Sunland Tribune 26/01

Tampa Historical Society

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FRONT COVER: Election Day, September 2, 1935, a 60" x 48" painting by Dr. Ferdie Pacheco. Painted in 1995, the artist states in his book, PACHECO'S Art of Ybor City, "this painting boasts the longest subtitle I've ever used: 'The day the governor called in the National Guard in order to protect the citizen's rights to vote twice.' This true-life event was called 'Tampa's Longest Day' in Hampton Dunn's award-winning column for the Tampa Tribune." Dr. Pacheco is a physician, artist, boxing commentator, historian, playwright, author of five books, and Ybor City native. The editor of The Sunland Tribune and the Tampa Historical Society are extremely grateful for permission to reproduce his painting on the cover.

BACK COVER: Cover of "The Red Record of Senator Claude Pepper," a tabloid published by supporters of George Smathers during his successful 1950 campaign to unseat U.S. Senator Claude Pepper of Florida. (Courtesy of Special Collections, Library, University of South Florida.)
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As I end three terms as your president, please allow me to reflect on the seven years that I have spent on the board of directors. I came on the board at the end of George Howell's term in 1992 and served on the board under five strong, incredibly committed presidents: Chuck Jordan, Barbara Reeves, Charles Brown, Kyle VanLandingham, and Ralph Beaver. Serving on the board under such responsible and visionary leaders was a real privilege. THS benefited enormously by their dedication and commitment. I also must acknowledge the incredible men and women I served with on the board who shared with me their knowledge and expertise of the workings of our Society, its history and its meaning to the community. They helped me grow in my role as a board member and later as president and made me a far better president than I would have been without their wise advice and counsel.

Lois Latimer, a founder, board member, treasurer and lifetime member of Tampa Historical Society provided endless amounts of support, encouragement, historical perspective and levelheadedness at all times and under all circumstances. Lois could always be counted on as she unselfishly served several boards of directors, officers, the membership, and the public over the past three decades. Thank you Lois for being there for this president.

Mary Judy Brown has steadfastly served as board secretary during my tenure as president and has done a remarkable job. Liz Dunham serves as our treasurer - much more than writing checks and balancing the books - and has performed her endless list of office duties effortlessly, without delay or hesitation. To each of you, including special friends in the history community including Jeff Gordon, Lester Olson, Arsenio Sanchez, Leland Ilawes, Dr. Gary Mormino, Cynthia Gandee, Susan Carter, and the staffs of the Henry B. Plant Museum and Tampa Bay History Center, please accept my sincere gratitude.

The year 2000 has been fun and filled with exciting THS programs and activities. Your Society is in good financial condition and you can be proud of the Peter O. Knight House, its grounds and our collection.

We hosted two successful Spring events during the City of Tampa's expanded Archives Awareness Month in April. We held our annual Open House and revived the Old Timer's Day that was so popular with members in past years. At the end of the month THS hosted the annual Oaklawn Ramble in a solemn and moving ceremony honoring Tampa's mayors who are buried at the cemetery.

In July, the board began an informal information-gathering process to help determine our future and, perhaps, closer relationship with the Tampa Bay History Center. We have acknowledged our formal commitment to the Museum's goals with Board resolutions over the years, but a closer alliance may be to our mutual benefit. TBHC's relationships with the public school system, colleges, universities, local governments, foundations and private individuals portend a bright future for the Tampa Bay History Center. THS can only gain by a greater sharing of our combined wealth of resources.

In October, we welcomed guests to our Fall Open House. Again, we enjoyed the participation of military reenactors who added historical authenticity and color.
Twice this year THS had the honor of facilitating the dedication of new historical markers. Congregation Schaarai Zedek proudly unveiled their marker on Swann Avenue during a wonderful, music-filled ceremony of history and prayer. The Society also arranged for a marker for the Rotary Club of Tampa to honor the World War I dead who are memorialized in the two obelisk-style monuments and highway originally dedicated in 1921. One of the two monuments was recently reinstalled in a beautiful grassy park at Memorial Highway and Kennedy Boulevard, and the new historical marker stands nearby.

All in all, it has been a busy year of events, good friends, new members and great hopes and plans for the future of our Society. Just as we are experiencing the extraordinary twists and turns of this historic 2000 national presidential election contest, three compelling articles in the 200() volume of The Sunland Tribune bring into sharp focus Tampa's own colorful and chaotic election history - great reading in light of Florida's central role in this year's disputed balloting.

It has been a great and humbling experience to serve as your president. I have made terrific friends, met interesting men and women, and have always been proud of my association with THS. As in years past, thank you for every small and large contribution you have made to the Tampa Historical Society.

Your new Board and officers will provide clear direction and strong leadership in the year ahead. I look forward to their many accomplishments and your increased participation. My final request: Get more involved with THS and volunteer your time. You will be as richly rewarded as my family and I have been.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Sincerely,

Frank R. North
Tampa Historical Society
2000 Board of Directors

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Frank R. North

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Paul E. Camp
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Lois Latimer

Frank R. North
Editor
The Sunland Tribune
Robert Kerstein

During the first two decades of the Twentieth Century, Tampa's business and professional community was politically active and influential, and the Board of Trade, which Tampa's business community organized in 1885 to promote growth, was a key organization. Even before the turn of the century, however, political conflict had surfaced within the city's civic-commercial elite and competing political organizations sought office, sometimes forming coalitions with labor supporters. Members of the civic-commercial elite cooperated in organizing the White Municipal Party prior to the 1910 local elections, which effectively disenfranchised African-Americans from the most important local elections.

Beginning in 1910, a political organization headed by D.B. McKay prevailed in local elections. This organization was often opposed by competing interests, including the Socialist Party, but McKay adequately incorporated segments of the civic-commercial elite, labor, and the Latin community in structuring a governing coalition.

Political Factions: 1900-1908

In 1900, Peter O. Knight, the politically influential attorney who was then serving as the state attorney for Hillsborough County, and who was associated with the Tampa Electric Company and several other major corporations, was on the losing side of the political convict with the Citizens' League, an organization that had formed prior to the 1898 election. The Citizens' League was successful in 1900 in gaining control of Tampa's government. The League first defeated Knight and his allies in contests for the Hillsborough County Democratic Executive Committee, and then built support for a slate in the municipal elections that was generally unopposed.¹

The Citizens’ League included among its leadership non-Latin working class citizens, as well as members of the commercial-civic elite. Its platform called for significant changes in public policy, advocating city ownership of the waterworks and lighting plants.² The platform also supported free school facilities in each ward, opposed the "giving away of franchises" by the city and emphasized the need for fair elections and the honest counting of ballots, a reaction to charges of vote fraud in the 1898 elections.³

The League’s reformist bent was further indicated by its invitations both to Mayor Samuel "Golden Rule" Jones, the social reform mayor of Toledo, and Socialist leader Eugene V. Debs, to speak in Tampa.⁴ Debs visited Tampa in February as a guest of the Citizens’ League and of several labor unions. He was escorted around the city by William Frecker, an incumbent City Council member and a Citizens’ League candidate for reelection to the Council.⁵

The Tampa Morning Tribune was the primary vehicle in which those opposed to the Citizens’ League, including Tribune publisher Wallace F. Stovall and Knight, expressed their views.⁶ The Tribune characterized League activists as consisting of corporate lawyers, Republicans, independents, and sorehead Democrats. Knight publicly contended, when it still appeared that the candidates of the Citizens’
League would face opposition in the municipal election, that the efforts by the League to appeal to the working class of the community were a facade. In reality, he argued, the election was primarily a battle over which set of corporate interests would control the city.7

It is true that competing members of the commercial-civic elite were on different sides of the contest involving the Citizens’ League. Still, the Citizens’ League’s president, secretary, and treasurer were all carpenters, rather than being representatives of major corporate interests.8 Moreover, representatives of the Citizens’ League, including Francis L. Wing, its mayoral candidate, unsuccessfully argued for the elimination of poll tax requirement for voting in the primary elections for county officers, indicating a desire to expand the franchise to lower-income citizens.9

Knight by no means accepted the election results of 1900 as the end of the battle; rather, the election was only the beginning. In his efforts to influence the new government on behalf of his corporate clients, Knight claimed to have had a fair degree of success. In August, Knight claimed that he was now "in line" with the City Council about as much as he had been under Mayor Frank C. Bowyer administration.10

In reality, the Citizens’ League government did not entirely defer to Knight or to the prevailing powers on the Board of Trade. For example, in January 1901 the City Council asked the city attorney to take action against Tampa Electric because it had violated city ordinances.11 The Council even voted to award a franchise to John P. Martin and Associates, a competitor with Tampa Electric, to build a trolley system, as well as an electric power plant.12 In addition, the Citizens’ League government supported a series of changes to Tampa’s 1899 city charter, a charter that had primarily been the work of Mayor Bowyer, city attorney C.C. Whitaker, and Knight. These changes included the elimination of the Commission of Public Works, whose members gained office in elections where only freeholders could vote. Knight later contended that if the legislature had adopted the charter amendments, Tampa Electric would have "swamped . . . by the payment of taxes and fees to this city."13 The charter amendments were successfully opposed by the Board of Trade in its lobbying before the state legislature.14 Still, in September 1901, Knight expressed his strong displeasure with the Citizens’ League government, complaining that there was a "secret organization composed of anarchists, who are running this city and county government . . ."15

