my father was not. The world is changing socially in a lot of ways and we feel the effect of these pressures.

Frank Starkey is J. B. Starkey, Sr.'s grandson.

TBH: Frank, what do you like most about living up here on the ranch?

FS: The freedom to move around. Sometimes I get tired because there's not many people around and it sometimes gets boring, but when I go to other people's houses I really see the freedom I have. I am really thankful for it.

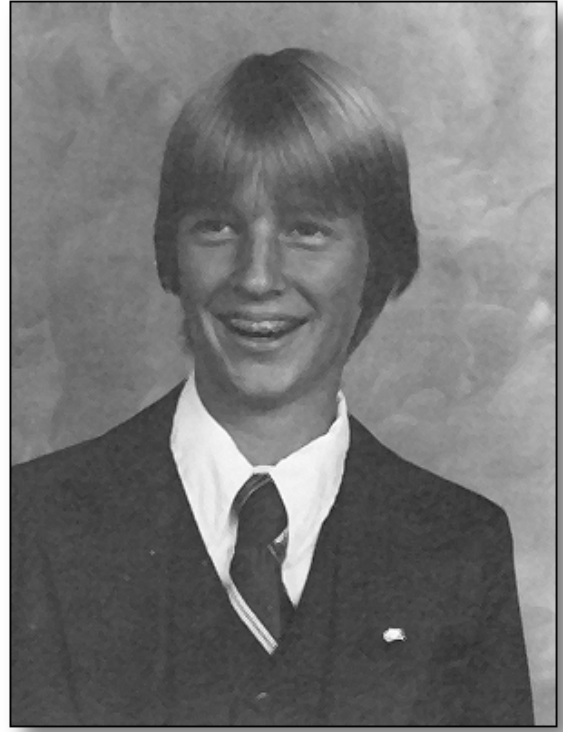
TBH: Is it hard work for you up here? Do your folks make you do a lot of chores, being on a ranch like this?

FS: Not for the ranch. In the house, and I have to feed my calves.

TBH: You have your own calves?

FS: Yes, I have two of them. Their names are Topsy and Turvy.

TBH: None of your friends have their own calves?



Frank Starkey.

Photography courtesy of J.B. Starkey, Jr.

FS: No. One of them, Topsy, is named after my grandfather's first calf.

TBH: What other kinds of things do you do up here, besides just walking around?

FS: Well, I have a cable slide and a swing, and my father has an ATC, a three wheel motorcycle, and I ride that a lot.

TBH: Do you have horses?

FS: Yeah, but nobody rides them.

TBH: Nobody rides them?

FS: I don't ride them. Nobody in my family rides them.

TBH: You don't ride the horses anymore? What do you think your grandfather did before they had motorcycles and ATC's and . . . Do you think you would like to live back in his days, when he was growing up, about your age?

FS: Yes and no.

TBH: Why yes and why no?

FS: Yes, because I like it without all the cars and all the development. The development is driving me crazy. They are just growing up around us. They're just growing up like weeds everywhere, subdivisions everywhere. And I'd like to not have that. And too, I wouldn't because there was a lot of hard work back then.

TBH: Like what do you think was hard about it?

FS: A lot of things. They didn't use electricity quite as much as it is used today. There was a lot more things done by hand, manually and a lot of hard work.

TBH: Do you think the idea of being a cowboy like your grandpa is appealing to you?

FS: Yeah. I would like to ride horses a lot more. I have not had that good an experience with horses, but I'd like to ride them.

TBH: What do you think you've learned from your grandfather? What do you think he taught you?

FS: A respect for the ranch and for nature, and for keeping it like it is.

TBH: And your father, what do you think you've learned from him?

FS: The same thing.

TBH: There are going to be a lot of twelve year olds who are going to come by the wilderness park one day who grew up in cities and don't know anything about this. What would you want them to know? What message would you give them as a twelve year old to a twelve year old?

FS: I'd just like them to respect whatever natural land they do have and that they come across in the park or some other park that has been kept natural. I would like them to realize that it's God's creation, and that they should really take care of it because there's no more nature once it's all developed. You can't plant trees and make it all like it was. I'd like them to take care of it.

THE SUNCOAST VIEWED THROUGH GERMAN EYES

Introduction and Translation by Georg H. Kleine

In her travel book, Annie Francé-Harrar, a German woman, presented a description of boom and bust Florida. To Francé-Harrar Florida held not only the fascination of a uniquely enchanting tropical paradise but also contained the key to the salvation of Germanic man. The wife of a famous biologist, his companion on world travels, and the author of numerous fictional and non-fictional works, she found Florida superior to lands like Hawaii, California and Egypt. Typical of the educated European of her generation, she perceived a crisis of the white man in the twentieth century. Sensitive to the decline of Germany's global significance in the wake of the First World War, she refused to renounce her "race's" claim to supremacy. Francé-Harrar looked for bold alternatives to safeguard civilization as she cherished it. This emissary from a Germany deeply infected by various shades of racism found the "colored peoples" picturesque and charming, yet lacking in vitality, the sense of mission and destiny. According to her, the Latins and blacks in Florida, whom she perceived as wild, romantic children of the tropics, would have to make room for the pioneers of the white "Northern" race. She thought the future of the state would be neither Cuban nor African. As Spain had failed to keep pace with the modern, industrialized nations, its quaint culture was left to linger on as the exotic backdrop to the superior Anglo-American civilization. Slavery was condemned harshly by Francé-Harrar, but from her cultural bias she expected that blacks, with "their humble servility beaten into them for generations," would continue to hold their place at the bottom of the economy.

Florida was to this daughter of a Siberian painter the symbol of the white race's last chance to claim its inheritance in the warm climates. Settlement in the "eternally wintry foglands" of Northern Europe had been a fundamental mistake, because it fostered melancholy and suffering. In Florida, white Americans were proving that they could organize a tropical heaven, without the ugly side-effects of colonialism, and create an affordable, healthy, civilized garden of human fulfillment. This paternalistic view ignored the plight of the working class. Nevertheless, it is interesting to take notice of Francé-Harrar as another writer in the long row of those who thought they had discovered what in her case was a *collective* "Fountain of Youth."

Francé-Harrar's writing style is difficult to capture in translation. It frequently matches in its hyperbole the extravagance of the ideas. The imagery is bold and very personal, one reason to restrict the excerpt to certain descriptive parts and exclude much of the reflective comments.

Annie Francé-Haffar*

In Tarpon Springs, the sponge market and sponge fishing last three months at a time. This pretty little (small only according to American standards) Tarpon Springs owes its name to the tarpon, the famous sport fish of the South. To catch this lively, strong king of the herrings, often

* Florida. *Das Land des Uberflusses*, [The Land of Superabundance], Berlin-Schoneberg: Peter J. Oestergaard Verlag, 1931.

more than two meters long, takes literally a wrestling match between man and fish every time. The place has an enchanting, small, quiet and dreamlike bay, only a mile away from the banks of the Gulf. There you can see the yellow and red Latin sails move in and out, and the men wearing Spartan red caps and Greek garb, as if this Tarpon Springs was a piece of Greece, blown across the ocean. They are Greek by descent, and they have emigrated to Florida to continue their fathers' age-old trade.

The sponges, said to be among the biggest in the world, if not the biggest anywhere, are growing tongue-like on the reefs, and are being brought up from depths of 150 feet. The transparent warm water facilitates diving, and they say that diving for sponges, if it is not "big business," represents an income not to be sneezed at.

