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You may wonder why a journal about Tampa Bay’s history and culture has on its cover a photograph of a Norwegian rocketing down a ski slope. The answer should become more apparent as you take a second look at the photo. While the skier is wearing pants and a sweater, the crowd is dressed in more tropical attire, and the “slope” is made of wood and covered in chicken wire. The photograph was taken from the top of the man-made platform, four stories above Franklin Street on November 19, 1958, for the Tampa Snow Show. One of the Snow Show organizers, Howard Hilton, has written a wonderful article chronicling the week-long downtown event. Sadly, Mr. Hilton passed away in August of this year at the age of 82. We are fortunate that he had the forethought to write his memoirs. He possessed a great sense of humor and was able to laugh both at himself and the winter carnival he unleashed on his adopted hometown.

The year since our last issue has been an eventful one. The new Tampa Bay History Center is, at the time of this writing, nearly complete – the fulfillment of a promise made to Hillsborough County nearly twenty years ago. The year has also been a busy one for this year’s contributors. The 2008 edition of Tampa Bay History features six articles, including the winner of the annual Leland Hawes Essay Prize in Florida History for Best Graduate Paper, an award given annually by the Tampa Bay History Center and the University of South Florida Libraries’ Florida Studies Center.

The 2008 graduate prize winner, Nicole Cox, leads off this issue with her paper on the last hurricane to directly strike the Tampa Bay area – the 1921 Hurricane. Cox examines the storm in the context of the Florida Land Boom that was just gaining momentum at the time and how the reaction – or non-reaction – to the hurricane by local boosters played a role in the public’s casual attitude toward these potentially dangerous storms.

Frank Schubert’s fascinating piece on one of Tampa’s most notorious, yet still largely unknown, figures, David Fagen, is our second article. Schubert’s in-depth examination of Fagen – a young man who grew up in the Scrub (Tampa’s first African American community), joined the Buffalo Soldiers in 1898 at the age of 19 and deserted the army the following year – goes beyond earlier and more superficial studies of Fagen. Schubert attempts to find the real story behind the man who deserted the U. S. Army in November 1899 to join the Filipino Insurrection.
Next is a re-examination of the Johns Committee by Seth Weitz, who explores a low point in the history of the University of South Florida (USF) and the state higher education system. In “Campus of Evil,” Weitz looks at the Johns Committee hearings at USF as both a “moral” and, more importantly, political crusade. Weitz writes about the controversy with an eye toward the long-term effects the discord would have on the university.

Leslie Poole, winner of the 2006 Leland Hawes Prize, has written a wonderful piece on St. Petersburg’s Katherine Tippetts, one of the founders of that city’s chapter of the Audubon Society. Tippetts arrived in St. Petersburg with her husband in 1902, where they operated a hotel and dabbled in real estate. After her husband died in 1909, Tippetts involved herself in social and environmental activities – in addition to operating the family business. Poole points out that Tippetts built a “foundation for activists who would follow in her footsteps in confronting Florida’s environmental woes.”

Editorial board member Joe Knetsch appears within these pages with an article on the early surveys of Fort Brooke and their impact on the fledgling town of Tampa. Knetsch’s expertise in the field of surveying, and his unique command of primary source materials, combine to make his piece an important addition to the scholarship of Tampa’s early history.

Anchoring the 2008 edition of *Tampa Bay History* is Mr. Hilton’s “The Abominable Snow Show.” It is presented here as Mr. Hilton wrote it (with a few minor grammatical edits) and is written in the first person – as if he was telling his story to all of you. I had the honor of spending some time with Mr. Hilton and hearing about the Snow Show from his perspective – an unusual mix of pride and embarrassment – and it was an afternoon I will not soon forget.

Thank you for a great and thoroughly enjoyable story, Mr. Hilton. This issue is for you.

RODNEY KITE-POWELL, EDITOR