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1983 PATRONS OF THE SUNLAND TRIBUNE inside back cover

COVER PHOTO: Nancy Jackson and sons. Read Martha Lester Nelson’s biography of her great grandmother on page 22.

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.
Tampa lost one of its best-loved citizens in March 1983 with the death of Rhoda Fraleigh Knight. 'Girlie' as she was known to her friends of all ages, though not a native Tampan, became a vital part of the community with her marriage to Peter O. Knight, Jr. in 1925. Small in stature but a giant in warmth and sincerity, she soon won her place in the hearts of Tampans.

Born June 5, 1904, Mrs. Knight received her early education in her hometown, Madison, Florida, and was graduated from Florida State College for Women with degrees in English and history.

Mrs. Knight was long active in religious, civic and social life in Tampa. Her greatest love was her church, St. Andrew’s Episcopal, where she was active in many of its organizations. For 38 years she was a member of the Board of Governors of the Home Association (the first floor west parlor of the Home has been named in her honor), and held memberships in the Junior League of Tampa, the Colonial Dames of America and the...
Chislers. At one time she served on the City of Tampa Park Board.

Along with her husband, Mrs. Knight continued the philanthropies of her father-in-law, Colonel Peter O. Knight, Sr. The University of Tampa and the Performing Arts Center were both recent recipients of sizeable contributions from the Knights. Their generosity helped make possible the purchase of his parents’ honeymoon cottage as headquarters for Tampa Historical Society.

There were no detractors of Girlie Knight. Those who knew her loved her for her vibrant spirit and for her genuine devotion to her God, her family, her friends and her community. Her delightful presence long will be remembered.

HOWELL A. McKAY is a native Tampan and a general insurance agent. He will serve as incoming treasurer for Tampa Historical Society for 1984.
During the busy year of 1983, Tampa Historical Society continued its tradition of supporting public awareness of our history by dedicating three historical markers, all located in the downtown Franklin Street Mall. The historical markers program was initiated by Tony Pizzo. (THS past president Ken Mulder wrote of the marker program in his article "Marking an Historic Trail Through Tampa", Volume VII, 1981.) Tampa Historical Society is proud of its contribution to a community...
service project which exposes thousands of persons to Tampa's history daily.

Saturday, April 16, two markers were dedicated in a gala celebration, the first being dedicated to Dr. Frank Adamo, early pioneer in Tampa's medical field. This was the first monument dedicated to a living individual. Dr. Robert Withers, Hillsborough County Medical Association Historian officiated at the services. Dr. Adamo and a host of family members and well-wishers were on hand to honor the event.

The second historical marker dedication April 16 was officiated by Dr. James Covington, board member and past president of Tampa Historical Society. The FORT BROOKE CEMETERY was recently discovered while constructing the Old Fort Brooke parking garage. During the Second Seminole War (1835-42) the U.S. Army used the site as a cemetery for soldiers, civilian employees and Indians. In 1982, 102 bodies were exhumed and reburied at the Oaklawn Cemetery. The Indian remains were put to rest by burning herbs at the Seminole Shrine on Orient Road, and today, passersby are reminded of this historic site, thanks to Tampa Historical Society.

On November 18, 1983, Tampa Historical Society dedicated its third historical marker to Captain James McKay, pioneer settler of Tampa. Captain McKay was an early Tampa entrepreneur who pioneered the first commercial connections between Tampa and the outside world. In addition, he was involved in the construction of the first courthouse, was active in the cattle trade to Cuba and was elected mayor in 1859.

The dedication ceremonies were attended by THS members, guests and McKay family members. THS was proud to be a part of this
ceremony dedicated to a pioneer whose family's civic contributions through generations have made them one of the most respected families of the area.
Tampa's "Old Timers Society", founded August 25, 1923, celebrated its sixtieth anniversary at the Knight headquarters of Tampa Historical Society on a beautiful sunny October 16. Known today as the Old Timers Reunion, the organization has maintained its purpose of honoring residents who have lived in Tampa fifty years or longer. In the original charter, forty years was the time necessary for an official honor. During the years it was changed to fifty years residence in Tampa. Those persons are given a bright red FIFTY YEAR CITIZEN ribbon each year.

The August 27, 1923 "Tampa Daily Times" stated that the new organization "Will be one of the most distinctive in the state of Florida ... there will be no politics, no creed and no diversion because of organized secret fraternities. These things will be left out of the Old Timer's Society, which is to be merely for the preservation of ideals of the past and memories of our respected elders of Hillsborough County."

During the ceremonies of the first reunion, Captain James McKay was awarded a medal for being the oldest white male resident of the county. In the dinner which followed, 600 to 700 pounds of beef and pork were barbecued "in the most approved style."

Sixty years later, Tampa Historical Society continued the tradition of honoring its older citizens. Board members, officers, and Hillsborough Community College students assisted in the preparation of food and drink for over 150 guests at the Knight headquarters.

Vice President Richard Clark assists guests to the registration table for the annual Old Timers Reunion. Pattie Dervaes, receptionist, recorded over 150 guests to the event.

- photo by Robert Vande Weghe

In 1979, Tampa Historical Society was requested by Emilio Pons to assume responsibility of holding the annual event. For the past four years, THS has revitalized a tradition of Tampa's past. The Old Timers Reunion has become one of our most popular annual events. Everyone agreed the 1983 Reunion was the best held in recent years.
Social Host Nancy Skemp discusses some interesting topics with one of the guests at the reunion.

-photo by Robert Vande Weghe

Guests at the Old Timers Reunion are greeted by Dr. L. Glenn Westfall, far left. Other guests (left to right) included Leslie Harre, Troy Harre, Mary Menendez Sheridan, Dorothy Latimer, Dorris Latimer, Lois Latimer, Earl Lovelace, Addeline Menendez Niles, Janie Crevasse, Joe Hipp, Barnard Barschwiz, Richard Clark, and Michiel Reed.

-photo by Robert Vande Weghe
During the early spring months of 1983, plans unfolded for a most spectacular event, the arrival to Tampa of the Key West schooner "Western Union". In May, Dr. L. Glenn Westfall was visiting Executive Director of the Key West Preservation Board, Mr. Wright Langley. Mr. Langley introduced Dr. Westfall to the crew of the "Western Union", and after learning that the ship and crew made an annual trip to Tarpon Springs for repairs, the group suggested the schooner stop by Tampa for a gala welcome. Dr. Westfall was appointed Hyde Park Ambassador of the Conch Republic by Key West Mayor Mr. Dennis Wardlow, and in this official capacity, he initiated plans for an official goodwill tour. Dr. Westfall returned to Tampa and found an enthusiastic supporter in Mr. Tom Curtis, president of the Tampa Bay Maritime Commission. Mr. Curtis vigorously involved himself in the project and made all the arrangements for the event. He and his organization contacted the Tampa Port Authority, the media, and a joint Tampa Historical Society-Tampa Bay Maritime Commission event was underway.

DR. WESTFALL, a past president of Tampa Historical Society, is a professor of history and anthropology at Hillsborough Community College-Brandon Campus and currently serves as executive director of Tampa Historical Society.

On Saturday, September 17, guests from both organizations came aboard for the festivities. They were amazed at the sleekness of the schooner, which had been constructed in 1939. Originally, the ship had been owned by Key Westers but was leased by the Western Union Telegraph Company to lay cables in the Caribbean. The delighted guests browsed through the cabins and were entertained with nautical songs.

It is hoped that in succeeding years the "Western Union" will make an annual visit to Tampa so that our community can appreciate the preservation of a beautiful 131-foot schooner.

The schooner "Western Union" arrived to Tampa docks for the celebration.
Tall mast of the Western Union

Official participants to the Western Union gala included, left to right, Mr. Randy Stevens, president, Tampa Historical Society, Mr. Scott Bottoms, Captain, The Western Union, Mr. Tom Curtis, President, Tampa Bay Maritime Commission, Tampa's Mayor, Mr. Bob Martinez, and Key West's Mayor, Mr. Dennis Wardlow (whose grandfather was president of the Ruy Lopez Cigar Factory which originated in Key West and later moved to Tampa).

Guests to the gala who feasted on shrimp and cocktails included Sarah Charles Stevens and Nancy Skemp, chatting here with Mayor Martinez and Randy Stevens.
Island Airport

By LELAND HAWES

Tampa's Hillsborough Bay might have another goodsized island between Ballast Point and Davis Islands if the city had carried through with original proposals on a $750,000 bond issue.

Freeholders passed the bond issue in 1929, a year usually remembered for more calamitous economic events. The airport-in-the-bay scheme was a 30-day wonder, but it demonstrated the almost desperate zeal of aviation boosters of the Twenties to put Tampa on the airline routes of the era.

A sudden campaign developed that fall after drastic problems threatened the progress already made to develop airmail links domestically and potential passenger and freight service to South America.

Drew Field was considered the municipal airport, although it was simply a leased tract of land from John H. Drew, and it contained few airport amenities. The old City Commission had agreed to pay $500 annually for five years, starting in 1927, and gave Drew the gas and oil concessions on the field.

Candidates for queen of the Tampa air meet were chosen each year by the Tampa Aero, Club in its effort to promote development of Drew Field as a municipal airport.

Map courtesy of Emilio Pons

Candidates for queen of the Tampa air meet were chosen each year by the Tampa Aero, Club in its effort to promote development of Drew Field as a municipal airport.

Map courtesy of Emilio Pons

LELAND HAWES is a columnist for the Tampa Tribune who specializes in history and nostalgia.
The 180-acre tract stretched from Tampa Bay Boulevard southward to Michigan Avenue (not called Columbus Drive until 1933), and it did not provide smooth sailing to start with. The city paid $10,500 to Drew to dig up stumps and clear the land, but the work must not have been completed by September 1929.

Heavy rains brought complaints that the airport had become a huge mudhole, with stumps scattered about petrifying pilots seeking to land or take off. Conditions were so adverse that the company providing airmail service to Tampa announced it was switching to Lakeland until things improved.

Sheriff L.M. Hatton, flying a small plane, reportedly hit a soft spot on the field and took a nosedive into the mud. The A.B. McMullen Flying School stopped solo flights by its students until the airport dried out. And worst of all, there was real concern that the city might lose its status as a stop for the New York, Rio and Buenos Aires airline (NYRBA).

The recently constructed $19,000 hangar didn’t have a solid floor, and aviators complained that the structure had been built "near a low corner, not near the center" of the property, according to The Tampa Tribune. In other words, the mud was making a mess of the hangar, too.

On Sept. 12, the Montevideo, a NYRBA airship, had to land off Davis Islands, where a yacht waited with a signal torch. A telegram to Charleston had warned the pilot not to hazard the mud at Drew Field.

Another amphibian plane put down into the bay near the Bayshore Royal Hotel after a heavy storm broke as the pilot approached Drew. A Tribune reporter and two small boys rowed the crew ashore. Later the decision was made to move the plane to Drew Field, but another "blinding rain" brought a "perilous landing" and the airship hit a stump.

