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***Afro-Cubans in Ybor City: A Centennial History* by Susan D.
Greenbaum**

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BOOK REVIEWS

La Relación o Naufragios de Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Eds. Martin A. Favata and José B. Fernández. Potomac, Maryland. Scripta Humanistica, vol. 21. 1986. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xix, 172. Cloth. \$27.50.

Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca was one of the premier story tellers of the mid-sixteenth century. His first “best seller” was the tale of his wanderings in Texas and Northern Mexico from 1529 to 1536. This “romance,” as some recent critics have called it, saw print in 1542. It was followed by a second account, this time of his adventures in the Rio de la Plata, to which he went as governor from 1540 to 1545. This second story was printed along with the first, somewhat corrected, in 1555.

This edition of the Spanish text of Cabeza de Vaca’s “Florida” story is based on the 1555 edition, with passages that vary from that text in the 1542 edition printed in italics. An appendix lists the readings of the two texts in parallel columns for readers curious to see how Cabeza, or his printer, changed the text. In the majority of cases, the changes are unimportant, serving more to clarify than to change meaning.

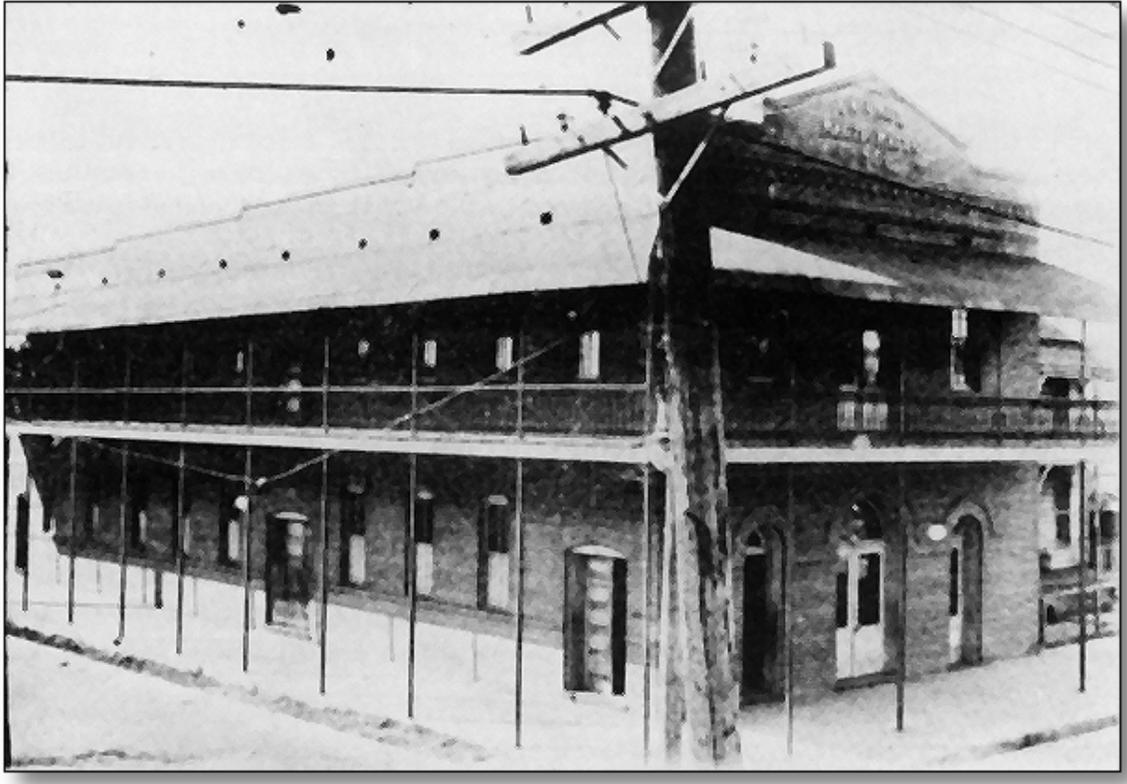
Besides indicating the differences between the texts, the editors (in their introduction) provide a handy summary of the various editions of Cabeza de Vaca’s tale, and they interject occasional notes to explain what they take to be obscure points in the text. In addition, they have modernized the spelling, a liberty that some purists will find objectionable but that the average reader of modern Spanish will welcome.

The lack of any additional critical apparatus in the form of a more extended commentary on the text, or even a bibliography of selected works about Cabeza de Vaca and his wanderings, makes this work less useful than it might have been for both specialist and novice. For example, readers of this journal will no doubt want to know the state of scholarly opinion on where Cabeza and his fellow conquistadores landed on the west coast of Florida. However, that form of presentation apparently is not what the series seeks to achieve, and so this text omits all but the most necessary of scholarly apparatus.

In sum, this is a fine reproduction of the texts of both editions of Cabeza’s tale, with minimal scholarly apparatus. Persons reading Spanish will want to add this volume to their Floridiana libraries.