In 1902, the Good Government League, a new political organization, mobilized support for its candidates against the Citizens’ League. Their respective mayoral candidates represented different backgrounds and occupations. The Good Government League backed James McKay, Jr., a descendent of a prominent pioneer family, a founding member of the Board of Trade, and a two-term member of the Florida Senate during the 1880s.16 McKay defeated the Citizens’ League candidate, Charles A. Wimsett, a leader of the Florida State Federation of Labor.17 Only one candidate of the Citizens’ League was successful in winning a seat on the City Council and none were elected to the Commission of Public Works.18 In fact, no incumbent City Council members or members of the Commission of Public Works continued in office after the 1902 elections.
### TABLE 1. MAYORAL ELECTIONS 1898-1908

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>VOTER TURNOUT</th>
<th>MAYORAL CANDIDATES</th>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>PERCENT OF VOTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>F. Bowyer</td>
<td>Citizens' League</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W. J. Dombrowsky</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F. Salomonson</td>
<td></td>
<td>24.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td></td>
<td>F. Wing</td>
<td>Citizens' League</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Linopposed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>1,905</td>
<td>J. McKay, Jr.</td>
<td>Good Govt. League</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. A. Wimsett</td>
<td>Citizens' League</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>2,214</td>
<td>F. A. Salomonson</td>
<td>Citizens' League</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W. H. Frecker</td>
<td></td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W. G. Mason</td>
<td>Voters' Union</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S. Elliott</td>
<td>Socialist</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>2,576</td>
<td>W. H. Frecker</td>
<td>Mun. Own. Assn.</td>
<td>39.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A. W. Cuscanen</td>
<td></td>
<td>32.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F. C. Bowyer</td>
<td></td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>4,041</td>
<td>F. Wing</td>
<td></td>
<td>51.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W. H. Frecker</td>
<td></td>
<td>47.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. Hankins</td>
<td>Socialist</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: TMT, 8 June 1898; 4 June 1902; 8 June 1904; 6 June 1906; 3 June 1908

### TABLE 2. WHITE MUNICIPAL PRIMARY ELECTIONS 1910-1916 AND GENERAL ELECTIONS 1912 AND 1916

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>VOTER TURNOUT</th>
<th>MAYORAL ELECTION</th>
<th>MAYORAL CANDIDATES</th>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>PERCENT OF VOTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>3,426</td>
<td>PRIMARY</td>
<td>D. B. McKay</td>
<td></td>
<td>42.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W. H. Frecker</td>
<td></td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>J. N. Holmes</td>
<td></td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>3,592</td>
<td>RUNOFF</td>
<td>D. B. McKay</td>
<td></td>
<td>51.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W. H. Frecker</td>
<td></td>
<td>48.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>3,216</td>
<td>PRIMARY</td>
<td>D. B. McKay</td>
<td></td>
<td>55.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W. H. Frecker</td>
<td></td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>H. P. Baya</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>4,034</td>
<td>PRIMARY</td>
<td>D. B. McKay</td>
<td></td>
<td>56.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F. Bowyer</td>
<td></td>
<td>43.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>3,039</td>
<td>GENERAL</td>
<td>D. B. McKay</td>
<td>WHITE MUN PTY.</td>
<td>70.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. L. Robinson</td>
<td>SOCIALIST</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>2,980</td>
<td>GENERAL</td>
<td>D. B. McKay</td>
<td>WHITE MUN PTY.</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>K. L. Harter</td>
<td>SOCIALIST</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: TMT, 7 April 1910; 17 April 1910; 9 April 1912; 4 June 1912; 18 April 1916; 6 June 1916
Labor leaders were not united in backing Wimsett. Frank Bell, who had been president of the Central Trades and Labor Assembly, comprised largely of AFL-affiliated unions, publicly supported McKay and the Good Government League. Bell had headed the labor assembly during the conflict in the cigar industry in 1900 and 1901 between La Resistencia, the radical, immigrant-led union, and the AFL-affiliated Cigar Makers International Union (CMIU). More generally, however, McKay’s supporters included many of Tampa’s commercial-civic elite.

Others from the commercial-civic elite supported the Citizens’ League. In addition, several union people were in the leadership ranks of the Citizens’ League, as indicated by its nomination of Wimsett for mayor. W.A. Platt, the former secretary of the CMIU, who now clearly was at odds with Bell, was on its executive committee, and the other executive committee members were also working class.

The Tribune and other McKay supporters advanced a theme similar to many boosters of the New South during this era, criticizing efforts to array labor versus capital, and arguing that labor and capital had to "go hand in hand together." The Tribune emphasized that a victory for the Good Government League would invite capital to the community and would encourage public improvements. After the victory of virtually the entire slate of the Good Government League, the Tribune emphasized that those who have money to invest will not hesitate, and that there would be no limit to the growth and development of the city.

The Good Government League did not remain as an organized group for the 1904 election, but many of its supporters rallied behind the candidacy of former mayor Frederick Salomonson after McKay chose not to run for reelection. Salomonson shared a similar perspective with McKay, emphasizing the need for growth, and also noting the importance of providing for public investment to service growth. This position was supported by the Tribune, which argued in an editorial that Tampa was progressing in terms of business and housing, but that the government had done little over the years to provide infrastructure services. Salomonson reacted explicitly against the "moral" elements, emphasizing that the cigar industry was the basis for the economic wealth of the city and that cigar workers were accustomed to the lax enforcement of liquor and gambling laws. Thus, the strong enforcement of "morality" and economic growth were perhaps antithetical.

The "moral" issue was added to the agenda largely because of the Voters’ Union, a new organization which nominated W.G. Mason for mayor, a dentist who had served on the City Council during the Citizens’ League’s administration. Mason advocated the strong enforcement of gambling and liquor laws, and emphasized that Salomonson was supportive of an "open" community, meaning that he would not oppose gambling, liquor, and prostitution. Some former Citizens’ League activists now backed this new organization. It shared the Citizens’ League position calling for the public ownership of utilities and whose leaders characterized Salomonson as being the corporation candidate backed by the Tribune and Peter O. Knight. The Citizens’ League, however, nominated William Frecker to run for mayor. Although Frecker secured more votes in the 1904 election than Mason, Salomonson won by a considerable margin and virtually all of the City Council candidates who supported Salomonson also
were elected. Only one incumbent Council member ran for reelection, and he was defeated. After this election there was a new mayor and a complete turnover of representatives on the Council.

Salomonson did not run for reelection in 1906; nor did the Citizens’ League continue as an organization. William Frecker continued his quest for mayor and was now successful, defeating Frank Bowyer and Arthur Cuscaden, a businessman who had served on the City Council during the McKay administration. Several of the candidates of Frecker’s new organization, the Municipal Ownership Association (MOA), were elected to the City Council, in an election in which only one incumbent was reelected.

Neither of Tampa’s two major newspapers supported Frecker. The Tribune backed Bowyer, emphasizing that those who were supporting his candidacy were the same people who built the city and would continue to allow it to prosper. D.B. McKay and his Times endorsed Cuscaden, contending that he was a moderate compared to both of his opponents. According to the Times, Bowyer was representing corporate interests and the "extreme" elements in the city were supporting Frecker, a claim that was belied by Frecker’s significant business support.

Frecker was successful in building a coalition that included some former Citizens’ League activists, segments of the commercial-civic elite, and some union activists. A labor-political league formed that pledged its support for Frecker, and J.A. Roberts, the successful MOA candidate for City Council in Ward Four, was a secretary of the cigarmakers’ union. Voters also elected at least two other union members to the Council, one from the Carpenters’ Union and another from the Painters’ Union.

This labor support was vital to Frecker’s victory, because large numbers of Tampa’s laborers both in and out of the cigar industry were organized. The Tribune contended that Tampa was "one of the strongest union strongholds in the country." Over 5,000 workers marched in the Labor Day parade in 1907, including representatives of the Women’s Union Label League and the Building Trades Council, as well as members of unions representing carpenters, painters, brewers, and printers, as well as cigarmakers.

Although Peter O. Knight had endorsed Bowyer in the 1906 election, at least some of Knight’s interests were well served during the Frecker administration. Yet, Frecker and the City Council sometimes took stands and pursued policy that was critical of corporate interests. Frecker even argued early in 1907 that the private corporations that owned the lighting and water plants should "surrender" them to the city and suggested that only the manipulations of the lobbyists and legislators in Tallahassee had prevented this from happening. The Council did pass ordinances reducing the rates that were charged by the Tampa Waterworks Company and the Peninsular Phone Company, although both of these efforts were overturned in the courts. The council also unanimously condemned three businesses that were facing a strike from union members.

