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FROM THE EDITORS

One advantage of local history is that it constantly reminds us that history is the story of real people. Although big forces - capitalism, war, reform - certainly operate locally, they affect, and are affected by, people acting both individually and collectively. Looking at these actors in their local settings makes the past visible.

This issue of *Tampa Bay History* highlights several individuals who played important roles in the development of South Florida. John Darling, an Indian trader and politician, campaigned in the pre-Civil War years for removal of the Seminoles from the South Florida frontier. In "John Darling, Indian Removal, and Internal Improvements, 1848-56," historian Joe Knetsch examines the reasoning behind Darling’s crusade and its connection to state politics and economic development. Another Florida pioneer of a very different sort was Father Philippe de Carriere, a Jesuit priest who ministered to South Florida Catholics. His many activities are chronicled in the article "Father Philippe de Carriere: A Jesuit Pioneer on Florida’s West Coast, 1888-1902," written by Michael J. McNally, who brings to this study his knowledge as both a Jesuit and a historian. The article entitled "The Waves Traveled through Everything: Radio’s Impact on Tampa in the 1920s," written by Heather C.R. McClenahan, explores the individuals like Sol Fleischman who brought radio to Tampa, and just as important, the author shows how this communication revolution affected Tampans.

Finally, this issue has two photographic essays. The first, "Child Labor in Florida," portrays young people at work. These largely nameless figures serve as examples of an issue that Americans have generally viewed with very mixed feelings, and the essay poses a series of questions that remain unanswered - should work by children be encouraged or outlawed and at what age and under what conditions should children be allowed to work?  "The Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections, 1912-1915," surveys the people in charge of voting and comes from an exhibit prepared by Alicia Addeo.

While telling the stories of various individuals, these articles make the important point that local people were linked to larger state and national - and even international - events and movements.

CORRECTIONS: Dr. Richard T. Farrior has pointed out that the last issue (Spring/Summer 1995) contains two errors in the article entitled "The Homefront on Florida’s West Coast: A Photographic Essay." On pages 56 and 62, photographs from a Tampa high school yearbook were misidentified as coming from the arch rival of the actual school. As Dr. Farrior, a member of the Plant High School Class of 1942, correctly points out, the photographs appeared in his yearbook, *The Panther*, for 1941-42. We extend our apologies to Dr. Farrior and all other Plant Panthers for confusing them with Hillsborough Terriers.
COMMUNICATIONS

July 19, 1995

To the Editors:

Regarding your issue on World War II, I am a member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society, and I am working with the Sarasota Historical Society and Sarasota Airport Authority to place a County Historical Marker at the airport commemorating the training that occurred there during World War II.

The 97th bomb group moved from Tampa’s MacDill Field to Sarasota Army Air Field in late March 1942. The C.O. was Colonel C.W. Cousland who had officially accepted the first B-17 delivered by Boeing. After six weeks of flight training, they returned to Tampa fairgrounds and then on to England, being the first heavy bomber group to arrive. They also flew the first all-American high altitude raid from England on August 17, 1942.

One other heavy bomb group – the 92nd – followed from MacDill to Sarasota. After that Sarasota Field was used for fighter training.

We have compiled a great deal of local news reports and photos regarding this training in Sarasota.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Drake
The 97th bomb group posed before leaving Sarasota after six weeks of training in 1942.

Photograph courtesy of Francis Patten.
JOHN DARLING, INDIAN REMOVAL, AND INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS IN SOUTH FLORIDA, 1848-1856
by Joe Knetsch

Writing on January 6, 1848, from the Kennedy Store at Charlotte Harbor, Indian trader John Darling stated to Governor William Moseley: “Sir: I have been some time at this station as agent for the Seminole Trader trading with the Indians, and I have seen enough of them to induce me to think that the policy at present pursued by the General Government, if the purpose is removal, ought to be changed.”¹ Darling, like many of his colleagues on the frontier, had little patience with the policy of peaceful removal of the Indians remaining in Florida after the long seven-year war was over. What induced Darling, an Indian trader at the time of the letter, to request the best efforts of the governor to get the Indian population removed and place himself in the ranks of the unemployed? For John Darling, and most other frontiersmen, the quest was for land. Cheap, cultivatable, productive land, was the motivating force of existence, whether for farming or speculation.

Darling’s early life remains somewhat clouded in mystery and myth. Pioneer historian D. B. McKay, in a 1957 article in the Tampa Tribune, noted that Darling was born on August 16, 1808, in Groton, Vermont, the son of Stephen Darling, whose family traced its roots back to long before the American Revolution. McKay wrote that Darling enlisted in the army at an early age and came to Fort Brooke, Tampa, in 1835.² However, Heitman’s Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army shows that Darling enlisted as a private in the Fourth Artillery on January 22, 1830. During his eight-year enlistment, Darling rose from private to quartermaster sergeant, an acknowledgement of his ability to lead men. On July 31, 1838, he was enrolled as second lieutenant in Fifth Infantry, a position from which he resigned on August 15, 1839.³ This rise is significant because few enlisted men ever rose from the ranks into the officer corps. Darling had obviously shown that his skill and courage as a leader deserved such recognition.

John Darling’s intimate involvement in the Indian removal issue from his early days in Florida can be shown by his employment as a clerk in the office of the agent for Indian removal and subsistence at Fort Brooke.⁴ Along with the experience gained from his position as quartermaster sergeant, this time spent with the Indian removal agency must have given Darling the tools necessary to launch a career as an Indian trader. In addition, he undoubtedly gained an enhanced knowledge of Florida geography from his scouts and other service in the army.

Darling and his fellow frontiersmen believed that the removal policy being pursued by the federal government was too timid. They demanded action from the U. S. Army to remove the final obstacle from the land so desperately sought by the settlers along the frontier. However, the U. S. Army was not in a rush to coerce the Indian population from the fertile lands of the Everglades region. It had, five years earlier, ended an exhaustive struggle with these same inhabitants and had lost more men and spent more money than any Indian war to that point, or after. The professional officers were not anxious for additional duty in the Florida swamps, where many had resigned or committed suicide in attempting to end their time in the quagmires.
John Darling.

Photograph courtesy of USF Special Collections.
The policy preferred by the military can be summed up in the words of Major General David E. Twiggs:

In my instructions I am not restricted as to time. This I hope was no accidental omission. In this affair time is a more important element than money. I may not be able to persuade this people to remove in months; with the whole regular force of the United States I might fail to coerce them in years. Months of persuasion cost neither money nor life. Every man I can induce to go, renders the task of forcible removal more easy. Every suttler's store I can establish in their country for trading in peace, opens a door for entrance in war. ... To remove these people with the least delay, we must take time enough to avert war, whether weeks, or months, or years be required.5

As if to reinforce this statement, Secretary of War George W. Crawford advised Twiggs: “You will take no hostile step against the Indians unless hereafter instructed, or the Indians become hostile, and then you will act according to previous instructions.”6 This was not a policy meant to endear the U. S. Army to the frontier leaders of Florida.

Yet Twiggs’ belief that the suttler's store was an important avenue into the heart of Indian country was given an odd twist by the opportunistic John Darling, who had experience as a suttler and trader in partnership with Thomas Kennedy. Well over a year prior to Twiggs’ penning of this sentiment, Darling had advised Governor W. D. Moseley:

I have suggested to the Agent to make gratuitous distributions of flour, and that only, or add whiskey if he will, although I do not think the latter commodity will aid the cause much, except on occasions. The reason I think that the distribution should be confined to flour, is this _ I learn that some of the Indians are already engaged in planting and raise corn in considerable quantities. This course will of course confirm their attachment to the soil, as they make improvements and find they can subsist without the aid of the United States. A liberal distribution of flour will have a tendency to stop cultivation and give them more leisure to talk and drink. Meat seems to be plenty among them and they say they have plenty of hogs and some cattle, but not many horses. If the old are supplied with flour, they can exchange it with the young for the products of the chase and thus produce a greater equality of condition among them. There is no instance that I recollect in the history of our intercourse with the Indian Tribes, where open dealing, perseverance, and skilful management have been used that has failed [to] purchase the Indian lands, except perhaps the Sacs and Foxes, and if it comes to that, the same course will have to be pursued here.7

The idea of creating a dependent Indian nation where cultural and political ranks were blurred was the cynical policy being advocated here. Darling believed that this policy would inculcate dependency to such an extent that the Indians who submitted to it would soon be easily removed by the promise of an annuity and an annual distribution of foodstuffs, in this case flour and meat. Darling would not hesitate to encourage frontier settlers to raid the Indian fields of corn and steal their cattle and hogs. For him, it served the purpose of reminding the Indians of their vulnerability and deprived them of sustenance, which would make their dependence that much greater. It also might have the positive effect of spurring them into an ill-timed attack that would force the U. S. Army into the final action for total removal.8

Another strategy suggested by Darling, and personally spearheaded by him, was the calling of public meetings in frontier communities to put pressure on state and federal officials to bring about removal. He reported the outcome of these meetings to Governor Thomas Brown in the following terms:
John Darling’s signed application, dated April 1843, in which he claimed 160 acres (along Old Tampa Bay) under the provisions of the Armed Occupation Act of 1842.
Public meetings have been held at this place, at Old Tampa, at Ichepeksassa, and on the Alafia, which were unanimous for the immediate removal of the Indians, the original proceedings of these meetings have been forwarded to you through this Post Office. I learn that a meeting was held at Manatee on the 20th instant, but I have not seen the proceedings, they were probably forwarded direct to you. I have called upon the Counties of Hernando, Monroe and Dade for an expression upon this subject, but I am not informed that an action has been taken upon my request.

Darling did not have to worry about the responses of the other counties. The Dade meeting was chaired by his close correspondent, George W. Ferguson, the postmaster and leading citizen of the Miami settlement, and the Manatee meeting was chaired by Dr. Joseph Braden, one of the mainstays of that community and a close ally of the political elite in Tallahassee. This form of political pressure on the authorities followed a long-standing frontier political tactic, which frequently had favorable results.

Thomas Brown had entered the office of governor in 1851 with a heavy agenda, which featured the removal of the Indians as a part of his regular addresses to the legislature and Congress. In his inaugural address to the legislature he noted that he had been advised that the force of United States troops already on the Florida frontier was deemed sufficient to secure the safety of its inhabitants. However, Brown did not believe this was the case. Noting that “there are other companies of settlers on the frontier, who were forced into service in defence of their families, and rendered hard service and suffered severe privations,” he pointed out these men would not have been needed if the regular force had been sufficient. He urged the General Assembly to pass a bill to emphasize the need to remove the Indians from Florida as soon as possible. As the governor put it, “The removal of the Indians from Florida has been assumed by the General Government as a duty, so repeatedly, and in such various and solemn forms, that it is beyond the power of language to make it clearer, or more binding and emphatic.”

The legislative branch did its duty and passed a bill on January 20, 1851, authorizing the governor to contact the President and the Secretary of War regarding the “speedy and final removal of the remnant of Seminole Indians now remaining in Florida.” Brown, in his second annual address to the General Assembly, reiterated the points made the previous year: “It becomes my duty again to call the serious attention of the General Assembly to the subject of the continuance of a portion of the tribe of Seminole Indians within the limits of this state, to the great annoyance of our people on the frontier, and detriment to the prosperity of the State.” Indeed, from 1848 until 1854, near the beginning of the Third Seminole War, each legislature issued calls to remove the Seminoles, keep them within their boundaries or restrict trade with the Indian population. By his constant letters and notes to the governors of Florida, John Darling
kept his hand in the agitation pie. Additionally, as a member of the Board of Internal Improvements for the Southern District, he had direct access to the most powerful men in the state, including the governor.

When Darling was approached by local citizens about the use of direct force against the Indians, in the tense period from 1849 to 1852, he advised them that “the state cannot possibly sanction the overt preparation of troops to operate against the Indians until it is known that Genl Blake has failed to remove them and the Genl Government has refused to exert force to effect that object, nor for the protection of the frontier until the conduct of the Indians make it necessary.” He pointed out that “either would be construed into an untimely interference, and if so at the expense of the state, a consequence to avoid if possible.” It was the expense, not the use of force to effect removal, that concerned Darling here. During this period, the state was constantly asking the federal government to reimburse it for the expenses entailed in calling out the troops in 1849. Because the state was financially strapped and, some believed, had called out the state troops without the sanction of the federal government, it may not have been entitled to the funds to replenish the state's thin treasury. This tight financial situation forced Darling and others to advise caution in calling out state troops to fight the Indians.

The arrival of General Luther Blake, the newly appointed Indian Agent in charge of removal, brought Darling’s attention to a peak, and he frequently informed the governor of the general’s movements. When the now famous incident involving Aaron Jernigan’s party occurred in early 1852, Darling was quick to advise: “It is undoubtedly right to make the Indians Know they must remain within their lines, and this is the way to show them; the only doubt I have about the matter is, whether or not it is premature, seeing the bad condition the frontier is in, to fend off in case the Indians should retaliate.” However, Darling continued: “The circumstance has happened just at the right time for General Blake arrived here yesterday morning with his retinue to commence his operation of removal. The Indians finding the country up against them in their favorite and most fortunate hunting grounds will be more disposed to listen to the proposals of Gen. Blake.” Darling noted that Blake’s retinue included the famed “Negro Abraham” and Elizabeth Bowlegs, “notorious some 13 years ago here as the Mistress of Capt. John C. Casey late Indian Agent.” This, he believed, may have been a mistake on the part of Blake, because “the Indians hold in supreme contempt the females who desert their tribes for the embraces of the foes of their race.” Yet, Darling did hold out some optimism that Blake might be able to induce the Seminoles to emigrate, particularly after Blake’s conference with Jernigan.

