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FROM THE EDITORS

We are very pleased to publish in this issue the first-prize winner of the 1982 Tampa Bay History Essay Contest. The award goes to Jack D. L. Holmes, who also received $100.00 for his efforts. His article chronicles the much neglected story of early Spanish explorations of the greater Tampa Bay region. It is a tale filled with frustrated dreams, daring adventure, and political intrigue. The author has spent a great many years gathering research on this fascinating subject, and we are proud to showcase the results of his painstaking labor. The second place prize of $50.00 went to Jon Wilson. His outstanding article, "Days of Fear: A Lynching in St. Petersburg," will appear in the next edition of TBH. We were very gratified by the response to the contest. Due to the quality of several of the remaining entries, the staff decided to present honorable mention awards. The winners in this category will have their essays published in future issues of the journal. Picking the finalists proved a difficult task, and the panel of reviewers paid special attention both to the quality of writing and research. We are sponsoring the contest again this year. The deadline for submissions is September 1. We welcome manuscripts dealing with any aspect of the history of the fifteen counties in our service area. The essays should be based on original source material, and they should not have been published previously.

Entering its fifth year, this issue of TBH includes articles on parochial school education among the immigrants in Ybor City; a translation of a French traveller's charming account of Brooksville; a gripping memoir of a survivor of the terrible hurricanes that hit Glades County in the 1920s; genealogical profiles of pioneers of Pinellas County; and a photo essay on historic hotels along the Suncoast. In preparing this issue, we gratefully acknowledge the contribution of Eirlys Barker. Our newest editorial assistant, Eirlys is a graduate student in American History at USF and a resident of Avon Park.

We hope you enjoy this edition, and we are always anxious to receive your comments. So, let us know how we are doing after four years.
COMMUNICATIONS

Editors:

I enjoyed very much the article, "The Joseph Atzeroth Family: Manatee County Pioneers." It was well written, researched and interesting. (TBH, Fall/Winter 1982)

I would like to point out, however, one small error. On page 21 line 1 Ms. Slusser states, "The island of Terra Ceia probably took its name from the Spanish words for 'heavenly land.'" Please note that Terra Ceia is Portuguese and it means Bay Land, similar to the fused word Lakeland. See November, 1981 issue of Sunland Tribune, "The True Meaning of Palma Ceia" (and Terra Ceia) by E. Fernandez.

The magazine is very enjoyable and my friends also enjoy it.

Cordially,

Eustasio Fernandez
Tampa
SPANISH INTEREST IN TAMPA BAY DURING THE 18TH CENTURY

by Jack D. L. Holmes

Initial Spanish interest in Tampa Bay probably originated with the sixteenth-century voyages of Hernando de Soto and Pánfilo de Narváez. While there is some doubt about identifying the Bahia de Espiritu Santo as Tampa Bay, there is little doubt that Spanish interest in Tampa Bay during the eighteenth century can be documented with certainty.\(^1\) As early as 1754, interim Spanish Governor Fulgencio Garcia at St. Augustine urged the establishment of military outposts at Tampa, Charlotte Harbor and Espiritu Santo Bay to check English attempts to win over the Florida Indians.\(^2\)

Although the Spanish crown felt the three hundred soldiers at St. Augustine were needed there more than in the Florida wilderness, Havana shipbuilders searching for a good supply of timber for masts and spars sponsored an exploratory voyage in 1756 under the command of Juan Baptista Franco. After describing the Tampa Bay area in detail and noting that the bountiful forests could provide timber “most useful for the construction of vessels,” he waxed eloquent on the advantages of settling the area: “We could not find a more delightful and comfortable place for everything.” He warned that if Spain did not take possession, foreigners would; this would be a serious blow to Spanish power in the Gulf of Mexico.\(^3\)

Franco, a skilled draftsman, returned to Tampa Bay the following year in an expedition commanded by Francisco Maria Celi in order to survey the area around Tampa Bay and to determine whether there was sufficient timber there for the Havana shipyards.\(^4\) Aboard the San Francisco de Asis, a shallow-draft, three-masted, lateen-rigged craft known as xebec, the party left Havana on Easter Sunday, April 10, 1757 and, after a careful examination of Tampa Bay which began on April 13, the observers noted San Blas and Barreda (present-day Egmont Key) and drew up a colorful and fairly-accurate chart. They began the return voyage on May 7, arriving at Havana one month to the day from the time they departed, on May 10, 1757.\(^5\) Captain John D. Ware, an authority on Celi, praised his ethnographical data on the Indians, the description of the flora and fauna and “the day-by-day activities of a group of men who made a contribution, however modest, to the history, tradition, and development of the Tampa Bay area.”\(^6\)

Spanish interest in Florida as a source of timber for shipbuilding certainly paralleled similar efforts by Spain’s traditional enemy, England, as the two foes locked in deadly combat during the French and Indian War (1754-1763). After that significant conflict, England obtained all of Florida and created East Florida with its capital at St. Augustine. The Proclamation of 1763 opened West Florida to immigration by the restless frontiersmen of England’s seaboard colonies, particularly to the capital of Pensacola, but also further westward to Natchez, Baton Rouge and Mobile. English interest in Tampa Bay led to its exploration and mapping by one of her greatest eighteenth-century naval masters, George Gauld, a true representative of the Scottish Renaissance.\(^7\) “Tampa Bay according to the Spaniards” forms part of a 1769 map published by
Thomas Jefferys. Still another example of English cartography of the Tampa Bay area is the one printed for Sayer and entitled “A Plan of the Entrances of Tampa Bay on the West Coast of East Florida.”

English interest in lumber and naval stores seems to have centered in East Florida around the capital of St. Augustine, as accurately pictured in a Spanish naval officer’s report of 1786. After the crown ordered Francisco Javier de Morales in Cuba to investigate the possible use of Florida shipbuilding timber, José del Río Cosa sailed along the east coast, exploring the region from the St. Mary’s River to St. Augustine. He mentioned Charles Bay (Charlotte Harbor) and “Tampa, or Holy Ghost Bay,” but did not go into much detail because the English had apparently done nothing in the area. Rather, don José described what the English had done from 1763 to 1783 when they were masters of the area around St. Augustine. He concluded with a plea that Spain develop the timber business as the English had done, not only to stimulate active trade, but to score a mercantilistic victory by encouraging the production of pitch, resin and tar for Spain and all of Europe without increasing the number of working hands.

Spain also exploited the boundless quantities of fish found on Florida’s gulf coast. Indeed, George Gauld, who explored Tampa Bay for England in the 1760’s, noted the presence of Spanish fishing “ranches” at Tampa and Charlotte bays. Nine people lived in three or four “snug palmetto-huts” and displayed their carp and other fish on hooks. “They begin by pressing the fish with a great weight,” he explained, “after it is split and salted, they hang it up to dry in the manner above mentioned.” Once dried and packed in bundles convenient for shipping, the fish were shipped to Havana and other Spanish settlements in the West Indies, particularly during the Lent season, just as the banks of Newfoundland provided salt cod for the Mediterranean markets. “It is a very lucrative branch of trade,” concluded Gauld.

Bernard Romans, who spent six weeks surveying Tampa Bay in the early 1770’s, praised the abundance of “wood, water, fish, oysters, clams, venison, ‘turkies’, large and small water-fowl, etc.” He discovered on Mullet Key a number of Spanish huts used for the purpose of fishing. Spring was the fishing season for the Spanish fishing fleets which anchored along the coast to catch tons of mullet, bass and drum fish to sell in Havana. “In little smokehouses along the beach, they cured fish over corn cob fires and preserved some varieties in barrels of salt so that they would be in good condition at the end of a six weeks expedition.” Romans also described a modest trade between the fishermen and nearby Indians and was surprised to learn that the Indians in their cypress-log canoes could paddle to Cuba from the keys in less than twenty-four hours. This regional economic activity, begun in the sixteenth century, continued throughout the colonial period and into the mid-nineteenth century when Florida was an American territory.

It was not for lumber, pitch-pine or fish that José de Evia visited Tampa Bay in 1783, however, but as a result of Spanish dissatisfaction with the charts in use for navigation of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. No one was more aware of this deficiency than Bernardo, Conde de Gálvez, captain-general of Cuba, Louisiana and West Florida. Because of faulty knowledge, he had experienced ships in his squadron running aground in the campaign for Mobile in 1780, and Spanish pilots were even hazy about Pensacola when the Spanish squadron attempted to enter the bay the following year. Gálvez’s uncle was José de Gálvez, Minister of the Indies, and at the nephew’s urging the Conde de Gálvez was given permission to “appoint someone capable
of inspecting the ports of West Florida with the greatest care, draw up suitable charts and locate the true configuration of the coastline, its sand banks and to measure the depth with proper soundings over the bars.”¹⁵ For that purpose, the Conde de Gálvez purchased a lugger christened the Comendador de Marsella.¹⁶ To command the expedition, which would take from 1783 until 1786, the Conde de Gálvez named a young naval officer who had served with valor in the Mississippi and Mobile campaigns.

José Antonio de Evia was born in the Galician town of La Graña and baptized in the parish church in July 1740. His father was Simón de Evia, a native of Sevilla who had gone to the naval school there and who, in 1736, had charted the Gulf of Mexico, particularly French settlements at Mobile Bay and along the Louisiana coast.¹⁷ Simón had married doña Felipa Gántes y Pravio, a native of La Coruña. Their son, José, followed his father’s footsteps in a naval career which found him named captain of the Port of New Orleans and commander of the Spanish Coast Guard following his epic-making navigation of the Gulf coast.¹⁸

Evia sailed from Havana to the keys and up the west coast of Florida to Carlos Bay (Charlotte Harbor), and by October 22, 1783, he cast his anchor in Tampa Bay. “The water over the bar,” he wrote, “is sufficient for any warship up to 60-cannon, the most shallow spot being 26 Spanish feet, while inside the bay the depth ranges from 30 to 36 feet.” Evia found that there was an abundance of fresh water, particularly during winter. Its large size sheltered all but the largest warships, and the sandy, sloping bottom was said to hold the anchors well. Nearby were lush forests containing oak, red cedar and pine of greater size than those found along Charlotte Harbor. Both bays teemed with fish, and Evia noted the steady run of at least ten fishing smacks between Havana and Tampa throughout the year. While he was drawing up his chart of Tampa Bay, Evia said there were six of the Havana fishing boats anchored nearby.

That times had changed from the bloody confrontations between Spaniards and southern Florida Indians since the sixteenth century is indicated in Evia’s comments: “The Indians are peaceful enough and carry on a regular trade with the Spaniards, whom they regard with cordial feelings. They regularly board our ships, trade their bear and deer meat and pelts for our honey, corn, rum and other things. When they get the urge, they sometimes board the fishing smacks and return to Havana with the crews.”¹⁹

Evia wrote to the Conde de Gálvez about his troubles – with the weather on the one hand and with Cuban naval officials on the other. “I left Tampa Bay on November 13,” he wrote, “to
inspect the coast of West Florida as far as Apalachee and Pensacola, but contrary winds and current slowed my approach to Cape San Blas until the 20th. Then, strong western winds and a storm forced me to retrace my route to Tampa Bay. Another storm almost drove me on the shoals, and I dropped my sails and let the winds blow me as far as the Marquesas. With such adverse weather, I realized my only recourse was to return to Havana, where I anchored on December 9.” Evia reported that the Cuban naval commander constantly interfered with him, although don José was working hard on completing his charts of Carlos and Tampa Bays, along m with his overall description of the Gulf coast.20

After Evia completed his three-year inspection of the Gulf coast along Mexico, he filed his general report in Mexico City, where the Conde de Gálvez had become viceroy. The most exposed, vulnerable and deserted bays along the gulf coast from south Florida to Matagorda Bay, Texas, included Tampa and Apalachee Bays in East and West Florida, respectively.21 As for Tampa, Evia wrote that it was a fine roadstead with a depth of eighteen feet over the bar at the entrance and between five and six fathoms inside. All along the bay the bottom was sandy, with sand bars near the shore and fine stands of timber. Evia noted only two of the three rivers flowing into the bay and also a trail which communicated with St. Augustine. August and September were hurricane months, but the rest of the summer there were breezes and gusts alternating between land and sea. Winter threatened the mariner because of north winds and the westerlies. Tides increased two or three feet depending on the force of the wind, and there was considerable variation in the hour of the ebb and flow. “The entire coast is clean with a good bottom until you reach Anclote Key, which is twelve leagues to the north,” he concluded.22

Evia’s 1783 map of Tampa Bay consists of at least two versions.23 Because it is detailed and gives location of various points, it may be the best colonial map of Tampa Bay surviving to this day.

What happened to the detailed map drawn up by Captain Vicente Folch y Juan in 1793? A careful examination of the sources yielded no map to Lawrence Kinnaird, Charles Arnade, or this writer, but it is clear from Folch’s detailed reports on his examination of Tampa Bay that a map was drawn, but it remains a mystery as to where it might be today.24

Spanish interest in Tampa Bay heightened during the 1790s as a result of foreign aggression in the area of the Gulf of Mexico. It was an old story, almost as if history was repeating itself from the era of the buccaneers when English, French, and Dutch pirates with government license preyed on Spanish shipping and nibbled away at its prior claims in America. Once again, Spain’s hold on her mare nostrum – the Gulf of Mexico – was threatened. The French Revolution and the Napoleonic Era found Jacobin agents such as Edmond Genet trying to organize privateers with American recruits as crew, despite the Proclamation of Neutrality. George Rogers Clark threatened to organize a force of disgruntled frontiersmen to force Spain to give up New Orleans. French privateers preyed on Spanish and American shipping in the Gulf of Mexico.25

When the 1795 Treaty of Basel caused Spain to withdraw from the anti-French coalition, England promptly declared war and the English minister to the United States sought to organize an expedition against Spanish Louisiana in collaboration with U.S. Senator William Blount.26
As if danger from France and England was not enough, William Augustus Bowles, a Maryland loyalist who had himself named Director of the Muskogee Nation, organized Seminoles and other Florida Indians into an anti-Spanish force which threatened peace on the frontier and challenged the powerful firm of Panton, Leslie and Company, which supplied the southeastern Indians from Nassau and Jamaica.27

An engineer stationed at Fort San Marcos de Apalachee, Luis Bertucat, searched West Florida in 1791 in an attempt to apprehend Bowles, who had become dangerous to Spanish influence with the Indian tribes. The following year Bowles struck at Panton’s trading post at San Marcos and looted it.28 New Orleans Port Captain José de Evia – the same who had described Tampa Bay in 1783 led an expedition which captured Bowles and returned him to New Orleans for the beginning of an incarceration in various Spanish military prisons for many years.29 But Spain had not seen the last of Bowles. He “miraculously” escaped from custody while being moved to a prison in Manila and returned to Florida. On October 31, 1799, he solemnly declared war on Spain and warned all persons “addicted to Spain or the United States” to leave his State of Muskogee.30
The scenario sounds fictional, but in the case of Bowles, truth really was stranger than fiction! Bowles issued letters of marque to an international collection of pirates who now became privateers for the sovereign State of Muskogee. Spanish ships were fair game for the privateers who gathered provisions and water from the off-shore islands along the Gulf coast of Florida. The Seminole pirate fleet numbered between twelve and four teen ships at one time and had colorful banners of scarlet and blue. They carried their captured prizes into “neutral” ports to sell and share the booty, and in general kept the Gulf of Mexico in a terrible turmoil for almost a decade.\(^{31}\)

In 1800 Bowles and his Seminole warriors once again attacked Fort San Marcos post, this time capturing not only Panton’s store, but the military bastion as well. To lead the counter-attack which almost succeeded in capturing Bowles himself, Lieutenant-colonel Vicente Folch y Juan joined the Spanish squadron which sailed from Pensacola on June 18, and returned there on July 15, 1800.\(^{32}\) It was not the first time Folch had rendered valuable contributions to the defenses of Spanish Florida, but it was one of the most colorful military campaigns, as a result of which, Folch won promotion to the rank of colonel on October 5, 1802.\(^{33}\) Moreover, as a result of offering a bounty of $4,500 for the capture of Bowles, Folch ultimately had the satisfaction of seeing his nemesis apprehended, delivered at Pensacola, and finally sent to prison in the Morro Castle at Havana, where he died on December 23, 1805.\(^{34}\)

Bowles had been encouraged, supplied and abetted by John Murray, Fourth Lord of Dunmore (1732-1809), unpopular Scottish governor of New York and Virginia who had ravaged the coasts after being forced to withdraw in 1775. As governor of the Bahamas from 1787, Lord Dunmore continued his turbulent ways, listened to plots against Spanish Louisiana, and saw in Bowles a chance to break the power of Panton, Leslie and Company and Spanish influence in the southeast with a single stroke.\(^{35}\) Governor-general Francisco Luis Héctor, Baron de Carondelet (1747-1807), wrote Spanish Minister of State Manuel de Godoy from New Orleans in 1793, that the Spanish ambassador to England should request the removal of Dunmore or at the very least, “his correction.” He pointed out that the Spanish coast-guard had captured a bilander, \textit{Resolution}, sent by Lord Dunmore to Bowles and his followers in an effort to open trade with the Seminoles.\(^{36}\)
After the Spaniards had captured Bowles in 1792, Lord Dunmore proposed the best way to free

Flag used by Bowles’ privateers, from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History Packson).

This copy courtesy of Mrs. Yulee Lazarus.

After the Spaniards had captured Bowles in 1792, Lord Dunmore proposed the best way to free
him was to capture either William Panton or the Spanish commander of Fort San Marcos. Incriminating correspondence to this effect was captured by Spain, whereby the machinations of Lord Dunmore were well known. Carondelet and Dunmore exchanged testy letters involving the seizure of the *Resolution*, and Carondelet explained the ship was carrying contraband in violation of Spanish law; the coast guard was justified in seizing the English ship.\(^5\)

Carondelet and Evia both agreed that a strong coast guard was essential to maintain Spanish control over the vast, unsettled Florida coast, not only around Cape San Blas and Apalachee Bay, but further south.\(^3\) The activities of Bowles in Florida and Lord Dunmore in Nassau led to the increase in ships and men for the Spanish coast guard, all under the control of New Orleans Port Captain Evia after 1787. Folch participated in this naval action, although he was a career army officer. The irony was that the Spanish Squadron of the Mississippi was, with the exception of Evia, composed of *army* officers such as Folch, and the commandants of the unit, Pierre George Rousseau and Manuel García y Muñiz.\(^3\)

A natural development of the coast guard was the interest in establishing a station at Tampa Bay to help in blocking the English efforts to break Spanish hegemony over the southeastern Indians. Engineer Joaquín María de la Torre wrote a treatise on how to crush the privateers and pirates operating with letters of marque from Bowles and his State of Muskogee: land an infantry detachment at Tampa Bay and establish a fortified post and then march overland to create a diversion among the allies of Bowles who were located between Tampa Bay and the Apalachicola River.\(^4\) The three points which Spain sought to control and eliminate the repeated losses to French corsairs and the privateers of Bowles were from Cape San Antonio on the eastern tip of Cuba, Cape Catoche on the northern coast of Yucatán peninsula, and the Dry Tortugas which were favorite stopping places of the pirates to the west of the Florida Keys.\(^4\)

Through this relatively-narrow passage Lord Dunmore had to send ammunition and trading goods to Bowles in Florida to keep the anti-Spanish movement alive, and Captain-general Luis de Las Casas wrote from Havana to Minister of State Manuel de Godoy as early as 1793 that while Tampa’s roadstead was inferior to that offered in the vicinity of Apalachee Bay, “it is for other purposes no less important, for the reason that its situation affords, in time of war, a shelter for the enemy from which they could harass infinitely the navigation of, vessels from Veracruz, Campeche, etc. passing through Tortuga Sound.”\(^4\) Moreover, the Havana fishing fleet got around the restrictions on importing foreign salted cod by obtaining around Tampa the fish so needed by Cuban Catholics during the Lenten season.\(^4\)

Since Lord Dunmore and Bowles worked in close harmony to break the monopoly of Indian trade held by the firm of Panton, Leslie and Co., it would seem to William Panton’s advantage to fortify Tampa Bay and block communication between the two Spanish foes; but, Panton did not believe the Indian trade around Tampa Bay would be significant when compared to other operations of the firm in Louisiana and West Florida. He did agree to build a trading post if the Spanish government would extend commercial advantages to his firm.\(^4\)

Captain-general Luis de Las Casas wrote Godoy that the Cuban fishermen brought back descriptions of Tampa Bay and that it was capable of protecting vessels of considerable tonnage and large draught, while an abundance of drinking water was nearby. Frigate captain Miguel
Sapiaín had inspected the bay during the Anglo-Spanish War of 1779-1783, and he had reported favorably on the useful lumber which could be obtained for the Havana arsenals. He had helped rebuild the Cuban shipbuilding yards which the English had destroyed after occupying the island in 1762.45

What finally convinced the Spanish government to undertake a more extensive inspection of Tampa Bay in 1793 was the arrival in Havana of several Indians from the peninsula who urged the Spaniards to build a trading post at Tampa Bay.46 Governor Enrique White at Pensacola wondered about the attitude of the Indians so he wrote to a trader among the Lower Creeks, James Durouzeaux, asking him to “sound out” the Indians about such a move. Panton at Pensacola agreed: “It would be better if the proposal should come from the Indians themselves."47

It seems strange that Indians would request white men to build such a trading post, given the experience of the Cherokees and Creeks with the United States, but Spanish policy toward the southern Indians was totally different from that of the United States. Where the Americans sought to make treaties with the Indians which would result in their removal west of the Mississippi, Spain made treaties with the Choctaws, Chickasaws and Creeks which ceded small, but strategically-located, sections of land where Spain could build forts to protect a Panton trading post. Such posts would give the Indians a place to pick up their annual presents, guaranteed to the southeastern Indians as a result of treaties Spain signed with them at Pensacola and Mobile in 1784 and at Los Nogales in 1793. Moreover, such frontier posts could supply the Indians with ammunition and create a formidable barrier against American expansion into the Old Southwest, in much the same way as the French at Mobile had blocked English expansion prior to 1763.48

