

1996

The Accidental Pioneer: Capt. Jim McMullen and the Taming of the Pinellas Peninsula

Donald J. Ivey

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/sunlandtribune>

Recommended Citation

Ivey, Donald J. (1996) "The Accidental Pioneer: Capt. Jim McMullen and the Taming of the Pinellas Peninsula," *Sunland Tribune*: Vol. 22 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/sunlandtribune/vol22/iss1/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Sunland Tribune by an authorized editor of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact scholarcommons@usf.edu.

THE ACCIDENTAL PIONEER:

CAPT. JIM McMULLEN AND THE TAMING OF THE PINELLAS PENINSULA

By Donald J. Ivey



James P. "Capt. Jim" McMullen, 1823-1895. Curiously, there are only two known images of Capt. Jim in existence, and this (along with the portrait of the seven brothers) is one of them. This sketch by Bay View resident Mary Faith Lame was taken from an early copper plate portrait of McMullen.

--Courtesy Heritage Village

Set amidst the urbanized hub-bub of Pinellas County sits a small four-room log cabin on the grounds of Heritage Village, the Pinellas County Historical Museum in Largo. That cabin, built in 1852, is one of the last reminders of an earlier, simpler era in the history of the Bay area, when the pine and palmetto hammocks had not yet been tamed by man.

The builder of the cabin, James P. "Capt. Jim" McMullen, was one of the earliest settlers in the Tampa Bay area, and though long known for his achievements, the full extent of his contributions to the development of our area are little understood. Like many of our early pioneers, some portions of his life have been recounted in detail, while others have been ignored completely. This article will attempt to provide a comprehensive recounting of what is known of Capt. Jim's life. And what is known *is* quite remarkable indeed.

The odyssey of James Parramore (sometimes spelled Paramore) McMullen began on a rural farm in Telfair County, Georgia on June 11, 1823. He was the sixth child and the third son of the 12 children of James McMullen, Jr. and his wife Rebecca (Fain) McMullen.

According to family legend, the McMullens originally came from Scotland to Halifax, Nova Scotia about 1775 and drifted south into North Carolina. James' paternal grandfather (also named James), is said to have served as a drummer boy in Granberry's Company of North Carolina Militia during the American Revolution. Family tradition also holds that he saw action at the Battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill. After the war, he settled in Burke (now Bulloch) County, Georgia, where he established a large plantation which he named "Halifax."

James' mother's family, the Fains, also came from Scotland originally. Like the McMullens, Rebecca's father Thomas Fain settled in Georgia and served as a soldier in the Revolutionary Army.

James was named after both his father and grandfather. His middle name was his maternal grandmother's maiden name, and as the third son James was, according to Scottish legend, believed to be exceptionally blessed.¹

About the year 1827, James' father (James Jr.) moved his growing family to the Talloaks area of Lowndes County, near the town of Quitman, Georgia and settled in that portion of the county which became Brooks County in 1858. There, he established a prosperous farm in the hardscrabble backcountry of south Georgia — no mean feat in those days — and young James no doubt spent a considerable amount of his time doing chores along with the rest of his brothers and sisters, while learning to hunt, fish, ride a horse and tend crops and livestock as well. Little precise information is known about his early childhood and education, but according to his granddaughter, Nancy McMullen Meador, "James P. McMullen did not have a great deal of higher education but he educated himself by reading, study and experience. His favorite authors were Shakespeare and Dickens."²

This rather placid existence went on until probably sometime in the spring of 1842, when at the age of 18, James suddenly fell ill with "consumption," now known as the respiratory disease tuberculosis. At that time the disease was frequently fatal, so to avoid infecting the rest of the McMullen family, James was sent away to recuperate.

Taking little more than his horse, dog, bedroll, gun and "bullet- molds and

powder," James ventured south into the Florida Territory. He eventually came to Rocky Point, located between Clearwater and Tampa. At some point, he also acquired a sailboat, which he took on excursions all over the Tampa Bay area, soaking in the fresh air and sunshine. On one of these excursions, he crossed the Bay and came upon a high bluff which formed a lasting impression on him. This would later become the settlement of Bay View in present-day Pinellas County.

At that time still a part of Hillsborough County, the Pinellas peninsula (then known as "West Hillsborough") was little more than raw unsettled back-country, inhabited by Indians and only a handful of settlers. Around 1830, Odet Philippe had arrived and became the first permanent European settler, establishing a homestead near Safety Harbor. But by 1840, there were still only a few families on the peninsula, hardy souls who lived primitively at best. But where many only saw empty wilderness, McMullen found opportunity, and he was quickly captivated by the vast potential of the area. In his wanderings, McMullen would come to spend considerable amount of time in Pinellas, camping out and living, as one source states, "virtually like a hermit," seeing no other human beings except for some Indians.³

After almost a year, McMullen recovered from his illness and headed back to Quitman to rejoin his family. On the way back north, he stopped at the pioneer settlement of Melendez in Hernando (which from 1844 to 1850 was known as Benton) County. There he met Elizabeth Campbell, 18, the daughter of the late John Campbell, who died fighting the Seminoles in 1838, and his wife Nancy (Taylor) Campbell. Like the McMullens, the Campbells had originally come from Scotland. In the 1790s, they had settled in



The McMullen log cabin (top), built by Capt. Jim about 1852 approximately two miles northeast of Clearwater. After Capt. Jim's death in 1895, the cabin and surrounding property were acquired by the Coachman family, who grew citrus in the area and subsequently used the cabin as a logo on their orange crates (bottom). Although the cabin was badly damaged in an arson attack in 1976, it was moved to Heritage Village in Largo in 1977, where it was renovated, restored and reopened to the public. There, as the oldest existing structure in the county, it remains as a popular attraction.

— Courtesy Heritage Village - Pinellas County
Historical Museum, Largo, Florida

South Carolina, and eventually they drifted south into Georgia and in 1826 moved to Florida, where they took up residence at Melendez.⁴

With the keen eye of a born entrepreneur, McMullen had clearly sensed the future potential of the Pinellas peninsula, and on his return to Georgia, he told his six brothers about his experiences in the Tampa Bay area, which he called "the closest thing to heaven that he could imagine."⁵

Evidently, even at this young age, McMullen was a man of unusual energy,

enterprise and daring. Son Birt McMullen later recalled that "Pa [the name that all of the McMullen clan affectionately gave to Capt. Jim] . . . had many enterprises, which he worked at with all the zest and energy possible, never saying 'You must do so and so,' but 'come on boys, let's get this thing done,' and worked right along with them."⁶

By 1844, James McMullen had returned to Florida, and on December 26th, after a courtship largely conducted by correspondence, he married Elizabeth Campbell, at the Campbell family's homestead near present-day Brooksville.



Like her husband, Elizabeth was evidently a woman of considerable strength and energy. Altogether she and James would have 11 children. She would also act as a midwife to the local women in the area and planted and tended much of the family's crops during their many years together in the wilderness. As their youngest son Ward recalled years later, each child "was taught to mind and as each one grew older, they would help with the younger ones and they all had chores to do."⁷

For the next four years, McMullen was in Benton County. There, he had established a

small farm, probably near his mother-in-law's homestead at Melendez where he bided his time, waiting for the right moment to strike out on his own. Finally, probably in the late spring of 1848, he returned with his wife and two children to the Pinellas peninsula, and homesteaded 240 acres near what is now Northeast Coachman Road and State Road 590A. There, he built a log cabin and began farming the land, which at that time was little more than virgin pine forest. But in time the presence of hostile Indians and the isolation of living in such a remote wilderness forced them to return to Benton County. Shortly after they left, the

local Indians are said to have set fire to their cabin, destroying it. Also, according to McMullen's youngest son Ward, McMullen was caught in the great storm of this year, which devastated Pinellas and caused heavy damage from winds and high water all along Florida's west coast. "The Great Gale of '48" blew away part of a big Indian mound behind which he and his friend "Uncle Dick" Booth (one of the earliest settlers on the peninsula and son-in-law of Odet Philippe) had taken cover near their camp by a spring in Safety Harbor. This experience, according to Ward, convinced McMullen that inland residence was best.⁸

