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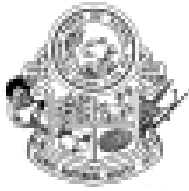
**Journal of the Tampa Historical Society**



VOL. XVII

NOVEMBER, 1991

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# THE SUNLAND TRIBUNE

Volume XVII November, 1991

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

KYLE S. VanLANDINGHAM  
Editor

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**“BENNY HAVENS”**

From the Tony Pizzo Collection, USF

INSIDE BACK COVER

Cover photo. The Tampa Bay Hotel, built by Henry B. Plant opened in 1891. The building, which now houses the University of Tampa, celebrated its centennial in 1991.

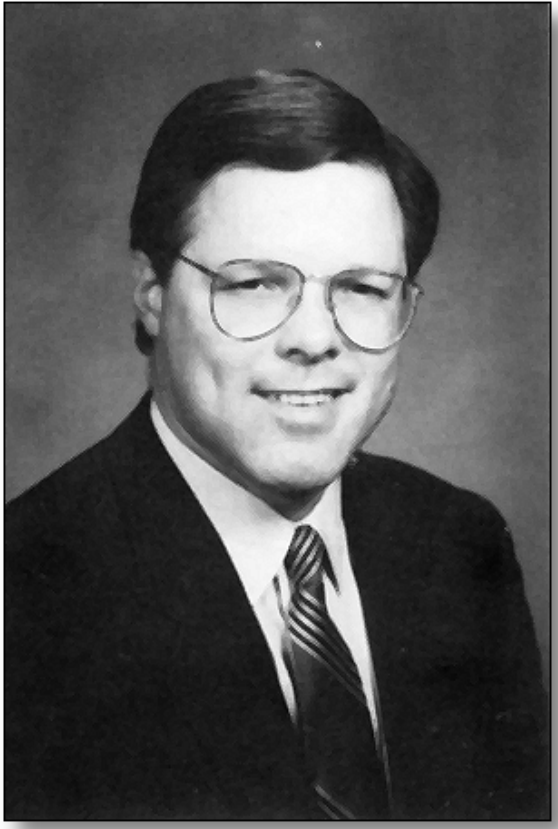
The *Sunland Tribune* is the official annual publication of Tampa Historical Society, distributed to members each year. Non-members may receive limited edition issues by contacting the Society at 259-1111.

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

## The President's Report

# POISED FOR THE FUTURE

By **GEORGE B. HOWELL, III**



**GEORGE B. HOWELL, III**  
President

Marie Antoinette once said of history: "There is nothing new, only what we forget." It is with this thought in mind that the original founders of the Tampa Historical Society, Inc. in 1971 set forth their mission "to bring together those people interested in history, and especially in the history of Tampa and Florida." Your board has searched diligently over the past year to determine how we can best fulfill our obligations to the Society's founders and to

you the membership. The key element of our efforts this year has been partnership. Successful programs and fundraising events were developed and carried out through partnerships with the H. B. Plant Museum, the Tampa/Hillsborough County History Museum, Inc., the Florida Historical Society, Mosaic, Inc. and many others. We have found strength and unity of purpose in the bonds made during the year and will continue to build on these new relationships.

In July of this year, a partnership was forged which may have an impact on the Society and our community like no other before it. Your board of directors adopted unanimously a resolution to pledge our efforts and resources to the Tampa/Hillsborough County History Museum, Inc. We have embraced as our own the mission of this organization to develop and build a first class history museum in Tampa; it is a mission very closely akin to our own. It is our ultimate goal to help facilitate establishment of a temporary museum and, ultimately, construction of a new building within the very near future. The trustees of this organization should be applauded for their efforts and supported by the community at large.

In order to support the costs of our new endeavors, fundraising has been a priority this year. Generous grants from both the Saunders and David Falk Foundations have allowed us to expand our programs and focus on the future. A major membership drive is currently planned to begin before

year's end. I hope all of our members will not only continue their support but also generate new memberships through friends and family.

Our headquarters at the Peter O. Knight cottage will be undergoing a facelift in 1992. The home has been fumigated, the grounds refurbished, and with the help of a recent designation by the City for eligibility as a Community Contribution Tax Incentive Program, we intend to raise \$60,000. to renovate the building and preserve this jewel of Hyde Park.

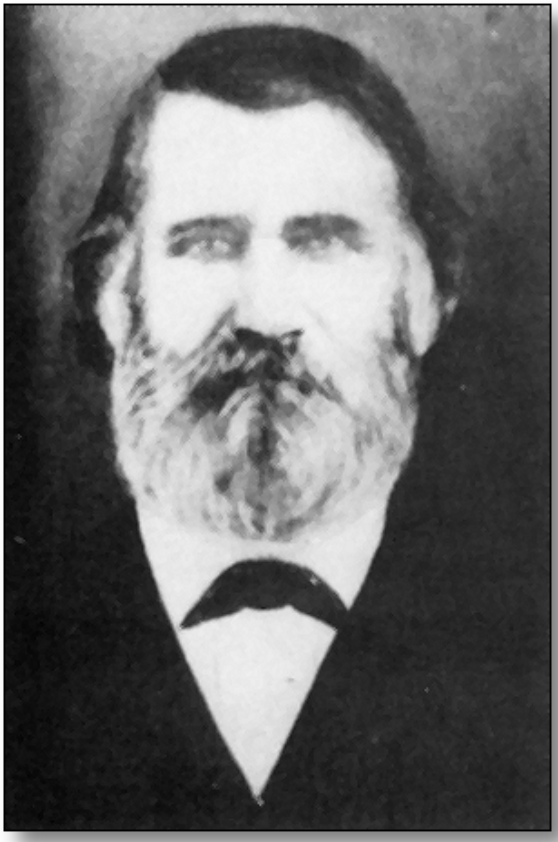
Your board is poised and committed to the opportunities that lie ahead. We ask for your support and we welcome your comments.

I would like to thank our supporters and benefactors, our partners in history and the officers and board of directors of the Society for a memorable year of fun, hard work and accomplishment.

Respectfully yours, George B. Howell

# TAMPA'S FORGOTTEN DEFENDERS THE CONFEDERATE COMMANDERS OF FORT BROOKE

By ZACK C. WATERS



**Colonel William I. Turner**  
**20<sup>th</sup> Regiment Florida Militia**

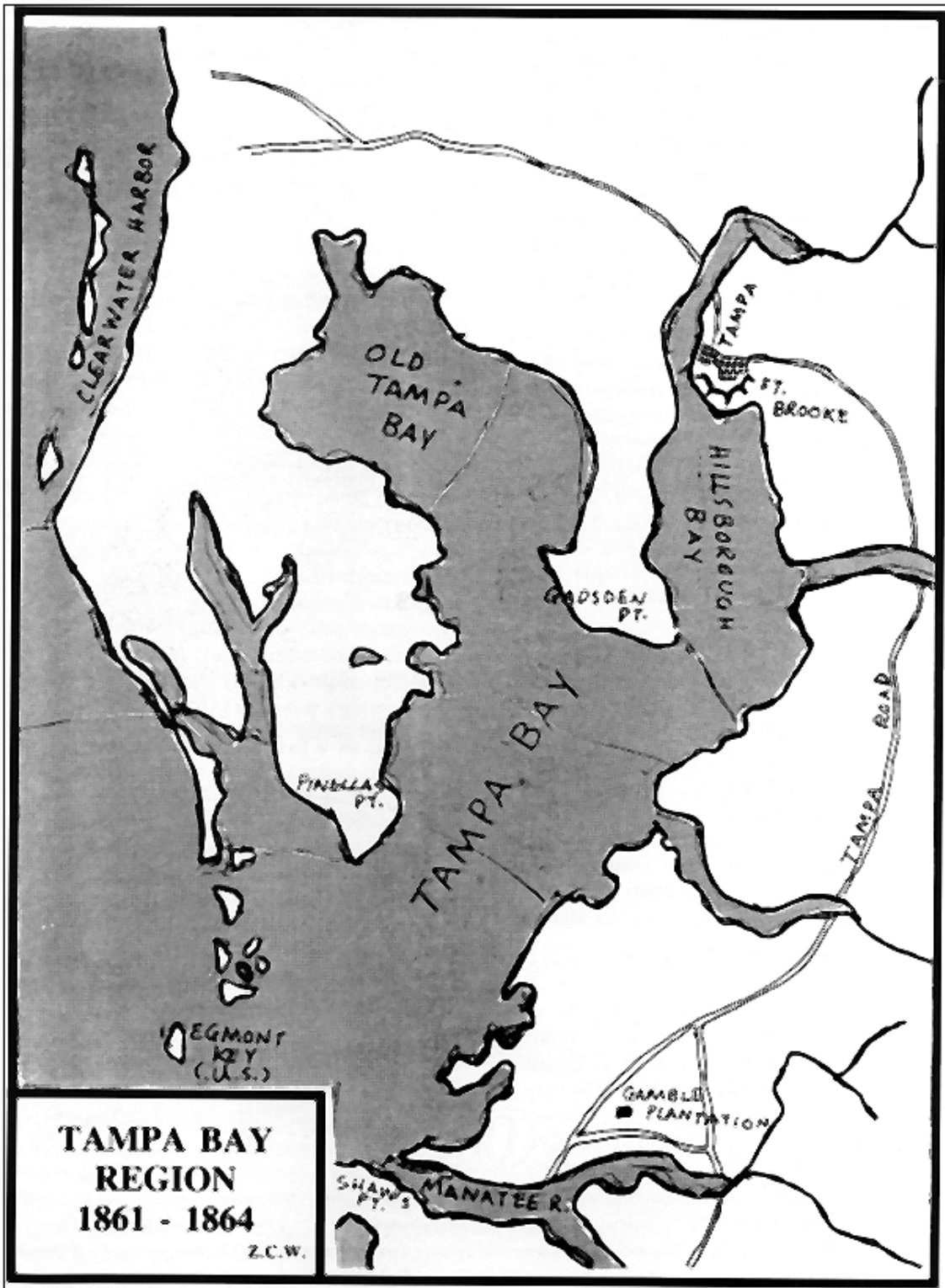
Photo from Edge of Wilderness by  
Janet S. Matthews

Fort Brooke was established as a military outpost on the east bank of the Hillsborough River in 1824, and for the next thirty-five years played a vital role in the growth and development of southwest Florida. Tampa had its beginnings with the businesses which sprang up around the fort, and during the

Second and Third Seminole Wars the Tampa garrison provided a haven of safety for the region's pioneer settlers. However, by 1860 the United States Secretary of War determined that Fort Brooke had outlived its usefulness and transferred the fort property to the Department of the Interior. Captain James McKay, a prominent Tampa businessman and politician, unsuccessfully tried to purchase the fort but did manage to lease the property from the United States.<sup>1</sup>

McKay took control of Fort Brooke on 1 January 1861, but his term of possession was shortlived. On 13 January the Gainesville mail carrier brought news of secession and the creation of "the free and independent country of Florida." The town of Tampa went wild in celebration. The quiet Sunday routine was shattered by cheering, parades, speeches by politicians, prayers by the clergy, and the firing of the Fort Brooke cannons. The next day the post was occupied by the Florida State Militia under the command of Colonel William Iredell Turner.<sup>2</sup>

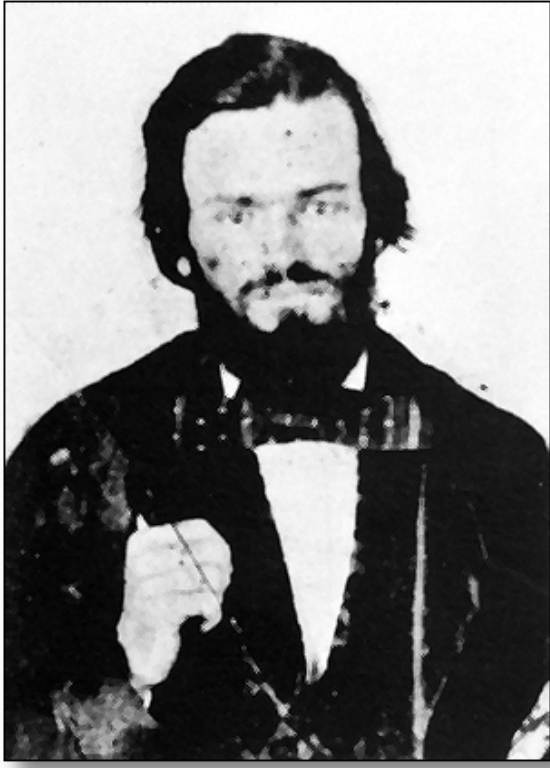
William I. (often mistakenly listed as "J") Turner, born in Virginia in 1812, had enlisted in the United States Army at age sixteen. He served in Florida during the Second Seminole War, and was wounded in the neck during one of the battles with the Indians. Turner was discharged from the United States Army in 1837, and lived in Alachua County for several years,



accumulating a substantial herd of cattle and several slaves. During the Third Seminole War, Turner served as a Quarter master's

agent at Fort Brooke and Fort Meade, and with the end of hostilities sold his holdings near Gainesville and moved to Hillsborough





**Captain John T. Lesley 4th Florida Infantry Regiment**

Photo from Tampa Town by Tony Pizzo

County. The 1860 Census shows Turner as the owner of the county's largest plantation and possessor of nineteen slaves. He also took an active interest in local politics. Turner was an early advocate of secession and only a few months previously had lost a bid for a Florida House of Representatives seat by 23 votes. His rank of colonel in the state militia and his ability to raise two companies for Confederate service from Hillsborough County indicate the high esteem he enjoyed in the Tampa Bay region.<sup>3</sup>

The first troops to occupy Fort Brooke after secession with Turner and his staff were whatever volunteer militia could be assembled on short notice. Military activity was looked upon by many as irrelevant, as most Southerners believed that secession could be accomplished peacefully. Little is

known of the troops who manned the fort during Florida's national period. They were undoubtedly ardent secessionists in civilian dress, armed (if at all) with the weapons used to fight Billy Bowleg's warriors.<sup>4</sup>

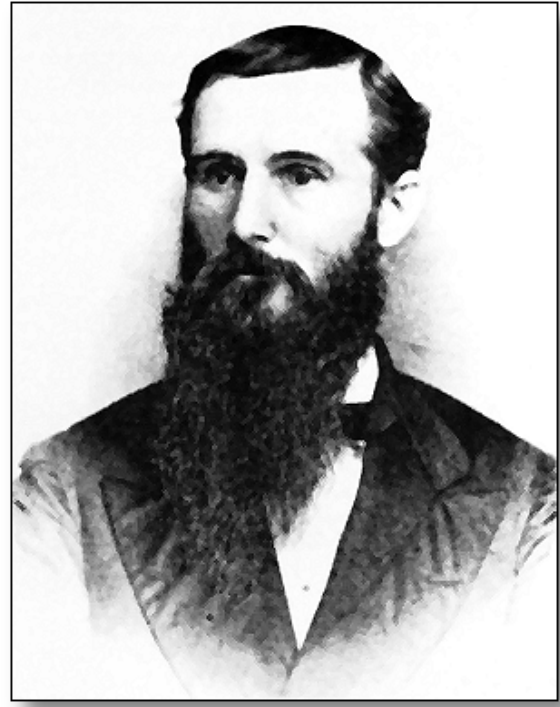
Notions of a peaceful withdrawal from the Union were soon dashed, for on 17 April news reached Tampa of the firing on Fort Sumter. A flurry of military activity ensued throughout the state, and Tampa was no exception. Turner supervised the construction of a series of earthen breastworks during this period, running from Fort Brooke to a nearby Indian mound. "The trench was equipped with carts that were used as ammunition carriers. The waterfront was further protected with the emplacement of five guns." During the first year of the war many of the residents of Tampa gave wholehearted support to the Confederate cause, and the citizens and their slaves probably aided the militia in the construction of the city's defenses.<sup>5</sup>

Turner's military preparations were designed to protect against the Federals, but the first battles at Tampa were political and legal, and Turner was the first casualty. During this time, prominent men in communities throughout the South began forming companies for Confederate service, often arming them at their own expense. One of Tampa's first such units was organized by prominent cattleman, John T. Lesley, and it took the nickname of the "Sunny South Guards." According to post-war accounts: "The names making up this roll (company enlistment roll) were from the best families of the town and vicinity..." These troops had to wait for almost two months to be sworn into Confederate service, and Lesley refused to obey the orders of the post commander, as Turner was a mere Florida militia colonel. Also, the "Sunny South Guards" were the darlings of Tampa, and obeying Turner's orders might have called them from the

parties, parades, and parlors to the digging of earthworks. So acrimonious did this feud become that several of the city's leading citizens (including John Darling, James McKay, and A. DeLaunay) felt compelled to seek assistance from Governor Madison Starke Perry. In a letter dated 27 June 1861 the citizens informed the governor: "A conflict of Authority has arisen between Col. W. I. Turner and Capt. J.T. Lesley as to jurisdiction or right of command in which Lesley denies the authority of Col. Turner and refuses to obey him as commanding officer contrary to and without his orders -- In (unreadable) to this matter the Subscribers state that they believe Col. Turner has acted and is in strict conformity to his instructions from the Commander in chief (Perry): and that he is competent and well devoted to the public interests of his command and ought to be sustained both by the state and confederate authority." Despite this impassioned plea by the citizens of Tampa, Turner's days as commander at Fort Brooke were numbered.<sup>6</sup>

Sometime near the end of July, 1861 Colonel Turner was relieved as commander of troops at the fort and replaced by Florida Militia General Joseph M. Taylor. Taylor was a Hernando County attorney who had replaced Benjamin W. Saxon as Hernando's state assembly representative following Saxon's death. Taylor's appointment was unquestionably an attempt by Governor Perry to halt the Turner-Lesley dispute, but Taylor soon found himself in the middle of a battle involving one of Tampa's most prominent citizens -- Captain James McKay.<sup>7</sup>

At the end of the Third Seminole War, McKay and his business partner Jacob Summerlin began shipping and selling beef at Cuba and Key West. Even after secession and the start of the war McKay continued



**Colonel W.L.L. Bowen**  
**4th Florida Infantry Regiment**

his lucrative trade with both markets. Key West, however, remained in Union hands throughout the war and became the headquarters for Federal operations in southwest Florida. On 6 June 1861, the Yankees in Key West detained McKay's ship **Salvor** which was on a cattle run to Cuba. Since McKay was on friendly terms with the Federal authorities, they leased his ship (McKay having little choice but to acquiesce to the deal) and let him return to Tampa. Upon his arrival, McKay was arrested on charges of petty treason, and James T. Magbee, the prosecutor and a political opportunist, demanded that the accused be hanged. A trial before two justices of the peace resulted in the defendant being bound over to the grand jury. With Taylor acting as solicitor during the hearing, the grand jury refused to return a true bill (finding of enough evidence for trial) and took the unusual step of having the record reflect that the charges were the

result of "private malice or some not mere laudable motion."<sup>8</sup>

Taylor's actions as commander were not greeted with universal approval. Among those disenchanted were twenty-five citizens of Clearwater Harbor and vicinity. In a letter to Governor Perry outlining a long list of grievances, the citizens were particularly incensed that "he (Taylor) has set at naught the Civil authority and sat himself on the trial of one James McKay for treason against the State of Florida" and further allowed McKay "to go to Key West"(.). They also took the opportunity to complain about the lack of protection provided Clearwater Harbor and stated: "(M)any of the men (Taylor's soldiers) are without arms and nearly all without suitable ammu-nition."<sup>9</sup>

McKay returned to Key West, reclaimed the *Salvor*, and headed for Cuba. On its return trip, the *Salvor* was boarded by Federals off Dry Tortugas, and military supplies were discovered including 600 pistols and a large quantity of percussion caps. McKay was detained in Key West and then transferred to Washington, D.C. He was finally released after President Abraham Lincoln intervened on his behalf and after taking the oath of allegiance to the United States. He soon returned to Tampa and resumed his lucrative blockade running and, in 1863, was named Confederate commissary officer for southwest Florida.<sup>10</sup>

The middle of August brought an end to the command of Fort Brooke by the Florida militia. Sometime in the middle of that month General Taylor either resigned or was relieved of his duties. Colonel William I. Turner, as senior militia officer present, turned over command of Fort Brooke to Captain John T. Lesley on August 21, 1861.<sup>11</sup>

Lesley was a native Floridian who had moved to Hillsborough County in 1848. His father, Leroy G. Lesley, was a Methodist minister at Tampa and a veteran of both the Second and Third Seminole Wars, and John T. Lesley had similarly served in the Billy Bowlegs War. Young Lesley had been a carpenter before the Indian War, but with the end of hostilities he became a cattleman and was quite successful in this endeavor.<sup>12</sup>

Lesley's short tenure as commander of Fort Brooke was Tampa's last tranquil period during the war. The Federal blockade had yet to squeeze off supplies, the citizens had not fled their homes, Union sympathizers were inactive, and Federal forces were still too weak and disorganized to mount an offensive. All of that, however, was about to change.

After less than two weeks as the post commander, Lesley and the "Sunny South Guards" were transferred to Shaw's Point on the south side of the Manatee River. Replacing Lesley at Fort Brooke was Major Wylde Lyde Latham Bowen. Bowen was a young Tennessean who graduated from Mossy Creek Baptist College (forerunner of Carson-Newman College) in 1860 and moved to Lake City, Florida, to read the law in the office of Whit Smith. After Fort Sumter, the twenty-one year old law student joined a Lake City company which became a part of the Fourth Florida Infantry Regiment. He was soon elected major of the Fourth Florida, and was first stationed at Cedar Key.<sup>13</sup>

When transferred to Tampa, Bowen brought with him companies D and E of the Fourth Florida. He also had command of Lesley's company at Shaw's Point, and Bowen was



**Lt. Col. John W. Pearson**  
**9th Florida Infantry Regiment**  
**Photo taken from painting at the Orange Springs**  
**Community Church**

not at all pleased with the discipline or condition of any of his troops. He took immediate steps to remedy conditions at Fort Brooke. The young commander promptly issued general orders, instituted twice daily drills, required daily and weekly troop inspection reports from company commanders, and prohibited the use of alcoholic beverages by garrison troops, except for medicinal purposes. Bowen also reminded his officers that they would be expected to "observe the Courtesies and Discipline of the C.S. Army"<sup>14</sup>

Once again, Lesley's company proved contentious, and apparently refused to recognize Bowen's authority. On 20 November, Bowen wrote to Colonel Edward A. Hopkins, commanding the Fourth Florida Regiment from Apalachicola, requesting

confirmation of his (Bowen's) command status, and reporting: "The Point where the Company (Lesley's command) is stationed is considerably up the River in an unpopulated and Hammock Country(.) The few Citizens that did live anywhere near have most of them moved away & the others taken their property away So that they can leave at Short notice. The Company will have to build Quarters and a Hospital and the Lumber forty miles distant from their Station - while they have no facilities for defending the Country & few for protecting themselves(.) besides there is a Company of Cavalry Serving as "Patrol Guards" for the adjacent Country along the Coast ... There are other points on the Bay that are of more importance to us and more desirable to the the enemy & at the same time accessible to this Post (Fort Brooke) in case of an attack, and I hope that you will instruct me forthwith to remove them to some other Point at which it will be less expense & inconvenience to subsist them and where they will be enabled to render effective Service to the Government." Bowen and the "Sunny South Guards" were ordered to Fernandina the second week of December and his new commander, Colonel William S. Dilworth, eventually brought Lesley and his unit under Bowen's control.<sup>15</sup>

Bowen had less success dealing with Hopkins. Shortly after his arrival at Fort Brooke, Bowen received three 24-pounder cannon from the colonel of the Fourth Florida with instructions to mount them at the site best suited for the defense of Tampa. After consultation with his captains and the citizens of Tampa the site selected was a small key near the mouth of the Hillsborough

River. Construction of the battery on the key began immediately. In an outpouring of patriotic spirit, Tampa citizens held meetings and agreed to provide men and

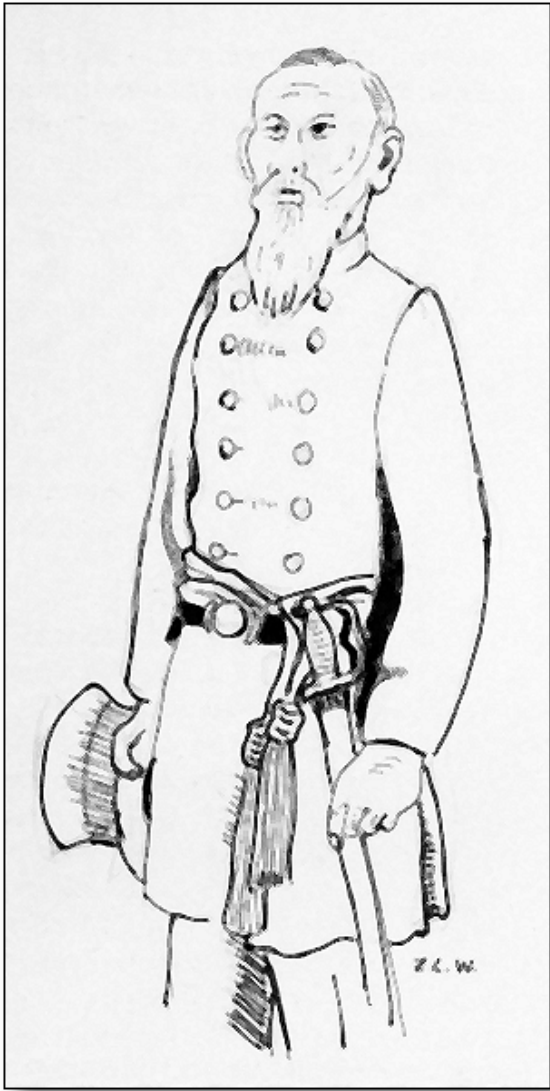
material to aid in their defense, and the citizens and soldiers began mounting the artillery. When Hopkins found that the battery was being erected on an island he ordered the work halted and a secondary site chosen. Bowen attempted to explain by letter that the key was the best location for the emplacement of the artillery, but Hopkins was adamant. As a result, the three 24-pounders were mounted at Fort Brooke. Hopkins' ill-conceived meddling had a far-reaching impact on Tampa. His decision allowed Union gunboats to move much closer to Tampa and Fort Brooke, and later bombardments of the town might have been prevented had the original emplacement of the battery been allowed. Additionally, relations between the citizens of Tampa and the Confederate military would remain strained thereafter.<sup>16</sup>

By mid-October, Bowen became increasingly concerned with military activities by the Federals. Early in that month, hostilities in southwest Florida sputtered to life with a skirmish near Fort Myers between Jacob Summerlin and his "Cow Boys" and Unionist wood cutters directed by the notorious "Yankee" agent, Lyman Stickney. Federal naval operations near Tampa Bay also increased, and Bowen and the Confederates soon proved a dangerous foe. On 11 October, troops under Bowen's command captured two fishing sloops out of Key West, the **William Batty** and **Lyman Dudley**, and thirteen prisoners. This minor coup was followed up by still more heroics from the young commander at Tampa as he wreaked havoc with the Union fishing fleet. In his report to Colonel Dilworth, Bowen reported: A accompanied the prisoners to Cedar Keys and on the way there I captured three more vessels and seventeen more prisoners making in total twelve vessels and sixty-nine prisoners." A

large quantity of military hardware was included in the haul.<sup>17</sup>

Bowen was ordered, mid-December, to report to Fernandina to help meet a threatened Federal invasion of Florida. He took with him Lesley and the "Sunny South Guards". Left behind were companies "D" and "E" of the Fourth Florida, and Captain Thomas J. McGehee apparently acted as the interim commander. Bowen later became Colonel of the Fourth Regiment, and fought valiantly at the battles of Stones River and Chickamauga, receiving honorable mention (the Confederate equivalent of a Medal of Honor) in the latter. Thereafter, due to illness, he was assigned to several backwater posts and unsuccessfully attempted to be named a Confederate military judge. In March and April of 1865, Bowen carried military dispatches between General Robert E. Lee and General Joseph E. Johnston. The "Sunny South Guards" became company "K" of the Fourth Florida Regiment, and Lesley remained the unit's captain. The company from Tampa fought ably in the early battles of the Army of Tennessee, but Lesley tendered his resignation as a major on March 1, 1863, and returned to Tampa to lead a company of Major Charles J. Munnerlyn's Cattle Guard Battalion.<sup>18</sup>

On 10 February 1862, Major Robert Brenham Thomas arrived at Tampa and assumed command at Fort Brooke. Thomas was a Kentuckian and the first West Pointer to serve the Confederacy at Tampa. He attended the United States Military Academy, graduating eighteenth in a class of forty-three in 1852. He was appointed a lieutenant in the United States artillery, and in 1856 was stationed at Fort Brooke. There he met and married one of the daughters of Captain James McKay. Due to his new wife's ill-health he resigned his commission and apparently was associated with McKay's



**Sketch of Major John Westcott**  
(from photograph) by Z.C. Waters

Tampa's mercantile operations. With the outbreak of hostilities, Thomas petitioned Confederate Secretary of War Leroy P Walker for appointment in the Southern army but finally joined the Second Florida Infantry Regiment with the rank of lieutenant. He quickly became a favorite of Brigadier General Joseph Finegan, commander of the Department of East and Middle Florida, and when Bowen was transferred, Finegan recommended Thomas

be made a major and assigned to duty at Tampa.<sup>19</sup>

The military conditions which greeted Thomas at Fort Brooke were appalling, and he set about correcting the situation. Beginning with the troops at the fort, he soon issued orders designed to instill discipline, such as re-instituting daily drills. Thomas was blunt in his message to the officers and men. He warned: "In consequence of a dereliction of duty in some of the staff department, notice is hereby given, that any neglect in **any part** of the staff department, the individuals so offending will be immediately relieved." The volunteers were apparently slow in adapting to military regimen, for almost a month later the post commander was reminding the troops of the necessity of wearing uniforms and carrying arms on parade. Despite Thomas' best efforts, the soldiers under his command never adjusted to military discipline. When these troops were finally transferred to Tennessee a visitor stated that "hog pens are cleaner" than their barracks, and reports reached the Union officials in Key West that "the Confederate soldiers plunder the gardens of the neighborhood as fast as any edibles are produced."<sup>20</sup>

Soon after his arrival, Thomas received orders from Governor John Milton to muster William I. Turner's Independent Cavalry Company and Lieutenant Henry Mulrennan's Coast Guard unit into Confederate service. Turner's company was to be sworn in as infantry, and this was Milton's revenge for a trick Turner had pulled on the governor the previous October. After being relieved at Tampa, Turner and his staff journeyed to Tallahassee to seek a commission for a cavalry company. Brigadier General John B. Grayson was in the final stages of "disease of the lungs" (tuberculosis), and "acted upon suggestion."

Milton kept the dying man a virtual prisoner to keep him from issuing orders, but Turner was not the type of man to be put off easily. Soon after brushing off Turner's request for a cavalry command, the governor received news of a Union invasion of St. Marks. He gathered what troops he could find and hurried south to meet the threat, only to find the supposed attack a ruse. When he returned to the capitol he found that Turner had seen Grayson, received his commission and supplies, and was well on his way back to Tampa. Milton fumed over the incident, but could do little at the time. Turner's cavalry proved to be an asset to the Confederacy in southwest Florida, but Thomas obeyed Milton's order and the new infantry company was soon transferred to the killing fields in Virginia.<sup>21</sup>

Thomas had little time to dwell on Milton's pettiness, for he had other problems to contend with. Milton's orders came on the heels of a petition from citizens of the Clearwater Harbor - Old Tampa Bay area demanding more protection. In the middle of February ships of the Federal blockading squadron flying the Confederate flag, had slipped into Clearwater Harbor and captured the Southern ships **Spitfire**, **Atlanta** and **Caroline**. The Unionists were aided in this venture by Yankee Sympathizers, J.E. Whitehurst and a Mr. Girard. Whitehurst also brought extensive information regarding the town and operations at Fort Brooke, and claimed that there were 38 neighbors and friends of like sentiments within six miles of Tampa. To make matters worse, the blockade was being felt by the soldiers at the fort and the citizens of Tampa. People fleeing the city to the Union outpost of Egmont Key reported: "The state of things (at) Tampa is fearful. They are literally starving. They have no coffee, no tea, no flour, no cloth of any kind, except their common homespun, for which they pay \$1.25 per

yard. They all say they cannot hold out much longer if the blockade is not broken." Finally, as if it were not enough to occupy his mind, Thomas also received word that the Yankess were inciting the Seminoles, to take the warpath against the Confederates. To meet the threat Thomas dispatched George Lewis of Tampa to determine the Indians' intentions, and to placate them if possible.<sup>22</sup>

The news that Whitehurst provided the Federals made Fort Brooke appear ripe for the taking, and Acting Volunteer Lieutenant William B. Eaton, commanding the bark **Ethan Allen**, decided he would grab the prize. Whitehurst reported the presence of "two twelve-pounders and two six-pounders mounted in battery there, and a force of 200 or 300 men." The soldiers at the fort Whitehurst classified as cowardly. This was not the first time, nor would it be the last, that Unionists mistook a lack of discipline on the part of Southern troops for lack of courage.<sup>23</sup>

On 13 April 1862, Eaton in the **Ethan Allen** and a schooner, the **Beauregard**, arrived off Tampa, and sent a demand for unconditional surrender of the town and fort to Major Thomas. Eaton concluded the message with a promise to allow twenty-four hours "to remove all women and children to a proper distance" before commencing "to bombard the town." Thomas politely refused to surrender the town, but expressed appreciation for the time to evacuate the town and apologized for "this manner of replying to your note." The next day the two vessels bombarded the fort and town in an intense but basically ineffective attack. The attack lasted but a short time, and no citizens or soldiers were injured. One result of this attack was to cause many of Tampa's citizens to seek safer places of residence, and by 1863, the town would (at times)

resemble a ghost town. The assault on Tampa did not meet the approval of Flag Officer W. W. McKean, commanding the United States Eastern Gulf Blockading Squadron, and within a few months Lieutenant Eaton was removed from command of the **Ethan Allen**.<sup>24</sup>

Major Thomas' days at Tampa were also numbered. In the middle of June, Thomas was ordered to northern Florida where he served as adjutant to General Finegan. Thomas acted as Finegan's artillery commander at the Battle of Olustee, and was recommended for a colonelcy in the Ninth Florida Infantry Regiment. After the Ninth Florida was transferred to General Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, a dispute developed between Thomas and Finegan, and Thomas resigned his commission. He was reassigned to Brigadier General John H. Winder's prisoner commissary department, and spent the last months of the war in that miserable capacity. At least briefly, he was assigned to the prisoner of war camp at Andersonville.<sup>25</sup>

The new commander at Fort Brooke was Captain John W. Pearson, and he brought a pugnacious attitude that had been lacking in previous commanders. Pearson was born in South Carolina and raised in Tennessee. He had served in Florida during the Second Seminole War, and he moved to the territory shortly thereafter. He and Senator David Levy Yulee purchased a mineral spring in northeastern Marion County, and Pearson prospered in land speculation, cotton cultivation, and as the owner of the famous "watering spa" at Orange Springs. By 1860, he had become convinced that war between the states was inevitable, and raised and outfitted a militia unit which took the name the "Oklawaha Rangers." Pearson and his company had done excellent service as state troops, and had pioneered the use of

guerrilla tactics by Confederates in Florida in a campaign along the St. Johns River a few months earlier.<sup>26</sup>

Shortly after his arrival in Tampa, Pearson and his Rangers received their baptism of fire. Pearson reported to General Finegan: "On Monday morning June 30 (1862), the gunboat (U.S.S. **Sagamore**) hove into sight in the bay, and after sounding and maneuvering to get a favorable position came to anchor, turned her broadside to us and opened her ports, and then started a launch, with a lieutenant and 20 men, bearing a flag of truce toward the shore." Pearson took a launch and eighteen men and met the Federals in the bay. There he rejected the Unionists' demand for an unconditional surrender. Gone was the courtesy and civility which had marked Major Thomas' encounter with the Yankees in April. Pearson reportedly told the Federals that he "did not understand the meaning of the word surrender"; and when told that such a reply meant that Tampa would be shelled told them to "pitch in."<sup>27</sup>

The shelling of Tampa began at 6:00 p.m., and lasted about an hour. Pearson's men, joined for the battle by the independent company of Captain John C. Chambers, replied with accurate fire from the fort's batteries. The next day the **Sagamore** backed out of range of the fort's artillery, and resumed shelling the town. Around noon, the Federal guns again fell silent, until Pearson hoisted the Confederate battle flag. This action brought an immediate response from the **Sagamore's** gun crews, but after three or four parting shots, the Federals withdrew, leaving Pearson and the Confederates still in possession of the town.<sup>28</sup>

Despite two days of intermittent bombardment, damage to Tampa and Fort Brooke was surprisingly light. Pearson's



report of the battle stated: "Nobody hurt on our side." The lack of civilian casualties may be partially explained by the Unionists allowing time for Tampa residents to withdraw to the safety of the interior. Confederate forces at Fort Brooke were similarly unscathed, and, in fact, viewed the proceedings as a lark. A correspondent for the New York *Herald* reported: "Some of the rebels would dodge behind the trees when the shells were fired, and after they had exploded would come out again, evidently much pleased at the exhibition of fireworks." The town itself was also spared from harm. Later reports indicate that a number of unexploded shells were found in the streets and buildings, but W.I. Murphy thanked "a gracious providence" that there was "no damage to man or beast, house or fence."<sup>29</sup>

The bombardment of Tampa convinced Pearson that the fort's artillery was inadequate to protect the town, but his requisition for additional cannons was denied due to lack of availability and pressing demands at less remote posts. Pearson, however, was not inclined to take no for an answer, and soon hit upon a unique solution to his problem. A member of the Pearson family later recalled: "Capt. Pearson seeing the short range of the cannon at Tampa... detailed two (members) of his company, J. J. Lovinston and \_\_\_\_\_ Mansel to go to his shop at Orange Springs and manufacture two rifle(d) cannons - six and twelve pounders that were effective at four miles - this being conceded by the engineer to have the greatest penetrating force." The field pieces were nicknamed "Tiger" and "Hornet", and did much to deter Union attacks while Pearson and his "pets" were at Tampa.<sup>30</sup>

It took Pearson almost a year, but he finally got a measure of revenge for the 30 June -

July 1 attack on Tampa, and the 13 December ramming of a blockade runner in Tampa Bay. Adapting the guerrilla tactics he had successfully used along the St. Johns River to garrison duty, Pearson set a trap at Gadsden Point at the southern end of the Interbay Peninsula. On 27 March 1863, the Union gunboat **Pursuit** appeared in Tampa Bay, and Pearson sent several members of his company disguised as blacks to Gadsden Point to lure the Federal sailors ashore. The Yankees mistook the Confederates for escaping slaves, and sent several sailors in a launch, bearing a flag of truce, to bring in the "blacks". Ignoring the flag of truce, Pearson's men waited until the Union seamen were within easy range, and opened fire on them. Although the Federals were "sitting ducks", only four were wounded, and all escaped back to the **Pursuit**. Outraged by the attack on the white flag, the Federals' sent the ships **Tahoma** and **Beauregard** to once more bombard Tampa and Fort Brooke. As with previous attacks, little damage was done to the fort or the town. Although the firing on the flag of truce was almost unique for the Civil War period, Pearson probably reasoned that the Union seamen were hiding behind the white flag to cover their illegal activities (stealing slaves and obtaining information about his command).<sup>31</sup>

As the South's resources and manpower dwindled, the Confederacy was forced to enact stringent ordinances to continue the war effort. In April, 1862, conscription laws were passed requiring that all white males between the years of 18 and 35 enroll for three years of military service. In November, the age limit was raised to 45. This act was extremely unpopular in south Florida. Coupled with a wave of deserters from the Southern army, area residents with union sentiments or simply wishing to be left alone, and a shortage of basic necessities,

the area became a powderkeg. Pearson provided the spark. As always, he was vigorous and conscientious in performance of his duty, and hunted the deserters relentlessly. He was also heavy-handed in his enforcement of the conscript laws. A Unionist reported: "(E)very man between the ages of 18 and 45 in that section of rebeldom (are) being remorselessly pressed into the rebel army, and if any objections are made they are handcuffed and tied, and then marched off, no matter what the condition of their families." Eventually, these actions led to the creation of a Florida Union cavalry unit which substantially hindered efforts to ship south Florida beef to the starving Confederate armies in Virginia and north Georgia.<sup>32</sup>

Pearson's troubles were not confined to Unionists and deserters. Residents of Tampa were soon complaining to Finegan of the lack of discipline among the Southern troops and interference with private property. The exact nature of the charges leveled against the "Oklawaha Rangers" is not revealed in extant records, but they probably involved the taking of food to supplement their meager rations. Finegan castigated Pearson, but there is no record of legal action being taken against the old guerrilla or his men.<sup>33</sup>

After eighteen turbulent months at Tampa, in September, 1863, Pearson and his men were ordered to north Florida. As a part of the Sixth Florida Battalion Pearson and the "Oklawaha Rangers" performed ably in the Confederate victory at Olustee. They were then formed into the Ninth Florida Infantry Regiment and ordered to Virginia to reinforce Lee's beleaguered army. On 21 August 1864, Pearson led his troops in a desperate charge against entrenched Yankees on the Weldon Railroad. Pearson was seriously wounded in the attack, and died a few days later in Augusta, Georgia.

