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THE SEA BREEZE: **THE FIRST NEWSPAPER OF THE LOWER** **PINELLAS PENINSULA**

by: Willard B. Simonds

On June 23, 1887 the *Tampa Journal* noted: "In 1885 Mr. (W.J.) McPherson came to Disston City from Deland, and on the first day of the following April (1886) issued the first number of *The Sea Breeze*. On the first day of the following April (1887) it was merged into the *Herald*" Thus, in one brief paragraph, the beginning and the end of the first newspaper published on the lower Pinellas Peninsula was reported!

W. J. (Will) McPherson was one of three sons of Elias B. McPherson, who had homesteaded 168 acres of today's St. Petersburg Beach in 1885. Besides *The Sea Breeze*, the McPhersons, father and sons, operated a printing business, a lumber yard, a contracting business, and a general business agency, all in Disston City. They also cleared and farmed at least some of their acreage at St. Petersburg Beach. Besides all that activity, Elias B. was superintendent of the Disston City Sunday School. *The Sea Breeze* of March 1, 1887 remarked: "Another voter added to the list in this precinct on February 17th; Ye editor having attained his majority on that day. Congratulations and subscriptions are in order." Thus, W. J. McPherson was only 20 when he founded *The Sea Breeze*.

McPherson was assisted in his publishing venture by G. W. Bennett, "a veteran newspaperman." *The Sea Breeze* in an article about Bennett declared: "We are indebted to him for assistance in our office." There are indications in several issues of the paper that E. B. McPherson, W. J.'s father, also had a hand in the publication. Walter Fuller credits Bennett with hand cutting, from a block of black mangrove wood, the flagstaff of the paper, first used in volume one, number three. That actual hand cut flagstaff is on display at the St. Petersburg Historical Museum, and a print from it is used as the flagstaff of the newsletter of the St. Petersburg Historical Society.

Disston City of the 1880s was no metropolis, having a population of 150, but it was the largest settlement of the five towns on lower Pinellas. No other settlement south of Bayview had a population of over 100. The settlers were farmers, fishermen, small merchants, skilled tradesmen, plus a few real estate and "general business" agents. The earliest arrivals had acquired their land by homesteading, generally in blocks of 160 acres or more. Later arrivals had to purchase their land from one of the homesteaders or from one of Hamilton Disston's land companies. The usual purchase appears to have been either five or ten acres.

While *The Sea Breeze* carried no news of earth shaking importance, its seventeen issues did chronicle the comings and goings of the people of the entire lower peninsula, events which were of importance in their daily lives. It included the news from the settlements of Disston City, Pinellas, John's Pass, New Cadiz, and Paul's Landing. Perusing it can furnish a glimpse into daily life in pioneer Pinellas County.

Editorially, *The Sea Breeze* campaigned for better roads, a railroad, better mail service, more interest in Sunday School, greater harmony among citizens, and more cooperation among the settlements on the "Point." More than once it spoke very strongly against liquor and the people who sold it.

The final edition of *The Sea Breeze* was issued April 1, 1887, when "it was merged into the Herald and sold to Mr. Langstreth who became publisher and Mr. R. E. Neeld of Pinellas, editor." H. M. Langstreth, apparently a resident of Disston City, was mentioned in an article in *The Sea Breeze* of December 1, 1886. Walter Fuller wrote that R. E. Neeld was one of four brothers who came to Florida from Selma, Alabama in 1873, and in 1886, moved from Tampa to Big Bayou (also known as Pinellas) where he opened a small grocery store. The final issue of *The Sea Breeze* made no mention of its forthcoming demise, and all that is known about its successor, *The Herald*, is that at least one issue was published, R. E. Neeld was the editor, and that it was printed by McPherson. No copies of any issue of the *Herald* have come to this writer's attention.

Why did McPherson discontinue *The Sea Breeze*? We do not know the answer, but here is one theory. In the 1880s Hamilton Disston, through his land companies, was spending large sums promoting Disston City throughout the United States and England. Highly exaggerated, multicolored maps, and brochures filled with extravagant claims for the future of Disston City were distributed by the thousands. Disston subsidized the first fourteen issues of *The Sea Breeze* by running full page ads in ten of those issues, possibly in the hope that having a local newspaper in Disston City would help land sales. But, those ads, and the subsidy, vanished after the January 1, 1887 issue. Without the subsidy, *The Sea Breeze* became a money-losing venture which McPherson could not or would not afford to carry on.

The question remains, why Disston discontinued the subsidy? By 1887 it had become clear that the Orange Belt Railroad was to terminate at Paul's Landing, instead of at Disston City. While Disston had only himself to blame, it did not change the fact that Paul's Landing was destined to grow, and the other settlements on the "Point" were destined to decline. Thus, why subsidize a newspaper in a declining area? Disston City did not decline into complete oblivion as did Pinellas, New Cadiz, and John's Pass, but it came close.

