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From the Editors

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FROM THE EDITORS

At the turn of the century many Americans engaged in a search for order. Buffeted by winds of change that swept across the country as a result of industrialization and urbanization, people sought ways to bring stability into their own lives and the society around them. The means, and even the specific purposes, varied, but Americans organized as never before to bring order into a world coming apart at the seams. This issue of *Tampa Bay History* highlights several local efforts to assert control over disruptive forces.

In the lead article, "The Birth of an Infant Society," Cathy Bayless Slusser describes the conditions that led to the formation of the Hillsborough County Medical Association in 1895. This voluntary organization was typical of the response of many professionals, from teachers to lawyers, who joined their colleagues to enforce high standards and improve not only their profession but also society generally. Tampa physicians used their collective strength to battle a number of common problems, including patent medicine salesmen, in the 1890s.

While physicians relied largely on self-help, some private voluntary associations resorted to political action to advance their causes. Prohibitionists represented one of the best organized and most effective political action groups at the turn of the century, and they considered their cause basic to any improvement of modern society. In "The Spirits of St. Petersburg," Jack E. Davis traces the crusade for a local-option law to prohibit the sale of alcohol beverages in St. Petersburg. Although largely unsuccessful in Pinellas County, local dry forces gave momentum to the state and national movements during the years 1892-1919.

Progressive reformers also took up the cause of conservation at the turn of the century, but the uncontrolled exploitation of many remote areas continued. During the 1930s the New Deal adopted conservation and reclamation programs designed to restore the natural environment. In a photographic essay, "Withlacoochee, a New Deal Legacy," Lewis N. Wynne and Guy Porcher Harrison graphically show the transformation of a large area of west central Florida.

In addition to a document describing "Bradenton in 1904," this issue contains book reviews, announcements and information about the 1988 *Tampa Bay History* Essay Contest. We hope you enjoy the issue.