Pearson's tour of duty at Tampa had been marred by problems, but he proved to be an excellent combat officer who "never backed away from a fight, nor was afraid to battle when the odds heavily favored the enemy."<sup>34</sup>

News of the departure of Pearson and his Rangers was relayed to United States naval forces by Union sympathizers in Tampa. Federal authorities were also troubled by the recent return to blockade running by Captain James McKay. Using his fleet ship **Scottish Chief** and the sloop **Kate Dale** and a thorough knowledge of the south Florida coast, McKay resumed his lucrative cattle runs to Cuba and frustrated all attempts by the blockading squadron to capture him. By mid-October, the Unionists received word that McKay's ships were anchored at Tampa, and Pearson's replacement was not yet in place. The Federal's therefore determined that the time was right to strike.<sup>35</sup>

The new commander at Fort Brooke was Captain John Westcott, and he was one of the little-remembered individuals who contributed much to the development of Florida. A native of New Jersey, Westcott had briefly attended the United States Military Academy, but left West Point to study medicine. He served as a doctor during the Second Seminole War, and thereafter made Florida his home. In his long career Westcott was a doctor, surveyor, devised an innovative plan for public education, founded the first Masonic lodge in Madison County, owned a sawmill, dabbled with mechanical inventions, and served in several state posts including the state Surveyor-General. With secession, Westcott threw his lot with his adopted state, and reported to Tampa as captain of Company "A" of the Second Battalion Florida Volunteers. He was then 56 years old.<sup>36</sup>

Westcott arrived at Tampa on 12 October 1863 and assumed command of the post two days later. The next day two Federal gunboats, the **Adela** and **Tahoma**, appeared in Tampa Bay, and the following day (15 October) began shelling Tampa and Fort Brooke. The bombardment lasted all day and 126 shells were thrown at the citadel. The Union attack, however, was a diversion and on the night following the bombardment, the gunboat **Tahoma** dropped a landing party of 140 at Ballast Point. The Federals marched overland, guided by what Westcott classed "traitors and negroes." The chief guide appears to have been James H. Thompson, whose illness required that he be carried most of the way on a litter. The landing party reached its destination on the Hillsborough River and burned the **Scottish Chief** and the **Kate Dale**, captured several of the blockade runner's crew, and burned a few bales of cotton. Westcott's report failed to mention the destruction of McKay's vessels, but he did report that nervous Confederates had scuttled the ship **A. B. Noyes**. Alerted to the presence of the landing party by crewmen who escaped McKay's boats, Westcott set out with his troops and some local cavalry to make the raiders pay. Just as the Federals reached the shoreline opposite the **Tahoma**, Westcott's troops exploded from the brush. A running battle ensued with the Yankees scrambling through the surf toward the gunboat and the crew of the **Tahoma** lobbing shells toward the Confederates in the brush. The Confederate horsemen dashed along the shoreline and the infantry sniped at the floundering raiders with their muskets and a couple of light artillery pieces manufactured by boring out engine shafts. After what must have seemed an eternity, most of the raiders reached the safety of the gunboat and the Confederates gathered the weapons abandoned in their flight. Of course, both sides claimed victory, but the

human costs were probably twenty casualties for each side. Westcott concluded his report of the battle with a warning and promise. He stated: "My force here is too small. I may be overpowered, but will fight them to the last." A recent historian has summed up the action thusly: "The Confederates had managed to provide a strong, effective defense and to inflict sharp casualties on the Federals once they were alerted to their presence, but the Union expedition had accomplished its goal - the destruction of the blockade runners."<sup>37</sup>

Westcott's vow to fight was soon put to the test. On 24 December 1863, the **Tahoma** and a small schooner appeared in the bay, and the next day gave Tampa its Christmas present from Uncle Sam. At about nine o'clock, the gunboat began a bombardment which lasted for two hours. Westcott was fearful that the attack was a diversion and made ready to meet a landing party, but the Federals only shelled the town and withdrew.<sup>38</sup>

The new year (1864) was a period of impressive gains by the Unionists and their allies in southwest Florida. In January, Yankee troops occupied Fort Myers, which had been abandoned at the end of the Third Seminole War. This post was garrisoned by Federal forces almost until the end of the war despite an 1865 attempt by the Cow Cavalry to take the fort. Also, south Florida's important contribution to the Confederacy was beef, and obtaining and driving the animals became increasingly difficult due to the aggressive actions of a recently formed Florida Union Cavalry troop and large bands of deserters from the Confederate armies. So dangerous had the situation become by April, that Major General James Patton Anderson, the newly appointed commander of the Military District of Florida, ordered the Sixty-fourth

Georgia Infantry Regiment (under command of Floridian, Colonel Theodore W Brevard) to south Florida to "commence a vigorous campaign against the deserters and others, who have been deprecating in that section." However, before the troops reached the area, the Georgia troops were recalled and ordered to South Carolina. At the same time, all infantry in Florida, including Westcott's small force at Tampa, were ordered to Virginia to reinforce Lee's hardpressed army.<sup>39</sup>

The only Confederate soldiers left at Tampa were Major Charles J. Munnerlyn's Cattle Guard Battalion. These troops used the city as a base of operations but were seldom stationed there. The Federals were quick to take advantage of the situation. A major Union expedition against Tampa was mounted in the first week in May. Several hundred troops, consisting of black infantry, Florida Union cavalry, and seamen, entered the town on 5 May, and the only alarm came from a young lad named Darwin B. Givens, who ran through the streets screaming: "The Devils are coming!" Virtually no Confederate opposition was encountered as the cow cavalry was away on a cattle drive. Several of the leading citizens of the town were arrested, and the artillery at Fort Brooke, including the three twenty-four-pound guns, was removed or destroyed. Minor looting occurred (chiefly by the Florida Union troops) and a Federal officer reported: "It made the Secesh here grind their teeth to see white prisoners brought in here by 'nigger troops' & locked up in the Fort." This Union occupation of Tampa lasted only a few days, but the Confederate occupation of Fort Brooke had ended.<sup>40</sup>

Fort Brooke was re-occupied by Federal troops on 15 May 1864, but was again evacuated a month later. For almost a year

the post was unoccupied, but a Union garrison was established at the fort at end of the war to parole former Confederate soldiers and sympathizers and maintain order. United States troops stationed at Tampa through the early days of Reconstruction, but were finally withdrawn 16 August 1869.<sup>41</sup>

The abandonment of Fort Brooke and Tampa by the Confederacy proved a sad end to a story of courage, perseverance, and devotion to duty. The Southern presence at the fort had, for three years, been a thorn in the enemy's side. Though the garrison rarely exceeded 250 men, its influence was felt far beyond the confines of Fort Brooke. Today, its sacrifice is almost forgotten, but they, and the few scattered independent companies in the area, served a valuable function. These neglected troops preserved the vital, beef-rich south Florida region for the Confederacy and enabled the hungry Rebel armies elsewhere to continue the struggle for southern independence.

## ENDNOTES

### FT. BROOKE CONFEDERATE COMMANDERS

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<sup>1</sup> Karl H. Grismer, *Tampa, A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida*, D.B. McKay, ed. (St. Petersburg, 1950) 135-36.

<sup>2</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 137-38; In a letter to Gov. Perry, 28 Jan. 1861, McKay stated that "during my absence in Havana and upon the news arriving of the state seceding, several indiscreet persons headed by our sheriff, has gone and took possession of the buildings" (of Ft. Brooke). Letter from James McKay to Gov. Madison Perry, 28 Jan. 1861, Governor's correspondence, 1860-61, R.G. 101, series 577, Florida State Archives.

<sup>3</sup> 8th United States Census, 1860, Hillsborough County, FL (Slave Schedule); Gussie W. Turner, *Turner and Allied Families*, (Bradenton, 1989) 12-26, 45-53; Election Results, Hillsborough County, 1860,

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Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, FL; Fred L. Robertson, comp., *Soldiers of Florida in the Seminole Indian - Civil - and Spanish American Wars* (Live Oak, 1903; reprint ed. Macclenny, 1983) 205, 245.

<sup>4</sup> Turner, *Turner and Allied Families*, 48-49.

<sup>5</sup> Anthony P. Pizzo, *Tampa Town, 1824-1886, The Cracker Village With a Latin Accent* (Miami, 1968) 65; Theodore Lesley, "Historical Commission Marks Site of the Confederate Battery," *Tampa Tribune*, 30 Nov. 1958; Grimer, *Tampa*, 138.

<sup>6</sup> "Sunny South Guards Feted With Poetry, Banner on Departure," *Tampa Tribune*, 17 July 1960; John Darling, et. al. to Governor Madison Starke Perry, 27 June 1861, Governor's Correspondence, 1849 - 71 R.G. 101 series 577 Box 1 Folder 3, Florida State Archives.

<sup>7</sup> Richard J. Stanaback, *A History of Hernando County, 1840 - 1976* (Brooksville, 1976) 31; Adolphus N. Pacetti affidavit, 1, Pacetti Family File, St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library, St. Augustine, FL.

<sup>8</sup> Canter Brown, Jr., *Florida's Peace River Frontier* (Orlando, 1991) 146-50; Secretary of State, General Correspondence, 1857-61 R.G. 150, series 24, Box 3, Folder 3, Florida State Archives; *Tampa Florida Peninsular*, 24 Oct. 1868.

<sup>9</sup> Petition of the Citizens of Clearwater Harbor, 15 August 1861, Governor's Correspondence, 1860-61, R.G. 101, series 577, Florida State Archives.

<sup>10</sup> Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, 148; United States War Department, *War of Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. (Washington, DC, 1880-1901), series 2, 11, 956-82 (hereinafter cited as ORA).

<sup>11</sup> Turner, *Turner and Allied Families*, 53 (photocopy of original reproduced at 326). In 1863, Taylor replaced James Magbee in the state senate, and later served as a private in the Confederate army. Leland Hawes, "Former Rebels Saw Error of Their Ways," *Tampa Tribune*, 3 June 1990.

<sup>12</sup> Ernest L. Robinson, *History of Hillsborough County, Florida, Narrative and Biographical* (St. Augustine, 1928) 300-01.

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<sup>13</sup> Robertson, *Soldiers of Florida*, 118-19; W.L.L. Bowen Confederate Military Records of Fourth Florida Regiment, R.G. 109, National Archives, Washington, DC (hereinafter cited as Bowen CMRs); genealogical information provided by Peter Branton, Lookout Mountain, TN, collection of author.

<sup>14</sup> Bowen CMRs; Robertson, *Soldiers of Florida*, 118.

<sup>15</sup> Bowen CMRs.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*; A. DeLaunay, et. al. to Major W.L.L. Bowen, 1 November 1861, Confederate Papers Relating to Citizens or Business Firms, Roll 238, National Archives.

<sup>17</sup> Bowen CMRs; *Savannah Morning News*, 27 Oct. 1861. Lyman D. Stickney was a political opportunist who passed himself off as a Florida Unionist. Historian William W. Davis stated: "Mr. Stickney's reputation was not of the best nor his influence in political circles very high. He was undoubtedly a person who mixed politics and private business indiscriminately and for pecuniary advantage." His political maneuvering led to the 1864 Union invasion of east Florida and the Battle of Olustee. William W. Davis, *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida* (1913; reprint ed. Gainesville, 1964) 273.

<sup>18</sup> Bowen CMRs; Bowen genealogical file, author's collection; *Savannah Republican*, 23 December 1861; Robinson, *History of Hillsborough County*, 300-01; John T. Lesley Confederate Military Records of the Fourth Florida Regiment, R.G. 109, National Archives.

<sup>19</sup> Robert B. Thomas, Compiled Service Records of Confederate Generals and Staff Officers and Non-Regimental Enlisted Men, M-331, National Archives (hereinafter cited as Thomas CSRs).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*; Robert Watson Diary, 18 May 1862, transcript at Chickamagua - Chattanooga National Battlefields, Georgia; Boston MA *Daily Journal*, 21 March 1862. See also, Ronald N. Prouty, "War Comes to Tampa Bay: The Civil War Diary of Robert Watson," *Tampa Bay History*, vol. 10, (Fall/Winter 1988) 36-65.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas CSRs; ORA, series 1, VI, 341. Turner's company became Company "K" of the Eighth Florida Regiment which fought with the Army of Northern Virginia. Mulrennan's unit was finally sworn in as infantry and formed the nucleus of Company "K", Seventh Florida Infantry Regiment, Army of

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Tennessee (CSA). After a few months in Virginia, Turner resigned his commission, and returned to Hillsborough County. He raised a second company for Confederate service, but apparently spent the remainder of the war in the Tampa Bay region gathering cattle for the Southern armies. After the war, he helped to found the town of Bradenton and was active in Manatee County politics. Turner, *Turner and Allied Families*, 54-62, 84.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.; New York *Herald*, 24 March 1862; United States War Department, *War of Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies*, 30 vols. (Washington, DC, 1894-1992), series 1, XVII, 85 (hereinafter cited as ORN).

<sup>23</sup> ORN, series 1, XVII, 85.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.; 215-16. From the tone of Lieutenant Eaton's response to McKean's dispatch, it is apparent that the flag officer believed Eaton had deliberately shelled civilian targets. McKean found such actions reprehensible.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas CSRs. Thomas was a popular figure in post-war Tampa. He was described as "(T)he best dancer, the best chess player, the best croquet player, the best shot with rifle or shotgun - he was the social and sporting arbiter in Tampa." Tampa *Tribune*, 4 August 1946.

<sup>26</sup> Donald J. Ivey, "John W. Pearson, Founder & Developer of Orange Springs," *Official Program, 5th Annual Confederate Festival of the South Orange Springs, Florida - November 24th & 25th* (n.p., n.d.) John W. Pearson file, Marion County Genealogical Files, General Records, No. P-17, Central Florida Library, Ocala; Eloise Robinson Ott and Louis Hickman Chazal, *Ocala Country, Kingdom of the Sun, A History of Marion County, Florida* (Ocala, 1966) 51; "The Oklawaha Rangers," unpublished mss., Eleanor S. Brockenborough Library, The Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, VA.

<sup>27</sup> ORA, series 1, XIV, 111.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.; New York *Herald*, 24 July 1862.

<sup>29</sup> ORA, series 1, XIV, 111; New York *Herald*, 24 July 1862; W.I. Murphy to "Mr. Editor", *Southern Christian Advocate* (Augusta, Georgia) 14 August 1862. One near tragedy did occur following the second bombardment of Tampa. A blacksmith, named Addison Mansel, found an unexploded shell near the graveyard, removed the powder, and poked a

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hot wire into the opening. In the inevitable flare-up, Mansel's hair, eyebrows, and beard were burned off, and he nearly lost his eyesight. Russell King, "Courthouse Shelled in Bombardment of Tampa," Tampa *Tribune*, 23 April 1939.

<sup>30</sup> "The Oklawaha Rangers"; "Wesley Mansel, a Tampa gunsmith, made the field pieces by boring out two engine shafts." They were known as the "Hornet and the Target." Tampa *Tribune*, 5 Feb. 1956.

<sup>31</sup> ORN, series 1, XVII, 397-399; New York *Tribune*, 29 April 1863.

<sup>32</sup> Mark Mayo Boatner III, *The Civil War Dictionary* (New York, 1987) 172; Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, 150-60; Boston, MA *Daily Journal*, 31 October 1862.

<sup>33</sup> John W. Pearson Confederate Military Records of the Ninth Florida Regiment, R.G. 109, National Archives.

<sup>34</sup> "The Oklawaha Rangers;" Robertson, *Soldiers of Florida*, 206-07; Gary Loderhose, 'A History of the 9th Florida Regiment' (master's thesis, University of Richmond, 1988) 27.

<sup>35</sup> Rodney Dillon, "The Civil War in South Florida" (master's thesis, University of Florida, 1980) 206-07.

<sup>36</sup> Dr. Joe Knetsch, "John Westcott and the Coming of the Third Seminole War: Perspectives from Within," paper presented to the Florida Historical Society Annual Meeting, 12 May 1990, copy provided to author Dr. Knetsch, ORA, series 1, XXVIII, part 1, 735.

<sup>37</sup> ORA, series 1, XXVIII, part 1, 735, Rodney Dillon, "The Civil War in South Florida," 215-16.

<sup>38</sup> ORA, series 1, XXVIII, part 1, 751.

<sup>39</sup> Dillon, "The Civil War in South Florida," 243-264; ORA, series 1, XXXV, part 2, 448-449, 485, 488; series 1, XXXV, part 1, 372. Some sources state that Westcott returned to Tampa on 8 May 1864 for four days, but this seems unlikely. Westcott and his company were at Hanover Junction, Virginia on 28 May, and the South's inadequate transportation system would have made such a trip virtually impossible. Westcott's unit became Company "I", Tenth Florida Infantry Regiment, and Westcott was named the regiment's major. Robertson, *Soldiers of Florida*, 219, 233; Grismer, *Tampa*, 148. See also,

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Rodney Dillon, "The Battle of Fort Myers," *Tampa Bay History*, vol. 5 (Fall/Winter 1983) 27-36.

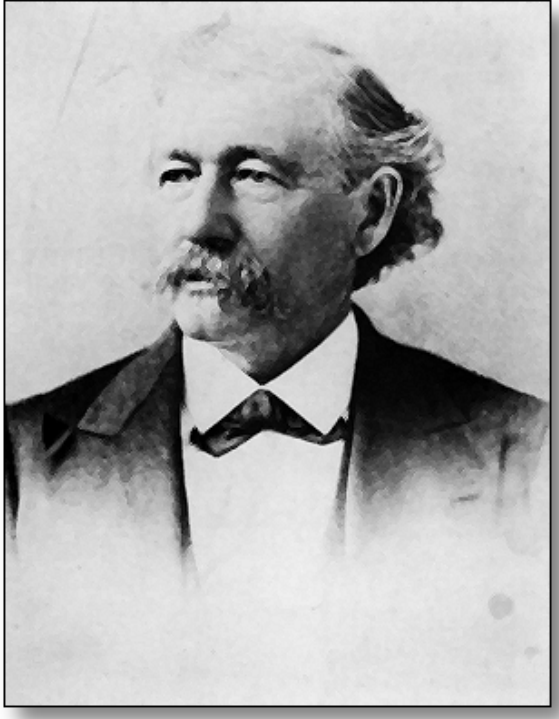
<sup>40</sup> Dillon, "The Civil War in South Florida," 2 59-265; Captain John Wilder to Mrs. M.W.F. Wilder, 22 May 1864, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT. One Union officer described Tampa as "desolate in the extreme," and described Fort Brooke as consisting of a single parapet facing the water, a magazine, and a few barracks. *ORA*, series 1, XXXV, part 1, 389-90.

<sup>41</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, chapter XIV, n.p.

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# TAMPA AND THE COMING OF THE RAILROAD, 1853-1884

By CANTER BROWN, JR.



**Henry Bradley Plant**

Henry B. Plant gave Tampa its first railroad 107 years ago.<sup>1</sup> For thirty years previously the town had sought such a connection; in part, to overcome the stranglehold of its physical isolation and, in part, to give the community a much-needed boost toward prosperity. At each and every turn those attempts had been frustrated.

Railroad fever first hit Tampa in 1853.<sup>2</sup> At the time only 500 or so individuals lived in the tiny town.<sup>3</sup> Barely deserving the title village, this was a rough frontier settlement. One unimpressed visitor scornfully noted: "Tampa is a small town - inhabited by the most worthless population in the world.

They seem to be the scum, well, refuse of creation... (There) are three or four lawyers, as many preachers, three stores - half a dozen grog shops, and these live on each other. I do not believe there is a dollar per head among them. They hate the sight of an honest man."<sup>4</sup>

Despite his exaggeration, the visitor properly expressed the town's poverty. Other than by water, Tampa essentially was cut off from the well-settled portions of Florida, which lay 120 miles or more to the north. The few roads were little more than tracks in the wilderness, sand traps in dry weather and mud holes in wet. When bridges were built, they often were swept away by hurricane winds and flooding. In 1862 a traveler noted of a stagecoach ride from Ocala: I arrived in Tampa, after having travelled on and in that old (coach) for thirty-two hours continuously through the most dreary country I ever saw." He added: "You may well imagine I was tired."<sup>5</sup>

Most Tampa residents had little hope of overcoming their poverty until this isolation was broken. At first, it seemed the problem might easily be solved. In January 1853 the Florida legislature approved the building of the Florida Rail Road. Backed by United States Senator David Levy Yulee, the line was to run from the area of Fernandina to "some point, bay, arm, or tributary of the Gulf of Mexico in South Florida."<sup>6</sup> Local citizens immediately organized to bring the road to Tampa. A great "railroad convention" was held and delegates were





**Railroad work in Florida**  
Photo from Tampa; *The Treasure City*, by Gary Mormino and Anthony Pizzo.

sent to Yulee for guarantees. Railroad officials did not disappoint them.<sup>7</sup>

The news threw Tampa into a whirl of growth and development. Scores of new residents arrived, intent upon expected profits. Among them were Lake City planter and railroad investor L. Whit Smith and judge Joseph B. Lancaster, former mayor of Jacksonville and speaker of the Florida House of Representatives.<sup>8</sup> Smith soon founded the town's first newspaper, the *Herald*, which in 1855 became the *Florida Peninsular*.<sup>9</sup> Lancaster was elected Tampa's first mayor the following year.<sup>10</sup>

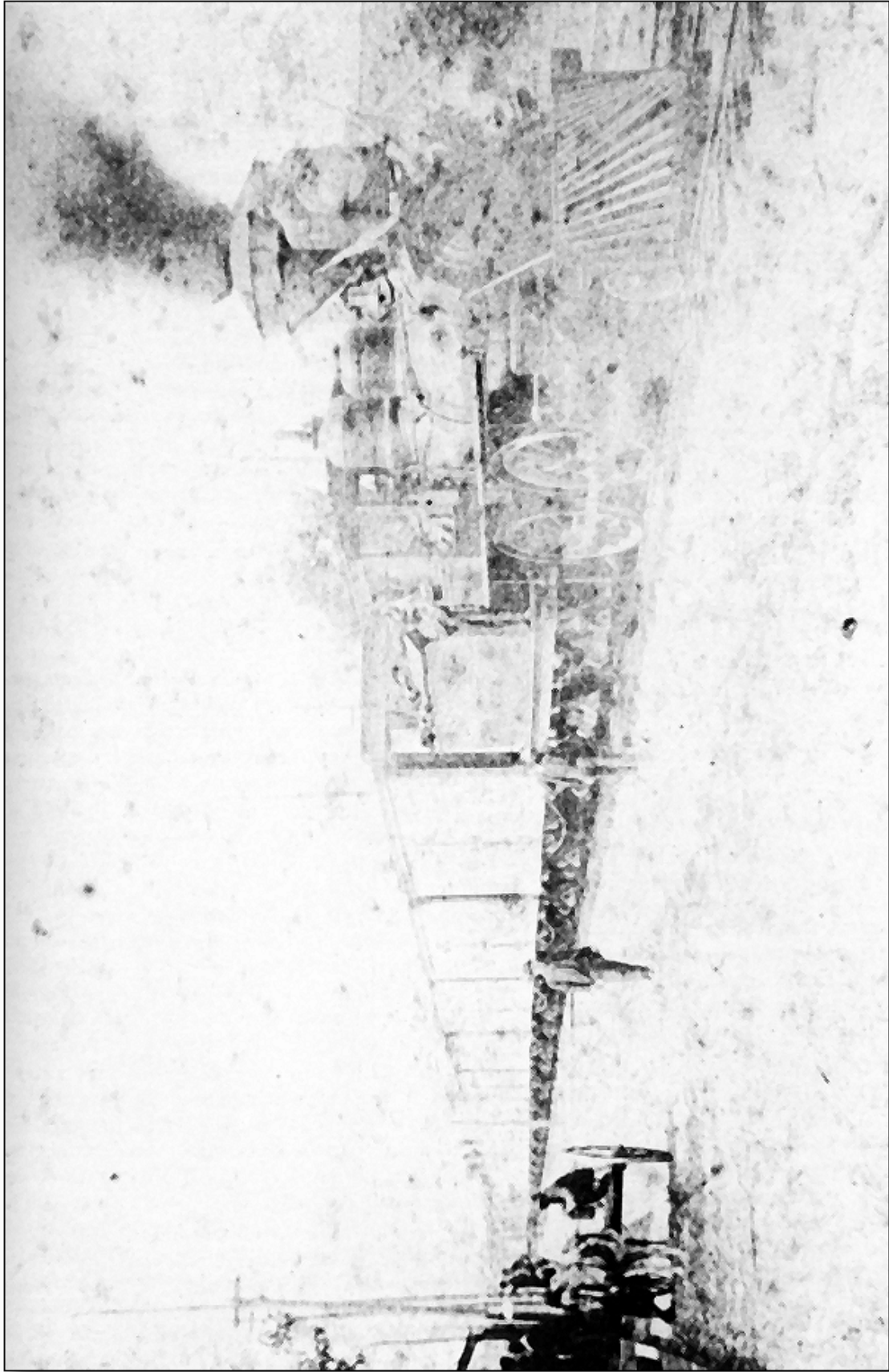
Despite the town's excitement, two years passed, and no construction had begun. All hopes were not dimmed, though, for in January 1855 the legislature enacted a comprehensive program of subsidies for railroad construction. Known as the Internal Improvement Act, it specifically provided

support for a line "from Amelia Island, on the Atlantic, to the waters of Tampa bay, in South Florida, with an extension to Cedar Key."<sup>11</sup> The language clearly applied to Yulee's road.

Within months, however, suspicions were aroused that Yulee intended to build only the more lucrative northern portion of his line. Under the leadership of Hillsborough County politician and lawyer, James T. Magbee, local citizens held out the possibility of the county investing in the railroad while demanding that the company "undertake to construct the road upon the whole route according to the intent and meaning (of the law)."<sup>12</sup> Before their efforts could show results, though, the Third Seminole or Billy Bowlegs War broke out in December 1855.<sup>13</sup> For a time, the railroad question took second place in the minds of south Floridians.

While the Indian war raged, the Florida Rail Road slowly was built south and west from Fernandina. In 1857 the Congress authorized land grants to subsidize the construction, and it was believed that the action, as one newspaper put it, "doubtless will operate as a stimulus to effect an immediate practical commencement of that portion of the road (to Tampa)."<sup>14</sup> Rumors circulated, though, that Yulee would divert the line to Cedar Key where he owned extensive properties. When the rumors proved true in 1858, angry Tampanians burned him in effigy on the courthouse square.<sup>15</sup>

Faced with what they considered Yulee's treachery, the area's residents decided to build their own line. In the summer of 1858 these men-including future governors Ossian Hart and Henry Mitchell-organized the Florida Peninsula Railroad. Bragged Tampa's newspaper, "This movement is the very thing we needed, and we heartily



**Tampa welcomes one of the Plant System's new woodburners, at the Polk Street station, between Ashley and Tampa streets.**

Photo from Tampa; The Treasure City, by Gary Mormino and Anthony Pizzo.

rejoice at it.<sup>16</sup> A yellow fever epidemic devastated the community, however, and no progress was made. Another effort was launched in 1859 under the chairmanship of Capt. James McKay.<sup>17</sup> Before financing could be secured, the Civil War extinguished any chance of construction.

The Civil War devastated Tampa. It was blockaded, shelled, and occupied by Union forces. Confederate martial law prevailed, and, at times, the community virtually was deserted. The early years of Reconstruction were little better. By 1867 the local stores were without supplies, and yellow fever again struck. So difficult were circumstances for most that, in 1869, the town abandoned its charter. From a pre-Civil War population high of 885, the total had dwindled by 1870 to 796. When yellow fever reappeared in 1871, Tampa was completely depopulated. Nine years later the census revealed only 720 residents.<sup>18</sup>

Throughout the period Tampans continued to long for a railroad as their only chance to stop the town's decline. Shortly after the war, hopes were lifted when construction of a line either to Tampa Bay or Charlotte Harbor was proposed. Warned one newspaper: "If the people of Tampa want this road, they can get it ... if they give it the 'cold shoulder'... they may lose it." Lose it, they did. Although Republican Governor Harrison Reed pledged his support, necessary Congressional assistance was blocked.<sup>19</sup> The town even went without a telegraph. When a line was constructed down the peninsula in 1867, it by-passed Tampa by fifty miles. For the next decade news was received overland from Fort Meade.<sup>20</sup>

Not all hope was lost, though. In 1870 south Florida's cattle trade with Cuba began to prosper, and local enthusiasm was rekindled.

At Governor Reed's urging, the legislature approved several lines into south Florida. One concern, backed by area residents such as cattleman Francis A. Hendry and lawyer John A. Henderson planned to build from near Gainesville directly to Tampa. Hillsborough and Polk County investors similarly organized the Upper St. John's, Mellonville, Tampa & South Florida Rail Road to tie the town to the St. Johns River.<sup>21</sup>

Excitement again was in the air, and the town's prospects were boasted. An 1871 "Commercial Convention" attempted to organize local efforts, and its members prepared to notify the country of the area's "many natural advantages."<sup>22</sup> Within months, though, the hopes came crashing down. An investor in Florida bonds, Francis Vose, obtained a federal injunction barring the state from granting land to support railroads. Construction plans came to an immediate halt.<sup>23</sup>

Occasionally during the 1870s rumors circulated that the Vose Injunction would be lifted. In 1877 the possibility seemed so likely that area men met again in Tampa to organize a line. Called the Tampa, Peace Creek and St. Johns Railroad, it was intended to connect Tampa and Jacksonville. The road was chartered, and surveys were conducted. Soon its name was changed to the Jacksonville, Tampa & Key West Railway, and William Van Fleet was named as its president. For the moment, though, no construction was undertaken. Meanwhile, 1879 two rival lines were chartered. One eventually was known as the Florida Southern Railroad, and it also enjoyed the support of south Florida's increasingly wealthy cattle interests. The second was the South Florida Railroad Company, which proposed a line from the St. Johns River to Tampa or Charlotte Harbor.<sup>24</sup>

In December 1880 the South Florida Railroad completed its track from Sanford to Orlando. At the same time, state railroad construction soared as the Vose Injunction finally was lifted. Funds necessary to satisfy the Vose claim came from the sale of 4,000,000 acres of state lands, located primarily in central and south Florida, to Philadelphia businessman Hamilton Disston. The price was twenty-five cents an acre. Disston and his associates immediately undertook a massive development -effort aimed principally at the Kissimmee and Caloosahatchee river areas. Francis A. Hendry's town of Fort Myers boomed, as did the towns of Orlando and Kissimmee with which Disston was more directly involved.<sup>25</sup> By March 1882 the South Florida Railroad, in line with Disston's plans, had extended its track to Kissimmee. There, however, its money ran out.

As investors, developers, speculators, and immigrants poured into south Florida in the wake of the Disston Purchase, Tampa remained locked in its tropical isolation and economic depression. Numerous lines were authorized to construct into the town, but the steel rails reached no closer than Kissimmee. It was upon this stage that Henry Bradley Plant stepped in the spring of 1883.

Plant was no newcomer to Florida or to the worlds of big business and railroad operation. Born in Connecticut in 1819, he had visited Florida for his wife's health as early as 1853. Not long thereafter his employer, the Adams Express Company, was reorganized, and Plant was placed in charge of its southern division, with headquarters at Augusta, Georgia. Faced with the threat of civil war, the company's management created a new entity, the Southern Express Company, to protect its

southern assets. Plant, of course, remained in charge.

So successful were Plant's efforts during the Civil War that the Southern Express Company not only remained in business, it also prospered with a contract to transport Confederate funds. With the peace Plant retained control, reorganized the concern, and expanded its operations. By the late 1870s he had extended his interests into railroading and soon controlled traffic from Georgia south into Florida.<sup>26</sup>

Key to completion of Plant's railroad system, however, was an anchor for his lines at some port on the Gulf of Mexico. Karl Grismer, in his book *Tampa*, reported that Plant first considered locating in David Levy Yulee's port of Cedar Key. As Grismer told the story: "Old timers say that Plant wanted to extend his railroad to the keys but when he tried to buy the necessary land, the Yulee crowd refused to sell. This made Plant so irate, the old timers say, that he angrily declared: 'I'll wipe Cedar Key off the map! Owls will hoot in your attics and hogs will wallow in your deserted streets!'"

Other stories of Plant's decision to build to Tampa have suggested that he considered Manatee County's Sned's Island, as well as Charlotte Harbor.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps central to his ultimate decision was the fact that Tampa Bay offered a protected anchorage for ships and that it lay far closer to Kissimmee than did any of the alternatives. A small community already existed at Tampa, of course, and, after thirty years of disappointment, its residents were willing to accommodate themselves to whatever Mr. Plant needed.

Plant's first step toward Tampa came in May 1883 when his Plant Investment Company purchased a three-fifths interest in the South

Florida Railroad. The quick negotiations and purchase illustrated the strength and flexibility of Plant's financial position, something not enjoyed by many of his undercapitalized competitors. His general superintendent later explained: "We speak of the Plant Investment Company-do you know what the Plant Investment Company is? It is Mr. Plant and his friends who have money, cash, to invest. When it is decided to do a certain thing, build a piece of road for instance, they figure out what each is to pay and send in their checks for the amount. They have no bonds, no indebtedness, no interest to pay; they build railroads to operate them and not for bond and stock speculations."<sup>28</sup>

Despite his financial resources and his desire to run, not speculate in, railroads, Plant nonetheless was a demanding businessman intent upon making the best bargain he could. With the South Florida Railroad within his control, he had a charter to build from Kissimmee to Tampa. But in granting that charter the state had offered a subsidy of only 3,840 acres of land for each mile of rail constructed.