Viewing Jernigan’s exploits as beneficial to spurring the government into action, Darling wrote: “A telegraphic dispatch was received by the Qr. Master here on last Sunday evening from Genl. Twiggs prohibiting the further dismantling of the post which had been begun under the orders of Col. Winder it seems without authority, from all these movements I gather, I think, that the government is getting convalescent on the subject of Seminole removal and we have a prospect of being rid of them this time.” As late as June 25, 1852, Darling was writing with guarded optimism of Blake’s chances for some success in Indian removal, favoring, along with Blake’s negotiations, an armed occupation of the area north of the Caloosahatchee River which would, he declared, “facilitate the ultimate removal of the Indians.” Darling’s guarded optimism on removal proved to be somewhat prophetic in that only a few chose to be seduced by
A plat from 1845 shows the large area of south Florida, much of it occupied by Indians, that John Darling sought to open for development.

Photograph courtesy of USF Special Collections.
the offerings held out by Blake. The final fight for removal, however, was only a short time away.

The main thrust of Darling’s motivations regarding the removal of the Indian population from southern Florida was to make way for the internal improvements which he believed were needed to settle the country and make it prosper. In line with his rising stature as a merchant and man of some political power, he was appointed as a fisheries commissioner for his home area and an officer in the militia. April 1851 saw John Darling placed upon the newly formed Board of Internal Improvements. The following month, he outlined the concerns of his “southern district” in a letter to Governor Thomas Brown of May 6, 1851:

The removal of the Indians... The draining of the Everglades...The construction of a Canal, to connect the inland waters and form an Inland Water Communication from Cape Florida along the Atlantic Coast to St. Augustine... The clearing out of timber obstructions in Pease Creek so as to permit boats and rafts to float down the stream... and the construction of a Railroad from Tampa Bay to connect with the Atlantic and Gulf Railroad... are subjects interesting to the people of this section and as such I recommend them to this consideration of your Excellency and the Board of Internal Improvements. ...The Draining of the Everglades is a subject of too great magnitude to be idly dismissed or permanently abandoned ... the question is, are these waters sufficiently elevated above the level of the sea to permit them to be drawn off? If they are, then the Everglades can be made dry land. I have thought it possible that the waters of the Kissimmee River, which supply Okechobee, might be diverted from their present course and turned into Pease Creek through a canal. ... Clearing out the obstructions in Pease Creek would open a direct highway for the transportation of timber, tar, turpentine, and other produce, that will soon be prepared for market along its banks. If it were possible to turn the waters of the Kissimmee into Pease Creek, the latter could be made navigable for small steamers near one hundred miles from its mouth.

This fantastic development scheme was just one of many that came to Darling from his correspondents and personal knowledge of the area. The railroad program was already in the planning stages under the auspices of David Levy Yulee and his colleagues and the dream of an intracoastal waterway had a long history in the literature of Florida.

The drainage of the Everglades was the object of the famous Buckingham Smith report of 1848 and was a popular source of speculation at the time. It also found its way into the reports of Lieutenant J. Edmund Blake when he discussed the importance of the construction of the intracoastal canal, which was current in 1843 and 1845, the years of his surveys. In both 1845 and 1847, the legislature passed resolutions calling for drainage of the Everglades. But John Darling, with his seat on the newly created Board of Internal Improvements, was in a position to advocate and possibly fund these projects effectively. He did not let the opportunity slip past him.

The act which had led to the creation of the Board of Internal Improvements was the famed Swamp and Overflowed Land Act of 1850. This act, the most important piece of legislation in Florida history, endowed the state with all lands which were at least fifty percent covered with water, but capable of being drained and made cultivatable. This meant that up to forty-nine percent of the land could be classified as “uplands” and, in theory, perfectly dry. To get this land, the state had to send out surveyors to determine which units of land were covered by the 1850 law so the state could submit lists for final approval by the General Land Office. The first two men chosen for this important task were Arthur M. Randolph and Henry Wells. These surveyors
began the task of identifying the lands available under the Swamp and Overflowed Land Act which, in the end, amounted to over 20,000,000 acres of land to be sold or donated for internal improvements by the state government. This vast amount of land, the largest single land grant to any state in United States history, was in addition to the 500,000 acres acquired by the state under the great Preemption Act of 1841, the School Lands (Section 16s), the lands granted for Seminaries of Learning, and the Armed Occupation Act of 1842. Administration of this enormous wealth in land was one function of the Board of Internal Improvements.

As a board member, John Darling realized that the task of identifying the lands was just the start. To understand exactly what this land was capable of growing and what might be the benefit of specific internal improvements would take more expert advice. Therefore, in 1851 he called on the governor to create the office of State Engineer (Geologist): “As the accomplishment of any of these works depends upon their practicability, I respectfully suggest to your Excellency and the Board of Internal Improvements, at the earliest day practicable, to cause a scientific survey to be made by the State Engineer, of the Everglades with a view to their draining either by cutting off the sources of Okechobee or otherwise _ of the route from Cape Florida to St. Augustine with a view to the construction of a Canal and also to the quantity of overflowed lands that would be drained by such a canal.”21 The legislature, under the guidance of Governor Brown, did just this in its next session, creating the Office of State Engineer and Geologist.22

John Darling also noted that most of the early surveys of Florida were conducted in the dry season, and these results would naturally have reduced the amount of public land under the 1850 law. He therefore requested that the county surveyors check the plat of lands against the actual conditions of the land during the rainy season, when thousands of acres would be subject to seasonal overflow. These new surveys could be the basis for requesting untold acres of land by the state under the Swamp and Overflowed Land Act.23

Based upon his experience as a fisheries commissioner, Darling was also aware that the state would have to protect its new-found wealth from opportunistic depredations by timber cutters, especially those harvesting cedar. The loss of value on state lands would inevitably hurt the chance for the sale of these lands and lessen the amount of money available for internal improvements.24 The later appointment of “timber agents” by the state proved Darling to be a farsighted and practical man.

To assist in his campaign for internal improvements in the southern district, Darling solicited letters from two prominent citizens, George W. Ferguson and Captain William Cooley. He noted for Governor Brown: “If the premises of Mr. Ferguson be the fact a very large portion of the Everglades may be reclaimed. Capt. Wm. Cooley, an old resident of Cape Florida, who was a guide in Capt. Powell’s expeditions in that region and who is consequently more familiar with that region than any other, person who has not had the same opportunity of observation, is of the same opinion; and besides he says there is a fall of 12 feet in the Sanybel [Caloosahatchee] River near Fort Thompson, he speaks highly of the character of the land south of the Sanybel River particularly that portion known as the Big Cypress. The fact that the Indians have agreed to retire south of that River, if true, is the best proof that the country is good.”25 Ferguson’s letter, dated May 12, 1851, emphasized the ease with which the Everglades could be drained, particularly since the falls of the Miami River, where he had established a coontie mill fell five feet nine
inches. This observation, in conjunction with similar ones gathered on trips up and down the coast, induced him to conclude that the drainage could be successful. Ferguson also stressed the ease with which the natural waterbodies could be connected to form a smooth, almost natural intracoastal waterway. The construction of many drainage canals along the natural outlets of the Everglades would dry out additional lands bordering them and open the whole area to settlement. In this reporting, he repeated the observations earlier made by Lieutenant J. Edmund Blake and the Buckingham Smith report.

In a ten-page letter, dated August 11, 1851, Tampa’s William Cooley made similar arguments. He claimed that “it will not require more than 15 miles of wraught canal to open a light draft steamboat navigate [sic] inland from Key Biscayne Bay to Indian River Haulover.” He, too, felt that the natural slope of the Everglades could be used to advantage to drain the “River of Grass” and make it cultivatable.

Backed by Cooley’s letter, Darling made his pitch to Governor Brown. “I am satisfied,” he wrote, “that all that will be required to effectually drain the Everglades, will be to enlarge the natural outlets of this watery region; or create equivalent artificial outlets; or cut off the extra supply of water to Lake Okeechobee, either of which it is believed is practicable.” Butressed by the arguments of these two prominent south Florida pioneers, Darling felt confident in pushing forward with his internal improvement recommendations.

As a resident of Tampa, John Darling also carried the torch for the construction of a railroad from Fernandina or Jacksonville which would terminate in Tampa, not Cedar Keys. Writing on November 18, 1851, he informed Governor Brown:

A charter to construct the Atlantic and Gulf Railroad has been granted by the General Assembly; but up to this time I am not informed that any material progress has been made in the work. I believe that if this should terminate at Cedar Keys, it will prove prejudicial to the interests of the state and the stockholders; because a better Harbor can be obtained at Tampa Bay as will be more certainly known when that point shall be surveyed for such purpose....I consider this an important work which when in operation will give new impulse to the industry of the interior and open a market for our extensive timber forests.

Darling, as noted earlier, led the drive to get each county to hold meetings to urge Indian removal, and, coincidently, during the Tampa meeting of December 15, 1851, he introduced the motion to send delegates to a railroad convention to be held in New Orleans the next month. At the same meeting, he was appointed to the internal improvements committee which brought forth resolutions concerning the development of railroads in Florida. In 1856, when a railroad convention was held at Ocala for the purpose of getting a branch line to Tampa through that section of the state, Darling and Tampa store owner William Cooley were selected as delegates to represent Tampa.

That Darling was consistent during these years of his life can be seen in his voting pattern during his only term in the General Assembly. While serving in 1855, he introduced a resolution concerning the use of monies earned from the sale and/or lease of Internal Improvement Lands and Swamp and Overflowed Lands which stated that the money should not be invested in state bonds but preserved in the treasury and used to pay only the interest on the bonds. He also introduced two bills to limit the way bond money of the Internal Improvement Fund should be
invested. He voted for the famous “Act to Encourage a Liberal System of Internal 
Improvements,” which set up the current Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust 
Fund (composed of the Governor and Cabinet today). Part of this bill specified the construction 
of the railroad to connect the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. He also voted for an act to prevent the 
depredation of state lands of all categories, especially timber, which was in keeping with his 
earlier ideas and concerns.32

John Darling is best remembered in Tampa as a founder of the Masonic Lodge and the cornet 
band and as an important and successful merchant. He also carved a place for himself in the 
history of Florida for his activities leading to and during the Civil War. He is known as one of 
the founders of the “Silver Grays,” a volunteer unit for the home defense of Tampa, in which he 
was a lieutenant, serving under Captain William Cooley. During most of the war he served as the 
registrar of lands for southern Florida. He was an active public servant, serving as city clerk and 
county commissioner, and in the latter office he signed a resolution favoring succession. His 
contemporaries included Ossian B. Hart, Henry L. Mitchell (both later governors of Florida), 
James T. Magbee, John Jackson, William B. Hooker, Jesse Carter, H. V. Snell, William and 
Samuel E. Hope, and the notorious Henry A. Crane. Among this cast of notables, John Darling 
strode as an equal, cajoling for school consolidation, running the young “Know Nothing” party 
in Hillsborough County and pushing for internal improvements so people could settle the land 
and make it productive. His life is a true picture of an active frontiersman, willing to take an 
advantage when available and willing to lead when needed. He is, and should always be 
remembered, as one of Tampa’s founding fathers and a leader for causes benefiting his concept 
of “civilization.”

Darling’s role as a facilitator of Indian removal and internal improvements is well documented, 
but he also clearly had the ability to persuade others to follow his leadership. Evaluating his role 
requires greater appreciation for Darling as a reflection of frontier Florida attitudes and actions in 
the areas of Indian removal and the struggle for internal improvements, including the drainage of 
the Everglades. Historical context, always an important concept too frequently lost in today’s 
exposition, is what must be understood before we can “judge” the importance of frontier Florida 
attitudes as reflected in the study of the life of John Darling. To pioneers like Darling, who put 
life and fortune on the line in the wilderness of Florida, we owe a great deal, but exactly how 
much is the true question. The answer will say as much about us as it does John Darling.

1 John Darling to William Moseley, January 6, 1848, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81: 
Seminole Agency 1824-76, Record Group 75, National Archives, Microfilm Roll 801, Microcopy 234.

2 Tampa Tribune, February 3, 1957, 14-D.

3 Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army (Washington, D.C.: Government 
Printing Office, 1903), 353. The author would like to thank Canter Brown, Jr. for the use of his research and 
enlightening discussions concerning Darling and other figures mentioned in this article.

4 Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1924-81: Seminole Agency Emigration, 1827-1946, Record 
Group 75, Roll 806. “Quarterly Statement of Agents and Others Employed in the Removal and Subsistence of 
Seminole Indians for the Quarter Ending the 30th Day of June 1837.” Darling is listed here as a clerk in the Tampa 
Bay Agency office.

5 House of Representatives Executive Document No. 5, 31st Congress, 1st Session (December 27, 1849), 132.
6 Crawford to Twiggs, November 28, 1849, ibid., 137.

7 Darling to Moseley, January 6, 1848.

8 That Darling and Governor Thomas Brown were of a similar mind set can be seen by Darling’s letters to Brown, dated February 14 and March 4, 1852. Florida Department of State, Division of Archives and Records Management, Series 755, Carton 2, Tallahassee, Florida.

9 Darling to Brown, December 28, 1851, “Swamp & Overflow,” rectangular file box, Land Records and Title Section, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Tallahassee, Florida.

10 The letters and petitions to Governor Brown can be found in the Department of State, Division of Archives and Records Service, Series 755, Carton 2.


13 See Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Florida: 1848, Chapter 260, “An Act for the Purpose of keeping the Indians within Their Proper Boundary”; 1850, Chapter 418, “An Act to provide for the final removal of the Indians now Remaining in Florida beyond the limits of the State”; 1852, Three Captures, 536 (Laws of the State apply to the Seminoles and other Indians), 537 (prevent Negroes from within the Indians limits from leaving the State) and 538, “An Act to prevent the trading with the Indians in this state”; and, in 1854, Resolution No. 15 (Requesting the Sect. of War to ask the Indian Agent for delivery of a Negro man belonging to B.M. Dell).