Seventeen issues of *The Sea Breeze* were published during its one year of existence. A complete file of original copies of all these issues is located in the archives of the St. Petersburg Historical Society at the Museum. A representative issue of *The Sea Breeze*, (November 15, 1886), loaned by the St. Petersburg Historical Society, is reproduced throughout these pages. Copies of all seventeen issues are available for reading at the St. Petersburg Historical Museum, the Gulfport Public Library, and the Gulfport Historical Society.

The Sea Breeze.

Vol. 1, No. 11

DUNSTON CITY, FLA., NOV. 19, 1886.

Price, 3 Cents

J. M. PARKER & SON

SOLE AGENTS FOR THE
TAMPA HOUSE

STAY AT THE

TAMPA HOUSE,

Tampa, Florida.

THE TAMPAN HOUSE, TAMPA, FLORIDA, IS THE
MOST COMPLETELY FURNISHED AND
BEST LOCATED HOTEL IN THE SOUTH
WESTERN STATES. IT HAS 100 ROOMS,
BATHS, AND ALL THE LATEST
IMPROVEMENTS.

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CASH STORE,

E. L. LOCKE, Prop'r.

THE CASH STORE HAS THE LATEST
IMPROVEMENTS IN THE
ART OF CASHING AND
SAVING. IT HAS THE
LATEST AND BEST
MONEY AND
BANKS.

DISSTON MILL

G. L. KING, Prop'r.

THE DISSTON MILL HAS THE
LATEST AND BEST
MILLS AND
MACHINERY.

\$12.00 per Thousand

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BUSINESS AGENCY

E. B. MACPHERSON & SON,

DUNSTON CITY.

CHAS. P. H. FORTNA.

THE MACPHERSON & SON
BUSINESS AGENCY HAS THE
LATEST AND BEST
MILLS AND
MACHINERY.
IT HAS THE
LATEST AND
BEST
MILLS AND
MACHINERY.

Disston City Doings.

Pleasant weather.

Beautiful moonlight nights.

Splendid shower Saturday morn-
ing.

John Miranda is now supplying
Dunston with fish.

The gardeners are complaining
about the dry weather.

G. W. Anderson has moved into
his new house on Virginia Avenue.

Thanksgiving Thursday the 19th.
Va editor is listening for the gobble
of the turkey.

Mr. Boomer is having some
trouble to get fish just when he is
ready for them.

Will Wood walks that he is the
biggest man in town, now, if he is
only about five feet six.

The Cash Store now furnishes a
very tasty sign. It was painted by
Arthur Norwood, but the way it is
being done!

Mr. John S. Collins writes us
from Jacksonville that he is headed
this way, and expects to be here in
a few weeks.

Mr. Hamilton is doing up his
shop, with the intention of running
system from San Jose to Tampa,
during the winter.

There will be meeting, for social
unity and religious improvement,
held at Locke's hall every Sunday
evening at 7 P. M. All are cordially
invited to attend.

Mr. Torres' new home gives him
considerable amusement, but the
results are rather expensive, in the
way of rough-ups, so far kept up for
mere entertainment.

Steps have been taken to induce
the Fleet System to have the steam-
er Margaret touch at our wharf, on
her way from Tampa to Manatee,
with some prospects of success.

A party of young people went
over to the Pass, opposite this place,
last Tuesday. They stayed there
several days, had a very pleasant
time, and caught a fine lot of grou-
per, snappers, drumfish, etc.

Dr. Edgar, of Dunedin, called at
our office last week, when we were
absent. We regret we did not meet
him, and more to learn of his recent
great loss in the death of his wife.
The Doctor intends to spend the
winter on his homestead on Pin-
Key.

We have attempted tasks fre-
quently that called for tact and in-
geny, but we think none more
brain-racking than the effort, to
comply with the demands of our
readers, to furnish a page of Dunston
City local. Things don't sometimes
most always happen.

As Messrs Anderson and Hamil-
ton have quit fish-harling, Mr. Har-
ris, who has been supplying the
other side with beef, says that he
will be here every Saturday morn-
ing, and as he furnishes the very
best of beef, we can depend on a
first class dinner once a week or
more.

The justice office has increased in
a cost net, and has been experi-
menting in winding it around his
neck, jerking out his loose teeth,
etc, and has succeeded in frighten-
ing a few mules, but it won't
make you smile a smile to see the
knowing long chops come up and
nose around the net while we are
drawing in our solitary line shiner
or leather fish.

New Cattle, our neighboring
town, is booming up. Mr. John
Buddell has his store in operation,
and he informs us that he has re-
ceived word, from Washington, fa-
vorable to the establishment of a
post office there. Mr. G. L. King
has his new mill moved down to the
bay and is fixing it up as fast as
possible. He has his arrangements
made to get logs from the upper
part of the bay, by sailing. We
may look for a boom in town here-
after, before long, and would
not be surprised if we were classed
as a suburb of the Future great.

