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Pattie Dervaes

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# **BALLAST POINT: A PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY**

**By PATTIE DERVAES**

During the 1890's and the early 1900's Ballast Point was little known, sparsely settled, a cattle pasture around the point and the peninsula. There were few automobiles, even fewer roads.

Ballast Point was the "in" place for Tampons to go on a Sunday afternoon, with the family picnicking, beautiful walkways for the ladies to stroll and admire the tropical plants and flowers, and to swim in the clear Hillsborough Bay around the oriental Pavilion.

After a full day of amusement at the park, they returned to their homes on the streetcars by which they had come, filling the seats, standing in the isles, hanging out the windows. Safety was not always the main consideration.

There were other places in the immediate area; places of recreation, boating, shopping and the exclusive Tampa Yacht Club.

Ballast Point Park still remains a well cared for picnic and fishing area, now a City park. The surrounding neighborhood is prosperous, changing and interesting.



**Post Card. A south side view of the Ballast Point Pavilion, showing the bath house built out over the water and its reflection in the clear, calm Hillsborough Bay.**

-courtesy of Pattie Dervaes



**An aerial view of Ballast Point Park, Tampa Yacht Club to the south, Tampa Gun Club to the north, and Davis Islands still under construction across the bay. The bicycle race track, no longer in use, can be seen across from the park and the Gun Club.**

-courtesy of Tampa Public Library



**Post Card. A view of the pavilion from the Hillsborough Bay. The two story toboggan was very daring and exciting. The dining room is on the right, overlooking the water. Shore dinners were served here. The zoo, with bears, monkeys, racoons and deer, in cages, was an interesting exhibit. Aligators were in a round, cement pen near the center of the park, while peacock roamed the grounds freely. The concession booths, operated by an elderly Japanese retired Naval officer named Y Yokameksu, consisted of a shooting gallery, billiards and a ball game. These booths can be seen at the far left of the picture.**

-courtesy of Pattie Dervaes



**Post Card. A view of the pavilion from inside Ballast Point Park, showing the oriental construction, the open air dance floor on the second floor and the beautiful landscaping around the walkways.**

-courtesy of Pattie Dervaes



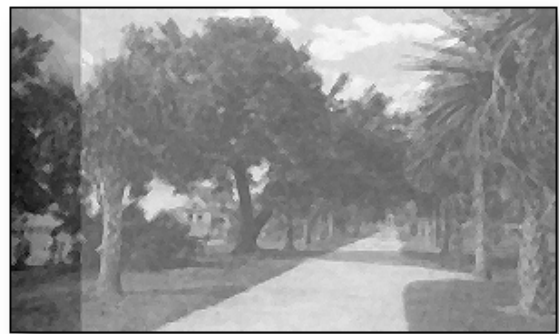
**Post Card. A view of the boardwalk, which ran from the pavilion to the concession stands at the west end of the park. Notice the boardwalk worked around the tree. The electric lights made strolling in the evening a very pleasant event.**

-courtesy of Pattie Dervaes



**Post Card. A view of the gazebo located in the center of the park. Band concerts on Sunday afternoons were held there, as well as other programs. The message written on the back of the post card is: Tampa, March 17, 1911. Dear friends, It's a pleasure to tell you that I am having a grand time. Find everything in good shape, and I think you could be comfortable should you want to do Tampa. The rooms are from \$5.00 to \$7.00 for week, 2 in a room. They inform me that good table board near here is \$4.00 for week. I hope to see you soon. Sincerely, Jim.**

-courtesy of Pattie Dervaes



**Post Card. A view of the grounds at the west end of the park. It is postmarked July 21, 1912. The Tampa Yacht Club is pictured, center, and there is no sign of the boardwalk or the concession booths.**

-courtesy of Pattie Dervaes



Post Card. Mr. Arthur S. Dervaes, Sr. was the first superintendent of Ballast Point Park when Tampa Electric purchased the park from Mrs. Chapin. The superintendent's home was in the park, where several of the Dervaes children were born. The home can be seen in the left background. Pictured, from right to left: Flora, who died the summer she graduated from high school; Rachelle, who married Gibson Gowland of Hell Harbor fame; Arthur; Jules; Albert (Beck); and Paul



The Buckeye Grocery, located on Bayshore Boulevard at the foot of Knights Avenue, was owned and operated by Clair and Minnie Cogan. It was also a streetcar stop. Note the tracks between the store and the red brick Bayshore road. Ralph Gower, 15 years old at the time, was the grocery boy. He took orders over the phone and delivered them in the delivery truck. Free delivery!

-courtesy of Mrs. Minnie Cogan



A view of the Ballast Point Pavilion after the hurricane of 1921. The bath house lies in the water. The little wooden dragons were blown from the roof or twisted about. A huge tree lies across the beach. Windows are blown out. It took months to clean up the debris. The splendid pavilion never returned to its former grandeur. It burned to the ground in August 1922.

-courtesy of Tampa Public Library



The Buckeye Grocery after the hurricane of 1921, showing the electric and telephone poles lying across the streetcar tracks, the destruction of the building as well as the shore under it around the pilings. Some of the sturdy pine trees weathered the storm very well.

-courtesy of Mrs. Minnie Cogan



The Allen boat dock on Bayshore Boulevard, at the foot of Hawthorne Road, about 1920. It was a meeting place for young people in the neighborhood. The walkway went completely around the boathouse at the end of the long dock. It is thought to have been built by Mr. Pierce, who worked for the Phosphoric Plant in Polk County. He kept his two yachts under the boathouse. There was a dance floor on the second floor, where he held parties, picnics and dances. He sold it to Mr. Allen.

-courtesy of Mrs. Imogene Hatzel Worth



The girls, acting cute on the Allen Dock, with the Wallace F. Stovall home in the background, at the right. After the hurricane of 1921, the dock was destroyed and never rebuilt. All that remains today are 15 pilings still standing in the water, which can be seen at either high or low tide, and a concrete floor on the bottom of the bay.

-courtesy of Mrs. Imogene Hatzel Worth



The rubble of the famous Ballast Point Pavilion lies on the shore, while the new pavilion is being erected over the water, about 1925. At this point in Tampa's history, there were many automobiles to take people to many recreation places other than Ballast Point. This last pavilion, even in its heyday, never became the showplace and central attraction as Mrs. Chapin's oriental Pavilion.

-courtesy of Tampa Public Library



The arbor, located midway into Ballast Point Park, had seats on either side, with a latticed top where honeysuckle vines covered it for shade. The Norman B. Hamm family lived in Gary and spent many Sunday afternoons in the park. They rode the streetcar from Gary to Ballast Point. Pictured, from left to right: Elmer, 7 years old; Myrtle; Florence; Mrs. Hamm; Clarence; Beatrice (Mrs. J.A. McLaughlin), 12 years old. Picture taken in 1924.

-courtesy of Mrs. J.A. McLaughlin



**The fire that destroyed the Tampa Yacht Club in 1938. Ballast Point Park is to the right of the picture.**

-courtesy Mr. George Woodham