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We extend our appreciation to the following people who have made special contributions to TAMPA BAY HISTORY.

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FROM THE EDITORS

Prosperity, depression and war have shaped much of modern history, and the period 1920-1945 featured all three. In many ways Americans are still living with the legacies of that era. Changes in the lives of Floridians mirrored national and international developments, as people at the local level sought to cope first with prosperity, then with depression and finally with war. This issue of *Tampa Bay History* features articles that show how larger forces intersected local life during the years from 1920 to 1945. Women, who won the vote in 1920, played an increasingly important role outside the home in the following decade. Mary Clair Crake, in her article "In Unity There is Strength: Women's Clubs in Tampa during the 1920s," examines the range of voluntary work performed by local club women. William D. Slicker's photo essay, "The Building Boom in St. Petersburg," graphically illustrates changes that forever altered the skyline of St. Petersburg during the twenties. The photo essay by Waneta Sage-Gange depicts a lesser known aspect of the period that involved "Training Army Pilots in Lakeland and Avon Park during World War II" The article by Walter T. Howard, "A Hillsborough County Tragedy: The 1930 Lynching of John Hodaz," reminds us that Floridians looked backward as well as forward in the interwar years. Finally, this issue contains book reviews that should be of particular interest to people living in the area served by the University of South Florida and *Tampa Bay History*.

The editors are pleased to announce that first prize in this year's *Tampa Bay History* Essay Contest will be shared by the authors of two entries. One winner is Lisa Tignor for her article, "La Colonia Latina: The Response to Tampa's Immigrant Community to the Spanish Civil War." The other winning article, "Crossbows to Bombers: The Military History of Mullet Key," is co-authored by Alicia Addeo and Bart Moore. These articles will be published in the next issue of *Tampa Bay History*. Our appeal for additional support from subscribers has brought generous contributions from the people listed on page 2 of this issue. We hope all of you will consider making special contributions when you receive renewal notices. Another way of helping is to give gift subscriptions in your name. *Tampa Bay History* remains, of course, a nonprofit journal, but publishing costs continue to rise. Thus we appreciate your continued interest and support.
Editors:

I wish to make a clarifying note concerning the caption associated with the SCL train picture shown on page 57 of the Spring/Summer 1989 issue.

The correct number for the Doodlebug is 4900, not 2900. The reference to the the “combined Seaboard Coast Line” would mean very little to the average reader. A more accurate caption for the photograph would be: “The Doodlebug #4900, of the Seaboard Coast Line (a merger of the Atlantic Coast Line and the Seaboard Air Line in 1967), passes the wooden depot of the former ACL station in Polk County’s Highland City with a single coach on its way to Naples. This unit was in service until the advent of Amtrak on May 1, 1971.” The existing caption could lead one to think that the unit was scrapped prior to the start up of the Amtrak service, which was not the case.

Certainly enjoy reading *TAMPA BAY HISTORY* and look forward to each issue.

Sincerely Yours,
Robert Warren
Clearwater
“IN UNITY THERE IS STRENGTH”: WOMEN’S CLUBS IN TAMPA DURING 1920s

by Mary Claire Crake

Founded in the early years of the new century, Tampa’s women’s clubs flourished during the city’s “boom” years of the 1920s. Not only did the number of clubs increase, but members’ activities expanded into areas previously reserved for men. During the 1920s, women’s organizations worked on numerous building projects including the completion of a new clubhouse, introducing many members to the male-dominated world of buying and selling real estate, applying for loans and preparing financial records. Also during the twenties, women entered the voting booth for the first time, breaking down another formerly all male bastion.

Although Tampa’s women’s clubs only belatedly supported the Nineteenth Amendment, with its passage, members consistently advocated greater female participation in electoral politics. In particular, female votes were used to push for educational improvements, which remained a legislative priority of local as well as state women’s organizations. Tampa’s clubs assisted in the formation of a teachers’ association and worked to provide school lunch programs and higher teacher salaries. In addition, school playgrounds and physical education programs received the attention of club members.

To increase their political clout, local members of the white women’s clubs formed a city and then a county-wide federation and joined state and national federations. Black clubwomen in Tampa had earlier formed a city-wide league, one of only eight such federations in the country. Through these various federations, large numbers of women worked toward the same goals and supported each other’s efforts in civic, social and political matters. During the 1920s, then, the activities of women’s clubs broadened, membership roles increased and members became extremely influential not only in their local communities, but throughout the state and country.

The decade began with women preparing to vote for the first time. Tampa’s clubwomen took this responsibility seriously, though black women found themselves disenfranchised on the basis of race once their sex no longer excluded them from voting. In August 1920, representatives from several local white clubs met at the home of Mrs. T.M. Shackleford, president of the Tampa Woman’s Club, to discuss their duties under the Nineteenth Amendment. Mrs. Shackleford proclaimed the importance of education for voters and showed why women needed to exercise this right. The study, entitled “An Open Forum on Our Government for Women Voters,” became the basis for a series of meetings designed to prepare the newly enfranchised woman to cast her first ballot.¹

The following week, the first of nine forums was held in the city courthouse. The subjects for discussion included the municipal form of government and women as voters. Judge Thomas M. Shackleford, husband of the initiator of these meetings, was the main speaker. The judge endorsed women’s participation in primaries* as well as in bond elections, provided they were

*The white primary, an institution in Tampa as elsewhere in the South, denied participation in this important political process to blacks, male or female.
taxpayers. The judge also noted that women could seek office for mayor, council and police judge but not for the board of public works since the law specified that it should consist of five outstanding male citizens. Judge Shackleford, however, argued that women should not serve on juries. He questioned whether members of the audience, if selected as jurors, would agree to remain overnight in the courthouse with male members of the jury. The women, disapproving of such practices, agreed that Juries should remain a masculine preserve.²

The forum meetings continued as local women participated in their first election as voters. In October 1920, the question of changing Tampa’s aldermanic form of government to a board of commissioners came before the electorate. The latter form of municipal government became popular during the Progressive Era since voters directly elected the commissioners and, therefore, felt they would be more accountable for their actions. Hundreds of women registered to vote, and their ballots helped bring the commission form of government to Tampa. The election to fill the commission seats then presented the local citizens with the unprecedented opportunity of voting for a woman candidate.³

Several months prior to the fall election, a Commission Government Club had been formed. This club favored a commission board and proceeded to select a slate of candidates. Several women were members of the club, and after debating the issue, they agreed not to present a woman candidate for the November 15 primary. Though all of the members apparently concurred with this decision, when nominations were made, Amos H. Norris submitted the name of his wife, Mrs. Amos Norris.⁴ The other women members of the organization protested Norris’s candidacy, stating that they had not changed their minds about endorsing a woman candidate. They were surprised then when Mr. Norris told a newspaperman he qualified his wife's candidacy through numerous endorsements from women members of the Commission Government Club. After doing so, he had talked with Mrs. Norris, who was in Asheville, North Carolina, attending a convention, and received her approval. The women members stressed that they did not have any personal opposition to Mrs. Norris, but felt that her entry into the race was an “unfortunate mistake.”⁵ Still, Mrs. Norris did not withdraw her name from consideration; she lost in the primary election, polling only 957 votes out of 22,339 cast.⁶

It was in the midst of election excitement that Tampa’s white clubwomen focused on organizing their first city-wide league. In May 1920, a number of women met at the home of Mrs. W.F. Miller to discuss the formation of a city federation. No decision was reached, and due to the summer season and the attendant cessation of club activities, another meeting was not held until February 1921. At that time, representatives from several women’s clubs, including the Friday Morning Musicale, the Tampa Civic Association, the Students’ Art Club, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Tampa Woman's Club, approved a motion creating the Tampa League of Women’s Clubs. Officers for the first year included Mrs. W.F. Miller, president; Mrs. S.L. Lowry, Sr., first vice-president; Miss Elsie Hoyt, second vice-president; Mrs. C.J. Woodruff, third vice-president; Mrs. S.W. Jackson, recording secretary; Mrs. L.H. Lothridge, correspondence secretary; Miss Kate Jackson, treasurer; and Mrs. Albert Adams, auditor. Miller, Lowry, Mrs. Jackson, Miss Jackson and Adams all represented Tampa Civic. Hoyt was also a member of Tampa Teachers’ Club, and Woodruff and Lothridge represented the Tampa Woman’s Club.⁷
Community welfare and cooperation became the keynotes of the League. Its stated purpose was to impart, encourage and promote the projects of all affiliated organizations without infringing on the work of individual clubs. The League worked to coordinate efforts of member clubs on questions vital to the home and the community, especially those affecting women and
children. League members agreed that unity through federation would not only benefit the clubs but also offer opportunities for expanding civic and social progress.8

The first project of Tampa’s League of Women’s Clubs reflected these ideals of civic and domestic improvement. Due to the prevalence of tuberculosis in Tampa during the 1920s, the League began a crusade to fight the disease. The League’s social welfare department researched the problem with the assistance of Dr. J.R. Harris, city health officer, and found a high percentage of tuberculosis among children, especially in poorer families. In 1922, 297 children attended the city tuberculosis clinic. The doctors informed the clubwomen that in order for the children to improve their strength, they needed nourishment provided by the intake of large quantities of milk. Dr. Harris recommended two quarts of milk per day for each child. The members of the League’s social welfare department calculated that providing one child with two quarts of milk daily would cost approximately $7.50 each month per child – an expense few poor families could afford. The League responded by starting a milk fund campaign.9

Clubwomen initially tried to raise the necessary funds through subscriptions. A subscriber either agreed to furnish the milk for a child until cured or provided a stipulated monthly amount to the League for the purchase and distribution of milk to needy children. The League’s chairperson for the milk fund, Mrs. C.A. Miles, assured the public that one hundred cents of every dollar contributed would go toward milk purchases. Members also distributed milk bottles as collection devices to local stores for voluntary contributions. Throughout the 1921-22 season, Tampa’s League also sponsored several plays and musical performances which raised over $2,000 for the milk fund.10

Various missions and charitable institutions distributed the milk paid for by League funds. Milk stations located at Red Cross headquarters, the United Charities, the Rosa Valdez Mission in West Tampa and the Wolff Mission of Ybor City dispensed over 38 quarts of milk daily. In 1924, additional milk stations – located at the Family Service Association, the West Tampa Americanization League, and the Urban League – received contributions from the Tampa League of Women’s Clubs.11

In addition to the milk fund, the women proposed construction of a tuberculosis preventorium. For this purpose, clubs raised $2,000 in cash and obtained another $3,000 from the sale of Christmas Seals. These funds were insufficient, however, for both the purchase of a site and the building itself. A committee of clubwomen, including Mrs. S.L. Lowry, wife of Commissioner Sumter Lowry, appealed to the county commissioners to donate the land. Although the commissioners gave an unofficial promise to the women’s committee, they indicated that they would have to investigate the availability of city property. Realizing delays would cost lives, the clubwomen turned to the Public Health Association for assistance. Through joint efforts, the Health Association and League secured a site at Laurel and Roosevelt Streets and used League funds to construct the institution. As a result, the Pine Health Preventorium opened in 1926 providing much needed care for children with tuberculosis.12

Members of local white women’s clubs also became involved in projects in the black community. In January 1923, Tampa’s Urban League requested support from the city’s white and black women’s clubs in securing an extension of the school year for black children. Black schools remained open only six months a year compared to eight months for white schools. Any
additions to the school term for blacks had to be provided for through the work of clubs and other welfare organizations which raised private funds to pay teachers’ salaries. Some blacks preferred to send their children to schools outside Tampa due to the shortness of the local term. In addition, teachers paid small salaries for only six months of the year could not afford to attend training schools to improve their standard of training.¹³

To change the situation, the executive secretary of the Urban League and first president of the Tampa Negro Women’s Clubs, Blanche Armwood Beatty, appeared with Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Norris before a special joint session of the county school board and district trustees. They appealed for at least an eight-month term for the three black schools in district four. Several male members of the Urban League also attended, assuring school officials of the willingness of blacks to do their part through taxation or other means to improve their children’s education. The school board considered extending district four’s school term the following year, and after further appeals from both black and white leaders, the board approved an eight-month term for black schools.¹⁴

The League also sought to improve education throughout the city through the promotion of a local teacher’s club. The League's president, Mrs. W.F. Miller, assisted the teachers in banding
together for their own betterment and encouraged members to take a more active role in all civic and welfare work. In 1921, the Tampa Teachers Club (an all-white association) was organized, and the following year the teachers voted to become members of the League. The club aimed to raise the professional standard of local teachers, to secure among teachers an exchange of ideas and experiences, to keep informed on education bills coming before Florida’s legislature and to cooperate with other clubs in securing legislation beneficial to schools. The first officers of Tampa’s Teachers Club included Mrs. F.N. Clayton from Woodrow Wilson Junior High, president; Mrs. Nellie Ramsey of George Washington High School, vice-president; Miss Faith Stowall from Henderson, secretary; and Miss Laura Switzer, of Madison, treasurer.\textsuperscript{15}

Concern for improving education also was evident in the formation of local Parent-Teachers Associations (PTA). Initially know as Mothers’ Clubs, many of these organizations had their roots in the educational programs of women’s clubs. PTAs encouraged closer cooperation between parents and teachers and worked with school boards in extending vocational and commercial education. These associations also promoted building improvements, lunch
Realizing the importance club-women placed on education, many of the local PTAs joined the League soon after its formation including those connected to the Buffalo Avenue School, Gorrie School, George Washington Junior High School, Henry Mitchell School and Seminole Heights School.