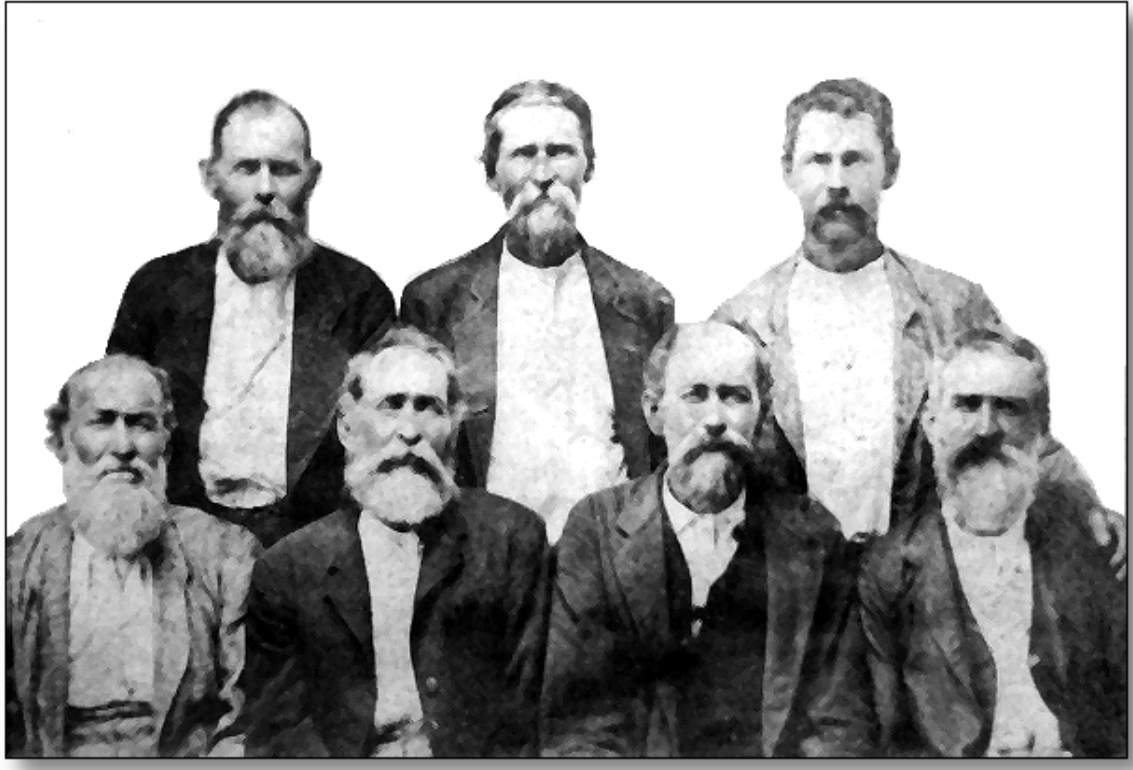
This failure did not, however, deter him. Sometime after early December in 1850 it is believed that James moved the family back south to Pinellas to make a second go of settling there. Returning to their original homestead, he built a second log cabin house in the area that later became known as Coachman Station, near Clearwater. Constructed of heart pine, the double pen log cabin contained four rooms and had a second story, unusual for cabins of that period. With a central breezeway and large cracks between the log sides, it was built to give plenty of fresh air, something the tubercular McMullen was particularly insistent upon. He is reported to have said, "I wouldn't give anything for a house that didn't have cracks wide enough to throw a cat through."

A simple home, with most of the furniture made by hand (including the beds, with mattresses made of stuffed corn shucks or Spanish moss), the McMullen homestead nonetheless became a popular meeting place for local residents. The McMullens were known as great hosts, and being on the road from Anona, Clearwater and all points to Tampa, their home became a popular stop-over for anyone going to attend

business across the Bay. Ministers, for example, would often come to the area to hold conferences and would stay over with the family. Ward McMullen later recalled that "I have seen as many as eleven Preachers eating dinner at my father's table in one day." In time, other outbuildings were also added and included a sugar house, where corn syrup and sugar were made and stored.⁹

At the time, cattle raising, subsistence farming and fishing were the chief industries on the peninsula. With no trading posts, stores or other established businesses, residents of the area had to be self-sufficient. Roads consisted of sand trails winding through untouched pine forest, and the principal money in circulation was the Spanish gold doubloon, obtained from selling cattle in Cuba. It was hard living and to be successful, an individual had to possess a real pioneering spirit.¹⁰

This the McMullens had in abundance and by 1852 James was joined on the peninsula by his younger brother Daniel, who moved to the Largo area and homesteaded 160 acres near what is now Rosery Road and Missouri Avenue. The first of James' brothers to join him in Pinellas Daniel also joined with his brother in the cattle business which both began to pursue at this time with a good degree of success. Another brother, John Fain McMullen also joined them on the peninsula, probably also during this year. He settled in Anona south of Clearwater Bay, near present-day Indian Rocks and Wilcox Roads. Like his brothers, cattle and citrus would become his chief interests. He would stay until 1857 when he moved to Madison County in North Florida. In 1871, he returned to Pinellas and settled in what is now the Lealman area of St. Petersburg, but soon after left for Perry in Taylor County, where he died in 1895.¹¹



The seven McMullen brothers of Pinellas. Back row standing, from left to right: John Fain, David and Malcolm Lawrence. Front row seated, left to right: William, Thomas Fain, James Parramore (Capt. Jim), and Daniel. This now famous photograph was taken by C. W. Motes at the Atlanta International Cotton Exposition in 1881.

— Courtesy Heritage Village



Although the day-to-day struggle to survive remained paramount, McMullen was actively involved in the area's community affairs from the very beginning. In particular, he seems to have taken a great interest in education. In 1853, with no schools on the peninsula, McMullen established a log cabin schoolhouse for local children in the area, using the second floor of his sugar house. The McMullens took in approximately 30 children for common schooling at this school and supplied room and board for them while school was in session. McMullen acquired a teacher for the children from up north, and paid her salary himself — making this the first organized school on the Pinellas peninsula.

Over the course of the years, the McMullens were also said to have taken in nearly 25 orphaned children in the area into their home, raising them along with their own children. Later, according to Nancy Meador, when the sugar house "was not large enough to take care of the children who wanted to go to school . . . Pa got his brother John Tom and Dick Booth to help him and together they built a one-room log schoolhouse" about two miles southeast of Clearwater. According to Meador, the school was named Sylvan Abbey because "Pa said the first girl that went to school there should be honored by having the school named for her. The teacher's name was Mrs. Abbey and her daughter's name was Sylvan so he named the school Sylvan Abbey." By 1884, this

Florida Brick !

A splendid article of Brick is now being made at my yard on Old Tampa, and for sale in any quantity. The Brick made at this Yard are as good as can be bought in any market. -- Samples can be seen at Grant & Craft's store. Price per M. [at the Yard.] \$13.
JAMES P. McMULLIN.

Cypress Barrels !

The undersigned is now having made, at his Shop at Turkey Hammock, 12 miles west of Tampa, Syrop Barrels of superior quality, which he will sell at \$2 50 pr barrel at the shop or \$3 00 delivered at Tampa. I have on hand a fine lot of fish barrels made expressly for the South Florida fisheries. Price \$2 pr barrel, at the shop. All orders for Barrels will be promptly filled.
JAMES P. McMULLIN.
 August 6th. 1869

Two 1869 advertisements which appeared in Tampa's *Florida Peninsular* newspaper announcing several of Capt. Jim's numerous business ventures. Note the misspelling of his last name as "McMullin."

— Tampa *Florida Peninsular*,
 August 25, 1869

schoolhouse was no longer adequate to accommodate the growing needs of the community, so McMullen built a third, larger schoolhouse near present-day Sylvan Abbey Cemetery, between Clearwater and Safety Harbor. Years later, McMullen's daughter Sally would often recall fondly of her education in these early area schools that "it was a hard task to study when they wanted to watch the little bears playing about in the trees nearby."¹²

At the same time, McMullen also became deeply involved in local politics. In October of 1853 he was elected as a Whig to serve as a member of the Hillsborough County Commission. According to historian John Solomon Otto, by this time McMullen was known as a prominent "backcountry" cowman, and as such he was no doubt elected to represent their interests on the Board. Two years later, he served as one of the founders of Hillsborough County's American Party, which held a convention in Tampa on September 15, 1855. The "Know-Nothing" Party (so-called because of their secretiveness and the reply of their members to queries of non-members, "I know nothing") endorsed a platform supporting a legal constitutional solution to the question of slavery within the Union, along with positions that were strongly anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant. McMullen, who himself was endorsed on the Know-Nothing ticket for a second term on the County Commission, subsequently went down in defeat with the rest of his party's slate of county candidates in the October 1855 elections.¹³

When news of the attacks which precipitated the start of the Third Seminole War reached the Tampa Bay area early the next year, McMullen was one of the first men to enlist in the Army as a volunteer, serving as a private in Capt. William B. Hooker's Company of Florida Mounted Volunteers, which on January 3rd, was mustered into service and ordered to protect the Florida frontier against the Seminoles. Seven weeks later he was mustered out of the service at Fort Meade, after probably spending the duration of his service on garrison or patrol duty in or near Fort Meade, and most probably never saw combat. At the expiration of his term of service, he returned to his family on the Pinellas peninsula, where he resumed farming and raising cattle.¹⁴



Workers in Capt. Jim's citrus groves, circa 1895. McMullen's log cabin can be seen in the background, at left.

— Courtesy Heritage Village

His service in the war apparently had no effect on his relations with the local Indians. As his son Birt later recalled: "I do remember him telling about staying all night with the Indians, just outside of Fort Myers — how he ate out of the same bowl with them and smoked the pipe of peace. They loved him and called him the 'Big Chief.'"¹⁵

After the war, he was elected to a second term on the Hillsborough County Commission in 1859, and was one of the last men to serve on the Board before the coming of the Civil War. Then, in the following year, he was elected Major of the 20th Regiment of the Florida Militia.¹⁶

But as the clouds of war began to loom larger on the horizon, McMullen found himself increasingly out of step with the local populace. When the Florida Secession

Convention convened in Tallahassee on January 3, 1861 to consider seceding the state from the Union, the news was generally greeted with enthusiasm in the Tampa Bay area. But in contrast, McMullen was, according to Florida historian George M. Chapin, so "strongly opposed to secession and announced his views so unmistakably that he became unpopular with his fellow citizens" in the area. However, when Florida finally did secede on January 10th, McMullen, according to Chapin, "felt that he must remain with his loved southland" and thus chose to remain and support his adopted state.¹⁷

As the war progressed, the McMullens and other neighboring families on the peninsula were forced to flee to an encampment at Fort Bone in Keystone Park near Safety Harbor for protection from Federal raiding parties and Confederate deserters. While the men



This is the earliest surviving photograph of a McMullen family reunion, showing Capt. Jim's family on the steps of the old Bay View Hotel, circa 1897. This is also the only known photo of the Hotel, which was razed in 1901.