Casting his eye about, Plant noticed that the Jacksonville, Tampa & Key West Railroad, originally founded at Tampa in 1877, also had a charter to build from Kissimmee to Tampa. The concern, however, had run out of money after grading fifteen miles of roadbed. What was most interesting, though, was that the road's charter called for a state subsidy of 10,000 acres of land for each mile of track, as well as the grant of alternate sections of land within six miles of each side of the road. The total commitment came to 13,840 acres per mile of track.

The huge subsidy proved irresistible to Plant. There was a problem, though. The subsidy was due to expire in January 1884

unless construction was completed before then. Other railroad men told Plant it simply could not be done, but Henry Bradley Plant decided to prove them wrong. First, he struck a bargain with the Jacksonville, Tampa & Key West's management. He provided them funds for construction of the line's northern end and received, in return, all rights to the subsidy for the route from Kissimmee to Tampa. Within a matter of weeks Tampa's town council had extended all necessary accommodations to Plant and had leased the lower ends of Polk, Zack, and Twiggs streets-with all rights to the adjacent riverfront-to the railroad for \$30 a year. Excitement at once was in the air.

As Karl Grismer explained: "On June 16, a crew of 168 track laborers came into town and began grading operations. More men quickly followed. Other crews started grading westward from Kissimmee. Orders were given for hundreds of thousands of crossties; workers in logging camps worked from dawn to dusk, and new mills were brought in to cut the timber. Construction men bought or leased every mule and ox within a hundred miles, and every vehicle in which earth could be moved. Farmers quickly sold every bit of produce they could grow; cattlemen reaped a harvest selling beef to the construction crews. Hillsborough County seethed with activity, and so did Tampa. Overnight it became a boom town."<sup>29</sup>

As the roadbed pierced the countryside, improvements continued in Tampa. A wharf was constructed at the foot of Polk Street, and schooners from around the country unloaded their huge quantities of supplies and equipment. Settlers streamed into the community, and the sounds of construction everywhere were to be heard.<sup>30</sup>

Through the heat of summer and fall two parties of twelve to fifteen hundred men worked toward each other from both ends of the line.<sup>31</sup> Many of the workers were black. The Plant System had used leased convict labor on other projects, and some of the men likely were prisoners. The heat, humidity, pests, and other working conditions were terrible. Nonetheless labor contractors drove the men mercilessly.

An incident that occurred during the construction of a spur line illustrates just how bad conditions could get. In August 1885 a "crowd" of black laborers at Bartow, fed up with their working conditions, attempted to escape their labor contracts or, as it was put at the time, "jump their obligations by running away." The men made it only twenty miles before being overtaken "by a party of indignant and excited contractors" who "in a most energetic manner" forced them to return to work.<sup>32</sup>

Week by week the line was extended. On September first, two locomotives arrived. Soon they were fired up, and the engine whistles were blown. Tampa's *Sunland Tribune* reported: "The echoes had hardly died away when from every street and alley, every doorway and window, and from the four winds came a mass of humanity to gaze at the monsters of the rails. It was an impromptu celebration such as Tampa had never seen before."<sup>33</sup>

As the rails were laid, new communities-such as Lakeland, Auburndale, Lake Alfred, and Winter Haven-sprang up along the line.<sup>34</sup> In Hillsborough County a town was laid out near the old Indian settlement of Itchepukesassa and the Seminole War post, Fort Sullivan. For a time it was known simply as "End of Track." Soon, it was called Plant City.<sup>35</sup>

On December 1 Henry Plant, himself, first visited Tampa. He had ridden his cars from Kissimmee, although an eighteen-mile gap in the track had to be overcome by horse and buggy. His arrival was celebrated grandly at Tampa's finest hostelry, the modest Orange Grove Hotel, built in 1859 as the home of cattleman William B. Hooker.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps that evening-if not before-Plant conceived of the need for grander accommodations in his new city.

The first train rolled out of Tampa nine days later, when service was begun to Plant City. The trip took an hour and a half. Troubling, however, was the gap remaining from Plant City to Auburndale. And time was running out. The state subsidy was set to expire on January 25.

Through December, the Christmas holidays, and New Years the workers toiled seemingly without relief. Day by day the track inched forward, but each day brought Plant's company closer to the deadline. The first week of January passed away, then the second and the third. Finally, with only forty-eight hours to spare, the two ends of the line met at Carter's Mill, five miles east of Lakeland. There, on the morning of January 23, 1884, the last spike was driven and the stranglehold of Tampa's isolation finally was broken.

Tampans went wild. The celebration commenced that evening at the Orange Grove Hotel and lasted until daybreak.<sup>37</sup> Townspeople were delirious at Henry Plant's boast that he would turn the "sand heap" of Tampa's main street "into the Champs-Elysees (and) the Hillsborough into the Seine."<sup>38</sup> The first through train left Tampa for Sanford that next morning, and regularly scheduled service began on February 13. It took six and one half hours to make the trip. Two weeks later con-

nections were available to points throughout the country. The editor of the Ocala *Banner*, though writing two years later, summed up the sentiments of the time: "How this railroad service kills time and space! Only a little while ago it took two days to go from Ocala to Tampa and four days to reach Jacksonville. Now we can speed over the route in a few hours in comfort. Because of the railroads, this entire country is being magically transformed."<sup>39</sup>

And so, Henry Bradley Plant magically transformed Tampa. Two years before it had been a village, and a decade before that it had for a while been a ghost town, deserted in fear of yellow fever. With the railroad, the town's 1880 population of 720 doubled and redoubled so that, by 1890, Tampan numbered well over five thousand. That figure again tripled by the turn of the century.

Plant's accomplishments, however, should not overshadow the efforts of decades to bring a railroad to Tampa. His ability to lay track so quickly was dependent, for instance, on the work of the local organizers of the Jacksonville, Tampa, and Key West Railway. Those men had explored all practicable routes across the peninsula and had identified the one ultimately followed. They additionally had graded fifteen miles of roadbed and had secured necessary permissions from the local governments involved. Those preliminary efforts allowed Plant to meet his deadline-though just barely. Otherwise, the history of Tampa and south Florida might have turned out quite differently.

In closing, please let me share with you the words of the engineer who surveyed those routes. "It is unquestionably true," commented H. P. Hepburn in April 1878, "that a road connecting our magnificent bay

with the St. Johns River would do more towards settling up and developing South Florida than any other like enterprise that could be projected." Prophetically, he continued: "The road would undoubtedly make Tampa the chief business place of South Florida, and the whole of this section of the State would be benefitted thereby."<sup>40</sup>

Henry Plant recognized the genius in other men's work and capitalized on it with his own relentless energy and financial resources. Truly he transformed Tampa, but it was the vision of others- developed over three decades of struggle-that led the way.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Gary R. Mormino and Anthony P. Pizzo, *Tampa: The Treasure City* (Tulsa, OK, 1983), 77.

<sup>2</sup> Jacksonville *Florida Republican*, May 5, 1853.

<sup>3</sup> Karl H. Grismer, *Tampa: A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida* (St. Petersburg, FL, 1950), 119.

<sup>4</sup> "Notes, 1849-1850," entry of March 1, 1849, Francis Collins Papers, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, The University of Texas at Austin.

<sup>5</sup> Charleston (SC) *Southern Christian Advocate*, February 13, 1862.

<sup>6</sup> Jacksonville *Florida Republican*, May 19, 1853.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, May 5, 26, July 21, 1853.

<sup>8</sup> Edward F. Keuchel, *A History of Columbia County, Florida* (Tallahassee, 1981) 71-72; Julius J. Gordon, *Biographical Census of Hillsborough County, Florida 1850* (Tampa, 1989), 328-29.

<sup>9</sup> Jacksonville *Florida Republican*, October 27, December 8, 1853, March 15, 1855.

<sup>10</sup> Mormino and Pizzo, *Tampa*, 46.

<sup>11</sup> *Laws of Florida* (1854), 9-19.

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<sup>12</sup> Jacksonville *Florida Republican*, April 19, 1855.

<sup>13</sup> James W. Covington, *The Billy Bowlegs War, 1855-1858: The Final Stand of the Seminoles Against the Whites* (Chuluota, FL, 1982), 1.

<sup>14</sup> Tallahassee *Floridian & Journal*, March 14, 1857.

<sup>15</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 128.

<sup>16</sup> Tampa *Florida Peninsular* quoted in Tallahassee *Floridian & Journal*, July 3, 1858.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, November 27, 1858; Tampa *Florida Peninsular*, July 16, 1859.

<sup>18</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 131-69, 178.

<sup>19</sup> Vernon E. Peeples, "Charlotte Harbor Division of the Florida Southern Railroad," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 58 (January 1980), 291.

<sup>20</sup> Canter Brown, Jr., "The International Ocean Telegraph," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 68 (October 1989) 151n.

<sup>21</sup> Canter Brown Jr., *Florida's Peace River Frontier* (Orlando, 1991), 256-57.

<sup>22</sup> Tampa *Florida Peninsular*, June 24, July 8, 1871.

<sup>23</sup> Jerrell H. Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet: Florida in the Era of Reconstruction 1863-1877* (Gainesville, 1974), 251.

<sup>24</sup> Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, 257, 266-69.

<sup>25</sup> James W. Covington, *The Story of Southwestern Florida*, 2 vols. (New York, 1957), 1, 171-72; Karl H. Grismer, *The Story of Fort Myers: The History of the Land of the Caloosabatchee and Southwest Florida* (Fort Myers, 1949; facsimile ed., Fort Myers Beach, 1982), 103-07; Edward C. Williamson, *Florida Politics in the Gilded Age 1877-1893* (Gainesville, 1976), 73-78.

<sup>26</sup> Dudley S. Johnson, "Henry Bradley Plant and Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 45 (October 1966), 118-23.

<sup>27</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 171-72.

<sup>28</sup> Johnson, "Henry Bradley Plant," 120, 122-23.

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<sup>29</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 172-73.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>31</sup> George W. Pettengill, Jr., *The Story of the Florida Railroads 1834-1903* (Boston, 1952), 76.

<sup>32</sup> Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, July 30, 1885.

<sup>33</sup> Tampa *Sunland Tribune* quoted in Grismer, *Tampa*, 174.

<sup>34</sup> Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, 275.

<sup>35</sup> Johnson, "Henry Bradley Plant," 123.

<sup>36</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 174; Kyle S. VanLandingham, "William Brinton Hooker 1800-1871," *South Florida Pioneers* 5 (July 1975), 6-12; Gary Mormino, "Tampa's Social Center Once Was A Hotel," *Tampa Tribune*, August 26, 1990; Leland Hawes, "Cattle Owner Hooker Was A Civil, Military Leader," *Tampa Tribune*, August 26, 1990.

<sup>37</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 174-75.

<sup>38</sup> Mormino and Pizzo, *Tampa*, 78.

<sup>39</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 175.

<sup>40</sup> Tampa *Sunland Tribune*, April 6, 1878.

*This paper was presented at the Tampa Bay Hotel Centennial Celebration, University of Tampa, Apr. 13, 1991.* <sup>1</sup> Gary R. Mormino and Anthony P. Pizzo, *Tampa: The Treasure City* (Tulsa, OK, 1983), 77.

<sup>2</sup> Jacksonville *Florida Republican*, May 5, 1853.

<sup>3</sup> Karl H. Grismer, *Tampa: A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida* (St. Petersburg, FL, 1950), 119.

<sup>4</sup> "Notes, 1849-1850," entry of March 1, 1849, Francis Collins Papers, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, The University of Texas at Austin.

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<sup>6</sup> Jacksonville *Florida Republican*, May 19, 1853.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, May 5, 26, July 21, 1853.



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<sup>9</sup> Jacksonville *Florida Republican*, October 27, December 8, 1853, March 15, 1855.

<sup>10</sup> Mormino and Pizzo, *Tampa*, 46.

<sup>11</sup> *Laws of Florida* (1854), 9-19.

<sup>12</sup> Jacksonville *Florida Republican*, April 19, 1855.

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<sup>15</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 128.

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, November 27, 1858; Tampa *Florida Peninsular*, July 16, 1859.

<sup>18</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 131-69, 178.

<sup>19</sup> Vernon E. Peeples, "Charlotte Harbor Division of the Florida Southern Railroad," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 58 (January 1980), 291.

<sup>20</sup> Canter Brown, Jr., "The International Ocean Telegraph," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 68 (October 1989) 151n.

<sup>21</sup> Canter Brown Jr., *Florida's Peace River Frontier* (Orlando, 1991), 256-57.

<sup>22</sup> Tampa *Florida Peninsular*, June 24, July 8, 1871.

<sup>23</sup> Jerrell H. Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet: Florida in the Era of Reconstruction 1863-1877* (Gainesville, 1974), 251.

<sup>24</sup> Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, 257, 266-69.

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Beach, 1982), 103-07; Edward C. Williamson, *Florida Politics in the Gilded Age 1877-1893* (Gainesville, 1976), 73-78.

<sup>26</sup> Dudley S. Johnson, "Henry Bradley Plant and Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 45 (October 1966), 118-23.

<sup>27</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 171-72.

<sup>28</sup> Johnson, "Henry Bradley Plant," 120, 122-23.

<sup>29</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 172-73.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>31</sup> George W. Pettengill, Jr., *The Story of the Florida Railroads 1834-1903* (Boston, 1952), 76.

<sup>32</sup> Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, July 30, 1885.

<sup>33</sup> Tampa *Sunland Tribune* quoted in Grismer, *Tampa*, 174.

<sup>34</sup> Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, 275.

<sup>35</sup> Johnson, "Henry Bradley Plant," 123.

<sup>36</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 174; Kyle S. VanLandingham, "William Brinton Hooker 1800-1871," *South Florida Pioneers* 5 (July 1975), 6-12; Gary Mormino, "Tampa's Social Center Once Was A Hotel," *Tampa Tribune*, August 26, 1990; Leland Hawes, "Cattle Owner Hooker Was A Civil, Military Leader," *Tampa Tribune*, August 26, 1990.

<sup>37</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 174-75.

<sup>38</sup> Mormino and Pizzo, *Tampa*, 78.

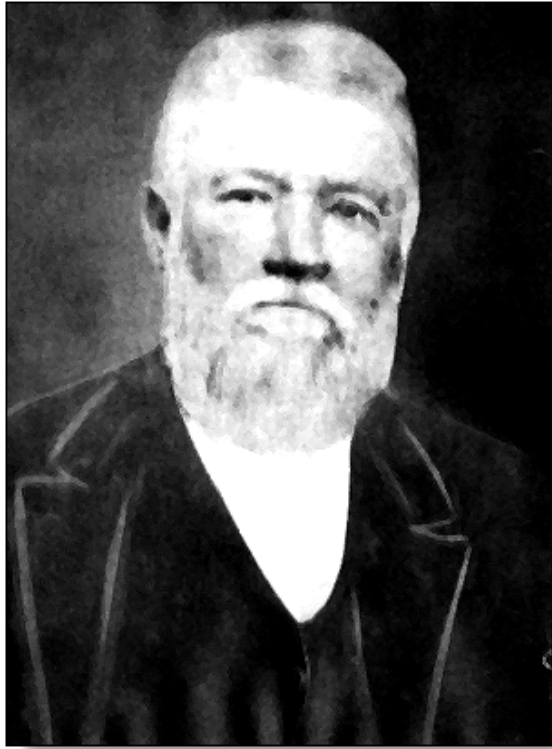
<sup>39</sup> Grismer, *Tampa*, 175.

<sup>40</sup> Tampa *Sunland Tribune*, April 6, 1878.

*This paper was presented at the Tampa Bay Hotel Centennial Celebration, University of Tampa, Apr. 13, 1991.*

# PROFILE OF CAPT. JOHN PARKER

By SPESSARD STONE



**Captain John Parker**

Photo by Krista K Theiler from framed copy at Hillsborough County Historical Museum and Library, Tampa.

Capt. John Parker, a pioneer settler of South Florida, was an Indian fighter, cattleman, and civic leader.

John Parker was born October 16, 1818 in Sampson County, North Carolina. With his parents, Luke and Sophia Parker, he moved about 1831 to that part of Alachua County, Florida, which on February 4, 1832 became Columbia County.

During the Second Seminole War, John Parker served as a private from May 22, 1836 to June 5, 1837 in the companies of

Captains Martin, Reed, and Niblack. He also served as a sergeant in Capt. Brown's Company from June 16, 1837 to December 18, 1837.

In Columbia County on December 12, 1839, he married Mrs. Jane Elizabeth (Smiley) Hooker, widow of Stephen Caswell Hooker (1808-1837). By the marriage John became the stepfather of William John and Stephen Poleman Hooker, for whom he was appointed guardian on August 12, 1850.

Under provisions of the Armed Occupation Act of August 1842, John Parker received permit number 651 for 160 acres in Simmons Hammock (Seffner) in Hillsborough County, Florida and moved there in 1843. The Parker family was listed in the Simmons Hammock Settlement in the 1850 census.

John was a cattleman, but he also held several offices of public trust in Hillsborough County. In 1845 he was elected as sheriff and also acted as ex-officio tax collector. He was a justice of the peace for several terms. On November 3, 1847 he was selected for a two-year term and qualified November 30. Again chosen on May 29, 1849, he qualified on November 19, 1849. His final term of selection was May 25, 1853. On October 24, 1849 he was elected to the Board of County Commissioners for a term of two years and qualified November 19, 1849.

On July 17, 1849 Captain George S. Payne and Dempsey Whidden were killed and Mr. and Mrs. William McCullough were wounded by a party of Seminoles at the

IN THE NAME AND BY THE AUTHORITY

OF THE

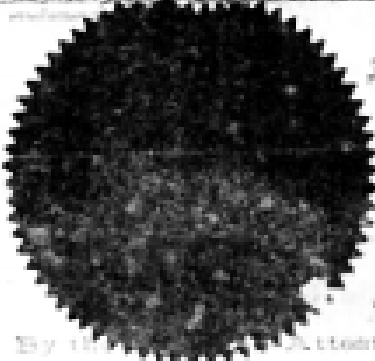
State of Florida.

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS MAY COME—GREETING

*Belherras, John Parker* hath been

*Colonel* according to the Constitution and Laws of this State, to be  
Lieutenant Colonel of the Tenthth Regiment  
of Florida Militia  
from the 7<sup>th</sup> day of May 1866 to continue during good behavior, or until he  
shall be relieved by law.

Now therefore, I, *John Parker* do hereby  
appoint *John Parker* to be  
Regiment of Florida Militia, according to the Constitution  
and Laws of this State, to be sworn, held and exercise the said office, and all  
the powers, duties, and responsibilities thereof, until the expiration of his commission and



In Witness Whereof, the Congress of said State  
has signed this Commission, and caused the Great  
Seal of the State to be affixed thereto, at the  
City of Tallahassee, this 11<sup>th</sup> day of  
June 1866, and of  
the Independence of the United States the 4<sup>th</sup>  
day of the Independence of Florida the  
11<sup>th</sup> day.

*Wm Perry*  
Governor of Florida

By the Governor of Florida  
*Wm Perry*  
Governor of Florida

STATE OF FLORIDA.

I do hereby certify that I am duly qualified, according to the  
Constitution of this State, to exercise the office of  
Lieutenant Colonel  
and will, to the best of my abilities, discharge the duties thereof, present and future,  
of the Constitution of this State, and of the United States.

Witness my hand and seal, at Tallahassee, this 11<sup>th</sup> day of June 1866.  
*John Parker*  
*Samuel J. W. Perry*

Kennedy-Darling trading post on the banks of the Charlo-Popka-Hatchee-Chee (Little Trout Eating Creek), which became later known as Payne's Creek. The post was located about one-half mile south where Fort Chokonikla was afterwards established on October 26, 1849, southeast of present day Bowling Green.

F. C. M. Boggess in his autobiography, *A Veteran of Four Wars*, related his version of the attack and John Parker's reaction to it:

"A man by the name of Payne opened up a store to trade with the Indians. He had employed Dempsey Whitton (sic) and had employed Win. McCullough and wife to keep house and cook for him.

"The Indians came in and began to drink and Payne refused to let them have any more whiskey. While at supper they shot a volley killing Payne and Whitton (sic), McCullough sprang for his shotgun and he and his wife left. Mrs. McCullough was wounded by the Indians while running and McCullough would urge her to go ahead. She had a baby one-year-old to carry as McCullough had to fight the Indians back and then run up to his wife. The Indians were too cowardly to rush on him and when he could see one he pointed his gun and the Indian would jump behind a tree. They followed him some miles and went back to rob and burn the store.

"McCullough and wife had to travel fifty miles with nothing to eat except birds without salt. He had to carry the baby and gun and lead his wife. The whole country fled to forts and a party went and took up Payne and Whidden's bones and buried them. A tombstone now marks the site of the store and remains of Payne and Whidden. Mrs. McCullough soon recovered.

"Capt. John Parker, who had been all through the seven years' war with the Seminoles from 1835 to 1842, at once began to recruit a company to fight the Indians at his own expense. He mounted and equipped a company and began to scout for the Indians. There is no question but his prompt action in enlisting and equipping a company and hunting the Indians prevented a general outbreak and a long and bloody war.

"Captain Parker was a great Indian fighter and he was always among the first to respond if any fighting was to be done and he has led several detachments of volunteers to the relief of the whites that were penned up in houses or forts."

A deposition given on August 11, 1849 by the McCulloughs at Tampa differed slightly from Boggess' account. It had the Indians, four in number, had falsely pretended to want to trade skins which were across the Peas Creek (Peace River). No mention was made of a demand for whiskey. The attack at supper had also resulted in Mr. McCullough's being wounded in the left shoulder. (McCullough's wife, Mary Ann, was a sister of Dempsey Whidden.)

Billy Bowlegs and Sam Jones, Seminole chiefs, did not want a war. On October 18, 1849 they surrendered three of the murderers to General Twiggs. A fourth had attempted to escape and was killed; his severed hand was turned over to the general as evidence. A fifth had escaped but was being pursued. (An earlier attack had occurred on July 13 7 1849 near Fort Pierce by the band.)

During the Third Seminole War, John Parker served as first lieutenant from January 3, 1856 to August 20, 1856 in Capt. William B. Hooker's Company, Florida

Mounted Volunteers. He was enlisted at Fort Meade but was on detached service at Fort Green for most of his tour. At Manatee on October 7, 1856, he enlisted as a private in Lt. Whitaker's Detachment, and was, subsequently, on November 18, 1856 elected as captain of the company, thereafter known as Capt. John Parker's Company. He was mustered out at Tampa on December 17, 1856.

Capt. Parker was an early cattle king of this area. In Hillsborough County on April 12, 1852, he registered his brand: swallowfork in one ear, undersquare in the other, brand "JP," On December 23, 1854 in Hillsborough county, he registered: staplefork in one ear, crop and split in the other, "SS." About 1856 he moved to Manatee County and settled in the area of present-day Ona. In Manatee County on May 28, 1860, he registered: crop and two splits in one ear, swallowfork and underbit in the other. In 1855 he had 1,700 head of cattle; 4,000 head in 1861; and 1,000 head in 1866.

In Manatee County Capt. Parker took an active interest in political affairs. On January 10, 1859 John Parker, John Platt, and Joab Griffin were appointed road commissioners and ordered to build a road from Manatee Village to Horse Creek. On November 22, 1859 John Parker was selected as a justice of the peace for a two-year term and qualified February 4, 1860. In April of 1859, he, Daniel Carlton, and Enoch Daniels were appointed trustees of Manatee County School District No. 3. Capt. Parker represented Manatee County in the Fla. House of Representatives in 1860 and 1861. On May 7 1860 he was elected lieutenant colonel of the 20<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Florida Militia and was commissioned by Governor Perry on June 11, 1860. On February 9, 1863 the Board of County Commissioners appointed John Parker and

five others as a committee to buy and dispense provisions to the wives and children that were struggling to get by during the time the heads of households were away in the war.

During the Civil War, Capt. Parker had three members of his family to serve in the Confederate cause. His oldest son, Lewis H. Parker, had enlisted in April 1862 in Co. E, 7th Fla. Infantry and served until war's end. William John Hooker and Stephen Poleman Hooker, his stepsons, both enlisted as privates in Co. E, 7th Fla. Infantry in April 1862. Stephen (who was married to Sallie Carlton) died January 7, 1863 at Morristown, Tennessee. William (who was married to Charlotte Albritton) was promoted to 2nd lieutenant on November 28, 1863 and was later killed in battle.

After the war, John Parker settled at Homeland in Polk County. In the 1870's he began disposing of his cattle. During the decade, he sold 3,000 head to his sons, Thomas O. and Jasper N. Parker, and 2,000 head to his brother, Streacy Parker.

Tradition has that Capt. John Parker died via poisoning of a drink of liquor that he had with someone at a camp meeting near Bartow. He died on November 10, 1881 at the home of P Dzialynski at Fort Meade and was buried at Homeland Cemetery. He had been a member of Bartow Lodge No. 9, F. & A. M. and the Methodist Church. Jane Parker, who was born on April 9, 1809, died on May 1, 1891 at the home of her son, Lewis H. Parker, at Joshua Creek and was buried at Joshua Creek Cemetery.

Capt. and Mrs. John Parker had the following children:

1. Martha J. Parker, born September 22, 1840; died November 17, 1843.

2. Lewis Henry Parker, born May 26, 1842; died March 4, 1901; married on February 1, 1866, Lydia Elvira Starnes.

3. Louisa Sophia Parker, born June 14, 1844; died October 16, 1906; married on February 5, 1866, Dr. Alexander Smoot Johnston.

4. Thomas Owen Parker, born May 20, 1846; died May 11, 1918; married on January 2, 1870, Sarah Louisa Blount.

5. John M. H. "Jack" Parker, born May 28, 1848; died December 28, 1868.

6. Jasper Newton Parker, born April 13, 1851; died August 27, 1896; married on July 8, 1869, Rhoda Jarrett Crum.

Special reference: Kyle S. VanLandingham and Virginia Westergard, *Parker & Blount in Florida*; also *Roster of Commissioned Officers*.

This article originally appeared in the Wauchula *Herald-Advocate*, June 9, 1988.

# PROFILE OF LLOYD DAVIS

By SPESSARD STONE

Lloyd Davis was a pioneer black cowhunter and orange grower of Joshua Creek and Homeland, Florida.

Lloyd Davis, also known as Lloyd Doves, was born into slavery near present-day Ona in Manatee County (now Hardee County), Florida in June of 1861. He was the son of Rachel Davis, the Negro slave and mistress of Capt. John Parker, a wealthy cattleman.

Rachel Davis and her children were an aspect of the peculiar institution" of the antebellum South that Southern apologists of the time preferred not to discuss in genteel society.

Albert DeVane in *DeVane's Earl Florida History*, however, related:

"During the early pioneer period, especially before the Civil War, the plantation owners and large cattlemen all owned many slaves. It was not unusual to find children sired by their master or his son. The children grew up among his children.

"Following the close of the Civil War, many of the women slaves continued to live on the plantations, especially the old nurses who had become attached to the children. The mulatto children, in almost every case, took the name of the mother, instead of the white father.

"In my research of such cases, over the years, there are several cases to my knowledge in the south and southwest section of Florida. A similar case was the Negro of Captain John Parker of Homeland and Arcadia. Captain John was the

progenitor of the Parker Brothers large cattle dynasty.

"Lloyd Doves, his mulatto son, was to become the bodyguard and, should I say, trigger man for his sons, Thomas and Lewis. There is much history surrounding him."

Rachel Davis was born ca. 1831. The 1850 Slave Schedule of Hillsborough County, Florida shows that William Parker owned one 19-year-old female slave, who is believed to have been Rachel.

William Parker and John Parker, his older brother, had moved in 1843 from Columbia County, Fla. to Simmons Hammock in Hillsborough County. A planter, William and his wife Wineford (1827-56), the natural daughter of William B. Hooker and Mariah Henderson, resettled in the 1850's at (now) Homeland. During the Third Seminole War, the 35-year-old Parker, was killed in the Tillis Battle on June 14, 1856.

William B. Hooker (1800-71), a prominent planter and cattle rancher, was appointed administrator of Parker's estate. On January 9, 1858, he placed in the Tampa newspaper, the *Florida Peninsular*, the notice of the sale at the courthouse door in Tampa from the Parker estate of about 800 head of cattle and "at the same time and place, the servant woman Rachael (sic) and her three children will be hired out for 12 months." The 1860 census of Manatee County enumerated five slaves as part of William Parker's estate under the custody of John Parker.

John Parker (1818-81) and his wife Jane (1809-91) had in 1843 homesteaded in

Hillsborough County where he ranged his cattle and served variously as county sheriff, county commissioner, and justice of the peace. By 1856 they were living near present-day Ona in (then) Manatee County where John expanded his cattle herds, becoming an early cattle baron. In 1849 and 1856 he commanded companies during the Seminole conflicts. In May 1861, he was elected Lt. Colonel of the 20th regiment of Florida Militia. In 1860 and 1861 he represented Manatee County in the Florida House. After the Civil War, he settled at Homeland.

Rachel Davis, after emancipation, continued her life with Capt. Parker and moved to Homeland. Canter Brown, Jr. in *Fort Meade On The South Florida Frontier In The Nineteenth Century* related of the Negro community in Homeland:

“At Homeland, the Negro community was in the process of becoming much more well established (than Fort Meade). A. C. Robinson and his family moved to Polk County from Sneads. By 1873 Charles McLeod and the family of Rachel Davis, including her sons Samuel, Corrie and Lloyd, who would become prominent cattlemen, were on the scene. Two years later, Jack Vaughn married Margaret McLeod and settled, followed in 1878 by Moses Allen, who married Eliza Davis. By 1880, Charles Flowers, Charles Harden, Mary Jones, Mary Holloman, and, possibly, the family of Charity Williams were listed as residing in the area.

"Homeland's Negro community was further enhanced with the presence in 1885 of Tom Walden, J. L. Robinson, Emma Hendry, and their families."

Brown further illustrates there was some hostility to the Negro settlers, but also

support from at least two of the area's leading white settlers, James T. Wilson and James B. Crum:

"James T. Wilson and James B. Crum moved to the defense of their fellow residents (when outsiders threatened Homeland's Negro voters). On election day (Sept. 1887) Wilson and Crum led a group of Homeland men, including the areas's ten Negro voters (which probably included the Davis men and their brothers-in-law) in a public procession to the county seat where they cast their ballots together."

Rachel Davis died August 1, 1913. She had eight children, of whom seven were alive in 1900, but the names of only six are now known. It cannot definitely be stated who was the father of her children. William Parker, her first master, probably was father of the three children advertised in 1858, but it is possible that another black slave was. John Parker was the father of Lloyd and, most likely, of the others.

Rachel Davis' known children are:

1. G. Alfred Davis, born ca 1852; married on January 17, 1882, Charlotte Hendry.
2. Samuel J. Davis, born ca. 1854; died April 13, 1928 at Homeland; married on August 24, 1892, Matilda Shavers.
3. Eliza Davis, born ca. 1856; died May 17, 1932; married on March 14, 1878, Moses Allen.
4. Lloyd Davis, born June, 1861; died August 15, 1937; married on December 25, 1889, Crissie Brown.
5. Minerva Davis, born ca. 1862; died August 13, 1928; married on May 24, 1877, Charles McLeod.



6. Corrie W, Davis, born December, 1872; died 1956; married on July 30, 1891, Hattie J. Honors.

Lloyd Davis, as a mulatto servant, was enumerated in the home of his other white half brother, Jasper N. Parker, in the Joshua Creek area in the 1880 Manatee County census. In the 1885 Polk County census, he was shown to be living with his mother and brother, Corrie. As earlier given, Lloyd married Crissie Brown on December 25, 1889. The 1900 Polk County census recorded in precinct 16, Homeland, the couple and their four children: Beulah (b. Dec. 1888?), Ida (b. Mar. 1892), Lewis (b. Mar. 1895), and Clara (b. June 1898). Another child had died in infancy.

As previously quoted, Albert DeVane described Lloyd as trigger man for his white brothers. This writer has been unable to obtain documentation for the charge, but Kyle VanLandingham, historian and co-author of *Parker and Blount in Florida*, confirmed to me in a personal interview on August 6, 1990 an account I had previously heard of a killing instigated by the Parker family.

As the corroborated story is recalled, Poleamon Parker Forrester, Jasper N. Parker's 37-year-old daughter, suffered what today would be called "battered spouse syndrome." Her husband of fourteen years, Charles W. Forrester, 42-year-old senior partner of the Arcadia law firm of Forrester & Burton, was a heavy drinker and, when drunk, frequently beat his defenseless wife. Lloyd was at times employed as a cowhunter for the Parkers, one of whom was Zeb Parker, Poleamon's brother. Unwilling to endure Forrester's brutal misconduct any longer, the family authorized his assassination by Lloyd, who then shot and killed the lawyer while he was dining in the

Arcadia House on June 5, 1908. Lloyd, whose escape had been prearranged, was apparently never prosecuted.

Lloyd returned to his farm in Homeland where he lived quietly until his death on Sunday, August 15, 1937. His wife, Crissie, who had been born in 1864, and, apparently, also their daughter, Clara, died before him.

The *Polk Count Record* of August 19, 1937 eulogized:

"Lloyd Davis, 75(?), one of the oldest colored residents of the Homeland section, passed away Sunday (August 15). The funeral will be held next Sunday at 2 o'clock at the colored Church of God in Homeland. He is survived by one brother, Corrie, and three children, Beulah Reed, now in Connecticut, but expected home for her father's funeral, Lewis Davis of Homeland, and Ida Silas of Bartow.

"The deceased was a well-known character both among the people of his own race and white people as an Indian herb doctor and cow hunter. In his earlier years he hunted cows for Col. Lewis Hooker, Capt. Hendry, and others. He became owner of an orange grove which he turned over to his children several years ago."

*Acknowledgments: My thanks are extended to historians Kyle VanLandingham and Canter Brown, Jr, who further credits his brother, John Brown, and the late Vernice Williams.*

#### **Editor's Note:**

This article originally appeared in the *Wauchula Herald-Advocate*.

A shorter, censored version appeared in the *Polk County Historical Quarterly*, March, 1991.

# TAMPA EARLY LIGHTING AND TRANSPORTATION

By ARSENIO M. SANCHEZ

An early Tampa Electric Company (not the present Co.) was organized on January 29, 1887.

About three months later the company brought the first Electric lights to the city of Tampa. A small Westinghouse generator was brought in and two arc lights were erected, one at the corner of Franklin and Washington Streets; and one in front of the brand new "Dry Goods Palace."

Tampa's first "light show" took place Monday, April 28, 1887. Word got around and people came from all parts of town to witness the event.

The *Tampa Journal* recorded the occasion by saying, "The amazed throng could hardly believe that the stygian darkness could be dispelled so miraculously by current coming through a wire.

Dazzling bright though these arc lights were, they were at best a qualified success, sputtering, crackling and hissing, they went out with dismaying frequency.

## FIRST LIGHTING CONTRACT

Judging from what they saw, the City fathers on Sept. 13, 1887 met with the City Council and awarded the fledgling company a ten-year contract to provide street lighting. Twelve arc lights at 60 cents a night to be provided.

After signing the contract the electric company became expansion-minded. More powerful generators were needed; and to obtain money to buy them, the company was reorganized, becoming Tampa Light & Power Company, with Solon B. Turman as President.

Tampa had to wait for its lights, however. An epidemic of yellow fever struck the city, bringing progress to a halt; and the new electric light system was not installed until May of 1888. A power plant was built at the corner of Tampa and Cass Streets.

Poles were erected and arc lights were put at major Tampa and Ybor City intersections.

Still in its infancy, the corporation had plenty of woes -financial and mechanical. It had the street light contract, of course, but few people wanted their homes or offices wired for electric lighting. Electricity was feared as dangerous. Besides, it was unreliable. Oil lanterns were safe and dependable.

Even though Thomas Edison's invention of the incandescent light astounded the world on December 21, 1879, commercial use of the electric light was not utilized until later on.

## NEW COMPANY FOUNDED



**Peter O. Knight**

Revenues were far below expectations. To make matters worse, the company's generators kept breaking down. Finally, in March, 1890 the company's local backers threw in the sponge and sold out to a syndicate headed by J. Rush Ritter, Philadelphia. Thus was formed the Florida Electric Company, incorporated at \$50,000.

The new company hadn't been in business long before it got into a rate squabble with the city. The city felt the 60-cents per night rate was too high, even though the old company had lost money.

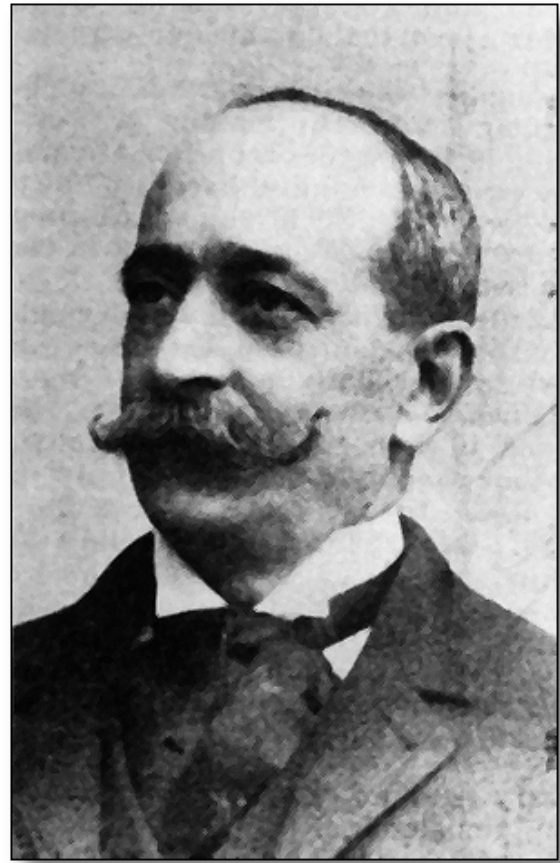
Ultimately, the two came to an agreement. Signed December 8, 1890, a three-year contract called for the company to provide twelve, 2,000-candle-power arcs at \$11 a month each and 193 32-candlepower incandescent lamps at \$2 a month.

