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Front cover: Cartoonist A.K. Taylor depicts Abe Maas, the "Merchant Prince" of Tampa, owner of one of the most successful department stores in Florida - Maas Brothers (circa 1900s). Maas Brothers began as a simple dry goods store in the 1890s. (Courtesy Special Collections, Arthur K. Taylor Cartoon Collection, University of South Florida Libraries.) Colorized by Sam Taylor of Chenoweth & Faulkner Advertising. Back Cover: The original electric streetcars ran throughout Tampa until the 1940s. This car, #407, is shown on a track in Tampa's downtown business district shortly before they were removed from service. (Courtesy of the Tampa Bay History Center.)
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Time does indeed fly. My two years as President of the Society seem more like months. The traditional programs of the Society continue to be the Oaklawn Cemetery Ramble, the publication of The Sunland Tribune, and the presentation of the prestigious D.B. McKay award. For Tampa Historical Society members new and interesting educational opportunities abound. For example, one of those opportunities was the Society's highly successful trip to Cuba. Collaborating with the University of South Florida's Department of Latin American and Caribbean Studies simplified preparations for the trip. Their contacts on the island from Santiago in the east, to Havana in the west provided us with access to locales that few tourists see. The trip was especially meaningful as we are currently experiencing many changes in the relationship between our country and our neighbor to the south. Hopefully, there will be similar trips in the future.

An event, conceived and spearheaded by Board member Judge E.J. Salcines, was the commemoration of Cuba's 100th Anniversary celebrating its independence from Spain. Fittingly, the function was held at the Cuban Club in Ybor City. Joining the Society in sponsoring this event were the Tampa Bay History Center, the Henry B. Plant Museum, the Ybor City State Museum, and both the University if South Florida's Florida Studies Center and the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

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An Ignoble Experiment:
Tampa's Restaurants
During Prohibition

Andrew T. Huse

ike many citizens of Ybor City, Casimiro Hernandez was a newly arrived immigrant in 1904 in search of his fortune. The still-growing cigar town was one of sharp contrasts: a vital manufacturing enclave on the edge of Florida's backwoods, a distinctive Latin quarter beside a cracker city. While Hernandez resided in a boarding house, a small saloon across the street caught his eye. He watched the customers come and go, and after several months, determined to buy the business for himself. He convinced a friend to back him financially, purchased the saloon, renamed it the "Saloon Columbia," and offered liquor, wine and cigars to the thirsty bachelor immigrants of Ybor City. Hernandez later added sandwiches and snacks to the menu, but a neighboring restaurant called "La Fonda" furnished complete meals.¹

Although Ybor City had been an industrial town since the cigar factories arrived in the 1880s, it still retained the feel of the rough and tumble Florida frontier. The saloons welcomed patrons with swinging wooden doors. Life could be tough in Ybor City and the hardscrabble Spanish, Cuban and Italian immigrants were equally tough. The hard working Latins and crackers, many of them young, single men, could not subsist on coffee alone. When not working in agriculture, the cigar industry, on the shipping docks or as merchants, most of the men needed a strong drink to soothe their ills and pass the time.

The simple saloon filled the needs of the workers nicely. Hernandez opened his swinging doors to the sandy streets of Ybor City in 1905, and thirsty workers beat a steady path to the Saloon Columbia. Saloons served as part employment agency, part social club, and part counseling center to Tampa's working men. Most of the Latin men had left their families behind in the old country, and felt free to pursue a little pleasure when not eking out a living. The Deep South states provided some of Tampa's hardest drinkers. Although segregated, many black and white residents separately engaged in the same pleasurable activities, namely drinking and gambling. Whether it was a cracker tavern in Port Tampa, an African-American jook joint on Central Avenue, or a Cuban bar like the Columbia, saloons had no trouble finding customers in Tampa, Florida's hardest-drinking city.

For many, the simple pleasures of the Columbia proved insufficient. Disreputable saloons offered gambling and prostitutes in addition to whiskey and conversation, and men of all ethnic groups sought out those forbidden fruits. As in other American cities, drunkenness bred criminality, brawls, murders, lost fortunes and social disease in Tampa. However small the actual number of revelers, a little mayhem went a long way in a frontier town. Tampa's Godfearing populace recoiled at the lawless sex and violence percolating in the city's saloons.

Above all, such seedy places were an affront to Southern womanhood. Footloose newcomers posed an especially fearful threat to the integrity of Tampa's women and families. Since most of Tampa's restaurants were little more than thinly-veiled saloons, it was understood that respectable women did not patronize them. Tampa's restaurants served as preserves for unfettered male enjoyment and interaction. Some fancier restaurants served dinner to couples, especially on special occasions, but only males joined the lunch-time crowd.

Latin women avoided the cafes during the day largely out of Old World tradition. Even respectable establishments remained
off limits to females. Tampa historian Tony Pizzo wrote, “The Columbia was a barroom or saloon catering to Latins and the cracker element [and] offer[ed] solace ... no women dared to enter.”

Ferdie Pacheco illustrates this fact further when discussing breakfast at the Columbia:

Most men had two breakfasts. One at home taken hurriedly, amid the domestic turmoil of wife and children, and the other at their leisure, at the Columbia, in the company of friends and associates, and in the warmth of continuous camaraderie.

For women who worked in the cigar industry, a cafetero (coffee vendor) delivered sandwiches, fruit and pastries to their work stations while the men dined in the restaurants. This culinary segregation of the sexes was not limited to Tampa’s Latin population. Traditions of the American South were no different, where men often sought out strong drink instead of good food when dinging out.

Even the sassy waitress had no place in old Ybor City, because men dominated both sides of the counter. No self-respecting man wanted his wife to work in a restaurant. Victor Licata, who owned the Seabreeze in its early years, gladly accepted the help of his wife and daughter to prepare his popular and labor-intensive deviled crabs, but he would not hear of them setting foot in his restaurant, not even in the kitchen. Instead, they prepared the savory crab rolls at home.

This kind of separation applied to all classes of society, although some mixing occurred, primarily at formal dinners and dances. Upper-class establishments catered especially to men as well. A good example is the Tampa Bay Hotel, among the finest resorts in Florida at the turn of the last century. While married couples actually dined together at dinner, many other activities were strictly segregated. The grand dining room held extravagant, formal and lengthy feasts for its guests. After dining, the men went to the bar to enjoy a drink and cigar, while the women conversed in their sitting
room. No man ever so fit to visit the ladies’ sitting room. A lady did not dare to venture into the men’s bar, but could order drinks sent to her room. Only one woman ever ventured into the bar. Unfortunately, the woman’s name, and the reaction of the men, was not recorded. 6

If many women opposed the saloon’s activities, it was not a resentment stemming from their exclusion from them. Like the anti-slavery abolitionists before them, prohibitionists found inspiration and motivation from Christianity. The majority of prohibitionists were women disgusted by the hardship caused by male drinking at home. Domestic violence, unfaithful husbands, and wages lost to gambling and booze alarmed temperate men and women alike. The growing prohibition movement raised women’s political awareness, and they received the right to vote with the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution on August 26, 1920. That the 18th Amendment prohibiting alcohol went into effect on January 16th of the same year was no coincidence. Although women were unable to vote for prohibition, they spearheaded the movement that fostered it.

TOWARD A DRY TAMPA

Aurelio Piñero and his young son, Armando, saw the police cars pull up to the back door of El Pasaje in 1932. Father and son watched a flurry of activity from a high window in the Cuban Club. Several officers dashed into the hotel and raided its elegant restaurant on the second floor. El Pasaje boasted some of the finest food in Tampa. The service, silverware and crystal glasses were second to none. For decades, wealthy and influential Floridians ate at El Pasaje. Despite its reputation as a haven for the elite, the restaurant’s management told doormen, maitre d’ and waiters to watch for the police. Management had tucked El Pasaje’s stash of illegal liquor in secret compartments in the walls, hidden by an elaborate system of panels and pulleys.

As Piñero and his son could see, El Pasaje’s status as a fine dining establishment did not spare it from police surveillance. The secret liquor compartments were not enough protection, either. Tampa police, often corrupt but tired of being made fools of, found $100,000 worth of liquor hidden from sight. Today, the same cache would be worth millions. 7

Before long, the police began tossing dozens of cases of liquor from the second-story window. Agents stood on the brick street below with clubs, smashing every bottle—or so they thought. Piñero looked for an opportunity to recoup some of his huge losses. Just as the police sped away, he and his son searched through the shattered whiskey cases with sticks. To Piñero’s delight, they found five unbroken bottles of Canadian Club. A few days later, he sold the bottles for a whopping $125—an equivalent of ten weeks’ wages for Piñero. 8

Why would a fine restaurant be raided by police? What threat did wine—and foods prepared with it—pose to society? What harm came from patrons quietly sipping cocktails out of demitasse cups? El Pasaje was not an obvious blight on the community, so what was all the fuss about? Even the most ardent prohibitionists did not smash El Pasaje’s stores of liquor, so why would the police?

How could something like prohibition happen in free-wheeling Tampa, never mind the entire United States?

On January 22, 1908, Carry Nation, the hatchet-wielding prohibitionist, visited Tampa. Of the prohibition’s activists, Nation was among the most famous—and the most radical. It was not every day that an elderly woman with a hatchet burst into crowded saloons and busted up barrels of liquor while customers and barkeeps watched. She had been galvanized into action decades earlier by the death of her hard-drinking husband. During her three-month stay in Tampa, Nation railed against the immorality of saloons and drunkards in numerous impromptu speeches. By the

I feel now that this great wave of Prohibition that is sweeping over the whole land propelled by a mighty power of public sentiment will go on and on, until national Prohibition will be the ultimate outcome...
- Carrie Nation, 1909
time of her visit, she had rallied the support of activists all over the country. Teetotalers all over the U.S. pushed for legislation that made the sale of alcohol illegal. Florida had a long history of conflict over alcohol, and Tampa and its restaurants would soon experience the economic consequences of prohibition.

If she had visited Tampa ten years later, Nation would have been satisfied to learn that prohibition began in Florida before most of the rest of the country. The fight to ban alcohol began in the late 1800s among Christian groups. In 1915, after years of struggle and debate, the Florida Senate passed Bill 222, or the Davis Regulation Act, which only allowed alcohol to be sold in secure containers and ordered all saloons closed from 7p.m. to 7a.m. Paradoxically, this forced determined drinkers to frequent saloons during the day, drink at home in front of family, or drink on the street.

Nevertheless, the Davis Act had the desired effect. Out of Tampa's 75 saloons, more than 50 closed on October 1, 1915, the day Bill 222 became law. While the Tampa's drinking public may have been aghast to find only one-third of their saloons still in business, St. Petersburg retained only two. Despite the new law, drinking in Hillsborough County and six other Florida counties was still legal. Hardworking, hard-drinking Tampa would not easily loosen its grip on the bottle.

The day the restrictions went into effect, the *Tampa Daily Times* reported,

Business in most of the Tampa saloons was better than usual all evening. In some grotesque conviviality was indulge in and many discordant voices joined in singing 'Auld Lang Syne.' Today Tampans must drink at home, in their private offices or on the streets. They can no longer linger over the brass and mahogany and depend upon it for support.

For those who wondered how flexible law enforcement would be over the issue,
Sheriff W.C. Spencer announced,

I am going to enforce the Davis Law to the letter. I do not intend to recognize newly formed clubs which are established especially for the profit derived from the use of lockers or sale of alcohol, or are operating a buffet merely as an incidental feature of its social or fraternal purposes.  

Yet Sheriff Spencer was just one in a procession of law enforcement officials unable – or unwilling – to enforce prohibition laws. The Davis Act was a failure, and foreshadowed why prohibition would fail in Tampa. In 1919, a Tribune editorial mused, “Soon there was hardly a place where liquor was sold that did not sell it openly and above board by the drink or by the gallon. The terms of the act were despised and condemned, and officials in some cities winked openly at violations.” New and established clubs served alcohol to their members throughout the era. Some social clubs planned on storing large reserves of liquor for members so it would be available at any time, with no money exchanged and no law violated.  

Between 1915 and 1918, Florida’s remaining wet counties voted to become dry and close their saloons. In 1918, Hillsborough County was one of the only wet counties in the state, though local government discouraged the operating of saloons through painfully high licensing fees. The money required to overcome these obstacles divided Tampa’s saloons into three categories: expensive establishments like the Tampa Bay Hotel, El Pasajé and the Balbontin Saloon that attracted well-to-do businessmen and politicians; working-class places like the White Swan for the common man; or “blind tigers,” unlicensed establishments teeming with bad liquor, gambling and prostitution.  

In November 1918, Florida’s citizens voted to enact prohibition, and even Hillsborough County went dry on January 1, 1919. Soldiers returning from World War I could not legally celebrate with a drink. The Tribune mulled over the consequences as prohibition went into effect.

This morning the fight is over; the prohibitionists are going about seeking other worlds to conquer, and Florida is so dry that a man will have to get the colic and a prescription from a doctor to get a little ‘medicine’ from the drug store. If you want a drink today the nearest place…is Baltimore; and it’s a darned costly trip there with federal railroad fares and porter tips to be added.  

Tampa must have been a sullen town, indeed. All saloons shut down, package houses auctioned off their stocks, and thirsty drinkers wandered about, wondering who might have a bottle of whiskey left. Unluckily for them, demand for whiskey was so high that Spanish cider would have to do. Tampa’s newspapers captured the feeling of loss and dejection shared by drinkers.

The regular customers could not pass by the old place [saloon] without stopping to take a look and pass the compliments of the season with such others of the clan [of drinkers] who still retained a controlling interest in a full sized thirst but who were compelled to satisfy their
inward aridness by merely sniffing at the drafts which from time to time wafted through the portals of package houses minus the packages.

Only the sign on the showcase - "Fixtures for Sale" - added to the gloom of the establishment. All over town it was the same, these establishments looking much like a doomed man who was trying to do all he could to make the best of his last day. 19

A year after Florida went dry, the nation followed suit. On January 1, 1920, prohibition became federal law. Once the prohibitionists had their way, the tough questions were left to the government. How would the ban be enforced? What kind of unforeseen consequences would result? Would the law solve social problems or create them? Is legislating morality democratic or even feasible?

The answers would prove discouraging. The social costs of the "Noble Experiment" were enormous. "Dry" America became an international laughing-stock. The law criminalized large portions of the populace who previously were law-abiding, especially those immigrants who enjoyed wine with their meals. The flood of minor cases strained courtrooms across the country to their limits. Popular entertainment soon mocked law enforcement with images of bumbling, corrupt and overzealous policemen. All the while, smugglers and moonshine producers filled the void that was once the providence of legitimate businesses. Organized crime made millions, paid no taxes, and became a national force of corruption in our society and in our politics. The parallels with today's vast "War on Drugs" are obvious, except the economic and social costs of today's "noble experiment" by far exceed those of the past. If Carrie Nation could have seen the chaos wrought by her Holy Crusade against saloons, she may well have put down her axe and gone home to her cabin in the Ozarks.

That was probably the wildest period of time in this country's history. There was more damn booze consumed and the whole Florida boom developed at that time. Florida was just going crazy. It had to be one hell of a time to live here in Florida.

- H.L. "Punky" Crowder

Wet Tampa: The Rise of the Underworld

It could be argued that prohibition put the roar in the "Roaring Twenties." It would have been a rather quaint decade if it were not for the convergence of prohibition with a variety of other factors. The U.S. was ready to celebrate its victory in the Great War. Motion pictures amused the population with slapstick humor and tantalized them with glamorous stars. General disregard for prohibition laws glorified gangsters and made folk heroes of violent criminals. Jazz burst on to the national music scene, reflecting the heady excitement of the times. Economic prosperity and speculation made scores of investors rich overnight. The Florida Land Boom made real estate agents, construction firms, and developers giddy with real and projected profits. Prohibitionists and suffragettes ushered in a new wave of women's liberation. "Flappers," the young rebellious ladies of the 1920s, enjoyed their new freedoms by dancing the Charleston, smoking cigarettes, and drinking bathtub gin. Their prohibitionist elders were not pleased.

Prohibition criminalized the drinking public, straining the legal system with arrests and court cases. Regular drinkers were not only denied liquor, but would be severely punished if found drunk in public. The day prohibition went into effect, a sailor named John Branch stood before a judge for public drunkenness. "You will be turned over to the state next time you get drunk," the judge told the sailor. If caught drunk again, Branch would be charged with a misdemeanor, fined up to $500, and sentenced to six months in jail. The third offense would be treated as a felony, with a maximum fine of $3,000 or three years in prison. To get a rough idea of today's costs for getting tipsy, multiply the fines by ten or more. 20

Immigrants whose families drank wine with their meals were suddenly treated like criminals for continuing a long cultural and
culinary tradition. Some theorized that prohibition was meant to shelter America's urban population from the evils of immigration - German beer gardens, Irish pubs and Italian bootleggers. Mr. B.M. Balbontin, a Spanish immigrant, liquor wholesaler, and owner of numerous saloons in Tampa, recollected the implications of prohibition for immigrants like himself.

98% of the beer plants in the United States belonged to Germans. 95% of the refineries belonged to Jews. 90% of the importers were Spaniards, Italians, French and German. More than 90% of the retailers in liquor belonged to the nationalities expressed above, all foreigners. 21

By legislating their livelihoods out of existence, prohibition negated the political influence of immigrants. Balbontin also found it suspicious that the U.S. voted on prohibition "during a time when there were more than three million soldiers out of the country." As in earlier wars, the poor had filled the ranks of the military. Balbontin also denounced "The clergy of the different denominations ... [who] are ignorants, who meddle in political and civil business...." However, Balbontin spared the clergy of his beloved Catholic church of such scorn, "who have never meddled in anything." 22

In his charming Nochebuena Cookbook, Ferdie Pacheco recalls the story of "Giuseppe's Nochebuena Ark." Whether the story is true or apocryphal makes little difference-either way, it gives us a glimpse at how immigrants viewed law enforcement during the prohibition era.

Giuseppe came from a long line of shipbuilders in Messina, Sicily and arrived in Ybor City just after the turn of the last century. He worked a small farm there with his family, earning a comfortable living by producing wine and cheese. Giuseppe would probably have passed quietly from the scene if Federal agents had not confiscated his wine-making equipment after prohibition took effect. Limited production of beer and wine was legal, but Giuseppe's equipment would have allowed him to supply much of Ybor City with wine.

Pacheco wrote, "Well," said Giuseppe, working himself up into a full Sicilian lather, 'How is a man to eat his pasta without Chianti? How is a man to digest his food?"

The Federal agent added insult to injury by suggesting Giuseppe drink Coca-Cola with his pasta.

The episode sent Giuseppe into a whirlwind of secret activity. Before long, it became apparent to everyone in Ybor City that Giuseppe was building a large boat-an ark, inspired by the biblical Noah. Every day for a year, his family and neighbors heard the sounds of his hidden labors inside.

Tampa's policemen were eager to make headlines with a successful bust, and a tip from one of Giuseppe's neighbors aroused their interest. Nochebuena, or Christmas Eve, was a lively night in Ybor City. The police waited until then to raid the ark, as Giuseppe's operation would surely be busy. When the police scaled the ark with ladders and clambered in, they found about a hundred Sicilian peasants at long holiday tables waiting for dinner. At the captain's table sat Don Giuseppe with his proud family.

Giuseppe stood and raised his glass for a toast. He pronounced, "To America, where even the police snitch on each other!" The Sicilians all laughed, and then the old man toasted Nochebuena, Jesus Christ, and America. "And lastly," he said, "to Coca-Cola, which in the absence of our beloved Chianti, will have to do." Giuseppe's guests passed wine glasses out to the policemen, all filled with Coke.