— Courtesy Heritage Village

served the Confederacy, the women took turns guarding the makeshift fort built on the site. They also planted gardens and raised sweet potatoes, sugar cane, cows and hogs to help them get through the increasing hardships caused by the war, and the blockade. James McMullen's youngest daughter Lucy, who was born at Keystone, later recalled how her mother "walked all night around and inside of the fort with a loaded gun on her shoulder".¹⁸

During the spring or summer of 1861, McMullen began organizing a company of 60 men to protect against Federal incursions onto the Pinellas peninsula. Nicknamed the "Clearwater Guards," most of the company consisted of men from some of the first families to settle in Pinellas. On July 20, 1861, the Guards were mustered into the service of the Florida State Militia by order of Brigadier General Joseph M. Taylor with McMullen as Captain. The company was stationed at Clearwater Harbor. In forming the company McMullen, never a great believer in the Confederate cause, was probably less motivated by patriotism than by a desire to protect his property and family from raiding and looting.¹⁹

Within a month however, McMullen and his men became embroiled in controversy. On August 15th a group of 35 citizens from Clearwater Harbor "and vicinity" signed a petition addressed to Florida Gov. Madison S. Perry, which outlined a long list of grievances against the local military authorities in the area. Among other complaints, they cited the fact that Gen. Taylor "has appointed a Captain or Commander over the troops raised here [McMullen], against the wishes of a large majority of the men." Further, they complained about the lack of protection provided Clearwater Harbor and stated that "many of the men [the Clearwater Guards] are without arms and are nearly all without suitable ammunition . . . we . . . do not feel safe under existing circumstances. . . ."²⁰

On October 20th, at the expiration of their three months term of enlistment, the company was mustered out of service. Many of the members of the command then went on to join other units in the Confederate Army, some eventually serving in units as far away as Tennessee and Kentucky. McMullen, however, returned to civilian life to care for his crops and livestock, but ever afterwards, he was always known by the nickname "Capt. Jim," from this military service.²¹

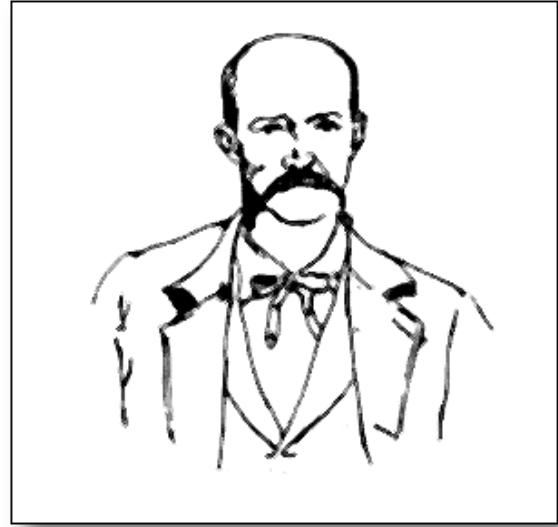
But McMullen could not escape the war entirely. The tightening of the Federal naval blockade on the South, combined with increasing lawlessness in the Tampa Bay area brought severe hardship on area residents. Bands of looters and deserters roamed freely, robbing, stealing and inflicting damage wherever they went. According to Ward McMullen, his father "hated the deserters more than he did the Yankees" because of all the damage they caused. The problem of making a living was becoming increasingly a matter of concern

for McMullen as well. Initially, he helped run cattle for the Confederacy to the starving armies fighting in the north. But Federal incursions into Florida were severely disrupting this vital lifeline until finally, in 1864, Confederate authorities were forced to act. A special unit known as the 1st Battalion of Florida Special Cavalry was formed to protect Confederate cattle supply operations to the north. Known as the "Cow Cavalry," this unit also served to protect local areas from raids by Federals and marauders alike.²²

On September 4, 1863, McMullen had enlisted as a private in Capt. John McNeill's Independent Company of Florida Infantry at Brooksville, for a period of three years or for the duration of the war. Several weeks later, on September 19, Capt. Jim's brother Daniel also enlisted in the same company. Shortly afterwards, Capt. Jim was detached from this unit and transferred to Capt. William B. Watson's Company (Company D) in the Cow Cavalry. With Capt. Jim also was his eldest son Bethel, now 17, and his brother Daniel, both of whom were transferred into the Cow Cavalry, due to their skills as cowmen.

In the Cow Cavalry, McMullen was assigned to lead cattle drives due to his experience on the frontier handling cattle before the war. For the remainder of the war, he led these drives to help supply desperately needed beef, tallow and hides to the battered Confederate armies to the north. Often these drives would go to Charleston and Savannah and would last as long as six weeks. A typical drive was described by one Confederate "cowboy soldier":

A detail of six men, under the command of Mr. James P. McMullen, was ordered to the cattle pens at Fort Meade to take charge of a herd of 365 beef cattle bound



Dr. Bethel McMullen
1845-1940

for Savannah. Early one morning the drive was commenced. The course was a northerly one, and in line with Orange lake in Marion County. The cattle were driven along at a "grazing rate" of speed, usually averaging around eight and one half miles a day. At night, if we were fortunate, we would reach a cattle pen, and here the beeves would be corralled until morning. With the coming of day, the drive was started again, the cattle slowly grazing over the country-side at a pace set by the animals themselves.

When we reached Orange Lake, the cattle were driven into one of the regular stopping pens. It was a good place to bed down, covering about four acres and hemmed up a rail fence 10 to 12 rails high. The "cowboy-soldiers," feeling that their herd was safe for the night, made camp about fifty feet in front of the gate and there lay down to sleep. But late that night, the cattle became frightened and stampeded right out of those pens onto the prairie. But fortunate for us, the melling of the beeves before they actually busted out woke us up

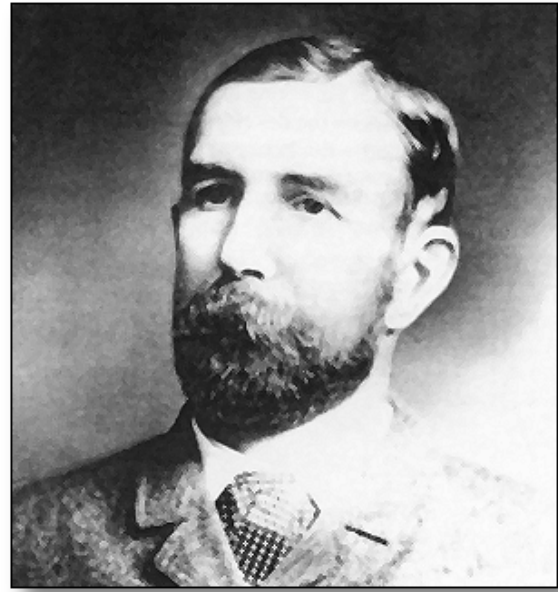
giving us all a chance to saddle up. We followed them about a mile, and before long they held up in a large swamp about a hundred yards from an old plantation house. A fence around the area had helped to direct them into swamp. When the cattle seemed ready to bed down again, we decided the pen was too far away to move them, so we built some large bonfires about 50 feet apart, hoping that would keep the restless beeves there for the rest of the night. But the next morning when we got up, there wasn't a cow in sight. Sometime during the early morning one of the leaders had evidently scented water and had led the rest of 'em through a space little more than 30 feet wide. All were found a mile or two away, placidly chewing their cuds at a bend in Orange Creek. Such was the perversity of the beast.

