FROM THE EDITORS

Although not far removed in time, Florida’s frontier period is difficult for historians to recreate. Among the obstacles, of course, is the paucity of surviving materials for historians to consult. Using a variety of sources, this issue of *Tampa Bay History* attempts to recapture life and events associated with several frontiers on Florida’s west coast.

Lynch law originated on America’s eighteenth-century frontier when Colonel Charles Lynch dispensed private justice in western Virginia. Although first employed in sparsely settled areas against horse thieves and common criminals, the practice of lynching persisted into the twentieth century as an illegal means of controlling unpopular minorities such as blacks, immigrants and political radicals. By 1934, Tampa was no longer a frontier, but some citizens still resorted to vigilante methods as demonstrated in Walter Howard’s article which won first prize in the 1983 *Tampa Bay History* Essay Contest.

The exploration of frontier conditions on Florida’s west coast is taken up by other authors in this issue. Lynn W. Ware examines early life along the Peace River. James M. Ricci analyzes one of Florida’s last frontiers - the land boom of the 1920s which boosters often represented as a new frontier. The photographic essay by Eirlys M. Barker shows images of pioneer life around the turn of the century. Finally, Ruth S. Irvin presents a document from 1851 that depicts Florida’s west coast at a time when a handful of settlers still grappled with the process of carving a life out of the wilderness.

The annual Essay Contest has generated so many worthy entries that we are pleased to announce the fourth annual competition with an entry deadline of September 1, 1985. For more information see the announcement on page 91.

UPDATE: The caption for the picture of Tampa’s Union Station on page 37 of the last issue should give 1912 as the date of construction.

The Fort Myers railroad depot shown on page 39 of the same issue has been transformed into the home of the Fort Myers Historical Museum. For the museum’s current activities, see page 90.

Marian B. Godown of our Board of Advisors points out that the last issue (page 63) incorrectly identified the location of Punta Rassa. The Menge Brothers operated a steamboat line on the Caloosahatchee River in Lee County, where Punta Rassa is (and always has been) located.