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Ignacio Haya: Pioneer Cigar Entrepreneur

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In the past decade, investment of foreign capital in the United States has received much publicity, but most Americans are not aware of the role which foreign investors have played in the economic development of our nation. In Florida, both Cuban and Spanish capital were instrumental in making Florida’s cigar industry the State’s leading business enterprise by 1900. One of the leading entrepreneurs, a Spaniard, was Ignacio Haya.
Born in Escalante, Santanter, Spain, December 8, 1842, Ignacio Haya was the son of landed aristocracy, who rented vast amounts of their estancia to tenant farmers. Ignacio was educated in Spain, and at the age of 18, he and his brother, Ramon, left their homeland to begin a new life in the United States. They arrived in New York City where Ignacio established a cigar factory with another Spanish immigrant, Serafin Sanchez. While Ramon moved between Cuba and Spain, Ignacio remained in the United States, forming the Sanchez and Haya Cigar factory in 1867.

The factory was one of the first in the nation to make cigars from the light colored Cuban tobacco called "Clear Havana" in the United States. By bringing raw tobacco from their own tobacco fields they purchased in Cuba, the firm did not have to pay duty on finished cigars. It produced Cuban cigars in the United States free of import duties. With an abundant supply of Clear Havana tobacco, the firm flourished since there was a continual demand for high quality Cuban cigars. Good quality cigars were marketed through advertisement in the form of cigar labels, cigar box art. The firm’s leading label portrayed a popular actress, Fannie Davenport. It remained the most popular label throughout the successful career of the company.

During the 1870s, cigar workers’ salaries remained low because of the overabundance of labor. High production, with little concern for working conditions led to the formation of unions and a succession of devastating strikes. Manufacturers such as Haya began to look to other parts of the nation where they could move their business, free from unions, labor unrest, and congested cities.

**TAMPA 'DISCOVERED'**

New manufacturing problems were a frequent topic of discussion with Ignacio Haya and a fellow Key West manufacturer, Don Vicente Martinez Ybor. Haya frequently visited Ybor in Key West during the winter months, to escape the harsh New York winters. During one visit, the manufacturers were joined by New York friends Bernadino Gargol and Gavino Gutierrez, who had just arrived from...
THE IGNACIO HAYA FAMILY
Marina Haya, later Frank Ambrose Torre; Ignacio and Fannie Haya, married 1872.
Tampa. After telling the industrialists about Tampa's economic potential, the four gentlemen made a quick visit to Tampa to see for themselves.5

Haya was so impressed that he later sent his partner Serafin to meet with the Tampa Board of Trade to discuss the possibility of moving their industry there. Sanchez arrived July 15, 1885, met with the Board, and an enthusiastic editorial in the "Tampa Morning Tribune" stated "The benefits that would enure to Tampa from the establishment of such an industry cannot be too deeply impressed on our citizens."6 The stage was thereby set for the beginning of Tampa's leading industry, thanks to Sanchez and Hayas' inquiries.

YBOR BUYS LAND

Don Vicente Martinez Ybor purchased the first land, 40 acres, approximately two miles northeast of Tampa. Haya allowed Ybor to take the first step in real estate, once he was convinced of its success, he purchased land, forming the Sanchez and Haya Real Estate Company. Haya then constructed a two story wooden factory at the corner of Seventh Avenue and 15th Street. During construction, he visited a local Tampa banker, Thomas Taliaferro, to inform him that he and Sr. Ybor need an institution of credit to facilitate the transactions involving purchases, sales, collections, and wages for their employees. At first, Taliaferro was unsure about the success of the cigar business in Tampa, but when Haya assured him that initial salaries would amount to more than $10,000 a month, Taliaferro, who was planning to move to Jacksonville, now decided his future was in Tampa. Thanks to the influence of Sr. Haya, he became a successful Tampa banker, and founder of today's First National Bank7

Sr. Haya not only convinced Tampa businessmen of the success which the cigar business would generate, but he was also the first manufacturer to produce cigars in Tampa. Although he and Sr. Ybor completed the construction of their factories at the same time, Haya received the title of "Factory Number One" because he used tobacco which had already been stripped of its stems in making the first cigars; (it was also stated that he was first because a strike at the Ybor factory hindered the production of cigars).8

Sr. Haya and his partner not only made a fortune from the production of cigars, but they also developed a real estate business, the Haya and Sanchez Real Estate Company, which induced other manufacturers to move to Ybor City. Real estate proved to be a profitable business enterprise for the Latin manufacturer and his associate.9

FAMILY LIFE

While he was living in New York, Haya married Fannie Miledoler in 1872. Fannie was
related to the prestigious William Steele family of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and the marriage brought considerable family wealth to his business.10 The couple resided on Calffon Avenue, near Fulton Avenue in Brooklyn.11 They had one child which died at birth. The bereaved couple returned to Spain and there adopted two year old Marina, a daughter of Ignacio’s brother Ramon. Marina returned with her new parents to New York, and was known only as the daughter of the family, never the daughter of Ramon.

