Tampa Bay History 02/01

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CONTENTS

From the Editors 3
Communications 4

ARTICLES

The Great Freeze of 1894-95 in Pinellas County
By Michael L. Sander 5

Egmont Key: Sentinel of Tampa Bay
By John W. Stafford 15

When the Steamboats Left Tampa Bay
By E. A. "Frog" Smith 30

Down at the Court House: A Photographic Essay
By Mark Driscoll and Margaret Anne Lane 34

ORAL HISTORY

Tony Pizzo’s Ybor City 49

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

An Unconventional and Democratic Picnic
By Marian B. Godown 65

A Tribute to Gloria Jahoda
By Peter D. Klingman 76

GENEALOGY

Where to Find Your Roots in the Tampa Bay Area
By Phyllis Belnap and Marjorie Hazel 78

BOOK REVIEWS

Hartley, Sketches from a Younger Florida, By Josephine Dill 83

Smith, Angel City, By Becky Acuna 83

Eberson, Early Medical History of Pinellas Peninsula, By James M. Ingram 85

Shofner, Daniel Ladd: Merchant Prince of Frontier Florida, By Nancy L. Rachels 86

Announcements 87
FROM THE EDITORS

Think of central and southwest Florida and what comes to mind? Recreation, oranges, and inviting bodies of water are only several of the delights this area conjures up. In the pages that follow you will find features on these familiar trademarks of the Tampa Bay region. Readers will journey back to the time just before the turn of the century when a series of hard freezes stimulated the development of the citrus industry in Pinellas County. Turning from this exploration of economic change, you will discover the historical and geographical transformations that have shaped Egmont Key - the gateway to Tampa Bay. Also you will hop aboard one of the last steamships to navigate Tampa Bay; and join a rugged camping trip in remote Fort Ogden (DeSoto County). In addition, a photographic essay vividly carries you to fifteen county courthouses and recounts some of the nearly forgotten stories of yesteryear. To bring the past even closer, the genealogy section offers some helpful tips on how to find your family roots. And in an oral interview, Tony Pizzo recaptures his origins through colorful memories of Ybor City.

This wide assortment of fascinating articles helps explain why *Tampa Bay History* continues to enjoy critical success from residents of the communities it serves. Enthusiastic support for the journal was recently conveyed to us at a lively meeting of our Advisory Board. Together with the editorial staff and USF administrators, board members discussed ways to disseminate information about *TBH* to a wider audience than it presently enjoys. Unfortunately, due to a serious injury suffered in an accident, Robert Harris, Curator of the Pinellas County Historical Museum, could not attend the meeting. He is presently recuperating, and we send him best wishes during his recovery.

This issue marks the completion of our first year, and the staff of *Tampa Bay History* looks forward to bringing you as appealing a selection of articles in the future as in the present and past. In doing so, we hope to retain the loyal supporters who joined us in the beginning and attract new friends to share in our historical enterprise.
COMMUNICATIONS

Any correspondence pertaining to the articles, reviews and other material contained in the journal may be sent to the Managing Editor.

Editor:

I am interested in having some information published in your forthcoming journal *Tampa Bay History* on J. A. Wood, architect of the Tampa Bay Hotel and other buildings in your area.

J. A. Wood was a very important architect whose career began in 1863 in Poughkeepsie, New York, where he worked with Matthew Vassar on some of the buildings at Vassar College. His most noted surviving achievement is the Tampa Bay Hotel. His work in Tampa during the early 1890’s is the last that I and four other persons researching him can identify. That is why we feel that someone in the area might know something biographical or at least be genealogically inclined enough to tell me and the others whom we might contact for assistance. We have no biographical data on him and, thus, have no idea whether he suddenly left Tampa in the 1890’s and went to California or whether he just fell dead in a swamp.

Please send any information to:

Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr.
Historical Preservation Section
Dept. of Natural Resources
270 Washington St., S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
(404) 656-2754
Paradoxically, for a state that worships the sun and its warming rays, the history of Florida can be measured in freezes. In 1835 there was a severe freeze crippling the earliest citrus trade begun in Florida probably around 1800. At the time, some believed a preposterous notion that the freeze was caused by a large iceberg lying somewhere off St. Augustine. This event was thought of as a fluke that would certainly never duplicate itself again in Florida’s history. It was, in fact, years before a freeze of this magnitude happened again in the Sunshine State. However, the severe winters of 1876-77 and 1880-81 proved it was possible. Much of the fruit north of the “frost line” was lost during these seasons. But, unquestionably, the most prominent freeze in Florida’s history was the “Great Freeze of 1894-95.” It was to the South what the blizzard of 1888 and the winter of 1978-79 was to the North. A quote from Caroline Mays’ History of Florida gives an insight into the severity of this freeze:

The Freeze of 1894 and the storm of 1895 will be remembered as the coldest days ever known in Florida. The orange crop was destroyed and many groves were killed. Many fruit growers and gardeners lost their entire income.¹

This essay will examine the impact of this freeze on Florida in general and then, specifically, on Pinellas County, which, in 1895, was still a part of Hillsborough County.

The commercial origins of the Florida citrus industry can be traced to about 1800. During this time, the most prolific areas of cultivation were found around St. Augustine, Jacksonville, the upper St. John’s River and other major centers of population in north Florida. The freeze of 1835 dealt the citrus industry a mild setback, but after that little stood in the way of orange culture in Florida.

A few groves went a long way toward promoting Florida citrus during the early commercial period of the 1800’s. One grove belonged to a gentleman named Douglas Dummett. The Dummett grove achieved recognition when, after the freeze of 1835, buds were taken from its trees to rejuvenate other groves in north Florida. One of the oldest and largest groves in the state, the Dummett grove came to bring a dollar more a box than any other fruit in New York City in the late 1830’s. Another

(courtesy of USF Special Collections)
prominent grove belonged to Harriet Beecher Stowe. Mrs. Stowe, along with her husband, Professor Calvin Stowe, bought about thirty acres in the village of Mandarin in 1868. After several successful seasons of citrus culture a label marked “Oranges from Harriet Beecher Stowe—Mandarin, Florida” became a prestige symbol in the North. The name “Mandarin” is thought by many to be a synonym for “tangerine.” But tangerines are actually only a variety of mandarin that originated in Tangiers. All mandarins have the so-called zipper skin that grow around the fruit like a loose-fitting glove.²

After the Civil War, Florida citrus began to accelerate dramatically with the infusion of northern capital. By the late 1870’s and 1880’s railroads launched extensive programs of land development, no small part of which involved the shipment and marketing of citrus products. The financial panic of 1873 caused many northern businessmen to seek other opportunities for investment.³ A myriad of prospective grove owners moved to north and central Florida with grandiose ideas of exploiting this new industry. “Orange fever” was encouraged by rumors which suggested that a few planted trees would yield the grower a high profit, while the bulk of his time could be spent hunting and fishing. “There is nothing to prevent the establishment in Florida of a race of rich men who will rank with the plantation princes of the old South,” The Atlanta Constitution predicted.⁴

The following table compiled by the State Agricultural Department of Tallahassee demonstrates the phenomenal rise in orange production during the late 1880’s:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of BoxesProduced⁵</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>625,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>1,250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>1,450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>1,900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>2,664,791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>3,023,044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>3,585,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>3,657,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>4,163,849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Harriet Beecher Stowe’s winter residence in Mandarin, Fla. showing groves in background, circa 1900.

(courtesy of USF Special Collections)
By 1894, orange production had topped the 5 million box mark. The freeze of 1835 and severe winters of the 1880’s had done little to dampen the spirits or diminish the production of citrus in Florida. But just when production had reached the half-billion milestone, the Great Freeze of 1894-95 dealt a chilling blow to the entire citrus industry of Florida.

On December 27, 1894, the first blizzard passed through the state. With winds of twenty-five to thirty miles per hour, the killing frosts accounted for temperatures of eleven degrees in Tallahassee, fourteen degrees at Jacksonville, and nineteen degrees in Tampa. The fruit was frozen right on the tree in most groves in central and north Florida. The pulp, upon close scrutiny, resembled watery snow. However, more importantly, the sap in the trees was not frozen to the core.

Although understandably depressing to many growers, this first freeze still left some hope. The weather quickly improved and high temperatures followed the freeze. The sap, repressed by the freeze, began to flow and by late January sprouts could be seen emerging from the trees. A second harvest perhaps could be salvaged.

Then came another hard freeze on February 7, 8, and 9. It was said that the first freeze destroyed the wealth of a year and the second wiped out the accumulation of a lifetime. This February freeze finished what the December freeze had begun. Not only young seedlings but
older trees planted fifty years prior to that date were frozen to the core. Branches broke off like pretzels.

Panic swept the state as growers left plows in the middle of the fields, houses half-constructed, and affairs undone to return to the North. It is said that almost half the homes in North Florida were abandoned at this time. Louise McMullen, a Largo pioneer, remembered her relatives in North Florida after the freeze:

Old man Dent had a grove south of Jacksonville, around Ocala. It froze solid, so he locked the door of the house and never went back.7

Only the hardiest pioneers and those too poor to move remained on their groves. In the aftermath of the freeze, however, they were consoled by one thought. The freeze of 1835 was as cold or colder than the current freeze, and the old seedlings, thirty to thirty-five years ago, were also destroyed in that freeze. The citrus industry totally recovered from the 1835 freeze, so it was possible to also survive this one, especially since newer and more modern agricultural techniques were being employed every day in the industry.

Pinellas County prior to the “Great Freeze of 1894-95” was extolled as an ideal section for citrus culture. Moreover, it was described by northern physicians as an ideal place to live. Dr. W. C. Van Bibber of Baltimore gave this report to the American Medical Association after a search had begun to locate the perfect, healthful location to begin a city:

Where should Health City be built? Overlooking the deep Gulf of Mexico, with the broad waters of a beautiful bay surrounding it; with but little now upon its soil but the primal forests—there is a large sub-peninsula, Point Pinellas, waiting the hand of improvement.8

The 1874 Clearwater Times further described the advantages of the Gulf Coast:

The Gulf Coast, South of Withlacoochee River which is but little North of the altitude 28º North, possesses many advantages over any other locality. The healthfulness of its coast, quality of soil, its comparative freedom from the annoyance of insects, the quality, size and flavor of the fruit, the convenience to transportation and great outlet to the market, the excellent water and the absence of the orange insect are some of the advantages claimed for this coast.9

Perhaps a less biased perspective of the advantages of the Gulf Coast over other areas of Florida may be found in this quote from an 1874 East Florida Banner:

The Climate on the Gulf Coast is mild and equable, and the productions are rich and varied. The Gulf Coast seems to be the native home of the orange. They flourish in most any condition and are seldom touched by frost [sic].10

These accounts shed some light on why Pinellas County withstood the calamity which befell the State of Florida in the winter of 1894-95. The geographic advantage of being a peninsula
surrounded by water and the climatic advantage of being generally warmer than north Florida helped lessen the severity of the freeze which destroyed the entire industry in some other parts of Florida. Nevertheless, Pinellas County suffered considerable damage. There was disagreement on the part of local historians as to the degree of damage left by the freeze. W. L. Straub, a highly respected local historian, suggested that Pinellas County suffered almost no damage from the 1894-95 freeze. He wrote:

Pinellas County, protected by the waters of the Gulf of Mexico and the warm breezes from these great waters, and on the East by Tampa Bay, long ago proved that here the citrus grove is safer than in any other part of the state. In the Great Freeze of 1894-95 when the industry was about wiped out in Florida, it was the Pinellas groves that supplied the surviving stock to rebuild the industry in other counties. It is said that in Pinellas County trees showed practically no damage from the low temperatures and had these then been properly marked and buds taken from them to rebuild other groves, Florida might now have the citrus trees which would resist any normal freeze of this state.11

Straub's statement that Pinellas citrus suffered “practically no damage” appears too optimistic an assessment, as interviews demonstrated. When asked to comment on Straub's descriptions, Nancy McMullen Meador of Clearwater, responded:

Who said that? That’s nonsense. The young trees were killed to the ground; maybe some old seedlings twenty to thirty years old weren’t ruined.12

But later in the interview she conceded that her uncle suffered little real damage to his grove:

Uncle Birt McMullen had a grove at Badwater back then. This property was beautiful with huge oak trees and a creek running through it. During the freeze of 1894-95 much of the local citrus froze; his didn’t freeze at all. Ordinarily citrus brought one dollar or a dollar and a half a crate; after the freeze he got fifteen dollars a crate.13

It was evident from this interview that the actual damage on a county level would be difficult to ascertain. Some groves suffered partial damage, some total. Estimates of loss varied from grove to grove depending upon its location in the county. Because Pinellas County is a microcosm of the State of Florida and sometimes known as “Little Florida,” a geographic and climatic parallel may be drawn between the two. Florida is hillier and cooler around Tallahassee than Miami, which is flat and warm. North Pinellas below Tarpon Springs is hilly and a few degrees cooler than Point Pinellas which is located on the southernmost tip of the Peninsula. The damage following the freeze was most extensive in north Florida as it was in north Pinellas. The damage in south Florida was less as was the case in south Pinellas. This might also explain Straub’s judgement, his perspective coming from “down county” where the groves suffered the least damage.

One grove which emerged unscathed belonged to Philip J. Bayly. This grove, sitting high up on Bayly’s Bluff, where present day Belleair Bluffs is located, was the most prominent of its day in Pinellas County. Bayly pioneered mail order fruit packing and was one of the first to deal
exclusively in fancy gift-wrapped fruit. Thomas Edison visited his grove several times en route to Ft. Myers. “The Wizard of Menlo Park” was not alone in his interest in the grove. At the turn of the century, the *West Hillsboro Press* wrote effusively of Bayly’s grove:

> There is probably no grove in Florida so well and favorably known on the gilt edge of the market as the Sandsfoot Grove. The proprietor, Philip J. Bayly, has, by a careful, intelligent and businesslike course, demonstrated the possibilities of an orange grove in Florida. He gets the very highest price paid in the markets always, and chooses his own customers.\(^{14}\)

Any man this astute in business probably took precautions before a freeze. His son, Taver Bayly, recalled how his father survived the freeze:

> My father planted a grove in 1890 and had a special method of wrapping the young seedlings in Croaker (fertilizer) sacks. When the '95 freeze came, two things saved the grove. A Northwest wind off the Gulf held the temperatures up and the wrapped trees allowed them to thaw slowly when the sun rose the following day. A lot of trees on the other groves were ruined at sunrise because they thawed too quick and split immediately in two. I believe Crescent City on the East Coast and Clearwater on the West were the only two areas to survive the freeze.\(^{15}\)

Nevertheless reports of the effects of the freeze varied. A July 17, 1897 *Tampa Morning Tribune* article observed:

> The cold wave of 1895 did but little damage to the old seedling orange trees on the West Coast nor were the budded trees hurt as badly as those further inland.\(^{16}\)

In contrast to this account, Mrs. Dafny Anderson, whose relatives lived inland and suffered considerably more than Coastal growers, remembered years later:

> Cousin Rosa said when she was a young girl she lived in a home south of where Largo High School is now. After the freeze, she said snow was piled up against the chimney of her house and most of the nearby groves were destroyed.\(^{17}\)

Obviously the freeze affected not only the citrus growers but all other businesses with whom the growers had dealings. In this instance, merchants operating largely on credit felt the immediate impact of the calamity. The following man spoke of his uncle’s grocery store which operated mostly on credit during the 1880’s:

> My uncle had a grocery store in Clearwater at that time and he had to close up on account of that freeze. No one could pay [his] bill because payment was dependent upon the sale of citrus.\(^{18}\)

The freeze affected other inhabitants of Pinellas County. Some recognized the immediate hardships encountered by the freeze, but looked at it from a larger perspective. Nancy McMullen Meador reflected this positive note:
This was a turning point in Pinellas’ economic condition. In a way, the freeze was a Godsend because the people then had to find other ways of making a living, like truck farming.19

An item in an 1897 edition of the *Tampa Morning Tribune* supported Mrs. Meador’s view and offered proof that other cash crops took the place of citrus during this time:

Circumstances alter cases and in this instance, the orange business of the state was cut short, but it made business better in other channels. For instance it put the growers to thinking and speculating and other as remunerative crops were tried and successfully made, which readily brought in handsome prices. Take the tobacco crop as a single criterion. It has revolutionized the agricultural interests of the state and made people bright and prosperous and live towns out of dead ones.20

A series of interviews Mrs. Meador conducted in 1950 for the *Clearwater Sun* revealed how families pulled together in hard times and subsisted on whatever was available at the time. Mrs. Carrie Burton Dieffenwierth spoke of the devastating freeze but told how a family kept from starving when a crisis arose:

The freeze of ‘95 killed everything growing. We learned to make one can of beef last for two meals for a big family. As Miss Julia put it, we learned to put potatoes and everything else we could find in it and therefore was born corned beef hash.21

The Harville family of Clearwater fell back on a second vocation to pull them through the freeze:

Of course the Harvilles suffered along with everyone else from the ’94-’95 freeze. Everything was frozen to the ground; great big trees split in half. If my husband had not had a little income from being Deputy Sheriff I don't know what we would have done.22

Capricious, indeed, was the freeze of 1894-95. While the effects upon Florida were devastating, research indicated that Pinellas groves recovered with surprising rapidity. Local newspaper reporters on the scene shortly after the freeze agreed on the speedy recovery. In 1897, the *Tampa Morning Tribune* reported:

A representative of the *Tribune* made a tour of the West Coast last week for the purpose of confirming or refuting the many glowing reports that are daily coming to us from that favored section of Hillsborough County, and we are pleased to say that we found that nothing had been exaggerated. The orange trees all along the Coast look finer, the tobacco crops better and the truck farms more numerous than in any section of the state yet visited by him.23

A Tampa journalist provided this heartening report on the tiny community of Ozona:
Ozona, can with truth be designated as the “garden spot” of the West Coast. Last year there were over 2,000 boxes of oranges shipped from this section alone, and this year the fruit growers expect to double their figures. There are more large and bearing old seedling orange trees in and around Ozona than any other section of equal size on the West or East Coasts.24

Several years later, the *West Hillsboro Press* made no mention of the freeze and noted the high fields of groves like Sandsfoot (Bayly Grove). Recently Sarah Mann from Palm Harbor (near Ozona) indicated her father's groves bore fruit at the turn of the century:

> After the freeze, daddy budded the trees into lemon stock and replanted them. It takes about three to five years for them to bear. By 1902 we had fruit on our trees.25

Although total figures on Pinellas County citrus production are incomplete for the years of the freeze, research showed that three of sixteen settlements on Pinellas Peninsula, Ozona, Largo and Dunedin produced over 15,000 boxes of citrus in 1896.26 Much larger St. Petersburg to the south accounted for fruit shipments valued at $250,000 in 1901-02; thus, it is reasonable to assume that in 1896 several thousand boxes were shipped from “down County.”27 As the entire production for Florida was only 93,152 boxes for the same years, Pinellas accounted for a substantial part of
These figures suggest that Pinellas suffered less from the destructive freeze than many other parts of the state.