Thereafter, the police left Giuseppe and his ark alone, and the Italians had their Chianti. If things had gone differently, Giuseppe and his friends would have been hauled off to jail, their lives disrupted and their property confiscated. At what price sobriety? Little public good would have come from sending Giuseppe to prison. 23

As it turned out, few Tampans served jail time due to the enforcement of prohibition laws. Defiance of federal and state prohibition laws made Tampa one of the wettest spots in the country. One of the reasons prohibition failed so badly is illustrated by the brief career of Tampa Police Chief Frank M. Williams. A veteran of World War I and a performer in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, the flamboyant Williams was appointed police chief in February 1922. He sported a large handlebar mustache and top credentials as a federal prohibition agent. Williams conducted multiple raids on speakeasies and gambling halls over the next year and a half, but in the election of 1923, voters and
political opponents denounced Williams as being soft on bootleggers and gamblers. He lost his position as a result. A Tribune editorial stated at the time:

It was brought out in the campaign that there had been more open violation of the law during the past year than at any other time in the history of Tampa. It was shown that liquor selling was being permitted in all parts of the city, as well as other offenses.24

Obtaining simple whiskey and rum was not a problem. Inland, backwoods moonshiners sold their "alky cooked liquor," while nocturnal smugglers in small boats ran rum into the city from various points in the Caribbean. Locals brewed beer and wine for themselves and resale.25 But a distribution network that could supply alcohol to a city as thirsty as Tampa needed muscle and organization, and that's where the underworld came in.

Before prohibition, organized crime was limited to ethnic gangs in the inner cities. There were no dashing gangsters in fine clothes and expensive cars, and most Americans looked down upon criminals. Prohibition became the catalyst in the creation of a nationwide network of organized crime. It also elevated criminals to folk heroes, replacing cowboys as the noble American individualist.

Most Italian-Americans in Tampa and across America belonged to poor, working-class families. As relative latecomers to Ybor City's cigar industry, they were often stuck in low-paying jobs. Despite hard, honest work, many Italians seemed to make little progress in finding better opportunities. The illegal liquor trade during prohibition gave some of the more daring ones a way out. Prohibition became a profitable godsend to the mafia and other organized crime groups.

Some went farther than Giuseppe and his ark, expanding into other illegal activities. The same disregard of the law that made illegal liquor acceptable encouraged a widespread acceptance of Bolita, a seemingly innocent yet illegal Cuban lottery. Few could have predicted how Bolita gambling would shape Tampa's history. While gangs competed for "territory," or markets for liquor, Bolita revenue became the ultimate prize. Especially after prohibition was dead and gone, gang wars raged over control of the numbers racket. The Italians ultimately came out on top of the Bolita game, and the illegal revenues decided local and state elections for decades. Organized crime in Tampa gave the city a bad reputation nationwide. The most famous exposure of Tampa's corruption was brought by congressional hearings held in Tampa in 1950. The U.S. Senate Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce, known as the Kefauver Committee – from the name of its chairman, Tennessee Senator Estes Kefauver, brought state and national attention to Tampa's gambling and organized crime.

While prohibition and then gambling criminalized many Tampans, it forced others underground – literally. Adela Gonzmart and Leo Stalnaker Jr. both recalled several tunnels running under Ybor City's streets and buildings. Stalnaker said, "I think not only bootleggers, but the gamblers were using it, too."26 One tunnel ran from the Las Novedades restaurant to the basement of the post office building across the street. According to some sources, a gambling parlor had been set up in the basement of the post office, the building later occupied by the Blue Ribbon grocery. The tunnel was discovered when the Blue Ribbon owner renovated the basement in 1994.27

THE MAD DASH: TAMPA'S SPEAKEASIES

Florida's increasingly restrictive liquor laws caused the migration of some previously
legitimate businessmen into businesses often with shadier intentions. The Saloon Columbia was just one Tampa business that was feeling the effect of the laws. Casimiro Hernandez had expanded the Columbia’s fare to include some food, but the business still relied heavily on alcohol. Clearly by 1920 and the enactment of prohibition laws, it was time to leave the saloon business behind. Hernandez finally turned to his restaurateur neighbor, Manuel Garcia of “La Fonda,” and proposed a merger. Garcia was having some financial difficulties of his own and readily agreed. Thus, the Columbia acquired the second of what would become many dining rooms.

Most saloon owners did not have the means or luck that Casimiro had. Tampa’s saloon owners had to find new businesses overnight. Prohibition set off a collective mad dash on the part of tavern owners to re-open their establishments as restaurants. Like many others, saloon owner John Nelson re-opened his business as a restaurant shortly after prohibition went into effect. Another business named “The Tavern” was registered as a restaurant in 1925, but one is left to guess whether it specialized in food or drink.

While prohibition ruined or disrupted some businesses, it made others rich. Entrepreneurs of all kinds – some legitimate entrepreneurs, others from the criminal underworld – cashed in on the insatiable demand for booze. As with today’s illegal drug trade, the potential for profit was too great to resist.

Bootleggers, who were often legitimate liquor distributors before being put out of business, needed new outlets to sell their product. Aside from restaurants, soft drink stands and soda bars often replaced saloons. Soft drinks were popularized at the same time prohibition was gaining momentum, and often acted as a sweet substitute for something harder. The name “soft drink” was meant to stand in sharp contrast to “hard liquor” by marketers. It is one of history’s ironies that “soft drink” fountains and ice cream parlors often acted as fronts for bootlegging and retail liquor sales.

In 1919, on the eve of nationwide prohibition, Tampa supported only nine soda fountains. A year later, with the U.S. a dry nation, there were 49, a sufficient number to replace most of Tampa’s saloons. In 1924, 115 soft drink retailers populated the business community, peaking with 131 in 1930. It should come as little surprise that the number of soda fountains fell sharply immediately after prohibition was repealed. Within three years of repeal, half of the

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<td>1937</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>64</td>
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<td>1939</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>125</td>
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fountains closed, and the numbers continued to fall steadily. 30

Billiards halls followed a similar pattern. Billiards began as a gentlemen's game, but the prohibition years would give pool halls a seedy reputation as a haven for illegal liquor and gambling. On the first dry day in Florida, a saloon re-opened as a pool hall, and others were expected to follow. Pre-prohibition numbers showed an average of between seven and nine establishments in Tampa in the years just before prohibition. That number ballooned to 22 in 1925 and 27 in 1932, only to drop to 11 just three years after repeal. 31

El Pasaje was not the only high-profile speakeasy in Tampa. The newly-expanded Columbia was notorious as well. According to the *Tampa Tribune*,

Men would gather in the bar to drink liquor in coffee cups, smoke fat cigars, and decide elections. Men would bring their wives and children to eat in the café. And some would bring their mistresses to drink in the private rooms upstairs. While entertaining young ladies upstairs one night, the Bambino [Babe Ruth] consumed two cases of beer by himself. On another visit Ruth reportedly downed 27 Café Diablos. 32

The repeal of prohibition seemed so remote that the Columbia built walls around its beautiful marble bar. Rediscovered in 1980 when a restaurant employee knocked a panel of wood loose, the vintage bar is again being used for its original purpose. 33

Most speakeasies stood in sharp contrast to the opulent El Pasaje. The majority served the working class with much less pomp and more ordinary food. Illegal bars with names like Pete's, the Lincoln Club, and Larry Ford's did a roaring business in the Roaring Twenties. Prohibitionists claimed that national alcohol consumption had dropped since laws took effect, a trend hardly in evidence in the smoky rooms of Tampa's saloons and bars. 34

**The Fall of Fine Dining**

If prohibition fostered small and large-scale crime, it also threatened to wipe out a whole section of the restaurant industry. In 1931, a journalist wrote, "The art of noble dining ... was assassinated under legal process on January 16, 1920, the day on which the prohibition laws became effective." 35 One of prohibition's unforeseen consequences was the virtual elimination of fine dining from the restaurant market. From the 1880s until the 1920s, "fine dining" usually meant French cooking, but in Tampa, Spanish food was king.

Early in the century, hotels often featured the finest food in the city. The Tampa Bay Hotel, whose dining room epitomized the ideal of opulence, had menus written primarily in French and featured French sauces and cooking techniques to prepare their dishes. Other upscale restaurants like...
El Pasaje served up Spanish food in an elegant atmosphere. While Tampa’s fine dining scene no doubt was very small and reserved for the elite, changes at the top of the socioeconomic ladder affected the development of Tampa’s entire restaurant industry.

Fine dining and Old World cuisine relied upon wine as an ingredient and accompaniment. Prohibition seriously undermined the food preparation and presentation at the few elite hotels and restaurants in Tampa. Prevailing expectations by guests in expensive restaurants were that they would be “wined and dined,” and one was just not the same without the other. Prohibition drove up the price of legal cooking wine, a fermented grape juice that proud and experienced chefs must have frowned upon. After prohibition took effect, lavish Old World feasts for Tampa’s elite could only happen behind closed doors. Demitasse cups replaced wine glasses and champagne flutes.

Since most hotels and restaurants depended upon beer, wine, and liquor sales for profits, prohibition forced them to close or compromise their quality. Even today, Bern’s Steakhouse (arguably one of the finest restaurants in Florida and in the nation) depends heavily upon alcohol for profits. In 1981, Bern’s lost $300,000 on food. If prohibition were to go in effect today, Bern’s and Tampa’s other high-priced restaurants would waste no time before scaling back operations or even closing their doors.36

Before 1920, Tampa’s popular hotels served some of the most elaborate meals in Tampa. By the 1930s, their quality had irreversibly slipped. “The major hotels,” Ferdie Pacheco remembered, “the Tampa Terrace, Jefferson, Floridian, and such-featured hotel food, and in the thirties that was condemnation enough.”37

Tampa’s hotels clung to the restaurant market long after, but prohibition sent them spiraling downward in quality and popularity. Even today, hotels depend upon tourists and high prices to turn a profit, or let a chain run its restaurant. It is commonplace today for hungry hotel patrons to be fed by a Waffle House, Denny’s or Pizza Hut on the premises.

WOMEN ON THE MOVE

In 1929, Casimiro Hernandez died, and his savvy son, Casimiro II, took over the Columbia. By 1935, he could see that prohibition had changed the restaurant industry. More women flocked to restaurants, and couples were more interested than ever in dining and dancing. Hernandez designed a new, elegant addition to the Columbia that would benefit from these recent trends. He took out a loan to pay for a palatial room that could accommodate an orchestra and dance floor. Adela Gonzmart remembered when her father returned home from the bank. “I heard him
tell my mother that Mr. Simpson had given him thirty-five thousand dollars on a handshake. He sounded very worried. Then I heard him say, 'Carmita, if this room is not a successful venture, I'll have to blow my brains out.'

Casimiro need not have worried. With the addition of the elegant ballroom, the Columbia became a destination for couples looking for romantic ambience and dancing. Old-timers would recognize the old Saloon Columbia of 1905, but the Columbia's ballroom could not have been more different. Advertisements for the Columbia and photographs of the time featured impeccably-dressed couples enjoying formal service, fine food, passionate flamenco music and the romantic ambience of their opulent dining room, a far cry from the pre-prohibition saloon atmosphere.

During prohibition, women felt more comfortable eating out in Tampa's alcohol-free restaurants. But, younger, more flamboyant woman of the 20s, the adventurous flappers, drank, danced and smoked in speakeasies. Both circumstances revealed changing traditions. With the great increase in the number of women customers, the restaurant industry blossomed in Tampa. Tampa's 117 restaurants in 1919 jumped to 275 by 1925. Tampa's population overall had grown, but increasing numbers of women customers also meant almost twice as many potential patrons.

Going out to eat at a restaurant rather than cooking a meal at home grew to be a favorite activity. Along with other societal changes in dating and marriage, eating out at restaurants was just one of the ways couples married and single spent more time together.

REPEAL OF THE "NOBLE EXPERIMENT"

By the time prohibition was repealed, one could honestly wonder who had voted
for enactment of the laws in the first place. Authorities were not interested in enforcing the measure. Prohibitionists were exhausted by the debate and disgusted by the crime lords who got rich from smuggled liquor. The government needed the tax revenue that alcohol imports, production and consumption would quickly generate. Drinkers, liquor manufacturers, and saloon owners simply wanted to get back to the pursuit of happiness. In fact, the only ones who wanted the “noble experiment” to continue were the gangsters, and who could blame them?

Beer became legal again in Florida on May 8, 1933, and the state scarcely took a look back. While Tampa’s drinkers sang “Happy Days are Here Again,” dozens of trains, trucks and ships converged on Tampa – Florida’s hardest-drinking city – bringing in 3.2% beer from New Orleans and Cuban beer prized for its higher alcohol content. The freighter Pawnee arrived just as the Beer Bill was signed, with enough beer to fill three railroad cars. In the months that followed, Hillsborough’s residents drank more beer than any other county in Florida: an average of 2½ bottles per person per day.

Drinkers and federal authorities alike could not wait for prohibition to be repealed. Although Florida did not do so until the end of 1934, the Federal government sent in personnel a year earlier to regulate the production and sale of liquor – still illegal under Florida state law, but now legal nationwide. The Tampa Daily Times explained further:

Uncle Sam isn’t fooled a bit by Florida’s bone-dryness. He knows there is liquor in Florida; he knows that more will be made and more will be imported, but the mere presence of the liquor doesn’t bother him at all. To him, Florida is the same as other states, and if Florida has a dry law, that’s Florida’s business. All that concerns him is seeing that the ‘Feds’ get their cuts on licenses and sales, and that terms of the new amendment [for repeal] were obeyed.

Since all of Tampa’s legitimate saloons had been out of business for over a decade, it took some time before they were ready to accommodate Tampa’s drinkers again. In the meantime, the city’s restaurants gladly filled the gap. Romano’s Restaurant offered a glass of Italian Claret free with each meal. Frank’s Delicatessen rushed to be the first downtown restaurant to offer beer the day it was legalized. Home brewing was so popular at the time that many ads offered refrigeration equipment, pumps, and ice.

After repeal, restaurants reminded diners to order alcoholic beverages with their meals. A 1935 newspaper ad for Alhambra Restaurant went so far as to offer “3 special turkey dinners,” the only difference between them being their price and the drinks that were served “free” with them. The Columbia’s elegant addition of 1935 would not have been as successful without the one all-important ingredient – alcohol. A Columbia menu of 1938 listed “drinks that are mixed by men of pre-prohibition experience,” because many Columbia workers stayed throughout their entire career.

Post-prohibition changes were many. While public drinking increased, fine dining did not recover. Establishments selling alcohol would never go back to the controversial title of saloon. Tony Pizzo explained, “The idea of the saloon was so sordid that after [prohibition’s] repeal, new euphemisms had to be invented to describe the new watering places.” Years of negative
campaigning against saloons had taken their toll, and the industry would reinvent itself. What’s more, it was now acceptable for a woman to enjoy a drink with her meal in a restaurant. 46

Tampa’s restaurant industry should have been soaring in profits with the reemergence of liquor sales, but economic downturn following the Florida Land Boom and then the Great Depression forced Tampa’s economy into a tailspin. Following the 1929 crash of the stock market and the Great Depression of the 1930s, it would take events equally as dramatic and life altering to lift the country and the economy out of its doldrums – it would take a second World War.

ENDNOTES

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45. Tampa Daily Times, 12/7/33.
46. Handwritten Tony Pizzo note, Special Collections, USF Library, Pizzo Collection.

Copies of newspaper advertisements used to illustrate this article are from editions of the Tampa Daily Times and Tampa Tribune courtesy Special Collections, University of South Florida Libraries.

Patrick Cosby

No single institution symbolized Ybor City more than the cigar industry. Ybor City had been founded in the 1880s when Vicente Martinez Ybor and Ignacio Haya moved their factories to Tampa. Through the early part of the twentieth century, the cigar industry supported a thriving Latin culture in Ybor City and established Tampa as America’s premier cigar manufacturing city. The Great Depression and the Second World War, however, proved to be crucial turning points for the fortunes of the cigar industry. Though many prospered during the war with lucrative government and military contracts, the post-war period saw cigar manufacturers seeking new strategies to combat shifts in lifestyle and consumption patterns.

During the war, the cigar industry boomed as the government purchased large quantities of cigars for the U.S. military. Stanford Newman of Cleveland’s Standard Cigar Company, which opened a mechanized factory in Ybor City in 1953, recalled that the U.S. Army Quartersmaster Corps requisitioned nearly half of all the cigars produced by the Standard Cigar Company while regular retail outlets faced rationing. The government demanded that cigar manufacturers “pack the cigars in huge wooden crates, which were waterproofed by lining them with tarpaper [and] painted with color-coded stripes” to distinguish them as luxuries rather than essential foodstuffs or munitions.

In 1945, Tampa’s cigar industry produced 527,886,000 cigars, more than 10 percent of the total number of cigars produced in the entire United States. Though machines had first been introduced in Ybor City during the 1930s, during the war years factories produced primarily high quality, hand-rolled cigars. Only 8,322,575 cigars were of a cheaper, machine-made variety. Contrastingly, Ybor City produced 12,562,450 class D cigars retailing for $0.08 each, 19,787,043 class E cigars for $0.15 each, 6,228,050 class F cigars for $0.20 apiece, and 9,455,280 cigars selling for more than $0.20 each. As the war ended, skilled artisans still dominated Ybor City’s labor force.

Along with cigars, the federal government also purchased large quantities of inexpensive, machine-made cigarettes for American GIs. Cigarettes had become so popular with the American troops that many servicemen continued smoking after the war, creating a huge demand for cigarettes, at the expense of other tobacco products such as cigars and chewing tobacco. In September 1946, William Wightman, the Post Commander of the Clearwater, Florida, American Legion Post, even drew up a resolution for state and national legislatures asking for tax-free cigarettes for veterans.

American society at large associated tobacco use almost exclusively with cigarette consumption. Such associations even reached absurd proportions when one pet owner in California preferred that his dog smoke cigarettes rather than consume other forms of tobacco. Butch, the forty-five pound Dalmatian, habitually assaulted people smoking and devoured their tobacco,
“fiery ash and all.” Butch’s owner, Bill Hill, eventually purchased an aluminum cigarette holder and taught the dog to smoke cigarettes. Butch smoked six cigarettes each day, and, Hill added, “the dog also likes beer.”

Unfortunately for the cigar workers of Ybor City, cigars failed to achieve the same levels of post-war popularity. After the war, the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps attempted to return millions of cigars, which the military had stockpiled since 1942, to the Standard Cigar Company. The company's president refused, however, replying that the cigars had become “so old and dried.” In Ybor City, the Perfecto Garcia and Brothers Cigar Company incinerated a total of 500,000 cigars that had been contracted for sale to the U.S. Navy. The company burned as many as 59,000 high quality long filler cigars in May of 1947. Ostensibly, company executives claimed to be protecting the brand name’s reputation by assuring a high level of quality, though burning the cigars secured one week’s worth of work for 900 of the company’s employees. The Perfecto Garcia and Brothers factory represented one of only four factories operating at full employment in the summer of 1947.

The cigar industry faced particularly difficult times in 1947. A prolonged slump had struck the industry in January and was predicted to last at least through November. Through the first fiscal quarter of 1947, the production of all classes of high quality cigars had decreased significantly from production levels in 1946. Production of class D cigars decreased from 48,500,000 in 1946 to 41,000,000 in 1947. Class E cigars fell from 62,000,000 to 33,400,000, class F from 14,000,000 to only 3,700,000. The highest class of cigars, class G cigars worth more than $.20 each, were reduced from a 1946 level of 30,000,000 to 19,250,000 in 1947. Only the production of inexpensive,
machine-made class C cigars increased, from 23,000,000 in 1946 to 25,200,000 in 1947.