14 Darling to Brown, December 28, 1851.

15 Darling to Brown, February 14, 1852.

16 Ibid.

17 Darling to Brown, March 4, 1852.

18 Darling to Brown, June 25, 1852.

19 For his role as a fisheries commissioner, see his report on page 21, exhibits, for the *Journal of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the State of Florida, 1846* (Tallahassee, 1847). His appointment as fisheries commissioner was made by Governor Moseley on December 27, 1845. (See Florida State Archives, Division of Archives and Records Management, Record Group 101, Series 679, Box 1, Folder 4.) His success as a merchant can be documented in the Census for 1850 (page 249, Schedule 1, County of Hillsborough, Fort Brook, Tampa Bay), which lists his holdings at $7,500 in real estate. By the 1860 Census his wealth had ballooned to $68,340 in real estate and $44,405 in personal estate. He was notified of his selection to the Board of Internal Improvement on April 22, 1851. Darling to Brown, May 6, 1851, Florida Department of State, Division of Archives and Records Management, Series 755, Carton 2.

20 Darling to Brown, May 6, 1851.

21 Ibid.


23 Darling to Brown, May 11, 1851.
24 Ibid.

25 “Swamp & Overflow,” rectangular file box, Land Records and Title Section, Division of State Lands, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Tallahassee, Florida. This box is unorganized and the letters lay as stored.

26 Paul S. George and Joe Knetsch. “Life on the Miami Frontier,” South Florida History Magazine (Fall 1990), 7-9. This article includes transcribed copies of two letters written by G.W. Ferguson explaining his views on internal improvements in southern Florida.


28 Darling to Brown, August 16, 1851.

29 “Swamp & Overflow,” rectangular file box, Land Records and Title Section, Division of State Lands, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Tallahassee, Florida.

30 Letter/Minutes of December 15, 1851 (Jesse Carter, Chairman; John Darling, Secretary), Florida Department of State, Division of Archives and Records Management, Series 755, Carton 2.

31 The Peninsular (Tampa), August 30, 1956, p. 2.

32 This paragraph is based on a study of Darling’s votes during the session of 1855, where he replaced Jesse Carter, the elected representative from Hillsborough County. He served only from November 29 to December 13, 1855. Yet, he was active in the discussions concerning internal improvements, served on the Indian Affairs and Incorporations Committee, and was often heard on the floor debating the concerns of his constituents regarding the judicial system. Journal of the Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the State of Florida, 1855 (Tallahassee, 1855), 44-145.
CHILD LABOR IN FLORIDA: 
A PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY

Children have always worked, but not until the late nineteenth century did reformers initiate the campaign to restrict child labor. As children moved with their parents from family farms to urban workplaces, their exploitation became more apparent, especially as it was exposed in dramatic photographs that showed their sad faces with vacant stares. Indeed, photography played a major role in the crusade of the National Child Labor Committee to remove children from dangerous jobs, establish a minimum age for their employment, limit their hours of work, and prohibit working at night. Organized in 1904, the National Child Labor Committee was one of many progressive movements led by aroused middle-class reformers who sought to curb the abuses associated with industrialization.1

After northern states took steps to restrict the exploitation of children in the workplace, the South became a target of reformers. Early in this century, many southern industries, including textiles and canning, employed large numbers of children as young as five and six years of age. In 1900, some 25,000 children under the age of fifteen were employed in southern factories. Countless others labored in the fields and branches of agriculture that increasingly relied on paid labor to plant, harvest, and process crops. Once northern states passed the first restrictions on child labor in the late nineteenth century, the South used the absence of state controls, or the presence of less restrictive legislation, as a competitive advantage in attracting runaway industries, notably in textiles.2

At the beginning of this century, Florida’s less industrialized economy employed children in certain sectors. In addition to agriculture, where children worked alongside their parents, the most notorious employers of children were seafood processors, canning plants for fruits and vegetables, and the so-called street trades, which included selling newspapers, carrying messages, making deliveries, and shining shoes. Tampa’s cigar industry also employed children, as can be seen in photographs from the period.3

The prevalence of child labor in the Sunshine State attracted the attention of reformers. In 1908, the National Child Labor Committee hired a young photographer, the now famous Lewis W. Hine, to document the working conditions of American youth, and he made several trips through Florida in the years before World War I. His photographs were carefully crafted political statements that proved a powerful tool in the fight against child labor. Following in the footsteps of other states, Florida passed a law in 1913 that prohibited the employment of children under fourteen in mills, factories, laundries, and theaters. Boys under ten and girls under sixteen were barred from selling newspapers in cities with a population of more than 6,000, where children under twelve were prohibited from working in stores or offices and from delivering merchandise or messages. The law also limited the hours children under sixteen could work to fifty-four hours in a six-day week. All night work by children under eighteen was prohibited. In addition to the obvious exemptions, Florida’s statute was further weakened by a provision that set at a maximum fine of fifty dollars for violation of the law.4

https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/tampabayhistory/vol17/iss2/1

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Despite the many loopholes in such legislation, the number of children working declined in the U. S. after 1910, but in Florida and elsewhere, children continued to be an important source of labor in some sectors. Many, of course, worked legally, but illegal employment was common due to the lack of enforcement and the opposition of parents who still wanted the additional income provided by their children’s labor. In 1920, Florida’s enforcement apparatus consisted of only one inspector for the entire state, and he had to cope with employers and parents who conspired to disobey the law. False birth certificates were easy to secure, and obviously underage children could flee the job site when word spread that the state inspector was in town.5

Another obstacle to eliminating child labor was Americans’ ambivalent attitude toward work by children. On the one hand, most people agreed that boys and girls should not be allowed to operate dangerous equipment or work before reaching at least the age of twelve. On the other hand, many Americans continued to think of work, especially by teenagers, as a way of learning the virtues of self-reliance, thrift, and dependability. Reformers fought back by pointing that working children, especially in the street trades, also learned how to cheat, smoke, steal, and pimp. Nevertheless, the ambivalent attitude toward child labor helps explain why it was not until 1938 that the federal government successfully passed legislation effectively outlawing the employment of children under sixteen in many industries (other than agriculture) and barring children under eighteen from working in dangerous occupations. Despite this ban, a 1992 government report found that 670 youths aged sixteen and seventeen were killed on the job in the 1980s. Recent abuses have led the National Child Labor Committee to conclude that “Child labor today is at a point where violations are greater than at any point during the 1930s.”6

The following photo essay shows children at work in a variety of Florida settings from fields to factories to local streets. While many of these scenes have disappeared, others still exist in contemporary Florida, often hidden from view in fields and sweatshops.
Aurel Rosin of Arcadia, described as a “young entrepreneur” in 1915, was clearly at play, not at work, but scenes like this reflect Americans' ambivalent attitude toward work by children.

Photograph courtesy of Florida State Archives.
Agriculture was the oldest and most common employer of children like the one in the foreground, picking strawberries in Polk County in 1915. Until the 1950s, child labor was considered so important in picking strawberries that schools closed during the harvest season in winter.

Photograph courtesy of Florida State Archives.

A group of strawberry pickers go home after a day’s work in the fields in the 1930s. Children were considered especially good at picking this crop, because they had nimble fingers and could crawl more easily than adults.

Photograph from The WPA Guide to Florida.
Flora English and Louise Bonniwell at the John C. English citrus packing house in Alva (Lee County) in about 1905.

Photograph courtesy of Florida State Archives.
Children helping operate a crude sugar cane mill in Manatee County in the early 1900s. The mill extracted juice from the cane to make sugar.

Photograph from *Yesterday’s Bradenton* by Arthur C. Schofield.

Children in 1903 feeding sugar cane into a mill located in St. Petersburg.

Photograph from *St. Petersburg and the Florida Dream* by Raymond Arsenault.
A young boy working as a “dipper” in a turpentine camp. The “dippers” emptied the cups filled with gum from pine trees into buckets; these were then emptied into 50-gallon barrels and taken for processing to a distillery. A “dipper” could fill four to seven barrels a day.

Photograph from Venice: Journey from Horse and Chaise by Janet Snyder Matthews.

The two boys (right) worked at the sawmill of Harrison M. Evans (seen here with his wife and two sons) in Largo in 1905. Fourteen-year-old Cliff Fussell (farthest right) made $1.50 a day at the mill.

Photograph from Largo. Florida. Then ‘til... by Harvey L. Wells.
So-called “street trades” like selling newspapers and making deliveries employed some very young children. This photo of Leslie and Eric Cooper, ages 6 and 10, was taken in Tampa by Lewis W. Hine in 1913. According to Hine, who worked for the National Child Labor Committee, the two boys worked all day, seven days a week.

Photograph courtesy of Florida State Archives.

Newspaper boys who were selling the Tampa Daily Times in 1922. Under state law they had to be at least 10 years old.

Photograph courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System.
Two young messenger boys who worked in Tampa. Florida’s 1913 child labor law prohibited children under 12 from delivering messages or merchandise, which in addition to the long hours was considered a dangerous job.

Photograph courtesy of Florida State Archives.

Wilbur Gold, a 12-year-old messenger for Western Union, was photographed by Lewis Hine in Tampa in 1911. Gold worked until 11 at night, but in 1913 the state made night work illegal for children under 18.

Photograph courtesy of Florida State Archives.
Western Union messenger boys photographed in Tampa in 1921.

Photograph courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System.

J. Mack Towne (seated center) and his son D.P. Towne (dressed in black) posed with the staff of Tampa’s Towne Laundry in 1903. The staff included several young boys. Florida’s 1913 child labor law prohibited the employment of children under 14 in laundries.

Photograph courtesy of USF Special Collections.
Twelve-year-old S.B. (Buck) Cochrane took a break from his bread delivery job to pose for this picture in Glades County. Youths in communities with a population of less than 6,000 were exempted from many provisions of the Florida’s child labor law.

Photograph from Glades County.

Children worked in services related to Florida’s tourist industry. Here a child drives tourists in the 1890s along the route of the Sanford & St. Petersburg Railroad.

Photograph courtesy of USF Special Collections.
A barefoot caddy at a course in the Tampa area (date unknown).

Photograph courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System.

Young caddies at a golf course in Bradenton in 1926.

Photograph courtesy of Florida State Archives.
Cigarmaking required a long period of apprenticeship, in some cases up to two years. Prospective cigarmakers attended “factory schools” like this one in Ybor City. According to Lewis Hine, who took the picture in 1909, young apprentices paid the boss $15 to $25 for being taught.

Photograph courtesy of the Albin O. Kuhn Library, University of Maryland.

Young cigarmakers at Englehardt & Co. in Tampa (1909). Lewis Hine noted, “Youngsters all smoke.” This observation reflected one of the concerns of reformers who sought to curb child labor.

Photograph from Lewis Hine by John R. Kemp.
Young cigarmakers working in the factory of Filogamo & Alvarez in 1909. In busy times, factories employed many young workers, a practice labor leaders in the cigar industry tried to stop. Control over the number of apprentices was always an issue in union negotiations.

Photograph from *Lewis Hine* by John R. Kemp.

Women and young girls were also employed in the cigar industry. This Lewis Hine photo of a box factory in Tampa in 1909 shows them making cigar boxes.

Photograph courtesy of the Albin O. Kuhn Library, University of Maryland.
Even after restrictions on other forms of labor, children continued to work legally in agriculture, as demonstrated by this 1946 scene near Plant City in Hillsborough County.

Photograph courtesy of Florida State Archives.

Charley Micco, a young Seminole, worked alongside his grandfather on a cattle ranch in 1950.

Photograph courtesy of Florida State Archives.

2 Ibid., 36-41.


4 Ibid., 87-93; Trattner, *Crusade for the Children*, 105-106.


FATHER PHILIPPE DE CARRIERE:
A JESUIT PIONEER ON FLORIDA’S
WEST COAST, 1888-1902
by Michael J. McNally

In the late nineteenth century, much of South Florida was still a frontier with isolated settlers living far from one another. Even as Tampa grew into a substantial city after the arrival of the cigar industry in the 1880s, its hinterland was sprinkled with sparsely settled communities. Ministering to the religious needs of South Florida’s residents proved a real challenge, especially in the case of Catholics who were a small percent of the population spread across the forbidding landscape, often in hard-to-reach locations. Moreover, Catholics living in the city of Tampa were increasingly Spanish-speaking immigrants. The challenge of sustaining the faith of Catholic settlers was met by Jesuit priests, especially Father Philippe de Carriere, who served for fourteen years on Florida’s West Coast.

St. Louis Parish (since 1905 called Sacred Heart Parish), Tampa, was established in 1860. From then to 1888, the parish had ten diocesan priest pastors. Omitting the total of 11.5 years when the pastorate of St. Louis was vacant, the average tenure of diocesan pastors between 1860 and 1888 was a short 1.7 years. The parish had five pastors from 1887 to 1888, three of whom suffered untimely deaths.

In May 1887 yellow fever broke out in Key West and soon spread to Tampa with devastating effects. The Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, who had arrived in Tampa in 1881 and opened a school, kept a diary that reported on October 5, 1887: “…the epidemic has become alarming.... Many families left the place, fearing the disease.... Every afternoon the parishioners met in Church to pray.” About fifty percent of the local population caught the disease whose cause was unknown. Although only a small proportion actually died of yellow fever, it decimated the clergy.

