4-5-2013

Ex libris : 02/02 (Fall 1978)

USF Library Associates

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/tlsdc_dept

Scholar Commons Citation
http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/tlsdc_dept/4
Contents

Claus-Trophobia at USF .................................1
Christmas is Everywhere
   in Books and Song ..................................1
History in Tampa Bay .................................5
"Without the Smallest
   Suspicion" ..........................................11
The Papers on Panton,
   Leslie and Company ..............................13
Major Acquisitions .................................15
Exhibits .........................................................16

Programs, activities, and services of the University of South Florida are available to all
on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sex, age,
national origin, or handicap. The University is an affirmative action Equal Opportunity
Employer.

Ex Libris

Vol. 2, No. 2 Fall, 1978

Ex Libris is published quarterly by the USF Library Associates, University of South
Florida, Tampa, Florida.

Please address suggestions and comments to J. B. Dobkin, Executive Secretary, USF
Library Associates, USF Library, Tampa, Fla. 33620.

Cover illustration: A selection of early post cards from the Library's Noel Wisdom
Graphic Arts Collection.

All illustrations in this issue of Ex Libris are reproduced from works in the Special
Collections Department of the University of South Florida Library. Photography is by
the photography department of USF’s Division of Educational Resources.
Claus-Trophobia at USF

IN A PURELY serendipitous manner, the Library’s Special Collections have accumulated an impressive array of items relating to Santa Claus and Christmas in general. In attempting to develop a truly comprehensive collection of 19th Century American literature, we have in passing acquired many Christmas related works for children and adults. Although no special effort has been made to acquire holiday-related items, our private press collection has also come to contain numerous Christmas works. Nearly all of our almost 100 American gift books and annuals mention their appropriateness as Christmas gifts, while not a few contain stories and poems of the Yuletide season. From facsimiles and originals of early religious works narrating the Christmas story to fascinating and colorful old Christmas cards, from the Noel Wisdom Graphic Arts Collection, Christmas seems to have arrived in all the areas of our collections without our having consciously sought it. A gleaning of our Christmas treasures forms the substance of our current exhibit in the Library’s fourth floor display area.

In honor of the season, the Library’s good friend Dr. Alice Smith has conducted a brief tour through the rampant jungle of Christmas literature, with particular emphasis on things in our own collection. To quote Eric Posselt’s introduction to his *A Merry, Merry Christmas Book*, "Contrary to a widespread belief particularly rampant among anthologists, Charles Dickens did not invent Christmas even though he did write more about it than any other man, dead or alive, and in so doing undoubtedly contributed his share to the revival of its celebration in England and thus, indirectly, in the United States. Considering the fact that in the year of Our Lord 1659, Massachusetts passed a law reading, 'Whosoever shall be found observing any such day as Christmas, or the like, either by forebearing labor, or feasting any other way, shall be fined five shillings,' a law that remained in force for fully twenty-two years; and considering that Christmas did not become a legal holiday until late in the second half of the Nineteenth Century, this is no mean achievement, indeed." So, with due reverence to Mr. Dickens and his fellows, we present Dr. Smith's timely look at some of the best loved tales of the Yuletide season.
AMONG MANY FAMILIES it is the pleasant Yuletide custom to read favorite Christmas stories, narratives, or poems aloud. The most universally known of these holiday tales are Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, and Kate Douglas Wiggin's beloved classic *The Birds' Christmas Carol*. Dickens immortal Ebenezer Scrooge, Tiny Tim, and spirits of Christmas past, present, and future are well known through television and film. The Bird family and their charming little daughter, however, have somewhat declined in popularity due to their lack of video exposure and the changing taste of the English language reading public away from sentimental stories.

With the increasing emphasis on the right and duty of everyone, including the smallest child, to have a realistic understanding of death, Kate Wiggin's languishing classic may yet be reinstated in public favor. For those never exposed to it, an outline of the story might be in order. The heroine, Carol Bird, was born on Christmas, just as the Christmas bells were chiming. She was a lovely child but was afflicted with what would probably be diagnosed as a congenital heart defect. She was confined to her bed, but brought joy to everyone who knew her. In turn, she gained happiness from everyone who entered her limited sphere of life. The story's enjoyment, as well as Carol's, revolved especially around the doings of the rag-tag-comical Ruggles family. By today's standards, Carol's story is a tear-jerker of distinguished caliber (as, for that matter, is Dickens' Tiny Tim). Nevertheless, the story is also one of fulfillment, quiet happiness, and hope. Since Christmas itself is a time of sentiment, perhaps a sentimental tale like Mrs. Wiggins' is not out of place even today.

The late Victorian years and early decades of our own century generated numbers of well-loved works based on emotional appeal, many more than the somewhat cynical world of the post-war era. Many of these traditional fragments of America's childhood are housed in the Special Collections department of the USF Library and in the Library's main book collection. Some Christmas titles that come to mind are briefly discussed in the following paragraphs.