The cigar industry slump in 1947 forced many companies to lay off many of the older, skilled cigar workers. Between December 1, 1946, and April of 1947, 5,561 cigar workers claimed state unemployment benefits from the Florida Industrial Commission's claims division. From the state agency, unemployed workers received $15 per week for sixteen weeks. By July, nearly 1,800 cigar workers had exhausted their eligibility for government assistance. Additionally, 2,000 to 3,000 cigar workers who had lost their jobs in 1946 still lacked permanent employment and few job prospects appeared for the foreseeable future.

As unemployment figures mounted for the cigar industry, city and state government officials began searching for ways to alleviate the pressure on Ybor City's workers. Few anticipated that the cigar industry would recover on its own. Projections indicated that the industry would have needed to produce and sell at least eighty percent of the sales totals from 1946, a heroic feat that would have required "a decided increase in demand." Additionally, cigar companies increasingly sought to increase the production levels of only the more marketable, lower class cigars that were made by machines rather than the hand-rolled cigars made by skilled workers. Such efforts sustained the cigar companies but failed to assist thousands of unemployed cigar workers. A Florida Industrial Commission report predicted that Ybor City would face a serious employment crisis "if the transition from hand-made to machine cigars results in any further substantial lay off of cigar workers."

One observer concluded that the unemployment situation in 1947 might have been more severe than in 1940, when 15,126 people were unemployed in Tampa, though 7,655 of those received government assistance through various New Deal government-funded projects. In an effort the confront the unemployment crisis, Tampa Mayor Curtis Hixon and city officials hoped to attract new industries to the area using the large, unemployed, skilled labor force as an enticement. However, most cigar workers had only worked in the cigar industry and would require expensive retraining to begin working in other industries. Additionally, 33 percent of the unemployed workers were older than 50 years of age and 40 percent had worked in the cigar industry for more than 25 years. Only 11 percent were younger than 30 years old. Though the city of Tampa attracted some new industries, particularly shipping industries, manufacturing companies would have had to address the issue of an aging, narrowly skilled labor force when contemplating an expensive move to Tampa or Ybor City.

By 1951, the cigar industry employed only 5,000 workers. Before mechanized production systems came to Ybor City, the industry had supported 12,072 workers in 1929. Ybor City's cigar companies could maintain a near monopoly on the highest classes of cigars because the costs associated with producing them by hand prohibited new companies from pursuing that consumer segment of the cigar market. The market for such high quality cigars remained small and unpredictable, however, and many companies chose to stabilize their profits by producing larger quantities of inexpensive cigars using machinery rather than expensive, skilled cigar workers. In the same amount of time that it would have taken a worker to roll 100 cigars by hand, a machine could produce as
many as 1,589 lower class cigars.

Increased mechanization helped Ybor City’s cigar manufacturers maintain high output levels. According to one veteran reporter, however, the departure of two factories, the Regensburg and La Primadora Factories, in early 1951 was “proof to the Cigar City that all [was] not well.” Combined, the two factory closures left 750 workers unemployed. The La Primadora factory at 2408 17th St. had been operating in Ybor City for more than 50 years and had been one of the city’s four largest cigar factories, employing 480 cigar makers. The company planned to move its factory to Coplay, Pennsylvania, in order to be closer to markets in the northeast, though company official Henry M. Hafer claimed that the company also decided to move because they wanted “to make cigars under modern methods.”

By 1953, one cigar company actually decided to relocate their operations to Ybor City. The Standard Cigar Company opened in June 1953. The factory, however, focused on producing machine-made cigars. More than 800 unemployed cigar makers, many former employees of the Regensburg factory that had closed in 1951, sought jobs in the new Standard factory. All of the job applicants were fifty years old or older, and many were in their eighties. Unfortunately, almost none could operate a machine.

While workers suffered unemployment as machines replaced them in the factories, the cigar industry as a whole, along with other tobacco products, faced additional challenges during the early 1950s. Consumer demand for tobacco products declined as the public became aware of the health risks associated with tobacco use. Even cigarettes suffered a 6.4 percent decline in consumption over the two-year period from 1953-1954. The cigarette industry responded by reintroducing filter tip cigarettes that presumably trapped nicotine and tar from the cigarette smoke. In 1952, 1.5 percent of cigarettes contained filters. By 1956, 30 percent contained filters and by 1958 that percentage had jumped to 46 percent of all cigarettes. Cigarette advertisements from the early 1950s promoted supposed scientific proof that filtered cigarettes were safe and mild. The Lucky Strike brand claimed that “scientific tests prove Lucky Strike is the mildest of six major brands,” while Camel surveyed 113,597 people and concluded that “More Doctors Smoke Camels Than Any Other Cigarette.” The Herbert Tareyton brand offered cork tip filters for “discriminating people.”
By 1955, Winston cigarettes boasted a new, exclusive filter that "works so effectively, yet lets the full rich tobacco flavor come right through." Unlike cigarettes, which could be profitable in milder forms, cigars depended upon a full, rich flavor. While cigarette manufacturers developed filters that offered some protection against health risks, yet still provided full tobacco flavor, cigar makers found few answers to public health concerns. As advertisers competed to establish which cigarette brands were mildest or most innovative, a 1951 newspaper advertisement invited people "to smoke HAV-A-TAMPA cigars – or any other Good Tampa made cigar [italics in original]."

The ability to use filters on cigarettes enabled cigarette manufacturers to weather the small storm caused by the growing public awareness of tobacco's health risks and contributed to the further dominance of cigarettes over cigars in the American marketplace. Ybor City's cigar manufacturers responded to the decreasing market share by lowering production costs through further mechanization and by focusing their efforts on producing greater quantities of inexpensive, lower class cigars. In 1955, cigar officials contemplated using a new type of binder that "made it possible to use damaged tobacco rather than just whole leaves." Though few thought the new innovation would become dominant in Ybor City since it could not be used to make higher-class cigars, cigar companies demonstrated a willingness to explore new technologies to decrease costs and increase efficiency at the expense of quality.

With the shift to mechanized production, Ybor City's cigar factories produced approximately two million cigars daily by 1960. The skilled, Latin cigar maker, however, had become a dying breed. In 1955 the Tampa Jaycees held a contest to find the oldest employed cigar worker in Ybor City. The Latin cigar workers and the cultural identity they contributed to the community in Ybor City would soon be gone, with no one to replace them. As the older generation of skilled cigar workers aged and the industry became increasingly mechanized, many young Latins returning to Ybor City after World War II sought opportunities outside of the declining cigar industry and outside of the boundaries of Ybor City.

On the eve of the Cuban Revolution, and the United States embargo that would severely limit the supply of tobacco from the island, Ybor City's cigar industry had already changed drastically in the decade and a half...
Cigar manufacturing required fewer skilled workers as machines became more common in Tampa during the 1930s. Women are the only workers shown in this 1950s photograph of cigars being machine made. *(Photograph courtesy of Florida State Archives.)*

that followed World War II. Cigar companies had shifted from hand-rolled cigars to mechanized production, forcing older, skilled cigar makers into unemployment lines and forcing a younger generation of Latinos to explore new industries and jobs outside Ybor City with its rich history and traditions. While Ybor City had once supported a thriving Latin culture centered on cigar manufacturing, residents of the neighborhood fled to new careers, new homes and new lifestyles in suburbia, leaving Ybor City vulnerable to bulldozers and the ravages of urban renewal. Although a new Ybor City may rise, the era of skilled artisans hand-rolling cigars in Ybor’s brick factories came to an end.

ENDNOTES

Patrick Cosby is a native of Tampa and received his B.A. in History with High Honors from the University of Florida. He is currently a graduate assistant in the History Department at the University of South Florida while completing his Masters thesis on issues surrounding baseball and the construction of “Latin” identity among cigarmakers in Ybor City.


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The Florida History Fair competition is an annual, statewide activity that enhances the teaching and learning of history for students from grade 6 through 12. County winners participate at the state level in May of each year and gather in College Park, Maryland in June for the National History Day competition. National History Day, established in 1974, is not just one day, but a year long program that makes history come alive every day.

Asya Adkins of Seffner, an eighth grader at Burnett Middle School, was one of two first place winners in the Junior Division, Florida History Essay Competition sponsored by the Hillsborough County School System and the Tampa Bay History Center.

FIRST PLACE WINNING ESSAY
JUNIOR DIVISION

Asya Adkins

T he story of the Tuskegee Airmen sheds light on the role of African-Americans in the military, an aspect of American history that has been forgotten or marginalized in many textbooks. Today it is unthinkable that until the end of World War II African-Americans were not allowed to serve in the United States Air Force, but in fact they were not.¹ The Tuskegee Airmen showed commitment and proved that they could serve in the military despite prejudice and other struggles they faced on their way to honor. The success of the Tuskegee Airmen caused a major reaction in the United States of America.

M any Negro-Americans from all over the country began their journey to Tuskegee Institute where they would be trained to fly planes and perhaps go to war to fight in combat missions. As the cadets made their way to Alabama, they realized this was no easy task. Like the first person to greet them, their first commanding officer, Captain Noel F. Parrish, stated, “Your future good or bad will depend largely on how determined you are not to give satisfaction to those who would like to see you fail.”²

As for other people not in the military, just getting the news that the Armed Forces was conducting an experiment by training Negro-Americans to fly planes, they became outraged. As a result, the government kept careful tabs on them and how they were being trained.

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was a strong supporter of Negro-American aviators. She took a plane ride with Chief Anderson at Tuskegee against her Secret Service bodyguards’ wishes. Her bodyguards didn’t want her to fly with him because he was Negro-American, which they thought would increase the chances for an accident. First Lady Roosevelt also loaned the college $175,000 to construct Moton Field, Tuskegee Institute’s CPTP [Civilian Pilot Training Program] training field. This field was used to train the Tuskegee Airmen.³

President Roosevelt was also a big help when he found out that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) planned a “March on Washington,” to protest against discrimination in government hiring. Around the same time, in June 1941, labor leader A. Philip Randolph called for [a new civil rights strategy, a massive,] 100,000 Negro-Americans to march on Washington to protest against discrimination in the Armed Forces and the defense industry. To avoid a confrontation at a time when the nation was preparing for war, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, forbidding racial discrimination in government hiring
Several Tuskegee aviation cadets, maintenance personnel, and instructors stand beside a PT-17 biplane trainer at Tuskegee Army Air Field. (Courtesy the Col. Roosevelt J. Lewis Collection at Moton Field, Tuskegee National Historic Site, Ala.; see www.cr.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/tuskegee)

and training programs. In an address, the President said, “I do hereby reaffirm the policy of the United States that there shall be no discrimination in the employment of workers in the defense industries or in the government because of race, creed, color, or national origin, and I do hereby declare that it is the duty of the employees and of the labor organization in furtherance of said policy and of this order, to provide for full and equitable participation of all workers in defense industries, without discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin.”

In August 1941, the cadets that passed basic training at Tuskegee became the 99th [Pursuit] Squadron. They spent three months just training and perfecting their skills in case they did get called to war, but the McCloy Committee was trying everything to stop them from going. [The Army’s plans for employing and training black troops during World War II were largely based on the testimonies of World War I commanders of black troops gathered for testimony at the Army War College. General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the Army, directed a study be made of Negroes and flying, assigning review of the issue to the War Department’s permanent Committee on Negro Troop Policies. The committee was headed by John J. McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War. - ed.] The McCloy Committee claimed that Negroes had smaller blood vessels which stopped blood from getting to the brain. This would cause blackouts, which they said could make the Negro lose control of the airplane. The McCloy Committee came to this conclusion about their blood vessels from other Negroes dying in basic training, but some saw it differently.

Now the Army was looking for a place to send the squadron. Originally the Air Corps had planned to send them to Liberia to fight the Germans on the African front, but by the fall of 1942 the Allies were winning in Africa. Then the Air Corps decided to send the squadron to India and Burma. For some reason this idea was abandoned. Then the Allies began making plans to move from North Africa to Sicily. The Allies decided to deploy large numbers of troops to the Sicily campaign. The 99th was to be one of those
units. But exactly when and where had yet to be decided. By early 1943, officials in Washington were starting to ask why the 99th had still not gone into combat nearly seven months after finishing basic training.5

Finally, in April 1943, over a year after graduation, word of moving was announced. Captain Parrish said, “You are fighting men now. You have made the team.” Then he restated, “Your future good or bad will depend largely on how determined you are not to give satisfaction to those who would like to see you fail.” 6

On April 2nd, the 99th climbed aboard a train that would take them to New York where they would board a troop ship. Hundreds of well-wishers came to the tiny Tuskegee train station to say good-bye.7 As they chanted:

Fight! Fight! Fight! Fight!
The fighting Ninetieth
We are the heroes of the night
To hell the Axis might
Rat-tat! Rat-tat-tat!
Round and planes we go
When we fly, the Ninetieth
This is how it go. 8

As the new pilots made their way to Morocco, Africa, they thought they were leaving racial discrimination behind. Little did they know that the worst was yet to come. When they got there they discovered they were to be on an all-Negro base and that wasn’t all. For a month they trained for combat, but never actually went. They only practiced dogfights with the fighters of the 27th.9

It took two months to get assigned to a mission. In early June 1943 the 99th pilots went into combat. Their first mission was to strafe the Italian peninsula of Pantelleria. Each day for a week planes went out, strafing and sometimes dive-bombing gun positions identified by their intelligence officer. Not a single enemy fighter opposed them. They said it seemed more like training practice than warfare.10 They participated in a few more petty missions, but finally got a taste of real combat on June 9th.

The squadron went on an escort mission to Pantelleria.11 All the planes of the 99th returned safely. The pilots had passed the test for that day. They learned that a person could be trained to fly a plane and shoot guns, but only combat could teach true attack skills.

During another mission, two of the 99th Tuskegee Airmen demolished a German destroyer, earning them a Soldier’s Medal. In America, the McCloy Committee was still keeping tabs on them, writing a report that stressed that three of the Squadron’s two-hundred men had died, capitalizing on the dead and ignoring the positive.

Back in Sicily the role of the 99th was now to escort bombers on a mission over Sicily. On July 2nd, during a bomber escort mission over southwest Sicily, 99th pilot Lieutenant Charles Hall spotted a group of enemy fighters following the bombers just after their bomb drop.12 He moved into the space between the bombers and the enemy fighters, turned on the German formation and began firing.

He saw his bullets enter one of the planes, which rolled sideways. He saw it crash in a cloud of dust confirming that he had indeed shot it down. Hall put his plane into a victory roll as he flew over his base. Everyone on the ground knew that the 99th had shot down an enemy plane, the first for the squadron. The men cheered and flashed “V” for victory as Hall landed.13 They went on to do the same thing from July until the end of August.

Even with the success, the commander of the 99th wrote negative reports, and at each level of command more negative comments seemed to be added. By the time reports made it to the McCloy Committee, they were presented with reports from the highest levels of the Air Force, stating criticisms like, “The 99th was not aggressive, did not have the needed stamina and could not fight as a team.”14 It was recommended that all Negro squadrons be assigned to non-combat roles.15 Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. went back to the United States to help train the 302nd, 100th, and the 301st fighter groups, also in Tuskegee. The report eventually came to him. On October 16, Davis was ordered to testify before the McCloy Committee.

In his testimony, Davis pointed out that the 99th Fighter Squadron lacked combat experience. In the first days of combat, there certainly had been mistakes made due to inexperience, but these mistakes were quickly corrected and the reports said nothing about the improvements that had been made. Addressing the question of stamina, Davis pointed out that the 99th had
operated continuously for two months without receiving replacement pilots. During that time, the pilots often flew three to six missions a day, every day.

The government [disagreed with the negative reports] and decided [to reject the recommendation] that all Negro squadrons be assigned to non-combat roles.\textsuperscript{16} The following day, the Tuskegee Airmen were assigned to Italy to fight with the 79th and patrol the assault beaches at Anzio, preventing the enemy from bringing in more troops.

More squadrons went to war. The 100th, 301st and the 302nd Squadrons all joined and became the 332nd fighting group which even included the 99th. They arrived in Italy in early February 1944. Their first mission was to patrol Italy's western coast, protecting convoys and the Anzio harbor.\textsuperscript{17}

For three months the squadron saw little or no action and enemy planes were sighted only three times. The pilots soon found out there that their P-39s were too slow to catch the Germans. But a new assignment and faster planes were in the future for the 332nd because General Ira Eaker, commander of the 15th Air Force, had a problem.\textsuperscript{18}

The General had been sending bombers to destroy German supply lines and factory centers in Northern France and Germany. Because the bombers had no escort fighters, many were being lost to the enemy fighters. Eaker was unable to get enough fighter commanders to agree to fly escort for the bombers.\textsuperscript{19} Some commanders argued that because the fighter planes could not carry enough fuel to escort the bombers all the way to the targets, they would be unable to protect them in the most dangerous areas, those near the target. When Eaker ordered the fighter planes equipped with extra fuel tanks, pilots refused to fly with them, claiming the heavy tanks affected the plane's maneuverability.

In a meeting, Eaker described his problem to Lieutenant Colonel Davis, noting that he had lost 114 men during one mission in February.\textsuperscript{20} Eaker needed fighter pilots willing to provide close protection to the bombers even if it meant not scoring personal victories. Davis knew a great opportunity when he saw one. His pilots would be flying in the offensive part of the war, supporting the attack on the enemy. They would be over enemy territory, taking the war to them and thereby making history. Davis and Eaker agreed that the 332nd would be equipped with P-47 Thunderbolts, which could fly as high and as fast as the German fighters.

When Davis told his squadron, they were upset. They would have to protect someone who didn't believe in them and they hated the idea that they couldn't chase after the enemy planes without orders. Davis made it clear that if they left the bombers unprotected while trying to be heroes there would be consequences.

The squadrons would be flying missions over Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Yugoslavia, south and east of Germany, France, Spain and northern Italy. The 332nd flew its first important mission as part of the 15th Air Force on June 9th, 1943, three days after D-Day. This mission was to escort B-17 and the B-24 bombers sent to destroy factories in Munich, Germany. The 332nd led by Colonel Davis rendezvoused with the bombers taking care to maintain altitudes and formation that would enable them to protect both the B-17s and B-24s, which were flying at two different altitudes.

As they neared Munich, Colonel Davis was alerted to two enemy planes approaching the bombers from the rear and ordered the 302nd squadron to "Go get them!" At that point two enemy planes flew through Davis' formation. Some of the 332nd turned on the invaders. In the battle that followed five enemy planes were shot down. The bombers accomplished their mission and not a single bomber was lost.\textsuperscript{21} On their return to the base a message from the commander of one of the bombers said, "Your formation flying and escort is the best we've ever seen." Colonel Davis received the Distinguished Flying Cross for his leadership of the mission. He said, "They must be angels, not losing one bomber. It's skills or a miracle. You must be the Red Tail Angels" (considering their planes' tails were red). The name stuck.

During July, the Red Tails flew many bomber escort missions to oil refineries, weapons and tank factories, and airfields.\textsuperscript{22} They shot down 39 enemy fighter planes and scored 39 aerial victories. They also helped the Allies by bombing the major Nazi Ploesti Oil Complex in Romania.

In August the 332nd continued its bomber escort missions to enemy oil fields. The war was now moving north and the
Allied needed southern French ports as entry points for troops and supplies. They did succeed in their plan. By the end of August 332nd planes attacked three airfields destroying 22 planes and damaging 83 planes in Romania. They destroyed 83 enemy planes out of 150 in Yugoslavia, and 36 more in Czechoslovakia. Also in September the pilots of the 332nd became known as skilled bomber escorts, and it was discovered that the Germans were manufacturing a new kind of plane, powered by a jet engine. They could fly much faster than a propeller driven plane and could fly practically straight up.