During the early 1920s, other Parent-Teacher Associations formed, and in 1921, the Florida State Congress of PTAs was organized. The Congress promoted a closer relationship between home and school, the training of children in good citizenship, and the endorsement of laws for children’s protection. By 1925, it became clear that PTAs could not function effectively if they bore double allegiance to a women’s league and a PTA Congress. Although the Congress acknowledged the excellent work of women’s organizations, especially in education, the fundamental purposes of the two associations were in conflict. Women's clubs would not accept fathers and male teachers as members while the PTA Congress concentrated exclusively on working with schools for the welfare of children. There was a natural reluctance on the part of women’s organizations to accept the division, but Tampa’s League of Women’s Clubs lost all but one of its PTA members by 1925. Some clubwomen feared that without the PTAs, the emphasis many clubs placed on improving education would wane. This did not occur, however, and cooperation continued to exist between women’s organizations and PTAs.

During the years that PTAs belonged to the League, Tampa played an important role in the state Congress movement. In 1924, the city hosted the fourth annual convention of the Florida Congress, the president of which was a Tampan, Mrs. Bertha Graham Anderson. As the daughter of Professor and Mrs. B.C. Graham, she provided the organization an entree into the offices of the educators of the state. Her father had been involved in the education field for many years serving as school teacher, high school principal, county superintendent and president of the Florida Education Association.

At the convention, A.B. Steuart, grand inspector general of the Scottish Rite (a Masonic organization) and a man concerned with school welfare, addressed the delegates. His main theme was the promotion of greater interest among parents in the welfare of the schools. He was also concerned about communities in which few parents were familiar with the American educational system, such as the Latin enclaves of Ybor City and West Tampa. According to Steuart, Tampa needed federal funding to assist in educating the many foreign-born illiterates among the city’s population. Solutions, Steuart explained, could only occur after enough citizens became interested in schools and worked for their improvement.

Although the number of local Parent Teacher Associations increased, a PTA had never been organized at the Ybor City School. The members of the Tampa Civic Association, however, had appointed a committee to investigate the possibility of a school lunchroom there. The committee members reported on the overcrowded conditions at the school and discussed plans for both a lunchroom and other improvements to the schoolhouse. Upon further investigation, members found the school building could not accommodate a lunchroom, and the project was deferred until either the crowded conditions in the school had been eliminated or a new building erected. The Civic Association notified the school superintendent of poor conditions at the Ybor City School, but according to school officials, no funds were available for necessary improvements.
The Civic Association established playgrounds at several local schools, but within a few years they became rundown due to a lack of money for repairs. In 1923, a committee composed of Kate Jackson, Mrs. Amos Norris and Mrs. C.C. Worthington, petitioned the city commission requesting funding for municipal playgrounds. The commission promised to consider a playground appropriation in the next year's budget but refused to commit to any long range plans. Even after Kate Jackson drove several commissioners to view the deserted playgrounds, they offered concern but no funds. Jackson then requested all association members to attend commission meetings and urge the funding of playgrounds, demonstrating how strongly they felt about city-funded recreational facilities and educating the commissioners on public needs in this area.

The League proceeded to launch an active campaign to obtain several municipally owned playgrounds and recreation centers. Members hired a field representative from the National Playground and Recreation Association for a ten-week survey to evaluate local needs for recreational facilities. A temporary organization for the promotion of the campaign was formed with Mrs. S.W. Jackson, president of the League, as chairperson. Following the survey and a recommendation that the city repair existing playgrounds and add others, the commission appropriated $10,500 to a newly organized Tampa Community Recreation Association. The Recreation Association set up five playgrounds, including one for black children, and hired a trained staff of playground supervisors to work under a public recreation director. Attendance records indicated the usefulness and need for Tampa's playgrounds. From September 1924 to April 1925, 81,587 white children and 12,540 black youths used the playgrounds.

In addition, the Recreation Association inaugurated physical fitness classes in local elementary schools. The program consisted of forty-minute instructions in baseball, basketball, tennis, running and volleyball. Supervisors emphasized the rules and conduct of each game so that children could play in groups at any time. The physical education work in the elementary schools reached 6,827 boys and girls during the 1924-25 school year alone.

The success of the recreation program was largely due to the efforts of the executive board, but many local organizations also contributed to its success. The Civic Association donated $1,000 for equipment, and one of the city playgrounds was named “Tampa Civic Association Playground” as a token of appreciation for the association’s long-term interest in developing local recreation programs. The League of Women’s Clubs contributed $50 to help defray the cost of the recreation survey, and the Gorrie School PTA turned over its well-equipped playground to the Association, making it part of the city's recreation system.

As Tampa Civic worked for city playgrounds, the Friday Morning Musicale concentrated on building a clubhouse. With an expanding membership and no permanent “home” in which to hold its activities, the need for a clubhouse increasingly became a necessity rather than a luxury. Although numerous women’s organizations desired a clubhouse, the Musicale’s needs were probably greatest. In their more than twenty-year history, the association had met at nine different locations including the Crescent Club, the German Club, Pythian Hall, the DeSoto Hotel’s ballroom, the Methodist Church and the Tampa Bay Casino. In addition, the Musicale’s activities usually required a commodious area for orchestra or chorus performances which could
be difficult to locate and expensive to rent. Its members, therefore, resolved to direct most of their activities and funds toward the construction of a clubhouse.\textsuperscript{32}

In October 1922, the effort to secure a clubhouse began in earnest when delegates from sixteen local women’s clubs met to discuss a land purchase. The representatives unanimously voted to purchase a lot located at the corner of Jackson and Jefferson Streets. Mrs. W.F. Miller, president of the Tampa League, donated the first payment of $100 for the land with the balance loaned by the Civic Association. Although the land seemed suitable for League needs, its prime location brought numerous offers from Tampa businessmen interested in purchasing the property from the League. Noting that the sale of their investment could bring the League a sizable profit, members decided to sell the land, netting $1,000 but temporarily suspending the clubhouse project.\textsuperscript{33}

Within a few months, however, Musicale members decided to proceed with the project and purchased a lot on the corner of Brevard and Horatio Streets for $4,000. The club then established three new committees – finance, building, and ways and means – to assist in the project.\textsuperscript{34} The ways and means committee divided the membership into groups with each group committed to raising $100 for the building fund during the 1924-25 season. At the end of the club year, these groups added over $600 to the building fund. In May 1925, however, Mrs. Carlton, chairperson of the finance committee, reported that in order to borrow money for construction, the Musicale had to be free from debt and functioning on a sound financial basis. For this purpose, the finance committee recommended raising the regular dues from $5 to $10 and adding new clubhouse dues of $15 per year. The finance committee also proposed a patron’s list composed of citizens who contributed at least $50 per year toward the clubhouse fund. In addition, the committee recommended that members solicit donations from Tampa’s business community. According to Mrs. Carlton, when the building fund reached $10,000 the club could secure a mortgage and proceed with clubhouse construction.\textsuperscript{35}

By October 1925, the Musicale’s building fund account showed a balance of over $14,000. Several months later, members accepted a bid of $48,000 from Logan Brothers Construction Company to proceed with construction. In May 1926, the finance committee attempted to secure a loan. After consultations with a half dozen financial advisors, the committee advised club members that a loan with a reasonable interest rate could not be secured for at least six months. As the six months passed, building costs escalated, delaying construction once again.\textsuperscript{36}

While working for their own clubhouse, the Musicale women met in the Tampa Bay Casino. In the summer of 1927, the League, from whom the Musicale rented space at the Casino, received notice that the entire building had been leased to the American Legion as a clubhouse, forcing both women’s organizations to locate a new meeting place. The city commissioners offered to lease the old Gordon Keller Hospital located at the fairgrounds to the clubs, which then discussed the possibility of remodeling that building into a clubhouse. A few weeks later, however, the Fair Association objected to the lease, stating that the fair needed the building for expansion. The women stood firm claiming the commissioners’ offer took priority over the Fair Association’s protest.\textsuperscript{37}
The Fair Association offered the League $10,000 in cash if they would surrender all claims to the lease. League members accepted the offer and met with the Musicale to discuss a possible partnership in constructing a jointly-owned clubhouse. After several meetings of both boards, the members decided to form a corporation to build a clubhouse on the lot owned by the Musicale. The building was erected with $20,000 contributed by the Musicale ($15,000 in cash with the lot and taxes valued at $5,000), and the League’s $10,000 from the Fair Association plus furnishings valued at $2,000 and $1,000 cash raised from assessments to clubs. The balance was financed with a $7,000 mortgage. The clubhouse opened in October 1927 at 809 Horatio Street and is presently used by the Friday Morning Musicale as well as by other local organizations, such as WMNF radio, for concerts and benefits.  

Prior to completion of the clubhouse, the Tampa League joined the Florida Federation of Women’s Clubs. At the time of affiliation, March 1925, members voted to change the name of their local organization to the Hillsborough County Federation of Women’s Clubs since federation members now included both city and county organizations. The state was divided into twelve sections with a vice-president of the Federation selected from each section. The twelve vice-presidents formed a committee which assisted in organizing new associations. The vice-presidents were also responsible for yearly visits to each federated club in their section. Hillsborough County’s Federation was appointed to Section Eight which also included the clubs of Hernando, Pasco, Pinellas and Polk counties. Members of the state federation carried out their work through four departments: civic and social service, which advocated cooperation with juvenile courts and city and county authorities; education, which supported closer cooperation among parents, children and teachers; music, literature and art, which encouraged appreciation of the arts; and American Homes, which sought to raise the moral and material standards of the home.  

Black women’s clubs formed a regional federation at about the same time. The Southeastern Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs was created when women leaders of the South decided that a council could assist in solving some of the problems peculiar to their race. In 1923, Mary McLeod Bethune of Daytona, presided over the organization. Three of Tampa’s black clubs joined the association, including the Harriet Tubman Mothers’ Club, the Eastern Star Community Club and the Busy Merrymakers Club.  

In 1923, Miss Hallie Q. Brown of Ohio, president of the National Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs, visited Tampa and addressed an audience at St. Paul’s A.M.E. Church. A powerful orator, Brown had spoken in principal cities in the U.S. and Europe. For two years she travelled in Europe promoting the interest of black education and raising funds for Wilberforce University with which she was affiliated. She also worked with Susan B. Anthony and other pioneers for woman’s suffrage. Brown’s address at St. Paul’s centered on the important and constructive work of black women throughout the United States. She pointed to Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper as pioneers in abolition, suffrage and temperance. Miss Brown also took the opportunity to promote scholarship and loan funds to provide educational opportunities for worthy black women.  

One of the local members of the black women’s federation was the Busy Merrymakers Club. The club was organized in 1923 with sixteen charter members. The Merrymakers was composed
of black businesswomen who aimed to provide service to the community. Members proposed that the club act as a black YWCA to provide a temporary residence in a respectable environment for women who recently arrived in Tampa seeking employment. The first officers elected included Gertrude R. Chambers, president; Preston Murray, vice-president; Emma D. Mance, secretary; Annie B. House Mance, assistant secretary; Lessie Blackshear, correspondence secretary; Achilles Robinson, treasurer; and Mercedes McCormick, chairperson of the board of directors.

As black women broadened their activities locally and regionally, white women also increased their activities through the state and county federations. In a rare case of common cause, the white women’s legislative committee endorsed a bill in 1925 that included the establishment of a state home for delinquent black girls. Tampa club leader, Mrs. Amos Norris, chaired the state federation's department of institutional relations and initially thought her department would have to work for passage of a special bill permitting the home. After further investigation, Mrs. W.S. (May Mann) Jennings, chairperson of the State Legislative Council and wife of ex-Governor Sherman Jennings, discovered that the previously approved bill providing a school for white girls was sufficient for the program now advocated for blacks. Although additional legislation was not required, clubwomen battled for the $25,000 appropriation to build the facility.