All of these incidents were described in detail by The Tribune in what became a concentrated campaign to arouse the citizenry to action on the airport problems.

It didn’t take much arousal, for Tampa’s eyes already were lifted skyward, in hopes aviation

Leonard Carothers and R.W. Schrock were co-pilots of the Seald-Sweet in efforts to set a new endurance record aloft in 1929.

- Burgert Brothers print courtesy Tampa/Hillsborough County Library

This 1930 view of Drew Field shows planes lined up on the runway, with hangar in background.

- Burgert Brothers print courtesy Tampa/Hillsborough County Library
might give it a lift following the "bust" of the Florida land boom. And this was the era when the exploits of Charles Lindbergh, and other long-distance aviator heroes had created a frenzy of fervor for flying across the nation.

Historian Anthony Pizzo remembers how excited he was as a teenager, riding his bicycle to Drew Field to watch the planes. One night when he was about 16 he spotted a "monstrous tri-motored Ford flying over the city towards Drew Field." Overwhelmed with excitement at seeing the big plane, he jumped into his father's Hupmobile without permission (no one else was at home at the time) and drove from Ybor City to Drew Field. He maneuvered the car up to the hangar - and found the five occupants of the plane standing there, wondering how to get downtown.

Pizzo was their only "greeter" and he was eager to be of service. So he drove them to the Tampa Terrace Hotel. "Sonny, you come back tomorrow - we'll give you a ride," one of the aviators told him. The thrilled young aviation enthusiast did return the next day for the ride, along with his father, mother and sister. And the plane crew had Christmas dinner at the Pizzo home.
Emilio Pons was active in the Tampa Aero Club which promoted air meets and social events to raise money for projects such as shell for the hangar floor. And he recalls the intense efforts to attract airplane manufacturers to Tampa.

But all those hopes and aspirations were dependent upon the city's providing a first-class airport. And not just a landlocked airport.

All the emphasis was on seaplane facilities, for amphibian plans appeared to be in the "wave of the future" for flights to South America. The pontoon planes had the advantage, of course, of staying afloat - and mishaps were fairly common.

Drew Field was still a rather primitive operation. Commander C.C. Blackburn of the Chamber of Commerce's aviation committee.
said it "had the makings of a good field," but he noted that during recent National Air Races pilots "nearly nosed over on their landings in soft spots."

On Sept. 18, Mayor D.B. McKay proposed a $750,000 bond issue to build a new airport that could handle amphibian planes traveling to and from South America. And he left the question of location in the hands of the Board of Aldermen's aviation committee.

By Sept. 26, the aviation committee, chaired by Alderman Don Thompson, came up with its solution to the problem: a 160-acre island dredged up in Hillsborough Bay between Ballast Point and Davis Islands. It would be connected to the mainland by a 2,660-foot causeway that would handle streetcars as well as automobiles. And it could be approached on three sides by seaplanes.

Seven other land sites had been submitted to the aldermen, but they came out in favor of the airport-on-an island. And The Tribune began running almost daily articles quoting supporters of the island proposal. Among the first, Davis Islands Corporation president George M. Osborne endorsed it, saying "It will be no nuisance to Davis Islands ... There will be no idle flying about."

The date for a freeholders’ election on the bond issue was set for Nov. 27.

Meanwhile, Drew Field’s deficiencies were delineated frequently. The chief pilot of NYRBA was quoted as saying: "Tampa is not giving these planes a safe landing field. It has one of the biggest fields and longer runways along the entire line, but unless the low places are filled in and rolled and the runways are outlined they will continue to be a hazard to pilots..."

Civic groups began to organize, but the first rumble of public opposition was heard Oct. 10. W.F. Stovall, former owner of The Tribune, blasted the site, calling it "ignorance" and "stupidity" to create an airport by pumping up bay-bottom. He favored a 22nd Street Causeway location.

Stovall drew a rebuttal from Chamber of Commerce manager Charles McKeand, who asked critics to "play fair," and implied Stovall had personal or business interests in a competing site.

Well into October the publicity drums beat steadily on the advantages of a sea/land airport in the bay. The former president of the state engineering society declared other locations would be "second-rate." And A. Pendleton Taliaferro, Jr., chief of field services for the U.S. Commerce Department, came out unequivocally for the island site while on an inspection trip.

While all this was going on locally, headlines from Wall Street vied for front-page space to describe the carnage taking place on the New York Stock Exchange. And liquidators were attempting to put together a plan to pay off a percentage of the losses suffered by depositors...
when Tampa’s Citizens Bank and several of its subsidiaries collapsed.

By mid-October, something silenced the campaign for an island airport. Mayor McKay and the city aldermen decided to place selection of a site in the hands of a "non-partisan committee" which would include local people as well as representatives of the U.S. Commerce, Navy and War Departments.

Although nothing appeared in print at that point, it is apparent that powerful forces scuttled the island proposal. Writing years later, historian Karl Grismer said, "Many residents of the Bayshore district objected strenuously to the proposed island airport, saying that it would lower their property values."

Since many of Tampa’s most prominent citizens resided in stately homes bordering the Bayshore, it is likely that Mayor McKay and the city aldermen heard heated protests from constituents they could not ignore.

The city wasn’t the only one to shift its position on the site question; The Tribune did, too. Abruptly, there was no more mention of the island airport. After Oct. 18, the newspaper stressed that all proposed sites would be given a fair shake by an "unbiased" committee.

On Oct. 19, the NYRBA line, which had expressed strong interest in establishing its southeast headquarters in Tampa, announced it would invest nothing more until a combination sea/land airport was completed.

On Oct. 20, a mass meeting of the merchants association was held to underwrite an endurance flight proposed by a St. Louis businessman. The Florida Citrus Exchange put up $5,000, and another $5,000 was subscribed by merchants to back the effort to keep a plane aloft more than 420 hours.

Within several weeks, the plane christened Sealed-Sweet (brand name for Citrus Exchange oranges and now the corporate name) was circling in the sky. A companion plane called the Mor-Juice was to supply fuel through a 50-foot rubber hose and food in canvas bags dangled from above.

The endurance flight attracted plenty of attention, and a Tribune reader’s letter warned: "Don’t let this deferred choice of airport site or the endurance flight that is being staged (to get you up in the air so that you will vote for the bonds?) camouflage the fact that you must pay for those bonds."

Registration was slow at first, and one-quarter of all Tampa property-owners had to sign up for the election to have any effect. But the chamber of commerce and The Tribune exhorted firms to "get out the vote" among qualified employees. Eventually, 2,073 freeholders registered, and they were targeted for personal lobbying by members of chamber committees.

Walter Beech, a former Tampan and president of Curtis Wright Corp., came out in support of a combined land/sea airport, and R. Wallace Davis, the city’s superintendent of public works, cautioned, "We must remember that no site had been decided upon."

Mayor McKay pledged that every one of the sites offered (a dozen by then) would be judged equally. And he named his local choices for the site selection committee: F. L. Judd, general manager of the Tampa Union Terminal, and architect Franklin O. Adams. Both insisted they would remain impartial until they surveyed the sites.
A Tribune editorial warned again that Tampa would be out of the picture as NYRBA's southeast base if a new airport were not under way shortly.

On the morning of the election, the lead article in The Tribune started out: "Registered property owners will decide by their ballots today whether Tampa is to move forward or stand still."

On Thursday, Nov. 28, 1929, a triumphant headline proclaimed: AIRPORT BONDS CARRY BY 1117 TO 416 VOTES. Alderman Thompson declared, "It was a great step forward and a reply to the pessimists."

The triumph proved to be hollow. Passing the bond-issue was no cure-all for Tampa's aviation aspirations.

There was still the lingering doubt that the committee might recommend the island site after all. The Tampa Garden Club - whose officers included Mrs. William Fielder, Mrs. J.A. Trawick, Mrs. Howell T. Lykes and Mrs. Walter S. Barrett - presented petitions calling an island airport "unsightly, offensive and nuisance-producing."

Public Works Superintendent Davis soon noted Mayor McKay's "desire to drop the island project" and said the nonpartisan committee would have plenty of alternatives from which to choose. The Tribune took editorial note of the strong opposition and decided the island would have dammed the bay to the "extent of endangering public health."

Then several startling events jolted the city. On the ninth attempt to establish an endurance record, the problem plagued Seald-Sweet crashed near Kissimmee, injuring its two pilots. The supply plane, the Mor-Juice, got caught in a heavy fog over Drew Field and one wing tipped the ground. The airship catapulted onto its nose and burst into flames, killing its two occupants, Stanley Smith and "Boots" Dempsey.

On Dec. 12, The Tribune came out with an early morning extra with the headline "$100,000 FIRE SWEEPS AIRPORT; 13 PLANES LOST." A firebug was blamed for invading the Drew Field hangar and torching every plane housed there.

Mayor McKay's hopes to include governmental representatives on his nonpartisan site selection committee were thwarted, too. None of the federal departments wanted to be involved. Finally, through the efforts of Florida's Sen. Duncan Fletcher, he was able to line up two reservists, Capt. George K. Perkins and Lt. Philip Pratt, both of Washington, D.C.

The site committee looked at 17 sites offered by various property-owners. And it came up with a selection that turned out to be more visionary than immediate: Catfish Point, at the southeastern tip of the Interbay peninsula.

Unfortunately for the proponents of a quick airport, Tampa's city aldermen held the final say on the site - and they had no intention of following the committee's recommendation. Although The Tribune berated the board for delays (and even more pointedly printed a primer for recall elections), the aldermen didn't budge. They simply came up with additional dodges and excuses, shifting from one site to another, then back again.

By February of 1930 NYRBA was making regular flights to South America via Miami. The impasse held tight in Tampa.

That August of 1930, the New York, Rio and Buenos Aires airline merged with Pan-American Airways. And in later years,
historian Grismer and local politicians referred to the city’s loss of Pan-American’s southeast facilities because of the board’s shenanigans.

Had NYRBA’s hub been established in Tampa, nobody knows whether Pan-American would have followed through with that plan in the merger.

Although Catfish Point got no bond money then, it got something bigger in 1939 -what was then the largest airbase in the Southeast, MacDill Field, later MacDill Air Force Base.

And Tampa did get a seaplane base several years later, when Works Progress Administration funds from the federal government made possible the building of Peter O. Knight Airport on Davis Islands.

The city succeeded in acquiring Drew Field by foreclosure in late 1933 for $11,000. Runways were expanded and improvements made, and by 1940 it was considered vital in the nation’s buildup for World War II. Thousands of servicemen trained there during the war, and Drew still plays a vital role in Florida’s aviation as the site of Tampa International Airport.