After the Great Freeze, the extensive damage to fruit in the north Florida counties caused the center of citrus culture to shift south a hundred miles or so. This relocation accounted for an influx of people into Pinellas County and increased citrus production during the years following the freeze. Karl Grismer has pointed out that “a number of growers in other parts of the state who had been frozen out came [to St. Petersburg] to make another start. They played an important part in developing the town.”

In 1897, the editors of the *Tampa Tribune* invited fellow journalists in Gainesville to “visit South Florida and see things the way they are, [they] will be one of the most ardent believers in better times in the country.”

Florida citrus production dropped from 5,000,000 boxes in 1894 to 46,580 in 1896. However, by 1901, the state had recovered once again reaching above the million box mark. The long-term effect on Pinellas County was positive. By 1912, the area was self-sufficient enough to split successfully from Hillsborough and form its own county. The road toward independence
was provided by those hardy citrus growers who brought Pinellas out of the Great Freeze of 1894-95.

4 McPhee, Oranges, p. 98.
7 Interview with Louise McMullen and Dafny Anderson of Largo on January 26, 1979.
9 Clearwater Times, June 27, 1874.
10 East Florida Banner, Jacksonville, June, 1874.
11 W. L. Straub, History of Pinellas County (St. Augustine: The Record Company Printers, 1929), p. 82.
12 Interview with Nancy McMullen Meador, Clearwater, Florida, February 1, 1979.
13 Ibid.
14 West Hillsboro Press, Clearwater, Florida, 1900-01.
16 Tampa Morning Tribune, July 17, 1897.
17 Interview with Louise McMullen and Dafny Anderson, Largo, January 26, 1979.
19 Interview with Nancy McMullen Meador, Clearwater, February 1, 1979.
20 Tampa Morning Tribune, August 17, 1897.
21 Interview with Carrie Burton Dieffenwierth of Largo by Nancy McMullen Meador for the Clearwater Sun, December 24, 1950.
22 Interview with Mrs. Carrie Harville of Clearwater by Nancy McMullen Meador for the Clearwater Sun, December 31, 1950.
23 Tampa Morning Tribune, July 13, 1897.
24 Ibid., July 16, 1897.
25 Interview with Sarah Mann, Palm Harbor, February 3, 1979.
26 *Tampa Morning Tribune*, July 17, 1897.


30 *Tampa Morning Tribune*, August 17, 1897.

EGMONT KEY: SENTINEL OF TAMPA BAY
By John W. Stafford

From time to time places and people gain or lose significance and fame. Such has been the case with Egmont Key. At one time it was one of the most important locations between Key West and Pensacola for ships sailing along the west coast of Florida. Egmont Key first gained significance when a lighthouse was erected there in 1848 to guide ships along the coast. Later the military significance of the island was recognized, and for nearly one hundred years it served as a sentinel guarding the approaches to Tampa Bay. Today, however, Egmont Key has lost its military significance, and has, ironically, resumed its earlier role serving once again primarily as a beacon to guide ships and planes to and from the Tampa Bay area.

Few dispute the close relationship between history and geography, for the two complement each other in many ways. Just as geographical inquiry must consider historical events, history is often enriched by geographical considerations. Although Egmont Key’s early importance rested primarily on its geographical location, its lingering significance rests to a greater degree on its history. Thus, to appreciate fully the role of Egmont Key in the development of the Tampa Bay area, one should consider both the history and the geography of the island.

I

Egmont Key is a small island on Florida's Gulf Coast at the mouth of Tampa Bay thirty miles southwest of Tampa. The island is approximately 1.6 miles long and has a uniform width of less than one-half mile. It is parallel to the Florida coastline far enough out in the Gulf of Mexico so that it probably is not part of the chain of offshore islands which dot the west coast of Florida.

Don Francisco Maria Celi, Pilot of the Royal Spanish Fleet, made the first known survey of Egmont Key in 1757.² His early survey by means of a sextant and a rope or chain provided an accurate measurement of the island, noting both its size and shape. Today it remains the best early map of the island.

Egmont Key has been altered in size from time to time by the endless action of wind and surf, periodically enlarged by deposits of sand and later reduced by erosion of the coastline. Most of the modification in size and shape of the island has occurred along the seaward coast, as might be expected. When surveyed by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Service in 1875, Egmont Key was fifteen to twenty per cent larger than shown by Celi, having grown significantly along the southwest Shore as a result of sand deposition. However, considerable erosion has occurred in the last 100 years, and the island today has been reduced to 398 acres, or approximately the same shape and size as measured by Celi over 200 years ago. The erosion power of continuous wave and wind action can be easily seen today after even a minor storm. However, the forces of erosion and deposition which cause periodic fluctuations in the beach area seem to balance each other out over a period of time, and the island has shown considerable resiliency in maintaining its approximate size and shape for over 200 years. This is especially true compared to other nearby islands, such as Mullett Key which has been severely modified in size and shape, and
Passage Key, 1.7 miles to the southeast, which has virtually disappeared beneath the sea and is today little more than a sand bar barely visible at low tide. Early eighteenth century charts show Passage Key as approximately the same size as Egmont.
The main surface of Egmont Key lies only three or four feet above sea level, but a row of sand dunes along the northwest shore gives an appearance of greater elevation. The highest natural point on the island is less than ten feet above sea level. The difference between the highest and lowest natural points, excluding beaches, is generally no greater than two or three feet in most places. The low elevation of the island and absence of significant high points, such as hills, hammocks, or ridges, subject the island to considerable erosion during severe weather. Although the shoreline appears to have stabilized somewhat in recent years, a hurricane or other severe storm could cause considerable damage and reduction in the size of the island because of the low-lying shores.

Water depths around the island vary considerably. Most noteworthy is an area within 100 yards of the northeast corner where a geologic anomaly—a depression in excess of ninety feet—is found. This is the deepest water in Tampa Bay and perhaps the entire nearshore of Florida’s Gulf Coast, and it may have influenced the geography and history of the island. Egmont Channel, the main shipping channel for Tampa Bay, passes through this depression just north of the island and averages forty to fifty feet in depth. A secondary channel, Southwest Channel, with depths to twenty-five feet, lies one-half mile south of the island. Water depths are generally deeper on the Bay side of the island compared to the Gulf side, and the bottom slopes more quickly to depths in excess of ten feet. To the east of the island water depths are generally less than fifteen feet for a distance of one-half mile or more, but shallow water of six feet or less is limited to the area within fifty yards of shore. The west side of the island is surrounded by extensive areas of shallow water with average depths of less than six to eight feet as far as two or three miles from shore. The shallower Gulf side is due to the buildup of bottom sand as a result of winds, currents, and waves.
The soil on Egmont Key is primarily sand mixed with numerous shells and is low in natural fertility. In the sandy soil rainwater percolates rapidly below the surface and the island is well-drained. There are no swamps, marshes, springs, or other forms of surface water anywhere on the island.

The climate of Egmont Key may be classified as sub-tropical. Data from the nearest official weather station at St. Petersburg, ten miles to the northeast, show an annual average temperature of 73.9°, with January the coldest month at 63.3°. The marine location of Egmont Key tends to moderate temperature extremes. Record low temperatures are in the mid to upper 20s, frost is extremely rare, and snow is unheard of. Annual rainfall at St. Petersburg is 55.4 inches with heaviest amounts occurring in the summer. Although winds in the Tampa Bay area are from the east most of the year, a high incidence of onshore breezes occur, especially during afternoon thunderstorms, an almost daily occurrence during summer months. The Tampa Bay area averages eighty-seven thunderstorms per year. Strong winds are also likely to occur in association with tornadoes and waterspouts that frequently accompany these thunderstorms.

During the period from 1885 to 1965 approximately fifty hurricanes have made landfall on the Gulf Coast of Florida, an average of one every eighteen months. Hurricanes can be expected to make landfall in the Tampa Bay area an average of once every twenty years. The 1848 hurricane covered Egmont Key with several feet of water and destroyed the newly erected lighthouse, but the 1921 hurricane did far more damage to nearby Mullet Key, partially destroying the island.

The vegetation on Egmont Key is substantial and nearly 100 different species of plants have been identified. Most of the island is covered with shrubs, palmetto, and small trees. The most common plants are the cabbage palm – *Sabal palmetto* – wax myrtle, and various lianas and vines. Less common but still widespread are sea grapes, strangler figs, buttonwood trees, and various shrubs. Poison ivy, sea oats, and greenbrier are found less frequently. Introduced plants such as Australian Pines have been planted on opposite ends of the island. Mangrove is conspicuously absent from the island, although it can be found in this part of Florida primarily along the inner shore of the barrier islands.

Wildlife on Egmont Key is quite sparse but includes a variety of birds, Florida “gophers” (land turtles), and rattlesnakes. The Florida “gopher” seems to be the most widespread of the fauna in evidence in every part of the island. Birds are limited in number, but rattlesnakes, although rarely seen, are probably everywhere. Crabs and other marine life exist in abundance on the beach, and the adjacent waters contain spotted and silver trout, redfish, snook, sharks, and nearly every other type of fish common to the Gulf Coast of Florida.

When Celi went ashore on Egmont Key in 1757 he found an abandoned canoe which was probably left by pre-historic Indians who utilized the island from time to time. The absence of a freshwater supply and adequate wood for fires suggests something other than permanent occupation by pre-historic Indians. Numerous archaeological sites in nearby southern Pinellas County and good fishing and hunting and the abundance of turtle eggs in the area of Egmont Key
lend credence to the possibility that pre-historic Indians had visited the island periodically. The distance from Mullet Key is only one and one-half miles, but it is across open water of Tampa Bay which is frequently rough and has a fairly swift tidal flow and dangerous current which might have discouraged frequent visits to Egmont Key. Any permanent settlements that may have existed on the island would have been located close to the shoreline. Thus they may have disappeared beneath the water of Tampa Bay or the Gulf of Mexico due to historic fluctuations in sea level and periodic alterations in the size and shape of Egmont Key from the actions of wind, currents, tides, and hurricanes. An archaeologic search of the island in 1977 found no evidence of pre-historic occupation.4

Spanish exploration of the Gulf Coast of Florida began in the late sixteenth century. The first white man to see Egmont Key and the Tampa Bay area was probably Ponce de Leon in 1513.5 Panfilo de Narvaez visited the southwest coast of Florida in 1528, and DeSoto came in 1539. However, no reliable evidence exists that either visited the Tampa Bay area, contrary to the reports of numerous historians and writers. Although seriously disputed, a good case can be made that both Narvaez and DeSoto probably sailed along much of Florida’s west coast and landed perhaps 75 to 100 miles south of Tampa Bay, near present-day Fort Myers.6 It is not likely that DeSoto went ashore on Egmont Key, as is claimed, to cut grass and find water for his
horses. DeSoto’s journal describes bottom conditions, water depths, and channel widths that have little or no similarity to present conditions around Egmont Key, and it is highly unlikely that significant natural alterations of the physical environment have occurred in the past 450 years.

It is highly likely that several other expeditions sailed past Egmont Key and Tampa Bay, including Miruelo’s in 1516 and Pineda’s in 1519. Captain Braddock of Virginia reportedly explored Tampa Bay in 1744-45, but here, too, the evidence is sketchy at best. Father de Barbastro tried to establish a settlement along Old Tampa Bay in 1549, and Pedro Menendez failed in an attempt to do the same in 1767.7

The first positive identification and useful description of Tampa Bay and Egmont Key was provided in 1757 by Don Francisco Maria Celi. Although the purpose of Celi’s voyage was not specifically described in his log, he provided the first map of Tampa Bay and reliable information concerning wind and weather conditions, water depths, and the size and shape of Egmont Key and other islands and keys at the mouth of Tampa Bay. He measured Egmont Key with great precision by repeated sightings along the shoreline, and he noted compass bearing and distance. Despite his remarkable and complete attention to detail on certain issues, he was guilty of sloppy practices in other ways. His failure on two separate attempts to survey and sound Egmont Channel along the north side of the island “because of adverse wind and current,” and his description of shoaling several miles west of the island detract somewhat from an otherwise complete and accurate early description of the geography of the area. It seems likely that he did not accurately survey the channel and resorted to careless speculation, for how could he have missed locating the ninety foot trench immediately north of the island. Furthermore, an English chart published in 1769, as well as modern charts, show the channel to have a minimum depth of twenty-one feet.8 Although Celi had no botanists, zoologists, trained geographers or cartographers with him, little fault can be found with his early contributions to our knowledge of the Egmont Key area.9

Two later voyages along the southwest coast of Florida by Joseph Antonio de Evia in 1783 and Vincente Folcy y Juan made little mention of Egmont Key or its surrounding waters except that Evia identified Castor (Egmont) Key and Pollux (Passage) Key as two sand bars on his chart.10 These two voyages ended the Spanish period in the Tampa Bay area after 250 years of exploration.

Bernard Romans, Deputy Surveyor of East Florida, was the second person to provide an accurate picture of Egmont Key and the Tampa Bay area. He reported a range of islands at the mouth of Tampa Bay including those he identified as Castor and Pollux Keys with shoals running westward from each island.11

A careful study of historical sources dealing with the first explorations of the Tampa Bay area will do little to inspire confidence in early cartographers or historians, for there is little consistency in naming the islands and keys in the area near the mouth of Tampa Bay. To make matters more difficult, many maps and charts reverse the names and improperly identify Mullett Key as Egmont or Passage Key as Egmont, and they often use different names for each of the islands.
Francisco Maria Celi not only provided the first useful description of the island we know as Egmont Key today, but he also was the first to give it a name. In 1757 he named the island Isla de San Blas y Barreda for the Rear Admiral of the Royal Fleet and Commander General in Havana. However, in 1759 it appeared on charts as Castor Key. When Joseph Antonio de Evia explored the area in 1783 his Spanish charts identified Egmont Key as Castor. Evia probably spotted the wooden cross erected on the south end of the island by Celi and renamed the island Cayo de Cruz, for that is the name which appears on an 1803 Spanish Admiralty chart of Tampa Bay (Bahia de Tampa). The island was finally given its present name by the British during their brief occupancy of Florida, 1763-1783, in honor of John Perceval, the Second Earl of Egmont, a member of the Irish House of Commons.

The late eighteenth century was a period of relative inactivity along Florida’s Gulf Coast, and Egmont Key was largely forgotten until the early nineteenth century. Two young men reportedly tried to homestead Egmont Key in 1821 but were unsuccessful. Captain Francis Dade from Fort Brooke (Tampa) hunted on Egmont in 1824, but he made no mention of seeing anyone living there. In July 1838 a party from Fort Brooke fished and hunted on Passage Key reported seeing three Spanish fishermen living there in a palmetto hut. They also saw abandoned houses, but they failed to mention anyone living on Egmont which was larger, safer, and probably better for

After the end of the Second Seminole War the Armed Occupation Act of 1842 opened up southern Florida for homesteading. In 1843 the land office at Newnansville (Alachua) reported that there were settlers on Egmont Key, but the Secretary of War informed the land office that Egmont and certain other keys in the area were reserved for military purposes and no permits were to be granted for settlement there.

Throughout the early 1830s residents of Key West and Sanibel had petitioned the federal government to build a lighthouse in Tampa Bay. In 1846 Congress finally authorized a lighthouse on Egmont, the only lighthouse between Key West and St. Marks. The lighthouse was completed in May 1848, but one of the worst hurricanes to hit the west coast of Florida destroyed it in September of the same year when the island was covered with six feet or more of water at the base of the lighthouse. Within three weeks a second hurricane, nearly as severe as the first one, hit Egmont Key. As a result of these storms, the badly damaged lighthouse was torn down, and a new one was built on the old foundation for $16,000 “to withstand any storm.” That the goal was met is attested by the fact that the lighthouse is still standing in excellent condition, despite several severe hurricanes, including one in 1921 that did extensive damage to the Tampa Bay area.

Egmont Key also served military purposes after the United States acquired Florida in 1821 from the Spanish. Little use was made of Egmont Key until 1837 when a depot and observation post were established on the island. The two hurricanes in 1848 did little to enhance its military value, but in 1849 Lt. Col. Robert E. Lee recognized the potential military significance of Egmont Key and recommended that defensive works be erected. Thus, 1849 marked the beginning of significant military activity which was to continue at various levels until World War II.
Throughout the 1850s Egmont served as a gathering place and temporary stockade for Indians awaiting shipment to Indian Territory west of the Mississippi River. Estimates of the number of Indians vary considerably, but it seems that as many as 200 to 300 were garrisoned on the island for shipment west. The last load of Indians left Egmont Key in 1858.