The Indians had a decade of experience with both the United States and Spain upon which to judge the ambitions of both powers. When the Spaniards began to build Fort Nogales on the Walnut Hills in 1791 and Chief Franchimastabé objected on behalf of the Choctaws, Natchez Governor Manuel Gayoso de Lemos called both the Chickasaws and Choctaws to a conference at Natchez in 1792. Subsequently, they consented for Spain to build Fort Nogales (present-day Vicksburg) to protect Panton’s trading post, but not to permit white farmers to settle there. In 1793, the Choctaws pleaded with Spanish commissioner Juan de la Villebeuvre to build a fort at the site of Old French Tombigbee on the upper reaches of that vital stream which allowed settlers to descend the Tennessee and Tombigbee Rivers to the Gulf of Mexico via Mobile Bay – the same route chosen for the Tennessee-Tombigbee canal today. The resulting Treaty of Boucfouca (1793) enabled Spain to build Fort Confederación at the site. Finally, in 1795, Governor Gayoso persuaded a pro-Spanish faction of the Chickasaws to cede a portion of present-day downtown Memphis to Spain for the construction of Fort San Fernando de las Barrancas, again, not for white farmers to settle and clear the land, but to establish a chain of posts, protected by artillery and the guns of the mobile Mississippi Squadron of Galleys. The end result of this Spanish Indian policy was to protect the Indian hunting lands against usurpation by the greedy American “Ecunnaunnuxulgee” – a Creek word given to “people greedily grasping after all their lands.”49

Thus, the Florida Indians not only did not fear a Spanish post at Tampa Bay, but they actually encouraged it! One of the traders in the Creek nation, James Burgess, wrote Durouzeaux that the
Indians who went to Havana were from the old fork town of the Apalachicola, Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers known as Uchisi or Uchesee. “The place,” he wrote, “is down in the Point of Florida, where the Spaniards always fish, and where the Indians take Vessels to cross over to the Havana: The Indians call it Pea Creek,” he added, “which I believe is called in the Maps Tampa Bay.”50 The officer which Captain-general Luis de Las Casas chose to undertake the mission to Tampa Bay was Captain Vicente Folch y Juan, a brilliant career-army officer, who was rumored to be the man Spain was going to name commandant of the post at Tampa Bay.51

“Visens María Joan Estanslsao” Folch y Juan was born and baptized at the parish church of St. Peter in the town of Reus, province of Tarragona, on March 8, 1754. His parents, Felipe Folch, Jr. and doña Isabel de Juan, were landed gentry from the highly-individualistic area of Cataluna in northeastern Spain, a region invaded by Charlemagne in 777. The Folch family was descended from Charlemagne’s sister.52 The youth enlisted in the Cataluña Light Infantry at the age of seventeen and studied at the Royal Military Academy at Barcelona. He came to America in the Army of Operations of 1780, planned to destroy English power in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean. Folch missed those campaigns led by Gálvez in 1779-1781, but he cared for the injured and ailing at hospitals in the Windward Islands. In 1784, he came to Louisiana and transferred to the Louisiana Infantry Regiment. He commanded the new post at the mouth of the Mississippi known as La Balize during 1786-1787, and did so well he was picked to command at Mobile from 1787 to 1792. He had been relieved by Captain Manuel de Lanzós just prior to the 1793 mission to Tampa Bay.53

Captain-general Luis de Las Casas drafted nine articles covering the “orders for the officer commissioned to Tampa Bay.” He wrote Folch that the major object was to inspect Tampa Bay in the event that should it be decided to occupy the area, Spanish officials would have sufficient information to aid the enterprise. Should a French ship be sighted, it was to be captured – Spain and France being at war – but if a neutral, then the Spanish captain would use his own judgement about capturing it if it carried contraband. The bay and surrounding coast were to be sounded and maps indicating dangerous bars or reefs clearly marked. In this task, a fishing boat captain already sent from Havana to the vicinity of Tampa Bay, F. Merinudez, would be able to help since he had fished there frequently and knew the environs. Spanish officials were particularly interested in the quality of soil and the type of timber available for naval stores and shipbuilding. Another object was to take a general census of the Indian villages or “ranches,” the distance from each other, and ethnological observations concerning their trade, economic activities, and whether they would welcome Spanish settlements at Tampa Bay. A proposed fort should be located and drawn according to the most recent engineering techniques and the availability of local raw materials such as timber, limestone, and mud for bricks. “You shall treat the Indians with much care,” wrote the captain-general, showing an obvious change in Spanish-Indian relations since the time of Juan Ponce de León.54

Folch’s galley was recently launched at New Orleans. Christened La Leal (The Loyal) in honor of the officers from the Louisiana Infantry Regiment who had donated funds with which to build it, the vessel was powered by sails and, during calm or maneuvering up small rivers, by thirty-four oars. Its armament varied, but in 1799 it boasted two 12-pounders, six 4-pounders and two swivelguns (pedreros).55 Unfortunately, the ship was better suited for carrying troops and supplies in the open Gulf of Mexico than in maneuvering the rivers of West Florida, as noted by
its commander, Captain Manuel García y Muñiz. Folch reported himself that the galley was much larger than required for the Tampa operations, and he glumly watched it run aground the day after he arrived! He also lost his anchor rope and, had the sea and wind not calmed, he said he would have lost the ship as well.

Folch described how it was to be a Spanish “tourist” at Tampa Bay in 1793:

We found a safe anchorage for the Leal and lowered the long-boat so as to take soundings and gather information for drawing up our charts. Unfortunately, it was so shallow near the shore that we had to beach the boat and continue on foot. Through swamps and uneven country, at times bogged down to my waist, I struggled to keep the instruments dry by putting them on my head as the water lapped my neck. I took better care of them than of my own person! When night fell, I chose a dry spot of land above water to await the dawn of another day and a resumption of my difficult chore.

The sailors who made up the launch’s crew were so afraid of the Indians and the tales they had heard of their barbarous cruelty that they panicked [sic] every time they saw a wisp of smoke or heard a rustle in the bushes. Had they not been more afraid of my loaded musket and pistols, they would have fled from our camp....

By day I traversed the country through thistles and thickets, brambles, thorns, swamps and ponds. At night I joined the exhausted men asleep at their oars in the launch with the boat’s rudder as my only pillow because if I had not been with them, they would have fled into these deserted forests.

It is worth noting that Folch had planned to make Tampa a flourishing settlement, however, and although his ideas are expressed in his description of Tampa Bay, the colonization feature has not been stressed.

Florida had been a refuge for Americans since England opened the area to colonization by the Proclamation of 1763. Folch had been commandant of Mobile at a time when hundreds of Americans sought refuge in West Florida away from the monumental struggle between tories and patriots in the American Revolution. Therefore, Folch was familiar with Spanish procedures for granting lands and certifying loyalty oaths for Anglo-American settlers who agreed to become Spanish vassals in Florida.
Since there were a number of islands off the Florida coast, Folch recognized they would be an ideal place to raise livestock: “These islands are very suitable for the raising of livestock of all kinds because of their richness in pastures and abundance of water.” Moreover, they were located on the trade route to Havana where salted meat had a good demand with corresponding attractive prices. Livestock raising would be, according to Folch, the basis of the proposed settlement for Tampa Bay.  

Considering the growing strain in relations between Spain and the United States over boundaries, territory, and over Indian affairs, it is extraordinary that Folch would suggest that Spain invite fifty families from the United States to settle at Tampa Bay. Folch urged the publication of advertisements in newspapers from New England to Georgia designed to feature the attractive advantages of Florida living. If not the first or last Florida real estate promoter, Folch certainly has to be listed among those who recognized quality living in Florida and proposed to bring in Yankees to settle the area.
The settlers should swear allegiance to Spain and promise to defend their new homes against foreign attack, even if it meant taking arms against their former countrymen. The government would grant “to the first fifty families who sign up” provisions for an entire year, twelve cattle and sufficient land. Families signing up after the “first fifty” would get land, but provisions for only six months. Settlers would be exempt from taxation on their exports to Havana and other Spanish ports. Because salted meat was expected to be their economic staple, settlers could expect to buy sufficient quantities of salt from the government at cost.\(^63\)

If Spain would support such a settlement, Folch argued, the potential enemies would not discover a deserted coast and cause Spain to lose, as had happened with England on the northwestern Pacific coast at Nootka Sound in 1789-1790.\(^64\) If nature abhorred a vacuum, Folch reasoned, the best way to prevent foreigners from occupying Tampa Bay was for Spain to do it first.\(^65\)

As for the advantages of a Tampa Bay settlement to the Indian trade, Folch argued that since the Indians lived by hunting, the proceeds from which were insufficient to buy what they needed, the Spanish government often felt obliged to give them presents to prevent them from stealing from their white neighbors or destroying their farms. On the other hand, if the Tampa settlers traded for Indian cattle (at a low price, since Folch claimed the Indians did not know the value of goods or cattle), the settlers would soon dominate the Indian trade against all other competition. Any money spent by the government to support such a settlement would be well worth the cost. How much did Folch think it would cost? Using the Mobile District as a yardstick, as he had commanded there, Folch claimed they needed a frontier-type stockade capable of defense against musket fire or Indian arrows. A garrison of fifty men would guard the fort, in addition to a gunnery corporal and four gunners, a chaplain, surgeon, medic, quarter-master, gunsmith, mason, carpenter, caulker, baker, blacksmith, interpreter for Indian languages, two shipmasters and twelve sailors. The bureaucracy would cost about $500 per year in salaries plus daily rations and $100 additional for the commandant. Labor for the fort could be obtained from prisoners in the Havana jails, thus costing only their rations. Only if Spain intended to make Tampa a formidable post should such an expenditure be taken, Folch concluded, and then only if sufficient immigrants could be brought from the United States.\(^66\)

A good idea, but in the wrong time. Spain’s extraordinary expenses for defense of the Mississippi Valley due to French and English invasion threats, the reorganization of the Louisiana militia, the expenses for ships and men in the squadron, and a host of other costs all worked against the Tampa plan. The French Revolution turned into the Napoleonic Wars, and these, in turn, led to the independence of Mexico and all of Latin America. Spain’s golden opportunity, if one existed, had come and gone in the decade between Evia’s exploration of Tampa Bay in 1783 and Folch’s plan for settling it in 1793.

Evia died in Havana in 1815; Folch followed to a Havana grave in 1829. The Spanish interest in Tampa Bay died, just as the two men who had known the unforgettable sunset there. Folch’s dream of an economically-sound settlement at Tampa would wait for another generation of Yankee farmers. Perhaps, almost two centuries later, we can admire their good sense and
wonder, what might have been had Spain supported a strong settlement in southern Florida in 1819.


4 In the fall of 1756, Ferdinand VI granted permission to cut the royal timber of Florida for the Havana shipbuilding industry. TePaske, *Governorship of Spanish Florida*, p. 106.


6 “Celi noted that in every instance the Indians came to the vessel of their own accord and that they had no fear of the white intruders.” Ware, “View of Celi’s Journal,” 16. See also p. 4, contact with the same tribes of Indians.


15 Bernardo de Gálvez to José de Evia, Havana, July 14, 1783, certified copy made at Havana, June 15, 1792, and enclosed in an expediente (dossier) on Evia (then called Hevia), Archivo General de Simancas (Spain), Guerra Moderna, Legajo 6932.

16 A lugger was a shallow-draft coasting vessel with one or more lugsails. According to Webster’s Dictionary, a lugsail was “a four-sided sail bent to a yard that hangs obliquely on a mast and is hoisted and lowered with the sail.”

17 Simón Joseph de Jesús de Evia was actually born across the Guadalquivir River from Sevilla and baptized in the parish church of Palomares. His map is in the Biblioteca Nacional (Madrid), M-I-142.

18 This writer’s research on José de Evia and his monumental navigation of the Gulf of Mexico appears in one book and several articles as follows: José de Evia y sus reconocimientos del Golfo de México, 1783-1796, 26, Colección Chimalistac de Libros y Documentos acerca de la Nueva España (Madrid: Ediciones José Porrúa Turanzas, 1968); “Gallegos notables en la Luisiana,” Cuadernos de Estudios Gallegos (Santiago de Compostela, Spain), Fascículo LVII (1964), pp. 110-113; “Two Spanish Expeditions to Southwest Florida, 1783-1793,” Tequesta, 25 (1965): 97-103; “Dramatis Personae in Spanish Louisiana,” Louisiana Studies, 6 (Summer, 1967): 177-180; and “José de Evia and his Activities in Mobile, 1780-1784,” Alabama Historical Quarterly, 34 (Summer, 1972): 105-112.


21 Tampa was considered part of East Florida; Apalachee Bay, West Florida. The Apalachicola River was the dividing line between the two Floridas as set up by the English in 1763. See the “Map of the New Governments of East & West Florida,” Gentleman’s Magazine (London), November, 1763.


24 Arnade, “Three Early Spanish Tampa Bay Maps,” 94.


26 A planned English invasion of Spanish Louisiana and West Florida for 1796-1797 was discovered by the Spanish ambassador to the Court of St. James, and documents thereon are in the British Foreign Office Papers, Legation Papers of Liston. See Liston to Grenville, February 13, 1797, and Grenville’s reply of April 8, 1797. Perhaps to hide her duplicity, England sealed these documents in Foreign Office Records, America, II, Series 18, and as late as 1964 they were still sealed! See Charles Oscar Paullin and Frederick L. Paxon, Guide to the Materials in London Archives for the History of the United States since 1783 (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 191.4), p. 21. On the “Blount

27 The best biography of Bowles is J. Leitch Wright, Jr., William Augustus Bowles, Director General of the Creek Nation (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1967).


29 Holmes, Evia, pp. 191-230.

30 A copy of the declaration is in Archivo General de Indias, Papeles procedentes de la Isla de Cuba, legajo 216; and it was printed in the Augusta Chronicle and Gazette of the State, January 25, 1800. On the Seminoles joining Bowles, see Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser (Georgia), January 21, 1800.


32 Folch’s diary of the San Marcos de Apalachee campaign of 1800 accompanies his request for the rank of colonel, June 3, 1802, and is in the Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Santo Domingo, legajo 2569.

33 Folch’s service sheet (hoja de servicios), December 31, 1815, in the Archivo General Militar de Segovia (Spain).

34 Folch’s proclamation, Pensacola, November 28, 1799, Archivo General de Indias, Papeles procedentes de la Isla de Cuba, legajo 216; Wright, Bowles, p. 171.


36 Carondelet to Duque de Alcudia (Godoy), No. 4, New Orleans, March 28, 1793, Archivo Histórico Nacional (Madrid), Sección de Estado, legajo 3898.

37 Carondelet to Duque de Alcudia (Manuel de Godoy), Nos. 16 and 17, confidential, New Orleans, August 30, 1793, in ibid.

38 Carondelet to Conde de Aranda, No. 27, confidential, New Orleans, January 8, 1793, in ibid. East Florida’s governor Quesada agreed with Carondelet: “I can find no more effective method of defense than to maintain a coast guard to cruise the bays, rivers, inlets and along the beaches of the vast, unsettled Florida coasts.” Jack D.L. Holmes (ed.), Documentos ineditos para la historia de la Luisiana, 1792-1810, Vol. XV, Coleccion Chimalistac de Libros y Documentos acerca de la Nueva Espana (Madrid: Ediciones José Porrúa Turanzas, 1963), 45 note.


41 Benito Pérez to Pedro de Zevallos (Ceballos), Mérida de Yucatán, August 15, 1802, Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Mexico, legajo 16.


44 Las Casas to Alcudia, February 1, 1793.

45 Las Casas to Alcudia, February 1, 1793; Pezuela, Crónica de las Antillas, p. 100.

46 Las Casas to Alcudia, February 1, 1793.

47 Enrique White to Baron de Carondelet, Pensacola, August 17, 23, 1793, both in Kinnaird, Problems of Frontier Defense, IV, p. 200, e. 201.


49 In addition to the sources supra, note 48, see Jack D.L. Holmes, “Up the Tombigbee with the Spaniards: Juan de la Villebeuivre and the Treaty of Boucfoeu (1793),” Alabama Historical Quarterly, 40 (Spring-Summer, 1978): 51-61.

51 Extract of letter, Burgess to Durouzeaux, Flint River, October 2, 1793, in Kinnaird, Problems of Frontier Defense, pp. 207-208.

52 Biographical data on Folch is based on a large number of primary sources in the Spanish archives, only a small number of which were used in this writer's sketch, “Three Early Memphis Commandants: Beauregard, deVille deGoutin, and Folch,” West Tennessee Historical Society Papers, 18 (1964): 14-26. David H. White (July 13, 1922-November 30, 1977) gathered a number of notes on Folch in Spain, but death interrupted his plan to write a comprehensive biography. His widow published his notes posthumously without editorial changes or corrections as Vicente Folch, Governor in Spanish Florida, 1787-1811 (Washington: University Press of America, 1981).


54 Draft of instructions (Luis de Las Casas to Vicente Folch y Juan), Havana, August 21, 1793, Archivo General de Indias, Papeles procedentes de la Isla de Cuba, legajo 1439, microfilm copy in the P.K. Yonge Library, University of Florida.
Documents concerning the building of the *Leal* are in Carondelet to Duque de Alcudia (Godoy), No. 15, confidential, New Orleans, August 27, 1793, Archivo Histórico Nacional (Madrid), Sección de Estado, legajo 3898. García described its good and bad points in a dispatch to Governor-general, Marques de Casa Calvo, No. 171, *Galera Leal* at Apalachee, February 21, 1800, Archivo General de Indias, Papeles procedentes de la Isla de Cuba, legajo 71-A. See also, on its strength, “Report on the Mississippi Squadron of Galleys” by Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, enclosed in Gayoso to Francisco de Saavedra (Minister of State), No. 19, New Orleans, June 10, 1799, in Archivo Histórico Nacional (Madrid), Sección de Estado, legajo 3901. On the interesting naval squadron led by army officers, see Holmes, *Honor and Fidelity*, pp. 63-65.

García to Casa-Calvo, February 21, 1800.

Folch to the crown, Pensacola, June 3, 1802, Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Santo Domingo, legajo 2569. This valuable summary of Folch’s Tampa Bay inspection in 1793, when combined with the description in Kinnaird, *Problems of Frontier Defense*, pp. 237-242, gives an excellent account of what Folch did at Tampa in 1793.

Folch to the Crown, June 3, 1802.


Folch to Las Casas, December 17, 1793.


Folch to Las Casas, December 17, 1793.

*Ibid.* On Spanish administrative costs, see Holmes, *Gayoso*, pp. 50-54 and *passim.*
In 1891, poverty, poor housing, and language barriers stood as obstacles that had to be overcome in Tampa’s Ybor City by parochial school teachers who arrived to educate children of foreign background in their traditional Roman Catholic religion. Before their work was over, these teachers – Sisters of St. Joseph of St. Augustine, Florida – branched out to serve blacks as well as Latins in private schools in Ybor City. Beginning in 1885, Cuban cigar makers working in Key West moved into the Tampa Bay area. By October, 1888, in addition to the estimated three hundred Roman Catholics in Tampa there were probably three thousand Catholics in Ybor City, settlers who followed the early cigar makers to Florida’s west coast. Private Catholic school classes conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph from St. Augustine began at the Catholic building on the corner of Seventeenth Street and Eleventh Avenue on September 23, 1891.1

This particular group of nuns originally came to Florida from France in 1866 to serve the needs of the liberated blacks following the Civil War. This mission was modified both by the politics of the period and by the perceived needs of white Catholic children wishing to attend Catholic schools. In addition to teaching children of both races, the Sisters of St. Joseph carried out charitable work. They provided medicines for the poor, visited the infirm, cared for orphans, and helped to advance the salvation of souls whenever they saw the opportunity. Women who volunteered to make simple vows of personal poverty, chastity, and obedience to their congregation, the nuns wore street-length black dresses with long sleeves, white collars, and black veils. From 1866, the headquarters in St. Augustine trained recruits from Florida, from states to the north, from Canada and the British Isles.

Three Sisters opened the Ybor City mission at Seventeenth Street and Eleventh Avenue, calling their school St. Joseph’s Academy. Their mother superior, Mother Marie Lazare L’hostal (sometimes written Lazarus Lhostal), came to Ybor City with the three pioneers to assist them in beginning their teaching mission. Mother Lazare first placed a thirty-seven-year old French nun in charge of St. Joseph’s Academy at Ybor City. She was Sister Marie Onésime Védrine, recruited from the Sisters of St. Joseph’s school in Jacksonville to teach and to run the household in Ybor City.

The other Ybor City pioneers were Sister Mary Catharine Byrne, age thirty-two, and Sister Mary Theophila Sullivan, in her twenties. In 1889, Catharine had been the first superior of a similar undertaking in Orlando, where she led a band of four Sisters of St. Joseph from St. Augustine. Her experience was counted upon to help give Ybor City’s academy a strong foundation. Theophila was a novice from Massachusetts, brought from St. Augustine to Ybor City. She had the makings of a strict disciplinarian and was one of the finest grammar teachers ever to staff the Sisters’ English classes in Florida.
The St. Joseph Sisters were not the first to undertake Catholic education in the Tampa area. Ten years earlier, four Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, another nuns’ congregation, had begun the Academy of the Holy Names in Tampa. In 1881, the Academy of the Holy Names began in Tampa with thirty-two English-speaking white students in a school held in a rented stable on Franklin and Zack Streets. The Holy Names Sisters offered domestic arts and cultural subjects, and by the end of their first year teaching in the Academy of the Holy Names, the student population had climbed to seventy-eight. A move in 1889 to a two-story building enabled the Holy Names Sisters to serve more Tampa children, many of whom were not Catholics. The Academy of the Holy Names moved to its present Bayshore Boulevard location in 1928, permitting the Sisters to accept boarding students, some of whom were from Cuba and Central America. Boarding students was discontinued at the Academy of the Holy Names in 1972. The Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary also began St. Peter Claver Catholic School for black children in Tampa.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church in Ybor City was built on property purchased for the Diocese of St. Augustine by the Jesuits of Tampa. Land adjacent to the church was sold for $2,500 to the Sisters of St. Joseph when they came in order for them to have land for a convent. The year before the Sisters journeyed from St. Augustine, the Jesuits were offered purchase of a lot by the Ybor City Land Improvement Company; hence, Father Quinlan and the land company made the deal. On February 18, 1890, the deeds were signed and the sum of $1,000 paid as the first installment on the purchase price of this land, one corner of which was Seventeenth Street and Eleventh Avenue. The land cost the Catholic church $5,000, and in six years, on March 25, 1896, the debt was paid. The Church cost $1,665.79 and was completed on February 20, 1891; the first services were held in it on April 19, 1891. (It was razed on January 25, 1937). For forty-six years, this frame structure was Ybor City’s Catholic church. For four years it was used as an all-purpose building, with the nuns living in rooms at the back and as St. Joseph’s Academy until the school was built.