On deck, the sea creatures, filled with sand, are being carved up, rinsed and rinsed again, until they are clean and smooth and usable. The lagoon seems to be inexhaustible, and equally inexhaustible the Greek people which reproduces itself all around, probably much happier and more content than in the homeland. Because, on closer look, it appears that what is viable what is binding about the homeland they have brought with them. Their black-eyed women prepare for them the same onion dishes: the shape of their boats, the practice of their trade, their language, costumes, and daily customs, are derived from the homeland. So firmly rooted is this piece of Greece in America that its residents do not even dream of returning. And there is hardly a lovelier, a more sun-blest coast than the lagoon country of Tampa, Clearwater and Tarpon Springs. Sure, the Greek island mountains are missing, and so is the snowy, rosy shadow of Mount Olympus which, naked like a mountain of the moon, glances down on ravaged and forgotten antiquity. But down there on the Gulf of Mexico, they have, instead, the whole wealth of tropical fruits, and they do not have to eat tough goat meat, leek and salted olives all the time. Only a fool doesn't think the exchange is for the better and longs to return back to the restless poverty of the homeland.

The Gulf Stream is here, it too, the mediator of life, and Florida, the coast of which it embraces as tenderly as no other, showering gifts upon her. Florida is its favored child, and will be that even more once she becomes fully aware of it.

II

During the early 1920s, there was in the Port Tampa a very big shoal, a partly submerged sand island which didn't serve any useful purpose, but was utterly hated by all skippers. A certain Mr. [D. P.] Davis . . . pumped a new island out of the water and wanted to create a paradise on it, a genuinely American paradise with fragrant gardens, swimming pools, fabulous lighting effects, gigantic hotels, with clubs, bungalows, music halls, and all kinds of super-luxury. (The hotels were all conceived of in a Moorish-bombastic style, similar to that of the Tampa Bay Hotel which extends a forest of conical spires further inland, at the mouth of the Hillsborough River.) Where a few pitiful mangroves were protecting ever new larvae of mosquitoes, there the most beautiful, enchanting, healthy, recreational beach of the United States was supposed to arise: something never before seen, marvelous golf courses, dance floors, colorfully gleaming, nightly fountains – a dream as probably only a billionaire can dream it. His friends tried to dissuade him.

The city of Tampa itself was hardly inclined to build a new, large state bridge that was supposed to establish a link between mainland and island.

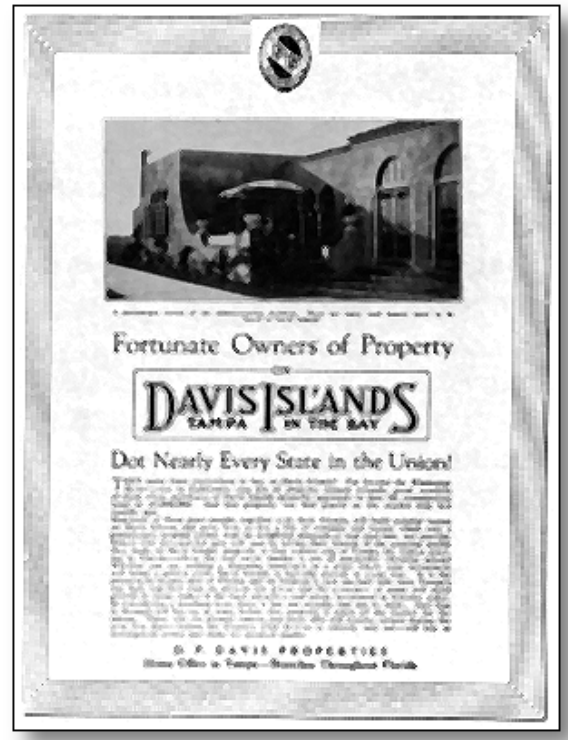
But have you ever seen a stubborn Yankee give up voluntarily something he really wanted to do? Mr. Davis invited public subscription for Davis Island. In October 1924, his offices were taken by storm. People stood there literally for hours with money in their hands, the way we lined up during the war [World War I] for a quarter-pound of butter or an egg. Thirty hours after opening three million dollars was available. At that time not a finger was being lifted to drain Davis Island. Still the light green shelf water moved in and out with the tide, pulling and washing, and the small harbour steamers' keels scratched sponges and lime algae off the bottom. Land and water had remained unchanged since the coast of Florida had risen from the warm surface of the Gulf of Mexico.

Eight months later there was a Davis Island, and on it dozens of winter villas, tennis courts, hotels and enchanting pavilions. A wide, paved street had been constructed through the new island. Gardens were already blossoming, birds arrived, cars rolled, the people had discovered a piece of new territory, and, unconsciously greedily, hurled themselves on it. A year after opening day, the last one thousand acres of the new island were released for public sale. People then saw in Davis Island an investment of such importance that within 24 hours checks totaling over twenty million dollars came in. Anybody who could possibly swing it tried to secure a little piece of land for himself. And since many more people did this than there was land to distribute, eight million dollars had to be returned to their disappointed and enraged senders. Not everyone could be accommodated even with the best of intentions.

When the big Florida boom began to ease up in 1925, and came to a standstill rather abruptly, the feverish activity on Davis Island stopped violently. The first wave of land seekers had been satisfied.

III

You should properly ask: which Tampa? The American or the Spanish, the port section or the Negro town? The Yankees, of course, prefer the American. To date, they don't think too much of the port, a gigantic, widespread facility with its own big phosphate quay. It is left over from Spanish times, they say, and one would finally have to start modernizing it. For that, they have



**Advertisement for Davis Islands from
Suniland, April 1925.**

Photograph courtesy of the University of South
Florida Library, Special Collections.

proposed a mere twenty-five million dollars. However, it remains to be seen whether the world economic crisis will not delay the whole project a bit.

Some 2,874 steamers called port at Tampa in 1929. Again to be quite specific: the American Tampa. For it is a big commercial and industrial city only on the side, with its 120,000 inhabitants, spa, and winter resort. It's as irregular as any city in the USA that grows up abruptly. Wide streets, the houses divided by "blocks," quarter to quarter, jingling with the shrill ringing of the traffic lights. Rough telegraph poles carry the weight of countless wires and are placed recklessly in the middle of the sidewalk. The Bay Shore out there on the Gulf [sic] looks just as enticingly elegant and enchantingly comfortable as all villa streets along the Florida coast. The Hillsborough Hotel and the Floridan Hotel and a few others represent the same distinguished luxurious inns one has become used to in all of America. They are skyscrapers, sixteen, eighteen stories high. In each room there is, of course, a well-screened, giant window, open day and night, but covered with thin mosquito wire, the kind one finds at all openings of a house, frequently around complete large verandas and gardens. And it's all well-cooled with ice water in special pipes. Eager black boys are everywhere at hand.

Esteemed reader, you know of copper-silver, once so famous chandeliers, sinks, plates made from this combination look at first – you could swear on it – like most real silver. But after some usage, a fiery glow comes through the white, gets redder and redder. For they have plated a thin layer of silver over a block of copper. And that's what now comes to the surface in shining embarrassment.

Tampa, well, that's another copper-silver, implying that the silver represents the 100% Yankee. I know that they don't like investigations of this kind so much over there. Never mind, you have to form an idea how such a southernmost city, a kind of Spanish-American West Indies, is composed in terms of population. The Italians living in Tampa say they are a people of 25,000; the Spanish are even talking of 30,000. How big is the black city, located on the site of a former Indian, maybe even Aztec village? That you don't hear anything about, and there is no information available to the public. But there are 10,000 souls for sure, probably more. Add to that the Cubans, who strut along with striped pants, with hats adorned with bells and tassels like real caballeros, even though they are almost exclusively cigar workers. The rest which then remains, those, to be sure, are incontestable American descendants.

In forty-eight factories they manufacture the certified, genuine "Habana cigars" which even belonged among the private supply of the Spanish king. The tobacco comes from Cuba, the colored hands that roll it come from Cuba. But all over the country the advertisements nevertheless scream: "Won't you have a Tampa cigar?" And next to it you find, beside the Spanish names, those famous German ones: Regensburger, Schwab, Sommerfeld, Upmann as companies of good repute.