Federal ships blockaded Tampa Bay during the Civil War and Egmont served as a base for Confederate blockade runners until the island was captured by Union forces in July 1861. Several buildings were constructed near the lighthouse, and Union sympathizers and runaway slaves fled to Egmont for safety and eventual shipment to Key West and elsewhere for protection. Union forces operating from Egmont raided coastal installations and bombarded houses on Pinellas Peninsula as well as Fort Brooke and the City of Tampa, sinking two ships in the Hillsborough River near present-day Lowry Park. Confederate Navy prisoners were held on Egmont during the Civil War, and the cemetery started there in 1864 became the burial ground for both Union and Confederate veterans. When the cemetery closed in 1909 most of the bodies were disinterred and moved to national cemeteries in St. Augustine, Florida or Marietta, Georgia. Following the Civil War little was done to develop the military potential of Egmont Key until the 1890s. In 1882 both Egmont and Mullet Keys were permanently reserved for military purposes. From 1882 to 1900 Egmont Key was known as the United States Military Reservation at Egmont Key. At the turn of the century it was renamed Fort Dade in honor of Major Francis L. Dade,
who along with practically his entire command was massacred by Seminole Indians in 1835. Of the approximately 398 acres on the island, 378 acres constituted the former military reservation, fifteen acres were set aside for a lighthouse, and five acres were leased to the Tampa Bay Pilot’s Association.24

Enthusiasm for military development of the island mounted as the likelihood of war with Spain increased. Two years before construction of Fort Dade began, there were only 1,198 soldiers in all of Florida.25 Fear and near mass hysteria in the Tampa Bay area in anticipation of a Spanish invasion in 1898 led to construction of a fort in 1899 after several months of frantic lobbying. Both Egmont and nearby Mullet Key (Fort DeSoto) were fortified one month before the Spanish-American War started.26 Coastal artillery units were installed on both the north and south ends of Egmont and the southwest corner of Mullet Key to guard entry into Tampa Bay. Although the guns were psychologically comforting to citizens of the Tampa Bay area, they were probably of limited military value and were, in fact, never fired at an enemy.

The war with Spain did not last long, and Egmont’s participation was minor. However, all soldiers returning from Cuba had to spend ten days at a 1000-tent hospital and quarantine station set up on the island. Even though the war ended soon after construction of Fort Dade began, it was decided to carry on with plans to develop the military potential of Egmont Key. From 1899 to 1916 over seventy buildings were erected on the island at a total cost of $494,427.48.27 A smaller, auxiliary post, Fort DeSoto, was built on Mullet Key for somewhat less than half this amount.

Most of the Fort Dade buildings were built of wood on brick piers with roofs of slate or tin. The buildings were heated by oil stoves and/or fireplaces and lighted by mineral oil lamps. A sewer system installed in 1902 drained into Tampa Bay. Cypress cisterns stored water drained
from roofs of buildings for drinking purposes. In 1904 six shallow wells and a large storage tank were installed to provide water for bathing and flushing toilets. Work began in 1909 on brick streets and sidewalks. In 1911 an electric generating plant was installed, and by 1912 most buildings had electric lights. An underwater cable provided phone service to St. Petersburg. In 1911 the first school was started at Fort Dade and enrolled sixteen students. In addition to barracks, lavatories, a bakery, miscellaneous storehouses, mess halls, a guardhouse and other typical installations, Fort Dade also had a thirteen-bed hospital, a morgue, cemetery, movie theater, ice plant, fire station, tennis court, baseball diamond, gymnasium, bowling alley, corral, stable, post office, telegraph, a train, and daily steamer service to Tampa. A small garden near the lighthouse provided a few fresh vegetables. However, the overall poor quality of the soil limited its productiveness, and even hay had to be brought from elsewhere to feed the horses. Despite the paucity of grass and other forage on the island, in 1914 a request was sent to the quartermaster’s office in Washington for authority to establish a dairy at the fort because of the difficulty in obtaining milk from town.28

In its early days shortly after the turn of the century, Fort Dade was quite attractive in many ways. At least some of the main buildings were surrounded by lawns. Palm trees lined the main sidewalks, and a series of well-built red brick roads and sidewalks gave the fort a certain charm. Despite its relative nearness to the mainland it was somewhat isolated, and soldiers complained of the mosquitos, rattlesnakes, and tropical climate.
Like many other Army posts, Fort Dade was beleaguered from time to time with problems seemingly typical of military inefficiency. When the school opened in 1911, the new desks that were delivered were too large for the children to use. In 1913 a sergeant filed an official complaint and request for transfer to a different duty station so his fourteen-year-old son could get suitable schooling. A request for canned milk submitted in July 1912 for delivery in
September was not received until January 1913. In 1912 when painters in Tampa protested that soldiers at Fort Dade were painting their own buildings, the Army responded that Tampa painters were charging exorbitant prices. Other difficulties bordered on the macabre. The base cemetery had become dilapidated and run down. Since the first burial in 1864, few records had been kept, and the government was unsure how many bodies had been buried. When a decision was made to disinter the bodies and move them to other military cemeteries in Florida and Georgia, considerable confusion resulted. Some graves were unmarked; no records could be found for two bodies that were exhumed; at least two Negro soldiers had been buried outside the cemetery boundary line.

During 1900, the first full year of the existence of Fort Dade, the number of soldiers stationed at the fort varied from eighty to 102, including one or two officers. The fewest number of soldiers reported on the bi-annual reports issued in January and June for the period 1900-1916 was sixty-three in 1904, and the largest number reported was 254 in 1916. Throughout the 1900-1909 period the number of soldiers at the fort averaged approximately 100-115 and from 1909-1916 approximately 200-275. Since the total number of children enrolled in school in 1911 was reported to be sixteen, a reasonable estimate might be an additional dozen or so children under age five and perhaps a dozen wives. Thus, Fort Dade generally had fewer than 300 personnel, including wives and dependents.

During World War I Fort Dade became a training center for National Guard Coast Artillery units. Reportedly 600 men were stationed at the fort during the war, including anti-submarine mine crews whose duties included the protection of Tampa Bay against attack. Several new buildings were erected in addition to a mine-laying dock at the north end of the island. After the war the coastal defense installation was considered obsolete, and Fort Dade was deactivated and abandoned to a single caretaker in 1923. The Secretary of War was authorized to sell the fort in
1926. Hurricanes in 1921 and 1926 did considerable damage to the fort and hastened the decision to close the installation.

In the early 1930s many of the original buildings at Fort Dade were burned down or demolished.

Although Fort Dade was abandoned and most of the buildings had been destroyed, Egmont Key again became useful for military purposes during World War II. Several new buildings were erected in the early 1940s. The island again served as a harbor patrol station just as it had done during World War I, the Spanish-American War, and the Civil War. During World War II, vessels entering Tampa Bay had to unload and store their ammunition on the island. Egmont was also used for amphibious warfare training and for aerial gunnery exercises. Reports of upwards of 1800 servicemen on Egmont during the war were probably greatly exaggerated, for few buildings were still intact, and during its prime just prior to World War I fewer than 300 soldiers were stationed there. After World War II the island was again abandoned for military purposes, except for the U.S. Coast Guard which tends the lighthouse and a radio beacon which helps guide aircraft to Tampa and St. Petersburg airports.

Thirty years later efforts to have Egmont Key declared a national park met with failure, but it has been set aside as a National Wildlife Refuge since 1974 and is presently managed by the J. N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Service at Sanibel Island. The most outstanding historic features on the island are the lighthouse built in 1848 and the remains of Fort Dade, including the only road on the island. In 1978, Egmont Key was named to the National Register of Historic Places primarily because of the lighthouse.

The Coast Guard continues to maintain the fifteen-acre lighthouse reservation, and the Tampa Bay Harbor Pilot’s Association still utilizes a five-acre area of the island. Two or three coast guardsmen and a dozen or so Tampa Bay pilots are the only permanent inhabitants on the island. The remainder of the island is being attacked by the natural elements. Trees and underbrush partially obscure the paved walkways and brick streets as well as the foundations of fifty to sixty structures of Fort Dade. Only a handful of buildings built during the Spanish-American period or later have survived the ravages of time, the elements, and vandalism. Plotting towers for gunnery exercises and several underground ammunition bunkers remain relatively intact. The two major gun emplacements on opposite ends of the island are still highly visible, but the one at the south end of the island is badly disintegrated, broken by wave action, and is falling into the Gulf of Mexico. The guard house erected near the lighthouse in 1910 is the only pre-World War I building still standing, but nature and vandals have taken their toll of this once noteworthy structure. An unidentified concrete structure resembling a garage or workshop still stands near the center of the island, but is missing its roof and doors. The only other remaining structure is a post-World War I concrete building near the west-central shore of the island which apparently served as a pumphouse, cold storage locker, and mess hall. It too has been victimized by vandals and natural elements. Several quonset huts erected during the World War II period are still in relatively good shape near the center of the island, but similar structures have rusted away and fallen into the Gulf of Mexico. In addition to these few surviving structures, the only other parts of Fort Dade which remain are several sections of the red brick streets and walkways which are in nearly as good condition today as when first installed in 1909.
Egmont Key remains a government reserve and is thus unavailable for additional settlement. The island rests demurely like a sentinel at the mouth of Tampa Bay, its history all but ignored. Nevertheless, with its excellent beaches, historic remnants of Fort Dade, and lighthouse, it remains an outstanding reminder of the Tampa Bay area’s history and deserves more attention than it now receives. Its geographic significance for military purposes has changed with the times, but not its geography.

Someday Egmont Key could be turned into an excellent park or recreation area where history buff, family picnicker, and tourist may spend pleasurable hours relaxing on the beaches, walking the red brick streets of historic Fort Dade, and in general, reliving part of the history of the Tampa Bay area.


8 Ware, “A View of Celi’s Journal;”: 11, 17, 20.


13 The original is in the Special Collections of the Tampa Public Library.


22 Covington, *The Story of Southwest Florida*, pp. 142-44.


25 U.S. Series Set 3524, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
Fort Dade located at Egmont Key was the third military installation of that name in Florida. See Frank Laumer, “This was Fort Dade,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 45 (July 1966): 11. Charles Arnade, “Cycles of Conquest in Florida,” *Tequesta* 22 (1963): 22-23


Record Group 92, Office of Quartermaster General, Document File, 1890-1914, Fort Dade, Box 199, National Archives, Washington, D.C.


*Return from Military Posts*, 1800-1916, Microcopy 617, Roll 278, Fort Dade, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

WHEN STEAMBOATS LEFT TAMPA BAY
By E. A. “Frog” Smith

No other town in the Sunshine State can boast of as great a graveyard of ships as Tampa, and its history is more colorful than most. In Tampa’s last resting place for all kinds and sizes of ships that sailed the seven seas, there is also a respectable number of smaller boats that knew no other home than Tampa Bay. Only one of the many vessels whose bones have bleached on Seddon Island or soaked in the brine at the mouth of the Hillsborough River carried a “ghost” that is still with us today. That is the ghost of the pirate Jose Gaspar whose spirit is the patron saint of Gasparilla Festival in Tampa today.

Not too many people today know the difference between a steamboat and steamship, except that the steamboat is smaller. Most steamboats of long ago were built for service on rivers and coastal waters while the larger steamships had to keep sail in deeper waters. Big steamships may be more impressive, but the smaller craft are best remembered because they were closer to nature and run by people familiar to all. That is why it was such a sad day when the two finest and best known little steamers left Tampa Bay, never to return.

At the beginning of the year 1925, there were several small packets sailing or steaming in Tampa Bay. Queen of the fleet was the giant sidewheel steamer Mandeville, a beautiful vessel from Lake Ponchartrain, Louisiana. An oil-burning ship, she was unsullied by coal dust, and her bright brass trimming shone like gold. The next finest and more sleek was the Favorite, which was known to all the old-timers of three score years ago. Both steamers were in service between St. Petersburg and Tampa. Two other smaller steamers, the Pokanoket and Manatee, ran between Tampa, St. Petersburg and the Bradenton-Palmetto area.
The Pokanoket in 1925

(photo from Yesterday’s Tampa, courtesy of Hampton Dunn)

The Steamer Manatee in 1909.

(photo from Yesterday’s Tampa, courtesy of Hampton Dunn)
Except that the *Manatee* and the *Pokanoket* spent their final days tied up in Tampa, finally sinking at their moorings, there is little to recall of their last days. Then came the sad news that the *Favorite* and the *Mandeville* had been sold and would soon leave Florida. The morning papers carried the story, but the news bit harder when the steamers’ big deep-toned whistles blew longer and more mournfully on the day they steamed up the bay for the last time. They were both bound for Wilmington, Delaware, and St. Petersburg people who had known and loved both would never see either again.

As the two steamboats slowly backed away from the pier in Bayboro Harbor, plumes of black smoke rose above the funnels and the melodic whistles blew a sad farewell. Hardened workmen from three big shops left their work to mingle with scores of people lining the shores of the harbor, all taking a last long look before turning away with lowered eyes. The St. Petersburg waterfront would never be the same after the two beautiful boats were gone.

Although motor-driven boats took the place of the larger *Favorite* and *Mandeville*, they were never so colorful and well-loved as were the steamboats with their tall funnels and musical whistles. The *Narwahl* carried freight and the motorship *Jeanette* carried passengers, but there was no halo above them. Smaller diesel-powered boats such as the *I. W. Riggs* and the *Genevieve*...
also plied the waters of Tampa Bay, but it was the *Genevieve* that left the most gruesome legend of the bay.

For many years there was a legend of the infamous pirate Jose Gaspar, who is still celebrated as ruler of Gasparilla Festival in Tampa, and how he wrapped an anchor chain about his body and jumped overboard when his pirate ship was sunk by an American gunboat. More than fifty years ago, the legend came alive with startling suddenness.

As the legend goes, the ghost of the pirate still lives beneath the waters of Tampa Bay. When he becomes lonely, he rises to the surface and pokes his grisly head above the side of some passing boat. Then with a wicked smile he would crook his bony finger at one of the crew, and the luckless fellow would follow the pirate down to Davey Jones’ locker at the bottom. The lonely ghost of the old pirate acted somewhat in the same manner as did “Grog Barrell Joe” of the British Navy during the eighteenth century. When the ghost of Grog Barrel Joe appeared aboard a British warship and served rum to his equally ghostly shipmates, someone died that night. Like the ghost of Jose Gaspar of Tampa Bay, Grog Barrell’s victims were never seen again. Nor was Captain Borden of the *Genevieve* ever seen again.

Late one moonless night in 1925, the *Genevieve* was churning her way between Tampa and St. Petersburg when the engineer on duty below the deck felt that the ship was going in circles. He called the pilot house, but nobody answered. To satisfy his mind he went up on deck to find the crew asleep, but Captain Borden was gone. Only one of the captain’s shoes was ever found. It was a saddened and frightened crew that told the story when the *Genevieve* landed. No one knew anything for sure. There had been no outcry or other sound of foul play. But one thing was sure, Captain Borden was gone. Could it have been the wickedly grinning spirit of Jose Gaspar, the bloodthirsty pirate of more than a century ago, who crooked his bony finger at Captain Borden and led him to his death? Who knows, it was and still is, one of the mysteries of the sea.
Florida’s court houses are much like those found elsewhere throughout the United States. They are halls of justice, meeting and bargaining places, political headquarters, centers where human events take place officially.

This photographic essay is adapted from Down At The Court House: Photographs and Stories of Florida’s County Court Houses, a traveling exhibit sponsored by the Florida Department of State. It was produced by the Museum of Florida History (Division of Archives, History and Records Management, Department of State), in cooperation with the Florida Photographic Archives, and with the help of the Bureau of Historic Sites and Properties, the Bureau of Publications, the Florida State Archives, the State Library of Florida, and the many Florida citizens who responded with photographs and stories about court houses in their individual counties.

The photographs in the exhibit constitute a family album of Florida court house pictures. The stories are like entries in the state’s diary – some significant, some quite ordinary – full of things that happened, people encountered, decisions made. They reflect the community's view of the past, its local pride, its ability to laugh at itself, and its collective hopes for the future.

The Museum of Florida History developed the exhibit from the photographs and stories received in response to a state-wide request for material about Florida’s court houses. Just as a court house takes on the character of its community, this exhibit reflects the state’s citizens. It is not a scientific survey of court houses, but rather a selection – from the material received – of those stories and photographs that show the court house on a human scale.

The exhibit evokes some of the flavor of local politics and law. It also provides insights into social and architectural changes through the years. The first organizers of Florida’s counties were citizens of vision but little wealth. They built simply, caring more for what was to happen inside than for external appearances. More recently, many of the early structures have been replaced by new buildings that meet current needs and reflect contemporary styles.

Through the years, court house structures have been built and razed, fought-over, altered – electrified, air-conditioned, enlarged – and replaced. The idea of the court house, however, has remained constant. Court houses have never been simply symbols of law and order – they are expressions of public faith. Centers of ordinary business and infrequent drama, they are sites of acute pain, accidental humor, numbing boredom, nasty fights, and occasional justice. Since the court house plays a vital role in local society, this exhibit is a visual record of buildings that are reflections of Florida life, substantiating Faulkner’s observation that “. . . there was no town until there was a court house.”
HILLSBOROUGH (Tampa)

Hillsborough County Court House, circa 1885

(courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough Public Library System)

Judge White’s Court House in the Hillsborough County Court House, 1920.