The Allied considered the jet planes a great threat to the fighters and so began new bombing missions. Air Force commanders called for renewed efforts to bomb enemy aircraft factories. Despite their efforts, the Allies couldn’t stop the German’s production of jets. The Germans continued to manufacture the planes in camouflaged locations in caves and forests. The Allies began to spot them on December 9th during a bomber escort mission and the new planes performed just as they feared they would.

During most of January 1945 the 332nd was weathered-in by rain and snow. The squadron only flew eleven missions. In early March, Colonel Davis got a surprising and disappointing communication from Headquarters. The 302nd squadron was to be considered inactive and disbanded, though he was not told why. Later that same month, on the 24th, a flight of fifty Red Tails escorted bombers on a mission to bomb a tank factory in Berlin. This mission was the longest ever made by the fighters of the 15th Air Force, a 1,600 mile round trip.

The long flight meant that the fighters had to be equipped with tanks that would hold an extra 100 gallons of fuel. These were not available on their base, so they had to order them from another base. As
the Red Tails arrived over Berlin, they were stunned by the destruction below. A few battered anti-aircraft towers struggled to defend what was left of the once beautiful city. Though covered with wreckage and rubble, the tank factory continued to turn out Panzer tanks, so the bombers destroyed the factory.

As they left the target area, the Red Tails engaged twenty-five of the feared German jet planes. When the jets attacked the bombers, a group of Red Tails went after them. The P-51s turned swiftly from side to side as the jets pursued them causing the jets to speed ahead of the Allies’ guns. Then the Red Tails had the jets right in front of them and fired. The P-51s shot three jets down and damaged several more. Lt. Lee “Buddy” Archer, a member of the 302nd Squadron, is remembered as “one of the best.” He shot down the first jet planes of the war.

In April there were only a few targets left. The Germans surrendered on May 6, 1945. By July the 332nd was on its way home. From June 1943, when the 99th went into combat, until May 1945 when the war in Europe ended, African-Americans had built an incredible record for themselves. They never lost a single bomber [under escort], and no other fighter group has even accomplished that. Out of 1,578 missions, they destroyed 111 aerial aircraft, 150 ground aircraft, sixteen barges and boats, 58 box cars, three gun emplacements, one destroyer, fifteen horse-drawn vehicles, 57 locomotives, six motor transports, two oil and ammunition dumps, three power transformers, and one radar installation. They damaged 25 aerial aircraft, 123 ground aircraft, 23 buildings and factories, 24 barges and boats, 100 horse-drawn vehicles, 69 locomotives, 81 motor transports, 561 box cars, two power transformers, eight radar installations and seven tanks on flat cars. This is an incredible record.

The Airmen won a great deal of medals for their bravery while fighting in World War II. They earned one Legion of Merit, one Silver Star, two Soldier’s Medals, eight Purple Hearts, 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, fourteen Bronze Stars and 744 Air Medals and Clusters. For all of these accomplishments, three years later, in 1948, President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9981, which ended segregation in various military branches of the United States of America.

Today there are many museums and statues honoring the Tuskegee Airmen and displaying exhibits of their bravery and courage. These exhibits show that African-Americans can serve in the military combat roles despite prejudice and the other struggles they faced. They showed their abilities to the people who believed in them, but most of all, they showed those that thought they were incapable that this was no impossible task. They showed the War [Department] of the United States that African-Americans could contribute to the efforts of fighting for freedom.

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Gone from our home, but not from our hearts: Nineteenth Century Epitaphs In Selected Florida Rural Cemeteries

Maureen J. Patrick

Gravestone studies in Florida are accompanied by a sense of urgency. Much of the state’s pioneer history and heritage rests in its nineteenth century rural cemeteries, and these, overgrown and under-tended, are sinking beneath relentless vegetation and unstable sand. Climate allies with neglect in the assault. Torrential rains, periodic hurricanes, lightning-strikes (with their concomitant fires and felled trees), blistering heat, and a year-round growth season seem united against these embattled sites and their valuable contents. Vandals and robbers swell the offensive ranks; gravestone researchers must often pick their way through shattered monuments and plundered statuary. (Figure 1)

Considering the rapid deterioration of all of Florida’s rural cemeteries and taking note of their immense historical value, it is vitally important that documentation and interpretation of every aspect of these sites proceed apace. Despite the pressing and important nature of such work, however, and apart from the purely genealogical or antiquarian foci of some researchers, little serious scholarly attention has been given the subject. Of the work that has been done in these graveyards, even less attention has been directed to what Dianna Hume George and Malcolm Nelson have called “literary approaches to gravestones,” that is, the critical study of epitaphs and memorial inscriptions, along with their material culture implications. The work is necessary and pressing for, as George and Nelson posit: “Epitaphs must be studied seriously as the last and in most cases the only lasting verbal representation of the people who sleep under the stones: ‘I have been and that is all.’”

Of the people who sleep under Florida stones, few sleep in a cemetery more interesting – or more neglected – than Oaklawn Cemetery in downtown Tampa, Florida. It is hard today to visualize Oaklawn as a rural cemetery. Situated just a few blocks from the bustling center of Florida’s second largest city, the burying-place, with its drooping oaks and twisted cedars, its chipped masonry wall and iron gates, seems incongruent but hardly rural. Cars rattle past on the narrow brick streets.
surrounding the site, skyscrapers seem to leer over the cemetery wall, and the county jail, directly adjacent, is a hostile neighbor, with searchlights and coiled barbed wire bristling atop its high stockade.

To view the cemetery in the context of its day, one must remember that when the cemetery was founded in 1850 the city cen-
ter, if it could be generously described that way, was not where it is now but some blocks southwest, and was comprised of the military installation Fort Brooke and its various outbuildings, all built more or less on the banks of the Hillsborough River. That meant that the cemetery, located in the northeast corner of the original plat of the county seat, was nearly a mile from the heart of the settlement, in an area devoted to farming and groves.

Blocked from expansion west and southward by the broad and meandering Hillsborough River, the city grew in a north by northeast pattern. By the turn of the nineteenth century, Oaklawn Cemetery was surrounded by residential and commercial construction, a sylvan refuge of the dead encircled by city sprawl. Its initial tracts, gifted in 1850 by Hillsborough County, in 1874 by B.C. Leonardi, and in 1880 by James T. Magbee, were by 1900 fairly well filled with graves; no adjacent unoccupied land remained. Other nineteenth century burying grounds, like Woodlawn Cemetery (Figs. 2,3,4) in a genuinely rural area north of the city center, and Myrtle Hill to the east, were commodious enough to serve for many years (and continue today to accept both below-ground and mausoleum interments.) But Oaklawn Cemetery, Tampa's first public burying ground, was awkwardly situated and too small to be of much long-range use to the ballooning Tampa community.

In consequence of these demographic shifts, the little cemetery at Morgan and Harrison Streets was all but forgotten. The oversight was disastrous, for Central Florida's climate combined with the work of vandals to wreak havoc on the old graveyard. Since stone markers were costly and difficult to obtain, most of the original markers at Oaklawn were carved cypress slabs or posts; those that survived a fierce fire in the cemetery's early years were lost to wind, rain, rot and flooding. (Some gravesites have vanished utterly, due to these losses and the disappearance of the cemetery's original plat sometime just after the War Between the States.) Above-ground stone tombs and monuments were cracked or shattered by falling tree limbs, tombstones toppled or were defaced, and memorial statuary was robbed on a regular basis. Most of the original gravesites were family groupings and, conforming to the custom of the age, had iron railings and fences. Over the years, these disappeared or fell to pieces. While civic groups attempted, at intervals, to care for and maintain Oaklawn, neither funds nor public attention was sufficient to insure the graveyard's well-being. In 1974, a reporter from The Tampa Tribune recorded, with a mixture of amusement and indignation, an interview with a homeless man living in one of the few above-ground tombs in Oaklawn. Every Halloween the cemetery became the locus for ghoulish pranks, of which spray-painting tombs and statuary was the mildest expression. In 1993, forty grave markers were destroyed in one such Halloween spree of vandalism. As recently as January, 2001, vandals toppled headstones, breaking several, and wrenched iron plot gates from their hinges.

More than common repugnance at the...
desecration of graves has motivated latter-day attempts to salvage what is left of Oaklawn and restore, where possible, its uniquely nineteenth century character. In the cemetery rest framers of all five Florida constitutions, two Florida Supreme Court judges, thirteen mayors of the city, members of many of Tampa’s founding families, Florida’s fifteenth governor, eighty-eight graves from the city’s five yellow fever epidemics, mass burials of Ft. Brooke personnel, and soldiers of seven wars (the Second Seminole War, Mexican War, Billy Bowlegs Indian War, War Between the States, the Spanish-American War, and World Wars I and II.)

Of additional importance is the cemetery’s role as an early example of the formally designed memorial landscape that was to become known as the rural cemetery. Replacing the crowded, haphazard and unhygienic city center graveyards of the past, the rural cemetery of the mid-to-late nineteenth century was lauded by an 1877 writer:

Can ‘couch more magnificent’ be sought for than the beautiful open cemetery, festooned with richest foliage, and glorified with the sunshine, the incense of flowers and the chants of winds? . . . we do avouch, for many weighty causes, that there are no places more fit to buy our dead in than our gardens and groves or airy fields, sub dis, where our beds may be decked and carpeted with verdant and fragrant flowers, trees and perennial plants, the most natural and instructive hieroglyphics of our expected resurrection and immortality.

When compared to the aerial prose of this text, the worn-out little Tampa burying-ground provokes a mild sense of disappointment, for at its best it was never a Greenwood or a Mount Auburn. However, viewed through a kind and reconstructing eye, the cemetery is undoubtedly a pocket edition of those grand and celebrated properties. Brick pathways, while they do not wind or meander, are nevertheless laid out in a pleasing rectilinear pattern throughout the grounds. A neat white Victorian cottage in the northeast section provides storage for the mundane tools of the gravedigger and caretaker, as well as a pleasant porch where, it is said, Confederate veterans used to sit and chat, and where the eulogy was sometimes delivered in poor weather. Memorial plantings are scattered throughout the cemetery: the evergreen Florida red cedar (for life everlasting), the renewing oak (emblem of faith’s strength) and the palm (suggestive of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem.) In some respects, in fact, now that the oaks have grown and spread their mossy limbs over the brick paths while the aged cedars’ trunks have twisted, sculpture-like, among the graves, Oaklawn is more the rural cemetery than it was at its founding, for its peaceful grounds, graceful foliage and broken but eloquent statuary exemplify the aesthetic that brought the rural cemetery into being. (Figure 5)

Recognizing if not the aesthetic then at least the unique historical nature of the
graveyard, the Tampa Historical Society has in recent years paid close attention to the site, hosting an annual “Oaklawn Ramble” that attracts the interest of local history organizations and antiquarians. Less salutary are the well-intentioned efforts of some “history buffs” to repair, clean, or replace broken or soiled grave markers, efforts which have resulted in, arguably, more harm than good. Tombstones and memorial sculptures have been scrubbed with bleach and other corrosive substances (increasing the deterioration of inscriptions and monument art), broken stones have been badly patched with cement, and some missing or shattered markers have been replaced with anachronistic modern stones. There is likewise no prohibition against gravestone rubbings by tourists and amateurs, and nearly every visit to Oaklawn uncovers evidence of destructive rubbing techniques in the form of wax crayon smears and newly cracked headstones. In these respects, both the City of Tampa and local preservation and historical bodies lag behind the national movement to restore and maintain historic cemeteries in a careful and technologically up-to-date fashion.

What site and artifact restoration/preservation work has been done at Oaklawn has been augmented by the collection of data (largely genealogical and historical) by amateur and a few scholarly individuals. Julius ‘Jeff’ Gordon, a retired Florida native and independent scholar, has, to date, done the most exhaustive survey and documentation of Oaklawn’s 1,208 graves. But Gordon’s work does not address the literary or iconographic aspects of Oaklawn grave memorials, nor make any attempt to locate the cemetery and its contents in the larger body of cultural archeology. Bearing in mind the validity of a future holistic study of these gravestones that would unify disparate sources of data - iconographic (carving and memorial art), literary (epitaphs and inscriptions) and historical - this study limits itself to the literary aspect of Oaklawn and provides some supportive data from similarly dated Florida cemeteries with the goal of encouraging these graveyards’ placement in their right and proper material culture context.

Study Sample

While Oaklawn is not, comparatively speaking, a vast graveyard, it is nevertheless a fairly “populous” one. In order to produce a sample of a size productive of close and thorough examination, and to effectively interpret the sample in the context of existing time-limited studies, this study restricts itself to the southwest section of the cemetery and to grave markers with dates from 1850 to the end of the second decade of the twentieth century. In this section and time span are located the oldest Protestant burials in Oaklawn and those of many members of Tampa’s “founding families.”

In addition to Oaklawn Cemetery, samplings were taken from several other cemeteries in Florida. The criteria determining the appropriateness of these sources were: 1) the rural nature of the cemetery; 2) the prevalence of dated gravesites in the 1850-1920 target time span; 3) the public, rather than family or private, use of the site. The
Figure 5. Oaklawn Cemetery looking toward the southwest.

sites are scattered throughout Florida with the aim of eliminating the "carver specificity" of the sites, that is, to ensure that the literary data gleaned from the samples does not reflect the work of only one carver or stone supplier. While no attempt was made in this study to tie the stones to any particular maker or carver, several distinctly
different styles of carving were noted. This observation, combined with the geographic separation of the sites, suggests that a number of memorial makers supplied the stones or at least carved the inscriptions. Some of the inscriptions are undoubtedly from stock sources, but, as many reliable material culture studies have pointed out, that fact alone need not diminish their utility since the popularity and prevalence of certain memorial sayings, like certain grave art motifs, suggest widespread social concordance in their meaningfulness.

The supplemental graveyards surveyed in this study are: Woodlawn Cemetery (at Indiana and North Boulevard Streets in Tampa), Homeland Cemetery (near Bartow, Florida), Micanopy Cemetery (in Micanopy, Florida, the state’s oldest inland town), and Columbus Cemetery (in the now-defunct north Florida town of Columbus.) The Homeland and Columbus Cemetery samples include every readable marker in these small burying grounds; the Woodlawn and Micanopy samples are from the oldest sections of each cemetery.

Restrictive Terminology

Many definitions of “epitaph” exist. Likewise the phrase “memorial inscription” may be open to disparate meanings. For the purposes of this study, the word “epitaph” will be considered to be equivalent but not identical to “memorial inscription,” that is, an “epitaph” will denote any inscription of a clearly memorial sort which is placed on a gravestone or grave marker, while “memorial inscription” will refer to literary data either from gravestones and grave markers or from memorial statuary, such as cenotaphs. (Ergo, all epitaphs are memorial inscriptions but not all memorial inscriptions are epitaphs.) Epitaphs and memorial inscriptions are denoted by quotation marks. Literary data excluded from the definitions of either epitaph or memorial inscription includes names, birth and death dates, conventional indications of relationship (“son of,” “wife of,” etc.) and conventional ‘dedicatory’ phrases such as “Sacred to the memory of.” As much as possible, this sort of non-memorial literary data from the surveyed graves has been included after the memorial inscription, in parentheses.

Data Collection

Field observation and transcription were used to obtain literary data from the graves in these cemeteries. Due to the age and advanced deterioration of grave markers and memorial statuary, some data has been irretrievably lost. Marginally readable epitaphs and inscriptions were reconstructed, when possible, by comparison with similarly worded inscriptions from studies of similarly dated stones and with the assistance of a Biblical Concordance and a historical dictionary. When an inscription has been reconstructed to any degree, the reconstructed words or phrases are shown in brackets, for example: “[Rest] in the Lord.” Missing and unreconstructed letters, words or phrases are shown by empty brackets,
for example: “Our [ ] sleeps in heaven.” Whenever possible, partially obliterated inscriptions have been restored to readability by consultation with local scholarly or amateur graveyard studies or individuals. Prior studies, however, recorded a wealth of genealogical or historical data while consistently omitting purely memorial inscriptions, and so very little re-constructive assistance was available from those quarters.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar errors were recorded as they are on the grave marker, without revision.

No data was recorded from grave markers lacking memorial inscriptions (such as the many military graves in Oaklawn), nor from markers where all but the barest information was obliterated beyond any hope of reconstruction.

Sample Organization

Readable or reconstructed inscriptions from Oaklawn and the other cemeteries surveyed are grouped by type. Five categories have been assigned to the literary data and are based on similarity of content. The categories are:

Spiritual or “other-worldly:” This category embraces inscriptions which focus largely or exclusively on the after-death condition as visualized and expressed in spiritual, though not necessarily or exclusively religious, terms. Examples are inscriptions like “He sleeps in Jesus,” “Gone to glory,” or “She waits in heaven.”

Tributes: Tributary inscriptions are frequently unique to the individual memorialized and their primary focus is on the individual in life, his or her inherent virtue(s), professional, familial, or vocational achievements and excellence. “A loving husband and father,” is one such inscription.

Those left behind: In this category are inscriptions that focus on the grief of survivors, their sense of loss or separation, or establish an implied dialogue with the dead. The not uncommon “Gone from our home, but not from our hearts” is one example, as is the imperative “Remember me.”

Combination epitaphs: While some epitaphs are purely of one type, many more combine the foci and symbolic language from two or more groups. One frequently encountered combination epitaph which originates in Biblical verse is
“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.” In this inscription, the deceased is given tribute as “pure in heart,” while the expectation of spiritual union with God is recorded as the consequence of such purity.

Unique epitaphs: This label is used by Dianna Hume George and Malcolm A. Nelson to describe “the intricately detailed poetic epitaph which obviously applies to the unique situation of the particular person memorialized.”

J. Joseph Edgette calls the form “original” and says of its examples: “Highly personalized and peculiar to one specific person, they are, so to speak, customized to fit one individual and one individual only.” I have modified the descriptions of Edgette, George and Nelson to include inscriptions, “poetic” or otherwise, which, whether or not they can be identified as falling into any of the preceding four categories, are demonstratively atypical among the sampled grave markers. The most striking example from this study is undoubtedly the Ashley gravestone in Oaklawn Cemetery.

Interpreting the data

Any critical interpretation of these Florida epitaphs must at the outset take into account the paucity and expense of stone for durable markers during the period of the study. Florida has little native stone of the sort that would suit for grave markers, and stone for this and other purposes had, at the time, to be shipped from stone-bearing states to Florida ports, then transported by an awkward and expensive combination of sailing or steam vessels, river barge, rail, and wagon to points within Florida. (Until the very late 1800s, Florida’s railroads were a patchwork of non-standard lines, many of which started and ended “nowhere.”) Wood (usually cypress) markers, not stone, were the norm for many graves; these could not and did not survive the long years, corrosive natural elements, and prevalence of fire in these cemeteries. The expense of stone markers and their concomitant rarity leads to a conclusion that any grave marker study will, by necessity, omit data from the hundreds of poor people, slaves, and marginal persons (such as seasonal fishermen, cattlemen and farm laborers, Native-Americans, domestics and others) whose loved ones or estate could not support the cost of a stone marker and the services of a stone carver. Such a deduction is borne out by the markers from the earlier half of the period of this study, that is, from the years 1850 - 1885. In Oaklawn Cemetery, for example, the majority of graves in the southwest section are those of Tampa’s prominent families whose relative wealth entitled them to enduring markers of stone or white bronze, as well as protective plot fences of iron, masonry or stone. (Figure 6) Thus, the democratic 1850 dedication of the cemetery as a burying place for “white and slave, rich and poor” is belied by the physical evidence of the graves.

