THE SUNLAND TRIBUNE
Journal of the Tampa Historical Society

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Front cover: “Tampa Steps Out” (1925) is one of the many festive, fervent, and funny songs written about Florida. Author Paul Camp’s article describes the best of them in “I’ve Got the Swanee River Flowing Thru My Veins: Florida Sheet Music in the USF Library’s Collection.”

Back cover: To both tourists and residents, Florida’s citrus industry represented one of the State’s most pleasant – and profitable – assets. Early twentieth century postcards (from the collections of Tampa Historical Society and Maureen J. Patrick) displayed the Citrus State’s most famous cash crop.
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

In April of this year a marriage – both romantic and practical – took place. The celebrants were Tampa Historical Society and Historic Hyde Park Neighborhood Association (HHPNA.) Fittingly, the ceremony took place in a Victorian honeymoon cottage, the Society’s headquarters, the c.1890 Peter O. Knight House at 245 S. Hyde Park Ave.

HHPNA and the Society share a mission: Hyde Park’s past, present, and future. Founded in 1971, Tampa Historical Society is Hillsborough County’s oldest history organization. Once an “umbrella” interpreter of Tampa history, it has refocused its efforts on the Hyde Park neighborhood and its residents – famous and ordinary. Headquartered in the Historic Landmark Knight House since 1974, the Society now – as always - produces a packed calendar of educational events and publications, leaving it little “discretionary funding” to apply to its goal of restoring the Knight House as an historic house museum, one that would serve Tampa’s heritage by displaying the material culture and lifestyles of the City’s first neighborhood.

In April, HHPNA President Jack Wyatt asked to hold the organization’s monthly Board Meetings at the Knight House. At the very first meeting the overlaps of the Society’s and HHPNA’s agendas were obvious. The Society has invited HHPNA to expand its organizational options by partnering with the Society in projects and programs, while HHPNA will embrace the Knight House in its mission to restore Hyde Park’s historic structures. In this way, working together, the two dynamic local organizations can enhance and secure Hyde Park’s unique identity as Tampa’s first neighborhood.

“The happy couple” have already produced healthy offspring in the form of visible progress toward total restoration of the Peter O. Knight House. Windows on the south side of the House were severely damaged in the hurricane cycle of 2005. Wood rot and additional rain damage had virtually destroyed the windows and frames, which date to the 1926-7 addition to the original House. As readers of The Sunland will see, the windows have been painstakingly and accurately rebuilt by master woodworker Ioannis “Johnny” Davakos.

At the southeast corner of the House, restoration faced a different challenge. A window there opened into the original bathroom of the House, just off the front bedroom. The bathroom was partitioned in the 1990s to make a closet (for records and artifacts) and create the current, modernized bathroom. Since the original window then opened into the closet, it was sealed under wallboard (in the closet interior) and a large sheet of plywood (on the exterior.) The adaptation was unsightly and greatly altered the original lines of the House. Johnny Davakos’ wood mastery went to work and the window returned to its graceful, original form.

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President's Message continued

Removing the wallboard in the closet produced a pleasant surprise! The original window shutters had been placed behind the wallboard, inside the boarded up window.

These happy chapters in the Knight House restoration are only the first. Pressure washing and paint scraping in August led up to a complete exterior painting of the House. Scrapings by architect and Society Board Member Dennis Jones have revealed the original layers of paint on the House. Jones’ forensic work is augmented by research in the National Trust for Historic Preservation archives, uncovering typical paint color schemes for late nineteenth century Victorian homes. Paint donations by Tanner Paint and labor from the local V.F.W. Post 4321 have, along with a raft of volunteers from the Society, HHPNA, and many other history-minded folks, accomplished in Fall of 2010 what the Society has dreamed of for so long; the repainting of the House in appropriate c.1890 colors.

Additional aspects of the Knight House exterior restoration include: rebuilding the original Chippendale porch railing and the porch itself; restoring the delicate gingerbread wood trim on the eaves and gables; re-roofing; restoring the original out-house (still in place but lacking its fixtures and needing a new and period correct roof); repairing wood/water damage to the original woodwork; “rodent proofing” the under-house, eaves, and attic; and restoring the Garden so that it displays typical Victorian plantings but also contains a gazebo for Society and rental events.

Beyond the exterior work, the Society’s long-range plan includes interior restoration (with period correct furnishings and a return to the original floor plan) to create the “Peter O. Knight Historic House Museum”, a “working exhibit” of lifestyles of Tampa’s middle class in its Gaslight Era, as exemplified by the Knights and their neighbors in Hyde Park.

Best regards,

Maureen J. Patrick

The southeast corner of the House, showing boarded-up window and detached shutter.

The southeast corner window after reconstruction.
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A Newspaper Columnist Visits Tampa in 1887: Lucie Vannevar’s Letters

Elizabeth Coachman

Endnotes by Paul Eugen Camp

Author’s Preface: In preparation for writing a biography of Dr. Mary Jane Safford, I located a series of Tampa newspaper columns written as “letters to the editor” by Lucie Vannevar. Born Lucie Wyman in Amboy, Illinois in 1855, she was a daughter of an Illinois Central Railroad Assistant Superintendent (according to James G. Wilson in Biographical Sketches of Illinois Officers Engaged in the War Against the Rebellion of 1861. Chicago, IL: James Barnet, 1862: 44-45.) She lived in several locales before settling in Tarpon Springs, Florida in the mid- to late 1880s. Lucie’s letters, published first in the 1886 Tampa Guardian and later on a near-weekly basis in the 1887-1890 Tampa Journal, are a treasure trove of first-person observations of early Hillsborough County. The writer’s grand sense of humor, along with her keen eye for detail (and first-rate name-dropping ability), produced highly entertaining newspaper copy. Today the Tampa Journal is available on microfilm in the Florida Newspaper Collection (University of South Florida Libraries) as well as the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Libraries, Main (John F. Germany) Branch.

Although Vannevar’s early columns focused on Tarpon Springs’ residents’ activities, she soon enlarged her interests. Letters about Clearwater, Yellow Bluff, Sutherland and other West Hillsborough communities appeared first under the title, “Our Tarpon Letter” and eventually “Lucie Vannevar’s Letter.” When the Orange Belt Railroad began regular service (early 1888), she began writing about towns and personalities from Sanford to St. Petersburg. Vannevar’s letters ceased without warning after the issue of March 17, 1890. However, in the May 29, 1890 Tampa Journal (page unnumbered), “Clear Water notes” states:

“Mrs. Lucie Vannevar, editor of Sanford Journal, passed through our village en route for Tarpon Springs, Friday a.m.”

Dr. Mary Jane Safford, whom Vannevar mentions several times in the letter following this Preface, was a resident of Tarpon Springs and one of the first women homeopathic physicians in West Hillsborough County.

Following a trip to Tampa in September of 1887, Vannevar wrote the letter below to her editor at the Tampa Weekly Journal. The letter appeared on September 15, 1887 and is transcribed with its eccentric spelling and word choices intact.
Tampa As Seen by Tarpon Eyes
An Interesting Description of Our City

by Lucie Vannevar
Editor Tampa Journal

Urged hereto by a spirit of emulation, hoping to win for myself such laurels as has ye editor of the Tarpon, I hied me forth upon my travels. Kindly allow me to draw a veil upon the parting scenes when, half frantic with grief, I tore myself from encircling claws of cats and dog. Regard for Mr. Truax's feelings tempts me to write that the drive to Tampa made me tired, but truth guides my "faible pen" and memory brings to me a picture of a long but pleasant drive, a drive past lovely lakes, through stretches of fair pine lands, where half hidden from their lovers, wholly hidden from those indifferent to their charms, starry blossoms stud the turf. Whatever of levity may have characterized my conduct during the earlier hours, was sobered down as Tampa came in sight, for to reach the city proper the ferry must be crossed, and coward that I am, that ferry has for me the combined horrors of a mouse and spider; indeed, if driven to it, I would rather face the mouse than cross the ferry. But on the flat we went, and my excited imagination straightway drew a horrible picture of myself and trunk, not to mention my husband and Mr. Leavell, being swept out to sea. But even flats reach their destination in time, that is, of course, if you give them time enough, and I was soon at the Collins House where kind Mrs. Nolan gave us a warm welcome, supplemented by a dish of the most delicious ice cream, which happy combination made me put on my very rosiest glasses, and see Tampa as she really is. Pardon me if from this time on I ramble. Remember I keep no diary; I know not when I ate, whether I went down town before or after meals; whether I retired or simply went to bed; whether the porter wished to black my boots or not; in short, I know nothing except that for the past few days I have been very happy and that Tampa and

Traffic crossed the Hillsborough River by ferry until the Lafayette Street Bridge (now Kennedy Boulevard Bridge) was completed in 1889. (All images illustrating this article, unless otherwise attributed, are courtesy of University of South Florida Libraries, Special Collections.)
Plan of Tampa in 1886.
Tampa's people have contributed much toward that happiness. The Journal after diplomatically sending a committee of inspection (consisting of the devil) to ascertain the probability of "from the country" being indelibly stamped upon my best gown, greeted me like a very prodigal daughter, my own particular compositor receiving me with a beaming smile, under which I am compelled to admit there lurked the suspicion of a frown.

These little family matters being attended to, we took a carriage and proceeded to see the sights, Mr. Cooper first carefully instructing the driver to avoid the street car line, that the engine might not break on me too suddenly, I being of a nervous temperament and unaccustomed to anything faster than the O.B.R.R. What did I see on that, and other drives. A city, not of palaces, perhaps, but of pretty residences and handsome stores; a city where magnificent brick blocks are rapidly taking the place of wooden structures. First, as a matter of course, we drove to Ybor City, and I could scarcely believe that I was awake, for where eighteen months ago, it seemed to me a wilderness, there stands today a city in itself; a working
man's city, and yet how different from one's idea of such a city. I had pictured blocks of cheaply built houses, where, like the tenements of New York, families huddled together, existing because existence is a necessity. I saw pretty homelike cottages, each with its little plat of ground. Instead of haggard, work-worn women and children, old before their time, I saw bright, sparkling pretty faces, and rosy happy little ones. Everything too was so clean. Yards and streets looked as though they might have been newly swept. I had been at Ybor in its early days, when the wooden building now occupied by the Opera house and stores, was the only factory, so was not prepared for the massive brick structure since erected.

We were kindly received by Mr. Manrara and, although, much to my disappointment, the operatives were not at work, I gratified my curiosity by going through the factory, even ascending into the cupola, from which the view is magnificent. Mr. Manrara being busy, or perhaps too humane to witness my sufferings, Mr. Field was detailed on escort duty and under his guidance I took my flight toward the inferno, for truly as we ascended the stairs, the fumes of tobacco rising with us, I could think of nothing else. They choked me, they made me sea sick, they did everything unpleasant, but when I reached the top I forgot it all, for spread out at my feet lay a picture lovely as any eye ever rested on. To the westward sky and water...
The Plant Steamship Line’s state-of-the-art flagship, SS Mascotte.

meet; far out the Mascotte\textsuperscript{11} lay, an ebon spot upon an azure sea; while the curving shore encircled the sparkling waters, even as an emerald necklace might lay upon the fair throat of a queen. Following the shoreline and the river, Tampa lay drawing ever nearer and more near until it reached our feet. Even I could distinguish different buildings; could see the Lykes’ block\textsuperscript{12} keeping stern guard over the Bank and the Journal office\textsuperscript{13}. The famous Scripture grove was plainly to be seen, the trees

The Bank of Tampa (later First National Bank) at Franklin and Washington Streets, established in 1883.
fearful least it should be overlooked, I inquired as each corner was turned: "Is this Nebraska Avenue?" commencing my inquiries shortly after leaving the scrub. The answer was so invariably "No," (not the soft "no" that turneth away wrath, but short and crisp) that I became quite discouraged and desisted just about the time we reached the Avenue, for which reason we drove some distance along it, I remaining in perfect ignorance that at last the Delectableland had been reached, although I confess to furtive admiring glances cast on either side. Nebraska Avenue is beautiful, and must as time rolls on, grow more and more so. Was it on this street I wonder that I saw those magnificent umbrella trees and the nursery of tiny ones just coming on. I found it to be an umbrella tree nursery when I hinted that possibly it might be a sweet potato patch. We passed many very beautiful groves, the most noticeable being of course the Scripture grove, which with its long lines of glossy dark leaved trees and cleanly cultivated land, is indeed an ideal spot. Famous as Nebraska Avenue is becoming, it is by no means the only beautiful street in Tampa, but I have such a faculty for making a very olla podrida of names, I fear to undertake to tell ones which I fancied. But they have nearly all one virtue, the virtue of being broad in their views (which is truly desirable in streets as well as people). Some are beautifully shaded, all should be. I wish I could tell you of all the pretty homes I saw. (I am not writing for Tampa people now, and if they find this tiresome they may e'en pass it by, and let those who wish to read of Tampa do so). I am rather given to admiring diminutive dwellings, so to the amusement of my companions some tiny vine-clad cottages drew fulsome praise from me. Still I am not blind to the advantages of handsome residences, and I saw some very handsome ones. I particularly noticed those of Mr. Ybor, Mrs. Jackson, Mrs. Frieben, Mrs. Otto, Mr. Conoley, Mr. Dorsey and many, many others, that I cannot name. How lovely some of the yards are, too. Open confession is said to be good for the soul, and I thereby confess that I never pass either Mrs. Jackson's or Mrs. Frieben's without being possessed with an insane desire to commit highway robbery. Their beautiful flowers and lovely roses tempt me
so. I am much impressed with the magnificent palm in Mrs. Friebele’s garden. I think I never saw one so elegant.

Apropos of yards and impressions, I was never so deeply impressed than I have been by the Courthouse yard. It is so esthetic, a very diamond in the rough, or, I might say, the setting of two diamonds in the rough, for I challenge the world to produce two rougher diamonds than the Courthouse and the jail. I am actually ashamed to mention the jail, the days of barbarism having passed, for truly none but a barbarian could calmly imprison a fellow creature there. It is horrible as to its exterior. I shudder to think of its interior. The Courthouse standing almost beside it is quite a bad; a tumbled-down looking building with blinds half off, some wholly so some pathetically leaning against the side of the building. All this grandeur, surrounded by a rickety, old fence, whose missing panels are almost as secure as those still standing. Indeed, the Courthouse, jail and square impresses one as one of the “great has beens.” This, in the midst of a city rapidly coming to the front as one of the leading cities of the South; this, in a county holding out great inducements to immigrants. Why, the very sight of that square is enough to turn thrifty men away. It is a crying shame and disgrace, and it concerns us all. But if Tampa blushes for this blot upon the fair escutcheon of Hillsborough county, this blot for which she is not responsible, she points with pride to her school house, and well she may, for it is a very handsome building, and one that would do credit to any city of Tampa’s size. Indeed, I have seen many not half so fine in larger places. I have almost dubbed Tampa the “city of churches” we have seen so many in our ramblings. I think the stores are beautiful, some of them. As to windows the South Florida Dry Good Store is rather ahead; they are beautifully trimmed, and by the hand of no novice. Friebele’s store is very handsome and well stocked, I have admired the grocery stores, one in particular reminding me of a Northern store. I noticed it one evening when lit up. And isn’t the electric light pretty? I am so glad Tampa is to have it. How glorious it will be when from the Reservation to Ybor its silvery rays will flash across the night, lighting up the darkest corners. The one already on Franklin Street is so attractive, although at present it is rather rivaled by the danger signal that throws its blood-red rays across the thoroughfare farther down.

I went to the Reservation Sunday. All the town was there, I tow, to hear our Dr. Mary Safford. For once I was oblivious to the charms of women’s dresses; for once I failed to notice bonnets; nature was so charming. If the Courthouse square is a blot upon Tampa, the Reservation is beautiful enough to redeem the city. Driving in, I thought of beautiful Bonaventure, Savannah’s pride, for never outside of that lovely city of the dead, have I seen such magnificent oaks.
They stand like giant Druids, the mystically lovely floating Southern moss, robing them in weird beauty. Driving along, we caught glimpses of the bay, for here it is that land and water wed. Here, too, the mound builders have left a monument in the huge mound rising skyward. Surely the vexed question as to who owns this place should be settled, for Tampa has here a natural park, which is only waiting to be developed, to rank among the grandest in the land. I think I am not visionary when I say that in the same length of time, it might prove a dangerous rival to Central Park. It is rolling and, I think, at any rate artificial mounds could be thrown up; artificial lakes are not necessary, for the rippling water leaves its shore. As for trees there are none more beautiful than those already there, and in that soil and this climate there is no tree or shrub that would not grow there. Think of flaming poincianas, of soft crape myrtle, of bright oleanders, of climbing jasmines, trailing ivies, fragrant roses, all of these and hundreds more, beneath the spreading branches of the oaks, their gorgeousness softened by the waving Spanish moss. Ah, it would be a paradise, a spot so lovely that all the world would envy Tampa.