(courtesy of Florida Photographic Archives)
HERNANDO (Brooksville)

It was a Halloween tradition in Brookville during the 1930s that someone’s Model T Ford ended up sandwiched at the intersection of the halls inside the court house. (Story source: Neil Kinnear)

MANATEE (Bradenton)

Palmetto, Manatee and Sarasota were all struggling to become the county seat. Just before the election, a new tactic was tried. In an effort to offset Sarasota’s bid – insuring a victory for either Palmetto or Manatee – the unincorporated community of “Braidentont” was placed on the ballot to siphon off votes. The plan boomeranged. “Braidentont” was the surprise winner by a 39-vote plurality. (Story source: The Islander and The Banner, November 23, 1978)
Like several others in Florida, the cupola of Polk County’s Court House was used as a civil defense aircraft spotter station after Pearl Harbor. At 9:00 p.m. one evening, among the occupants of the building were the spotters in the cupola and a couple of people working late in
the tax assessor’s office. About a mile away, people heard the clock chime three, not nine, times. In the court house they heard the comforting bong, bong, bong . . . then crash! They thought a plane had come in low and bombed the court house. Actually, the counterweight from the court house clock had fallen from its hook, plunged through the glass ceiling of the dome, and smashed the railing of the rotunda magazine. The clock was replaced by an electric model after the war. (Story source: Loyal Frisbee)
When W. H. “Wild Bill” Towles was chairman of the Lee County Commission, he dreamed of replacing the old wooden court house with a more modern structure. Towles, a southwestern Florida cattle baron, had a lot of political clout, but conservatives in the area had power, too. They had consistently blocked any move that would tear down the existing building. When the construction contract for a new court house was awarded in 1915, Towles acted fast. Sensing an impending injunction against demolition of the old structure, he and the commission pushed through a resolution to have the building razed during the night. By next morning only memories were left of the old court house . . . although its wood was later used to build the Fort Myers Hospital. (Story source: Marian B. Godown)
DESOOTO (Arcadia)

Postcard, 1909. Desoto County Court House.
(courtesy of Vernon Peeples)

HARDEE (Wauchula)

Office of the Hardee County Commission, 1927.
(courtesy of Hardee County Commissioners)
It is customary for a session of a Court of Record to be preceded by a formal announcement by the judge’s bailiff that the court is in session. In Pasco County in the early part of the century, the sheriff or one of his deputies customarily acted as bailiff and made the announcement in the
traditional language of the English courts, not merely to those present in the court room but to the public at large. The sheriff would stick his head out of the second floor window, calling to whomever was within hearing distance, “Oyez, oyez, the Circuit Court of the Sixth Judicial Circuit is now in session. All persons having business before this honorable court draw nigh and ye shall be heard.” (Story source: William G. Dayton)

PINELLAS (Clearwater)

Officials on the steps of the Pinellas County Court House, 1910.

(courtesy of Kendrick T. Ford, Heritage Park)
Judge John V. Bird enjoyed the view from his offices in the court house overlooking the oak tree that graces the building’s entrance. One day in the 1960s the judge arrived for work only to find a crew starting to trim and cut back the oak. With booming authority he pronounced to the crew, “Anybody touching that tree will be going to Raiford.” The oak still stands. (Story source: Judge Harry W. Fogle)

HIGHLANDS (Sebring)

Before the Highlands County Court House was built in 1925, judges conducted business not in a court but on a court – a basketball court. Since there was no room in town large enough to hold the sessions when judge, jury, prosecution, defense, and witnesses all had to be on hand, legal proceedings were carried on in a large, open basketball court in Sebring. (Story source: Allen C. Altvater, Sr.)
Some good wines get better with age. What about moonshine? Officials in Punta Gorda might have the answer. Recently, when the Elections Supervisor cleaned out the records vault, he found not only some old checks dating back to the 1920s, but also a forgotten cache of confiscated moonshine. (Story source: Supervisor of Elections’ Office, Punta Gorda)
GLADES (Moore Haven)

In these days of snail’s-pace justice, it’s refreshing to recall a news article in the 1927 Glades County Democrat that chronicled a whirlwind cycle of crime and punishment. A service station at Ortona was broken into and robbed about 2:00 in the morning. At 10:00 the same morning two men were arrested and charged with the robbery. Before noon the Grand Jury had been presented the evidence and had returned an indictment. The suspects were arraigned almost immediately. They pleaded guilty, and by 3:00 were on their way toward serving two-year prison terms handed out by the Circuit Court Judge. (Story source: Mrs. Beryl Bowden)
Rented space in the Arcade Building was used as the Sarasota County Court House until 1927 when the permanent Court House was occupied.

(courtesy of Sarasota County Archives and Research Center)

Sarasota County Court House, built in 1926-27.

(courtesy of Sarasota County Archives and Research Center)
COLLIER (East Naples)

Former Collier County Court House in Everglades City, 1928.

(Bureau of Historic Sites and Properties)

Seminole Indians at the Collier County Court House in Everglades City

(courtesy of William J. Reagan)
In Collier County they tell of Judge Harrison and his dedication to his work. In the early 1950s, when Everglades City housed the court house, the streets were awash in ankle-deep water. While others wondered what to do about the water in the one-foot-above-sea-level town, Judge Harrison arrived for the day’s proceedings . . . barefoot and with his pants rolled up. (Story source: M. Scott)

HENDRY (LaBelle)

Clock tower of the Hendry County Court House

(courtesy of Florida Photographic Archives)
For years, the 70-foot clock tower at the Hendry County Court House housed no clock at all, just four 6-foot clock faces without hands. A lightning storm in 1929 – just a year after the clock had been installed – caused severe damage. Repaired four years later, it soon went out of commission again. Finally, in 1949, the cost of the needed repairs exceeded the value of the clock and it was sold for $10.00, leaving only the half-ton bell hanging in its place. Even that remnant of times past was eventually donated to a local church. As their Bicentennial Project, however, the LaBelle Jaycees – taking pity on the clockless tower – installed a replacement clock system and dedicated it during the 1976 Swamp Cabbage Festival. (Story source: Mrs. Beryl Bowden)
The name Tony Pizzo is so synonymous with the history of Tampa that when producers at WUSF searched for a title of their ten-part documentary of the city, they eventually arrived at the obvious: Tony Pizzo’s Tampa. The author of Tampa Town: Cracker Village with a Latin Accent (1968), Pizzo was recently presented with an Award of Merit by the American Association of State and Local History for his yeoman efforts to preserve the heritage of the Tampa Bay area.

The son of Sicilian immigrants, Tony was born Sept. 22, 1912, on the corner of 8th Avenue and 18th Street in Ybor City. His parents, Paul Pizzo and Rosalia Pizzolato ran a thriving grocery store, an institution which has managed to endure the urban “renewal” of Ybor City. That Ybor City still boasts a bodega is a credit to the indefatigable Pizzo, who at times worked single-handedly to preserve the embattled enclave, which was once the greatest Latin colony in the South.

In his efforts to revitalize Ybor City, Pizzo became increasingly fascinated with the rich heritage of the Tampa Bay area. To promote and popularize the past, he became founder and first president of the Tampa Historical Society, the Ybor City Rotary Club, and the Pan American Commission. A grateful city named him Outstanding Citizen in 1956; he has also been decorated by both the Italian and Cuban governments.

Today, Tony maintains a furious pace of research and writing, despite holding down an executive position with Tampa Wholesale Liquor, the House of Midulla. Tony and his gracious wife, the former Josephine Acosta, reside on Davis Island where they track the fortunes of their two sons: Tony, a physician, and Paul, an attorney.

Interview with Tony Pizzo

Q. Tony, why don’t you tell our readers the moment, or period, that you first acquired an historical interest in Tampa.

Pizzo: It happened around 1949. We had organized the Ybor City Rotary Club, and we became very closely affiliated with the Havana Rotary Club – we made trips back and forth – and finally some of the Cubans were wondering why so many Cubans were going to Miami for their vacations instead of Tampa as they did for years. After World War II the S.S. Cuba that plied between Tampa and Havana twice a week was taken off the run. We had real close ties with Cuba. After World War II the airlines began promoting Miami as a summer vacation paradise, and the Cubans began to discover the glitter of Miami Beach. A Time magazine story reported at that time that Cuban tourism was worth $34 million to the Miami area, and we became very aware and disappointed in the shift of Cuban visitors from Tampa to Miami. On one of our trips we met a newspaper man who said to me, “You know, Tampa really means a lot to us because it’s the cradle of Cuban Liberty.” And, of course, we were amazed. Here we were born and raised in Tampa, and how little we knew about our history. He started telling us about José Marti organizing the revolutionary party here, that the message to start the revolution went out concealed in a Tampa cigar, and how the cigarmakers gave a day’s pay each week to
help the cause. And we thought, boy, if Tampa and Ybor City are that important, maybe we could put up historical markers as an attraction for Cuban tourism. I broached the subject with a Rotarian of Havana whose name is “Fifi” Bock – he’s still living; he’s in Miami now. His father was one of the big Cuban cigar tycoons of the 1890s; they were well-to-do and an outstanding family. Mr. Bock at the time was the director of the Military Institutes of Cuba. He volunteered to make the historical markers at the military foundry and put them all over Ybor City. He said, “All you need to do is the research and write them up.” We were beside ourselves – what a fantastic deal! So I took it upon myself to find out as much as I could, and I started to interview oldtimers, Cubans who were in their 80’s and 90’s. What I learned from them was unbelievable – that we had such a rich history. Then I started meeting historians in Havana, and one of the friends whom I really admired very much was Jose Rivero Muniz. He had written many books – he wrote Los Conquistadors En La Florida, and Los Cubanos En Tampa, which I cherish!

Q. **What was Ybor City like in 1948 when you set out on your projects?**

Pizzo: Well, let’s say it was still intact. The people had not moved out of Ybor City. The people were still there . . . but things were beginning to change. After the war the economy began to prosper, and the younger Latins, better educated and prepared for life, began to look towards new horizons. Then something happened in the early 1950s
that started the downfall of Ybor City as we knew it, the colorful colony of Spaniards, Cubans, and Italians. Near the downtown area there existed a small area known as “the Scrub.” That area is the site of today’s Central Park Village, a housing project occupied by blacks.

“The Scrub” was a world of its own. No one ventured into that quarter. Only those who lived there frequented the place. There were no paved streets. The houses were placed at random – thrown together in an incomprehensible maze. The frame houses dated to the 1880s; they were weather beaten, shabby, and literally uninhabitable. It was probably the worst slum area in the state. I remember a news story referring to “the Scrub” as a cesspool in the heart of town. It was a frightful place forgotten by time.

“The Scrub” started as a small Negro settlement which surrounded a lumber mill near Oaklawn Cemetery. Tampa was a village then, its northern fringe extended to LaFayette Street (Kennedy Boulevard). The Negro settlement got its name from the scrub palmettoes which covered the area. Some of the first blacks to inhabit “the Scrub” came from the Bahamas. When many of the lumber mills in the interior began to close down in the 1890s, many of the black lumberjacks drifted into the quarters. This is how Tampa's first black community emerged.

When Ybor City was established in 1886, two miles to the east of Tampa, the black community found itself in the middle of a wilderness sandwiched between the Cracker village of Tampa on the one side and the Latin village on the other. In time Tampa and Ybor City began to grow in all directions and “the Scrub” remained in the center, a lost and forgotten world.

When a movement was starting for the clearing of “the Scrub” I remember Curtis Hixon, then mayor, telling me while flying to Havana, “we must do something to better the living conditions of our black people.”

So when these people were displaced, where were they to go? Ybor City was the logical area. Many of the Latins were beginning to build new homes in other areas. Real estate agents grasped a golden opportunity and began selling Ybor City houses to the blacks who had nowhere to go. These agents gouged the black man, selling houses for more than double their worth. Many of the Ybor City houses were very old and in dire need of repair. The Latin section was classified as a blighted area. Many of the younger Latins had become Americanized – had been to war and were educated. They began to leave – it wasn't that they didn't like Ybor City – it was a question of economy. How could you build a new home in an area that was decaying? And we saw what had happened to several people who built beautiful homes there. To give you a good example, Dr. Santiago Paniello built a magnificent yellow brick home on 14th Avenue and 16th Street. He was a good friend of mine. I asked Dr. Paniello, “Dr., why did you build this beautiful home right here in the middle of Ybor City?” He said, “I made my money here; these are my people. I want to live amongst them.” Later, his children finished college, and they wanted to live in a better area. And so this is what was happening. The real estate people went to the blacks who were selling their houses to
the federal government, and induced them to buy old houses in Ybor City. The old Ybor City dwellings were selling for $7,000 to $10,000 – houses that weren't worth $1,500.

Q. Up to that time were many blacks living in Ybor City?

Pizzo: There were very few blacks living in Ybor City. The majority were blacks from Cuba, who were different from American blacks. To begin with, they were highly educated, not only in formal schooling, but also they were highly trained cigarmakers. They worked next to the white cigarmakers and lived in the white neighborhoods; they were mixed. And there was a lot of respect, one for the other. And the Cubans had their own clubs, their own baseball teams . . . and there was no discrimination between the Latin whites and the Cuban blacks. They lived together, they worked together . . . there were many fast friendships between blacks and whites. My father had an elderly Cuban tenant. When they became too old to work, we fed them. When they died my father paid for their funeral. Remember, those were the days before welfare.

Q. How did the Cuban blacks and the American blacks get along once this transition took place?

Pizzo: Well to begin with, there was a barrier there. Most of the Cuban blacks didn’t speak English. So that kept them separate, and also the cuban blacks were a lot better educated than the American blacks. They just didn’t mix that well. The Cuban blacks associated more with the Latins in Ybor City, and there was a good bond of friendship among them. So it was a real different situation.

Q. Could anything have been done to prevent what you called the demise of Ybor City, even once the black migration took place to Ybor City?
Pizzo: Well, actually to go in sequence, after the blacks moved to Ybor City the Federal Urban Renewal Act was passed. Florida could not take advantage of this legislation because a state court decision declared the act unconstitutional. Daytona Beach had instituted a test case, but the lower court ruled against her. The City of Tampa decided to test the constitutionality of the act before the State Supreme Court. The case was prepared by Cody Fowler, one of Tampa’s most eminent attorneys, with the assistance of Milo Smith, a young up-and-coming city planner.

The petition was for the approval of the Maryland Avenue redevelopment in Ybor City. The main thrust of the petition was to show the importance in preserving and redeveloping the historic aspect of the area. Milo Smith asked me if I could prepare an historical map showing the historic sites, events, and buildings in Ybor City. I still have this “historic” map. Because of the dynamic history of Ybor City the Supreme Court decided in favor of Cody Fowler and Milo Smith. Ybor City made it possible for cities in Florida to participate in the use of urban renewal funds.

The first urban renewal project cleared the area from the Union Station to 7th Avenue. Today this area is the site of a large complex of attractive apartments housing blacks. The second urban renewal project was the downtown riverfront. That area on Ashley between LaFayette and Cass Streets where the convention center and the city library are located was a series of warehouses with railroad tracks on Ashley as well as a railroad yard along the river bank.

The third and final urban clearance was part of the Ybor City section bordering from 7th Avenue to Interstate 4 on the north and from Nebraska Avenue to 22nd Street on the east. From Ybor City the exodus was to Tampa Heights. Urban renewal was meant to enhance living conditions of the cities, the plan covered only the material things; human feelings and the people’s well-being were totally ignored. So because of cold blooded governmental programs the Latins and blacks of Tampa have been forced to scatter to the four winds. Shifting people without regard to their feelings has been criminal. What they should have done was to take a block at a time, rebuild and have the people keep their properties and let them stay. We could have had beautiful small homes in Ybor City and many happy people. Today there still is a lot of nostalgia for Ybor City; people are still dreaming of the old days. They wish that somehow they could have stayed there. And so urban renewal just went in there and in one shot cleaned everything out. A lot of the great buildings that should have been preserved were destroyed. There were very beautiful brick buildings that are irreplaceable.

Q. Do you remember any specific incidents?

Pizzo: Yes, the No. 4 Fire Station. We were going to turn the fire station into a museum, and before we knew it the bureaucrats worked up a fast deal and in twenty-four hours it was bulldozed into dust. The junior college wanted the land, and a fast shuffle was pulled. Other very valuable brick buildings were also destroyed. Today Hillsborough Community College owns about fifty empty acres in Ybor City – off the tax rolls. Another good example is the time we tried to preserve four flat-top concrete houses
which had served from the very early days of the founding of Ybor City as homes for Cuban cigarmakers. These buildings were the only examples found in Tampa that were typical of Spanish colonial period architecture found in Cuba. They were located on 14th Street and 12th Avenue.

We had a very forceful campaign going to save the four houses. We had the full cooperation of the press, and organizations and citizens had voluntarily pledged more than a thousand dollars to save them. These unique buildings were destroyed without regret by an agency which claimed that the buildings were in the way of the redesigned street pattern through Ybor City. That Fire Station No. 4 was a real sad thing. So we made a second choice, and the museum is now housed in the Ferlita bakery building. Then on 15th Street and 9th Avenue we had two beautiful brick buildings, with a lot of wrought iron. They just tore those down – it was pitiful and disgusting.

Q. Now, whom should we blame? Should we blame faceless bureaucrats in Washington, or Tampa people?

Pizzo: Of course it goes to every level. It started in Congress because the law was formulated – ill-formulated, let's put it that way. They had no regard for humanity. If a blighted area needed to be razed, that's all it spelled out. It had to go. It didn’t take into account historic buildings, it didn't take into account the welfare of the poor, or anything. They just paid everybody off and you’d find yourself another house. They displaced people indiscriminately, which was wrong. Congress passed the law, and all the way down to the local level there were axes to grind. They tore down buildings because it was to their advantage. The more buildings they tore down, I imagine, the more money they were able to get. They wanted to prolong the project. On the local level a lot of people had no feeling for our city. They were actually, in my book, unconcerned about the community’s welfare. They conducted the business of the bureaucracy, without feeling for the history or the future of our community. I fought like a one-man fire department trying to preserve things. The El Pasaje building, for example. It had a beautiful balcony the entire length of the second floor, and one day I saw it was gone. I went to see the owners. Mrs. Avanell, the owner, said, “We didn’t want it to fall, and we've got it in the back of the yard.” Well, anyway, she said they were going to replace it. It was never replaced. To me that's one of the most historic buildings next to the Tampa Bay Hotel.
El Pasaje is the second most historic building in Tampa. The destruction of the old courthouse was a blunder, but that’s another story.