From Orange Lake we continued our drive to the state line crossing the St. Marys River near the ferry at Traiders Hill. All was uneventful until the herd came to the fording of the Altamaha



**Sarah Jane (McMullen) Hackney Belcher,
1850-1929**

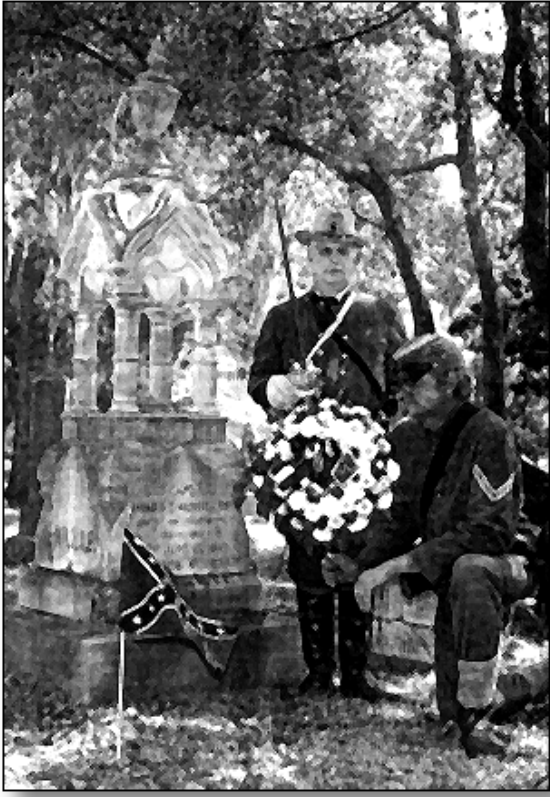
— From *Pioneer Florida*
by D. B. McKay



William A. Belcher, 1846-1935

— From *Pioneer Florida* by D. B. McKay

River some miles northwest of Brunswick, Georgia. Here a crowd of several hundred people had gathered to see us cross at a point where the river was less than a fourth of a mile wide. All went well until two steers swam too far downstream and found themselves on the far side of the old flat, below the landing. They drowned. They were pulled ashore by ropes, and enough meat was butchered from one to supply the drovers for two or three days. The crowd collected by the river was then told that they could have the rest. Within the hour not one horn, hoof or tail remained of the beasts. It shows you how hungry folks were then. From there we drove the cattle on to Savannah where they were delivered. Three hundred and sixty-two head out of the original herd of 365 had made it. Besides, the two that were drowned, one as also lost somewhere between Fort Meade and Savannah. The herd was actually in far better condition than when they left their



Confederate reenactors at the grave of Capt. James P McMullen in the McMullen Cemetery near Clarwater.

— *Tampa Tribune*

prairie home in Florida five weeks earlier.²³

The end of the war found McMullen a 2nd Lieutenant in Company D of the Cow Cavalry. After probably being paroled by U.S. forces in May or June of 1865, Capt. Jim returned to his home and family in Pinellas, and came back to an area shattered by war, neglect and looting. Many homes had been ransacked by Federal troops and Southern marauders alike. "When the Capt. Jim McMullen family returned to their home," according to local historian Gladys Booth Tucker, "Bethel, then a 16 year old boy [actually, he was 19], was delighted to find some syrup that he had hidden in a deep

hole, in jugs and bottles, of course," — apparently one of the few remaining items in

the house that had been successfully kept hidden from the looters.²⁴

As was the case elsewhere throughout the South, the end of the war brought hard times to the Bay area, but instead of giving up on the primitive life on the peninsula, the McMullens seemed to thrive there. In 1866, a fourth McMullen brother, David, moved to the Pinellas area and settled on Morse Hill in Safety Harbor. David stayed only a few years, and eventually moved his family to Lakeland. Then, in 1868, (or perhaps as early as 1865), Capt. Jim's older brother Thomas Fain moved his family to Pinellas and settled about one mile west of Safety Harbor, at a location formerly known as Davey Place, which was directly adjacent to his brother David's property. There, he built a large log cabin (which stood on the site until the 1970s) and raised vegetables, cotton and cattle until his death in 1888. Also about this same time the eldest McMullen brother, William, came and settled four miles south of Largo near Ridge Road, where he farmed and raised cattle. He is also purported to have developed the first commercial saltworks on the peninsula. He later moved to Polk County, where he lived between Lakeland and Mulberry for about 17 years. Then in the early 1890s he returned to Largo to live with his son Daniel. William died in 1898 at the age of 72, and is buried in Lone Pilgrim Cemetery in Largo, just south of his original homestead. And finally, Capt. Jim's youngest brother Malcolm also came to the area, settling about 1871 on a homestead about one mile southeast of Daniel's property, near present-day Belcher Road and East Bay Drive in Largo. The last of the seven brothers to come to the peninsula, he

outlived them all, dying in 1909 at the age of 69.²⁵

The year of 1868 also saw Capt. Jim re-enter the local political arena. On December 2nd of the year he was chosen as one of three delegates from Old Tampa to the Democratic convention at Brooksville to nominate a candidate for the State Senate from the 22nd District. Apparently disgusted by the excesses of the carpetbaggers, Capt. Jim switched his allegiance to the Democrats after the war and according to Chapin, "continuously supported the democratic party, which elected him to various offices of trust."²⁶

By 1869, he also began to recover from the economic effects of the war. Capt. Jim's prescription for economic recovery was to diversify his business interests to cover a broad range of ventures that appealed to his considerable energies. For example, the August 25, 1869 edition of Tampa's *Florida Peninsular* carried two advertisements for McMullen-owned enterprises. The first announced "Florida brick! A splendid article of Brick is now being made at my yard on Old Tampa and for sale in any quantity. The Brick made at this Yard are as good as can be bought in any market- Samples can be seen at Grant & Crafts store, Price per M. [thousand] \$15.00." A second advertisement in the same issue also stated that Capt. Jim "is now having made at his Shop at Turkey Hammock, 12 miles West of Tampa, [Cypress] Syrup Barrels of superior quality, which he will sell at \$2.50 per barrel at the shop or \$3.00 delivered at Tampa" as well as "a fine lot of fish barrels, made expressly for the South Florida fisheries. Price \$2.00 per barrel at the Shop."²⁷

Evidence of his economic recovery during the post-war years may perhaps best be illustrated by an article which appeared in

the first edition of the *Clear Water Times* on July 12, 1873. In it, an editorial paid tribute to Capt. Jim, noting that: "One of the first settlers in this neighborhood, came here an invalid, supposed to be fast verging on a state of incurable consumption. He is now — and has been for years past — one of the most healthy and active business men in the country. He has more irons in the fire — without letting any of them burn — rides more, and endures more fatigue, than any other man in the community, and never shows any signs of flagging health or energy."²⁸

Two weeks later, a second article in the *Times* announced that "Capt. James McMullen passed through this county last week with 1,200 head of cattle enroute to Punta Rassa. They were purchased in the counties of Levy, Taylor and Lafayette. Several hundred were lost in crossing the Suwanee River . . . The Capt. McMullen, mentioned above, is our neighbor, the recuperated invalid of whom mention is made in our first number and we will guarantee that he has more activity and is more fertile in resources than to lose that number of cattle in crossing the largest stream in Florida."²⁹

Then followed Capt. Jim's greatest and most ambitious project: the creation of his own community.

In 1874, after acquiring much of the surrounding land at 25 cents an acre, Capt. Jim founded the community of Bay View, just east of Clearwater Harbor at the spot he had admired more than 30 years before. As Nancy Meador tells it, the area was first known as "Eagles Nest" because "there was a huge pine with a mammoth eagle's nest high in its top branches. It stood as a sentinel keeping watch over the harbor." Later, it was renamed "Swimming Pen," due to the

fact that with its naturally deep harbor and its close proximity to Tampa, it was an ideal location to load cattle onto boats for market. At that time, it was common for the locals to herd their cattle down through the middle of the settlement to Clearwater Bay. There, they would be penned in the water and forced to swim out to boats waiting offshore, where they would be hoisted aboard and taken to market in Tampa. Then, when Capt. Jim established his settlement there, the name was changed to Bay View (probably by Capt. Jim, who no doubt realized that a more attractive name would entice more settlers).

At Bay View, Capt. Jim vigorously made new improvements. Two stores were built there, one of which was managed by Capt. Jim's son Dan and the other by John C. White, who later served as Hillsborough County Judge. In order to encourage further settlement in the area, Capt. Jim also built a wharf to accommodate steamboats, and gave one or two acres of his own land to newcomers. Capt. Jim's son Bethel was the first to build a frame house in the community that same year. Purportedly, it was made from lumber that came from an old home in Cedar Key. The home was dismantled, made into a raft and barged down to Bay View, where it was reconstructed as Bethel's new home.³⁰

The following year, on July 13, 1875, Bay View opened its own Post Office, with Capt. Jim as the settlement's first Postmaster. According to Nancy Meador, "The mail came across the bay by boat and people from all over upper Pinellas . . . came here for their mail."³¹

That same year, Capt. Jim also led the way to establish a Masonic lodge on the peninsula. On August 14, 1875, a meeting was held in Bay View Hotel to charter a

Masonic lodge for the Free & Accepted Masons in the area. In attendance were 11 of the leading members of the community, including Capt. Jim, his brothers John, Daniel, David, Thomas and his son Bethel. A charter for the Lodge was granted on January 13, 1876, and the meetings that followed were held upstairs at the hotel. Then, in 1889, the third floor of the hotel was converted into a lodge hall for the membership. Throughout these years Capt. Jim was an enthusiastic participant in all of the Lodge's activities. In 1878, he served as Treasurer for the Lodge, and also served an additional 10 year term, from 1881 to 1891. (In 1899, the Lodge moved into new quarters in the Bay View School, then in 1908 was moved to Largo. Today, as Star Lodge No. 78, F&AM, it is the oldest Masonic Lodge in Pinellas County.)³²

The year 1875 also marked a major milestone for Capt. Jim's agricultural interests, for probably sometime during this year he converted his farm to a new cash crop, citrus. Odet Philippe first introduced citrus into the area in the 1830s, and Florida's warm climate and sandy soil soon proved to be perfectly suited for raising the new crop. By the 1870s demand for the product in the north had created a strong market for citrus, and while many local farmers had been growing citrus for years, now they began to devote a greater portion of their lands to grow it.