In Lucretia Peabody Hale's *Peterkin Papers*, the bumbling, comical Peterkin family face in their own hilarious fashion the problem of a beautiful Christmas tree that is too tall to fit in their living room. The Lady from Philadelphia comes up with her usual no nonsense response to the problem, solving the problem in a manner a bit shattering to the
In the first chapter of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, Amy, Beth, Meg, and Jo, under Marmee's guidance, share their meager Christmas breakfast with some of the ever present poor during the bleak days of the American War Between the States. With our contemporary emphasis on "social action" to alleviate poverty, we might even today find a reading and discussion of this anecdote useful in conveying the idea of social responsibility to children and youths.

A CHARMING CHRISTMAS story which reaches the hidden, innermost Christmas dreams of the child concealed in every adult heart is *How a Street-Car Came in a Stocking*, by Harriet Allen. This touching Christmas tale was reprinted in 1948 in *The St. Nicholas Anthology*, edited by Henry Steele Commager. The story begins with young David's father reading an advertisement aloud from his newspaper which offered old horse-drawn streetcars free for the taking. The taker, however, had to remove the car from the car barns at his own expense. David was certain that Santa Claus would bring him one. In spite of his mother's tearful entreaties to be sensible, he wrote many letters to Santa about his one Christmas wish. After many disheartening rebuffs, David received his longed-for car in a perfectly plausible manner. This warming and heartening tale makes real as few others do the aching Christmas fantasies of childhood.

The popular image of Santa Claus has taken numerous forms over the past two or three centuries. It has been said that "Sinter Claus" came to America with the Dutch settlers of early New York. Certainly Dr. Clement Moore imprinted Santa as a jolly old elf in the imaginations of all American children when he published " 'Twas the Night Before Christmas" in the Troy, New York, *Sentinel* in 1823. Although many famous illustrators have produced versions of Santa Claus' appearance, the modern image of Santa was created by German-American cartoonist Thomas Nast. Although remembered for his satirical political and social cartoons (Nast was the creator, among other things, of the Democratic donkey and Republican elephant), Nast gave Santa Claus the cherry nose, rosy cheeks, and round jelly-belly now almost universally accepted as the true image of St. Nick. Santa's musical image was later immortalized into song by band leader Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians, set to a complex musical score that intensifies the mood of each phrase.

AT SOME TIME in their lives, children
are bound to ask "Is there really a Santa Claus?" A journalist named White answered this somewhat thorny question for a little girl named Virginia. His famous "Virginia letter," with its well-reasoned reply ending "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus," is still remembered and quoted today as perhaps the ultimate statement on the question. Less well known is a 1904 book entitled Is There a Santa Claus?, written by Jacob A. Riis. This little 38-page, blue-bound volume (of which six pages extoll the works of Danish immigrant Riis) is a small work of art. Its delicate borders with pen-and-ink sketches of a child's dream Christmas are carefully designed to compliment the type, paragraphing, and sentence arrangement to form a harmonious whole. Riis answers for a little boy the same question Virginia posed, skillfully transmuting a child's belief in a bodily Santa Claus into the concept of goodness and giving that should pervade our lives every day of the year.

In earlier times, the British had a custom of staging Christmas pantomimes to celebrate the season. Many writers renowned in British letters have contributed at least one Christmas story intended to be pantomimed. Charles Dickens wrote two: The Cricket on the Hearth, and The Magic Fishbone. William Makepeace Thackeray also wrote a story of this type, entitled The Rose and the Ring. In her book-length fantasy Granny's Wonderful Chair, Francis Brown tells about "The Christmas Cuckoo." William Morris, now more widely known as the founder of the famous Kelmscott Press than for his writings, also created a Christmas pantomime story. A one-time favorite now almost forgotten in his romantic poem "Sir Galahad, A Christmas Mystery," published in 1858. Fairy tales for children, underlying these seemingly simple stories are satires of man's condition meant for perceptive adults.

A similar type of story perhaps better known to American readers is Henry Van Dyke's story The Other Wise Man (1896). This Christmas tale embodies the theme found in stories and old legends of Befana and others who neglected the opportunity to follow the Christmas Star, then were doomed to spend centuries searching in vain for the manger and the new-born king.

ANCIENT STORIES and legends of Christmas have often been retold or given a new twist. Among these, some of the best known are: The Friendly Beasts, adapted from an old Christmas carol by Laura Nelson Baker; The Nutcracker, adapted from the musical Nutcracker Suite by Warren Chapell; The Little Juggler, illustrated and adapted by Barbara Cooney from An Old French Legend; and Why the Chimes Rang, adapted by Raymond M. Alden from a story first published in 1908.
Gene Stratton Porter, maligned by literary critics, extolled and remembered by Hoosiers, and still beloved by readers who manage to find her early 20th Century books, gives a charming description of a family Christmas celebration in *Laddie*. In the chapter entitled "Keeping Christmas Our Way," all the delicious tastes and spicy odors of Christmas food in the making are described. "Little Sister" flattens herself against the window to see the men bring in the Christmas tree cut from the "back forty acres." Stockings are hung, gingerbread women and doughnut men are munched, and everyone sings "Ho, ho, ho, who wouldn't go, Up on the housetop click, click, click, Down through the chimney with good Saint Nick..." All the traditional joys of an old fashioned American Christmas are there, to be enjoyed by readers of all ages.