In the mayoral election in 1908, Frecker was narrowly defeated in his bid for reelection by Wing, who had served as mayor from 1900 through 1902, when both he and Frecker were active in the Citizens’ League.
played a role in this race, and both apparently had disbanded prior to the campaign. In fact, there was little distinction between the appeals of Wing and Frecker during the campaign. Both claimed to support growth, recognized the need for more public services, and said they would befriend labor. Although several citizens who had been politically active in earlier campaigns supported a particular candidate, the Tribune actually took no stand, noting that each was a good candidate. 38

Political Factions: 1910-1918

By 1910, D.B. McKay, the owner and publisher of the Tampa Daily Times, the Tribune's primary competitor, began to participate in local politics much more actively than only through his work on the newspaper. He formed a loose-knit political organization that participated in political activity in Tampa from 1910 through 1935. McKay was first elected mayor in 1910 and remained in office until 1920. He was again elected in 1927 and served until 1931.

McKay was one of those who was active in forming the White Municipal Party before the 1910 election. Essentially, this was the Democratic Party reorganized at the local level so as to exclude the African-American population from playing a role in local electoral politics. From 1910 until well into the 1940s, the most important local election was the White Municipal Party primary, in which no African-Americans could vote. 39 According to some of its supporters, the "white primary" would reduce the "purchasable vote" in local elections. This was an ironic contention, given that political corruption became more ingrained in Tampa's political fabric during the decades following its adoption.

Locally, obstacles to black participation existed even before the adoption of the white primary. For example, Zachariah D. Greene, a black lawyer, tried unsuccessfully to get on the ballot for municipal judge in 1908. Although he had obtained enough signatures on a petition to appear on the ballot, he was told that his petition had been lost. 40 African-Americans, however, had registered to vote in sizable numbers prior to the formation of the white primary. In 1906, blacks comprised about 24% of the registered voters for the municipal election, a figure similar to their percentage of the total population. They constituted 33% of the registered voters in the First Ward, which included the downtown area, and 26% of the registered voters in Ward Two, north of downtown. 41 The Tribune contended that the "Negro was the balance of power" in some municipal elections. 42

Now, with the adoption of the white primary, a decisive step was taken to remove African-Americans from meaningful civic and political participation.

(Note: Superscript for endnote 43 omitted) 43

McKay's first electoral victory was in 1910 against Frecker and a third candidate. More voters cast ballots for McKay than for the other candidates in the white primary, but a runoff election was necessary due to the failure of any candidate to earn a majority of the votes. 44 In the runoff, McKay narrowly defeated Frecker. 45 In the general election, the Socialist candidate for mayor gained little support. Two Socialists also unsuccessfully ran for at-large seats for the City Council in the general election. 46

Prior to the primary, McKay gained the endorsement of several established business-professional men, although Reverend Joe Sherouse, McKay's campaign manager, was a union member. 47 Some of
Frecker’s long-time supporters from Tampa’s commercial-civic elite continued to back him in this race. Peter O. Knight, whom Frecker had referred to as a "boa constrictor" in an earlier campaign, but whose interests were well served when Frecker was mayor, endorsed Frecker. Still, Frecker emphasized during the campaign that he had strong union credentials, stressing that he had been active in the union movement in Chicago and that he had helped organize the clerk’s union in Tampa.

McKay’s campaign was designed to attract support from Tampa’s working class, as well as from the commercial-civic elite. For example, he advocated the municipal ownership of public utilities, claiming that cities such as Jacksonville had profited from providing lighting to their citizens. McKay also argued for the municipal ownership of the docks, contending that this would ensure that one corporation would not be able to shut out another from the facilities. Plus, he generally supported expanded public improvements to support growth.

In spite of McKay’s contention that he supported labor, Socialist Party activist S. Elliott challenged McKay in the general election. Elliott spoke out against the disfranchisement of blacks in the white primary, criticized "greedy real estate men," supported the referendum and recall in local elections, and called for public ownership of utilities. He had run for treasurer in the 1908 municipal election, and earned 407 votes, compared to the 41 votes that the Socialist candidate for mayor had garnered in that election. In his bid for mayor, Elliott gained fewer than three hundred votes, while McKay gained more than five times his amount.

The Tribune’s coverage of the general election focused on the issue of race, and showed clearly that Tribune publisher Stovall and candidate McKay were allies in the quest to limit any political influence of African-Americans in Tampa. The Tribune had not endorsed any candidate during the primary elections, but, of course, favored McKay against Elliott, and emphasized that its primary fear was that blacks would turn out in large numbers and support the Socialist candidate. In fact, prior to the election, the Tribune had noted that it had "been strongly hinted that, in case the negroes do attempt to elect a man over the party nominee, there will be trouble at the polls on election day." However, the paper announced in a headline after the election that the "Negro was Conspicuous by His Absence."

After the election, it became clear that McKay and Stovall were also allies in fighting striking workers in the cigar industry. In spite of McKay’s appeal to working-class voters during the election campaign, shortly after taking office he helped organize a citizens’ committee similar to one that he had been involved with in 1910. A strike and lockout in 1910 followed the demand of the Cigar Makers International Union (CMIU), the dominant union representing the workers, for a closed shop. Vigilante activity included the hanging of two Italians who had been arrested for shooting a bookkeeper in a cigar factory in West Tampa. It was never proven who actually participated in the hangings, but many business leaders expressed their support. Shortly afterwards, leading Board of Trade members, including West Tampa founder Hugh C. Macfarlane and Stovall, formed a citizens’ committee that engaged in several acts of violence and intimidation against striking workers.
Mayor McKay and members of Tampa’s commercial-civic elite who were on the side of McKay and Stovall during the 1910 electoral fray, now joined with many who had opposed them in the election, including Peter O. Knight, in supporting the cigar manufacturers against the CMIU. Many union members outside of the cigar industry vocally supported the cigar workers. Thus, competing elite factions in Tampa politics coalesced when the issue was articulated as labor versus capital in the cigar industry. McKay joined with others in Tampa’s business and professional community against both Latin and non-Latin union members in the community, some of whom had been his electoral supporters. During the strike, McKay hired citizens as “special police” to aid the citizens’ committee. According to one analysis, “arbitrary arrests, illegal searches, routine physical beatings, and flagrant violations of civil rights characterized the actions of the patrols.” This strike lasted several months, but the demand of the CMIU for a closed shop was defeated by the factory owners, who were organized into the Tampa Cigar Manufacturers’ Association.

In spite of this, McKay was successful in defeating Frecker and attorney H.P. Baya in the 1912 election. Due to a revised city charter that the state legislature adopted in May 1911, this was the first Tampa mayoral race in which the victor served a four-year term. McKay gained a majority of the votes in the primary election of the White Municipal Party, thus avoiding a runoff. Most of the commercial-civic elite lined up solidly behind McKay, due partly to his coalescence with his 1910 electoral opponents in favor of the cigar manufacturers and against the unions.

McKay’s platform in 1912 was growth-oriented and non-threatening to business and professional interests. He no longer stressed the goal of public ownership of utilities. Instead, McKay claimed to be running on the record of his first administration. He pointed to the recent expansion of the city, including the annexation of the territory that had been included in East Tampa, which had incorporated only a few years before, and the public acquisition of waterfront property in that area, an action that the U.S. government’s Corps of Engineers had insisted on as a condition for future assistance in developing Tampa’s ports. In addition, McKay emphasized that Tampa had grown by annexing large areas of Tampa Heights and Hyde Park in 1911.

After McKay’s primary victory, some sensed that many of Tampa’s Latin and African-American populations were likely to oppose him in the general election. The Tribune expressed fear that if McKay’s supporters failed to vote in the general election, it was possible that a Socialist could be elected mayor by mobilizing both blacks and white Socialists. The newspaper emphasized that that it could conceive “of no greater calamity that could befall this city than the election of a Socialist administration, or even a partly Socialist administration.” Although no Socialist candidate was elected, the general election indicated that a sizable proportion of Tampa’s voters was dissatisfied with the lack of a meaningful choice in the white primary election. Almost as many people voted in the general election as in the primary, and Dan L. Robinson, the Socialist candidate for mayor, gained almost thirty percent of the votes. Elliott, the Socialist candidate in 1910, had spoken out in support of the striking cigar workers later that year, and certainly Robinson shared the same perspective. He secured a majority in both Wards Four and Seven. Blacks were able to vote in this general election, and they
comprised a sizable portion of the population in Ward Four. Ward Seven in Ybor City included primarily Latin voters. A majority of voters in Ward Seven also supported most of the Socialist candidates for citywide Council seats, although none was elected. Surprisingly, they did not elect the Socialist Council candidate from their ward, with the defeated candidate contending that ordering of the candidates’ names on the ballot misled the voters.