In 1950 we had a $50 million bond issue to clear the riverfront of unsightly warehouses and build a convention center. The Ybor City Rotary Club called a meeting of leading citizens of the community. We had an evening meeting, and a nice dinner at the Columbia Restaurant. We broached the subject that out of the $50 million, we wanted $1 million earmarked for Ybor City. And we got the $1 million. The city fathers and all of the community leaders agreed that something should be done to preserve Tampa’s Latin quarter. So we had a million dollars earmarked for Ybor City. We came up with a plan to build a Latin plaza and redo all of 7th Avenue, and really try to revive it. Well, what happened was we had an election year coming up, and the city representatives who were running for reelection didn’t want to increase taxes or the budget. Things became so involved with public meetings that Ybor City became a pawn. So they dipped into the $1 million fund, the measly $1 million out of the $50 million, and took $600,000. They took the easy way out and Ybor City was sacrificed because they were afraid that the people would vote against them. This is true history. In the following election Nick Nuccio, a proponent of the Latin plaza project lost to Julian Lane, and we went to see the new mayor, and we said, “Let's put the $400,000 into Ybor City.” Julian Lane agreed with us and he beautified 7th Avenue and built a mall. So out of the $400,000 not only was 7th Avenue beautified as it is today, but also the old original lampposts that were there were torn down during the Curtis Hixon administration, and they were given to schools, to the TB hospital – they were scattered all over. We fought to keep the lampposts, but would you believe that the Ybor City Chamber of Commerce wanted the new type of lamps and actually asked the city to take them out. So when Mayor Lane decided to beautify 7th Avenue he hired Milo Smith to
work on the plans. One day I got a call from Milo. He said “Tony, we want to put up fountains, and we want to put the old lampposts back. Where can we find one to make a mold?” I said, “Well, I think you can get one at the Orange Grove Grammar School. They'll lend you one, I am sure.” Well, to make a long story short, in redoing all of 7th Avenue the City had to pay $1,000 for each lamppost, which, you know, were no longer the originals. So that was another lost cause that was victorious in the end.

Q. What period saw the greatest amount of property removal and housing removal in Ybor City?

Pizzo: It was the 1960s. I think it was the middle 60’s when everything went to pot. But I want to go back to the historical markers. So I went to Cuba. I had finished my research and found that José Marti came here in 1891; he made about seventeen trips to Tampa. The basis of the Cuban Revolutionary Party was drafted right here in Ybor City. The Cuban Revolutionary Party was ratified at the Liceo Cubano on 13th Street and 7th Avenue. That’s where José Marti made two of his most famous speeches. The speeches were called “Para Cuba Que Sufre” and “Los Pinos Nuevos.” The Cuban volunteers were trained here. At any rate I found that we had taken a tremendous part in the liberation of Cuba. There was a hotel on 9th Avenue at 16th Street which today is the site of the labor temple. The hotel called Victoria – it was a stopping place for rebels who came in to be trained in Ybor City and then clandestinely were sent to Cuba to fight.

You cannot write about the Cuban revolution without mentioning Ybor City. The workers in the factories, and that included Cubans, Spaniards, and Italians, gave one day’s pay to the cause of Cuban liberty. They called that “el Dia de la Patria.” Many of these events were mentioned on markers. The first marker was erected in front of the Ybor factory. It is a beautiful stone put up by the Ybor City Rotary Club. I think it was in 1949. That was the first one. And of course when Castro took over our project became paralyzed. We never were able to get any markers out of Cuba. All of our friends left Cuba for the States. By this time it had become a very personal project to me because I had done all of the research. At that time there was a foundry on the Hillsborough River near the site of Interstate 75. I talked to the owner, and he said “Tony, I'll make those markers for $75 apiece.” I went out and raised the money. I went to about twenty-five major corporations and nobody turned me down. So I was able to raise the money and had the plaques put up. We made it an official project of the Ybor City Rotary Club. I didn’t want to do it as an individual. The city cooperated in putting up the markers. The markers were made at $75 apiece, but after the first ten markers were made the price went up to $100. So we paid $100. Later they went to $150. Today they’re being made in Ohio at a cost of $450.00 a plaque. And we’re still putting up markers. I guess I personally have been involved in putting up more than forty historical markers not only in Ybor City but all over Tampa.

Q. Who’s the most interesting character you’ve ever interviewed?

Pizzo: I talked to a man whose name was Tinner, a native of Tampa. When I talked to him in the 1940s, he was in his 80’s. I'll never forget it. One evening, we were sitting on a
curbstone, and he was telling me the story of the Spanish-American War. All about the saloons, and how wild they were, and the soldiers.

And, of course, I used to visit D. B. McKay a lot. He died in the early 50's when he was ninety-four years old. He was probably, in my book, the greatest native citizen in Tampa history. He was a courageous man, a very talented man. He served as mayor of Tampa for several terms and made many contributions in the growth of Tampa. In his later years he published the “Pioneer Florida” column in the Sunday *Tampa Tribune*. Because of him much valuable information has been preserved. I came across a story in the *Tribune* dated 1887. During the yellow fever epidemic McKay was running a rival newspaper. He was a very young man then. The *Tribune* reported that you could shoot a shotgun down the street, and not hit anybody. The village was deserted. Everybody had taken off into the woods. People thought they were safer in the woods, and everybody left town, except young McKay. The *Tribune* complimented McKay for staying in town through the epidemic to get the paper out.

Q. *From your conversations with those pioneers, would Tampa have been a good place to live in the 1870s or 80s?*

Pizzo: Well, in the 1870s Tampa was really in the doldrums. Things were bad, Tampa had shrunk in population. The 1870s were probably the worst years. There was nothing going on here; it was an isolated community. Progress was at a standstill. But the people who lived here seemed to have enjoyed it. There was a lot of game, and fishing was excellent. It was quiet. The weather was beautiful. There were those who really loved it. And there were those who didn’t see much prosperity for the future. We had an influx in the 1870s of people from the state of Nebraska. I never could figure out what brought them from Nebraska to Tampa.

Q. *Is that how Nebraska Avenue was named?*

Pizzo: That probably had something to do with it because they started developing orange groves along Nebraska Avenue. From 7th Avenue to Columbus Drive, Nebraska Avenue was a dirt road with orange groves on both sides. It was an interesting time in Tampa; for instance most of downtown Tampa was covered with orange groves. The foundation of the Tampa Bay Hotel was packed with shells from a mound which was located at Bullfrog Creek. So a large part of the Indian mound is right under the Tampa Bay Hotel today. They used to bring the shells in barrels loaded on barges. One of the barges capsized right by the Tampa Bay Hotel and all the shells went into the river. They had an awful time getting the shells all out of there. Also, when they started developing the downtown area after 1891, some of the orange trees were transplanted on the grounds of the Tampa Bay Hotel. The same thing happened in Ybor City. The area near 13th Avenue and Columbus Drive in the 1890s was known as “Morey Heights.” Mr. Morey was a real estate developer. From Columbus Drive on out, everything was a wilderness in those days. When Mr. Morey surveyed his grove for home sites he had some of the orange trees transplanted on Bayshore Boulevard at the site of the Centro Espanol Hospital. And until recently, when the hospital was torn
down – another tragic loss, if you remember that hospital, its architecture – a lot of orange trees were still there.

Q. What do you say when someone says “progress”? How do you answer?

Pizzo: I believe in progress and I believe that some changes have to be made. But I think there’s a limitation. You take, for example, the Latin clubs today. The new generation is no longer interested in their functions. You know, the Latin clubs started a mutual aid society, and they served a tremendous purpose. Latin people are very proud – they never got on the welfare rolls, no one from Ybor City would go on the welfare rolls. The clubs took care of them. In other words, the Italians took care of the Italians, and the Spaniards and Cubans did the same thing. The clubs rendered other services. The buildings served as a meeting place, schools were conducted there, a fine library was found in every clubhouse. The young found recreation in the reading room, the card room and in the cantina. Entertainment was available for all ages in theatres and ballrooms. Yes, the Latin clubs were gems; they served the early immigrants fantastically well.

Q. What do you see as your finest historical accomplishment?

Pizzo: Well, I’m very proud that I had a vital role in organizing the Tampa Historical Society. The results are gratifying. We have members, especially descendants of many old pioneer families who built the city, and to them it was a question of “why haven't we done this before?” Among the more than 500 members are some of the most prominent families, as well as members from all walks of life. This, naturally, gives me a great deal of pleasure. Just recently we obtained the Peter O. Knight house as our headquarters. The Tampa Junior League was very instrumental in obtaining the Knight house. Those young ladies do fabulous things for Tampa. We also have received financial assistance from individuals who have shown their affection for our community throughout the years. The Tampa Historical Society has been a blessing to Tampa, and I'm proud of the part I played in organizing it.

I am also very pleased to have served as president of the José Marti Park Committee. I never will forget an elderly Negro man, a Cuban Negro, coming to me and pointing to the old shack and saying, “That’s where José Martí lived. That’s where the Negro woman, Paulina Pedroso, had her boarding house. And when they tried to poison Martí, she said ‘you better live here . . . this is going to be your headquarters and my husband is going to be your bodyguard.’” When I heard all of this, I did some investigation to make sure that the old gentleman was right. And so I went before the Rotary Club, and we formed a committee to preserve the building – but the building was too far gone. If we could not save the house, we wanted to do something with the historic area. We made many trips to Cuba seeking help with this project. We were offered lumber by Cuban companies, and money by Cuban patriots who believed that something should be done. Cuban newspaper writers started coming to Tampa, and stories were being written about the house. The Martí house became the most publicized preservation project through the fifties with stories in Cuba and Tampa. Finally, on one of our trips we saw
President Batista. The committee was composed of Mayor Curtis Hixon, Doyle Carlton, the former governor of Florida, Earl Mullen, director of the Pan-American Commission, Tony Grimaldi, and Johnny Diaz. We have a photograph taken with Batista, the President of Cuba, at the meeting. He pledged to give us money. And he said “I will give you $25,000.” Batista sent architects from Cuba to inspect the old frame house. The building was filled with termites. It was so far gone that you really would have had to rebuild it. It couldn't be preserved.

So they said, “Why don’t we make a little park?” And they came up with plans – I have them – the original plans of what the park was supposed to look like. Anyway, on our second trip Batista definitely pledged the money, and he said, “We’ll send you the money.” So we waited about two or three months and nothing happened. And in the meantime the building caught fire, and the fire department saved it. So we took a picture of the building, partially burned, and sent it to Cuba. Every newspaper in Cuba ran stories and the picture of the house: “José Marti’s house to be razed . . . The partially burnt historic house will not be preserved. . . ”. And things got so hot in Cuba over that picture that, believe it or not, President Batista called a special session of Congress, and the money was appropriated for the house. When the money arrived here it was sent to the Cuban Consul. He formed his own committee, changed the plans, and the park was established. Of course I raised hell, and we were included in the committee. At any rate we can proudly claim all the credit for the creation of the José Marti Park.

Q. The Irish character, Mr. Dooley, said he didn’t like historians because they only study what nations died of. He’d like to know what they lived of. Let’s talk about what you remember as the vibrant signs of Ybor City.

Pizzo: Well, as I was growing up as a child, I was born in 1912, most of the generations before mine were immigrants. So I was in an environment that was so different from, say, twenty years later after my generation started coming into its own. It was a different world. Everyone spoke Italian or Spanish, and they were all oriented to their clubs. The club was the “mecca.” The whole soul of Italian life was the Italian club and the activities of the Italian club. It was the same with the Spanish clubs and the Cuban club. But those clubs had other things going: they had beautiful libraries, foreign newspapers, and classical books. I remember one particular newspaper, *Il Corriere d’America* published in New York. The Italian club had regular weekly dances in its beautiful ballroom. The theatre showed movies and vaudeville shows. There was so much going on – the whole social focus was on the clubs. Some of the activities in the summertime were picnics out in the countryside. All the clubs had picnics and they were very enjoyable. Rocky Point, Ballast Point, and DeSoto Park in Palmetto Beach were very popular sites. Picnics were held on the Alafia River and at Bullfrog Creek.

They were very happy times. When one of the clubs gave a picnic, people of different nationalities attended. 7th Avenue was a vibrant main drag; it probably surpassed Franklin Street at one time. The best shops in Tampa were on 7th Avenue. Payday in the factories was on Saturday, so you can imagine thousands of cigarmakers getting their pay, going home and taking a bath, putting on their best finery, and walking up and
down 7th Avenue. The shops stayed open on Saturday until 11:00. That’s the reason Saturday night dances in the Latin Clubs started after the shops closed at 11:00 P.M. That custom has come down to this day.

Q. Would you find an Anglo on 7th Avenue in 1930?

Pizzo: Well, you used to find them on Saturday morning. Hillsborough County was very rural until the 1940s. Ybor City was a very fine shopping center. And the “crackers,” what we called the “country people,” came to shop. They used to have caravans of wagons loaded with families. They came only Saturday morning and went shopping all up and down 7th Avenue. In the afternoon they would go back home; they had quite a way to travel. And in the evenings the Latins flooded 7th Avenue. Saturdays were busy and fun days on 7th Avenue.

Q. Were there any ethnic distinctions that you might see on the avenue? For instance, were Italians dressed the same way as the Cubans, and the Cubans like the Spaniards?

Pizzo: No, they all dressed more or less the same. They did all their shopping in the same stores, and the same styles were being followed – American styles. On Saturday nights the restaurants would be crowded. It wasn’t like today where you have two or three restaurants. In those days you had two or three restaurants or cafes on every block. They had pastries and served coffee in the old Cuban style, and hot chocolate. You know, they used to boil the milk, and they used one pot for hot milk and a coffee pot for coffee. The waiter would come along and say “obscurio (dark), medium, or black” and he would pour the coffee according to your desire.

Q. Was the Columbia Restaurant always a jewel of Ybor City?

Pizzo: The Columbia Restaurant was opened in 1903. It opened up as a saloon, a little cafe, and in time it became the gem of Spanish restaurants. They had a bar, which is still there; they served pastries, coffee, and short orders. It was a regular coffee shop, a bistro or a cantina, if you want to call it that. What made 22nd Street in the early days really very popular was its location, an important crossroads. 22nd Street was called Livingston Avenue in those days. And the 22nd Street corner became the gathering place for farmers in the morning. That’s where they traded, along 7th Avenue and 22nd
Street. They’d come in with their wagons and trade produce. You see, we had a lot of peddlers in the early days, Italian peddlers who peddled vegetables and fruit. They started arriving at about 4:00 in the morning, and before long there were hundreds of wagons. The cracker farmers brought their produce and sold them to the peddlers. 22nd Street was a very active corner for many, many years.

Q. Tell us about your courtship patterns on 7th Avenue. What would young people do on Saturday night?

Pizzo: When my generation came along – this is hard to believe, but in my generation in high school, if we dated a Latin girl, we had to have a chaperone. The mother would usually go along. Dating started at high school age. So we had to take the mothers to the movies with us, or to dances; we’d take the old ladies. I remember going to dance at the Centro Espanol, which were really the plush dances of the period. And you’d see sitting along the walls the Spanish ladies, and some Italians, with their daughters. And that’s the way it was until I went to college.

Q. Did Italians seem stricter, or less strict, than the Cuban girls?
Pizzo: Of the three Latin groups in Ybor City, the Italians were the strictest. The Cubans were the least strict. The Spaniards weren’t as strict as the Italians, but they still had a very strong feeling, like the Italians, for their daughters to marry their own kind. One of the reasons was the fact that most Spaniards held key positions at high salaries in the cigar factories. The Spaniards were the upper strata of Ybor City society. But the Italians were coming along and intermarriage started. In the early days the Italians got pretty rough at times when a daughter wanted to marry a Spaniard or a Cuban. I’ve heard of incidents where a Spaniard or Cuban who was courting an Italian girl was intimidated with an order to leave town, and he did. And they did mean business – it was that bad. And there were occasions when Italian fathers, after their daughters married a Cuban or a Spaniard, never talked to their daughters again.

Q. Do you care to talk about bolita?

Pizzo: Bolita came very early with the cigar industry. You know, one of the stipulations Mr. Ybor made the Board of Trade when he came here to establish his company town was the fact that his workers had to have gambling. He knew the cigar makers. He knew their likes and dislikes. The Cubans weren’t good churchgoers. They all wore religious medallions, and they believed in God. But when it came to going to church, they weren’t that good. That was pretty true of most of the Latins in Ybor City. But there's a reason for all that. Anyway, when Mr. Ybor came he said to the city fathers: “Remember, this community is going to be hiding in the woods by itself. And I want you to know that I know the Anglo Saxon spirit of church on Sunday and no gambling.” The Board of Trade was so anxious to get the cigar industry that it said: “Well, they’re going to be all by themselves out in the country in their little community out there, let them do what they want. If they want to gamble, let them have gambling.” But a little later on the Tampa villagers were raising an eyebrow with what was happening in its little sister village of Ybor City. Saloons were opened on Sunday and gambling dens with games of faro, dice, and roulette were in full sway. There also was cock fighting. So the churches of the little town of Tampa started opening up little branches out there, and they called them “missions.” Their mission: to christianize the Latins.

Q. Didn’t you once as a youngster see bolita thrown? Weren’t you a newsboy and you happened to wander into a plush gambling house?

Pizzo: Yes, the Tribune wrote a story about bolita, and I was interviewed. You see, when I was going to grammar school I would sell the Tampa Times until the evening up and down 7th Avenue. In those days we had all those big green streetcars, and I’d ride between 22nd Street to 14th Street up and down, until I got rid of my last newspaper. And in those days there were several casinos in Ybor City. The best known were the Lido and the Imperial. The most plush of these casinos or gambling houses was the Lido on 14th Street and was run by Rafael Reina. I described to the Tribune what I saw when I walked in there selling my newspapers. It was a regular Las Vegas type of casino. It was very plush, full of people, well-dressed, and the and there was bolita throwing going on. Bolita started back in the early part of the century here. It was introduced by a man they called El Gallego – he was a Spaniard.
Q. You, had mentioned earlier that there was a reason why Ybor City was anti-clerical, not very religious. Would you elaborate?