The Sisters of St. Joseph traveled by train, leaving St. Augustine for Ybor City on September 22, 1891, and they settled in the rooms attached to the Catholic church at the corner of Seventeenth Street and Eleventh Avenue. Fortunately they wrote down all of the details of their lives, keeping a diary of daily events as they saw them in their convent at Ybor City. The writer of the first chronicle was not identified, but Sister Mary Catharine probably began this bound book, now in the archives of the Sisters at St. Augustine. The first entry reveals that they were sent to Ybor City by Bishop John Moore of St. Augustine at the request of Father John O’Shanahan, S.J., provincial of the Jesuits, “to labor for the conversion of the Cuban cigar makers.” The diary continues:

On Wednesday at two o’clock in the afternoon the sisters arrived at their destination. They were met at the station by Rev. Philip de Carriere (S.J.) who led the way to the church where Father (John) Quinlan, superior of the Jesuits in Tampa was waiting to
receive them with a luncheon. After they had refreshed themselves they were shown their future home, which consisted of three small rooms built back of the church. 

During the week before school opened on September 29, 1891, the Sisters of St. Joseph worked to furnish the rooms provided for them as convent. It was probably on September 24, the day after the foundation of their mission in Ybor City, that Mother Lazare took Sister Theophila with her into the town of Tampa to buy beds and bedding. They got the beds but not the bedding, and the Sisters had to sleep for some days without mattresses or pillows. They could not shop in Ybor City because merchants in the Latin Quarter spoke Spanish only, a language the nuns did not understand.

The nuns made a dormitory from a room thirteen by thirteen feet in the space allotted to them in the back of the Catholic church at Seventeenth Street and Eleventh Avenue. The next room was thirteen by nine and a half feet, and it became their community room for a refectory (dining room) and trunk room (storage space). Right from the beginning, the Sisters of St. Joseph in Ybor City were in debt:

All the beds, bedding, dishes, chairs, tables, stove, cooking utensils, everything in fact except the groceries for the first week had to be bought on credit. When Mother Lazare left the house (to return to St. Augustine) the Sisters had five dollars and a good number of debts with which to start their mission. The number of children in attendance at the end of the year (in 1892) was about one hundred and six.

Having gotten their bearings the first week they were in Tampa, and settled down in Ybor City, the Sisters of St. Joseph from St. Augustine prepared to hold classes in the church. Sister Catharine taught the boys and Sister Theophila the girls. They planned to start school at nine a.m., with the help of Father De Carriere as the interpreter. On the first day of school, September 29, 1891, for the first hour, he gave the nuns a lesson in Spanish until at ten, three bashful girls came to school. More trickled in, for a charter class of fifteen. By November, 1891, there were ninety-five children in school, and three classes were offered, one for older boys, one for older girls, and one for younger boys and girls in the same class. Another novice, Sister Germain, was sent from St. Augustine, to take the youngest as her class.

In 1891, Mr. and Mrs. Vicente Martinez Ybor, the cigar manufacturer, sent their sons, Salvador and Ralph, to St. Joseph’s Academy. Other children of both employer and employee families in the cigar factories were listed in the 1891 student body as follows: Aurora Gutierrez, Mary Gutierrez, Anita Gutierrez, Maruka Duarte, Jennie Duarte, May Nadine, Elena Cabal, Joe Cortino, Charley Cortino, Jennie Cortino, Annie Cortino, Rosa Cortino, Theresa Cortino, Cisto Fernandez, Manolo Fernandez, Raymond Fernandez, Ethelrina Fernandez, Brigida Fernandez, Evelina Fernandez. They were the “wildest, strangest little things” the Sisters had ever seen, described in the chronicle this way:

They were intelligent but utterly ignorant of their religious duties, knowing little beyond the existence of God, and yet with a strange love for our Blessed Lady, St. Joseph and St. Anthony. They make long novenas in their honor, love to have their pictures in their houses, decorate them with flowers and burn candles before them, yet
they cannot be induced to go to Mass or frequent the sacraments. This belief in God
and devotion to Our Lady and the saints is confined to the women and children. The
men, with very few exceptions, have no faith.

The attendance at Mass has been bad; at first Mass there were only six or eight, at last
Mass, twelve or fourteen. The first Sunday we were here there were a good many,
probably due to the fact that they wanted to see the new Sisters.

Teaching, under existing circumstances, was difficult. The children were bright but
not accustomed to restraint. They would speak aloud in school, leave their places
without permission and, as it was necessary to have someone interpret all that was said
by teachers or pupils, there was unending confusion.6

The Sisters taught academic subjects such as reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, oral
composition, oral catechism, and biblical pictures in a primary course. The church was used as a
school room for two classes. Sister Germain taught the smaller children in a grouping near the
altar of the church. Sister Catharine, teaching the larger boys in a group down by the organ, gave
a course of study that included catechism, spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, Bible
stories, and elements of grammar and of United States history. On days that these classes were
held in the church, the Blessed Sacrament was removed to the vestry room. The priests provided
Mass on Sundays, Tuesdays and Fridays, and classes did not begin until after the weekday
Masses in the church. Sister Theophila took her class of the larger girls to the Sisters’ community
room, giving them the same instruction that Sister Catharine gave the boys covering religion,
reading, writing, spelling, English, arithmetic, geography, civics, hygiene, nature study, general
science, and history.

It is no wonder, with the confusion in the classrooms, the language barriers, and the poverty
that the novice, Sister Germain, tired of the hard life and applied to leave. Fathers De Carriere
and Quinlan tried to dissuade her to no avail, and she went home to her family in February, 1892.
Her replacement worked with the smaller children from March until December, 1892, when she,
too, quit convent life.

In May, 1892, the nuns held a fair at the Cuban Lyceum to enable them to build a school for
the boys on their lot adjacent to the church. They found it very inconvenient to teach boys and
girls together, and besides, teaching in church was at best a temporary arrangement. The Sisters
had borrowed $2,000 from the Jesuits at Spring Hill College near Mobile, Alabama, using no
doubt their acquaintance with the Tampa Jesuits to negotiate the loan, in order to pay for their lot
in Ybor City. The first fair raised $123. In July, the nuns held another fair, this time at the
Spanish Casino, which realized $140. The Sisters hired Mr. Scott (the chronicle did not mention
his first name), then in Tampa building the courthouse, to erect a frame building on the southeast
corner of the lot, at the corner of Eleventh Avenue and Seventeenth Street.

At first, the Sisters thought they would build a one-story building, but thinking it would be too
warm, they added another story to the building which was already under construction. It was
finished on October 1, 1892, blessed by one of the Jesuit priests, and classes for boys at St.
Joseph’s Academy were opened in the lower story. By spring, 1893, St. Joseph’s Academy was
instructing 176 students. The Sisters had obtained from St. Augustine a nun to take charge of the cooking. Previously they had been obliged to do their own cooking in their hours away from performing their regular teaching duties. They had found this trying and their health and strength suffered.

Sister Theophila did not return to Ybor City for the 1892-93 school year because she had to remain in St. Augustine for her year of study in the novitiate. Her class was taken by Mother Onésime. Sister Clara Agnes, the cook, assisted in teaching small children, and the number of teachers in the convent totaled four when, in October, 1892, Sister Leonide was sent to teach music. The Sisters decided to end the school year with a benefit program, which they called an entertainment. It was held both to make much needed money and to advertise the school to the people of Ybor City. Georgia-born Sister Mary Agatha Brennan was borrowed from St. Joseph’s Academy in Orlando to help train the one hundred children who were to present the program. The children did well, and their parents were justifiably pleased; but, only enough money was raised to cover expenses.

Money was earned not only from the small tuition of twenty-five cents a week per child, but from the extra cost for music lessons. Early advertisements of St. Joseph’s Academy in Ybor City were handbills printed in English and Spanish. A first-class, English education was promised on this handbill for boys and girls of all denominations, at moderate terms. School fees were reduced for children from the same family. The children received calisthenics to promote strength and graceful movements, the handbill added, and it declared that in addition to reading, writing and arithmetic, the Sisters taught music, singing, drawing, calligraphy, phonography, typewriting, plain and fancy sewing, and embroidery.

The Sisters of St. Joseph Convent in Fernandina Beach sent the Sisters of St. Joseph’s Academy in Ybor City a calf in April, 1893. In May, Father William J. Tyrrell, S.J., gave the Ybor City nuns a cow to take the place of an old one they had sold because of its age. Mother Onésime, the Ybor City superior, used some of her personal money to pay off the debts of St. Joseph’s Convent and Academy. In 1894, a French priest who served in Florida, Father Stephen Langlade, brought her $386, part of the money left her by her parents. He carried it to her from her French superiors in Le Puy, France. Mother Onésime used it to pay Mr. Scott $200 owed for building the school. She disbursed $65 to build a fence around the convent property. That year, two hundred and nineteen elementary and primary school students attended St. Joseph’s Academy. They closed the school year with a benefit program at the Cuban Lyceum on Seventh Avenue, making enough to cover expenses.

The Sisters, meanwhile, were still living in the crowded, makeshift, convent at the back of the church, which they considered unhealthy. The three rooms at the back of the Ybor City Catholic church had to be used as their temporary convent, Mother Lazare of St. Augustine told Mother Onésime, until the St. Joseph Sisters of Ybor City could put aside $1,000 to build a proper convent. They started the convent building fund with $100, putting the case in the hands of their patron, St. Joseph, and by February 1895, they had saved the required amount to build a convent on their lot. The Sisters in St. Augustine contributed fifty dollars; in Mandarin, twenty dollars; in Elkton, twenty dollars; in Palatka, ten dollars. They obtained a loan of $160 on February 23, 1895, from Mandarin’s nuns, fifty dollars from the Fernandina convent, fifty dollars from the St.
Augustine motherhouse, and $586 from Mother Onésime. They borrowed $200 also from Joseph A. McDonald, a friend of the St. Augustine Sisters who was associated in Miami with Henry M. Flagler. Pienig and Cooly of Tampa were given the contract to build the convent.

The frame building was erected in 1895 on the Sisters’ lot adjacent to the Catholic church in Ybor City. The two-story building cost $1,675 to construct and provided floor space, forty-eight by thirty-three feet in size, with a first story eleven feet high and the second, nine and a half feet high. An eight-foot wide piazza, as the Sisters called their porch, was on the north and south. The kitchen was a separate room, twelve by fifteen feet, on the first floor. The Catholic church property in Ybor City now boasted three buildings, Our Lady of Mercy Church, the two-story school building, and the two-story convent. Father De Carriere came to bless the new convent on May 5, 1895, going into every room, accompanied by the five nuns who carried lighted candles. When he reached the front door, he turned and said solemnly to them: “The devil has been driven out; and woe to that person who first brings the devil into this new house!”

The Sisters installed a statue of their patron, St. Joseph, as a token of protection, and they moved in on May 10. They waited until necessary permission had come from the bishop to have the Blessed Sacrament permanently in their chapel tabernacle. They had a table for an altar, set up on two steps. Bishop Moore gave them a tabernacle made in Rome, Italy, and they placed candles and flowers on each side. The bishop himself canonically erected the Stations of the Cross in the chapel. The motherhouse in St. Augustine lent a chalice and ciborium, sacred liturgical vessels, for use at Mass. Some friends in Orlando sent white vestments for the priests to use in celebrating Mass. Mother Lazare gave purple vestments and large altar candlesticks. The St. Joseph Sisters in Mandarin gave the Stations, vestments of other liturgical colors, and the Mass cards upon which the liturgy and eucharistic prayers were printed in Latin. Among the benefactors who helped furnish the Ybor City convent were Miss Kate Jackson, Mrs. John Toomey, a Mrs. Schwabb and a Mrs. Arguelles (the chronicle did not give the first names of the latter two women).

Difficulties continued to present themselves. In 1896, the Sisters were threatened by Mr. Scott with suit if they did not finish paying him. They paid him $475, and at the same time, paid back $150 to Mr. McDonald on his account. To do this they had to borrow more funds from convents in Elkton and Mandarin. They borrowed $200 on March 1, 1896, from the nuns at Mandarin. In the early part of 1896, due to a fever epidemic (the chronicle did not explain whether it was influenza or yellow fever), the number of children attending classes at St. Joseph’s Academy gradually decreased. School that year was closed without end of the year exercises. War was going on between Spain and Cuba, making it impossible for the nuns to arrange for presentation of a program in either the Spanish Casino or the Cuban Lyceum. They wrote in their chronicle:

Party feeling ran high between Spaniards and Cubans. As we had many from both nations in our school and there was no American hall to which we could go, we were obliged to omit the exhibition entirely.”

Sister Mary Euphrasia Masters, a St. Augustine native of Minorcan descent, was a promising music teacher. Arriving in May, 1896, to help with classes and teach music, she remained at Ybor City while others went away for the summer. In five years, the staff in Ybor City had
grown from three to seven Sisters. By this time, they were teaching the Latin children mostly in English. Their handbill had advertised a first-class English education and attracted both Spanish and Cuban parents who wanted their children growing up in English-speaking America. More than sixty children enrolled for fall classes in 1896. In one of the rooms behind the church, a class in English was opened for Italians.

Those who came to the St. Joseph Academy in Ybor City increasingly were unable to pay tuition as easily as before “owing to the poverty of the Cubans produced by the drain on their resources to support the Cuban rebellion.” No closing exercise was given in 1897 either, because of the continuing conflict between Spaniards and Cubans. During the summer, two nuns remained in Ybor City to look after their buildings, chickens, and cow. The class for Italians proved a failure (the chronicle did not explain why, but perhaps the children did not like being placed in a separate class from their peers of Cuban and Spanish backgrounds). With no class for Italian children, the teacher was released to resume a class she had taught before.

While Ybor City seethed with Cuban revolutionary activity, the economic effect was felt by the convent school. Sixty-eight boys and 102 girls registered for the year 1897-98. Forty-two of the children were taught gratis, and many of the rest were unable to pay all of their tuition. The Sisters would hardly have been able to make ends meet if it had not been that the United States
began to prepare for war with Spain, and Tampa was selected for the mobilization of troops. While the soldiers encamped in Tampa, the Sisters of St. Joseph visited them. They gave the soldiers medals and scapulars and tried to persuade them to make their peace with God by receiving the sacraments (if they were Catholics) before going to Cuba. The men “in gratitude for the interest taken in them gave little donations that enabled the Sisters to meet current expenses which the proceeds of the school would not have done.”

Tampa’s military population swelled to 33,000 men by May 22. Although an armada moved toward Cuba in mid-June, thousands of men were left behind in Tampa. The convent in Ybor City benefitted from the wartime prosperity, and the Sisters were able to furnish the chapel with a carpet and an altar. It was in June, 1898, that the school boys were organized into St. Joseph’s Society, the object of which was to keep them together and faithful to their religion. Father Tyrrell wanted them to sing in Our Lady of Mercy Church, and the Society boys formed a choir for Ybor City’s Catholic Masses on Sundays.

In 1898, Mother Onésime was sent to Orlando as superior, and she was replaced at Ybor City by Mother Marie Louise Hughes. Marie Louise was born in County Armagh, Ireland. She had entered the convent in Jacksonville, Florida, at the age of eighteen, on December 3, 1874. After she served out her term as Ybor City superior succeeding Mother Onésime, she was elected mother superior of all the Sisters of St. Joseph in Florida. The St. Joseph Sisters were putting their best leaders and teachers in Ybor City to make a success of the St. Joseph’s Academy there.

A novice who could sing, Sister Mary Seraphim Curran, came in the fall of 1898 from north Florida to Ybor City. She had entered the convent that year from Pennsylvania. Sister Mary Agatha Brennan, recuperating from an illness, came to Ybor City in January, 1899. She organized a choir consisting of some youths who had left school, considering it a good way to bring them to Mass on Sundays. She also organized the Children of Mary Sodality in May, 1899, at the behest of Father Tyrrell. Sodality is another word for organization, and the Children of Mary were organized in local groups of young people to live in Christ through the sacraments of the Catholic Church, under spiritual direction pledged to accept Mary as Christ’s gift to be the mother, intercessor, and model of loving service to her divine Son. The Jesuits founded the first Sodality in Rome in 1563; in Florida, Jesuits spearheaded the adoption of the Children of Mary Sodality as a Catholic youth association.

To pay some outstanding bills, the Sisters obtained the free use of Centro Español to give a benefit school program in December, 1899. This project raised eighty dollars. After the show, Mary Agatha became quite ill due to overwork in preparing the children for the program. The nuns wrote, of her recovery:

For weeks her life was despaired of and when she did recover the doctors admitted that medical science had nothing to do with it. We all think it was the many prayers offered for her that kept her on earth.

The Sisters faced other challenges that year. Mother Lazare had come to Ybor City on October 12, 1899, with a novice, Sister Joannes, who was to take Sister Seraphim’s class in order that Seraphim could return to St. Augustine for her year in the novitiate training. Three days later, on
October 15, in St. Augustine, Mother Lazare was removed from the Sisters’ highest office of mother superior in Florida and returned to the ranks of the Sisters. By November, 1899, the Sisters of St. Joseph in St. Augustine, at the request of Bishop Moore, cut their connection with the motherhouse in France and placed themselves under the general direction of the bishop and his successor-bishops in St. Augustine.

When this happened, Mother Lazare was sent from St. Augustine to teach a class in Ybor City. The other nuns wrote:

Mother Lazare took Sister Augustine Curry’s place as teacher of the little girls. She bears her heavy cross with patience that is truly remarkable but we are all a little embarrassed with her. Having looked up to her so long as our Superior it is very difficult to treat her as a simple Sister. There is an unavoidable constraint in our intercourse.17

Mother Lazare had been superior in St. Augustine from 1878 to 1886, then provincial superior from 1886 to 1899. Her unusual removal from office was occasioned by the wish of Bishop Moore to Americanize the administration of the nuns in Florida, and her chronicle suggests that her Gallican peers, the pioneers of the congregation, were not pleased with turning over the administration of the convents in Florida to the bishop.

Unless one was familiar with convent life in that generation, the constraint the other Sisters felt with their former superior might be difficult to understand. Lazare had set the tone for the French Sisters’ rules and life style as mother superior for twenty-one years, when she left office on October 15. Sisters lived according to their original French constitutions. Their rule told them how to live and pray and work, what to wear, and to obey the mother superior in practically everything. Even their demeanor towards friends and relatives was regulated. The nuns were asked to love their superior as their mother, and to salute and obey those she placed in charge with respect and reverence. Haste, anxiety, confusion, and noise were foreign to these women. The Sisters needed the superior's permission in sending correspondence. Meals were eaten in silence, in the convent only, while a Sister read aloud from some pious book or from the rules. Innocent recreation followed the day’s last meal, when the nuns would not speak of worldly news that might distract them, or engage in loud laughter or unbecoming behavior. Any conversation beyond a half hour’s time required permission. The rule governed their behavior even when they were out of the convent, and because it was not written down at the time, the nuns learned how to conduct themselves inside and outside the convents from the Sisters charged with training novices and from observing other nuns’ example.

In Ybor City, Mother Lazare continued to be called Mother; that was etiquette. She may have shared with her colleagues the dissatisfaction she and other French Sisters felt with the new arrangement in Florida. Bishop Moore, not the French superior, became the authority figure to whom newly elected mother superiors would be accountable. If the Sisters understood anything well, it was authority, for their rule had sanctified it. Lazare probably believed she had lost face with the other nuns. The Ybor City chronicle notes:
Some of the French Sisters were not satisfied with the change of Superiors and decided to leave the Florida mission. Others still looked on Mother Lazare as Superior, and this was a cause of disorder and division. The Bishop told her she had better go. She left this house April 27, 1900 and set sail for France from New York May 10, 1900.18

Mother Onésime was one of the nuns who returned to Le Puy. She was the founding superior in Ybor City, who, while her community was still in debt from the new wooden school building, planned the first convent in the Cigar City. She raised money at home and in France to pay off the debts in Ybor City, and she even used personal funds that were left to her by her parents. Onésime, who was with the seventh group of French Sisters to come to Florida in 1880, shared many of the trials of the early French nuns in the state. She had nursed yellow fever victims in Jacksonville and had come down with it herself. Onésime and Sister Octavie Fabre, who had come from France in 1894, spent a few weeks in Fernandina before leaving for France. With the departure of many of the French nuns, the Sisters of St. Joseph began a new chapter in their history in Florida.

In Ybor City, St. Joseph’s Academy and convent continued to provide education and spiritual example to Latins and Italians. Mercy Church was elevated to parish status, separate from Tampa’s St. Louis Church, on March 2, 1900. Father Th. DeBurne, formerly of Miami, was the first Jesuit pastor of this pioneer Ybor City Catholic parish. He and Father F. Barry, S.J., were chosen for Ybor City because both spoke Spanish as well as English. Ybor City counted about 15,000 persons when Solemn High Mass was offered on March 4, 1900 at Our Lady of Mercy Church. Since about one-fourth of that population was Italian, the Jesuits began to study the Italian language. The next year, sermons were in three tongues, the Italian at 7 a.m., English at 9 a.m. and Spanish at 11 a.m. The Sisters recorded the new parish in their annals in this manner:

Ybor has at last been made a parish....Saint Joseph seems to manage everything in this place. For a long time the [Jesuit] Fathers spoke of coming, preparations were made, everything was ready but they did not come till the first Sunday in March – Saint Joseph’s month. Anything of note that takes place here for the furtherance of religion begins or takes place in his month or on some feast of his. The building of the convent was begun on the first Friday of March 1895; it was blessed on the feast of the patronage of Saint Joseph, May 5. The first Mass in the Ybor church was also said on [Saint Joseph’s] feast of patronage.19

Other personnel changes followed. On October 4, 1901, Sister Anna Clotilde Kohler, a St. Johns County native, was sent to Ybor City, and in a few years her life would be dedicated to teaching blacks. Sister Mary Clare Brennan, aged forty-five, was sent to open St. Benedict’s School for the Colored on Columbus Drive and Twentieth Street in Ybor City in February, 1903. Her class in Ybor City's white St. Joseph's Academy was taken by Sister Mary Philomena Salmon, a novice from Cleveland. All the Sisters of St. Joseph in Ybor City visited the new St. Benedict’s School on March 19 1903, their patronal feast day.20 St. Benedict’s, built by the Jesuits, was a two-story brick building that had four classrooms and an auditorium. The auditorium also served black Catholics as a place of worship on Sundays and holy days. (The chronicle of the Sisters did not indicate how many students were first enrolled at St. Benedict’s
School.) Thus, twelve years after the nuns came to Ybor City to teach Spanish, Cuban and Italian children, they began to teach blacks in a separate school. Sister Anna Clotilde was on the faculty of St. Benedict’s for nearly the entire time, more than forty years, that the Sisters of St. Joseph taught blacks in Ybor City. Sister Clotilde became principal of St. Benedict’s in August, 1906. A fire swept through Ybor City in March, 1907, destroying everything between the convent next to St. Joseph’s Academy and St. Benedict’s School on Columbus Drive and Twentieth Street. The convent escaped the flames except for its fence, but the furnishings were moved out, and some articles were lost in the excitement.