Paul E. Hoffman

Afro-Cubans in Ybor City: A Centennial History. By Susan D. Greenbaum. Tampa. 1986. Tampa Printing. Photographs. Notes. Pp. 37. Paper. \$4.00



The original building of La Union Martí-Maceo in Ybor City.

Photography courtesy of U.S.F. Special Collections.

A long-awaited missing link in the ethnohistory of Tampa has at last been documented thanks to anthropologist Susan Greenbaum. *Afro-Cubans in Ybor City: A Centennial History* combines research and interpretation with oral histories and a superb collection of previously unpublished photographs. This book provides the first thorough study of Tampa's Afro-Cubans. In line with her quote of Fernando Ortiz, "Sin el negro no seria Cuba" (Without the Negro there would be no Cuba), so too, without her contribution, our local historical perspective would be incomplete.

Dr. Greenbaum introduces the reader to the historical experience of blacks in Cuba, where a less restrictive racial attitude allowed the retention of numerous African cultural traits. Unlike the more repressive form of slavery in the United States, Cuban slavery did not isolate Africans as completely from whites, thereby allowing African cultural characteristics to be absorbed into the overall society. The emergence of cigar factories in Cuba's urban centers resulted in the employment of Afro-Cubans, and some became integral parts of the emerging Cuban middle class. They were also involved as political activists in the Cuban Ten Year's War (1868-1878) and the Spanish American War.

As a result of Spanish repression, particularly after 1878, Afro-Cubans joined the exiles who fled to Key West and later Tampa, bringing their cultural heritage with them. The social and



A Tampa cigar label.

Photography courtesy of Thomas Vance and L. Glenn Westfall.

cultural differences between black and white Cubans expanded in the U.S., influenced, according to Dr. Greenbaum, by Florida's segregation laws. One result was that Afro-Cubans in Tampa retained their cultural heritage. In the early 1900s, they established the cornerstone of local Afro-Cuban identity, La Unión Martí-Maceo.

Throughout the twentieth century, Afro-Cubans faced the same problems of unemployment (due to the decline in the cigar industry), the depression and the destruction of their community by urban renewal which eroded the cohesiveness of other ethnic groups in Tampa. Yet the Afro-Cubans not only survived but also extended their influence in Ybor City, West Tampa, and

Tampa proper. La Unión Martí-Maceo member Silvia Griñan, for example, was the first black teacher to integrate Tampa schools. Other members of the community, such as Francisco A. Rodriguez, Laureano Diaz, Rogelio Alfonso, and Juan Casallas, became community leaders who proudly retained their cultural identity.

During the past two decades, the revitalization of Ybor City has addressed the issue of ethnic identity, but not until Dr. Greenbaum's study has the role of Afro-Cubans been properly assessed. The papers of La Unión Martí-Maceo, recently made a part of the holdings of the Special Collections Department of the University of South Florida Library, are now accessible to researchers, thanks to the efforts of club members and Dr. Greenbaum. She deserves the "kudos" of her fellow professionals and members of the Tampa community for her significant contribution to the history of Tampa's ethnic heritage.

L. Glenn Westfall

Outposts on the Gulf Saint George Island & Apalachicola from Early Exploration to World War II. By William Warren Rogers. Pensacola, Florida. 1987. University of West Florida Press. Pp. 297. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Cloth. \$28.95.

During their final weeks in office, Governor Bob Graham and his cabinet sorted through the history of sewage treatment plans on Saint George Island. Governor Bob Martinez had barely taken over when a controversial state purchase on the island appeared on the cabinet's agenda, not to vanish for a while. Franklin County issues are popular in the capital; Tallahassee views the county's land and water as an important state concern. While Apalachicolans fear that their city may be turned into a "living museum," Franklin County wonders why this pristine region must be preserved at the expense of those who can least afford to forego "growth." On February 26, 1987, the Apalachicola *Times* lamented "that in modern Florida never have so few been asked to sacrifice so much for so many in the name of statesmanship."

For much of the nineteenth century, Apalachicola developed as the "cotton city" for Georgia and Alabama, far ahead of other Florida towns. Decades before the discovery of the Sanibels and Sand Keys, Saint George Island brochures stirred investors' dreams. Yet today the passing traveler may mistake the county seat for a ghost town, and on the island developers continue to go bankrupt. Although lumbering, oystering and shrimping took up some of the slack when cotton shipping came to an end after the post-Civil War boom, Franklin's economy was never truly diversified, and agriculture never took hold. It remains one of Florida's poorest counties. Still, those and other handicaps, such as a badly neglected port and inadequate communication (Apalachicola Bay received its first bridge as late as 1935!), failed to discourage the settlement of what Professor Rogers calls "a tolerant and cosmopolitan society not common to the rest of the South" (p. 93).

The author, however, does not spend much time explaining the ways and the whims of the people of Franklin County. Rather, almost half of the book is devoted to an outsider, a promoter from Kentucky who was "easily the equal of Miami's frenetic developers" (p. 156). The oyster magnate William Lee Popham (1885-1953) was as successful as the developer Popham was a colorful fraud. Saint George Island at that time aspired to become another Hot Springs,