Pizzo: The Spaniards, as well as the Italians, came from little villages of their respective countries. The clergy in those villages were the rulers. From what I have read and heard, the clergy would cater to the well-to-do, and the poor, the peasant, the tiller of the soil was treated as a third-rate human being. The Church should have treated every individual equally. It isn’t like our church here in America. It was very provincial, and the priests played their politics. Those who had nothing (and later became immigrants in Ybor City) resented the treatment. I’ll give you a good example. If you read Mr. Angelo Massari’s book he related how as a young boy he went to church for confession. The priest sat at the head of the altar like he was the king of Santo Stefano (Sicily). Everybody had to stand in line for confession but when a Don of the community or any of the well-to-do, the prominenti, would come in they would go straight to the priest without standing in line for their turns. Mr. Massari said that this preferential treatment of the well-to-do turned him away from the church. These are the types of resentments people brought with them. That’s true of the Spaniards, because they had the same situation. The clergy just ruled the roost. When the Catholic Church was organized, the Spaniards were probably the best churchgoers, and the Italians were second, the Cubans third. In most cases only the women and children went to church; the men just didn’t. The Italians were the hardest group to get together. When the church was organized in Ybor City in 1890 a priest was brought in from out West because he spoke Italian. They felt with all these Italians here they should have an Italian priest. His main task was to get the Italians to become churchgoers. He fared poorly at his assignment. In the early twenties, however, an Italian church was organized and located in the Italian community on 8th Avenue and 23rd Street. I became a altar boy at that church. That church was still in existence until a few years ago.

Q. In conclusion, please sum up your thoughts about Tampa.

Pizzo: Well, I think that Tampa is a unique community because it has always been cosmopolitan from its very beginning. It started as a fort, and people came and settled near the fort. Before the arrival of the Americans, Cuban and Spanish fishermen were living along the shores of Tampa Bay. In 1848, a severe hurricane nearly wiped out Fort Brooke and the small Tampa settlement. The boom created by the rebuilding of the fort attracted quite a number of people from St. Augustine. In those days peninsular Florida was bare of any settlements with the exception of St. Augustine and New Smyrna. Attracted to Tampa were a number of descendants of the Italian settlers who came to establish New Smyrna in 1767. They spoke Spanish and English, and began to grow roots in the Tampa community, so from the very beginning Tampa was a polyglot of nationalities.

Tampa was destined to become an important city because its geographical location at the mouth of the Hillsborough River at the head of Tampa Bay made it a logical harbor. From the beginning it was the hub of commerce for the region of the central west coast
of the peninsula. Its proximity to Latin America was the main reason the community became a railhead in 1883. In turn, the coming of the railroad attracted Messrs. Ybor and Haya with their important cigar factories to create their company town, Ybor City. The cigar industry launched Tampa into existence as a viable, progressive, and successful community. The railroad also spurred Tampa’s economy by encouraging the establishment of several fishing companies, lumber mills, and truck farming.

Tampa’s destiny was to succeed. At times progress was at a standstill, or moved along slowly, but it always forged ahead. Tampa has been blessed through the years with dynamic community leaders, and a bit of luck also played a part from time to time. We have attained an enviable position as a city, but we have paid a dear price because of the rapid growth, the clumsy planning for the future. Our bay is no longer the fisherman's paradise. Our mangroves have disappeared, and the pollution infesting our once clean air has dimmed the rays of the famous Florida sun.

Every morning Davis Islanders are reminded of the poison they breathe by merely looking at the industrial dust covering their cars. Some of our palm trees have died from this foul air. It’s sad.

I am not a pessimist and have never been. I think Tampa has a fantastic future. Look at what has happened in the last few years. The downtown area and Seddon Island are on the verge of a fabulous redevelopment. We will not be able to recognize downtown Tampa a few years from now.
AN UNCONVENTIONAL AND DEMOCRATIC PICNIC

By Marian B. Godown

A picnic, as defined by Webster, is either an outing with food usually provided by members of the group and eaten in the open or a pleasant and amusing experience.

Both of these definitions are fully illustrated in the following account of An Unconventional and Democratic Picnic which took place almost seventy years ago in the semi-wilderness of De Soto County, about twelve miles south of Arcadia. The lively report of the fun-filled, over-night excursion in March, 1912, was written by Robert (Rob) Russell, six years before he was shot down behind German lines in the First World War. Russell, a pilot in the Royal Air Force, was buried in the British Military Cemetery at Tournai, Belgium.

Rob Russell and his brother George, who was fifteen at the time of the Picnic, were two of nine children of Thomas F. Russell. A member of the New York Cotton Exchange, the senior Russell in 1895 bought a half-interest in the Lawndale Grove at Fort Ogden, including a house that had been built nine years before. Later, he bought the entire grove, renaming it Sunny South Farms.
Two of the Russell children are still living, Anna and Elizabeth, and they reside at the pioneer Russell dwelling. The wood-frame house is believed to be one of the oldest in the county as so many of the others went up in flames. Their father used the building as a hunting lodge, staying at the place for a few weeks at a time. Rob Russell ran the grove while he lived there until the First World War. George took over the management after he returned from Army war service. He died in 1962. Another brother, the late Joseph A. Russell, was a partner with Elizabeth in managing the 100-acre grove. Anna Russell, a former research librarian at Columbia University, and Elizabeth became year-round residents in 1957, but they have been back and forth to the grove all their lives. They barely remember their older brother, Rob. Elizabeth manages the grove today.

Of the twenty-eight at the picnic, four are still living: eighty-five year old Morris Daughtrey of Punta Gorda and his sister, Kate Smoke; Mary Ida Duffy of Tampa; and Curtis Johnson of Fort Ogden. Mrs. Smoke, the widow of Dr. Wallace Smoke, is ninety-one and lives in North Fort Myers.

Apparently, participants at the picnic formed one big, happy family. Many were kinfolk or good friends who had grown up together in the small Fort Ogden community. Besides Curtis, his family members in attendance included: his parents, Mary and Sid Johnson; his grandmother, Mrs. J. O. Carr; his uncle Tull or Tully; his aunts, Edla Carr (later Mrs. Robert Morgan), and Mrs. J. A. Duffy; and his cousins, Mary Ida and Joe “Buck” Duffy. In addition, there were three pairs of brothers, Robert and Ray Morgan, sons of Eli Morgan, railroad depot agent at Fort Ogden; the Russell boys, and Morris and John Daughtrey, Jr. (nicknamed “John Tiger”), who had arranged the picnic. (Pioneer cattleman John Daughtrey, Sr. and his wife Rebecca had seventeen children.) Fluella and Doris Dyess were sisters.

Young Curtis, who was to emerge as the hero of the picnic for “catching” a twelve-pound snook without benefit of hands, remembers the fun he had. He was about twelve years old. He recalls it rained some, but mostly he remembers the time spent walking, cooking, eating and singing about the campfire.

His father, Sid Johnson, was foreman of a local citrus packinghouse for many years while his grandfather, J. O. Carr, used his own schooner to transport groceries and supplies from Pensacola in west Florida to the picturesque Peace River in southwest Florida. He also operated a general store in which he kept money for his fellow townspeople in his large safe.

In 1912, Fort Ogden had more bustle than it has today as it was a trading center for shipping citrus and cattle on the two railroads intersecting the town at that time. It boasted over ten stores, among them: a blacksmith shop, barber shop, hardware store, poolroom, drug store, dry goods store, and five general stores. There were also Baptist and Methodist churches, a school, citrus packinghouses, and a post office which has been in continuous service since it was established in 1876.
Fort Ogden is probably the oldest officially recorded site in De Soto County. Named for Captain Edmund Ogden of the 8th U.S. Infantry, its history dates back to 1841 when it was first established on the banks of the Peace River as a short-lived post during the Seminole Indian War. After having been moved three times, the town now rests three miles from its original location. One year after residents enjoyed this memorable picnic, the town was incorporated as a municipality. Later, its status was upgraded to a full-fledged city but in the Great Depression, the City of Fort Ogden was abolished by the legislature.

Rob Russell’s description of that long-ago picnic captures the life-style of the early days of the 20th Century in this tiny dirt-road community on the sprawling south Florida frontier. It was an era of simpler pleasures and home-spun fun. For diversion, the early settlers square-danced, went camping or on outings and found enjoyment in visiting and eating. Their social life also revolved about the church. In the recital of the excursion, there is no mention of present-day conveniences such as refrigeration, bathroom facilities, running water, lights, air-conditioning, television or instant take-out food.

Although business has moved away and most of the stores are empty, Fort Ogden remains home for many long-time residents. They treasure their traditions. That is why during the first Sunday in May of each year, people gather in the park for a nostalgic May Day picnic.

De Soto County, Florida, March, 1912

John Daughtrey Junior planned and arranged for an overnight picnic to be held at Shell Creek, twelve miles from Fort Ogden, which is in Southern Florida. A general invite was extended to the inhabitants and visitors of Fort Ogden, out of which twenty-seven persons appeared on the other side of Shell Creek for Supper the night of March fifteenth nineteen hundred and twelve.

The advance guard rolled out of Fort Ogden at one thirty, headed by Sid Johnson and his wife, drawn by their old horse Charlie; following close behind came Mrs. J. D. Carr with her daughter Edla and Bertha Cowart. Bringing up the rear in a two seated spring wagon were Mrs. J. A. Duffy and family, Joe Buck and Mary Ida, with whom were George and Robert Russell.
John Daughtrey with a double wagon and two mules had a full load; Misses Fluella and Doris Dyess, & Oney Sloan, Eva Williams, and Messrs. Luther Gibson, Morris Daughtrey, Leon Williams and James O’Connor. These waited in town for school to close in order to pick up two more passengers, “The School Teachers” – the Misses Mattie Ivey and Eva Cole. School was out at two thirty and John started his mules Shell Creekwards soon after.

The advance guard had a good start, were loaded lighter and trotted some, arriving at the agreed upon camp about sunset.

Sid Johnson and Rob Russell delegated themselves to get some lightwood which had to be hauled by wagon nearly a half mile while the others unpacked the wagons and put up the tent.

Dr. Wallace Smoke, his wife and boy Stubby Herbert arrived in a spring wagon before Sid and Rob returned with the wood. After Dr. Smoke unhitched his horse he began to pour forth his tale of woe. It seems that he had left along the road two baked chickens, some biscuits, some coffee, some rice, some tin ware, in fact a little of everything he had in the wagon when he started. They had driven fast to catch up to the advance guard, and palmetto roots and gullies had done the rest. Tull Carr brought Rob and Ray Morgan in an auto.

The tent was up and Sid was boiling coffee when the first rain came. Everybody rushed for something, some found it, others didn’t. Eventually the things that were perishable were secure in the tent. The rain continued to fall in torrents, the fire was nearly out, and the party had but one lantern. Rob Russell put on his oil skins, brightened up the fire, and put some more water on to boil, as the women wished to make chocolate.

Some anxiety was now expressed as to the whereabouts of the rear guard. The women of the party were afraid they were getting wet. Sid was sure John Tiger (nicknamed on account of size and strength, not ferociousness) had secured shelter at a little cabin not far from the road, while Dr. Smoke thought that in the storm and darkness they had gotten off the main road. He proceeded to lead them aright by firing many shots from his thirty eight revolver. They answered him and he continued to shoot when they answered.

At last John Tiger drove across the creek and landed the belated, wet, and bedraggled picnickers into camp. They were a happy bunch despite their appearances and although the rain had stopped, they still showed the signs of a passing shower.

The fire was piled high and soon blazing merrily, warming and semi-drying the late wet ones. One particular young lady got a friend of hers to take the creases out of her dress, the operation being performed thusly: the operator clutched the bottom of the skirt with both hands and yanked downward, while the particular one jumped upward. As the skirt wasn’t torn apart, the creases probably were.
A large tarpaulin was spread on the ground and the women folk [sic], including the “School Teachers” who had donned aprons that all but covered their heads, started to set things out for supper. Baskets, boxes and tin pails filled with everything good to eat appeared on all sides. Coffee was poured for those fortunate enough to have cups, and things began to happen, but not to anyone or anything except the eats.

The night had turned delightfully pleasant. The warm freshness of the air after the rain, and the glimpse one got of the stars between mouthfuls of ham, egg and lettuce sandwiches, deviled eggs, four kind [sic] of cake, cookies, and good coffee made one happy to be alive and joyful to be on such a picnic.

John Tiger dug a bunch of bananas out of his wagon, hung them on the ridge pole of the tent, and called out for all to help themselves which they “shore” did.

It didn’t take long to clean up after supper and the dishes were placed in a pan to await the morning before being scourd. The few edibles that had been overlooked were returned to the basket, box, or pail, their fate only being posponed [sic] temporarily.
Rob Russell now wanted to take a flash light picture. The party arranged themselves near the fire and one was taken of the whole group with the exception of Dr. Smoke; but he was still sore about the loss of his chickens and probably thought it would show on his face.

After the picture, Tull Carr started for Ogden leaving the two Morgan boys in camp. He had perhaps been gone fifteen minutes when he returned with Dr. Smoke’s chickens just as fine as when they were packed to bring, not injured a particle. Dr. Smoke drew a deep breath and began to enjoy himself.

Nine o’clock had passed before everybody was quietly seated (excepting some children) on the wagon seats around the fire or playing some favorite game. The most popular game seemed to be “truth.” A number seat themselves in a circle, one placing his or her hand on a knee or the ground. The person to the left of the leader follows by placing a hand on top of the one already down and so on until all players have their hands in the pile. Now the person whose hand is at the bottom calls a number, for instance seventeen and pulling out his or her hand places it on top of all the other hands counting one. The hand now on the bottom is drawn forth, the owner placing it on top counting two. Thus continues until the seventeenth hand is placed on top, the owner being “it.” Every one draws their hands away and in turn ask the unlucky one a question which must be answered truthfully.

John Tiger had two tents in his wagon; one, an immense affair fully large enough to hold everybody present, the other about the size as the one already up. These were both speedily stretched, and the bedding and other articles piled in.

One of the three tents was assigned to the women of the party and it soon had a number of occupants, all the chaperones having turned in after the younger folks claimed they were going to stay up all night.

Some continued to sit around the fire, others getting together in parties of four or five played all sorts of card games in the large tent, building a fire inside of it for light. The noise that grew from these games was not conducive to the slumber sought by those that had turned in.

A game of five handed poker was started, the stakes being cartridges. The noise of the other games died to insignificance amid the uproar that this game created. Roars of laughter rose from the group, interspersed with shouts and threats of violence if someone didn’t stop stealing someone else's cartridges, all of course in the best spirit of fun.

John Tiger who was a participant in the poker game won everything in the cartridge line, and then said he was going out to cut some cabbage. He wanted to know who’d go with him and he had plenty of volunteers. Two axes were secured and John Tiger with his followers, of whom some were girls, started out to cut cabbage at half past twelve in the morning.

A few stayed behind, two especially to be noted, Fluella Dyess and Rob Russell who stayed in the big tent all alone playing stick frog.
The cabbage hunters returned in less than an hour proudly bearing the result of their toil: nine palmetto hearts or swamp cabbages as they are known in the South. Everything had been quiet while the cabbage party was away, but on their return they broke loose with revolvers and guns. Those without automatic noise makers shouted until everybody in camp was again awake, if they had ever succeeded in getting to sleep.

John Tiger got some ribs of beef and placed them on sticks before the fire to broil. When these were cooked everybody in sight was eating beef and raw cabbage.

After this repast had been disposed of, different games were resumed. John Tiger sang and danced “ain’t she a pretty little shoe doll.” A bunch got into the large double wagon back of the largest tent and sang, hollered and talked.

One young lady, Miss Cole, attempted to secure a moment’s rest by laying down in the large tent; but her chum and fellow teacher couldn’t see it, so she yanked her out, put her by the fire and made her sit up and take notice.

John Tiger was on hand to prevent any attempt at resting. Shooting a gun close by or shouting until the person answered were his usual methods, but he was ever ready to pull one out bodily if necessary.

Herbert Smoke, undoubtedly feeling the loss of sleep and the need of exercise, began to throw cabbage roots around. He was told to stop but paid no attention. Rob Russell called to his brother George and they picked Herbert up and carted him down to the creek, the intention being to throw him in. George either misunderstood or had pity on him, for when it was time to let go, George held on, and only the feet which Rob had hold of, got wet. But Herbert had his lesson and was good for the rest of the morning.

John Tiger got angry again about three thirty and said he was going to cook himself a mess of cabbage. After much searching two cabbages were found, all the others having been eaten raw. John Tiger made a selection of the people whom he wished to help him eat his cabbage, and began preparing to cook it. He had everybody convulsed with laughter making puns, witticisms & comments of the most harmless kind, while the pot boiled and the cabbage cooked. When the cabbage was pronounced cooked by Miss Ivey who had supervised the cooking of it, the selected few gathered around with plates that had just been washed clean by Eva Williams and Jimmie O’Connor. John Tiger dug out the portions and slapped them on the plates. Rob Russell wanted a flash picture of the cabbage eaters so they obligingly sat quiet while it was being taken and afterwards gave him some cabbage for taking it.

Daylight was seen before the cabbage was all eaten, sort of an early breakfast for the selected few.

The cry of daylight went around, followed by a grand finale of shots and shouts and so ended the sleepless night of the John Tiger band.
Having aroused everybody in camp, John Tiger and a couple of other fellows set off to cut some cabbage for dinner.

People began to find towels and soap and made excursions to the creek, hoping with the aid of the cold water to wash away the appearances of not having slept well.

Sid Johnson put a kettle of water on to boil, then sat down and rested. Every once in a while someone would pick up something and look at it as if they intended to start getting breakfast for the bunch; but they had that tired feeling and were soon to be seen crumpled up someplace watching others yawning, stretching and trying to look alive. After a few attempts of this character it was unanimously agreed that those who wanted any breakfast could take it out of the baskets for themselves.

John Tiger returned with half a dozen cabbages, all fine large ones. These were carefully put away to await the dinner cook’s pleasure.

John Tiger and the other cabbage cutters cared not for breakfast. So a proposal was made that some fish be caught or shot for dinner. A large party set out for this purpose, armed with rifles, revolvers, and fishing lines. Accompanying the true hunters were several young ladies, unarmed for such an expedition save for their eyes which could be used in discovering fish at untold depths.