Forty-three-year-old Father Charles Peterman, the much-respected pastor of Tampa’s St. Louis Parish since 1883, contracted yellow fever on October 24, 1887. Upon hearing the news, the Bishop of St. Augustine, John Moore, sent Orlando’s pastor, forty-year-old Father Felix P. Swemberg, to Tampa to tend Peterman and the parish. Swemberg, ordained for the Vicar Apostolic of Kansas in 1868, moved to Orlando in late 1885, and founded St. James Parish. Reaching Tampa by October 27, 1887, Swemberg discovered Peterman dead. Only four days later Father Swemberg too expired from yellow fever, but not before the experienced missioner Father Henry P. Clavreul, pastor of St. Joseph’s, Mandarin, arrived. After burying Peterman and Swemberg, Clavreul, who was immune to the disease, cautioned Bishop Moore not to send another priest to Tampa for the time being.

Almost a year later, on September 12, 1888, Father Clavreul was relieved by Father Denis O’Sullivan, a young Irishman of the Diocese of Newark and a former missioner in Africa, who had lived through several epidemics and who volunteered to help disease-ridden Florida. After only twelve days in Tampa, he, too, died from yellow fever. With no other Catholic clergy there from September 24 to October 17, 1888, Tampa was without the ministrations of a priest.
Meanwhile, another priest in Key West expired of the same disease. In one year Bishop Moore lost one-quarter of his priests to yellow fever, while fifty percent of them were infected with it, including the Bishop himself.\(^3\)

Moore begged for emergency help from the New Orleans Jesuits, a group he had turned to earlier in 1882 to care for Catholic settlers around San Antonio, Florida. Although they had refused him then, they responded positively now. Father James Duffo, a sixty-two-year-old French Jesuit who was fever-immune, was sent from Selma, Alabama, to Jacksonville.\(^4\) The New Orleans Jesuit Superior, John O'Shanahan, received a second desperate letter from Moore on October 5, 1888, asking for a bilingual priest to serve temporarily the growing Spanish-speaking population in the Tampa region; at 5 P.M. the next day Father O'Shanahan called to his room the sixty-three-year-old French-born Father Philippe de Carriere.

Born in Toulouse, France, on April 20, 1825, of an aristocratic family, de Carriere had entered the Society of Jesus in 1844. He went to Spring Hill College, a Jesuit school in Alabama, in 1848 and was ordained in Mobile in 1857. O'Shanahan chose de Carriere not only because of his Caribbean missionary experience and multilingual skills, but also because he thought that the older Jesuit was immune from yellow fever because of his long years in the tropics. De Carriere
knew that this was not the case, since he never contracted the disease! Yet he said nothing and with obedience typical of Jesuits, de Carriere “accepted willingly” his superior’s “invitation” to serve Tampa. At 3:30 P.M. the next day, Sunday, October 7, 1888, with prayers, alms, provisions for the journey, and with $100 in his pocket, de Carriere left New Orleans by rail for Tampa, less than twenty-four hours after accepting O’Shanahan’s “invitation.” Given the disease-ridden reputation of Tampa and knowing the fate of three other priests there, the French Jesuit was sure that he was going to his death: “I pledged my life for the sake of that mission,” he later wrote.

After a long and arduous train trip, Father de Carriere arrived in Tampa at 10:30 P.M. on October 17, 1888. He was the first Jesuit on Florida’s West Coast in 319 years. Father Juan Rogel, a Spanish Jesuit, had been pastor of the Calusa at San Antonio de Padua Parish on Mound Key (Estero Bay) from 1567 to 1569. Disembarking the train in 1888, the French Jesuit discovered Tampa quarantined. “The city was almost deserted,” he observed; “I was the only minister dwelling in it.” However, it was not the epidemic that struck de Carriere as most discouraging, but rather what he called the “spiritual misery” of Tampa. He wrote: “It could not be remedied except through a crusade of prayers,” which he solicited from friends in the South and in France. “In a word,” he continued, “heaven had been stormed in favor of Tampa and of Florida.”

Meanwhile, Bishop Moore looked for a permanent solution to the pastoral needs of Tampa. He had no diocesan priest to send. Hearing of this, Father O’Shanahan, the New Orleans Jesuit Superior since 1888, sought to expand Jesuit apostolates into Florida. Through de Carriere’s mediation, Bishop Moore looked favorably on O’Shanahan’s offer of help.

The New Orleans Jesuits had their roots in France. In 1837 four French Jesuit priests, two brothers, and a novice traveled from France’s Lyon Province to New Orleans. From 1838 to 1884 the Jesuits opened four colleges: St. Charles in Grand Coteau, Louisiana (1838); Spring Hill in Mobile, Alabama (1847); Immaculate Conception in New Orleans (1847); and St. Mary’s in Galveston, Texas (1884). By 1880 the New Orleans Jesuits had become an independent mission from Lyon. At that time they had fifty priests, thirty-seven brothers, and forty-eight
On July 31, 1889, Father O’Shanahan met with Moore to propose that the Bishop hand over to the New Orleans Jesuits eight South Florida counties (Hillsborough, Polk, De Soto, Manatee, Osceola, Lee, Dade, Monroe) “exclusively and in perpetuity for sacred ministry and the care of souls.” This extraordinary arrangement gave to the Jesuits over one-third of Moore’s diocese permanently! On September 25, 1889, Father John Quinlan, an Irish-born Jesuit, arrived as pastor of St. Louis Parish, Tampa, thus officially initiating the 1889 agreement even before the formal document was signed by Bishop Moore and Father O’Shanahan on September 3, 1891.

Up to then, that is from October 1888 to September 1889, the aged Father de Carriere was pastor of St. Louis Parish and in charge of all its surrounding missions. During the summer of 1889, de Carriere began contacting Catholics scattered throughout the surrounding territory. On May 16 and 17 he journeyed to Lakeland. Returning to Tampa for the weekend, he left again on Monday, May 20, by steamer across Tampa Bay to Point Pinellas (St. Petersburg), where he was told that one Catholic family lived. Although Mass was said there as early as 1878, de Carriere found only a handful of Catholics, including the aged Vincent Lionardi and the Torres family. The next morning (May 21) de Carriere took the 6:30 A.M. train for Tarpon Springs. There he visited the family of Judge D. J. Murphy. Using a small chapel Murphy had built, de Carriere heard confessions and said Mass for ten persons. He returned to Tampa the same day via a six-hour ride by mule carriage. The following Monday, May 27, he left Tampa by steamer for Manatee and reached Fogartyville, visiting the home of Irish-born Captain Bartholomew Fogarty, who also had constructed a chapel near his house. The next day Bart Fogarty made his First Communion. The collection amounted to $4.15, noted de Carriere, who returned to Tampa by steamer on May 28.

The next Monday, June 3, de Carriere left Tampa again, this time for Bloomingdale (southeast of today’s Brandon near the Alafia River). Staying three days, he heard confessions, said Mass, preached, gave a public lecture on “The True Church,” baptized, instructed converts, and gave First Communion to two adults. He also started a fund drive to build a church and appointed several laymen to serve as the building committee. On June 5 de Carriere left Bloomingdale by train for the six-hour trip back to Tampa, carrying a collection of six dollars in hand.

Father de Carriere’s missionary pattern was repeated by other Jesuits in the years that followed. St. Louis Parish was the base of operations for congregation-gathering and evangelization among the widespread Catholics on the West Coast. This parish-based missionary pattern, common throughout the South, was three-staged. First, a station was established, which served as a place where Catholics gathered, usually at the home of a prominent family. Before a station was founded, the priest-missionary had to search out Catholics. Once the station was established, the priest visited it periodically, which meant sporadically, briefly, and usually unannounced, but never on a Sunday since on that day he needed to be at St. Louis Parish in Tampa. Although Catholics in a locality often remained a station for years, as soon as practical the congregation was moved to the second stage. This mission stage demanded a concentration of Catholics and the construction of a church, however modest. The priest visited missions more frequently and more regularly than stations. But what separated the mission from the third stage of
Father Philippe de Carriere at the age of 82 on the occasion of his 50th anniversary as a priest.

Photograph courtesy of ANOPSJ.
development, the parish, was the presence of a residential pastor appointed by the Bishop. A pastor and his people, not the church building, constitute a parish. Whereas a station or a mission is often not self-supporting, a parish usually must be. From 1889 through 1919 Jesuits exclusively tended Catholics at all three stages of development on both coasts of Florida. It is a tribute to their diligence that by 1919 more missions were ready to become parishes than there were Jesuits to pastor them.

Besides overseeing rural stations and missions, de Carriere founded urban missions as well. On April 25, 1889, de Carriere visited Port Tampa for the first time; by the turn-of-the-century it had a mission chapel. Soon after his arrival, Father de Carriere went to Ybor City to continue negotiations for a site begun earlier between Father Peterman and Vicente Martínez Ybor, the cigar manufacturer. Settling on a lot, the purchase price was $5,000, a bargain thought Martínez Ybor, who supposed the land was worth $8,000. Although neither Bishop Moore nor Father de Carriere felt they were getting a bargain, they concluded the deal, aided by a $1,000 down-payment given by Henry Flagler, East Coast railroad magnate.10

Father de Carriere’s solitary posting came to an end with the arrival on September 25, 1889, of Father John Quinlan, a Jesuit who took over as pastor of St. Louis Parish, with de Carriere his assistant. Quinlan, a native of County Cork, Ireland, described his Tampa parish as 260 miles

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Tampa’s St. Louis Church in about 1887.

Photograph courtesy of ANOPSIJ.
long and 150 miles wide, comprised of twenty small cities. Father Quinlan listed nineteen stations and missions which de Carriere had served from the parish when he was the sole priest. These far-flung locations included Arcadia, Bartow, Bloomingdale, Ft. Meade, Haines City, Jupiter, Kissimmee, Lakeland, Fogartyville, Bradenton, Manatee, Miami, Ft. Myers, Pinellas, Punta Gorda, St. Cloud, St. Petersburg, Tarpon Springs, and Ten-thousand Islands.11

On April 19, 1891, Ybor City’s first Catholic church, Our Lady of Mercy Mission (named for a nineteenth-century Marian devotion of Cubans) began services. At a time when wood-frame churches of comparable size cost from $200 to $400, Our Lady of Mercy Church cost $1,665.79, signifying it was not a cheap or second-class building. Three years later the mission became a parish. In July 1892 Father Quinlan was transferred and replaced by another Irishman, Father William Tyrell. Three other Jesuits were assigned with Tyrell, including Father de Carriere.12

During the seven years of Tyrell’s leadership, the pastoral care in the area grew in complexity, largely due to his energetic efforts, which included the opening of a Jesuit high school in 1899 and the completion of a magnificent new church named Sacred Heart in 1905. When Tyrell left Tampa in 1899 for Spring Hill College, fifteen Jesuits were assigned to the Florida Jesuit Missions. Thirteen were based in Tampa, of whom three were full-time missionaries to the outlying areas. Tyrell’s successor was Daniel O’Sullivan, who served from September 1899 to April 1903 and under whose superiorship de Carriere was transferred from Tampa in 1902.13

From September 1889 to 1902 Father de Carriere, whose age, personality, and experience made him a sought-after advisor, had several pastoral responsibilities. In addition to serving as assistant pastor at St. Louis Parish and chaplain to the Sisters of the Holy Names Convent, Father de Carriere was keeper of the Jesuit house diary, a function that he fulfilled with such care that his records are a gold mine for historians. From his arrival in 1888 until his departure in 1902, Father de Carriere kept meticulous notes on the development of the Jesuit Florida Missions. After leaving Tampa, he wrote several recollections of his experiences on the West Coast.14 His writings are revealing, insightful, and refreshingly frank, more direct and colorful than any of his diarist successors. They also describe components of parish life from 1888 to 1902, among them clerical life and attitudes about Catholic schools and religious women.

One critical aspect of clerical life is the relationship of priests to the diocesan bishop. Bishop Moore maintained very good relations with the Tampa Jesuits, and Father de Carriere deeply respected the Bishop, as is shown by what he wrote when Moore died in late July 1901: “In him our Society lost a true friend and the Jesuit Fathers of the Mission of Florida their beloved founder, protector, and benefactor.”15

To be a Catholic priest in South Florida from 1888 to 1919 meant to be a Jesuit. Born in the turmoil of the Reformation, the Jesuits were action-oriented with a threefold focus as school masters, spiritual directors, and missionaries. As an international organization with a strict military-like chain of command loyal to the Pope and the Jesuit General, self-sacrifice and a willingness to take on any task was deeply ingrained in them. Jesuit personnel were interchangeable parts; no one priest had a monopoly on any one work to the exclusion of others. As Father de Carriere wrote of the ideal Jesuit in 1896: “He ought to be ready and willing at all
times [to allow] any other laborer [who] would and should come to facilitate him [in] the work of salvation [and] in the share of souls he has received for Christ and not for himself only.\textsuperscript{16}

Beginning with the venerable Father de Carriere, one Jesuit was always assigned as the confessor and chaplain to the Sisters of the Holy Names in Tampa. Their Catholic academy, taught by themselves as religious women, was held in highest esteem by Catholics. Father de Carriere wrote in 1896 that the Catholic school was so essential to the work of the parish that it should be constructed even before a church building. However, he favored parochial schools, which were tuition-free schools, rather than academies, which were private institutions run by religious women and which took in boarders and demanded tuition.\textsuperscript{17}

Father de Carriere critically reflected in 1896 about parochial schools and the Sisters. He perceived a possible conflict between the educational needs of the parish and the purposes of the Holy Names Sisters’ Academy. An 1891 agreement between the Sisters and the Jesuits said that the Sisters were not to refuse any child who could not pay since the pastor would make up any serious school deficit. Yet five years after the agreement, Tampa still had no established “system of parochial schools.” The majority of Catholic school children went to public schools, wrote de Carriere, because Catholic families were too poor to pay the tuition demanded at the Sisters’ Academy. In short, de Carriere opposed the academy system because he felt it discriminated against the poor, whereas a parochial school was preferable because it provided free education.