While awaiting the funds for a new facility, the Florida Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs attempted to care for a number of girls in temporary quarters at the old Marion County jail. Blanche Armwood Beatty, a Tampa resident and chairperson of the committee on industrial relations for the state associations, joined forces with the white women’s federation. She mailed hundreds of letters to individuals and organizations in the black community asking them to send correspondence and resolutions to the governor, state senators and representatives asking for their assistance in securing an appropriation for the institution.

The members of both state federations initially thought it advisable to work toward placing the building for black girls on the same land as the home for whites and yet not have white and black girls in close contact. However, sentiment against building both homes on the same property crystallized among some leaders in both organizations. When the Florida legislature finally approved the appropriation in 1937, the black federation decided not to build on the same property but to locate another site. This dispute ended cooperative activities between the associations for the time being.

The white women’s state federation continued to hold a yearly convention, hosted by one of the member clubs, for which delegates were selected by their own association. They elected state officers, endorsed or rejected resolutions, and acquired information concerning other club activities. At the 1925 Ft. Lauderdale convention, education was the keynote. The convention delegates voted to assist in reducing adult illiteracy in the state, endorsed physical exams for all students, and recommended that each county represented by a federated club send a young man and woman to the university and women’s college for teacher training. They also recommended to the state legislature that an appointed state board of education replace the existing ex officio board.
The resolution endorsing an appointive board called for an amendment to Florida’s constitution. On the proposed board only the governor and commissioner of agriculture would be ex officio members with the governor appointing the other five members, who should represent the various geographical regions of the state. The present board, consisting of the governor, the secretary of state, attorney general, treasurer and superintendent of public instruction, was composed of those burdened with responsibilities of other offices, providing them with little time for public education matters. State federation members also contended that the present law excluded women from serving on the board, a service, the clubwomen argued, for which they were eminently fitted.52

In the state legislature, the resolution received a favorable report in the house and senate committees. The senate committee, however, reserved its decision after considering its effects on the sale of state school property. Senators argued that board members living in various areas of Florida would impair the timeliness of voting on the purchase of land. Reformers advocated that a committee of two ex officio members and the superintendent of public instruction be appointed to handle such situations. Endorsing that proposal, the senate committee submitted the bill to the full senate. The session closed, however, prior to final approval.53 The legislature did enact a law authorizing the appointment of an educational survey commission, but this halted the question of further legislative action until the five commission members reported their findings.54

At the 1926 Deland convention of the Florida Federation of Women’s Clubs, the agenda included a broad range of issues. Several south Florida clubwomen reported that a recent hurricane had ravaged a large part of Royal Palm Park located near Miami. The park was not a state owned facility, and, therefore, funds for its rehabilitation would have to come from private contributions. Convention delegates, realizing the park could lay in waste for years without assistance, voted to form a Royal Palm Park committee and to loan the committee $2,000 from the federation’s treasury to begin clean-up work.55

The concern over Royal Palm Park was part of a growing concern with environmental issues among clubwomen. In December 1927, Mrs. C.A. Miles, a member of the Hillsborough County Federation, received a request from Mrs. Katherine B. Tippets, president of the state federation, to provide an account of the method her conservation committee used in Tampa to enforce the law protecting holly and other trees. As outlined by Mrs. Miles, the committee members visited editors of both Tampa newspapers, showed them a copy of the state law prohibiting the sale of holly and asked their cooperation through editorials and news articles. Both papers editorialized in favor of the club’s efforts. The clubwomen proceeded to call on city commissioners and asked their assistance in preventing sales of the restricted plants. The mayor instructed the city attorney to draw up an ordinance which conformed to the new state law; and every wholesale produce house, florist and chain store was visited and asked not to sell holly. The chief of police promised to instruct his men to report all violations immediately. The process required weeks of work by the clubwomen but succeeded in stopping the commercialization of some of Florida’s most beautiful natural attractions.56

Not all local problems became part of the state agenda, however. One such issue, brought to the attention of the Tampa Woman’s Club in 1928, was dancing in public schools. The president of the Hillsborough High PTA, Mrs. John T. Adams, requested that the school board permit the
use of the school for a student dance with PTA members as chaperones. The board, however, upheld a long standing rule against dancing in school buildings.\footnote{57}

Following this initial rejection, the PTA solicited assistance from the Tampa Woman’s Club, which adopted a resolution supporting the request of the PTA and presented it to the board. Club members argued that students needed wholesome outlets for their youthful energies and parents needed knowledge of their children’s whereabouts. The Woman’s Club viewed dancing as an educational opportunity, through which the PTA would be “elevating the moral and social standards of the community’s future citizens” by providing the proper surroundings under the right conditions and with the “supervision of parents and teachers at a social gathering of students.” It urged the members of the school board to grant the request of the PTA and permit the use of the high school for student dances.\footnote{58}

The Women’s Club’s resolution was opposed by Dr. Claude W. Duke of the Tampa Minister’s Association. This organization supported the school authorities and urged the board of education to stand firm against efforts to divert “our tax supported buildings from the purposes for which they were erected.”\footnote{59} Mrs. Amos Norris responded to Dr. Duke by stating the the school building belonged to the taxpayers and not to the school board and, therefore, the trustees were presumptious in denying the use of the building to the PTA which was composed of property owners as well as parents.\footnote{60} After reviewing both arguments, the school board still refused to permit student dancing in school buildings.\footnote{61}

Requests such as this one reflected the ever increasing demands presented to clubwomen by citizens and other civic associations. In a report submitted at the 1929 state meeting, Mrs. Robert Brodie, vice-president of section eight, presented the varying activities of her section’s membership. The Alpha Sorosis of Dade City contributed toward keeping the grammar school open an extra month. The Brooksville Woman’s Club enlarged its clubhouse and organized a junior club. The Ozone Village Improvement Society added numerous books to the local library and financed city street lights. Pinellas County’s federation worked for the health and welfare of school children, assisted in improving the Naval Landing Park and planned to build a clubhouse on Snell Island. The Sunshine Society of Pinellas Park sponsored a public library. Tampa’s Woman’s Club sponsored journalism and literature classes, and Tampa Civic supported a scholarship at Tallahassee. The Hillsborough County Federation’s activities included storm relief, juvenile court work and citizenship schools.\footnote{62} And this report excluded the activities of black women’s clubs which supported day nurseries, health clinics, educational improvements and a host of other civic efforts.

The decade of the 1920s, therefore, presented Tampa’s women’s clubs with opportunities and demands seldom envisioned earlier in the century. Receiving the franchise provided women with an additional impetus and vehicle for community involvement. Clubs successfully fought for a preventorium, detention home and playgrounds even though few lawmakers supported initial requests for these institutions. Educational matters continued to hold a premiere place among the members of local as well as state women’s organizations, black as well as white. Members proposed numerous changes in the educational system and worked with PTAs to foster the passage of reform legislation at the local and state level.
Although members of local women’s clubs extended their work into Latin and black neighborhoods, no blacks and few Latins were accepted as members’ of white clubs. In response to racism and to their own community’s needs, black women organized separate associations. Cooperation between black and white women’s organizations did provide some educational and social benefits, to blacks and encouraged increased contact between the races, at least among women.

During the greater part of the twenties, local women’s clubs benefited from the generosity of local citizens which enabled members to extend their efforts to effect civic and social improvements. By the end of the decade, however, as financial crisis deepened into depression, women’s clubs began to feel the pinch. The Friday Morning Musicale, for example, lost all funds in it’s general account due to a bank failure, and the county federation was forced to borrow from the milk fund in order to meet expenses.63 The decade of the thirties would, provide women’s club members with new challenges, challenges they were better able to face because of the growth and experience gained in the previous decade.
Julia Harrison Norris (Mrs. Amos H.) was the only daughter of Anna E. Givens and Judge Charles E. Harrison. She was the sixth generation of her family born in Tampa. A member of the First Methodist Church, she taught Sunday school and was the organist. Mrs. Norris and her husband lost their only son in infancy. She held membership in the Tampa Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) serving two terms as president of the local organization, president of the Florida division of the UDC and treasurer general of the national UDC. Norris also was a member of the Tampa Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, served as president of the Tampa Civic Association and recording secretary and parliamentarian of Tampa's Woman's Club. In addition, she was the first treasurer of the Tampa League of Women's Clubs and president of the Hillsborough County Federation of Women's Clubs. Amos H. Norris owned the Amos H. Norris Co., a mill supplier. Eloise N. Cozens, Florida Women of Distinction (Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Publishing Company, 1956), pp. 43-44.
Mrs. Bertha Graham was active in PTA work for over fifteen years while her three children attended school. She worked in four Tampa units, serving as second vice-president of Henry Mitchell PTA after serving as state treasurer of the Congress prior to becoming its president. Griffin, *Lest We Forget*, p. 31.

Griffin, *Lest We Forget*, p. 31.

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The Friday Morning Musicale is presently pursuing a historic preservation grant-in-aid for the clubhouse. The Musicale requested over $188,000 for repairs. The structure is listed in the Hyde Park National Register District. Through the efforts of Mrs. John W. Rodgers, president of the Musicale and Mrs. Irene Bradley, treasurer, numerous fund raising activities have been inaugurated. Interview with Mrs. Irene Bradley.

Hillsborough County Federation of Women's Clubs Scrapbook, 1920-1935, HCFWCP.

*Tampa Morning Tribune*, January 12, 1923.

Ibid., January 28, 1923.

Ibid.

Ibid., January 21, 1923.

Gertrude R. Chambers was a hairdresser and partner in Robinson and Chamber Hairdressers and resided at 1303 Jefferson; Mrs. Preston Murray, lived with Alice Murray who was a cook; Emma D. Mance was employed as a teacher at the West Tampa School and resided at 212 W. Ross Ave.; Annie B. House Mance worked as a hairdresser at Robinson and Chambers and her address was 1506 Lamar St.; Lessie Blacksheer resided at 405 E. Scott and Achilles Robinson and Mercedes McCormick, were not listed. *Tampa City Directory*, 1923.
The Florida Legislative Council lobbied Tallahassee legislators for six Florida organizations including: the Florida Federation of Women’s Clubs, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union of Florida, the Florida League of Women voters, the Florida Audubon Society, the Business and Professional Women’s Clubs of Florida and the Florida Congress of Mother’s Clubs and Parent-Teacher Associations. Ibid., September 6, 1923.

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THE BUILDING BOOM IN ST. PETERSBURG: A PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY

By William D. Slicker

The years 1922-1926, known as “the roaring twenties” throughout America, are remembered as “the boom” in Florida. St. Petersburg shared in the boom. In 1920, the city’s population was slightly more than 14,000. By 1925, the population had passed 50,000. The completion of the Gandy Bridge which linked St. Petersburg with Tampa in 1924, the development of an inexpensive automobile by Henry Ford and an advertising campaign by the St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce all contributed to this influx of people.

During the boom, buildings of every sort were built: offices, churches, apartments, country clubs, a museum, clubhouses for civic and social organizations, a newspaper building, an electric power building, a theatre, a coliseum and hotels. Several housing subdivisions were also begun. For several months during 1925, more construction was financed in St. Petersburg than in any other city in the state.

By the end of the twenties, the bust replaced the boom, and St. Petersburg’s skyline remained almost unchanged for the next forty years. Some of these boom buildings have been demolished, and some sit vacant as monuments of the boom era. However, many have been maintained or restored and still look as dapper as they did during the boom. The following photographic essay shows the impact of the building boom on St. Petersburg. The photographs without credit lines are from the author’s collection of postcards.
The shortest land route around Tampa Bay from Tampa to St. Petersburg was 43 miles. In 1902, George S. Gandy conceived the idea of a bridge across the bay. In 1917, the right of way was approved by the Florida legislature, but World War I delayed the project until 1922, when financing through a public stock issue was arranged and construction began. The bridge opened in 1924.

Photograph courtesy of the St. Petersburg Historical Museum.

The St. Petersburg Yacht Club was organized on October 29, 1909. During 1916 and 1917, a $15,000 clubhouse was built. During 1921 and 1922, a $60,000 addition was added to the clubhouse. The formal opening was December 21, 1922. The clubhouse, with further additions, is still in use.