Rob Russell who at this time was busily washing up the “selected few” dishes was earnestly requested by the women who were to stay in camp, to discontinue the operation and go with the crowd, saying that they would finish washing them before supper time. Needless to say Rob left there in a hurry. Sid Johnson also remained in camp involving [sic] upon himself the responsibility of correctly cooking the six cabbages, a job of no mean proportions.

The time was announced as six thirty when the fishing party left camp, crossed the creek, and headed north going up stream. The cow path taken led through a thicket of scrub, oak, briers, vines and low trees, all right for scratching flies off a cow’s back but making dodging a necessity and skirts a nuisance. This path was some fifty yards from the creek and ran parallel with it for a quarter of a mile. It then turned diagonally toward it, leading out to a high bank above the creek. The shore on either side at this point had little growth of any sort, which made walking again a pleasure.

In coming through the underbrush, those having lines had cut poles to which the lines were now tied, and fishing commenced. The marksmen with rifles and revolvers ready advanced cautiously along the banks peering into the different pools in hopes of discovering some unwary denizen of the shallow creek.

The creek was low, the depth of the water running from one to five feet. The height of the banks in some places was over ten feet above the water, at other places we could walk down a gradually sloping bank and easily jump safely across the water to the other bank.
It was not an ideal day for shooting fish. The wind was too high, ruffling the surface of the water, making it difficult to discover the fish and hard to judge the depth of the water. Depth is an important factor in shooting fish unless straight downward at them or at right angles; then one can aim straight at the fish. But at less acute angles one has to keep in mind the depth of the water, for water tends to force a bullet forward instead of downward and each additional foot of water increases this forward trend, making it necessary to point the gun eight inches to the side of a fish three feet under water, when you have a forty five degree shot.

Several fish were seen and shots tried but without success. The line fishermen caught a few small sun fish which were carried along for exhibition purposes, hardly being large enough to eat. These fishermen were using frogs for bait; these having been caught along the banks from time to time by those otherwise unemployed.

The party had continued up the creek in this way for nearly two miles, when it was decided to turn back. Before starting everyone sat down to rest. Rob Russell sat on a bank of the creek watching the kids of the party paddling and sporting in the water. Curtis Johnson, one of the paddlers, tired of this and thought it would be more fun to throw sand at Rob. He started in to do this but as Rob couldn’t see the fun, he quickly told him to stop. Curtis paid no heed and was promptly picked up and heaved in the creek by Rob. Great was Rob’s surprise when a large fish weighing all of twelve pounds was washed ashore by the big waves the force of Curtis’s body falling from a height of four feet above the water had created. Rob at once jumped for the fish, receiving a good prod with one of the large fins, but throwing the fish far enough up the bank to make escape impossible. Curtis who had been standing in the water watching these proceedings, walked out looking like a wet rat and shouting loudly for all to come and see the fish he had caught.

The story was told to those who had not witnessed the catch and had they not been so near at hand and able to see the perfectly lively unmarked fish, would have undoubtedly thought it the best “fish story” ever.

Rob took a picture of Curtis and his fish after which Miss Cole tried a snap at the same subject.

Curtis and his paddling companions picked up the fish and at once started back to camp with it. John Tiger said it was a robalo but that everybody called them snooks.

Groups formed and everybody started back to camp, some going through the woods to avoid following the bends in the creek, others following straight along it in hopes of seeing something to shoot.

Curtis had arrived long before the main party and had recounted the wonderful and lucky capture of the twelve pound fish. Even the most staid of his listeners thought it rather remarkable.

The hour was still early, a few minutes before ten, but dinner preparations were well under way when the crowd returned, although dinner was not scheduled before twelve.
Some lay down to secure a little rest and a funny example was made of one young fellow who was unfortunate enough to fall asleep. When he awakened he was greeted with shouts of laughter. His face was ringed, dotted, and daubed with pot black, and he presented a most comical aspect.

Games started in different parts of camp and Rob Russell was well occupied for an hour skinning and cutting up the prize fish.

Mr. Morgan and Jeb Carr were guests at dinner, arriving from Fort Ogden in Mr. Morgan’s auto about dinner time.

Everything edible was spread out on a large table cloth and dinner was ready. Before starting to eat everybody was requested to sit or stand quiet a second round the cloth and Rob Russell took another picture.

The dinner was excellent, the cabbage and coffee being especially fine. The fish was a little coarse but cooked well and not so bad. Dr. Smoke’s now famous chickens were dissected and eaten with relish. There was plenty for all and everyone seemed to be doing the meal full justice.

Three bathers, Mrs. Johnson, Miss Ivey, and Miss Cole prepared for a plunge shortly after dinner. Upon their appearance in bathing costume nearly all the non-bathers followed them to the creek. Rob Russell took two pictures of them before they got wet and four others after they selected their bathing pool and were splashing around in it.

The spectators comfortably seated themselves around the pool while the mermaids dove, swam, and had a general good time.

As soon as the bathers had dressed everything was piled into the wagons, horses hitched, and a start made for Fort Ogden. Everybody seemed sorry to leave camp, most wishing to stay another night.

All still showed signs of tiredness but the largest demonstration given was by Mrs. Johnson, who curled herself on her side of the wagon seat, put her head in her husband’s lap and tried to go to sleep. She stuck to the attempt for about a mile, but when an extra large palmetto root nearly bounced her out of the wagon, she decided she had best take her chances at stealing a wink sitting up.

Prairie Creek runs between Shell Creek and Fort Ogden and is eight miles from town. Shell Creek is five miles farther on and 13 miles from town. When Prairie Creek was reached on the return trip, John Tiger jumped out and began to unhook the mules, saying that the party was going to have supper here. Mrs. Carr who was somewhat ahead stopped when she discovered that the other wagons had halted, with the exception of Dr. Smoke’s which was far in advance of her and beyond recall. When the plan for supper at Prairie Creek was explained to her, she turned the wagon around and unhitched as the others had done.
Leon Williams and John Tiger turned a skip rope while those who wished skipped. Some were extremely graceful, others – but what's the use. Sid Johnson was making the coffee, a few were down at the creek fishing or strolling around, some of the women folks were getting out the remains of the dinner.

It was only five o’clock when supper was ready. It was rather light but considering everybody had plenty at dinner no one was extra hungry and it did nicely.

Nothing much had been taken out of the wagons, so it did not take long after supper to return the few things, and the ride homeward was resumed.

About two miles from Prairie Creek, probably to prove to himself the constancy of his best lady friend, Leon Williams claimed to have lost a knife. John Tiger stopped the mules, for Leon said he was going back to hunt it. He asked his lady friend to help him; without a moment’s hesitation she jumped out and they both started on the back trail. John Tiger was to wait until they returned. The two wagons that were blocked behind John Tiger when he stopped now pulled out in front and continued towards Ogden. Leon and his companion went back about twenty five yards, when they turned around and came back to the wagon, Leon apparently entirely satisfied and reconciled to the loss of his knife.

The mules were again urged forward, but were unable to catch the other wagons before they reached Ogden.

As the different persons were left at their respective homes one and all agreed that they would ever be ready to go on another Picnic just like it.
The recent passing of Gloria Jahoda has deprived Florida of one of her most powerful literary talents. Few other authors or poets could match her sensitivity, her keen powers of observation and insight, or her command of the language. Born Gloria Love in Chicago on October 6, 1926, she attended Northwestern University and the University of Wisconsin. She married Gerald Jahoda in 1952, completed two novels, Annie and Delilah’s Mountain, by 1963, and moved that same year to Tallahassee when her husband joined the faculty of library science at the Florida State University. Thereafter, she focused much of her energy on bringing Florida’s history to life.

Four books represent her main contributions to Florida history, and each is, in its own way, a product of her own special feelings about the state and its people. In her first Florida book, The Other Florida, she concentrated on rural Florida, especially the Panhandle. Of the Florida cracker she wrote: “It is easy to smile, to feel virtuously ambitious and superior to the rural Floridian. It is easy to forget that until recently he and his wife and children were infested with hookworm, that he has been bone-poor for a century and too busy hoeing his collard patch and
cotton crop to stay in a one-room school... His good nature is not the Florida cracker’s weakness. It is his victory.” Nor did she in this work fail to point out that crackers come in different varieties. Traveling the sideroads of rural Florida from Fernandina to Cedar Keys, she encountered Jews, Swedes, Germans, and others who “become curiously alike... strong individualists who may sneer at the cracker’s prejudices but who have acquired his sensitivity to his landscape.”

Jahoda’s second book was The Road to Samarkand: Frederick Delius and his Music. While the book is obviously a biography of the composer, it is a story which begins on the Florida orange grove where Delius once lived. In this book, Jahoda gave us her portrait of migrant laborers, especially their music, and showed how Delius wove their themes, rhythms, and moods into his own composition.

Her third book focused on Tampa Bay – River of the Golden Ibis. Jahoda meant to describe the Hillsborough River as a part of a series of books on “Rivers of America,” published by Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. But the book was to Jahoda herself more “a love letter to the Hillsborough River and Tampa Bay” and is intended to be a poetic evocation of both. She explored the entire stretch of the river from Green Swamp in central Florida to Tampa Bay. One reviewer wrote that River of the Golden Ibis was “like old home week,” telling Tampa Bay’s traditions and history: Tarpon Spring’s sponge industry, Gamble Mansion, pioneers of Pinellas Point, Peter Demen's Orange Belt railroad, and many more.

Jahoda’s last work on Florida summed up her feelings for her adopted state in a way few of us can. “Florida,” she wrote in her bicentennial history, “is the great American escape – a lot of people’s idea of heaven.” “It's something of an essay about the people who make up the state – who they are, where they came from, what they contributed. Everybody from the Palm Beach socialite to the migratory worker.” And if the book was not encyclopedic, it was, after all, never meant to be. How did Glorida Jahoda see Florida? “Florida is a living testament to the American belief that there will always be a tomorrow, the clouds will roll away, and a stunning sun will shine.” So, too, will her works be a living testament to her talent and a fitting testimony of her personal love affair with Florida and its history.
WHERE TO FIND YOUR ROOTS
IN THE TAMPA BAY AREA

By Phyllis Belnap and Marjorie Hazel

How should beginning genealogists approach the task of seeking their ancestors? After taking the first step of identifying and having documentary evidence of your parents and possibly, your grandparents, the next step appears giant sized. Generally, the problem is one of direction and location. Where do you go from here – literally – and how do you get there? With the modern nomadic nature of mankind, locations are usually far away, and you think the hunt is not worth the effort. However, Tampa contains one of the most accessible collections in the Branch Genealogical Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (Often called the “Mormon” church, and hereafter referred to as the church.) As one of over 200 branches of the main library located in Salt Lake City, Utah, this branch location has the facilities to borrow microfilms of many records available from the main library. Still, there are records not on microfilm and even some on microfilm are not available because of contractual agreements with the archives where they were filmed. The church, realizing the importance of vital records, has traveled to many countries and has offered to film the records at that location, making two copies. One of these copies remains in that location; the church has possession of the other copy. Because of this policy, many records from remote areas are now available to patrons of a branch library. With these copies as a start, branch libraries begin to gather their own resource material:
books, family histories and records, and facilities for using the wider depositories of the Salt Lake library.

These sources are now available to anyone within traveling distance of the church’s branch library in Tampa. Located at 4106 East Fletcher Avenue, north of the University of South Florida campus and between the twin highrise buildings, John Knox and Fontana Halls, the L.D.S. Genealogical Library is administered by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but it is open to everyone interested in genealogy. For the hours call (813) 971-2869, because the hours do fluctuate according to seasons and demand. There are no fees for using the library; the only fees are for ordering microfilms or photocopying. As with other programs and facilities of the church, the library is manned by volunteers. They are not there to do your research, but they are pleased to help in using any facilities available and in suggesting possible avenues for exploration.

After entering the larger of the two rooms used for research purposes, you will find one entire wall utilized for storing the growing collection of books. The first section is devoted to family histories. These are published volumes which have usually been placed in the library by supporting patrons. The books are divided into countries: England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Norway, Denmark, Germany, and United States. Volumes for the United States include Confederate Records, Military Records, Compendium of American Genealogy, Pension Roll and Pension Applications, and Genealogies in the Library of Congress. Book subjects are further divided into states. Since funds are limited and contributions often sporadic, the number of books is not too great, and there are more available for some locations than others. A noteworthy item might be the printed volumes of state-wide indexes to the national censuses. These also are located according to state.

Another part of the library collection to be appreciated is the collection of print-outs of Parish Registers of England. These are computerized lists of all names and dates within that parish, and for more convenient use, they have been alphabetized. The parishes covered by this collection are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amplhill Parish</td>
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<td>Bedfordshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arncliffe Parish</td>
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<td>Yorkshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bentham Parish</td>
<td>Christenings 1673-1812</td>
<td>Yorkshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Billingham Parish</td>
<td>Christenings 1570-1875</td>
<td>Durham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birtley Parish</td>
<td>Christenings 1728-1875</td>
<td>Northumberland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bishopwearmouth Parish</td>
<td>Christenings 1567-1812</td>
<td>Durham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishopwearmouth Parish</td>
<td>(2 books)</td>
<td>Durham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Castlechurch Parish</td>
<td>Christenings 1568-1812</td>
<td>Staffordshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Rounton Parish</td>
<td>1595-1837</td>
<td>Yorkshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fewston Parish</td>
<td>Christenings 1593-1812</td>
<td>Yorkshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gargrove Parish</td>
<td>1558-1812</td>
<td>Yorkshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grinton Parish in Swalesdale</td>
<td>Christenings 1569-1814</td>
<td>Yorkshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halifax Parish</td>
<td>Christenings 1538-1593</td>
<td>Yorkshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Coley and North Owram Congregational Christenings 1644-1752)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Haydon Bridge Parish</td>
<td>Christenings 1654-1812</td>
<td>Northumberland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An exciting facet of the genealogical collection located in the main room is the Computer File Index (CFI). The index consists of individual names and dates collected from several sources which have been used for church information and stored in the giant computer in Salt Lake City. While all the details one might wish for are not necessarily there, much is, with the further possibility that the information located there may guide you to other people interested in the same line. These records are found on microfiche cards, and two microfiche readers are available for use. To use this file, you must first locate the proper locality. The index is divided into regions, such as: North America (United States and Canada), England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and the Channel Isles. Within the regions for England, the microfiche cards are arranged by shire (county), for the United States by state, and Canada by province. For all other areas the microfiche cards are arranged by country.

After determining the location, you can find names of specific individuals arranged alphabetically by surname and then by given name. The surname will be found alphabetized under the standard spelling for that surname. A cross reference is found from the actual spelling to the standard spelling, which is marked with an asterisk (*). Each name has been assigned a Batch Number, and from this you can obtain additional information on the individual entry, as well as the name and address of the person submitting the information. As further information becomes available to the church, this file system will be updated. Therefore, it is a reference tool that should be used continuously.

The large room also contains a number of genealogical aid books which patrons of the library can use as reference or which they may purchase. However, this is not a lending library and books cannot be removed from the building. The room is equipped with a copy machine, and desired material can be duplicated for a nominal cost.

The second room of the library is a genealogist’s treasure house. In addition to six microfilm readers, this room houses several large file cabinets containing a wide scope of microfilms. Of prime interest is the card catalogue file on microfilm. You will find cards for all family history books currently on film that are located at the Salt Lake Library and available on loan to the local branch facilities. In addition to family histories there are card catalogues’ of additional sources, listed according to locations. Some locations categorized include: Albania, Andorra, Antiqua, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, the Azores, Bahamas, Belorussia, Bermuda, Belgium, Bulgaria,
Cyprus, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands, Netherland Antilles, New Zealand, Poland, Romania, Russia, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland, South Africa, United States and the West Indies.

After discovering the location of your search, you can read the catalogue entry of each book under that location, determine whether it will contain the information you are seeking and whether the film of that book is available to be ordered. By filling out an order form and paying the cost of obtaining the film, you will be notified upon the film’s arrival in the library. Then you can call and reserve a microfilm reader. Films are available for a two week period, but for an added charge they can be placed on indefinite loan. Such films may be made available to other researchers in the building, provided the original borrower is not using them. For this reason, check the films already filed under specific locations to see if they might be related to your needs.

The Tampa branch library has a variety of microfilms on different countries. For Great Britain and Scotland, there is an 1851 census and copies of parish information from a wide area. Available is Boyd’s Marriage Index of England. Although Boyd was unable to complete the recording of all marriages in England, this is still an excellent resource tool. It is indexed according to both bride and groom. For Sweden there are District Court Record Registers (Indexes) and church records – births, marriages, deaths – for a number of areas, including Stockholm. Norway’s section includes some parish registers. There are films on the Orkney Islands and Western Scotland. Italian records cover the Protestant Churches of the Piedmonte Parish as well as early records (1699-1888) of Villara Pellise and others of Ville S’eche for 1838-1841. There are several films containing birth records of the Netherlands from 1721 through 1842. You should be aware that, inasmuch as the films are copies of record from the various countries, they are written in the language and style of that country and may require additional assistance in reading and translation. This is your responsibility as the patron ordering the film.

Films on indefinite loan for areas of the United States are placed according to location, and the Tampa library has quite a number of these currently available for the use of visitors. A number of national and state censuses are on microfilm. These are generally not complete censuses but may be sporadic and confined to areas of interest to the person who placed them on indefinite loan. Many states and counties have films of early court probate records and vital records of marriages, births and deaths. For the South, there are Florida films on deceased veterans for some areas, cemetery records, tombstone inscriptions, tax rolls, prints of early newspapers, family records, town meetings minutes, records of deeds, sales of ships and crew listings of English and Spanish vessels. In addition to census records, the Georgia section has vital records for some counties, deeds and mortgages, church records, wills, indexes to land and property, cemetery records, homestead records, land lottery grants, probate records and administrators’ bonds. Kentucky has quite a few rolls of county censuses, plus marriage records, school censuses, guardian bonds for Hancock County, and records on Franklin, Boone, and Mercer counties. Louisiana films are almost non-existent; there is only one soundex roll. Mississippi has census records. Along with government and state census records, North Carolina contains pension applications, pension roll indexes, and a tax list for 1720-1779. There is an index to wills
and an inventory of estates and wills for Duplin County. North Carolina also has muster rolls, soldiers of the War of 1812 and records and correspondence of the Church of England dated in the 1700’s. Also, there are numerous rolls on information for Ashe, Anson, Beaufort, Bertie, and Warren counties. South Carolina has a limited number of census records as do Tennessee and Texas. Virginia has census information and indexes to patent and land grants. West Virginia has some census records along with films on vital records, wills and inventories.