A good guide to finding Christmas stories is the Wilson *Children's Catalog*, found in the reference collections of most well-equipped libraries. Each edition of the *Catalog* indexes numerous Christmas stories and poems for children. The works indexed are available in both school media centers and public library children's sections. More Christmas verse may be found in dozens of adult poetry collections, such as the *Oxford Book of English Verse* and the *Oxford Book of American Verse*. Christmas verse ranges from sophisticated modern offerings by well-known poets to the very sentimental but much loved anonymous classic *The First Christmas*:

"Hang up the baby's stocking;  
Be sure you don't forget –  
The little dimpled darling!  
She ne'er saw Christmas yet..."

From song to verse to tales old and new, there is indeed a wealth of Christmas literature to be found. There are Christmas works for every taste and age to help readers capture the diverse aspects of America's favorite holiday.

*Editorial Note*: If Dr. Smith's brief tour of Christmas literature has awakened memories or piqued your curiosity, you'll find a wealth of Christmas books at the University Library. The range of material relating to the diverse aspects of Christmas is surprising, and it is gratifying to us to be able to present a delightful sampling of it. I hope all the Library's friends will be sure to see our display of rare and unusual Christmas items in our fourth floor exhibit areas.
History in Tampa Bay

“I ARRIVED IN TAMPA in August, 1912,” the old Cuban mused. "A strike among cigarmakers in Havana forced me to leave Cuba in search of work elsewhere."

Jose de la Cruz paused to reflect pensively on these stirred memories of his youth. Only the desire to spend his twenty-third birthday with his family delayed Don Jose's departure from Havana until late summer. "I came to Tampa in search of work,” de la Cruz continued. "Tampa was than a small village, really two villages: Ybor City and West Tampa. I arrived in Ybor City in the middle of a torrential rain storm. The streets were paved with mud - not gold," he commented wryly. "All I remember," he resumed, "was the mud, the heat, and the mosquitos. And that night, my first night in Tampa, I vowed I would return to Cuba within the year."

Jose de la Cruz never returned home.

Several years later, some 1400 miles away, in the small, peaceful Massachusetts town of Walpole, a personal tragedy set into motion another migration. "My father died suddenly of a heart attack," Judy Adams reflected. "The death of my father shattered my family and left my mother inconsolable. Mom had a brother living in St. Petersburg and she decided to sell the house and bring us down." That first year on the Gulf coast was a difficult one for the Adams family. "We hated everything about the place and consoled each other by playing games to name the worst thing about the town. We loathed the flatness, the heat, the too-brilliant sky, the stucco houses, southern accents, sand, palm trees, sandspurs, and neighbors. We missed our father, our home, our friends, the snow, the hills, meadows, and woods."

Nevertheless, like de la Cruz, the Adams family permanently settled in central Florida and found a new home.

In the early 1920's, in still another part of the world, Mario Patuzo, his wife, and three sons prepared to leave Italy to join Mario's older brother in Tampa. "My uncle's produce and vegetable business was beginning to flourish," Mario's youngest son recollected some fifty years later, "and he could now afford to bring the rest of the family to America. Coming to Tampa not only gave us a new start but, more important; reunited our family. We have never regretted our decision."

These three accounts provide a sample of the diverse origins of some of those who have settled in the Tampa Bay region. Pieced together, these fragments of 20th Century Tampa Bay life form a mosaic of local history. Each unique story has been uncovered and preserved through the common tool of oral history.

AN INNOVATION in historical research, oral history makes it possible to record the experiences of the heterogeneous population that forms the greater Tampa community. Oral history seeks to gather data and information through taped interviews, reminiscences, reflections, and oral memoirs. Directed dialogue provided the investigator research opportunities ordinarily unavailable through the use of the more conventional historical sources in manuscript and archival collections.
Jose de la Cruz, Judy Adams, and Mario Patuzo all share one trait in common: their names will never appear in the index of an American history textbook. Nevertheless, their lives provide a means through which to gain a fresh understanding of local history. Oral history furnishes a view of the past from the "bottom up" by offering the historian an alternative to traditional orientations in which elites typically dominate the stage. This approach serves to humanize history, returning to the center of historical inquiry people as the subjects of history rather than its objects. In this fashion, oral history yields insights into the way abstract forces of history affect, in very personal terms, the lives of ordinary human beings - ordinary in the sense that they are not ordinarily the subject of historical inquiry. Because historians have not typically dealt with the experience of common people, the full human dimension of the American past remains partially concealed in lofty generalizations. Historical events, hence, appear remote, often unrelated and irrelevant, to the present.