Railroad magnate Henry Plant believed the city was destined to become a winter resort

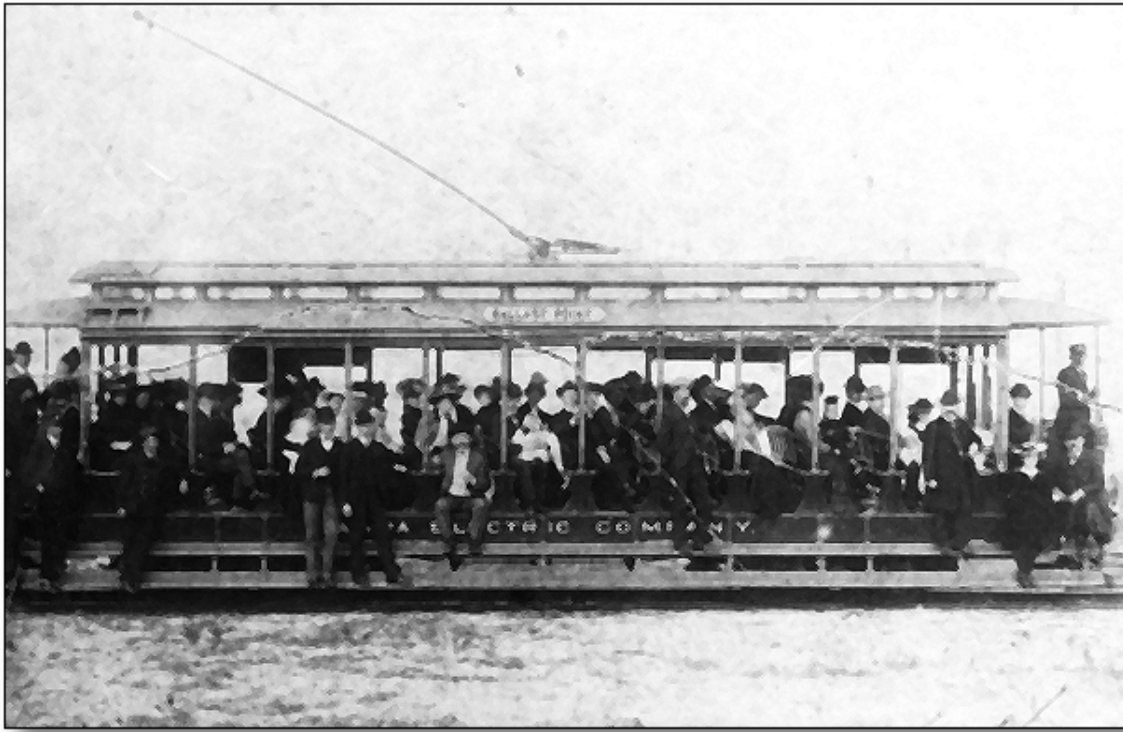
and built the extravagantly ornate Tampa Bay Hotel on the Hillsborough River. The \$3 million minaret-topped structure opened in 1891 and still stands today - as University of Tampa.

When Sydney L. Carter of Alachua county nominated Henry Mitchell for Governor of Florida at the convention in Tampa, June 1, 1892, the electric lights flickered and went out. This was a common happening in those early days, and it caused no great surprise.<sup>1</sup>

Tampa's prospects looked so bright in the spring of 1892 that investors began fighting among themselves to gain the right to provide electric light and power for the town and also electric street railway.



**Edward Manrara**



**In the unhurried days, before the age of the automobile, one of the most popular forms of amusement for Tampanians was taking the trolley out to DeSoto Park or to Ballast Point for outings. Some chose to ride the open trolley to Macfarlane Park to watch a baseball game.**

**In 1913, of the 67 trolleys operated by the Tampa Electric Company, 63 were of the open type.**

## **BEGINNING OF ELECTRIC STREET RAILWAY**

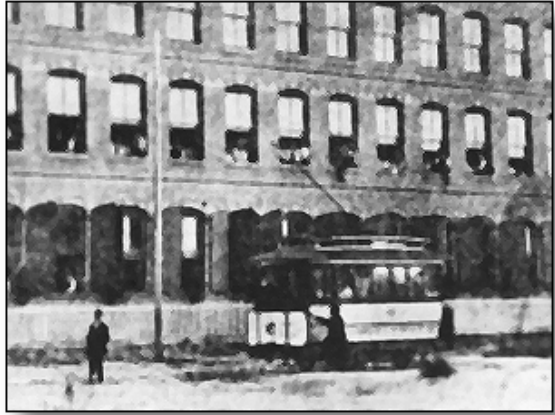
The battle began in April, 1892, when the Tampa Suburban Company, a street railway company was organized by W.H. Kendrick, E.S. Douglas and Peter O. Knight, with the financial backing of Mr. & Mrs. C.W. Chapin, wealthy residents from New York. The company stated it intended to build an electric street railway from Ybor City through Tampa and down the west side of the Hillsborough River to Ballast Point.

The Tampa Street Railway Company established by Eduardo Manrara, and Vicente Martinez Ybor which began

operating the steam locomotive line to Ybor City in 1886, insisted their franchise covered all parts of the city and that the Tampa Suburban had no right to build. Going to the courts, they succeeded in getting an injunction which restrained the Tampa Suburban from proceeding.

Tampa Suburban appealed, taking the case all the way to the Supreme Court, where it eventually was victorious. The litigation, of course, was quite time-consuming.

To get around this injunction, the backers of the Tampa Suburban organized a new company called the Consumers' Electric Light & Street Railway Company. It secured a franchise to sell electric service as well as



**Consumers' Electric Light & Power Company streetcar on the side of Cuesta-Rey Cigar Factory in West Tampa - 1897.**

transportation. Stock was sold to local people and a generator was installed in a small sawmill near Morgan and Cass Sts. Among the stockholders of the Consumers' were Vicente Martinez Ybor, his son Edward and Eduardo Manrara. Trolley lines were built to Ybor City and Ballast Point, late in 1892.<sup>2</sup>

When the favorable court ruling was handed down, Consumers' leased the property of the



**Rural transportation in the early days was carried on by horse and buggy. Bernard Justen and his daughter Theresa are making their way home after attending Sunday services at St. Joseph Church in West Tampa.**



**The first automobile, "the horseless carriage" was brought to Tampa by Eduardo Manrara in 1901.**

Photo from History of Hillsborough County, Florida by Ernest L. Robinson

Suburban Company.

In order to develop West Tampa as Hillsborough county's second cigar industrial area, it was essential to provide vital transportation to Tampa and Ybor City.

An agreement was entered into on November 19, 1892 between the construction firm of Jones, Copper and Skinner and the Consumers' Electric Light & Street Railway Company to build the Iron Fortune Street drawbridge across the Hillsborough River, close to the Ellinger cigar factory. The agreement with the construction company read that the bridge would be completed and ready for travel (use) on or before February 1, 1893. This enabled workers living east of the river to commute (as well as to help downtown merchants). Hugh Macfarlane and his associates helped finance a streetcar route from downtown Tampa into West Tampa, as part of the Consumers' Electric Light & Street Railway Company system.

The electric street-car began running to West Tampa and Pino City, a suburb of West Tampa, in August 1893.<sup>3</sup>



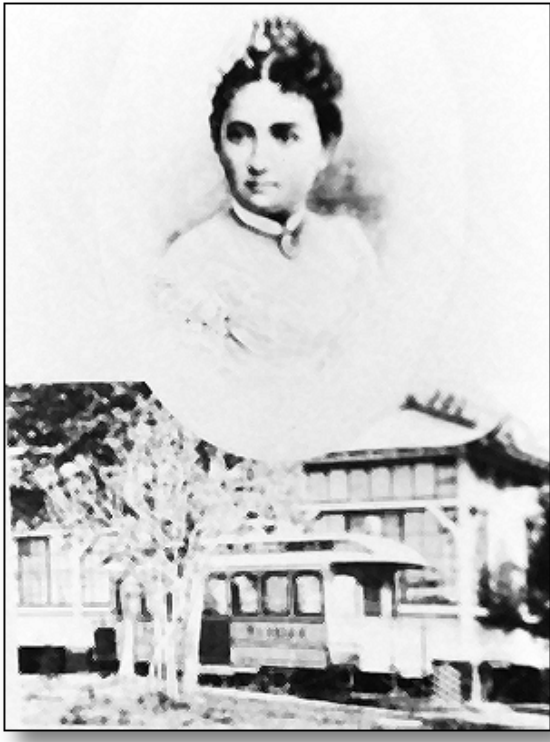
**Franklin Street (looking north) where several forms of transportation can be seen in use.**



**The Tampa Railway stopped in front of the Centro Espanol's first clubhouse built in 1892 on 7th Avenue and 16th Street in Ybor City.**



1919 bus between Tampa and Clearwater.



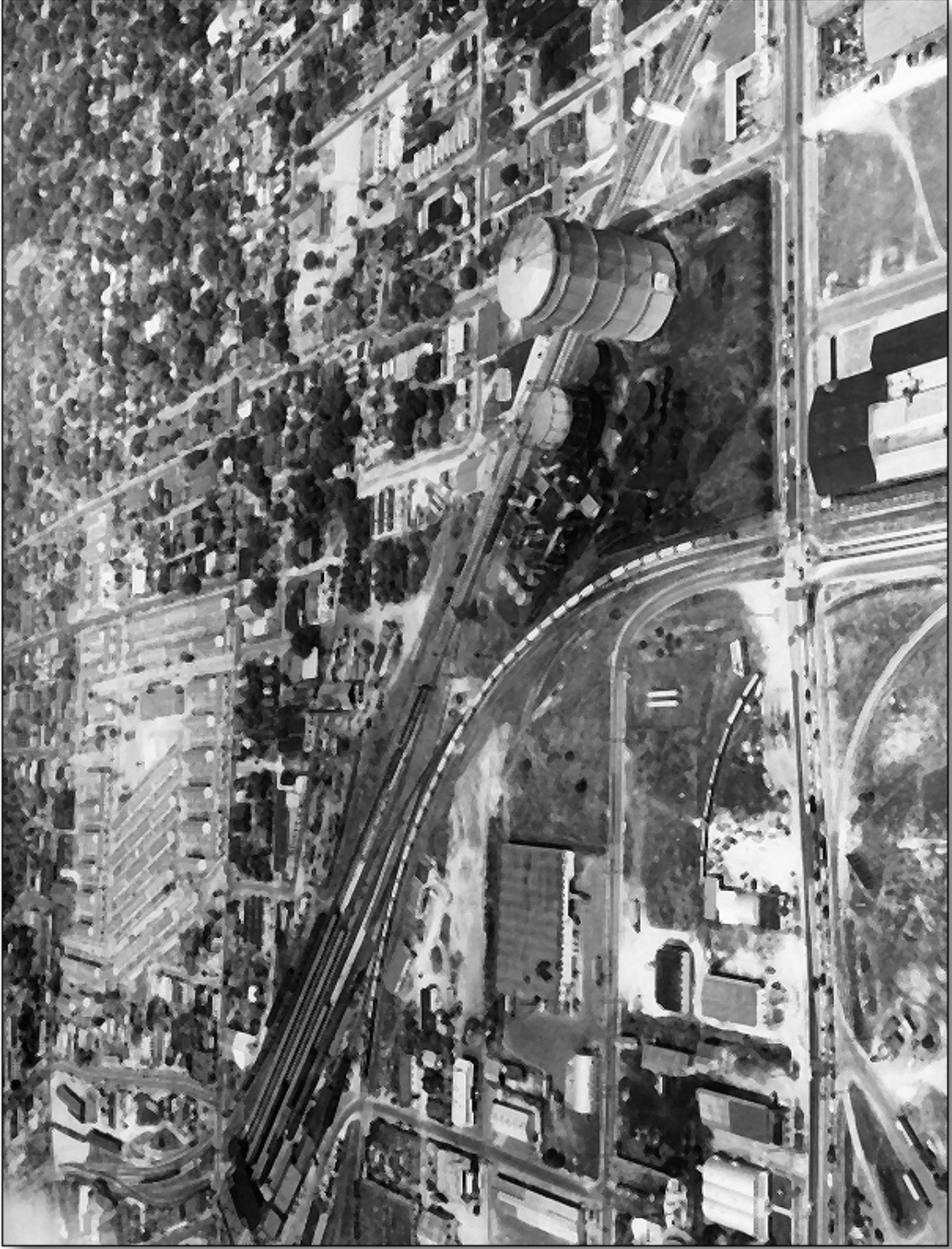
**A STREETCAR NAMED "FAIR FLORIDA"**  
Mrs. C.W. Chapin used the above private streetcar called, "Fair Florida," to sally forth majestically to do her shopping, visit friends and go sightseeing. When the street railway in which the Chapins owned shares sold its franchise & properties, the Chapins left Tampa, never to return.

The electric streetcars that operated over the lines were the first in Florida. The car barn was at the intersection of Knight and Hills Avenue on Bayshore. There were no tracks on the river bridge at that time, and there were no paved streets. The tracks were laid with ties, like a railroad.

Meanwhile, Consumers' competitors had not been idle. The Tampa Street Railway converted its old steam locomotives to electric and put trolley cars into operation on May 16, 1893.

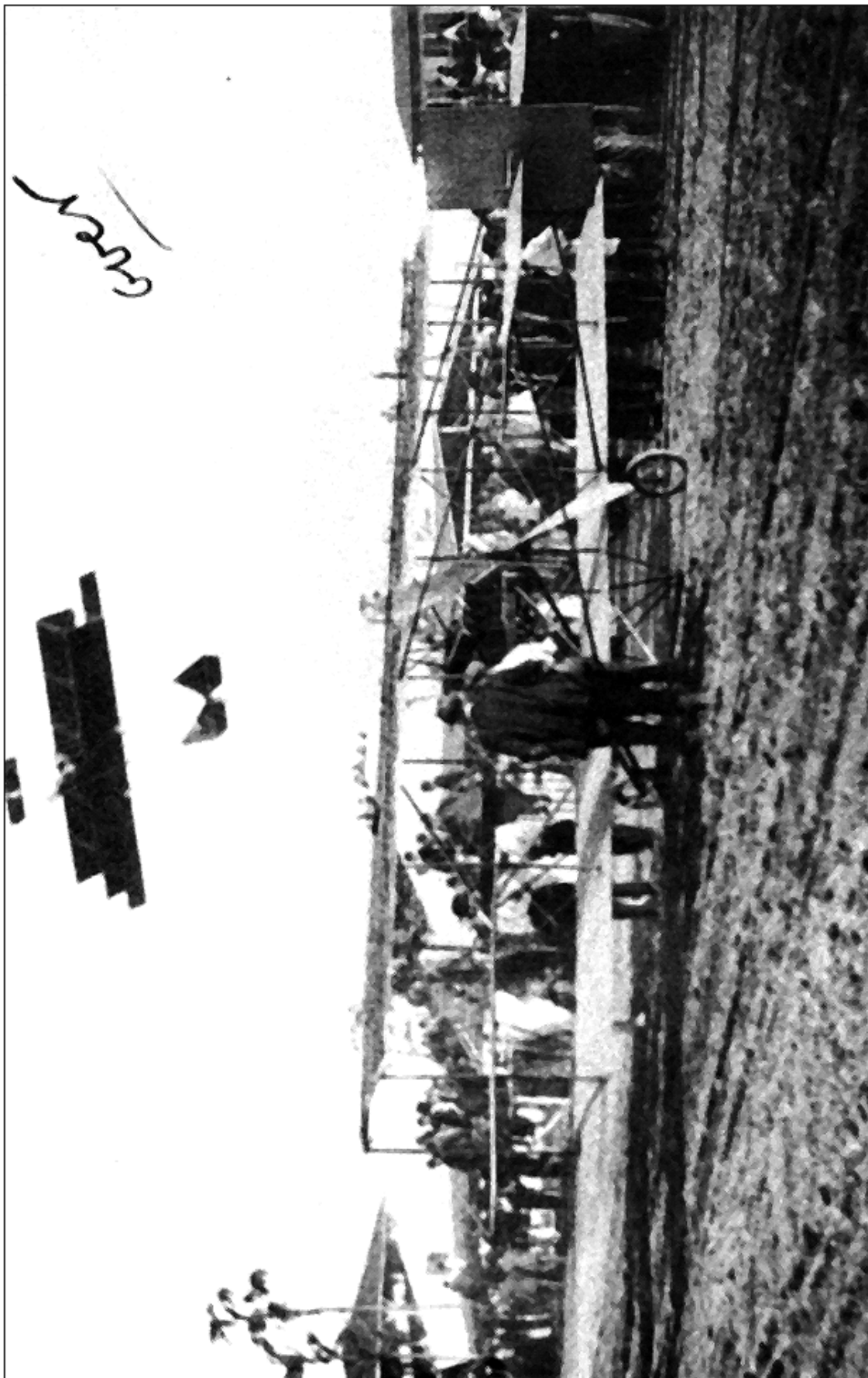
With the two companies operating competing lines to Ybor City, a rate war ensued. Consumers' reduced the fare to two cents and kept it there, bringing the older company to the brink of financial ruin. Finally, its promoters gave up. The company went into receivership and was purchased by Consumers' on June 18, 1894.

Thus in 1894 Consumers' had almost complete control of Tampa's electric

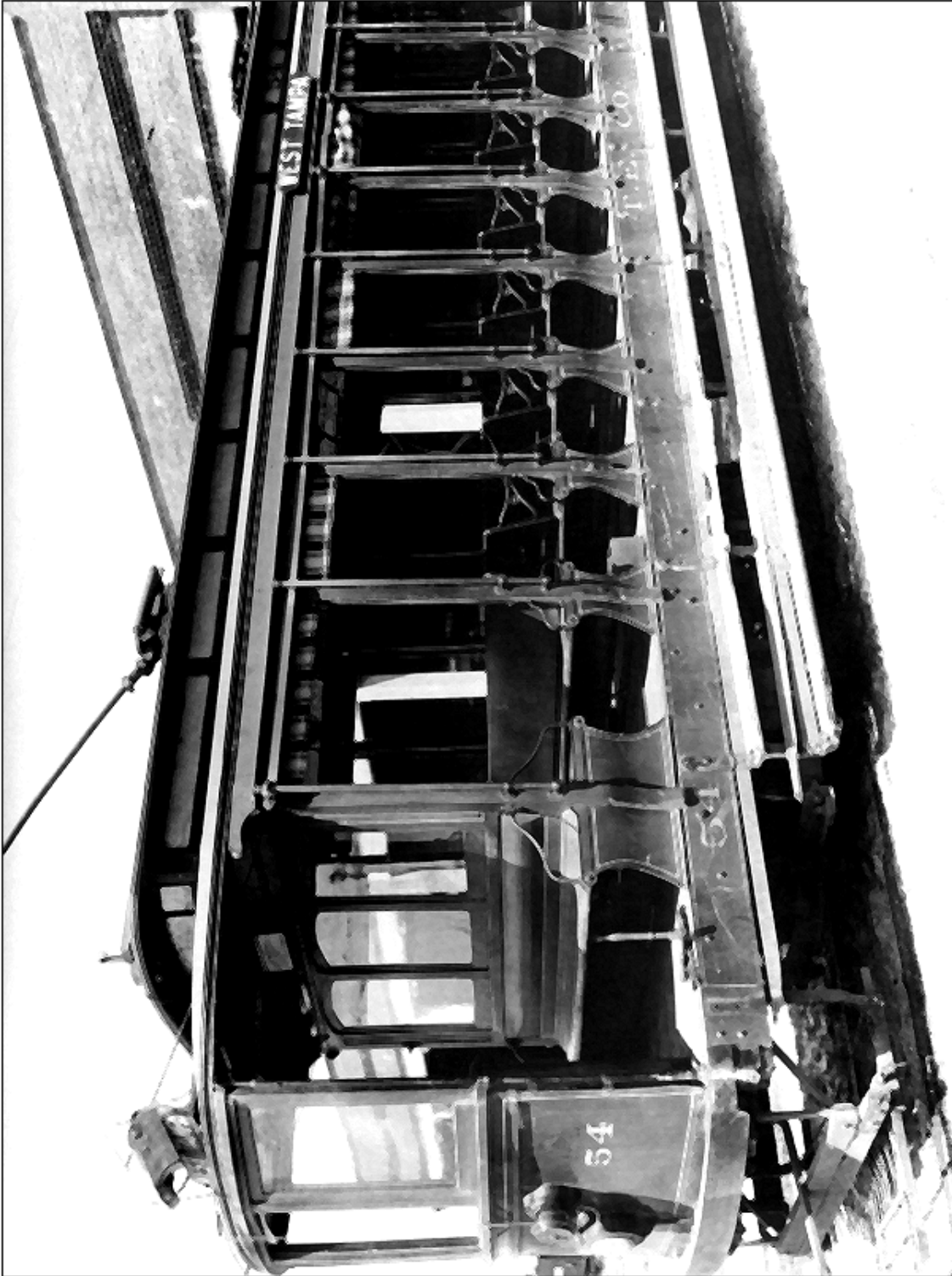


**Tampa Gas Co. established 1895. Tank erected in 1915. Demolished in 1982.**





On February 21, 1911, the first air meet in the Tampa area, took place at the Old Race Track, located north of Tampa Bay Blvd., in the area of the Tampa Bay Mall, in West Tampa. Crowds of curious and excited onlookers gathered to watch the historic event.



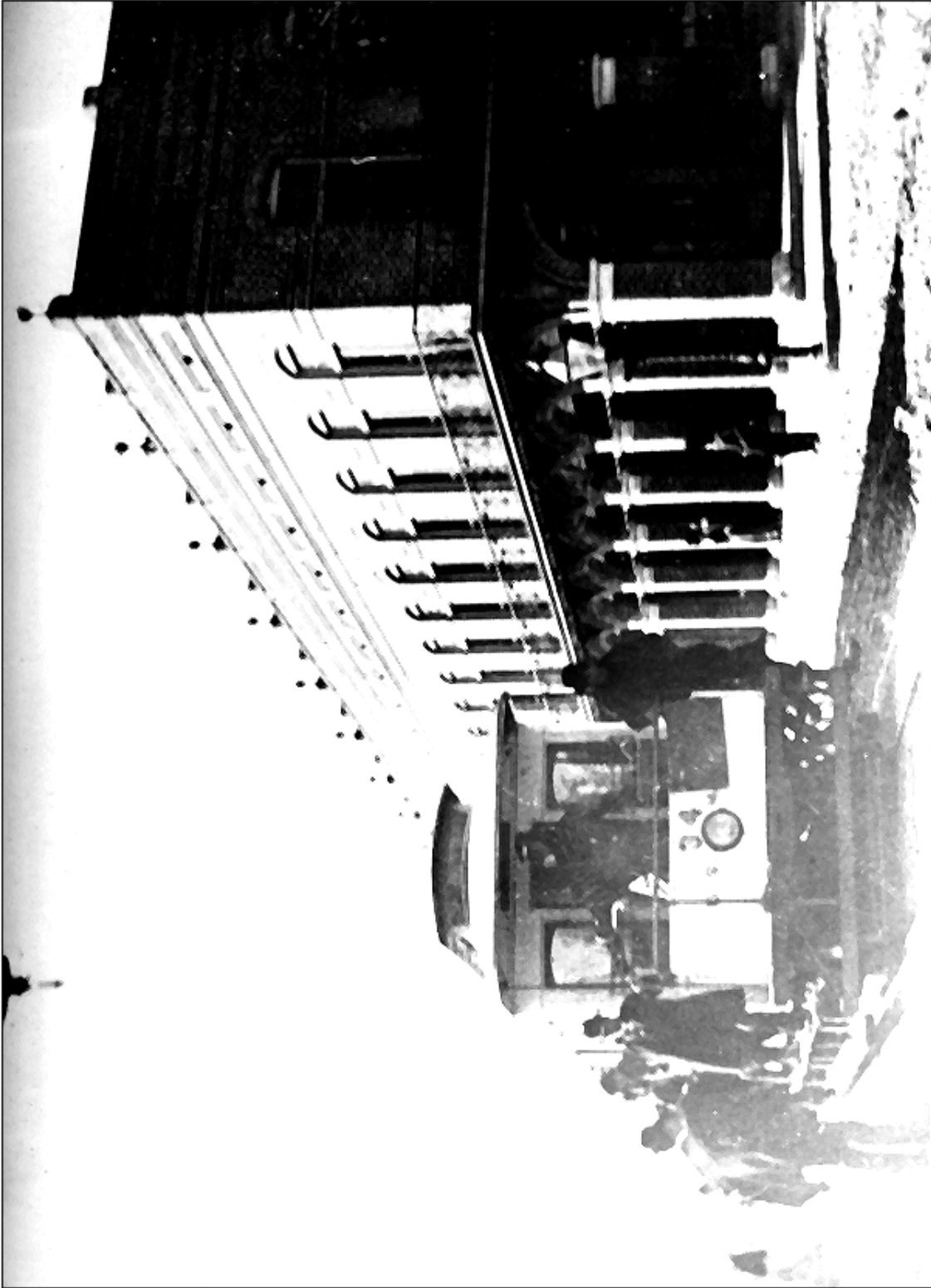
**A West Tampa streetcar in front of the barn in 1916. Similar open streetcars transported many baseball fans to the games in Macfarlane Park on Sundays.**

Photo courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System

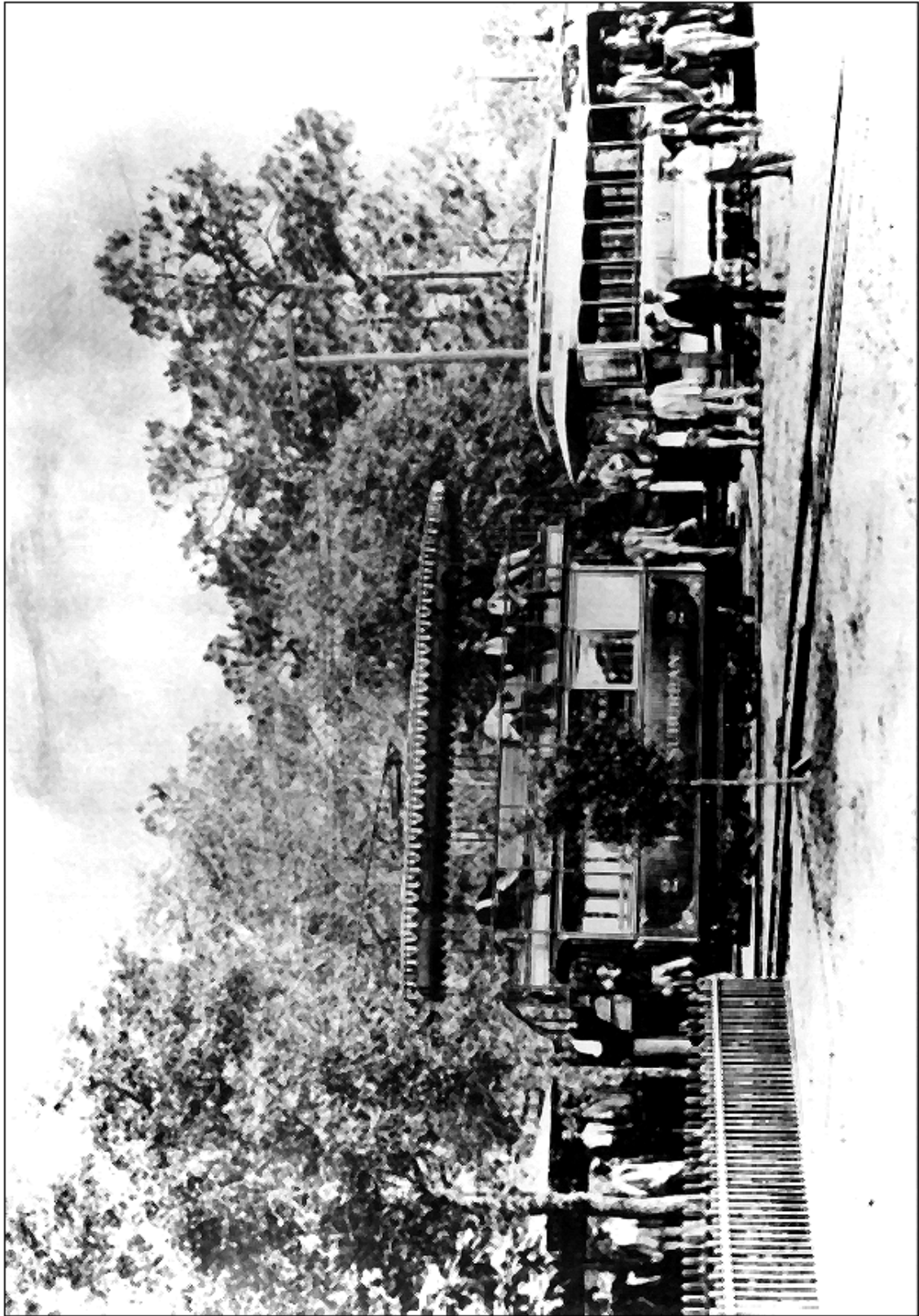


#### THE WEST TAMPA-YBOR CITY STREET CAR

In August 1906 the Tampa Electric Company opened a direct line between West Tampa and Ybor City. Thomas M. Steuart, motorman, standing on steps and James White, Conductor standing on street. Photo taken circa 1913 at the corner of Albany Ave. and Main St., West Tampa, FL.



Tampa Electric streetcar in front of El Pasaje Restaurant. Note: street has not been paved, 1910.



Tampa Suburban Streetcar, a Double-decker, returns to Ballast Point after a trip to Tampa and Ybor City. 1892. Photo courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System.

transportation and all the lighting business, having absorbed the Tampa Street Railway and Power Company.

In 1890 the Tampa and Palmetto Beach Railway Company had built an electric line from Seventh Avenue and 22nd Street to DeSoto Park. This line also was subsequently purchased by Consumers'.

### **A GROWING CITY**

During the next few years Tampa grew and prospered. The demand for more streetlights increased and the use of electricity in the peoples' homes slowly increased. Streetcar lines were extended. More cigar factories continued to be built.

Tampa's growth brought many community improvements. By 1900, sand streets in the business district were becoming a thing of the past. Many streets had hard-surfaced, and concrete sidewalks were added.

Paving with Vitrified brick followed in the early 1900's made for free movement of vehicles.

Tampa's population tripled between 1890 and 1900, from 5,000 to 15,000.

On Tuesday night, December 13, 1898 the dam used by the Consumers' to generate electricity on the Hillsborough River was blown up with dynamite, by the cattle barons, who felt the dam infringed on their God-given right to graze their cows anywhere the creatures cared to roam.

Financially weakened by the sabotage, the Consumers' Company sold its franchise and properties on October 2, 1899 to the Tampa Electric Company, a new corporation of eastern investors headed by Stone & Webster, of Boston. George J. Balwin, of

Savannah, Georgia was named President; Peter O. Knight, Vice-president; Elliot Wadsworth, Secretary; C.A. Stone, Treasurer, and Henry G. Bradlee, Manager.

When the Tampa Electric assumed control, the city's trolley system consisted of 211/2 miles of track. Main lines extended to Ybor City, West Tampa, one to DeSoto Park, completed Oct. 18, 1894, and the other to the Company dam, five miles north, completed in 1897.

This also extended Tampa's own growth northward along Franklin Street and Florida Avenue. Transportation and communication between West Tampa and downtown Tampa was quite extensive by 1900, and there was mutual cooperation as well as competition between the areas for new factories and facilities.

### **COOKING WITH GAS**

Another form of lighting and heat was gas. In 1895 the Tampa Gas Company was organized by Eduardo Manrara, Tampa cigar manufacturer, advancing most of the money, and two men from Minneapolis, A.J. Boardman and Frank Bruen. A small gas plant and a 30,000 cubic foot storage tank were constructed.

A contract from the City of Tampa for 250 gas streetlights in 1898 kept the company from going broke. But few persons wanted the expense of piping gas into their homes. In 1900 the Company had only 363 customers and of those, only 109 had cook stoves.

By 1910 the number of customers had increased to 1,160 and annual sales totaled 35,000 cubic feet.<sup>4</sup>

In the growing community of West Tampa the West Tampa Gas Co., a concern operated by the Tampa Gas Company placed in 1914, street lamps in each corner on Main Street from North Boulevard to North Albany. Later in January, 1916 gas lamps were placed on Main Street between Howard and Albany Avenues.

Many persons still remember the old lamplighter of long, long ago, the man that lit the street lamps late in the evening and put them out early in the morning.

In April 1916 new extensions were made in all parts of the city. The Gas Company had been operating in West Tampa since 1913. At the completion of the extensions there were fifteen (15) miles of mains in West Tampa alone. There were 200 gas street lamps, including the lights around Macfarlane and Peregrino Rey Parks.<sup>5</sup>

### **NEW TROLLEY LINE**

The Tampa & Sulphur Springs Traction Company, which had built a line to Sulphur Springs in 1907, had thereafter established other lines in the city and competed with the Tampa Electric Company.

The company was running streetcars into West Tampa, forming a direct route from the cosmopolitan cities of Ybor City and West Tampa by January 1909. This was accomplished by building the Garcia Avenue Bridge across the Hillsborough River on which the tracks were laid. Steel was laid on concrete piers to form a strong foundation for the new bridge. The structure was put together by the Virginia Bridge & Iron Company. A satisfactory agreement was reached between the traction company and the City of Tampa whereby the city paid a part of the cost and in return would have

free use of the bridge for pedestrians, providing a sidewalk for their use.<sup>6</sup>

The Bridge was not provided with an electric apparatus for opening the draw, like the one at the Lafayette (Kennedy) Street Bridge. The draw was opened by hand power, but this did not cause delay. The traffic in this part of the river was not heavy, and the bridge was not open often.<sup>7</sup>

The City of Tampa could not support two systems and in 1911 the younger concern, headed by John P Martin, went into the hands of the receiver. Two years later (1913) it was purchased at receiver sale by Tampa Electric Company, and the systems were consolidated. The Company then had 47 miles of track and was operating 67 trolley cars, 63 of which were open.

Early motorists took delight in proving their autos were faster than the streetcars. Bayshore Boulevard was paved with oyster shell, and motorists would drive along just ahead of one of the Company's cars on the Port Tampa run, causing the motorman to "eat dust" all the way from Ballast Point to the Tampa city limits. After such a run the motorman's neat blue uniform was white.

By 1916, Tampa's population had jumped to 65,000. It was truly the "Cigar City," with 196 cigar factories. That year 300 million cigars were rolled out and 12,000 men and women made their living in the thriving industry.

Development of the Tampa Electric Company streetcar system reached its peak during the Florida "boom" days. There were 53 miles of track and overhead trolley lines, serving all downtown Tampa, Ybor City, West Tampa, (as far as Macfarlane Park), Palma Ceia, Tampa Heights, Jackson

Heights, Sulphur Springs, and south to Port Tampa.

The company continued to operate its trolley system in Tampa until a year after World War 11 ended (August 1946), when the system was abandoned. At that time the system comprised of 53 miles of track and 168 trolley cars were in operation.

On August, 1946, bus transportation was provided by the Tampa Transit Line, a subsidiary of the National City Lines of Chicago.<sup>8</sup>

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Henry Laurens Mitchell*, 1978.

<sup>2</sup> The History of Tampa Electric (from the files of the Tampa Electric Co.)

<sup>3</sup> *Tobacco Leaf*, Aug. 23, 1893

<sup>4</sup> *The Sunland Tribune*, (Nov. 1982) Tampa Pastimes - Hampton Dunn

<sup>5</sup> *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 7, 1916

<sup>6</sup> *Tampa Morning Tribune*, June 19, 1908

<sup>7</sup> *Tampa Morning Tribune*, Oct. 13, 1908

<sup>8</sup> The History of Tampa Electric (from the files of the Tampa Electric Co.)



**THE FAN  
EL ABANICO  
AMBASSADOR OF LOVE**  
By TONY PIZZO



**THE FAN WAS A WEAPON OF ROMANCE**

In the hands of a beautiful Spanish *senorita* the fan glittered like a fluttering butterfly speaking the language of love. The gorgeous cigar-box label, "La Mia," (my own), was owned by *Pendas and Alvarez Cigar Co.* The firm was established in Havana, Cuba in 1867, and was the third cigar factory to move to Ybor City in 1887.

Original Label: Tony Pizzo Coll., U.S.F.

In the early days of Ybor City Latin *senoritas* were very proficient in the art of fan flirting. She learned the coquettish and graceful use of the fan from childhood.

It has been written that during Spain's golden epoch, *senoritas* went armed with fans and *caballeros* carried swords. Some times the amorous flutter of the fan would

be mightier than the sword and more effective than Cupid's arrows.

The fan is an exceptional work of art. The luxurious makeup of the fan made use of exotic materials, tortoise shell, plumes, silk, ivory, bamboo, palm leaves, chicken skin, leather, French rosepoint, sandalwood and adorned with colorful artwork. In the hands

of a *senorita* the beautiful fan was a weapon of fatal attraction.