\textbf{The Holy Names Academy in about 1892, when it was located on Twiggs Street.}

Photograph courtesy of the Archives of the Sisters of the Name of Jesus and Mary.
paid for by the parish. The Sisters, claimed de Carriere, were formed in a narrow view of poverty in their novitiate, a very severe personal economy coupled with “a greedy instinct for getting occasionally all the petty gains they can make for their community,” even at the expense of the poor. He stated that the Holy Name Sisters opposed free parochial schools because they felt it undermined their income-bearing academies. On this matter de Carriere expressed himself in uncharacteristically strong terms, since in other matters he admired the Sisters and was their gentle devoted chaplain. In 1896 he even favored having them work in pastoral ministry rather than just teaching, a remarkably prescient suggestion; regrettably, he commented, the Holy Names leadership would not permit this.  

Just before Father de Carriere was transferred from Tampa in 1902, he looked back on the spiritual progress of the Tampa Missions and felt a sense of accomplishment. When he had arrived in Tampa in 1888, he was in agony, “at the sight of so much destitution and spiritual misery.” Yet by 1902 de Carriere saw the spiritual progress of Catholicism in Tampa. He pointed to the increase in the number of Communions (commented upon again and again by Jesuit diarists who followed him), the number of people at Mass, the fact that both men and women attended, the involvement of children and youth through the various Catholic schools, the proliferation of devotional Sodalities, all of which indicated the growing spiritual vitality of Catholicism on Florida’s West Coast. For de Carriere this spiritual deepening of parish life was not simply the result of his efforts or anyone else’s, but rather it was the product of intercessory prayer and Divine Providence, since for him nothing else explained Tampa’s spiritual transformation since 1888.

In 1902 at the age of seventy-eight, Father de Carriere, the father of the Jesuits of Florida, retired, leaving Tampa for the Jesuit novitiate in Macon, Georgia. During the last ten years of his life he wrote letters to his many friends, recorded his recollections of the early days of the South Florida Missions, and passed on his missionary experience to Jesuit novices. He died in Macon, on January 27, 1913, at the age of eighty-eight.  


Centennial History of Saint Leo College, Saint Leo Abbey, and Holy Name Priory (St. Leo, FL: St. Leo College, 1989), 40; Jane Quinn, The Story of a Nun: Jeanie Gordon Brown (St. Augustine, FL: Villa Flora, 1978), 255-56; Edward Hayes, The Good News of St. James Cathedral, 1885-1985 (Orlando, FL: privately published souvenir, 1985); Buckley, Sacred Heart.

4 James Robertson Ward, Old Hickory's Town: An Illustrated History of Jacksonville (Jacksonville, FL: Florida Publishing, 1982), 167-69, 187; Margaret C. Fairlie, “The Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1888 in Jacksonville,” Florida Historical Quarterly, 19 (Oct. 1940), 95-108. Father James Duffo, a Frenchman in the Society of Jesus since 1841 and in the U.S. since 1848, had served in several areas where yellow fever raged and was immune from the disease, hence he was a logical choice to send to Jacksonville. Unlike de Carriere, Duffo only served in Florida for a few months in 1888 until the health danger ceased. He later died on February 27, 1900. Thomas H. Clancy, Our Friends, 2nd ed. (New Orleans: Jesuit Provincial Residence, 1989), 21, 121.


6 De Carriere to Richard White, SJ, June 19, 1902, Supplement to House Records, vol. I, ANOPSJ; De Carriere to Slevin, May 15, 1908, ANOPSJ. Irish-born Father John O'Shanahan, SJ, was Superior of the New Orleans Jesuits from April 22, 1888, until November 14, 1891, when he was removed from office due to alcoholism. He died on July 6, 1913. Clancy, Our Friends, 123; Notebook on Provincials, ANOPSJ.


8 “History of the Church in Florida, 1889-1921,” Cabinet 18, Drawer 2, Archives of the Diocese of St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg, FL (hereafter referred to as ADSP); “Florida Counties which Belong to the Jesuits of Louisiana,” Supplement to House Records, vol. I, ANOPSJ; Moore to O’Shanahan, Oct. 15, 1889; Agreement between Moore and O’Shanahan, Sept. 3, 1891, ANOPSJ; Buckley, Sacred Heart.


10 De Carriere to Slevin, May 15 1908; De Carriere Journal, April 20-June 5, 1889, House Diary, June 19, 1898, Supplement to the House Records, Tampa, Vol. I, 1888-1921, ANOPSJ.


Book of the Dedication of the Church of Sacred Heart, Tampa, Florida (Tampa, FL: privately printed, 1905); Buckley, Sacred Heart.

14 The works of Father de Carriere at the ANOPSJ include: Tampa House Diary, 1888-1902; Supplement to the Tampa House Diary, 1888-1902; Personal Journal, April 20 to June 5, 1889; “Memoirs of Fr. de Carriere,” Sept. 21, 1899; “Notes for the Record,” Feb. 28, 1908; Letter to Richard White, SJ, June 19, 1902; Letter to Thomas Sleven, SJ, May 15, 1908. Another work of de Carriere’s is “Memoirs of Fr. de Carriere,” Oct. 4, 1894, Ybor City Missions, Scrapbook, Archives of the Sisters of St. Joseph, St. Augustine, FL.


18 Chronicles, Sept. 8, 1899, Feb. 2, 1900, July 30, Aug. I, 1901, ASNJM, L-S; House Diary, March 22, Sept. 7, 1896, ANOPSJ.


20 Clancy, Our Friends, 9, 121.
“THE WAVES TRAVELED THROUGH EVERYTHING”: RADIO’S IMPACT ON TAMPA IN THE 1920S
by Heather C.R. McClennahan

In a hurry to get to work or to complete morning chores, Tampa Tribune readers may have missed the story on the newspaper’s back page on May 15, 1922: “World Now Passing into the Radio Era, Public is Becoming ‘Radio Bugs.’” No invention had ever received so much attention from so many scientists and engineers, and demand for radio equipment left manufacturers swamped. “Radio is with us to stay,” the article boldly proclaimed; “the general public have taken it up to so great an extent that we must either keep up with the progress of time or drop out of the procession.”

The Tribune’s rival answered the article that very afternoon. The Tampa Daily Times announced on the front page that it had received permission to begin the first radio station in Florida. During the next decade, station WDAE brought fighter Jack Dempsey into the city’s living rooms, kept anxious listeners updated during hurricanes, and helped introduce the nation to one of the most popular big bands of the era. Tampa’s experiences were repeated in towns and cities across the nation as radio’s popularity increased.

For the first time in history, Americans from coast to coast shared experiences instantaneously. What happened in the big radio markets of New York and Chicago trickled down to smaller locales. At the same time, with radio stations powerful enough to reach hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles, listeners learned of performers, people, and events throughout the nation. Scholars have argued that radio, more than any other phenomenon, led to the emergence of a national culture in the United States. The electromagnetic waves traveled without regard to regional lines or cultures and helped to create a national identity.

During the 1920s, radio passed from a curiosity to a craze to an integral part of American culture. While much has been written about what happened to the medium in its early years, few have explored its impact on people or individual cities during the 1920s. Every radio history includes KDKA in Pittsburgh broadcasting the Harding-Cox election returns in 1920, WEAF in New York playing the first advertisements, and the formation of the networks. Social historians have focused on the changes in radio audiences, the structure of the broadcasting industry, and the appeal of particular programs. But larger questions are often taken for granted: What made radio so popular? How and why did radio become such an important part of life? How did lives change with the introduction of radio? By studying Tampa in the early years of radio, this article seeks to explore and answer these questions.

The developmental stages of radio had just begun when the United States entered World War I. The Navy took over control of the airwaves and, at the same time, trained a generation of operators who would later bring entertainment, education, and news to the nation. The medium’s big break came when Westinghouse-owned KDKA went on the air on November 2, 1920 and broadcast the presidential election returns. The event sparked a craze in radio, as the figures demonstrate. The number of radio sets jumped from 50,000 in 1921 to 600,000 in 1922. Sales
zoomed from $60 million in 1922 to $358 million two years later. In January 1922 only thirty stations broadcast in the United States. By March 1923, 556 stations clogged the airways – clogged because until May of that year, all stations broadcast on the same AM frequency, 360 meters.4

Stations in the same town juggled times with each other, and radio buffs demanded that they go off the air some nights altogether so far-away stations could be received. That led to the institution of “Silent Night,” a period of one or two nights each week when stations in New York, Chicago, and other big cities voluntarily left the airwaves. “Silent Night” did not occur in Tampa, where WDAE broadcast only a few hours each evening, but the phenomenon would help Tampa introduce itself to the world. The Times’ station received letters from as far away as Australia as its signal bounced through the atmosphere.5

Most families built their own radios in the early years – often out of an oatmeal box wound with wire, a galena or silicone crystal, and a pair of headphones. Listeners used a thin wire called a cat’s whisker to probe the crystal and tune into stations. The simple devices featured no volume controls. More experienced radio amateurs developed tube sets which required cumbersome storage batteries. When Westinghouse manufactured the first commercial radios in 1920, crystal sets sold for $25 and tube sets cost $60. By 1922, hundreds of companies produced sets that came in all shapes, sizes, and prices.6

Most broadcasting history books cite 1922 as the landmark year for radio. WEAF in New York aired the first commercials, advertisements touting the Hawthorne Court apartments. RCA, Westinghouse, and others created technical innovations that increased radio sets’ ability to pick up stations and made the sets more affordable. More than 600 stations went on the air, but then, many went off again, sometimes within days.7

Those who sought radio station licenses in the early 1920s did not plan to make money out of the venture. Rather, they sought publicity or prestige within the community. For instance, in Great Falls, Montana, the local newspaper launched station KDYS. The mayor spoke over the airwaves to a crowd of more than 800 who huddled around a receiving set in a dry goods store during the first broadcast. In some respects, the story is eerily similar to Tampa’s, but the KDYS transmitter failed its first night and the station closed within two years. Radio listeners in Tampa can still hear WDAE.8
After suffering a postwar depression, a protracted cigarworkers’ strike, and a punishing hurricane, Tampa boomed in 1922. Tourists flocked to the state; land buyers swooped down from the north looking for prime real estate. Construction started on the Gandy Bridge, the first to cross Tampa Bay. Development of exclusive Davis Islands and Temple Terrace would soon begin. These were exciting, heady times.\textsuperscript{9}

In the midst of the boom came a small announcement in the May 15, 1922 \textit{Tampa Times}: ‘Stand By’ Fans to Aid Times Test Radio Broadcaster.” The short article asked radio listeners throughout the state to tune in between seven and nine p.m. for the next three days and to let the newspaper know if static interfered with the test. The newspaper did not tell them where to tune in on the radio dial because dials had not yet been invented.\textsuperscript{10}

Tampa did not buzz with excitement over the news of a new radio station because so few people had receivers at the time, according to Sol Fleischman, a radio and television star who began his career on WDAE in 1928. But people did gather around what sets they could find, such as the one at the Eli Witt Cigar Store on Franklin Street that loudly squawked WDAE’s first test. The station played phonographs and broadcast news events from the day: Chicago’s labor war waged out of control, former Florida Governor Sidney J. Catts was indicted for accepting bribes, and the Automobile Club of America formed a chapter in Tampa. Almost as important to some listeners were the baseball scores that came over the airways.\textsuperscript{11}

The three-day test paid off. On May 17, the \textit{Times} announced it had been granted a license by the government to operate its “radiophone” broadcasting station. It was one of ninety-seven organizations given a license that month, the twelfth newspaper in the United States to be so honored, and one of sixty-nine newspapers that would own a radio station by year’s end. Soon regularly scheduled broadcasts featured Tampa singers and speakers “addressing the world” from the small studio atop the Citrus Exchange Building downtown.\textsuperscript{12}

The first such broadcast came on May 31, 1922, with the following schedule:

7:30 p.m. Markets and News of the Day  
7:45 Piano solo by Miss Helen Ray  
8:00 Radio Greetings: Mayor Charles H. Brown  
8:05 Solo and Quartet  
8:20 Vocal Solo  
8:30 “The Spirit of Rotary” by E.D. Lambright, postmaster of Tampa  
8:45 Homer Moore Quintet  
9:00 Bedtime Story, “How the First Sunflower Got Its Name,” by Children’s Librarian, Marian Pierce  
9:15 Solo  

With the exception of the mayor’s greeting and the quintet leader unwittingly bawling out his members over an open microphone when they finished their number, much of the programming over the next decade followed a similar pattern. Meanwhile, listeners across the state began responding to this new phenomenon.\textsuperscript{13}
“Thank you for the pleasure you are giving us,” came the praise from Fred and J.A. Haslinger of Oldsmar soon after the station went on the air. Piccolo and violin solos particularly impressed the couple. A.W. Anders of Plant City wrote, “You sure came in fine.” And another Plant City resident claimed to have heard the broadcast over his new aerial made of bed springs. Norman Stillwell, a fourteen-year-old Tampa boy, bragged in a letter to the Times that he had built a receiver for seventy-five cents and could hear WDAE loud and clear.  