Sunday evening we went to the Opera house, again to hear Dr. Safford. I was surprised to find so fine a hall and pretty a stage.

It is to Gen. Wall that I owe the pleasure of a visit to the Leader Club rooms, in the Lykes block. They are most luxuriously fitted up, with soft velvet carpets, elegant portiers, and the easiest of easy chairs. Two elegant billiard tables are in the billiard room; the card room has the cutest of toilet contrivances, half revealed, half hidden by a lovely hand-embroidered screen. A handsome bookease holds all the leading periodicals and papers of the day, while the long table in the reading room is covered with reading matter. The walls are beautifully papered, and a fine hat-stand with beveled mirror stands near the door.
The general effect is marvelously beautiful. Please understand, all ye who think clubs and dissipation synonymous terms, the rules of the Leader Club are very strict. Wines and liquors are not allowed in the rooms. It is simply a place where the members may meet and enjoy themselves in a rational manner.

It seems strange to see such handsome brick blocks; the Lykes, whose upper story is a dancing hall, the Wall block, Sparkman block, and the bank. This last building is particularly attractive. Tampa's hotels have been written up too many times for me to attempt the task, so I will let the Palmetto, St. James, City, Plant and Orange Grove tell their own tales, and will only say that we are at the Collins, and that there we find the comforts of a home. Can it be that I forget Tampa's papers. No, but modesty prevents my puffing the Journal too much, and of course I think the Journal best of all. I called at the Tribune office one pleasant afternoon and enjoyed it very much, feeling, however, great sympathy for Col. Mathes, who really wishes to vote one way, but says he greatly fears such domestic pressure will be brought to bear upon him, that he will go the other, which goes to prove that he does not know any better how to use his ballot than I would. I also looked to at the News and found Mr. Jackson busily getting out his newsy little sheet.
There is so much more I would like to write. I would like to tell of the pleasant people I have met; tell all who have been so kind to me how much I appreciate it, but Mr. Cooper already looks askance at this long letter, and with Allen Quatermain, I must say, "to be continued in our next."

ENDNOTES

1. George Truax was editor of the Tarpon Springs weekly newspaper The Tarpon, which he founded in 1886. (Stoughton, Gertrude. Tarpon Springs: The Early Years. 2nd Ed. Tarpon Springs Tarpon Springs Area Historical Society, 1975; pp. 16, 33.)

2. As Tampa's first bridge was not completed until November 1888, Lucie Vannevar crossed the Hillsborough River by the West Tampa Ferry at the foot of Jackson Street, operated by Jesse J. Haydon. The ferry consisted of a flatboat large enough for a carriage or wagon, pulled back and forth across the river by ropes. (Webb, Wanton S. Webb's Tampa Directory. New York: W. S. Webb, 1886. p. 531. Also Grismer, Karl H. Tampa: A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region. [St. Petersburg, Fla.]: St. Petersburg Print Co., 1950. p. 187.)

3. "Mr. Leavell" was E. F. Leavell, who operated a "Hack and U. S. Mail Line" (hackney carriage service) between Tampa and Tarpon Springs. (Tampa Journal, September 22, 1887. 4:3.)

4. The Collins House, located at the corner of Whiting and Ashley, was a hotel operated by Dr. and Mrs. J. Forest Nolan (not "Nolan"). (Webb, p. 546. Tampa Journal, January 1, 1887, 1:2.)

5. The Tampa Weekly Journal, Henry J. Cooper, editor and proprietor, was located at the southeast corner of Franklin and Washington. (Webb, p. 527; Grismer, p. 200. Tampa Journal, May 19, 1887, 1:1.) The "devil" is a reference to "printer's devil," an errand boy or apprentice in a printing shop.

6. The Tampa Street Railway, the city's first streetcar line, was completed early in April 1886. It was a narrow gauge street railway with locally made passenger cars pulled by a small wood-burning locomotive named "Jennie." The line ran from the downtown business district to Ybor City. (Grismer, pp. 190-191.) The O.B. R. was the Orange Belt Railroad, a narrow gauge rail line between St. Petersburg and Sanford built in 1887-88 by Peter A. Diemans, founder of St. Petersburg. (Grismer, p. 203.)

7. Created as a cigar-making "factory town" by manufacturer Vicente Martinez Ybor (1818-1896), Ybor City was established in 1885-86 on forty acres of land located northeast of Tampa and purchased from John T. Lesley. (Grismer, pp. 182-183.)

8. This is a reference to the so-called "Spanish Opera House," the Liceo Cubano. The Ybor & Manarra cigar company built the two-story wooden building in 1886 as a temporary factory. When the company's three-story brick factory was completed, Ybor and Manarra remodeled the older structure as a community center with an opera house on the second floor. (Steffy, Joan Marie. The Cuban Immigrants of Tampa, Florida, 1886-1898. Unpublished Master's thesis, University of South
Florida, 1974, pp. 16-17.)

9. Eduardo Manrara (1842-1912), was the partner of V.M.Ybor in the Ybor & Manrara cigar factory and co-founder of the Ybor City Land & Improvement Company. (Grismer, p. 52.)

10. The only field listed in the 1886 or 1893 Tampa city directories or the indexes to the 1886-1887 Tampa Journal is James C. Field, Tampa's pioneer commercial photographer. Although Field does not appear to have been connected with the Ybor & Manrara cigar factory, in 1887 he was a member of the Tampa City Council and so may have helped show Lucie Vannear around town.

11. The SS Muscotte was an 884-ton, iron-hulled steamship launched in 1885 at Philadelphia and operated by the Plant Steamship Line. Between 1886 and 1900 the 195-foot ship carried passengers and freight on a regular schedule between Port Tampa, Key West and Havana, Cuba. (Prince, Richard E. The Atlantic Coast Line Railroad: Steam Locomotives, Ships and History. Green River, WY. Richard Prince, 1966, pp. 44, 47.)

12. The “Lykes Block” was probably the block on Franklin Street housing the Almeria Hotel, a structure built by Dr. Howell T. Lykes in 1886 and Tampa's first three-story brick building. (Grismer, pp. 183-184.)

13. “The Bank” would be the First National Bank, located at the corner of Franklin and Washington. Established as the Bank of Tampa in 1883, it became the First National Bank when it received its national charter in 1886. The bank's two-story building, constructed in 1885, was the city’s first brick structure. (Grismer, pp. 115, 178-179; Webb, p. 54.)

14. The Scripture Grove was an orange grove owned by grover James Scripture. (Webb, p. 547.)

15. This would be the Ybor City Ice Works, located at the old “Government Spring” at 13th Street and 2nd Avenue in Ybor City. (Clarke, J. O. D. The Gate-to-the-Gulf (Tampa) City Directory and Hillsborough County Guide. Tampa: Clarke, 1893, p. 185; Grismer, p. 180; Tampa Journal, June 23, 1887, 4:3.)

16. Although “Mr. Skidmore” is obviously affiliated with the ice works, no one by this surname is listed in either the 1886 (Webb) or 1893 (Clarke) Tampa city directories, nor does anyone named “Skidmore” appear in the indexes to the 1886 or 1887 Tampa Journal.

17. “Jack” was the pseudonym used by the Tampa Journal's correspondent for northern Hillsborough County. (Tampa Journal, February 2, 1887, 2:5.)

18. “The Scrub” was the area between the downtown business district and Ybor City, populated primarily by African-Americans. (Grismer, p. 212.)

19. Common name for Magnolia tripetala, an American magnolia tree with large leaves in umbrella-like clusters.

20. Olla podrida is a stew of meat and vegetables, rather like a Spanish “mulligan stew.” The term is used to mean a miscellany or incongruous mixture.

21. “Mr. Ybor” was cigar manufacturer Vicente Martinez Ybor. “Mrs. Jackson” was Mrs. John Jackson. The Jackson home was located at the corner of Franklin and Zack (Webb, p. 532). “Mrs. Frischele” was Julia Wall Frischele (Mrs. Christopher L.), whose home was on Franklin at the corner of Washington (Webb, p. 529). “Mrs. Otto” was the wife of bookkeeper Julius Otto. They lived on Morgan Street at the corner of Twiggs. (Webb, p. 537). “Mr. Conoley” was William N. Conoley, real estate and general business agent, whose home was at the corner of Franklin and Twiggs. (Webb, p. 527.) “Mrs. Dorsey” was the wife of Jesse H. Dorsey and lived at the corner of Twiggs and Monroe. (Webb, p. 528.) (Clarke, J. O. D. The Gate-to-the-Gulf (Tampa) City Directory and Hillsborough County Guide. Tampa: Clarke, 1893.)

22. The structure Vannear so scoffingly describes is the 1855 Hillsborough County courthouse, a two-story wooden structure with a central cupola and a two-level front porch with four columns. Set in a large square surrounded by a wooden picket fence, it was located at Madison and Lafayette. Although originally a handsome, white-columned antebellum structure, by 1887 the courthouse was showing its age. (Grismer, pp. 79, 122.)

23. This was an eight-room school building on 6th Avenue completed in 1886 at a cost of $4,735. (Robinson, Ernest L. History of Hillsborough County, Florida. St. Augustine, FL: The Record Company, 1928, p.131.)

24. The South Florida Dry Goods Company was established by William Christie and Alex S. Gray in April, 1887. (Tampa Journal, June 23, 1887, 1:5.)

25. Christopher L. Frischele (1815-1886) operated a general merchandise store at the corner of Franklin and Washington. (Webb, p. 529.)

26. The Tampa Electric Company, organized January 29, 1887, brought electric lighting to Tampa with two electric arc lights first lit on April 25, 1887. One was located at the intersection of Washington and Franklin streets, the other in front of Abe Maas’s “Dry Goods Palace” at Franklin and Twiggs. On September 13, 1887, two days before Vannear’s article appeared, the City of Tampa awarded the electric company a ten-year contract to light the city’s streets with 12 arc lights at a rate of 60 cents per light per night. (Grismer, p. 194-195.)

27. The Fort Brooke Military Reservation was located approximately where the Fort Brooke Parking Garage is today. Established in 1824, Fort Brooke, around which the town of Tampa developed, was a major military post during the Second Seminole War (1835-1842) and Third (1855-1858) Seminole Wars. The Military Reservation was originally a 16-mile square with the fort at its center. By the 1880s the Reservation had been reduced to about 148 acres. It was last used by the Army in 1882. On January 4, 1883 the remaining land was turned over to the Department of the Interior. Although citizens attempted to obtain the Reservation (with its towering live oaks) for the city as a park, a bit of political chicanery opened the land for home-stead ing and the site ended in private hands. (Grismer, pp. 56-57, 168-169.)

28. This is a reference to Savannah, Georgia’s beautiful and historic Bonaventure Cemetery, famous for its huge moss-draped live oaks. Developed around the ruins of the eighteenth century Tattnall mansion and family burying ground in 1847, Bonaventure Cemetery is now maintained by the City of Savannah, and its surviving live oaks are listed in the Georgia Landmark and Historic Tree Register.

29. This references the large prehistoric Indian shell mound, forty feet high and two hundred feet in diameter, located in the Reservation near the foot of Morgan Street. Although it still stood in 1887, it was later used as a source of shell for making sidewalks and surfacing streets. (Grismer, p. 12.)
30. Although this could be the “Opera house” in Ybor City, it is more likely Branch’s Opera House (on Franklin Street near Lafayette), Tampa’s principal venue for events during the 1880s. Opened by Henry L. Branch on March 7, 1884, the Opera House was a two-story structure with stores at street level and a large hall upstairs. (Webb, p. 525; Grismer, pp. 133, 179.) According to the September 15, 1887 issue of Tampa Journal, Dr. Safford addressed a Tampa temperance meeting; one or both of the Safford speeches probably dealt with the prohibition of alcoholic beverages. This would support the “Opera house” being Branch’s rather than the Liceo Cubano, since temperance was not a popular cause in Ybor City, where saloons were abundant.

31. “General Wall” was prominent Tampa attorney and state senator Joseph Baisden Wall (1847-1912). The Tampa Journal refers to Senator J. B. Wall as “General Wall” in July, 1887 and “Colonel Wall” in September of the same year; it appears that the title was honorary rather than denoting actual military rank. (Tampa Journal, July 23, 1887, 1:1; September 22, 1887, 4:1; Grismer, p. 331.)

32. The Lykes Block probably included the Almeria Hotel as mentioned in note 12; the Wall Block was 310-312 Washington (Clarke, p. 41.) The Sparkman Block was 507-513 Franklin (Clarke, p. 41.)

33. Opened in 1884, the Palmetto Hotel on the northeast corner of Florida and Polk was a three-story building with a five-story observatory tower (Grismer, p. 103, 179.) The St. James, located on the northeast corner of Franklin and Harrison, was managed by Thomas White and had “a bathroom on every floor” (Webb, advertisement preceding p. 546; Grismer, p. 179.) The City Hotel, J. A. Roberts proprietor, was located at 607 Ashley (Clarke, p. 185.) Opened in December, 1884 by owner Jerry T. Anderson, the H. B. Plant Hotel (not to be confused with Henry B. Plant’s later Tampa Bay Hotel) was a two-story wooden building located on the east side of Ashley just north of Lafayette (Grismer, pp. 87, 179.) The Orange Grove Hotel was a three-story frame structure at 813 Madison, originally built as the home of pioneer cattleman William B. Hooker. It is famous for poet Sidney Lanier’s stay in 1876, during which he wrote Tampa Robin and ten other poems (Grismer, p. 163-164; Clarke, p. 185.)

34. The Tampa Tribune was founded in 1876 and merged with the Tampa Journal in 1893 to form the Tampa Times, with Henry Cooper as general manager. Wallace Fisher Stovall founded a new Tampa Tribune in 1893 shortly after the two older papers had merged. (Grismer, pp. 199-200.) “Colonel Mathes” was George M. Mathes, editor of the Tribune. (Tampa Journal, June 23, 1887, 5:3.) “Mr. Jackson” is probably G. H. Jackson, who was editor of the Bartow Informant in 1886. (Tampa Journal, August 8, 1886, 3:4.)

35. Allan Quartermain was the hero of British writer H. Rider Haggard’s popular African adventure novels King Solomon’s Mines (1885) and Allan Quartermain (1887.)

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Arsenic in the Land of Orange Blossoms: Maxcy v. Mayo and the Fight to Save Florida’s Orange Industry

Nova Muhlenberg Bonnett

Editor’s Note: Ms. Bonnett submitted this article to The Sunland Tribune in perfect legal publishing format. The Sunland’s Editor requested, and the author graciously made, changes in the formatting to conform with The Sunland’s guidelines. Tampa Historical Society, Inc. is grateful to Ms. Bonnet for making these alterations.

Preface

In 1932, the Florida Supreme Court decided a landmark case brought by a group of Florida citrus growers. In their complaint, the growers alleged that the State of Florida had violated their substantive due process rights under Article 1, Section 9 of the Florida Constitution. That Section reads, “No person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law.” The case was extraordinarily important not only for its ruling on substantive due process and the State’s police powers, but also because the lead plaintiff, L. Maxcy, Inc., a corporate pioneer grower in Florida’s citrus industry, was challenging two Florida statutes which made it a criminal offense to spray arsenic solutions on “bearing” citrus trees, unless otherwise authorized by the federal government or Florida’s Plant Board. Lattimer (Latt) Maxcy was the head and heart of L. Maxcy, Inc. and Latt Maxcy’s lawsuit was to become the cornerstone of future practices in Florida’s most important industry: the growing and marketing of citrus fruit.

By the mid-1920s, Florida’s citrus industry was approaching full flower but industry practices were largely unregulated as growers experimented with various fertilizers and chemicals which promoted fruit quality and maturation while protecting their groves from invasive pests. Dipping winter temperatures and attendant frost were an ever-present concern but even more threatening and noxious were the intermittent infestations of the non-indigenous Mediterranean fruit fly. Other industry challenges included the great distances citrus was shipped to market, overland by railroad or truck, and the havoc such extended hauls played with fruit maturation and spoilage.

