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## George Horatio Packwood, Sr.- Tampa's Forgotten Pioneer

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**AN ELEGANT COUPLE OF EARLY TAMPA**  
**George H. Packwood, Sr. and wife Lahvasia C. Packwood**  
**August 21, 1910**

## **GEORGE HORATIO PACKWOOD, SR.- TAMPA'S FORGOTTEN PIONEER**

**By ERNEST PACKWOOD MacBRYDE**

He is Tampa's forgotten pioneer-my grandfather, George Horatio Packwood, Sr.

If the names Horatio and Packwood sound familiar to you, he is responsible, as the



**EUNICE AND GEORGE H. PACKWOOD, JR.**

**...All Dressed Up**

-Photo by FIELD, Tampa

Packwood Subdivision in Hyde Park was named for him, as were those streets. Azeele, Eunice and Mary were streets named for three of his daughters-but only Azeele, of those three, remains today.

It's not too surprising that he has been omitted from Tampa's history, thus far. Spanish Town Creek which flowed by his home on the way to Hillsborough Bay (near Bayshore and the Davis Islands Bridge) has long been covered, due to development of the Hyde Park area, and is doomed to forever flow to the bay in darkness. Even the old two-story home has been long demolished. Many times, as a child, I was

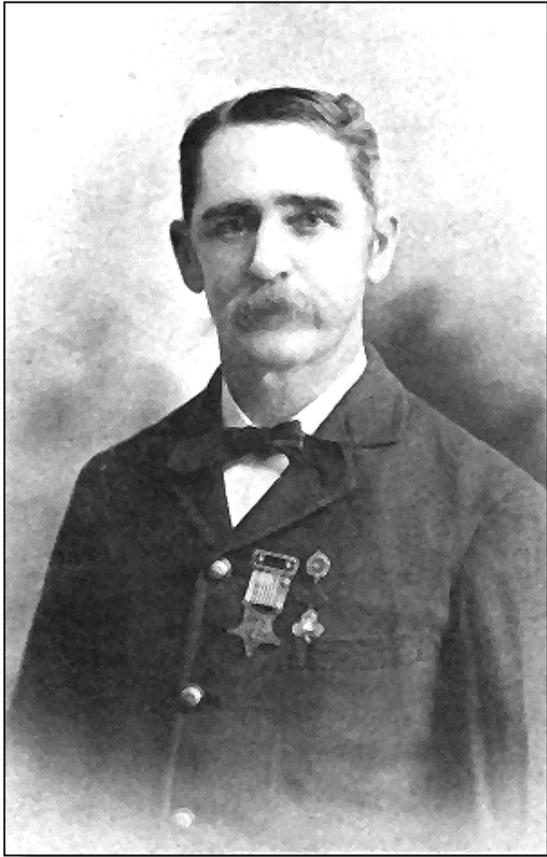


**DAUGHTERS MARY AND LAHVESIA.**

**... Taken in N.Y. City, May 1901**

told that he donated the land to the city for the purpose of building Gorrie School.

My grandfather was thought of as a stern Scot-Episcopalian. Early in life, he showed his independent nature when after attending Heidelberg University in Germany, he was in New York City and accepted a commission in the Union Army. This was considered high rebellion, as his father owned three plantations in Louisiana. The night before he was to report for active duty, family papers reveal that he was given a dinner party at Delmonic's in New York City which lasted five hours. According to his Discharge Papers, dated August 4, 1865, in Boston, Mass., he had served in the 20th



**GEORGE HORATIO PACKWOOD**  
...Veteran of Two Wars

Regiment of the Massachusetts Infantry as a first Lieutenant.

He brought his family to Tampa from Maitland following a disastrous freeze which destroyed his orange groves. He and his wife, the former Lahvesia Caruthers, had five children - George, Jr., Lahvesia, Azeele, Eunice and my mother, Mary.

### **FAMILY OF MUSICIANS**

Even as a small child, I was in awe of the furnishings in my grandparents' home. They were considered grand and not only from a child's viewpoint. I particularly remember his massive desk, which boasted of beautifully hand-carved decorations. All of

the children had been taught to play some musical instrument and my favorite was the piano which my grandfather played for hours once during a hurricane as if he were answering the noises of the gales and the sounds of the waters of the bay nearby.

My grandmother was not without musical talent. I have a copy of the sheet-music of a song she composed. At the top is written in ink, "For Mr. D.B. McKay, Editor, The Times, with compliments of the author, Mrs. Geo. H. Packwood, Sr." - dated November 1905. The name of the song is "Candita". Also written on the cover is "Souvenir of the Fair, November 1905". It was published by the Crown Publishing Company, Mt. Kisco, New York.

Early Tampans will remember Mr. Packwood for having the only electric car in town. I remember the fresh flowers in the cut glass vases mounted by each door in the interior.

### **GOES TO WAR AGAIN**

For a time, he and George Morrison shared a partnership in a hardware store on Franklin, near Lafayette Street (now Kennedy Boulevard). An opera house occupied the second floor. Perhaps he was instrumental in that location of the opera house as he was considered a patron of the arts.

His second Army career started when he enlisted as a quartermaster in 1898 at the beginning of the Spanish-American War. He was later appointed as Chief Quartermaster in the Havana Customs House in 1899, where he remained until 1902. Family correspondence reveals that he traveled between Havana and Tampa many times during those four years.

He was in his sixties when he became president of the We-Fone-U Stores, a new concept in grocery marketing of that time.

His daughter Azeele (nicknamed "Babette") was murdered in New York City where she had gone to study art. All of the daughters attended finishing school in New York City. The son, George, Jr., was constantly at odds with his dictatorial father and left home, never to be heard of by the family again. Lavhesia and Mary both married and had families. Eunice never married and lived in the old family home until her death in the early 60s.

George Horatio Packwood, Sr. died in 1932 at the age of 87.