McMullen marketed his citrus in partnership with Gustave Axelson, who owned a small fleet of boats in Pensacola. Together, they would sail to Cedar Key and points as far west as Pensacola and Mobile to market the crop. If any fruit was left over after selling at these markets, he would "put it in sacks or cotton baskets and ship it by train on to Montgomery." A grandson, Robert D. (Bob) Belcher later recalled that "Pa was the only

one who realized anything off his fruit in those early days. He was never a man to give up. He was a driving force, but always went along with the force, never expecting others to do things that he was not willing to have a part in." That Capt. Jim made a success of this new venture there can be little doubt, as evidenced by a notice which appeared in the January 4, 1879 issue of Tampa's *Sunland Tribune*, which announced that "Capt. Jas. McMullen, of Old Tampa, near Bay View, was in town Tuesday and presented us an orange, weighing 16 1/2 ounces."³³

But Capt. Jim was not merely content to simply grow citrus and make a profit. In 1880, he made an important new contribution to the citrus industry in Florida. At the time, the only way to transport and market the crop was to load it into the hull of a boat or place it in barrels. Then it would be shipped to Cedar Key, put on a train and carried to markets in the North. Capt. Jim, however thought that there must be a better and more attractive way to market his produce. As a result, he designed the first orange crates in the state. According to Ward McMullen and Nancy Meador, he sent a "bunch of men in the woods and split three-foot boards and they used palmetto stems to fasten them down as wires." After he had perfected the crate, "he had the sawmill make the ends and he hewed the trees and split the sides himself." The next year, he marketed his citrus in Mobile, using the new crates, and he received \$12.00 per crate, which son Bethel recalled "was mighty good money on those days." The crates quickly caught on with other growers, and helped make the fruit much more attractive to buyers in the North. The new cash crop prospered under Capt. Jim's care, and by 1890, he is said to have had one of the largest groves in Hillsborough County.³⁴

Federal, state and local records for this period give us an interesting glimpse into the McMullen family at this time. U.S. census returns for Hillsborough County in 1880 listed McMullen as residing in Precinct No. 3 with his wife, four of their youngest children, an "adopted" child, a laborer from New Jersey and a man by the name of "John Saunders," from Mexico. Saunders, also known as Juan Patrecia, was said to have been a young Mexican boy who had escaped from a vindictive step-mother in the 1840s. He became a stowaway on a boat headed for Cuba, but was caught and sold into slavery. After a few years he managed to steal a boat and get to Florida, where he changed his name to Saunders. He was also said to have been quite fond of Capt. Jim, "because the latter never made fun of his small size." For a time, he lived with the McMullens, helping in the garden and tending the chickens, and was affectionately known to them as "Uncle Johnnie."

State census returns in 1885 also illustrate the degree of relative prosperity the family enjoyed during this period. Agricultural schedules for that year record Capt. Jim as owning 75 acres of tilled land, along with 100 acres of woodland and forest. His farm is valued at \$2,500, and the estimated value of all farm production for 1885 is given at \$600. In addition, the family, is recorded as owning two horses, two mules, 36 milch cows, 10 pigs, 62 poultry birds and 40 other livestock. Hillsborough County tax rolls for 1884 also show McMullen and his wife to have owned at least 457 acres of land valued at approximately \$3,785 — all in all, a very prosperous homestead by the standards of that time and place.³⁵

The 1880s also ushered in another period of intense activity for McMullen. In October of 1880, with the help of "Uncle Dick" Booth, McMullen began to cut a right of way from

the head of Old Tampa Bay to Bay View. This, according to Nancy McMullen Meador was the first road on the peninsula that was built according to surveyor's specifications. Originally named Haines Road, the name was later changed to McMullen-Booth Road by the Pinellas County Commission, to honor the two pioneers who built it.³⁶

The following month, 19 years after he had last served, Capt. Jim was elected to a third term on the Hillsborough County Commission. But once again, he lost a bid for reelection two years later, finishing a dismal eighth in a huge field of 25 candidates. It would prove to be his last bid for public office, a service that seemed to appeal more to Capt. Jim as an avocation than as a means to power or ambition.³⁷

Educational pursuits also continued to interest McMullen. In 1882, Capt. Jim is said to have built a small log cabin schoolhouse at Bay View, to accommodate the growing demand for an educational facility in town. By 1889, a two-story frame building was built to replace this, with the upstairs serving as a Masonic meeting room and the downstairs serving as a large classroom.³⁸

By the mid-1880s, with the promise of the coming of the railroad to the area, Capt. Jim stepped up his development efforts in Bay View, and by 1885 had completed a second series of improvements, adding a large hotel to the settlement. The hotel (known as the Bay View Hotel) was a two-story, 20-room structure with open double-tiered galleries which overlooked Tampa Bay. A year later, a second wharf was added to handle the increasing steamboat traffic coming to the area. As Bethel McMullen recalled: "steam-boats came in once a week, bringing passengers and freight and carrying produce that was raised here back with them. Mr.

Bill Henderson [W.B. Henderson, a prominent Tampa merchant and banker] had a steamboat which ran regularly to Mobile. It carried interesting cargo from this vicinity, ranging from water-melons to gophers."³⁹

In making the improvements, McMullen clearly anticipated that Bay View would be a major stop on the railroad line into Pinellas. Therefore, he very early on became involved in efforts to bring a railroad onto the peninsula, as a notice which appeared in the January 1, 1887 edition of the *Sea Breeze*, published at Disston City (now Gulfport) reported that "A railroad meeting was held at Tarpon Springs, recently ... to solicit donations of land to the railroad." [The "railroad" is the proposed Orange Belt Railway, which eventually expanded its line from Oakland in North Central Florida into the Pinellas peninsula.] Capt. Jim attended the meeting, and was appointed to serve on a committee for township 29 (the Clearwater Harbor-Bay View area) to help solicit land donations. A month later, The *Sea Breeze* reported that representatives of the Orange Belt Railway "have spent two days with the people on the Point, inspiring considerable confidence that they mean business, and receiving some substantial guarantees in the way of help, in land donations."⁴⁰

But when the railroad finally did come to Pinellas in the spring of 1888, Bay View was bypassed entirely. Capt. Jim had thought that the Orange Belt would naturally come directly through Bay View, as this was the most direct route. But instead, the railway ran down the Gulf Coast into the newly-named settlement of St. Petersburg, and although completion of the railway proved to be of tremendous benefit to the Pinellas peninsula as a whole, it proved to be a devastating blow to McMullen's little settlement. By bypassing Bay View, it drew settlers and development away from the

small community, which eventually spelled its doom. By 1900, Bay View had declined markedly, never to become the large commercial center which Capt. Jim had envisioned. Today, the remnants of the little community may still be seen, lying partly within the city limits of Clearwater, and partly within an unincorporated section of Pinellas County.⁴¹

The following years were largely ones of sadness and disappointment for Capt. Jim. On December 17, 1890, Elizabeth Campbell McMullen, Capt. Jim's wife of almost 46 years, died at the age of 65, probably in the log house the family had built when first coming to the area. Then on December 27, 1894, the first of a series of devastating freezes hit the state, which produced frost and froze citrus fruit right on the tree in most groves throughout Central and North Florida. In Tampa, temperatures as low as 19 degrees Fahrenheit were recorded. Later, on February 7, 8 and 9, a second freeze hit, which killed countless numbers of young seedlings and older trees alike. The long-term effects of the "Great Freeze of '94-5" on the citrus industry and the economy in Florida would last for years. On the Pinellas Peninsula, although the damage was generally less severe (the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico to the west and Tampa Bay to the east and the warm breezes they generated helped to protect the citrus crop somewhat), it still had an effect. The extent of the damage to Capt. Jim's groves is not clear, but it must have taken its toll. At least some in his family however, appear to have come out of the freeze with relatively little damage to their crop. Capt. Jim's son Birt was the luckiest local grower. At "Badwater" near Clearwater, where he owned a grove, the trees never froze at all. As Nancy Meador recalled, "Ordinarily citrus brought one dollar or a dollar and a

half a crate; after the freeze he [Birt] got fifteen dollars a crate."⁴²

This setback presaged the end for Capt. Jim. On April 17, 1895, he died at his son Bethel's home in Bay View at the age of 71. According to the *Clearwater Press*, "His death, though anticipated by himself and family for more than a year past, came suddenly, was peaceful and almost painless. He had been able to ride, and was carried to his son's residence only two days previous to his death, having no more unfavorable symptoms than had been indicated for several months. A disease of the heart, which had caused his long suffering, was the cause of his death," the article noted, and went on to pay a heartfelt tribute to both the man and his accomplishments: "We can truthfully say that to no one man in all this territory are we more indebted for the present favorable conditions surrounding us than to this veteran pioneer and promoter of every good enterprise. He was specially known as a friend to the friendless and a helper to every stranger seeking to establish a home in this section. His intimate knowledge of the country enabled him to point his followers to the most favorable locations for homesteads and general improvement, and he was always ready to perform such service without any hope of reward."⁴³

The following day at noon, he was buried next to his wife in the McMullen Cemetery which he had established in 1881 and which today is located northeast of Clearwater on Coachman Road.⁴⁴