Disillusioned by classroom textbooks, increasing numbers of people have recently launched personal quests into the past to discover their roots and those of their communities. A good deal of this historical introspection developed as a by-product of Bicentennial celebrations. The Bicentennial commemoration functioned in part to a restless republic that broke away from Old World traditions and relentlessly forged ahead new frontiers. Lacking the kinds of institutions - a monarchy, an established church - capable of binding together a culturally diverse people perpetually on the move, Americans rallied around the Presidency as an emblem of national allegiance. The re-election of President Richard Nixon in 1972 meant that the two-hundredyear birthday of the nation would fall during his administration and would highlight one of the common aspirations central to the national ethos: the pursuit of the American dream. A poor boy from Whittier who grew up to become president through hard work, competition, perseverance and dedication, Richard Nixon appeared to be a modern-day Horatio Alger hero, an embodiment of the self-made man. This manifestation of the American dream, however, quickly turned into an American nightmare.

The national disgrace culminating in Watergate disenchanted many Americans who had characteristically derived comfort from conventional national symbols. There were now no more heroes, no leaders worthy of unqualified confidence. Even the most revered figures of the American past, historians discovered, were found deficient. Jefferson owned slaves; Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, and Wilson were racists. Kennedy converted the White House into a bordello.

SEVERELY TESTED, the nation did not discard its time honored national symbols. Instead, Americans turned inward to retrieve the old values and find new symbols in
order to reaffirm the American dream. For this, many Americans looked to the unheralded, day-to-day struggle of their parents and grandparents.

Alex Haley pointed the way in *Roots*. Although depicting a seamy side of American history filled with slavery, exploitation, and racism, Haley nevertheless portrayed the classic American success story of the climb from rags to riches. His saga restored personal courage and dignity to a fundamental position in the American creed after a convulsive decade of political assassination, unpopular wars, and the exposure of corruption at the highest level of government. The lesson of *Roots* was clear: one could find meaning, purpose, and, most important, a place in the great course of human events not in the collective chronicle of the nation but rather in the individual experience of family and community. In addition the surge of interest in the history of blacks, women, and ethnic groups reflects a growing disillusionment over the manner in which the American past has been reconstructed. The discovery of one's roots and the act of personally defining the meaning of that experience is an expression of power and liberation. The phenomenon of "do-it-yourself," a gesture at once of creativity, individual self-sufficiency, and an ever increasing reluctance to entrust to others tasks deemed important to self-fulfillment, has spilled over into the area of historical inquiry.

Local manifestations of this phenomenon have been striking. Membership in the Tampa Historical Society and the Pinellas County Historical Society has increased steadily. Consisting of a number of community historical societies, including Largo, Dunedin, Safety Harbor, St. Petersburg, and Tarpon Springs, the Pinellas association in particular has recently experienced a growth in membership from twenty-five to 600. According to Pinellas County Historical Commissioner Dr. David R. Carr, this membership increase reflects a growing historical consciousness among local citizens. "The fast pace of change in the community," Carr explained, "has made local residents realize that the physical remains of their heritage were being ripped up, paved over, and forgotten." In response to this gratifying community support, both the historical societies in Tampa and Pinellas County have expanded their activities. On the east side of the Bay, Temple Terrace recently commemorated its fiftieth anniversary; as part of this celebration, local citizens launched an oral history project to record the memories of surviving town founders. Similar programs have been undertaken in Brandon, Plant City, and Ruskin. The Tampa Preservation Inc., in still another effort, has applied increasing resources to the restoration and preservation of local historic landmarks. The recently chartered Ybor City State Museum reflects one
more commitment to local history. Glenn Westfall, the Ybor City State Museum consultant, speaks of the project with great enthusiasm. "The Ybor City State Museum will give a view of Tampa that has been in the past overlooked," Westfall indicated. "In fact, it is evidence of an increasing awareness in the community of the contribution that the diverse ethnic groups have made to local history; the museum will continue to promote this awareness."

THESE ALREADY successful enterprises suggest a number of approaches to Tampa Bay history that are conveniently available to the local residents excited by the prospect of discovering their roots. Family history offers one of the most versatile and accessible means of understanding the past. Using the technique of oral history, the researcher traces the origins and chronological development of the various branches of the family to see how they have joined together in the present. Another benefit of family history lies in the light it sheds on the development of the community. Family elders can play an important role in reconstructing local history. Indeed, these individuals have made notable contributions to the growth and development of the Bay area; they can now be enormously valuable in the preserving of the very past they have had a hand in shaping. Their memories of residential patterns, employment opportunities, and race relations, to name but a few, restore a colorful hue to the past in danger of fading with time. This proved to be the case with one local family researcher, Arnie Mitchell. Investigating his family origins, Mitchell gained an interesting insight into St. Petersburg history from his parents: "St. Petersburg was not a city faced with the prospects of recovering from the dismal effects of the Second World War as were some other parts of the country. The war had ironically brought growth to the area, a minor boom of sorts. In 1941, as now, the economy of St. Petersburg was largely dependent on tourism and Pearl Harbor at first seemed to spell doom. The rationing of gasoline and tire rubber emptied the city of visitors for a time. Things looked bleak until the Army decided that the area's mild weather and abundance of housing would make it an ideal spot for training servicemen, and the armed forces moved into the vacuum." This wartime concentration of servicemen on the Gulf coast came to provide the basis for the subsequent post-war boom in the central Florida population. Mitchell recalled the decision of his father and uncle to stay. "Two of the individuals who participated in this development were brothers, Marion and Wesley Mitchell, ex-trainees of the Merchant Marines who chose to stay in St. Petersburg after they were discharged in 1945. They were so taken with the area that they persuaded their parents and a younger brother to move down and settle here. In early 1946, a fourth brother mustered out of the Navy and immediately came to St. Petersburg to complete the clan. Prior to the war, the Mitchell family had been sharecroppers, descendants of generations of people who followed mules on other people's land, shovelled dirt, chopped wood, and grew the food they ate. The brothers now had enough money saved from their service pay to build their parents a home of their own in the Gulfport area of St. Pete and they then commenced to construct their own lives."
THIS TYPE OF INQUIRY into the family past, further, serves to humanize the larger national record. This, in turn, has unlimited potential as a pedagogical device. The often repeated student complaint - "history is my worst subject" - clearly suggests deficiencies in the manner in which the discipline is taught. The introduction of family history into an American history course offers an exciting and, indeed, a uniquely personalized approach to the national past. Each family history represents a microcosm of the larger national process.