Robinson’s support came even though a revision to Tampa’s city charter in 1911 imposed a poll tax as a requisite for voting in municipal elections, which was more likely to discourage working class and lower-income residents from voting than wealthier citizens. Also, in spite of Tampa having a sizable Latin population, many of whom opposed McKay's support of vigilante activity against Latin union activists, several factors worked against a strong anti-McKay "protest vote" by the Latin community. For one thing, the majority of Latins still had not been naturalized and thus could not legally vote. Thus, Latins in Tampa could not legally use the franchise to try to translate their concerns to political representatives. Furthermore, the radical ideologies of many Latins led them to view elections as relatively irrelevant mechanisms in achieving meaningful reform. The mutual aid associations that had been organized by Cubans, Afro-Cubans, Spaniards, and Italians provided health care and other benefits to members that were perhaps seen as more meaningful than benefits that might have accrued from electoral accomplishments. In addition, McKay often spoke out against political opponents who he claimed were attacking the Latin population. McKay did not participate in the verbal criticisms of gambling in Ybor City nor did he make any serious effort to crack down on its operation. This, in itself, was likely to bring some support from members of the Latin working class who faced discrimination from much of the wider community.

These factors, as well as the lack of strikes and vigilante activity in Tampa’s cigar industry during McKay’s second term, probably contributed to the ebbing of the Socialist Party vote in the mayoral vote in the 1916 general election. His administration did succeed in securing a reduction in gas rates from the Tampa Gas Company and had some success in an effort to secure a reduction in electric rates, both of which were likely to bring working class support to McKay. Karl L. Harter, the Socialist candidate, securing only 17.45% of the votes, after McKay was renominated in the primary of the White Municipal Party against former mayor Frank Bowyer. Giovanni Vaccaro, the Socialist candidate for Council in the seventh ward, gained almost 40% of the votes, but still was defeated by the White Municipal Party candidate. In fact, all of the White Municipal Party’s nominees were elected.

In Conclusion

By the turn of the century, Tampa’s politically active members of the civic-commercial elite sometimes competed for office. Representatives of the city’s working class, although sometimes divided, began to play a more active role in political organizations vying for power. Neither a cohesive governing regime nor simply governance by a commercial-civic elite existed. Beginning in 1910, McKay led a successful political organization, although not a centralized political machine. By 1920, with McKay as mayor for 10 years, a loose-knit regime governed. Many of Tampa’s commercial-civic elite were more closely tied to this regime than was any
other segment of the population. Members of the Commission of Public Works, which played a significant role in allocating tax revenue for the expansion of infrastructure, were primarily business and professional citizens and had less electoral accountability than did the City Council.79 Similarly, members of the Board of Port Commissioners, formed in 1913, were primarily members of the professional-business class.80

Still, McKay’s administrations, as had Frecker’s and the Citizens’ League’s earlier, adopted some policies that appealed to the working classes and union voters, and not merely the professional and business community. Further, it purchased, largely at the urging of the federal government, a significant amount of land in the port area to challenge the near-monopoly that railroad interests had acquired.

In spite of these policies, governance in Tampa during the first two decades of the twentieth century should not be thought of as representing an "inclusive" progressive regime or a pluralist polity open to any organized group wanting to influence policy. Rather, Tampa’s politics were most responsive to business interests, open to some segments of a fractionalized working class, closed to women, and became even more restrictive to African-Americans after the the organization of the White Municipal Party and adoption of the white primary.

Twenty years into the 20th century, Tampa’s hopes for a modern and progressive city governed by politicians responsive to the needs of all the people remained an elusive and frustrated dream of the disenfranchised, the working class, and the minorities.

ENDNOTES

Robert Kerstein has been a professor of government and world affairs at the University of Tampa since 1977. He has written several articles on urban politics and policy. His book, Politics and Growth in Twentieth-Century Tampa, will be published by the University Press of Florida in May 2001.

1 Knight had been the chairman of the executive committee of the Hillsborough County Democratic Party. He was defeated by Judge Frank M. Simonton in his bid for reelection as the Democratic Party committeeman representing Hyde Park; Weekly Tribune, 3 May 1900. Former mayor Herman Glogowski did try, unsuccessfully, to be elected Tax Collector against the Citizens’ League candidate.

2 Tampa Morning Tribune (TMT) 20 March 1900.

3 TMT, 1 April 1900.

4 TMT, 7 February 1900.

5 TMT, 9 February 1900.

6 Col. J.B. Anderson, who represented the Third Ward in Hyde Park on the Board of Public Works, and who served with Knight on the board of Exchange National Bank, was also associated with the Knight faction. He was the financial agent of the city during the Bowyer administration; TMT, 30 May 1900. Others opposed to the Citizens League were William B. Henderson, a founding member of the Board of Trade, who was elected to the Board of Public Works in 1898, and Solon B. Turner, who had been president of the Tampa Electric Illum Company, and was married to Matilda Lykes, the daughter of parents from both the Lykes and the McKay families; TMT, 26 April 26, 1900; 24 April 1900. Also opposing the League was Frank Bruen, the president of the City Council during the Bowyer administration (1898-1900). Bruen was one of the organizers of the Tampa Gas Company, along with Eduardo Manrara, Peter O. Knight, and A.J. Boardman; Karl H. Grismer, Tampa: A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida (St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg Printing Co., 1950) 230.

7 Weekly Tribune, 26 April 1900. In May 1900, members of the Democratic Party who were affiliated with the Citizens’ League separated from the League’s Republicans during the county elections campaigns; Weekly Tribune, 17 May 1900.

8 TMT, 15 February 1900. J.R. Williams was the League’s president, W.L. Hanks was its secretary, and John M. Henderson was its treasurer. Henderson was
serving as City Clerk in 1899; Sholes, Directory of the City of Tampa 1899.

9 TMT, 1 April 1900.

10 George Baldwin to H.H. Hunt, September 25, 1900, in which Baldwin quotes the letter from Knight to Baldwin, dated 19 August 1900, TECO Archives.

11 City Council, minutes, 23 January 1901, 352.

12 City Council, minutes, 23 August 1901, 479; 6 September 1901, 489; 24 September 1901, 497; 11 October 1901, 8. In an election on December 3, 1901, citizens voted 266-52 to approve the contract with Martin for lighting for the City of Tampa; City Council Minutes, 6 December 1901, 251.

13 Peter O. Knight to George J. Baldwin, 4 September 1901; Baldwin Papers, University of North Carolina, Box 54.

14 TMT, 29 May 1906.

15 Peter O. Knight to George J. Baldwin, 4 September 1901; Baldwin Papers, University of North Carolina, Box 54.

16 Grismer, Tampa, 319-320.

17 Wimsett was an engineer for the Johnson-Cole Company, which was a lumberyard. Peter O. Knight was the vice president of the company; Sholes’ Tampa City Directory, 1901. McKay won in each of the four wards; TMT, 24 ____1902; election figures in TMT, 4 June 1902.

18 The entire ticket of the Good Government League was elected, other than one of its candidates for City Council in the second ward and former mayor Herman Glogowski, who was its candidate for Assessor and Collector; TMT 4 June 1902. Frank Wing was defeated in his race to represent the second ward on the Board of Public Works.

19 TMT, 9 April 1902. The CMIU was a member of the Central Trades and Labor Assembly.

20 TMT, 28 March 1902; 8 April 1902.

21 TMT, 10 April 1902; 22 May 1902.

22 W.A. Platt was the spokesperson for the CMIU and for the Tampa Central Trades and Labor Assembly in November 1900 before the arbitration board that had been appointed by the Tampa City Council in November 1900 to settle the strike. Although Bell tried to arrange a compromise between CMIU and La Resistencia, the efforts were unsuccessful; Long, La Resistencia. Platt’s refusal to accept a compromise to the dispute that had been offered by La Resistencia and supported by Bell perhaps contributed to Bell and Platt being on opposing sides in the 1902 election. The other members of the executive committee were Harry Robinson, Augustus J. Russ, and John W. Peters; TMT, 20 April 1902. It is unclear if they were union leaders, but all were working class. Robinson was a painter, Russ a box maker, and Peters a paperhanger; Sholes, Tampa City Directory 1901.

23 TMT, 28 March 1902.

24 TMT, 30 April 1902; 3 June 1902.

25 TMT, 6 June 1902. The Good Government League’s platform did not explicitly oppose public ownership of utilities, but indicated that it should be considered only “where possible and practical”; TMT, 28 March 1902.

26 TMT, 28 May 1904.

27 TMT, 4 June 1904. Other backers who had been active in the Good Government League two years earlier included John P. Wall, Jr., who had served as the city attorney under McKay and Perry Wall II. Another supporter was J.R. Dekle, who was the co-owner of Jetton-Dekle Lumber Company. The vice-president of this firm was W.D. Wiggins. Both Wiggins and Dekle were elected to the City Council in the 1904 election; TMT, 12 March 1904; 5 April 1906.