But even after his death, Capt. Jim's legacy to his adopted land continued to live on through the considerable achievements of his children. Capt. Jim's oldest son Bethel was the first dentist to practice in South Florida, establishing his practice in Tampa

in 1871 and later near Clearwater in 1874. His practice at that time covered a vast area, from Monticello in Jefferson County south to Key West. He was also actively involved in the community, serving for a time as chairman of the Hillsborough County School Board. Bethel died in Clearwater on January 31, 1940 at the age of 94, and at the time was purportedly one of the oldest surviving soldiers from the Civil War in the Bay area.⁴⁵

The second son, Daniel Campbell McMullen, lived his entire life in the Clearwater area and was, according to Florida historian George Chapin, "a prominent representative of horticultural interests, having about four hundred acres of land on which he engaged in stock-raising, and also in the cultivation of oranges and vegetables. He made a specialty of handling vegetables which he shipped extensively and also supplied to the local hotels. His labors resulted in transforming unimproved tracts of land into fields of rich fertility and success attended him in his undertakings."⁴⁶

Another son, James Robert, also went into farming and planted citrus trees in the Bay View area. He also worked a big oyster bar in Old Tampa Bay, and for a time carried passengers and cargo in his sailing ship, the *Carrie Bell* (later renamed the *Gypsy Maid*). In 1889, he followed his father as Postmaster of Bay View, serving until 1897. One of his children, Nancy McMullen Meador, later became head of the Clan McMullen in North America and served on both the Pinellas County and Clearwater Historical Commissions. As the leading authority on the family's history in Pinellas, she wrote scores of articles on the early McMullen pioneers, and was for many years until her death in 1984 an invaluable source of knowledge on local area history.⁴⁷

A fifth son, Birten Lee McMullen (affectionately known as "Uncle Birt" to his many friends in the area) attended the Sylvan Abbey schools and later went to Emory University in Atlanta. Like many in the family, he raised cattle and developed extensive citrus groves on the peninsula, most of them located near his home on Gulf-to-Bay Boulevard in Clearwater. He was also very actively involved in local politics, serving for over 20 years as a member of Pinellas County's Democratic Executive Committee.⁴⁸

And finally, Capt. Jim's youngest son George Ward McMullen also made his mark on the Pinellas community. Affectionately known as "Uncle Ward", he attended Smith Institute in Lexington, Kentucky and then returned to Pinellas to become a citrus grower. He also served as a Trustee of the Safety Harbor Elementary School from 1915 to 1920, and as a Pinellas County Commissioner from 1919 to 1921. Twice married, with 10 children and one stepchild, he was a popular and much-loved figure in Pinellas County for many years, often being sought out for his wisdom, wry humor and fond memories of his days as a pioneer in the Pinellas wilderness. He died in Clearwater on June 1, 1966 at the age of 95, the last of the surviving children of Capt. Jim and Elizabeth.⁴⁹

Capt. Jim's daughters also made significant contributions of their own, marrying into some of the most prominent families in Pinellas. The eldest surviving daughter, Sarah Jane "Sally" (or "Sallie") McMullen, first married Thomas B. Hackney, son of Dr. James Hackney, who was one of the earliest pioneers of St. Petersburg. After his death in 1881, she married William A. Belcher of Largo, who was the widower of Sarah's younger sister Mary. Belcher served in the 1887 State Legislature from Hillsborough

and was the first to introduce a bill in the Florida House of Representatives to separate Pinellas from Hillsborough — a proposal which eventually was adopted in 1911, creating Pinellas as Florida's 48th county. By Hackney, Sally had five children, and by Belcher, four. One of her children, W.L. Hackney, served as a Pinellas County Commissioner from 1925 to 1929.⁵⁰

Another daughter, Lucy Marian "Aunt Lucy" McMullen, married DeJoinville J. Booth, son of "Uncle Dick" Booth. The couple had eight children and lived for most of their married lives in Safety Harbor, where they became prominent and much-loved members of the local community. There, Aunt Lucy helped to organize the first missionary society in the Sylvan Abbey Methodist Church, and was a charter member of the Safety Harbor Order of the Eastern Star.⁵¹

Today, with descendants in the local area numbering in the hundreds (if not thousands), the family of Capt. Jim McMullen continues to exert a powerful and lasting influence on Pinellas County and the Tampa Bay area, just as their forefather did so many years before.

Sometimes, in the still half-light of early morning, one can almost see Capt. Jim sitting on the porch of his grand old log cabin, surveying all that has come after him. And we, who have come after him, owe him a great debt of gratitude, for our area would surely not be what it is today without the influence of his forceful character. Though not the first to come to the Pinellas peninsula, he was by far the most energetic in promoting its virtues and as a result made a lasting mark on the development of the area. And in a sense his legacy — the legacy of an independent man who only wanted something better for himself and his family

— lives on in us today, and in our hopes and dreams for this magical place we call home. Quite a legacy for a man who had become a pioneer only by accident after wandering, sick and alone, into the land of his dreams.⁵²

¹ Daughters of the American Revolution, Boca Ciega Chapter, "Pinellas County Florida Cemetery Inscriptions," n.p., 1971 (Mimeographed), 111; Donald Draper Campbell, *The Descendants of John Campbell and Wife Mary Nicholson, Pioneers of the Florida Territory* (Alexandria, Va. 1982), 59-61; Folks Huxford, *Pioneers of Wiregrass Georgia*, 6 vols. (Adel, Ga. 1954), II, 224; Harvey L. Wells Collection, 28 vols., n.p., n.d. (Typewritten), XIX, 5, 40, Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo, Florida; D.B. McKay, "First of Pioneer Florida Clan Of McMullens Fought In Battle Of Bunker Hill As Drummer Boy," *Tampa Sunday Tribune*, 6 December 1953, sec. C, 14; and Robert C. Harris, "The Seven McMullen Brothers of Pinellas County," *Tampa Bay History* 1 (Fall/Winter 1979), 62-63. Harris is apparently mistaken in identifying James McMullen Sr.'s unit in the Revolutionary War as "Canburys Company." See letter from E.J. McMullen to Robert Harris, 2 June 1979, McMullen Family File, Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo. Also, recent research conducted by McMullen family member Ernst Upmeyer, III, suggests that the McMullens may have first arrived not at Halifax, Nova Scotia but at Halifax, North Carolina. See McMullen family papers in the possession of Mr. Ernst Upmeyer III, Largo.

² Campbell, *The Descendants of John Campbell*, 59; Harvey L. Wells Collection, II, 96; and Nancy Meador, "Jim McMullen and Dick Booth Built First Road in Pinellas County in 1880," *Clearwater Sun*, 4 December 1949, 2.

³ Nancy Meador, "Citrus, Cattle Raising, 'Big Storm' Mark Early Days in Bay View History," *Clearwater Sun*, 20 November 1949, 2; Interview with G. Ward McMullen, son of James P. McMullen, Clearwater, Florida, 8 October 1958; Harris, "The Seven McMullen Brothers," 62-63; Campbell, *The Descendants of John Campbell*, 61; Lorna Carroll, "The McMullens of Pinellas," *Floridian*, 6 August 1967, 11; and Linda Parker, "McMullens Carved History From Pinellas Wilderness," *Clearwater Sun*, 2 July 1975, sec. B, 9. There are numerous versions of the now legendary tale of McMullen's Florida journey, but the essential elements remain the same.

Harris ("The Seven McMullen Brothers," 62) and Campbell (*The Descendants of John Campbell*, 61) give the year as 1841; but Nancy Meador ("Citrus, Cattle Raising," 2) and G. Ward McMullen (Interview, 8 October 1958) both give the year as 1842, which is to be preferred. Why exactly McMullen chose to come to the Tampa Bay area is also unclear, although some (Carroll, "The McMullens of Pinellas," 11) have suggested that he was instructed to go to Florida for the "salt air"- a common treatment for tuberculosis patients in the 19th Century. Others in the McMullen family have speculated that James' father may have come to the peninsula at an earlier date to either farm or to visit, but eventually returned to Georgia (Interview with Paul McMullen, great-grandson of James P, McMullen, Clearwater, Florida, 30 May 1995). There is no direct evidence for this, although we do know that the father did own for a time in the 1840s land in North Florida. See Campbell, *The Descendants of John Campbell*, 59.

⁴ Campbell, *The Descendants of John Campbell*, 11-14, 61; Harris, "The Seven McMullen Brothers," 62, 64; and Richard J. Stanaback, *A History of Hernando County 1840-1976* (Brooksville, Fla. 1976), 18. The Melendez Settlement was located just southeast of present-day Brooksville.

⁵ Harris, "The Seven McMullen Brothers," 62, 64.

⁶ Nancy Meador, "Bob Belcher, oldest living Grandson of Capt. Jim McMullen, tells of Old Days Around Largo," *Clearwater Sun*, 24 September, 1950, 21.

⁷ Campbell, *The Descendants of John Campbell*, 61; and Harris, "The Seven McMullen Brothers," 64; G. Ward McMullen, comp., "The Family of Capt. Jim McMullen," (n.d.: n.p.), 1-2, McMullen family files, Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo; and Paul McMullen interview.

⁸ Harris, "The Seven McMullen Brothers," 64; G. Ward McMullen interview; and Dick Bothwell, "This Old House . . . Is 104 Years Old!," *Sunday*, 19 August 1956, 4-5.