At the University of South Florida, courses in 20th Century American history require students to project the experiences of their families against the wider screen of the American past. Students interview their parents, grandparents, relatives, and family friends, attempting to place them within the larger framework of the American past. To this end, they ask questions concerning occupations, income, education, religious beliefs, political preferences, social customs, and community affairs. These student-historians also probe the manner in which wars, depression, urbanization, mobility, and reform influenced their forebears' economic and social development. They are not expected to construct a family tree, but instead to compare the relatives' experiences with the scholarly accounts and interpretations of 20th Century American history. Missing from the action of the pages of the textbooks are the mass of Americans whose private records to not turn up in archives but whose lives are presumably abstracted in the generalizations that sweep across the pages of history books. While students may often learn - or memorize - interpretations about the causes of World War I and II, the impact of prohibition, the flood of immigrants, and the nature of reform under the New Deal, most do not know what happened to people - often their own parents and grandparents. The tendency to concentrate on the elite actors of the American drama often distorts the past, reducing history into something of an irrelevances, and hence "one of my worst subjects."

The human element of the depression, to cite an example, acquires lasting impact and considerable poignancy as students listen to older relatives recount the day-to-day struggle of the late 1920's and early 1930's. After such an experience, the depression was something more than a remote historical event for one student-historian: "The stock market crashed and there was no more credit available for the stores. Only the new small chain stores in town survived because of their mother companies. Refusing to declare bankruptcy, my father had to sell our stores to pay off the creditors. First went the grocery store in 1929. The furniture store was the last to go, some months later. Our home then went for taxes. Salvaging some of our possessions, we moved into a third-

Written at Fort Brooke (Tampa) in 1838, this document is part of a large collection of Seminole War military items housed in the USF Florida Collection.
floor apartment, bearing the sudden stigma of poverty. In fact, my grandmother moved into the front room to help pay our rent. With no business to run and no work, my father began to drink. We all looked for ways to earn money. The boys sold magazines which they delivered faithfully in a green wagon. At Christmas, my mother became a saleslady. She made and sold hats. She gave manicures in ladies' homes. The quarters she brought home were dropped into the meter in the kitchen to provide gas for cooking our meals."

Beyond the university, local high schools should as an integral part of social studies programs encourage students to seek out family members as the focal point around which to study national and local events. The history so often uninteresting in the classroom becomes alive in the home. American history programs organized around family experiences serve, moreover, to preserve local history. If saved and deposited in school and local libraries, a considerable amount of source material for local history would be available in a short period of time. This type of research, further, heightens an awareness and appreciation of the historical worth of family possessions. Exploration of family origins frequently leads to the discovery of important historical materials, otherwise lost. Memorabilia, photographs, family documents, letters, and diaries, usually taken for granted and ignored, in this context acquire a new worth.

APART FROM THE UTILITY of oral history as a tool for family history, it can be imaginatively used to enhance the community's understanding of present and future development. In the last ten years, Tampa Bay has experienced remarkable growth and expansion. Amidst this whirlwind of change, it is especially crucial for institutions to assess on an on-going basis their place, role, and mission in the community in which they exist. Indeed it is important to rescue information that has direct bearing on past and present community history. To this end, oral history has direct relevance. Through conversations and interviews, hitherto untapped human sources of information provide insight and perspectives previously unobtainable. Moreover, precisely, because human beings are mortal, and their recollections die with them, oral history provides a singularly unique opportunity for ensuring the survival of the remembrances of the living. An oral history project at the Hav-a-Tampa Cigar Company, for example, would accomplish a number of important objectives. First, it would generate among company personnel a sense of identity with the company's growth and development. Such a project, further, would undoubtedly underscore the interplay between the cigar industry and Tampa's economic development.

