

12-1-1987

***Outposts on the Gulf Saint George Island & Apalachicola from  
Early Exploration to World War II* by William Warren Rogers**

Georg H. Kleine  
*University of South Florida*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/tampabayhistory>

---

**Recommended Citation**

Kleine, Georg H. (1987) "*Outposts on the Gulf Saint George Island & Apalachicola from Early Exploration to World War II* by William Warren Rogers," *Tampa Bay History*. Vol. 9 : Iss. 2 , Article 9.  
Available at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/tampabayhistory/vol9/iss2/9>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Open Access Journals at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Tampa Bay History by an authorized editor of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact [scholarcommons@usf.edu](mailto:scholarcommons@usf.edu).

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,

Arkansas, with the additional attraction of manufacturing plants that turned dolphin hides into shoestrings. While Professor Rogers' hero "always blended the future with the present" (p. 211), many others in Franklin County were (and are) far more cautious. The author does not ask why Apalachicola Bay remains an unmined treasure, but a promised second volume, carrying the story to the present, may fill the gap. Fortunately, many people who shaped more recent developments (like Captain George Kirvin, a latter-day oyster-Popham) are still around to help Rogers update the county's history.

For what is often a plodding, meticulously documented but minutely detailed picture, one wishes for a lighter touch and a broader stroke throughout. The bewildering and trivial sequence of owners of Saint George Island is treated with the same seriousness as is the interesting episode of Civil War blockade running. Nevertheless, the people of Apalachicola and Franklin County are very fortunate to have found a historian of Professor Rogers' congeniality and scholarly qualifications to satisfy their remarkable historical pride and curiosity. At the book signing, they demonstrated their appreciation: almost three hundred showed up, and many had to be sent home without their own copies. This superbly produced study is truly one to treasure, as the University Presses of Florida spared no effort to make *Outposts on the Gulf* a very handsome book.

*Georg H. Kleine*

*Holy Smoke*. By G. Cabrera Infante. New York, 1985. Harper & Row. Pp. 329. Cloth. \$16.95

This book has little to do with the Tampa Bay area, but a serious student of the history of the region would be well served by a careful reading of *Holy Smoke*. The book is about cigar smoking: its history, its impact on Western culture and its mystique in the popular imagination. The book, in short, serves as a sociocultural treatise on the appeal of the cigar, from which one can arrive at some understanding about the sources of the vitality of the cigar industry in Tampa.

The Cuban-born writer, now living in exile in England, approaches the subject of the cigar with the eye of a novelist and the range of a scholar. His inquiry allows him to display his wit and the range of his erudition, and the result is a highly readable and entertaining book. The reader learns how tobacco is grown, where it is cultivated, how cigars are made, the characteristics of the varieties of shapes and lengths and the rites and rituals of proper cigar smoking. Cabrera Infante elaborates on the art and form of smoking a cigar: when to smoke ("the evening. . . is the hour of the cigar"), where to smoke ("smoke indoors always, never take your cigar with you outdoors") and how long to smoke ("a good cigar should last forever—or a few seconds"). In one of the more interesting sections of the book, Cabrera Infante deals cleverly but with sociological insight with the symbolic aspects of cigars in the culture: the use of cigars in literature, art and film to denote variously corruption, wealth, and power. Cigarettes are effete, cigars are macho. In sum, this is required background reading for anyone who seeks to understand how the economy of Tampa could at one time have been sustained by principally cigar manufacturing. Cigars were big business, finding connoisseurs from among such a diverse range of people, heroes and anti-heroes alike, such as Mark Twain and Edward G. Robinson, Winston Churchill and W.C. Fields, Bertolt Brecht and Groucho Marx. For as little as five cents, everyone else could light up and be transported to the place of his fantasy.