Pierce Electric Company, Tampa’s distributor for RCA, became the first to cite WDAE in its newspaper advertisements, telling radio fans they could pick up the new daily broadcasts on sets that ranged from $32.50 to $200. While Pierce customers impatiently waited four to six weeks for a receiver because demand outstripped supply, Hunter Electric promised that shipments of radio equipment arrived weekly. As radio distribution rivals fought each other on the Times’ pages, the newspaper tooted the station’s horn. “Dealers in radio receiving apparatus in Florida report that the demand for outfits since The Times announced its broadcasting station has been enormous.” Later a story claimed hundreds of receiving sets had been installed since the announcements of a new station. Self-congratulations aside, the newspaper and radio executives
did have some reason for satisfaction. Letters and telephone calls came in from a far away as Key West and Jacksonville in those first few days.\textsuperscript{15}

Radio, one of the most novel inventions in history, had arrived. While bureaucrats in Washington wondered how to regulate the airwaves, youngsters like Normal Stillwell, Sol Fleischman and, soon, their parents tuned in. “Fans predict that the time is not far distant when nearly every home in the cities and the country will be equipped to listen in on concerts,” the \textit{Tampa Times} proclaimed. Those predictions proved absolutely correct.\textsuperscript{16}

Radio was magic. People who first listened to static-filled broadcasts over ill-fitting headphones in the 1920s still speak of it in awe. “It was like a miracle,” Sol Fleischman recalled. Voices came out of the air, and people had never heard nor seen anything like it. “It was the most amazing thing!” remembered Mary Delp, who first listened to radio in the early 1920s on her uncle’s crystal set. “I was astounded [at] the very fact that there was music you could hear and no one was playing.” Even \textit{Times} editor and five-time Tampa mayor D.B. McKay seemed mystified by the phenomenon. People who would not listen to a phonograph in their home scrambled to hear it on the radio. “What radio fans are really interested in is the mysterious wireless itself.... The wireless has a basic and universal appeal because it is closely allied with the supernatural, even the uncanny,” he claimed.\textsuperscript{17}

Radio gained even broader appeal as programmers learned to give listeners more of what they wanted. Music, news, sports, children’s bedtime stories, and other such programs dominated the airwaves in the 1920s. Soon content, rather than novelty, led people to tune in. A study of radio stations in New York, Chicago, and Kansas City in February 1925 showed that more than seventy percent of the programs focused on music while about ten percent included news, sports, and other information. Entertainment, church services, and other miscellaneous programs made up the remaining twenty percent. In Tampa at the same time, more than eighty percent of the programming consisted of music. WDAE broadcast nightly from five to seven-thirty and on Thursdays from three to ten. Musical performances made up eight of ten programs listed for Thursday nights in February 1925 while a lecture from the Bradenton Board of Trade and a humorist completed the list.\textsuperscript{18}

In the 1920s, artists sometimes appeared for publicity alone, but they also put on some spectacular performances. Tampa scored a coup in 1925 when Miguel Fleta, leading tenor for the New York Metropolitan Opera, chose to make his radio debut on WDAE. He sang a Mexican ballad that the \textit{Times} claimed was heard from Philadelphia to San Antonio and by multitudes in Cuba, where Fleta was a hero. Later in the decade, the station broadcast live from the Davis Islands Country Club where the roof pulled back on clear nights and Isham Jones and his orchestra played beneath the stars. Jones, originally from Chicago, composed such popular songs as “It Had To Be You” and “I’ll See You In My Dreams.” He led one of the finest dance bands of all time, and broadcasts of his concerts over WDAE are said to have drawn thousands of letters from every state and a number of foreign countries.\textsuperscript{19}

Despite great performances and performers, radio schedules proved erratic, at best, throughout the nation. Live shows ran over and under time. Guests were sometimes delayed, and station employees filled in by singing, playing instruments, or improvising some other way to keep the
WDAE’s broadcast tower in 1924 was on top of the Tampa Daily Times building at the corner of Franklin and Washington streets.

Photograph courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough Public Library System.
audience occupied. WDAE was not immune to such troubles. “Sometimes you would be off the air for half an hour because you didn’t have anything to go on the air,” Fleischman recalled. Once Harry Slichter, managing editor for the Times, filled a ten-minute empty slot with a trombone solo.\(^\text{20}\)

Along with dance music, sports broadcasts gained popularity as a radio staple in the 1920s. Sports reached a golden age during the Roaring Decade, with the likes of Babe Ruth in baseball, Red Grange in football, Bill Tilden in tennis, and Bobby Jones in golf. Radio, with its hyperbole-prone announcers, helped those stars to shine, as evidenced by the Jack Dempsey-Gene Tunney fight in 1927, probably the most promoted and most spectacular sporting event up to that time.\(^\text{21}\)

The popular Manassa Mauler and scholarly Tunney fought in Philadelphia in 1926, and, to the chagrin and surprise of most Americans, Dempsey lost. The boxers set up a rematch in September 1927, to be held at Soldiers Field in Chicago. A record 104,000 fans spent over $2.6 million for seats. Much of the rest of the nation, an estimated 50 million people, listened in on radio.\(^\text{22}\)

To broadcast the fight, WDAE joined sixty-eight stations in the largest network ever up to that time. The Tampa Tribune estimated at least twenty-five percent of the city’s population would hear the bout. Businesses such as Thompson Electric Company and Studebaker Gulf Sales, as well as clubs like the Knights of Pythias and Egypt Temple Shrine, planned radio parties. In addition, the newspaper noted, more than 3,600 Tampa homes had radios.\(^\text{23}\)

Excitement about the fight built up for days in the nation’s sports pages. Hundreds of people stood in the streets outside the Times building to hear the WDAE broadcast over loud speakers. Tampa native Dorothy Smith remembers her father and brothers gathering around the set in their Tampa home to listen to the dramatic fight – which did not interest her in the least – shouting at the radio as they rooted for their man. For seven rounds, Dempsey chased Tunney, who “boxed circles around the ex-champion,” easily thrusting aside his savage lunges. Then Dempsey found a vital spot and Tunney went down. The referee delayed the count for five seconds because Dempsey refused to move to a neutral corner. In what became known as the famous “long count,” Tunney pulled himself up at nine. Again to the disappointment of much of the nation, he went on to win the fight.\(^\text{24}\)
Even local sporting events like college and high school football games captured audiences in Tampa. One such game led to the nearly legendary broadcasting career of local radio and later television star Sol Fleischman. Telephone lines were unavailable between Tampa and Gainesville for live broadcasts of University of Florida football games. Therefore, a telegraph operator sent the play-by-play to Tampa, where another operator transcribed the information and an announcer put it over the air. Because of time lag between when the announcer finished describing a play and the telegraph operator received new ones, the station kept a small band in the studio to fill in the gaps. Fleischman played drums for the band. Prohibition notwithstanding, on September 28, 1928, the announcer got drunk before the end of the game. The station manager asked the band members if one could step in. When no one volunteered, a friend of Fleischman’s piped up, “Sol’s got a big mouth.” The retired announcer likes to say he sat down at the microphone to finish the game and got up fifty-four years later. 

Radio announcers such as Fleischman and New York sports announcer Graham McNamee became local and national celebrities. Their voices went into people’s homes, and listeners began to consider them friends. Radio personalities in New Jersey and Kentucky even received proposals and propositions in letters from adoring fans in the mid-1920s. “Everybody treated me like a member of the family wherever I went,” Fleischman recalled. While announcers contributed to radio’s popularity, they would also play a role as the medium became an essential part of American life.

Radio brought more to the nation than entertainment. From news of the hero’s welcome for Charles Lindbergh in 1927 to weather reports, people tuned in instantaneously to the world around them. “I can remember everybody crowding around during an emergency or an event,” said Pearl Wilson, who grew up near Tampa. At the same time, the medium became a big business, creating jobs during the booming 1920s for radio manufacturers, retailers, engineers, announcers, and musicians.

After Herb Brown graduated from Hillsborough High School in 1929, his father urged him to take a correspondence course in radio repair. The younger Brown set up a small shop in his parents’ home and later worked for a wholesale radio parts distributor and as a transmitter engineer for WDAE. After World War II, Brown opened his own electronics store on Nebraska Avenue. “Radio was not in my thoughts ... except as a listener” in the early years, Brown reminisced. But when the opportunities came along, he rode the wave into the expanding
business of radio. The number of radio dealers in Tampa jumped from one in 1922 to twenty by 1930.²⁸

As the industry boomed, entrepreneurs looked for ways to make money from the magic airwaves. Critics expressed doubts over AT&T’s plan for “toll broadcasting” on WEAF in New York in the summer of 1922. One publication declared advertising “positively offensive to great number of people.” But the developer for Hawthorne Court apartments, who paid $50 for the nation’s first radio ad, claimed sales jumped up. Within seven months, two dozen sponsors used time on New York’s WEAF, and the idea would soon catch on throughout the nation.²⁹

Towne’s Tampa Steam Laundry became the first company to advertise on WDAE. As George Seargeant, the seller of that ad told the story, he and chief engineer William Pharr Moore, decided one day in 1926 that the station needed some daytime programs. Mack Towne appeared reluctant to buy time at 7 a.m., but Seargeant eventually talked him into sponsoring an early morning program. Coffee companies, department stores, and jewelry shops soon signed up to keep the station on the air during the day. By 1929 WDAE, which started out as a “toy” for the Tampa Times, supported itself with advertising revenue.³⁰

While some lamented the commercialization of the industry, radio proved how useful it could be in 1928. Hurricanes besieged Florida in the 1920s. A 1921 storm caused about $500,000 in damages in Tampa. Another one devastated Miami in 1926. When the next big tempest came along two years later, radio technology had advanced enough to play a part in saving human lives and aiding victims.³¹

The ’28 hurricane struck the east coast of Florida on September 16 and turned northward, losing force as its swept up the peninsula. Four WDAE staff members remained on the air seventy-two hours, relaying news of the storm as wires blew down throughout the state. Tampa, with maximum winds of twenty-eight miles per hour, was spared, and the broadcasters got that word out quickly.³²

WDAE responded indignantly to a report on WEAF that the storm lay waste to Florida from Palm Beach to Tampa. The stations exchanged messages “while hundreds of thousands of fans listened in all over the country,” the Times reported. “The New York station then corrected the false report.” Mayor G.B. Knowles of Bradenton commended the station “for correcting the misinformation about storm conditions being broadcast” and combating “false propaganda against us in the north.” George Clements of the Bartow Chamber of Commerce praised the station for keeping the people of the state as well as the nation informed of the “true conditions” and for counteracting “stories sent out by irresponsible persons, including newspaper correspondents eager to get first page at the expense of accuracy.”³³

Despite the optimistic outlook in Tampa where officials seemed most worried about the state’s reputation with tourists, Palm Beach, Okeechobee and other southern communities lay flattened. The storm killed more than 800 people in twenty-four towns and left 16,000 homeless. The Red Cross requested five million dollars in aid. WDAE again swung into action, raising money for storm victims over the airwaves.³⁴
When natural disasters occurred throughout the decade, Tampans raised funds for the victims. Announcers from the station and the community usually took to the WDAE airwaves to get help, and the *Times* was always quick to give credit to the radio station for the thousands of dollars that came in. Bravado aside, such examples demonstrate just how important radio had become.\(^{35}\)

Radio changed peoples lives. It affected everyone from school boys who tinkered with homemade sets to local acts that hit the big time. Listeners began altering their schedules in order to accommodate radio programs. Parties took on a new sound as radio rather than phonographs became the music medium of choice. Drivers equipped their automobiles with cumbersome gadgets to pick up radio stations. Social lives were transformed as people gave up old-fashioned visiting and neighborly chats to gather around the crackly box for entertainment and news. Radio captured imaginations and opened up the world.

At school, young boys discussed their exploits on simple crystal sets, recalled Vernon Lastinger. “The big thing was to stay up late at night and see how far you could get a station on them, how far your set would bring in something. Oh man, when you’d get a new station you’d
write it down and brag the next day,” he said with a laugh. Two prominent stations he remembered tuning in were KDKA in Pittsburgh and WBT in Charlotte. Off and on through the 1920s, the *Tampa Times* ran program schedules for radio stations from Boston to San Francisco so local listeners could hear the sounds elsewhere.36

Educational programming remained a small part of radio in the 1920s, but Mary Delp remembered one important lesson. “I learned to dance,” the eighty-year-old recalled with delight. She especially loved listening to classical music and the big bands that came from stations far away.37

As WDAE and other radio stations began expanding their hours later in the decade, women found they could perform chores and listen at the same time. Such actions would eventually lead to the rise of daytime soap operas. But in the early years of radio, listening proved a much more formal affair. Families and neighbors gathered around to hear music and news, using their imaginations to picture events as they happened.38

With the advent of radio, life also changed dramatically in Tampa’s Latin enclaves of Ybor City and West Tampa. Prior to 1922, residents sat on the front porches of their cottages, chatting with neighbors and waving to passersby. After radio came along, people stayed indoors, listening to magical music and other programs, said Tony Pizzo, the late Tampa historian whose father owned one of the first radios in Ybor City. Pizzo also recalled almost everyone tuning into Cuban radio stations on Saturday mornings to hear the results of the lottery games. A person walking down the street in Ybor City would not miss a bit of the broadcast that wafted out from almost every house. Such scenes would later be repeated throughout the nation with popular drama and comedy programs like “Amos ‘n’ Andy.” While folks still gathered with the family to listen to the radio, social life shifted forever. “It really changed the lifestyle of America,” Pizzo concluded.39

Radio also brought a devastating blow to the cigar factories where Cuban, Italian, and Spanish immigrants toiled. After a prolonged strike in 1931, radios replaced *los lectores*, the readers who had informed and entertained more than two generations of cigarmakers as they worked. Factory owners feared the readers incited workers by reading radical newspapers and novels. The radio never caught on well in the factories because most workers did not speak English, Pizzo explained. Still, the replacement of *el lector* with a black box displaced a rich part of Latin heritage.40

Radio brought other social changes outside the home. At a political rally on May 25, 1922 – just days after WDAE took to the air – only 150 to 200 people showed up. The *Times* blamed the small crowd on “radio concerts, the movies, and other attractions that kept many away.” Soon after that, politicians learned to use the radio to get their message to the public. Florida Governor John Martin went on the air live during a noon broadcast in November 1927. Tampa native Doyle Carlton kicked off his successful gubernatorial campaign on March 2, 1928, with a speech from the courthouse that was broadcast over WDAE.41

Radio fit the spirit of the 1920s, a period typified by consumerism, self-confidence, and leisure time. It brought free entertainment into the home. Unlike magazines or newspapers, where
WDAE’s 5 kilowatt transmitter in 1932.