In May, 1910, Miss Matilda Aviles, a Mrs. MacWilliams and Mrs. John Aviles planned and held the first benefit lawn party at St. Joseph’s Academy, Ybor City. From July, 1910, until January, 1911, there was a labor strike, making money scarcer than ever for the Sisters. Every day, poor people went to the convent to beg for food and clothing. “The Sisters had hardly money enough to pay their expenses, but they prayed to St. Joseph and he always helped them,” the chronicle recorded. In September, 1910, the Academy opened for one hundred and nine pupils. About a third of these were able to pay the tuition of twenty-five cents a week. Many were unable to purchase books they needed, owing to the strike. The blacks’ school opened on October 3, enrolling fifty pupils. By the end of the month its attendance increased to eighty-nine.

The Sisters’ chronicle recorded another fire affecting their property at St. Joseph’s Academy, on May 12, 1911. It occurred at two p.m. just before classes were dismissed. Some of the St. Joseph Sisters sought housing that night in Tampa with the Sisters of the Holy Names and the rest remained in the damaged Ybor convent, mopping up water when it rained. Insurance covered the repairs that took about ten days. At the same time, the nuns had a contractor put four dormer windows in the attic to enlarge living space. A Captain Dixon, president of the Southern Lumber Supply company which did the work, donated two gold crosses for the roof of the convent.

In October, 1911, the Sisters of St. Joseph opened a Sunday School at the church for black and white children who did not attend their schools. There were eleven teachers, eight nuns and three secular women. In 1912, Mother Katherine Drexel of Philadelphia promised to pay twenty-five dollars a month for a nun to teach blacks at St. Benedict’s School. An Irish girl, Sister Mary Rita Hehir, was sent to help instruct the blacks. One of the older black children would teach as an aide until 10:30 a.m. when Sister Rita, who had an earlier class to cover at the Academy, would arrive to teach for the rest of the school day at St. Benedict's. The teacher’s aide received music lessons in return for her work.

The cigar factories, mainstay of Ybor’s economy, had been on strike since the previous Christmas, and very few pupils at either school were paying tuition. However, the Sisters of St. Joseph had established close ties with civic and business leaders. On June 20, 1912, classes in St. Joseph’s Academy closed with a program at the Cuban Casino on the corner of Tenth Avenue and Fourteenth Street. Salvador Ybor allowed the use of the casino free of charge. After the 1912 retreat in St. Augustine, ten Sisters of St. Joseph were sent to Ybor City to staff their two schools. During the fall and winter Sunday School classes, six nuns took most of the classes. In addition, Mrs. Alicia Neve taught the girls who spoke only Spanish or Italian, and Sisters Clotilde and Francis taught the blacks their catechism.
Sister M. Rosalie Andreu, music teacher at St. Joseph’s Academy, kept this announcement and picture of Adelaide Aviles and her doll “saying prayers” in the memorabilia from the Academy. The child’s mother was a student of Sister Rosalie.

Photograph courtesy of the Archives of the Sisters of St., Joseph.
After sending a draft for $500 to Spring Hill College on November 25, 1912, the Sisters owed only $500 to the Alabama Jesuits. On May 23, 1913, the debt was paid in full, and after twenty-two years, the Sisters at last owned the property the convent was built on.

The Sisters constructed a pagoda on the convent grounds in the spring of 1913, using it for May procession, an ice cream festival, and school gatherings. They purchased a Remington typewriter in installments and paid weekly installments to lay sidewalks for $375 on three sides of their lot. School closed on June 17, 1914, with an afternoon program at the Circulo Cubano, Tenth Avenue and Fourteenth Street. The blacks closed their school with a musical in St. Benedict’s hall on June 25 in the evening.

The people of Spanish heritage remembered Sister Anastasie Marsein as the Angel of Mercy of Ybor City. She spent almost half a century teaching children there. In the afternoons, she would visit the sick and take food to the poor. She was the instructor who brought many to the sacraments before they died. In the end, she was paralysed herself. She lived through the time when the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s had repercussions in Ybor City. There were two local factions, those who supported the Loyalists and those who sided with Francisco Franco in Spain. Because Catholics generally supported Franco’s forces, Ybor City Catholic residents who favored the Loyalists picketed the nuns, threatened the families of Francophiles, and withdrew their children from the Catholic school. As a result, attendance at St. Joseph’s slumped.

Another much admired teacher was Sister Anna Clotilde Kohler. A stabilizing influence in the black community she served, Sister Anna Clotilde arranged for a stage to be built to the satisfaction of parents and children. In 1916, she began two societies, St. Joseph’s for boys and St. Cecilia’s for girls. Every fourth Sunday, members of each would march to Our Lady of Mercy Church for integrated services of Mass, and the children took special pews beside the banners they carried. Sister Anna Clotilde completed sixty-five years of religious life, dying in Miami on May 21, 1962. For forty-three years, until the Sisters of St. Joseph withdrew from teaching schools in Ybor City, Sister Clotilde taught at St. Benedict’s. With little financial help, she trained three generations of boys and girls in elementary education and music. Like the other Sisters of St. Joseph, she worked under the direction of men’s orders, Jesuits, Salesians,
Josephites and Redemptorists, and got along with them all. After St. Benedict’s ceased to be a
mission of the St. Joseph nuns, Sister Anna Clotilde was transferred to Fernandina where she
taught blacks at St. Peter Claver School for another dozen years. Even in her old age, she re-
tained active interest in the blacks of Ybor City and Fernandina and carried on an extensive
correspondence with her former students who did not forget her work for them.

Meanwhile, in 1913, the state legislature made it unlawful for white teachers to teach blacks in
a black school. Sisters were doing so in several areas of the state besides Ybor City, and
continued to do so with the encouragement of the bishops of St. Augustine. The law was tested
in 1916, with the arrest of Sisters in St. Augustine for violating the statute. Sister Rita’s own
blood sister, Sister Thomasine Hehir of St. Augustine, brought the suit. While her case was in
court in St. Johns County, April 24 through May 20, 1916. Ybor City nuns suspended their
classes for blacks. The judge of the Fourth Judicial Court of Florida overturned the law in
question as class legislation depriving teachers of privileges which were not denied to any other
class of citizens, thus, violating a liberty guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. When the case was
settled in St. Augustine, the Ybor City nuns resumed their classes for blacks until the close of the
regular school year; but, they did not make up the time lost during the trial.

St. Joseph’s Academy was relocated in 1921 from the former school building the Sisters had
built to a three-story one constructed by Father Tyrrell. It fronted on Eleventh Avenue and
dominated Tenth Avenue and Eighteenth Street. It had 398 windows, measured 135 by sixty feet,
and rose sixty-five feet in the air. Father Tyrrell’s magnetism brought donations in 1921 for this
new school from Catholics, Protestants, Jews and those of no creed who were simply his friends.
In 1934, this school became the parish school and was no longer run by the Sisters of St. Joseph
as St. Joseph’s Academy. It became known as Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, the name
change given to it when the Redemptorist Fathers changed the name of the parish church at 1701
Eleventh Avenue to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The Redemptorists took over the former parish
of Our Lady of Mercy, razed the old frame church, and built a handsome brick one on the spot
where the old one stood. Sisters of St. Joseph continued to teach at Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Parochial School until 1943, when they were replaced there by other teaching nuns.

Although the Sisters of St. Joseph are no longer in Ybor City, they still serve on Florida’s west
coast, at Cor Jesu Home for the aged in Tampa and at St. Joseph’s School in St. Petersburg.

In “Living Waters,” a commemorative pamphlet marking a century of Christian education and
charitable service in Florida, the Sisters of St. Joseph recalled that they shared their lives with the
multilingual population of Ybor City for long years, through strikes, unemployment, political
disputes, and war. They found inspiration among those they served, and in turn, they inspired
deeper understanding of the Catholic religion in the lives of those they taught. They supported
themselves on the income from their private academies, the music lessons so well loved by the
Latin children and their families, and by gifts and loans. At the same time, they built the Ybor
City school and taught the classes of blacks.

Despite language barriers, they transformed buildings into schools and convents, and shared
their slender resources with the poor and sick. Their work in Ybor City is now a happy memory,
and their good deeds are being repeated elsewhere in the Tampa Bay area where they now teach and carry on other apostolates.

In a 1920 photograph, Sister M. Rosalie Andreu, S.S.J., is pictured in the pagoda built in 1913 at St. Joseph’s Academy. Seated on either side of Sister are music aides from the adult community. The rest are the music pupils of the St. Cecelia Music Club meeting at St. Joseph’s Convent.

Photograph courtesy of the Archives of the Sisters of St. Joseph.
1 Handwritten annals or chronicles of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Ybor City, now found in the Archives of the Sisters (AS), St. Augustine, Florida; hereafter, AS.

2 Bishop Augustin Verot, first bishop of St. Augustine, Florida, secured five Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary in 1868 from Montreal, Canada, for a private school in Key West. That school became known as the Convent of Mary Immaculate.

3 AS, September 23, 1891.

4 Ibid., pp. 9-10.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., pp. 6-7.

7 Ibid., pp. 11, 13.

8 Ibid., p. 19.

9 Ibid., pp. 22-23.

10 Ibid., p. 27.

11 The Minorcans from the island of Minorca (now Spanish) in the Mediterranean Sea came to Florida as British subjects, bringing their Catholic Spanish culture with them in 1768, bound by contract to cultivate a British plantation established at New Smyrna. In 1777, the Minorcans abandoned that plantation and were welcomed as citizens of St. Augustine by the British governor of East Florida. They sank their roots and their descendants still flourish there in the twentieth century. Some went to several parts of Florida also, as, for example, in 1818, Antonio Maximo Hernandez, Minorcan native of St. Augustine, owned a farm on the east shore of Tampa Bay. Other early Minorcan families who migrated from St. Augustine to Tampa were Oliver Andreu, John P. Leonardi, Bartolo Leonardi, Antonio Papy (who was of Greek descent), Andrew Pacetti and Andrew P. Canova.

12 A.S., p. 31.

13 Ibid., p. 35.


15 Cf., New Catholic Encyclopedia, V. 9, p. 894, under the citation, “Miraculous Medal.” This medal, struck in Paris in 1832 and given papal approval in 1842, became the badge of the Children of Mary Sodality. A nun who was a Daughter of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Catherine Labouré, on November 27, 1830, designed the medal from a vision of Mary she claimed to have had at the time in Paris. The vision promised great favors to those who wore the medal around the neck and because remarkable things followed for those who wore it, it became popularly known as the “Miraculous Medal.” It featured a drawing of Mary on one side and symbols with the letter M on the reverse side.

16 AS, p. 44.

17 Ibid., pp. 42-43.

18 Ibid., p. 46.

19 Ibid., pp. 44-45.
Ibid., pp. 48-49.

Ibid., p. 63. St. Joseph Academy’s Ybor City student enrollment between 1900 and 1910 included these regulars:


Another list of the same era shows as students of the Sisters of St. Joseph: Magdalene Christ, Oddine LaCourse, Mable James, Lottie LaCourse, Assuncion Salguiero, Myrtle Osborne, Providencia Florita, Viola Klassen, Earnestina Noriga, Paselina Razza, Angelina Risceli, Anuncion Martinez, Juagina Rubio, Provincia Puazia, Carela Montio, Dulchina Gairlan, Gracie Cortino, Isabella Sanchez, Rafaelita Pando, Nattalac Corwin, Mary Noriega and Maria Suarez.

Katherine Drexel of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, became a Catholic supporter of education of blacks and American Indians. She was the granddaughter of a wealthy banker, Francis Martin Drexel. She was two when her own mother died. Katherine and her sister, Elizabeth, educated at home by governesses, were society belles. Their father, Francis Anthony Drexel, married as his second wife, Emma Bouvier, who was devoted to her stepdaughters. When the parents died, Katherine inherited a fortune. In a papal audience at the Vatican, she told Pope Leo XIII she wanted to give the money to the work with the Indians and Negroes of the United States. Upon his recommendation, she founded the Blessed Sacrament Sisters for Indians and Colored People in 1891. Soon, Mother Katherine began to answer requests for help from Catholic dioceses and other Sisters teaching blacks on the proverbial shoestring, and from Catholic Indian missions in the Southwest. She put more than $12 million of her inheritance into the work. The annals of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Ybor City faithfully record checks received from Mother Katherine Drexel for their work with black education in the Tampa area.
“COME IN AND BE OUR GUESTS”
HISTORIC HOTELS ALONG THE SUNCOAST

by Louise K. Frisbie

But for a quirk of fate, Cedar Key might have become the metropolis of Florida’s Gulf coast, those thirteen Moorish minarets on the Tampa Bay Hotel might have adorned one named the Cedar Key Hotel, and Tampa might have remained the village that it was in 1880.

It almost happened.

As Henry B. Plant considered a western terminus for his railroad, one which would also be a seaport for his steamship lines, Cedar Key looked good. It was then an important port and manufacturing center, the fifth largest town in Florida, the greatest fish and oyster market in the state. Moreover, it already was a railroad town-terminus of the Florida Transit & Peninsular.

Plant bought the FT&P – or thought he had. But the owners of this old cross-state railroad (Fernandina to Cedar Key) refused to sell a certain vital property. Only then did Plant, angrily vowing to “wipe Cedar Key off the map,” turn his attention to the fever-wracked village of Tampa, and develop it instead.

This was a period in history when the Iron Horse was king, and the railroads were the arteries of trade and travel.

Why such emphasis on railroads in an essay on hotels? The answer is that the great hotels built by Plant along Florida’s west coast, and his opposite number on the east coast, Henry M. Flagler, and others after them, large and small, would not have been constructed without the existence of rail service. Florida was accessible previously only by water – its Atlantic and Gulf coasts, its inland rivers and lakes – or by slow and comfortless stage coach, or simply by trail-blazing with wagons drawn by horses or oxen.

Then, in the 1880s, Plant pushed his railroads south and west from Sanford (which was connected by the St. Johns River to Jacksonville and points north), and the towns of Haines City, Winter Haven, Auburndale, Lakeland and Plant City came into existence, like beads on a necklace. This was the pattern of growth in Florida – and when the trains brought sun-seeking visitors, accommodations were provided for them. It was the beginning of Florida’s mammoth tourist industry.

Shown here is a selection of hotels in the fifteen counties represented by Tampa Bay History. Some are large, luxurious and still flourishing, such as the Bellevue Biltmore; others, still sturdy and picturesque, have been converted to different uses. Some have been restored, or are being restored, and still others, like the old Orange Grove in Tampa, are long gone and all but forgotten.
Palm Cottage, built in the 1890s as a guest house at the old Naples Hotel, is listed on the National Register of Historic Sites, and serves as headquarters for the Collier County Historical Society. In 1892 the vacant lot on which it is now located was assessed at $5, and the tax was 6 cents.
The prestigious Punta Gorda Hotel, built in the 1880s at the Gulf-side southern terminus of the Florida Southern Railway, was at one time part of the Plant System. It is shown here as it appeared in the early years. Later it became, in turn, the Charlotte Harbor Inn and Charlotte Harbor Spa, and was popular with sportsmen throughout its existence. It had been modernized and streamlined, and its grounds handsomely landscaped, before it burned in 1959.

All photos unless otherwise noted, courtesy of author.

The Naples Hotel at Naples, a modest sixteen-room structure when it was built in the 1880s, was expanded over the years into this long, rambling, elegant building. In the early years a wooden-wheeled cart, used to carry luggage and freight from the city pier was pushed on a wooden tram line to the hotel, a block away along a sandy trail. The hotel was one of the first buildings in Naples. Walter Haldeman, a member of the original hotel corporation, built Palm Cottage in the early 1890s as a guest house to handle the overflow from the hotel. The hotel was closed in 1962 by its then owner, Henry B. Watkins, who bought and expanded the Beach Club Hotel.

Courtesy of the Collier County Historical Society, Inc.
The Rod and Gun Lodge at Everglades City, popular with hunters and fishermen, stands on the foundations of the first home in the area, built by William Clay. The house was bought by William S. Allen in 1873. After Allen’s death in 1889, his property – the entire townsite – was bought by Capt. George W. Storter, Jr. He enlarged the home over the years, to serve as a store and lodge. In 1923 he sold his holdings to Barron G. Collier, who entertained national and international dignitaries there for many years. Now owned by Martin Bowen, the lodge houses guests in three cottages, containing a total of twenty-five rooms. The original building contains the lobby and dining room.

Photograph courtesy of Morris Storter, Gainesville.

Arcadia’s DeSoto Hotel, built about 1904, occupied the upper two floors of this three-story building. The DeSoto National Bank was on the ground floor, the hotel lobby and dining room on the second floor, and guest rooms on both the second and third floors. Balconies faced both Oak Street and DeSoto Avenue. The site became a parking lot.
The Green Terrace Hotel was built in 1926 by the City of Bowling Green, near the northern Hardee County line. It had twenty-four rooms for transients, and a bar and dining room where Friday and Saturday night social activities were held for guests and townspeople. The first meal served was a dinner for the Masonic Order. Later named the Wayside Inn, the hotel had become a retirement home for elderly women by the time James L. Strack bought the building in 1971 and converted it into an alcohol and drug abuse rehabilitation center. It is now named the Bowling Green Inn.

The Everett Hotel at LaBelle, pictured here about 1920, was built in 1911 by E.E. Goodlow, who gave it his name. He later sold his LaBelle property to Henry Ford who, in turn, sold it to Joe B. Hendry about 1930. The hotel boasted a swimming pool which was enjoyed by townspeople as well as hotel guests until it was closed in the late 1940s. The name had been changed to the Hotel Riverside before it burned in 1954. The owners of the hotel at that time, W.B. and Lois Barron, donated the land on which it stood for construction of the Barron Library.

Courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection, Florida State Archives.
The original sixty-five room Clewiston Inn, built on the ridge of Lake Okeechobee, was the hub of Clewiston’s social life from the time it opened in 1926 until it burned on September 19, 1937. The present Clewiston Inn and Motor Lodge was built in 1938 of brick with steel-lined walls, to withstand the strongest winds that might sweep through the area. Located at U.S. Highway 27 and Royal Palm Way, it has fifty-six rooms and eight apartments. Its bar is noted for a mural of Everglades wildlife, painted by the late Clinton Shepherd of West Palm Beach, covering all four walls. Famous guests at the original inn included President Herbert Hoover, Thomas A. Edison and Harvey Firestone.

Built in 1926 as the Tangerine Hotel, Brooksville’s Windsor Hotel has gained renewed life since December, 1974, when Jean Clymer became its owner and operator. With a three-story main section, the forty-eight room hostelry has two-story wings on either side. Built by a local corporation headed by John C. Emerson, the Tangerine boasted crystal chandeliers and marble floors, and was furnished with wicker furniture. It now has a formal dining room and two lounges, and caters to the traveling public.
The Jacaranda Hotel at Avon Park, built in 1925, still has much of the original furnishings and equipment, including its elevator, installed when the building was constructed. Other original equipment includes the hotel’s sprinkler system (sprinkler heads every eight feet), the refurbished wicker furniture in the lounge, six crystal chandeliers in a banquet room, and a piano, brought from England in 1925. The piano is part of a five-piece orchestra which plays on Sundays after October 1 each year. Modern touches have been added by the present owners, Preston and Ruth Weeks. The picturesque hotel serves both permanent and transient guests.

Harder Hall has been a Sebring landmark since its construction in 1929. Currently owned by Land Resources Corporation, it has 131 rooms. In addition to catering to the traveling public, it is noted for summer golf and tennis camps which attract young players from throughout the country.
One of suburban Tampa’s favorite fun spots in the 1920s and 1930s was Sulphur Springs, with its large swimming pool and alligator farm. Just across the street, and at the end of a streetcar ride north from the heart of the city was the Sulphur Springs Hotel and its accompanying arcade of shops, shown here. Families would sometimes bring a picnic lunch, to be eaten on one of the sidewalk benches in front of the shops. Despite a spirited effort by nostalgic Tampans to save the building, it was torn down to make way for a parking lot.

Photograph courtesy of the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System.

Built in 1860 as a residence for William B. Hooker, Tampa’s first “mansion-like” home was converted after the Civil War into the Orange Grove Hotel. Captain Hooker’s son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Henry L. Crane, were operating the hotel in 1876 when famed poet Sidney Lanier and his wife stayed there for three Winter months. Lanier described the building as a “large three-story house with many odd nooks and corners, altogether clean and comfortable in appearance and surrounded by orange trees in full fruit.” The building is shown here as it looked in its early years. By 1924, the front had been remodeled to provide a second floor porch matching the one on the ground floor, and a smaller covered porch had been extended almost to the sidewalk.

Courtesy of the Florida Collection, USF Library.
Known in its early years as the “Queen of the Frontier,” the Royal Palm Hotel helped to transform Fort Myers from a cow town into a popular Winter resort. Built and furnished by Hugh O’Neill of New York, it opened on January 7, 1898, as the Fort Myers Hotel. For a limited time at the turn of the century it was one of the H.B. Plant chain of luxury hotels. The name was changed to Royal Palm after O’Neill planted an abundance of tropical shrubbery on the grounds. The hotel was said to be the first building in Fort Myers wired for electricity, and each of its four floors contained a “ladies’ retiring room with two porcelain tubs.” The hotel housed servicemen in training during World War II. It was dismantled in 1947-48.

Once said to be the home of legendary pirate Jose Gaspar’s favorite wife, Useppa Island now is occupied by the exclusive Useppa Island Club, and the Collier Inn. Useppa Island was such a favorite with tarpon fishermen that in 1902 the Useppa Inn (shown here), with twenty guest rooms, was built. In 1912, Barron G. Collier bought the island and used the inn as his home. In recent years the building has been restored and is now the Collier Inn. About that unlikely name, Useppa: legend has it that Gaspar’s favorite wife was a captured Spanish beauty named Josefa. He named the island for her, and it appeared on government charts by that name for many years. Josefa finally was changed, on the local Cracker tongue, to Useppa. The island is nestled between La Costa and Pine Islands, twenty-five miles west of Fort Myers, and boasts the highest land in Lee County.