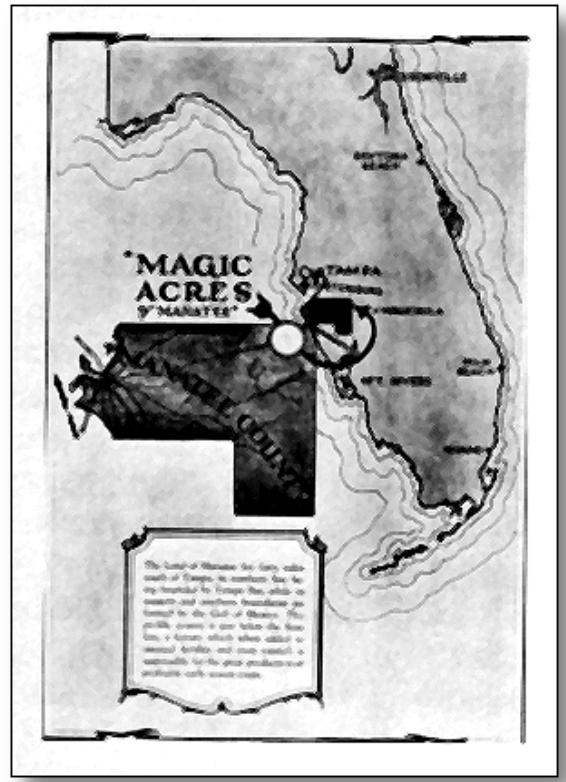
Tampa is hot, hot and humid. That's why it is popular to go to Chicago during vacation time, or at least send wives and children there. Thirty-six degrees Celsius [96.8 degrees Fahrenheit] maximum temperature is no joke. To suffer through that year after year is not easy for the white skin. But the Romance and the mixed blood in colored town flourishes on it, just like the palm trees and the lianas in the gardens, and on the filthy refuse dumps, where castor oil plants pro-

liferate, in trees tall as a man. Thirty thousand boxes of oranges are being shipped annually from here. They come from nearby Manatee County. But for 100,000 winter tourists accommodations are also available, cheap, expensive, very expensive, depending on the demand.

Yet the strangest, the most interesting of this “Spanish-India” is “East Broadway”, the gigantic commercial street that runs across the colored town, “Ybor City”, at all hours boundlessly over-crowded. What a colorful, screaming, shrill and turbulent world! Spanish and Cuban women and cats – both equally beautiful, equally exotic. One finds silken dresses, crudely brilliant, like Chinese lanterns, stores with bridal outfits, stared at by burning black eyes. On signs you can read that this smoking jacket, this white satin dress, this veil of lace, this pair of underpants, . . . and these incredibly baby-sized and high heeled taffeta shoes belong to some typical bridal pair, and that they intend to wear all these beautiful things (all the way down to the most intimate) on their future wedding day. A wedding in this “Madrid of America” means exactly as much as in the real European Spain, a significant part of a woman's life. Once there were bullfights, too, introduced by, as is reported, . . . [Martinez] Ybor who is said to be the city's founder. They have been abolished, however. In reponse to the thundering protests of the Anglo Americans, the bullfights were finally prohibited. The “Centro Asturiano” (it looks as genuine as if it had been transported by a spell from Habana across the sea) is frequented by the most distinguished Spanish-Cuban families.

A hundred, a thousand balconies are hanging like a back-cloth of stalactites into the street. There are donkey carts, cars (heavens, what cars!), high-heeled shoes, parasols, tinted skin in all shades, from the precious parchment-pale to tar-black. Smells of beef quarters, fish, fruits, tobacco, dust, children, onions, fruit juices, and gasoline, are crammed into a veritable narrow ghetto, rich with life's smells. What a care-free, hot fire of existence, what gaiety, what unconditional enjoyment of the day, what firm belief in man's self-confidence, even if he's only a poor devil, cutting tobacco, loading orange crates, rolling cigars day in, day out. Yes, that's what has come of the Spanish conquerors of the world! But the spirit, the sacred conviction of being God's chosen people has stayed with them, today as then!

The midwinter celebration of the great pirate Gasparillo's [sic] festival, is enjoyed all along the coast up to New Orleans. A private ship sails into the city which can't defend itself against the



Advertisement for the Magic Acres of Manatee from *Suniland*, January 1926.

Photograph courtesy of the University of South Florida Library, Special Collections.

invasion and has to hand the keys to the disembarking pirates. There is a parade, commotion, then subjugation by the invader. A Gasparilla puppet is dangled off the pirate vessel's highest mast, amidst roars, ridicule, and women's jeers. These are part of the tradition immortalized in the colonial history of this fervent, exuberant Gulf of Mexico.

**Advertisement for the Adams Boat Line
from *Suniland*, February 1925.**

Photograph courtesy of the University of South
Florida Library, Special Collections.

The admirable hospitals, the county courthouse, civilization are all over there on the Yankee side, and so is the country club which is designed in such a fashion that one can open the ceiling by pushing a spring, and eat and dance in the banquet halls under the enchantingly beautiful starry skies of the south.

The future of Tampa? As long as there is world trade, there will be a need here for a commercial gateway. But one thing is unlikely, that it will always be so Spanish-Cuban, of such wild, unbroken romanticism as it is today. Already St. Petersburg, Sarasota, Clearwater, all the beautiful winter resorts around, are infinitely more American.

IV

In the turpentine forest, in the white sand, there begins a square of asphalt streets, a young coconut planting, a banana field with a few wooden shacks, a few Mexican houses, the customary water tank (a huge metal egg, several meters high up on its iron support), then a large garage and pump station, a tiny hotel. A sign: "Naples-sur-Golf will arise here." For 10,000 people they have built a sewage system here, they offer lots and living space. They are not yet here, those ten-thousand. But nobody doubts that they will come, slowly, like percolating water, or roaring like a storm. For the time being, however, there are miles of mangrove swamp around the clearing for the city. For we are at the Gulf of Mexico, we have left Fort Myers this morning. Delightful beyond all comprehension, it has also once been one of these non-existent "Naples-sur-Golf," while today it has already more than 4,000 permanent residents, not even counting Ford and Edison who reside on their properties big as duchies.

That's how cities come into existence in Florida.

People don't ponder much here. They think that this is a nice place. Why not build a city here? With a pumping station and a motel it usually begins. They are distributed over the whole highway system. But nothing is left to chance. From the first day, there is a veritable street map, according to which "blocks" are set up and on which houses will later be put. Sometimes such settlements don't make it beyond the early stages. They are a wretchedly small, forgotten "Paris" or "Venice" through which one travels somewhere on the way [out] of Tampa. But sometimes they get big, they blossom, and snatch people like a mighty vacuum cleaner.

Other cities have a much more curious sponsorship. There is Sarasota, today one of the most beautiful and most-visited resorts on the Gulf coast. It was not at all in existence, it was simply "made" by the Barnum and Bailey Circus (duly gazed at in astonishment in Germany and



Parade coming up Main Street in 1922, Sarasota, Florida.

Photograph courtesy of the Sarasota County Historical Archives.

elsewhere), or to be specific, by its owners, the “Ringling Brothers.” The millions they derived from the thumping sensations of their enterprise they invested in real estate speculations in Florida which were obviously no less impressive than the colossal advertisements which enveloped their giant circus like an iridescent cloud. John Ringling built the one hundred miles of highway across a number of keys into Sarasota, created a harbour, and the bay on the Manatee River. Previously there had really been nothing but sand and swamp. His brother Charles set up shiny hotels, the foremost being the immensely expensive Ritz Carlton which is part of a whole chain of similar enterprises.

It’s a very special matter right from the beginning with these kinds of “Naples-sur-Golf.” It’s possible, especially with the present world economic crisis, that the establishment of these cities may here and there turn out to be premature and at first impractical. But once they are over their first growth problems, their course is no longer endangered. At first, they will develop into a Fort Myers, as Ocala, or any such 2,000-4,000 resident city which from the very beginning is geared towards much more expanded tourism. They do everything to please their guests. They put up big “welcome” signs by the highway, as I saw it near the tiny hamlet of Kissimmee near Orlando. And the residents display an amazing degree of self-sacrificing devotion when it comes to “beautifying” their town. All the public libraries, parks, music halls, churches are nearly always donations by an individual for the general public. One really doesn’t do justice to the Yankees when one denies their sense for a special type of romanticism. Otherwise, they wouldn’t put cities into the wilderness, and create true paradises from perilous swamps. True, American infatuation with numbers and bigness is not a salutary trait. But everything over there is so

marvelously widespread, possesses such a youthful vigor, even the making of money. Otherwise nobody would probably ever have the idea to build the many “Naples-sur-Golf.” The way things are today in Florida, that would definitely be a shame. For on the big scale of balance between nature and man, man still weighs in with too little.