Photograph from the Earl Jacobs Collection, Nelson Poynter Library, USF.
The eighty-five-room Ponce De Leon Hotel was erected at First Street North and Central Avenue in 1922. It is a residential hotel today.

In 1923, the 250-room Mason Hotel was completed on the corner of Fourth Street North and First Avenue at a cost of $1,500,000. It was built by a company headed by Franklin J. Mason, a retired contractor. The architect was F. Jonsbeg from Boston. In 1926, the company was bought by William Muir, who changed the name of the hotel to the Princess Martha, in honor of his wife. After renovation, it recently reopened as a residential hotel.

Photograph from the Earl Jacobs Collection, Nelson Poynter Library, USF.
The First Baptist Church was organized in 1892. It met at several locations through its early years, until 1911 when it bought the property on Fourth Street North across from Williams Park and built a church. In 1923 a new church of neoclassical design was built at a cost of $150,000, and it is still in use today.

The Pheil Hotel was started in 1916 by Abram C. Pheil and was completed in 1923, one year after Pheil had died. Located at 424 Central Avenue, it had 130 rooms. It later became the Madison Hotel. The site is now a part of the Florida National Bank.
The Soreno Hotel with 300 rooms had its opening celebration on January 1, 1924. It was built at a cost of over $1,000,000 by Soren Lund. Born in Denmark, Lund had come to America at age fourteen and worked his way up in the hotel business from bell boy to hotel owner. He moved to St. Petersburg in 1910, bought the Huntington Hotel and in 1920 started building the Soreno, on Beach Drive. Today, the Soreno stands vacant, scheduled to be demolished by Bay Plaza.

Photograph from the Earl Jacobs Collection, Nelson Poynter Library, USF.

The Suwannee Hotel opened on December 10, 1923, at the corner of First Avenue North and Fifth Street. It had 205 rooms and was built by John N. Brown, who had come to St. Petersburg as a railroad express agent and became a leading citizen. The building was recently renovated and today is the NCNB Bank building.

Photograph from the Earl Jacobs Collection, Nelson Poynter Library, USE
The Coliseum opened in November 1924 at Fourth Avenue North and Fifth Street. It cost $250,000 to build and became the site of social events, sport competitions, exhibits and dances. It still stands today.

The Pennsylvania Hotel was built in 1925 by Harry C. Case, who came to St. Petersburg from Philadelphia to run the streetcars. Located at Fourth Street North and Third Avenue, it is a residential hotel today.
The seven-story Dennis Hotel was designed in the neo-classical style by Henry Cunningham of the New York firm of Goodhue and Associates. Located on First Avenue Across from Williams Park, it opened in December 1925. Today, it is the residential McCarthy Hotel.

The Jungle Country Club Hotel was built by Walter P. Fuller at Park Street and Fifth Avenue North in 1925 in connection with the Jungle Golf Club. Close by was the Jungle Prado which was the first shopping center in the county. Today, the former hotel is the home of the Admiral Farragut Naval Academy.

Photograph from the Earl Jacobs Collection, Nelson Poynter Library, USF.
The 375-room Vinoy Park Hotel was erected in 1925 at a cost of $3,500,000 on Beach Drive between Fifth and Sixth Avenues North. It was built by a company headed by Aymer Vinoy Laughner. The architect was Henry Taylor. The general contractor was George A. Miller. The hotel opened with a gala New Year’s Eve Party on December 31, 1925. The building stands vacant today.

In January 1926, the beautiful Spanish-style Rolyat Hotel had its celebrated opening. Babe Ruth and Walter Hagen were there. The Rolyat (Taylor spelled backwards) was built by Jack Taylor. Today the building houses Stetson Law School.
First Methodist Church was organized in 1889. In 1924, work began on a $250,000 Gothic revival church at Second Avenue North and Third Street. When the structure was near completion, parts of the roof and walls collapsed. A new architect and engineer were hired, and the building was finished in 1926 at a cost of almost $500,000. The church is still in use today.

The Million Dollar Pier was designed by Parson, Klapp, Brinkerhoff, and Douglas. The general contractor was Raymond Concrete Pile Company of New York. Work started September 8, 1925, and the pier was opened to traffic in July 1926. The official dedication ceremony was held on Thanksgiving Day, 1926. The building on the pier was replaced with the present inverted pyramid building in 1972.

Photograph courtesy of the St. Petersburg Historical Society.
The Don Ce-Sar was completed in 1927. The 312-room hotel was built by Thomas J. Rowe who named the hotel after Don Caesar de Bazan from the opera "Mariana." It housed troops during World War II and then served as offices of the Veterans Administration for two decades. It stood empty until it was refurbished and reopened as a hotel.

The St. Petersburg Memorial Historical Society Museum opened in 1922. It was located on Second Avenue N.E. on the approach to the pier. The museum is still housed in that building which has been enlarged with additions.

Photograph courtesy of the St. Petersburg Historical Society.
The Snell Isle Gardens apartment building opened in 1926. It was designed for clients who were awaiting the completion of their Snell Isle residences. Each apartment included a Steinway piano and other stylish furnishings. It is located on Snell Isle Boulevard on the approach to the Snell Isle Country Club. Both the Snell Isle Gardens apartment building and the Snell Isle Country Club are in use today.

Photograph courtesy of the St. Petersburg Historical Society.

The ten-story West Coast Title Building, located on the southeast corner of Central Avenue and Fourth Street South, opened in July 1926. It was torn down to make way for the present Florida Federal Tower building.

Photograph from the Earl Jacobs Collection, Nelson Poynter Library, USF.
The 2,300-seat Famous Players Theatre Building (later called the Florida Theatre Building) opened in 1926. It was located on Fifth Street South between Central and First Avenues South. It showed many Saturday morning serials. In the late 1960s, it was torn down, and the site is presently a parking lot.

The eight-story St. Petersburg Times Building on First Avenue South between Fourth and Fifth Streets South was completed in 1926 at a cost of about $650,000. The building was occupied in June 1926 and is still used by the newspaper. The nearby Royal Palm Hotel, on Fifth Street South near First Avenue South, was completed in 1923, and the Y.M.C.A., on Fifth Street South and Second Avenue South, was finished in 1925. The Royal Palm Hotel was eventually torn down for expansion of the St. Petersburg Times. The Y.M.C.A is still in use.

Photograph courtesy of the St. Petersburg-Historical Museum.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


A HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY TRAGEDY:
THE 1930 LYNCHING OF JOHN HODAZ

by Walter T. Howard

In April 1930, vigilantes in Florida’s Hillsborough County brutally lynched a Hungarian immigrant named John Hodaz after kidnapping him from police custody. The victim stood accused of violating the “honor” of family and community: he had allegedly dynamited the home of a prominent family in Plant City, maiming and nearly killing a woman in the process. As late as 1930 the use of lynching to defend family honor and enforce order was still a firmly held Florida tradition. Indeed, Florida was the most lynch-prone state in the South during the 1930s. One antilynching organization of the day, the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching, reported in a special survey that during those years the Sunshine State had the highest frequency of lynching law in the country. From 1930 to 1939, Florida went only one year (1933) without a lynching. The next worse state, Mississippi, had two lynch-free years; Georgia and Louisiana, three; and the rest of the lynching states at least four. Virginia had only one extra-legal execution in this period. These data clearly reveal that during the thirties, Florida ranked first in the South when it came to the frequency of its lynching activities.

Hillsborough County residents, although living in and around the city of Tampa with a population of over 100,000, looked both forward and backward in 1930. In April of that year they witnessed dramatic international and national events: Mahatma Gandhi’s salt campaign in India, Charles Lindberg’s record coast-to-coast flight over the country and Al Capone’s escapades in Chicago. Furthermore, they regularly devoured press exposés about crime and violence. For example, on April 25, 1930, local residents read on the front page of the Tampa Tribune about a lynching in South Carolina where whites dragged a black man from jail, strung him up and riddled his body with bullets. On the same front page they also read about another tragedy much closer to home, in eastern Hillsborough County.

The mysterious dynamiting of the J.L. Waller home in Plant City stunned the county. The Tampa Tribune which carried all the details of the incident, reported that on April 24, 1930, at about 6:00 a.m., Mrs. Waller unsuspectingly opened her kitchen door only to have a bomb go off in her face. The perpetrator had placed dynamite in a tin bucket on the Waller’s back porch and then connected it with a string to the doorknob. Opening the door brought an instant explosion which demolished the porch and wrecked the kitchen. The force of the blast hurled Mrs. Waller about ten feet through the air leaving her unconscious and covered with debris. Reacting quickly to the crisis, the seriously-injured woman’s husband and neighbors rushed her to the hospital where doctors amputated her left leg.

The shock to the community of Plant City caused by this catastrophe was compounded by the discovery of four undetonated bombs planted at the H.B. Willaford home. Observers described the Willafords and Wallers as “prominent farmer folk,” well-liked by their neighbors. These two families lived about one mile from each other. Willaford had awakened that morning to discover a box of explosives with 350 sticks of dynamite under his bedroom window. Fortunately for him,
a long fuse connected to it had burned about three inches and then sputtered out harmlessly. Later in the day he tripped a string on the path leading to his barn which sprung a rat trap device designed to set off another charge, but it too failed to detonate. Further, he found another bomb connected to the barn door, ready to go off. Finally, after a thorough search of his property, Willaford came across a fourth dynamite device along a well-trod path near his house. Not surprisingly, friends congratulated this lucky man on his remarkable escape from disaster.10

Press accounts of tragedy and near-tragedy in Plant City inflamed local opinion. Tampa papers described in graphic detail the so-called “fiendish plot to destroy the Waller family and H.B. Willaford family,” and they declared that the “bomber had apparently worked for several hours during the night, setting the quiet country scene for wholesale murder.” Finally, they confidently claimed that the perpetrator of this outrage would soon be apprehended.11
Reporters had good reasons for making this claim. Indeed, from the beginning of the investigation authorities viewed a man named John Hodaz as the chief suspect. He was a forty-one-year-old naturalized citizen, born in Hungary. The *Tampa Times* described him as an unmarried person who often appeared quiet, depressed and sullen. His naturalization papers revealed that he had come to the United States from eastern Europe in 1915. It would later be learned that Hodaz had worked for the U.S. Navy in World War I and had been trained in the use of explosives. Another Tampa paper published a brief story stating that the small Hungarian

Clockwise from upper left: Marsh Waller, the son of the bombing victim; Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Willaford who escaped injury when bombs at their home did not explode; a box of dynamite that failed to explode; one the assembled divices that did not detonate.

Photograph from *Tampa Tribune*, April, 25 1930.
community in Hillsborough county declared this immigrant to be a Czech, although local Czechs correctly denied this. In response to this claim and denial, the Tribune reported that “nobody wants to claim him.”

It developed that Hodaz had harbored a grievance against Waller and Willaford. About one year prior to the bombing, both Hillsborough County men had been instrumental in having the Hungarian arrested and prosecuted for a series of domestic burglaries in the Plant City area. In addition to this, Willaford had physically assaulted Hodaz who then sought refuge in the Waller home. Mr. Waller, however, drove him back out onto the street. The humiliated immigrant apparently waited a year and then took his revenge.

Needless to say, law enforcement officials went right to work on this case. Plant City officers, Tampa policemen and Hillsborough County deputies combined their manpower and resources in an intense manhunt for Hodaz. All day on April 24, and throughout the night, they searched with bloodhounds for the alleged culprit over the countryside surrounding Plant City. According to one account, Hillsborough County Sheriff R.T. Joughlin, “fresh from a moonshine raid,” went about spreading a “dragnet” over the greater Plant City area. Efforts to find Hodaz at his usual haunts were unavailing, and law officers monitored major roads throughout the county. Finally, the police in neighboring communities were furnished a description of the suspect.

Local newspapers wasted no time in publishing an astonishing announcement that encouraged unauthorized efforts to track down and punish the dynamiter. They printed an offer, made by Willaford and Sheriff Joughlin, promising a $1,000 reward to anyone coming forth with information leading to the bomber's capture, “dead or alive.”

With this kind of encouragement, a large, unofficial search party organized itself soon after the dynamiting. This unruly crew, consisting of scores of outraged Plant City citizens, looked day and night for Hodaz. Reacting wildly to any rumor, these angry men roamed over Hillsborough County searching frantically for the Hungarian whom they believed had set the explosives at the Waller and Willaford homes. At one point, this restless group took a strawberry grower named Otto Keen, who was suspected of hiding the dynamiter, from his house and flogged him severely for some ten minutes before satisfying itself that he was not concealing Hodaz. Expressing concern about these extra-legal activities, law enforcement officials stated that when the suspect was apprehended he would promptly be spirited away to an out-of-town jail for safekeeping.

