

12-1-1992

From the Editors

Tampa Bay History

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Recommended Citation

Tampa Bay History (1992) "From the Editors," *Tampa Bay History*. Vol. 14 : Iss. 2 , Article 2.
Available at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/tampabayhistory/vol14/iss2/2>

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FROM THE EDITORS

The reconstruction of the past by historians has traditionally focused on the lives of great men. Kings, presidents, and generals dominate the stage in traditional history. Indeed, political leaders have been used to personify entire periods from "the Age of Pericles" to "the Reagan Era." A significant challenge to this view of the past has come from social historians who write history "from the bottom up." Focusing on the lives of ordinary people, such as workers (men and women), families, and ethnic and racial minorities, social historians have drawn attention to the importance of class, race, and gender in shaping the past. One problem, of course, is finding sufficient evidence to document the experiences of people who left few written records. However, social historians have ingeniously tapped both traditional and non-traditional sources to recapture the actions, thoughts, and everyday life of common people.

In its thirteen years of publication, *Tampa Bay History* has sought to portray the diverse experiences of the great variety of people who have either visited or lived in this area. The list of subjects has ranged from Spanish explorers to recent retirees, from runaway slaves to the Krewe of Gasparilla, from cigar factory owners to migrant laborers, from working women to unemployed men. Since *Tampa Bay History* depends on the interests and creativity of authors who choose to submit articles, the wide distribution of subjects reflects the many new directions of historical research.

This issue features lives of local people in all their diversity - male and female, white and black, working class and middle class. The opening article by Jack Moore, "Jack Dempsey in Tampa," includes in its title probably the only name in this issue that most readers will recognize. Yet Moore considers more than the persona of the famous boxer. He uses a brief two-day visit by Dempsey to examine larger social questions, especially the relationship between sports and boosterism in the 1920s. In "Work Wanted - Female: Women and Work in Pinellas County in the 1950s," Ellen Babb looks at paid and unpaid work by black and white women. While placing these experiences in a national context, she reconstructs the lives and attitudes of local women largely through oral history interviews. H. Coupled with more traditional sources, oral histories can provide a wealth of information about the recent past. Stacy Braukman's interview of Ellen Green, a Tampa civil rights activist, opens up a world of accomplishments by black women that traditional histories of the civil rights movement have generally overlooked or underestimated. Finally, the photographic essay by Alicia Addeo reveals the way Fort De Soto looked during its heyday at the beginning of the century.

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