Photograph from WDAE by Hampton Dunn.
audiences could pick and choose what they read, everyone who tuned into the same station listened to the same programs. That gave radio power that no other medium could match up to that time.  

While “Silent Night” allowed listeners to learn about other areas of the country in the early 1920s, networks and syndicated programs would bring them common experiences later in the decade and into the 1930s. Stations had joined together by telephone or telegraph wires as early as 1922, when WJZ in Newark and WGY in Schenectady, New York, linked for the World Series. But technical difficulties kept such broadcasts from becoming popular until AT&T developed special cables for the transmissions. The National Broadcasting Company debuted its nineteen-station network on November 15, 1926, with a four and one-half hour show that included broadcasts from the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel and a skit from Will Rogers in Kansas.

WDAE joined the younger Columbia Broadcasting Network in March 1930 and connected with it full time in June 1931. Tampa residents then heard the same shows as listeners in Portland, Oregon, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and more than seventy other cities in the United States. Workers commuted in the mornings with the same cheery tunes in Florida as in Nevada, and families throughout the nation sat down at the same time to hear Hank Simon's famous “Show Boat” musical program, isolated by walls but joined together by airwaves.

Even before the difficult decade of the 1930s, radio’s golden age, the medium had begun to play an integral part in American life. From people who worked in the industry to avid fans to those who just heard radio at a neighbor’s house, radio intertwined itself with the population, bringing scenes of life from as close as next door to as far away and exotic as New York or San Francisco. The foundations had already been laid when popular syndicated programs such as “Amos ‘n’ Andy,” which drew an estimated 40 million listeners in the early 1930s, came along to enthrall a depressed nation.

By the end of the 1920s, radio could certainly not be considered a craze or a fad. Radio entertained, taught lessons, brought instantaneous news, saved lives, and amazed young and old. In eight short years, it had become indispensable. Vernon Lastinger best summed up his generation's fascination with radio while explaining its impact: "The waves traveled through everything."

1 Tampa Tribune, May 15, 1922, 12.
5 Barnouw, A Tower In Babel, 94; Interview with Sol Fleischman at his home in Sun City Center, Florida, April 15, 1993, notes and partial tape in possession of author.

6 Fleischman interview; Interview with Vernon Lastinger at his apartment in Tampa, Florida, April 15, 1993, notes and partial tape in possession of author; Sterling and Kittross, Stay Tuned, 79.

7 See Barnouw, A Tower in Babel, for more details on 1922 events.

8 Ibid., 104; Sterling and Kittross, Stay Tuned, 62-63.

9 Karl H. Grismer, Tampa (St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg Printing Co., 1950), 247-68.

10 Tampa Daily Times, May 15, 1922, 1.

11 Fleischman interview; Headline from Tampa Daily Times, May 15, 1922.


13 Tampa Daily Times, May 31, 1922, 1; Dunn, WDAE, 15.

14 Tampa Daily Times, May 29, 1922, 5; Dunn, WDAE, 16; Tampa Daily Times, May 19, 1922, 11.

15 Tampa Daily Times, May 19, 1922, 1; 10.

16 Ibid.

17 Fleischman interview; Interview with Mary Delp at her apartment in Tampa, Florida, April 15, 1993, notes and tape in possession of author; Tampa Daily Times, May 29, 1922, 4.

18 Sterling and Kittross, Stay Tuned, 72; Tampa Daily Times, radio schedules from February 1 through 28, 1925.


20 Sterling and Kittross, Stay Tuned, 72; Dunn, WDAE, 16.


23 Emery and Emery, The Press, 316; Dunn, WDAE, 92-93.

24 Interview with Dorothy Smith at the Seminole Heights Recreation Center in Tampa, Florida, April 8, 1993, tape and notes in possession of author; Tampa Daily Times, September 23, 1927, 1; Dawson, “Boxing,” 77.

25 Fleischman interview.


27 Interview with Pearl Wilson at the Seminole Heights Recreation Center in Tampa, Florida, April 8, 1993, tape and notes in possession of author.
Interview with Herb Brown at the Seminole Heights Recreation Center in Tampa, Florida, April 8, 1993, tape and notes in possession of author; *R.L. Polk and Company’s Tampa City Directory*, 1922 through 1930.


*Dunn, WDAE*, 19-21.


See, for example, *Tampa Daily Times*, February 1925.

Lastinger interview; for schedule examples, see *Tampa Daily Times*, February 1, 1925.

Delp interview.

Interviews with Wilson, Smith and others at Seminole Recreation Center.

Telephone interview with Tony Pizzo, April 20, 1993, notes in possession of author.


Lastinger interview.
Pinellas County dates from 1912 when it separated from Hillsborough County. Since its inception, Pinellas County has had twelve Supervisors of Elections. Originally known as the Supervisor of Registration, this official is in charge of registering voters and running elections. The number of people voting and the way people cast ballots has changed dramatically since 1912, when people used paper ballots that were collected in wooden boxes and counted by hand. After a long period of using heavy voting machines, the country has adopted the highly portable Votomatics that rely on computers for the tally.

The twelve people who have held the office of Supervisor of Registration, and more recently Supervisor of Elections, have reflected significant shifts in Pinellas County politics. The first four supervisors came from local pioneer families. From 1912 to 1948, the supervisors were all Democrats, but for more than forty years, Republicans, including the three women supervisors, have controlled the office. The longest occupant of the office was Wilda J. Cook, who served for twenty years beginning in 1953. The record for the shortest term is held by Harry Hammock, who was supervisor for a brief three months in 1924.
This photo essay is drawn from an exhibit that is on permanent display in the office of the Supervisor of Elections, located at 315 Court Street in Clearwater.

Pinellas County voters using mechanical voting booths in the 1958 election at Clearwater Precinct 43. -Photograph courtesy of Heritage Park/Pinellas County Historical Museum.

Preparation of precinct boxes in 1963. Photograph courtesy of Heritage Park/Pinellas County Historical Museum.
Clearwater voters using the Votomatic system in 1988.

Photograph courtesy of Pinellas County Government Department of Public Affairs.


Photograph courtesy of Pinellas County Government Department of Public Affairs.
Erected almost overnight to save the county seat for Clearwater, this frame building served as the first courthouse for Pinellas County when it split from Hillsborough in 1912. Among the first officials pictured here are Albert S. Meares, the original Supervisor of Registration (as the Supervisor of Elections was then known) and Arthur Campbell Turner, who was the first county treasurer and then followed Meares as Supervisor of Registration. Meares (1846-1928) served from January 5, 1912 until December 13, 1913, when he resigned. His successor, Arthur Turner (1844-1929), held the office from 1914 to 1916. Born in Madison County, he moved to Clearwater with his family in 1854, making him one of the area’s pioneer residents. A businessman and farmer, Turner held the position of postmaster and served two terms on the Hillsborough County board of commissioners before becoming one of Pinellas County’s first officials. Married three times, Turner fathered twenty children.

Photograph courtesy of Heritage Park/Pinellas County Historical Museum.
Charles A. Wilcox, Sr. (1889-1951) served as Supervisor of Registration from 1916 to 1918. Born in Anona, he attended Largo High School and Southern College at Sutherland. After eight years as Supervisor of Registration, he became Tax Assessor.

Photograph courtesy of Heritage Park/Pinellas County Historical Museum.

Harry Hammock (1881-1968), a citrus grower born in Largo, was Supervisor of Registration for only three months in 1924.

Photograph courtesy of Madeline Hammock Minor.
John W. Davis (1880-1941) served as Supervisor of Registration from 1924 to 1936. Born in Madison County, Davis moved his family in 1920 to the Largo-Clearwater area, where he operated several hotels. As a result of diabetes, he lost his legs in the 1920s, and he thereafter used artificial limbs and crutches. He was defeated in his 1936 re-election bid.

Photograph courtesy of Marjorie Davis.
William C. “Billy” Reid (1883-1949) was elected in 1936 to three four-year terms as Supervisor of Registration. Born in Chicago, he was paralyzed by polio in 1904, and six years later he moved to Largo, where he managed citrus properties. He was instrumental in acquiring the county’s first voting machines. He was defeated in the 1948 election, which marked a turning point in local politics.

Photographs courtesy of the W. C. Reid family.
Warren A. Wright (1880-1951) was the first Republican elected Supervisor of Registration in Pinellas County. Like his predecessor, he was born in Chicago, and he served in the Spanish-American War. A traveling salesman, he moved to St. Petersburg in 1933 to join his mother and sister who had been residents for twenty years. He resigned from office in 1951 due to poor health.

Photograph courtesy of Heritage Park/Pinellas County Historical Museum.

Richard M. Collins (1915- ) was appointed by Governor Fuller Warren to finish Warren Wright’s term of office. Born in Polk County, Collins moved to Largo in 1939, where he married Ethel Marie McMullen. A grocer, he served as a Largo city commissioner and as mayor before becoming Supervisor of Registration. In 1952, he was defeated in the Democratic primary.

Photograph courtesy of Richard M. Collins.
Wilda J. Cook (1898-1978), a Republican, was first elected in 1952 and served five terms. Born in Pittsburgh, she was a teacher and social worker before moving to Pinellas County to work for the Veterans’ Administration. During her twenty years as Supervisor of Registration, the number of voters in Pinellas County grew from 78,000 to over 250,000, and her staff mushroomed from six to twenty-three. After suffering a stroke, she retired at the end of her fifth term.

Photograph courtesy of Heritage Park/Pinellas County Historical Museum.

Jeanne Khoyi Nelson (1927- ) was elected in 1972 as Supervisor of Elections. A native of Fort Myers, she graduated from St. Petersburg Junior College and returned to the area after living in Iran for twelve years. In 1976, she was defeated in a bid to become Pinellas County Clerk of the Court.

Photograph courtesy of Jeanne (Khoyi Nelson) Serra.
Charles J. Kaniss (1917- ) served twelve years as Supervisor of Elections. Born in Oklahoma, he moved with his family to St. Petersburg in 1925. After serving in World War II, he joined his father and brother in the Kaniss Jewelry Store in St. Petersburg. During the 1950s, he was a member of the City Council, and he later worked as director of the Sanitation Department and then in the City Transit Department. After winning the post of Supervisor of Elections in 1976, 1980, and 1984, he decided not to seek reelection in 1988.

Photograph courtesy of Pinellas County Government Department of Public Affairs.

Dorothy Walker Ruggles (1941- ) was elected in 1988 and 1992 and is pictured here on the right. Born in Missouri, she moved to Pinellas County in 1969, and in the 1970s, she joined the staff of Supervisor of Elections Kaniss, rising to become his deputy administrator and then succeeding him in an uncontested election.

Photograph courtesy of Pinellas County Government Department of Public Affairs.
BOOK REVIEWS


Reading books about organized crime poses difficulties for someone studying history. Mobsters are noted for their anecdotal information, sometimes painting sensational pictures of their endeavors and lending little in the way of verifiable evidence for a topic important in historical discourse. Nevertheless, organized crime is an indelible fact of life for many cities in the United States.

Tampa has very seldom been mentioned in either journalistic or historical mob literature, but 1994 changed that with the publication of *Mob Lawyer.* When Tampa attorney Frank Ragano’s memoir and narrative about organized crime reached bookshelves across the country, a new and alternative awareness of Florida life became possible.

In reading attorney Frank Ragano’s book, one is haunted by the same caveat regarding story credibility learned from studying the Mafia through other books. However, Ragano’s story is different. It has surprising credibility and won an endorsement from no less an authority on organized crime than former Justice Department and House Select Committee on Assassinations legal counsel Robert Blakey. Blakey years ago aptly pointed Ragano out as a “house counsel to organized crime figures.” Ragano’s book also received praise from several legal journals such as the *New York Law Review.*

Among Ragano’s clients was former Tampa mob boss Santo Trafficante whose crime empire extended from Tampa to Miami and pre-Castro Havana. Ragano traces Trafficante’s ascension into national organized crime stature and mentions investigations such as the Kefauver committee in the early 1950s, the McClellan committee, and Attorney General Robert Kennedy’s forays into organized crime which incensed Trafficante and two of his proteges, New Orleans crime boss Carlos Marcello and Teamster Union President Jimmy Hoffa. Ragano also served as Hoffa's lawyer. Tampa’s image was not spared by the crime investigations. One unflattering early 1950s national magazine article described the cigar city as “Hellhole of the Gulf Coast.”

Ragano gives the reader a bird's-eye view of Tampa, covering the Italian-American lawyer’s childhood in Ybor City, his early days as an attorney and law clerk in Tallahassee, and his entrance into private practice in Tampa. Ragano’s own Ybor City neighborhood and other Tampa locations provide backdrops throughout the book. Included in his narrative are several Tampa landmarks. He and his all important client Santo Trafficante dined at the Columbia Restaurant, the Tampa Terrace Hotel, and the International Inn. Also introduced are local law enforcement officers such as Sheriff Ed Blackburn who campaigned against organized crime.