In much the same fashion, similar undertakings could study the development and contribution of other community institutions, including such established agencies as Tampa Electric Company, General Telephone, the University of South Florida, University of Tampa, and the Tampa Tribune. In addition, relative newcomers to Tampa Bay, most notably the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, the Rowdies, Tampa Airport, and any number of the new shopping malls recently completed in the region offer fertile ground for oral history. Indeed, at no time in the future will the opportunity for the oral historian be greater than it is at the present. Virtually all the prime movers behind the organization of the Buccaneers and Rowdies, for example, are still living and reside in the Bay area. This would be a particularly apt time to record the genesis and development of professional sports on the Sun Coast. Oral history would not only provide insight into the social and cultural patterns of the region, but it would also function as a basis to examine activities destined to play a major role in shaping the economic fortunes of the Tampa
Bay area.

Clues to the understanding both the past and future are available in the present. In so many ways, oral history preserves today's memories of yesterday for tomorrow's generation.

Louis A. Perez, Jr. and Steven F Lawson
Department of History, University of South Florida
"Without the Smallest Suspicion"

A Letter Written to President Madison in 1810, and Some Questions Thereon.

A glimpse into Florida history and a fascinating peek behind the curtain of government intrigue is provided by a letter sent to James Madison, President of the United States, on August 6, 1810. This document - now located in the Special Collections Department of the University of South Florida Library - raises a number of questions, some of which are mentioned following the transcription of the letter.

Washington Aug 6 1810

Dear Sir,

Some time previous to Mr. Smith's departure for the Springs I had a long conversation with him respecting the situation of the Florida's, which seemed to meet his unqualified approbation. "That I should go to St. Augustine and endeavor to possess myself of a thorough knowledge of the disposition of the Inhabitants of that place and the neighboring country towards the United States." which I could readily do without exciting the smallest suspicion as to the object of my visit to that country. About four years ago, I became special Bail for a person who was arrested in this place for a debt of five or six hundred dollars, which I have had to pay. The gentleman to whom I allude, then resided at Savannah; but removed about two years since to St. Augustine, where, if living, he now resides. About six months ago, I transmitted to a friend in that place an attested copy of the judgement of the court with a rect. (receipt) in full for the debt & cost of such, but have not heard what prospect there was of obtaining an indemnity. I possess several letters from the gentleman himself, expressive of his regret of my situation, and of his determination to save me harmless which I should take with me as evidence of the object of my visit. I have several acquaintances there, among whom, is a Mr. Cox, who was formerly a neighbor to my Father, also a Mr. Young, who married a sister to Capt. Sibbald, who resides some distance in the interior of the Country. These circumstances, I am convinced would enable me to form an acquaintance with those most likely to possess a general knowledge of the character and sentiments of the people of that country. My plan would be, to hear and observe all that might be passing, without expressing any opinion of my own. I am also acquainted with Capt. Smith of the United States Army, who commands at Fort Hawkins, with whom I could readily communicate, if necessary. I have likewise a power of attorney from Mr. Shaler, to receive a sum of money from Col. Tate of Georgia, which would give colouring to my plan. I should have addressed you some time ago on this subject; but Mr. Smith, in our last conversation, advised that I should wait a few days to take the chance of hearing from Mr. Crawford; but a fortnight having elapsed without receiving any communication from him, induces me not to delay any longer.

The only compensation I require, is that my unavoidable expenses should be defrayed by the government but should I succeed in the recovery of my claim, I will charge nothing.

The above is submitted for your decision, with which, let it be to go, or stay, I shall be perfectly content. In case of the former I should take my family immediately to the Berkeley Springs where Mr. Smith would furnish me with instructions for my
government, and proceed thence on horseback across the country. I remain very sincerely,

Your most obt. & very Humble Servt.
I presume that I could be back in two months. Richd. Forrest

As students of Florida history know, following the return of Florida to Spanish rule in 1783 United States policy was directed towards acquisition of the Floridas by hook or crook. American intrigue on the Florida frontier culminated in the “Patriot War” of 1812, a rebellion among American settlers in East Florida aimed at annexing the province to the United States. When the time came, however, President Madison balked at openly backing the rebellion, resulting in its failure. The major question Forrest’s proposal raises is, of course, whether it influenced the course of America’s Florida policy. Did Forrest come to St. Augustine in 1810 as an American spy? As yet, we have been unable to locate records of his presence there. If he did come to Florida, one wonders, did his report contribute to the uprising two years later, or did it influence Madison against intervention in the Floridas?

On the surface, Forrest appears to be a true patriot wishing to serve his country in a matter of considerable delicacy. The information he offers to obtain could have been of great value to the administration in Washington in gauging the temper of the Florida colonists.

On the other hand, Forrest's proposals have a suspicious flavor of self-interest to alloy the patriotic tone. He may in fact have been attempting to get government aid in collecting an otherwise unrecoverable bad debt. If the President's response was indeed favorable, Forrest had little to lose. At worst, he'd have a free trip to St. Augustine; at best, he'd successfully collect monies he apparently could not afford to go to Florida on his own to collect. Either way, he would have performed a service for the government, for which he could claim due credit.