However, one should not be too hasty in supposing that the cemetery is or was entirely non-representative, overall, of the population of nineteenth century Tampa. For instance, a mass grave of Fort Brooke
soldiers and settlers (originally interred at the military site but removed to Oaklawn in 1982) bears no individual markers. Likewise, a mass grave of nineteenth century yellow fever victims is denoted by a single (recent) commemorative stone. (Figure 7) Slaves and domestics may well be interred with the families of their masters, and their graves—while rarely unmarked—were more likely to have merited perishable wood rather than enduring stone markers. (The earliest burials at Oaklawn were those of a Cuban pirate and a slave belonging to the family of Rev. L. G. Lesley; both graves now bear modern replacement marker stones.) Native-Americans were also buried at Oaklawn; a sizeable number of Seminole Indians were recently disinterred from Oaklawn and moved to a tribal burying place. Additionally, Florida has always been an attractive locale for speculators, adventurers, and transients; lacking family or friends in the area, these disconnected souls may have been buried with a minimum of outlay by whatever segment of the community took on the job. There are then the problems of defacement, breakage, theft, and the deterioration or replacement of stones, which have resulted in the loss of data from countless graves, a problem compounded by the disappearance of the cemetery’s original plat. The uncomfortable truth of cemeteries like Oaklawn, along with its cousins Woodlawn, Homeland, Columbus and Micaynapy, is that a significantly greater number of persons are doubtless interred in these grounds than those whose graves are marked. Hence, while the visible data seems to suggest that only well-to-do white families make up the population of dead in these Florida rural cemeteries, enough data is irretrievable that any such postulation is, at best, risky.

In assessing the collective epitaphs from these four rural burying grounds, one can readily see that of the five types of inscriptions into which they have been divided combination epitaphs are the most numerous (totaling 37 of 126; the next largest category is spiritual, numbering 35 of 126.) Recalling again the scarcity and cost of stone memorials and stone carving, it is notable that so many survivors would spend so much to memorialize their departed in complex sentiments. This fact speaks eloquently of the compelling needs of mourners in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to present relatively lengthy and often poetic characterizations of the dead, their presumed after-death condition, and/or the feelings of those left behind. Of course, in “combination,” as in other types of epitaphs, some carvers and mourners were more “economical” than others. An example of elegiac economy is the Wiggins epitaph from Columbus Cemetery: “She sleeps in Jesus for she was ready.” In just eight words the deceased is given tribute for her Christian piety and consigned to a restful sleep in heaven. Such verbal thrift is the exception rather than the norm, however, in “combination” epitaphs. More often they hold forth on their several topics at such length that they barely fit on the grave-stone, as is the case with the Mollie and Jackson Cannon stone, also in Columbus Cemetery, which reads: “These died in faith not having received the promise but having seen them afar off and were persuaded of them and embraced and confessed that
they were strangers and pilgrims on earth.” This slightly confusing epitaph is touching in the necessity which it reveals in the mourners (obviously children of the deceased, since “Mother and Father” is also inscribed on the stone) to incorporate into the stone faith, doubt, reassurance, spiritual reunion, and a sense of the alienation and hardship of Florida pioneer life. One gains an even deeper sense of the compelling emotions behind this carving when reading the epitaphs of Baby Cannon, died December 16, 1906, and Jearl Cannon, died June 4, 1907. Both were children of Jack Cannon, Jr. and Rosa Cannon, the son and daughter-in-law of the parents memorialized in the “strangers and pilgrims” epitaph. In one and a-half years (and quite possibly less, since the 1906 parental marker is not dated as to month and day) Jack and Rosa Cannon underwent mourning for the second of deceased parents and two small children of their own. All three epitaphs are of the “combination” sort, and all three reflect the impulse of these hard-stressed mourners to memorialize the dead in complex sentiments and at considerable expense.

The Jearl and Baby Cannon epitaphs turn our attention to children's epitaphs, of which there are in this study what seems, to modern eyes, like a disproportionate number. Thirty-five of the one hundred and twenty-six interments in this sample are those of children under eighteen years of age; thirty-one of those graves bear the bodies of children under ten years old. Keeping in mind the high infant mortality and limited medical technology of the era, as well as the risks associated with a primitive Florida environment (beset with tropical diseases, poor sanitation, Indian attack and the hardships of a blockaded coastal region during the War Between the States), the fact that so many graves of young children are found in these rural cemeteries is not surprising. What is notable is that, overall, the children's grave markers bear inscriptions no less fulsome or complex than those of adults. Clearly, if the epitaph evidence is taken as an indicator of the relative social worth of the departed, then children were valued as highly as adults, and mourning sentiments for them were as fervent, lengthy and complex. To be sure, the child-related gravestone and mourning art from this period has been much studied for its forms, aesthetics and iconographic content, all of which yield a portrait of childhood as the era saw it: pure, fragile, and close to God. Epitaphs and memorial inscriptions verbalized this view of idyllic and vulnerable youth. Martha Pike and Janice K. Armstrong have written: “Children were understood to be innocent and beloved by God. There existed a pervasive fear (often realized) that an adored child would be taken to Heaven too soon by a God who chose him as His own. The good died young, and many families knew the anguish of bereavement.” Pike and Armstrong illustrate their argument with the 1842 epitaph of Elizabeth F. Mills, but the authors might just as well have chosen these lines carved on the 1865 Columbus Cemetery marker for William Tison:

“Farewell our little angel
We miss thy smiling face
We miss thy little prattling voice
But with Jesus thou art safe.”

The many similar epitaphs for children buried in these Florida rural cemeteries are proof in stone that the conventional aesthetics of childhood, mourning, and spirituality were as compelling and widespread in nineteenth and early twentieth century Florida as in more developed and populated parts of the country. The difficulties of life in what was at the time a frontier state cannot be overestimated, but far from relinquishing the mourning conventions which, collectively, one scholar has described as “a predominantly bourgeois phenomenon,” the epitaphs of the dead in these cemeteries support the deduction that, whatever sacrifices these pioneer Floridians made and whatever socio-cultural appurtenances they were forced to discard in their frontier environment, their idealization of childhood, their attitudes toward juvenile death, and their modes of memorializing their dead children were no different than those of their contemporaries in more settled parts of the Eastern Seaboard.

The linking of childhood with the heavenly condition, so often found in children's epitaphs, leads one to an examination of religion generally as it appears – or does not – in these rural burying grounds. Here the data from this study produces an interesting observation: of the surveyed epitaphs from these four cemeteries, nearly two-
thirds contain overt references to Christian religious doctrine (in the form of words such as “Jesus,” “Christian,” “angels,” and the like, or by including exact or paraphrased Biblical quotations, such as “He giveth His beloved sleep.”) A small additional number of epitaphs contain oblique or ambiguous Christian references, such as “thy heavenly face,” or “We will meet again.” (While a strictly denotative reading of the obliquely worded epitaphs might leave them open to non-religious, or at least non-Christian interpretation, they would have contained no such ambiguity for nineteenth and early twentieth century readers. As Barbara Rotundo points out in “She Hath Done What She Could,” “Men and women in the nineteenth century knew scripture and recognized which gravestone epitaphs were biblical quotations.”) 17

That very close to two-thirds of these surveyed epitaphs bear religious content may seem to modern assessors an indication of high religiosity in the culture which produced them, but it is the non-religious one-third that should truly capture our attention, for compared to the gravestone inscriptions of, say, eighteenth century New England, the sizeable number of epitaphs in this survey which contain no markers at all of Christian doctrine, symbolism and/or literature suggests a growing secularization of death and bereavement. This secularizing process was by no means peculiar to the cemeteries in this survey, but was part of the generalized movement over time from the doctrinal narrowness of America’s Colonial and post-Colonial periods to the Romantic era broadening and reorientation of both the religious and the aesthetic spheres. Even overtly religious memorials reflected, over time, a lightening and “softening” of literary content. James Deetz has described how epitaphs evolved from eighteenth century examples which “stress decay and life’s brevity” to early nineteenth century stones, focused on “resurrection, and later, heavenly reward.” 18

Along with the progression of death and bereavement away from purely religious dogma and symbolism, the domestication of death and mourning in the nineteenth century play a part in understanding the increase in non-religious imagery in memorial inscriptions. Critics Pike and Armstrong have suggested that the American cult of domesticity that “idealized and sanctified the home, the family and the women who formed them” stimulated a vision of the after-life as a well-ordered domestic environment and death as a temporary separation until a final happy reunion in the better world of the hereafter. (Figure 8) The rural cemetery, with its pleasant vistas, artistic statuary and graceful landscape, was the vehicle for a rich subtextual discourse of ideas on the family and household, death, mourning, and the after-life, while the epitaphs and memorial inscriptions were shorthand versions of that subtext. All five cemeteries surveyed in this study contain examples of the genre. The Brown family’s white bronze cenotaph in Oaklawn bears this fine specimen: “He was a mother’s idol but death, like the dew from heaven, fell quickly, yet gently on this drooping flower.” (Figures 9, 10) Such domestic imagery, springing from a memorial vocabulary verdant with drooping flowers, sunbeams, buds, and blooms challenges, in these Florida graveyards, the religiosity that formerly monopolized the death and mourning experiences. In all five samples, as a matter of fact, only two stones bear the dour and once commonplace epitaph which, by the mid-nineteenth century, is conspicuous by its rarity:

Remember man as you pass by
As you are now so once was I
As I am now so you must be
Prepare for Death and follow me.

Sixty (just under half) of the interments in these Florida rural cemetery samples are those of women or girls. (One infant’s grave marker is gender-unspecified.) When the grave markers are examined for gender distribution by category, there is near parity in most categories, however, two - “tributes” and “combination epitaphs” - show a lopsided distribution. There are half again as many female as male graves marked by “tributes” (12 to 8), and a reverse preponderance of male to female “combination epitaphs” (23 to 15.) Since, of all five epitaph categories, “tributes” and “combination epitaphs” deal most directly with life achievements and activities as interpreted by survivors, the gendered qualities of those achievements and activities might be expected to reveal themselves with somewhat more frequency than in epitaphs focusing on other aspects of the death and
after-life conditions. While the sample size in this study is not large enough to legitimately postulate on this point, the disparity by gender in these two categories should stimulate more study on gender as it affects epitaph type in Florida graves from the era.

Some interesting points arise when examining the epitaph categories and their distribution temporally. If the study sample is divided in half, with the earlier half including grave markers from 1850 - 1885, and the later half those from 1886 - 1920, then 42 interments are dated in the first half while 77 occur in the second. (Seven stones are not dated or bear unreliable dates.) Only one category – that of “tributes” – seems to occur with near-parity in both halves of the study; “tribute” epitaphs constitute 19% of the earlier grave markers and 14% of the later ones. There is a marked decrease in the prevalence of “combination” epitaphs, which decline from 43% in the earlier half of the sample to 24.7% in the later half. “Unique” epitaphs also decrease in the newer graves, from 14.3% before 1886 to 5.2% between that date and 1920. Two epitaph categories show an increase in frequency from earlier to later halves of the study: “spiritual” (increasing from 19% to 37.7%) and “those left behind” (increasing from 9.5% to 18.2%).

Interpreting the seeming increase, over time, in these two categories, however, benefits from extending the *terminus ante quem* of the first half of the study to 1900. For “spiritual” epitaphs this adjustment produces a frequency of 52.4% in the earlier period versus 37.7% in the 1900 - 1920 period. These percentages reflect Deetz’ observations on the decline, overall, in overtly “spiritual” or religious memorial sentiment as grave markers move into the modern era. Moreover, advancing the cutoff date of the “older” half of the survey to 1900 adds only two graves to the “those left behind” group of older memorials, yielding adjusted frequencies of 14.3% in the earlier time span and 18.2% in the later one. This, too, conforms to material culture studies demonstrating the increased secularization of death in modern memorials, with its resultant shift of focus from mortality and the Hereafter to the needs and feelings of survivors. Keeping in mind that the limited size of this survey cannot offer conclusive findings in any category, the data from these five burying grounds suggest that the stones in Florida rural cemeteries may mirror results from studies in other locales, as well as prefigure results from more ambitious Florida epitaph studies, studies which might themselves incorporate the data gleaned from this preliminary work.

It is surprising, considering the interpretive fruitfulness of the literary data from these Florida rural cemeteries, that there are so few intensive studies devoted to similar sources. The paucity of critical studies – both local and national – of the literary data from gravestones is doubly surprising when one considers that such studies are by no means new or novel. As early as the Renaissance, when tomb carvings and memorial inscriptions were looked upon as historical documents and/or curious antiquities, burial sites were examined and epitaphs recorded by the hundreds. The historiographic and archeological preoccupations of the eighteenth century led to renewed interest in tomb art, epitaphs and memorial inscriptions, while the nascent sciences of psychology and sociology sought to assign motivations and “national characteristics” to the literary data from these sources. By the nineteenth century, John Kippax was moved to publish in Chicago the book called *Churchyard Literature: A Choice Collection of American Epitaphs*. In addition to the customary taxonomy of epitaphs as “Admonitory,” “Professional,” “Devotional,” “Ludicrous,” and so on, Kippax formulates a quite objective definition of “epitaph” and suggests that deductions of a socio-cultural nature may be gleaned from a careful study of the genre. For the purposes of this study, however, Kippax’s real contribution arises not from his analysis of historical epitaphs but from his comments on contemporary ones, the virtues and standards of which he defines with a clarity that enlightens critical readers more than a hundred years later:

They may recount the virtues and glorious actions of the deceased, and hold them up for our imitation; and they may also narrate the descent of the individual, and may mourn his loss. A moral or admonitory precept, too, may be added, and in this manner important instruction may be conveyed. An epitaph should unquestionably be brief, and
should combine beauty of expression with tenderness of feeling. All that is expressive of love, sorrow, faith, hope, resignation and piety, should characterize an epitaph. It ought to be made almost exclusively applicable to the individual interred, and certainly not too long for remembrance. Its object is to record what is worthy of remembrance, and to excite sympathy in the beholder. True and genuine sorrow is never loquacious. In conveying consolation and admonition it should have reference to the common lot of all, and teach us to look up from the grave to a higher sphere of existence.\(^{20}\)

It is doubtful that any one epitaph could embody all the virtues recommended by Kippax's formula, but the practical applications of his words are transcended in importance by what those words tell us about the needs, beliefs, tastes and lifestyles of the nineteenth century readers for whom they were intended. When read along with the literary data from rural Florida cemeteries, a well-articulated image begins to form, an image of a time and place and of people who lived and died then and there. The mouths of those people have been stopped by the passage of years, but they are by no means mute, for their epitaphs and memorial inscriptions encourage dialogue with moderns who know that to read a sufficiently large sample of gravestone epitaphs from a particular era and location is to have an eloquent, if one-sided, conversation with the past.

ENDNOTES

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2. Ibid., 88,89.
3. A northerly extension of Morgan Street in the early 20th Century 'trimmed' a portion of the old grave yard and forced the relocation of a number of graves to other parts of Oaklawn or to other cemeteries.
5. Ibid., November 5, 1993.
9. Woodlawn Cemetery, located in an early suburban neighborhood north of downtown Tampa, contains gravesites dating from the late 1800s to the present. The cemetery is laid out in true rural style, with meandering paths and memorial plantings and statuary. It is adjacent to several highly interesting cemeteries, one Jewish, one Latin, and the Showmen's Rest, where are buried circus and show people.
10. Homeland, a community in eastern Hillsborough County near the present town of Barrow, was established in the 1850s. It flourished briefly and then fell into decline at the turn of the century, leaving behind scattered homesteads and the Homeland Cemetery.
11. Columbus Cemetery is now enclosed within the grounds of the Suwanee River State Park, near Live Oak in northern Florida. In the mid-1800s, Columbus was a thriving settlement of 500 souls; its location on the Suwanee River made it an ideal shipping and passenger depot for steam-powered paddle-wheelers, and the River also powered mills and grinding operations at the site. During the War Between the States, Confederate troops mustered at Columbus to protect its vital bridge across the Suwanee and protect the river from blockades by Union troops. Columbus' importance waned toward the end of the nineteenth century as rail transportation supplanted river transport, and the community was defunct by the second decade of the twentieth century. Family connections, however, produced burials in Columbus Cemetery until 1973.
14. At the Homeland Cemetery can be seen a number of depressions in the terrain. They are suggestively sized and shaped and it is quite conceivable that these are graves whose surface markers are completely gone. Also at the site are stones and parts of stones embedded nearly flush with the ground cover and nearly concealed with vegetation; these may be toppled gravestones or those which have sunk so deeply into the grave beneath that only their tops are visible. Considering the exposed location of the cemetery, the absence of a supporting community, the soft soil of the site and the advanced deterioration of the markers, this charming little cemetery may someday soon be entirely lost to view.
America (New York: The Museums at Stony Brook, 1980), 17.

16. Buckley, op cit, 123.

17. Barbara Rotundo, "She Hath Done What She Could," *AGS Quarterly*, Spring 1999, 11. The title of Rotundo's essay is a case in point, and one which appears among the epitaphs surveyed for this study. "She hath done what she could" is derived from Mark 14:iii-ix; it is the inscription on the 1893 Mary Weissbrod gravestone at Oaklawn Cemetery.


19. Pike and Janice Gray Armstrong, op cit, 16.

20. Kippax, op cit, 32.

APPENDIX

Oaklawn Cemetery, SW portion

*Spiritual or 'other worldly'*


"Jesus called a little child unto Him." (Leslie William, son of Dr. & Mrs. L.W. Weedon. Born Aug. 29, 1891. Died Dec. 6, 1892.)

"He has gone to the mansions of rest." (Wm. Milton Cathcart, son of Wm. M. & N.J. Cathcart. Born Apr. 29, 1858. Died Nov. 10, 1893.)

"He giveth His beloved sleep." (May Wall Smith. Born July 30, 1876. Died April 15, 1909.)

"At rest with Jesus." (Mary Ann Collins. Apr. 23, 1827. Aug. 16, 1913.)

"Hush! Angels hover near." (E. Maud Mobley, Aged 5 Years. Richard N. Mobley, Aged eighteen months.)

"Suffer little children to come unto me and [forbid] them not for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." (Sacred to the memory of Malcolm Donald McNabb, son of Malcolm & Catherine C. McNabb. Born [ ] 1836. Died [ ] 4.)

"Our bud has [ ] [it]s early bower And burst to bloom in Paradise." (In memory of Mary E. Daughter of R. B. & Ma[ry] E. Thomas. Died Mar. [ ] 0th, 1857. Aged 2 mon[ths], 15 days.)

"Our darling has gone home to God. For of such is His Kingdom." (In memory of Delia. Daughter of Wm. C. & Eliza Ferris. Born Feb. 18th 1852. Died March 10th 1857.)

"He gathers the lambs to His bosom." (Ruby Nunez Lamb. Aged 5 yrs.)

"Christ took her to be with Him. Saved through the blood of Christ." (Annie, Wife of Robert F. Nunez. Oct. 9, 1870. Jan. 4, 1900.)


"Peaceful be thy silent slumber." (J. Henry C. Daegenhardt. 1801 - 1862.)

"At rest." (H. Weissbrod. Born Dec. 15, 1818. Died June 8, 1900.)


*Tributes*

"An upright man, and exemplary Christian." (In Memory of Wm. W. Wall. Born Nov. 29th 1834. Died April 22nd 1878.)


"His [ ] Bible integrity and ardent patriotism, his social qualities and his works of charity won for him the admiration of every honest heart." (Darwin Austin Branch, M.D. Son of Dr. F. & M. V. Branch. M.W. Grandmaster of the Grand Lodge of the [Masonic Order] For the State of Florida. Died at Tampa August 16, A. D. 1878. Aged 26 years.)