One the most important and interesting parts of *Mob Lawyer* is Ragano’s explanation of Trafficante’s status in the world of organized crime. Once thought to be just a small-time gambler and mobster strictly involved with the bolita rackets in Tampa, Trafficante exercised power and influence that were grossly underestimated, according to Ragano. Trafficante’s
connections to Cuban exiles and the CIA attest to this. Also telling are Trafficante’s ties to other organized crime figures in New York and the extensiveness of the Tampa don’s crime empire.

Another famous client Ragano discusses is Teamster Union head Jimmy Hoffa. Ragano attributes his national reputation as a criminal lawyer to the celebrity of this client. His narrative on several key Hoffa-related cases is engaging, and Ragano describes a world of illegally skimmed Teamster pension funds, and the trials and investigations related to them. One gets the feeling that this is what organized crime is really about when reading these sometimes tedious accounts.

If there is any weakness in this book, it is the description of Santo Trafficante’s activities related to the so-called Mafia/CIA plots to eliminate Cuban dictator Fidel Castro. Ragano claims Trafficante worked for the CIA through an intermediary. However, CIA documents from a 1993 National Archives release mention Santo Trafficante pointedly as “Joe the courier.” Trafficante and mob figures from Los Angeles and Chicago were utilized by the CIA for the elimination of Castro.

Mob Lawyer also contains information about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. The House Select Committee on Assassinations concluded that the assassination was probably a conspiracy accomplished by organized crime. The chief counsel for committee, Robert Blakey, went even further by referring to the organized crime aspect of Kennedy’s murder as an “historical fact.” Blakey named three of Frank Ragano’s clients and associates (Trafficante, Marcello, and Hoffa) as the most likely to have carried out the plot. Mob Lawyer touches upon conversations Ragano and Trafficante had related to these allegations.

A study into the Kennedy assassination is a highly speculative exercise with much government information still inaccessible and much other information anecdotal. Problems arising for students of the assassination parallel those experienced by students of organized crime. Mob Lawyer should be read carefully and critically, but Ragano’s word should not be dismissed, even though much of what he says has not been proven. The book still serves as a landmark for local history and some of its lesser known aspects.

Frank DeBenedictis
What do George G. Meade, Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson, and Ambrose Powell Hill have in common? Most would identify these men as prominent generals in the American Civil War. Yet as Canter Brown, Jr. reminds us, less than a decade before they saw duty in America’s most tragic conflict, all three were stationed at the isolated frontier military outpost of Fort Meade. Named in 1849 for its founder, George Gordon Meade (the later victor of Gettysburg), Fort Meade became the largest inland settlement in lower peninsular Florida. Located near Talakchopco, a center of Seminole and Tallahassee Creek contact for generations, the fortification was placed strategically on elevated land on the upper Peace River for the purpose of guarding the Indian boundary tenuously established after the Second Seminole War.

Brown places Fort Meade within the context of the rapidly changing South Florida frontier. A place of violence, greed, and warfare, but also of economic development and transitory prosperity, Fort Meade served as a kind of island in a vast frontier. It was a place where farmers, ranchers, soldiers, tradesmen, South Florida pioneers, and later miners, citrus growers, Cuban tobacco growers, and even cultivated English colonists – each in their turn – congregated in lower peninsular Florida. Throughout its tenuous existence, Fort Meade faced more than its fair share of disasters, natural and man-made. Hurricanes, disease, floods, blights, and freezes hit the town. But so did political and personal divisions during the Civil War (which ultimately resulted in the town being burned by Unionists in 1864). Dramatic declines in commodity prices, especially citrus, phosphate, and tobacco, rocked the town, often forcing settlers to alter their ways of life.

The immediate post-Civil War scene witnessed the telegraph which linked Fort Meade to New York and Havana. Instant communication with Cuba created conditions for the cattle boom. The 1880s brought rapid change to South Florida. The Disston Purchase publicized the region in the North and abroad. Henry B. Plant’s railroad linking Tampa to Jacksonville followed close behind. But the line followed an arc thirty miles north of Fort Meade, leading to the advent of Lakeland, Auburndale, Lake Alfred, and Haines City. Soon spur lines linked Bartow and Winter Haven. Finally locomotives arrived in 1885 and with them a new influx of settlers. A number of these new migrants were Englishmen – “remittance men” and others who brought a love of horse racing, but also great wealth and even more importantly their skills as engineers, artisans, and entrepreneurs. Finally, in 1890, Florida and the entire South Florida region experienced a phosphate “gold rush” that altered – both for better and for worse – the economy and the landscape of the town to this day. Throughout the 1890s, capital was raised and small and large concerns dotted the entire region. Phosphate was the activating force for the economy of the whole region, and since the turn of the century, the South Florida economy has ebbed and flowed according to its rhythms.

This book will attract wide readership not only within the Bay area, but also among those who desire information of town and country economic development during Florida’s nineteenth century. Generally free of the graphs, statistics, and unintelligible jargon which clutter many of the “modern, scientific” studies of localities, this is, as one reviewer asserts on the dust jacket, “local history the way it should be written.” Brown’s book is testament to the fact it is possible to write a book scholars will take seriously, even while writing for a larger audience. His study is
well-written, lively, entertaining, and beautifully illustrated. Meticulously drawn maps, town grids, and informative appendixes grace the volume. Brown’s research in newspapers and in local, state, and federal documents is exhaustive. This work, taken together with his excellent *Florida’s Peace River Frontier* (Orlando, 1992), establishes him as a leading scholar of peninsular Florida, and indeed nineteenth-century Florida.

James M. Denham


In the early years of the Civil War the Union determined to neutralize Confederate activities in Florida primarily through a naval blockade. That duty eventually fell to southern squadrons of the U.S. Navy charged with sealing off Florida’s 1,400 miles of irregular coastline. The Union Navy’s strategy proved effective, with the notable exception of some successful clandestine “runners” in such west coast ports as Charlotte Harbor. In this East Gulf area, as George Buker points out in this useful work, the nature of warfare engendered by deep and persistent divided loyalties turned the west coast of Florida, particularly the southernmost region, into a bloody and complex civil war within a war.

Buker does yeoman duty in tracing the inner dynamics of the East Gulf Blockading Squadron (EGBS) as it grew and adapted to the exigencies of war on Florida’s west coast. His work
weaves a complicated subject of military personnel, vessels, and personalities into an interesting narrative of national war and local reactions to it. Beginning with a discussion of the background to secession, the author paints in broad, and sometimes fine, strokes the relevant naval strategy caused by and resulting in divided loyalties in west Florida. In the process, he introduces readers to a wide range of recognizable actions, such as the critical significance of beef running and the seemingly interminable role of Tampa’s nefarious runner, James McKay, as well as the lesser-known actions of Southerner-turned Union commander, Henry A. Crane, and the role of the United States Colored Troops (USCT) in “peculiarizing” the war in the southern reaches of the peninsula.

What results from all this is an intriguing story of soldiers, sailors, and civilians in the East Gulf region, a story that is structurally similar and dissimilar from most other theaters of the war. With its fiercely divided loyalty, concerns for refugees, critical supply operations (e.g. beef cattle), and contraband (e.g. slaves), the west coast of Florida presented the unusual – some might argue unique – opportunity for the Union Navy to promote a localized inner-civil war within the larger conflict. Buker captures well the essence of his story when he states, “The militant effort of the blockaders, refugees, and contraband provided Confederate Florida with one of its most effective foes during the war” (182).

Certainly, all blockading squadrons created and maintained contact with Union sympathizers, guerrillas, and other disaffected Southerners during the Civil War; yet Buker demonstrates that the EGBS might have achieved singular success on the west coast of Florida in turning these “refugees and contraband” into Union allies. In this regard, Buker’s work thrusts Florida, specifically the East Gulf region, into the center of the ever-growing body of literature analyzing the incredibly diverse impact of the American Civil War.

Careful readers will derive much of value from this story. But they may also come away a bit perplexed about the author’s organization strategy, which involves chapters switching abruptly from military units and strategy to mini biographies of selected Unionists such as Henry A. Crane and deserters like William W. Strickland. Devotees of the subject may wonder further why Buker did not rely more heavily on the ground-breaking and yet unsurpassed works of Rodney E. Dillon, specifically his 384-page master’s thesis and two-volume doctoral dissertation on the nature of the struggle in southwest Florida. Yet these are passing criticisms that should not detract from Buker’s contribution to understanding the complex nature of the inner Civil War in west Florida, a subject that is increasingly drawing more critical appraisal.

Irvin D. Solomon


In the southern tales To Kill a Mockingbird and Intruder in the Dust, a local white female turns back an overwrought lynch mob to save the life of a black man. The fifteen victims of vigilante justice in Florida during the 1930s never knew such improbable heroics. In fact, just as the South was stepping back from its long and torrid romance with lynch law, Florida was ever more the
entangled lover. The place that evoked the benign image of a palm-tree paradise was ironically “the most lynch-prone state” in the 1930s (15).

In this compact monograph, Walter T. Howard reconstructs individually each of the decade’s twelve lynchings (two were double lynchings). A Florida State University graduate who teaches at Bloomsburg University in Pennsylvania, Howard is well versed in Florida and African-American history, and in Lynchings he shows us the darker side of that past.

The sordid ritual of lynching in Florida and the South as a whole peaked in the 1890s. By the 1930s, Howard points outs in his most interesting argument, modern society was reshaping the character of lynching law. Though concentrated in the Old Plantation Belt of north Florida, extralegal violence was not exclusively rural in nature. Urban areas – Tallahassee, Panama City, Daytona Beach, Fort Lauderdale, and Tampa – hosted most of the 1930s lynchings. Furthermore, national condemnation, antilynching activity, increased federal involvement, radio-equipped state patrol cars, and a changing public conscience had driven perpetrators into something of a lynchers’ underground. Ceremonial mob violence was giving way to the speedy and effective work of small clandestine bands. Media-generating exceptions, such as the ceremonial-style lynching of Claude Neal – one of the most gruesome in history, contributed to the shift away from traditional forms of white terror.

Despite the reshaping of lynchings, Howard writes, they had not lost the force of the white community’s will. Perpetrator identifications came infrequently, indictments less often, and convictions never. Local police often colluded with lynchers. Town newspapers tended to hold the purported actions of victims responsible for the violence and, like state officials, worried more about community image than about civil injustices and the loss of life. Condemnation came primarily from outside the state. Although three whites died by the hands of Florida vigilantes in the 1930s, lynching was in the tradition of the South a segregated activity – only whites practiced and condoned it.

Understanding the compulsion behind this macabre pastime has long posed a challenge for scholars. Howard explains that motives were as varied as circumstances, and they spanned a range that included economic competition, alleged murder and attempted murder, purported sexual assault, and political radicalism. He concludes that “race was undoubtedly more important than class as the root cause of” most lynchings (148). In addition to punishing the individual, lynching served the purpose of social control and the maintenance of white supremacy. Each of the black lynchings, for instance, involved allegations of black-on-white crime.

While Howard’s findings confirm established scholarly claims, Lynchings lacks a fresh perspective of vigilante justice. Some readers will find that the book is longer on narrative than on analysis, and perhaps too short on both. It offers an incomplete understanding of lynching’s cultural underpinnings, which went deeper than race and class conflict. For instance, the chapter entitled “Protecting White Women” never fully develops the powerful myths behind race and sexuality. Throughout the book, one finds little treatment of the local black community’s reaction to lynchings and only a glossy picture of the larger social dynamics of the host communities.

These observations aside, Howard writes with a style and ease that is inviting. Students of extralegal violence and Florida history will find Lynchings an accessible read.
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COVER: Strawberry pickers in eastern Hillsborough County in 1946. See the photographic essay on page 20. Photograph courtesy of Florida State Archives.
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NUKING HURRICANES

"The Lee County Commission has proposed to offer the United States Government a 7500-acre tract, complete with aviation installations, as a base for the atomic bombing of hurricanes. The action was taken after commission members had studied an Associated Press dispatch reporting that in a New Mexico experiment the atom bomb explosion evaporated clouds in its path. During the discussion meteorological opinion was quoted to the effect that similar treatment would be effective against tropical disturbances in southern waters.

"The tract offered as a base for atom bombing planes is now under lease to the Government at $1 a year. It is occupied by the Buckingham Flexible Gunnery School which until recently maintained a garrison of some 10,000 men. It has 10 miles of heavy duty runways on which B-29s now operate and is equipped with hangars, utilities, administration buildings and barracks." *Tampa Daily Times*, August 9, 1945.
TAMPA'S FIRST POLICEWOMEN

"The position of policewoman on the Tampa force, held by Mrs. M.K. Christian for the last seven years was abolished yesterday by Chief Logan in the interest of economy. The position was dropped after a conference between Chief Logan and Mayor Chancey who decided a policewoman no longer was needed. Mrs. Christian was appointed to the job in 1924 under Chief D.B. York and has served since that time." * Tampa Morning Tribune, December 24, 1931.

"Mrs. Ernest King of 1202 Curtis Street, whose husband was killed recently in an automobile collision, was appointed a police deputy yesterday by Chief A.C. Logan and will handle the duties formerly assigned to Mrs. M.K. Christian, policewoman. The appointment will become effective tomorrow. Mrs. King, a former school teacher, will work out of the chief's office, doing clerical work in addition to her other duties.

"Mrs. King's appointment meets the request of a petition signed by 17 ministers yesterday and presented to Chief Logan asking him to re-establish the office of policewoman. Accompanying the petition was a letter from Mrs. Robert Brodie, chairman of the committee of Tampa women who have sought to re-establish the office after Mrs. Christian was dismissed from the department as the office was abolished.

"The ministers' petition set forth that the office of policewoman is essential in the city of Tampa and that this fact is well known to every citizen. We the undersigned, call upon you to reinstate this office and further ask that this action be taken immediately." * Tampa Morning Tribune, January 17, 1932.