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***Tampa: The Treasure City* by Gary R. Mormino and Anthony P. Pizzo**

Charlton W. Tebeau  
*University of Miami*

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**The intersection of Tampa's LaFayette (Kennedy) and Franklin streets shown in the 1930s. The three buildings featured in the photograph are no longer standing.**

Photograph courtesy of Anthony Pizzo.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Tampa: The Treasure City.* By Gary R. Mormino and Anthony P. Pizzo. Tulsa. 1983. Continental Heritage Press. Photographs. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 272. Cloth. \$29.95.

This book is in three closely related parts of roughly the same length, narrative, photographs, and histories of sponsoring individuals and institutions. It is part of the American Portrait series which includes studies of Miami and Pensacola in Florida. It is an effort in words and pictures to present the spirit and identity of modern Tampa, a city with roots deep in the past. It is, of course, not a detailed history of the city, but the glimpses readers get may well motivate them to learn more about it. A bibliography provides a guide to further reading.

The story of Tampa lends itself admirably to this kaleidoscopic presentation. It is made up of legends and legendary characters galore, of dramatic episodes and rising and falling hopes and

achievements. An international flavor adds to this many-faceted image. It is important always to remember that Florida lies on the northern rim of a Hispanic world that reaches across the southern United States to the Pacific Ocean and down through Mexico and Central and South America. Like other cities on that rim, Tampa is a gateway to both the Hispanic and the Anglo-American worlds.

Only recently have we come to realize that the Florida Indians were more numerous and much more highly civilized than was commonly supposed. This is nowhere more evident than on the Gulf Coast of Florida. Perhaps the total disappearance of those Indians long before the state's belated modern development accounts for that oversight.

The early part of the story is told in imaginative and sweeping statements, often quite perceptive. This inevitably leads to some oversimplification and distortion, and may invite some nitpicking. Juan Ponce de Leon deserves more than the Fountain of Youth as his motivation for exploring Florida. Hernando de Soto was the first of the explorers to be primarily a gold seeker. It is to the credit of the authors that they do not claim to know where he actually landed in Florida. Tampa Bay was a most likely place. Hopefully, it will remain Florida's greatest mystery.

The Gasparilla festival best typifies the legendary aspect of Tampa's story, and the writers give it its proper place in history. One character was very real indeed, John Gomez, himself a legendary figure, who is credited with telling the story. He was a well known figure on the southwest coast a century ago.

Tampa, like Miami, waited for the railroad, aptly termed "the Messiah," to come into its own. Until the rails opened the way into the hinterland, the city's magnificent harbor had only a local and limited use. Then within a century, a modern metropolis developed. Tampa overcame a late start, and quickly transcended but never forgot its Indian, Spanish, Italian, and Cuban heritage or its romantic frontier flavor.

The final section of the book provides accounts of some of Tampa's business and cultural institutions and biographies of some of its leaders, recording information available nowhere else.

*Charlton W. Tebeau*

*Juan Nepomuceno de Quesada: Governor of Spanish East Florida, 1790-1795.* By Janice Borton Miller. Washington, D.C. 1981. University Press of America. Maps. Bibliography. Index. Pp. ix, 184. Paper. \$15.99.

Juan Nepomuceno de Quesada y Barnuevo was the second of seven Spanish governors ruling East Florida from St. Augustine between the close of the American Revolution in 1784 and American occupation in 1821. He succeeded the brilliant Vicente Manuel de Céspedes y Velasco in 1790, and apparently left office in 1795. These were critical years in world history in general and on the Spanish-American frontier in particular. The French Revolution affected Spanish defenses throughout America; it was Quesada's task to handle Florida defenses. He did so with disgruntled troops who grumbled at their lengthy pay arrears and with little support from his