At the center of Maxcy v. Mayo was the question of the unlawful use of arsenic in sprays applied to fruit-bearing citrus trees, a process that protected the trees from devastating pests but which also

Florida citrus grove. (Courtesy of Florida State Photographic Archives.)
altered the fruit’s outward appearance. In the case of oranges, the spraying prematurely triggered the bright orange outer color, while leaving the edible portion of the fruit substantially inferior in texture and taste. The questionable practice gave rise to statutes designed to protect the public while acknowledging the growers’ efforts to fend off the Mediterranean fruit fly.

Florida’s Citrus Industry
Florida’s citrus industry had its beginnings on Merritt Island, just off the east coast, in 1830, when Captain D. D. Dummitt planted the state’s first known orange grove. A non-native specie, Florida oranges have been traced to varieties originating in Seville, Spain, a byproduct of the Spanish exploration.

By 1895, production of oranges in Florida had reached an astounding five million boxes per year, but the number of varieties being grown were considered too vast to be efficient. Not unlike the oil producers of Western Pennsylvania, whose overproduction threatened the entire industry, Florida orange growers quickly realized the benefits of a common strategy that would benefit them all. Arguably a trust, but nonetheless effective, Florida orange growers joined together in 1909 to form the Florida Citrus Exchange, an association with the purpose of controlling production and self-regulating the market. One of the original members of the Florida Citrus Exchange was James Gregg Maxey, a former cotton farmer from Columbia, South Carolina, who brought his family to south central Florida in 1895, hoping for an alternative to South Carolina’s failing cotton industry.

Latt Maxey and His Town
James Gregg Maxey settled his family in Mulberry, Florida, just south of Lakeland in Polk County, the central part of the state. Mulberry was and still is famous for its phosphate mines. One of James’ children, Lattimer, went to work as a water boy in the mines. Adventurous and industrious, young Latt, as he was called, spent his free time exploring the undeveloped Florida midlands. In 1904 on a canoe trip, Latt was reputedly surprised to note that citrus growing in the area of Lake Reedy had not perished in recent freezes, and soon convinced his father to buy land in the area, then called Lakemont, but later renamed “Frostproof.”

The senior Maxey began the business of growing oranges in South Lake Reedy, and built the family a homestead nearby. The home later burned and in 1913 James Gregg Maxey moved his family into an unassuming bungalow home in “town,” where the Maxeys also took in boarders.

The Maxey home, located at 324 South Scenic Highway, would later serve as a nexus for future generations of Maxey family residents. Upon James Gregg Maxey’s death in 1926, Latt’s sister Ruth Maxey Urie and her husband moved into the home with their mother, and a generation later the house passed to Susanna Urie Copps, their
Ben Hill Griffin, another transplant to Frostproof who arrived in 1906,18 Sarah and Ben’s son, Ben Hill Griffin, Jr., would later become not only one of Florida’s citrus kings, but also one of Florida’s most important power brokers. A former director of both Winn-Dixie and the University of Florida Foundation, Griffin, Jr. was also chairman of the board of Alico, Inc.19 He entered politics in 1956 and served alternately in Florida’s House and Senate until 1968. Griffin, Jr.’s granddaughter is former Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris, who notoriously intervened in the landmark election case, Bush v. Gore.20 Both Ben Hill Griffin, Jr. and Latt Maxey were named posthumously as part of the state’s Great Floridians 2000 Program, which recognizes outstanding Floridians who have made lasting contributions to the State.21 Unsurprisingly, perhaps, those nominations were made by then-Secretary of State Katherine Harris.

Supported and encouraged by a large and local family, by 1931, Lattimer Maxey was not only the owner of extensive orange

dederland.15 The Uries also owned and operated the town’s general store. Three years earlier and just down the road, Ruth’s sister, Julia Maxcy Pond and her husband Junior, built a hilltop home overlooking Lake Reedy.16 By the early 1990s, the home had passed through the ownership of various members of the family to become the property of the Ponds’ granddaughter, Mrs. Roger McDowell.17

Clearly, by the early 1930s, the Maxey family had made Frostproof its permanent home and was established as its preeminent family. Latt Maxey’s sister, Sarah Guignard Maxey, married a young man named

Ben Hill Griffin and Florida Governor Rubin Askew, 1971. (Courtesy of Florida State Photographic Archives.)

Ruth Maxey Urie. (Courtesy of Historical Frostproof Homes 16, Polk County Historical Quarterly 4; March 1990.)

Hunters with Seminole guide, Maxey ranch at Frostproof (n.d.) (Courtesy of Florida State Photographic Archives.)
Frostproof, Florida

Frostproof is a dot on Florida’s map, a very small town with a stable population of approximately 3000, a number that has changed little in the past five decades. During Frostproof’s early citrus business, grove owners and other men working in the endeavor would meet at the end of the work day, sitting on benches outside one of the town’s two pharmacies (which remained open until 9:00 at night.) According to Mrs. Patricia Wilson, Latt Maxey’s daughter, the growers conducted more citrus business on those benches than they did in offices or boardrooms.25

Located near the geographic center of the Florida peninsula, Frostproof began inauspiciously enough but today serves as the nexus of some of Florida’s most influential businesses and power brokers. The Maxey Corporation, headquartered at 33 East Wall Street in Frostproof, reports on its corporate website that the organization built by Lattimer Maxey is now worth “several hundred million dollars.”26 The company is significantly involved in ranching, citrus groves and Florida real estate development.27 In 2008, the Maxey Corporation sold a massive land holding, representing the second biggest land transaction in Florida’s history (superseded only by the original land purchased by Disney World).28

Maxey v. Mayo

By the mid-1920s, Florida citrus growers were regularly using pesticide sprays containing arsenic, both as a weapon to guard against invading insects but also as an unnatural accelerant in the fruit’s maturation process which affected the fruit’s taste and quality.29 The use of such sprays came under attack by the Florida legislature, con-
cerned that Florida’s most important industry was developing a reputation for fraudulent practices. The context for these alleged fraudulent practices is, however, important to understand.

In 1906, the same year that Ben Hill Griffin, Sr. arrived in Frostproof, the federal government passed the Pure Food and Drug Act, an overarching attempt to somehow control the largely unregulated industries producing the nation’s food supply and creating a seemingly unending array of privately produced medicines. The Act was to be administered by the Department of Agriculture’s fledgling Division of Chemistry.

According to United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Historian, Wallace F. Janssen, by the turn of the century the unmonitored use of chemicals and artificial colors in U.S. food production was widespread and growing. Department inspectors were diligent, but little jurisprudence existed for determining exactly how to interpret the 1906 Act with respect to specific substances.

As to agricultural pesticides, the federal government was aware of the controversy boiling up around arsenical spraying of fruit, but its efforts to regulate such use was “conciliatory,” at best: attempts were made to educate farmers regarding the problems associated with arsenic while at the same time keeping federal concerns from the public. Considering the long history of arsenic use in American agriculture and the government’s concerns arising from that use, federal control of arsenical spraying came late in the game as part of new legislation in 1938, six years after the final decision in Maxey v. Mayo.

During the late 1920s, while the federal government struggled with the regulation of chemicals being added to the nation’s food supply, the State of Florida faced a growing practice within the industry which made it possible for growers to pass statutory citrus fruit maturation tests, by treating the unpicked fruit with arsenical sprays. The application of arsenic negatively affected the sweetness and citric acid of the fruit itself, while accelerating and intensifying the orange color of the fruit’s skin, making its appearance appealing but misleading with regard to inner quality. Inspectors and customers were, at that time, looking only to the color of the fruit as a maturation index, making it possible for those growers employing the arsenical process to evade detection of immature fruit in their shipments. The economic impetus for the spraying practice was the early-season citrus market, which generated higher prices for crops than the mid-to-late season market.

The Supreme Court of Florida had first addressed the citrus maturation problem as early as 1913, in deciding the case of Sligh v. Kirkwood. Sligh was a citrus grower charged with violations of a 1911 Florida statute that made it a criminal act to “sell, offer for sale, ship or deliver for shipment any citrus fruits which are immature or otherwise unfit for consumption.” Sligh challenged the statute as a conflict with the Commerce Clause found in Article 1 Section 8 of the United States Constitution, but the Court eventually held that the state statute in question was neither in conflict with the Commerce Clause nor in conflict with the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act. The Court further found that the statute did “incidentally affect [interstate] commerce” but because the affect was only incidental and because the statute fell within the state’s police powers to protect the public health, the statute was valid as written and Mr. Sligh had been properly charged.

The law was thus settled that growers would face criminal charges if they attempted to evade the maturation laws. This was a relatively easy law to enforce because up to that point, immature fruit was obvious to the naked eye: the problem had come from growers’ misbranding and misrepresenting the nature of the fruit in their
shipments. However, once it became clear to growers that the use of arsenical sprays could radically change the outward appearance of the fruit, those growers who used such sprays were able to evade the “naked eye” maturation tests and the shipping of substandard fruit resumed.

The Florida legislature attempted to thwart the practice head-on. In 1927, the legislature resolved the economic conflict created by the arsenical spraying practice by passing legislation which prohibited the use of arsenical sprays and fertilizers. The concurrent problem encountered by the Legislature, however, was the latest in a series of invasions by one of the citrus growers’ most devastating foes: the Mediterranean fruit fly (Medfly). When this pest invaded central Florida orange groves in the mid-1920s, arsenical sprays were found to be singularly effective in stemming the infestation. With this in mind, the Legislature created exemptions to the 1927 criminal statutes prohibiting arsenical spraying: by designating quarantined areas over much of the state, which permitted those growers within the quarantined areas to continue the use of the sprays for an additional year after the lifting of the quarantine. The dichotomy was obvious: while fighting the Medfly infestation with arsenical sprays, citrus growers in the quarantined areas were able to speed up the exterior maturation of oranges which were then inherently inferior in quality but would pass the maturation tests; and the exemptions to the arsenical spraying statutes made it all possible.

Arsenical spraying had created a problem for Florida’s citrus industry that had worldwide repercussions: an international perception existed that all citrus growers in the state were engaging in unethical, perhaps even fraudulent, practices which resulted in unfair competition with growers in other states (particularly Texas) and foreign growers as well.

Florida Commissioner of Agriculture, Norman Mayo, alleged in a brief in a similar case against Florida grapefruit growers that “the early season flood of inferior arsenated fruit is a menace to the reputation and value of Florida fruit of both early and late season variety,”. Further, although Commissioner Mayo was genuinely concerned about fraud on the consumer, there was in actuality a much broader, serious economic debate growing out of the practice, in which three different camps within the United States citrus market had staked out different and contentious positions: the minority of the domestic market who were engaging in the process, the majority of the domestic market who were not, and foreign competition, whose financial interests were riding at least in part on the outcome of the domestic debate.

In response to this growing concern, the Florida legislature passed two statutes designed to prohibit the use of arsenic pesticides while reserving a one-year post-quarantine exemption for those orchards located in areas of quarantine: that is, areas acknowledged as then-current battle-grounds in Florida’s ongoing war with the Medfly. This statutory provision permitted the gathering and marketing of quarantined fruit which had been subjected to arsenical spraying, for one year following the lifting of the quarantine, an event effective on December 6, 1930. The Florida legislature’s continued, permitted use of arsenical spraying generated animosity within the citrus industry, where the debate over the use of arsenical sprays continued to rage. Latt Maxey’s orchards in and near Frostproof had been designated as part of the quarantine area, center stage in the international industry debate.

Florida’s citrus inspectors, charged with enforcement of the new statutes, were aggressive in their charge. Not fully understanding the status of the Maxey groves nor the import of the quarantine provision, they sought to enjoin Maxey’s use of arsenical sprays as they would against any other grower. When inspectors attempted to enforce the new criminal statutes by seizing Maxey’s crops and charging Maxey with criminal violations, Maxey sued in the circuit court, seeking an injunction to prevent the seizure and destruction of his arsenic-
coated crops, naming Commissioner of Agriculture Norman Mayo and other state officials as defendants, and alleging violations of substantive due process under the theory that the State was taking his property, which was statutorily exempted, without just compensation.\textsuperscript{54} Maxcy further alleged that because arsenic is a naturally-occurring substance in citrus fruit, inspections testing for arsenic would necessarily implicate a grower’s violation of the Acts, even if no arsenic had been sprayed.\textsuperscript{55} This patent unfairness, Maxcy alleged, was yet another example of due process violation. The Circuit Court viewed it differently, however, and denied Maxcy’s prayer for an injunction, dismissing the case. Maxcy appealed: to the Florida Supreme Court.

The Florida Supreme Court carefully examined the statutes at issue and specifically cited the exemption for quarantined groves, acknowledging that the statute’s language regarding fruit in the quarantined areas was ambiguously worded as to whether the exemption applied only to fruit “in esse” at the time of enactment or whether the exemption applied to any fruit grown during the one-year post-quarantine exemption.\textsuperscript{56} Noting that ambiguously worded statutes dealing with the “seizure and destruction of property” should be strictly construed in favor of property owners, the Court held that Maxcy’s fruit was not subject to seizure. The Supreme Court reversed the circuit court’s decision and remanded the case with instructions that the Circuit Court grant the motion for an injunction, which was to remain in effect until the statutory exemption period expired on December 6, 1931.\textsuperscript{57} This might have been the end of the case had there not been a constitutional question which the Court found no need to address in its first hearing. The Attorney General of Florida, concerned that the constitutional question of substantive due process would find its way into other similar lawsuits, petitioned for a rehearing, noting that the spraying statutes raised questions of “great public importance to the state’s welfare.”\textsuperscript{58} The Florida Supreme Court granted the petition for rehearing, and ruled on the constitutional question on January 6, 1932, one month after Latt Maxcy’s statutory exemption expired.\textsuperscript{59}

Part of the Attorney General’s dilemma concerned Norman Mayo, the Commissioner of Agriculture. How was the Commissioner to know whether to pursue enforcement of the spraying statute while its constitutionality remained in question? As a general rule, Florida appellate courts (and indeed, most appellate courts) will only address “difficult constitutional questions of grave importance” where the issues in a particular case cannot be decided on other grounds.\textsuperscript{60} In the first hearing, the Florida Supreme Court was able to resolve Maxcy’s claims by recognizing the post-quarantine provision and then applying the Philadelphia v. Stimson rule in granting an injunction in Maxcy’s favor.\textsuperscript{61} Further, in Maxcy, at the time of the Florida Supreme Court’s first hearing, the quarantine provisions of the spraying statutes had not yet expired, raising a question of whether or not the issue of arsenical spraying was completely ripe for judicial review.\textsuperscript{62}

Upon rehearing, the Court addressed the constitutional dilemma in systematic fashion. First, the Court determined that the statute only addressed arsenical compounds applied “on the trees” themselves, and so eliminated any question of ground fertilizers from the analysis.\textsuperscript{63} The Court next addressed the question of whether or not enforcement under criminal statutes like those in question, could be enjoined by the Court, as injunctions are equitable, not legal, remedies, and courts cannot ordinarily issue an injunction to stay criminal proceedings.\textsuperscript{64} The question was one of first impression in Florida, and the Supreme Court looked beyond Florida for an answer. Citing the United States Supreme Court case of Philadelphia Co. v. Stimson, the Court relied upon the exception to the injunction rule.\textsuperscript{65} The United States Supreme Court had held in Stimson, that where property rights guaranteed under the Constitution, rights like Latt Maxcy’s in his orange groves, were the subject of the criminal statute, and where “the danger of irremediable loss is apparently great and immediate,” as it was in Maxcy’s case, an injunction is the proper remedy, despite the criminal nature of the statute itself.\textsuperscript{66} Having dispatched the questions of arsenic in ground fertilizers and injunctions in such cases, the Court then proceeded to address the question of the constitutionality of the arsenical spraying statutes themselves.

Noting the fundamental importance of protecting private property, and praising
the rugged individuality required by those resisting perceived unconstitutional oppression by the political majority, the Court nonetheless held that the statutes in question were constitutional. 67 Relying on the well-established broad scope of a state’s police powers to regulate and enforce, the Court said: “When put to the choice by the practical necessities of the case, the Legislature may exercise its power to suppress an evil by prohibiting entirely a stated practice out of which that evil largely grows, even though by so doing, innocent acts may be forbidden and long-established customs of the people thenceforth made unlawful.” 68

And with that decision, arsenical spraying of citrus groves in Florida became an unquestionably criminal practice. But it wasn’t over yet. Because the Court had expressly avoided addressing the use of arsenic in ground fertilizers, that practice lawfully continued. Latt Maxey, in effect, lost the battle but won the war.