Photograph courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection, Florida State Archives.
The Manavista Hotel at Bradenton was built by H.L. Cole, who had been Henry B. Plant’s business manager in Tampa, and opened to the public on January 1, 1907. Its spacious grounds sloped down to the Manatee River, where a private pier served hotel guests. It was remodeled in the early 1920s, and covered with a coat of rough plaster to resemble Spanish architecture. When larger and more modern hotels were built, the Manavista’s clientele diminished, and it was closed about 1945. This picture was taken when the city was still called Bradentown.

The eight-story Dixie Grande Hotel in Bradenton was built during 1925, and opened in February, 1926. Its first occupants were members of the Philadelphia Phillies baseball team, who were in the city for Spring training. Originally named the Southland Hotel, it was built by a group of local businessmen. As the Dixie Grande, it was surmounted by a flashing neon sign spelling the hotel’s name. The hotel was destroyed by implosion on August 4, 1974, to make way for the glass-sided eight-story office building of the First City Federal Savings & Loan Association.
The Edwinola Hotel, Dade City’s first major building when it was erected in 1912, now forms the entrance to what will soon be the town’s tallest structure, according to Louis Abraham, a local realtor. In the past seventy years, the three-story building has served as a hotel, an elegant New Orleans-style restaurant, the city’s social center, and the headquarters of a small “university.” An eight-story tower now under construction immediately behind the original structure will house 225 retirement apartments. The old Edwinola, refurbished but retaining its original facade, will contain business offices, administrative offices, dining and recreation facilities.

Pass-a-Grille was little more than a village when Mrs. Anna C. Hartley built the handsome Hotel La Plaza in 1906. She was a daughter of Zephaniah Phillips, Pass-a-Grille pioneer who had built his cabin there twenty years earlier. Renamed the Pass-a-Grille Hotel in 1913, it remained that town’s grandest hostelry for nearly a quarter of a century. It was a square frame building ornamented with Victorian “gingerbread” and surrounded by covered verandas.
Any ground-level photograph of the magnificent Belleview Biltmore Hotel at Belleair can encompass only a part of the famous hostelry. It is said to be the largest occupied wooden structure in the world. Built in 1896 as one of the Plant System chain, it boasted Florida’s first hotel golf course – a six-hole layout – when it opened. It now offers its guests two eighteen-hole courses on the hotel grounds (designed in 1915 by Donald J. Ross) and another nearby. The courses were completely renovated in 1973-74. In addition to the many-gabled main structure, there are several guest “cottages” on the expansive grounds.

The Kibler, Lakeland’s first modern hotel, was built in 1913 at a cost of $125,000 by twin brothers, A.B. and D.B. Kibler. Born in North Carolina in 1874, these men became partners in the phosphate industry in Lakeland in 1907, later adding the hotel to their interests. Six years later they sold it to H.B. Carter, who renamed it the Thelma Hotel. In addition to serving travelers, for many years it was a popular place for civic club meetings and other local gatherings.
The Hotel Wales, built in 1911, was the first major building in Lake Wales. The town was established that year on 5,000 acres of pine woods and virgin land by the Lake Wales Land Company. The hotel later became the Lake Shore Hotel, then the Plantation Inn. Famous for many years for its fine food served by waiters and waitresses in ante-bellum dress, it was in continuous seasonal use until it was destroyed by fire on May 24, 1979, shortly after it had closed for the Summer.

The real estate bubble burst before this six-story hotel at Fort Meade could be completed in the 1920s. This steel and concrete skeleton stood at the city's main intersection, Broadway and Charleston Avenue, for almost forty years. Inevitably, it was dubbed the Skeleton Hotel. For a number of years before it was torn down in March, 1964, fresh produce stands operated under the shelter of what would have been the floor of the second story.
When Col. J. Hamilton Gillespie, an energetic young man newly-arrived from Scotland in 1886, decided to promote Sarasota by building a hotel, he announced it would be “for people of wealth and influence ... the finest hotel on the entire west coast,” according to Del Marth in “Yesterday’s Sarasota.” The DeSoto Hotel on the waterfront at Main and Gulf Stream was the result. It was opened with a grand ball on Feb. 25, 1887 – the first big social event in that area. The hotel had 30 rooms, lobby and dining room. By 1913 a new wing had been added and the name changed to the Belle Haven Inn; rates were then $2.50 to $3.50 a day. The Inn was razed in 1925. The site is now occupied by the Orange Blossom Club Apartments.

Photograph courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection, Florida State Archives.

The John Ringling Hotel at Sarasota was built in 1926 by Owen Burns, who named it the Vernona, for his wife. About the same time, circus tycoon John Ringling was attempting to build a lavish hotel on nearby Longboat Key, to be known (by payment of a royalty) as the Ritz-Carlton. The building boom burst and that hotel was never completed. Instead, Ringling bought Burns’ El Vernona and gave it his own name. It became a seasonal haven for celebrities of the day. “Nearly everything fashionable that went on in town was held at the hotel, where six chefs in the kitchen served dinner on golden plates that were counted every night,” wrote Del Marth. The hotel later served as an apartment hotel, under the name Ringling Towers. It now stands vacant, the property of Gardinier, Inc.

Photograph courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection, Florida State Archives.
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WEATHERING THE STORMS: THE FLOYD WILDER FAMILY AND THE GREAT HURRICANES OF THE 1920s

Introduction by Ruth S. Irwin

Motorists speeding along Highway 27 around the south shore of Lake Okeechobee between Clewiston and South Bay are aware of lush cane fields and vegetable plantings on the one hand and the Hoover Dike rising up to contain the lake on the other. It is difficult to visualize the wild beauty and the virtual inaccessibility of this area before the turn of the century.

Unique in the world, the Everglades had long been a land of legend and strange tales. The first written source of information of this mysterious region came from a shipwrecked Spaniard, captured in 1545 as a boy and held captive for seventeen years by the fierce Calusa chief, Carlos. Hernando d’Eascalante Fontenado was told by his captors of the existence of a great interior lake known as Mayami. In 1823 a map of Florida carried the word Everglades. The Seminoles gave the lake its present name of Okeechobee. They had been driven south into the area during the Seminole Wars, and in 1837, the soldiers pursuing them verified the location of the lake and the difficult terrain around it.

The early explorers found a wonderland of moving water, fish, exotic birds, snakes, insects, orchids, ferns, and animal life. They noted the thousands of birds that rose up each morning from the great bird rookeries in the custard apple trees. This dense belt of trees, festooned with moon vines, girded the lake on the east and south shores and fanned out a mile or two into the razor-sharp saw grass. The custard apple land gave its name to the fantastically rich organic soil known as custard apple muck or black gold.

The countless years of slow vegetable decay, low elevation, warm climate, heavy rainfall, and periodic flooding built up the ground level of the land to as much as fourteen feet above bed rock. The great bird rookeries, the land lying fallow, flooding, depth, and age all played a part in the formation of custard apple muck.

The rise of farming on these shores was preceded by a chain of events on many fronts. Lone egret hunters, as well as bobcat, coon and alligator trappers, came first. The digging of the canals linked the lake to the outside world and gave rise to a lucrative fishing industry. Great land sales were made to ease many a financial crisis for the state. The sale of 108,000 acres of land adjoining the south shore to Richard J. Bolles was made in 1908, and three years later, he built an impressive hotel at Lake Harbor to foster land sales. Hundreds of prospective land customers were brought in by yacht or steamboat from Ft. Myers and Ft. Lauderdale. Farm sites were widely advertised in newspapers throughout the country.

The early farmers who came after World War I into the 1920s were the real pioneers. Many of them were veterans or southern farmers who had been wiped out by low prices on their farm...
crops, following the war. They were able to grow several crops of winter vegetables during the farming season, and they found ready markets. They also encountered many difficulties – flooding, getting their vegetables to market by boat before they spoiled, drainage and soil problems, muck fires, drought, and hurricanes.

Towns and settlements on the south and east shores were formed, soil and drainage problems were solved, highways and railroads were built to speed the vegetables to market and end dependence on the water as a means of travel. A mud and sand dike was built, and after the hurricanes of 1926 and 1928, it was replaced with the present strong dependable dike and a sophisticated system of water control. Vegetable farming and the sugar cane industry arose as it is known today. Commercial fishing disappeared as well as commercial boat traffic on the lake and were replaced by sport fishing and pleasure craft.

Pioneer families in the Glades have important stories to tell of the lives they lived. There is hardly a pioneer family on the south shore that did not lose family members or close friends in the 1928 hurricane. At that time the mud and sand dike was breached and a great wave of water, driven by hurricane winds, swept over the land and drowned over 2000 people. Today, most of those who can recall the disaster were children then, but they can vividly remember details of family life and their experiences.

It is important to preserve their stories not only to give their children and grandchildren a sense of continuity but also as a record of historical event, human endeavor, and persistent fortitude. One such family was that of Floyd Oliver Wilder of South Bay. He came by boat to this area as a child with his family in the early 1920s. He was a farmer or worked in farm related activities most of his life until his retirement. It has been my privilege to record his story.

* * * * * *

I was born on February 2, 1918, in Knoble, Arkansas to Oliver Wilder and Willie Riegar Wilder, the youngest of seven living children. My mother and father had planned to come to Florida because their health was bad in Arkansas. Times were not too good in Arkansas, and my father was interested in the possibilities that were opening up in south Florida with land development.

My mother did not live to see Florida because she died of blood poisoning. I was told that she held and nursed me in the late afternoon. She died before morning. She was buried on the day that I was one year old. My father sold almost everything as soon after this as he could. My sister Vivian remembers that among other things there were two thousand fruit jars that were sold or given away - a silent reminder of my mother with her German background of providing and canning food for our large family.

My oldest sister Vivian was born in 1903, Mildred in 1906, Hilda in 1908, Melvin in 1910, Raymond in 1912, Laura in 1914, and I in 1918. My father moved with us to Wauchula in January of 1920. He had great courage in moving a large family with young children, but we were a close family and the older girls were a great help to him. My father did not marry again.
My father went to work for a Mr. Ashball in Wauchula, cutting timber, soon after our move to Florida. We moved on to Avon Park where he continued to cut timber. We then moved to Moore Haven on the train. My father made crates and picked and packed tomatoes. The ones in our family old enough to work picked tomatoes. The next move was to Clewiston and then to South Bay, where my father started farming. It was in the early twenties.

I remember our move to South Bay on Captain Felix Forbes’ boat that hauled about everything including passengers and mail. Travel in those days had to be made mostly by boat all around the lake, as there were no roads to speak of. It was almost impossible to go to Moore Haven by land. In wet weather it took half a day to go to Lake Harbor from South Bay by land. You had to cross several dead rivers, and the only way to get across was to cut down custard apple trees and put them in the river beds in order not to get bogged down. South Bay, at that time, was just a few buildings and houses on the North New River Canal bank.

The boats on the lake were our only contact with the outside world when we first came to South Bay. They made an impression on my mind as a boy growing up. I remember the Estero, which had once belonged to the Koreshan Unity, a strange religious group south of Ft. Myers. The Estero was seventy-five feet long and narrow and it was used for hauling vegetables and freight. The Fox and the Arline Y, cabin boats, carried mail and passengers and had regular routes on the lake. Tug boats pulled barges up and down the North New River Canal, taking produce to Ft. Lauderdale and bringing back freight. I remember when we first came and for a long time after, the seine boats of the commercial fishermen.

My father started farming, and we moved several times in the South Bay area. We lived in a little house on a dead river which is still in a field on the edge of South Bay. A Mr. Hutchinson who had no family was a neighbor and a Mrs. Thigpen, whose husband had left her, lived nearby with her three children.

There was a custard apple ridge around the east and south side of the lake. If the wind blew from the northwest it blew the water into the dead rivers which provided natural drainage. If the wind blew long enough the water spilled out from the rivers and piled up all around. The water flowed back into the lake when the wind slacked.

My father started farming with machete, axe, hoe, and hand plow. The custard apple trees were covered with moonvines that would die when the frost got to them in the winter. The custard
apple was dormant in the winter, would get new leaves in the spring, and the moonvines would sprout out again. My father cleared virgin land and farmed it for the first time. Custard apple trees were no great problem to clear, but there were small elderberry trees that were hard to get up. The custard apple land had the greatest fertility. The fertility of the land diminished as custard apple gave way to willow, elder, and saw grass.

The custard apple trees provided a haven for birds of many kinds. There were great numbers of wild ducks on the lake, and there were coots, ibis, egrets, hawks, buzzards, jack daws, and blackbirds. Sometimes, crows drifted through, and there were Wilson snipe with their long yellow legs.

My father leased several places, and I remember that we lived for awhile about a mile and a half from South Bay down toward Okeelanta. Okeelanta was about four miles south of South Bay and it was the largest settlement in the area when we first came.

My father moved back to a farm owned by a Mr. Nimmie in the Bean City area, just west of South Bay. Mr. Nimmie was a good man, and my father liked him very much. Mr. Nimmie and Kuskin Hovie were trying to grow avocados on a big scale. The avocado trees were planted on diked up land with ditches dug on each side in an attempt to keep their roots dry, for avocados will not stand wet feet. I remember trying to eat a green avocado.
We moved into a big building on this farm which was about one mile east of Bean City. My father, at various times, grew beans, tomatoes, bell pepper, egg plant, English and black eyed peas, potatoes, onions, and pole beans. He grew field corn to feed the stock and the chickens. At first, our farm produce was sent to Ft. Lauderdale by boat. Later, vegetables were taken across the lake to Moore Haven and sent out by rail.

I remember that after the hand plow, we had horses to pull the plows, and after awhile an old Fordson tractor was acquired and also a Model T truck – this was about 1925 or 1926. My sister Vivian remembers that she made a pleasant trip with the Nimmie family to West Palm Beach in their car one time. A rock road from West Palm Beach to Belle Glade had been constructed by 1923. A muck road continued on from South Bay to Clewiston-the rock road, old highway 27, was not finished until after the storm of 1928.

The house that we lived in, down toward Bean City, was located between the new, unfinished diked-up roadway by the canal and the old mud and sand dike at the lake. The dike had been started in 1923 and finished in 1925.

Very few people remember the first storm in 1926 but I remember it hit us in a hard way because of the location of our house. It must have struck in July, and it was a hurricane to us.

The day this hurricane blew in, my father and Mr. Nimmie had gone to South Bay. They had walked across the roadway, crossed the canal in a row boat, and walked down the south side of the canal into South Bay. They left the boat tied up on the south side of the canal. Melvin, Raymond, Laura, and I were home alone when the rain began to fall and the wind off the lake began to blow.

The dike holding back the waters of Lake Okeechobee was breached and the water began to flow in all around us. The diked-up roadway that was being built held back the water like the rim of a bowl. We were soon trapped in ten or twelve feet of water. I noticed that Nellie, the horse, was swimming in the water. The house filled rapidly and we were forced to leave. We swam through the wind and the rain to the diked-up roadway and climbed on top of it.

We huddled on the road beaten by wind and rain. Mr. and Mrs. Hudson and their children, who lived on toward Bean City from us, made it to the road and all of us huddled there together. I heard Mrs. Hudson cry out over the sound of the wind, “Oh Lord! Why do you do this to me?”

A piece of tin flew by at this instant, hit her on the head, and knocked her out. About this time my father and Mr. Nimmie appeared on the other side of the canal – a welcome sight to all of us. They immediately brought the boat over and began to ferry us to the south side of the canal, two at a time. Mrs. Hudson came to and she was not hurt too bad. Soon, we were all on the other side.

We went south out into a field about a mile from the canal and all of us crawled into a corn crib half filled with shucked corn and pumpkins. We chewed dry corn and raw pumpkin when we got
hungry, as there was nothing else to eat. We stayed there until the next afternoon. The water began to drain back in the lake when the storm died down and the wind abated.

We made our way home to find that the house had been flooded and all of our food was ruined. Black, soupy mud had soaked our mattresses and bedding and lay four to six inches deep on everything. My father went to South Bay and got food from V. C. Denton’s grocery store and brought it back to us that same afternoon. The Fordson tractor had been completely submerged. They had to replace a coil in each of its four cylinders. They drained and dried it out and finally got it running again.

Lots of fish had blown out of the lake, and water lay in pools all around. Melvin was trying to kick a catfish out of the water and the fish finned him through his boot. It did not hurt him very much, but it wouldn't have mattered if it had for there was not a doctor anywhere around.

I heard, a long time later, that the wind blowing from north to south in this July hurricane or big storm, pushed the water from the north side of the lake. The people in Okeechobee walked out on the dry lake bed and gathered up fish quite a way out before the water came back again.

My sister Vivian was working as a waitress in a cafe in Clewiston run by a Mrs. Dinger. Mildred was working in West Palm Beach. Hilda stayed at home and did most of the cleaning and cooking before she married Clarence Lee. She had two children by her first marriage, and she and Clarence had a baby. They were living at Sebring Farm near Lake Harbor; Clarence operated a boat on the lake; and Melvin looked after Laura, Raymond, and me when our father was not around.

The next hurricane was not long in coming. On September 17, 1926 it hit Miami with winds of 140 miles an hour or better. High winds reached Lake Okeechobee on September 18, and winds of severe hurricane strength swept across the lake and backed waters up in the southwest corner by morning. A great swell of water, ten or fifteen feet high, washed the dike away at Moore Haven, swept houses and buildings away, and drowned several hundred people.

Strangely enough, this hurricane did not do much damage to us, even though the wind was terrific. My father made a rope swing and tied it to the two by fours holding the roof. The larger ones of us took turns sitting in the swing, and the roof held and was only slightly damaged. Wind driven rain came into the house, but it was clean.

Vivian, in Clewiston, was living with the Dinger family for whom she worked. She became uneasy as the storm gathered strength at night and at 1:30 a.m. she made her way to Madam and Papa Watanabe’s Hotel on the ridge and rented a room. Many people were in the hotel and others continued to come even after the storm abated. The Watanabes, Japanese and good of heart, fed people all that day, and Vivian helped them. Wet clothes hung on the second floor screened in porch of the hotel for several days, and Vivian’s room was piled high with wet clothes. Everyone made a run on Cecil Parkinson’s store, and the women turned out in dungarees. Parkinson’s completely sold out.
The Watanabes begged Vivian to stay on and work for them. She was glad to do so, because the Dinger family, scared by the storm, left Clewiston. The Watanabes went back to Japan after a time, but Vivian continued on when Mrs. Downs took over the Clewiston Inn. She worked there for fifteen years.

All of us were brought up to work. Melvin and Raymond stayed around home, and they would go out to work in addition to helping my father farm. They worked on the barges that plied the lake. Melvin drove tractors, and he worked on Brown’s peanut farm. Everyone did what they could to earn a buck.

My older brothers and sisters always maintained that our dad never punished Laura or me because we were so young when our mother died. I can surely say that my dad got me one time. Raymond and I were out behind an old, blown-down building, shucking corn, and Raymond had a pack of cigarettes. I talked him into letting me take a puff or two. I had just put the cigarette in my mouth when my dad stepped around the corner of the old building and caught me. He swatted me with a board, and the board had a nail in the end of it. He might let me take a puff of his cigar or a sip of his moonshine as I sat on his lap but he drew the line on a cigarette.
My father was always good to me and I was very close to him as long as he lived.

My father started farming at Gardner’s place, which was south of the first curve of the highway going north out of South Bay. We moved into a small house there. In spite of setbacks, we were doing well by sending our produce by boat across the lake to Moore Haven; it went out by rail from there.

Mr. Gardner helped my father build a house for us in 1927, after we bought some lots in South Bay on what is now known as 2nd Street. The house was located four or five lots south of where the railroad tracks are today. We were a quarter of a mile or so from the sand and mud dike on the lake.

My father built our house to take advantage of all prevailing breezes. Four rooms projected out on four sides, and each room had a door and windows. It was built wrong to stand the wind of the 1928 hurricane.

The day before the September 16, 1928 storm was not too bad. It was cloudy, breezy, and cool with sudden showers. Sunday, the sun came out, and the wind was blowing briskly. We had been told that there was a hurricane, but no one expected it to come into our area.
Hilda and Clarence Lee came from Sebring Farm with the children – Billy, Geneva, and the baby. In the afternoon, Gardner’s two sons, Billy and Johnny, who was my age, Raymond and I went down to the North New River Canal bank, nearby. We were skipping rocks along the water. The wind was strong. The lock was closed, and water was piling up around a big barge tied up in the lock.

Mr. Gardner had been up around the post office, and he got word that the hurricane was coming our way. He came down to get his boys. This was about 3:00 or 4:00 p.m., and he may have been down to talk to my father. He told Raymond and me to go on home because a hurricane was coming.

Hilda and Laura cooked a fried chicken dinner, and we ate. Mrs. Thigpen with Lillian, Pearl, and Philip, who was a buddy of mine, were with us. Just before dark we noticed the water coming up, and my father, Clarence, and all of us boys ran out and began gathering up chickens, putting them in the corn crib. We had about 200 chickens. It was raining, the wind was blowing a gale, and the water was coming up fast. It got so dark that we gave up on the chickens and went into the house which was built on pilings.
The water began to come into the house. The water rose fast, and my father said we must go up in the ceiling loft. I went up first with a kerosene lamp. They started passing up blankets and other things to me, and all of us were soon up in the loft – Dad, Mrs. Thigpen and her three children, Hilda and Clarence and their three children, Melvin, Raymond, Laura and I. There were fourteen of us in the loft.

Something hit the house and knocked it off the piling about 9:00 p.m. I will always believe it was part of the grandstand from the ball park that was located to the north of our house. Since the house sat between the canal and the roadway and the locks on the canal were closed, the water piled up and the wind swirled the house through the water. The house shifted and leaned.

The last thing I heard my father say was, “Run to the far corner!” and everyone ran to the far corner and huddled there.

“Hold on to the roof!” he yelled.
I reached up and held on to the timbers. The roof went, “Zing,” and then it was gone. There was no sound except the sound of the wind and the rain. The house disintegrated and dumped us into seventeen feet of water.

I could feel people kicking me as we came out of the huddle. We were dumped out in utter darkness amid debris. Glass, tin, and flying timbers were all around us in the air and water. I must have grabbed hold of about three different things as I was dislodged from one to grab another.

The next morning, I discovered with the first light from the sun that I had caught a section of sheeting from a tar paper shack. I was on the east side of the canal near where the bridge was located. The timber to which I clung was lodged on a slant in a big guava tree, and this had served as a wind break. I was wet, cold, and so exhausted that I hated to get up. I must have dozed off again.

Search parties continued to hunt victims of the storm for many weeks. The burning of unidentified bodies in South Bay after the hurricane is shown here.