Her fan flirting maneuvers, and her winning ways were a spectacle of intriguing amusement. An observer in the early days related how *senorita* watched by a vigilant *senora*, "held the fan half opened, then hid half of her radiant face, then quickly peeping with her wistful brown eyes from behind its shelter like the moon out of a gilded cloud."

The fan spoke poetically in the hands of an Ybor City *senorita*. The sight of a handsome caballero would trigger the *abanico* into a frantic flutter. She was a charming flirt with the fan, signaling disdain or supreme romantic expectations.

In the language of the fan, a graceful wave of the fan across her left cheek, meant, "I love you"; an abrupt closing indicated, "anger"; a gradual opening of the folds signified, "reluctant forgiveness"; placing the fan on the right ear, signaled, "you have changed"; the swift drawing of the fan through the hand, meant, "I hate you"; opening the fan wide conveyed the ardor, "wait for me"; fast fanning warned, "I am engaged"; or the mournful slowness of the fan sighed, "I am married". Drawing the fan across the forehead warned, "we are being watched"; placing the handle to the lips expressed the desire, "I want to be kissed."

Observing the intricate maneuvers of the fan in the hand of a beautiful Ybor City *senorita* in love was a precious sight to behold.

# TAMPA'S GREAT FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION

By TONY PIZZO



**In the 4th of July of 1918 grand parade appears the Italian Club unit on 7th Avenue approaching Nebraska Avenue. The Ladies Auxiliary is shown with a large American Flag, followed by officials of the club and the Ybor City Italian band. The little boy in the white sailor suit carrying a white parasol is Tony Pizzo, now Hillsborough County Historian, striding alongside his father, Paul Pizzo, carrying the banner of the Italian Club.**

Photo courtesy of Tom Cagnina

The Independence Day festivities of 1918 were impressive demonstrations of unity by the diverse nationalities of Tampa in support of the war effort. The civilian population was on parade that day cheering for democracy and rekindling the fires of hate against Kaiserism. It was a proud day for Tampa.

Martin Caraballo, a native of Mexico and a prominent attorney, was chairman of the

foreign-born committee that planned and carried out the Independence Day celebration.

Mayor D. B. McKay issued a proclamation to honor the day. All business establishments and government offices closed for the festivities.

The day started with a concert in front of the courthouse by the Boys' Band. At noon,



**The Centro Espanol and Centro Asturiano Clubs marched together carrying service flags of their members in the armed forces. At the head of the Spanish unit is beautiful senorita appearing as Miss Liberty, and a caballero dressed as Uncle Sam. The scene above is Franklin Street and Madison Avenue.**

Photo courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System

Sergeant D. B. Givens of the County Guards fired the National Salute of 48 guns.

Prior to the parade which was scheduled for 2:30 p.m., an event of great interest was the launching of another wartime vessel at Hookers Point.

The "monster parade" as described by the *Tribune* started promptly at 2:30 p.m. The parade route followed 7th Avenue to Franklin Street to Lafayette Street (Kennedy Blvd.) to Plant Field. Major H. E. Snow was the grand marshal.

The unique parade was composed of the various nationalities in Tampa. Clubs and societies marched in a body bringing their own fife and drum corps, bands and floats. The fluttering flags and banners and the sound of martial music kept the throng of spectators cheering constantly.

The Italian delegation carried a sign, "Viva Italia -a valued ally, heroic and undaunted." The participants wore white uniforms and carried American and Italian flags.

Next came the men and women of the Circulo Cubano with the slogan, "To die for your country is to live." They were followed by a group of several hundred children bearing American and Cuban flags. The lead banner expressed their true thoughts: "Cuba Libre - Ever With Her Uncle Sam."

The next unit was a contingent of the Spanish colony. Members of the Centro Espanol and Centro Asturiano, dressed in white, carried the service flags of their members in the armed forces. At the head of the unit marched a beautiful senorita draped in the American flag. She represented Miss Liberty. Marching beside of her was a caballero dressed as Uncle Sam.

They were followed by hundreds of Greeks on foot. A banner was carried, showing the number of Tampa Greeks serving in the war. A beautiful float followed with Miss Hattie Sellers representing the Statue of Liberty. The float bore the slogan, "We are fighting for World Democracy."

France, Belgium, Syria, Honduras and other countries followed with banners and streamers flying in the breeze.

The parade passed in front of the grandstand packed with thousands of citizens. After the parade passed the stands the County Guard put on military exercises and patriotic speeches were made by Mayor McKay and Judge Horace C. Gordon.

The competitive drill was won by Company D. Major Conolly pinned a medal on Captain Bigham, and kissed him on either cheek a la General Joffre.

Mayor McKay congratulated Mr. Caraballo for the success of the great event, and he also congratulated the melting pot of Tampa loyalists for joining hands to cheer for

democracy. "You have demonstrated," he said, "your loyalty to the American nation, and you have done what our beloved President Wilson wished to have done. Tampa is one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the country, but she is one of the most thoroughly American."

*Originally published in La Gaceta*

# THE DAMNEDEST TOWN THIS SIDE OF HELL: TAMPA, 1920-29. (PART II)

By DR. FRANK ALDUINO



Judge Leo Stalaker, Sr

The exception to this rule occurred in the summer of 1927 when the City Council appointed judge Leo Stalaker to the municipal bench.<sup>27</sup>

Stalaker, a State Representative, who had recently gained notoriety for sponsoring a controversial antievolution bill, was selected as a temporary replacement on the bench in June 1927. To retain his judgeship, he would have to win a special election in October. Despite the consequences, Stalaker, in an act of defiance to the political establishment, quickly asserted his independence. Upon assuming his judicial

duties he warned Tampa's underworld that he would vigorously enforce the law. Stalaker kept his word. On his first day on the bench the crusading magistrate quadrupled the customary fines and shocked the city by imposing stiff prison sentences for *bolita* and liquor violators.<sup>28</sup>

Stalaker's aggressive stand against Tampa's vice conditions sent many liquor violators scurrying for safe shelter. In fact, E. L. Bergstram, a federal prohibition agent in the city, stated:

I know that many "speakeasies" and other places where liquor has been sold in the past have closed their doors and gone out of business. They are not willing to run the risk of being "caught with the goods." The closing of these places is having its effect on the moonshine stills. Many of them also are going out of business because the market for their liquor has been severely crimped."<sup>29</sup>

Although Judge Stalaker's stern interpretation of the law delighted the city's ardent prohibitionists, it infuriated Tampa's political structure. Not willing to wait until the upcoming judicial election, Mayor Perry Wall demanded the immediate removal of the factious magistrate. Unable to secure the support of a majority of city commissioners, Wall had to wait for the October plebiscite. As expected, Stalaker lost the judicial contest, carrying only two of twenty-six precincts. Despite his decisive defeat, the

judge had three more months on the municipal bench before his abbreviated term expired. On November 27, 1927, using a movie camera the judge recorded a vice sweep through Ybor City. The pictures would be used as evidence for future arrests.<sup>30</sup>

The movie, which the judge entitled *The Wages of Sin*, provoked the wrath of Mayor Wall and other city politicians. Once again, they called for Stalnaker's impeachment. Although many Tampanians believed that the judge had usurped the law, he managed to serve out his entire appointment. For seven months Tampa's underworld and its political allies had faced a formidable foe; illegal liquor and *bolita* operators lost a considerable amount of revenue while Stalnaker sat on the municipal bench. They would not soon forget this crusading magistrate. In fact, within a year of his defeat, Stalnaker was disbarred from the Florida Bar Association. Throughout the Great Depression he was forced to write detective stories to support his family.<sup>31</sup>

Stalnaker could not be bribed, but he was the exception to the rule. Prohibition added to the public corruption already flourishing in Tampa. Dishonest officials allegedly including patrolmen, police chiefs, city commissioners, and even a few mayors, all accepted protection money. Yet, municipal authorities did not have a monopoly on graft. Throughout the "Noble Experiment," Hillsborough County sheriffs were as bribable as their municipal counterparts. For example, William Spencer, a county sheriff during the early days of Prohibition, liked to personally collect his graft from moonshiners so that "he could sample some of their hooch."<sup>32</sup> Another sheriff accused of accepting gratuitous kickbacks was Luther Hiers. In September 1926, an affidavit signed by some of Tampa's most

prominent citizens accused the sheriff of allowing at least 101 saloons to operate within the county. The sworn statement also alleged that Hiers tolerated the *bolita* rackets, prostitution, and dope peddlers. Although the besieged sheriff was chastized by the local press, Governor John Martin refused to remove him.<sup>33</sup>

L. M. Hatton was not so fortunate. In one of the closest races in Hillsborough County history, Hatton defeated three former sheriffs: L. C. Hiers, William Spencer, and A. J. White. In office only a few months, Hatton was accused of receiving \$10,000 a month from the county's liquor and gambling violators. According to an affidavit signed by Deputy John Harrington, who was Sheriff Hatton's liaison with Tampa's underworld:

When Hatton became sheriff [I] was authorized by Hatton to make collections weekly of sums of money from persons violating the liquor and gambling laws, the amount of such collections to be fixed by the affidavit upon the character of the business done by such law violators.<sup>34</sup>

Harrington claimed that Hatton maintained two lists of violators—an active and inactive. Individuals on the active list paid the sheriff and were allowed to continue their illegal operations. Those on the inactive list refused to pay the sheriff and immediately had their "joints" raided. Upon receiving Deputy Harrington's sworn statement and other damaging testimony, Governor Doyle Carlton removed the crooked sheriff. His decision was later upheld by the Legislature. Although Hatton was replaced, subsequent Hillsborough County sheriffs continued to receive graft from the city's underworld.<sup>35</sup>

Despite convenient protection arrangements with county sheriffs and municipal officials, bootleggers still needed to use discretion when conducting their business. Most rumrunners feared the long arm of the federal government. When the Volstead Act became effective on January 16, 1920, the Treasury Department was ordered by Congress to create an additional branch of the Internal Revenue Bureau. It was given the responsibility of enforcing the national prohibitory laws. This so-called Prohibition Unit supervised the actions of each of the forty-eight state Prohibition Directors.<sup>36</sup>

Florida's first federal prohibition chief was judge O. P. Hilburn. A Tampa native, World War I military hero, and former Hillsborough County Juvenile Court magistrate, Hilburn was selected by National Prohibition Director John Kramer to suppress the state's liquor traffic. During the first months of the "Noble Experiment," federal authorities made a concerted effort to eradicate the state's infant bootleg trade. Local newspapers praised Judge Hilburn's resolve and efficiency. They also wrote glowing stories about the courageous exploits of his agents, especially Mayor Frank Williams, Tampa's future police chief. Many Tampanians believed H. M. Gaylord, Deputy Commissioner of the Internal Revenue, when he stated that the United States would soon be as "dry as a desert."<sup>37</sup>

Yet this prevailing sense of optimism soon evaporated as Florida prohibition agents became increasingly handicapped by several obstacles. First of all, throughout the "Noble Experiment" Congress refused to adequately finance the war on liquor. Periodically, state directors, in order to absorb budgetary cuts, had to release their agents. In May 1921, Judge Hilburn was compelled to furlough 75 percent of his entire prohibitory force.

Another agency restricted by tight congressional budgets was the Coast Guard. This branch of the Treasury Department had the unenviable task of controlling the importation of smuggled liquor and other contraband along Florida's 1,200 mile coastline. Severely undermanned and lacking the necessary appropriations, the Guard was almost impotent in its struggle against better financed and more sophisticated rumrunners. Using high-speed, expensive motorboats, smugglers easily out-manuevered the Coast Guard's antiquated cutters.<sup>38</sup>

A second problem facing federal prohibition was the lack of honest and efficient agents. Low pay, long hours, few benefits, and the lack of job security discouraged qualified applicants and bred corruption within the ranks of the Prohibition Unit. Throughout the "Noble Experiment" scores of federal agents (especially prior to 1927 when they were not covered by Civil Service requirements) were dismissed from the service for accepting bribes or consorting with known bootleggers. Tampa newspapers frequently reported the arrest or dismissal of dishonest prohibition agents.<sup>39</sup>

Another obstacle to enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment was an unsympathetic federal judiciary. The Volstead Act violators filled the courts, frustrating many already overworked judges. By 1922, more federal courts were desperately needed to try the massive volume of prohibition violators. Yet Congress never provided adequate funding. This lack of Congressional support created a good deal of resentment among members of the federal bench, which was usually reflected in prohibition cases. "Damp and wet" judges, disgruntled with the existing system, became excessively lenient in their punishment to liquor violators. Fines,



sometimes as low as five or ten dollars, were not uncommon for those breaking federal prohibitory statutes. judges also showed their displeasure with the "Noble Experiment" by restricting the scope of evidence permitted in alcohol prosecutions. Although the Supreme Court had broadened search and seizure rules, federal judges were often hesitant to allow questionable evidence in the courtroom.<sup>40</sup>

Because of this judicial hostility, prohibition agents found it difficult to obtain the necessary evidence for a solid prosecution. In order to have a chance for a conviction, agents needed to arrest a defendant in the act of selling illegal liquor. In Ybor City, this was nearly impossible. According to Tampa historian Anthony Pizzo, every street corner in the city's Latin quarter had posted sentries that watched for federal agents. If one was spotted, a warning quickly spread throughout the neighborhood cafes, restaurants, and speakeasies. Since liquor was generally served in a pitcher, any evidence was simply destroyed by pouring it down a drain. When prohibition agents arrived at their destination, they usually found patrons drinking nothing but *cafe con leche*.<sup>41</sup>

Throughout the Prohibition era, federal enforcement of the Volstead Act can be characterized as cyclical. In fact, federal enforcement patterns in Tampa were remarkably similar to those practiced by local police and county sheriffs. Federal agents often conducted their intensive crusades against bootleggers and moonshiners just prior to an important election or after the replacement of a state, regional, or federal prohibition director.

In Tampa, the appointment of a new federal prohibition chief usually brought a period of instability for the city's bootleggers. When

A. L. Allen was appointed the chief federal agent in the State of Florida, he promised "vigorous and unflinching enforcement of all prohibition laws."<sup>42</sup> Within months he and his men captured 102 stills, 26,912 quarts of whiskey, and 55,777 gallons of mash. Yet, this enthusiasm for law and order quickly waned. After the initial drive, federal prohibition arrests decreased considerably. Infrequent raids continued over the next few years, including several against the Florida Brewing Company. They increased again in 1925 with the arrival in Tampa of General Lincoln Andrews. Appointed by President Calvin Coolidge in April of that year to head the Prohibition Bureau, Andrews conducted a massive nationwide campaign against bootleggers, moonshiners, and international smugglers. His first target was the leaky State of Florida.<sup>43</sup>

In order to control the embarrassing amount of illicit liquor flowing into the Sunshine State, Andrews devised a two-pronged plan to curtail rum-running. His main objective was to completely reorganize the Prohibition Bureau. Every prohibition agent was furloughed and thoroughly reviewed before being allowed to return to work. Many did not meet the new rigorous requirements and were dismissed. Assistant Treasury Director Andrews also replaced or transferred every state prohibition director in the Union. In Florida, A. L. Allen was succeeded by Benjamin Simmons, an exbrigadier general who supposedly had no political connections and was given the job solely because of his superior administrative skills. Simmons was given a free hand in selecting his agents.<sup>44</sup> As his primary assistant, Simmons chose Phillip Hamsch, a retired navy lieutenant-commander who had starred on the football team at the Naval Academy.

Andrews' second course of action in his quest to crush the liquor trade in Tampa and the rest of Florida involved the Coast Guard. General Andrews, in order to block the importation of spirits during the busy tourist months, transferred the large Rum Fleet stationed off New York, New Jersey, and New England to the Sunshine State. Andrews planned to seal the Florida coast before northern rumrunners had a chance to deliver their goods into the state. "When the rum fleet arrives it will pursue the rumrunners just as a fishing smack follows a mackerel,"<sup>45</sup> intoned Captain John Berry, Commander of the Florida Coast Guard. He continued by warning potential smugglers,

"If this foreign fleet, which has been laughing at the law in eastern waters, dares to hoist anchors and head for Florida, it will be a most dangerous move it ever made. We are prepared to meet any of the vessels whose skippers think they can ignore the law and reap a harvest in Florida."<sup>46</sup>

The combined activities of Director Simmons and Captain Berry had a tremendous effect on the supply of imported liquor in Tampa. It was reported that the "squeeze" doubled the price of scotch whiskey to nearly \$25.00 a quart. Furthermore, cafes, restaurants, and other liquor emporiums that formerly did a thriving business either temporarily closed their establishments or sold their customers moonshine. Although this colored "shine" was barely fit for human consumption, a thirsty public was willing to pay as much as \$10.00 a quart for the inferior liquid.<sup>47</sup>

Surprisingly, this effective crusade lasted for over eight months. With General Andrews personally directing the operation from Florida, the federal government maintained a tough enforcement policy. In fact, in July

1926, Andrews added a new weapon to his arsenal - airplanes. Docked on Davis Island, these aircraft were flown by navy and army pilots. They were equipped with machine guns to fire upon smugglers who resisted arrest. Although few of these "Rum Planes" ever encountered bootleggers, they nonetheless provided essential intelligence for federal officials. Flying high above the earth, they charted and patrolled the labyrinth of waterways and inlets used as landing spots by smugglers. Apparently, the Air Force and other federal agencies continued to wreak havoc on Tampa's rum trade throughout the early months of 1926. Even Izzy Einstein, the legendary prohibition agent from New York, noticed Tampa's shortage of quality alcohol. While visiting his brother in the city Einstein commented: "Everyone [in Tampa] seems happy, sober and orderly, and I haven't seen a single drink since I came. One glass of buttermilk was the most intoxicating thing I could get to drink in a couple of restaurants I tried."<sup>48</sup>

Despite an impressive record against the bootleg trade, the federal crusade suddenly ended in late 1926. Lack of funds, apathy and corruption allowed Tampa's rumrunners to soon reestablish their lucrative businesses. While intermittent crackdowns on suspected liquor violators continued throughout the remaining years of the "Noble Experiment," there was not another coordinated effort to crush the importation of smuggled liquor in Tampa. The Great Depression and the Wickersham report which "documented the breakdown of enforcement and impossibility of imposing aridity on a determined minority," assured that the federal government would do little to dry-up the city of Tampa, as well as the rest of the nation.<sup>49</sup>

## ENDNOTES

<sup>27</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, 2 January 1989; Oral Interview, Nick Longo.

<sup>28</sup> *Tampa Tribune*.

<sup>29</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, 20 July 1927.

<sup>30</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, 31 August 1927; *Tampa Tribune*, 20 July 1937; *Tampa Tribune*, 2 September 1927; *Tampa Tribune*, 5 October 1927; *Tampa Tribune*, 28 November 1927.

<sup>31</sup> Oral Interview, Leland Hawes, March 6, 1989.

<sup>32</sup> Oral Interview, Frank Gatto, June 6, 1986. Gatto is a pseudonym.

<sup>33</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, September 1916.

<sup>34</sup> Governor Doyle Carlton Papers, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida. Record Group 102, Series 204, Box 40.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Laurence F. Schmeckebier, *The Bureau of Prohibition: Its History, Activities and Organizations* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1929), pp. 7-9.

<sup>37</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, 14 January 1920.

<sup>38</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, 21 May 1921.

<sup>39</sup> Andrew Sinclair, *Prohibition: Age of Excess*, pp. 182-185.

<sup>40</sup> James Carter, "Florida and Rum-running During National Prohibition," pp. 60-61; *Tampa Tribune*, 18 May 1922.

<sup>41</sup> Oral Interview, Anthony Pizzo. March 6, 1989.

<sup>42</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, 2 January 1922.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*; Andrew Sinclair, *Prohibition: Age of Excess*, p. 243.

<sup>44</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, 4 September 1925; *Tampa Tribune*, 4 August 1926; *Tampa Tribune*, 19 September 1925.

<sup>45</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, 2 October 1925.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, 19 November 1925.

<sup>48</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, 24 May 1926; *Tampa Tribune*, 6 March 1926.

<sup>49</sup> James Carter, "Florida and Rum-running During National Prohibition," p. 62.

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# BABE RUTH AND HIS RECORD "HOME RUN" AT TAMPA

By JAMES W. COVINGTON

It was during Spring Training in his final year wearing the Boston Red Sox uniform that Babe Ruth hit a home run that may have been the longest one any player ever hit. Born on February 6, 1895 George Herman Ruth, the son of a Baltimore saloon owner and bartender was sent to St. Mary's Industrial School For Boys by his parents when they found they could not control him. Within a short time George was taken in hand by six-foot three, 250 pound Brother Matthias of the Xaverian Order who introduced him to discipline, a limited amount of education, shirt collar stitching and helped him become a pitcher in the leagues organized by the school. Both catching and hitting came naturally to the left handed Ruth but pitching required much more sheer strength. Ruth became the outstanding all around baseball player in the school.<sup>1</sup>

When George Herman was twenty years old and still at St. Mary's he was signed by a good Catholic and owner of the Baltimore Orioles Jack Dunn to a contract in organized baseball that paid \$600 for the season.<sup>2</sup> In his first year in the minor leagues Ruth won fourteen victories and six defeats as a pitcher and consequently was sold with two other players to the Boston Red Sox for \$20,000. In that year at Baltimore sports followers began to call George Herman Jack Dunn's baby or Babe.

The huge bulk, heavy features and self-centered inner image propelled Babe into the center of conversation held by students at St. Mary's and members of the

Baltimore Orioles. They called him Tarzan until Babe realized that Tarzan was King of the Apes. When he was invited to eat in a fine home he set aside asparagus salad untasted. When the hostess asked him why he had not eaten the salad, he replied that the vegetable caused his urine to smell. When teammates noted that he changed underwear only every two weeks, he refused to wear the undergarment in the future and no one suspected that only bare skin was beneath the expensive Suits.<sup>3</sup>

During Spring Training at Hot Springs, Arkansas, Ruth made some of the other players angry when he wanted to take daily batting practice; thus forcing some to wait while he batted. Ty Cobb, one of the greatest of all hitters, claimed that Ruth, being a pitcher, could experiment with his swings at the ball and not be criticized for pitchers were usually poor hitters. Finally, Ruth developed a swing that utilized the full 215 pounds of weight and often when he missed the ball, would fall and land on his knees. It was awkward but effective. When the farm team at Providence, Rhode Island needed good pitchers, Ruth was sent there and assisted the team in winning the championship of the International League. When the International League completed its season, Ruth was recalled by the Red Sox and was able to win 2 games and lose one. Ruth's record in his first year in the minors was twenty-three wins and eight losses.<sup>4</sup>

With the outstanding hitting and equally outstanding pitching, it was difficult for the Red Sox manager to designate Ruth for one



**Babe Ruth, celebrating his birthday in St. Petersburg.**

Photo courtesy of *Tampa Tribune*

position. At first he was in the line-up as pitcher and pinch hitter but by May, 1918 he was shifted to first base and hit two home runs two days. Within a short time he was shifted to left field; a position where he remained for some time. Despite the effects of World War I and a players' strike the Red Sox won the league championship and World Series.

During negotiations in salary for the following year 1919, Ruth secured the services of a part-time agent and set the figure for his salary at \$15,000 a year - a raise of \$8,000 and second highest in baseball. When owner Harry Frazee refused to grant the hefty sum, Ruth became a hold-out. He was not with the team when it boarded the Clyde steamer at New York bound for the new training site in Florida or when it boarded the Seaboard train at Jacksonville bound for Tampa. When an agreement was signed with the New York Giants for a series of games at Tampa and on the trip northbound, it became absolutely necessary to sign Ruth so that large crowds could be attracted to watch his home runs and Frazee agreed to a contract which paid \$10,000 a year to Ruth. Shortly, Ruth left New York bound for Tampa on a midnight train.

Tampa at this time was going through a difficult period. Two hundred and thirty-eight persons had died during the October-November, 1918 influenza epidemic and the two shipyards that had employed more than five thousand persons in 1918 closed down in 1919 and the former employees found it difficult to secure other employment. On May Day of 1919 one hundred special guards were hired to guard against possible Communist violence but no disorder at all took place. Yet the city council tried to stimulate prosperity in the tourist trade by printing free post cards and

brochures to advertise Tampa, providing free public band concerts and community "sings" and the luring of the Boston Red Sox from Hot Springs to Tampa was a good move.

First of the Red Sox contingent to arrive in Tampa was Dr. M. P Lawler the trainer who proceeded to the Tampa Bay Hotel and adjacent Plant Field where the practice and games would be held. The field, located in the center oval of a race track maintained by the South Florida Fair Association and Tampa Bay Hotel, had been winter quarters of major league baseball teams since 1913 when Chicago had trained. Lawler saw that the infield had been improved and the hot and cold showers in the clubhouse had been reconditioned but he was more impressed by the facilities of the Tampa Bay Hotel.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the holdout Lawler claimed that Ruth was the most capable baseball player in the world. When the team arrived in Tampa on March 22, 1919 and eighteen players began practice at 10:00 a.m. on the following day, manager Ed Barrow observed the rough condition of the infield and outfield but he, like Lawler, was pleased with the Tampa Bay Hotel.<sup>6</sup>

Plans had been made by manager Barrow and owner Frazee to play several practice games with the reserves in Tampa, play the two home games with the New York Giants who were training at Gainesville and then travel with the Giants northward playing games with them in Gainesville; Columbia, South Carolina; Spartanburg, South Carolina; Winston-Salem, North Carolina and concluding the series in Richmond, Virginia. Barrow was glad to see Ruth when he arrived saying that the outfielder-infielder pitcher was needed as a pitcher by the team. No one in Tampa was sure about the figure

Ruth had signed for: \$15,000 a year or \$30,000 for three years.

With the players in camp, preparations for the long season proceeded at a fast pace. When rain forced a cancellation of work-outs on one day, two a day practices were scheduled on the following days. Billy Sunday, the well known evangelist who was presenting crusades against sin in the area, took part in the workouts by chasing balls in the outfield and bunting at batting practice.<sup>7</sup> The members of the team who had gone to the Palma Ceia Golf Club for food and golf gave in return a party for the members of the club at the Tampa Bay Hotel. With a reward of 150 cigars to the winning team, two games were played between the regulars and substitutes. In these two games, Ruth pitched one inning and played first base the rest of the time.<sup>8</sup>

Everyone awaited the arrival of the New York Giants, led by John McGraw, who would meet the Red Sox in the first spring training game. There was a heavy advance sale of the tickets which sold for 55 cents and \$1.10.<sup>9</sup> Thirty-five players, reporters and members of the Giant organization arrived by train from Gainesville on the night before the game and stayed at the Tampa Bay Hotel.

In an April game attended by a record crowd of 4,200 persons, the Red Sox beat the Giants 5-3 but the score did not matter, it was a home run by Ruth that was remembered for many years. In his first time at bat in the second inning, left fielder Babe Ruth batting fourth in the line-up, studied Giant's pitcher George Smith who would win only thirty-nine games in eight seasons. It seemed easy to hit against the pitcher and Ruth took a powerful swing which propelled the ball deep into right center field.<sup>10</sup> Right fielder Ross Youngs tried to make a catch

but the ball sailed high above his head beyond the outfield located in the inner part of the race track and into the sand beyond the track. After the game reporters were able to find Youngs and have him point out the exact spot where the ball had landed. The distance from the landing spot to home plate was measured but no exact figure has been given. Probably the ball was hit a distance between 500 and 600 feet; manager Barrow took a middle ground by estimating the distance at 579 feet.<sup>11</sup> It was the longest home run that Ruth ever hit and probably longer than any other man had hit at that time. The ball was found, signed by Ruth and Barrow and given to Billy Sunday.

The Red Sox went on to beat the Giants again on the following day and beat them in the final game of the series at Baltimore where Ruth hit four home runs in one game. When Ruth hit his home runs, he was hitting a dead ball that was thrown by a pitcher who could use spitballs and other freak deliveries which were later banned. Despite the home run hitting of Ruth, the Red Sox did not win the championship in 1919. Ruth would hit 714 home runs in his career doubling the figure of the second man on the list of home run hitters and hit a record sixty for one season but the Tampa home run was probably his best remembered single time at bat.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Robert W Creamer, Babe: *The Legend Comes to Life* (New York, 1974), 29-45.

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence Ritter and Donald Honig, *The Image of their Greatness: An Illustrated History of Baseball from the 1900 to the Present* (New York, 1979), 72.

<sup>3</sup> Creamer, Babe, 184, 186.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

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<sup>5</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, March 18, 1919.

<sup>6</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, March 25, 1919.

<sup>7</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, March 28, 1919.

<sup>8</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, March 29, 1919.

<sup>9</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, April 2, 1919.

<sup>10</sup> Creamer, Babe, 189.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.



# REMINISCENCES OF TONY PIZZO

## The Sights, Sounds and Smells of Ybor City

I like to think of the days of my youth in Ybor City recall the sights, sounds and smells that enriched my childhood. Life was pleasant and carefree, often exciting. I can still hear the chatter in Spanish and Italian as the workers trudged light heartedly to long days of rolling cigars in the factories; the rumbling of wagons and the clump of horses' hooves through the brick streets delivering milk and loaves of bread before sunrise. I can still hear the steam-whistles of the Tampa Box Factory and the Latin-American Laundry; the Regensberg Cigar Factory tower clock striking on the hour, and the bell of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church calling its parishioners to mass.

The exotic fragrances still tingle my nostrils. I can not forget the aroma of bread being baked by Italian housewives in their backyard-ovens permeating through the neighborhood -- (this was a Friday ritual); the roasting of coffee-beans in the coffeemills creating aromatic smoke perfuming the streets, and the pungent smell of Havana tobacco being blended. The guava processing plants brewed the exotic tropical fruit into jelly, paste, and *casco de guayaba* -- guava shells. The surrounding neighborhoods were perfumed with a piquant aroma. Breathing the seductive fragrance of steaming guavas, when I was a mere boy, left a sweet memory.

The mellifluous Latin chatter along the sidewalks in the evenings was an enchantment. I can still hear the music from

the clubhouse ballrooms wafting on the night air during festive occasions. Remembering the haunting wail of the train-whistle in the middle of the night, rumbling along Sixth Avenue, awakens a sad sensation of nostalgia. The old haunts and departed friends capture my memories. It was a way of life that will not return. It filled the summers of my childhood.



# **A SYNOPSIS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE IN TAMPA AND THE ROLE OF THE TAMPA BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE**

**By ROBERT W. SAUNDERS**

The history of Tampa cannot be completed without taking into consideration the many efforts made by Tampa's citizens of African descent to rid the community of racial segregation and the evil effects of "Jim-Crow." As this is written, it is also significant that what these Black Americans accomplished is directly related to the Bill of Rights, written two hundred years ago and subsequent amendments, particularly, amendments 13-15.

The changes that have occurred certainly could not have taken place without the help of some white citizens. There were quite a few who became concerned about the injustices that were imposed on African Americans. But often these concerns were tied to the traditional practices which relegated persons of color to the back of the bus and "cross the tracks" "away from the mainstream of Tampa's everyday affairs" mentality. But as pressures for institutional change mounted, so did the attitudes of a large number of white citizens.

Playing an important part in bringing about institutional change has been the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. With its broad program base covering every aspect of life, the NAACP through its local chartered entity, the Tampa Branch, and the Florida State Conference of NAACP Branches, led the attack against

racial segregation and discrimination. This is only a small effort to tell this side of the story.

The events reported here, are based on actual reports written by me and sent to the national and regional offices of the NAACP. The reports and letters referred to were written during the time that the activities were happening. As a national representative of the NAACP, it was my responsibility to assure that the local Branch adhere to the policies of the Association. As a native born Tampan, I had a natural interest in seeing that racial discrimination and segregation came to an end.

There has been much confusion and misinformation about the history of the Tampa Branch. While I am not able to cover all of the Branch's history, I have included a synopsis of how the Branch started during World War 1, some of its officers and early members and a few remarks about early cases. Recent research shows that most early black leaders including the late Blanche Armwood Beatty and the late Dr. Benjamin Mays were members of the NAACP.

This is a part of the manuscript that I am currently working on to tell the story of the NAACP in Florida. It also is, in my opinion, an important part of Tampa's history. The truth is that the advancements made for and

about Tampa's African American Citizens, were made with sacrifice, pain and fear of reprisal. The saying that nothing is free holds true in the "Fight for Freedom."

### THE NAACP STORY -- TAMPA

Racial discrimination and segregation has always been an issue in Tampa. In 1952, racial signs reading "Black" or "Colored" and "White Only" were seen in every government owned facility. Even during World War II, I was assigned to several troop trains bringing soldiers from Tuskegee Army Air Field to MacDill Army Air Base. The trains would pull in to the Southern end of the base and then back up to the northeastern part of the facility where the all black aviation squadron was located. All facilities at MacDill were separated by race. The USO club on Harrison Street was also segregated.

Protests against "Jim-Crow" practices have been a part of Tampa's life. These protests began when the community was first settled. Slaves, escaping from plantations, joined with Seminole Indians in battle against Union troops in the 1800's. Protests were raised during the Spanish American War when troops of the U.S. Army's Twenty-fourth Infantry and the Ninth Cavalry protested "Jim-Crow" treatment while waiting to board ships bound for Cuba. During the early 1900's, Black parents protested segregation in public education and demanded better school facilities for their children. Lynching had its place with Ku Klux Klan elements taking front row to assure that Black people and "Nigger Loving" supporters remained in their places. Substandard housing conditions, job discrimination in the skilled and unskilled employment levels, and unhealthy living conditions helped to spawn the birth of NAACP.

The Tampa Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was organized in 1917. Reorganized in 1920-21, it has continued to exist without interruption. The Branch has had many active and well known persons as its supporters. Among its leaders were the Rev. Andrew A. Ferrell, Sr., a Presiding Elder in the African Methodist Church; an attorney Greene, the only Black attorney to practice in the city in the 1920's; E. E. Broughton, who served as Treasurer of the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College and later as an officer of the Central Life Insurance Company, C. Blythe Andrews, who served as Secretary of Central Life and later published the *Florida Sentinel Bulletin*. Other persons who served as Branch Presidents were Mathew Gregory, my wife Helen Saunders, Charles J. Davalt, Charles Stanford, Levy Taylor, Ellen P. Greene, Francisco A. Rodriguez, Elder Warren W. Banfield, Robert L. Gilder and another Seventh Day Adventist leader Elder Straghn. Straghn served at a time when there was dissension in the Branch and the Black leadership.

The Tampa organization also had its group who would be considered activists by today's standards. Playing an important role was Norman E. Lacy, a man small of stature but strong in his beliefs that the NAACP should actively attack "Jim-Crow" laws. In 1945-46, the National Office of the NAACP dispatched Ella Baker, a field secretary to Tampa to mediate between the warring factions. With Andrews, Broughton and many others who opposed Lacy's approach on one side and Lacy, supported by Mathew Gregory, Luther Maddox, Harold N. Reddick and Dan MaLoy openly calling for direct action to confront police brutality and unjust killings of Blacks, Ella Baker, an NAACP field secretary had her hands full.

Tampa Branch meetings in 1945 and '46 often became so heated that blows were struck between the opposing factions during meetings held on Cuba and Spring Streets. When Elder Straghn became the Tampa Branch President, Ella Baker made a second trip to Tampa to bring the two sides together.

Mathew Gregory, a close friend of A. Phillip Randolph, founder and President of the International Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and himself a pullman porter, became president after Elder Straghn was assigned to a church in Sarasota. Gregory also served as Interim President of the Florida State Conference of NAACP Branches following the assassination of Harry T. Moore in 1951.

In 1948-49, the NAACP joined the Urban League and Andrews in a fight to erase housing blight in mid-town Tampa. The Rev. Paul Wagner, a white minister and pastor of the Palma-Ceia Methodist Church, announced that the Urban League had adopted a Resolution to be sent to Mayor Curtis Hixon. The resolution directed the attention of the Mayor and other city officials to the conditions of the "Scrub," which was once described by Dr. Benjamin Mayes, the League's Executive secretary as one of the worst slum areas in the Nation.

The "Scrub's" boundaries were Central Avenue on the west, Nebraska on the east, Scott Street on the north and Cass Street on the south. The Urban League called for the



**Robert Saunders is seated next to Ruby Hurley (4th row) in this 1954 photo of the NAACP's 45th Annual Convention in Dallas. Other civil rights giants pictured are Thurgood Marshall, Clarence Mitchell, Bob Carter, Gloster Current, Herbert Hill, Roy Wilkins, Jack Greenberg, Constance Baker Motley, Frank Williams, Cecelia Marshall and Mildred Roxborough.**

Photo from NAHRW News (April-June 1988)

"razing of the scrub" and building of low income housing for Black citizens. The "Scrub" was described as a focal point for city wide infectious diseases, crime and substandard housing. There was no economic class structure. Poor, middle and upper class Black families were clustered in substandard, unpaved streets. Perhaps a redeeming factor was the existence of St. James Episcopal Church on Lamar Ave.

The call for elimination of the "Scrub" came after a long series of bitterly fought condemnation suits which involved the taking of property owned by Blacks and a few whites in the Robles Park Area. The three or four block area had homes occupied by several Black families. This group protested the building of a three million dollar project to be constructed for white occupancy on the land they were being forced to vacate. They also claimed that they were being picked on by the Tampa Housing Authority. The area in which they lived contained a minimum of slum condition.

The Resolution text read as follows:

"Be it Resolved that the Tampa Urban League recognizes the need for low-cost housing and applauds the Tampa Housing Authority for the facilities already furnished.

Be it Resolved that the Tampa Urban League feels that great caution should be exercised in the location of housing units so that they will not destroy the value of presently situated single residence subdivisions.