28 TMT, 8 June 1904. S. Elliott, the Socialist candidate, secured only about one percent of the votes (some TMT articles spelled the name Ellot, others Elliot, and still others spelled it Elliot). Salomonson received more votes than any of the other candidates in each of the four wards, and won a majority of the votes cast in wards 1 and 4; TMT, 8 June 1904.

29 TMT, 6 June 1906. Cuscaden had been active in the cattle and citrus businesses; TMT, 26 May 1906.

30 Stovall and Edwin Lambright, the Tribune’s managing editor, who had been active with the Good Government League, claimed that the Seaboard Air Line Railroad, Atlantic Coastline Railroad, and the
Tampa Northern Railroad were all about to spend large sums to improve their facilities. They also argued that the Kendrick group, an organization including Peter O. Knight, would invest heavily in the city; *TMT*, 26 1906. The *Tribune* noted further that the Tampa Gas Company and Tampa Waterworks Company had spent over two million dollars to expand their plants.

31 *TMT*, 26 May 1906; 22 April 22 1906. Among Cuscaden’s supporters were former mayor James McKay, Jr. and John P. Wall, Jr.; *TMT*, 26 May 1906.

32 Former Citizens’ League activists included George Walker, E.R. Gunby, and James Lenfesty; *TMT*, 7 April 1906. Also Don McMullen, who had switched from Frecker to the Voters’ Union in the past election now supported the MOA.

33 *TMT*, 9 June 1906; 16 October 1907; 15 May 15 1906. T.J. Blackmon was with the Carpenters’ Union and I.B. Miller was with the Painters’ Union. Roberts was elected secretary and treasurer of the state Federation of Labor in 1904. He was again elected secretary and treasurer of the state Federation of Labor at its annual meeting that was held in Tampa in January 1907; *TMT*, 16 January 1907; 19 January 1907; *Florida Times-Union*, 20 June 1904.

34 *TMT*, 5 January 1907; 3 September 1907. Among Tampa’s unions that were represented at the convention of the State Federation of Labor in 1907 were the Shipwrights’ Union, the Firemen’s Protective Association, the Cigarpackers’ Union, the Cigarmakers’ Union, the Carpenters’ Union, and tile Longshoremen’s Union. Also represented were the Women’s Label League and the Central Trades and Labor Assembly; *TMT*, 16 January 1907.


36 *TMT*, 16 January 1907; 12 October 1907; 20 March 1908; 15 June 1908. In October 1907, the council voted unanimously to support the resolution of Councilman J.A. Roberts that denounced the Western Union Telegraph Company, Postal Telegraph Cable Company, and the Associated Press for its action during the strike of the telegraphers in Tampa. This followed a meeting of the Central Trades and Labor Assembly whose members pledged support for the strike of the telegraph operators, who were calling for higher wages, shorter hours, and equal pay for men and women. The Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution in 1917 requiring that the union label of the typographical union appear on all printed material of the Commission; *TMT*, 16 October 1907; 24 September 1907; 6 June 1907.

37 *TMT*, 3 June 1908. Wing’s strongest support was in the Ybor City Wards 6 and 7, where he garnered more than 60% of the votes. Frecker’s strongest showing was in Ward 9 in Tampa Heights, where lie gained 63% of the votes; *TMT*, 3 June 1908.

38 *TMT*, 3 May 1908. Former mayor Frank Bowyer supported Wing and Hugh Macfarlane, and E.R. Gunby, who had been the city attorney in the Frecker administration, supported Frecker. Both Gunby and Macfarlane were active in the Republican Party in Hillsborough County, although they sometimes were in separate factions of the party; *TMT*, 3 June 1908; 29 December 1907.

39 The White Municipal Party was recognized by the Tampa City Council in an ordinance that it passed on March 8, 1910. The ordinance called for the City Clerk to open the registration hooks in his office fifteen days prior to "any white municipal primary election" for the purpose of nominating candidates for the city’s general election. No specific mention was made in the ordinance to the fact that only whites would be allowed to vote in the primary elections of the party, but this obviously was understood by Council members.

40 Hewitt, "In Pursuit by Power." The City Council ruled that it would accept only original petitions, and then Judge Perry Wall of the Circuit court also refused Green’s appeal that his name he placed on the ballot. Wall found Greene was guilty of neglect because he had delayed his appeal for ten days, and then dismissed the case. Wall shortly afterward became the chair of the executive committee of the White Municipal Party. In 1904, the *TMT* reported that L.G. Caro, a “colored” citizen, had applied to run for city council, but had withdrawn his name; 18 May 1904.

41 As of May 27, 1906, 4,088 whites and 1,314 "colored" had registered to vote for the municipal elections. Thus, of the 5,402 registered voters, blacks constituted 24%. There were virtually no registered blacks in the Third Ward in Hyde Park (15/159) and a relatively small percentage (15%) in the Fourth Ward in Ybor City (171 of 1,154). In the First Ward, 543 of the 1,641 registered voters were black and in the Second Ward 535 of 2,045 were black. The
strongest representation of blacks in the city’s seven precincts was in precinct 2 of Ward One, where they were 47% (351/745) of the registered voters. Unlike the Democratic primaries for county offices, no poll taxes were required to register to vote in the city that year; TMT, 27 May 1906; 13 April 1906.

42 TMT, 9 June 1910.

43 J.N. Holmes was the third candidate. He had served on the City Council during the Salomonson, Gillette, and Bowyer administrations. He also sat on the Commission of Public Works from 1906-08, and was appointed by Mayor Wing in his second administration to be chief of sanitation; TMT, 6 March 1906.

44 TMT, 7 April 1910 contained the numerical voting figures. After losing in the first primary, Holmes endorsed Frecker for mayor; TMT 27 April 1910.

45 TMT, 27 April 1910.

46 In the 1910 City Council elections, four incumbents were reelected. Thus, seven new persons on the City Council came into office with McKay. The two Socialists who lost to candidates of the White Municipal Party were A. M. Windorst and Angelo Leto; TMT, 11 June 1910.

47 These included John P. Wall, Perry G. Wall, Arthur Cuscaden, Frank C. Bowyer, the former mayor who was now the president of the Board of Trade, George Raney, Jr., who was serving as the County Solicitor, and M.B. Macfarlane; TMT, 26 April 1910; 22 June 1910.


49 TMT, 25 March 1910.

50 Frecker reminded voters that he had worked as a tanner in Boston and Chicago and had been a delegate to the trades assembly in Chicago; TMT, 31 March 1910.

51 TMT, 25 March 1910.

52 McKay took steps after being elected to ensure more public ownership of the docks, in part due to the insistence of the Corps of Engineers. See Buker, "Tampa’s Municipal Wharves," on Tampa’s port development. This article is especially interesting for its treatment of the relationship of private interests to port development.

53 Elliott complained that real estate developers wanted to increase the number of lots in their subdivisions, and thus built streets that were too narrow. He also opposed the system whereby the county leased out convicts to private enterprise. The TMT also opposed the convict leasing system; TMT, 2 June 1910, 5 June 1910. Although the newspaper gave no biography of Elliott and only referred to him as S. Elliott, he apparently was Spurgeon Elliott, who owned the Big Four Manufacturing Company, which produced cider and vinegar, and was located on Washington Street; see R.L. Polk & Co.’s Tampa City Directory, 1909.

54 TMT, 7 May 1910.

55 The TMT reported that the returns, excluding Ward 8, showed that McKay was ahead of Elliott, 1,398-248; 8 June 1910. It did not later report the total returns that included Ward 8, but did note that Elliott received a total of 290 votes and that McKay beat Elliott by more than a five to one margin. Elliott did best in Ward 7 (excluding Ward 8), but still lost there 65-28; TMT, 11 June 1910; 8 June 1910.

56 TMT, 7 May 1910.

57 TMT, 8 June 1910.

58 Long, "The Open-Closed Shop Battle."

59 Ingalls, Urban Vigilantes, 97-98.

60 Ibid., 100-109.

61 Hewitt, "Politicizing Domesticity."


63 Long, "The Open-Closed Shop Battle."

64 TDT, 8 April 1912. Also, the city was now divided into ten wards, rather than nine, with the newly annexed territory in East Tampa being made a separate ward. Each of the wards elected one City Council member and one was elected at large.

65 TDT, 10 April 1912. The terms for City Council members were also extended to four years; however, in this election, candidates from the even-numbered
wards and the at-large seat were elected for two-year terms.
66 TDT, 23 March 1912; Buker, "Tampa's Municipal Wharves."
67 TMT, 4 June 1912.

68 Hewitt, "Politicizing Domesticity."

69 TMT, 5 June 1912. Robinson earned over 60% of the votes in Ward 7. McKay received over 90% of the votes in Ward 2 in Hyde Park, and over 85% in Ward 3, also in Hyde Park. He also secured over 85% percent of the votes in Wards 6 and 10, and over 70% in Wards 1 and 5.