Forgotten hero or opportunist? We leave the riddle to Florida scholars.

Note: The Mr. Smith referred to in the letter is apparently Robert Smith, who served at this time as Madison's secretary of state.
Exhibits

EXHIBITS of rare and unusual items from the University's collection are displayed in the Library on a continuing basis. Display areas are located on the fourth floor of the main library building, both in the lobby and in the Special Collections reading room. Exhibits are changed quarterly.

**Current Exhibit:** "Florida in Pictures, 1876-1925." Drawn from the Library's collection of Florida photographs and picture postcards, this exhibit is a picture tour of a long vanished Florida. Most of the structures and views portrayed in the display either no longer exist or have changed beyond recognition. Including early views of Tampa, St. Petersburg, and other Bay area cities, the exhibit presents an unusual opportunity to see familiar places as they once were. Overall, it is a startling commentary on the rapid development of 20th Century Florida and the radical changes that have been wrought. The exhibit will be on display until June 7.

**Quarter IV (June 19):** "Thomas Bird Mosher and the Mosher Press, 1891-1923." The Library is fortunate in having an extensive collection of books published by the Mosher Press, perhaps the paramount private press in the history of American printing. Established in Portland, Maine, in 1891, for thirty years the Mosher Press produced "choice and limited editions" of books notable for their typographic excellence. In addition to producing beautiful examples of the typographer's art, Mosher played a major role in introducing the works of important British writers to Americans. The display will be on view from June 19 to September 1.

**Quarter I, 1978:** "The Dime Novel in America, 1860-1925." The dime novel, though often lacking in literary quality, was perhaps the most totally American fiction ever produced. The dime novel chronicled and celebrated the great westward movement and the rise of an urbanized, industrial America. To a great degree, dime novels created and popularized the romantic image of the American west. This exhibit will trace the development of the dime novel from its first appearance in 1860 to its demise in the 1920's, using original specimens drawn from USF's large dime novel collection. Beginning in September, this exhibit will provide an interesting view of a colorful, almost forgotten segment of America's literary heritage.
Major Acquisitions

A TRULY MAJOR contribution to our growing research collections was the designation of our Library by Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Kimmel as the depository for Mr. Kimmel's personal papers and collections. The collection reflects the talents and interests of this versatile American writer, who is perhaps best known for his famous poem "The Other Unknown Soldier." During his long and distinguished career, Mr. Kimmel has created major works in such diverse fields as drama, fiction and history. Original manuscripts of Mr. Kimmel's publications, including numerous unpublished works, form an important segment of the collection.

In addition to material relating to his own literary career, Mr. Kimmel's files contain voluminous manuscript correspondence with a large number of notable Americans, including such diverse figures as Ezra Pound and Nelson Rockefeller. Mr. Kimmel's circle of acquaintance and correspondence held such famous American literati as John Dos Passos and Robert Frost. Particularly notable is Mr. Kimmel's file of Carl Sandburg material. A close personal friend of Sandburg, who often visited the Kimmel home in Georgetown, Mr. Kimmel has extensive files of Sandburg letters, as well as much fascinating "Sandburgiana." Other highpoints of the collection are a page of original Walt Whitman manuscript and some interesting Joseph Conrad material.

The Kimmel Collection also includes numerous rare and unusual printed works. As well as published versions of Mr. Kimmel's own works, the collection contains a fascinating array of signed, presentation copies of modern American literary works. The Kimmel Collection is a mine of literary and scholarly research materials, as well as a treasure house of priceless manuscript items. We hope in future issues to provide more information about this fascinating addition to our collections.

Also during the past quarter a very significant addition was made to our already extensive collection of the works of British boys' book writer George Alfred Henty. The acquisition of the personal library of noted Henty collector William B. Poage completes our collection of the works of this voluminous and highly influential 19th Century British writer. With the addition of this material, which includes Henty's extremely rare adult novels and virtually everything written to date about Henty, our Henty collection is now one of the finest and most complete in the world. G. A. Henty and the USF Henty Collection will be discussed in detail in a forthcoming Ex Libris article by Mrs. Arline King, a long-time student of Henty and Hentyana.

IN ANOTHER important development this quarter, the Library completed acquisition of the Harry K. Hudson Collection of American Boys' Series Books. The collection consists of approximately 4,000 American boys' series books, with primary coverage in the period 1900 to 1950. Many of the volumes retain their rare original dust-jackets. A complementary collection of American girls' series books is under development, with some 1,000 volumes acquired to date. The collection is arranged by series, in accordance with the revised edition of Mr. Hudson's definitive A Bibliography of Hard-Cover, Series-Type Boys' Books, (Tampa, Data Print, 1977), which was largely based on the items comprising the collection. Mr. Hudson's bibliography thus serves as a book catalog to the collection, providing entries by author, title, series, and publisher. Though all items listed in the bibliography are not represented in the Hudson Collection, holdings for most
series are complete. Works of authors whose primary period of activity was before 1900 are not housed with the Hudson Collection, being placed rather in the University's 19th Century American Literature Collection.