Be it further Resolved that the Tampa Urban League feels that the so called "Scrub" area is a focal point for city-wide infection, and as

such, a hazard to the health of those living in the area, and that the city should proceed with condemnation proceedings on the ground of sanitation."

The Resolution concluded with the following statement: "Be it further Resolved that the Tampa Urban League feels that the Housing Authority should provide additional low-cost Negro Housing and that it should be located in the "Scrub" so that slum clearance may actually be accomplished, rather than in any other district."

The Tampa Urban League's Resolution is important to mention because it brought attention to the fact that some prominent white Tampans were espousing better housing, although racially segregated conditions, for the city's Black citizens. The NAACP with its predominately Black



**NAACP SOUTHEAST REGIONAL STAFF (1956). Left to right: Ruby Hurley, S.E. Regional Director; Charles McClain, North Carolina Field Director; Medgar Evers, Mississippi Field Director; Rev. Holmes, Georgia Field Director; unknown; Robert W. Saunders, Florida Field Director; and W.C. Patton, NAACP Voter Education and Registration Director. One of regular staff meetings held to map plans to combat racial discrimination in the Southern States.**

Photo from NAHRW News

membership was not alone in this fight. Receiving copies the Resolution were Tom

Dyer, Executive Director of the Authority, Senators Spessard Holland and George Smathers and Congressman McMullen of Tampa.

In January 1949, a delegation of ten Negro leaders appeared before the Streets Committee of Tampa to support a proposal for a Negro Housing Project. Andrews, acting as spokesman for the group, pointed to the failure of the City of Tampa to provide adequate housing for its Black citizens. Andrews argued that for twenty years every effort to provide decent housing for Negroes has met some sort of opposition from a certain class of white people. Making up this committee were Perry Harvey, Sr., President of the International Longshoreman's Union in Tampa, Dewey Richardson and Frank Burt.

The fight waged for equal rights often made headlines in the local news media. An early case involved the slaying of a white bill collector by a Black man after the collector forcibly entered his home.

Among the most publicized NAACP cases involving the Tampa NAACP occurred when a white police officer killed a Black man named Sam Ingram. Mathew Gregory led a committee which asked to meet with Mayor Curtis Hixon regarding the shooting. The NAACP demanded that action be taken by the city to punish the three white officers who it believed were responsible for Ingram's death. The NAACP also protested the brutal beating of a Black woman by Tampa police for forcibly entering the woman's home. Another strong protest was registered after Cole Newcross, a seventy-nine year old Black citizen was beaten by deputies. NAACP protests

continued well into the 1960's with many complaints filed with the Federal Government under the new Civil Rights Statutes.

Tampa NAACP leadership continued to protest racial discrimination in a different form beginning in 1949. James A. Hargrett, Sr., a former Middleton senior high school teacher and in '49, operator of a grocery business on Lake Avenue, filed a suit in Federal Court for equal school facilities in Hillsborough County. This effort by Hargrett would have been successful but for the fact that prior to the Federal Judges' decision, a compromise was reached between the School Board and Black Leaders. The Board agreed to make all schools for Negroes equal to those attended by white students in the County. The suit, which was being considered as a part of what eventually became the 1954 Brown Decision by the national NAACP staff, was dropped by the NAACP because of the compromise. Hargrett suffered much criticism and economic reprisals from some Black citizens as well as members of the white community, who failed to understand the nature of the action or the fact that the nation was steadfastly moving towards outlawing race as a factor in education and everyday life.

A new and different kind of Branch leadership arose. Black World War 11 veterans, educated under the G.I. Bill of Rights, returned to the community as lawyers, medical doctors and teachers with higher degrees. Francisco A. Rodriguez, the son of Cuban parents with African heritage, graduated from Howard University's College of Law. He joined William A. Fordham, a graduate of Lincoln University's law school, to form the first Black law firm in the city. A third Middleton High School graduate, Harold Jackson, also began practicing law. In politics, Mary Alice



A delegation of NAACP leaders meeting with President Kennedy at the White House in 1962 to propose comprehensive civil rights legislation. Robert Saunders is 5<sup>th</sup> from left. Aron Henry, 3<sup>rd</sup> from left. On right is Patricia Harris; 2<sup>nd</sup> from right is Theodore Berry.



**Robert W. Saunders, 2nd from left, and his wife Helen, on left, at University of South Florida reception in 1987, when Saunders' papers were submitted to USF Special Collections.**

unsuccessfully ran for public office. In the early '60's other young attorneys such as Delano Stewart started their practice in the Tampa community.

There were several ministers with long years of service in the city. While most of them did not participate actively in Branch activities, they could be counted upon to rally their members in support of membership drives and efforts to end police brutality. Rev. William M. Davis, pastor of Beulah Baptist Church; Rev. Marcellius D. Potter an A.M.E. Presiding Elder and publisher of the *Tampa Bulletin*; Rev. G. J. Oates, also an A.M.E. minister; Rev. Jacob W, Rhodes, Bethel Baptist Church pastor; Rev. John C. Robinson, First Baptist Church, College Hill; Rev. William M. Scott and Rev. Sylvester A. Cousins, pastor of St.

Paul A.M.E. Church, served as a core of religious leaders who not only openly preached about the NAACP but made their churches available for meetings. Rev. Joseph B. Bryant, who personally admitted to me that he was not a "...well educated man but he knew that Negroes needed the NAACP," was a staunch advocate of voter registration.

As older ministers retired or died, younger and more civil rights oriented religious leaders representing the Baptist, Methodist and Seventh Day Adventist faiths replaced them. Among these were the Rev. Dr. A. Leon Lowry, Sr., a former college professor and pastor of one of Augusta, Georgia's largest Baptist churches; Elder Warren A.



Banfield, a Seventh Day Adventist minister; Rev. E. D. Lewis, a C.M.E. Pastor who had served as president of the Dothan NAACP Branch in Alabama; Rev. J. H. Adams, Jr., of the Methodist Church and Rev. S. M. Peck. Each of them became active in civil rights.

Rev. Peck was pastor of historic St. Paul A.M.E. Church during the time of school desegregation efforts and the sit-ins. He supported the work of the youth council and the senior branch and helped to promote the major public meetings held at the church.

Lowry was elected State Conference President in 1956 and served until 1962. Banfield and Lewis served as presidents of the Tampa Branch for several years and Adams was appointed chairman of the NAACP State Church Committee. Rev. Adams, as Chairman of the State Conference Committee in 1962, was instrumental in getting ministers through that committee to pressure Governor Collins for action in 1959 when a "Negro coed" was raped in Tallahassee. "This will acknowledge your recent correspondence regarding the alleged crime against a Negro coed"... Governor Collins wrote on June 4, 1959 in response to a letter from Rev. Adams. "The people here, white and colored, were understandably shocked and outraged. All judicial processes have proceeded efficiently and expeditiously," he concluded.

Among the new branch leaders were Rodriguez, who served for a short period in 1955-56 but resigned because he represented the Association in many local court suits. He was followed by Elder Banfield who provided leadership at the beginning of the school desegregation attempts. Ellen P. Greene, a Central Life Insurance employee became the first woman president in 1960.

Stanford, Levy Turner, DaValt and Robert L. Gilder made up the roster of other Branch Presidents up to the time of my departure in 1966.

It was this latter group, buttressed by the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision, the Court's decision of 1956 ending racial segregation in intracity bus transportation and the 1964 Civil Rights Act, who faced the onslaught of racists' criticism and gave support to young high school and college students carrying out sit-in protests. One of them, Stanford, was arrested while leading members of the NAACP Youth Council during a sit-in demonstration. They also gave full support and in most cases, initiated the Mannings School case, a recreation suit against the City of Tampa, the case of Hammond and Griffin vs. the University of Tampa and complaints to end discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations. The recreation suit was settled out of court with only one condition effecting an illegal reverter clause in the Ballast Point Deed being compromised.

They also were in office during the sit-in demonstrations and the demonstrations to desegregate Tampa's theaters. DaValt, as Branch president, assured the success of the youth council's activities by allocating funds from the senior Branch's treasury-funds needed to pay bonds, attorney's fees and even the buying of sign materials to be displayed during the downtown Tampa protests. Not known to the City's Bi-racial Committee which met with youth leaders for the purpose of silencing them, was the fact that funds were provided while the meeting was in progress.

Selection of Tampa as the site for the Field Director's office in 1952 was another factor that strengthened the NAACP Program in this city. Local branch leaders were able to

obtain guidance and assistance in planning and implementing civil rights programs. Attacks on the city's racially segregated policies often were settled in ways that perpetuated the discrimination that NAACP opposed. With a national NAACP staff person present, local Branch officers could not enter into compromises that were against NAACP policy or be influenced by other Black leaders. Finally, I, as Field Director, did not report to local or state NAACP officials and received my entire salary and travel expenses from the national Office. Threats of economic reprisal had no effect on the decisions and programs.

People like Matthew Gregory, Harold Reddick and Edward Davis knew that the only weapon to fight racial segregation was not to allow it to exist in any segment of community. I found it easy to gain their support when I approached them with new ideas. Gregory, who was president of the Tampa Branch until '54, was a fighter. He was a good friend of E. D. Nixon of Montgomery who, following the arrest of Rosa Parks, initiated the effort which brought the Montgomery Movement and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., into prominence. A Pullman porter, Gregory had the strong backing of A. Phillip Randolph, president of the International Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and a national officer of the NAACP. Randolph made several visits to Tampa and on several occasions spoke for local groups and the NAACP (He referred to me as his "son").

Beginning in 1952, new strategies for attacking and destroying the fabric of separate but equal, workshops to train individuals on techniques, public mass meetings with prominent speakers who were able to counter southern traditions and propaganda were held in Tampa and the rest of Florida. From my office, I prepared press

releases, wrote a column for the Pittsburgh *Courier* and sent written communication to the organization and other black leaders explaining NAACP policy and asking for support, and started the ball rolling in a new direction. The new Branch leadership supported efforts to end housing discrimination and segregation by protesting Tampa's failure to comply with Urban Renewal requirements for a Citizen's Committee representative of the entire community. The events leading up to the protests began with the following statement issued by the Tampa Branch on Urban Renewal early in 1961:

"Urban Renewal is a program undertaken by the city with the assistance of the Federal Government to redevelop slums and blighted residential areas. The basic purposes of the entire program is to improve the housing conditions of local families by eradicating and halting the spread of urban blight and deterioration.

Urban Renewal, under ideal and fully democratic conditions, can be constructive. Local programs democratically conceived and equitably administered are an indispensable tool to the orderly residential and economic growth of our community.

However, to the Negro, Urban Renewal can have a very damaging and objectionable impact upon his progress as a citizen in the community. The overall practice of planning "for" and not "with" minority groups in the development of an Urban Renewal program for the entire community has a tendency to relegate the affected minorities into positions of having others plan for

the housing needs, irrespective of the rights guaranteed as citizens of the state and nation.

In the City of Tampa, although plans may be considered by some to be adequate, there has been a tendency to proceed with Urban Renewal, whether intentionally or unintentionally, without fair representation from and on a community wide level. It is essential that minority groups be represented in this planning and by persons who will defend their rights against encroachment while realizing that the program of Urban Renewal benefits the entire community when administered fairly.

Furthermore, it is necessary that all citizens recognize that an effective program is not shortranged. Urban Renewal plans and promotion reaches over a span of from eighty to one hundred years. Codes and laws which accompany the program effect all persons and will control the actions and lives of many generations yet unborn. It then becomes necessary that responsible citizens take cognizance of all programming in this area and demand that fair and impartial representation on all phases of Urban Renewal development be given to all groups regardless of color. By doing this then the program becomes acceptable and reaches the requirements of certain acts governing it.

Since Negroes, as a result of racial or economic discrimination, are usually forced to reside in substandard housing areas, Urban Renewal pro-

grams usually involve this segment of the population in a much higher ratio than another group. This is true in Tampa. Therefore, the responsibility of insuring local requirements lies with those who best understand the program of Urban Renewal and who are willing to address themselves to the problems that must be confronted and solved." This initial statement ended with a paragraph committing the local Branch to work "cooperatively with the entire communities to promote good wholesome, clean housing for every citizen."

In Tampa's Black community, the urban renewal concept and its effects was divisive as well as debilitating. NAACP leadership was concerned about existing discriminatory housing patterns and that the City's planners were on a sure course that would perpetuate illegal practices of discrimination based on race. Another group, largely made up of individuals who were the beneficiaries of the "Jim-Crow" system, benefited from racial segregation. It was clear that their insight was more speculative. They stood to benefit economically from the sale of already dated housing stocks. NAACP leaders knew that the city's appointing authorities would by-pass naming individuals who would demand that Urban Renewal policies and planning include corrective actions to end segregated housing.

The debate and pressures called for further action to assure that the City complied with requirements of the law. On June 10, 1961, as Field Director, I placed a call to Jack E. Wood, Jr., NAACP Special Assistant. Jack Wood responded to the telephone request by letter dated June 12, 1961. In his letter Wood wrote that:

"In response to your telephone call today advising this office that there is no Negro representation on the Tampa Florida Citizens' Advisory Committee, I fully agree with you that the City of Tampa has failed to comply with the URA requirements respecting its eligibility for workable program recertification.

Effective February 8, 1960, the Urban Renewal Administration revised its workable program requirements in order to insure among other things that local citizens would be afforded adequate opportunity to participate in local urban renewal programs being aided by the federal government. The requirement, which prior to that date had been optional, called for the following:

*Citizen Participation*-Appointment of a citizens' advisory committee, community-wide and representative in scope.

Naming of a subcommittee of the citizens's advisory committee or a special committee on minority housing problems. This committee is to include representatives of the principal minority groups in the community, and will be primarily responsible for working for full opportunity in housing for all groups. Although this administrative change was announced in February 1960," Wood continued, "it was not possible to secure immediate compliance by all local municipalities for the reason that many had just had their workable programs recertified for another 12 month period. All local programs submitted for

recertification after March 1961, must however, comply with this requirement as a prerequisite to approval. Inasmuch as the Mayor of Tampa has appointed a citizens' advisory committee and has completely disregarded your repeated requests for representation by a responsible member of the Negro community, it is my thinking that the central office in Washington should suspend all further processing and approvals of the local program pending compliance by the local public agency".

Jack Wood's letter also addressed two very important matters that had sorely divided Tampa's Black leadership.

"As the enclosed copy of the revised workable program requirements indicates, there should also be appointed in Tampa, a subcommittee to deal with minority housing problems. Such a committee should be engaged in a program seeking full opportunity for housing for all groups in order to aid and expedite the relocation phase of the local program."

Woods then addressed what has proved to be a problem for the city even until the present time:

"I completely reject the mayor's announcement of a 'special' committee of Negroes to 'study' the Maryland Avenue Project", he wrote. "The fact that this committee is to have an announced lifetime of two weeks is an affront which circumvents your rights of representation at a responsible level.

'As you will note", he concluded, "I am forwarding copies of this letter to persons whose responsibilities include the enforcement of the minimal safeguards contained in the urban renewal program. These persons will, I am sure, take whatever steps may be necessary to secure the degree of cooperation and accommodation that the Tampa Redevelopment Commission is legally obliged to provide."

Copies of the letter were sent to Dr. Robert C. Weaver, Administrator, HHFA; Mr. Frank D. Clarke, Assistant Administrator, HHFA and Mr. William Slayton, Commissioner, URA.

Jack Wood's letter prompted the Tampa Branch President, Mrs. Ellen P Greene, to send a telegram on June 13, 1961, registering an official complaint against the City, to Robert S. Weaver, Director, Federal Housing and Homes Administration. In the complaint, Mrs. Greene said that:

"The Tampa Branch NAACP, requests that your office reconsider its recertification of the Urban Renewal Program for the City of Tampa, Florida, pending a restudy of the 'workable program' submitted to determine if specifications have been met. There has been no Citizens Advisory Committee appointed to make recommendations. Negroes who number approximately 23 percent of this city's population, are not represented and an estimated 60 percent of those affected by Urban Renewal will be Negroes.

The present plan of city officials setting up a temporary committee to approve the Maryland Avenue

Project does not meet requirements of the Federal Government nor the approval of a large number of citizens. Consideration is not being given to Negroes in the overall plan for Urban Renewal in this community.

Request your urgent consideration of this matter", she concluded.

On June 15, I wrote Jack Wood outlining the problems identified after an analysis of the Tampa Urban Renewal Program was made by the Branch. The letter stated the following:

"A commission was set up with seven persons, all members of the majority group (white). At no time has a Negro served on this permanent or continuing committee. The program has developed to a point where blighted areas are being cleared, land purchased and some families are now being relocated. The city has never had a sub-committee to the Citizens Advisory Committee.

Furthermore, a study reveals that present plans calling for a program of relocation and rehousing of affected low income occupants is following a line of the tradition and customs as they now exist, based on lines of color. An example of this is observed in planning for the so called 'Maryland Avenue' project. Here much of the blighted conditions and sub-standard housing in the City of Tampa is found. However, plans are to re-establish this area as a 'Negro area'. It is also observed that in relocating persons affected by slum clearance in this and other

sections, that Negroes are not informed as to certain regulations with regard to rights and privileges in making purchases on the housing market. A large number are being relocated in areas circumscribed as Negro areas or Negro communities.

To come within the scope of governmental regulations, the Mayor of Tampa, the Honorable Julian Lane, recently appointed a bi-racial group with three white members and three Negro members. This group, according to announced responsibilities is to study the 'Maryland Avenue' project and approve same. Apparently this is an attempt to hurriedly meet some of the requirements for approval. However, since the committee is not one of a continuing nature and certain some of its members are not representative, its functioning as a responsible group which will face issues and problems is questionable.

In the light of the above, it is clear that the development of a program of improvement for this City has not been done for minority groups and not with Negroes. It is clear that if this program continues as it is now progressing, Negroes in Tampa will be relegated to a continuous pattern of racially segregated housing for the next fifty to one hundred years. It is the opinion of NAACP leaders that some effort must be made to prevent this pattern from becoming set and firm.

In some areas which were formerly inhabited by members of differing racial groups, such are now disappearing and are becoming

solidly Negro, whites are selling their houses to persons being relocated. Prices are greater than the value of the house and the purchasers find themselves paying for houses that are soon to be classed as sub-standard. Meanwhile, the whites are building new homes financed with funds received from the sale of houses to Negroes or through FHA and other government financed programs. Thus, the pattern of racially segregated communities is being aided and abetted by the present Urban Renewal Plan which sets out to better living conditions by outdated and outmoded methods."

On July 23, 1962, slightly more than a year had passed since the activities and complaints of 1961. Once more the Tampa Branch's housing committee made its findings and recommendations to the Branch membership. The committee, in its opening paragraph stated that:

"...housing, like food and clothing, is an essential commodity." Reference was also made to the passage of the 1866 Civil Rights Act and "...its re-enactment in 1870..." The most sweeping and compelling opinion of the U.S. Supreme Court which outlawed "restrictive covenants", made it mandatory that persons desiring to purchase property be protected from the acts of those who would willfully plot through contracts and covenants, to deny other citizens this right because of color.

The committee findings were:

"(A) That in the area of home ownership in the city of Tampa,

there are efforts to establish strict lines of residency based on race. Participating in this conspiracy are members of the realty profession, mortgage lenders, buildings and promoters. Much reference is often made to 'Negro housing', 'Housing for Negroes', and 'Negro quotas' by some of these individuals while in essence, the overall program of community redevelopment should be concerned with housing for citizens regardless of race or color.

(B) Persons displaced by the Federal-State highway project are left to find their own housing. Many are led to believe that Progress Village is the only area in which Negroes may purchase housing."

The committee referred to a previous visit to Tampa by Madison Jones, NAACP Housing Director, in 1956. During that visit, Jones found the City's planning appalling. He also noted the lack of interest and/or knowledge of federal requirements imposed at that time. It called for the Tampa Branch to arrange for Jack E. Wood to make a complete study of all facilities and plans "for Tampa". Noting that it was being advocated that "property to be acquired for Urban Renewal purposes on the west side of Hillsborough River and extending from Fortune Street South", be turned over to the University of Tampa for further growth of this institution," the committee recommended that the NAACP oppose this plan. It recommended that the land should be reserved for residential purposes. "Persons having to move from this area should be allowed a first opportunity to repurchase land in this area for homes", it concluded in the report.

Another letter dated November 20, 1962, addressed to Mayor Julian Lane called for

the appointment of "one or more Negro citizens" to serve as members of the Urban Renewal Board which was up for renewal.

Mayor Lane made a late night telephone call to the Field Director's home shortly after the November 20th letter, asking that the complaint filed with federal officials against the City of Tampa be withdrawn. Lane pledged that the city would comply. Following this call, the protest was withdrawn.

A public meeting was called by the NAACP at the Greater Bethel Baptist Church to announce that the city would comply. Present at the crowded session were white community leaders including members of the recently formed Bi-racial Committee and the City Planning and Development Commission.

While the NAACP was pushing for an end to racial discrimination in housing, another group comprised of leading white business men, developers and several persons from the Black community were developing plans for all Black development. This community was named Progress Village. The story of its development is one of intrigue. NAACP, as illustrated above, recognized the need for new and better housing stocks for all citizens regardless of race. Its leadership was fully aware of the past patterns and practices which existed in Tampa and the fact that politicians did nothing to prevent the perpetuation of these illegal past patterns and practices. Therefore, NAACP could not endorse or approve Progress Village.

Aurelio Fernandez was one of the persons with an interest in the Progress Village Project. Fernandez, of Afro-Cuban heritage, requested that I meet with him in his office at the old Henderson Street Junior High School where he worked as its principal.

(This school was formerly attended by white students. The Hillsborough County School Board converted it to an all Black program). Aurelio began by giving me a grand picture of the plans. He named some of the persons involved in the endeavor and how it would benefit the entire Black community. One of his arguments was that Attorney Rodriguez was in favor of the program. I reminded him that Rodriguez could not commit NAACP, especially in light of the complaints and long standing opposition to racially segregated housing. He asked if I would try to get the NAACP to endorse Progress Village. My response was that if the developers and proposers of the project would commit in writing that Progress Village would be a totally integrated and desegregated community, then I would carry the request for endorsement to the local Branch and subsequently to the National for consideration. This written commitment was never given. Contrary to much publicity, there was no official approval of Progress Village by the NAACP.

However, this did not end discrimination in all of Tampa's housing. NAACP leaders had to protest discrimination against Black servicemen in Tampa's motels during the threatened invasion of Cuba by President John F. Kennedy and again in 1964 when airmen from MacDill Field were denied use of trailer park facilities.

In 1962, Rev. Lowry addressed the issue of hotel and motel segregation of Black troops to Clarence Mitchell, NAACP Washington Bureau representative. Negro airmen from MacDill Air Force Base were also denied the rental of space at several trailer parks. These trailer parks were placed off limits to military personnel because of this discrimination. Other complaints were filed to prevent the Tampa Housing Authority

from perpetuating racial discrimination in its low income public housing program.

In 1963, a young and very articulate new leader was elected to lead in the Civil Rights struggle. This was Robert L. Gilder. Gilder's election is a marked example of how one vote can elect an individual to office.

With Tampa as a test tube, it soon was possible to get other branches to follow suit. (Pensacola on the borderline of Florida and Alabama was first to begin a program to improve its program. Abraham Tolbert, the local branch president, reminded me of Gregory. Tolbert was independent. Employed at the Naval Air Station, his income was not affected by local threats. He also was a shop steward on the base. Tolbert never hesitated to call or inquire about programs and activities.)

The usual complaints about unnecessary police force were still being received and protested. However, an emphasis on voter education and registration and with the backing of the National Office, served as a new source for recruiting new faces. In 1953-54, Tampa boasted of approximately 1,500 registered Democratic Black voters. Black Republicans numbered less than twenty-five. The goal was to raise the Black voting strength to 5,000 by the end of 1955. Phillip "Phil" Weightman, political and voting specialist from the international CIO-PAC came to Tampa to assist me in organizing the drive. Weightman was able to obtain financial support from the United Steel Workers of America's local union. Dewey Richardson, known to Tampan as "Mr. Democrat", was employed to help coordinate the effort. Several persons were hired to do the door-to-door. With these meager funds, transportation was given to those persons wanting to register at the County Courthouse. We brought individuals



to the Courthouse from Belmont Heights, West Tampa and Port Tampa. This was the start of the first statewide voter registration effort for the State of Florida since that conducted by Weightman prior to the campaign in which Claude Pepper lost to George Smathers.

### **THE JAMES HAMMOND STORY**

It must be said that James Hammond had a burning desire to bring about change in Tampa. We did not always agree on the techniques he advocated as a means to achieve the goal of equality in Tampa, but in the long run, he always supported the organization's objectives. Hammond, by trade was a graduate electrician. Like some other craftsmen, he could have stood on the sideline. He might have waited for the tidbits to be handed down to support his family. But waiting did not satisfy him.

Jim Hammond was aggressive. He had his own style for addressing the issues of racial segregation. However, the NAACP was always his means to buttress his demands whenever he was confronted with the "die-hard" or go slow attempts of the white power structure. My respect for Hammond grew as we often discussed stratagem to bring down discrimination. The University of Tampa venture was an example of how he attacked racism. There was another event which focused on his non-acceptance of racism and segregation.

As a Captain in the Army Reserves, Hammond found himself in command of groups headed for Fort Benning, Georgia for Summer Training. Prior to their departure, he told me that the mode of transportation would be by Greyhound Bus. The Army had arranged for the soldiers to eat at the Greyhound Bus Terminal in the State

Capitol where racial segregation was still an issue. Rather than to be subjected to embarrassment, Hammond was ready to face Tallahassee's racist segregation policies regardless of the outcome. He felt that as the Senior Officer, he had to take a stand.

The command consisted of more than forty or fifty white soldiers and perhaps two or three blacks. He was the Senior Commissioned Officer. As the Commanding Officer, Hammond had quietly decided that he would not accept efforts to divide the troops by race. We discussed the options that he had if City Officials tried to force the black soldiers, including Hammond to use the shabby "Colored" restaurant at the bus station. The two of us agreed that this was a golden opportunity to strike hard at racism in the State Capitol.

When the troops arrived in Tallahassee, Hammond would lead them into the "White restaurant." He hoped that since all of them would be in uniform, there would be no problem being served. If he was told that he and the other black soldiers could not eat with the white troops, he would order all of them to board the bus and continue on to their destination. We struck on another plan. I would call on Dr. George Gore, president of Florida A&M University. I would also alert Clarence Mitchell in Washington D.C., that he should expect strong opposition from State and City Officials. The Florida NAACP Conference of Branches could be depended upon to provide bond and attorneys, if needed.

I called Dr. Gore and explained the situation to him. Dr. Gore agreed that Florida A&M facilities would be prepared to accommodate the soldiers. Francisco A. Rodriguez was made aware that he might be called to go to Tallahassee. Clarence Mitchell's office was ready to move.

The expected happened in Tallahassee when white and black troops entered the traditionally segregated 11 white" facility. The manager wanted to know who was in command. Hammond responded that he was. He was told that the black soldiers could not eat with the white troops. This included Hammond. The fact that the group were under orders issued by the Army made no difference. Hammond's protests brought threats of enforcement by police if he insisted on breaking racial segregation patterns. Finally, Hammond ordered the soldiers to get on the buses. The group headed for Florida A&M where they ate in the dining room.

Bob Sykes represented Florida's Third Congressional District. His base was in Crestview, a hot bed of racial segregation. Because of the number of years he had served in the U.S. House of Representatives, he was known as the "Dean". When the news broke, Sykes immediately protested to the Army. The cry was that Hammond had used his authority to embarrass white troops and to violate Florida's segregation laws. A demand was made to take his commission. Hammond's refusal to accept racial segregation was upheld. He retained his commission. The forces of discrimination in Tallahassee had lost another battle.

### **THE UNIVERSITY OF TAMPA SUIT**

The final chapter of racial segregation at the University of Florida was near completion. Another chapter was about to start at one of Florida's prestigious private institutions.

On March 9, 1962, Gloster Current received a letter from me on, "action taken here, in Tampa, to correct an act of discrimination at the University of Tampa on March 1, 1962".

I reported that the National Labor Relations Board, through the Regional Director for the 12th District had agreed to cooperate with the University of Tampa in sponsoring a course for labor leaders and management. The course was for twelve weeks. On Thursday night, Mr. Perry Harvey, Sr. President of the Local 1402, ILA, AFL-CIO; attempted to enroll in the course and was told that he could not because the school maintains a segregated policy. Mr. Harvey refused to remain and protested to union leaders and to the NAACP.

In the report I told of the action taken to protest the act of discrimination against a prominent and important leader. The action included the following:

- (1) Issuance of a Press Statement;
- (2) Sending of telegram to the chairman NLRB with copy to Mr. Clarence Mitchell requesting action;
- (3) Letter to Dr. David DeLo, President of the University requesting an audience to discuss desegregation of the University.

The Chairman of the NLRB ordered the course removed from the school on Friday after Mr. Mitchell had talked with him. Negroes are now attending the school without discrimination.

I explained to Gloster that the University of Tampa is a private institution. It receives a large sum from the City and County for Public Relations and its athletic program. It is also being considered to receive additional grounds for expansion in the Urban Renewal Program. The land is presently occupied by Negroes. If there is any hesitancy about desegregation, I continued, we will seek to

get an injunction withholding public funds from the school.

The press statement included a statement from Francisco A. Rodriguez that, "in receiving funds from the City or any public source, the University is opening its doors to those who make it possible for the funds to be contributed. It is my understanding that some of the property which is part of the University of Tampa is formerly city owned or presently administered by the City of Tampa." Rodriguez believed that in making an allocation of public funds to the University, the Institution becomes a function of the State itself and therefore cannot bar persons because of race.

However, the University's opening of its doors in 1962 was of short duration. On February 25, 1964, I filed a complaint with the Presidents Committee on Equal Opportunity. The letter stated that, "Recently, two negroes, one a Tampa school teacher, named Mrs. Hazel Gibson Phillips, at the Middleton Senior High School and Mr. James Hammond, an electrical contractor in Tampa, attempted to enroll at the University of Tampa which claims to be a private institution, but which has obtained and is using government funds and public property.

"The University maintains an extension course for MacDill AFB personnel, however, it is known that Negro Airmen, although they may participate in the program at MacDill, they are not allowed to attend the University or to use its facilities in the City of Tampa. The school has also obtained FHA funds to build several facilities on the campus."

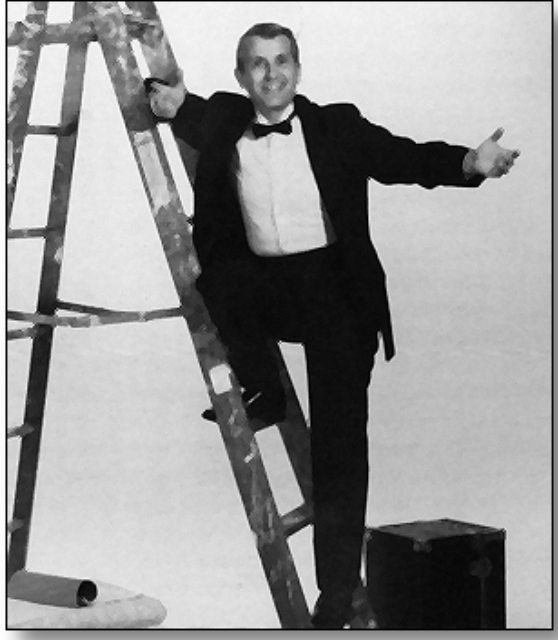
The Committee was requested to begin an investigation of the discrimination policy at the University for the purpose of opening up all areas of its operation to all persons regardless of race, creed or color. My letter

concluded that the school had obtained a Federal Scholarship Fund for Cuban Refugee students. Congressman Sam Gibbons, against opposition from some members of the institution's Trustee Board, warned against continuing a policy of racial discrimination.

Rodriguez filed a suit in the Federal District Court on behalf of Mrs. Gibson and Hammond, on May 6, 1965. The suit was dismissed in the Federal District Court for the Middle District of Florida by judge Joseph P Lieb. On appeal to the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, the Appeals Court held that although the University of Tampa was not a State or City Institution in the usual sense, where its establishment was largely made possible by use of a surplus city building and the use of other City land leased for University purposes, denial to Negroes and the right to be admitted to the school was a State action under the 14th Amendment. However, because the University's Governing Board withdrew racial barriers and some Negroes were enrolled, the court stated that injunctive relief was no longer required.

# SPANISH LYRIC THEATRE CELEBRATES ITS 32nd ANNIVERSARY

By JoANN HASKINS CIMINO



**Rene Gonzalez**

The tradition of live theatre in Tampa began with the influx of the various Latin groups whose Mutual Aid societies, such as, Centro Asturiano, Centro Espanol, Circulo Cubano, and Union Italiano provided theatre presentations of zarzuelas, comedies and dramas for the entertainment of their members and their cultural enrichment.

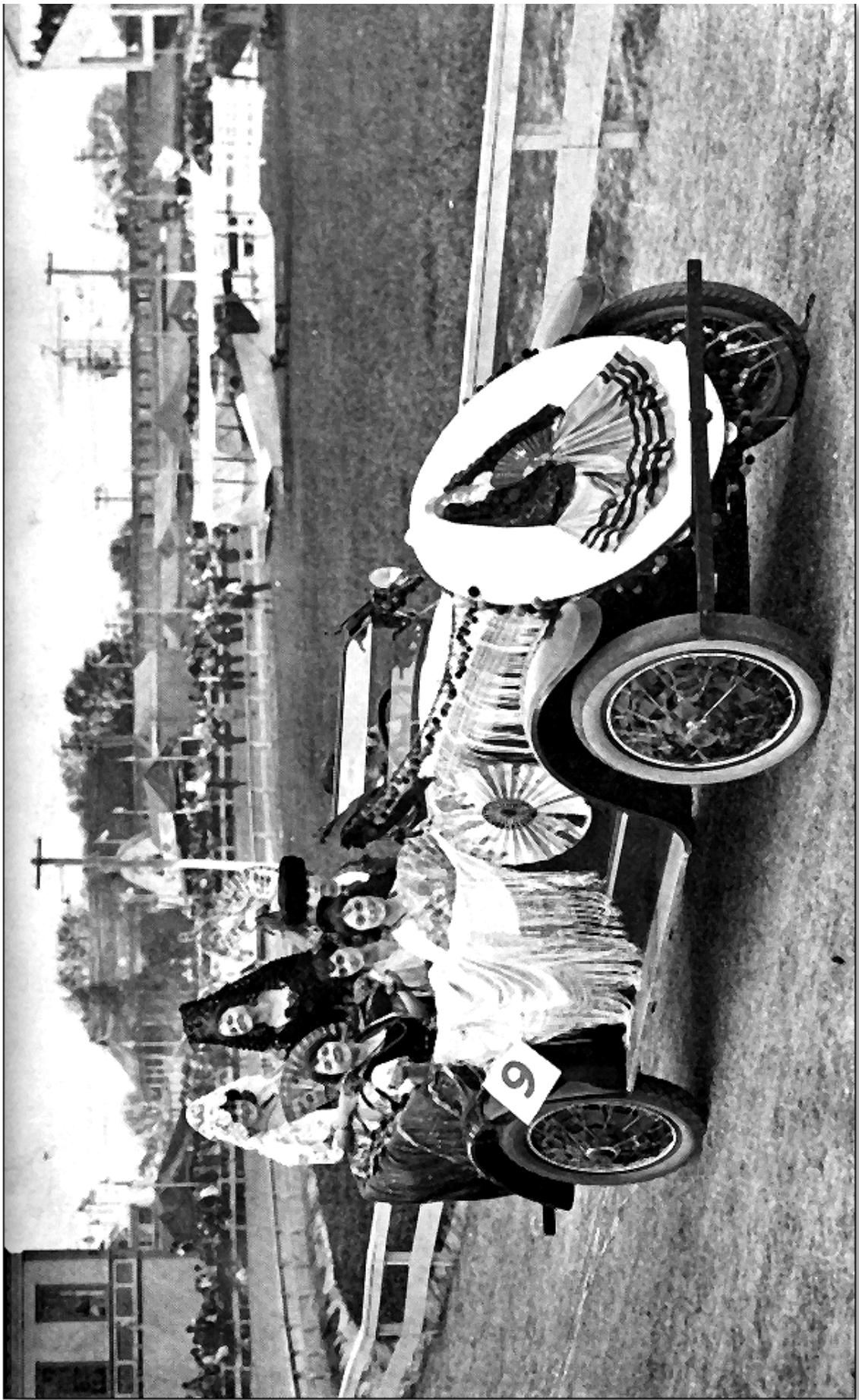
The Federal Theatre of the WPA held its debut on March 5, 1936. This account is given by Nicholas Kanellos in the *History of Hispanic Theatre in the United States: Origins to 1940*. Its last performance was held in September, 1937 due to the enactment of the ERA Act. Performances



**Rehearsals for the first production at the  
Centro Asturiano Theatre.**

were still held for a short time thereafter, in the name of the Federal Theatre, but these were eventually terminated.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the renamed Spanish Lyric Theatre holds the distinctive history as the oldest continuous theatre group in Tampa, and the oldest Hispanic group in the nation.

