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New Historical Museum Looms for Tampa as Society Enters Exciting Decade of the 90s

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As the milestone of a new decade approaches, we are obliged to look back as well as to look ahead. The Tampa Historical Society has certainly come a long way since its genesis almost 20 years ago. The path of progress has had many turns over the years, but through the ongoing vision and dedication of its members and directors, the organization thrives. It is an organization that in the past year has devoted much attention to planning and laying the foundation for the decade ahead. We now approach the 1990s with membership on the rise, a great new board of directors chaired by incoming president James Judy, and some truly exciting projects on the horizon.

Among those projects is a THS partnership role in the development of a long-awaited Tampa/Hillsborough historical museum. Several prominent THS members have organized and incorporated under the co-leadership of Tampans Tom and Lee Touchton to research potential sites, public interest, financing, and the project’s overall feasibility. The museum project’s board of trustees has a mutual vision of creating one of the finest historical museums in the country. I’m sure you would agree that Tampa is worthy ... and ready. It’s a project that is long overdue and with strong leadership, hard work, your continued support, and a little luck, will become a reality. You’ll be hearing more about this exciting project as it progresses.

While the museum project is very exciting and certainly plays an important role in the future of the Tampa Historical Society, we plan to continue to upgrade every aspect of the organization. Among the THS priorities for 1990 are the further restoration of our headquarters, the Peter O. Knight Cottage in Hyde Park and the addition of a much-needed professional executive director.

Thanks to generous contributions this past year by the James and Martha Ferman Family and the David and Ann Murphey Family, among others, we are able to
realistically plan for these projects in the year ahead. But like most nonprofit organizations, we are always in need of financial assistance.

The Tampa Historical Society has operated without an executive director for almost five years. Our progress is very dependent upon the addition of a professional director who will work closely with the organization’s board. We want to provide the membership with the best programs, activities, and publications possible. An experienced executive director is expected to play a critical role in next year’s agenda. Several key THS board members have begun the search for appropriate candidates with plans to have someone in place early next year.

The coming year also brings the Florida Historical Society’s annual convention to Tampa in May, hosted for the first time since 1970 by the Tampa Historical Society. Having the FHS convention in our historic city is especially timely since this publication’s editor, and past THS president, Hampton Dunn, enters his first full year as president of the state historical organization. We are very proud of Hampton and his ongoing efforts to promote history throughout the community and the state. We plan to show our FHS guests and colleagues the kind of hospitality that has made Tampa not only a great place to live but also to visit.

And, as always, we’re looking for creative, entertaining and educational programs that bring the excitement of the area’s history to life for our valued members. I encourage and even challenge each of you to get more involved in the Tampa Historical Society in the critical year ahead. The organization is always in need of program ideas, historic artifacts, volunteers, new members and, of course, professional and financial assistance. The Tampa Historical Society is on the verge of great things. It’s been an honor to serve as president this past year. I’m looking forward to supporting our incoming board and the exciting projects ahead. Together, we can MAKE HISTORY in 1990 and the years ahead.