70 All of the nominees of the White Municipal Party were elected to office in the general elections except for A.N. Goldstein, the party's candidate for council from the Fourth Ward, who lost to an independent candidate. No Socialist candidate was elected; TMT, 5 June 1912.

71 Tampa's city charter that was adopted in 1911 also called for citizens to register before each election; see discussions in the City Council, minutes, 18 April 1911: 56.

72 Mormino and Pozzetta, Immigrant World, 301. Of the total of 11,691 males twenty-one years of age and older living in Tampa in 1910, 4,407 (37.7%) were foreign born whites. Of the foreign born whites, 919 had become citizens by 1910 (20.9%), 2,765 (62.7%) were still aliens, and the status of 548 was unknown. Also 175 had their "first papers" by this time; Table II. Composition And Characteristics Of The Population For Cities Of 25,000 Or More. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census Of The United States 1910.

73 Mormino and Pozzetta, Immigrant World, and Ingalls, Urban Vigilantes.

74 See Mormino and Pozzetta, Immigrant World, Chapter 6, for a discussion of these institutions. The organization, structures, and relationships among the clubs are among the most fascinating aspects of Ybor City. See Varela-Lago, "From Patriotism to Mutualism," for a discussion of the formation of the Centro Espanol in 1891 rind then the Centro Asturiano in 1902. Also see Ferrara, "Tampa's Centro Asturiano Cemetery."

75 An example of ethnic support for a politician because he tried to restrain the representatives of the dominant culture who criticized the immigrant population was in Memphis. For a discussion of ethnic and black support for Ed Crump during this era, see Wald, "The Electoral Base of Political Machines." McKay and most of Tampa's elite also reacted strongly against prohibition. During the race for the state senate in 1908 between Robert McNamee, who was supporting local option on the prohibition issue, and Donald McMullen, who was viewed as being a prohibitionist, they supported McNamee. A businessmen's committee was formed to support a local option that included many who were on opposing sides of political campaigns, including Peter O. Knight, John Wall, Jr., Hugh C. Macfarlane, Thomas M. Weir, C.A. Wimsett, Eduardo Manrara and others; TMT, 8 April 1908 and 25 April 1908. The cigar manufacturers, headed by Enrique Pendas, organized to fight prohibition, arguing that it would probably result in the cigar industry leaving Florida; TMT, 7 April 1906.

76 TDT, 6 March 1912; Tampa City Council, minutes, 22 July 1913: 504; 25 April 1913: 414.

77 Karl L. Harter was unable to secure more than one-third of the votes in any of the ten wards. His best results were in Ward 7 (32.58%), Ward 10 (30.56%), and Ward 9 (29.59%); tabulated from figures provided in the TDT, 7 June 1916. McKay beat Bowyer in eight of the ten wards. Bowyer won by only three votes in Ward 3, and won 65% of the votes in Ward 9, which the Times described as a stronghold of "Freckerism;" TDT, 19 April 1920; TMT, 20 April 1916. The TDT, 18 April 1916 included the registration figures.

78 TDT, 7 June 1916.

79 A state act in 1889 authorized the creation of a Board of Public Works for the City of Tampa. A special legislative act of 1899 amended the charter of the City of Tampa and changed the name of the Board to the Commission of Public Works.

80 However, McKay was dissatisfied with them in the later years of his decade in office. In the white primary election in April 1918, McKay supported a citizens' ticket for the Port Commission, because he was dissatisfied with what he interpreted as the inaction of the existing commission. McKay widely praised all the members of this ticket, emphasizing their business and professional accomplishments. In the primary election held on April 23, 1918, all of the Citizens' ticket won seats on the port commission except for one, and they were unopposed in the
general election on June 4; TDT, 16 April 1918; 20 April 1918; 24 April 1918; 15 May 1918.
Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Cummings and the Fort Brooke to Fort Mellon Road

Dr. Joe Knetsch

The author of the following document, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Cummings, was a proud veteran of the War of 1812 who began his long and illustrious military career in 1808 as a Second Lieutenant of the "Light Dragoons". Prior to the War of 1812, he had received two promotions (First Lieutenant and Captain), which was a difficult task in the days of the small army. The native of Ireland worked hard during the war and was rewarded with a transfer to the 4th Regiment of Infantry in 1815. Within four short years, he had risen to the rank of Major of the 8th Regiment of Infantry, transferring to the 7th Regiment of Infantry in 1823. In 1828, Cummings received a promotion to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel of the 2nd Regiment of Infantry. Assigned to Florida duty in November of 1838, as he notes below, he immediately set out for his post at Fort Brooke, Tampa Bay. The uncertainty of travel on Florida waters during the Second Seminole War (1835-1842) is well illustrated in the following document. After the completion of this road, Cummings returned to Fort Brooke and was rewarded for his diligent attention to duty with a full Colonel’s rank in December of 1839. He did not have the pleasure of enjoying this rank for too long. Alexander Cummings passed from this earth on January 31, 1842.¹

The route depicted on the map includes a number of place names which currently exist on the map of Florida, including the city of Maitland. However, some of the other spots are foreign to our current experience. Forts Sullivan, Cummings, Gatlin, and Mellon no longer exist. Luckily, historian Canter Brown Jr., in his award-winning volume, Florida's Peace River Frontier has identified these places for us. The old Indian town of Itchepuckesassa/Fort Sullivan is today's Plant City; Fort Cummings is known to all today as Lake Alford; and Fort Davenport gave its name to the community of Davenport in northeastern Polk County.² Fort Gatlin is reputed to be the original home of today's Orlando, while at the eastern end of the road, Fort Mellon became the nucleus for the city of Sanford. This war-time road became an important route for the early settlers of the area and greatly facilitated communication between the settlements, which relied heavily upon the troops stationed at Fort Brooke for protection once the war had ended. An important part of the route is still in use as State Road No. 92, connecting Lake Alford with Davenport and Kissimmee.

In the document that follows, the reader will see the rough frontier of Florida in its most raw form. The road was constructed in essentially virgin territory [as the Army and white population understood the term]. The low, boggy and muddy wetlands were a major impediment to road construction. The men labored nearly as long constructing some of the bridges and causeways as they did in building Forts Sullivan and Cummings. What is more remarkable about the document is that this construction took place at the beginning of what was the rainy season in South Florida. The fact that the weather is not mentioned is a good indication that this year was one of the few dry years during that long and tragic war. Additionally, it should be kept in mind while
reading this report that the entire enterprise was done under the watchful eyes of the Seminoles and their allies. Just because the Army officers make little or no mention of their immediate presence does not mean they were unobserved. The fact that recent horse tracks were noticed headed toward the Big Cypress clearly indicates their presence. The tenacity and bravery of the men of Cummings’ command cannot be doubted under these telling circumstances.

Head quarters, Eastern District
of Florida,

Fort Heileman, June 10, 1839,

Sir,

In obedience to a circular dated Head quarters, Army of the south, Fort Brooke 23d May 1839, requiring a report of my operations in Florida from the commencement of the campaign last hall to the present time, giving as far as practicable the movements of the several detachments, under my command, the number and extent of bridges, causeways, Blockhouses built &c. I have the honour to state, that I arrived in Florida on the 8th of November last at Garey’s Ferry, and was informed that Genl. Taylor had left directions that I should repair to Fort Brooke on the 12th of Nov. I set Out with my staff for Fort White [on the Santa Fe River, where I expected to find a steam boat for Tampa Bay, in this however, I was disappointed, and after remaining there four days with a hope that a boat would reache the place, I retraced my steps to Newnansville, & from thence to Micanopy & continued on to Fort Clinch [on the Withlacoochee River] where I met with Genl. Taylor who was on his way to the Suwannee & Middle Florida. From (Genl. Taylor I received an order for my Government in obedience to which, I proceeded on to Fort Brooke, being accompanied as far as the Anuttelaga Hammock by Captain Garrett of the 1st Inf, with his company, who was directed to establish a post at this point. I reached Fort Brooke on the 8th of December, where I found about 260 Indians & negroes assembled for emigration, Captain Abercrombie had not returned from the Sanybal [Caloosahatchee River], to which he had been sent by Genl. Taylor with a view to prevail on the hostile Indians to come in. The command at Fort Brooke being small I was desirous that the Captain should return with his company before I should set out on the duties assigned me by the General. I deemed it hardly safe to leave the post without a sufficient force for its protection while there was so large a number of Indians & negroes, some of whom, it was believed, were not too well disposed towards us.

Major McClintock with four companies of the 3d Regt. of Artillery, arrived at Tampa Bay about the middle of Dec. which with the three companies of Infantry, made the command appear large on paper, it must be understood, however, in speaking of companies, that none of them were complete the Artillery averaging about forty, & the Infantry a little over fifty men to a company.

On the 7th of January 1839, three companies of Arty & two of Inf. marched out in the direction of Hitchpucksassa with Brevt. Major Wilcox & I joined them in the evening, the train consisted of thirty four wagons loaded with provisions & forage, the road was accurately measured & marked by Lieut. Ketchum, Actg. Topographical Engineer.