A Case of First Impression
Maxey v. Mayo had a cast of characters as colorful as one is likely to find in the archives of the Florida Supreme Court or any other jurisprudence. High-powered Tampa attorneys Pat Whitaker, Sr. and Tom Whitaker represented Latt Maxey in the fight to protect his citrus business. 69 Indeed, the Whitakers were Maxey’s attorneys for most of his important legal business. 70 Prior to arguing the case, Pat Whitaker was already established as both a powerful force in Florida criminal legal defense work and as an influential state senator. 71 Following the resolution of Maxey v. Mayo, the Whitakers’ reputations continued to grow. 72 Pat Whitaker, who was a serious candidate for Florida Governor in 1936, had one year earlier served as chief counsel in the defense of six former Tampa policemen who stood accused, along with members of Florida’s Ku Klux Klan, of flogging and tarring labor organizers in the now-famous Tampa sewing rooms strike. 73 Whitaker’s clients, the six former policemen, were acquitted. 74

Pat Whitaker graduated from Georgetown University Law School in 1916 75 and began his renowned Florida legal career in 1919 by convincing a Tampa judge that “a mullet is not a fish.” 76 Whitaker’s clients in that case were young men caught fishing for mullet out of season, thereafter arrested for illegal fishing prac-
tices. The men were exonerated, however, when Whitaker convinced the judge that mullets have gizzards, a characteristic shared with turkeys and poultry but not, generally, fish (or so Whitaker claimed). Buying Whitaker’s argument, the judge determined that the mullet was, therefore, not technically a fish and that the six fishermen had not, therefore, broken the law. 77 A reputed master in the courtroom, Whitaker was rumored to resort to theatrics when necessary, as in grabbing a jury’s attention by removing and replacing his false teeth. 78

Stories about Pat Whitaker abound in Florida lore, but one thing is certain: his legal talent, coupled with Tom Whitaker’s, helped to shape Florida law, both in the courts and in the Legislature.

The Pesticides Issue
The troubling issue of arsenic in American produce is only one area of a longstanding debate about the chemical composition and effect of pesticides. Although the issue in Maxey v. Mayo brought arsenic levels to a head in Florida, the debate began far earlier than the 1930s and continues through the present. 79 As recently as 1996, a unanimous Congress passed the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) of 1996, which became effective that same year. 80 Although regulatory in nature, the primary purpose of the Act was to create incentives for research and development of pesticides which would be safer for human consumption, especially with respect to their effects on infants and children. The challenge to Florida’s citrus industry is, of course, that the pests simply continue to exist although the various pesticide components are periodically prohibited on public health and

Pat Whitaker.
(From Justice: Law & Lawyers in Hillsborough County, 1846-1996 by Kyle S. Van Landardham.)
environmental bases. Current challenges include a citrus infection called “citrus greening” which is treated with a fungicide called “Bravado,” now being considered as a lethal threat to the honey bee population.\(^1\)

Latt Maxey was unquestionably a visionary who saw the coming demise of arsenical spraying and may have been at least motivated in part by this recognition when he began his association with Major Keenan. It is more likely than not that when Keenan established his soil laboratory in Frostproof in 1928, a primary purpose was to assist Maxey in finding suitable and effective replacements for arsenic pesticides.

**Conclusion**

Maxey v. Mayo is not merely a case of first impression, it is also a snapshot of Florida’s developing history and culture. This window into the Florida of the 1920s puts the spotlight on a linchpin of the State’s wealth, the Florida citrus industry. But the story doesn’t end there. The case also hints at the developing grasp of the State’s commercial and political power brokers, some of whom were fabulous characters of legendary proportions and ingenuity but who were also, sometimes, engaged in questionable practices. As legal history, the case goes to the heart of the constitutional tension between private rights and governmental protections.

Although some Americans may view the law and its judicial decisions as occasionally arbitrary and consistently dry and formalistic, cases like Maxey v. Mayo demonstrate that lurking just behind the Latin phrases and often endless legal reasoning lie the fascinating histories of people and places. Notwithstanding the elegance of a fair and just legal result, there is nothing quite like a really good story.

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*The President of Minute Maid and the Florida Senate Committee, 1963. (Courtesy of Florida Citrus Commission.)*

*Latimer Maxey*
ENDNOTES
1. See L. Maxey, Inc. v. Mayo, 139 So. 121 (Fla. 1931).
3. Maxey, 139 So. at 130.
4. Id.
6. Id.
7. Id. at 12.
8. Id. at 13.
12. FCIF, supra.
14. Id.
15. Id.
16. Id.
17. Id.
18. Id.
21. TGF, supra.
22. FCIF, supra.
23. Telephone interview with Mrs. Patricia Wilson (Feb. 22, 2010).
26. See MDG, supra.
27. Id.
29. Maxey, 139 So. at 130.
30. Id. at 129.
31. 59th Cong., Sess. 1, Ch. 3915, p. 768-772; 34 U.S.C. 6768.
33. Id.
34. Id.
35. James Harvey Young, Food and Drug Regulation under the USDA, 1906-1940, 64 Agricultural History 2, The United States Department of Agriculture in Historical Perspective, 141 (Spring 1990).
36. Id.
38. Maxey, 139 So. at 127.
41. Id. at 186 (citing Florida Statute Chapter 6236, §B 1).
42. Id. at 187.
43. Id. at 188.
44. Id.
45. See State Protection, supra note 37, at 1274. It should be noted, however, that the Maxey court determined in its opinion that the question of ground fertilizers containing arsenic had been left open.
46. Maxey, 139 So. at 125.
47. See State Protection, supra note 37, at 1276.
49. Id. at 1276.
51. Maxey, 139 So. at 125. The quarantine was lifted on December 6, 1930, but the growers in previously quarantine areas were exempt from seizure of their fruit based on arsenical spraying for an additional year. The statutory expiration of that “grace” period fell on December 6, 1931.
52. See State Protection, supra note 37, n.16.
53. Maxey, 139 So. at 125.
54. Id. at 129. Also, see Black’s Law Dictionary: the doctrine of substantive due process requires that under the 5th and 14th amendments of the Constitution, legislation must be fair and reasonable in content and must further a legitimate government purpose.
55. Id. at 128.
56. Id. at 139 So. at 125. “In esse” refers to something which was in actual existence at the time. See Black’s Law Dictionary.
57. Id. at 126.
58. Id. at 126.
59. Both the first and rehearing decisions were presented “per curiam,” that is an appellate court decision in which the author of the opinion is not identified. Additionally, both decisions were rendered “en banc,” which means by a full panel (at that time, six) of the court’s justices. The first decision (rendered November 14, 1931) was a per curiam en banc opinion joined in by five justices (Brown, Buford, Davis, Ellis, and Whitefield) but in which Justice Terrell neither joined nor dissented. Rather, Justice Terrell wrote separately to say he believed the Court should have decided the remaining issues instead of sending them back to the trial judge. It was at that point that the Attorney General moved for rehearing because Commissioner Mayo did not want to pursue the case further if the Court would eventually rule against him. The petition for rehearing was granted and a second opinion was issued on January 6, 1932. That opinion was also en banc and per curiam, though Justice Terrell had by then joined the majority and Justice Davis wrote a dissent. Not all cases at the Florida Supreme Court went to a division (that is, three justices on the panel); some, like this one, were heard en banc from the beginning. The determination about whether to initially
hear a case in division or en banc came down to the novelty or importance the court attached to the case. For a further discussion, see Walter W. Manley II & Canter Brown Jr., The Supreme Court of Florida, 1917-1972 (2006).

60. Maxey, 139 So. at 126.
62. Maxey, 139 So. at 126.
63. Id. at 127.
64. Id.
65. Stimson, 223 U.S. at 621.
66. Maxey, 139 So. at 127.
67. Id. at 131.
68. Id.
69. Id. at 123.
70. Wilson interview, supra, note 23.
74. Id.
75. Email from Maureen J. Patrick, President, Tampa Historical Society, Inc. to the author (Mar. 11, 2010) Copy on file with the author.
76. Kyle Van Landingham, In Pursuit of Justice: Law and Lawyers in Hillsborough County, 1846-1996, at 47 (1996). Van Landingham quotes Pat Whitaker as saying that mullet are bottom grazers and have gizzards to help filter the sand from their system. Whitaker’s argument was that although whales and beavers also live in the water they are not fish, so why not the mullet?
77. Id.
78. Id.
79. Use of pesticides has a long and well-documented history. The ancient Sumerians were the first recorded users of insecticides, employing sulfur compounds to solve the problem. By the 1930s, however, new application technology and compounds ushered in the modern era of pest control, See “A Short History of Pest Management”, Penn State University, The Pennsylvania Integrated Pest Management Program, available at http://paipm.cas.psu.edu/9H-1.htm As Frederick M. Fishel, an associate professor at the University of Florida, points out, “Early plant-derived insecticides included helleborine to control body lice, nicotine to control aphids, and pyrethrins to control a wide variety of insects. Lead arsenate was first used in 1892 as an orchard spray.” See Frederick M. Fishel, Pest Management and Pesticides, an Historical Perspective, the Electronic Data Information Source (EDIS) of UF/IFAS Extension, available at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pd219.
81. Kim Flottum, “Evidence that Pesticides are Seriously Messing Up Our Honey Bees”, The Daily Green, August 1, 2008, available at http://www.thedailygreen.com/environmental-news/blogs/bees/honey-bee-pesticides-55080101 (last visited March 20, 2010). The Pesticide Action Network of North America (PANNA) has reviewed the components of Bravado, which is registered with the EPA as “Echo lite chlorothalonil fungicide.” PANNA notes that the active ingredient in Bravado is acutely toxic and is also a carcinogen. See http://www.pestici deinfo.org/Detail_Product.jsp?REG_NR=06006300009&DIST_NR=054705
Letters from Norma Messenger Joughin:
A Memoir of the Pioneer South and Florida

Lula Joughin Dovi

It was a great surprise to learn recently through a cousin doing family research that the family name of Messenger was not (as we had thought) the real name of our great grandfather. He was Ludwig Schlesinger who emigrated from Sweden to the United States around 1850 with his brother John. After arrival here Ludwig changed his name to Louis Messenger. Preserved letters that crossed the Atlantic Ocean described many difficulties that beset the men.

Their troubles began when their father Aron (Avraham Meir ben Yehudah) Schlesinger of Goteborgs, Sweden, allegedly a successful silk merchant, went into bankruptcy in 1831 and had to spend three years as a debtor in prison. Aron’s wife died in 1834, and the siblings Ludwig/Louis and John had a struggle. Aron died in 1866. Louis wrote a number of times to his nephew Robert, who had difficulty finding a career in both Sweden and this country. Letters also passed between Robert and his cousins.

Louis married Mary Jane McCabe McCauley, a nineteen year-old widow from Mt. Airy, North Carolina, at Petersburg, Virginia in 1853. Among the nine children they had was my grandmother Leonore, called Nora by her family. She was born in 1855.

During the Civil War the family lost their home in Petersburg due to the fiery ravages...
of battle. After that they moved to Memphis and later to Rome, Georgia. Family history says that Mary Jane and her mother, Mary Jane McCauley, began a young ladies’ seminary there.

Before the family left their home they were said to have been visited by Union soldiers demanding all their food. Nora’s grandmother said she planned to have a good meal prepared for them and feed the entire company. She did so, and at that time the men did not burn down the house nor take their silverware. Next time the soldiers visited was the disaster. For a while the family lived in the slave quarters.

According to Nora, there was a hazardous trip across Northern lines to deliver quinine and other medicines, all of which could be wrapped in paper. Nora pretended to be ill as a wagon transported her lying on a mattress filled with the medicines. On the way, however, soldiers stopped them. They lifted her out of the wagon while men ran their bayonets through the mattress.

The rigors of wartime loss, devastation, and rampant yellow fever took a terrible toll on Mary Jane McCauley Messenger. She had lost a father, mother, brother and others. In 1882, at the age of 48, she died. An obituary published in The Sunny South by her son-in-law, Thomas E. Hanbury, an owner and editor of the paper in Dalton, GA, describes the loss felt for her:

It is not amiss here to state that although poor in this world’s goods at the time of her death, yet she had seen better, happier and brighter days. She was an offspring of a wealthy and noble Virginia family whose house was ever open and whose hospitality warmed and refreshed the guests and the stranger within their gates, until their all was swept away by war’s desolation. Many old Virginians who sojourned in Petersburg before the war will remember the famous... heights familiarly called ‘Mount Airy’... In Memphis she went through three serious epidemics nursing the sick, and caring for the dead... until worn away with fatigue and after she had nursed and buried her father, mother, brother and many others... For her family she was an untiring worker and for them she labored and hoped... For many years in her younger days she followed literary pursuits, and her articles adorned the pages of the best literary papers in the country...

In 1875 one of Mary Jane’s poems, “Lines to Leonore J. N. [Nora], Terrell, Texas,” appeared in The Sunny South and expresses her love and longing for her daughter who by then was married. The last stanza of three reads:

When Evening dons her fleecy veil
And clasps her starry zone,
I’ll smile on thee in moonbeams pale
And sing in Zephyr’s tone;
Across the waste of years my love
Turns to thee evermore,
As to the ark the faithful dove
My loveliest Leonore.

Nora seemed to have escaped the yellow fever epidemic of 1878, probably because she left to be married in 1874 to Robert J. Joughin, a building contractor from the Isle of Man. Her father Louis wrote to the Swedish family that it was difficult to leave Memphis because of quarantines and armed guards preventing people from boarding trains. However, a married daughter, Rosa Hanbury, wife of Thomas E., provided an escape to a house in Dalton, Georgia, where her father and some of the family remained outside the town under quarantine.

Louis described the terror in Memphis where “people were dropping dead in the streets, the deaths [ran]...up to 120 per day out of only one quarter of the population of about 7000 &” Almost ten years later, from 1887 to 1888, Tampa also suffered a similarly devastating yellow fever epidemic. Some families left and camped outside the town.

Robert Joughin’s contracting work took Nora to Terrell, Texas where my father, Robert T. Joughin, was born. Two other sons were born before him. In her correspondence with cousin Robert, Nora recounted many details of her life and tried to induce him to join her husband in his work.

By 1884 Nora and her husband, “Mr. J” as she called him, were in Sanford, FL, where he was building houses and acquiring a citrus grove. She described one of his projects as a house costing $900 to build with the expectation that it would be rented for $15 a month. Houses were in demand, she said. At that time part of the economic importance of Sanford was due to the boat traffic on the St. Johns River.
On the personal side, Nora wrote that she had been very ill and that “my Doctor was afraid I would have nervous fever – but I suppose I took it just in time. I am not feeling real well. I suffer so much with nervous headaches – and there seems no help for it. But if I can only keep up so I can attend to my home duties I will be so thankful.” She complained that weak spells once in a while made her feel very bad and discouraged at the time and that they did “irritate Mr. J so.”

Nora wrote again from Sanford in 1885 to describe what must have been a minor building boom. There were many Swedish people there. Evidently her husband was building one house at a time and selling it. A letter to her cousin in 1888 told of the unexpected death of her father. She also mentioned, “Yes we are in ‘the land of flowers,’ it is truly a lovely Country, but as Sanford is quite a new little town, we miss a great many conveniences that we have in a larger or older city, but everyone thinks that Sanford will in a short while be a large place.” Her husband did well there for a while but later had reverses due to a freeze.

Still in Sanford in 1890, Nora wrote a letter of condolence to her cousin Robert after hearing about the deaths of his mother and father. She said her lack of letter-writing was because her health had not been good and that “my baby and four other children make it quite busy for me.” She was only thirty-five by then. She also complained that the servants were not helpful. Ultimately the family included six sons and two daughters.

Later the family moved to Tampa. Robert Jones Joughin continued to have building success in the area until his unexpected death at the age of fifty. He was involved in the construction of the still-standing wood Belleair Hotel, near the beach in Belleair (Clearwater) across Tampa Bay. Also, he is said to have built the deep-water docks for the Port of Tampa.
Nora’s love for her husband shines brightly, and sadly, in two poems she wrote. In an excerpt from the first, “Which One”, she asks:

One of us, dear –
But one
Will sit by a bed with a nameless fear
And clasp a hand
Growing cold as it feels for the spirit land –
Darling, which one?