V

Among other things, the southern states differ from northern ones in that the separation between the “black town” and the other parts is not sharply drawn. In Tampa, the Negro city proper simply spills over into Ybor City, the Spanish-Cuban part. No Americans live here, to be sure, but Spaniards, Italians, Cubans, and the mixed bloods that have mingled between these peoples, and that is without exception “colored” to the true Yankee. Also, there still live old colored people who, born as slaves, hold on to the former tradition. The women still walk around in the once prescribed costume: a long, wide-pleated cotton dress with a narrow waist, white stockings, cut-out flat shoes, a small, crudely colored scarf, and a little bonnet on the head. A whiff of old-fashioned respectability and modesty is still with them like a faded lavender scent. One could well imagine that the tragic idyll of bondage forced upon them begins once more this very hour, as they shuffle to the door of their “cabin”

FUNERAL HOME RECORDS AND THEIR VALUE IN GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH, PART I

by Denise Kelley & Randy Bobbitt

Few detective novels would be complete without a description of the hero or heroine poking around a cemetery in search of clues to a mystery. If you decide to unravel mysteries of your own, such as those encountered in writing your family history, you will probably poke around a few cemeteries and many other places. Funeral homes are one of many locations genealogists find helpful in conducting a search.

Tracing your family history involves discovering information about your ancestors from many sources. The goal is to find records that give information to identify specific relatives and certify a family relationship.

Primary sources that document family relationships include civil records from such government offices such as those of the Clerk of Court or the Health Department. The office responsible for these records will need certain information to conduct a search. The full name of the relative, date of the vital event, place where the event occurred, your relationship and purpose for needing the information will be the main considerations of the official who will determine if a search can be conducted.

Requirements vary as to how specific the information must be before an agency will conduct a search. In Florida, a search can be costly if you cannot provide the State Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services Office with a specific date. You will be charged a fee for each five years searched.

Funeral home records can provide help in two ways. First, specific dates from funeral home records can be used in meeting the information request criteria of government offices. Second, funeral home records can be used in lieu of government records when responses to requests for information indicate no record exists at a public agency. Funeral home information can provide leads to other sources of information such as cemetery records and markers, obituaries, and church records. Often these sources give additional information about the ancestor you are searching and also about other family members, thus adding more to the picture you are composing of your family genealogy.

Florida funeral home records date back to the late 1800s in some instances. Records may be retained by the original owner after the sale of a business. If not, the records may be maintained by successive owners. Funeral home information is more complete after the 1930s and 1940s in Florida.

Use the same guidelines when corresponding with funeral home directors as those previously mentioned when writing to government bureaus. Write in simple language and be specific. Contact the public library for telephone directories of the locality in which the relatives's death occurred or request a funeral home directory compiled by state associations and the National Funeral Directors Association of the United States. A letter to the State Funeral Home Association in the state where you are searching should prove helpful as well.

The following list of Florida funeral homes should prove valuable as a tool in searching your family genealogy in Florida. Most funeral directors are receptive to the needs of persons making inquiries about their relatives and express a willingness to provide assistance useful to a genealogical search. This assistance is considered vital in tracing a family history and certifying family relationships. Comments by directors are added as needed to further assist you with your search.

FUNERAL HOME	COUNTY	DATE RECORDS BEGIN
ALACHUA		
Huggins-Copeland Funeral Home P.O. Box 1305 - Gainesville, FL 32601		January 1, 1970
Johnson-Hayes Funeral Home P.O. Box 1248 Gainesville, FL 32601		1926 (old records from 1926 to 1943 are limited; from 1943 to the present records are good)
Williams-Thomas Funeral Home P.O. Box 1290 - Gainesville, FL 32601		1929 (earlier records were destroyed in a fire)
BAKER		
John M. Brinkley Mortician P.O. Box 491 - MacClenny, FL 32603		15 May 1949
BAY		
Smith Funeral Home 505 N. MacArthur Ave. - Panama City, FL 32401		1947
BREVARD		
Wylie-Baxley Funeral Home P.O. Box 428 Cocoa, FL 32922		1894 (1894 to 1945 sketchy; 1945 to present more complete)
Brevard Funeral Home South 1001 S. Hickory St. - Melbourne, FL 32901		1971
Davis Funeral Home 36 E. Brevard Dr. - Melbourne, FL 32935		December 1959
Smith Funeral Home P.O. Box 1497 - Titusville, FL 32780		November 16, 1924

BROWARD

Kraeer Funeral Home 217 E. Hillsboro Blvd. - Deerfield Beach, FL 33441	1952
Case Funeral Home 4343 N. Federal Hwy. - Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33308	
Fairchild Funeral Home 299 N. Federal Hwy. Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301	February 1, 1930 (older records not as detailed as later ones)
Fannin Funeral Home 326 E. Las Olas Blvd. - Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33312	February 2, 1930
Jennings Funeral Home 3904 W. Commercial Blvd. - Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309	February 1963
Jordan-Thomas Funeral Home 5110 N. Federal Hwy. - Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33308	1964
Kahs Funeral Home 2505 N. Dixie Hwy. - Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33305	1959
Kraeer Funeral Home 4061 N. Federal Hwy. - Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33308	1952
Boyd's Funeral Home 6400 Hollywood Blvd. - Hollywood, FL 33021	May 1958
Fred Hunter Funeral Home P.O. Box 6969 - Hollywood, FL 33021	February 1960
Pancier Memorial Home 4200 Hollywood Blvd. - Hollywood, FL 33021	1951
Wadlington-Brown-Cooper Funeral Home 140 S. Dixie Hwy. - Hollywood, FL 33020	December 1951
Wintter Funeral Chapel 1050 N. Federal Hwy. - Hollywood, FL 33020	1961
T. M. Ralph Plantation Funeral Home 7001 N.W. 4th St. - Plantation, FL 33313	December 1965
Kraeer Funeral Home	July 1961

1199 N. 36th St. E. - Pompano Beach, FL 33064

Kraeer Funeral Home 1952
200 N. Federal Hwy. - Pompano Beach, FL 33062

Stitely Funeral Home 1963
6107 Hallandale Blvd. - West Hollywood, FL 33023

CALHOUN

Adams Funeral Home 1976
1115 Hwy. 71 North - Blountstown, FL 32424

Blountstown Chapel 1978
707 Preston Ave. - Blountstown, FL 32424

CHARLOTTE

Kays Funeral Home April 25, 1959
P.O. Box 2056 - Port Charlotte, FL 33950

Kays-Ponger Funeral Home January 6, 1945
619 E. Marion Ave. - Punta Gorda, FL 33950

CITRUS

Strickland Funeral Home February 1962
P.O. Box 398 - Crystal River, FL 32629

Hooper Funeral Home 1946
P.O. Box 305 - Inverness, FL 32650

CLAY

Helm Funeral Home September 18, 1961
P.O. Box 445 - Green Cove Springs, FL 32043

Westberry Griffis Rivermead Funeral Home July 1, 1965
950 Park Ave. - Orange Park, FL 32073

COLLIER

Brister Funeral Home October 20, 1968
707 N. Hwy. 29 - Immokalee, FL 33934

Earl G. Hodges Funeral Chapel August 10, 1962

3520 Tamiami Trail - Naples, FL 33940

Pittman Funeral Home 1954
6th Ave. - Naples, FL 33940

Pittman Funeral Home 1974
Tamiami Trail - E. Naples, FL

COLUMBIA

Biggs-Wilson Funeral Home 1902 (partial to present)
P.O. Box 846 - Lake City, FL 32055