Is he historical, or is he hysterical?? He's both!! Rene Gonzalez is the creative, colorful founder of the Spanish Lyric Theatre. Besides his role as Artistic Director of SLT Rene is in demand for his entertaining programs among Tampa's civic, historical and social groups. His tales of old Ybor City are especially moving, as he brings to life the potpourri of ethnic characters who add spice to the melting pot of yesterday's Latin quarter. In his rendition of the diversity of urban life he concocts a spicy, ethnic brew that provides both amusement and nostalgia especially for



This auto and its occupants were probably in a parade in the early 1920s. The cream silk shawl draped on the car once belonged to Rene Gonzalez' grandmother Rosalia Pardo Gonzalez. The two Gonzalez sisters were among the first Spanish descendants to attend Florida State College for Women in Tallahassee. Their father, Jose Gonzalez, encouraged his daughters to participate in varied beneficial activities that Latin women were not usually directed toward. America G. Escuder proudly tells that her father "enjoyed the freedom and success of his own life and bakery business within the Ybor City community, and desired the same for all of his family."<sup>4</sup>Riding in Auto: Right rear: Rosalia Gonzalez Sullivan; Left front: America



**"EL VIOLINISTA SOBRE EL TEJADO"**  
 Rene Gonzalez in the U.S. premier 1974, 1980,  
 and 1983.



**"EL MILAGRO DE LA MUSICA"**  
 Alberto Pazo and Mercedes Porredon, 1981.



**"EL HOMBRE DE LA MANCHA"**  
 Mary Gonzalez and Juan Pedro Somoza in  
 1982 production. SLT first performed it in  
 1974 with Clemente Ochoa.



**"EL REY y YO"**  
 Mary Gonzalez and the King's children 1976  
 and 1982.

those who personally experienced those times and personalities that he brings to life.

Rene began his direction of Spanish Lyric Theatre thirty-two years ago. At that time

SIT was known as Spanish Little Theatre. The production was held at the Centro Asturiano Theatre and performed by a troupe of students from the University of Tampa. Rene Gonzalez considers that the continued support of many individuals in the community has contributed to his theatrical successes and the longevity of SLT. His wife Mary he attributes as his "primary



*"La Viuda Alegre"*  
Willie Rodriguez and Alicia Testasecca, 1959.



*"EL SOLDADO DE CHOCOLATE"*  
Diana Anton and the late Joe Patane, 1971



*"EL MURCIELAGO"*  
Alma Phillips in the original Spanish translation, 1966.

mainstay and her own artistic contributions have been an important accompaniment."<sup>2</sup>

The Gonzalez family has been active in the growth of Tampa since Rene's grandparents

Jose and Rosalia Gonzalez arrived in 1901 from Oviedo, Spain and became residents of Ybor City. Jose joined Rosalia's brothers Gumersindo and Saturno Pardo for a partnership in the popular Pardo-Gonzalez bakery.

Rene's parents Anibal and Anita "Nena" Gonzalez owned La Casa Arte, known for many years for its fine needlework and supplies. For two decades costumes for SIT were designed by Rene and created by Anita. Some of these are thirty-years old and still being used today. The Tampa *Tribune* told of Anita's ability to create in one sitting: she would put together the most intricate piece, measure the actor and would routinely have the costume finished in half a day.<sup>3</sup>

### Comedias Musicales



*"El Conde De Lussemburgo"*  
Santa Caso, 1963.

### Musical Comedies

- "EL VIOLINISTA SOBRE EL TEJADO"  
"Fiddler On The Roof" 1974, 1980, 1983
- "EL HOMBRE DE LA MANCHA"  
"Man of La Mancha" 1974, 1982
- "MAME" 1975
- "NO, NO, NANETTE" 1977
- "EL MILAGRO DE LA MUSICA"  
"The Sound Of Music" 1981
- "HELLO, DOLLY" 1983
- "MI BELLA DAMA"  
"My Fair Lady" 1984

El Pequeño Teatro Español fué el primer teatro en los Estados Unidos a presentar obras de Broadway en español y el único teatro capaz de presentar la misma obra en dos idiomas con el mismo elenco.



An audience in the early 1960's during an intermission at the Centro Asturiano-SPANISH LYRIC THEATRE's first "home"



The Spanish Little Theatre was the first theatre in the United States to regularly present Broadway musicals in Spanish, and



the only one capable of presenting the same show in two languages with the same cast!

### **Operetas Vienesas**

### **Viennese Operettas**

"LA VIUDA ALEGRE " 1959, 1963, 1979  
"EL CONDE DE LUXEMBURGO" 1962,  
1968, 1971  
"EL SOLDADO DE CHOCOLATE"  
1964,1971  
"LA DUQUESA DEL BAL TABARAN"  
1965, 1976  
"EL MURCIELAGO" 1967  
"EL ENCANTO DE UN VALS" 1968  
"EVA" 1965, 1982  
"LA PRINCESA DEL DOLAR" 1973

Las operetas vienasas han sido favoritas del publico hispano desde comienzos de este siglo. Una de las primeras representaciones fué una opereta y desde entonces hemos presentado las operetas mas sobresalientes incluyendo una traducción original de "Die Fledermaus" "El Murcielago" de Strauss.

Vienesse operettas have been favorites of Spanish speaking audiences since the turn of the century. One of our first productions was an operetta and since then we have done most of the outstanding works including an original translation of Strauss' "Die Fledermaus" "El Murcielago".

Page from 25th Anniversary Program of Spanish Little Theatre

### **ENDNOTES**

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<sup>1</sup> *History of Hispanic Theatre in the United States: Origins to 1940* Nicholas Kanellos, U. of Texas Press, Austin, Texas, p. 158-159.

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Rene Gonzalez, Sept. 9, 1991.

<sup>3</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, July 14, 1991.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with America Gonzalez Escuder, Sept. 23, 1982.

# OAKLAWN CEMETERY RAMBLE

*On April 28, 1991, the Tampa Historical Society sponsored another successful ramble at Oaklawn Cemetery.*

*Over 150 people showed up to take a stroll through Tampa's history and to honor those individuals who contributed to making our city the great place it is.*

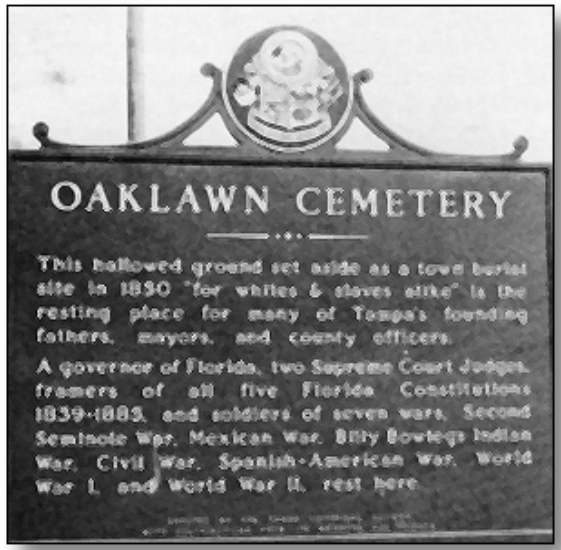
*Special thanks go to Board member **Arsenio Sanchez**, who organized the event. **Ross Ferlita**, Tampa City Parks Department, and Jerry Tschedener, Calvary Catholic Cemetery, assisted in making this event successful.*

*Mr. & Mrs. Lester Olson demonstrated their interest in this event by donating their time, money, and effort to make sure the cemetery was cleaned up.*

*The late Theodore Lesley wrote the following history of Oaklawn Cemetery which was printed in the "Pioneer Florida Page" of the Tampa Tribune, March 9, 1958.*

## The History of Tampa's Oaklawn Cemetery

By THEODORE LESLEY



THE HISTORICAL MARKER

The original plot, now incorporated in the enlarged cemetery, was set aside April 1, 1850, by the board of county commissioners. It was described in a very general way as "all that part of the county's land lying north of Harrison and east of Morgan streets."

When platted the small northeast section which fronts the paved north-south walk, and joins what later became St. Louis (Catholic) cemetery, was reserved for burial of Negro servants in slavery time. Therein occurred the first burial in the cemetery, a slave of Rev. L. G. Lesley, shortly after the above date. Up to 1865 many colored servants were interred there by their owners.

The second burial was that of a white man, a "Mr. Hubbard, one of the Cuban pirates found dead in the woods on the 18th of June, 1850." Alexander Gage, who operated the first ferry in the county across the Hillsborough river at what is now Sulphur Springs, was paid \$7 for the pirate's coffin, following (according to the quaint wording of the county commissioners' minutes) an "inquisition," over the body.

Possibly the oldest stone in the cemetery is that erected to the memory of Rev. Alexander Martin, a retired Methodist minister who resided at his plantation on the Alafia river, and who died there October 7, 1850. This could be debated with one over the grave of Samuel Friebele, on which is inscribed the date of death, August 9, 1849. However, it is believed the body was removed from another grave after this cemetery was established.

Many other stones cut in this period exist there today. Notably among these is one to Florida, wife of Col. Hugh Fisher, who died February 16, 1851.

The first Masonic funeral to be conducted in Tampa was that of Thomas J. Cook, who died May 22, 1851. The members met at the lodge room the following day, marched to the house of the deceased brother, thence to the grave in the burial ground and conducted all the ceremonies of the ancient order of Masonry. The large marble stone covering his vault is still in evidence, but badly in need of repair, as it is cracked and chipped in many places.

SOME 80 YEARS ago the original plat of the cemetery was lost, but at that time it was resurveyed along the old lines. But, unfortunately, many graves of Tampa's early



**Mr. and Mrs. Lester Olson receive a Certificate of Appreciation for their efforts to clean up beautiful Oaklawn Cemetery.**

citizens were lost sight of forever, as few stone markers were erected in that era.

Hillsborough County, 100 years ago, was frontier territory, far removed from natural deposits of marble, thus only the few well-to-do families could afford this stone, it having to be shipped by sailing vessels from far away ports like Philadelphia and New York. Others had to be content with simple cypress slabs. However, nearly every lot had its own fence of iron or wood, and the grouping of these many fencings made it a picture of unique and interesting design.

Occasionally fires reduced the wood to ashes, but each was speedily rebuilt.

AT THE OUTSET burial lots were sold by the county at 2 ½ cents per square foot, each lot being approximately 400 feet square. In January, 1853, the cemetery appears for the first time on a Tampa map, when the city limits were extended to include the area.

December 7, 1855, the county commissioners appointed William S.

Spencer sexton and superintendent of the "public grave yard." He was authorized to charge and collect \$5 for each corpse buried by him.

E. A. Clarke, county treasurer, was ordered to sell lots in the public grave yard. Said funds were to be kept separate from other funds and be known as the "grave yard funds." To this was to be added the amount received by the corporation of the town of Tampa (then a defunct organization) for lots herefore sold, which funds were to be entirely used to fence and to keep in repair the grave yard.

To this amount was added a bequest from J. W. Brookbank, M.D., who died in May 1854, and being without immediate family left \$50 towards fencing the public burial ground.

Many pioneer Tampa families purchased burial lots at this time, notably James McKay, William T. Brown, Andrew H. Henderson, John T. Givens, Sheldon Stringer, John T. Givens, M. C. Brown, John P Crichton, M.D., Franklin Branch, M.D., the Kennedys, Perkins, DeLaunays, Grillons, Ghiras and others in subsequent years.

Tampa was rechartered under legislative act December 15, 1855, and organized by election of officers in February, 1856. The supervision of the burial ground again passed to the city officers, but the county did not return the grave yard fund. Repeated requests were made of the county board for this amount during the next five years, but each time it was met with refusal.

April 6, 1858, the county board in conjunction with the mayor agreed that \$10 be the uniform rate of burying the dead who were destitute; those who died within the limits of the town to be buried by it, and all

who died outside the limits of the corporation to be buried by the county.

IT HAS LONG been a puzzling question as to what became of the original plat of the cemetery. That it survived the several bombardments of the city by Federal gunboats during the War Between the States is evident from the following resolution adopted by the county commissioners July 22, 1866, when John T. Lesley was sheriff:

"Resolve: That, whereas, graves have been dug and persons buried in the streets and avenues of the city burial ground, and

Whereas, the said practice is improper and ought to be prevented,

Therefore resolved, that no person shall be buried in burial grounds of the city of Tampa except upon private lots, without permission of the sheriff.

"Resolve 2. That persons desiring to bury a body in said burial ground, or to purchase a lot in said ground, shall apply to the sheriff, who will point out the place for the grave to be dug, and for this service the applicant shall pay the sheriff \$ 1, or the sheriff may sell a lot of that purpose not less than 10 feet square at 4 cents per square foot, in accordance with map or survey of same.

"Resolve 3. That any person violating this order or disregarding the same will be indicted before the grand jury for trespassing."

Unfortunately, enforcement of this order lasted only a few years.

Little was done in the city grave yard during the post-Civil War period. It was inevitable that it soon became overgrown with weeds. As it was far removed from town, it was again occasionally swept by fires which destroyed the few remaining cypress markers. Thus, these graves, too, passed into the classification of unknown. It would seem that the missing plat was lost sometime in these years.

THE BURIAL GROUND was surveyed by W. C. Brown in the Spring of 1878, and it is along his lines the present plat is know today.

The ladies of Tampa organized to insure proper care of the hallowed spot.

First the Nickel Club was organized in the 1870s, and through musical programs raised funds from the nickels collected at each meeting to clean the cemetery. The famous Southern poet Sidney Lanier appeared on several programs with his flute while visiting in Tampa in the Spring of 1877.

The Ladies' Memorial Society was later organized. For years its officers were Mrs. H. L. (Meroba Hooker) Crane, president; Mrs. John T. (Crossie Krause) Gunn, secretary. Subsequently Mrs. R. B. (Fannie Givens) Thomas was elected president, and at no time in the history of the cemetery was such loving care given to it.

Some years later, when all the original lots had been sold, James T. Magbee in 1880 deeded as a gift land adjoining the burial ground to the east. This was immediately divided into lots and offered for sale. It is in this section that Magbee's own tomb is located.

In 1874 the need for a Catholic cemetery was met when B. C. Leonardi and wife

Mary deeded to the Roman Catholic bishop of St. Augustine one acre joining the Tampa burial ground on the north. It was then as now known as St. Louis cemetery, taking its name after the first Catholic church built in Tampa. A fence with a double gate long divided it from its neighbor to the south. But it, too, has long suffered ravages of time and recently had to be disposed of as junk.

After the death of Mrs. Thomas in 1923, the Ladies' Memorial Society closed its active association with Oaklawn cemetery, as it was now known.

WITH THE DEVELOPMENT of other units of this nature in the city, and the passing of the generation whose loved ones rest there, Oaklawn became again neglected, and only visited once a year by crowds on the Southern memorial day.

For years the beautiful custom of the Daughters of the Confederacy visiting the graves of the Southern soldiers and decorating them with flowers and small Confederate flags was observed.

An orator of note always addressed a great assembly of people on this day, April 26th. Surrounding him on the open porch of the pavilion sat the aged survivors of the armies of the Confederacy.

Since the establishment of Oaklawn cemetery, 108 years ago, it has had a close and unique association with Florida's historic past. Here rest framers of all five Florida constitutions: William B. Hooker, 1839; James Gettis and Simon Turman, 1861; James Gettis and James T. Magbee, 1865; C. R. Mobley, 1868; Dr. John P. Wall and Vice-president John T. Lesley, 1885.

Two Florida supreme court judges' tombs are here, including one, Joseph B. Lancaster,

who sat on the second bench, in 1851. Judge Lancaster had the further distinction of being Tampa's first mayor. In the extreme southwest corner of the cemetery is the grave of the 15th governor of Florida, Henry L. Mitchell.

No set of stones offer greater contrast than those erected to the soldiers of the wars of this country. They range from the Indian wars of 1835, the Mexican war in 1848, through the Civil, Spanish-American, World Wars I and II, to the Korean conflict in 1950.



#### TIME CAPSULE

Mayor Sandy Freedman and THS President George Howell examine contents of the old YMCA Time Capsule, which was opened Oct. 10, 1991. The capsule dates from 1909 when the old YMCA was built.

Photo courtesy of Tampa Tribune



**Past THS President Nancy Skemp, THS president George Howell and THS Vice President Barbara Reeves at the Old Timers Reunion, Oct. 20, 1991, at the Plant**

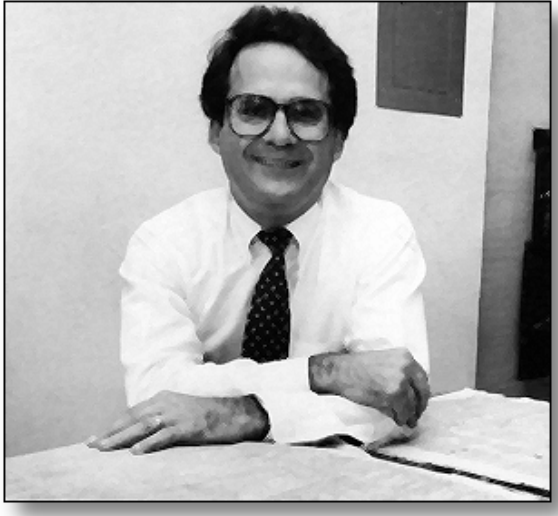


**Past THS President Jim Judy, organizer of the Old Timers Reunion, Oct. 20, 1991.**



# 1991 D. B. McKAY AWARD WINNER: USF PROFESSOR DR. GARY MORMINO

By HAMPTON DUNN



**Dr. Gary R. Mormino**  
Photo courtesy of Tampa Tribune

Congratulations to the 1991 winner of the D. B. McKay Award of the Tampa Historical Society!

Dr. Mormino, thus, becomes the 21st outstanding Floridian to earn this coveted statewide honor. The award is named in recognition of the late D. B. McKay, longtime publisher and editor of *The Tampa Daily Times*, three times distinguished Mayor of Tampa, and revered historian for *The Tampa Tribune*.

A native of Illinois, Dr. Mormino was one of six children born to Ross (Roselino) and Mabel Mormino, he a machinist and she a housewife. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He and his wife Lynne and two daughters, Amy and Rebecca, live in Temple Terrace.

He is a history professor at the University of South Florida. In 1980, Dr. Mormino went to Italy on a Fulbright-Hays Fellowship and taught at the Università di Roma.

The McKay recipient has contributed mightily to the cause of Florida history through his prolific writing, lecturing and teaching. He has written an endless number of publications, scholarly papers, book reviews and books.

His first book, *Tampa: The Treasure City*, coauthored with another great Tampa historian, Tony Pizzo, was sponsored by The Tampa Historical Society and came out in 1983.

Dr. Mormino, with Dr. George Pozzetta, published *The Immigrant World of Ybor City: Italians and Their Latin Neighbors, 1885-1985*, in 1987. This volume was selected as the inaugural book in the Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island Series. It also was awarded the Theodore Saloutos Prize for outstanding book in immigration history, 1988, Immigration History Society.

Dr. Mormino's *Immigrants on the Hill* was awarded the Howard Marraro Prize for outstanding book in Italian history, 1987, American Catholic Historical Society. It also was selected as "Choice's Choice," one of the Outstanding Academic Books for 1987-88, *Choice Magazine*.

The Tampan's article, "Florida Slave Narratives," was awarded the Arthur Thompson Prize, 1988, as the outstanding

article in *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Florida Historical Society, 1988.

Dr. Mormino also received the Leonard Covello Prize for the best article in Italian immigration history, 1980.

The educator and author was former Executive Director of the Florida Historical Society.

Writing history is his vocation and avocation. His commitment to this activity was summed up when he told a reporter for LaGaceta in 1984: "I have found my niche in Ybor City and in Florida ... and my mission."

1984 Frank Garcia

1985 Former Gov. Leroy Collins

1986 Dr. Samuel Proctor

1987 Doyle E. Carlton, Jr.

1988 Leland M. Hawes, Jr.

1989 U.S. Rep. Charles E. Bennett

1990 Joan W. Jennewein

1991 Gary R. Mormino

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

1972 Frank Laumer

1973 State Senator David McClain

1974 Circuit Judge James R. Knott

1975 Gloria Jahoda

1976 Harris H. Mullen

1977 Dr. James W. Covington

1978 Hampton Dunn

1979 William M. Goza

1980 Tony Pizzo

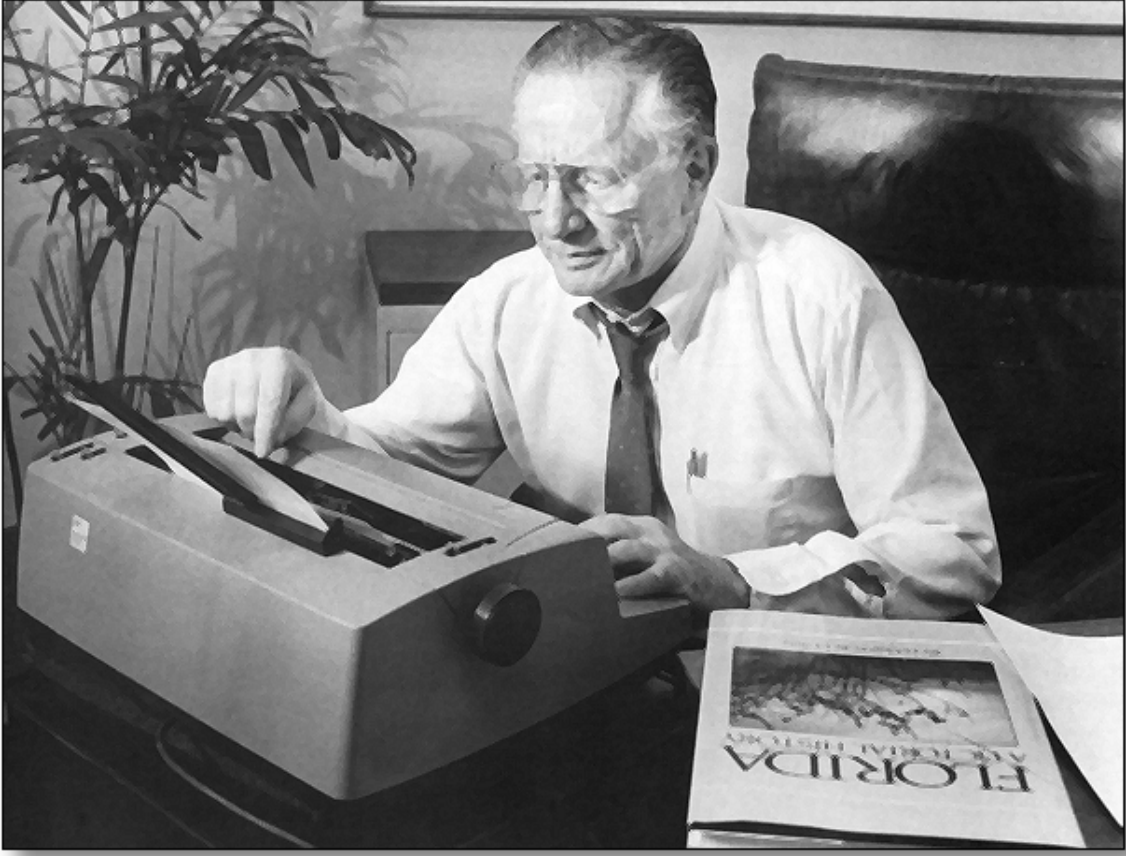
1981 Allen and Joan Morris

1982 Mel Fisher

1983 Marjory Stoneman Douglas

# HAMPTON DUNN RETIRES AS EDITOR OF SUNLAND TRIBUNE

By LELAND HAWES



**Hampton Dunn**

Photo courtesy of Tampa Tribune

When *The Sunland Tribune*, journal of the Tampa Historical Society, was first published in July 1974, it consisted of only 18 pages with a cover and listed no editor.

But the president of the society that year was H. Hampton Dunn, a charter member, and he's the one who took on the chore of creating a publication for the still-infant organization.

That first issue contained essentially one long article written by Col. George Mercer Brooke, Jr., a descendant and namesake of the founder of Tampa's Fort Brooke. Colonel Brooke had read the paper to an audience of 400 at the Air Host Hotel, today's Marriott Airport Hotel.

The modest first edition was only a hint of more imposing things to come, most of them attributable to H. Hampton Dunn. Under his

editorship, 12 more issues were published out of a total of 16. And he edited-and wrote an impressive portion of-860 pages of material under the society's imprint!

Since Hampton has felt the need to slow down-slightly-at the age of 75, he has submitted his resignation as editor, so that he can turn his astounding energies to other projects.

It's only appropriate that we recount some of his accomplishments in the pages of this journal started and named by him...

A native of Floral City, Hampton began his journalistic career with a handwritten neighborhood newspaper, then went on to write crusading editorials at Citrus County High School.

With the aid of scholarships during the 1930s Depression, he attended Mercer University in Macon, then the University of Tampa. As a sophomore in May 1936, he got an offer to become a full-time cub reporter on *The Tampa Daily Times*-and he took it.

Before long, he was covering gangland killings and checking Tampa Municipal Hospital (as it was known then) for accident injuries. And a blind date acquainted him with a Gordon Keller School of Nursing student, Charlotte Rawls. They were married in August 1941, and they recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

Hampton was among the *Times* reporters called in one Sunday in December 1941 to report local tie-ins with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The next day he was checking recruiting offices and was soon enlisted as a candidate for a commission in the Army Air Corps.

Named a second lieutenant in August 1942, Hampton boarded the liner Queen Mary within a month on a voyage to Europe. He spent most of World War II in North Africa and in Italy, winding up with the rank of major and serving as public relations officer for the 12th Air Force.

Returning to Tampa in late 1945 and back at the *Times*, he traveled the state as a 11 star reporter," winning an award for the best Florida news-story in 1946 for his coverage of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings invasion-of-privacy trial.

Promoted first to *Times* city editor, then managing editor in 1949, Hampton started the "Palm Tree Politics" column and pushed numerous crusades - such as taking phosphate trains off Tampa streets and creating a downtown civic center.

When the *Times* was sold to the Tribune Company in 1958, Hampton Dunn moved over to television with Miami station WCKT for a while. His biggest story was covering Fidel Castro's takeover of Cuba from a vantage-point in Havana.

But Hampton was eager to get back to Tampa, and he joined the Peninsula Motor Club in 1959 and again started roving the state. His crusading in the AAA publication *Florida Explorer* took aim at speed traps and crooked garage operators, for example. The glare of publicity cleaned them up, too.

His travels exposed him to Florida's historical sites, and he began photographing and writing about them. His first book, *Rediscovering Florida*, set the tone for much that followed.

Meanwhile, he wrote historical articles for *The Tampa Tribune* and other newspapers and showed historical and scenic slides to

groups all over the state. For more than 25 years, he averaged five slide shows weekly.

Hampton Dunn was among the founders of the Tampa Historical Society in 1971, one of its early presidents and a winner of the D.B. McKay Award for significant contributions to regional history.

Since his semi-retirement from AAA, he has served as president of the Florida Historical Society. He still presents slide shows, and he's still writing, and providing pictures for, historically-oriented books. Currently, he's working on his 19th and 20th volumes.

Hampton is even more visibly in the public eye as WTVT Channel 13's historian, giving TV viewers graphic glimpses of the past.

Somehow, in the midst of all this, he's able to relax on occasion and listen to country-western and bluegrass music.

Yet in a lifetime of achievements, Hampton Dunn will be long remembered for his pace-setting editions of *The Sunland Tribune*. Tampa Historical Society has indeed been fortunate to have a journal of such breadth and liveliness.

When Leland Hawes went to work as a reporter for **The Tampa Daily Times** in 1950, it was Hampton Dunn who hired him. Hawes, a native of Tampa, has been writing a History/Heritage column for **The Tampa Tribune** since 1982.

Correction: from Sunland Tribune, Vol. XVI, Nov. 1990, p. 64.

U.S. Senator George Smathers was an occupant in the automobile with President Kennedy. Smathers was seated between Gov. Bryant and Rep. Gibbons. Smathers was incorrectly identified as James H. Conroy, Jr.

# KYLE VanLANDINGHAM NEW EDITOR OF SUNLAND TRIBUNE



**Kyle S. VanLandingham**

Kyle S. VanLandingham was appointed Editor of *The Sunland Tribune*, March 19, 1991, by the Board of Directors, following the retirement of Hampton Dunn.

Kyle, a fifth generation Floridian, was born in Ft. Pierce in 1951. He received his B.A. degree from Maryville College, Maryville, Tennessee in 1973. In 1976 he received his J.D. degree from Cumberland School of Law of Samford University. He was County Attorney of Okeechobee County from 1978 to 1987. Kyle then moved to Savannah, Ga.,

where he lived until 1990. That year he returned to Florida and lives at Riverview.

He is author of *Florida Cousins: The Descendants of Win. H. Willingham*; *Pictorial History of St. Lucie County 1565-1910*; *Pioneer Families of the Kissimmee River Valley*; and co-author of *History of Okeechobee County and Parker and Blount in Florida*.

Kyle is past president and life member of the St. Lucie Historical Society and is a past

member of the Board of Directors of the Florida Historical Society. He was the 1981 recipient of the Florida History Award from the Peace River Valley Historical Society for "distinguished service in Florida history." He is also a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, Military Order of the Stars and Bars and Sons of the American Revolution. He is past president of Okeechobee Rotary Club, past Worshipful Master of Okeechobee Lodge No. 237, F. &A. M., and past Senior Warden of Our Savior Episcopal Church in Okeechobee.

Kyle's ancestor, Capt. Wm. B. Hooker, was a pioneer antebellum cattleman of Hillsborough County and built the historic Orange Grove Hotel. Kyle is also descended from Stephen Hollingsworth, Hillsborough County sheriff in 1844; James Alderman, for whom Alderman's Ford was named; and Reading Blount, original pioneer settler of Bartow, FL.

Kyle is a collector of Florida related books and travels extensively.

## REMINISCENCES OF CAPT. JAMES McKAY, JR.

*James McKay, Jr., was born in Mobile, Ala., in 1842 and moved with his parents to Tampa in 1846. In his later years he wrote two lengthy articles about the early history of Tampa and Hillsborough County. The first was printed in the Tampa Times, Dec., 20 1921, and was later reprinted in D. B. McKay's Pioneer Florida. The second article appeared in the Tampa Times, Dec. 18, 1923, and is reprinted below. He died in 1924. Items in brackets are editor's corrections.*

### "History of Tampa of the Olden Days"

By JAMES McKAY, JR.

There have been many articles published by the press of the early days of Tampa, composed by those who obtained their information from hearsay and not personal knowledge, that were only partly correct. I will, to the best of my memory, relate what I know from the late forties and fifties of what Tampa was then, and its slow but substantial growth to the seventies.

As I have stated previously, our family came to Tampa from Mobile, Ala. in 1846. At that time there were but few citizens, who were civilian and but few houses outside of the government reservation. The military post was known as Fort Brooke, garrisoned by the Fifth Infantry, and commanded by Colonel Waite. There was but one store, owned and operated by W. G. Ferris, on the reservation. He was known as the sutler for the post. These stores are now called post exchange at army posts.

The north side of the government reservation ran east and west along Whiting street. The town was situated north of this line, and was a bed of sand and thick growth of what was called the scrub. The postoffice

was on the reservation. At the time our family came to Tampa, the postmaster was Dr. John M. Palmer. He constructed a small hotel on the north side of Whiting street near the river and named it the Palmer hotel. This was a building containing 10 or 11 rooms, with a dining room the entire length of it on the back, and about 15 feet wide, which was used later on as a dance hall for the young people. This hotel withstood the hurricane of 1848 although the water rose two feet over the main floor. Colonel Hugh T. Fisher was the manager of this hotel. He became the postmaster June 10, 1850. Colonel Fisher was the grandfather of our present deputy sheriff, Mr. Brooks.

In 1846 Darling & Griffin opened a store at the corner of Whiting and Tampa streets. Later on the name of this firm was changed to Kennedy and Darling. My father also opened a small store in 1850, at the corner of Washington and Franklin street, where the *Tampa Daily Times* is now published.



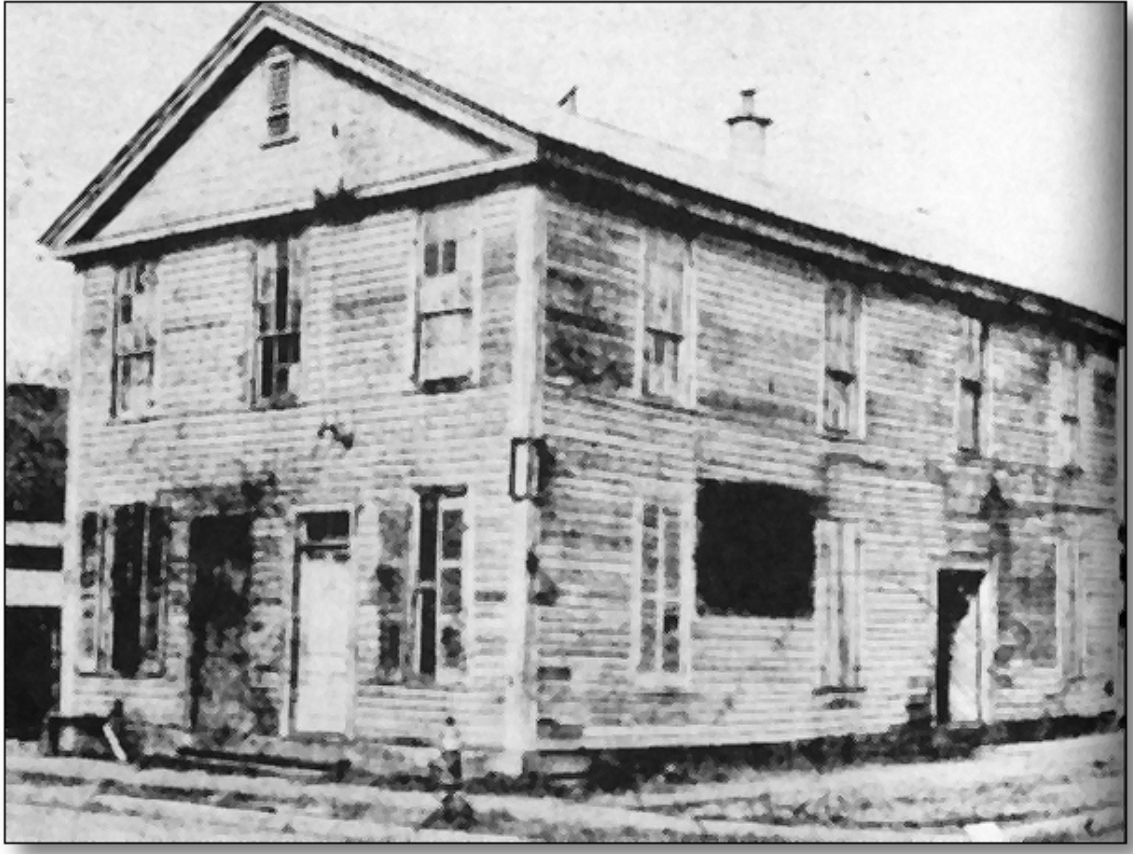


**Hillsborough County Court House, constructed 1854**

### **Hurricane in 1848.**

In 1848, the town was visited by a terrific hurricane causing the tide to rise above 15 feet above low water mark, washing away the W. G. Ferris store and the house we were living in; in fact, most of the houses that were located on the river bank. Our family was moved to the Palmer hotel, and when driven out of there on account of the tide, to the Darling and Griffin store, and then to the military hospital on the reservation. As soon as Mr. Ferris could obtain material he erected a small building

on the south side of Whiting street near the intersection of Franklin. This street did not extend farther south, on account of the reservation. A few years later Mr. Ferris, having some trouble with the military officials, they ordered him off the reservation, when he moved his store to the corner of Florida and Washington streets and built his residence on the same lot. This residence became the old folks home and later on was moved to the site the home is now occupying and somewhat improved, or made larger.



**Original Masonic Lodge Building, corner of Franklin and Whiting Streets.**

The military built a wharf for the use of their vessels, at the mouth of the river and also a twin warehouse for quartermaster and subsistence stores, connecting with the wharf. I recollect the government stables were also near this storehouse and the lot on which the temporary stables were built contained many bitter-sweet orange trees. Later on, when the Indians became unruly, the stables were moved to the east side of the reservation and increased to several hundred for cavalry and mule teams. I think, at one time, there was some 200 wagons of four mules each, used for transportation of supplies to troops occupying posts in the interior.

In 1848-49-50 my father owned and operated the schooner Sarah Matilda-named for my mother- between Tampa, Mobile and

New Orleans. With the exception of the government vessels, this was the only vessel that was being used commercially for this port. He also constructed a twin wharf at the foot of Washington street. Cattle were penned between the wharves, for shipment to Key West, by schooner.

The Indians having moved to the Everglades and the country being in a peaceful condition, many settlers came into the country and some located in Tampa, purchasing lots and building homes, clearing up the scrub as they would build, putting down plank sidewalks and in some instances shell, but the sand remained in the streets making it hard on teams as well as pedestrians. No lot of 105 feet by 105 feet sold for more than \$25 or \$140 for the square. That is what our family paid for the lots where the Olive

hotel is, also The Times lot, and the Almeria hotel square. How many of us would like to purchase them at this price now?

### **Shipping in 1851.**

In 1851 we shipped cedar logs that were cut from up the Hillsborough river, to Blanchard and Fitch in New York, for making pencils. In 1851 my father erected a saw mill at the place where the Tampa Steam ways is now situated, for the manufacture of lumber. Previous to this, all lumber was freighted from Mobile. Sawdust from this mill was placed on the municipal streets to assist teams in hauling. When the yellow fever appeared in town many of the citizens claimed it was from decayed sawdust and the practice was stopped.

