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## *Holy Smoke* by G. Cabrera Infante

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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.

*Louis A. Pérez, Jr.*