DADE

Carl F. Slade Funeral Home October 1955
800 Palm Avenue - Hialeah, FL 33010

Lowe-Hanks Funeral Home June 1, 1963
151 East Okeechobee Road - Hialeah, FL 33010

Branam Funeral Home 1949
809 North Krome Avenue - Homestead, FL 33030

Bennett-Ulm Funeral Home September 17, 1964
15201 Northwest 7th Avenue - Miami, FL 33169

Bess Memorial Mortuaries 1906
10936 N.E. 6th Avenue - Miami, FL 33161

Brake-Saunders Funeral Home January 1, 1959
4100 N.W. 7th Street - Miami, FL 33126

Lithgow Funeral Center Late 1940s
15501 W. Dixie Highway - N. Miami, FL 33161

Lithgow Funeral Center Late 1940s
485 N.E. 54th Street - Miami, FL 33137

Lithgow Funeral Center Late 1940s
3232 Coral Way - Miami, FL 33129

Lithgow Funeral Center Late 1940s
8080 S.W. 67th Avenue - South Miami, FL 33173

Lithgow Funeral Center Late 1940s

17475 N.W. 27th Avenue
 Carol City (Opa Locka), FL 33056

Reid-Lowe Funeral Home
 2360 N.W. 36th Street - Miami, FL 33142

December 1958

Stanfill Funeral Home
 10545 S. Dixie Highway - Miami, FL 33156

1956

Van Orsdel Mortuary
 3333 N.E. 2nd Avenue - Miami, FL 33137

1924

Newman Funeral Home
 1333 Dade Blvd. - Miami Beach, FL 33139

Early 1940s

Riverside Memorial Chapel
 1920 Alton Road - Miami, FL 33139

Records kept for
 7 years

Walsh-Wood Funeral Home
 7140 Abbott Avenue - Miami Beach, FL 33141

May 1950

Alligood-Carroll Funeral Home
 17300 S. Dixie Highway - Perrine, FL 33157

Late 1965

DE SOTO

Robarts-Grady Funeral Home
 P.O. Box 47 - Arcadia, FL 33821

1936

DIXIE

Richard P. Gooding Funeral Home
 P.O. Box 307 - Cross City, FL 32628

Mid 1930s
 Early 1940s

DUVAL

Corey-Kerlin Funeral Home
 1426 Rowe Avenue - Jacksonville, FL 32208

August 20, 1963

George H. Hewell and Son Funeral Homes
 4747 Main Street - Jacksonville, FL 32206

April 4, 1934

Giddens-Griffith Funeral Home
 1129 S. Edgewood Avenue - Jacksonville, FL 32050

Early 1930s

Giddens-Griffith Funeral Home

Early 1930s

1701 Beach Blvd. - Jacksonville, FL 32250

Giddens-Griffith Funeral Home
6940 Atlantic - Jacksonville, FL 32211
Early 1930s

Giddens-Griffith Funeral Home
4607 Lexington - Jacksonville, FL
Early 1930s

Hardage & Sons, Estes-Krauss Funeral Home
517 Park Street - Jacksonville, FL 32204
June 1930

Hardage & Sons, Estes-Krauss Funeral Home
415 Hendricks Avenue - Jacksonville, FL 32207
June 1930

Hardage & Sons, Estes-Krauss Funeral Home
Arlington Road - Jacksonville, FL
June 1930

Hardage & Sons, Estes-Krauss Funeral Home
Blanding Blvd. - Jacksonville, FL
June 1930

Peoples Northwoods Funeral Home
2220 Soutel Drive - Jacksonville, FL 32208
1968

Robert M. Naugle Mortuary
P.O. Box 5067 - Jacksonville, FL 32207
1919

ESCAMBIA

Fisher-Pou Funeral Home
P.O. Box 809 - Pensacola, FL 32502
December 1926

McNefl-Keyes Funeral Home
1380 N. Palafox Street - Pensacola, FL 32501
1936

Waters & Hibbert Funeral Home
P.O. Box 667 - Pensacola, FL 32502
1931

FRANKLIN

R. L. Rilley Funeral Home
P.O. Box 576 - Carrabelle, FL 32322

GADSDEN

Adams Funeral Home
P.O. Box 581 - Quincy, FL 32351
1950

Morgan-McClellan Funeral Home 1940
 P.O. Box 528 - Quincy, FL 32351

Smith-Morgan Funeral Home
 P.O. Box 36 - Chattahoochie, FL 32324

HARDEE

Coker Funeral Home Some records back
 P.O. Box 545 to 1925; becoming more
 Wauchula, FL 33873 accurate in 1930s

HERNANDO

Brewer Memorial Funeral Home 1965
 P.O. Box 216 - Brooksville, FL 33512

Turner Home for Funerals November 1959
 504 E. Jefferson - Brooksville, FL 33512

HIGHLANDS

Stephenson-Smith Funeral Home 1921
 P.O. Box 1466 - Avon Park, FL 33825

Stephenson Funeral Home 1925
 P.O. Box 193 - Sebring, FL 33870

Warren Funeral Home February 1950
 P.O. Box 166 - Sebring, FL 33870

HILLSBOROUGH

Stowers Funeral Home January 1961
 401 E. Brandon Blvd. - Brandon, FL 33511

Colonial Funeral Home 1918 to 1936 are not
 P.O. Box 1148 - Plant City, FL 33566 complete; 1936 to present
 complete

Lewers Shannon Funeral Home June 1959
 308 E. College Ave. - Ruskin, FL 33570

F. T. Blount Company 1917
 5101 Nebraska Ave. - Tampa, FL 33603

Curry Funeral Home 605 S. MacDill Ave. - Tampa, FL 33609	1957
Duval Funeral Home 3806 Nebraska Ave. - Tampa, FL 33603	1951
Jennings Funeral Home 6900 Nebraska Ave. - Tampa, FL 33604	Dec. 8, 1954
Marsicano Funeral Home 4040 Henderson Blvd. - Tampa, FL 33609	November 1956
J. L. Reed & Son 3410 Henderson Blvd. - Tampa, FL	1887
B. Marion Reed Company Funeral Homes 258 Plant Ave. - Tampa, FL 33606	1917
Roel & Curry Funeral Home 4730 N. Armenia Ave. - Tampa, FL 33603	1977
Snipes Funeral Home 6718 N. Armenia Ave. - Tampa, FL 33604	1968

(MORE TO FOLLOW IN THE NEXT ISSUE.)

BOOK REVIEWS

The Sea Shell Islands: A History of Sanibel and Captiva. By Elinore M. Dormer. Revised Edition. (Tallahassee, 1979. Rose Printing Company. Photographs. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 265. Cloth.)

This updating of an earlier volume brings the history of Sanibel and Captiva up to the present.

Mrs. Dormer, with a trained eye for colorful detail, traces the story of the islands from their geological beginnings to the classical conflict between resident and developer.

The evidence of early Indian inhabitants is brought up to date with reports of new archeological discoveries. The more exciting stories of Spanish explorations and the ever-intriguing, if apocryphal, tales of legendary pirates are recounted with gusto.

We are told of the first American settlers and the eventual establishment of the islands as an on-going agricultural community that was wiped out by a hurricane. The island population then settled into an isolated residential community with tourism its main industry.

Then, in 1963, over the objections of most residents, came a new causeway that linked, the islands with the rapidly growing mainland. The author's original volume ends here in these words: "With the islands under siege, the future was uncertain. After 473 years, the conquistadores and traders were back – in search of wealth."

She now recounts this uncertain future. Time has allowed her to supply more details of the bitter fight over the causeway which was promoted by outside financiers.

When the causeway struggle was lost, residents still expected growth to be kept orderly through their local zoning authority. But to their dismay, the courts declared this illegal. The islands were at the mercy of a county commission which, the author suggests, was dominated by the building and related industries.