THE SEA BREEZE.

Published every two weeks.

Editorial Office: "We believe for All."

Published by the Sea Breeze Publishing Company, 1000 North Franklin Street, Tampa, Fla.

Subscription Office: 1000 North Franklin Street, Tampa, Fla.

Tampa City, Fla., Nov. 19, 1888.

POINT PINELLAS.

As letters are continually coming in from friends in the Northern and Western States, inquiring concerning the healthfulness of this and other localities, and my own frequent notices, through the papers, of ministers and other overworked persons, coming south for the purpose of recovering their health. We think it advisable to repeat some of our former statements, with additional evidence, in favor of this delightful land again. Many localities especially pulled up by speculators as great sanctuaries etc., where everybody gets well and graveyards are out of business, have been greatly overrated, and Florida has been and is at the present time well supplied with such sanctuaries. The south of the whole matter is, this state is in the hands of speculators, and many business firms and possession paths are being scattered abroad throughout the world, to attract the attention of the home and health seekers, and many hundred new towns springing up all over the state are making special claims of being the one peculiarly favored point. Well that's so too. We have no doubt but that there are many other localities that are healthy and have many attractions. We have found in our travels that the high pine ridges and also the low ridges in the flat woods, and some swamps or large streams, are generally healthy; but well chosen situations on the coast have their special claims, and we feel no hesitancy in repeating our statements concerning the small peninsula and keys enclosed by Tampa and Boca Ciega bays, the Gulf of Mexico, and Clear Water Harbor, that we have no hesitancy to meet with any evidence to convince us that there

is another locality on all the coast of Florida that will take the lead of Point Pinellas. Our space will not admit of detailed statements and particulars now, but we will endeavor to present them in as we go along and will show them up in a way that will be likely to convince the most skeptical. We might add that this paper is not published in the interest of any land speculator or Company, nor with the design of inducing speculators to invest in their lands; but with the view of inducing a good class of people to settle here and help build up the Point and improve the society.

Those who predicted ruin, or even an end of the boom for Florida, on account of the freeze, have not been heard from lately. The new capital invested in the State during the first six months of this year was \$4,000,000 against \$3,000,000 during the same time last year. Let them crack Florida and stand it if they can.—Florida.

Although many sections of this country have suffered greatly this past summer from the heat, Florida has been blessed with a very pleasant and comfortable season, and with unusual good health. Fevers of a malignant character have been few and far between, and the people of this state have many things to be thankful for, notwithstanding the financial depression and dullness of business.

It is one of the recommendations of Florida that it lies in a region of the world which, from its geographical situation, exempts it from violent storms of any kind; whether arising in the mountains and valleys of the North-west or in the torrid equatorial region. This situation gives it its equable climate and makes it impervious to the extreme action of the elements in any form. To characterize the little wind-dogs and gales which occasionally blow down a shanty or upset a weak tree as cyclones is a ridiculous misnomer which creates a wrong impression on the public mind and creates injurious impressions elsewhere. There are no cyclones in Florida.—Times Union.

JOSEPH R. TORRES.

General Insurance Agent

Representing Life, Accident and Fire Insurance.

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McPHERSON & SONS,

CONTRACTORS & BUILDERS.

Plans and Specifications drawn.

DUNN CITY, FLORIDA.

ANDERSON AND HAMILTON,

BUTCHERS.

Market every Saturday.

BOLOGNA SAUSAGE always on hand.

DUNN CITY, FLORIDA.

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HARDWARE!

TINWARE STOVES, BARBED WIRE, & C.

Tampa, Fla.

107 Washington St., opposite Post Office.

THE CASH STORE.

J. M. Johnson, Prop.

TAMPA FLA.

CHOICE FAMILY GROCERIES.

Call and examine our Stock, before purchasing elsewhere.