In answer to her own question she later wrote the poem “God Thought It Best”:

One of us, dear, had first to go,
Yet many happy years,
Which it would be we did not know,
God willed it so.
Darling, I am the one left,
God thought it best.

Before Nora died in 1920, at the age of sixty-five, she had seen two of her sons achieve prominence. Bert was a captain in the Spanish-American War, and his name is on a monument to the War in Plant Park at University of Tampa. He founded Joughin Plumbing Company later. My father Robert T., or Bob as most people called him, was a major on the governor’s staff in World War I and founded his own plumbing company before Bert died of appendicitis in the 1930’s. In 1929 my father was appointed Sheriff of Hillsborough County by Governor Doyle Carlton to finish the term ending in 1932. That period in Tampa turned out to be a notorious and gun-slinging time between gangsters and officials.

The author’s father R.T. Joughin (son of Nora Messenger and Robert Joughin) attends to car matters while his wife Lula (the author’s mother) sits in the back seat. Date unknown. (Courtesy of the author.)
I’ve Got the Swanee River Flowing Thru My Veins: Florida Sheet Music in the USF Library’s Collection

Paul Eugen Camp

Providing a musical portrait of the Sunshine State from the 1850s to the 1980s, the University of South Florida Library’s Florida Sheet Music Collection is one of the most colorful elements in the library’s “Floridiana” holdings. Most of the songs in the collection were written with a promotional aim in mind: to entice tourists, investors, and potential residents with images of sunshine, orange blossoms, palm trees, and balmy breezes. Some emphasize the exotic and semitropical aspects of the state, creating visions of an enchanted land of Seminoles, alligators, and Spanish señoritas where winter never comes. Others evoke the aura of Southern belles and plantations, or spin enticng fantasies of romance under a silvery Florida moon. Still others portray Florida as a land of opportunity, where fortunes in real estate and business are waiting for enterprising newcomers.

The collection includes musical tributes to the virtues of Florida towns and cities from the Panhandle to Biscayne Bay. Pensacola provides the theme for tunes like On Pensacola Bay (1920) and My Dusky Ola from Pensacola (1903). Florida’s capital city inspired Tallahassee, featured in the 1947 Paramount movie Variety Girl, and My Talahassee [sic] Lassie (1902), which was—“Dedicated to the Southern Belle.” On the East Coast, there are songs about Florida’s oldest city like In the Mission of St. Augustine (1953), songs praising sun and sand In Daytona (1924), and songs like Meet Me at West Palm Beach (1923) touting the delights of Palm Beach’s grand hotels, where winter visitors danced The Palm Beach Tango (1914).

Of course, there is a wealth of music about Miami, from multiple editions of the 1935 hit Moon Over Miami to the Latin beat of Miami Beach Rumba (1946). In Miami You
Owe a Lot to Me (1925), the punning lyrics tell the sad tale of a “little chap, just like a yap” who bought some Florida land sight unseen, only to find out the lot he had purchased was under water. He laments “I bought it by the foot, but I’ll sell it by the gallon. Miami, you owe a lot to me.” Another tune from Miami’s past, The Miami Storm, commemorates the great hurricane that devastated the city in 1926. From more recent times, there is Miami Dolphins No. 1 (1973), Miami Vice: Theme from the Universal Television Series and the 48-page Miami Vice: Piano, Vocal, Guitar; a collection of music from that series (both published in 1985).

Florida’s West Coast is also well represented in the USF collection. My Florida Home (1891) sings the praises of a home on the Anelote River, “Neath the shade of the orange, the palm, oak, and lemon, within sound of the sea and in sight of its foam.” Another prime location for home seekers on Florida’s West Coast is In the Land of Homosassa (1925), the perfect place for those who think “Of northern climes I’ve had my fill” and dream of living in “Homosassa, Homosassa, by the Crystal river shore.” That same year, the Clearwater Chamber of Commerce published On Old Clearwater Bay to entice visitors to “Clearwater, the springtime city on the bay.” From nearby Clearwater Beach came On the Gulf, On the Bay, On the Road to Mandalay (1926), praising the charms of a new subdivision advertised as “Mandalay, the isle of a thousand palms:”

There’s another Mandalay,
Where the flying fishes play,
Where the days and nights are June,
Where the birdies sing this tune;
It’s the quaintest place I know,
Surely you would like to go;
Oriental Isle,
Golden treasure Isle
Mandalay so fair.

Mandalay is on the bay,
Mandalay is always gay.
There the gentle breezes blow,
There the magic lanterns glow;
Rosy cheeks and sunny eyes,
In this southern Paradise;
If you’re looking ‘round,
Want to settle down
Mandalay’s the town.
Earlier in the 1920s, the Sarasota area was acclaimed as a paradise for beachgoers in *Crescent Beach* (1921): “Yes, that is the place we all like to go, the place we so long to reach; where we romp and we play in the glittering spray at beautiful Crescent Beach.”

The collection holds many songs lauding the beauties of Tampa Bay and its surrounding communities, pieces like *Way Down on Sunny Tampa Bay* (1911), *On the Shores of Tampa Bay* (1934), and *I Don’t Want to Fly (Away from Tampa Bay)* (1928). After spending a day frolicking in the Bay, revelers with energy still left could dance to the *Tampa Bay Tango* (1914). The 1924 ditty *Gandy Bridge*, “dedicated to the twin cities, Saint Petersburgh [sic] and Tampa,” commemorates the opening of the first bridge across the bay:

All illustrations accompanying this article courtesy of University of South Florida, Special Collections, Floridiana Collection.
The greatest thing in the grand old south
Is our new Gandy Bridge
It spans the waters of Tampa Bay
We drive from ridge to ridge
Birds golden throats more gaily sing,
Stars brighter shine in glorious spring
The waves salute you when you bring,
You're [sic] sweetheart to Gandy Bridge.

Oh, Gandy Bridge we are all for you
We love you more and more,
We praise you as we drive along
And speed from shore to shore
With sky so light the world smiles bright,
The balmy breeze a lovely night
Attunes the world with one accord,
We shout welcome all aboard.

Listen the mocking birds are singing
Gandy Bridge.
Waves softly whisper
Gandy Bridge
Stars are beaming
Gandy Bridge
The sil'vry moon is shining winds are sighing
Gandy Bridge
Wild flowers sweetly perfume
Gandy Bridge.

Builder George Sheppard Gandy (1851-1946) formally dedicated the bridge on November 20, 1924. It was the engineering marvel of Tampa Bay at the time, cutting the travel distance between Tampa and St. Petersburg from 43 to 19 miles. The original bridge was demolished in 1975 when a replacement span was completed. Commuters who remember the old Gandy Bridge may find it hard to believe that it was ever “sweetly perfumed” by anything but internal combustion engines and perhaps the occasional dead fish.
The City of St. Petersburg inspired songs like *Sunshine City* (1922), *On Tampa Bay* (1925), and *Sunshine City in the Rain* (1926). For the aviation-minded, there was *Over the Sunshine City* (1930), which commemorated the christening of the Goodyear blimp “Vigilant of St. Petersburg” in the city on December 11, 1929. A particularly fervent tribute to St. Petersburg is *Sunshine City, Forever for Me* (1923):
Dedicated to the City of St. Petersburg, Florida

Sunshine City Forever For Me

GERTRUDE COBB MILLER & ERNEST B. HOLLEY

Moderato

There's a city they say, on old Tampa Bay, Nest-ling
There's a city to-day, on old Tampa Bay, Where the
Though I wander a-far, And no pleasures I bar, As

there 'neath southern skies Where they work and they play and they're
song-birds sing in the trees And the trees seem to say as they
over this wide world I may roam I would still long to be in that

happy each day, Where the spring-time nev-er dies. Take me
rock and they sway, Fanned by a gentle breeze. For to me it is home sweet home.
land by the sea. For to me it is home sweet home.
There’s a city they say,
On old Tampa Bay,
Nestling there ‘neath southern skies;
Where they work and they play
And they’re happy all day.
Where the springtime never dies.

There’s a city today,
On old Tampa Bay,
Where the song birds sing in the trees
And the trees seem to say
As they rock and they sway,
Fanned by a gentle breeze.

Though I travel afar,
And no pleasure I bar,
As o’er this wide world I may roam;
I would still long to be
In that land by the sea,
For to me it is home sweet home.

Take me back to that beautiful city,
To that wonderful city so bright,
Where all is so pleasant and cheery
Till our souls are filled with delight;
Though I travel this great wide world over,
And its wonders and glories I see,
I’ll still long for that bright golden city,
Sunshine city, forever, for me.

Compositions about Tampa, St. Petersburg’s neighbor across the bay, tend to emphasize the city’s prosperity and business opportunity in songs like 

Folks you’ve heard just lots ‘bout Dixie
We know you think she’s grand –
but Flo-ri-da is Dixie’s Sunny land Honey land Sunny land
There’s a city they call Tampa ‘mid tropic splendors rare
with industry A port to sea No other can compare

Where?

Down in Tampa folks will greet you with a smile
Where opportunity is friendly as can be –
Down in Tampa you will learn to step with glee
She’s got a rep she’s full of pep Folks down in Tampa got to step
Down in Tampa you must lamp her from the bay
Her Boulevard so gay with bright lights all the way.
A buzzin like a busy bee are Tampa’s wheels of industry.
Steppin out there’s no doubt about Tampa

Visitors to Fair Tampa could promenade to the tune of the Tampa March, both tunes composed in 1922 by Nella Wells Durand. Moonlight on the Hillsborough (1924) provides a romantic view of the river that flows through the city, while tunes like Fiesta Time in Tampa (1950) and Ybor Way (1959), a parody of Rudyard Kipling’s poem “Mandalay,” pay tribute to Tampa’s Latin heritage: “Come you back to Ybor Way, where the señoritas play, there they serve those good garbanzos, Cuban coffee every day.”
Most of the music in the USF features lyrics about Florida or have Florida-related titles. However, the library also collects songs and instrumental pieces written by Tampa composers or published in Tampa even though they are about non-Florida topics. For instance, USF has a copy of Tampan Granville B. Evans’s 1924 love song When the Roses Bloom in Dixie (I’ll Come Back to You) which doesn’t mention Florida at all. Evans’s song has two qualifications for inclusion in USF’s collection; it was written by a Tampa resident and also published in the “Cigar City.” The 1932 election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the U.S. presidency inspired Tampa Italian immigrants Luigi Casaburi and Giovanni Mazzarelli to write The Bells Ringing in Glory: Homage to the American People:

Bells ringing in glory from the summit of the capitol at
Last the ruling people has [sic] achieved a complete victory
America’s dearest son has been chosen to the throne

Din ... Don

It seems a dream that he is gone It seems a dream that he is gone,
Hoover was a messenger of lies Should be Roosevelt of the land sunrise

The song’s cover is replete with patriotic illustrations, including a drawing of Roosevelt in front of the Capitol dome tipping his hat to a crowd waving U.S. and Italian flags and one of Uncle Sam holding a newborn infant. The USF copy of this very rare piece of Americana is signed by Casaburi, who also added a note written in Italian.
The USF collection includes songs relating to several of Florida’s institutions of higher learning. There is, of course, a copy of composer R. Wayne Hugoboom’s *University of South Florida Alma Mater*, winner of the November 29, 1961 competition to choose a theme song for the new state university:

Hail to thee, our Alma Mater, may thy name be told
Where above thy gleaming splendor, waves the Green and Gold.
Thou our guide in quest for knowledge where all men are free,
U-ni-vers-i-ty of South Florida, Alma Mater, hail to thee!

Be our guide to truth and wisdom, as we onward go,
May thy glory, fame and honor never cease to grow.
May our thoughts and prayers be with the through eternity,
U-ni-vers-i-ty of South Florida, Alma Mater, hail to thee!

The collection has no copy of Florida State University’s alma mater, but it does have *We’ll Sing Her Praises*, the anthem of Florida State College for Women, FSU’s immediate predecessor:

We’ll sing her praises to the nations free, we’ll sing her praises to the sky,
We’ll tell the whole world that she’s one grand school,
We’ll raise her glowing colors high,
Her ideals, her ev’ry standard true, We will uphold for all to see,
We’ll spread her fame, bring honor to her name, be proud of F.S.C.

Established as Florida Female College in 1905 and renamed Florida State College for Women in 1909, FSCW (lovingly referred to as “Flastacowo”) became a co-educational university in 1947 with its name changed to Florida State University.

The University of Florida is represented in the collection by an eleven-page booklet of *University of Florida Songs* published around 1940. Included are classics like *Cheer for Florida*, *We are the Boys from Old Florida*, and *The ‘Gator Song*:

For the ‘Gators of Florida
We’ll sing a song of praise today – Noble, brave and true;
No finer man hood ever grew; For the ‘Gators of Florida,
May victories come to stay; Always so brave and true,
the boys of the Orange and Blue.

Annie W. (Mrs. Forrest M.) Kelley wrote the original words and music for *The ‘Gator Song* in 1932, subsequently transferring her publication rights to the University of Florida.
During both World War I and World War II, Florida’s climate and the ready availability of land for military camps made it the “training ground of the nation”, where America’s young men prepared for battle. In 1918, Irving Berlin’s rousing hit song Over There about American soldiers fighting the Germans in France inspired Tampans Rogelio Rigau and Jack A. Gunn to write Over Here, the brightly colored cover of which featured a soldier shaking hands with a civilian holding a liberty bond: “Over here, Over here, We are praising, yes, our heroes over there.” A Soldier Boy’s Song to His Florida Girl, probably also written in 1918, looks toward a bright future “When the Kaiser’s gone from power” and the soldier returns to his sweetheart “Mid the blooms of great old Flor’da.” Florida’s 124th Infantry Regiment was mustered into Federal service as part of the 31st “Dixie” Division. A soldier in the 124th, Floridian Alexander Beach Pooley had no doubt which U. S. Army unit would reach the German capital first when he wrote The 124th Infantry Florida (Dixie Division): First to Berlin (1918).

Though in general songs with military themes were considerably less numerous during the Second World War than they had been in the earlier conflict, World War II inspired several Floridians to express their patriotism in song. Army Air Corps training activity in Florida put hundreds of planes in the air on training flights, and prompted Vero Beach resident Burma Reed Knight to write U. S. Bombers (1944):

Hear our Bombers how they hum,
They’re in the air, Here they come.
They swiftly go on their way,
For to return, Anoth’r day.
We’ve pleasant scenes To recall,
Our big Bombers, Beat them all.

Hear them hum hum hum – hum hum hum, hum, hum,
Hear them hum, hum, - Hear them hum, hum hum hum, hum hum,
Hear them hum, hum, hum, Hum, Hum.

With all that humming going on overhead, particularly around bomber training bases like Tampa’s MacDill and Drew Fields, Floridians must have been very glad indeed to see the end of the war in 1945.
Florida’s Seminole Indians have inspired many songs, but judging from the results few of the lyricists or cover illustrators involved knew anything about the Sunshine State’s Native people. This lack of knowledge seems have to stopped few songwriters; the facile tunesmiths simply dressed their Seminoles up in Sioux war bonnets and installed them in teepees. *Seminole* (1904) has an Indian maiden and chief on the front cover arrayed in stereotypical Plains Indian regalia, with a hide teepee in the background for good measure. *Seminola* (1925) also shows its title character, who lived “in a little teepee that stands in the shades of the great everglades”, clothed in Plains Indian buckskins, complete with an eagle feather in her hair. The colorful cover illustration of the 1914 song *Kissamee* (punning on the name of Florida’s Kissimmee River) shows its heroine paddling a northern birch bark canoe instead of the cypress dugout one might expect.

Eugene Francis Mikell, creator of the 1912 opus *Lackawanna: Indian Love Song*, wins the prize for packing the most ethnological faux pas into one song. On the song’s cover, his Seminole maiden is dressed like a Cheyenne princess, is named for a valley in Pennsylvania, and reigns as “the pride of the big teepee,” all against a background of Florida palmettos:

Down where all the orange trees a blooming, Florida’s praises sing,  
Where flowers the sunny land perfuming – And songs from nature ring. –  
An Indian Maiden fair to behold Drinks from a Spring both Sparkling and cold  
Water so pure water so sweet While this name she’d often repeat  
Laackawanna, Laackawanna, Laackawanna dear  
My Laackawanna I love you so –  
You are the pride of the big teepee – I’ll make Heap much Love to thee  
And when I wander down by the Spring For your Big Chief you must sing  
My Laackawanna.