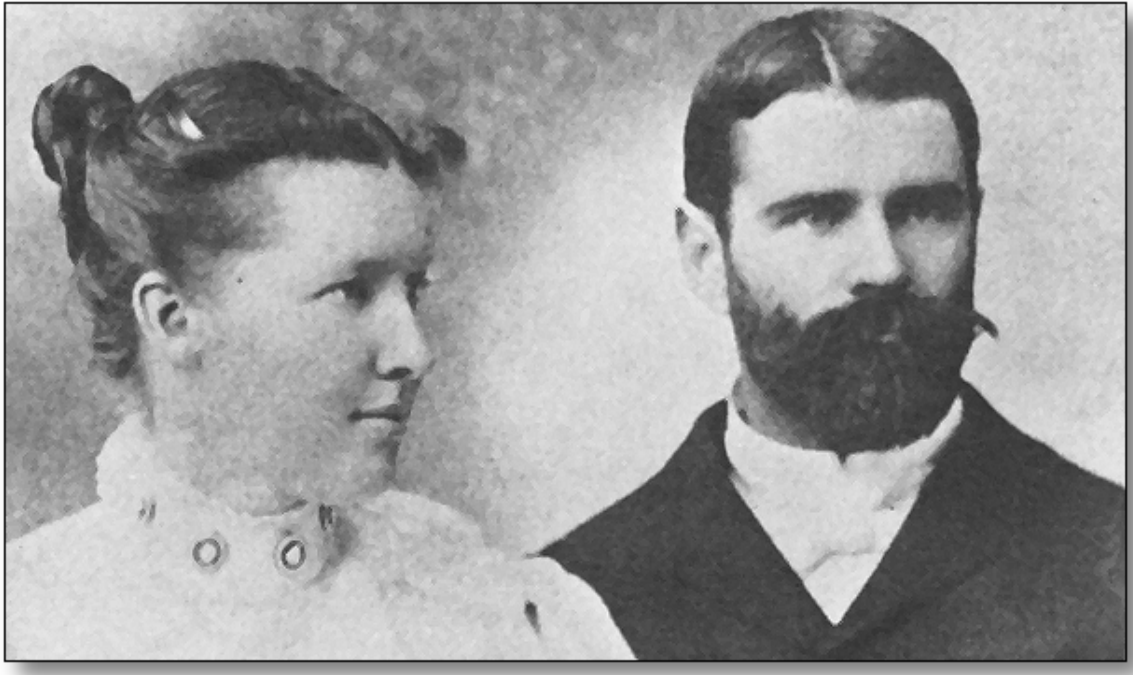
This led to the long and ultimately successful struggle to win for Sanibel its own city government. With this, Sanibel residents achieved some measure of control.

Many old timers, however, believe it came too late. The conquistadores and traders got their wealth, but the islanders lost a treasured way of life.

Griffing Bancroft

The Plant Pioneers. The Story of the Reasoner Family, Pioneer Florida Horticulturists and Their Nursery. By Norman J. Pinaridi. (Torrington, Conn., 1980. Rainbow Press. Photographs. Pp. 216. Paper.)

Norman J. Pinaridi, a senior vice-president of Bradenton's Inter-City National Bank, indulges his love of writing in a splendidly illustrated, up-to-date history of Florida's "Oldest



Egbert and Sarah Reasoner, 1895.

Photograph from *The Plant Pioneers* by Norman J. Pinardi.

continuously operated nursery and family business.” This is a history to which any family would be proud to put their name. Many of the original research materials were gathered by Mrs. Julia Reasoner Hastings from family documents and nursery records prior to her death in 1975. In 1977 her history of the nursery’s founders, Pliny and Egbert Norman Reasoner, was published in a 73-page booklet entitled *The Reasoner Brothers: Florida’s Pioneer Nurserymen*. The booklet detailed the brothers’ arrival in Florida, the early family history and the founding of the nursery.

Norman Pinardi has taken this information as his starting point but *The Plant Pioneers* extends far beyond the earlier work in scope. It intermingles the Reasoner family history very well with the story of the nursery's successes and the history of the Manatee-Sarasota area and its growth.

The Reasoner’s love affair with Florida began in 1881, when the 17 year-old Pliny Reasoner toured the state searching for the perfect place to begin an orange grove. Taken from Pliny Reasoner’s own letters and journals, this is an extremely clear first-hand examination of both “tourist” Florida and “cracker” life in Florida before the turn of the century.

Pliny Reasoner’s report of the Charles Abbe murder and ensuing manhunt for the vigilantes through the piney woods of the Manatee-Sarasota area is a unique report of the state of post civil-war Southerner-Yankee relations.

Later chapters cover the family's arrival and reactions to their new Florida home, the Reasoner Brothers' introduction of new plant species into Florida, and the search for rare native palm and plant species. The two chapters describing the deaths of Pliny Reasoner in 1881 and the death of Egbert Norman Reasoner's son, also named Pliny, in 1912, are moving accounts.

Like many other Florida families, the Reasoner family faced the twentieth century's depression, world wars, and Florida's postwar boom period. Few other families left such a testament of beauty throughout the state.

The Plant Pioneers is a well balanced narrative and a very "good read" for plant fanciers, students and lovers of Florida's history, and the general reading public. The only noticeable thing lacking is an index for plants and one for the people and places. It is to be hoped that in 2001 a later author will continue the history, with indexes.

Pamela N. Gibson

Biscuits and 'Taters. A History of Cattle Ranching in Manatee County. By Joe G. Warner. (Bradenton, 1980. Great Outdoors Publishing Company. Photographs. Maps. Bibliography. Index. Pp. vi, 95. Paper.)

Biscuits and 'Taters tells you much you'll enjoy knowing – but didn't know whom to ask – about the early Florida cowhunters and cattle ranching in Manatee County from about 1845 to 1940.

In 1845, Manatee County extended southward from Tampa Bay to the Caloosahatchee River, embracing nearly 4,700 square miles of palmetto scrub and piney woods. Seven counties presently lie within this perimeter.

Written by Joe G. Warner, a fifth generation Manatee Countian and retired cattleman, *Biscuits and 'Taters* is an historically accurate anecdotal account of the pioneer families who overcame Indian attacks, wild animals, frequent adverse weather conditions, and livestock diseases such as fever ticks and screwworms, to establish the County's still-flourishing cattle industry. It is the story, too, of the loneliness and back-breaking work endured by a rugged, courageous breed of men and women. In addition to the ranching aspects, the narrative also touches upon many other facets of area history.

Unlike the western cowboy, traditionally romanticized in story and song, the early Florida cowhunter has received scant literary attention. A reason, perhaps, is that he lacked the glamorous appearance of his western brethren. As described by Warner, the cowhunter's work clothes were strictly utilitarian and utterly devoid of style.

The title of Warner's book derives, with some affection, from the fact that before the roundups, or cowhunts as they were called, the womenfolk baked large quantities of biscuits and sweet potatoes. These supplemented the cowhunter's in-the-saddle menu that consisted of a slab of salty bacon, coffee, and sometimes an onion for dessert. The absence of refrigeration or stoves made spartan fare a necessity during the grueling weeks cowhunters rode the rangeland

collecting the cattle herds for branding and shipment to markets. Much of the livestock was exported to Cuba via schooners and, later, steamships sailing from Manatee River landings.

Illustrative of the magnitude of cowhunts is the fact that by 1878 more than 53,000 head of cattle roamed the fenceless County, and 1,036 individual brands were on record.

Biscuits and 'Taters is an entertaining amalgam of Warner's personal experiences, his many conversations and reminiscences with veteran ranchers, and information gleaned from oral history recordings and extensive researching of Manatee County's early cattle shipping records. His book also includes rare photographs of early cowhunters in action, plus facsimiles of the cattle brands used in pioneer times.

Oscar Elder

The Story of St. Martha's Catholic Parish: Sarasota, Florida, 1912-1977. Compiled by the Parish History Committee. (Sarasota, 1977. St. Martha's Catholic Parish. Photographs. Bibliography. Index. Pp. viii, 325. Paper.)