Authorities sought to assure the public that they were in control of the tense situation. Directing the investigation, Sheriff Joughlin told reporters that he would soon make an arrest. On the day after the bombing, State Attorney J. Parkhill joined the inquiries and called the dynamiting “one of the most dastardly crimes ever perpetrated in Hillsborough County.” The state attorney and sheriff followed every lead until the case broke wide open.

On April 26, two days after the bombing, Deputy Sheriff Tobe Robinson responded to an anonymous tip and arrested Hodaz in Tampa. The suspect surrendered without a struggle. He was taken into custody at a boarding house at 115 Magnolia Avenue, where he had rented a room under the assumed name of “Alga Diaz” on the night before the bombing. “I told Hodaz what I wanted,” stated Robinson, “and he came along without any resistance.” The deputy added, “he
only asked that he be given a chance to get a lawyer. I handcuffed him and we started out.” Robinson searched Hodaz’s room and found $12,000 in Polish government bonds and a file of newspaper clippings about the dynamiting episode. The deputy claimed that his prisoner confessed to planting the undetonated explosives at the Willaford home, but he denied the Waller bombing. Finally, Robinson related that Hodaz swore he was aided by an accomplice, whom he refused to name.

The deputy put Hodaz in his car and headed toward Bartow in neighboring Polk County. In some unexplained way, however, a band of gunmen knew precisely where to wait for the officer and his prisoner on this route. “I guess I was about five miles southeast of Plant City,” explained Robinson, “when I saw a car coming to meet me with his headlights out.” He also declared that another auto came up behind him at about the same time. Finally, he described the kidnapping of his prisoner in the following way:

Four men jumped out wearing black masks, each armed, and one holding a flashlight. Three of the guns were shoved into my side, and one against the head of Hodaz, and the flashlight brought out his features clearly in the darkness. I guess they knew him. Not much was said and there were eight men in two cars. They still held guns on me and they put Hodaz in one car. They turned around and told me to drive like hell. As I started four shots were fired.

The kidnappers took Hodaz and brutally lynched him. They first drove their captive to a secluded area of Hillsborough County about ten miles north of Plant City. There they dragged the handcuffed prisoner from the car while someone backed another automobile under an overhanging bough of an oak tree. A rope was thrown over the limb, and then a perfectly fashioned hangman’s noose was placed around Hodaz’s neck. One of the vigilantes forced the helpless man up on top of the motorized scaffold. Several gunmen trained their weapons on the hapless prisoner and fired just as the auto supporting him was abruptly withdrawn. One shotgun blast discharged at close range tore through the body beneath the heart, ripping a jagged hole in the middle of the victim’s torso. Another similar charge took effect on the right side of the chest. The lynching victim was killed instantly by shotgun fire rather than by strangulation. Before departing, vigilantes fired five pistol bullets into the abdomen of the lifeless form as it swung from the oak.

The next morning a woodcutter found the executed man swinging from the oak tree. Word of the macabre scene swept through the county, and within an hour of this discovery, a large crowd of curious onlookers gathered in pouring rain to view the gaping holes in the dead man’s chest. One report estimated the gathering to number in the hundreds. The narrow road winding through the woods was choked with cars and horse-drawn wagons. The crowd expressed no sympathy for the victim. In fact, one angry man in the throng had to be restrained to keep him from kicking the body of Hodaz. A few men even asked for pieces of the hangman’s rope to take home as souvenirs. Sheriff Joughlin and State Attorney Parkhill were among the last to arrive at the site that morning.

At the scene, in a sudden spring rainstorm, Justice of the Peace A.W. Hawkins hastily empaneled a coroner’s jury. Indeed, he selected a jury from the spectators who stood about. This
group gathered in the cleared spot beneath the tree and stared at the mutilated form that hung above. The sheriff took down the body, and jurors watched as the corner went through a perfunctory examination and declared: “I pronounce this man dead.”

After the pronouncement Sheriff Joughlin virtually absolved his deputy of any liability in this affair. He declared that Robinson was merely following orders in taking Hodaz to Bartow. Even so, neither lawman ever satisfactorily explained how the waiting gunmen knew what route would be used to take Hodaz out of Tampa that day. The deputy speculated that one of the cars driven by vigilantes must have followed him to and from Tampa. While this might have explained the presence of the car that came up from behind, it clearly failed to account for the automobile that came toward him with its lights out. As events proved, investigating authorities never challenged the officer’s story. Indeed, the sheriff announced at the lynch scene itself that he would pay the posted reward money to Deputy Robinson.

The Hillsborough County sheriff took it for granted that few in Plant City would object to his awarding the reward money to his subordinate. This town, where the lynch victim lived and worked, before his demise, was a small community of some 6,000 inhabitants in 1930. Situated just twenty miles from the metropolis of Tampa, the pleasant-looking city was identified as the center of strawberry farming in Florida. Furthermore, unlike many farming towns in the state, Plant City was neither culturally isolated nor economically backward. Attractions and diversions
in nearby Tampa offered residents many opportunities for varied ways to pass their leisure time. Moreover, the *Tampa Tribune* and *Tampa Times* kept them well-informed about national and international affairs. Plant City citizens lived in a bustling community and drove on paved streets lined with many modern-looking office and commercial buildings; most owned cars and enjoyed the use of electricity in their homes.  

In spite of the relatively modern appearance of Plant City in 1930, many who lived in and around this rural community still adhered to the old-fashioned frontier ethics of their fathers. This code of conduct called for the immediate administration of informal justice to criminals or undesirables, bypassing costly, time-consuming legal processes. Although blacks were the most common victims of lynch law in the South, whites identified as outsiders, especially foreigners, also suffered at the hands of vigilantes.

A number of foreign-born whites lived in Hillsborough County in 1930. Moreover, many of them were clearly visible to the native majority as farm workers and transients. In a county of some 153,519 inhabitants, foreign-born whites comprised about eleven percent of the total population in 1930, and blacks made up nineteen percent. These large minority groups, which included a small contingent of eastern Europeans, undoubtedly raised the anxiety level of native white Southerners who were much concerned about maintaining their dominance in the community.

By 1930 the native white majority in Hillsborough County had not yet learned to live peacefully with the varied ethnic groups who resided in their midst. They still looked askance at the different social customs and cultural practices of blacks, Cubans, Spaniards, Italians and eastern Europeans who lived among them in the Tampa Bay area. Varying dress, mannerisms, languages, social habits and institutions of immigrants sometimes stirred fear and distrust among the dominant social groups in the county. Members of the dominant groups, in turn, had often used extra-legal violence as an instrument of social control against ethnics accused of seriously violating expected standards of behavior.

In addition, economic conditions created by the onset of the Great Depression undoubtedly exacerbated ethnic tensions in Hillsborough County. Hard times in the vicinity of Plant City took the form of bank failures, mortgage foreclosures, falling crop prices and rural unemployment. In this increasingly constricted local economy, native whites and ethnics competed for the low-income, marginal jobs provided by agricultural and commercial enterprises. In all probability, indigenous agricultural laborers were angered when they could find little or no work, while migrants, many of whom were foreign-born and willing to accept subsistence-level wages or alternative payments, continued to plant and harvest strawberries and other crops. Lynching a Hungarian immigrant might well have been one way this distressed group vented its frustration over economic difficulties which it could not control.

It fell to the representatives of the native majority to apprehend and deal with the vigilantes who lynched Hodaz. Not surprisingly, they were pessimistic about the upcoming investigation. Sheriff Joughlin, for example, declared that identifying and capturing the murderers “will be extremely difficult in view of the scanty evidence.” He continued, “my regret is that we did not get a chance to question Hodaz concerning an accomplice.” State Attorney Parkhill stated that...
the Hillsborough County grand jury would investigate the lynching in May, but he speculated that apprehending the masked killers would be difficult without any eyewitnesses to identify them.40

After the coroner’s inquest, officials turned the lynch victim’s remains over to a Plant City undertaker. Graphic press accounts and wild rumors stirred a morbid curiosity among a great many people. In fact, more than 4,000 persons from all over the Tampa Bay area visited the local funeral home to view the Hungarian's body. This throng included men, women and even children, who were “abnormally curious to see the victim of the hideous lynching.”41

Soon after the burial of Hodaz, community leaders in the county assessed the unfortunate situation created by this incident. The Tampa Tribune led the outcry over the lynching. Along with the details of this grisly, extra-legal execution, it featured a front-page story about how Florida led the nation in lynchings in 1929.42 It also ran a long and strongly-worded editorial titled, “An Avoidable Lynching,” which stated that “it is unfortunate that Hillsborough County’s record for the year has already been marred.” Further, the editorial emphatically noted that “this was a lynching which could have been avoided easily. . . .To take the accused man directly back
into the territory where indignation centered was a stupid piece of business. He should have been taken in the other direction."

The Tampa paper wrote at length about the causes of this tragedy. Moreover, its analysis went further than noting the obvious motivation of vigilantes seeking vengeance for the Plant City bombing. It explained to the public that a year earlier authorities had unsuccessfully prosecuted the Hungarian for several burglaries and then reluctantly dismissed the charges. The dismissal of charges was allegedly based on the “technicality” of a defective search warrant used to gather evidence for the state’s case against Hodaz. This evasion of punishment, editors claimed, was the key factor in motivating a small group of Hillsborough County vigilantes to take the law into their own hands. The lynchers, according to the Tribune, were fearful that this man might once again manipulate the legal process to avoid being brought to justice. The editorial concluded that “we’ll have to score another black mark against Old Man Technicality, who so often defeats justice and turns loose upon the public criminals who ought to be doing time.”
Editors in nearby Orange County followed the Tampa newspaper’s lead. The *Orlando Sentinel* took a special interest in this case, and it ran an editorial which argued that the Plant City lynching was actually an understandable protest against legal technicalities. It also characterized Hodaz as “an undesirable citizen, a lawbreaker, and a positive menace to society.” *Sentinel* editors asserted that “whenever court procedures moved with increased swiftness and with greater surety, the incentive to such an affair. . .will be lessened and the number of lynchings will be decreased.”

The *Tribune* promptly responded in kind to this editorial. It stated that “probably upper-most in the inflamed minds of those who did Hodaz to death was the thought that, if left to procedures of the courts, he might escape the penalty for this much more serious offense.” It then concluded by asserting that “the lynching was a crime, but it was at the same time a bloody assertion of the lack of confidence in the established process of justice.”

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1925 view of Plant City’s West Reynolds Street.

Photograph courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System.
The Tampa newspaper continued its analysis of this lynching tragedy in a third editorial which appeared on May 2, 1930. In this piece, however, the Tribune made a full disclosure of all the facts and admitted that there was more to the Hodaz affair than a band of vigilantes venting frustration over legal technicalities. Tampa editors finally spelled out the details of the Hungarian’s earlier encounter with the law and in the process cleared up some of the misunderstandings about this case. After his previous arrest, Hodaz had pled guilty to burglary charges and the court was preparing to sentence him to a term in Florida state prison. At this point he retained a private attorney who withdrew the guilty plea and asked the court to discharge the prisoner on the grounds that the arrest warrant had been technically defective. The court refused to do this. Hodaz was then tried before a jury on the burglary charges. After hearing all of the evidence, the jury acquitted the defendant.47

The Tribune laid out these facts and tried to defend its earlier version of the case. Editors claimed that “it is our information that the validity of the warrant figured in the trial and probably had something to do with the verdict rendered.” However, they failed to explain just how the so-called faulty warrant influenced the jury’s decision, nor did they state why they had failed to mention the jury trial in their previous coverage of the story. Instead, they diverted attention from these questions by singling out Hodaz’s lawyer as the villain, arguing that it was he who had thwarted justice in order to save his client from punishment.48

Other editors in south Florida wrote much less about this lynching and its causes. Nevertheless, they were critical of this lawless act. The St. Petersburg Times lamented the fact that lynch law plagued the United States, while there were no similar customs in other “civilized” nations like England, Canada and Austrailia.49 A Miami Herald editorial exclaimed: “Another brutal lynching disgraces the name of Florida. . . .Brave officer! It is the duty of officers of the law to protect their prisoners. The crime calls for investigation and vigorous prosecution.”50

The lynching did, indeed, call for thorough investigation and vigorous prosecution of the guilty parties. In this particular case, however, there would be neither. On May 6, 1930, the Hillsborough County criminal justice system failed to consider the Hodaz lynching when the spring term of the circuit court convened without the customary empaneling of a new grand jury. The Tribune announced that this step sharply broke with tradition; to be sure, it was the first time in the county's history that no grand jury was convened. Disenchanted editors ran a story entitled, “What, No Grand Jury?” Noting the claim “that there is no particular demand for the services of a grand jury at this time,” the Tribune countered, “there is always some matter which could be investigated by that important body, a recent tragic occurrence near Plant City for example.”51

This article made it clear to the public that, in the final analysis, Hillsborough County officials did not really want to know who executed Hodaz.