What about that airport proposed for Hillsborough Bay? Although dredge-and-fill projects were not weighed for ecological impact in 1929, the opponents were probably correct. For another island undoubtedly would have produced an adverse effect on that end of the bay.
THE INDIAN MOUND THAT WAS TO MAKE TAMPA FAMOUS

By J. RAYMOND WILLIAMS

Although most people think Tampa is famous for its cigars, subtropical climate, or even the Super Bowl, there was an early twentieth century amateur archaeologist who thought Tampa would always be famous as a result of his discoveries. These discoveries, found when two local men dug into an Indian mound in their back yard, included human skulls with horns and with teeth growing out the sides of their jaws. If this weren’t enough to make Tampa famous, the skeletons were said to be buried in a pattern which would prove that the origin of the great civilizations in prehistoric America could be traced to a mythical Welsh Prince.

Recently, I wrote a paper on the growth of knowledge in archaeology in the Tampa Bay area for presentation at a local symposium. This required the rereading of most of the accounts of early excavations and excavators in the immediate Tampa Bay environs, but did not allow me to deal fully with their activities - something I thought would be of interest and now have the opportunity to do.

Two facts struck me during the preparation of the symposium paper. The first was the absence of much literature, even local newspaper accounts; and, second, the destruction, so early, of the Tampa Bay area’s most important archaeological sites without an adequate account of what was found, how it was found, where it was found, and what was found with it— all essential information needed to describe the function of prehistoric or early historic sites, and to be able to say much about how these Indians lived. A modern archaeologist’s first thought is one of despair about each of these two facts. The contextual information has been lost—indeed, never recorded, and the residue of activities, which we call artifacts, dispersed to unknown places. Of course, these were not really archaeologists; they were individuals who had an overwhelming curiosity about the content of Indian burial mounds and villages. And, even though the sites were not excavated by the rigorous and precise methods we use today and no detailed records were kept, these early
"archaeologists" did not dig for personal gain. They dug out of curiosity about their prehistoric predecessors. Things have changed today, I thought, until I recalled numerous surreptitious digging activities reported to me in past years (usually without the landowner's permission or on public lands), and the prehistoric and historic sites I have seen that looked like they had been used for bombing ranges after relic collectors, like a species of giant gopher tortoise, had dug into them. Their excavation methods have been referred to by one Florida archaeologist as the "rape and pillage" method. These are not amateur or avocational archaeologists who have a genuine interest in Florida's past; they are people who loot to collect, trade, or sell the labor of past individual's activities. In that sense, their activities are worse than what was occurring 100 or more years ago, since they have no interest in reconstructing extinct cultural systems. Indeed, they have no real appreciation for the accomplishments of the people who once lived where we live today and have no interest in those things that governed their daily lives.

DR. WILLIAMS is a professor of archaeology at the University of South Florida and an expert on early Florida Indian archaeology.

In comparison, the characters involved in the first excavations in the Tampa area had curiosity, and even though their interpretations frequently border on the absurd, they did not wantonly destroy what took the first inhabitants of Tampa Bay millenia to accomplish.

Several points need to be made to better understand the problems faced by these early excavators. First, humans have lived in Florida for over 10,000 years and this long time span is broken into periods, based on technological, social, and other changes, different site types, and numerous other changes in artifact styles. Just as European prehistory is divided into the Paleolitic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze, and Iron ages (we all know of those divisions), American prehistory is similarly divided based on somewhat different criteria. For example, certain shapes of projectile points may be characteristic of a period that ranges from 6000 to 2000 years B.C.; ceramics did not appear until 2000 B.C. in the Tampa Bay area, and mounds for the burial of the dead did not appear until around A.D. 1, and so on. Through time, prehistoric peoples learned to be more and more efficient at exploiting their environment for food and other resources and this efficiency is reflected in changes in tool types, ceramics and other artifacts and site types. The early archaeologists did not realize there had been a great span of occupation and tried to fit all sites into a single period. One must remember that absolute dating techniques are quite recent. Radiocarbon dating was not discovered until 1947 and not really used in archaeology until the 1950s. Second, most did not associate the large and complex mound sites with American Indians. Indians were considered a barbaric race and these barbarians or their
ancestors could not possibly, they thought, be responsible for the large, complex and patterned site formations which, to construct, would require a considerable breadth of knowledge and complex social systems. They looked for answers in Egyptian, or Incan, or other cultural systems to explain the presence of site features such as temple mounds in Florida. Last, they did not have the techniques and skills used in archaeology today. They did not understand the law of association or know the value of stratigraphy. They did not have the zooarchaeological skills or the advances in chemical and physical analyses of cultural materials, soils, etc. that we have today. They did not consider it useful to carefully excavate, record and analyze all cultural material and soil, or understand the site's environmental context. Thus they were handicapped since a foundation of scientific knowledge did not exist which could be used to better interpret the findings. Today, there is no excuse for destroying our few remaining prehistoric sites without proper excavation techniques, recording of materials, and analysis.

This story relates to one specific site and the early Tampa archaeologists who dug and reported upon it. The early Tampan who wrote about the site was Joseph J. Hall, who in 1928 was Secretary of an organization called the Florida Archaeological Society. The article was titled "Mystery of the Mound Builders: First Preliminary Archaeological Explorations of Tampa Mound, discovered by George Henriquez. It is the only known publication of this archaeological society and Hall's report is a mixture of asking the wrong questions, wild imagination, and exaggeration.

Finding where the mound once stood was the result of the tenacity of a University of South Florida undergraduate student in anthropology, Mr. Roger Bumpas. He was assisted by Dr. Lyman O. Warren, a well-known amateur archaeologist from St. Petersburg who has made significant contributions to an understanding of Florida archaeology, Mr. Tony Pizzo, who seems to know and remember everything, Ms. Holly Pardi, a graduate of USF with an anthropology degree who searched the County Court House property records, and personnel at the USF Special Collections Library. It was these individuals who did the hard and time-consuming work.

The story of the mound that was to make Tampa famous began around April 1, 1928 when Mr. Ulysses Parodi and Mr. George Henriquez (the name Henriquez is used in the article written by J.J. Hall about the mound, although a Tampa Tribune article about the dig refers to him as George Hernandez) began digging in an Indian mound on Mr. Parodi's property on Nassau Street between Manhattan Avenue and Hubert Avenue. They recovered between 34 and 39 skeletons, depending on the source of information, broken pots, conch shells, stone and stone implements, and some things simply referred to as "trinkets."

Prior to digging, modern archaeologists ask questions about sites which will give us answers relevant to the discipline or the prehistory of the area. We call these 11 research designs." J.J. Hall, who wrote about the excavation, also asked questions which he thought the recovered burials and cultural materials from the mound would answer. His major questions were "Who were the Mound Builders? Where did they come from? Where did they go?" He was not simply interested in collecting and selling artifacts or bones. He was asking questions he thought the recovered materials from the mound could answer. Unfortunately, he was asking the wrong questions. The "Mound
Builder" controversy had been settled 50 years earlier by professional archaeologists, but was not accepted as fact by much of the general public; and, interestingly enough, continues to be asked by many individuals today. When early explorers saw and dug into the large mound sites in the eastern United States, they were intrigued by their size, complexity and the fine workmanship of their contents. Such monumental architecture was not, they thought, a result of activities by ancestors of modern Indians. Racial and ethnic biases were definitely a great part of the reason they believed this. How, they thought, could the ancestors of simple village horticulturalists or hunters and gatherers living in small bands or villages, as the Indians were living in the Colonial Period, be descendents of such an intelligent "race?" They looked elsewhere for explanations, as stated earlier-to Egypt, China, Mexico, or Europe, not realizing that the great "civilizations" that had developed in eastern North America (referred to by archaeologists as the Mississippian Period and dating from about A.D. 900 to 1350) had changed rapidly prior to European contact. Too, they looked for, expected to see, and saw, things that did not exist except in active imaginations.

This is what happened to Joseph Hall. Hall stated that the burial formation at the Tampa Mound was in circles and squares with the central figure standing up in the center and the others in circles of 12 around him. How this added up to 34 or 39, the body count, is not stated! Since Mr. Hall evidently did not see the site or the burials as they were excavated, he had to rely on hearsay from the diggers. He grasped at the hearsay, however. Furthermore, his beliefs were reinforced by listening to hearsay about burials from another site nearby. This site was a mound in Ruskin, Florida, which, according to rumor, contained 65 burials, all found kneeling in a circle around a giant in the center who was over 8 feet tall.

Hall traces this burial pattern to the mythical Welsh Prince Madoc, who, according to a fifteenth century Welsh poem, was said to have sailed in 10 ships and discovered America in the twelfth century. Prince Madoc was also the subject of Robert Southey's early eighteenth century poem "Madoc," and burial patterns in circles and squares were written about in Southey's "History of the Great Southern Empire," which was fiction rather than history, though this did not seem to matter to Joseph Hall. Southey had traced the origin of this type of burial pattern to the influence of Prince Madoc.

If the discovery of a pre-Columbus European influence on burial mode was not enough to make Tampa famous, the skeletons themselves would, thought Mr. Hall. According to Hall, they were examined by students, doctors, archaeologists, anthropologists and a Doctor of Phrenology." Yet, ignoring normal human variation and sexual dimorphism, of which he must have been aware, Hall stated that they were a "mixed race." The larger ones were men, the others of European ancestry, according to Hall. The European ancestors were Welsh, I presume! What makes them so unusual, and was to make Tampa famous, was that Hall stated that they had teeth growing where teeth do not grow today, and some of them had horns. Hall stated that "one unique specimen alone is enough to bring worldwide fame to Mr. Henriquez and Tampa among scientists all over the world who will be interested and will come to Tampa to see and investigate this remarkable type of skull." Furthermore, he stated that the finds "will bring more world-wide publicity to Tampa among
students, educators, scientists and everyone than any other find made in America."

These unique skull characteristics confirmed, to Hall, that the specimens belonged to a separate race, the "Mound Builders," and that the burial pattern confirmed that the Mound Builders had their origin in Europe. Thus, he had answered, once and for all, the question of the origin of the Mound Builders. Most Americans, being of European descent, did not find it difficult to believe that all important events have their origin in European cultures. Hall was, of course, wrong on both counts. There has never been a circle and square (with one individual in the center) burial pattern uncovered by professional (or amateur) archaeologists. Neither have there ever been skeletons recovered with characteristics, such as horns, discussed by Hall. The teeth are undoubtedly unerupted third molars, which often come in at odd angles; and the horns, based on the photograph in Hall's article, are portions of the supraorbital torus, or eyebrow ridge.

Yet, I am still told stories by some lay individuals today who claim to have seen "wagon-wheel" burials and other oddities. The macabre is obviously often more interesting than the truth-look at the success of Erich von Daniken's books and his fantasies about ancient astronauts. As a professional archaeologist, I frequently hear stories that have their origin in active imaginations.

Thus, to answer a question the way he wanted to answer it, Hall had to be blind to reality. He had to create physical characteristics and burial patterns which did not exist. The alternative would have been to ask a different question, one which did not interest him, or the public, at that time.

Tampa, however, went on to become famous, even without the Indian mound.
NANCY JACKSON – 1815-1907

A Pioneer Eye Witness to Tampa’s Beginning
"I can hardly realize I'm the person I'm talking about".

