From the Editors

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FROM THE EDITORS

War and preparation for war has occupied Americans for much of their history. Florida did not avoid the battles or fear of attack that Americans experienced periodically in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Indeed, Florida's location, relative isolation and long coastline made it a special concern for military planners. Moreover, Floridians could not escape the effects of wars fought elsewhere.

In this issue of *Tampa Bay History* the articles by co-winners of the 1989 Essay Contest examine the impact of war and preparation for war in the Tampa Bay area. The lead article by Alicia Addeo and Bart Moore, "From Crossbows to Bombers," traces the military history of Mullet Key, the Pinellas County site of Fort DeSoto. This fascinating study shows the ways in which the isolated island at the mouth of Tampa Bay figured in national and international conflicts from the arrival of Spanish explorers in the sixteenth century to World War II. Another war is the subject of Lisa Tignor's prize-winning article about "La Colonia Latina: The Response of Tampa's Immigrant Community to the Spanish Civil War." The conflict that tore Spain apart in the 1930s had repercussions in Tampa's Latin community, which raised funds for the Spanish Republic and campaigned for U.S. intervention in the struggle.

War also figures in the photo essay, "Musical Traditions in Florida," by Kent Kaster. In wartime, as in other periods of stress, Americans used music both to rally the public and to escape the tensions of everyday life. The photo essay shows that music often served a social function and frequently reflected political and technological trends.

Finally, an intriguing document records an 1860 expedition down the Peace River. As Canter Brown, Jr., makes clear in his editorial comments about the journey, this expedition by seven men was sandwiched between two wars that shattered the calm of Florida's last frontier. The first, resulting in the defeat of local Indians in the Third Seminole War of 1855-58, opened the Peace River valley to settlement by whites. It also made possible the 1860 expedition, which is described in detail by one of the participants who could not have known that an impending civil war would delay further development of the area.

The editors take this opportunity to express their appreciation to all subscribers, especially those listed on the facing page who have made special contributions to *Tampa Bay History*.

CORRECTION: In the last issue, the editors incorrectly identified a photograph in the article "The Building Boom in St. Petersburg." The last photograph on page 33 shows the Snell Building, not the St. Petersburg Times Building.