8th. Tile troops were under way at daylight & left the Peace creek road 11 miles from Tampa Bay, two miles farther we came to
This finely detailed map, prepared by Adjutant Clendenin, 2nd Regiment of Infantry, United States Army, clearly shows the locations of several fortifications on the Florida frontier. Forts Mellon, Maitland, and Gatlin are in the top right section. Lake Ahapopka is due west of Fort Maitland. Tampa Bay, the Hillsborough River, and Fort Brooke can be seen in the bottom left. Fort Dade is just up from center. Fort Cummings, known today as Lake Alfred, was named for Lt. Col. Alexander Cummings. (Map from the National Archives courtesy of the author.)
the Plantation of Mr. Simmons, which had been abandoned soon after the commencement of the war, the Indians had destroyed all the buildings fences &c &c. from this place the road was opened as we advanced, at the distance of 15 miles we came to a small stream with muddy bottom over which was thrown a bridge of rough logs, two miles farther brought us to Buzzard creek [Baker Creek], which empties into the Thono de sassa lake, the stream was deep & muddy on each side, here we made a substantial bridge about 200 feet in length with a causeway on each side which enabled us to pass the wagons over in safety. Encamp at this creek where we were engaged two days in building the bridge.

10th. Pass through low grounds & swamps, the pioneers had heavy work in opening the road, progress about 5 miles.

11th. Made an early start & after passing over & through swamps & Hammocks arrive at the old settlement of Hitchpucksassa, where we commenced building a Fort 110 feet square, with two Block houses & two Store Houses.

12th. This morning I made an excursion in the direction of the Sand Hills, with the mounted company, passed over a high ridge with a lake on each side, this was the commencement of the Sand hills, after riding about 15 miles returned to camp in the evening, where the troops had been busily employed at the work & had made considerable progress.

13th. Returned to Fort Brooke in company with Adjt. Clendenin intending to come out again in a few days.

23d. In conformity with previous intentions I set out this morning with a small escort of Dragoons, the post at Hitchpucksassa was completed & was named Fort Sullivan, Captain Garner with his company 3d. Arty were left as a Garrison to the Fort. The work was in fine order, the block houses were used as quarters for the soldiers in which they were very comfortable & two good & substantial Store houses were put up for the preservation of the public property.

24th. Leave Fort Sullivan at an early hour, having dismissed my escort of Dragoons, & continued my journey in company with Lieut. Hoffman. In passing the Sand Hills we are most of the time in view of a large pond or Lake, the water of which is very good & they abound in fish of various kinds. about the middle of the day I came to the camp where I found Major Wilcox busily employed, the Fort was pretty well advanced, the Block houses & store houses nearly completed. This post is situated on the point of the ridge, with a Lake on each side and a beautiful sheet of Water in front covering about 300 acres, abounding in fine fish & turtle.

Between the lake which lies on the north side of this post & that in front, there is a stream which connects the two, about 200 yards in length with a dense Hammock through which a road was cut & a strong bridge built between 200 & 300 feet in length which required great labour, this is 46 1/2 miles from Fort Brooke, the country in advance is unknown to us & to our guides, no white man had yet passed through it.

26th. Set out with the intention of ascertaining the situation of Fort Gatlin, from the best information I could obtain it was about 23 miles S. W. of Fort Mellon, I had with me Lieut. Anderson of the 2d Infy. & 30 mounted men with a negro Interpreter & an Indian guide, neither of whom know anything of the country nor (apparently) of anything else. our course at first was about
A reproduction of page two of Lt. Col. Alexander Cummings’ report of June 10, 1839 to Brig. General Zachary Taylor, Commanding Army of the South, Tampa Bay. Cummings writes, "I reached Fort Brooke on the 8th of December, where I found about 260 Indians & negroes assembled for emigration, . . . I deemed it hardly safe to leave the post without sufficient force . . ." (Reproduction of the document from the National Archives courtesy of the author.)
N. F. & continued so bearing a little to the north all day, passed two streams within the first 4 miles & two others at the distance of 15 & 20 miles all of which would require bridging.

27th. At 12 Oclock struck Genl. Jesup’s road which passes down to To hop ke laga, on which we travelled four of five miles after leaving this road discovered a large trail of mounted men who had recently passed in the direction of the Big Cypress.

Owing to the ignorance of the guide we were led out of our way & passed on the north side of lake Ahapopka, on discovering this mistake, I concluded to go on to Fort Mellon, the Hammock which leads off from the north cud of the lake, is about a mile wide, in passing through which we crossed two small streams of clear running water. encamp on the bank of a handsome creek about 30 feet wide which our guide said was the outlet of Ahapopka Lake.

28th. Pass through several Hammocks some of which are wet & boggy, about noon came to a handsome stream about 25 yards wide with a thick Hammock on each side, which was difficult to penetrate owning to large vines & cypress knees. The ground also, was deep & boggy, this stream rises or rather issues from a spring a short distance above the crossing. arrive at Fort Mellon at Sundown. I only remained at this post one night, it did not strike me as a favourable location for health, the place being low & the country immediately round it wet & muddy.

29th. Set out on my return taking the south side of Lake Ahapopka, to Fort Maitland 14 miles the direction is nearly south, here we left the road & took a course West, South West, without a trail. in camp at a pond of bad water.

30th. About two & half miles, brought us to Genl. Jesup’s road, which we struck at the South end of Lake Ahapopka, continued our course about two miles farther when we came to our trail outwards, about 8 miles farther encamp between two ponds which afforded protection to our front & rear, on a handsome knowl of land, and only required a Sentinel on each flank.

31st. Arrived at Camp where Major Wilcox had completed the Fort which he named Fort Cummings.

Leaving one Company of Artillery at this post under the command of Lieut. Bragg, I directed Major Wilcox to proceed in the direction of Fort Maitland & establish another post between twenty & thirty miles in advance of Ft. Cummings & to build bridges over the Streams which he has done, the station is named Fort Davenport.

Each of these three posts viz. Fort Sullivan 26, Ft. Cummings 46 1/2, & Fort Davenport 66 1/2 miles from Fort Brooke is Garrisoned by one company of Artillery (3d. Regt.) & is commanded respectively by Capt. Garner, Lieut. Bragg & Lieut. Wyse & have so far proved healthy.

Between Fort Brooke & Fort Davenport there has been six strong bridges build besides causeways.

The distance from the Gulf to the St. Johns by this route is 120 miles over a sandy pine barren most of the way, the numerous lakes gives the country a picturesque appearance, along the borders of these lakes & on the small streams, there are thick Hammocks, some of which afford good land for cultivation but I should think it impossible that anything like a dense settlement can ever be formed on this route.
Since my return to Fort Brooke I have remained in command of the district which embraces the three posts above named as well as Fort Cross 45 miles N. W. of Tampa Bay. The troops at the different posts within the district have been engaged so far as their means would enable them in scouring the country in their vicinity.

Respectfully Submitted
Alex. Cummings
Lt. Col. 2d. Injy.

Brigr. Genl. 7. Taylor
Comg. Army of the South
Tampa Bay
E. F.

ENDNOTES

Dr. Joe Knetsch is a Senior Analyst with the Bureau of Survey and Mapping, Division of State Lands, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and is a regular contributor to The Sunland Tribune and other journals of Florida history. Knetsch has been published in each of the last eight issues of The Sunland Tribune and this volume contains two of his articles. He received his B.S. from Western Michigan University, his M.A. from Florida Atlantic University and his Ph.D. from Florida State University.

1 Francis B. Heitman. Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, Volume 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903) 344. The writer would like to thank Ms. Leslie Lawhon and Mr. Wilburn Bell for their assistance in the preparation of this piece.

POLITICAL EXCESS SHAPED BY A GAME OF CHANCE: Tampa, Bolita, and the First Half of the Twentieth Century

Pam Iorio

The first half of the twentieth century saw the city of Tampa grow from a frontier village to a medium size metropolis, experiencing challenges that set it apart from other cities in Florida. Tampa’s ethnically diverse population consisting of Cubans, Spanish and Italian immigrants, who settled in Ybor City and West Tampa, fueled a booming cigar industry that brought tremendous revenues and nationwide recognition to the city.

Tampa’s port and railroad linkage supported economic growth. Civic affairs were dominated by pioneer Tampa families, white, Anglo businessmen who traveled in a constricted social circle webbed by marital ties among their families. The city’s political affairs were the stuff of legend and lore. Election days were raucous affairs. Tooting car horns and brass bands provided a festive backdrop to the highly intense and personal campaigns that culminated in rowdy and unpredictable election-day antics. Election fraud was pervasive. Deeply intertwined with the political and social life of Tampa was another industry that defined the city - gambling. For more than half a century, Tampa's reputation grew as a gambling Mecca where lawlessness was condoned by a wink and a payoff to public officials. At the heart of the gambling industry was a game of chance, imported from Cuba. It was called Bolita.¹

At the northeast comer of Eighth Avenue and Fourteenth Street in modern Ybor City is a parking lot for Hillsborough Community College. While historical markers dot numerous locations throughout this historic Latin district there is no marker on this comer, nothing to indicate that this spot in Ybor City saw the birth of a gambling industry that would shape the identity and the politics of Tampa.