This lynching was not an isolated incident of southern vigilante justice. Indeed, the Plant City episode was one of twenty-one such crimes that took place in the South in 1930.52 This number of extra-legal executions, double the figure of 1929, alarmed many concerned groups and organizations, especially the Commission on Interracial Cooperation (CIC) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). They feared that lynching was making a comeback after declining in the 1920s.53 In response to this situation, the CIC created the Southern Commission on the Study of Lynching (SCSL) to investigate and analyze all the
lynchings of 1930. To accomplish this, the SCSL named one white and one black investigator to gather evidence about the vigilante-style executions of that year. The white investigator was Arthur F. Raper, a social scientist from the University of North Carolina, and the black one was Walter Chivers, a sociologist from Morehouse College.54

Arthur Raper inquired into the Hodaz lynching. Details clearly raising the possibility of police complicity or misconduct in the slaying immediately attracted the southern sociologist’s attention. In his final report, Raper bluntly stated, “police officers were either in connivance with the mob or else extremely stupid.” He concluded that “the mob took possession of the accused in the presence of the officer, who did not fire a shot or make any other real effort to protect the accused.”55 Raper’s investigation of the Hodaz killing was part of a larger story of educated, native-white Southerners taking a strong stand against lynching in the 1930s. This change in attitude marked a dramatic development in the history of the modern South.56 Raper conducted rigorous inquiries into all twenty-one lynchings of 1930 in an effort to compile scientific evidence to enlighten Southerners about the evils of lynching. His findings were compiled, edited and published by the SCSL in pamphlet form in 1932, with several other CIC members writing additional magazine articles to publicize the information.57 Finally, these case studies and findings, including a brief analysis of the Hodaz episode, were published in 1933 as The Tragedy of Lynching.

Beyond producing this classic study, Raper spoke widely on its conclusions. Throughout the South he addressed civic clubs, churches and other similar groups. Many Southerners, he believed, thought lynching terrible and were in fact pleased to have detailed information to buttress their opposition. The SCSL sent Raper’s book to educational institutions and libraries all over the South. As a result, thoughtful readers throughout the region had the opportunity to examine the details of the Hodaz slaying in the larger context of the overall story of southern lynchings.58

One Southerner opposed to this gruesome custom was Florida Governor Doyle Carlton (1929-1932), but in spite of his antilynching views he failed to take any action in response to the Hodaz execution.59 The press reported that when the Plant City tragedy occurred the state’s chief executive was traveling by train to North Carolina on official business and could not be reached for a statement. Even so, upon returning to Florida, Carlton did not make any effort to condemn the crime publicly, nor did he call for any special investigation of this lawless act. He could have acknowledged possible police misconduct in the matter and then demanded that certain Hillsborough County law officers, perhaps Sheriff Joughlin and Deputy Robinson, be brought before him to explain their actions in this matter. The governor, however, took none of these steps.60 He might have avoided involvement in this case in part because he was already preoccupied with combating the effects of the Great Depression in his state.61 In addition to this, none of the organizations and groups that usually called on government leaders to respond to such tragedies wrote Carlton after this lynching. Thus, the governor was under little pressure.

The Hodaz killing ushered in a decade of lynching violence in Florida. Vigilantes in the Sunshine State executed twelve blacks and three whites in the period from 1930 to 1939.62 The Hodaz lynching fit certain recognizable patterns of vigilante tactics that typified most of the extra-legal murders that occurred in Florida during the thirties. Most of the decade’s lynch
victims, like Hodaz were targeted for execution by a small band of vigilantes, kidnapped from the police without a struggle, carried off in a car to a secluded area and murdered in a vigilante-style execution conducted wholly outside the authority of the law. And, of course, none of the lynchers was ever punished.63

Anti-lynching cartoon indicting “Th’ Law” in Florida.

From the Philadelphia Record, reprinted in The Crisis, January 1935.
While the Plant City tragedy can be seen in terms of this broad picture of the history of lynching in Florida during the thirties, it was also part of the long story of extra-legal violence in urban Hillsborough County and surrounding areas. Indeed, civil rights groups had identified this county as an area prone to lynching. Moreover, vigilantes in neighboring counties lynched a total of twenty-two victims between 1900 and 1935. In Tampa itself, between 1858 and 1935, six whites and three blacks fell victim to lynch law. Further, in the period from 1900 to 1940, there were five lynchings in this large metropolis, a total that represents “one of the largest numbers recorded for any major city in the South.”

In the Hodaz case none of the lynchers was ever officially identified, let alone brought to trial. Authorities in this instance clearly refused to take action. County officials, the state attorney and even the governor failed to investigate aggressively this tragic crime. Not one official was committed to apprehending and then prosecuting the guilty parties. Each undoubtedly viewed the lynch victim as an undesirable immigrant and a menacing criminal who deserved his fate, even at the hands of vigilantes.

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1 The strong inclination of southerners in Hillsborough County to take the law into their own hands has been established in recent studies: Robert P. Ingalls, “Lynching and Establishment Violence in Tampa, 1858-1935,” *Journal of Southern History*, 53 (November 1987), 613-644; Ingalls, “General Joseph B. Wall and Lynch-Law in Tampa,” *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 63 (July 1984), 51-57.

2 For a broad discussion of the issues of violation of honor, southern violence, and vigilantism, see Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).


5 Records of victims lynched in Florida during the 1930s can be found in the files of the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching at the Trevor Arnett Library, Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia. There are also accounts of these incidents in the “Lynching Files” in the Administrative Correspondence Records of Florida governors, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida. See also Jessie Daniel Ames, *The Changing Character of Lynching* (Atlanta: Commission on Interracial Cooperation, 1942), 36.

6 *Tampa Tribune*, April 4, 15, 21, 1930.

7 Ibid., April 25, 1930.

8 Ibid.; *Tampa Times*, April 25, 1930.

9 *Tampa Tribune*, April 25, 1930.

10 *Tampa Times*, April 25, 1930.

11 *Tampa Tribune*, April 28, 1930.

12 Ibid.; *Tampa Times*, April 28, 1930.

13 Ibid.

14 *Tampa Times*, April 25, 1930.
Investigators found only one clue suggesting that Hodaz may have been helped by an accomplice. They spotted an extra set of foot prints in the garden around Willaford's house. *Tampa Times*, April 28, 1930.

One Tampa journalist, who was a child at the time of the Hodaz execution, recalls that the victim was lynched at a spot on the road between Thonotassassa and Zephyrhills (off of present-day U.S. Highway 301). He also reports that it took place somewhere in the vicinity of what is now Hillsborough State Park. Author’s interview with Leland Hawes, *Tampa Tribune* staff writer and editor, March 11, 1988.

The Hodaz lynching was, in the works of one observer, “conducted with precision pointing almost to rehearsal.” The same commentator noted that “there were no signs of hurried preparation” by the vigilantes in this carefully planned execution. *Tampa Tribune*, April 29, 1930. Since neither the governor nor the grand jury investigated this crime, the only detailed accounts of it were published by Tampa’s two newspapers.

For a generation, vivid memories of this affair were associated in the minds of Hillsborough County residents with the lynch-tree widely known as the “Hodaz Oak.” Author’s interview with Leland Hawes, March 11, 1930.

As the central marketplace for eastern Hillsborough County, Plant City was strategically located at the hub of six rail lines. Further, in the area of education this community claimed an accredited high school and four grammar schools with an enrollment of hundreds of students. It also boasted a thriving social and cultural life, including its own music and opera house. Bruton and Baily, *Plant City: Its Origins and History* (St. Petersburg, Fla.: Valkyrie Press, 1977), 71; Ernest L. Robinson, *History of Hillsborough County* (St. Augustine, Fla.: Record Company, 1928), 83-88. See also Charles S. Johnson, *Statistical Atlas of Southern Counties: Listing and Analysis of Southern Counties* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 77.
The distribution of the county’s ethnic population in 1930 can be broken down in the following way: 107,623 (70.1%) native whites; 16,737 (10.9%) foreign-born whites, and 28,983 (18.9%) black. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census*, 413, 423.

The east European population in 1930, in Hillsborough county numbered as follows: 91 Poles, 52 Czechs, 101 Austrians, and 268 Russians. Only a handful of the 1,347 Hungarians who lived in Florida at the time resided in this urban county. Ibid., 402, 425.

One recent study of Tampa’s ethnic history briefly discusses ethnic and class divisions in urban Hillsborough County. The authors state that the “white power structure jealously guarded and retained control” of the community. Gary R. Mormino and George E. Pozzetta, *The Immigrant World of Ybor City: Italians and Their Latin Neighbors in Tampa, 1885-1985* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 55-57.

Ibid., passim.


By 1930 Hillsborough County agriculture was clearly feeling the sting of the Great Depression. Hundreds of agricultural laborers were unemployed, and those still working often suffered wage cuts. Overall, the county’s farmers in 1930 planted fewer crops of all kinds than in previous years. In addition to this, there was also a sharp decline in the acres of strawberries planted and in the number of quarts harvested. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Agriculture, vol. 2, Part II* (Washington, D.C., 1932), 238-250.

*Tampa Tribune*, April 29, 1930.

Ibid.

Of the ten lynchings that occurred in 1929, four took place in Florida, three in Texas and one each in Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi. Ibid.

Ibid

Ibid.

*Orlando Sentinel*, April 30, 1930.

*Tampa Tribune*, May 1, 1930.

Ibid., May 2, 1930

Ibid.

*St. Petersburg Times*, April 29, 1930.

*Miami Herald*, April 29, 1930.

*Tampa Tribune*, May 7, 8, 1930.

Hodaz was the only white man lynched in 1930. Arthur F. Raper, *The Tragedy of Lynching* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933), 469-471.


55 Raper, The Tragedy of Lynching, 14.


59 Carlton’s antilynching stance was not surprising in light of his educational background. He attended such prestigious northern schools as Columbia University and the University of Chicago. His opposition to the practice of lynching, however, was based primarily on his recognition of the damage it did to the state’s reputation in the North, discouraging northern visitors from coming to Florida for vacations with their tourist dollars. A brief, but enlightening, portrait of this governor can be found in Charlton Tebeau, A History of Florida (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1971), 395-99.

60 By way of contrast, Carlton’s successor, Governor David Sholtz, took all of these listed steps in response to the 1934 lynching of a black man named Robert Johnson in Tampa. Walter T. Howard, “A Blot on Tampa’s History: The 1934 Lynching of Robert Johnson,” Tampa Bay History, 6 (Fall/Winter 1984), 7-8, 15.

61 In contrast to his inaction in the case, Governor Carlton reacted firmly to the next Florida lynching that occurred in Calhoun County in August 1931. He carefully investigated this extra-legal murder of two black youths who had been accused of attacking a white man. Moreover, he tried unsuccessfully to have a local grand jury indict the lynchers. See “Report Concerning Lynching of Charlie and Richard Smoak in Calhoun County, Florida, August 28, 1931,” from State Attorney John H. Carter to Governor Carlton, May 28, 1932, all in Doyle Carlton Records, 1929-1932, “Lynching Files,” Administrative Correspondence, Series 204, Box 53, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.


64 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Thirty Years of Lynching, 1889-1918 (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 53-56.

65 Ingalls, Urban Vigilantes, passim.

66 Ingalls, “Lynching and Establishment Violence,” 643.
TRAINING ARMY PILOTS IN LAKELAND AND AVON PARK DURING WORLD WAR II: A PHOTO ESSAY

By Waneta Sage-Gagne

In 1938, while most of Europe engaged in efforts to mobilize and strengthen their armed forces against the imposing Axis threat, the United States stood outnumbered by almost three to one in air force equipment and manpower. General Henry (“Hap”) Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Forces (AAF) at that time, realized the critical need for expansion of American air power and the urgency of the task. Unfortunately, traditional means could not produce trained pilots in the numbers and in the time that would make a significant difference. All AAF training was done in San Antonio, Texas, at Randolph Field which could only produce about 500 pilots a year. Since building another Army installation would take too long, General Arnold devised a plan using existing private schools and enlisting the help of civilians.1

Pilot training schools or flying schools were scattered all across America, and many were operated by veteran pilots from World War I or young aviation businessmen. In most cases these schools had good track records for successfully training pilots with a core group of instructors on staff. The plan to use them to train Army pilots made good sense, but Arnold failed to persuade Congress to provide funding for this joint venture when he first proposed it in January 1939. Nevertheless, Arnold pushed ahead.