<p>THE SEA BREEZE. P. O. BOX 1000, PINNACLES, FLORIDA. DUNN COVE, FLA., Nov. 12, 1886.</p> <p>Pinellas Pencillings.</p> <p>Mr. Strong has returned from South Carolina.</p> <p>Mrs. J. T. Shaw has been quite busy for some time past but is much busier now.</p> <p>Mr. Neff is now carrying the mail on his last yacht, between the Point and Tampa.</p> <p>Mr. D. G. Watt's workings seem to be growing in interest and attendance.</p> <p>Mr. A. Lathers has let a contract to Mr. Thompson, to clear five acres of land, for the purpose of planting an orange grove.</p> <p>Messrs. Sloan and Steele have bought Captain Williams' property, and intend to run it between this place and Tampa.</p> <p>The school at the Miranda school house is quite full, and we are glad to state that Miss Harrison is giving excellent satisfaction as teacher.</p> <p>Mr. Ward is expected back in December, and has written to Mrs. Ward to prepare rooms for a company of friends that he will bring with him.</p> <p>The vote of the County was strong against bonding the same. We will be ready to reconsider the question when we get a county of our own on the west side.</p> <p>Mr. Stanton is putting up a substantial fence around his premises. He has a fine grove of mango and avocado pear trees in connection with his orange grove, all of which are putting on an excellent growth.</p> <p>Mr. Steele has returned from his visit to Panama and Marion may not be looking as though he had been well treated during his absence. He reports a heavy emigration coming southward via the St. Johns, and thinks we will get a large crowd in South Florida this winter than ever before. He says he was informed by good authority that the O. S. & G. R. R. is being pushed in this direction.</p>	<p>All Around The Point.</p> <p>Removal of a wedding in the near future. Who are the lucky ones?</p> <p>Mr. Flackin has returned from his visit to his old home, in England. We hear it whispered that he is about to form a co-partnership, ere long, with a certain fair one of Tampa. He has commenced operations towards building on his piece of land north of Dunedin City.</p> <p>Captain Miranda shows no abatement in pluck and grit. He has employed a professional gardener, Mr. Riley, and is planting out an extensive garden of egg plants, cabbages, tomatoes, etc. The dry weather that we are now having opposes somewhat against his planting, but we judge from the way in which he is managing his work that he will overcome all obstacles.</p> <p>A proposition is being talked of by some of our leading citizens, to effect an organization on the Point to try and get rid of the loose potato-growing man's looks that are the dread of all vegetable growers. We are willing to help point a hand to buy up the whole lot, and have a grand shooting match, if some better way can not be thought of, to get rid of these worthless pests.</p> <p>In reply to the query: Does the culture pay in Florida? The editor of the Florida Agriculturist states that on the coast, where the orange grove and palmetto are in abundance, they do well; the average yield per acre being about fifty pounds. We would be glad to publish an article from some of the best keepers on the Point in regard to their success in the business, yield, etc.</p>	<p>FLORIDA FACTS.</p> <p>We are indebted to the Florida Agriculturist for the following valuable statements coming from Prof. G. M. Crosby, who has given the State a critical study during three years of constant travel and observation.</p> <p>First: Florida covers about 50,000,000 acres.</p> <p>Second: Only about 4,000,000 acres of dry lands in the "orange belt".</p> <p>Third: Only half of this is suitable for cultivation.</p> <p>Fourth: The Country is mostly flat and covered with yellow pine timber.</p> <p>Fifth: No more healthy region can be found than the high lands.</p> <p>Sixth: We have very little entirely fertile soil, phosphatic, calcareous, siliceous, or chromatic.</p> <p>Seventh: Malaria is a big bore which may be prevented by judicious living, and is easily cured.</p> <p>Eighth: The climate is as nearly perfect as can be found on the globe.</p> <p>Ninth: The summer heat is so modified by the trade winds that the nights are cool and pleasant. Many residents declare that the summer is the most delightful part of the year.</p> <p>McPHERSON & SONS, CONTRACTORS & BUILDERS. <i>Plans and Specifications drawn.</i> DUNN COVE, FLORIDA.</p> <p>DRYGOODS, SHOES, & NOTIONS, HARDWARE & TOOLS, Tinware, Crockery, & Glassware, — AT — BAUMEISTER'S BONIFACIO, FLORIDA.</p>
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W. B. MIRANDA, Notary Public.

JOS. P. G. WATT, Cashier.

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FLORIDA LAND AND IMPROVEMENT COMPANY,
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Valuable Orange Groves, Rich Sugar Lands,
Extensive, Productive Rice Lands, for sale.

Pinellas, Alexandria, Disston, Millerton—our Bay view towns!

ALL FINELY LOCATED ON TWO OF THE FINEST BAYS ON THE GULF OF MEXICO

PINELLAS ALEXANDRIA

SITUATED ON HANDSOME BLUFFS BOLDLY OVERLOOKING TAMPA BAY

DISSTON AND MILLERTON

FROM THEIR BREEZY RIDGES OVERLOOKING THE MORE QUIET AND PICTURESQUE
WATERS OF BOCA CERCA BAY.

HEADQUARTERS

OF THE LAND DEPARTMENT, at present at the office of the Company, at DISSTON, and under the
personal management of W. B. MIRANDA.

The Finance Department is under the special management of Jos. P. G. Watt, late of London, England.
All business of a financial character transacted. Taxes returned and paid for non-residents. Loans nego-
tiated. Rents collected. Titles examined, &c.

The Surveying Department is under the direction of experienced Surveyors. Abstracts of Titles made;
Conveyances drawn, &c., &c.

THE AGENCY is also prepared to furnish all kinds of Estate Taxes, and set out and care for Graves for
Non-residents.