Photograph courtesy of Linda and Jack Stanley and the Belle Glade Municipal Library.
Harold Clark found me as he was trying to salvage things from his family’s home. He told me that some of my folks were down near the post office and had been looking for me. Raymond, who had been lodged near the bridge, yelled at me about that time, and not being able to realize what had happened I asked him, “What are you doing here?”

I climbed up on the roadway and crossed the bridge. The post office was narrowly separated from the locks, and I saw the barge still in the locks. I learned later that most of the people in South Bay had survived by getting on the barge. Ivan Van Horn was given credit for saving the lives of the 211 people on board which were most of the people in the South Bay area. He stayed outside on the deck all night, unprotected from the wind and the rain, and kept the bilge pump running while others bailed water, and the barge stayed afloat.

They took me to the post office which was still standing and Mrs. Hartline, who lived there, gave me some soup. She also gave me some of Eric’s clothes which I remember were too big for me. I had gone through the hurricane unhurt, barefoot, in overalls and shirt and I lost only one
I saw Melvin, Raymond, Hilda, Clarence, and Lillian Thigpen who were there ahead of me.

My dad’s body was the first body recovered after the hurricane passed. Ivan Van Horn found him on the west side of the canal close to the bridge. His skull had been crushed.

The bodies of Philip Thigpen or “Man,” my friend, and his sister Pearl were on the west edge of the canal. They must have been drowned. Raymond was carried to the bridge and hung on to it until just before daybreak.

Melvin was able to hang on to a small building back of the lumber yard on the west side of the canal. Old Mr. Hutchinson had a flashlight and had started to our house in the early part of the storm. He lived near Mrs. Thigpen, and he had a special interest in looking out for her and her children. He had been unable to reach our house and had taken refuge in the small building before Melvin landed there.

It was nothing short of a miracle that Melvin was able to grab Hilda as she came tumbling along in the dark waters behind him. The three of them were able to hang on to this building through the storm. I distinctly remember that I had seen a light blink several times as I was

Photograph courtesy of Linda and Jack Stanley and the Belle Glade Municipal Library.
thrown about in the black night and the tumbling waters. It might have been Mr. Hutchinson’s flashlight.

In addition to the loss of our father, Laura was drowned as were Hilda’s three children. Mrs. Thigpen, Pearl, and Philip were drowned. Eight of the fourteen who took refuge in our house were lost, and six of us survived. I was ten years old.

We left South Bay the second day after the storm on a truck belonging to the Huffman Construction Company. We went to Belle Glade and on to West Palm Beach where we were taken to a hotel on the lake.

Mildred had gone through the storm in the George Washington Hotel where she was working at that time. She was frantic with worry, and she was looking for us. She found me out on the sidewalk trying to hull a coconut.

The Red Cross and other organizations put up a tent city in West Palm Beach for the refugees of the storm. We stayed there several months, were able to get groceries and other necessities, and the iceman delivered ice to us. Melvin had gone back to the Glades to help with the cleanup.

We were finally able to return to South Bay, and we lived all winter in two army tents put up by the Salvation Army or the Red Cross. The Red Cross built a house for us on two lots which Melvin owned across the street from the house we live in today.

Mildred came back and stayed for several years, and all of us lived together. Mildred married Nello Greer from Belle Glade, and Melvin married Vyrue Taylor. Melvin and the others looked out for Raymond and me, and we continued to go to school in South Bay.

Raymond and I grew up with the boys around South Bay. Vernie and Willie Boots, who lost their mother, father, and brother, Virgil, at Sebring Farm in the hurricane lived with their half brother William Rawls. They were friends of mine.

Once Vernie, Willie, Johnny and Billy Gardner, Bernam Woodham and I were swimming and playing alligator tag by the spillway at the locks down by the bridge. Vernie jumped in the water,
hit Bernam with his hip, and knocked him out. Bernam came up bobbing. I grabbed him and just as we went through the spillway I managed to grab hold of an iron brace and swing us out of the swift water. The other boys grabbed us and pulled us out of danger. Bernam revived, but he did not swim any more that day. He went on home.

The lake was also our playground. My friends and I waded, swam, and played tag up and down the south shore. We would go as far west as Lake Harbor and wade and swim from there to Ritta Island and all the way around it.

C.E. Thomas lived in his old house on the east side of the island, and he farmed his land there. He had lost all of his family in the ’28 hurricane except his son, Mutt. Mutt was then living with an aunt up in north Florida land going to school. Mr. Thomas wanted me and my friends to stay and eat with him, and we almost always did. He seemed so lonesome there, living alone and farming his land.

The commercial fishermen would be out fishing in their seine boats, and they were always glad to see us when we went out on the lake. They would be insulted if we did not stop and eat with them. We would watch them seine the fish with their great nets. We would watch the big bass jump in the nets and see the nets filled with cat and bream. The men always insisted that we pick out the fish we wanted to take home with us.

My friends and I had custard apple wars, fighting each other with custard apples. One has to search today to find custard apple trees that were once so plentiful. Most of those that were not grubbed up by the farmers were cleared out by the great storm.

We fished off the old mud dike using the tails of grasshoppers for bait. We could pick off a bream almost every time by just putting our line down.

I was helping my brother-in-law, Nello Greer, over on Torrey Island sometime after the hurricane. We plowed up human bones. It was not uncommon for farmers to find skulls in the fields after the storm.

As time went on I grew up. I met Lillie at Milton Crouch’s packing house, now South Bay Growers, where we were both working. Her father, Bennett Hobbs, moved with his family to South Bay in 1935.

Lillie and I were married on August 8, 1937. We first lived in a house that we rented from Russell Fisher several blocks from our present home. Melvin bought a house that a Mr. Alys had built, and we rented that house from him for several years.

A Mr. Hawkins built the two story house that we have lived in ever since. He wanted to leave the area, and he sold the house to us for $3,000.00. We moved in three weeks before our daughter, Linda, was born. There are four upstairs bedrooms in the house. Mr. Hawkins said that he wanted to see us fill them up. We did just that.
Linda was born on August 8, 1943, Sharon was born December 5, 1945, Theresa on September 22, 1948, and Floyd Oliver Jr. (Buddy) was born on February 9, 1951.

This story was written so that today's younger generation might have a record of how life was in the Glades in the early days. The Wilder family can be counted among the pioneers on the south of Lake Okeechobee.
A FRENCHMAN IN BROOKSVILLE

translated by Charles Wrong

Editor’s Note: In the Fall/Winter 1979 issue of TBH (Vol. I No. 2), we published an excerpt from Edmond Johanet’s Un Francais Dans La Floride, which was originally published at Tours in 1890. Johanet was an intellectual who visited areas that were not easily accessible at the time, including Pasco and Hernando Counties, and his diary records his contacts with and reaction to the inhabitants of the “less civilized” regions of Florida. His comparisons with the daily life and institutions of the French people give his observations unique flavor. Monsieur Johanet’s descriptions of Brooksville are every bit as charming as were his comments on Dade City, which appeared in these pages previously.

Finally I came to Brooksville, county seat of Hernando County. I arrived there at 8 p.m., tired out, aching all over, but happy.

It had already been pitch dark for the past hour and a half. I was surprised to see that the carriage was not provided with lanterns. They are apparently unnecessary in that region, being replaced by the instinct of the horses, who are much more farseeing than we are. I paid $12, a little over 60 francs, for 16 leagues wrung with difficulty from the sands in ten hours. That’s really for nothing!

I rested up comfortably from the experience in my boarding-house bed. I had been offered a room with two beds, one of them already occupied; but I declared that the society of the cockroaches that I saw running up and down the walls would be enough to charm my solitude.

When I woke up I was completely stupefied. I had been set down, the previous night, in a town; in the main square of Brooksville. Now, at first light, I found myself in the country! The streets of this county seat (a “county” is the equivalent of a French “department”) are like nothing so much as a chain of verdant hills, with ravines and precipices; in the middle of which horses, mules, cows and pigs feed at liberty, on terms of complete friendship with the inhabitants. I saw a swarm of vultures that had just landed on the carcass of a donkey. I grabbed my gun in order to slaughter them, but somebody shouted “Hold it there, you fool, there’s a five-dollar fine for every vulture killed!” It was explained to me that the functions of the highway department were carried out by a company of these carrion-eaters, and that they do a better job of cleaning the roads of refuse than any street sweeper of Paris. Sure enough, with a couple of pecks these birds of prey converted a stinking carcass into a very clean skeleton.

Unfortunately they didn't carry off the bones. It’s not their “job.” It isn’t anybody’s “job.” That word “job” applies to every piece of work contracted for, to every item of piecework, to every occupation.

Nor is it the vultures’ “job” to eat up the side-dishes: dirty bits of paper, greasy rags, old pieces of leather, scraps of iron, the remains of wooden cases, fragments of jam jars, rotting bags, torn
clothes, with which these verdant roads are strewn. Nobody in Florida ever dreams of mending anything. When a button drops off, it can drop off in peace, with no fear of ever being replaced by a fortunate rival; if a tear appears, it is left free to grow and grow; if you get a spot of mud on your clothes, you leave it to the fresh air to clean it off. No garment can be said to have finally lost favor until it has passed from a white owner to a black one. When a black dweller in the wilds can no longer tell into which hole he ought to put his arm or his leg, he jettisons the garment in the main public square of Brooksville, along with old hats and nameless, topless boots, to the great joy of cockroaches, bugs, fleas, and other insects which feed royally on human sweat.

I ventured beyond the public square. I came to the main street: all the houses were of wood! They were square in shape, and rested on wooden blocks 50 centimetres high; they looked like immense closets standing erect. Commercial buildings carry enormous signs; they look like booths from a fair installed permanently on a little hill. Most of them contain stores of general merchandise, selling everything: butter and jewelry, smoked meat and lace, shoes and dishes. If you don’t have any money, you can barter a steer for a complete suit of clothes. As it isn't easy to give you change from a steer, they will enter up the value in your account, and until the price of the steer is exhausted you can go on buying an umbrella, a hat, writing paper, cigars, a subscription to Le Figaro, in fact everything needed to give life its charm.
Two other houses contain “druggist stores,” pharmacies, very well supplied and very tempting. I also saw three houses containing doctors’ surgeries. I don't know where these doctors and druggists got their training, but if I were a sick man I would distrust their prescriptions and the way they are prepared. They can’t do you good, and can only do you harm. I would have more confidence in the specialities, in cans or bottles, sent down by some big factory up north. It can be assumed that these last were made up from some formula approved by the Academy of Medicine in New York. Prescriptions, on the other hand...! I saw one that was given by a doctor who could be completely confident of his title, because he had bestowed it on himself!

These drug-stores all sell whiskey, rum, brandy, and strong liquors in general. By law, such liquors may only be sold there, because these places cater to the sick! The American drug-store, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, reminds me of those arsonists who are the first to run to put out the fires their own criminal hands have lit.

Bars, tobacconists, a barber, offices of attorneys at law and public notary [sic], a letter-out of horses and carriages for hire, a carriage-builder, a saddler, carpenters, restaurants, boarding-houses, a skating-rink, three printing presses bringing out as many newspapers, ironmongers, grain and feed merchants, a watchmaker, a painter: that is the world of business.

There is a large hotel, the Hernando Hotel, very well run, comfortably furnished, the property of Major John Parsons, managed by L.Y. Jennes. The cooking is very good, but very expensive:
$3 per day. It is done by a black woman, the wife of old James who was formerly a slave of the Garay family. The $3 includes the price of the room; the weekly rate is $10 to $15. A plantation of orange trees, it is true, surrounds the hotel. It is located on the highest ground of Brooksville, 300 feet above sea level, and from its windows the view extends for 10 leagues round. This is very rare in Florida, a flat region covered with forests, and this fact alone explains why Brooksville was founded where it stands. The town in fact has no water supply: no stream flows through it, and you have to go some distance to find a lake.

On this plateau stand some attractive villas, sheltered by the orange trees; also the post-office, the telegraph office, and the Court House.

The Court House is the community building: the tribunal for all levels of jurisdiction from the simple police court to the court of appeal and the assize court; the town hall and the theatre. In the auditorium death sentences are pronounced, weddings are solemnised, comedies and dramas are performed. On the ground floor several notaries public and lawyers have their offices. Here you will find the registration and mortgage offices kept by the clerk of the court; the treasury, the tax office, the auction mart; everything, in fact, and much else besides.

As the vultures do not have the “job” of cleaning up the Court House, the floor, littered with old papers, orange peel and cigar butts, has never suffered the indignity of a broom. Everyone brings in a bit of dirt on his shoes, and the result is that a mixture of garbage and sand rises quite a bit above the level of the soles of your shoes. In contrast to the floor, the litigant finds himself stripped clean.

Brooksville has, in addition, two churches for white folks and two for black. One of the white churches is Methodist, the other Baptist. The Baptist minister is the Reverend Frank de Courcy, descended from a former French Protestant family which emigrated as a result of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. As for the black churches, the devil himself, be he never so black, could never tell what they are praying to. He would be deafened by their epileptic singing, their rhythmical stamping of feet and clapping of hands, and their brazen-throated preachers. It goes without saying that, white or black, these churches are built of wood. The white churches, with their steeples, really do have the feel of churches. From a long way off they are exactly like those edifices that children put up with the wooden blocks of their building games. They look as if they had been just set down on the grass; and in fact they have no foundations, any more than the other wooden houses of Florida. You feel you could take them apart piece by piece.

Brooksville has two mixed schools [coeducational?], one a public school, the other a free school. The teacher of the latter reads French, and makes an effort to talk it and to teach it: all credit to him. The little students go to class barefooted and bare-legged. You hear no sound of wooden shoes on the floor. In America the wooden shoe is unknown, to both sexes and to all ages.

The administration of Brooksville consists of a mayor, a central commissioner, a mayor’s secretary, a collector of city taxes, and nine aldermen or councillors (the mayor being one). The school board is composed of a president and four board members. So much for the municipal government. The Hernando county administration is also located in Brooksville. The sheriff
performs the functions of prefect and of hangman. France, as you see, does not have a monopoly of hangmen/prefects. The current President of the United States, Grover Cleveland, in his capacity of sheriff, has hanged three men; this did not prove an obstacle to his getting married. The prefect or sheriff is assisted by a general council.

The rector of the academy, the treasurer-general, the director of taxes and the tax collector have the same functions as in France.

. . . The court is composed of a judge, a solicitor, an usher, and twelve jurors for civil and criminal cases. Its sessions are held twice a year, in March and April. The tribunal is composed of one judge, and that’s plenty – this judge sits only once a month; he’s a man of leisure.

Finally, the county sends to Parliament [the State legislature] one senator and two deputies [representatives].

The organization of public powers is thus complete in each county, as it is in France in each department.

Not that I took all this in when I first came to Brooksville. At the start I took nothing in at all, so strange and incomprehensible did the town seem to me! I understood nothing about it. I saw some inhabitants, but there didn’t seem to be enough of them to need so many shops and churches.

“Wait till Saturday,” I was told; “You’ll see.”

And now it was Saturday; market day. Market of what? Nothing was brought in. I saw a lot of natives spreading their wares over the wooden sidewalks, but they did not obstruct the traffic. I was waiting for the arrival of carts full of peasants and vegetables, peasant women and poultry, discharging all their loads onto the public square in the picturesque operation whereby the countryside takes over the town. I was, hoping to see the fat farmer’s wife offering “a skinned duck to the fine lady who haggles over the price.” Not a bit of it. If any of the locals brought any goods, they sold them immediately in the store of general merchandise with which they had an account, and in exchange they took away all sorts of provisions, but not much in the way of change. Such people, anyway, are quite rare in Florida, for the little that people produce they consume themselves. Saturday is accordingly the day of business for the shops rather than for the country people. And “country people” is the wrong term if we understand it to mean peasants. Florida has neither peasants nor townsfolk. Everyone is alike. You live in the town or in the woods; that’s the only difference.

Come into town on a Saturday and you will be convinced of this fact. You don’t see any carts. Everyone arrives, like a landed proprietor, in a buggy: a little light carriage mounted on four large, very fine wheels; in a wagon, a sort of dray with four wheels, drawn by two mules; on horseback; or on the back of a mule, an animal so proud of its descent from a horse that it is as stubborn as a donkey.
All these means of transportation fill Brooksville with ladies and misses from the woods, in light dresses all of white, with large shepherdess-style hats. You would take them for bunches of daisies from the meadows, brought to town by satyrs and fauns. And the men, with their goatees, have quite the look of satyrs and fauns about them; unless, that is, their big hats, their collarless shirts, their torn, stained, and threadbare coats, and their trousers tucked into their boots would lead you to mistake them for mountebanks from a fair. Everyone is a gentleman in these parts; so these, too, are gentlemen. Our horse-dealers, cattle-traders, and pig-sellers do not make so good an impression; but our marquises make an incomparably better one. All the same, one sees strange things in the wilds; and I have seen, with my own eyes, some quite peerless gentlemen, with good shoes, good clothes, good haircuts, rivals of George Brummel. They looked rather unfashionable. The dresses of their wives and daughters came from the best dressmakers of New York. How greatly I prefer the white muslin and the shepherdess hats that look so delightful on these daughters of free America, so fresh under the eternal Florida spring!

The origins of Brooksville do not go back to darkest antiquity like Mycenae and Troy. To judge by the age of the oldest plantations of the area, the foundation of Brooksville can’t go back more than thirty years. Like girls, the young cities of America count their years in the springtime; at the time of the lilac or the orange blossom, according to latitude. Old cities conceal their age under their ruins; young ones proclaim it by their trees.
About 20 years ago, in the [congress], there were two deputies: Brook[s] and Sumner. One fine day, having run out of arguments, Brooks knocked Sumner cold. Was it for this exploit that the name of Brooksville was given to the town we are dealing with? Or was it for a feat of arms which earned him a more honorable mention, for Brooks, if I remember rightly, was a major or a general? [The source of the bloody dispute was over slavery, which Charles Sumner of Massachusetts opposed and Preston Brooks of South Carolina defended.]

In memory of those two prize-fighters, the inhabitants of Brooksville long preserved, as a tradition, the habit of blowing each others’ brains out. Being particularly at odds with the blacks, they amused themselves by making them bite the dust. There were so few amusements in those days! Fortunately, these habits have been modified by having other things to think about. After three black brothers, quarrelsome people apparently, were struck down by the same hand, the series of rifle and revolver shots came to an end.

The legend of American towns built in a single day is not borne out by those of Florida. Indeed, a town does not begin to build its first house until the area round about, peopled by folk who live on their plantations, demands a center for provisions and a place to do business. The first house is always one of those stores, furnished with all the objects of prime necessity, including the post office and the telegraph office. The general merchant discharges the functions of the post-master.

It is easy to reveal the first settlers at their arrival by the traces they left around Brooksville. They followed the same path as those I saw collect around the source of a pretty little river, the Wikiwachee, where one day, inevitably, a town will arise. They began by residing at the Hotel of the Beautiful Stars or the Inn of the Golden Sun, the former by night, the latter by day. All the delights of existence! This was the fresh-air period. It was followed by the canvas period: man’s desires are insatiable, and, growing tired of the vault of Heaven, they put up tents. Next came the squared-timber period. Continually spurred on by ambition, they cut down pine trees, shaped them into logs, piled the logs on top of each other, and covered the whole thing with shingles split with an ax.

Next we have the age of the plank. A sawmill was set up in the neighborhood, chewing up the green wood with its fine teeth. Houses sprang up, and were inhabited while the sap from the wood was still trickling down the sides.

The setting up of the sawmill attracted workmen, settlers, who were supplied with the wood to build their houses and enclose their property. Soon the first house of Brooksville rose from the ground. Others lined up beside it; and so we have the founding of a town.

In the near future, fire, in a single day of great appetite, will devour three quarters of the town. To rebuild it, they will no longer use wood. This will be the age of stone or brick. That is the story of Chicago.

At Brooksville this story has so far only gone as far as the first chapters. The chapters yet to come will never be as interesting as the story of the city of the prairies or the queen of the lakes. You can’t have everything. Brooksville is perched on an attractive hill, breathing a pure and
fortifying air, which has caused it to be sought after by sick people; like Cannes and Menton on
the shores of France. It has no lake, to mirror the town in its waters; nor rivers, to provide
communication with the great centres of commerce. It is said that the railroad should soon bring
it out of its isolation.

There is no theater at Brooksville, but, from time to time, a play is put on by amateurs.

A production of this kind, at which I have been present, does not deserve to be forgotten. The
actors, recruited among the high society of Brooksville, charming artists indeed and very
distinguished actors, played, with a naturalness to which amateurs don’t always attain, two small
one-act pieces. The show was of course put on in the auditorium of the courthouse. The scene
was adorned with draperies of glowing red. But how strange was the lighting! Cigar boxes,
nailed to the walls, and filled with candles!

At the most pathetic moments, your attention was sometimes distracted by two slight sounds:
dry sounds, but also wet,[sic] The ladies appeared to find this as simple as if the gentlemen had
been munching candy. I expected to see a boy go up and down the rows during the intervals,
calling out “Here is the program of the two pieces: tobacco plugs flavored with vanilla, or
flavored with orange!”

After the performance, one of the actors came forward, announced one last scene, and closed
the curtains. A few minutes later they were re-opened, to show all the actors in a group. In the
center, Juliet reclined tenderly on Romeo’s arm. In front of them, immobile in his white cravat
and his frock-coat, was a minister. After a tender little speech, he took Juliet’s hand and placed it
in that of Romeo; asked both of them if they took each other for man and wife; and, when they
said yes, placed his hands on them and blessed them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the
Holy Spirit. Part of the play, do you suppose? Not at all! The minister was a real flesh-and-blood
minister with all a minister’s powers; the marriage was valid by law and custom; divorce or death
alone, henceforward, could break it.

The crowd of spectators left the building, the newly-weds among them. Nobody took any
notice of them, but the crafty Frenchman felt a certain interest in the future of these fortunate
actors in a play whose climax had made them husband and wife. He followed them until he saw
them vanish into a house of the age of wood. It must have seemed to them a palace of the age of
gold.

We are really backward in France with our questions of civil marriage and church marriage,
our contracts, our banns, and . . . our ceremonies of all kinds! In Florida it’s as easy to enjoy the
rays of a honeymoon as to get a touch of sunburn.

It was a benefit performance, and the object of the benefit was a cemetery! When anyone, by
sheer bad luck, dies, they make a point of burying him no matter where: at the edge of a wood,
beneath an orange tree or a palm tree. Not under six feet of earth. What a labor that would make
for the company of vultures, who, in addition to highway maintenance, have the task of
disposing of bodies . . . after burial! To provide the deceased with the place of refuge they
lacked, some people came up with the idea of using a play to obtain a cemetery. They certainly
didn’t expect to get a marriage out of it.