However, the most bizarre specimen in the collection featuring Florida’s Native people is the 1920 song *Seminole Sun Dance*. Inspired by the elaborate Palm Beach Seminole Sun Dance pageants staged from 1916 into the 1920s, it has Seminole warriors warbling to potential white home seekers, “We sing you a welcome, the peace pipe we pass; come here and increase like the blades of the grass.” Needless to say, George Graham Currie, the author of this fulsome invitation for white settlers to occupy the Seminoles’ Florida homeland, was not a Seminole.
The Suwannee River, usually spelled “Swanee,” was the hands-down favorite theme for songwriters composing music about the Sunshine State. Perhaps no other American river save the Mississippi has been so fertile and enduring an inspiration to the nation’s composers of popular music. Consequently, the USF collection has more songs about the Suwannee than about any other feature in the state. There are multiple editions of Stephen Collins Foster’s Old Folks at Home (better known as Way Down Upon the Swanee River) adopted as Florida’s official state song in 1935 (but falling into controversy in recent years.) The Suwannee songs range from the 1851 first edition to a 1945 boogie-woogie arrangement by Robert Whitford and a 1960 piece for the accordion, Accordionizin’ on the Swanee, “a modern paraphrase based on Stephen Collins Foster’s famous ‘Swanee River.’”

There are also many versions of George Gershwin’s 1919 hit Swanee, theme song of popular singer Al Jolson (1886-1950):

Swanee, How I love you, how I love you, My dear old Swanee –
I’d give the world to be
Among the folks in
D-I-X-I-E
Even know my Mammy’s waiting for me, praying for me
Down by the Swanee – The folks up north will see me no more –
When I go to the Swanee shore.

Jolson, who obviously knew a good thing what he heard it, celebrated Florida’s euphonious river in several other songs, including Dozen Where the Swanee River Flows (1916), Don’t Cry, Swanee (1923), and Swanee River Trail (1927). Another popular singer who was a fan of the Suwannee was “Ol’ Banjo Eyes” Eddie Cantor (1892-1964), with Silver Swanee (1922) and There’s a Bend at the End of the Swanee (1923). The river, or at least its name, inspired scores of songs like Goodbye Old Swanee River (1878), Take Me Back to That Shack on the Swanee (1923), and the memorable ditty I’ve Got the Swanee River Flowing Thru My Veins (1919):

I’ve got the Swanee River flowing thru my veins,
That’s why I love those good old fashioned Dixie strains,
And ev’ry twig and tree along its shore Brings back to me once more.
Songs my Mammy sang to me, oh melody, I can hear the banjos playing night and day,
And each refrain is in my brain to stay, Altho I left my heart with someone down in Dixie,
I’ve got the Swanee River flowing through my veins.
I'VE GOT THE SWANEE RIVER FLOWING THRU MY VEINS

WORDS BY
ED. ROSE

MUSIC BY
BILLY BASKETTE

McCARTHY & FISHER

[Image of a man pointing towards a river scene]
Lively, imaginative cover art adds graphic interest to most pieces of Florida sheet music. While the covers of some Florida songs have illustrations by nationally known sheet music cover artists like Albert W. Barbell (1887-1957), many pieces feature the work of local Florida illustrators. Some have artwork created by the composer personally. The illustrations range from slickly professional to downright crude, but are almost always visually interesting. There are beach scenes with bathing beauties from the Roaring Twenties, views of idyllic rivers shadowed by Spanish moss, and images of señoritas dancing with handsome caballeros. Some covers show bustling urban landscapes radiating economic opportunity, while others enshrine neat little homes nestling beneath the orange blossoms. In vivid colors undimmed by time, these pictures of fun, sun, and enterprise provide delightful amplification to the tuneful word-pictures created by Florida’s composers and lyricists.

Many sheet music covers also feature inset photographs of the now largely forgotten bands and singers who once serenaded audiences with lively renditions of songs like In Samiland With You (1925). For instance, a picture of the Danks-Rudisill (Rudy Rudisill and Thomas Danks) Coliseum Orchestra, once the toast of Fort Myers, graces the cover of City of Palms, a 1926 musical tribute to “queen city of southwest Florida.” Of Brother Charlie (Charles Irwin Arnett) and Daisy Mae (Ethel Irene Reddy) of Tampa’s WDAE Radio appear on the 1949 song Orange Blossom Trail, while the Ipana Troubadors dressed in fancy Spanish bullfighter outfits liven up the cover of Tamiami Trail (1926). Fiesta Time in Tampa (1950) has a romantic portrait of Columbia Restaurant violinist (and owner) César Gonzmart (1920-1992) on its cover. Other songs feature portraits of the Melnotte Twins (1912), the Six O’Reillys (1927), Fred Damon’s Greenwich Villagers (1925), and Frank Grasso’s popular Tampa band Don Francisco’s Orchestra (1925).

Although USF’s Florida sheet music collection has a considerable number of early pieces like The Florida Quick Step (1851), the Florida Polka Redrose (1854), and the Florida Glide Waltzes (1886), the 1920s were the golden age of Florida sheet music. During the wild and wondrous frenzy of the great Florida land boom, from roughly 1920 to its sudden collapse in 1925-26, there were probably more songs written about Florida than in all the years before and since. As real estate sales reached unprecedented heights, the state’s boosters saw catchy, toe-tapping songs as an effective way to reach prospective investors and home seekers. Some songs promoted a single development like Bel-Mar in F-L-A (1925), billed as “Tampa’s most desirable subdivision:”

Bel-Mar is a suburb and it isn’t very far –
A Little walk a little jaunt from Tampa in your car –
Should you meet a dainty miss just bring her right along –
and Whisper in her pretty ear the chorus to this song.
Other songs urged people to come to particular towns or cities like Arcadia, Miami, or Coral Gables, while many simply aimed at luring prospects to the state as a whole, like "Happy" Jack Hanes’s 1927 ditty Florida’s the Place for Me:

You may talk about the East, You may talk about the West,
You may talk about good old Broadway, You may talk about your pretty countries
But Florida’s the place for me.

Florida’s the place for me, It’s the Land of Prosperity
Where the oranges are sweet and the Breezes are a treat,
so here’s where you ought to be,
When you’re feeling awfully Blue I will tell you what to do
You may be so far away, but Here’s what I say, that Florida’s the place for me.

After the catastrophic crash of the land market in the winter of 1925-1926 brought hard times to Florida, upbeat, hopeful songs like “Happy” Jack’s composition tried to spark renewed interest and bring back prosperity. The number of new Florida songs slowly ebbed as it became apparent that it would take more than snappy tunes to revive the Sunshine State’s fortunes. By the time prosperity did return, after long years of economic depression and a world war, sheet music was no longer quite the popular medium it had once been. Americans increasingly looked to radios, jukeboxes, record players, and tape decks rather than making their own music at home on a ukulele, guitar, or parlor piano, so the amount of Florida sheet music produced in the post-World War II era never approached the flood tide of the 1920s.

This brief survey includes only a limited selection from the hundreds of Florida-related songs comprising USF’s Florida Sheet Music Collection. The majority have been archived and appear in the USF Library’s online catalogue at http://www.lib.usf.edu/. While seldom outstanding as musical compositions, and with lyrics that tend to be brazenly promotional or unintentionally humorous, these forgotten songs provide illuminating views of the Sunshine State not necessarily as it was, but as generations of promoters, developers, and romancers wanted people to see it. So hit The Orange Blossom Trail (1949) and head for Florida Among the Palms (1925), Down Where the Swanee River Flows (1916), When Florida Calls to You (1936), and you get Sand in Your Shoes (1947), you’ll say Florida’s the Place for Me (1927).
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Florida’s the Place for Me. Words and music by “Happy” Jack Hames. [Sarasota, Fla.?:] Sarasota Times, 1927. 2 p.

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In Daytona. Words and music by Wm. Diffett; arranged by Eugene Platman. Daytona, Fla.: Wm. Diffett, 1924. 5 p.

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U. S. Bombers. Words and music by Burma Reed Knight. Vero Beach: Burma Reed Knight, 1944. 3 p.


We’ll Sing Her Praises: Florida State College for Women. Words by Sara Kreitzman; music by Isabelle Sands. When the Roses Bloom in Dixie (I’ll Come Back to You). Words and music by Granville P. Evans. Tampa, Fla.: G. P. Evans & Sons, 1924. 5 p.

OUR STORY

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Fidelia Jane Merrick Whitcomb: A Nearly Forgotten Florida Medical Pioneer

By Elizabeth Coachman, MD

Tarpon Springs, Florida was once part of Hillsborough County. The town was home to A.P.K. Safford and his sister Dr. Mary Jane Safford, who is said to be the first female physician on Florida’s West Coast. However, while researching Dr. Safford, the author found a second female physician actively practicing medicine in Tarpon Springs. In the town’s Cycadia Cemetery, Dr. Fidelia Jane Merrick Whitcomb is buried in an unmarked grave not far from her friend and colleague Safford. Although there is a bayou, a boulevard, and a housing development named Whitcomb in the town, most would think that these were named in honor of Fidelia’s son Silas Merrick Whitcomb the 28-year-old Harvard Class of 1880 graduate who became Tarpon Springs’ first Town Clerk at its 1887 incorporation. Perhaps they were named for him, since his career was illustrious as an academic and author. However, when one stops to wonder how such a youthful fellow from western New York just happened to be in Tarpon Springs and have connections to attain a politically appointed office, one need only look to Merrick’s mother and her friendship with Dr. Safford.

Fidelia Jane Merrick was born July 9, 1833, in Nunda, Livingston County, New York, and was the daughter of Iiram and Esther Richardson Merrick. There is little known of her childhood beyond the fact that she attended the coeducational Nunda Literary Institute for at least three years and that her family was a bit unconventional in their practicing the Universalist faith. In his Centennial History of the Town of Nunda, II.

Dr. Fidelia Jane Merrick Whitcomb (From Centennial History of the Town of Nunda, by Henry Wells Hand.)
Wells Hand describes the family situation:

This family, unlike their relatives of the Richardson and Wilcox families, was [sic] Universalists. It required some courage and strength of will to espouse a cause, which like early Christianity "was everywhere spoken against.

It must have been in the Merrick make-up of blood, brawn and brain, to be brave strong and self-reliant, to be themselves, instead of being pocket editions of pedagogues and parsons, who were supposed by most people in those days as the possessors of unlimited knowledge and truth.

A charge of heresy and the fate of ostracism, awaited those who dared to reason for themselves in those days, when Puritan Calvinism dominated in church circles. Even Methodism was tabooed and Universal Love was less acceptable than even universal malignity.

The children of Hiram B. Merriek were mostly girls with masculine minds, and possessors of the Merrick makeup, supplemented by the devout spirit of the Richardson family. Their intellectuality, their freedom from fetters, their zeal for progress, progressive piety and patriotism, made them poor conservatives, poor imitators, but natural leaders among their own sex. Conspicuously so was Fidelia J. Merriek Whitecomb, a true logician, a subtle reasoner, a born theologian, a social leader.\(^5\)

Despite their formidable descriptions the Merrick girls found husbands. Fidelia married Walter Bruce Whitecomb in November 1851.\(^6\) He came to Nunda in 1848 as a clerk\(^7\) for his uncle Walter Whitcomb described as the leading merchant of the town.\(^8\) After marrying Fidelia, Walter B. clerked for her uncle Jeremiah (sic) Richardson and eventually became a merchant as well as an associate with the Nunda Bank for nearly forty years.\(^9\)

Fidelia was known as a logician, and it was logical in the nineteenth century for a woman to enter the realm of motherhood. She did so on August 17, 1852, with the birth of her daughter Clara Eva.\(^10\) Silas Merriek Whitecomb followed on January 10, 1859.\(^11\) We know little about their childhood other than both were graduates of Nunda Academy.\(^12\)

While her children were young the Civil War raged, and Fidelia was credited with leadership that led to the, "doing of great things for the soldiers." Biographer Hand continues, "Since the united efforts of the patriotic women of Nunda, led by their strongest church leaders, Mrs. Whitcomb, Mrs. Britton, Mrs. King and Mrs. Merrick, working together in perfect harmony, there has been more of the spirit of the Master in the churches and less of that bigotry, too common in this community."\(^13\)

Clara Eva Whitecomb attended the School of Elocution in Boston and became a teacher of elocution. Silas Merrick who later went by only "Merrick," attended Chelsea High School in Chelsea, Massachusetts,\(^14\) in preparation for Harvard. While Fidelia lived in Massachusetts during her children's school years her husband stayed with the family business in Nunda, New York. Obviously, the Whitcombs believed in educating both sexes — under parental supervision.

As the wife of a successful businessman, Fidelia could have had a quiet life while living in Massachusetts and minding her children but chose activity in the growing woman's rights movement. A group of unaffiliated Universalist women largely unknown to each other and from multiple states met in Buffalo, New York, in September 1869.\(^15\)

Their main goal was that of so many religious organizations: to find a way to raise money to support church activities. Until that time there was no national organization of Universalist Church women. Caroline A. Soule was President of this new organization and Fidelia Whitecomb the first Corresponding Secretary.\(^16\) Both women were among the original incorporators of what became known in 1873 through Act of Congress as The Woman's Centenary Association of the Universalist Church.\(^17\) Fidelia remained national Corresponding Secretary for several years.

How does Fidelia Whitecomb fit into Florida's, let alone Hillsborough County's history? The route to her Florida activities may have started at the Union League in New York City in October of 1873. At that time Fidelia attended the First Woman's Congress that established the Association for the Advancement of Woman (AAW). She
and Dr. Mary J. Safford had been among those influential U.S. women calling for the first Congress of Women on September 1, 1873.\textsuperscript{18} Fidelia’s associate from the Woman’s Centenary Association, Caroline A. Soule, opened the proceedings. Among the Executive Committee Members from Massachusetts were “E. J. M. Whitecombe (sic)” and Dr. Mary Safford.\textsuperscript{19, 20} This organization was one of several in the mid- to late 1800s promoting woman’s rights, education and general improvement in social station. Even if Fidelia and Mary Safford had not met prior to this event they most certainly would have known each other after it.

In the spring of 1873 the homeopathic physicians of Massachusetts met to establish, “The Homopathic Association of Boston University”, to aid in the founding of a coeducational homeopathic medical school at Boston University (BUSM).\textsuperscript{21} Among those original physicians was Dr. Mary J Safford-Blake (“Blake” was added after Safford’s 1872 marriage and deleted following her 1879 divorce), who was one of the first female faculty members of Boston University School of Medicine.\textsuperscript{22} Homoeopathy differed from traditional allopathic medicine in that the former used minute doses of substances known to cause specific symptoms in an effort to alleviate the very same symptoms in the patient. This “hair of the dog that bit you,” type of cure may have had some success in part because it was less harmful than some of the traditional medical treatments of the day. (For fever, for example, a homeopathic dose ofaconite (Monk’s hood) would do far less damage than an allopathic dose of calomel (mercurous chloride.) Many homeopathic medical schools including BUSM differed from allopathic ones by accepting female students. BUSM’s preliminary announcement of July 1873 stated: “Students of both sexes will be admitted to the school of medicine on uniform terms and conditions. The regular course of instruction will be of the most thorough and comprehensive character, covering three full years of study.”\textsuperscript{23}

Actual classes at BUSM began November 5, 1873, and Fidelia must have been among those first matriculating since she graduated in 1876 at the age of 42, just as her son was finishing his first year of college.\textsuperscript{24} Dr. Safford-Blake was professor of diseases of women\textsuperscript{25} and Fidelia’s preceptor for the last two years of her program at BUSM. Her thesis was, “Women in the Medical Profession.”\textsuperscript{26} Unfortunately, there are no known copies.