Written by MARTHA LESTER NELSON

Nancy Jackson was a pioneer of courage and fortitude, who possessed an indomitable spirit for all of her ninety-two years. She was born January 22, 1815 in a deserted cabin in the vicinity of the St. Mary's River. Her parents, Levi and Nancy Dixon Coller were fleeing for their lives as the Indians were seeking American scalps for a bounty. While the men in the group stood guard around the house, the babe was delivered, and mother and child escaped harm.

After peace was restored, the Coller family lived in Alachua County. When Nancy was seven years old, her father and his two brothers-in-law set out on horseback to choose a home near Tampa, for Levi had heard that the salt water would be beneficial to his health. He selected a site near the mouth of the Hillsborough River. Unfortunately, he failed to file his preemption papers before returning to Alachua "to make one more crop".

In 1829 the Coller family moved to a tract of land on Six Mile Creek, then known as "Coller's Creek". Here the family prospered for several years. Levi had a large farm "where he cultivated the first cotton planted in South Florida, which was used for home manufacture and consumption." In 1824.

The family moved across the river and built a log cabin. Mr. Coller raised vegetables, planted cotton, ginned it himself, and Nancy, her mother and sister Cordelia spun 'dyed it and wove it into cloth for the family's use. Levi and Nancy Dixon Coller and their five children had the distinction of being the first Anglo-American family in the Tampa wilderness.

In 1900 Cynthia K. Farr had a lengthy interview with Nancy Coller Jackson. As the result of that, a booklet was published "Tampa's Earliest Living Pioneer". This conversation with Cynthia Farr will furnish much about Tampa's past that could only be learned from such an eye witness as the old pioneer Nancy herself.

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MARTHA LESTER NELSON is a fifth generation Tampan who was born and raised in Hyde Park. Nancy Jackson was her great grandmother.
At this time only a small force of soldiers was at the garrison. One company was under Major Dade, and the other was Major Belden - or Belton. All was peaceful until about 1835. A friendly Indian came to the Coller home to warn them of the danger as hostile Indians were on the warpath.

They were preparing to burn and pillage the houses of all white settlers. This warning was not taken seriously until the Collers found that their horses and boats had been stolen. Then they realized that they must flee to the garrison at once so as to have the protection of the soldiers. The Rev. Daniel Simmons, a Baptist minister, and his wife and daughter had come by ox cart some fifteen miles east of Tampa, for they, too, had received a warning. The two “terror stricken” families felt their escape was doomed until two soldiers from the Fort arrived with a small boat to rescue them. The twenty-one men, women and children had barely reached the safety of the Fort when they saw the reddened sky and the black smoke coming from the destruction of their home. All the years of hard work and the accumulation of necessities and a few luxuries was gone.

The Collers, along with the Simmons, were given temporary quarters in the hospital building. The family drew rations from the government, and Levi Coller became a valuable guide for the troops. He was not only familiar with the country, but knew a great deal about the Indians and their whereabouts.

The day the families arrived at Ft. Brooke, they found that preparations were being made for one of the two Companies to go to Ft. King (near Ocala). Captain Francis Belton refused, saying that before he would go and face certain death for himself and his men, he would resign his commission. But Major Dade would not be called a coward, and said he would "die first" before he

Dr. Robert Jackson, born May 2, 1802, died March 2, 1865. He was stationed at Ft. Brooke, arriving in 1834. He was a compounder of medicines and the surgeon’s chief steward or interne.

-Photo courtesy of Martha Lester Nelson
would refuse to obey an order. In Nancy Jackson’s words, "These things were said in my hearing - just at our door. My sister Cordelia and I sat up all night and made 100 sacks for powder for Major Dade and his company, and saw them start off. The soldiers stood in a line while the Major and his officers came and bade us all good-bye. His words at parting were very brave, and tears were in many eyes. But before he got half way to Ft. King, his company was massacred.

"John Frazier (Captain Upton Fraser) was one of Dade's men. He was kind of my sweetheart then. He was killed with the rest." The scene of the massacre was where Dade City is now located. The place was named for the fallen hero.

Nancy continued: "After that we moved into two little tents at the fort for safety. We stayed there for about three weeks, and were in constant fear of death. We did not dare go out or cook a mouthful, but did very well on hard bread and water. We could see the heads and shoulders of the Indians moving about one of the bluffs. Belton burned several houses in the garrison thinking the Indians would make batteries of them. I tell you it was a glad day when General Gaines came with his soldiers to relieve our little Company. This gave courage to us all."

For awhile the Collers - along with their nine children lived aboard the ship of Captain Crowell. After its departure with Indians bound for Arkansas, the family was asked to move into rooms in General Jessup's quarters. In Nancy's words, "If it had been the family of a general, they could not have done more. My sister and I - quite proud ladies - felt awfully lifted."

This period of happiness was brief as an epidemic of measles and "camp fever" overtook many of the soldiers.

Nancy's family was not exempt as the four younger brothers and sisters - Sara Anne, Edward, Matilda, and David - died. Their mother became desperately ill, and were it not for the good care of Dr. Robert Jackson, the surgeon's chief steward, she too, would have died. Dr. Jackson was described as a "handsome young man with fine manners". He had been a student at West Point having previously graduated from Rutgers College in New Jersey. Robert Jackson was in the government employ as "compounder of medicines and surgeons chief steward or interne".

Robert Jackson had arrived at Ft. Brooke in 1834, the same year the territorial legislature of Florida organized the County of Hillsborough.

Following the epidemic at the fort, Nancy and Robert Jackson fell in love. They were married in September 1836 in Judge Augustus Steele's office in the garrison. This was the first recorded wedding on Florida's West Coast.

Dr. Burns, chief surgeon, had a room in the hospital vacated, white washed and fitted up for the bride. As the room was adjoining the surgeon's, Nancy was aware of all that was being done. As the wounded were brought in, Robert Jackson not only administered medicines, but assisted in determining whether the injured were living or dead. Nancy relates how there were instances when a scalped soldier was pronounced "hopeless", but Robert used his skill and saved several. His abilities did not go unnoticed, and he found himself in great demand.
At this time General Taylor - later President - was in command with headquarters at Ft. Brooke. Nancy Jackson became acquainted with Mrs. Taylor and her daughter Mrs. Wood, the wife of Dr. Wood one of the fort’s surgeons. The Taylors gave the Jacksons a barrel of dishes as a wedding gift, and when the first baby arrived, Mrs. Wood gave the child a beautiful robe. Nancy and Robert Jackson lived at Ft. Brooke until after the birth of their first child - Mary Josephine - in 1837.

Note - According to my mother - Mary Jackson Lester - the child was the first Anglo-American child born in Hillsborough County. This information came from Nancy Coller Jackson - my mother's grandmother.

In 1838 Robert Jackson asked to be relieved of military duty, and moved near the outlet of Spanishtown Creek. This was about the junction of Verne Street and Plant Avenue. Later he built a house as a "squatter" on the west bank of the Hillsborough River where its waters flow into the bay. Here the family improved a beautiful tract of land - about 160 acres - known by older residents as Jackson’s Point. He became judge of the probate court of Hillsborough County, and in critical cases of illness was called in for consultation.

I would like to digress from Nancy herself, though this does concern her father. Levi Coller was perhaps the first Tampa Bay pioneer to receive a government job. During the Indian War a lighthouse was erected at Egmont Key. Several ships bringing supplies had missed the channel and were stranded on sand bars. It was here at Egmont Key that Levi had the job of lighthouse keeper. But he also acquired lands along the west bank of the Hillsborough, keeping many diversified interests. In the Hillsborough County Court records is a deed from Levi Coller selling all rights of title and claim to that "parcel of land known as Ballast Point and being situated on the west side of the Hillsborough Bay commonly called Tampa Bay in the county and state aforesaid". The sum Levi Coller received was $50.00.

As for Mary and Robert, they were themselves quite remarkable folk, offering some unusual surprises in their lives. To me one of these concerned a foster child, Victoria Montes de Oca. Her father was Don Juan Montes de Oca - a "Spanish gentleman of high family" who settled at Spanishtown Creek before the coming of the Americans.

Don Juan became an interpreter for the Army at Ft. Brooke, and was highly regarded by both Americans and Indians.

Before Indian hostilities began, he met an Indian maiden from the village at Lake Thonotosassa, and they were married. A daughter Victoria was born to the couple. While still quite young the mother died leaving Victoria - only a child herself. Nancy and Robert Jackson took the girl into
their home and reared her. Victoria married Alfonso de Launay, a lawyer from Virginia who came to Tampa in 1848. He operated the Palmer House and was active in city and county government affairs. He is best remembered as the second mayor of Tampa. Victoria and de Launay are buried in the Catholic section of Oaklawn Cemetery.

In September of 1848 Nancy and Robert Jackson’s family were prosperous and happy with their five children. One day a strong wind developed to gale proportions. The four older children were so frightened that Robert took them to a nearby store to divert them. Nancy remained at home with a sleeping baby William. As the weather became worse, it was apparent it could well be a tidal wave. Robert realized the threatening situation, and he sent an employee to bring the mother and child to safety. When the man reached the house, he saw the "ways" floating. The mother had not realized the danger. She grabbed the baby, and with the help of the employee, she crawled out of the house. Just as she got a few feet away, huge timbers from a nearby shipyard knocked the house off of its foundation, and in a short time it went swirling down the bay. That baby she carried to safety was my grandfather, William Parker Jackson, who had been born in November of 1847.

Accustomed to hardships and trials, the Jacksons stood this as they had stood others. "So thankful", says Nancy, 11 that our lives were spared that we could not mourn for what we had lost, though everything went - money, valuables, bridal gifts and all. Surgeon Wood, General Taylor’s son-in-law, thought a great deal of Mr. Jackson, and as a token of his high esteem, he gave him a very large solid mahogany wardrobe, and some fine decanters and other keepsakes, which we prized very highly. But we were never able to find anything of any value. A door of the wardrobe, a child’s hat, and a few articles of little value were all that were found".7

Once again the family began to build their lives. They erected a more substantial home away from the river bank. They used every means of economy, and began to see to the needs of their ever growing family - eight in all. Their children were educated in private schools, some even had college courses. As Robert Jackson was in failing health, the full responsibility was that of Nancy’s.

And then came the Civil War. Tampa was not the scene of bloody conflicts. Nancy remembers that there were three attempts by Union vessels down the bay to bombard Ft. Brooke which was held by the Confederates. The shells fell in the water or unexploded on the land. Because there was some danger, Nancy would load her pony with supplies, gather the children and walk to a friend’s home a few miles away and spend each day. At night the family returned home feeling they were safe after dark. Robert remained at home to watch for shells that might fall and ignite the house.