. . . As Brooksville appeared to offer me all the resources one could reasonably demand of a
town on the grass, the capital of a land that was practically wilderness, I resolved to establish
there my headquarters for supply and rest, and return there when I was tired from hunting in the
woods.

The house where I live is located in the middle of a magnificent orange plantation. On some
trees, 15 years old, I counted up to 2500 oranges. When I marvelled that a single tree could
support such a weight, they told me that some orange trees bore 10,000 oranges! Those are
venerable trees, forty years old.

Every morning I pick two or three golden fruits, frosted by the dew. If one of them appears not
to be succulent enough, I throw it away and select another, ripened to perfection by the sun of
autumn, full of juice and flavor! The Valencia is no doubt a delicious orange; but you can’t beat
a Florida orange, picked from the tree with the pearl necklace left by the morning dew! All
Nature is at my service. On my passing, a double row of banana trees respectfully bow their
large leaves beneath the caresses of the breeze. Rising on their high trunks, the heads of the palm
trees protect my own head against the rays of the sun.

My pitch-pine chalet rests on six blocks of seasoned wood 50 centimetres high. It is painted all
white, except for the roof, whose wooden tiles are brown. It consists only of a first floor and an
attic. In the attic, two rooms have been constructed. The first floor has four: two bedrooms, a
drawing-room and a diningroom. Out back is the kitchen, linked to the house by a little wooden
bridge. In front is a piazza or covered gallery, as wide as the house, adorned with some climbing
plants and some dull-colored flowers.

Under this piazza, a bucket full of water hangs from a small beam. Here comes a visitor. I
plunge into this bucket a long spoon ending in a bowl shaped like a cup, and I offer him this
nectar as seriously as it would be offered to me if I were to visit someone else. Everyone goes in
for passing the cup. It is an Indian custom, or imitated from the Indians; they pass the calumet
round as a sign of hospitality. The water in this bucket comes from my cistern, where rain water
drains by means of wooden conduits moulded to the gutters of the roof. It is not cold, but, such
as it is, I bless Saint Médard for sending it to me, because otherwise I would be obliged to drink
the water of the springs, which has a bad taste.

My visitor finds on the piazza a zinc wash-basin, some soap, and a towel, with which to
freshen up. I don’t invite him to make use of these things, as that might lead him to suppose I
thought he might not be clean. But he anticipates my invitation, and washes his face and his
hands. He then goes inside, to my bedroom. His eye lights on my hunting boots. He takes off his
shoes and tries them on. He finds them too small for him. But he likes my hat; he puts it on his
head; it suits him. “How much?” he asks. “It’s not for sale,” I reply. He sits down without a
word.
I have to write something. He comes up to read over my shoulder. Everything of French origin is for him a subject of interest. He takes them up one by one, and asks me what they’re for. A Lefaucheux gun arouses his admiration; a gun with ramrod tempts him. Neither object is of any value; but the more he urges me to sell the rifle with the ramrod, the more I feel certain that it’s very useful and that I must not part with it. My clothes, my books, my knick-knacks are inspected meticulously. In the end I get to feeling like an Indian tribe, being questioned by a traveller on its habits and customs, and having its arms and clothing examined with care. I am astonished to find myself playing this role, although he seems perfectly at home in his.

Then I, in my turn, ask him questions about his family.

“Are you married? Do you have any children?”

“Three. The youngest was born yesterday. A boy.”

“Have you registered his birth? Would you like me to act as witness?”

“What would a witness do?”

“Don’t you need a witness when you register a birth? How was it done?”

“Well, the child is entered on the Court House registry like this: A. J. Thomson, sex male, born 1 December 1884.”

“Is that all?”

“How much more do you want?”

“His given names in full. The names of his father and mother; and their age, profession, and domicile. And the same for the witnesses.”

“All that is unnecessary, dear sir.”

As you can see, an American, from his birth, is independent of his family; he is free. So that he may know, later on, how much he took the liberty of weighing when he was born, his weight is announced in the paper, like this: “There has been an increase in the family of Mr. and Mrs. Thomson: a son, weighing 14 pounds.” That’s how the birth of my visitor’s son was recorded in the newspaper, the Brooksville Register.

He also tells me that, when he got married, the minister handed him a certificate of the marriage. The minister kept no copy himself; what would have been the point? You don’t need to call on the minister to find out if you are married, because you are living together. You would not have a certificate to say that, on the demand of your wife, with whom you had been living for six months, you had been married forcibly and without knowing it.
These customs tend to eliminate illicit ménages and encourage morality. Indeed, it is better to get married right away, in the proper manner, than to find that six months of living together has created a *de facto* marriage.

When you die, said Thomson, there is no death certificate. You fade away without leaving a trace. It’s all over; who needs all that scribbling?

But no, it isn’t all over. What about inheritance? Who gets what?

Apparently all that is bound to sort itself out, without any public declaration or inventory. Very strange!
PROFILES OF EARLY SETTLERS ON THE PINELLAS PENINSULA

by Evelyn C. Bash

Editor’s Note: The following sketches illustrate the history of the earliest white settlers on the Pinellas Peninsula, and we wish to encourage readers to submit similar profiles for the pioneers in their own areas. These biographical entries are listed in chronological order by the date when land claims were filed.

The original inhabitants of the Pinellas Peninsula were the Tocobega Indians, and evidence of their presence is confirmed by the many mounds of shell, some of which were used for burial. The Indians lived in thatched palmetto huts in small villages, ate fish and shell fish, but also cultivated maize and other crops. Their cruel treatment by the early Spanish explorers, such as Panfilo de Narvaez, led to persistent conflicts. Two years after Pedro Menendez set up a garrison in 1597, his men were massacred by the Indians. After the massacre, there were to be no further Spanish attempts at permanent settlement in the area.

Contact with the Spanish led to the virtual extinction of the local Indians, as they succumbed to diseases such as smallpox. Thus, fishermen could set up fish “ranchos” or camps unhampered by the Indians. These “ranchos” were licensed by the Spanish government in Havana, and the fish was cured and then shipped to Cuba. Among the fishermen were Jose Maria Caldez who settled at Oyster River on Old Tampa Bay in 1814, and Joaquin Caldez, who settled at the same place in 1824.¹

* * * * * *

Philippe

Odet Philippe is said to have been born in Lyons, France, in 1769 and to have studied medicine there. He was in the Battle of Trafalgar, October 21, 1805, where he was captured by the British and exiled to the Bahamas. Released after two years, he sailed to Charleston, South Carolina. Odet Philippe was listed in the 1810 Census in South Carolina. His first wife was Hortense de Medici, whom he married in 1807. She lived only a few years after her marriage to Philippe. About 1810 to 1814, he married Dorothee Desmottes. They had four daughters: Louise Poleanna, born August 7, 1814; Mary Elizabeth Octavia, January 27, 1816; Charlotte Septima Marie, February 17, 1820 and Merlinya/Melanie, December 17, 1825. All were born in Charleston.²

On December 3, 1822, Philippe filed an application for U.S. citizenship in the U.S. Circuit Court in Charleston.³ A few years later, financial difficulties forced Philippe to leave Charleston and seek a new home.⁴
Philippe is believed to have sailed in his schooner, The Ney, down Florida’s east coast to the Indian River where, near present-day Fort Lauderdale, he settled and began to make salt from sea water. When this project failed, he began to plant citrus.\footnote{5}

Warned of an Indian uprising, Philippe set sail once more and spent several years in Key West. It was here, on January 17, 1829, that he received his citizenship papers.\footnote{6}

In September, 1830, Philippe sold a small building at the back of Government House to Robert B. Stanard.\footnote{7} On February 17, 1833, Philippe was appointed Justice of the Peace for Monroe County.\footnote{8}

In Key West on August 12, 1833, Elizabeth Octavia Philippe and George P. Washington were issued a license to wed.\footnote{9} Later, she was to marry Charles Papy, and a third husband, John Alvarez, on April 12, 1865.\footnote{10}

In 1833, a Negro slave Philippe owned in Charleston was sold to Edward Chandler.\footnote{11} In June, 1836 in Key West, Philippe made a deed “in trust to Wm. R. Hackley as trustee for Philippe’s wife, Marie Charlotte Florance Philippe, of a billiard table, glasses, etc.”\footnote{12} which items he had purchased a year earlier from Andrew Anderson.\footnote{13}

It was probably soon after this that Philippe arrived at his new home site on Old Tampa Bay. A home was built of logs from trees felled on the site. He called his home, St. Helena.\footnote{14} Philippe chose for his home, land near the shore at The Point at the head of the bay, near a large Indian mound.\footnote{15}

The U.S. Census for 1840 lists Philippe in Hillsborough County. Hillsborough County, which at that time included the Pinellas Peninsula, was established in 1834. Florida was still a territory of the United States under the administration of Andrew Jackson. Statehood was not to come until 1845.

Philippe is credited with being the first to plant grapefruit in rows.\footnote{16} When Philippe settled here, Pinellas Peninsula and the rest of central Florida was a wilderness. There were no roads or wagon trails. The land was covered with forests, palmettos, dense growing shrubs, and tall grasses.\footnote{17}

The “Gale of 1848,” a severe hurricane, destroyed Philippe’s house, killed his citrus grove, and cut into the Indian mound. He later resettled on higher ground on the southside of the mound.\footnote{18}

Philippe’s second home on the peninsula had two front rooms, separated by a hall, and one room across the back of the house. This house remained standing until 1916. A cook house was separate from the main house.

Philippe lived with his daughters. The two front rooms were bedrooms occupied by the girls. Philippe slept in the loft above the large back room where the family did their chores.\footnote{19}
The Florida Census of 1840 lists Odet Philippe and only nineteen other heads of households in the county. We know that Philippe made his way to Tampa on many occasions, because early Hillsborough County records show that on February 5, 1839, he purchased three lots on Tampa Street for $100 from Augustus Steele. On these lots, Philippe had erected two billiard parlors and pinball alleys for the amusement of the soldiers of Fort Brooke.

The records also show that in 1842, Philippe also owned an oyster house, two Negro slaves, Anthony and John; five horses and a colt, four mules, five cows and six calves, hogs, hunting dogs, a wagon, a barouche and harnesses.20

In April, 1841, the U.S. Army established Fort Harrison on the bluffs overlooking Clear Water Harbor. The fort was used as a convalescent center for the men at Fort Brooke who had contracted malaria and other diseases. The fort was named for William Henry Harrison, who, only the previous month, had been inaugurated ninth president of the United States. The fort was abandoned in October of the same year.21

The Second Seminole War had prevented many from coming to Florida. The end of the War in May, 1842, followed by the Armed Occupation Act, opened up the area to settlers.

Until the Armed Occupation Act of August 4, 1842, settlers in this part of Florida were actually “squatters” who established homes on any land they happened to fancy. The Act provided that 160 acres would be given to any head of a family or single men over eighteen years of age “who would bear arms and live on the land in a fit habitation” for five years and cultivate at least five acres.

This spurred several claims to be made along Tampa Bay in the Bayview area and on Clear Water Bay near Clear Water Harbor.22

Philippe, under the Armed Occupation Act, filed a claim November 1, 1842, for land at Worth's Harbor at the head of Old Tampa Bay. He received his permit, #80 on Jan. 17, 1843, and his patent to the land was filed on June 2, 1850 in Hillsborough Deed Book A, p. 269.23

Leveque/Levick
Leveque came to Florida in February, 1842. George Watson, deputy surveyor, called him “French John.” Leveque claimed land at Boca Ciega Bay, 8 miles from “Punta Pinales.” Permit #589 was granted him on June 30, 1843. Land was listed in Hillsborough Deed Book C, p. 145, October 12, 1866.²⁴

Stephens

James Stephens was born in Georgia in 1805, came to Florida in 1839, and settled briefly in Newnansville in Alachua County. He was listed there in the 1840 Census. He filed his claim, September 5,1842 for land at Clear Water Harbor which had been occupied by the Fort Harrison. He was issued Permit #28, December 28, 1842 and received his patent for the land November 1, 1848. This land embraced all the territory west of the present Ft. Harrison Avenue from Drew Street South to Jeffords Street in Clearwater.²⁵

Before coming to Florida, Stephens and his wife, Elendar, had two sons and a daughter, all born in Georgia between 1830 and 1838: Eli-Ely, James Alfred, Elizabeth. Born to them at Clear Water Harbor were: John W., 1843; Berrian, 1845; Alma, 1848; Catherine, 1855; Lucy, 1858.

James Stephens was listed in the Hillsborough County Census of 1850 and 1860. He died in 1860, possibly a victim of yellow fever.²⁶

James Alfred Stephens was born in Georgia in 1833 to James Stepens and his wife, Elendar. He married Patrocnencia Papy, nicknamed Penny and Sinia, May 29, 1859. All of their eleven children were born between 1864 and 1880 in Florida. He was listed in the 1850 Census in Alachua County and in Hillsborough County in the 1860 Census.²⁷

John W. Stephens was born at Clear Water Harbor in 1843 to James Stephens and wife, Elendar. John W.’s children by his first wife, Mary L. were: James, Gadsden, Charles, Lelah, Cordy. His second wife, Alevia J., was born in 1844. Their children were: Frances H., born 1867; James W., 1869, Charles O., 1871, Ruth O., 1873. All the Stephens children were born in Florida. The 1870 Census for Hillsborough County finds them listed as Family 109 in House 109; the 1880 Census in House 161, Family 161.²⁸

Stephenson/Stevenson

Samuel H. Stephenson was born in Canada in 1813, and came to Florida in 1828. He was listed in Duval County in the Census of 1840. He filed a claim to land at Clear Water Harbor, November, 1842, under the Armed Occupation Act, and received permit #24, December 23, 1842. He was awarded land north of what is now known as Stevenson’s Creek, Clearwater, on August 1, 1849, patent #197. He is listed in the 1850 Census of Hillsborough County. His wife and four children also are listed in the Marion County Census of 1850.²⁹

Stephenson and his wife, Elizabeth, had seven children, all born in Florida: Martha Jane, 1838; Mary, 1841; Sandusky, 1845; Henry Washington, 1847; Sarah Ann, 1850; Jane, 1853; Constantien, 1854. Four of these children were said to have attended the first school on Pinellas Peninsula.³⁰
Martha Jane married W.R. Daniels. They had two sons born in Florida: William, 1854, and Samuel, 1858. They are listed in the Census of 1860 in Hillsborough County. Sandusky married William H. Mobley.

Tresca

Tresca was born in France in 1805. A mariner/navigator, he came to Florida in 1836 and filed claim, Dec. 1, 1842, to land at the head of Old Tampa Bay. He received his permit #164 on January 28, 1843, and later his patent #298.

Nelson and Cooley

Receiving land near Philippe at Worth Harbor was William Nelson. A seaman and oysterman, Nelson came to Florida in 1836 and filed claim to the land February 21, 1843, receiving permit #937 on August 4, 1843, and patent #340 on April 19, 1850. He sold the land to William Cooley on March 12, 1852. Sale was registered in Hillsborough County Deed Book, March 13, 1852, p. 15.

William Cooley was born in Maryland in 1783. A merchant, he was listed in the U.S. Census of 1850 for Hillsborough County. His first wife and family had been massacred by Indians, January 6, 1836.

Hernandez

Antonio Maximo Hernandez came to Florida in August, 1814, probably from Cuba. He operated a fishing camp at the tip of Pinellas Peninsula. It is believed his first wife died by March 9, 1843. They had a daughter, Mersa, born in Cuba in 1842. His second wife was a Domingo. A son, Antonio Gomez, was born to them in 1848 in Florida.

Hernandez filed a claim for land at Old Tampa Bay, March 9, 1843, under the Armed Occupation Act. Permit #303 was issued to him on March 25, 1843. Patent for the claim was issued October 15, 1852. After his death, his widow sold the real estate on April 21, 1886.

McKay

Early settlers in the Anona area were the McKays, for whom McKay Creek was named. Alexander McKay came to Florida in 1839. Single, he claimed land at Clear Water Harbor in what is now the Harbor Hills section of Largo. He filed June 2, 1843 and received permit #564, June 21, 1843.

George McKay came to Florida in 1840. He filed for the land at Clear Water Harbor next to Alexander McKay, on June 3, 1843. His permit #630 was received July 7, 1843. He was awarded patent #338 for the land, Lots 1, 2, 3, Hillsborough County, on May 26, 1851.
Charles McKay came to Florida in February, 1843, and filed a claim for land at Clear Water Harbor, four miles south of Fort Harrison, June 1, 1843. He received permit #563 on June 21, 1853.\(^{39}\)

**Silva**

Joseph Silva came to Florida in June, 1834. Under the Armed Occupation Act, he claimed land at Boca Ciega, “8 miles from Punta Pinales,” adjoining John Levick. He was granted permit #588 on June 30, 1843, and received patent #448 on August 1, 1849.\(^{40}\) The property is listed in Hillsborough County Deed Book C, P. 38, October 13, 1849. On August 31, 1855, he sold the property to Francis Garrard. The sale is listed in Hillsborough County Deed Book C, page 41.

**Kearney/Kenny**

Kearney was born in Pennsylvania in 1802, and came to Florida in 1835. He claimed land on the island of Mullet Key on July 29, 1843 and received permit #922 on August 4, 1843.

His permit was later canceled as this land was being reserved for military purposes. Kearney filed another claim in February 1846, and was issued permit for the land the same day. However, location of the land is not specified in genealogical papers. He was in the census of 1850 for Hillsborough County.\(^{41}\)

**Grillon**

Born in France in 1818, John Grillon came to Florida in May, 1840. He married in Wakulla County, Florida, January 12, 1843. The name of his wife is not given. In July, 1843, he filed for land on Old Tampa Bay and received permit #890 on August 1, 1843.

On August 15, 1855, a marriage license was issued at Key West to John and Septima Marie Philippe. They had four children: Odet P., born in Tampa in 1848, John, born in 1850 in Key West; Philip, 1852, and Josephine, 1854.\(^{42}\)

Grillon was Charlotte Septima Marie Philippe’s second husband. Her first husband was Ramon Moreno, whom she married in Key West in the presence of Manuel Olivella. The marriage was performed by Justice of the Peace Dubose.\(^{43}\)

Her third husband was Joseph/John Andrews, whom she married September 8, 1856. She married James H. Loughridge February 12, 1866.\(^{44}\)

**Miranda**

William B. Miranda settled on Pinellas Peninsula in 1844, west of Coffee Pot Bayou on the east side of the peninsula.\(^{45}\)

Abel Miranda came to the peninsula in 1857. He was joined two years later by John A. Bethell. The two Mirandas and Bethel were in the fishing business on Maximo Point.\(^{46}\)
Richard D. Booth, born July 6, 1818, in Lancaster, England, married Merlinya/Melanie Philippe, May 10, 1847. A daughter, Ortencia, nicknamed Tansy, was born May 25, 1848. A son, Richard Julius was born August 14, 1849 at Key West. Four sons were born at what is now Safety Harbor: Odet William “Keeter,” 1853; George, November 1857; DeJoinville, October 30, 1860 and John Wilkes “Will,” September 19, 1866.

Odet William “Keeter” Booth married Ada F. Branch. They had five children born between 1883-1894. “Keeter” Booth and his wife died at the present Safety Harbor and are buried at Sylvan Abbey.

George Booth married Elizabeth Catherine Pickett. They had five children born between 1887 and 1897.

DeJoinville Booth married Lucy Marion McMullen, November 23, 1886. Lucy was born to James P. and Elizabeth McMullen at Bayview, April 19, 1862. They had nine children born between 1887 and 1905.
Richard Julius Booth married Susan J. Hammock, who was born in Georgia or Florida in 1857. Susan’s father was George Hammock. Mother’s name was Christian. Susan and Richard had two children.  

Lowe

Captain John Thomas Lowe and his wife, Laura Dorothy Meares, came to Anona from Key West in January, 1850. They had four children: Jefferson, Wesley, Mary and Asa.

Jefferson Theodore Lowe was Anona’s first postmaster.

Hart


Taylor

John Stansel Taylor was born in Georgia in 1813. He married Margaret A. with whom he had three children: John Stansel, born October 12, 1844 in Hernando County; William J. and Margaret Ann.

Taylor purchased all of the land “west of Ft. Harrison Ave. from Drew Street south to Jeffords St.” from James Stephens for a female slave cook who allegedly had tried to poison Taylor’s family.

On October 2, 1858, Taylor married Emily A. Garrison. She had been born in Georgia in 1830. Their children, all born in Florida, were: Martha, 1859; Felix L., 1860; Jackson Lee/John L., 1863; Sarah E., 1866; James S., 1868.


Turner

In 1851, David B. Turner settled at Indian Rocks. In 1854, he and Robert J. Whitehurst bought John Stansel Taylor’s land in downtown Clearwater for $800. They divided it between them, running a line between what is now South Ward School and the First United Methodist Church. There were bearing orange trees, set out by James Stephens on Whitehurst’s portion of the land, but they were considered worthless, as there was no market for them.
The first post office was established at Clear Water Harbor in August, 1858. David B. Turner was the first postmaster. Mail came by boat from Cedar Key. The first post office was in the two-story log home of Turner. It was located in a heavily wooded section, on a high bluff at the foot of what is now Turner Street, overlooking Clear Water Harbor.

Turner also owned and operated a saw mill on the creek which empties into the bay near where the Belleview Biltmore Hotel now stands. He hired a Mr. Manning to run the post office and to teach the Turner children, Arthur Campbell Turner, Bell, and Margaret Ann. Turner was killed in an accident at the sawmill in 1866.65

Garrison

Richard Garrison, who fought in the Indian Wars in Florida, was given a grant from the federal government of 300 acres which encompassed both sides of Curlew Creek. He settled there in 1852 in what is now north Dunedin.66

Miscellaneous Under Armed Occupation Act

George Forsyth came to Florida, January, 1840. Single, he had been a First Lieutenant with the 2nd Dragoons in Newnanville, Florida. He filed claim to land at Old Tampa Bay, Feb. 1843 and received permit #379 on April 24, 1843.67

Edmund Bird came to Florida in 1831 and filed claim, January 23, 1843, to land at Clear Water Harbor known as Fort Harrison. Single, he received permit #261 on March 10, 1843. He is listed in the Census of 1840 for Campbell County, Georgia. He had been a delegate to the St. Joseph Convention in 1838.68

Samuel Bishop, a single man, came to Florida in November, 1841. He filed a claim on March 23, 1843, and received permit #549, June 16, 1843. He sold the land (location not specified) to Eliel N. Lockhart, November 4, 1857.69

Charles Hoffinghoff came to Florida in 1843. Single, he applied for land at Mullet Creek, Old Tampa Bay, on May 15,1843. He received permit #879 on July 31, 1843.70

John Conrad Dalwig came to Florida in April 1843, and filed claim for land at Old Tampa Bay, June 7, 1843. He received permit #877 on July 31, 1843.71

George Sullivan came to Florida in April, 1841. He filed claim for land at Old Tampa Bay, one mile east of Odet Philippe, on June 30, 1843, and received permit #604 on June 30, 1843.72

Joseph G. Jenkins came to Florida in January, 1825. He and his wife, Rebecca, had a son, James, born in Florida in 1831. Jenkins filed, July 6, 1843, for land at Fort Harrison at Clear Water Harbor. He was issued permit #866, July 29, 1843.73
Jordan Smith came to Florida in November, 1837, and filed claim to land at Old Tampa Bay on July 6, 1843. His permit #865 was dated July 29, 1843. Single, he was chairman for A.M. Randolph, deputy surveyor in Township 28, South Range 16E in first quarter of 1844.  