⁹ The actual date of the McMullens move and the building of the log cabin has been the subject of intense speculation for years, and dates vary widely between sources. Ralph Reed, first Director of the Pinellas County Historical Museum and an accomplished journalist, believed that the family moved back to Pinellas shortly after the December

1850 census was taken- a date which seems plausible. In her history of the area, Nancy Meador makes no mention of the move back to Benton after 1848, and suggests in two separate articles that the log cabin was completed in 1848, a date contradicted by Ward McMullen, who stated in interviews that the log house was built in 1852. James P McMullen also planted a variety of crops on his land, including cotton, peas, corn, sweet potatoes and sugar cane. See Ralph Reed, "The McMullen Family of Pinellas," paper presented at the annual McMullen family reunion, Clearwater, Florida, 4 July 1963, in McMullen family file, Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo; Meador, "Citrus, Cattle Raising," 2, "Sturdy Two-Story Log Cabin Built by Jim McMullen in 1848; It Still Stands," *Clearwater Sun*, 5 February 1950, 6 and "Uncle Bert' McMullen, 84, Born in Log Cabin, Vividly Recalls His Childhood," *Clearwater Sun*, 14 May 1950, 21; G. Ward McMullen interview and "The Family of Capt. Jim McMullen," p. 1; Bothwell, "This Old House," 4-5; Harris, "The Seven McMullen Brothers," 64; and Tom Keyser, "House Tells History," *Clearwater Sun*, 26 November 1973, sec. B, 1. After James McMullen's death, the home was sold to the Coachman family in 1902. They owned citrus groves in the area, and used the popular landmark as a trademark on their citrus labels. In 1977, the cabin was moved to Heritage Village, in Largo, where as the oldest existing structure in the county, it is still a popular attraction.

¹⁰ William L. Straub, *History of Pinellas County Florida* (St. Augustine, Fla., 1929), 36-37.

¹¹ Harris, "The Seven McMullen Brothers," 64-65, 73; Campbell, *The Descendants of John Campbell*, 57; and Bicentennial History Book Committee, *Largo Florida Then 'til . . .* (Largo, Fla., n.d.), 6.

¹² Pinellas County, Florida Board of Public Instruction, *The Golden Anniversary of Pinellas Schools* (Clearwater, Fla., 1962), 10; Nancy Meador, "When Pinellas Was Pioneer Wilderness Settlers Built First School in Bay View," *Clearwater Sun*, 18 December 1949, 6; and "Sturdy Two-Story Log Cabin," 6; Workshop in Resources Education, *Pinellas Resources* (Clearwater, Fla., 1945), 11; and *Sunland Tribune*, 18 June 1881, 3. McMullen also later helped to build the first publicly-supported school on the peninsula in 1855. Known as the Taylor School, it was built by John S. Taylor and McMullen together with their slaves on Taylor's land near Rousseau Creek. The first class held 19 students and lasted for 40 days. The first teacher was William

N. Campbell. Harvey L. Wells Collection, II, 89; and Pinellas County, *The Golden Anniversary of Pinellas Schools*, 10. Hillsborough County Commission records for this year also reveal that on December 7, 1855, McMullen, Taylor and Eli Hart were appointed trustees of Hillsborough County School District No. 1 (at Old Tampa) for 1856, to serve for 1 year. See Hillsborough County Commission records, 7 December 1855.

¹³ "Proceedings of the Alafia Convention, Held on the 15th. Sept. '55," *Florida Peninsular*, 29 September 1855, 2; Spessard Stone, "The Know-Nothings of Hillsborough County" *Sunland Tribune* 19 (November 1993), 3, 5; Hillsborough County election returns, 1853 and 1855, Record Group 150, Series 21, Carton 18, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee; Florida Historical Records Survey, *Roster of State and County Officers*, 142; and John Solomon Otto, "Florida's Cattle-Ranching Frontier: Hillsborough County (1860)," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 63 (July 1984), 78, 82.

¹⁴ Seminole War military service records of James P. McMullen, Hooker's Indpt. Co., Florida Mounted Vols., Record Group 407, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; James W. Covington, *The Billy Bowlegs War* (Chuluota, Fla., 1982), 74-78; and Fred L. Robertson, Comp., *Soldiers of Florida* (Live Oak, Fla., 1902; reprint ed., Macclenny, Fla., 1983), 13. Fort Meade was in that part of Hillsborough which became Polk County in 1861.

¹⁵ McMullen Seminole War service records; and Nancy Meador, "Uncle Birt' McMullen," 21.

¹⁶ Hillsborough County election returns, 1859, Record Group 150, Series 21, Carton 18, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee; Florida Historical Records Survey, *Roster of State and County Officers*, 142; and Tampa *Florida Peninsular*, 14 April 1860, 2; and 12 May 1860, 2.

¹⁷ Ralph A. Wooster, "The Florida Secession Convention," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 36 (April 1958), 374, 377-378; and Chapin, *Florida 1513-1913*, 516. McMullen was however, no abolitionist. Hillsborough County Tax Rolls for 1855 show him to have owned two slaves. See Ralph Reed notes, McMullen family file, Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo. This evidence directly refutes the statement of historian Walter Fuller, who claimed that the McMullens were "dirt farmers" who "abhorred slavery" (Carroll, "The McMullens of Pinellas," 11). Instead, McMullen probably based his

objections to secession on the hardship and suffering it would cause local residents, as well as the unfair burden that fighting a war would place upon the poorer, small or non-slave holding Southerners- a common complaint of Southern anti-secessionists.

¹⁸ Nancy Meador, "'Aunt Lucy' Booth's Full Life Goes Back to Civil War and Reconstruction," *Clearwater Sun*, 23 April 1950, 10.

¹⁹ Payroll sheet for Capt. J. P. McMullen, "Clearwater Guards," 20 July-3 September 1861, Record Group 350, Series 43, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee; Robertson, *Soldiers of Florida*, 49-50; and Harris, "The Seven McMullen Brothers," 65.

²⁰ Petition of the Citizens of Clear Water, Florida to Gov. M. S. Perry, Clear Water, 15 August 1861, Record Group 101, Series 577, Carton 1, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee.

²¹ Robertson, *Soldiers of Florida*, 49; and Payroll sheet for Capt. J.P. McMullen, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee.

²² Waters, "Tampa's Forgotten Defenders," 7-8; Robinson, *History of Hillsborough*, 301; Robert A. Taylor, "Cow Cavalry: Munnerlyn's Battalion in Florida, 1864-1865," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 65 (October 1986), 196-214; and Ward McMullen interview.

²³ Civil War military service records of James P. McMullen, Co. I, 9 Florida Infantry (Confederate), Record Group 109, National Archives, Washington; Joe Akerman, *Florida Cowman* (Kissimmee, Fla., 1976), 88-89; Ward McMullen interview; David W. Hartman, comp., *Biographical Rosters of Florida's Confederate and Union Soldiers 1861-1865* 6 vols. (Wilmington, N.C., 1995), III, 973; and Florida Confederate pension applications of Bethel and Daniel McMullen, Record Group 137, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee. Harris ("The Seven McMullen Brothers," 6-5) mistakenly identifies Daniel's service "in Captain McNeil's 19th Georgia Infantry" when in fact he joined the same unit as Capt. Jim — Capt. McNeill's Independent Company of Florida Infantry, which later became Co. I, 9th Florida Infantry Regiment. See Civil War service records of Daniel McMullen, Co. I, 9 Florida Infantry, Record Group 109, National Archives, Washington. See also Robert A. Taylor, "Cow Cavalry: Munnerlyn's Battalion in Florida, 1864-1865," 196-214 and "Rebel Beef: Florida Cattle and the Confederate Army, 1862-1864," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 67 (July

1988), 15-31 for background on the history of the Cow Cavalry in Florida.

²⁴ Civil War military service records of J.B. McMullen, Co. D, 1 Battalion Florida Special Cavalry (Confederate) and J.D. McMullen, Co.A, 1 Battalion Florida Special Cavalry (Confederate), Record Group 109, National Archives; Hartman, comp., *Biographical Rosters of Florida's Confederate and Union Soldiers 1861-1865*, III, 973, and Tucker, "Way Back," 6 June 1957, 1. Considerable confusion surrounds the last several years of McMullen's military career in the Cow Cavalry. Two possible service records have been found that might be his, one for a "J.B." McMullen, 2nd lieutenant of Company D of the Cow Cavalry (1st Battalion Florida Special Cavalry) and one for a "J.D." McMullen, private in Company A. Although it is unusual for a private to advance to the rank of 2nd lieutenant without holding any intervening ranks, such things were not unusual for the Cow Cavalry, an unusual outfit, and it seems most likely that Capt. Jim's service was with Company D. This is primarily because "J.D." McMullen's service records show his place of enlistment as Finholoway, near Perry in North Florida- suggesting that this might be another member of the McMullen family. However, all this still remains as pure speculation.

²⁵ Harris, "The Seven McMullen Brothers," 70-71, 73; and Straub, *History of Pinellas County, Florida*, 34.

²⁶ Tampa *Florida Peninsular*, 5 December 1868, 2; and Chapin, *Florida 1513-1913*, 516.

²⁷ Tampa *Florida Peninsular*, 25 August 1869, 2-3.

²⁸ *Clear Water Times*, 12 July 1873, 2.

²⁹ *Clear Water Times*, 26 July 1873, 2.