St. Martha's, Sarasota, became the church the circus built. This book unfolds that story and is dedicated to Monsignor Charles L. Eslander, founding pastor. In the telling, Catholic history is traced there from 1847 through the present pastorate of Father Jerome A. Carosella. Credit is given to early pioneer people and their priests, from circuit-riding Jesuits until the Bishop of St. Augustine, Florida, gave Sarasota County, in Father Eslander, its first resident diocesan priest. He served at St. Martha's from 1927 to 1968, and died in retirement, February 16, 1977.

Martha in the New Testament is the patron saint whose name was given to Sarasota's first Catholic church, honoring Martha Ann Burns, the donor of the lot. Her son, Owen Burns, and John Ringling of the circus business, were developers of modern Sarasota. Since May 31, 1911, the Burns' lot belonged to the Catholic Church. However, Jesuits kept the Sarasota County registers of Catholic births and marriages in Tampa until Father Eslander came to town in Sarasota to serve there and for a short time as pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Bradenton.

This book documents that during the Thirties, the building of St. Martha Church was helped along significantly by management and performers of the Ringling Brothers Circus. (Some night on the late movies on TV, keen-eyed viewers may still see Father Eslander and his altar boys blessing the circus as its train pulls out of winter quarters in "The Greatest Show on Earth." He was really the circus' priest, so it was a bit of real life on film when he and the acolytes, fully vested, joined the famous movie stars in the cast of that 1951 movie.)

I suppose it is difficult to achieve a completely smooth writing of a history compiled by a committee. Readability is flawed by more names in the text than the reader cares to know, but it is evident that the authors of this parish history did their homework. One would hope that other Catholic churches in the St. Petersburg diocese would attempt to document their own "roots" in the Florida communities, and this book is the best I have seen of the genre.

It is a valuable addition to history in the Tampa Bay area, told in terms that make one see Catholicity as it was before the Second Vatican Council, and as it is today. The pastor today, Father Carosella, is “vicar forane” or dean of the Southwest region comprised of Hardee, Manatee and Sarasota Counties. He is one of the best liturgists in Florida and the book reflects this. This text includes some heretofore unpublished material and is therefore a welcome volume on the local history shelf.

Jane Quinn

BOOK COMMENTS

Dear Editors:

We, the authors of *The Seekers: Pioneer Families of Nokomis and Laurel* received a copy of a book review by Gregory L. Ferris this past week. We do not recall asking for a review but we did send a copy of our book to one of your history professors who had helped us with our research. I suppose from him, you obtained a copy of our book.

I'm afraid Mr. Ferris overstepped his authority by not checking his facts as he accused us of doing. To begin with, we are not amateurs in the field of writing. We have excellent writing credits both locally and nationally.

He says it is difficult to accept the contention of the Turners that fourteen families living in Laurel and Nokomis are truly representative of a fifty year period. We must remind Mr. Ferris that these early families intermarried extensively, so basically the families remained the same. This area was a wilderness. It took a long time to clear the lands and homestead. We did not include land speculators and migrant families with the real pioneer families.

Three families that were limited to a half page each were so done that way because they did not want to cooperate with compiling the area history. We wrote little about them because that was the way they wanted it.

Mr. Ferris must realize that up to the point of us trying to preserve the history of this area, THERE WAS NO WRITTEN HISTORY AND NO RESEARCH HAD BEEN DONE EITHER.

Because, at the writing of our book, we did not know if there would be a follow-up book or not, we included the discussion of the McKeithen family who provided financial solidarity to the Laurel community and people did make several references to the McKeithens and we included the family for clarity so readers not familiar with this family would understand the references.

Mr. Ferris's review is two years too late. The book is the most checked out book on the Florida shelf in our public library. The first printing sold out in less than three weeks. The second printing is doing well - a steady seller in bookstores from Sarasota to Englewood.

Mr. Ferris's review is the only disparaging one the book has received. Of course, he doesn't live in this area and doesn't realize how glad most people were to have our effort (we know was not perfect and said so) published since nothing had been done before. We are continuing our research and this book we are working on will be designed as the last one was - FOR THE PEOPLE OF THIS AREA AND BY THE PEOPLE OF THIS AREA. It was never intended to be subjected to someone who does not live in or understand our area.

Sincerely,
Paul H. Turner & Joan Berry Turner

P.S. It would be a matter of interest to us to know Mr. Ferris's qualifications for doing a local-history review & how many local histories he has researched and written. We feel Mr. Ferris's real problem is that our book was not written in a flowery literary style and not academic which it was not supposed to be.

Gregory L. Ferris replies:

British historian and political analyst for *The New Republic*, Henry Fairlie, argues that, ". . . oral history is only, for all its fancy name, a refusal to do the hard work of sifting." Although Fairlie's comment merits attention, it is evident that oral history has prevailed in gaining credibility within the field of historical research. Historians and, indeed, the general public have accepted the oral tradition as a method for studying non-elite, community-based history. Therefore, if the oral tradition is to continue as a successful methodology, certain historical standards must be present.

Oral historians must be aware of the differences and conflicts between "presenting historical information and providing entertainment." It is important for the oral historian to interview and edit to get the best possible story - not to compile all of the information available.

The oral historian should consider a cross-section of the population in order to explain the interaction of members of a community regarding social, political and economic growth. The completion of this task requires the oral historian to research newspapers, town reports, tax records, etc. Upon accomplishing this exercise, then perhaps the oral historian can increasingly assure the general public that the results of the research indicate the inclusion of those participants who established a community of culture and moral ideologies.

The oral historian must also be aware of appropriate documentation and editing procedures. Critics often look for consistent footnoting and editing as a means of evaluating thorough research. Published research ought to serve as a springboard for further research of the given community or act as an active model for those desiring to pursue community-based oral history.

The Turners' comment that they have . . . "writing credits both locally and nationally", remains questionable. To suggest that their book was written, "FOR THE PEOPLE OF THIS AREA AND BY THE PEOPLE OF THIS AREA", certainly does not imply that they were prepared for constructive criticism or to be ". . . subjected to someone who does not live in or understand our area". Hopefully the book they "design" next will increasingly adhere to necessary oral history standards.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EDITOR'S NOTE: The editors will gladly publish announcements of upcoming events related to local history, but these items must reach the editors at least two months before the publication dates of June 1st and December 1st.

A twenty-four page booklet describing a self-guided stroll through historic downtown Fort Myers is now available. The booklet gives short sketches of thirty-eight homes and structures, some dating to 1898. Eleanor Brooks Mobley drew the fifteen eye-catching sketches and map illustrating the booklet. It was written by Prudy Taylor Board, Anna Rodgers Pack and Marian Bailey Godown. Previously, Mrs. Godown had featured many of the buildings described in the booklet in the column "The Passing Scene" which she compiled for the Fort Myers News-Press for four years. Jan Brown, a trustee with the Nature Center of Lee County, coordinated the booklet. The first printing was sponsored by the First National Bank of Fort Myers for the benefit of the Nature Center. Copies may be obtained for \$1.00 each by mail from the Nature Center, P.O. Box 06023, Fort Myers, Florida 33906.

David Narrett has been awarded the 1981 New York State Historical Association Manuscript Award for his monograph, "Patterns of Inheritance in Colonial New York City, 1664-1775: A Study in the History of the Family." The award, a \$1000 purse and assistance in publication, is presented annually to the author of the best unpublished book-length manuscript dealing with some aspect of New York State history. Manuscripts are now being received for the 1982 Manuscript Award. The deadline is February 1, 1982. For further information contact Dr. Wendell Tripp, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York 13326.

The Florida Park Service will hold its Annual Dade Battlefield Commemorative Day on Sunday, December 27, 1981 at two o'clock in Bushnell. This event will include music, an arms drill with men in authentic uniforms and a first person account of the battle.