Thomas Stanfield was born in Georgia in 1815. A grocer, he came to Florida in September, 1838. He claimed land at Old Tampa Bay northwest from Gadson’s Point, west from Fort Brooke. Claim was filed July 6, 1843, and he received permit #884, July 31, 1843. He had one child, Frances, born in Florida in 1848. Stanfield is listed in Census of 1850 in Key West, Monroe County, House 322, Family 341.  

Thomas Piper came to Florida in November, 1838. Single, the land he claimed was at “Clear Water Harbor next to Samuel Stephenson.” Claim was filed July 16, 1843, and permit received July 31, 1843. He established a ferry at Lafayette Street, Tampa, May 23, 1846.  

Joseph Jones came to Florida in July, 1843. A farmer, he laid claim to land at Old Tampa Bay on July 28, 1843, and received permit #939, dated August 4, 1843. He is listed in the U.S. Census of 1860 and 1870 in Sumter County. He and his wife, Mahala, had a daughter, Caledonia, born in Florida in 1859.  

Samuel Cosby acquired land at Egmont Key, receiving permit #923 for the land on October 7, 1843.
14 Grismer, *Tampa*, p. 70.


17 Dr. Wilfred T. Neill, “Naming of Florida’s Counties Evolved through the Years,” *St. Petersburg Times*, 1970s, clipping.

18 Griffin and Bullen, *The Safety Harbor Site*, p. 7.


20 Grismer, *Tampa*, p. 86.

21 Ralph Reed, “The Story of Pinellas”, (Written for Pinellas Historical Commission, 1960s).


24 Ibid., Vol. 2, PC000812.


27 Ibid., PC000788.

28 Ibid., PC000824, PC000825.

29 Ibid., PC000830.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., Vol. 1, PC000831.

32 Ibid., PC000830.

33 Ibid., Vol. 3, PC000839.

34 Ibid., PC000814.

35 Ibid., Vol. 1, PC000844.

36 Ibid., Vol. 2, PC000807.

37 Ibid., Vol. 3, PC000315.

38 Ibid., PC000317.

39 Ibid., PC000316.

40 Ibid., PC000819.
41 Ibid., Vol. 2, PC000811.

42 Ibid., PC000350.

43 Monroe County Record Book B, 1837, p. 379.

44 Genealogies, Vol. 2, PC000351, PC000161.


47 Genealogies, Vol. 1, PC000161.

48 Ibid., PC000273.

49 Ibid., PC000274.

50 Ibid., PC000275.

51 Ibid., PC000272.

52 Ibid., Vol. 2, PC000310.

53 Ibid., PC000314.

54 Reed, "The Story of Pinellas."

55 Genealogies, Vol. 1, PC000303, PC000307, PC000564, PC000563.

56 Ibid., Vol. 3, PC000328.

57 Woman’s Club of Clearwater, “A History of Clearwater, FL.”


59 Ibid., Vol. 2, PC000330.

60 Ibid., Vol. 1, PC000777.

61 Ibid., PC000233.

62 Ibid., Vol. 3, PC000234.

63 Straub, History of Pinellas.

64 Woman’s Club of Clearwater, “A History of Clearwater.”


66 Reed, “The Story of Pinellas.”

68 Ibid., Vol. 1, PC000797.
69 Ibid., PC000799.
70 Ibid., Vol. 2, PC000808.
71 Ibid., Vol. 1, PC000802.
72 Ibid., Vol. 3, PC000837.
73 Ibid., Vol. 2, PC000809.
74 Ibid., Vol. 3, PC000820.
75 Ibid., Vol. 3 PC000822.
76 Ibid., Vol. 3 PC000816.
77 Grismer, Tampa, p. 111.
78 Genealogies, Vol. 2, PC000810.
79 Ibid., Vol. 1, PC000960.
BOOK REVIEWS


Mr. Buker’s subject is the development of “riverine warfare” by the U.S. Navy during the Second Seminole War (1835-1842). Traditionally, U.S. naval forces had been used for coastal defense or blockade and secondly as raiders of enemy ships, a sort of hit-and-run operation on the high seas. The early days of the Seminole War being land encounters, the navy acted almost exclusively as a supply carrier along the coast, serving ports like Jacksonville, Key West, and Fort Brooke. The material of war was brought more safely and quickly than that which was entrusted to overland wagon trains. The latter was often subject to Indian attacks. Inevitably the capability of the United States in producing the necessities of war pushed the Seminoles south, mile by mile. The land was lower, swampy, cut more and more frequently by rivers, and of course, finally, the Everglades. Previously, troops that forded the occasional rivers could dry out on the highlands, but in southern Florida what passed for highlands were often wetlands. Soldiers would sicken, supplies would become water-logged and rot. Quite literally, the struggle by the white invaders to kill or remove the native people bogged down.

The Navy, which had progressed slowly in its thinking from carrying supplies up and down the coasts to sending lighter craft along the bigger rivers to harass the enemy, finally began to adopt
amphibious tactics. What began as a fleet of one in 1835 expanded to more than one hundred (including canoes) by 1842. Navy and Marine personnel were no longer content to lob a few rounds from the comparative safety of barge or cutter but traveled by dugout through river and swamp, searching out the enemy and then switching whenever appropriate to land tactics, marching in some cases for days away from their transport to bring the Seminole to bay. The Everglades, last redoubt of the desperate Indian, was no longer refuge against the white man. The end came soon.

*Swamp Sailors* is well researched and adequately written. Naval involvement in the Seminole War has certainly called for a thorough examination, and Mr. Buker has provided it.

*Frank Laumer*

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Edmund Berkeley and Dorothy Smith Berkeley, co-authors of numerous books and articles concerning colonial science and scientists, have produced an excellent account of the life of John Bartram “His Majesty's Botanist for North America.” Most students of Florida history have heard of the son, William, who wrote a classic account of plant, animal and Indian life in Georgia, South Carolina and Florida, but few know that John visited Florida in 1766, saw an Indian treaty conference and wrote an account of his experiences.

The story begins in Pennsylvania where Bartram, born in an English Quaker settlement on the frontier, after receiving a Quaker education was able to acquire a farm, a family and a desire to learn about farming practices and adapt those that were most suitable for proper land conservation. Next step on the ladder came when Bartram began writing to Peter Collinson in England and collecting plants and seeds for him for cultivation in the gardens of English nobility. In 1735-36 Bartram sent to England 3,000 black walnuts, 1 3/4 pecks of dogwood berries, 3,200 swamp Spanish acorns and two pecks of red cedar berries. For this accumulation, Bartram was paid £18. Although Collinson had encouraged Bartram to become a collector of plants and seeds, it was James Logan of Philadelphia who loaned books to Bartram so that he could acquire a knowledge of Latin for plant identification and learn about the scope of research current at the time.

By 1739, Bartram became an experimental botanist and had acquired a reputation that was wide-spread in Europe. He discovered that campion plants which bore pale red flowers were hybrids of the red and white flowering plants. Lord Petre placed orders with Bartram for seeds of American trees which were planted in wholesale lots in English nursery beds. The Duke of Argyll who possessed large Scottish estates, English gardens, nursery and greenhouses began placing much larger orders to Bartram than Petre had done.

The excursions of Bartram, often accompanied by son William, in search of specimens were extensive. In 1743, he visited the headquarters of the Iroquois Indians at Onondago, New York,
where a council was being held. Two years later came a trip to the Catskills and a year later to New England. In 1760-62 Bartram made his way to North and South Carolina where he collected many plants and observed the Cherokee Indians. Upon his return from the Carolina, Bartram was named King’s Botanist at a salary of L50 a year.

John and William Bartram visited Georgia and East and West Florida in 1765. During this trip the Bartrams made their way by land from Charleston south to Georgia and Florida. Highlights of the trip were excursions to St. Augustine, an Indian treaty council and the St. John’s River. Surprisingly enough, John Bartram did not think highly of the work of his son, William, who showed little promise as a botanist and failed as a rice plantation owner in Florida.

The authors have done an outstanding job. The map work is very good, the index complete, and the authors have written in a most interesting manner.

James W. Covington


No doubt many Floridians sat down last evening to a dinner that consisted of packaged Stouffer’s frozen entrees, perhaps a glass of Lipton iced tea, and, for dessert, a scoop of Baskin-Robbins ice cream. If you were among those who enjoyed any one of these, it is likely that you are unaware of their common culinary link – they are all foods produced by foreign-owned companies. While such edibles may be more subtle indicators of the ever-growing foreign presence in the American consumer marketplace, it can be both a troublesome and beneficial reality. As Americans increasingly opt for the quality of many foreign-made items, such as televisions and automobiles, (thus neglecting our own manufactures) non-U.S. companies are moving more directly into our lives and economy through their ownership of land, manufacturing, and retail properties in Florida.

By the mid-1970s foreign firms owned “targeted investments” of property, plants, and equipment in Florida that totaled over one billion dollars. In the Tampa Bay area the agro-chemical industry most clearly demonstrates such activity with Gardinier (French) and W.R. Grace (German) playing major roles in the worldwide manufacture and distribution of
chemicals and phosphate. Other corporations such as Clorox (German) and Chloride (British) have high visibility, but foreign companies from Manatee to Mulberry are engaged in enterprises as varied as the construction of aluminum doors and the processing of shrimp.

Non-U.S. investment is concentrated, however, in the south Florida area. Banking, led by Royal Trust of Canada, and land development, often fostered by shadowy companies chartered in the Netherlands Antilles, are focal points for outside capital. Recently, the south Florida economy has been stimulated by a heavy injection of funds, sometimes from questionable sources, from Latin America. What of the vaunted Mideast oil monies? Wilkins assures us that the supposed threat of Arab investment takeovers which concerned many Americans in the 1970s never really materialized in Florida. Overall dominance of investment still belongs to Canadians, British, Germans and French.

Mira Wilkins has given her readers a fine piece of scholarship – well written with a solid interpretation and lengthy appendices listing the various companies and their holdings. She argues convincingly that foreign-owned businesses are valuable to Florida. Through the services and products they provide, they pump extra revenue into the state economy and create needed jobs for Floridians. Much is gained and little is lost through their presence. Wilkins highly praises the role of government and business in setting forth and abiding by regulations; indicative of a responsible attitude by which we all will benefit.

Those who are searching for a history of foreign investments in Florida will be disappointed. This is a straightforward account of business in the state in the 1970s. And while no National Association of Manufacturers’ whitewash, the work does not attempt an in-depth inquiry into the political/economic manipulations involved in acquiring property, rezoning real estate or colliding with environmental defenders. The general reader, businessman or scholar who wishes a thoroughgoing analysis of the quality and quantity of foreign investment will find this book invaluable.

John Belohlavek


The story of Spanish conquest in the New World is traditionally told in terms of military campaigns, diplomacy and religious fervor. Eugene Lyon introduces another facet, that of conquest as the venture of a licensed entrepreneur called an adelantado, who advanced the frontiers of Spanish Christendom in the manner of the medieval Reconquest. The case he presents is that of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, a seaman of vision and ability, one of a series of adelantados sent to North America’s Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. In 1565, Menéndez signed a three-year contract to explore, conquer and settle the perilous country of Florida. Philip II, forced by lack of funds to modify his program for strengthening the Spanish state, was continuing the system of conquest by private enterprise. In return for his services, Menéndez was promised twenty-five leagues squared, a marquisate, two fisheries, some valuable shipping and slave
licenses, a share of royal revenues, and the right to be the first governor and captain general of Florida.

It was a family undertaking. Menéndez’s tough, seafaring clan of Asturians – Lyon refers to them as the “comoño” – helped him to finance and staff the expedition, as well as to outwit Seville’s officious House of Trade. Lyon’s exposure of this kinship network and how it operated adds the piquancy of scandal to the story. He points out, also, that their expedition was not in reaction to Fort Caroline, for the Menéndez contract had been signed and preparations were well under way before news arrived of René de Laudonnière’s incursion on the River of May, or still later, of Jean Ribault’s reinforcement. It was when Philip II was faced with these unexpected threats that the enterprise of Florida became a joint one between comoño and Crown, and the king underwrote the escalation of manpower and matériel that would enable his champion to be fairly matched with the “luteranos.” Unlike earlier historians, this one does not take sides for or against the massacre of the French at Matanzas. After presenting the international and cultural setting, and the difficulties inherent in the situation, he defers judgement to the reader.

Lyon demonstrates that just as certainly as the English, the Spanish came to the New World to colonize. At his own expense, Menéndez contracted to bring 500 settlers to Florida, of whom 200 were to be married men and 100 farmers. The fact that they were to locate in fortified towns made them none the less agricultural, for Spanish farmers lived in villages instead of scattered homesteads. The basic unit of local government was the municipal council, or cabildo, established when the town was founded. Scholars have declared that there were no cabildos in Florida. Lyon shows that an active council existed in each of the adelantado’s three settlements.

The volume’s purpose, to analyze the fiscal and societal underpinnings of the Florida enterprise, is abundantly accomplished. In the process, Lyon adds unique information on such topics as contemporary business practices, the Spanish empire’s intermediate bureaucracy, Caribbean supply routes, and the management of hired soldiers. The reader who braves his footnotes – which for once are where they belong, at the foot of each page – will discover a wealth of interesting discussions on geography, historiography, and documentary sources. The appendices consist of a translation of the Menéndez contract, a comparison of its terms with those of seven others, a summary of the costs of the enterprise, and a genealogy. Index, glossary and bibliography are thorough and useful; the style is clear, the design attractive. The low price of $10.00 reflects a well deserved subsidy by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. This book will be a necessary addition to collections on the history of Spain, European expansion, and Spanish.
Florida. A second volume, carrying the account up to the 1634 settlement between the Crown and the Menéndez heirs, is in progress and will be welcome.

Lyon has made us a further gift which, with characteristic modesty, he does not mention. His long years of research in the archives of Seville, Madrid, Simancas and Cádiz, have uncovered rich caches of Florida documents, including lawsuits, audits, ship manifests and notarial records, missing from the older collections. His generosity in pointing the way to these materials will in the long run prove as great a contribution to scholarship as his own excellent book.

Amy Turner Bushnell


This is an outstanding contribution to the scarce but expanding scholarly historical literature on Spanish Florida (which in reality is the Spanish Southeast of today’s United States previous to the arrival of the English).

We still lack much information on this period although documentation is abundant and properly gathered (in Gainesville) after many decades of searching, photostating and microfilming in overseas archives and libraries. Amy Bushnell is an able and enthusiastic user of this rich resource. Her gusto for original Spanish and French documentation is unmatched. Her talent to produce from this data a well organized and readable original topic is attested to by this, her first book. She has attracted attention before through her various research articles.

The center of Spanish Florida was St. Augustine, governed in the first two centuries by the royal Hapsburg dynasty’s bureaucracy – a very complex and entrenched system. This bureaucracy, narrow in vision, existed to protect and stimulate tangible wealth such as “bars of gold, silver coins, precious stones...” and shared power with the Church in the twin purposes of Spanish colonialism: to acquire material riches and to gain souls for the Catholic heaven.

The money, jewels, precious stones, bullion, income, expenses and contracts were handled by the royal officials of the treasury (The factor, contador, and tesorero). These existed in St. Augustine. Even expert historians of colonial Spanish America are often deficient in their knowledge of the duties, importance, behavior patterns and traditional actions of these officials. Very few, if any, studies have been made to describe the actual functioning and interaction of these officials in a particular administrative colonial post. Therefore the Bushnell study is of importance not only to the Florida history bibliography but also to that of all colonial Spanish America.

Dr. Bushnell deals with the Hapsburg administration from the establishment of St. Augustine until the coming of the Bourbon dynasty after the War of Spanish Succession, during which St. Augustine was besieged and destroyed. By giving us the story of these royal officials she
provides us with a fine sketch of St. Augustine during this period, because the three men all reached through family ties and activities into every aspect of St. Augustine and Spanish Florida.

The men who bought, acquired and inherited the jobs were generally mediocre, adept in surviving, often corrupt, living in a narrow society that offered little. Status meant petty advantages such as better furniture or silk shawls for the women. The research based on original documentation is flawless: the 140 pages of text are well organized and the author’s writing is clear, correct and lively. The notes, bibliography, and index are first-rate; the appendices and glossary useful.

Here then is a model of original work that adds value to local, state, regional and national history, and Latin American history as well. One rarely finds such a fine history book dealing with what is considered a dull subject. It is anything but dull.

Charles W. Arnade
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Editor’s Note: The editors will gladly publish announcements of upcoming events related to local history, but these items must reach the editors at least two months before the publication dates of June 1st and December 1st.

The professionally produced slide show, "Past Perfect", is now being offered on loan, free of charge, to members and member organizations of the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, Inc.

The package consists of a carousel of slides combined with a synchronized cassette tape. The equipment required to show it can be as basic as a regular carousel projector used with a small portable tape recorder, whereby the operator manually advances the slides (as indicated on the written script) to synchronize with the tape. If a synchronized audio-visual slide projector and tape recorder are available, the operation can be entirely automatic.

At the very simplest level, the slides can be projected and the script read as the slides change, but those who have used the package do not recommend this as the voice on the tape is very effective and charming.

To borrow the slide package contact the Florida Trust, P.O. Box 10368, Tampa, FL 33679.

Heritage Park at 11909 125 St. N., Largo, will be holding a Country Jubilee on Saturday, October 22, 1983 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Students, teachers, parents, friends are all welcome to see old time crafts, games and to hear country time music.

There is a 50¢ donation, children under six free.

Watercolors by artist Alvin Meyers will be on display at the Fort Myers Historical Museum July 1 to August 31.

Meyers, an architectural sculptor by profession, worked primarily in the New York City and Chicago areas during his lifetime. Born in 1898, he received most of his training at the Philadelphia Academy of the Arts. He was awarded a travelling fellowship, and spent a full year studying in Paris. Recipient of the Prix de Rome, he then spent three years working and studying in Rome.

Meyers designed the Board of Trade building and the Chicago Daily News Plaza in Chicago; the Archives Building in Urbana, Illinois, and several state buildings. He vacationed on Fort Myers Beach for several years, beginning in 1936. He built a home on the beach shortly after his marriage to Edith Potter, MD. It was during that time he began painting scenes of old Florida - the fishing camps, shrimp boats, and beach scenes that were so much a part of Floridian life. And it is these paintings, recording a way of life that seems far-removed now, which are on display at the Museum. The Museum is located at 2300 Peck Street, Fort Myers, FL 33901 (813-332-5955).
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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Cover photograph. The St. Petersburg waterfront in March, 1926. The skyline is dominated by the Soreno Hotel. Photograph courtesy of the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System.
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CANDIED SQUASH.

Peel the squash and cut in slices 1 inch thick. Lay slices in large baking pan, dot with butter, cover with brown sugar and moisten slightly with water, bake slowly, turning several times.

MRS. W. L. ELDRED, Bonita Springs, FL

From the *Lee County Economy Cook Book* compiled by the 1921 Home Demonstration Council of Lee County. Reprinted by the Southwest Florida Historical Society. Used by permission.
OYSTER STEW

1 qt. oysters
4 thin slices of white bacon

2 in. square, clear fat
1 spoonful flour

Wash oysters thoroughly - if you want a strong flavor, in their own juice, if not in clear water. Dice bacon and fry well. Add flour to bacon and grease then add water to make a very thin gravy. Let boil, add oysters and boil one or two minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

For soup take less oysters and a little of the oyster juice. Make same as above. Serve with crackers.

MRS. J. W. PIXTON, Iona, FL

From the Lee County Economy Cook Book compiled by the 1921 Home Demonstration Council of Lee County. Reprinted by the Southwest Florida Historical Society. Used by permission.
COCONUT SANDWICHES.

1 cupful freshly grated cocoanut
1/2 cupful nuts, ground fine
1 teaspoonful lemon juice

2 teaspoonsful powdered sugar
3 tablespoonsful thick cream, worked in

Spread this between wafers or between bread and butter.

MRS. ARNOLD.

From the *Lee County Economy Cook Book* compiled by the 1921 Home Demonstration Council of Lee County. Reprinted by the Southwest Florida Historical Society. Used by permission.

TWENTY MINUTES SOAP.

1 cup of clarified fat
1 1/2 tbsp. lye

1/2 cup cold water

Melt fat, add lye to water; when dissolved and cooled pour it onto the fat. Beat 20 minutes with Dover egg beater and soap is ready. This amount produces 1 1/2 cups soap.

From the *Lee County Economy Cook Book* compiled by the 1921 Home Demonstration Council of Lee County. Reprinted by the Southwest Florida Historical Society. Used by permission.
ORANGE PUDDING.

Three oranges, juice of one-half lemon, one pint of milk, one tablespoonful of corn starch, one cupful of sugar, two eggs, one-fourth teaspoonful of salt. Cut oranges into pieces, half size of nutmeg. Place in a pudding dish, squeeze lemon juice over them, add a half cupful of the sugar, stir and set aside while preparing the rest.

Beat the yolks of the eggs, stir in two teaspoonsful of milk, add the same quantity of milk to the cornstarch, and beat the two mixtures together. Heat the rest of the milk, and when boiling, add the egg and the cornstarch mixture. Cook for five minutes. Add salt and rest of sugar. Remove from fire and lay the preparation, one spoonful at a time, upon the oranges in the dish. Beat whites of eggs stiff, add a tablespoonful of sugar, spread on top of pudding and brown in stove.

MRS. B. F. WALKER, Olga, FL.

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