Again this year the University's English department has made available resources from its library fund allocation for the purchase of material for our 19th Century American Literature Collection. This generous support has enabled us to acquire scores of important American literary items from the period 1800-1900, with emphasis on fiction works. Supplemented by continued gifts from private sources, progress towards our goal of a comprehensive collection of American fiction of the 19th Century continues to be most encouraging.
5. Provenance

The discussion of signed copies brings us to the question of provenance-. Provenance is, basically, the pedigree of a specific copy of a book. That is, who its previous owners were. Usually, marks of previous ownership (signatures, inscriptions, library markings, etc.) detract from a book's value. Books once owned by famous persons, however, may be of considerable value, even though the book itself is nothing special. For example, a 19th century Bible may be of minimal value of itself; however, if it were extensively annotated by Charles Darwin it would be a treasure indeed. We will discuss the effect of provenance on book values further in the section dealing with factors influencing prices.

To Summarize:

Where does all this lead us? Hopefully, to an understanding that it is easier to tell what is not valuable than what is. There are no easily spotted, foolproof marks for identifying valuable books. Age, edition, scarcity, associations, and so forth are all factors that may, either alone or in combination, make a book valuable. Having established this, we can proceed to more interesting matters; namely how to estimate book prices, which is our next chapter.

II

Value and Identification

NINETY PERCENT of the old books you are likely to encounter may be eliminated as possible rarities by consulting a few standard bibliographic works. It is the purpose of the following sections to tell you about a few bibliographic aids, what they do and how to make use of them.

Pricing Guides

It is impossible for any one source to list every book title, much less give current prices for each one. There are just too many books, and prices fluctuate too rapidly. However, there are a number of works that provide relatively recent prices for selected books.

There are two main types of price guides helpful in determining the possible value of books (notice that "possible”; it's important). The first lists prices paid at book auctions. Two examples are American Book Prices Current and its British counterpart, Book Auction Records. Both of these report sales at the important auction galleries in Britain and the United States, and their coverage overlaps. You are more likely to be able to locate a set of American Book Prices Current (known to librarians as "ABPC"), so we will discuss it rather than its British counterpart. Substantially, everything said about one is equally true of the other.

American Book Prices Current, like most tools of the book trade, is set up alphabetically by author. There are annual volumes issued, plus five-year cumulative index volumes. There is, however, time lag in getting the volumes out. Since the prices listed are those that were actually paid, ABPC is a good indicator of the market value of a given book provided the book being checked is identical to and in the same condition as the one sold. Before jumping to conclusions about your book, be sure to read the section below on "Condition." Another thing you must keep in mind when thinking about prices
listed in ABPC and others of its class is that they are *auction* prices. They may be higher or lower than the actual going rate, depending on how the bidding went at the particular auction. Basically, ABPC tells you that at a certain time someone wanted a given book badly enough to pay "x" dollars (or pounds) for it. This provides you with a pretty good idea as to what price range a given book falls in.

A second category of pricing aids are those compiled from the catalogs of antiquarian book dealers. One of the best known of this class is an annual listing called *Bookman's Price Index* (BPI). It is also set up by author and, as in the case of ABPC, there is an unavoidable lag in the appearance of its annual updates. The primary thing to keep in mind about prices obtained from BPI and similar tools is that the figures represent what specific dealers were *asking*, not what they got. Book dealers, like any other type of dealer, quite often suffer from delusions of grandeur when pricing their merchandise. When you find a price in BPI or its cousins, however, you know that a specific professional book dealer thought that a book like yours was worth "x." And, though not an absolute value, this figure will give you an idea as to price range.

A close relative of our friend BPI is a very helpful work known as *Used Book Price Guide*. This is really not a rare book pricing guide at all, but rather a *used* book guide, which is not quite the same thing. Most pricing guides do not take notice of books priced below 10 or 15 dollars; *Used Book Price Guide* does. In fact, most of the books listed are priced below $50. So if your book doesn't show up in the more aristocratic guides, you might find it comfortably ensconced in the pages of this work instead. You won't get rich on most of the items found in *Used Book Price Guide*, but you may be able to figuratively nickel-and-dime 'em to death. However, here, too, you must remember that you are not dealing with absolute values.

(To be continued)
Any person who wishes to help in furthering the goals of the USF Library Associates is eligible to become a member. Regular, sustaining, patron, corporate, and student memberships are available on an annual basis (September 1 to August 31). Student memberships are open only to regularly enrolled students of the University of South Florida, and are valid only so long as the member remains a regular USF student. Life memberships are also available to interested persons.

Membership in the Associates includes a subscription to Ex Libris, a journal of articles and news about Associates activities, library developments, and other topics likely to be of interest to Bay area bibliophiles. The member is also entitled to attend all Associates functions and, in addition, is eligible for book loan privileges at the University Library, subject to prevailing library regulations.

So, if you are interested in helping us to obtain a better library for the University and its community, and want to participate in the many services and activities offered to members by the Library Associates, please use the membership blank below and become one of us today.