By April 1939 Arnold had invited eight operators of flying schools to Washington and outlined his plan to them. In brief the Army would provide the cadets, the planes and the curriculum; Army personnel would be stationed at each school, including a commanding officer for discipline and oversight of the program. All flight and ground school instruction would be given by civilian instructors previously trained by the Army. Additionally, the civilian schools would provide plane maintenance, fuel, living quarters, office space, hospital and medical services.2 Since the plan had not been funded by Congress, Arnold asked these school operators to cooperate with the understanding that the entire financial risk would be theirs if the plan did not eventually win Congressional approval. All eight of the operators agreed to proceed without funding, and the Civilian Army Air Force Pilot Training Program began.3 By the end of 1939, Congress authorized funding for the venture, and the operators began negotiating contracts.

E.J. Sias was one of the original flying school operators that General Arnold had invited to Washington. Sias owned the Lincoln Airplane and Flying School in Lincoln, Nebraska, which began training cadets in 1939. Unfortunately, many problems arose not only with the management of the school and the flight instructors but also with the Nebraska weather which was completely unsuitable for such a training operation. The government recommended that Sias move the school, preferably to one of the southern states which had a more desirable climate. Of the many sites inspected in the southeastern United States, officials selected the city of Lakeland, Florida, “because of its excellent airport facilities, schools, recreational facilities, water and light
plants, but mainly because of its climatic advantages.”

Sias negotiated with the Lakeland City Commission in May 1940, and the transfer of operations from Lincoln began in August of that year. By September 18, 1940, the first class to train in Lakeland had begun, and the school changed its name to the Lakeland School of Aeronautics.

In the process of relocating Sias sold the Lakeland school in July 1940 to two experienced aviation businessmen, Hal Darr and Albert I. Lodwick. Darr, owner and operator of the Chicago School of Aeronautics, later sold his half of the Lakeland School and opened two more training schools on his own in Georgia. Lodwick, one of America’s most prestigious businessmen in aviation, was senior vice president and director of the Aviation Manufacturing Company, and he had recently resigned as president of the Stinson Aircraft Company and assistant to the president of the Curtiss-Wright Company. One of his best known aviation accomplishments was his management of Howard Hughes’ recordbreaking trip around the world in 1938. In 1941 he bought Darr’s half of the Lakeland School and moved to Lakeland permanently. After one year of success, Lodwick changed the name of the school to the Lodwick School of Aeronautics.

The Lakeland school was situated on the site of the former municipal airport, on the banks of Lake Parker. The initial contract with the city included the only building on that site, a steel hanger, which the city was to move at a later date to another site for the school. When students first arrived in 1940, they were temporarily housed in the Thelma Hotel, and the administrative offices were also in downtown Lakeland in the basement of the New Florida Hotel. A new barracks was completed in December 1940, and a second barracks and administration building were added by December 1941.

The normal course of study at these primary training schools lasted ten weeks and included classes in meteorology, mathematics, map reading, theory of flight, aircraft and engine construction as well as training for flight in link trainers and actual flying time. After the first five weeks the next group of cadets would arrive which meant every five weeks there was turnover.

By 1941 the British also realized that they could not produce enough trained pilots as quickly as needed. In that same year under an agreement between the British and the AAF, a select group of primary training schools in America was designated to assist in training. The Lakeland school began training Royal Air Force cadets that year and by 1943 had graduated more than 1,200 of them.

At the same time that Lodwick was making a success of the Lakeland school, he negotiated to open and operate a second school in Avon Park, Florida, approximately forty miles southeast of Lakeland. Lodwick signed a contract with the city of Avon Park in July 1941, and the first cadets arrived in October. The new school, named Lodwick Aviation Military Academy, was located in the former Highlands Hotel, which became a barracks. The former Highland Lakes Country Club and Casino, on the banks of Lake Lillian in Hardee County, served as ground school. The municipal airport of Avon Park was used by the training school, and more fields were added at Lodwick’s expense over the years to accommodate their high usage. Between September 1941 and February 1942, Lodwick also constructed two steel hangers. The training fields and hangars were located two miles from the barracks, and a shuttle carried the cadets back and forth.
These two civilian schools in central Florida proved remarkably successful. The Lakeland facility was operational from September 1940 through August 1945. It became the first primary school established in the Eastern Flying Training Command, and it was the last one to close. It graduated forty-nine classes, containing a total of 8,825 pilots, of whom 1,327 were British. The Avon Park school ran from October 1941 through June 1944, and it graduated more than 2,800 cadets. The success of the schools can be measured not only by the number of graduates but also by the remarkable cooperation between civilians and the armed services. The financial impact on the surrounding communities of each school was also great, as each installation hired hundreds of laborers for construction, maintenance and administration. Clearly the business acumen of a man like Albert Lodwick had more to do with the successful operation of these schools than anything else. His ability to manage these operations, while remaining actively involved in many aspects of the aviation industry elsewhere, was the greatest tribute to his expertise.

For five years Albert Lodwick brought the war home to two small communities in Florida. Thousands of strangers from all over America and other nations came to these towns and called them home for a short time. Their presence constituted for many local residents their only contact with the war effort, and for most, having these schools in their hometown was a real source of pride and a way of participating in a truly patriotic endeavor.

The photographs that follow were all taken at the two Lodwick schools between 1941 and 1945. Most were taken by staff photographers retained by Lodwick for publicity purposes or by Army personnel who were assigned to document the history of the schools. This photo collection (P.G. #700) and corresponding textual materials (R.G. #2700) are part of the special collections of the Lakeland Public Library.
Albert Irvin Lodwick (1904-1961), one of the most successful aviation businessmen during the 1930s and 1940s, purchased and successfully ran the Lodwick School of Aeronautics in Lakeland and the Lodwick Aviation Military Academy in Avon Park, which served as primary training schools for the United States Army Air Force during World War II.
Several Stearman primary training planes (P.T. 13s) parked in front of one of the original hangars of the Lakeland School of Aeronautics in 1941.

One of the two original barracks under construction at the Lodwick School of Aeronautics. The school employed hundreds of civilians when in operation and ongoing construction also provided many jobs for the community.
A 1942 aerial view of the Lodwick School of Aeronautics in Lakeland shortly after completion of the original two barracks (two long buildings lower right). The former Municipal Airport’s hangar (top left) was later moved to stand alongside the newly built barracks that are in the foreground.

The standard pieces of equipment that a young cadet would receive upon entering a flying school were a Gosport flying helmet, Air Corps regulation goggles, an Aberdeen (cover-all type) flying suit and a leather jacket (not shown). This cadet is also wearing his parachute.
A cadet working with a simulator control panel. The ground school instruction during the ten-week training program required proficiency in all technical aspects of primary type aircraft.

These cadets at the Lakeland School of Aeronautics display their rope climbing abilities, a part of the rigid physical training that accompanied flight training.
The Link Training Department at the Lodwick School of Aeronautics contained twelve link trainer units for the students. Each unit simulated flight including radio usage as well as all aspects of the plane’s equipment.

A barracks of the Lodwick School of Aeronautics on the shores of Lake Parker. The choice of Lakeland as a site for the flight training school was based on climate, since flying was possible during some part of the day for an average of three hundred and sixty days a year.
In 1941 the Lodwick School of Aeronautics in Lakeland was only one of a handful of civilian training schools in the United States providing primary flight training for Royal Air Force cadets. Here in front of one of the barracks at the Lakeland school, a few of the cadets clown for the camera.

In 1941, English cadets were introduced to baseball and hot dogs at a party staged at the city park by members of the Lakeland Jaycees to help the new students get acquainted with the community.
The view from the front porch of the barracks at Lodwick Aviation Military Academy, which was located in the former Highlands Hotel, overlooking Lake Lillian in Avon Park. This training school was opened in 1941.

The lobby of the former Highlands Hotel served as a recreation area. The hotel had 120 rooms with lake views and capacity for 234 cadets.
The mess hall at Lodwick Aviation Military Academy in Avon Park also served as a gathering place for such functions as graduations.

Sandwiched between two lakes, the former Highlands Hotel housed the barracks of the Lodwick Aviation Military Academy in Avon Park. The beautifully landscaped grounds bordered Lake Lillian which cadets used for swimming and other recreational activities.
These civilian employees who worked in the mess hall at the Lodwick School of Aeronautics were some of the hundreds of people who found employment at the schools.

Both pilot training schools remained involved with the local communities. On special occasions cadets, in full uniform, paraded through Lakeland and Avon Park. This picture was taken on the corner of Tennessee Avenue and East Main Street in Lakeland.
This view of a young cadet reflects the sense of patriotism that permeated the pilot training schools.

During the war employers commonly posted the names of employees who went into military. At the pilot training school this boosted moral and helped create better relations between civilians and Army personnel.

2 History of 60th Flying Training Detachment, A. A. F. Contract Pilot School (Primary), Lodwick School of Aeronautics, Inc., Lakeland, Florida (1940-1944), 43.


4 History of 60th Flying Training Detachment, 5.

5 Ibid., Appendix III.

6 History of the 2160th A. A. F. Base Unit (Contract Pilot School, Primary), Lakeland, Florida, (1 February-30 June, 1944), 12.

7 61st Flight Training Detachment Army Air Force Contract Pilot School (Primary), Lodwick Aviation Military Academy, Avon Park, Florida (1941-1943), Appendix I.

8 History of the 2160th A. A. F. Base Unit, Appendix IVa.
BOOK REVIEWS


Cuban immigrants’ contributions to enriching the Florida peninsula have received mainly symbolic recognition by state and local government. Tourism capitalizes on this historic cultural link and inevitably disregards the political and economic conflicts that have consistently mobilized and polarized Cuban immigrant communities. Gerald E. Poyo’s “With All, and for the Good of All” skillfully analyzes Cuban immigrants’ roles in their country’s developing independence movement between 1848 and 1898. Centering on the émigré workers of Key West and Tampa, the author examines the interests, political action and rhetoric of exile organizations and cigar workers in Florida, New York and New Orleans.

He emphasizes not only the various philosophical and economic issues that led to separation from Spain, but also their outcomes, adding a valuable new dimension to analyses of the relationship between achieving independence and attaining sovereignty. The title of the book, a quote from a Tampa speech by José Martí in 1891, refers to Martí’s success in mediating conflicting notions of Cuba’s future relations with Spain and the construct of a free Cuba. In studying Martí’s efforts to forge consensus at least on immediate goals, Poyo highlights the ideals of émigré anarchist cigar workers who ultimately supported the revolt for a Cuba free from racism and labor exploitation.

Poyo suggests that the very process of organizing, capitalizing and securing support for independence profoundly affected immigrants’ subsequent relations with the United States. Cuban émigrés participated in the U.S. economy and culture while recognizing their separate interests in Cuba. They also adopted values, ideas and expectations from their U.S. experiences that helped shape post-1898 events. A significant dichotomy emerged. Cuban political nationalism – the recognition of historic differences and goals – achieved unprecedented force, and strategies of expression were debated within a foreign country which historically coveted island control.

The author is not alone in demonstrating the significance of Martí’s 1895 death in shaping Cuban history. The unique contribution of this study is its exploration of class conflicts within the émigré communities, revolving around both political and military options – conflicts that ultimately “gave the middleclass nationalist leaders the opportunity to dictate the future of the insurgent struggle” (114) and of independent Cuba. Once Martí had secured class solidarity through the Cuban Revolutionary Party (PRC), the institution itself was perceived as embodying the goals of social and economic justice. Although José Martí’s successors did not exhibit commensurate adherence to these ideals or institute effective programs for accomplishing them, one step – ending Spanish colonialism – was achieved. Movement toward the other objectives would take much longer.
“With All and for the Good of All” enhances our understanding of the tangible manifestations of U.S. influence in Cuba: in trade, property and investment. Poyo offers a well-written and well-researched account of the issues debated in the émigré communities, and his sources include a broad range of newspaper accounts, published essays, pamphlets, broadsides, archival materials and secondary works from the U.S. and Cuba. Relating his study of emigre thought to broader political and economic processes, he has nevertheless kept his topic in precise focus. This book should be appreciated by anyone interested in Florida history, Cuban history or Latin American nationalism.