In [1849] Mr. Payne's store situated near Peace River, present Hardee County, was burned by a party of Indians and he was massacred. The Indians being at peace the government demanded that the perpetrators of this crime be delivered to the authorities and they pressed this demand with such force that Billy Bowlegs surrendered three of his tribe. [The three were later sent to the Indian Territory In August, 1850, Daniel Hubbard, an orphan boy, was abducted by Indians and murdered. In 1851, Billy Bowlegs delivered the three alleged murderers to civil authorities in Tampa. See "The Seminole Indian Murders of Daniel Hubbard," by Jas. W Covington, *Sunland Tribune*, Vol. XV, Nov. 1989.] They were placed in jail and held for some time, when one day about noon, they gave a war whoop and when the sheriff went to the jail found all three of them dead, hanging to the bars, with their blankets. One of them did the hanging and then stood on a bucket, kicked it from under him, as he was found with his feet on the floor and his legs bending so as to throw his weight on his blanket, showing

how determined they were. Benjamin J. Hagler was the sheriff at that time. I was a boy [8] years of age and I have never forgotten how these Indians looked, while hanging. This incident was so impressed on my mind that it has remained with me to this date.

As time rolled along the town began to grow, slowly but substantially. The following merchants opened stores on Washington street. John Jackson, C. L. Friebele, James McKay, W. O. Ferris, E. A. Clark. Michael Wall had a clothing store, corner of Franklin and Whiting street. Brown & Company also had a clothing store, on Washington street. There was a Spaniard named Jose Vigil who carried on a confectionery store on Franklin street. He was a unique character. His vest, and he was never seen without wearing one, came down nearly as long as his coat, having an immense watch and chain in one pocket with a large lot of silver change in the other pocket of the vest. He was very tall and slender, with large black eyes and a fierce looking moustache and when he wished to impress you with his importance he would put on a Gasparilla look. But he was kindhearted and always gave the boys candy, or some little sweet mints, especially when he would receive a lot of decayed fruit from Havana and wanted the boys to cull it over for him. Every Christmas he would have a miniature representation of the birth of Christ, and his home was then thrown open to the people. His wife and sister-in-law being musicians of a fine type playing the guitar and piano and his father-in-law playing the violin, making it exceedingly pleasant and happy for us. When the war between the states began he moved to New Orleans and died before the war ended.

TAMPA HERALD.

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**TAMPA, FLORIDA.**  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7. 1854.

### **Our Court House.**

Through the kindness of Mr. Breaker, contractor and builder of this magnificent Court House, we are enabled to furnish our readers with a full description of its order, size, various offices, &c. &c.

The building is 76 ft. long, by 45 wide, and two stories high. The 1st. story is 12 ft. between joints; the second is 14 1-2 ft. On the 1st floor is the City Hall, Judge of Probates, Clerks', and Sheri&, Offices, and Grand Jurors' room. A spacious Hall extends from the Southern entrance of the building, between the four Offices to the City Hall. On the 2nd floor is the Court Room, 42 by 45 ft., and two spacious Jury rooms, with a passage extending from the south entrance, between the jury rooms to the Court-room. A projecting Portico, an each end, the whole width of the building supported by heavy *Grecian Columns*. A double flight of stairs ascends from each end of the building, landing - on the 2nd floor of the portico's. The Roof is mounted with a Domo and Tower, 18 ft in diameter, and 24 ft high, covered with Tin, or Zinc. The extreme height of the building, from the pinnacle of the Tower to the ground is 68 feet; and the whole is being beautifully finished in a combination of the *Grecian, Ionic, and Corinthian Order's*.

The plan was drawn by the contractor, Mr. Breaker, who has engaged to erect the building, for a sum less than \$5000. The execution of this contract, we are satisfied, will be attended with considerable loss to the builder, unless the generosity and liberality of the County Commissioner's shall interpose to prevent it, For the credit of our Town and County, we hope they will, and that too, with no *niggardly* hand.

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Fort Myers was established, I think, in 1850 by the government. My father was appointed sutler of this post in 1852 and used a small schooner named Emma to take his goods

from Tampa to Fort Myers. He also opened a store at Fort Denaud, which was on the Caloosahatchee river some 20 miles above Fort Myers and chartered a little steamer he owned, named the Woodduck to the quartermaster department to carry supplies to the troops at that place. She was operated between Punta Rassa, Fort Denaud, and Fort Myers.

### **The First Court House.**

The mails were brought to Tampa overland from Gainesville by stage first weekly, then semiweekly, under contract with my father in 1852. The first court house was constructed in [1848] and the second and larger court house was built by the Rev. John H. Breaker, being a two-story building in [1854]. In 1855 the Morgan Steamship Line operated their steamers between New Orleans and Havana, touching at all the Florida ports semi-monthly, which also gave the town mails, freights and passengers.

The Leonardy brothers conceived the idea of erecting a hotel of some 25 rooms on the lot occupied by the Scottish Rite building, naming it the Florida House. This building my father purchased from them and operated as a hotel until the beginning of the war. It was full every winter, with tourists who visited the town for their health. In 1852 we opened a ferry at the foot of Jackson street, so as to cross the stage with the mail. It was also used by the public. Ponds that were located on the east end of Jackson street caused the city officials as well as the people, considerable annoyance, especially during the rainy season. One of these ponds at the corner of Jackson and Marion street would take in all four corners and prevent pedestrians from passing in that direction. I have skated rocks over ice on this pond when it was frozen over during the winter.

The authorities dug a ditch in the center of Jackson street to drain these ponds, and in some places it was 12 feet deep. Across Franklin and Tampa streets small bridges were placed so as to permit passage of teams and the public. This did not accomplish what was desired so the ponds were filled in later on.

The first Masonic lodge was organized, I think, in [1850] and the upstairs of my father's store was fitted up for holding their meetings, and later on I think in the later part of [1852], the lodge building at the corner of Whiting and Franklin street was erected, first a two-story building, the upstairs for a lodge and the lower floor used principally for school purposes, and later on an addition of a two-story building at right angle to the first one, was constructed. I am under the impression that my father was one of the charter members of this lodge, and had as much if not more than any other citizen in its organization and construction but later on had a difficulty with one of the members, withdrawing from the lodge, saying he would never enter it again as long as this party was a member, and I do not think that he ever attended a lodge meeting after that. I am under the impression that he had several hundred dollars of stock in this organization which he lost for some reason. If I have made incorrect statements in reference to this matter and the lodge has records on file in regard to it, I would be very glad to be put right in the matter. [James McKay, Sr. became a member of Hillsborough Lodge No. 25, F&A.M. Apr. 10, 1850. He was expelled Dec. 15, 1855 due to a dispute with fellow Mason Madison Post. McKay was reinstated in the lodge, Sept. 5, 1863.]

We children attended school in this lodge building. Rev. J. K. Glover, a Methodist minister, was the teacher. About this time

the Know Nothing Party, was organized against the Democratic party. The political excitement reached our quiet little town, and Rev. Glover advocated the former party so strong, denouncing the Democratic Party, that we were removed from his school and sent to James Petty as teacher. Well do I remember the public meeting that was held in the court house. Rev. J. K. Glover advocating the tenets of the Know Nothing party and Mr. Alfonso DeLauney denouncing the former party and defending the principles of the Democratic party. Their speeches were bitter but the people believed that Mr. DeLauney was right. The Know Nothing party was of short life. Mr. DeLauney was appointed postmaster Dec. 21, 1852 and served a little more than 8 years, he was of French descent, very intelligent and a fine talker.

In the month of December, 1855, the Indians again went on the war path and the early part of 1856 found a number of volunteer companies mustered into the military service, and also more regular troops sent to Fort Myers and Tampa. The government sent also two small steamers from New Orleans named Grey Cloud and Texas Ranger, to ply between Tampa and Fort Myers. My father also purchased the schooner Venice at Mystic, Conn., to freight goods from New Orleans to Tampa. Things around Tampa began to be active and quite a lot of money was placed in circulation.

The Indians burning and massacring settlers near Tampa, the citizens were organized and performed picket duty on all the roads entering Tampa. Boys as well as the men were used in the discharge of this duty. The stage conveying the mails had a guard of several soldiers mounted, to protect it. The court house bell was to sound the alarm in case of a night attack and the citizens were kept in a state of excitement all the time.

Considerable improvements were made on the reservation. New barracks and officers' quarters and store houses were erected.

### **End Indian War.**

The government finding it difficult to drive the Indians out of the country or capture them, concluded to enter into negotiations with them and with this plan in view sent Major Rector, with 50 civilized Indians from Arkansas, into the Everglades some distance below Fort Myers, in [1858]. These Indians scouted around until they got in conference with Billy Bowlegs and Sam Jones, the Seminole Chiefs and at a meeting induced Bowlegs to leave them and emigrate to Arkansas with his band, at so much for each warrior, squaw and piccanniny, They were concentrated on Egmont Key and when all reached that point were embarked on the Steamship [Grey Cloud], for New Orleans. Sam Jones decline to leave the state, but this ended the Seminole war.

Mustering out of the volunteers threw a lot of disreputable men on the town and they became so bad that the citizens organized themselves as a band of regulators, whipping some and driving them out of town and in one or two instances hung some. This broke up lawlessness and the town was restored to quiet and order.

After the excitement of mustering out of volunteers was over and the unruly element driven out of town, business began to improve and all citizens co-operated in making improvements to their property and others locating in the town, adding to the population, Tampa put on city airs. There was not an over plus of skilled mechanics "out sufficient to carry on all building and construction work. These mechanics were experts in their lines of work. None better

could be had in the state. Houses were built to last a lifetime.

In 1857 during the summer, Tampa was visited by an epidemic of yellow fever, but it being very late in the summer and cold weather coming on, there were not many cases and but few deaths, but in 1858 it started early in the season and spread rapidly over the town. All that could move to the country did so but there were many deaths, some of our best citizens passing away. I was stricken with the disease and only for my mother and grandmother, being most excellent nurses, they having passed through an epidemic in Mobile sometime previous, I would not be here today writing this article. There were many theories advanced from what source came the disease. Some stated that it was introduced from New Orleans by schooner. Others claimed it originated from filth in the town. Any way there was a campaign of cleanliness and sanitary measures were adopted in the winter of '58 and early '59. These measures were rigidly enforced and before the summer of '59 came in, the town, was placed in fine shape. But it gave the town a setback from which it did not recover for two years.

In 1858 my father came to the conclusion the country would be benefited from the exportation of cattle to Havana, Cuba, so he purchased the brig Huntress, fitted her up with cattle pens and contracted with the Morgan Steamship Line to load their decks twice each month, paying \$1,500 per trip, whether he loaded the decks or not. He constructed a small dock at Ballast Point and lightered the cattle out of these vessels. Through this source quite a sum of money was placed in circulation in south Florida. In fact after the military left this part of the country the shipment of cattle was the only source of obtaining money. There was only a small amount of sea island cotton made in

this section and some potatoes, sugar and hides. These were brought to town and sold in trade, for other goods.

### **Starts Life Work.**

September, 1853, I was sent to the Kentucky Military Institute, situated near Frankfort. My brother-in-law, Col. R. B. Thomas being commandant of cadets and professor of mathematics. But my brother, George, dying in 1859, Colonel Thomas was requested to return to Tampa at once, and later on I was called home to take charge of all outside work and handle the floating property.

There is one thing that I have forgotten to state farther back in this article. It has been remarked that Tampa had not been visited with a hurricane since 1848 until the one of 1921, which is an error, Tampa was visited with a pretty stiff hurricane in 1853, that I recollect very well. The schooner John Roalef owned by W G. Ferris and sons arrived from New Orleans with a cargo of general merchandise and just as she had finished discharging this cargo, this hurricane came along, bringing in a tidal wave with it that landed this vessel about 100 yards north of the A. C. L. railroad warehouse where it stands now and about 100 yards from the river bank. My father bought this vessel, had her jacked up and repaired, dug a canal to the river and launched her into this canal, floating her. The tide must have risen some 10 feet above low water mark as this vessel was drawing some five feet or more of water, at the time she went ashore.

During the winter of 1859 the young men of the town organized the Tampa Cornet band, employing J. A. Butterfield as leader. This band was composed of some 14 members

and when, after practicing a few weeks, it ventured in giving promenade concerts and dances, charging a nominal sum for admittance, it gave the young people many evenings of pleasure and enjoyment. There are only two of this band now living. Henry Crane and myself.

In January, 1860, there was constructed a pasture fence, beginning on Hillsborough bay just near the present site of the Spanish sanitarium, extending across the peninsula about two miles north of Port Tampa, to old Tampa bay, for the purpose of concentrating cattle. The demand for cattle had increased to such an extent that my father in the spring of this year went north to purchase a steamer suitable for the trade and after searching the eastern ports, not finding a suitable vessel, went to Chicago and there purchased the steamer Salvor. She was not of sufficient size for the trade, so he took her to New York, cut her in two, putting 70 feet in the middle of her. Before leaving Tampa he purchased from Captain L. G. Lesley, his entire stock of the S. V. brand of cattle, as well as 2,000 head of beef cattle from other parties. These cattle were all delivered to this pasture by June 5. The steamer should have arrived here by June 1, but owing to the slow manner of completing the work on her, she did not reach Tampa until the middle of July. In the meantime the pasture went dry, not a drop of water for cattle and many died before the rains began. There were only about some 3,500 head that were in a condition to stand shipping, and those that were left alive, we altered the marks and brands and drove to Manatee county. The pen where I received all this number of cattle, some 8,000 head, was situated some 200 yards from where I am now living. At that time there was but one house within one mile of the pens. What wonderful improvements have I witnessed since that time.

### **Population 1,500 In 1860.**

During this year, 1860, Tampa continued to improve both as to business and population. To the best of my recollection there were about 1,500 inhabitants. [Thomas E. Jackson in 1924 estimated Tampa's 1860 population as 451 in the incorporated limits and 100 in the suburbs.] After the election of Abraham Lincoln as president, considerable excitement followed, when in January, 1861, Florida seceded and the climax was reached and every one went wild.

Later on, the militia was called out and every available man was put to work throwing up breastworks and batteries at the mouth of the river, to resist an attack from the United States navy, which we believed at that time we would wipe off the face of the water.

The S. S. Salvor was offered to the Confederate government and Commodore Hartstene was sent here to inspect her. She made a trip down the bay with him and when he returned he told my father that she would not do for the government, as she drew too much water for inside work and was not fast enough for outside work. So having two or three loads of cattle on hand, she continued freighting them to Havana. On her last trip he received a tip that when she returned to Key West from Tampa she would be seized by the federal government, but as there were a great many southern sympathizers in Key West who were anxious to get to the main land, he offered the Salvor to take them to Cedar Keys, obtaining permission from the commanding officers to do so. One hundred and eighty-six boarded her, and he made the trip to Cedar Keys with them not charging a cent. On the return trip he came by Tampa,

loaded cattle and returned to Havana. As he passed through Key West, the commanding officer notified my father that an officer would go with him to Havana to purchase animals for use of the military at Key West and for him to follow his orders. On arrival at Havana the crew refused to return to Key West and the ship was laid up. The officer was informed to get back to Key West the best way he could. My father chartered a fishing smack to bring him to Tampa, as he wished to ascertain the situation in the south. Secretary S. R. Mallory who was a great friend of his, advised him to run the blockade with the Salvor. The south would go to war and they wanted arms and ammunition. So he returned to Havana, obtained a cargo of guns and other war materials and merchandise, induced some of his Cuban friends to invest in the enterprise, which they did, the cargo costing some \$400,000. Clearing the ship for Nassau, under the English flag, but bound to Cedar Keys; he sailed out of Havana harbor in the afternoon, headed for Nassau, but when night came on, changed the course for Cedar Keys. The next day he was captured by the Keystone State and towed to Key West. My father was confined in Fort Taylor and the steamer, with my brother, Donald, and the crew taken to Philadelphia. Donald was sent to Fort Lafayette, N. Y. harbor. Seven of the crew, being negroes owned by my father were freed. The steamer was sold and purchased by Clyde and Company. The cargo was also sold.

### **Companies Formed.**

In the meantime, formation of companies began. I had been first lieutenant of a militia company under Captain Lesley but when we were to muster into the service the order was to reorganize, when I, with some other of the Tampa boys, Drew and T. W. Givens



left for the front. Givens left some 10 days prior to Drew and myself. He joined the Twentieth Florida regiment, as quartermaster sergeant, near Jacksonville, where they were forming as a regiment.

Drew and myself went to Fernandina to join Finegan's Legion, but on arriving there were told by General Finegan that he had given up the raising of a legion, as the government had notified him the arms could not be furnished at that time. So we continued on to Richmond, to join the Second Florida regiment, but on arrival at Richmond, Colonel Thomas, who was adjutant of the Second Florida, advised me to apply for the position of captain quartermaster of the Fourth Florida regiment that was then being organized in Florida, which I did, through Secretary Mallory. I was appointed and ordered to report at Apalachicola to Colonel Ed Hopkins, commanding the regiment, who, with two companies, was stationed there. The balance of the regiment was scattered along the coast, as far down as Tampa. Later on the regiment was concentrated at Fernandina. Drew joined a Texas regiment and we never met again.

Tampa furnished several companies of men for the army, and after a year the inhabitants, all of who could leave, moved to the country and the town again began going down grade. Some few troops were kept, as a guard to give notice of the approach of the enemy -- not for protection of the place, for this they could not do. Tampa was a dead town at this time. Only when the enemy gunboats visited the place and would throw a few shot and shell in the town did the people show much life.

The Fourth Florida left the state in May, 1862, for Tennessee and joined Bragg's army and in the early part of 1863 was ordered to Mississippi, to the relief of

Vicksburg, under Johnston, he having some 2,000 wagons loaded with supplies for Vicksburg.

The night of the fourth of July, 1863, we finished placing our pontoons, over the Big Black, when about 2 o'clock of the morning of July 5 we received notice that Vicksburg had capitulated on the fourth to General Grant and that General Sherman was on his way to try and capture Johnston's army. It was but a very short time before our army was in motion on the retreat, for our fortifications around Jackson, Miss., and when we reached Jackson our rear guard was skirmishing with Sherman's advance guard.

After the fall of Vicksburg the federals had full control of the Mississippi. This was a great loss to the south, as it cut off the supply of beef cattle from Texas. The government then turned its attention to Florida for supply of beef cattle. Some 160 veterans who lived in South Florida and knew the range and how to handle cattle, were detailed from the army, and ordered to report to Major Stubbs, at Madison, Fla. A wire was sent by Major P. W. White, of Quincy, who was chief commissary of the state, that I be ordered to report to him for detached duty, which was disapproved, but later on in the fall of 1863 I received orders to report to him, which I did. I was assigned to duty in south Florida in charge of these men.

Many deserters from the army and some from the lower part of south Florida below Fort Meade, with the notorious Jim Green, located at Fort Myers, and increasing in such numbers the Federal government organized them into companies. There were also negro solidiers with this command. These deserters made raids in the interior, taking cattle owned by loyal southerners and destroying

homes to such an extent, the authorities sent Colonel Munnerlyn to this section, directing him to organize the citizens and all home companies into an organization under the name of Munnerlyn's battalion, for the protection of south Florida, with headquarters at Brooksville. During the summer of 1864 a body of these deserters numbering about 90 under Jim Green, well armed and equipped, marched overland from Fort Myers in direction of Fort Meade, with the purpose of destroying all houses in that locality but they were discovered when within 15 miles of their destination we met them with some 25 men and had a fight, they killing one of our best men, Jim Lanier. However we stopped them from carrying out their foul intentions and turned them down the Peace Creek swamp, they making their escape during the night.

### **Tampa Captured.**

They again made a raid into Tampa, capturing the town. General Woodbury in command and some 400 deserters and negro soldiers holding the town for two days, after taking what property suited them hurriedly left, hearing that Dickison and his men were advancing on the place to attack it. I was at Fort Meade with 55 men, organizing some 1,200 head cattle, to forward to the army of Tennessee, when I received the news of the capture of Tampa at 2 o'clock that afternoon. I left with 35 men for that place, reaching within two miles of the town at 11 o'clock the same night, when I obtained information as to the force that occupied the town. Immediately upon receipt of news of the capture of Tampa, couriers were dispatched calling all citizens to report to the Six Mile creek, as quickly as possible, which they did and by noon of the next day we had about 75 men and boys. The morning after my arrival near Tampa, I sent a flag of truce into the

town by Gideon Zipperer and another man, two of the bravest and best men I had with me, requesting that my wife and child be permitted to leave the town with these men, as I would attack the town within 24 hours. Mr. Zipperer is now living below Bartow on his magnificent home and orange grove. The Federals declined to permit either the men or my wife to leave the town and held them until they evacuated the place, taking some 60 bales of cotton that my father owned. The two vessels that carried these troops to Tampa, named Honduras and Huzzas, both were purchased by my father and renamed the Governor Marvin, and Southern Star. This was after the war. Many times have I read the log books of these vessels giving an account of this expedition. Captain Van Sice commanded the Honduras at the time of this expedition. I got acquainted with him in Havana after the war, he then being master of the City of Vera Cruz of the Alexander Steamship Line plying between New York and Havana. He discussed with me the capture of Tampa.

A few years later Captain Van Sice, with the City of Vera Cruz, was lost in a hurricane off St. Augustine.

I had placed pickets on all roads leading out of Tampa, with orders to halt all passers, no matter who they were. The picket force was composed of six men. At 12 o'clock the night of the day the federals evacuated Tampa, six men came riding up the road from the direction of Tampa and although the guard heard them talking before getting abreast of their position they were permitted to pass without challenging. I was notified two hours afterwards, when I immediately started six men after them, but it was too late, for they had some 10 or 12 miles the start of our men. The deserters proved to be Jim Green and five of his followers.

These deserters taking so many cattle from the range, Colonel Brevard and Captain Dickson were ordered to cooperate with us in breaking up Fort Myers but the federals landing in Jacksonville, they were recalled, and when it was reported that they were advancing out of Jacksonville in the direction of Lake City, I received orders to report there with all dispatch possible, with all available forces. The men were badly scattered and it required three days to get them together, but I succeeded in leaving with 110 of those who had seen service in the armies of Virginia and Tennessee. Although we rode all day and part of the night we did not reach Olustee until the morning after the battle, without our horses just completely worn out. We were allowed two days rest up and ordered to return to our station.

### **Futile Effort.**

[In early 18651 Major W. M. Footman was ordered to this section to organize as large a force as possible, to attack Fort Myers. He succeeded in getting together some 150 men, when we left Fort Meade with all the supplies we could pack on our horses, one piece of artillery and one wagon with a large skiff and this skiff loaded with corn. After the first day's travel we came to the flat country and it being the rainy season our horses traveled in water from ankle deep to their saddle skirts. In fact it was a difficult matter to find dry land sufficient for the command to camp on. When we reached the Caloosahatchee river at Fort Thompson we found the river half a mile wide and a strong current running. Rafts were constructed and towed with the skiff to cross our equipage on. It required some eight hours to cross. Part of the artillery ammunition was lost on account of the skiff capsizing. We tried to follow the trail at night, with the intention of

attacking the place just at daylight, but the advance guard got lost on account of so much water, and the darkness, so we sat on all horses all night, 12 miles from Fort Myers. At daylight we made a start, riding rapidly, with Gideon Zipperer and three men a mile in advance, they having orders to ride in a sweeping gallop when nearing [Billy's] creek, where the federal picket was stationed. This they did and captured the picket and four men. At the same time the command moved up rapidly and captured some negro soldiers and two or three deserters who were washing their clothes in a pond. Noticing a bunch of cattle north of us I was ordered to take four men and reconnoiter, which I did. We discovered men with the cattle but as the country was very open they discovered us and after pursuing them two miles we captured two of them. The others escaped in the direction of Punta Rassa. When we formed into line and began an attack we discovered that nearly all of the ammunition both for artillery and small arms was worthless, damaged by water. This was a terrible disappointment to all, as, coming so far, with a prospect of success, we were compelled to return without accomplishing our object, only capturing some 20 prisoners and several hundred head of cattle. We returned to Fort Meade the most worn out and dilapidated looking set of soldiers you ever saw, horses jaded and men half starved.

Jim Green and his gang of deserters made one more raid before the ending of the war. [July 18641. They landed in the night at the mouth of Anclote river and captured some of our pickets, among them being C. L. Friebele and E. A. Clark, who were merchants of Tampa before the war. They, with another one of our men were sent as prisoners to Ship Island, near Gulfport, Miss. The intention of this gang of deserters was to capture and burn everything around

Brooksville, but as we were concentrating our men they got cold feet and turned in the direction of Bayport. Two of our home companies, one from Brooksville and the other from the vicinity of Tampa, neither company knowing the other was in the vicinity of the entrance to the swamp at Bayport, at 12 o'clock at night, each thinking the others were deserters, opened fire. Young Campbell was killed and Captain Lesley was wounded in the arm before they found out all were Confederate soldiers. The deserters had passed into Bayport some two hours previously. The next morning about 10 o'clock I, with some 20 men from Tampa, reached the place where the shooting had taken place. Seeing a new grave, we removed some of the earth and discovering it was a white blanket that covered the body knew it was one of our men. Shortly afterwards a courier came up from Brooksville who informed us of the shooting between our own men.

I was paroled at Bayport, May 6, 1865. My parole was signed by a Captain Pease. A few days after this Judah P. Benjamin of the Confederate cabinet drove into Brooksville with a single horse and open-top buggy, wearing a large felt hat, looking for lands to purchase. We soon found out who he was, when he was sent on down the line. A boat was secured to take him out of the country and Captain Fred Tresca an old shipmaster of Manatee, was selected to take charge of the small boat. He was successful in getting to the Bahama banks with Mr. Benjamin, after being searched two or three times by federal gunboats.

After the close of the war we all returned to our homes, which we found in most instances in a dilapidated condition. Tampa was a hard-looking place. Houses were in bad order. Streets and lots were grown up mostly with weeds and the outlook certainly

was not very encouraging. To make matters worse two companies of negro soldiers were sent to garrison the place. White officers commanded them. It was not long before the troops became overbearing and in some instances threatened arrests of our citizens. I was one that was to be brought before a military court, for the destruction of papers and documents. Getting uneasy over the many reports coming [?] I, with my brother Donald, mounted our horses and laid out in woods for six weeks. The excited condition of the country and activity of the officers at this place being reported to Washington by a revenue officer, a special agent was sent here to investigate with authority to act and he soon had matters straightened out. I received notice from my father to report to the commanding officer in the garrison before stopping anywhere, which I did and was given a paper stating that I was not to be molested only on order from Washington. Shortly after this event the negro soldiers were removed and white troops of the regular army went to garrison the place. It was not long before they were on good terms with the citizens - and assisted in pushing the town ahead, trying to make us forget that we were enemies at one time.

My father succeeded in getting to Havana by a fishing smack and from his friends in Cuba got sufficient funds to take him to New York, landing there with only a few dollars in his pocket. Meeting the old merchants he dealt with previous to the war, they assisted him in buying the Steamer Honduras, which he named the Governor Marvin, costing \$72,000. He also bought a stock of goods valued at \$24,000. He left New York in October, 1865, with this vessel loaded and 165 passengers. he met a hurricane off St. Augustine and came very near losing vessel and all hands, but by the graciousness of the Heavenly Father he pulled through it with some slight losses only.

Two or three days after the hurricane, in passing down along the Florida reef, he saw some 21 vessels of all kinds ashore, as quick as he could, he discharged freight and passengers that were for Key West, patched the steamer up, and left for a bark loaded with sugar and a steamer that was ashore and worked on them for two weeks, for which he received enough to pay for one-half of the Marvin.

When reaching Tampa about the last of November, he entered into the shipping of cattle to Cuba but as the cattle were beginning to get poor and the grass being bad in Cuba, they did not sell for sufficient to pay for cost, duties, and freight and about the last of December he discontinued shipping them.

In the meantime stores opened on Washington street and although there was not much money in circulation, still there was considerable business, mostly in trade. I K. Roberts and Company operated a weekly line of steamers along the coast from New Orleans to Havana, bringing freight and passengers. That was of great assistance to this section of south Florida.

Florida was placed under a provisional government, by the federal government but it was administered by a humane governor with[out] the severity that the officials at Washington thought it should be and it was not long before carpetbaggers were put in control backed by deserters and negro soldiers.

### **Jim Green Helped.**

A renegade judge of the court was placed in office in this section and with the notorious Jim Green and his deserters to assist him,

they joined the republican party, the fight became quite interesting. The loyal Confederates soon were engaged in a struggle that was not much inferior to the war between the states. At one time it appeared as another losing proposition but with the aid of the Ku Klux Klan, all over the south began to see daylight. In 1876 this state as well as others, emerged from the fight by placing George E Drew in the governor's chair, [but] Florida's vote was given to Hays.

It was not long after this when the renegades and deserters were fired from office and sound democrats installed. From that time this section began to improve, and every person felt safe and happy. Previous to this there were many night rides by the citizens, to accomplish what they did.

In 1866, during the summer, the trade with Cuba had increased to such an extent that my father purchased the Steamship Southern Star to assist the Governor Martin to freight cattle, but the demand did not last longer than that year, as the insurrection in Cuba broke out and buyers were afraid to put cattle on pastures. He chartered the Marvin to a party of Spaniards to load mules at Tampico, but when we arrived there found an insurrection had sprung up in Tamaullipas and we were detained for a month, when we loaded 357 mules for Havana. Arriving at our destination we found the city in a state of excitement for fear of an attack from the Cuban army. The night of the day of our arrival, while myself and officers of the ship were upstairs in the Louvre playing billiards, as a battalion of Spanish soldiers were passing, someone fired a pistol. The soldiers opened fire on the lower or ground floor and shot the place all to pieces. We made our escape over the tops of buildings and were let down through a trap door on the top of the building on the opposite side of the block. It was not long before we found

ourselves on board the Marvin and very glad to be there.

### **Tried to Conceal Contract.**

In 1876, when the leaders of the Republican party were in Tallahassee [?] the situation with our democratic leaders, I was in Washington, having the mail contract between Tampa and Cedar Keys transferred from my father's name-he having died shortly before this-to myself. I received a wire from General Dickison saying that an agent of the party was on his way to Cedar Keys to take passage on the Valley City for Manatee to try and get possession of the Pine Level returns. I sent a message immediately to my brother, Donald, who was master of the Valley City, she being at Cedar Keys that day. After loading he anchored her down the channel and when the train arrived he only had a yawl boat to take mails from the train and this party was told he could not get passage, as the boat would not carry him. He returned to Tallahassee and reported the situation, and an effort was made to cancel the contract but as Senator Connover was my friend he prevented it.

I have been compelled to mention my father many times, which I could not prevent, from the fact that in the early days of Tampa there was not a single interest connected with the town but what he was either the originator, or connected with it in some manner. He was identified with every improvement in the town.

As this article is rather lengthy I will close, wishing you and all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

## MEET THE AUTHORS



**ALDUINO**

**FRANK ALDUINO** was born in West Babylon, NY, and received his B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. from Florida State University. His doctoral dissertation "The 'Noble Experiment' in Tampa: A Study of Prohibition in Urban America" explored the social, political and economic ramifications of the Eighteenth Amendment in the Treasure City. Dr. Alduino is an assistant professor of history at Anne Arundel Community College, Arnold, MD. He is currently working with the Center for the Study of Local Issues, a division of the College's Social Sciences, to establish an oral history center. Dr. Alduino is also assisting in the production of a documentary entitled "Shady Side: A Chesapeake Community."

**CANTER BROWN, JR.** a native of Fort Meade, is a doctoral student in history at the University of Florida. He received his B.A. and J. D. degrees from Florida State University and is the author of numerous



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scholarly articles on Florida history. He is a recipient of the Florida Historical Society's Governor LeRoy Collins Award and the Southern Jewish Historical Society's B. H. Levy Prize. His book, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, is published by the University of Central Florida Press.

**JoANN HASKINS CIMINO** received her B.A. degree from the University of South-Florida. She is descended from Tampa pioneers Levi Collar and Leon and Josefina E Arduengo. She has previously written for the *Sunland Tribune*.

**DR. JAMES W. COVINGTON** is past Professor of History at the University of Tampa, and author of numerous books and articles. He is former president of the Florida Anthropological Society, and of the Tampa Historical Society, and former member of the Barrio Latino Commission and of the Hillsborough County Historical Commission.



COVINGTON



DUNN



HAWES

**HAMPTON DUNN** for 56 years has been prominent in the communications fields of journalism, radio and broadcasting and public relations of Florida. For years he was managing editor of *The Tampa Daily Times*, has been a commentator for WCKT-TV (now WSVN-TV) in Miami, was for nearly three decades an executive of the Peninsula Motor Club (AAA) (now AAA Auto Club South) and continues as a AAA consultant. Currently, he also is a prize-winning regular Florida historical reporter on WTVT-TV, Channel 13, Tampa. He is author of 16 books on Florida history Active in many historical and preservation groups, Dunn is past President of the Florida Historical Society Tampa College conferred on Dunn an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters when he was commencement speaker in 1987, and gave him its Distinguished Service Award when he was speaker at the College's centennial celebration in 1990. His alma mater, the University of Tampa, conferred on him an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters in 1989, and gave him its Distinguished Public Service Award when he was commencement speaker in 1975. He

was a Major in the Air Force in Mediterranean Theater during World War II.

**LELAND HAWES, JR.** is a native Tampan who grew up in Thonotosassa, where he published a weekly newspaper at age 11. A graduate of the University of Florida in 1950, he worked as a reporter for *The Tampa Daily Times* for two years, then for *The Tampa Tribune* in various capacities since then. For the last several years he has been writing a history/nostalgia page.

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

**ARSENIO M. SANCHEZ**, a member of the Tampa Historical Society since 1981, is a native of West Tampa. He attended West Tampa Academy of the Holy Names, Jesuit





**PIZZO**



**SANCHEZ**



**SAUNDERS**



**STONE**



**WATERS**

High School and graduated from Plant High in 1937. He served in the Navy during World War II and graduated from the University of Florida in 1951. Sanchez was employed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture until he retired in 1978.

**ROBERT W. SAUNDERS**, a native of Tampa, received his B.A. degree from Detroit Institute of Technology. He also attended the University of Detroit Law School. In 1952 he became NAACP Field Secretary for Florida, following the murder

of Harry I Moore. He was NAACP Field Director until 1966 when he became chief of the office of civil rights for the Office of Economic Opportunity in Atlanta. He continued in that position until 1976 when he returned to Tampa to establish and head Hillsborough County's Office of Economic Opportunity. In 1987 he became executive assistant to the County Administrator and retired in 1988. He was instrumental in the adoption of affirmative action programs and the human rights ordinance in Hillsborough County.

**SPESSARD STONE** was born in Clewiston in 1944. He is a descendant of the pioneer Stone and Hendry families of Florida. He was reared in Hardee County and in 1960 suffered a broken neck in a diving accident, resulting in quadriplegia paralysis. Spessard is accounts receivable clerk for S & S Irrigation. He is author of *John and William Sons of Robert Hendry*, a Hendry genealogy; *The Stone Family*, *Thonotosassa Pioneers*, and *Lineage of John Carlton*, as well as numerous historical articles and biographical sketches for various publications. He lives in Wauchula and his hobbies are reading and Florida history.

**ZACK C. WATERS** is a native of Marion County, Fla. He received his B.A. degree from University of Florida and his J.D. from Memphis State University. He is a scholar of Florida Civil War history and has contributed articles to the *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Waters teaches English at East Rome junior High School in Rome, Ga.

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DE SOTO GAN - TAMPA UNIVERSITY FACADE

G. H. R. H. H. H.



## BENNY HAVENS

*Come, fill your glasses, fellows, and stand up in a row,  
 To sing with animation we're going far to go;  
 In the army there's nothing pretentious's very dear,  
 So we'll sing our reminiscences of Benny Havens, Oh!*

*Let us toast our father, father, the Republic, as you know,  
 Who in the path of science taught us upward far to go;  
 And the wisdom of our native land, whose clouds like veils are blue,  
 They're oft remembered in our cups at Benny Havens, Oh!*

*To the ladies of our Army our cups shall ever flow,  
 Companions in our exile and our shield 'gainst every foe;  
 May they see their husbands generals, with double pay also,  
 And join us in our choruses at Benny Havens, Oh!*

*From the land of death and danger — from Tampa's deadly shore,  
 Comes up the soul of manly grief, O'Brien is no more;  
 In the land of sun and flowers his hand has plighted true,  
 No more he'll sing "Pete Conroy," or "Benny Havens, Oh!"*

Chorus  
*Oh! Benny Havens, Oh! Benny Havens, Oh!  
 We'll sing our reminiscences of Benny Havens, Oh!*

"BENNY HAVENS" was for many years a contraband seller of liquors and viands to the "West Point Cadets," and, in course of time was expelled from the immediate precincts of the military academy. He then opened a regular establishment a mile or two south of West Point, which has been a favorite place of resort for Cadets on a convivial party, "sans permission." The lamented O'Brien, formerly a sergeant in the army, was commissioned as a lieutenant in the "Eighth Infantry." Before or while about joining his regiment, he stopped at West Point to visit an early friend of his, the late Major RIPLEY A. ARNOLD, then a first class Cadet, residing at No. 32, "Rue de Cash Left," in the old North Branch. They made frequent excursions to "Benny's." The song was composed by O'BRIEN, ARNOLD, and others of the Class of 1888, and became, as it is now, and ever will be, extremely popular with all graduates. The last verse, relative to O'BRIEN'S death, which occurred at Tampa Bay, was added by LEADBEATER, of the Engineers.

A GRADUATE.  
 — 1864

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