The family was not exempt from involvement in the war. Two of their sons enlisted in the Confederate Army. Oscar - born in 1841 and living in Georgia - served there. The other, John, was here with his family and a young man. Nancy recalls the incident, "When my John enlisted with the Confederates, I thought I could not have it so. His father was sick then, and I knew they were to be sworn in that day. I slipped out just from my own impulse to where Captain Robert Thomas had the boys in camp. John was under age - only a school boy. I was his mother and I was going to forbid them taking him away. When I got near enough, I saw them all in a line with their hands raised to he sworn in. I knew I was too late. I
nearly fainted. I stopped where I was under a tree, and finally got back home."8

This son, John Brown, served in the Confederate forces with distinction. He was a member of Co. K - 7th Florida infantry, and participated in the battle of Chicamauga, and other famous engagements. In the latter part of the war, he was transferred to the Confederate Navy, and took part in many coastal battles. One of his most memorable times was the boarding and capturing of the Union gunboat Water Witch. He served until the surrender.8

Though Robert Jackson’s health was poor, he did Home Guard duty. My grandfather William was only fourteen when hostilities broke out. However, at age sixteen, he too, joined the Home Guard. It was his habit to slip home after dark for supper. One night he was discovered and captured - a frightening experience for one so young. He was carried to a house used for prisoners, and upon his arrival, he found his father had also been captured. Robert assured his son there would be no violence. And they were both treated quite well. Robert Jackson’s health declined rapidly and he died in March of 1865 not realizing his wish to see the hostilities end, which did so about a month later.

Now Nancy Jackson was really alone, left to accomplish the things necessary to insure her future. As yet she had no legal claim to the land where her home was built. Under the new homestead act, she endeavored to secure title to the land the family had been occupying and developing - much of it planted in orange trees. She had intended entering 160 acres as her homestead, but through the unscrupulous dealings of men she had trusted even some government agents, she was forced to do two things that were foreign to her nature - yield and compromise. She relinquished half of the 160 acres rather than incur litigation, and settled for the remaining 80. There was an “inexcusable failure” of the proper official to record her name as homesteader. Following an appeal to Washington, she finally secured her acreage which bordered the Hillsborough River and bay.

In order to continue to secure an independent life for herself and her children, Nancy would sell a portion of her homestead to some who wanted to hasten the growth and development of Tampa. One of these enterprising men was O. H. Platt of Hyde Park, Illinois. In early 1886 he purchased 20 acres of the original Jackson estate, subdivided it and named it Hyde Park after his home town. Hyde Park Avenue was the first street opened.10

What used to be called Jackson’s Point is now Hyde Park Avenue, Beach Place, Plant Ave., Platt Street, Cardy Street and Parker Street. Nancy Jackson’s last home still stands at 205 Platt Street - the scene of the interview with Cynthia Farr. Cardy Street was named for Joseph Cardy, the husband of Nancy’s first child Mary. This was the location of their home. Parker Street near the Tampa Tribune got its name because that was a family name of Robert Jackson. Theresa Tinney - a granddaughter of Nancy Jackson resided on Parker Street until her death in 1940.

Nancy saw seven of her eight children reach maturity - only one - Parker - died at age thirteen. Of her boys she could be justly proud. Oscar was a successful business man in Georgia, remaining there after his Confederate War days. We know that John Brown distinguished himself in his military days. William - my grandfather who was affectionately called “Captain Bill” - became a captain of several ships coming into
Tampa. These ships were bringing all the mail and passengers from Cedar Keys and New Orleans as those were the nearest railroad points from the north and west. He also substituted on ships traveling to Havana, Cuba. In 1914 he was elected to the board of county commissioners to represent his district. Robert, the youngest son was twice elected sheriff of Hillsborough County. In 1887 the Tampa Electric Company was organized by five men who were responsible for bringing the first electric lights to Tampa. One of these men was Robert A. Jackson.11

As Nancy Jackson finished her interview with Cynthia Farr she said, "I can hardly realize as I tell over my past life that I am the person that I am talking about." It is a wonder indeed! This lady should certainly be recognized as a unique human being who faced every challenge. She was a living witness to many of the tragic scenes of Tampa's past; yet she had the ability to rise above all these troubles and disappointments with renewed hope and courage. Her fondest wish was that she might live her remaining years in quite serenity in her own home. This she did until her death in 1907. She was buried in Oaklawn Cemetery beside her beloved Robert. The large stone reads: "In memory of our mother and father, Nancy Coller 1815-1907 and Robert Jackson, 1802-1865" - Buried in the same plot are their children: Parker, Oscar, Mary, William, Cordelia, John and Teresa.

This poem appeared in *The Times* newspaper following the death of Nancy Jackson – March 24, 1907. She had always considered *The Times* staff as her protégés. She always backed her own birthday cake, and say that a large portion was shared by the “folks at *The Times*”. This custom she continued for her last birthday in January of 1907.

**THE VICTORY**

(Dedicated to the lamented Mrs. Nancy Jackson, Tampa’s most beloved pioneer.)

She fell asleep in the autumn of life,  
When the harvest was garnered clean;  
She passed, like a soldier, from the field of strife,  
Passed with a faith unmoved, serene.  
The harvest which she garnered from the fields of human needs,  
Was a harvest rich, in value—a harvest of good deeds.  
Like the tired knight who rests on his shield  
When the din of the battle is o’er,  
She sleeps in peace on victory’s field—Sleeps to awake on earth no more.  
But her victory was not earthly—her triumph was from above;  
Her weapons were not for carnage—they were weapons of tender love.  
You have seen the age-worn roses fade away,  
Beneath Time’s hand their petals droop and fall;  
You have seen their tints turn ashen grey,  
In their death you have felt the funeral pall.  
But in passing, they have left a fragrance rare  
A perfume in memory’s garden, in the heart a lasting prayer.  
So ’twas with this rare human flower,  
That bloomed in the Garden of Life;  
That gave hope to its comrades each hour,  
That attained beauty and strength through strife.  
What nobler battle was e’er fought—what greater victory won—  
Than in gaining the master’s plaudit—than in hearing His words, well done?"

-F. L. Huffaker
NOTE

This article would not be complete without giving special thanks to my late mother Mary Jackson Lester - granddaughter of Nancy Jackson.

My mother spent many years researching family history - authenticating her dates, events, and all material so that it would be absolutely accurate. She carefully collected this information, including conversations with Nancy Jackson, Mary Cardy (my mother’s aunt), and her own father "Captain Bill". It is this detailed information that has helped to make this story possible.

REFERENCES

1 Tampa by Karl H. Grismer, Edited by D.B. McKay, 1950, p.61


4 Tampa’s Earliest Living Pioneer, Cynthia K. Farr, 1900, pp. 10-11

5 Ibid.


7 Tampa’s Earliest Living Pioneer, Harrison Wiley and Hill, 1915, p. 64

8 Ibid.
In 1880 Tampa was a small village. It had a population of approximately 800 persons, a few stores, several doctors, a few more attorneys, many orange trees and groves, unpaved streets, wooden commercial buildings, two churches, several boarding houses, two hotels, more than a hundred family houses and no banks. Large tracts of land sold for $10.00 an acre and one lot at the corner of Madison and Morgan sold for twenty-five dollars. The frame homes with large yards and sides protected by picket fences were supplied with water by wells, barrels or cisterns and sanitary needs served by outhouses located near the stables in the rear of the lot. The more prosperous of the inhabitants made their money in service industries or the cattle trade with Cuba.1

Traffic with other places in Florida and the United States was limited. There were occasional unscheduled ships from Gulf of Mexico ports, monthly mail service and the cattle boats to Cuba.4 Because of these contacts it was necessary to maintain a quarantine station at Ballast Point to prevent the spread of yellow fever to the town. A contact by land was the stagecoach line which ran the 137 miles between Gainesville and Tampa originating at the depot on Morgan Street and Florida Avenue. Another way of reaching the North was to travel by boat to Cedar Keys thence by railroad to Fernandina.

One of the first signs that changes were coming was the decommissioning of Fort Brooke and occupation of the available land by homesteaders. In 1877 part of a larger tract was sold and in 1883, the remaining 148 acres were opened to those who wished to file a homestead claim. Within a short time seventeen applicants including Dr. Edmund Carew from Gainesville who moved into the officer’s quarters claimed...
land and squatters erected tents and huts. Some lots in this area sold for eleven dollars an acre. Thus, a town known as Fort Brooke was organized on Tampa’s borders.

The biggest impact upon Tampa, perhaps in its entire history, was the coming of the railroad to Tampa. After Plant had acquired the rights of the Jacksonville, Tampa and Key West Railroad to construct a railroad into Tampa, his line, the South Florida Railroad began construction in Tampa. Grades were made, ties were cut, rails were laid and locomotives brought in by sea from Cedar Keys and were assembled. Finally the first train moved on the tracks from Tampa to Plant City on December 10, 1883, and service to more distant points on February 13, 1884. The first railroad station was in a converted home on the river banks between Twiggs and Zack streets.

The railroad opened up markets in Tampa during the period of construction and afterwards. The railroad construction stimulated the farmers markets with the buying of food for the laborers and the timber industry with cutting of ties for the railroad. In addition the farmers could get a better price for their products such as strawberries by the fast service to cities in the East. The fishermen could pack their catch in ice and ship the fish and oysters to the same cities.

Private enterprise solved some of these problems in 1884 with opening of the Bank of Tampa (First National Bank of Tampa) and the construction of three new hotels capable of housing 350 persons, an opera house and a roller skating rink.

The larger population created some problems which the Town Council attempted to solve. "Lewd houses or houses of ill fame" were prohibited with a fine of $50 to $500 being levied for each offense. For the drifters an ordinance stated: "Any loafing person, who likely can become a nuisance, can be tried and if the mayor is satisfied he is a nuisance, can be taken into custody and put to work on the streets of the town." Since the arrival of the trains was a big event, there was established a fine of $5 for those convicted of annoying passengers or shouting at them from hotel windows.

Construction of wooden sidewalks along Water, Whiting and Marion streets continued with the owners of adjacent lots paying 2/3 of the cost of construction. It would not be until the turn of the century that hard surfaced walks would be constructed at Lafayette (Kennedy) and Tampa. Since there was a need for street cars and a public water system, contracts were awarded but both companies given the contracts initially could not fulfill their obligation and withdrew.