Susan Fernández

As this splendid book suggests, scholars are discovering the neglected twentieth-century history of Florida. And a fascinating history it is, characterized by colorful visionaries, boosters, and builders, an economy growing at a heady pace throughout most of the century (although often slowed by periodic economic downturns), unending waves of newcomers and tourists, increasing ethnic and racial diversity, and a powerful pattern of urbanization that made Florida 85 percent urban by the 1980s. Raymond Arsenault’s *St. Petersburg and the Florida Dream, 1888-1950*, provides a marvelous exploration of these varied themes set against the panorama of dynamic change in modern Florida history.

Arsenault moves quickly and authoritatively through the Spanish colonial era and the nineteenth-century frontier period of Pinellas history, reserving his most detailed treatment for the period after 1888 when the Orange Belt Railroad arrived at a tiny hamlet near Tampa Bay, feeding the pretentions of the town builders. From that point on, the cast of characters moving across the St. Petersburg stage is both delightful and beguiling. The city’s movers and shakers ranged from Peter Demens, the railroad builder from Russia who gave the city its name, to crusading editor William L. Straub of the *St. Petersburg Times*, promoter and developer Frank Davis, baseball man and St. Petersburg Mayor Al Lang, socialite developer “Handsome Jack” Taylor, and writer and civic leader Katherine Bell Tippetts, among many other fascinating seekers and promoters of the “Florida Dream.”

One of the great virtues of this book is that it consistently places the St. Petersburg experience within the larger context of urbanization and American history generally. Moreover, Arsenault has utilized effectively the “Florida Dream” metaphor – the idea that subtropical Florida’s combination of sunshine and seashore could fulfill “the centuries-old promise of perpetual warmth, health, comfort, and leisure” (p. 7). In this sense, the book invites comparison with Kevin Starr’s histories of *California: Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915* (1973) and *Inventing the Dream: California through the Progressive Era* (1985).

The book is particularly admirable in that Arsenault has resisted the temptation to turn his local history into a filiopietist tract in praise of notable citizens. Instead, the author has dug deeply into St. Petersburg’s history, often providing a powerful bottom-up perspective. Arsenault is especially strong in detailing the history of the Sunshine City’s black community. During the boom years of the 1920s, the black community grew in proportion to the white population, totaling well over 7,000 by 1930, but an officially condoned and strictly enforced Jim Crow segregation system kept the blacks confined to a burgeoning residential ghetto and generally away from public view. Brutal lynchings were not uncommon in the early years of the twentieth century. The pervasive pattern of segregation persisted into the post-World War II period, but a 1944 Supreme Court decision ending the white primary in the South led to dramatically increased black political activity in St. Petersburg. By 1950 St. Petersburg had one of the highest rates of black voter registration in the South. Nevertheless, poverty, poor housing and overcrowding characterized the city’s black neighborhoods by the 1950s, Arsenault’s terminal point for the book. Similarly, Arsenault provides a fuller exploration of the role of women in the city than is commonly found in most local or urban histories.

Arsenault has done an excellent job of integrating over 350 historical photographs tracing the city’s history over time. The full captions are carefully related to the narrative text. Moreover,
Arsenault writes with an unmistakable stylistic flair that carries the reader through St. Petersburg’s absorbing history. Arsenault has placed the magnetic attraction of St. Petersburg, and of Florida generally, within a persuasive interpretive context, and he has nicely balanced the general and the specific. This well-researched and finely written study is both a visual treat and a pleasure to read. At the same time, it makes a very important contribution to modern Florida history.

Raymond A. Mohl


The Literary History of the United States, originally published in 1946 and subsequently revised and augmented several times, once offered authoritative pronouncements upon major and minor American writers for students of American literature, generalists and specialists during the Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy years. It examined the career of Zora Neale Hurston in a brief but complimentary paragraph calling her “In prose depicting the humor of Negro life the outstanding writer of her race. . . . [A]n anthropologist as well as a creative writer. . . . When she describes the life of colored people in Florida, she never loses humanity and zest in the quest of science.” No one-paragraph comment would suffice today for Hurston in any self-respecting
overview of American literature between the two world wars. She is clearly a writer who has rightly benefited, critically, from the new emphasis upon restructuring the canon of valued American writers through placing greater emphasis on significant works by women and by African-American authors.

A recent “Call for Papers” for a “Zora Conference” at Embry-Riddle University requests investigations of “Zora as folklorist... novelist... short story writer... as feminist/iconoclast/politician/civil rights worker... as hoodoo doctor... as Florida fisherwoman....” Actually, in her brief book, Karla Holloway deals with all these subjects except the last, but usually not in a way to benefit general readers immediately. Hers is a text – to employ one of her favorite terms – intended by the way it is written for trained readers with skills in anthropological, linguistic and deconstructionist theory. Eventually her insights, many of which are keen, may trickle down to readers less expert in the somewhat esoteric combination of academic territories over which she ranges to produce her commentary. In some ways this is a pity, for when she writes plainly she is shrewd in analyzing areas of considerable interest to good readers of ordinary training and preparation.

One of Holloway’s best passages examines the duplicity with which Hurston felt she had to live – that perhaps as a black woman was forced upon her – in order to create. Holloway wisely says of an an incident when Hurston had been dragged through the mud of courts and the seeming enmity of the black press that “Her friends had been so thoroughly deceived by the persona Hurston created for them, the strong-willed, theatrical, joking woman, that they were unable to pierce beneath this veneer to comprehend the seriousness and hurt of this incident [to]... a woman accused by the very community she sought to celebrate in her fiction and in her research” (28).

The heart of Karla Holloway’s book investigates narrative strategy in Hurston’s fiction and her extremely sophisticated use of dialect. As Holloway explains in her helpful preface, she explicates how Hurston’s “narrative voice. . . speaks of, through, for and in a metaphysical blending with characters’ voices,” and “Using the concept of dialect. . . focuses on the effects of adornment, using linguistic theory as its genesis and a structural interpretive mode to achieve its results” (xvi). Throughout, Holloway takes pains to indicate the African and African-American roots of Hurston’s art. Her observations seem more penetrating when dealing with the early fiction such as *Jonah’s Gourd Vine* (1934) and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) than with the somewhat later *Moses, Man of the Mountain* (1039) or *Seraph on the Suwannee* (1948). The book seems cramped by the compression perhaps imposed upon it by its series’ formula. Many sentences such as “The identity implicit in this prepositional structure clearly illustrate that we must physically claim the image to meet the text's challenge” (36) and “The black text that signifies takes its impetus from this linguistic activity and internalizes the process until it speaks to itself” (37) cry out for coherent expansion. Some matters such as Hurston’s specific knowledge and detailed practice of anthropology might be set forth. The book is remarkable in striking bright sparks whose afterglow it would be pleasing to see nurtured into greater illumination.

Jack B. Moore
Frank Lloyd Wright once argued that “the one blind spot in our nation, educationally, is architecture” (104). In Tropical Splendor, a companion volume to a WEDU series on Florida architecture, Hap Hatton does his best to correct this oversight. In many ways, the book is successful. Hatton demonstrates a firm grasp of national and international social and design trends but never lets them overwhelm his Florida focus. The book is well designed and beautifully illustrated. Tropical Splendor provides a good introduction to what Hatton calls Florida’s “surreal real estate,” the “fun and fantastic” buildings which abound in the state (ix).

But the book is not without flaws. The title itself is misleading. Although “tropical splendor” is clearly Hatton’s primary focus, the subtitle “An Architectural History of Florida,” promises more
than is delivered. The architecture of the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is dismissed in a mere seventeen pages. The exotic achievements of Henry Plant’s Tampa Bay Hotel or Walt Disney’s tourist meccas are of far more interest here than the pedestrian “cracker houses” or suburban subdivisions in which the majority of Floridians have lived. Hatton’s claim that “Florida has always been a land where architects let imagination reign” (xii) is certainly true, but he bases this conclusion on selective evidence.

Yet what Hatton does cover is impressively treated. The strongest element of the book is its discussion of individual builders and their often idiosyncratic visions. Henry Flagler’s St. Augustine hotels are presented in appropriately lavish detail. The developers, like Tampa’s D. P. Davis, who created new land from swampy keys and sandbars, are here in all their intriguing and money-grubbing glory. The “classics” (John Ringling’s Ca’d’Zan, Miami Beach’s Art Deco hotels, Wright’s buildings at Florida Southern College and many others) receive loving and careful attention. As a guide to Florida’s “architecture of attraction,” Tropical Splendor is excellent.

Yet Hatton’s message is disturbing. He finds in Florida’s built environment elements of fantasy and escape that suggest an unwillingness or inability to deal with reality. Since the late nineteenth century, Florida’s entrepreneurs and architects, Hatton argues, have spent an inordinate amount of time and money trying to attract non-Floridians to the state. This philosophy was expressed as early as 1875, when innkeeper William Kelly observed: “We live on sweet potatoes and consumptive Yankees and we sell atmosphere” (43). During the 1920s boom, the search for the perfect “atmosphere” expanded. Addison Mizner claimed that living in his Mediterranean Revival Boca Raton was “almost beyond realness” (84). In modern Florida, Disney architects use bricks that are seven-eighths standard size to scale their creations down to proportions soothing to the human psyche. This ploy, Hatton points out, “creates a believable world of dreams” (189).

Hatton wonders why Floridians have so eagerly pursued a false reality. After more than one hundred years of chasing this elusive “ideal,” Florida’s natural environment and historic architecture have suffered severely. Hatton pleads for historic preservation and environmentally sensitive development, but his story of the “selling of Florida” suggests that we still have a long way to go.

Priscilla J. Brewer


This hard-to-categorize volume on one of the great North American ecosystems is both beautiful and informative. If one first thumbs through the book to look at the pictures, one is struck by Maslowski’s exquisite photographs of the swamps and their plant and animal inhabitants. As a coffee-table book, this one equals those of the Sierra Club and Audobon Society that excel in celebrating the glories of nature. A closer look reveals that it is far more than a pretty picture book. The many maps and descriptions of particular swamps throughout the
range of this ecosystem make Dennis’ text a guidebook for bird-watchers, wildflowers enthusiasts and other nature lovers on vacation. Still there is more. When one sits down to begin reading the text, one finds a detailed account of both the natural and human history of the swamps.

The writing is informal, generally accurate and always fascinating. The life cycle, ecology, taxonomy and geological record of the cypress are explained clearly, along with the history of human exploitation. There are detailed accounts of the unusual plant and animal life of the swamps, including a discussion of the last verified sightings of the extinct Carolina parakeet and the nearly(?) extinct ivory-billed woodpecker. The book is full of stories of the many naturalists, writers, soldiers, runaway slaves and others whose lives were touched by these beautiful swamps. There are also inspiring stories of ragtag bands of local residents battling governments and developers to protect their favorite watery sanctuaries.

Students of botany, zoology and ecology, as well as of American history and geography, will find this useful background reading. Bibliographies at the end of each chapter provide access for the serious student to the vast scientific literature on the Cypress swamps. A good index and appendices listing the plant and bird life of the swamp add to the utility of the book. Professional researchers venturing into this sometimes intimidating environment for the first time will also find it useful both as background and as a handbook. *The Great Cypress Swamps* is a rare combination of solid information and a readable, interesting style that will appeal equally to the professional and the layman.

Frederick B. Essig
South Florida Swamps and Nature Preserves
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

PRISCILLA J. BREWER is Assistant Professor of American Studies at the University of South Florida.

MARY CLAIR CRAKE earned a M.A. in history from the University of South Florida and is currently a Peace Corps volunteer teaching on the island of St. Vincent’s in the Caribbean.

FREDERICK B. ESSIG is Associate Professor of Biology at the University of South Florida.

SUSAN FERNANDEZ is Visiting Assistant Professor of History at the State University of New York at Plattsburgh, where she teaches Cuban history.

WALTER T. HOWARD holds a Ph.D. from Florida State University and teaches part-time at St. Leo College and the University of South Florida.

RAYMOND A. MOHL is Professor of History at Florida Atlantic University.

JACK B. MOORE is Professor of American Studies at the University of South Florida.

WANETA SAGE-GAGNE, formerly Special Collections Librarian at the Lakeland Public Library, is Librarian/Archivist at the Arlington County Public Library in Virginia.

WILLIAM D. SLICKER, a third-generation resident of St. Petersburg, is an attorney who received his B.A. and J.D. from Florida State University.
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COVER: Cadets at the Lodwick Aviation Military Academy, Avon Park, Florida, enjoy their graduation during World War II. See pages 52-64.
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