Old Timers Reunion

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OLD TIMERS REUNION CELEBRATES ITS SIXTIETH YEAR

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