³⁰ Meador, "Citrus, Cattle Raising," 2; and City of Clearwater, Florida, "Bayview: An Architectural And Historical Inventory Of The Built Environment" (Clearwater: Mimeographed, n.d.).

³¹ Harvey L. Wells Collection, "Pinellas County Post Offices," vol. 23; Appointment Book of Postmasters in Hillsborough County, Record Group 28, National Archives, Washington; and Meador, "Citrus, Cattle Raising," 2.

³² Star Lodge No. 78, Free & Accepted Masons, *Star Lodge No. 78 F&AM Centennial 1876-1976* (Largo, Fla., n.d.), 2, 4, 6, 10-17, 31, 36. Also, prior to this

McMullen was one of the earliest members of Hillsborough Masonic Lodge No. 25 in Tampa. Records for this Lodge indicate that he was initiated on September 20, 1851, and demitted on March 16, 1867. See "Members, Hillsborough Masonic Lodge," *Florida Genealogical Journal* 18 (October 1982), 73.

³³ Nancy Meador, "Bob Belcher, Oldest Living Grandson of Capt. Jim McMullen, Tells of Old Days Around Largo," *Clearwater Sun*, 24 September 1950, 21; "Uncle Birt' McMullen," 21; and Tampa *Sunland Tribune*, 4 January 1879, 3. Nancy Meador also suggests (in "Citrus, Cattle Raising," 2) that on first settling on the peninsula, Capt. Jim planted citrus on his land with the help of Odet Philippe, who is credited with being the first to introduce citrus seeds to this area. This probably is true, and we do know that by 1873 he had planted 75 orange trees on his property (Campbell, *The Descendants of John Campbell*, 63) but a full- scale move to citrus on his part was not made until about 1875. According to Ward McMullen, (who remembers picking cotton until the switch was made), the new crop was planted because, as he said "there was more money in citrus" (G. Ward McMullen interview).

³⁴ Meador, "Dr. Bethel McMullen," 4; G. Ward McMullen interview; and Harris, "The Seven McMullen Brothers," 66.

³⁵ Tenth United States Census, 1880, Hillsborough County, Florida, 397; Harris, "The Seven McMullen Brothers," 66; Hillsborough County Tax Rolls, t884, on file at the Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo; and Florida State Census, t885, Hillsborough County, 15, 26.

³⁶ Meador, "Jim McMullen and Dick Booth Built First Road," 2; and McMullen, "The Family of Capt. Jim McMullen," 3. Before this, Capt. Jim had also served as 1 of 3 Hillsborough County road commissioners for District #1 (Old Tampa) in 1866. See "Minutes Hillsborough Co., FL Commissioner's Meetings," *Florida Genealogical Journal* 17 (1981), 56.

³⁷ Tampa *Sunland Tribune*, 11 November 1880, 3; and 16 November 1882, 3; and Records of State and Local Commissions 1880-1895, Record Group 150, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee.

³⁸ Meador, "When Pinellas Was Pioneer Wilderness," 6.

³⁹ Nancy Meador, "Children Virtually Lived on the Water In the Early Days of Bay View History," *Clearwater Sun*, 29 January 1950, 9; and "Dr. Bethel McMullen," 4; and City of Clearwater, "Bayview." McMullen's Bayview Hotel enjoyed a modest success prior to the turn of the century until it was razed in 1901. The lumber from the hotel was used to construct a large two-story residence, which presently stands on the original site of the hotel.

⁴⁰ *Sea Breeze*, 1 January 1887, 1 and 1 February 1887, 2. According to research done by Ralph Reed, first Director of the Pinellas County Historical Museum, McMullen's committee eventually raised \$20,000 to buy rights of way for the railroad.

⁴¹ City of Clearwater, "Bayview;" Straub, *History of Pinellas County Florida*, pp. 48-49; and George W. Pettengill, Jr., "The Story of the Florida Railroads," *The Railroad and Locomotive Historical Society Bulletin No. 86* (July 1952), 89.

⁴² Harvey L. Wells Collection, XIX, 40; Family Bible Record of James and Elizabeth McMullen; Daughters of the American Revolution, Boca Ciega Chapter, "Pinellas County Florida Cemetery Inscriptions," 111; and Michael L. Sanders, "The Great Freeze of 1894-95 in Pinellas County," *Tampa Bay History 2* (Spring/Summer 1980), 7-13.

⁴³ "Death of Capt. Jas. P. McMullen," *Clearwater Press*, 25 April 1895, 1; Harvey L. Wells Collection, XIX, 40; Family Bible Record of James and Elizabeth McMullen; and Paul McMullen interview. Curiously, no obituary for McMullen appeared in any Tampa paper at the time, showing perhaps the lack of regard which many felt those in Tampa had for Pinellas at that time. According to Capt. Jim's great-grandson Paul McMullen, McMullen died after a visit to his brother Daniel's homestead near Largo. After visiting with Daniel and his family, Capt. Jim refused an offer to stay overnight and instead rode his horse back home in a rainstorm, which resulted in his last illness.

⁴⁴ Harris, "The Seven McMullen Brothers," 68; McMullen Cemetery file, Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo; and Daughters of the American Revolution, Boca Ciega Chapter, "Pinellas County Florida Cemetery Inscriptions," 111.

⁴⁵ Family Bible Record of James P. and Elizabeth (Campbell) McMullen, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments* (Philadelphia, n.d.), in the possession of Mrs. Mary Caldwell (Typewritten

transcript of same in McMullen family file, Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo); Florida Confederate pension application of Bethel McMullen, Record Group 137, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida; Nancy Meador, "Dr. Bethel McMullen First Graduate Dentist in Section", *Clearwater Sun*, 27 November 1949, 4; Tampa *Florida Peninsular*, 27 May 1871, 3; "Dr. Bethel McMullen Dies", *Clearwater Sun*, 1 February 1940, 1; and "Dr. Bethel McMullen, County Pioneer Dies; Funeral is Saturday", *St. Petersburg (Fla.) Independent*, 1 February 1940, 4.

⁴⁶ Family Bible Record of James and Elizabeth McMullen; Harvey L. Wells Collection, XIX, 40; George M. Chapin, *Florida 1513- 1913: Past Present and Future*, 2 vols. (Jacksonville, Fla., 1914), II, 370; and McMullen, "The Family of Capt. Jim McMullen", 1.

⁴⁷ Nancy Meador, "Sailboats Played Important Role In Lives of Early Bay View Settlers", *Clearwater Sun*, 11 December 1949, 2; and "Death of J.R. McMullen" and "In Memoriam", *Clearwater News*, 27 July 1911, 1.

⁴⁸ Meador, "Uncle Birt' McMullen," 21; "County Pioneer B.L. McMullen Dies in Largo", *Clearwater Sun*, 23 October 1950, 1; "Birten L. McMullen Dies; Lifetime County Resident," *St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times*, 22 October 1950, sec. 2, 15; and Straub, *History of Pinellas County Florida*, 406.

⁴⁹ McMullen, "The Family of Capt. Jim McMullen," 1-3, McMullen family files, Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo; Family Bible Record of James and Elizabeth McMullen; Harvey L. Wells Collection, XIX, 40; Nancy Meador, "Ward McMullen, Grandson [sic] of One of 7 McMullen Brothers, Recalls Early Days," *Clearwater Sun*, 16 July 1950, 21; Dick Bothwell, "Death of "Uncle Ward" Marks End Of An Era", *St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times*, 2 June 1966, sec. B, 1; and Paul Davis, "Last Of Early McMullens", *St. Petersburg (Fla.) Independent*, 3 June 1966, sec. A, 15. According to Ward, Capt. Jim was out grinding cane at the mouth of Stevenson's Creek when word reached him that Ward was about to be born. He rushed home just in time to witness the birth. "My daddy said I was the last and there never would be another one like me," he recalled fondly during his later years.

⁵⁰ Family Bible Record of James and Elizabeth McMullen; Harvey L. Wells Collection, XIX, 40; D.B. McKay, *Pioneer Florida*, 3 vols. (Tampa, Fla,

1959), III, 117; "Mrs. Belcher Passes Away", *Clearwater Sun*, 20 January 1929, 1; and Hackney family files and Pinellas County Government files, "Pinellas County Officials Commissioned", Heritage Village Library and Archives, Largo.

⁵¹ Nancy Meador, "'Aunt Lucy' Booth's Full Life", *Clearwater Sun*, 23 April 1950, 10; "Lucy Booth, Pioneer Safety Harborite, Dies," *Clearwater Sun*, 3 October 1951, 1; and "Mrs. Lucy Booth, 89, Dies; A Pinellas County Pioneer," *St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times*, 4 October 1951, 2.

⁵² In closing, the author would like to gratefully acknowledge the contributions of several people to this paper. First and foremost, I would like to express my thanks to the McMullen family, particularly Mr. Paul McMullen and Mr. Ernst Upmeyer, III, who generously gave of their time and supplied me with much valuable information. My thanks also to Gall Schueren, Janie Bridges, Ruth Pesich and the Pinellas County Historical Society for their untiring efforts to help me, which were all sincerely appreciated. Without their support and assistance, this project would have never been completed. And last, but certainly never least, I would like to thank my lovely wife Mylene for her undying support, patience, and love.