In the five years from 1880 to 1885 the population had quadrupled bringing problems to the town in the form of needs for proper housing, banking, paving of streets and sidewalks, recreation, transportation, police and fire control, sanitation and water supply. Stimulated by the growth of business and a demand for better services, the Town Council made a few improvements. An attorney at the rate of $200 a year was added to the list of elected officials, a port inspector at $50 a month added to the payroll and assigned
to the Quarantine Station, and membership of the Town Council increased from five to nine members.\(^{10}\) The Sanitary Committee of the Council reported that a considerable amount of trash had accumulated in the streets and that cisterns should be used instead of shallow wells. Within a short time persons convicted of violating town ordinances were put to work on the streets instead of paying fines and owners of lots were advised to clear debris from them. Oil street lamps were installed at alternate corners in the downtown area and the marshal instructed to check them and keep them in repair. With this additional duty, he was allowed to hire an assistant at the rate of $25 a month.\(^{11}\)

Three improvements were still needed to meet the needs of the growing towns. The aroused citizens of Tampa held a meeting at the opera house on April 13, 1886 in which they petitioned the council to provide a proper supply of water for fire protection. In a compromise the council decided to provide the volunteer fire company which had been organized in 1884 with a pumper. Finally the machine was purchased in 1886 at a cost of less than $600 but could be used only against fires which started near the river or a lake. It was stipulated that privies could not be erected closer than three feet from a property line and a town scavenger hired to empty privies at a rate of 250 per cleaning. Both human and solid waste were taken to the town dump. Finally the Tampa Police Force was started with the hiring of two men, Jim Roach and Frank Jackson, at the rate of $30 a month.\(^{12}\)

Next, the progressive members of the business community organized in order to lure more firms to Tampa. On May 7, 1885 the town’s leaders met at Branch’s Opera House and elected Dr. John T. Wall as the first President of the Board of Trade or Chamber of Commerce. It was this organization that helped raise the money so that Vicente M. Ybor could locate his cigar business in Ybor City. In addition, the Board of Trade guaranteed the daily sale of five tons of ice so that an ice plant could be established in Tampa. Due to the actions of the Board of Trade within a year 1885-1886, the cigar industry came to Tampa and the fishing industry flourished.

With these gains, the citizens, mayor and town council began to press for incorporation as a city. Needed at this time were sewer and water systems, electric lights, paving of the streets, better public transportation, police and fire protection, expansion across the western bank of the Hillsborough River and annexation of some subdivisions. The start of this would come in 1887.

These five years from 1882 to 1887 had seen the growth of a town into a city. The coming of the railroad and location of the community upon Tampa Bay made this growth possible. Getting the industries such as the railroad, shipping of fish and phosphate, cigar and ice manufacturing were important and the citizen groups achieved their goal. Other services such as police and fire protection, parks, schools, public transportation, water and sanitary sewers lagged behind.

NOTES

1 As of this date the best published book on the history of Tampa is the one by Karl H. Grismer
Tampa: A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida (St. Petersburg, 1950) but the forthcoming book on Tampa by Pizzo and Mormino may supersede it. A photographic record of Tampa’s past was compiled by Hampton Dunn Yesterday’s Tampa (Miami, 1972).

2 This town charter had been authorized for Florida towns in acts passed by the legislature in 1868, 1869 and 1872. The Tampa government was legalized by the legislature in a special act passed in 1877. Acts and Resolutions Adopted by the Legislature of Florida at its Ninth Session Under the Constitution of 1868 (Tallahassee, 1877), 118-119.

3 Minutes Mayor's Court, August 21, 1857-May, 1882, City Clerk's Office, August 17, 1876. Hereafter cited as Minutes.


6 The Jacksonville, Tampa and Key West Railroad had been granted right to lay and use a single track of railroad along Whiting and other streets in August, 1881 and fifteen miles of grade completed but work soon stopped due to lack of funds. Tampa wanted a railroad so much that no taxes were to be levied upon the railroad. Minutes, August 4, 1881.

7 Grismer Tampa, 173-174.

8 Minutes, February 9, 1886.

9 Minutes, February 3, 1886.

10 Minutes of July 1, 1885 and October 8, 1885.

11 Minutes of February 3, 1886.

12 Minutes of August 16, 1886.
BALLAST POINT
COW PASTURES TO CONDOMINIUMS

By PATTIE DERVAES

Ballast Point received its name in the early 1800's. It is not known when the term first began to be used, but the name was coined as a point for schooners to drop their ballast of rocks before proceeding through the 7-9 foot channel in the Hillsborough Bay to the mouth of the Hillsborough River. Tampa.¹

Tampa became a cow town and Ballast Point became one of several cow pastures. A large spring lake, fed by three artesian springs, was the largest of several artesian springs in the area. It was the first watering hole south of the hand hewn fence that stretched from Hillsborough Bay to Tampa Bay; Bay to Bay Boulevard follows this original fence.² Dr. Howell Tyson Lykes kept large herds of cattle in this area, shipping them from his long dock, 3 steers wide, at Ballast Point. He loaded virtually from his own front yard.³

The point of land jutting into Hillsborough Bay, called Ballast Point, was early known as a good place to picnic and swim. A narrow rutted road wound around the shoreline from Hyde Park to Gadsden Point, which later became Beautiful Bayshore Boulevard.

By 1894, a streetcar line was running along the bricked road along the shoreline, from downtown Tampa to Ballast Point. Mrs. Chester W. Chapin built a beautiful pavilion at the end of the line. It was of oriental design with little wooden dragons cavorting along the roof and eaves. The two story structure looked out over the clear water of Hillsborough Bay, with a park of many acres surrounding it. A theatre and dance floor were on the second floor. The first floor had a restaurant where shore dinners were served; a bathhouse where bathing suits could be rented; and a daring two story tobogan slide into the water. The park had amusements for adults and children. There was a ferris wheel and playground equipment. Animals were enclosed within a fence that surrounded the banyan tree. The grounds provided ample space for families to lay tablecloths and spread lavish picnics from baskets.⁴

When Tampa Electric Company bought the streetcar line and park, Mr. Arthur Dervaes, Sr. became the first superintendent. It had been named Jules Verne Park by Mrs. Chapin. The Hillsborough County Historical Commission Marker, near the pier, reads: "Mrs. Chester W. Chapin, controlling owner of the company which operated the city's first electric trolly cars, purchased these acres and in 1894 developed this site into a tropical park as terminal for her line. She named it for the French writer, Jules Verne, (1814-1905) who in his famed novel From the Earth to the Moon, first published in 1865, chose a site near Tampa as his launching site for the imaginary shot of his rocket to that planet nearly 100 years ago."

The beautiful pavilion was severely damaged during the 1921 hurricane. The little dragons on the roof were blown away.

PATTIE DERVAES came to Tampa in 1926 and has lived in Ballast Point and Palma Ceia. She is a past board member of Tampa Historical Society.
trees were uprooted, tropical flowers and foliage were killed by saltwater. The animals were set free during the height of the storm, as they could instinctively find higher ground. Repairs were made on the pavilion, and the surrounding park was cleared of fallen trees and debris. The following year, August 1922, the pavilion was burned to the ground.5

A new one story pavilion was erected on the point, with a long pier extending over the water, for fishing, strolling and crabbing with long nets. There was a wide sidewalk leading from the streetcar shed at the entrance to the park, on Interbay Boulevard, through the park and the center of the pavilion onto the pier. About midway through the park was an arbor, with long seats on either side. Flowering vines grew over the latticed top creating a shady, comfortable resting place for stollers and lovers. Also, a fish pond was near the arbor, with 12 inch goldfish.

A bait stand across the street from the streetcar shed sold fishbait of every kind: shrimp, minnows and crabs. There were tasty hot dogs, cold drinks, candy, and of course any kind of fishing tackle anyone could use to catch the many different kings of fish from the pier, depending on the season. They rented rowboats, and choosing the right kind of oar locks and the right size oars was very important. My aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Hans Salveson, owned the concession, with living quarters behind the business. Uncle Hans owned a motorboat at one time, and I made many trips with him to rescue a boater who was caught in a squall or who had lost an oar.

This pavilion burned in 1937, and another was never built. Today, the pier remains, with fond memories for thousands of Tampans. The park is well kept by the City and there are seats along the pathways to watch the ships coming and going through the Bay, and the many sailboats. The old banyan tree is gone, also, along with thousands of hearts and initials carved into the long roots hanging from the trunk and upper branches. They were carved for an eternity. The gazebo, from which handsome bandsmen once played Sunday concerts, is a silent sentinel, awaiting another happy time.6

As Tampa and Ballast Point passed through and out of the cow pasture era, Ballast Point became a residential section and many changes came about in the little community. By the early 1900's some fine homes had been built along Bayshore Boulevard, from Hyde Park to Gadsden Point and around Ballast Point.

As the area developed, so did life-support schools, churches and stores. Roads were built, with the streetcars being the main mode of transportation.

Some of the schools already established that Ballast Point children attended were: The Academy of the Holy Names on Bayshore; the Hyde Park School, later named the John Gorrie Elementary School; Woodrow Wilson Junior High School; and the schools in Port Tampa. The High Schools were Hillsborough and Jefferson.

The original Ballast Point School was held in an old three room wooden building, two blocks south of the present Ballast Point School. Classes were held in several grades, with each grade sitting in a single row. The new Ballast Point Elementary School was opened at the beginning of the 1925-26 school year. The Ballast Point School District was formerly the Port Tampa School District. The first trustees were Frank L. Cooper, F.C. Crowe and C.M. Light. Later,
L.B. Farrior and J.L. Clark served on the board. Sarah Chapman was the first principal with an enrollment of 301. The second principal was J.W. Park, with Mr. Thomas R. Robinson becoming the principal in 1927, when the Junior High School was added.  

Mr. Robinson was beloved by his many students who remember him with great affection and respect. Sarah Worth Rutherford still wonders how he could get so much chalk on his suit, while Joe Wegman remembers the tail of a handkerchief dangling from his back pocket, under his coat, as he wrote on the blackboard. We knew him well. Today this school is an elementary school again.  

In 1927, H.B. Plant High School opened in Palma Ceia, on 19 acres of land. Students from Ballast Point rode the streetcars, went by bicycle, had cars or walked. Those who rode the streetcars got off at Barcelona and walked the mile or so to and from school for three years. These were memorable times for us. The fun of pulling the trolley boom off the line was always a source of amusement, and the poor conductor could never find out who did it. We never told. Many secrets were shared along the way. Cold weather we bundled up. Hot weather we mopped our brow. Last minute lessons were studied and we crammed for tests.  

Ballast Point students excelled in all of Plant's student activities, with champions in football, basketball, baseball, the Honor Society and the band, to name a few.  

From the beginning of Tampa's history, there have always been stores within easy reach of customers. Ballast Point, too, had stores within easy access.  

The Buckeye Grocery, near Ballast Point on Bayshore Boulevard at the foot of Knight's Avenue, was owned and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Minnie and Clair Cogan. Bayshore Boulevard was a narrow brick road in 1916, with the streetcar running along the shore side. It was also a streetcar stop. The store was built on pilings over the water, with people coming to buy everything from chicken feed to candy. Some came by boat, some by automobile, others on the streetcar, or they walked if they lived in the neighborhoods. Mr. Cogan drove his Buick truck in the mornings to take orders from some neighborhood and Ballast Point customers. He delivered in the afternoon. Free delivery! During the storm of 1921, the store was destroyed. The Cogan's sold the building and took a holiday. Later, they bought it back, moved it to a new location and continued their prosperous store keeping.  