By 1876 Fidelia’s children no longer needed her presence in Massachusetts. Merrick began studies with Harvard’s class of 1879 but was not graduated until 1880.\textsuperscript{27} Fidelia returned to Nunda, New York, to become the town’s first female physician as announced in the November 1876 New England Medical Gazette.\textsuperscript{28} She had an extensive practice with a large office at her home on Massachusetts Street\textsuperscript{29} and was elected to the American Institute of Homeopathy at Lake George, NY, in 1879.\textsuperscript{30} Nunda’s weekly newspaper contained an ongoing announcement of her daily availability for consultation 10 to 12:00 a.m. and 2 to 5:00 p.m.\textsuperscript{31} She was treasurer of her County Homeopathic Medical Society;\textsuperscript{32} and there is a short notice of her hosting (at her home) the July 1883 semi-annual meeting. Dinner followed a presentation on “Dysentery” (on what was otherwise described as an unusually pleasant day.)\textsuperscript{33} Fidelia also served as Nunda’s medical examiner.\textsuperscript{34} She not only practiced but also taught medicine and is credited with teaching one Thomas Hammond who completed his medical studies elsewhere. Although she may have been an excellent teacher her student met a sorry end: “…had he been born poor instead of rich, he would have been successful. His love of luxuries and excessive hospitality led him into extravagance, and the loss of his property. His death quickly followed; he died in Nunda, at the age of forty.”\textsuperscript{35}
Detail of 1884 map of Tarpon Springs showing location of Fidelia and son Merrick Whitcomb's property in relation to body of water known today as Whitecomb Bayou. The small area indicating water just to the left of "Merrick" is Hidden Lake. Note the location of A.P.K. Safford's property just north of Spring Bayou and of the Tarpon Springs Hotel at the north end of Citron Street, the current Pinellas Avenue or Alternate U.S. 19. No legend for scale available. (By permission of the Tarpon Springs Area Historical Society, Tarpon Springs, FL.)

Copy of map of Tarpon Springs filed May 16, 1884 as certified by W. P. Culbreath, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Hillsborough County on May 14th, 1917 (By permission of the Tarpon Springs Area Historical Society, Tarpon Springs, FL.)
Like many homeopathic physicians of her day, Dr. Whitcomb participated in medical research. Since homeopathic therapy involved treating specific symptoms with dilutions of substances known to cause the same symptoms, research involved the investigators' taking specified dilutions of study substances followed by observation of symptoms experienced within a specific time frame. If a substance produced a headache, then the same substance in greatly diluted form might be useful for treating headaches. Fidelia was researcher number 15 of 24 in one trial. Following her ingestion of *carbon vegetabilis* (powdered charcoal), she reported having, "pain in the region of the spleen, followed by a dull heavy ache." She was lucky since others involved in the same study described symptoms ranging from terrible headaches to, "violent itching of the scalp for many days."36

Despite her busy medical practice Fidelia found time to continue her woman's rights work. "Mrs. F. J. H. (sic) Whitcomb, MD, Nunda," is listed in the 1876-1877 membership roster of the Association for the Advancement of Woman.37 Unlike her friend and mentor Dr. Safford-Blake, Fidelia’s name does not appear in the AAW programs as a committee member or as a lecturer. However, she was busy on the political front. Hand describes her, "in politics a Republican, she could make votes if she could not vote."38 February 12, 1880, the governor of New York State signed a bill into law allowing women to serve as school officers and to vote in any school meeting.39

On October 12, 1880, eleven thousand districts of New York State held school elections. Just as Mary Safford-Blake did in Boston in 1875,40 Fidelia ran for and was elected to her local school committee. Stanton goes on to say:

A woman in Nunda writes: Only six women attended the school meeting in the first district on the 12th, but over forty went to the polls on the 13th. Two women were on one of the tickets; the opposition ticket was made up entirely of males. We were supported by the best men in the village. The ticket bearing the names of Mrs. Fidelia J. M. Whitcomb, M. D., and Mrs. Augusta Herrick, was elected."41 Fidelia’s Nunda School Board tenure continued into 1883, with favorable reports. 42

The temperance movement provided another path to the woman’s rights Fidelia sought. On her death the Nunda Council #183 of the Royal Templars of Temperance passed several resolutions in memory of their “sister F. J. M. Whitcomb”, described as "a true and faithful member of our council, and an earnest worker for the cause of temperance."43 The group resolved to drape the council charter and asked the membership to wear a badge of mourning for thirty days in her honor.
Via all these seemingly unrelated events, Fidelia Whitecomb entered Florida history. Her health declined and, Hand related, \"She saved others, herself she could not save, from death, from an incurable malady.\"\14 Despite her \"incurable malady\", Fidelia showed a fighting spirit. In April 1883 she traveled to Florida to visit her old friend and mentor Dr. Mary Safford, as noted in The Nunda Nez:\n
Dr. F. J. M. Whitcomb starts for Florida to-day, to be absent for a few weeks in order to rest and recuperate. Her duties have been very arduous for several months past, keeping her almost constantly employed night and day, and a trip to the sunny south where she expects to meet her friend, Dr. Safford Blake, will be pleasant and beneficial.\15

Dr. Safford had been a Tarpon Springs \"snowbird,\" for some preceding months and enthusiastically described the area's marvels in the April 1883 New England Medical Gazette:

We seem at last to have struck the real \'Fountain of youth,\' if what \"they say\" is true. There is a spring near here, the water of which is a deep blue color and quite tasteless. An elderly man had been very badly crippled with rheumatism for several years. He was induced to go and bathe in and drink the water. In a surprisingly short time he found his before-stiffened limbs now supple with an agility belonging to youth. Not only that; his previously bald head became covered with a luxuriant growth of brown hair, and the fringe of gray hair, all that was left of the original growth, was also restored to its natural color. He now still lives to tell this wonderful tale, and there are living witnesses to support him in it.

While I write, this last day of winter, I look from my open window upon the perfected foliage of early summer. There are twelve varieties of wild flowers on my table before me. The thermometer ranges about 68 to 70 degrees. There is always a cool breeze coming inland from the Gulf. We have no mosquitoes, and flies are very amenable to treatment, if one gets accustomed to their idiosyncrasies. Fever and ague are
rarely contracted on this west coast. I don’t see how graveyards are ever started here, especially in localities where doctors are unknown.46

Dr. Safford’s brother A.P.K. Safford was well known as the third Territorial Governor of Arizona and as land agent for the Lake Butler Villa Corporation - involved in land sales in Hillsborough County. This land was part of the controversial, “Disston Purchase,” in which Pennsylvanian Hamilton Disston and an international investment syndicate bought four million acres of Florida land for one million dollars. Tarpon Springs was a prime area and was touted as a magnet for health seekers.47 A.P.K. Safford and Dr. Mary Safford lived there for at least parts of each year from 1882 until their deaths a week apart in December 1891.48,49

Obviously, Fidelia enjoyed her Florida visit since she returned the following autumn after giving her patients relatively scant warning in the local paper: “I shall leave my office the last of Nov., for Florida, to be absent four months. Dr. P.M. Ostrander, a Physician and Surgeon, every way worthy of confidence and patronage, will take my place during absence. I desire to have all standing accounts settled before I leave.”50

Her mode of travel to Florida is not documented, but Fidelia’s son-in-law E. C. Olney, Esq., traveled to Tarpon Springs in March 1884. While on that trip, probably to accompany his mother-in-law back to Nunda, Olney wrote a letter to The Nunda News. Among other topics he describes taking a steamship to Savannah followed by a train to Callahan, FL. On his arrival at 10:00 p.m. he rented a sleeping berth on the train that came to Cedar Key at 7:00 a.m. From there he took a schooner to Tarpon Springs.51 It wasn’t until later that year that the 132 foot, thirty thousand dollar steamer, “The Governor Safford”, was built by Pusey and Jones Company in Wilmington, Delaware, and placed in service between Cedar Keys and Tampa.52

Fidelia was an even more prolific letter writer than her son-in-law and penned several long letters to The Nunda News during her 1884 winter’s stay in Florida. From her January 1, 1884, letter comes the following:

And we are in the bright land of the Sunny South; in the “New Paradise: called Tarpon (sic) Springs. ... There are mineral springs bubbling up through the salt water of this bayou which are valued highly for their medicinal properties ... The bayou is a clear beautiful sheet of water, with a great variety of salt water fish, little and big, also a variety of water fowls.

Wild duck are especially abundant this time of the year. Our excellent marksman, Mr. Thornton, whom many of the Nunda people know, just came in after a “little shoot,” with fifteen fine ducks and other water game. A mile and half east is a lovely sheet of fresh water. Lake Butler is six and half miles long and over a mile wide. This is filled with different kinds of fresh water fish and a few ‘gators. In every direction are beautiful fresh water lakes. One corner of our land is watered by Hidden Lake, from which our table may be supplied with delicious fish and green turtle soup.53

An important reference in the letter is: “our land is watered by Hidden Lake.” Hidden Lake still bears that name in Tarpon Springs and is just southwest of the body of water now known as Whiteomb Bayou. Fidelia was one of the earliest customers of the Lake Butler Villa Corporation headed by A.P.K. Safford. By May of 1884 she owned a portion of land shown on the map (Illustrations 3-4.) It is interesting that Fidelia did not choose land in the area - favored by many of the northern visitors - immediately adjacent to Spring Bayou (Illustration 5.) Continuing with a description of the local wildlife she asks: “What about those horrid reptiles and insects? I have walked and ridden about the country a good deal and have not seen a live snake, but I have seen one dead one; that was a large rattlesnake ...”

Regarding the insects she continues: “Of insects, we have the common fly, about the same as in summer at the north; a few mosquitoes, they are not numerous. I have not seen a spider in or on a house since I came here, no matter how old the building. The sand flies are only troublesome about sunset to those walking in sand. There are some fleas, but not many here, and no chintz bugs. It would be difficult to find a warm climate with so few reptiles and insects to annoy as here.”

She sums up the place as follows: “It is a healthy place, I answer emphatically, un-
doubtedly the natural sanitarium of the Gulf Coast. The climate is as near perfect as one can imagine ... I can think of nothing better for weak lungs or nervous weakness, or any debilitating diseases."  

Two days later Fidelia wrote another letter to the editor of the Nunda paper, providing a comprehensive list of Tarpon Springs’ flora. Fruits included the usual citrus but also alligator pear, pomegranate, olive, fig, persimmon, bananas, pineapples, three varieties of plums, honey peach, four or five kinds of mulberries, and strawberries among others. Apparently the only things she could not find were raspberries. She said that she knew of no vegetable that could not be grown in Tarpon Springs and even enjoyed local, “good Irish potatoes grown here as at the north.” She described seeing on January 2, 1884 a ten-pound cabbage and large turnips.  

In February of 1884 she continued her correspondence to the editor of the Nunda paper and waxed eloquent about the glories of a summer evening. Like Mary Safford’s of the prior year, Fidelia’s letters read like promotional literature for Tarpon Springs’ nascent real estate projects. With time to devote to cataloging Florida’s flora and fauna, it does not appear that Fidelia practiced medicine in Tarpon Springs in the winter of 1884. However, the following November she entered a local partnership with Dr. Ostrander who had covered her practice in Nunda previously: “Dr Whitcomb expects to leave for Florida about 23rd. Dr. Ostrander who has entered into partnership with Dr. Whitcomb will occupy the same office. He will be found in his office from 8AM until 10PM and from 10PM until 8AM at his boarding place in Mrs. Lovell’s house.”

After November 8, 1884, the weekly newspaper advertisement of Dr. F. J. M. Whitcomb’s consultation hours read:

F. J. M. Whitcomb, MD  
P. M. Ostrander, MD  
Homeopathic Physicians  

Dr. Whitcomb’s Office, Tarpon Springs, Hillsboro Co, Florida  

Dr. Ostrander’s Office at W. B. Whitcomb’s, Massachusetts St., Nunda, NY, Office Hours 2-5 PM”

A note in the May 10, 1883, edition of Frances Willard’s Women’s Christian Temperance Union’s widely circulated house organ, The Union Signal, gives an idea of a potential Tarpon Springs enterprise:

Dr. Mary Safford, sister of ex-Gov. Safford, of Arizona has taken 200 acres of land near Tarpew (sic), Florida, where she intends to plant a colony. She has an idea of establishing a sanitarium in that colony, to which invalids will likely be attracted, from all parts of the States. Dr. Safford is an energetic, shrewd and brilliant woman, highly cultured, and exceedingly able in her profession.  

Although her grove of invalid cottages never came to fruition, Dr. Safford with the assistance of Dr. Whitcomb, did manage another health-oriented business. In 1883 construction of the Tarpon Springs Hotel commenced. The Lake Butler Villa Corporation headed by Mary Safford’s brother built the three-story elegant hotel of lumber from Disston’s sawmill in Atlantic City, NJ. (Illustrations 6-7). Although the hotel reputedly opened in 1884, an advertisement in the Florida Medical and Surgical Journal, November, 1885, names Dr. Mary J. Safford of Boston and Dr. F. J. Whitcomb of Aurora (sic), N. Y., as managers. The advertisement reads:

The Tarpon Springs Hotel has been constructed upon the best sanitary principles. It is under the management of Dr. Mary J. Safford of Boston and Dr. F. J. Whitcomb of Aurora, N. Y., both physicians of extensive experience. The appointments are all directed to the attainment of the maximum comfort of invalids. The rates are nominal and within the range of all health seekers. Every facility for outdoor pleasure is provided. Sailing, rowing and fishing offer their attractions. Many patients wintering here in the past two years attest the marvelous benefit that may be derived from this pure air, equable temperature and salubrious climate. Full information may be obtained by addressing Dr. M. J. Safford, Tarpon Springs. (Illustration 8)
Various authors considered the building "a large, first-class hotel" and "a handsome building and in every way most comfortably appointed. In the evening walking on the broad piazzas which surround the hotel, and looking out upon the twinkling lights of the town, the outlines of the houses in lamp- and starlight, it is like a dream to reflect that all this has risen where there was but untrodden wilderness three short years back."  

Wanton Webb's 1885 description of Tarpon Springs includes this enticement:

These springs are noted for their great medicinal virtue and attract crowds of invalids from all parts of the country ... There are two excellent hotels, the Tarpon and the Tropical, the former opened for the first time this season, ... The general aspect of the place is that of a thriving and progressive town, and during the winter months the large influx of tourists, invalids, etc., adds materially to the permanent population which comes principally from Pennsylvania and New York."  

Both physician/managers came from sophisticated backgrounds and understood the desires and needs of their predominant-ly northern guests/patients. The Florida State Gazetteer and Business Directory of 1886 lists both doctors as homeopaths and as proprietors of the Tarpon Springs Hotel. The Gazetteer lists no other physicians in Tarpon Springs and only one other homeopath for the entire state. As this listing may have been on a paid basis, at least it can be said that the ladies knew how and where to advertise.

Fidelia’s interest in promoting Tarpon Springs’ health benefits also may have related to her son’s presence there; by promoting Tarpon Springs she was helping her family business. On February 10, 1885, Merrick wrote the following to his alma mater, under the heading: “SILAS MERRICK WHITCOMB Is at Tarpon Springs, Hillsborough County, Florida, as Agent for the Sale and Improvement of lands, and Orange-Grower. Writes –“

(February 10) ‘I returned from Europe in the summer of 1883 and finding myself still disinclined to settle down into a humdrum sort of existence, and become a doctor, lawyer, or whatever the buttons might indicate, I yielded to the prospective charms of a Florida Orange Grove, and came to this ex-
tremity of the “Sunny South.” Nor have I had reason to regret my choice. While you are shivering before your grate, we are enjoying the sweet odor of new-opened orange blossoms. In fact, I am so well satisfied that I can with clear conscience advise all lovers of eternal springtime to visit me.” 65

Apparently, the, “lovers of eternal springtime” and their sick relatives did visit. The women proprietors continued to run the hotel into 1887. Unfortunately, the hotel burned down in the 1890s, and no records of guests or patient names survived.

While practicing medicine and attending to the invalids visiting the Tarpon Springs Hotel, Fidelia still had time for church activities. She was Vice-President of the Woman’s Centenary Association of the Universalist Church of the Good Shepherd organized in Tarpon Springs by fourteen members in the winter of 1886. 66 That same year she was named Vice-President for the State of Florida for the same organization. 67 There is no description of what her duties may have entailed. Just as she was corresponding secretary for the national organization and treasurer for her county medical society, Fidelia did not seek positions assuring fame or prestige. Instead, she chose to hold offices of quiet responsibility.