"She lived and died a Christian." (Matilda V. Branch. Wife of Dr. Franklin Branch. Died August 23rd A. D. 1857. Aged 18 Years.)


"Pioneer. Teacher." (Daniel Plumby. 1804-1860. [Replacement granite marker,])

"Here lies the remains of Christopher R.
Perry Butler 1st Regiment [C.]S. Army. With the tender affection of a son and brother he united the spirit of a Gallant Soldier tempered with the gentle influence of Christian piety. Born in Greenville District of South Carolina August 26th, 1829. Died at Tampa Bay November 1st, 1853. In the courageous discharge of his duty. This stone is erected by his mother."

Those left behind


“Thou didst give and Thou has taken. Blessed Lord Thy will be done.” (Gay. Infant. Son of Chas. F. & Ida Gay. Oct. 6, 1903.)

“Remember Me.” (Sacred to the memory of James M. Harris. A native of N. York. Born September, 1819. Died October 19th, 1855. Aged 56 years.)

“We shall go to him but he shall not return to us.” (Darwin Orson. Son of Rev. J. O. & G. H. Branch. Born Dec. 24th 1858. Died Aug. 8th 1859.)

Combination epitaphs

“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Mat. 5:11” (Gay. Ida Kennedy. Wife of Charles Francis Gay. Born May 8, 1880. Died Apr. 7, 1919.)

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth [ ] saith the spirit that they may rest from their labors and their souls do follow them. Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” (Our Father and Mother. Rev. J. J. Wells. Born Aug. 18, 1796. Died Jun. 6, 1866. R. A. Wells. born Apr. 10, 1803. Died July 6, 1872.)

“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. [ ] Confederate veteran wound­ed at [ ] [Member of Light Guards Columbus, Ga.” (Clement C. Shepperson. Born June 3, 1840. Died Mar. 20, 1904.)

“He was [ ] amiable disposition [ ] and religious life [ ] loved him for his [ ] he died in the [ ] faith in the [Lord.]” (In memory of Martin Cunningham. Born December 9th A.D. 18 [ ] Died Apr. 5th A. D. 18 [5].)

“He was a mother’s idol but death, like the dew from heaven, fell quickly, yet gently on this dropping flower.” (In Memory of John F. Brown. Born Feb 7, 1846. Died August 2, 1867.)

“Brother thou art gone to rest We will not weep for thee For thou art now where oft on earth Thy spirit longed to be.”

“To know him was to love him. Though taken from us, let us not forget that he has crossed over the rolling, restless tide of death, and awaits us on the other side.” (In Memory of William H. Brown. Born Sep. 17, 1842. Died May 31, 1870.)

“An honest man, at rest. His soul has returned to its original home, to go no more out forever.” (In Memory of William T. Brown. Born in 1810. Died August 11, 1868.)

[The above three memorial inscriptions are taken from a white bronze cenotaph inscribed “Brown.” The Brown gravestones are adjacent and contain only names and birth-death dates.]

“I know that my Redeemer liveth. His life work of pure unselfish and noble deeds is done and he has joined the throng of loved ones in the Fathers house where are many mansions.” (Clairborne R. Mobley. Aged 46 years.)

“Too pure and angelic for [earth] She has gone to her home above Relieved from the trials of life To live with the God of Love.” (In Cunningham family plot. Stone effaced except for four lines above.)

“This stone was placed here by his discon­solate widow who with their children mourn the loss of a good husband, a good father and a good Christian citizen. Remember man as you pass by As you are now so once was I As I am now, so you must be Prepare for Death and follow me.” (Sacred to the memory of Malcolm McNab. Born June 22, 1818. Died Dec. 1, 1858.)

“Rest sweetly our little [ ] We will meet thee in Heaven.” (Clara Vashti, Daughter of
E.A. and H.M. Clarke. Died October 21st 1857 aged 6 months and 26 days.

Unique epitaphs

"Here lies Wm. Ashley and Nancy Ashley. Master and Servant. Faithful to each other in that relation in life, in death they are not separated. Stranger consider and be wiser. In the Grave all human distinction of race or caste mingle together in one common dust." (To commemorate their fidelity in each other this stone was erected by their executor John Jackson 1873.)

"Thy meek spirit retired unpolluted and bright ere by woe or remorse was riven. May the scene of thy death be a pharos of light to guide thy survivor to Heaven." (In memory of Mary E. Wife of R. B. Thomas. Born 28 July 1839. Died March 25, 1857.

"They together in this life walked for 31 years. May they ever walk together in Eternity. Blessed are the dead who die in the LORD." (Sacred to the memory of Mrs. Abija Turman. Relict of Simon Turman. Apl. 22d 1799. Died Jan. 3d 1864.)

"Killed Steamer Alabama." (Willie Ferris. 1863-1882. [Replacement granite marker.])

"Died At Sea." (Elpenice Moore. 1802-1856. [Replacement granite marker.])

Homeland Cemetery

Spiritual or ‘other worldly’


"At Rest." (Marion J. Son of J. & M.B. Watson. Born March 11, 1876. Died Nov. 7, 1900.)

Those left behind

"As I am [so you must be] Prepare to [die] and follow me." ([ ] Born Apr. 9, 1872. Died Mar. 3, 1893. Aged 20 Y. 10 M. 24 D.)

"Our father." (Wm. H. Durrance. born Aug. 30, 1815. Died Feb. 27, 1879.)

Tributes


"The friend of youth, the friend of age, the [ ] of [ ]” (Sebron A. Smith. Born Apr. 24, 1848. Died Dec. 10, 1882.)

Combination epitaphs

"[ ] in soft repose dearest pride.”

"[ ] and is blessed [ ] and [h]om[el]” (Sacred to the memory of [ ]me Tison. [ ]th, 1852 [ ] 1881.)

Woodlawn Cemetery, sample

Spiritual or ‘other worldly’


"Sheaves after sowing
Sun after rain.
Sight after mystery
Peace after pain.”


’Sweet babe thy spirit now hath rest. Thy sufferings now are o’er.” (Maxine, daughter of L. H. & M. B. White. Born June 1, 1910. Died Mar. 18, 1912.)

"Gone to a bright home, Where grief can not come.” (Elizabeth. wife of U. C. Graham. July 25, 1882. Mar. 15, 1907.)

"God in His wisdom has recalled
The boon His love had given
And though the bodies slumbers here
The souls are safe in Heaven.”

"It was not an enemy that took our loved one from us, but our Father in Heaven called him home.” (E. A. Clark. Born in Cornwall on the Hudson, New York, Dec. 16, A.D. 1831. Died in Tampa, Fla. Nov. 7, 1886.)

"Not lost, blest thought
But gone before
Where we shall meet
To part no more.”
(Allen Waters. Born April 1, 1882. Died March 1, 1909.)

“Sleep oh sweet babies & take thy rest.”

Those left behind

“Precious ones from us have gone,
The voices we loved are stilled.
Places are vacant in our home.
Which never can be filled.”
(Mollie B. Terry. Born Jan. 15, 1858. Died Sept. 11, 1908.)


“Our darling. Gone but not forgotten.”
(Hillard J. Pierce. Oct. 5, 1906. Dec. 9, 1911.)

“She was the sunshine of our home.”

“Dearest loved one, We have laid thee in the silent grave's embrace. But thy memory will be cherished Till we see thy heavenly face.” (M.J. Haley. 1876 - 1916.)

“A sunbeam from the world has gone.”

“We had a little treasure once
He was our joy and pride
We loved him oh perhaps too well
For soon he slept and died.”
(Our darling baby. Lewie Barber. July 5, 1905. Apr. 19, 1912.)

“A precious one from us is gone
A voice we loved in stilled
A place is vacant in our home
Which never can be filled.”


“Weep not father and mother for me. For I am waiting in glory for thee.” (Ruth E. Daughter of Mr. & Mrs. E.H. Brannen. Apr. 16, 1907. June 18, 1907.)

Tributes

“To know her was to love her.” (Lola G. Schooley. Born Aug. 16, 1876. Died July 31, 1895.)


“Jesus loves the pure and holy.” (Annie S. Schooley. Born Apr. 15, 1850 at Marebak Falsteb ID. Died Apr. 18, 1898 at Tampa, Fl.)

Combination epitaphs

“In love she lived,
In peace she died,
Her life was craved,
But God denied.”

“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Mat. V. VII” (Rev. J.T. Duncan. 1850 - 1914. His Wife Agnes A. 1854 - 1932.)

“Weep not father and mother for me. For I am waiting in glory for thee.” (Ruth E. Daughter of Mr. & Mrs. E. H. Brannen. Apr. 16, 1907. June 18, 1907.)

“Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God.” (In memory of Henry W. Elliott. Born Aug. 1, 1867. Died Dec. 9, 1889.)

“He that believeth though he were dead yet shall he live.” (Jane 0. Blessing Dawdy. Wife of Charles B. Nolan. born near Memphis, Tenn. Oct. 24, 1844.Died Tampa, Fla. Apr. 29, 1899.)

“Saved. Departed to be with the Lord.”
(Mary Ellen Agney. May 1, 1905.)

Unique epitaphs

“I love my companions and appreciate my friends on earth, and crave that we may have a reunion after death.” (Dr. Hiram J. Hampton. Born Jan. 5, 1852. Died June 7, 1920.)

“He gave his life for his country and for the sacred cause of liberty and for all mankind. His body lies in Suresnes Cemetery, Paris, France. His soul has returned to its giver.”
(In memory of First Lieut. Louis A. Torres A.E.S. Born in Tampa Feb. 13, 1893. Died in France Sept. 1, 1918.)
Columbus Cemetery

*Spiritual or ‘other worldly’*

“We shall sleep but not forever.
There will be a glorious dawn.
We shall meet to part no never
On the resurrection morn.”

*Those left behind*

“We shall sleep but not forever.
There will be a glorious dawn.
We shall meet to part no never
On the resurrection morn.”
(Thomas E. Swift. Beloved husband of Amanda Swift. Born May 9, 1851. Died July 11, 1893.)

*Combination epitaphs*


“Mary, thou art remembered yet with dotting love and keen regret. And faith can yield no joy for me, Brighter than that of meeting thee.” (Mary R. Wife of J.M. Barclay. Born Nov. 10, 1849. Died Oct 20, 1885)

“Murray Darling, only son. I'll meet thee when life is done. Meet where parting is no more, On the happy peaceful shore.”
(Thomas E. Swift. Beloved husband of Amanda Swift. Born May 9, 1851. Died July 11, 1893.)

*Unique epitaphs*

“Leaving an infant son 7 weeks old She told her relations and friends a few hours before her death that she was happy and for them all to meet her in Heaven. What a glorious Death. ‘Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord.’” (Sacred to the memory of Sarah C. 2nd wife of J.B. Spencer. Who died at Sunny Side, Fla. May 31st 1867. Aged 33 years & 11 days.)

Micanopy Cemetery, sample

*Spiritual or ‘other-worldly’*


“Budded on earth to bloom in Heaven.”


“Her end was peace. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.” (Mary Eleanor nJe Bellah. Consort of Dr. John Wesley Price. Born Dec. 10, 1828. Died Mar. 20, 1904.)

“Gone in her young years afar from Life's tears.”
(Gertrude Chitty. Wife of Chas. R. Carter. Mch. 28, 1882. April 4, 1909.)

“Be thou faithful unto death and [ ] thee across [ ] Rev. 11:10.” (Martha A. Thrasher. Sept. 26, 1828. Apr. 24, 1894.)

“Sleep in the arms of Jesus, safe on his
Tributes

"Her words were kindness, Her deeds of love." (Cora Hill, wife of J.T. Blount. July 27, 1851. Jan. 28, 1922.)

"Thy trials ended, thy rest is won." (In loving memory of Our Father W i l l i a m Marion Avant. Born Au. 12, 1850. Died May 20, 1895.)

"She hath done what she could." (Mother. Martha S. Ley. 1928 - 1914.)

"No one knew thee but to love thee." (Roy. Infant Son of E. L. & S. E. Ley. Born Apr. 29, 1892. Died Nov. 16, 1892.)

"As a wife devoted, as a mother affectionate, As a friend ever kind and true." (Lina F. wife of J. L. Crisman. Died Apr. 22, 1885. Aged 27 yrs. 5 mos. 6 ds.)


Those left behind

"Mother thou hast from us flown To the regions far above. We to thee erect this stone Consecrated by our love." (Mary A. Keaton. Born Nov. 21, 1820. Died Mar. 17, 1889.)

Combination epitaphs

"He believed in the Lord Jesus For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Romans [ ] (Wm. H. McGuire. Born in Montreal Canada. Died Feb. 9, 1889. AG. 29 yrs. 6 mos.)

"Gone to be with my precious darling and Jesus my saviour." (J. T. Blount. Apr. 6, 1838. Nov. 24, 1922.)


"Farewell my wife and children all Tis true a father, Christ doth call; Weep not, weep not my children, It is sweet to die a Christian." (Dr. E. D. Barnett. born Jan. 15, 1851. Died Apr. 16, 1885.)

"Cheerful he gave his being up and went, to share the holy rest that waits a life well spent." (John W. Price. Born Oct. 30, 1823. Died Apr. 24, 1891.)

Unique epitaphs


"Died of bilious fever." (Abner H. Emerson. Nov. 5, 1861 - Jul. 30, 1908.)

"Away from home and kindred dear Among some strangers he lies here." (Columbus M. Putnam. Bor[n] Jan. 1, 1858. Died Dec. 19, 1880.)
The Princes of Seventh Avenue: Ybor City’s Jewish Merchants

Yael V. Greenberg-Pritzker

As a people, Jews have left an indelible mark on the state of Florida, making contributions to its economic, political, religious, and social life. From the establishment of early known settlements of Pensacola to the creation of modern public institutions, Jews have played a significant role. While most Florida residents are more familiar with arrival of Jews after World War II, documented Jewish history can be traced as far back as 1763 (see Figure 1). In that year, Alexander Solomons, Joseph de Palacious, and Samuel Israel arrived in Pensacola. The majority of Jewish families began immigrating to the U.S. in the 19th century and to Florida in the 1920s and 1930s. Today, Florida boasts the third largest Jewish population in the United States (about 750,000) next to California (967,000) and New York (1,651,000), and South Florida has the largest concentration of Jews living outside of Israel (650,000).

The Jewish experience in Florida has not been without its share of achievements. Undergoing successive periods of acceptance and discrimination, Jews managed to leave a lasting impression, despite their limited choices of settlement and employment in the early beginnings of statehood. With the transfer of Florida from Spain to England in 1763, Jews were legally permitted to establish permanent residency. Prior to this pivotal year, during early Spanish rule of Florida, Jews and other religious groups who did not practice Catholicism could only reside temporarily and were not allowed to practice their beliefs. During the administration of President James Monroe, a treaty with Spain was signed February 22, 1819 which conveyed to the United States all the lands situated east of the Mississippi River. Yet, even as more Jews immigrated to Florida, persecution and prejudice remained a feature of life. It wasn’t until an act of Congress on March 3, 1821, when the region became an American territory, that Florida pledged a new attitude of tolerance of religious diversity. This act made it more attractive for persecuted immigrants to settle in the territory. During this period, Florida’s Jewish population only numbered between 30-40 individuals, with the majority of the population living in the northern part of the territory. On March 3, 1845, the day the state of Florida was admitted to the Union, Jews numbered fewer than a hundred people, out of a total state population of 66,500.

Jewish population figures continued to rise steadily; six synagogues were established throughout the state by 1900. Florida’s first congregation was founded in Pensacola in 1876 and was named Temple Beth El. Avath Chesed followed in Jacksonville, 1882; Rodeph Sholom, Key West, 1887; United Hebrew of Ocala, 1888; Shaarai Zedek, Tampa, 1894; and B’nai Israel, 1899 in Pensacola. Remarkably, all of the congregations established more than a century ago remain in existence today, with the synagogue in Key West changing its name to B’nai Zion and United Hebrews of Ocala splitting into two separate institutions.

Prior to 1900, all of the congregations formed in Florida were based on Ashkenazic Judaism, the religious traditions and practices that came out of eastern and Central Europe. While it is true that Ashkenazic Judaism dominated the religious landscape of Florida synagogues, a few congregations followed Sephardic doctrine, which originated in the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal). With only six congregations in 1900, Florida’s synagogues have
Figure 1. Jewish Immigration into Florida from 1763. (Used with permission from the collection of the Jewish Museum of Florida, Miami Beach.)
grown to nearly 300 today and new facilities spring up each year.  

JEWISH MERCHANTS

For centuries, Jews have been linked to the mercantile, dry goods (needles, buttons, ribbons, and non-perishable food items), and apparel businesses. Part of the reason for this association stems from historic anti-Semitic sentiments in Eastern Europe, where Jews were often prevented from pursuing other occupations. Additionally, the majority of Jews were forced into a cultural dependency given the discrimination they faced and had to rely on their own abilities and skills, including trading, selling and provisioning in order to support themselves. Generation after generation of Jews followed their ancestral footsteps, moving into the same trades and businesses of fellow family members. Immigrating to the New World did not alter this earliest of Jewish economic patterns.

Unlike other immigrants to the United States who had thoughts of returning to their native homelands, Jews were knowingly aware that once they left Eastern Europe, they would never be able to settle or visit their birthplaces again. Instead, they carved out new niches, moving from portable occupations such as peddling to establishing permanent businesses including pawnshops, dry goods, and haberdasheries.

MIGRATION OF JEWS TO FLORIDA, TAMPA, AND YBOR CITY

The first recorded evidence of Jews in Tampa occurred in the year 1865. Seeking to find a refuge from political unrest and anti-Semitic sentiments in their native countries, thousands of immigrants were enticed by advertisements in newspapers to seek work in cigar factories around the state of Florida. One such ad, entitled “The Rush for Key West,” appeared in the Tobacco Leaf Journal on May 2, 1885 and made the case that in order for Key West to become a significant location for the manufacturing of cigars, “an increased demand of labor was needed.” Remarkably, a high proportion of Romanian Jews settled in Florida and came to Key West after 1880 before making their way to Tampa.

The majority of Jews who came to the United States were from the Iasi and Husi regions of Romania and ended up immigrating and living in Key West simply because of one man’s mistake. As the story goes, in 1884, a man by the name of Joseph Wolfson was on his way to Tampa when his ship encountered bad weather and he was forced to land off the coast of Key West. Having a limited command of English, and finding a small community of Jews already living there, Joseph mistakenly thought he had landed in Tampa and immediately sent for his Romanian family to join him. This pattern of chain migration was a common feature of eastern European immigration, and became a reason why so many families joined their relatives in Key West and Tampa to work as cigar workers and merchants.

Jewish peddler merchants had traveled throughout small Florida cities and towns during the 19th and early 20th centuries selling their goods until they could afford to settle down and open small stores. While only a small number of Jewish merchants remained mobile, catering to the economic and health related needs of many communities, the majority worked in order to be able to settle permanently in one place. The small stores they opened would sell a wide variety of merchandise including clothing, groceries, cigars, dry goods, and furniture to several generations of families. Some of these established merchants even managed to help their fellow immigrants and relatives in extraordinary ways by providing them with jobs or financial assistance to purchase their own stores.

In an effort to destroy peddler culture in 1891, the Key West City Council imposed a $1,000 tax on peddlers. This situation caused most peddler merchants to relocate their businesses further north. Unable to pay the tax, the Jewish merchants who had migrated to Key West from Romania packed up their carts and headed towards Ybor City in Tampa. German, Russian, and Polish Jewish immigrants were also part of the migration to Ybor, but came to Tampa independently of Romanians. Hearing stories of an expanding cigar industry in Tampa, many Jews also left Key West following cigar manufacturer Vicente Martínez Ybor’s decision in 1886 to relocate his production plant to the city. While most Jewish merchants who followed Ybor concentrated their efforts on opening stores and
The first Maas Brothers Dry Goods Store - The Palace - was located at 619-621 Franklin Street. (Photograph courtesy of Special Collections, University of South Florida Library.)