Mrs. Lou Campbell had a little store in her home at 6003 Interbay Boulevard during the late 20's and the early 30's. She sold staples of canned goods, bread, eggs and candy fish suckers which she sold for one cent. Ken Mulder remembers selling flowers or anything he could to get a penny for one of those little fish suckers. She gave credit and went broke. It was the depression and money was scarce. Other little stores in the area were: the Ballast Point Grocery, Abe Hyman's Meats and Groceries, Joseph Labadie Hardware, Peter Moll General Merchandise, and others.  

There was the Ballast Point Bakery, located at First Street, north of Interbay Boulevard. Mr. Lunsford and his two teenaged sons owned it and did the baking in the garage. The bread came out of the Dutch ovens at 3 p.m. each day. Mr. Lunsford often took the first loaf, sliced it, spread it with butter and gave the heavenly morsels to neighborhood
children. I was one of these, for we lived in back of the bakery. To this day, I think it was one of the greatest acts of kindness of my childhood, to receive a slice of that fresh, hot buttered bread. The smell and taste lingers with me yet, and perhaps with the other children who also had a slice.9

There were several dairies in the area, which started with a cow or two, and expanded as the business grew. Mr. John Houston had a dairy at 3200 Hawthorne Road and Hills Avenue, now MacDill Avenue, in the early 1920's. His cows grazed south of Gandy Boulevard, in the open woods and country. Mr. Houston's Dairy, at its peak, had 15 cows.10

The largest of the neighborhood dairies was King's Dairy, located south of Interbay Boulevard near the present Dale Mabry Highway, then a sandy road called Vera. The rutted road ran through palmetto patches back to their home and the dairy, now part of MacDill Field. Mr. King's cattle grazed on open land. He was a carpenter by trade, with the dairy supplementing his income, until it took all of his time. Bottles were washed by hand, filled and delivered. He bought enough cows to supply customers in Palma Ceia, Ballast Point and Port Tampa. His milk was also sold to the steamships CUBA and FLORIDA at the Port Tampa docks. The dairy was dissolved in 1940 when the government bought their land as part of MacDill Field.11

Churches played a very important part in Tampa history, no less than in Ballast Point history. The early settlers made their way on the sabbath to downtown Tampa by boat, wagon, horseback or on foot. Some had automobiles, which plowed through the deep sand or the mud. Going to church was very important.

In Ballast Point, the earliest churches were held as meetings in private homes, where a few of the faithful gathered for hymn singing and prayer. When more people came than could be accommodated in the home, a move was made to an already existing building or a new one was built.

The Ballast Point Baptist Church was started as a mission of the First Baptist Church, in Hyde Park. First services were held near the ferris wheel in Ballast Point Park, September 1923. Sunday School was held in the superintendent's office on Sunday afternoons. Later, services were held in a tent. Two lots were given to the Baptist City Mission, on Russell Street; a small church was erected on this property, until 1950, when a new sanctuary was built on Bayshore Boulevard near Ballast Point School.12

The Bayshore Methodist Church was started in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fred and Ruby Berry, on Bayshore Boulevard and Knight's Avenue, in 1923. Later a home was bought on Bay Vista, the walls were taken out, a piano was donated and services were held there for many years. People came from Ballast Point and the neighborhood. This church is now located on MacDill Avenue near Euclid.13

Interbay Methodist was started in the home of Mrs. Mary Bruce Alexander in 1923. This church is now located on MacDill Avenue at Interbay Boulevard.14

The First Presbyterian Church sponsored a Sunday School in the afternoons on Elkin Street. It was called the Sydney Lenfesty Memorial Church. His two school teacher sisters conducted the Sunday School, Miss Lizzie playing the piano and Miss Mattie playing the cornet. It never became a church, but it was important in the lives of
Geodes have played an important part in the history of Ballast Point. Ballast Point Diamonds, agatized coral, by whatever name they are called, evolved from coral reefs that thrived in Hillsborough Bay 15 million years ago. Many Tampans have excellent collections in their homes, and they are placed in museums worldwide. The Smithsonian Institution has one of the finest collections of Geodes from Ballast Point to be found. They are called Ballast Point Diamonds because they were first found in quantity there. Collections and beauty are not the only uses for Geodes.

F. Hilton Crowe wrote of battles between Ballast Point and Port Tampa boys: "We Ballast Point delinquents gloried in having an apparently inexhaustible source of "chunkable" rocks to be used in repelling invaders from Port Tampa. It was our custom to have a goodly store of geodes at all times. On weekends, we would crouch in the bushes at the main streetcar stops and wait for unwary Port Tampa boys who were rash enough to visit our Ballast Point girls.

"The geodes selected for ammunition were about the size of oranges, were fairly round, and in our expert hands became formidable missiles.

"The geode weapons of Ballast Point had a dangerous counterpart in the coal of Port Tampa. In those days there were many hunks of coal along the railroad tracks in Port Tampa. If a Ballast Point boy had the temerity to go courting in Port Tampa, he dismounted from the streetcar at town limits, and sneaked by devious means to the girl of his choice. His trip was not always successful, even then.

Many of us, including me, remember vividly playing with them as if they were toys.

The worst hurricane the city had experienced since the storm of 1848, hit on Tuesday, October 25th, 1921. The worst of the disaster hit Ballast Point along the shoreline. Many miles of streetcar lines were undermined. Of the many experiences I have heard, I'll relate only one.

Nell Strickland Arnold related that she lived on DeSoto Avenue, off the Bayshore and was 7 years old at the time. They lived on an incline that sloped down to the beach on Bayshore, when there was no seawall. During the first part of the hurricane, the water was blown out of the bay. Then the eye of the storm passed over, but no one knew about the eye of the storm. It just became very quiet and calm. Everyone went outside to see the damage with roofs blown off and signs blown down. She and her father walked down to the shore and the muddy bottom of the bay could be seen for a long way out. A lady named Mrs. Green, who lived on Bayshore, went out to see about her boat, during the first part of the storm. She and the boat were washed out into the bay. She could be seen from the shore, but no one could help her. She and the boat were blown across the bay and washed up at what is now Apollo Beach, unharmed.

Nell and her father, and neighbors, were on the shore when the eye of the storm passed over, and the wind came from the opposite direction. It blew the water back into the bay, harder than it did the first time. The wind blew her down on the shore, the water was up to her waist and she couldn't walk. She was rescued by her father. The water came up to the first floor of homes along Bayshore. Pianos, furniture, stoves and litter of all kinds was blown out of houses to litter
yards and streets. A streetcar had gone to Port Tampa and was on the way back when it was swamped at Howard Avenue. The motorman abandoned the car and water covered the trolley, which swayed in the water.\textsuperscript{17}

People who lived along the Hillsborough Bay and in Ballast Point could all tell similar tales.

Another victim of the hurricane was the boathouse and dock at the foot of Hawthorne Road and Bayshore Boulevard. Imogene Hatzel Worth relates that a Mr. Allen built a long dock from the beach out to the deeper water, about 1915. At the end of the beautiful dock, he built a boathouse on pilings, to house his two boats. Mrs. Worth, at that time lived on Chapin Avenue. There wasn’t any other place for young people to gather except Ballast Point Park and that was too far for them, so they enjoyed the dock. With her friends, they would walk through the woods in that area, as there were few homes, and no walkway along the Bayshore. They walked to Mr. Allen’s orange grove at Hawthorne Road, picked some oranges, then walked out onto Mr. Allen’s dock to enjoy the fruit. From the end of the dock, Mr. Wallace F. Stovall’s home could be seen, through the trees. Davis Islands had not been thought of yet, and only a few steamers and schooners could be seen as they made their way to and from the harbor in Tampa. The long dock and boathouse were destroyed during the 1921 hurricane, blown off the pilings into the water. Today, the pilings remain, silent reminders of a by-gone day. The pelicans and other sea birds use them for resting places and to sun themselves.\textsuperscript{18}

The Tampa Yacht and Country Club was organized in 1904. John Savarese was the organizer and the first commodore. The club is located on Interbay Boulevard, adjacent to Ballast Point Park, on the south. The first club building was erected in 1905, at a cost of $7,000. It was a single story building of wood construction, with a concrete foundation. It burned to the ground in December of 1905, destroying all the records. A second club building was erected and this one burned in 1927. A third building was erected, a large rambling two story structure, built over the water. A small yacht basin took care of the splendid sailboats and yachts of members, with a marine ways to haul boats that needed repair out of the water. This club was also lost to fire in 1938.

Edward Bond remembers being at the scene of this fire. The fire trucks had to come a long way, and when they got there, it was impossible to save the building. The firemen brought out tubs of ice cream which Eddie and other people enjoyed while the building burned.

The present Yacht Club is the most lavish of all, with a membership of over 1,200, drawing membership from Tampa’s most influential businessmen. The large yacht basin cares for the many yachts and sailboats of members, with the most modern boat ways to be found.\textsuperscript{19}

What of Ballast Point today? Tall pines and spreading oak trees still dot the peninsula. Many brick streets remain to tell of a past boom time. Many old timers remain in their homesteads. It is a place where single family dwellings dominate. But the scene is a changing one. The trolley line was discontinued and dismantled in 1946. The clear water of Hillsborough Bay is brackish and polluted and there is no swimming anywhere along its shore.

Morton Gould was the first present day developer to realize the potential of Ballast
In 1973, he surprised Tampans by building Commodore’s Cove, Phase 1, and in 1977, he built Phase 2, both at Interbay and Bayshore Boulevard, a few blocks south of Gandy Boulevard. He felt the attitude of the public during the 60’s and 70’s was that Ballast Point was a sub-standard area. He felt it was a most desirable area, with its trees, brick roads and proximity to the water.20

Mr. Thomas Spurlin, a developer with the Paragon Group, currently building the newest condominium on Interbay Boulevard, sees this area becoming the most prestigious area in Tampa. It affords easy access to downtown Tampa. The view along Hillsborough Bay is magnificent, overlooking downtown Tampa, Davis Islands and a long view of the bay to MacDill Air Force Base. People who live in this area see it as it has always been, but new people coming into Tampa see it differently. The trends are exciting.21

Ballast Point, from cow pastures to condominiums.

NOTES

1 D.B. McKay, Tampa Morning Tribune, April 19, 1953.
2 Interview with Ken Mulder.
3 Dr. Howell Tyson Lykes, Founder of an Empire”. James M. Ingram, M.D. Sunland Tribune, Vol. IV, November 1978, pg. 32.
4 Personal Interviews.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Ballast Point School, Achievement Booklet, pg. 4.
8 Personal Interview with Mrs. Minnie Cogan.
9 Personal Interview with F.M. Chiles, Jr.
10 Personal Interview with Mr. Ross Williams.
11 Personal Interview with Mrs. Margie King de la Houssaye.
12 50th Anniversary Booklet, Courtesy Mr. and Mrs. William Jennings.
13 Personal Interview with Mrs. Minnie Cogan and Mrs. F.A. Reed.
14 50th Anniversary Booklet, Courtesy Mr. and Mrs. William Jennings.
15 Personal Interview with Mr. Syd Lenfesty.
16 Tampa Morning Tribune, November 15, 1959.
17 Interview with Nell Strickland Arnold.
18 Interview with Mrs. Imogene Hatzel Worth.
19 Interview with Mr. George Woodham.
20 Interview with Mr. Morton Gould.
21 Interview with Mr. Thomas Spurlin.
22 Other Interviews with Mr. Mel Culbreath, Mrs. Maxine Davis Nesbit, Mr. Joe Byars.
EL GALLEGO
Tampa’s First Bolitero

by TONY PIZZO

When casinos began to appear, in Paris a few years after the French Revolution, one of the games conducted in these gaming houses was a type of lottery in which 100 small wooden balls were held in a leather pouch. The croupier held the leather receptable above his head and, after shaking it vigorously, allowed only one ball to emerge. This little numbered ball was the winner, and the game which became known as Bolita had its origin.