By April of 1887, Fidelia’s advertisement on the front page of The Nunda News listed her practice as “Whitecomb & Ostrander” but did not mention Tarpon Springs. 68 There is documentation of her “gradually failing health”69 but no indication of its cause. It is unlikely that she died of one of the era’s common acute infectious diseases such as cholera, yellow fever, dysentery or pneumonia. However, a malignancy or tuberculosis would certainly be considerations. Despite her touting Florida’s healthful climate, she sought recovery in the Virginia mountains in Autumn 1887, after which she returned to Florida. This suggests that she was not bedridden then since she still could travel,
but a few months later her husband and children gathered in Tarpon Springs, just ten days prior to her death on April 1, 1888. Her lengthy obituary in The Sunland News read in part:

Some six or eight years ago she became interested in Florida, and made purchases in Tarpon Springs... It was a land of sunshine and flowers to which she was much attached, and at her own request, made some time ago, that if she should die in Florida she wanted to be buried there.

Just five years earlier Dr. Safford questioned the need for graveyards in Tarpon Springs. Dr. Fidelia Jane Merrick Whitecomb’s remains were placed in what is now an unmarked grave in Plot 50, Section J, of the town’s Cycadia Cemetery. A.R.K. and Dr. Mary Safford’s remains, marked with huge granite blocks after their deaths in 1891, were buried in plot 37, Section J. In his Centennial History of the Town of Nunda, Hand remarked at the end of Fidelia’s biography: “Had she been buried here the wreath and flag we bestow, in gratitude to those who loved and served their country in the hour of her peril, would not be out of place on the grave of this ardent patriot.” Such memorials as Hand describes are out of step with current practices. It is nevertheless a fitting tribute to recall that Dr. Fidelia Whitecomb be remembered as not only one of the first residents and promoters of Tarpon Springs but also as one of the first female physicians of Hillsborough County, Florida.

**Addendum**

Readers of this article will see some connections between it and the Tampa Guardian and Tampa Journal “Letters to the Editor” by Lucie Vannevar, excerpts from which I edited and which are included in this issue of The Sunland Tribune. The inclusion is no accident. Lucie Vannevar’s chatty “Letters” mentioned both Dr. Whitecomb and colleague Mary Safford numerous times. Vannevar described the two Tarpon Springs medical pioneers with her usual wit: “Both are thoroughly educated in the profession and no doubt would enjoy a lucrative profession were it not so distressingly healthy in Tarpon.”

Vannevar gave periodic attention to the activities – medical, social, and personal – of Fidelia Whitecomb. As Fidelia’s health began to decline, Vannevar noted: “Dr. Whitecomb, who you will remember went north some months since, is now at Healing Springs, Va. Dr. Whitecomb is at present in very poor health, but as it grows cooler we hope she will regain her wonted strength and return prepared to take her place among us. She has a wonderful faculty for smoothing out tangled skeins in society and even the little society of Tarpon sometimes becomes tangled.”

Unfortunately, no remedy for Fidelia’s health problems was found in Virginia or elsewhere. While the pertinent issues of Tampa Journal are missing, Lucie Vannevar’s Tampa Journal entry of June 29, 1888 remarked: “Death has been with us again. Professor James Johonnot died last week, after a lingering illness. He was laid to rest not far from his old friend Dr. Whitecomb.”
Endnotes

2 Harvard College Class of 1889 Secretary’s Report, No.IV: August 1890. Buffalo: Matthews, Northrup & Co. August 1890; 133.
5 Hand, 124.
6 Whitcomb, 529.
7 Hand, 258.
8 Hand, 292.
9 Hand, 258.
10 Whitcomb, 529.
11 Whitcomb, 529.
13 Hand, 125.
16 Thomas, xxiv.
17 Thomas, xxix.
18 Papers Read at the Congress of Women, Held at St. George’s Hall, Philadelphia, October 4, 5, 6, 1876, Names and Addresses of Officers and Members of the Association for the Advancement of Woman, History of the Association. Washington, D. C.: Todd Brothers, Book and Job Printers, 1877; 125.
22 King, 172.
23 King, 183.
24 King, 211.
25 King, 183.
26 Emily L. Beattie, Archivist at Boston University, personal communication of 2 Feb. 2008.
29 Hand, 406.
33 “Meeting of the Homoeopaths.” The Nunda News XXIV.10, Jul 1883. (rest of citation illegible at source.)
34 Notice. The Nunda News XXIX. 15, 14 Apr. 1888.
35 Hand, 407.
37 Papers Read at the Congress of Women, Held at St. George’s Hall, Philadelphia, October 4, 5, 6, 1876, Names and Addresses of Officers and Members of the Association for the Advancement of Woman, History of the Association. Washington, D. C.; Todd Brothers, Book and Job Printers, 1877; 6.
38 Hand, 124.
41 Stanton, 428.
42 “Nunda Free Academy and Union Graded School Announcement.” The Nunda News XXV. 36, 8 Sept. 1883.
44 Hand, 124.

Stoughton, H. G., ed. 1883.

Notice. The Nunda Nezas XXIV. 1 Dec. 1883.


F.J. M. W., “Our Florida Letter (Special Correspondence of the News).” The Nunda Nezas XXV. 7. 16 Feb. 1884.

Notice. The Nunda Nezas XXV. 44. 1 Nov. 1884.

Signal Notes. The Union Signal. 10 May 1883. 9.


Thomas, xix.


Hand, 125.
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About the Authors

Nova D. Muhlenberg Bonnett is a Juris Doctor from Nova Southeastern University, Shepard Broad Law Center, Ft. Lauderdale-Davie, Florida. She received her Bachelor of Arts with high honors in History from New Mexico State University in 2006. Ms. Muhlenberg Bonnett also holds a paralegal certificate and spent many years working as a staff member in law firms in Jacksonville, Florida, Washington, D.C., and Las Cruces, New Mexico. Her legal focus is social justice law as applied and in historical context.

Paul Eugen Camp is a Librarian Emeritus at the University of South Florida. From 1972 until his retirement in 2008 he was a librarian in Special Collections at the University’s Tampa Campus Library, working principally with the department’s extensive collection of Floridiana. He served as a member of Tampa Historical Society’s Board of Directors from 1993 to 1999, and again from 2007 to 2009. Camp also served as Executive Secretary of the Florida Historical Society from 1979 to 2009, and as General Secretary of the Florida Historical Confederation for the same period. He is the author of Collecting Florida: The Hampton Dunn collection and Other Floridiana (Tampa: USF Libraries, 2006) and of numerous other publications relating to Florida history, American history, and historical American children’s literature.

Elizabeth Grange Okulski Coachman, M.D. studied Art at Moore College of Art in Philadelphia and at Rutgers University. Her first career, however, was Medicine; she holds an M.D. and was a pathologist in Florida for 20 years. She lives in Brooksville, Florida, with her husband Mike Coachman, member of a Pinellas County pioneer family. In Brooksville and in her Newfoundland studio, she produces landscape art and copper intaglios. (One of Elizabeth’s Central Florida landscapes was the back cover of the 2007 Sunland Tribune.)

Around 2002 a representative of the Safford House Museum (Tarpon Springs, FL) asked Elizabeth to present, as living history, Dr. Mary Safford, one of the first female physicians in western Florida. In researching the role, Coachman discovered the remarkable world of nineteenth century women physicians and their struggle for recognition, as well as their place within the larger women’s movement. A sidebar to her research was the discovery of the Lucie Vannevar Tampa Journal columns, one of which is displayed in The Sunland Tribune for the first time since its initial publication in 1887. Elizabeth is currently authoring a book on Dr. Safford; publication is expected in 2011.

Lula Joughin Dovi is a fourth-generation Tampan. She received an A.B. degree from Florida State University and an M.A. degree from University of South Florida. Ms. Dovi spent 37 years in the Hillsborough County Public Schools as a teacher and curriculum coordinator.

A longtime member of Tampa Historical Society, Inc., Ms. Dovi served several terms as a Board Member. Her family connections to Tampa history go back to her great-grandfather John Jackson, the government surveyor who laid out the streets of downtown Tampa, surveyed extensively in Hillsborough County during the Seminole Wars, and whose work extended to large areas of the Southeastern United States. Ms. Dovi’s grandfather Thomas E. Jackson was Mayor of Tampa for several terms. Her great-aunt Kate V. Jackson (for whom Kate Jackson Recreation Center is named) was a pioneer of Catholic education locally and founder of the Academy of Holy Names, and is credited with creating a recreational parks system for Tampa’s children. Ms. Dovi’s father, R.T. Joughin, was appointed sheriff of Hillsborough County, 1929-32.

In recent years, Ms. Dovi has had articles published in local newspapers. She also writes and reads her poetry for two local groups, including Tampa Writers Alliance.
Society Snapshots From 2009-2010

On Sunday, October 25, 2009, the Society presented its annual Gothic Graveyard Walk at Oaklawn Cemetery. A crowd of over 100 people gathered at Tampa's first public burying ground (c.1850) as living historians in period dress introduced some of Oaklawn's "residents" and the stories of frontier Florida that reveal their lives and deaths.

Oaklawn Cemetery at Morgan and Harrison Streets, is serene and shady before the opening of the Gothic Graveyard Walk.

The crowd, dressed for comfort in the unseasonably late heat, gathers.

Sexton and gravedigger "Ezekiel Aikle" (Paul Camp) has many tales to tell of the old cemetery.

Living historians Michael Norton ("Father Michael O'Terlihy") and Maureen Patrick ("Miss Prudence Fipwhistle") are "ghost guides" for the event.
“Fr. Michael” discourses on the life and times of Indian trader and pioneer Tampan Thomas Pugh Kennedy, at the family plot.

Ezekiel’s shovel is always ready to accommodate new interments.

Society Board Member Fred Hearns asks the public's support for preservation and education initiatives at Oaklawn.

“Miss Prudence Fipwhistle” examines her new grave marker.

“Miss Fipwhistle” introduces the public to the family plot of Dr. John P. Wall.

Board Members Damita Binkley (left) and Elizabeth Granger (right) are tireless supporters of the Society’s mission at the Cemetery.
Book Reviews

Thunder on the River: The Civil War in Northeast Florida
by Daniel L. Shafer.

(Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010.)

Review by Maureen J. Patrick, M.A.

Persistently popular topic for readers and scholars alike (perhaps because the issues leading up to, surrounding, and following it remain unresolved on many levels), the Civil War has produced still another — this time locally focused — book. Daniel L. Shafer's *Thunder on the River* has several attributes that will insure its popularity with those who study the conflict and never tire reading about it. For one thing, the book is clearly and cogently written. Shafer's style combines a scholar's insight with a prose writer's deft phrasing, and while not exactly a page-turner *Thunder on the River* is smoothly readable. It is the sort of book one can take on a long plane flight and feel, in the reading of it, not only informed but entertained.

Shafer's command of detail is formidable, as he gathers rich primary source material into his narrative and uses it to bring the reader to the same fields, rivers, swamps, and savannahs where the War ranged across North Florida. Often overlooked in mainstream Civil War studies, the Florida engagements were decisive in some regards for both Union and Confederate forces. Shafer does a fine job depicting the military strategists, their personalities, virtues, vices, and quandaries, and conveying the impression (rightly) that wars are fought not by logistics and armaments but by men, brains, and guts. Through diaries, letters, and journal entries, Shafer fleshes out a theater of combat that is often painted in the bold and bloody colors of warfare, when the daily life of a soldier was more usually a grinding defense against boredom, bad food, and petty discomfort. Confederate Cavalry officer Winston Stephens, chafing against inaction at Camp Finegan (near Jacksonville) wrote to his wife about the town and its pretty girls, reassuring her that “at thirty three I am too old for such things.” Stephens related that he and his men “were generally well but on short allowance [for wages] which makes soldiers...
in bad humor, but I am in good humor as I have just had dinner – baked beef, potatoes. . and rice with a little sugar for sweet.”

Detail from primary sources like Stephens’ letters makes Thunder on the River a particularly fine book for those who want to encounter the Civil War not as a dry historical tract but rather a living memory of the people who experienced it. The work is not lacking in logistical and technical information, however. Of particular interest to readers whose interests lie in the technology of mid-nineteenth century warfare is Shafer’s chapter on “Torpedo Warfare and the Struggle For Control of Northeast Florida.” In that chapter Shafer presents the rarely explained underwater mine (“torpedo”) technology that was so devastating to the Union plan for control of North Florida’s waterways.

If Thunder on the River has a flaw it lies in Shafer’s decision to conflate his excellent and detailed analysis – rich in first-person detail – of the War in Northeast Florida with broader issues of race. There is no doubt that Shafer could – and probably should have – written a book on that topic alone, since there is always room in the market (both scholarly and general) for learned perspectives on the complex racial issues leading up to and following the Civil War. But diverting the otherwise excellent and focused narrative into byways of racial incident, opinion, and reaction somewhat diffuses Shafer’s focus and prevents the book from having a single, forceful thesis. In essence, Shafer has, in Thunder on the River, written two books: one on the economies, attitudes, and consequences of both slavery and abolitionism, and another on the logistics, technology, incidents, and personalities of combat during the War in Northeast Florida. Either book would, given Shafer’s solid scholarship and adept writing style, have been a success.
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On Thursday, December 10, 2009, Tampa Historical Society presented its annual D.B. McKay Award. The Award acknowledges notable contributions to local history and has been a Society tradition since 1972. 2009 marked the first year that the Award ceremony has taken place at the Peter O. Knight House during its Holiday Open House, where guests enjoyed Victorian Christmas décor, food and spirits, and the company of Society Members and friends. The 2009 Award recipient was Martha S. Ferman.

Martha Sales Ferman was born in Shellman, Georgia to parents Florence Elizabeth Coxwell Sale and Owen Cornelius Sale. Valedictorian of her Shellman High School graduating class, Martha took an Honors degree in Music (majoring in Piano) from Andrew College in Cuthbert, Georgia.

In 1937, Martha Sale married James Laurens Ferman. A pioneer in the automobile sales business locally, Ferman’s soaring vision and business acumen insured that by the 1950s, the name “Ferman” was nearly synonymous with “motorcar” in the area, and by the 1970s several generations of Tampans had bought their autos from the Ferman enterprise, and enterprise that thrives today.

Martha Ferman has always been highly visible in community and civic affairs. Boards and committees that have gratefully noted her support include: Hyde Park Methodist Church, the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center, The Tampa Theater, the White House Conference on Children and Youth, the Hillsborough County Children’s Commission (Past Chair), Delta Kappa Gamma, Delta Delta Delta (President, Alumnae Association), the Colonial Dames of America (Chair, Tampa Town Committee), the Tampa Garden Center (Chair of Building Plans Committee; President of Rose Garden Circle), the Tampa Museum of Art (Chair of Guilders – now FOTA – and Pavilion Committee member), Tampa Symphony (now the Florida Orchestra; President of Symphony Guild), the Easter Seal Guild (President), the Junior League of Tampa (numerous offices and committees), the Friday Morning Musicale, Chislers, Inc. (Founder and Past President), the United Way, the Tampa General Hospital Foundation, the YWCA, the American Red Cross, McDonald Training Center, the PTAs of Gorrie Elementary and Wilson Junior High School (President of both) and more.

Involved with Tampa Historical Society, Inc. from its outset, and a former member of the Society’s Board of Directors, Martha S. Ferman has always contributed generously and believed steadfastly in the necessity of preserving, presenting, and privileging local history. With deep gratitude and respect, the Society honors Mrs. Ferman for her many years of belief in its mission.
Past Recipients of the D.B. McKay Award

1972  Frank Laumer
1973  State Senator David McClain
1974  Circuit Court Judge Lames R. Knott
1975  Gloria Jahoda
1976  Harris H. Mullen
1977  Dr. James Covington
1978  Hampton Dunn
1979  William M. Goza
1980  Anthony ‘Tony’ Pizzo
1981  Allen and Joan Morris
1982  Mel Fisher
1983  Marjory Stoneman Douglas
1984  Frank Garcia
1985  Former Governor Leroy Collins
1986  Dr. Samuel Proctor
1987  Doyle E. Carlton, Jr.
1988  Leland M. Hawes, Jr.
1990  Joan W. Jennewein
1991  Dr. Gary R. Mormino
1992  Julius J. Gordon
1993  Jack Moore and Robert Snyder
1994  Dr. Ferdie Pacheco
1995  Stephanie E. Ferrell
1996  Michael Gannon
1997  Rowena Ferrell Brady
1998  Dr. Canter Brown, Jr.
1999  J. Thomas Touchton
2000  Dr. Larry Eugene Rivers
2001  Arsenio M. Sanchez
2002  Honorable Dick Greeo
2003  Frank R. North, Sr.
2005  Doris Weatherford
2006  Tom McEwen
2007  Fernando R. Mesa
2008  Roland Manteiga (posthumous)
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