Abe Maas, at right with hat, is shown in 1896 with employees outside his store - The Palace - on Franklin Street. (Photo courtesy of the Tampa Bay History Center.)

Businesses that would supply the needs of cigarworkers, a few did manage to operate their own factories and manufacture their own brand of cigars. As Martinez moved his operations from Key West to Tampa in 1885, he sent for additional cigarmakers from Cuba and transferred many of his former employees to the new factories. Although the majority of laborers that Martinez brought to Ybor were Cuban, Jews were among the laborers albeit a very small percentage. Providing a bridge between ethnic groups, the cigar factories helped to foster the economy of an urban city like Tampa, while establishing organizations that assisted immigrant populations with settlement and health care issues. According to the 1911 Immigrants in Industries issued by the 61st Congress, “the order of numerical strength among the races employed in the cigar factories” was:

First, Spanish; second, Italian; third, Cuban; fourth, all other races, including Creoles from New Orleans, Whites and Negroes from Nassau, Porto Ricans, German Hebrews, French, Chinese, Russian Hebrews, Greeks, and Americans.

By 1890, Florida’s Jewish population would grow to nearly 2,500 persons.
As Tampa became the leading manufacturing center in Florida during the early 20th century, the economy continued to become more financially dependent on the booming cigar industry in Ybor City. Driven by the wages of the cigar laborers, the local economy relied heavily on their weekly salaries to support and maintain business and industry. For the merchants doing business on Seventh Avenue, the brunt of their clientele consisted of cigar workers, local residents in neighboring areas, and to a lesser extent, farmers from Plant City. While the larger population in the small-town South frequently regarded Jews as being part of the merchant class, Jews in Ybor City received similar attention. In fact, so prevalent was this connection that when dry goods merchant Adam Katz announced the birth of his son, the Tampa Tribune heralded the event as “A new Hebrew merchant was born today.” Not even a day old, Adam’s son was already designated by the Tampa community part of the next generation of merchants.12

In the following excerpt, Manuel Aronovitz, a Jewish merchant, recounts his experiences of his arrival to Ybor City:

In the month of June 1914, I arrived in this country and at that time there were two stations, one in Ybor City and one in Union Station. And by mistake my brother waited for me in Ybor City. So I landed in Union Station and I was trying to get a ride to Ybor City and they used to have those horse and buggies. And they wanted fifty cents (charge for ride), but I only had thirty-five cents in my pocket, so I showed them here...here’s thirty-five cents. And they said they ‘no we can’t do it.’ I gave them the address and one man did pick me up for the thirty-five cents but he let me off at the corner of Nebraska and Seventh Avenue. I had to walk eighteen blocks to get to my brother.13

In Susan Greenbaum’s book, More Than
Table 1: Jewish Dry Goods (Wholesale) Stores in Tampa: 1910

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name/Store</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abramovitz Bar</td>
<td></td>
<td>1807 14th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bergman EM</td>
<td></td>
<td>1813 7th av</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britwitz Manuel</td>
<td></td>
<td>1612 7th av</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buchman J M</td>
<td></td>
<td>1906 7th av</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crackowaner Daniel</td>
<td></td>
<td>1012-1014 Franklin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crackowaner Morris</td>
<td></td>
<td>1514 7th av</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essrig Meyer</td>
<td></td>
<td>1304 and 1605 7th av</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falk O &amp; Bro Offin</td>
<td></td>
<td>714 Franklin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishman Solomon</td>
<td></td>
<td>1926 9th av</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldberg Solomon</td>
<td></td>
<td>2105 7th av</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldstein A N</td>
<td></td>
<td>1224 Franklin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guterman Daniel</td>
<td></td>
<td>1713 7th av</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katz Adam &amp; Co Adam</td>
<td></td>
<td>1430 7th av</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katz Manuel</td>
<td></td>
<td>307 Main W T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirstein Philip</td>
<td></td>
<td>26 City Sav Bank bldg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maas Bros Abe</td>
<td></td>
<td>619-621 Franklin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reppa Isidor</td>
<td></td>
<td>169 Howard av</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rothman Jacob</td>
<td></td>
<td>1515 7th av W T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schwartz Solomon</td>
<td></td>
<td>1328 7th av and 311 Main W T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segall Philip</td>
<td></td>
<td>1727 7th av</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simovitz Abraham</td>
<td></td>
<td>1806 7th av</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simovitz Samuel</td>
<td></td>
<td>301 Main W T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steinberg E H</td>
<td></td>
<td>1611 7th av</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weisberg Charles</td>
<td></td>
<td>N.E. corner Main and Howard av W T</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

W T = West Tampa
Source: 1910 City Directory, Vlm. X.

Black: *Afro-Cubans in Tampa, Florida 1886-2000*, a story about the organization of the Martí-Maceo Society (black Cubans) in Ybor City, she notes the willingness of Jewish merchants to learn Spanish as a means of attaining economic and social positions in a Latin immigrant society:

Motivated initially by Martí-Maceo's struggle to pay off a substantial bank loan of $2,600, Adam Katz, a Romanian merchant, became a friend to this group and assisted them financially until his death on November 19, 1924. By learning Spanish, Jewish immigrants were not only able to gain respect with the dominant population in Ybor, but the century. Like Katz, many were merchants in Ybor City who spoke Spanish and found a comfortable niche in the immigrant enclave.
also conduct business with few restraints. While few in number, the Sephardic population (Jews who came from Spain, North Africa, and the Middle East) in Ybor also had an easier time of communicating with the Spanish community than other merchants, because of their knowledge of Ladino. Originating in Spain, Ladino is a dialect still spoken by Sephardic Jews today and is largely a combination of Hebrew letters and Spanish pronunciation.

Immigrants began flooding into Ybor City seeking work. Cigar manufacturers, expanding their operations, adding branches and relocating their factories, provided jobs and created opportunities for merchants of every kind. The unincorporated city of Ybor was developing rapidly and residents and city officials alike had to contend with growing problems of sanitation, utilities, and transportation. Reluctantly, with the prodding of the Tampa Board of Trade, Ybor City became incorporated on June 2, 1887.

By the time the bulk of Jewish immigrants had come to the city around 1890, Tampa and its newly incorporated Ybor City were moving at a rapid pace, growing nearly to 6,000 people within a decade. From its beginning as a “sleepy coastal village,” to a bustling urban center, the expansion of Ybor City necessitated a vibrant retail industry to meet the many needs of cigar workers who lived there and worked in the nearby factories. Seventh Avenue and its surrounding streets became a central area in which immigrants worked, socialized, and conducted the majority of their shopping. In a sense, one could say that Seventh Avenue helped to foster numerous exchanges between immigrants from different countries and provided a distinctive environment in which business could be conducted. Sharing the immigrant experience, Cubans, Spaniards, and Italians understood the determination of Jews to succeed, leading to the formation of lifelong friendships with merchants.

Even as the majority of Jews participated in the economic growth of Ybor through the retail trade, a small percentage was involved in the production of cigars. Although their contributions were minimal in comparison with that of their Cuban, Spanish, and Italian neighbors, the majority of available literature on cigar production does refer to a handful of instances when Jews did participate. For example, in the mid-1900s, the Rippa family moved their cigar-manufacturing factory from Key West to the Tampa area to produce their own brand of cigars. German Jews also came to Tampa around 1910. The Hamburger, Regensburg, and Bucksbaum families are a few of the German Jews who came to Florida seeking the prospect of lucrative investment opportunities.

**Jewish Merchants’ Role in the Struggle for Cuban Independence**

In many larger communities in the South, Jews were viewed as being outside the mainstream population. By contrast, Tampa Jews were not prevented from participating in the affairs of their community. When José Martí began speaking around the United States about his personal struggle for Cuban Independence, Jews who were working in the tobacco industry in Tampa...
joined with Spanish activist groups to lend their support. Laboring in the cigar factories, Hispanics and Jews conversed about Cuba and its prospect for tremendous growth and change in the coming years. If anything, eastern European Jews could empathize with Martí's struggle for independence from Spain, for most had been estranged from their homelands, too, and knew what it felt like to be without a permanent place to live.19

Steinberg, owner of H.R. Steinberg's on Seventh Avenue in Ybor, was an important supporter of Martí's cause and in November 1892, introduced Martí to organizations within the Jewish community as a way to obtain funding for his movement. Steinberg was later honored with a reception attended by the Cuban leader. Due in part to their experiences with repressive governments in their native countries, Jews, especially those from Romania, sympathized with Cuban cigarworkers and believed that they should receive fair

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**Figure 1: Jewish geography of Ybor City, 1920s-1970s. (Used with permission from the collection of the Jewish Museum of Florida, Miami Beach.)**
benefits and wages. Some individuals took action in other ways by volunteering to fight in the war with Spain. Men like Max and Joseph Steinberg even settled permanently in Cuba after their War of Independence.20

The experiences of Jews in Eastern Europe caused both Russian and Romanian immigrants to offer their support to the Cuban struggle in rather distinct ways. Historically, Jews from Romania “suffered more through being considered an alien in the country of his birth than any other persecuted Jew of the present day.” When Romanian Jews began immigrating to the United States, many became so “completely” devoted to their new country and took such strong interest in political affairs that they established their own organizations including the Romanian American Republican Club and the Romanian American Independent Citizens Associations. These organizations not only served as a forum for the expression of their opinions, but also as a place where Romanian immigrants could gather and interact with one another. Albert Staar, son of former merchants in Ybor City, expressed his thoughts on the reasons for Romanian support of Cuban independence:

“Being from Europe and running away from army conscription by tyrants, kings, and communists made us sympathetic to a country where we were free. You should support anything you wanted especially freedom seekers Cubans.”21

Russian Jews responded in an altogether completely different manner to Martí’s cause, and were not as involved as the Romanians. In fact, by the time Martí visited Tampa in October of 1892, the majority of Russian businessman began making plans to move their shops out of Ybor City making way for larger businesses. Unlike the Romanians, Russian immigrants were always looking for ways to expand their businesses, pushing to move downtown in the hopes of capitalizing on the growing
customer base rather than remaining in the unpredictable economic structure of Ybor City.  

At this point it is important to note the significance of Jewish participation in the public affairs of Tampa during this period. Along with other immigrant populations, Jews living in Tampa were allowed to express their freedom by attending public assemblies and vocalizing their opinions without having to be concerned about retaliation by supporters of anti-Semitic movements. In stark contrast to the experiences of Tampa, Jews living in the Deep South witnessed many examples of hatred displayed against them, and for fear of their lives often did not become involved in the public affairs of their communities. This approach was not always possible, particularly when Jews responded to national incidents such as the 1913 trial of Georgia citizen and Jewish businessman Leo Frank.  

Cited as the “most publicized event involving a Jew that ever occurred in the South,” Leo Frank’s case ignited concerns among the Jewish community in Atlanta and throughout the United States. Ultimately, the false conviction of Frank for killing a 13-year-old worker in his pencil factory taught Jews that no matter how much they assimilated into southern society, the larger population would never consider them “true southerners.” In the minds of many Jews, what happened to Leo Frank could certainly have happened to them. Frank was given life imprisonment by the governor, but unfortunately was later
hanged by a lynch mob. Having experienced first-hand blatant anti-Semitism, Southern Jews remained on alert, outwardly displaying feelings of calm, but among themselves continuing to be fearful of the future.  

ISADORE KAUNITZ

In 1903, Isadore Kaunitz, a native of Buzei, Romania, constructed the first brick building on Seventh Avenue in Ybor City. Hearing stories of a “golden medina,” a golden land, where a person was free to live, work, and pray without being persecuted, immigrants like Kaunitz believed that they could make a better life for themselves in the United States. Carrying few material possessions, many Jewish immigrants who came to Ybor did not have any relatives to rely on, and often were pointed toward Kaunitz to seek counsel and financial assistance. By 1910, only seven years after Kaunitz had opened his store, El Sombrero Blanco - The White Hat, the city directory listed 15 stores owned by Jews in Ybor City; all were recorded as dry goods businesses (see Table 1). Through the efforts of merchants like Kaunitz, Jewish immigrants were able to establish their credibility within Ybor and be part of the tremendous expansion that was taking place at the time.

In just a few years, Jews had managed to become part of the economic force on Seventh Avenue providing the city with a wide range of goods, from everyday articles such as fabric and clothing, to items like auto parts that were not so ordinary in those days. In 1910, the Whol, Buchman, and Rippa families opened their stores in Ybor City. No one, not even the families themselves could have imagined that their businesses would have such far-reaching impact on the future development of Tampa.  

By 1925, names like Aronovitz, Shine, Weissman, Verkauf, Weber, Weiss, Simovitz, Segall, Katz, and Wolfson, were prominent on storefronts and industries throughout Ybor City and West Tampa (see Figure 1). In the first quarter of the 20th century, Tampa’s geographical and economic development increased dramatically, in part to the intensification of commerce and industry throughout Ybor City. By 1920, some 34 years after Jewish immigrants first arrived in Ybor City, a total of 30 businesses were owned and operated by Jewish merchants.

This economic expansion was short-lived however, and came to an end with the stock market crash of 1929 and the subsequent depression that began that year. The Great Depression of the 1930s clearly affected Tampa’s cigar industry, as America’s fondness for tobacco was quickly supplanted by more pressing concerns caused by high unemployment and rationing of food staples and supplies by the federal government. 

Forced to deal with the prospect of shutting down their businesses entirely, many merchants on Seventh Avenue attempted to combat financial deterioration by diversifying their existing shops or opening completely different kinds of businesses. For many, the idea of closing up their shops for an extensive period was an agonizing decision, one that was necessary if their families were to have any chance of making it through the difficult times ahead. Others managed for as long as they could, relocating their businesses to the downtown and West Tampa areas. From 1930-1940, business on Ybor’s main shopping area, Seventh Avenue (La Gran Séptima Avenida), continued to undergo tremendous changes, often leading to old stores being taken over entirely by new ones. During the decade of the 30s, Florida’s Jewish population would increase to approximately 25,000.

From 1930 to 1940, business on Seventh Avenue continued to change as old shops were replaced with new ones, including Finman’s Kosher Market, Alma Fleischman’s Style Hat Shop, Dayan’s Linens, and Sam Haimovitz’s Active Lumber Company. As the United States neared entrance into World War II, those merchants who were able to “hang on” into the 1940s would experience a revitalization of commerce that would have a tremendous impact on Tampa and Ybor City.

The war brought thousands of skilled workers and military personnel to Tampa. The city was fast becoming a major center for the shipbuilding industry. While building and repairing ships required a steady flow of trained workers, the opening of military bases such as Drew, Henderson and MacDill Army Air Fields also meant that thousands of servicemen and women would spend months and even years living in the Tampa area. Ybor City’s close proximity to the bases and Port of Tampa meant that
One of the last remaining Jewish-owned stores on Ybor City's Seventh Avenue is Max Argintar Men's Wear, 1522 East 7th Avenue. (Photograph courtesy of the author.)

shipyard workers and GIs would venture into Ybor, spending large parts of their weekly salaries in restaurants, bars and stores on Seventh Avenue.²⁸

In 1946, the Bobo family, one of the more prominent Sephardic Jewish families living in the area, opened the Blue Ribbon Supermarket; it remained a fixture on the Avenue until June of 2000 when the family retired the business and sold it to a development group. The building, however, never made it through further development, and was destroyed by fire shortly after being sold.²⁹

The 1950s and 1960s brought further change to Ybor City with a large percentage of established businesses moving out of the area. With their permanent departure or closing, and a decline in the number of new stores opening, the once vibrant city was beginning to show signs of physical deterioration. Clothing stores owned by the Poller's and Haber's left Ybor to relocate downtown, while the Weissman's Hallmark Emblems and Martin's Uniforms remained until the 1970s. Though Ybor City went through many periods of highs and lows, the close-knit atmosphere that had been such a part of its charm during the first half of the century would never be the same after the U.S. embargo on Cuba in 1960 ended the importation of Cuban tobacco and permanently stifled the cigar manufacturing industry. According to José Yglesias's article, “The Radical Latino Island in the Deep South,” cigar makers could not make fine cigars without tobacco from the Vuelta Abajo area of Pinar del Rio in Cuba. The Vuelta Abajo was considered by cigar manufacturers as the finest area to grow tobacco, and once the land became unavailable, the industry began to decline steadily. Adding to the decline, manufacturers also moved from the production of hand-rolled cigars to machine-made, which cost half the price (about five cents each) and could be made more quickly. Unlike the fine cigars that had built Ybor's reputation world-wide, these cigars could be made with less labor and in far larger quantities.³⁰

As early as the 1950s, many of Ybor City's historic buildings and entire neighborhoods began to be demolished to make way for new roads, subsidized housing, and proposed large-scale development. Urban renewal in the 1960s further complicated Ybor's situation and shifted the composition of long-time residents living in the area. In 1910, Ybor City was largely inhabited by immigrants all under the age of 40, and by 1960, the majority of these men and women were growing older.³¹ Race was also a factor, as large percentages of African-Americans began moving into Ybor City after 1950. The demolition of many Ybor homes and businesses to make way for construction of U.S. Interstate 4 just north of the city's core business district further added to Ybor's economic decline.

Florida first approved urban renewal legislation in 1959, and in 1962 Tampa was the first city to reveal its plans for the creation of an urban renewal agency. While bulldozers began to tear down Ybor City in 1965, officials in the urban renewal office proclaimed that the city would become “a tourist attraction second to none in the
U.S.” In the end, 660 buildings housing 1,100 families were demolished at a cost of over 9.6 million dollars. 32

Even through this difficult period, Jewish merchants never completely abandoned Ybor City, as evidenced by the arrival of families like the Waksman family who fled Cuba in 1961 and opened the Corona Brush factory in Ybor and the Dress Mart in downtown Tampa. The significance of Jewish merchants in Tampa was made clear by newspaper articles written shortly before the closing of Louis Wohl’s department store in 1977. After serving the community for nearly 80 years (open since 1897), Wohl’s supplied Tampa residents with a myriad of goods, from restaurant supplies and equipment to home furnishings. Lawrence Levy, an employee of Wohl’s since 1933, fondly recalled the days when “country boys” from as far away as Ocala would come to the store to buy supplies to make their moonshine. Levy recalled, “They’d come to our warehouse in a pickup truck with 15 or 20 100-pound sacks of sugar already piled on. Then they’d fill up the rest of the space with 5-gallon bottles.” Eventually, the government stepped in and ordered Wohl’s employees to record the license tag numbers of anyone purchasing five or more bottles at one time. Levy added, “that pretty well ended the business for us.”33

Through the revitalization of Ybor City in the 1980s and 1990s, a few Jewish businesses returned and tried their hand at retail again; unfortunately their efforts were short-lived as Ybor continued to undergo urbanization. Small shops could no longer compete with the “economic boom” that was occurring throughout downtown Tampa.

Although crowds of people filled Ybor’s cafes daily giving Tampa residents the false impression of the city’s return, nearly a third of Ybor’s 2,229 residents in 1980 lived below the poverty level. Nonetheless, one single Jewish family, the Argintars, has managed to remain on the Avenue since 1902. Argintar’s Men’s Wear has been a staple on Seventh Avenue (1414 7th Avenue) and continues to be the only store operated by a descendant of immigrants who fled Romania in the late 1890s. When asked about his family’s service to the community, Sammy Argintar, son of the late Max Argintar who originally founded the store in 1902, proudly replied, “We know about 70 percent of the people...we have been here, our business had been here since 1902. We’re the oldest business big or small.”