After Ybor City was founded, the Hayas moved to Florida, first living in Ybor City proper, near the recently completed railroad line which connected to Tampa. Mrs. Haya used the trolley on a regular basis, but was also consistently late for its departure. A niece regularly held up the trolley until she arrived, and this soon became a joking custom of Ybor City. One of the trolley cars was named the "Fanny" because of this incident.12

1ST WOMAN EXECUTIVE

The Hayas later purchased the commodious Gumby home, located at 605 Magnolia. It remained the family residence for the remainder of the life of Mrs. Haya. In 1929, she was induced to sell the Magnolia property for the construction of apartments, but she insisted in moving the house. Consequently, the massive three story structure was cut in half and moved to 706 Brevard, where Mrs. Haya remained until her death. This was one of the earliest recorded movings of a house in Tampa. Marina Haya married Ambrosia Torre in 1908. Mr. Torre was a salesman for tobacco leaf in New York; he moved to Tampa, opened a cigar factory, and produced the Americus brand of cigars. The couple raised five children in Tampa: Ambrose, Ignatius, Marion, Joseph (Joe), and Fannie.13

Throughout the development of the cigar industry in Tampa, the Hayas not only employed hundreds of workers but also contributed to the overall development of Tampa through good works. At the death of Mr. Haya, Fannie became Tampa’s first woman executive of a large corporation. In 1928, she donated a large tract of land on the Hillsborough River to the City of Tampa as a park.14

HAYA’S CONTRIBUTIONS TO TAMPA

Throughout his manufacturing career, Ignacio Haya was noted as a humanitarian, who was concerned about the welfare of his workers.15 One of the reasons for moving from New York was to give workers better living conditions. The workers’ homes, still found in Ybor City and West Tampa, were far superior living quarters to the tenement houses of New York. Haya was also instrumental in supporting the social lives of his workers in the formation of the Spanish Casino, an organization devoted to the recreation and entertainment of cigar workers. Haya was president of the organization and contributed generously to its construction and maintenance.

Haya’s role in the evolution and development of Tampa was adequately summarized in his May 11, 1906 obituary:

The death of Ignacio Haya removed one of the conspicuous figures of the growth of Tampa and of its great industry ...

Mr. Haya was one of Tampa’s great "Captains of Industry." In addition to being a businessman of acumen and revenue, he was a man of kind heart and charitable nature. No appeal for aid ever reached him without response.
Only a few days ago, he cheerfully gave $1,000 to sufferers from the San Francisco disaster.

The *Tribune*, speaking for the people of Tampa, pays tribute to the career of this strong man who has gone from among us so suddenly. Men like Ignacio Haya make a city great and Tampa cannot have too many of them.16
LIST OF SOURCES

Oral Interview, July 11, 1980.

131bid.


"Ibid.

16Tampa Tribune, May 11, 1906.

1 Karl H. Grimmer, A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida, Ed. D. B.


3 Also, oral interview with Thomas Vance, July 11, 1980, Tampa, Florida.

4 Ramon later returned to Spain to oversee the family estate. During the Spanish American War, he served in the Spanish Army in Duba while Ignacio supported the American cause.

5 Tobacco, September 30, 1915, p. 98.

6 Ibid., The "Fanny Davenport" label printed in 1878 remained the same for the Tampa Factory, which added the words "Factory Number I" to the label.


8 Board of Trade Minutes, Vol. 5, July 15, 1885, p. 7. Also, Tampa Morning Tribune, July 16, 1885. The newspaper gave a glowing account of the potential which the industry would give to Tampa, allowing work for over 125 persons. This was undoubtedly exciting to Tampans who saw the potential of developing their sleepy coastal community to a large town.


11 The Sanchez and Haya Real Estate Company remained a major source of revenue and owned most of the East Broadway (Seventh Avenue) buildings, the heart of the commercial and residential area of Ybor City.

12 Oral Interview, Thomas Vance and Fannie Vance, July 11, 1980.
13 Ibid


15 Ibid.

16 Tampa Tribune, May 11, 1906