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From the Editors

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FROM THE EDITORS

How many times have you travelled by car along Highway 41 heading south from Tampa or north from Bradenton? You emerge from the snarls of traffic around those two cities and settle down to the monotonous forty-five minute cruise. A few signposts spring up, but the towns they announce - Gibsonton, Apollo Beach, Ruskin - barely attract your attention. However, after reading about the history of Ruskin, this hamlet you rush by on the highway will never again conjure up just another ripe tomato. Take a closer look and you will see a community founded by a group of people attempting to establish a cooperative utopia in the sunshine.

There are other fascinating places that we never have time to explore amidst the frantic pace of modern life and the inside pages reveal some of them. For instance, Boca Grande, on Gasparilla Island, grew up around the railroad (not from the wanderings of a legendary band of pirates), and its residents are striving to preserve that origin. The Gamble Mansion, outside of Bradenton, housed a famous fugitive at the end of the Civil War - Confederate Secretary of State Judah P. Benjamin, who was fleeing one step ahead of capture by Union forces. To discover more about how places looked in the past, including those mentioned above, do not discard your old picture postcards. Collect them and you will compile a vivid record of days-gone-by, as the photo essay reveals. Also, old newspaper articles can offer information about our own history, as one finds in reading the story about what Palmetto was like at the turn of the century. In addition to the interesting places you can read about and observe in this issue, you can also meet some noteworthy people, including the first woman reporter for the Tampa *Tribune*. Enjoy the stories and sights.

Unfortunately, *TAMPA BAY HISTORY* has lost one of its good friends. Last November, Bobbi Campbell Gonzalez died in an automobile accident. As a staff member of the Office of Information Services at USF, Bobbi did a good deal to publicize *TBH* throughout the Bay area. We extend our condolences to her family.

The deadline for the first annual *TAMPA BAY HISTORY* Essay Contest is fast approaching. September 1 is the last day for submitting entries. The winners will receive cash prizes of either \$100 or \$50, and the winning articles will be published in the journal. For additional information, please see the announcement on page 93 of this issue, or write the Managing Editor for further details.

This issue marks the departure of Cathy Bayless Slusser as our editorial assistant. She is completing her M.A. Degree in History and has been a valuable contributor to the journal. She plans to work as a freelance writer and historical consultant, and we wish her success in the future.

UPDATE

The cover photo on the Fall/Winter 1981 issue was described as a banquet attended by Jewish soldiers and their relatives and friends. Only after publication of the journal did the Managing Editor realize that the "banquet" was actually a Passover Seder. The historian-detective will notice the traditional Passover matzoth on the plates in front of the guests and the Haggadoth, the holiday prayer book, on the tables. This is a small point, but one that had to be made by the editor, a graduate of the Sholem Aleichem Folkshul #10, Bronx, New York, and a student of Menke Katz. Furthermore, although the Hebrew language is written from right to left, we did not intend to reverse the name of the synagogue which sponsored the seder. Its correct name is Schaari Zedek.

George Pozzetta, whose story on the 1910 cigar strike appeared in the same issue, wishes to thank Glenn Westfall for supplying the strike cartoons which accompanied the article.

Also, Marian Godown, our advisory board member from Ft. Myers, corrects us in describing a few photos that were used in the Edison Park article appearing in the last edition. Thomas Edison donated the two lots, not the buildings, for the Congregational Church (p. 33). His winter home is not one of the first pre-fabricated houses in the country (p. 37). There were pre-fabs in Key West in the 1840s and somewhat later in Tallahassee and Tarpon Springs. Edison merely borrowed the idea. Marian passes on this anecdote about Edison's relationship to the Congregational Church: "Edison was an agnostic and used to jump behind his wife, shouting, 'I'm a heathen, I'm a heathen,' to tease her. She got Edison to join with her in giving the two lots."