As Ybor City undergoes a rebirth and revitalization, as renovations and new construction transforms entire blocks, as new stores and restaurants open, and the clang of the streetcar returns after an absence of over 50 years, the only lasting remnants of the Jewish merchants are their names, which adorn many of the building facades on the Avenue. Who could have foreseen the impact and enduring presence that a small group of people from Russia, Romania, and Germany would have on the history of commerce and trade in Ybor City?34

ENDNOTES

Yael Greenberg-Pritzker received a Bachelor of Arts and a Masters of Arts in Applied Anthropology from the University of South Florida. She plans to pursue her Ph.D. in Anthropology, and teaches anthropology part-time at Hillsborough Community College. Her areas of interest include ethnography, immigrant history, ethnicity and identity. Most recently, she was awarded the Presidential Award from the Florida Historical Society for her paper "Southern Cultural Enclaves: Jewish Settlement in Ybor City, 1880-1924." Currently, she is writing and publishing articles which pertain to her work on the Jewish community of Ybor City.

The author wishes to thank Mr. Richard Bernardy for his assistance in preparation of illustrations and graphics for this article.

4. Ibid., 3.
8. Ibid., 3.
16. Ibid., 190.
17. Glenn L. Westfall, Key West: Cigar City U.S.A. (Key West: Historic Key West Preservation Board, 1985), 5, 17.
19. Ibid., Ybor City and the Jews.
21. Ybor City and the Jews; Centro Maccabeo Names, available at Mosaic Archives, Miami; Ibid., Green and Zerivitz, 16.
26. Heimovics and Zerivitz, 29; Westfall, 18; Ybor City and the Jews.
27. Ybor City and the Jews.
28. Ybor City and the Jews.
31. A.M. de Quesada, Images of America: Ybor City (Great Britain: Arcadia Publishing, 1999), 109; Ybor City and the Jews; Mormino and Pozzetta, 305.
32. Mormino and Pozzetta, 305-306.
34. Ybor City and the Jews; Mormino and Pozzetta, 312-313; Sammy Argintar, interview by Yael V. Greenberg-Pritzker, 29 March 2000.
Spessard Lindsey Holland was born in Bartow, Florida on July 10, 1892. He attended the Bartow public schools and graduated from Summerlin Institute in 1909 (a complete primary and secondary school which became Bartow High School), where his mother had taught. He received his Bachelor of Philosophy degree magna cum laude at Emory College in Atlanta (now Emory University) in 1912. From 1912-14, he taught high school in Warrenton, Georgia. He then entered the University of Florida in 1914 where, while attending law school, he taught high school in the sub-freshman department (high school) of the university. The first elected president of the student body and a member of the law school debating society, he received his L.L.B. from Florida in 1916 and was admitted to the bar.

He qualified for a Rhodes Scholarship in 1913, but the outbreak of war in Europe kept him from attending England's prestigious Oxford University.

Along with his academic achievements, Holland made time for a variety of college sports and lettered in track, football, basketball, and baseball at Emory and Florida. He made such an impressive showing as a pitcher in an exhibition game against the Philadelphia Athletics in 1916 that Connie Mack offered him a contract, but he declined.

Soon after the United States entered World War I, Holland volunteered in 1917 and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Coast Artillery Corps. Lt. Holland was sent to France with the 31st Artillery Brigade, Headquarters Battery, where he served as a brigade judge advocate and assistant adjutant. Transferred at his own
request to the Air Service, Signal Corps, he was assigned to the 24th Aero Squadron where he saw action as an aerial observer and gunner gathering information and taking photographs behind the enemy lines. His participated in aerial offensives over the Meuse-Argonne, Champaign, St. Mihiel, and Luneville sectors, and was credited with downing two enemy planes.

On a mission with Lt. George E. Goldwaite of New York City, his plane was hit and crash-landed in a crater behind American lines. On December 11, 1918, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for valor in action. The citation, signed by Gen. John J. Pershing, Commander-in-Chief, read:

First Lieutenant Spessard L. Holland, C. A. C. Observer 24th, Aero Squadron, distinguished himself by extra-ordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy of the United States at Bois de Banthville, France, on 15 October 1918 and in recognition of his gallant conduct I have awarded him in the name of the President the Distinguished Service Cross.

Transferred back to the United States, he was promoted to captain and toured for the Victory Loan Drive. Capt. Holland resigned his commission in July 1919. While still serving in the army, he married Mary Agnes Groover on February 8, 1919 at Lakeland, Florida. Mary, the daughter of Dr. William Rowan Groover, a Lakeland physician and businessman, and Mary Matilda “Mollie” (Knowles) Groover, was born July 31, 1896, in Fort White, Florida.

Holland had a long and distinguished law career. Admitted to the Florida Bar in 1916, he became a junior partner with R. B. Huffaker in the law firm of Huffaker and Holland in Bartow, but his practice was suspended while he served in World War I. Soon after his discharge from the service and resuming his practice, he was appointed Prosecuting Attorney of Polk County. In 1920 he made his first bid for elective office and won the post of County Judge for a four-year term; he was re-elected in 1924.

In 1929 he again returned to private practice and partnered with William F. Bevis as Holland and Bevis. The firm became Holland, Bevis & Hughes with the addition of Robert L. Hughes Jr. in 1933; Holland, Bevis & McRae, 1946; Holland, Bevis, McRae & Smith, 1953; Holland, Bevis, & Smith, 1961; Holland, Bevis, Smith & Kibler, 1964; and Holland, Bevis, Smith, Kibler & Hall, 1965. Merging in July 1968 with the Tampa law firm founded by Peter O. Knight, the new firm, Holland & Knight LLP, is today one of the largest and most prestigious law firms in Florida, with over 1,000 lawyers in offices throughout the United States and in
several foreign countries.

One of Holland and Knight's most important cases, of which Holland made the closing argument in October 1959, was the Tidelands Case, in which the U.S. Supreme Court confirmed the claim by the State of Texas to 2,440,650 acres of submerged land between low tide and the state's Gulfward boundary - the underwater land extending 3 leagues (10.35 miles) from it coastline into the Gulf of Mexico.4

Holland was elected to the Florida State Senate to represent Polk County in June 1932, and was re-elected in 1936. During every session, he was a member of the school committee, helped draft and co-introduced the Florida School Code, supported measures to improve the schools, raise the pay of teachers and provide for their retirement. He supported workmen's compensation, unemployment insurance, citrus law reforms, and repeal of the state poll tax in 1937. He sponsored measures for the reduction of taxes and consistently opposed a state sales tax.5

In 1940, Holland was elected Governor of Florida on the Democratic ticket and served from January 7, 1941 to January 2, 1945. As Florida's World War II-era governor, he promoted the establishment of military bases in the state and mobilized the home front. His administration accomplished many notable acts: in January 1941, the teachers' retirement system was put into effect; the state's public schools were placed on a sounder financial basis; and the state's finances were strengthened by reform of the tax system and refinancing of the state's debt. In this regard the property tax legislation mandated uniform assessments at actual value and tax deeds were validated, thus resulting in increased and prompter tax collections. Recommended by Governor Holland while in office and adopted were four constitutional amendments: pledging gasoline taxes for highway betterment; lowering of the intangible tax; a provision for amending the constitution in a shorter period; and creation of the Florida State Game and Fresh Water Commission.

In 1943, at a conference of governors at Denver, he helped secure revision of railroad freight rates, which aided the South. In 1944 he negotiated deeding of thousands of acres of Florida marsh or submerged land to the United States. From this land, he was instrumental in establishing the Everglades National Park in 1947. During Holland's term, he prevented a lynching of three Negroes at Quincy by ordering them transferred to the Tallahassee jail, to which the
Spessard L. Holland (left and top left) is pictured above with two of Florida’s most powerful politicians: Governor Fuller Warren (1949-1953) in the center and Senator Claude Pepper. (Photograph courtesy of Holland & Knight LLP.)

mob followed. The would-be lynchers, who had followed them to the jail, backed down after they were confronted by Governor Holland.6

Following the death of U.S. Senator Charles O. Andrews on September 18, 1946, Holland was appointed September 25, 1946 as a Democrat by Governor Millard F. Caldwell to fill the vacancy. (Andrews’ term would have expired January 3, 1947.) He was elected to a full, six-year term in 1946—only the second ex-governor of Florida to be elected to the U.S. Senate and the first Florida native to serve as both Governor and Senator. Holland took office on January 3, 1947, and, subsequently, was reelected in 1952, 1958, and 1964. A conservative Democrat aligned with the Southern bloc, he was a key figure in preserving the filibuster and maintained that civil rights were matters of states’ rights. In opposition to passage of the Civil Rights bill in 1964, he vowed, “We’ll stand up and fight as long as we can.” Major
legislation he supported in Congress included the Marshall Plan, Taft-Hartley labor law, Tidelands Act of 1946, and its successor, the Submerged Lands Act of 1953, the Pan American Highway, and foreign aid. He was one of the original sponsors of statehood for Alaska and the first Southerner to support statehood for Hawaii. Although he never chaired a major committee, he was, nevertheless, considered one of the most powerful senators as he skillfully combined seniority, connections, and friendship to achieve his goals. At retirement, he was serving on three committees: Agriculture and Forestry, Appropriations and Aeronautical and Space Science. The greatest achievement of his legislative career, however, was his sponsorship of the 24th Amendment to the Constitution. The Amendment, which became law in 1964, reads, “The right of citizens of the United States to vote in any primary or other election for President or Vice President, for electors for President or Vice President, or for Senator or Representative in Congress, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax.” Poll taxes had long been used to disenfranchise black voters. Having never been defeated for elective office, Holland decided against seeking reelection to the Senate in 1970, and retired in January 1971.

Throughout his life and career, he was involved in various civic and fraternal organizations and received numerous honors. He served as a member of the board of visitors of the U. S. service academies and as a trustee of Emory University, Florida Southern College, and Florida Presbyterian College. He was a recipient of honorary degrees of LL.D. from Rollins, Florida Southern College, Emory University, Florida State University, and the University of Miami; D.C.L. from the University of Florida, and H.H.D. from the University of Tampa. Named in his honor, among others, was the Spessard L. Holland Law Center at the University of Florida and the Holland Building in Tallahassee. He was a member of the American and Florida Bar Associations, Phi Beta Kappa, Alpha Tau Omega, and Phi Delta Phi. He was also a member of the Sons of the American Revolution, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Masons (33rd degree Shriner), Kiwanis Club of Bartow, and Elks.

He was a conservationist and enjoyed bird watching—which his wife introduced him to—and enjoyed hunting and fishing. He was a baseball and football fan and played tennis. His hobby was collecting books on Florida.

Spessard L. Holland died of a heart attack on November 6, 1971 at his home at 1005
South Broadway, Bartow. The body, with a uniformed honor guard from MacDill Air Force Base in attendance, lay in state at the First United Methodist Church, of which Holland was a lifelong member. The Rev. Lee R. Van Sickle officiated. Members of the law firm of Holland & Knight served as pallbearers. Interment was in the Holland family plot in Wildwood Cemetery in Bartow. Floyd Christian, then Florida State Education Commissioner, said of him: "No one distinguished himself in public life as much as Senator Holland, both as a governor and a senator. He truly represented the people...He truly was a great public servant."

Mary, Holland's wife of over fifty years, suffered a stroke and died March 22, 1975. She was buried beside her husband in Wildwood Cemetery.

They had four children:

1. Spessard Lindsey Holland, Jr., born May 26, 1921, Lakeland; died March 26, 1989, Melbourne, FL; buried Florida Memorial Gardens, Melbourne; married (1) Elizabeth Jeanette Logan; (2) Dorothy Durrance Bryan; (3) Rita Hinchman McDaniel.


4. Ivanhoe Elizabeth Holland, born June 28, 1930, Bartow; married (1) Augustus Henry King III; (2) Richard Bellaire Craney. 11


ENDNOTES

Spessard Stone, a descendant of the pioneer Stone and Hendry families of Florida, was raised in Hardee County and is a resident of Wauchula. Stone is the author of numerous articles in past volumes of The Sunland Tribune as well as John and William Sons of Robert Hendry, The Stone Family, Thonotosassa Pioneers and Lineage of John Carlton.

The author expresses his appreciation to Dr. Canter Brown Jr. for his assistance during the research for this article.

1. "Soldier's Pension Claim" and Widow's Pension Claim, Florida Archives; "Information About Spessard Lindsey Holland United States Senator From Florida," 1; Canter Brown, Jr., In the Midst of All That Makes Life Worth Living: Polk County, Florida, to 1940 (Tallahassee: Sentry Press, 2001), 135; "Biographical Sketch of the Life of Spessard L. Holland," Vertical Files, State Library of Florida, Tallahassee, n.d.; "Spessard L. Holland Dies Suddenly at 79," Polk County Democrat, November 8, 1971; Social Security Death Index. "Information:... has that Fannie Virginia (Spessard) Holland came to Florida in 1888, but Fanny, as she spelled her name, in "Widow's Pension Claim" averred that she "had continuously resided in the State of Florida since the 1st day of September, 1889." "Register of Marriage" in the pension application has that Fannie V. Spessard was 29 years old when married; thus she was born ca. 1861. In "Widow's Pension Claim" of January 20, 1925, her name was printed "Fanny V. Holland," but the same has, "That she was lawfully married to the said Benjamin Franklin Holland under the name of Fannie V. Spessard in the County of Monroe State of West Virginia on the 9th day of September, 1890." She, however, signed her name "Fanny V. Holland." The pension was granted to "Mrs. Fannie V. Holland." Frank L. Holland was born October 7, 1895 and died in March 1966 at Winter Haven, Florida. Virginia Holland was born May 23, 1898; married in December 1919 Roy Trent Gallemore; died in February 1986, Bartow.


562,212. Regarding the poll tax, Senator Holland, emulating his successful repeal of the tax in Florida as a state senator, introduced the amendment in 1949 and persisted in every succeeding session of Congress until 1962 when it was approved by the 87th Congress; Subsequently, it was ratified by three-fourths of the states and became the 24th Amendment in 1964. Although a Democrat, Holland was “often branded a Republican in philosophy and voting.” See “Sen. Holland Paid A Tribute,” Tallahassee Democrat, September 30, 1966.


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The Honorable Dick A. Greco, Recipient of the 2002 D.B. McKay Award

The 2002 recipient of the D.B. McKay Award is Dick A. Greco, Mayor of the City of Tampa.

The 31th recipient of this coveted award is a native of Tampa. After attending local schools, he went on to attend the University of Florida. He returned to Tampa to attend the University of Tampa after graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Studies, he became Vice President of the family business, King-Greco Hardware.

In 1963, at the age of 29, he was elected to the Tampa City Council. After serving a four-year term, he was elected Mayor of the City of Tampa in 1967. At thirty-four years of age, he was the youngest mayor of a major city in the United States. He was reelected in 1971, however resigned in 1973 to join The Edward I. DeBartolo Corporation as Vice President of Development and Governmental Relations.

In 1995, Mr. Greco ran for mayor again and was reelected in March, 1995. He then resigned from his position with The Edward DeBartolo Corporation.

Mr. Greco has shown extraordinary leadership and vision as he has guided Tampa through periods of significant change, growth and improvement. From helping to bring the Tampa Bay Buccaneers of the NFL to Tampa, to presiding over the Model Cities Program, to building Horizon Park, to bringing Hillsborough Community College to Ybor City, to the development of the Cultural Arts District, he has been at the forefront of development.

During his career in the public sector, Mr. Greco has served on several governmental boards and authorities including the Tampa Aviation Authority, the Tampa Expressway Authority, the Tampa Port Authority's Board of Commissioners, the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, President of Florida League of Cities and the Board of Directors of the National League of Cities.

Mayor Greco has had a major impact on the city's history, especially in the area of architectural and historic preservation. Since 1995, he has been responsible for: establishment of the Historic Preservation Commission; Tampa Heights' designation as a Local Historic District; the surveying of 1,743 structures of historic significance in several neighborhoods including Parkland Estates, New Suburb Beautiful, Tampa Heights, North Franklin Local Historic District and the Ybor City Local Historic District; scheduled 1,200 structures for review to assess their historical significance in the West Tampa District; designation of seven properties as Local Landmarks; placement of two properties on the National Register of Historic places; revised both the Hyde Park and Ybor City Design Guidelines; established the Historic Preservation Resource Library; and created the Historic Preservation Workshops.

The Mayor is also a member of several civic and social organizations and their boards.

For his significant contribution to Florida's history, Dick A. Greco is the recipient of the Tampa Historical Society's 2002 D.B. McKay Award.
Past Recipients of the D.B. McKay Award

1972 Frank Laumer
1973 Sate Senator David McClain
1974 Circuit Court Judge James R. Knott
1975 Gloria Jahoda
1976 Harris H. Mullen
1977 Dr. James Covington
1978 Hampton Dunn
1979 William M. Goza
1980 Tony Pizzo
1981 Allen and Joan Morris
1982 Mel Fisher
1983 Marjory Stoneman Douglas
1984 Frank Garcia
1985 Former Governor Leroy Collins
1986 Dr. Samuel Proctor
1987 Doyle E. Carlton, Jr.
1988 Leland M. Hawes, Jr.
1990 Joan W. Jennewein
1991 Dr. Gary R. Mormino
1992 Julius J. Gordon
1993 Jack Moore and Robert Snyder
1994 Dr. Ferdie Pacheco
1995 Stephanie E. Ferrell
1996 Michael Gannon
1997 Rowena Ferrell Brady
1998 Dr. Canter Brown, Jr.
1999 J. Thomas Touchton
2000 Dr. Larry Eugene Rivers
2001 Arsenio M. Sanchez

Past Presidents of the Tampa Historical Society

Anthony Pizzo 1971 (deceased)
Nonita Henson 1972
Hampton Dunn 1973-1974
Dr. James W. Covington 1975
Mrs. Bettie Nelson 1976-1977
Dr. L. Glenn Westfall 1978
Mrs. Leslie McClain 1979
Kenneth W. Mulder 1980-1981 (deceased)
R. Randolph Stevens 1982-1983
Richard S. Clarke 1984-1985
Nancy N. Skemp 1986-1987
Samuel L. Latimer 1988 (deceased)
Terry L. Greenhalgh 1989
James Judy 1990
George B. Howell III 1991-1992
Charles Jordon 1993
Mrs. Barbara G. Reeves 1993
Charles A. Brown 1994-1995
Ralph N. Beaver 1997
Paul R. Pizzo 2001-2002

KENNETH W. MULDER

Kenneth Mulder, President of the Tampa Historical Society in 1980 and 1981, passed away this year. Ken was a member of the Tampa Historical Society until his death and was a lifelong student of Tampa and Florida history. A Tampa native, his favorite subject as a schoolboy was history. An insurance executive when not hunting for Florida’s past, he was fascinated by pirates and artifacts left behind by Florida’s Indians and pioneers. During his presidency of THS, the bones of over a hundred soldiers and civilians from the 1820s were discovered during the site preparation for the building of the Fort Brooke Parking Garage in downtown Tampa. The remains were reinterred in Oaklawn Cemetery. Ken accumulated a substantial library of books on history and along with his wife Sandy, who shared his love of our rich heritage, published a series of Days of Long Ago books, Pirates, Seminoles, and Tampa Bay, which features much of his collection of artifacts gathered during his years of collecting. Ken was a great student of history and a fine storyteller. We are fortunate that he shared with us his dedication, commitment and passion to our city. He will be greatly missed.