Fort Myers Historical Museum Director Patti Bartlett announced today that she and Museum Technician Mark Appleby will move from their present offices in City Hall into the museum on Peck Street during the second week in November. Construction work on the former railroad depot is in its final stages, according to Bartlett.

Working with Appleby who has an art degree from the University of Northern Iowa, Bartlett has completed design and sketches for many of the displays in the main section of the museum. "These areas for exhibit" Bartlett said, "are the Calusas, the Spaniards, a blacksmith shop, the cattle industry, the lumber industry, and Main Street Fort Myers, circa 1924. Main Street will be comprised of four sections - a family parlor, a barber shop, an office, and a general store." Construction of the individual displays will begin once the move is completed.

The museum is now actively soliciting donations of old documents, photographs and artifacts relative to any of the above exhibits. "We are especially interested in Calusa artifacts and cattlemen's tools," Bartlett said, adding that volunteer help in making the move will also be appreciated. Once moved, volunteers can be invaluable in helping with clerical work such as keeping records of acquisitions, she said.

Anyone wishing to volunteer or having artifacts they wish to donate to the museum should contact Bartlett at 334-1281.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

GRIFFING BANCROFT is a former newspaper reporter and a commentator for CBS. He lives on Captiva and founded the Sanibel-Captiva Audubon Society.

PRUDY TAYLOR BOARD is a free-lance writer and reporter living in Fort Myers. She has written several hundred articles that have been published in local and national magazines and newspapers.

RANDY BOBBITT graduated from the University of South Florida with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History. He is a free-lance writer.

OSCAR ELDER is a member of the Board of Directors of the Manatee County Historical Society. Previous to his retirement, he was Press Secretary for Senator Spessard Holland and an Information Officer for the United States Department of Agriculture.

PAMELA N. GIBSON works as a librarian for the Eaton Florida History Reading Room of the Manatee County Central Library. She also serves as Corresponding Secretary for the Manatee County Historical Society.

DENISE KELLEY is enrolled in a Masters' Program in Personnel Organization and Development at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

GEORG H. KLEINE is Associate Professor of History at the University of South Florida and a specialist in Modern German History.

FRANK LAUMER is an author and resident of Dade City. His publications include *Massacre!*, a study of the Seminole War.

GEORGE POZZETTA is an Associate Professor of History at the University of Florida in Gainesville. His latest book is entitled *Pane E Lavoro: The Italian-American Working Class*.

JANE QUINN is the editor of the *Florida Catholic*. She is the author of several books on Catholics in Florida.

TAMPA BAY HISTORY

Published Semi-annually by
The Department of History
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
University of South Florida
Tampa, Florida

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Correspondence concerning subscriptions, contributions, books for review, and all other editorial matters should be sent to the Managing Editor, *Tampa Bay History*, Department of History, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida 33620. (Telephone: 813-974-2807). ISSN: 0272-1406.

Manuscripts from potential contributors should be typed and double-spaced with footnotes, also double-spaced, placed at the end and prepared in conformity with the style used by the journal. Manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope with enough postage.

The subscription rate is \$10 for one year and \$18 for two years. Single issues and back files are available. Printed semi-annually, in the spring/summer and fall/winter.

Tampa Bay History disclaims responsibility for statements made by contributors.

Tampa Bay History is indexed in *Historical Abstracts, America: History and Life*.

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COVER: Jewish soldiers and their families at a banquet held on April 19, 1943 at the Zedek Schaari Synagogue. Photograph courtesy of Hampton Dunn. See Photo Essay, page 40.

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Street Scene in the town of Pass-a-Grille, c. 1920.

Postcard courtesy of the University of South Florida Library, Special Collections Department.

YANKEE COME, ON DOWN

"New settlers are arriving by nearly every boat and from what we can gather there will be a very large immigration to this section of the State this coming winter. We are not surprised at this as there is no portion of Florida which affords greater inducements in the way of healthfulness, a genial climate and a productive soil than this." *The Sunland Tribune*, June 9, 1877.

... WAIT, GO HOME

"There are more visitors here this winter than has ever been in this city in the month of January. So much for being the healthiest city and the best fishing ground on the Gulf Coast of Florida." *St. Petersburg Times*, January 31, 1903.

TEETOTALING TAMPANS. NO BUSCH GARDENS?

"There are efforts being made to get up a Temperance society in this place and we hope that the efforts of the parties engaged in this work may be crowned with success for such a society is much needed, if it can possibly do any good." *The Florida Peninsular*, June 24, 1871.

BUT WILL THEY BURY THEIR HEADS IN THE SAND?

"Ostrich racing, long an attraction and favorite sport on the east coast, will be brought to Tampa as a novelty of the Florida fair. P.T. Strieder, general manager, announced yesterday that Miss Katherine Reed of Miami, ostrich breeder, will bring a flock of her long necked birds for the fair and seven women will be given an opportunity to ride them in daily races in front of the grandstand. The ostrich, Strieder said, is a tricky bird but those coming here are well trained and probably will carry their riders with a minimum of spills." *Tampa Morning Tribune*, January 7, 1935.

NO WONDER THEY CAN'T GET DATES!

"Bartow has more pretty girls of marriageable age than any town in the State. There is said to be seventy in society, while there are only about fifteen to twenty beaux." *Polk County News*, October 10, 1890.

"Some of the Bartow boys are not remarkable for good behavior like those in some of the lands of steady habits. Their conduct on the back seats of the Opera House, lately jostles the dignity and upsets the equanimity of the lovers of the drama. Knocking sticks against doors at night and throwing bricks on tin roofs is calculated to draw out maledictions with implied animadversions upon their doting parents." *Polk County News*, January 13, 1893.

IN CASE OF FIRE ...

"What has become of the Hook and Ladder Company? Do our citizens intend to let it fall through? The young men of Tampa will organize a company if the citizens will furnish the Hook and Ladder. Our citizens should have some local pride and aid the young men to do what they cannot do themselves. What say the people of the city of Tampa?" *The Florida Peninsular*, July 14, 1867.

LIFE BEFORE THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

"Does the sanitary committee think that the stagnant puddles of water on the upper part of Jackson Street are healthy?" *The Sunland Tribune*, December 22, 1877.

BARTOW'S BOOMING BUSINESS

"The phosphate business in this section is moving along. Besides the large shipments being made continuously by water from Punta Gorda, four carloads arrive here daily from that place en route to Atlanta." *Polk County News*, September 12, 1890.

GOT THEIR GOATS!

"Excitement soared to a high pitch in the Estuary section yesterday as news spread that triplets - and then quintuplets had been born along the waterfront. Residents of the neighborhood visualized nationwide advertisement for the section, with flocks of newspapermen seeking interviews and photographs. And then it developed that the new arrivals - both the triplets and the quintuplets - were goats." *Tampa Morning Tribune*, January 12, 1935.

FOR THE BIRDS

"The Bird law has been duly observed, which is evident from the number of small birds to be seen and heard over town. The buzzard also claims protection under the law and makes himself very officious around premises which are not kept as the sanitary committee directs." *The Sunland Tribune*, September 8, 1877.

INFLATION

"Florida is wearing out approximately seventy-five tons of currency a year, equivalent to about \$15,000,000 in greenbacks, silver and gold certificates and federal reserve banknotes; a pretty good indication that paper money is being kept in constant circulation in the 'Lands end of Dixie'." *Suniland*, February 1926.

PROMISING PREDICTION

"Florida's real development has only just begun. Everywhere throughout the Peninsula they are cutting, burning, draining, lifting land and building. The money is here, the initiative is here. Vision, determination, ambition, common-sense-all are factors in the great awakening of the state." *Suniland*, February 1926.

CIGAR DIPLOMACY

"Three beautiful Spanish girls have been selected to go to Washington to ask President Roosevelt to attend the cigar jubilee at Tampa next month. And if he should accept - what a shock that would be! It will be a nice trip, anyway, for the girls, and a field day for the photographers, and not a bad day for Tampa cigars." *Tampa Morning Tribune*, January 7, 1935.