Dealing with the Midwest, Illinois material primarily consists of census records. In addition, there is a microfilmed copy of the *Warsaw Newspaper Signal* from 1847 to 1853, and an adjutant general’s report concerning the Civil War. For Indiana there are a number of census records, an index to marriages (1848-1920), and an index to death records, birth records and registered voters for Fountain County. Indiana films are limited and seem to cover only Jasper county, with marriages, deaths and births from 1865-1920. Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Michigan, Nebraska, and Missouri have census records. Wisconsin has only 1860 records. An interested person has obtained films containing national censuses for Ohio, with others on grave registries and soldiers buried in that state, vital records, tombstones, probate records and guardian dockets.

In the Northeast, Maine and Vermont have limited census records primarily of York and Penobscot counties, and there are some limited vital records, rolls on meeting minutes, intentions of marriage, civil records and land and property taxes for some areas. Maryland has limited census films, inventories, an index to various counties around 1754, and a slave schedule. The Massachusetts section contains census and vital records. There are town records, cemetery records, and census and vital records for New Hampshire. New Jersey has rolls on church records and historical quarterlies. New York is limited to some census rolls along with one small section of a passenger index. Quaker church records, along with births and burials, grantor indexes, marriage records, wills, orphan court records and mortality schedules are available for some Pennsylvania areas. Rhode Island has DAR records, family records, bibles and wills.

Although this composes the bulk of information in the second room, local genealogists hoping to save vital information as well as to perform a community service have been given permission to copy funeral home records of the J. L. Reed and the A. P. Boza funeral homes. These are also available for the researcher.

This is only an introduction to the services available at the Tampa branch of the Genealogical Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. To really get the picture, visit it!
BOOK REVIEWS

Sketches From a Younger Florida. By Howard Hartley. (Clearwater: Citcom Printing, 1978. $1.95)

The ten stories in Howard Hartley’s *Sketches From a Younger Florida* appeared in the magazine, *Beach Life*, and were written when Hartley was in his 80’s. An ex-newspaper, radio-news, and public relations man, he came to the Tampa-Clearwater area in the 1920’s; in later years he considered himself a native Floridian.

“Newcomers” and “Longtimers” both will enjoy the sketch of Count Odet Phillipe’s life before 1834, and the following years, after he settled with his family near Safety Harbor. Now this area is known as Phillipe Park, beautifully situated on the waters of upper Old Tampa Bay.

The third Duke of Sutherland, well known in the United States as well as Europe, came to the Tarpon Springs area in the late 1880’s bringing romance and glamour. He built a mansion on the shore of Lake Butler (now Lake Tarpon). Hartley writes of the gay times and excursions enjoyed by the Duke and his friends for the few years he lived in the area and before he returned to his homeland, England.

Hartley writes in an informal, easy style about his stint as an Air Raid Warden for Clearwater in 1942. In this story he tells about the Clearwater War Production Pool that was responsible for turning out ammunition boxes for the War Production Board. When a new contract was not forthcoming, Mayor Seavy suggested that they forget the ammo boxes and manufacture baby playpens, which they did. Remember the wartime baby boom?

There are seven more stories in *Sketches From A Younger Florida* that stir the memories of earlier times in Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties. The reader will find all the sketches informative, and written in a style that will appeal to all ages. The small paperback book is easy to hold; the print bold enough for no eye strain; a book to pick up for just one story if one’s time is limited, or for many hours of pleasure. Howard Hartley's journalistic style makes the stories come alive.

Josephine Dill


In 1977, Florida agribusiness produced over 363,150 tons of tomatoes, as well as 192,000 tons of refined sugar, 1½ million tons of ground crops, and more than 10½ million tons of citrus fruit. A contingent of some 150,000 farm workers quite literally shouldered the burden of this near $900 million dollars-worth of foodstuffs, helping to make Florida agriculture the nation’s second-most important producer of perishables and Florida agribusinesses the second-most prosperous farms in the country. During the past twenty years, myriad news media efforts have helped to map the bleak and bewildering twists and turns of the little-known, back-rural route those farm workers have had to follow; roads that have interminably led to the most visible and haunting
symbol of their plight – the migrant labor camp. Now, Patrick D. Smith has added to Florida’s accumulation of exposés the novel, Angel City – his attempt to dramatize the harsh realities and ironies of migrant farm laborers and their most human implications.

Jared Teeter, the protagonist of Angel City, is a man to whom Smith embues an abundance of rustic simplicity and West Virginian “mountain pride.” Finally forced off his land in the early 1970's by the increasing unprofitability of small farm units, Teeter packs his pregnant wife, his teenage daughter and son into a fourteen-year-old Dodge van and heads for Homestead, Florida. Their entrance into the “migrant stream” is indeed illustrative of the common, if not archetypal, crises constantly faced by farm workers: the dot-to-dot picture of a trip in which every break in the line represents another misfortune – a broken water pump, a flat tire, a ticket for a faulty brake light; the depletion of their limited cash upon “a generator that all the while had been on a shelf in the rear of the garage but that was now priced higher,” upon two weeks-worth of cold meats, crackers, and warm sodas; and finally the inability to secure shelter and work upon arrival in a strange and hostile town. Tired and anxious, his mountain-pride affronted by the dependencies and abasements of migrant poverty, Jared Teeter’s hopes soar as he is recruited by a gas station attendant for a “permanent”, picking job with Silas Creedy.

A huge man, “his hair red and short-cropped . . . his face almost as red as his hair,” Creedy ushers the Teeters behind his Mark IV into Angel City where they settle into the degrading conditions of the camp and the daily and hourly routines of the work – the pre-dawn lineups at the outhouse in anticipation of the shadowless terrain of the fields, the monotonous aching of the small of their backs and the backs of their thighs, and the continual fatigue produced by the heat of cheerless evening cook-fires, rotgut wine, and windowless rooms. Despite the lock on the camp gate, the repeated warnings of the Black man, Cy who befriends him, and two encounters with Creedy’s ledger of debts and camp henchmen, it takes Teeter nearly a month to realize fully that he and his family are indeed prisoners of Angel City – the row of dingy cinder block barracks isolated by miles of south Florida marsh and crop lands and an eight-foot high, barbed-wire fence.

Though Smith does well in describing the process by which the Teeter family is dehumanized, he falls far short of accurately interpreting the dynamics behind that process. Angel City is isolated not only by location and locks, but also by a system of agricultural production that relies upon the very existence of labor camps or squalid “quarters,” upon poverty amidst plenty, upon the powerlessness of its victims. What Smith depicts in Angel City is peonage, a system of exploitation by which an individual is forced to work off debts through unwilling servitude, a system that was prevalent, if not the common practice, in the South for nearly a century. While, in the late 1800's, the Federal government outlawed peonage in an attempt to free the agricultural peasantry of the southwest, the recently-defeated states of the Confederacy passed “Black Codes” that effectively controlled their newly-emancipated farm labor force. The outrageous terms and conditions of forced labor for “vagrancy” or minor offenses and the plantation stores that raised prices (and thus debts) by 110%, recreated slavery. State statutes that outlawed forced servitude and convict labor were passed within the lifetime of the older generation of Florida farm workers. Though progress and the sinew of the farm labor community have mitigated the worst barbarities of the system, it must always be remembered that the origins of Southern agricultural labor relations are in slavery and peonage, that the racism and economic expediency
of that system have yet to be eradicated, and that it is the economic, political, and social superstructure of the system that cloaks both an Angel City and a camp of modern mobile units in the same shroud.

Smith unfortunately lets the buck fall at the feet of the greedy Creedy. He completely ignores the social and political realities that circumvent the laws regulating health conditions in fields and camps, child labor, minimum wage guarantees, and labor contractor practices. (One is reminded of the case of Florida contractor Wardell Williams who, within this decade, was convicted of murder, was allowed by the court upon the favorable testimony of his agricultural employer to serve his sentence in the off-seasons, and who is now facing peonage charges.) But the greatest fault, and perhaps danger, of Angel City is Smith’s characterization of the farm labor force. The fact that he chose to rely upon the enslavement of a white whose salient characteristic was his “mountain-pride” implies that the non-white workers who have endured the conditions which Angel City seeks to exemplify must have no pride left. Such a view smacks of being a liberal rationalization for a racial and class stereotype. All farm workers are not dehumanized by virtue of the fact they are farm workers; indeed, the dignity of their struggle and perserverance speaks to their strength. Not all labor camps are slave labor camps; the real tragedy lies in the fact that the men and women who end up in peonage camps were most usually “killed” before they ever got there and seek the safety of a barbed wire fence as refuge from the cruelties, the constant insecurities and crises of the system outside the gate.

Becky Acuna

*Early Medical History of Pinellas Peninsula: A Quadricentennial Epoch.* by Frederick Eberson, (St. Petersburg: Valkyrie Press, 1978, $10)

The subtitle of Dr. Eberson’s delightful monograph reflects the breadth of his work. In 190 rather small pages, he meticulously and lovingly examines the medical history of the Pinellas Peninsula from the Precolumbian Timucuan Indians (300 BC) until the present day.

Although written in a sprightly personal style, this narrative has been researched exhaustively, and the numerous references are placed conveniently on each page along with the subject matter. The illustrations alone are more than worth the modest cost of the book.

Even the most avid students of medical Floridana will discover many well-documented gems gathered by Dr. Eberson. Just to name a few:

*There was no physician on the Pinellas Peninsula until 1883, and only nine by 1912.*

*Between 1874 and 1885, the lower tip of the peninsula was touted in medical literature by reputable American and English physicians as the ideal site for a “Health City,” in spite of the fact that the development of that area, as well as all of Florida, was paralyzed by the deadly triad of yellow fever, typhoid, and malaria.*

*In 1905-1910, Tarpon Springs dominated the peninsula in population.*

*Cedar was once one of the most common trees of the west coast from Cedar Keys to Venice.*
As late as 1914, before the passage of the first Medical Practice Act, at least half of the practicing physicians of Florida were “fakes and quacks” with purchased diplomas and licenses.

The disease which most often brought the hopefully convalescent patient, such as the nature poet, Sidney Lanier, to Florida was tuberculosis.

These and many more medical-historical pearls are here for the reading.

The final chapters, biographies of sixteen pioneer Pinellas physicians, are replete with personal and medical details, and bring the writing into modern focus.

The innovative and efficient arrangement of the index in this excellent book makes merely looking things up very pleasant.

James M. Ingram


Having lived in the Panhandle region of north Florida for several years, I have traveled through St. Marks and Newport several times. This book, Daniel Ladd: Merchant Prince of Frontier Florida, is mainly a historical account of the economic growth of these communities. Because of my familiarity with north Florida I enjoyed this work immensely.

The author, Jerrell H. Shofner, has utilized ledgers and store accounts of Daniel Ladd to weave an interesting story of economic growth in one area prior to the American Civil War. Daniel Ladd moved from Maine to Florida in 1833 at the age of sixteen. After serving an apprenticeship at Hamlins’ commission house in Magnolia, he opened his own store in Newport. From his base at Newport, Daniel Ladd became involved in many business operations. He also became one of the largest factoring agents in the South. Along with his store and many other businesses Daniel Ladd was indeed a merchant prince!

Although this work concentrates on the north Florida Panhandle region there are several connections with the Tampa Bay area. Planters in the Tampa Bay region bought supplies from Ladd (p. 43). Ladd’s ship, the Spray, took mail, passengers, and freight from St. Marks to Cedar Key and Tampa (p. 61). For readers interested in local Florida history the book is excellent. It paints a picture of antebellum Florida and its agricultural importance. Daniel Ladd, like many other Floridians, never recovered financially from the changes brought by the Civil War.

Nancy L. Rachels
ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Hudson Branch of the Pasco County Library System has set aside the month of July to focus on local history, with displays of pictures and artifacts from the community. Plans are already in the organizing stage for the July 4th celebrations. Many of the events taking place will be sponsored by the Hudson Chamber of Commerce. By far, the most exciting is the Hudson Gopher Turtle races that are held at the school playgrounds. You are cordially invited to visit the library and view this interesting display, and at the same time, enjoy the festivities. For further information contact Loraine Cors, Librarian, Pasco County Library System, Hudson Branch, Hudson, Florida 33568.

Each year, the Polk County Historical and Genealogical Society hosts a Pioneer Dinner at the Bartow Country Club in which the remaining pioneers of the Polk County area are brought together for the dinner and associated events. This year the dinner will be held in June at the Bartow Country Club in Bartow, Florida. For further information on this event, contact Glen Hooker, Polk County Historical Society, Haines City, Florida.

The following is a list of upcoming events at the Pinellas County Historical Museum:

MAGNOLIA BLOSSOM BRUNCH - Saturday, August 30, 1980 The brunch is an afternoon fund raising event put on by the Pinellas County Historical Society. There will be a fashion show accompanied by a tour of the museum. The brunch will be held on the veranda of Seven Gables. A charge of $7.50 is requested. Tickets are limited.

COUNTRY JUBILEE - Saturday, October 4, 1980 The annual jubilee is held the first Saturday of each October. There will be old-time entertainment with refreshments. Arts and crafts displays highlight the day. Free to the public.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM - Wednesday, December 3, 1980 Christmas caroling and a church choir make this event a success every year. Refreshments provided by the Pinellas County Historical Society. Free to the public.

For further details on these and other upcoming events, please contact, Ken Ford, Director, Pinellas County Historical Museum, 11909 125th Street, Largo, Florida.

The Genealogical Society of Sarasota holds workshops each Friday in the conference room of the Selby Public Library, 1001 Blvd. of the Arts, Sarasota, Florida. Each month the focus of the workshop changes to a different area of the country. For further details contact Jean E. Wallace, 743-Birdsong Lane, Sarasota, FL 33581.
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

BECKY ACUNA is a former USF/New College student who has worked as an organizer within the farm labor community in Florida. She is currently working on a project funded by the Florida Endowment for the Humanities.

PHYLLIS BELNAP is a resident of Clearwater, Florida, who is active in local genealogy.

JAMES W. COVINGTON is Professor of History at the University of Tampa. He has written extensively on 19th Century Florida and is currently working on the history of Davis Island.

CECIL B. CURREY is Professor of History at the University of South Florida. He is author of various books on colonial history, religion and philosophy. His published works include *Road to Revolution* and *Code 72*.

JOSEPHINE DILL is a native of New Port Richey. She is actively involved in the history of the West coast of Florida.

MARK DRISCOLL is curator of exhibits at the Museum of Florida History in Tallahassee. He holds a master’s degree in architecture from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

MARIAN B. GODOWN is a resident of Fort Myers and co-author of *Yesterday’s Fort Myers*.

CHESTER HANDELMAN is a professor in the Department of History and Political Science at Broward Community College.

MARJORIE HAZEL is a resident of St. Petersburg who is active in local genealogy.

JAMES M. INGRAM is Professor and Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, College of Medicine, University of South Florida.

PETER D. KLINGMAN is an instructor of Social Science and Chairman of Faculty Affairs at Daytona Beach Community College. His published works include *Josiah Walls: Florida’s Black Congressman of Reconstruction*.

MARGARET ANNE LANE is the Curator of Education at the Museum of Florida History in Tallahassee. She completed graduate work in American History at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia.

NANCY L. RACHELS is Chairperson of the History/Political Science Department at Hillsborough Community College. She is currently writing a biography of Peter O. Knight.

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TAMPA BAY IN 1821

"Florida. From what we hear of Tampa Bay, though its shores are not now inhabited, it will probably contest with Pensacola the honor of being ultimately fixed upon as the southern naval depot of the United States. The bay is said to be easier of access and to have more water than that of Pensacola; the neighboring country is fertile and abounds with live oak - and a short canal will unite the bay with the great river St. Johns." Nile's Weekly Register, June 30, 1821. [Note by Jack D. L. Holmes: In 1821 a canal was suggested, but not built at that time. See Charles E. Bennett, "Early History of the CrossFlorida Barge Canal," Florida Historical Quarterly, XLV, No. 2 October, 1966, 1351.
WHAT THIS STATE NEEDS IS A GOOD HANGIN’

"Take Hillsborough County as a criterion and it is not worse than other counties in Florida and the entire south. The jail is crowded with criminals of all kinds. They have been tried and retried and convicted and reconvicted, but what does it amount to? People get tired waiting for justice. Astute attorneys take advantage of so many technicalities of the law and when a murderer has a little money and puts his case in the hands of an able counsel, his liberty and life are rarely disturbed. So unless Judge Lynch presides occasionally, a hanging is as rare as fried chicken at a second-class boarding house." *Tampa Morning Tribune*, July 30, 1897.
MANATEE COUNTY FLORIDA

OWN and have for sale a tract of land subdivided in ten-acre tracts, situated on and by the Manatee River in Manatee County, Florida. A soil survey made by an expert agronomist shows that we have high-grade soils, truck and combination works. This property is accessible to both water and rail transportation, is in the growing area, close to the center of population of the country, and the important fruit and truck centers of the West Coast. The property adjoins a town-site on the water-front where building lots can be had and where tourists can spend the winter econmically and enjoy boating, fishing and bathing in salt water and be in close touch with all Tampa Bay and Gulf resorts as well as the cities on the river. Our Club House is at the disposal of those who desire to investigate. The banks of the river at this point are one foot above high tide and it is one of the most delightful spots in the State. Prices are moderate and terms easy on either cash or land or the two items. There are people here now from several States. Booklet and views mailed on application. Also copy of soil survey report.

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(From Semi-Tropic Florida Development Yearbook, 1916, issued by the Tampa Morning Tribune)