The game spread to Spain where lotteries had been popular since 1763, during the reign of King Carlos III. The Spaniards christened the game Bolita. In time the game appeared in Cuba where gambling was a traditional pasttime. The Captain General of Cuba, Jose Gutierrez de la Concha, once remarked that, "with a game of chance, fighting roosters, and singing senoritas, the Cubans could be led anywhere."

TONY PIZZO serves as Hillsborough County Historian and is a past president of Tampa Historical Society.
Soon after the 1868 outbreak of the Ten Year War in Cuba, a large group of refugees moved to Key West. Vicente Martinez Ybor, sympathetic to the cause of Cuban liberty moved his cigar factory to the Key. Bolita operators followed the exodus.

In 1886, Mr. Ybor, to get away from labor problems and political strife on the Key, decided to move his operation. His attention was drawn to the village of Tampa, where he built his company town and christened it Ybor City. Soon, other cigar manufacturers followed suit, and the Cuban community began to grow.

An enterprising Spaniard, Manuel Saurez., better known as El Gallego (The Galician), assessing the rosy future for Ybor City, closed his saloon on the Rock Road in Key West. With his bolita balls, he moved to Ybor City and introduced Bolita to Tampa. Reams of stories have been written about this game of chance, but the name of
Tampa's first bolitero faded with the passing of his contemporaries.

El Gallego made an indelible impact on the history of Tampa. He would affect the lives of thousands for more than sixty years - a fact that was beyond his wildest imagination. His little Bolita game, at first accepted by the general populace as an innocent recreational activity, evolved into an industry second only to the fabulous business of making cigars, itself a multi-million dollar operation. Bolita writers were everywhere. No one looked down on them. They visited the workshop and the office and haunted the streets. They'd take your bet any time, anywhere. Bolita brought pleasure to many and despair to countless others. Throughout the thirties and forties, the Bloody Years, Tampa experienced political upheavals and civil turmoil. More than forty Tampans met violent death partially as a result of the Bolita-instigated racket which had appeared on the scene.

In the early 1890's El Gallego opened a saloon in the Sevilla Building on the northeast corner of Fourteenth Street and Eighth avenue. Here he introduced the friendly, sociable game of chance known as Bolita, or 'little ball’. He instantly became very popular throughout Ybor City, and Bolita became a way of life in Tampa. Bolita was 'played' by the selling of chances on numbers ranging from one to one hundred. Little wooden balls bearing the numbers were placed in a bag which was tossed around a circle of men. A member of the crowd would reach for the bag when it was tossed into the air, and seize one of the balls. This ball was cut from the bag with scissors, and declared the winning number. Those holding the winning number were paid at the rate of 8 to 1. Bets started at 50 and up to a limit set by the house. Bolita was 'thrown' every night at 9 o'clock and twice on Sundays.

In the early days Bolita was considered a popular and inoffensive recreational activity. The Tampa Tribune naively reported that "the new game of chance was causing many of the wash-women in the Scrub area to complain that their husbands were taking their Octagon soaps and selling them for a nickel to play Bolita," and that "the Ybor City cigarmakers were blowing their money on Bolita with the vivacity of an untamed cyclone."

El Gallego prospered and became a local celebrity. In time he passed from the scene. New Bolita bankers emerged in the persons of Pote, Serafin and Rafael Reina, owner of the famous El Dorado Cafe. These were the Bolita barons with a reputation for reliability in pay-offs. They did a roaring business in the Roaring Twenties. Protecting them by possessing undisputed political power was Charlie Wall, the King of Tampa Bolita.

In 1927 the vicinity boasted the presence of approximately 300 Bolita "Joints". More than 1,200 peddlers made the rounds of the city, covering cigar factories, homes, office and government buildings. Almost everyone in Tampa played Bolita. The nickel and dime game established by El Gallego had become a social monster - a multi-million dollar dragon.

Bolita evolved into what became known less colorfully as If the numbers racket". As Tampa's second export, after cigars, Bolita rapidly spread throughout the nation.

After the repeal of Prohibition the control of the Bolita racket was coveted by former bootleggers. Bitter rivalries emerged. Murder and violence became as common as the ebb and flow of the tides of Tampa Bay.
The 1960’s crusade against the Bolita racket by hardhitting Virgil M. “Red” Newton, Managing Editor of The Tampa Morning Tribune, brought an end to Bolita in Tampa.

Manual Suarez, El Gallego, introduced Bolita to Tampa as a friendly, sociable game of chance. It is certain the thought never crossed his mind that this innocent little game would become part of the rackets and the inevitable resulting violence.
THE D.B. McKay AWARD

for distinguished contributions to Florida History

D.B. McKay, native and member of a pioneer family, was three times Mayor of Tampa and for many years was the distinguished Editor and Publisher of The Tampa Daily Times. In his later years, he produced the Pioneer Florida pages for The Tampa Tribune. The D.B. McKay Award was created by the Tampa Historical Society in 1972 to honor others who have contributed to the cause of Florida history.

Winners of the D.B. McKay include the following distinguished 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 Marjorie Stoneman Douglas

For many years John Ware, a man well known to many members of the Tampa Historical Society was interested in the life and career of George Gauld, who surveyed much of the Gulf Coast for England during the English occupation of Florida 1763-1783. Captain Ware saw service as a member of the Merchant Marine, was appointed a Tampa Bay pilot in 1952, and did considerable research and publication in the histories of Florida ports. After doing much research concerning Gauld in this country, Ware was ready to go to England and Scotland when the cancer which took his life was discovered. As his friends know, Ware worked until the last and Robert Rea, a professor at Auburn, completed the project.

George Gauld served as a coastal surveyor for the British Government from 1764 to 1781. During that time he surveyed and charted the Gulf Coast from Key Largo to Galveston Bay and in addition, Jamaica, Grand Cayman Island and Western Cuba. The first part of Florida to be surveyed by Gauld was Pensacola in the fall of 1764. According to Rea and Ware, Gauld did a good job in 18 months of work at Pensacola Bay.

In May, 1765 Admiral Sir William Barnaby ordered Captain Rowland Cotton, in command of the H.M.S. Alarm to proceed to Espiritu Santo on Tampa Bay with Gauld's surveying party of twenty-two men aboard to survey the bay. Starting on June 21, 1765 Gauld, using smaller boats to check the depth of the water, checked the coastal islands lying at the entrance to Tampa Bay and the three entrance channels. Using the schooner Betsey and smaller boats, Gauld and his men moved in the bay proper noting that the site of present-day St. Petersburg would be a "good place for a settlement" and a small lake that may have been Mirror Lake. Black rocks were observed at Ballast Point and a fresh water pond near Gadsden Point. Rocky ground was noted near Hooker's Point and several islands reported to be lying at the mouth of present-day Hillsborough River. There was no mention of any of the rivers that flow into Tampa Bay. Earlier Spanish surveys probably did a better job. Greater detail was given to present-day Mullet Key when Gauld observed that a small fort should be built on the island. On August 14 another ship bound from Virginia for Pensacola stopped at Mullet Key for water and firewood. On August 30, 1765 the survey was completed and the Alarm returned to Pensacola. Another surveying party led by Gauld visited Tampa Bay in 1771. This time work was done along Anclote Island, Hillsborough Bay, the Hillsborough and Palm Rivers and the "West" river.

It was due to Gauld’s 1765 survey that several places named by him still bear his designation. Egmont Key was named for John Perceval, second Earl of Egmont and Lord of the Admiralty, Hillsborough Bay for Wills Hill, Earl of Hillsborough and President of the Board of Trade, and Mullet Key for the fish found there. One of the authors believed that Tampa may have been named by Gauld but little proof was offered.
On the return to Pensacola, Gauld continued his surveying work along the Gulf Coast. When Pensacola was captured by the Spanish, he returned to England where he died in 1782. Captain John Ware and Dr. Robert Rea have made an excellent contribution to our knowledge of the history of Tampa and the Florida Gulf Coast.

James W. Covington  
Dana Professor of History  
University of Tampa
I am pleased to submit this my final report to you for 1983. It has been a busy, yes even hectic, year!

Our overriding concern has been to publish Tampa -The Treasure City a goal I believe that will be reached by the time you read this report. We have to be successful in this endeavor not only to produce a history book we can be proud of for years to come, but it is our way to retire almost $10,000 of Society debt, aside from the Knight House mortgage, my administration inherited in 1982. Some of the obligation has only recently surfaced as tax receipts turned up indicating ad valorem bills had not been paid on the Peter 0. Knight house for several years. This situation must be and is being corrected at considerable expense. Revenues from the sale of the history book should net close to $15,000 to THS, so please help us sell the book to Tampa and retire our debt in the process!

Financial matters aside, we have had a busy, exciting year meeting in tallships, short trains, museums, and historic buildings. Programs on olde-car races, researching your "roots" and the placement of several historic markers have kept us busy on land, rails and sea.

Many thanks to all those who worked so hard to provide the program and socials, kept the office humming and all the other necessary housekeeping details. A special thanks to Glenn Westfall
for his many gifts including Program Director, Editor of the Newsletter, Yardman and "Field Marshall" of daily activity. We could not have gotten along without him. Thanks, too, to Howell McKay and the Sunland Tribune Editorial Committee for many hours, and

definitely to Bettie Nelson who chaired the Book Committee and to Gary Mormino and Tony Pizzo for writing our book.

And now for the future. I believe the time has come to expand beyond the round of socials and programs we have enjoyed so much. In addition, we need to focus some energy in the direction of youth - particularly kids, young families, and young singles. Many are interested in history, but so much more can be done such as school programs, outings, workshops, and other specialized activities! The Knight House should be renovated, remodeled, and modified into a museum, and an active one. Some money has been given for this. More is needed to complete the job. Much more thought needs to be given to the future role of THS in Tampa - Who are we and what do we wish to accomplish? Perhaps it is time for a part or full time Director with an office open daily for tours and research. There are great challenges ahead!

Thank you all for the privilege to serve as President these two years. It has been fun, tiring, rewarding and educational. Best wishes to you individually and collectively as Tampa Historical Society.

Cordially,

Randy Stevens
President 1982 & 1983
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