Tampa historian Tony Pizzo credits the 1895 arrival of bolita to Tampa to Spaniard Manual Suarez, known as El Gallego. Drawn to the growth and vitality of Ybor City, El Gallego opened a saloon at the northeast comer of Fourteenth Street and Eighth Avenue, and introduced a game of chance that was, at first, considered a fun diversion for working class families. Pizzo described how the game of bolita was played:

Bolita was ‘played’ by the selling of chance on numbers ranging from one to one hundred. Little wooden balls bearing the numbers were placed in a bag, which was tossed around a circle of men. A number of the crowd would reach for the bag when it was tossed into the air, and seize one of the balls. This ball was cut from the bag with scissors, and declared the winning number. Those holding the winning number were paid at a rate of 8 to 1. Bets started at 5 cents and up to a limit set by the house. Bolita was ‘thrown’ every
night at 9 o’clock and twice on Sundays.2

*Bolita* was illegal, but despite that fact, its popularity quickly spread throughout the city, crossing racial, ethnic and economic lines. Affluent customers bought their tickets in fashionable Hyde Park; blacks played in their neighborhood, an area west of Ybor City called the "Scrub," while cigar workers in Ybor City factories bought *bolita* tickets and cafe con leche with the same regularity. Though Cuban and Spanish boliteros first organized syndicates to control this profitable industry, it was an Anglo from a well respected Tampa family who figured out how to form a partnership that linked both Tampa’s gambling and political interests.

Tampa’s written local history is rich with references to Charlie Wall. Called the "dapper dean" of Tampa gambling, the "Bolita King," a "brilliant gambling czar," the "Big Boss," Tampa’s Racket Chief," "the brains behind a gambling empire," and "Ybor’s Underworld King," Wall is a fixture in Tampa’s colorful local history. No novelist could conjure up a more compelling character. Born in 1880 into a highly respected and leading Tampa pioneer family, his father, John P. Wall, was a former mayor and well known doctor and Wall’s mother was descended from the McKays, another pioneer family prominent in civic and business affairs of the city. His mother died when he was just twelve; his father died two years later. Charlie was left only with a stepmother whom he disliked so much he shot at her with a .22 rifle, earning himself a stint in jail by age seventeen. Finally an uncle, Dr. H.T. Lykes, a member of another wealthy and prestigious Tampa family, took Wall under his wing and sent him off to military college. This was a short-lived experiment in rehabilitation; Charlie was kicked out of college and returned to Tampa where he found his true vocation: gambling.

Charlie’s new career was helped by the fact that "some of Tampa’s most prominent citizens . . . were heavy bettors." One of his first experiences with gambling was as a courier for bets placed on horse races. Wall made a commission from the transaction and saw just how lucrative having the right connections could be. Wall surmised that a *bolita* system built on these same powerful connections could also flourish and he saw the long term potential for amassing wealth and political power. The dynamics of small town Tampa, with a clearly defined political power structure that operated on a system of cronyism and personal favors, served Wall’s interests. *Bolita* operators would pay Wall for protection from the police, Wall would buy votes, elections would be won, and public officials would be paid to tolerate the status quo. Tampa elections, which never enjoyed a history of fairness or accuracy, would now be manipulated by gambling interests.3

Understanding gambling’s influence on elections and political life in Tampa requires an appreciation of how Tampans historically chose to exercise their franchise. Even before the turn of the twentieth century, Tampa elections were steeped in personal attacks, managed in a slipshod fashion, and generally only for the most stout-hearted participant. An election in 1887 provoked the following editorial from the *Tampa Weekly Journal*:
For two or three days before the election, whiskey was dispensed free by some of the saloons. On election day the streets were lined with drunken men, the most obscene, vulgar, and profane language could be heard, not only on the streets, but also in the room in which the election was held. Frequent rows and fights occurred, and during the entire day and night a drunken and riotous mob held possession of the town. Such a state of affairs are a disgrace to an intelligent and civilized community, and the Journal desires to place itself on record as being opposed to any such proceedings. We denounce the buying of votes by any man, either with money or whiskey; we do not believe in coercion or intimidation, and we call upon the respectable, law-abiding and intelligent citizens of Tampa to see to it that the like does not occur again.4

The reality of Tampa elections was at odds with the image that city fathers wanted to project of their growing city. Early boosters of Tampa attempted to depict a vibrant city on the move, led by progressive men of vision. In 1895, The Tampa Morning Tribune featured a front-page spread entitled "Beautiful Tampa By the Gulf" which detailed the tremendous growth and vitality of the city. The article’s headlines summarized Tampa in this way, "Public Spirit and Harmony Abound Among Its Prosperous and Contented Inhabitants - - The Demand for Real Estate - It Is Impossible to Supply - - Suburbs Are Spreading Rapidly - Public Improvement the Order of the Day." Historian Karl Grismer saw a different Tampa during this same time period, concluding, "Tampa was still nothing but a lusty boom town which was suffering acutely from growing pains."5 Election day revealed an unruly and unsophisticated facet of this diverse community, a side at odds with the progressive and vibrant image city leaders so desperately wanted to portray. But the history of Tampa contains an interesting sidebar: the men who ruled the city through most of the twentieth century were willing to put up with the city’s wild elections and notorious gambling reputation, as long as they remained in power.

Elections would continue to be raucous affairs, far into the new century. Election day was often a festive event, with highly competitive races that brought excitement to the citizenry. In the 1908 mayoral race, the Tampa Morning Tribune reported that, "Every musician in the city who could muster an instrument was marshaled into bands, and from early mom until the last ballot had dropped into the boxes, blasts of ‘A Hot Time In The Old Town Tonight’ and other melodies added to the din of cheering around the polls. The bands were transported from one precinct to another in carry-alls, and after regaling the workers at one voting place would hasten to another to cheer with their lively airs."6 When automobiles replaced the horse and buggy, candidates hired cars to transport voters and carry their messages throughout the city with megaphones. On election day in 1910, the streets of Tampa were teeming with activity, "with people moving about in every possible kind of conveyance excepting balloons and airships, and the thoroughfares were congested at all the polling places."7
Tampa politics was personal and many citizens understood that their own success in this fledgling city had much to do with being aligned with a winner. A reporter in 1900 perhaps captured the importance of the mayor’s race best when he wrote, "According to the street-corner gossip, there are about four thousand five hundred jobs to be dished out, and the exalted position of the mayor of Tampa is as important as being chief ruler of the United States." With so much at stake, controlling the vote, by paying individuals for their ballot, became the goal of those in power. Gambling interests had the motivation to keep those in power who would allow their operations to continue, unfettered by legal action, and they had the money to buy influence.

The first decade of the twentieth century saw African-Americans effectively shut out of electoral politics in Tampa. City fathers became concerned that the black vote was a "purchasable" vote that added a degree of instability and uncertainty to the election outcome. In 1908, a group of leading Tampa citizens formed the White Municipal Party, to "prevent the future operation of the Negro vote as a balance of power in municipal elections." With city elections now run under the auspices of the White Municipal Party, the elections of 1910 were held with the Tampa Morning Tribune happily reporting that the candidates for the first time, did not have to "go down into the dives of the ‘Scrub’ to hobnob with the festive colored brother on his own ground, to ‘fight the devil with fire’ by resorting to money, used in the most shameful way, as a means of securing the bulk of the Negro vote." While the thought of the black "purchasable" vote was unacceptable to city leaders, other "purchasable" votes were apparently more palatable. The poll tax, enacted by the Florida legislature in 1889, set at $1.00 a year, was now a tool the gamblers could use to manipulate elections. Wall would pay the poll taxes for voters and keep the receipts. The voters would never make it to the polls, but the votes would end up in the ballot box nonetheless. Poll tax manipulation could also be used to prevent support for the opposition from voting. In 1934, supervisor of registration John Dekle charged that certain groups were "attempting to disenfranchise voters known to be in the opposition camp by collecting and destroying their registration certificates and then promising to pay poll taxes, which are never paid."

Wall’s real power lay in the city’s Fourth Ward encompassing Ybor City. Wall had built up a tremendous amount of good will in Ybor City through his financial support of striking cigar workers in 1910. Now those workers allowed Wall to pay their poll taxes, and a voting bloc was Wall’s to deliver at election time. Those in the Latin community saw Wall as the powerhouse Anglo who had the necessary ties to those in power to make the system work. One elderly cigar maker interviewed in 1985 recalled that "Charlie Wall was the Big Boss. He used to run the city of Tampa. Charlie Wall had connections. You see, he was americano. The Latin had nothing. What power did we have?" Charlie Wall could deliver votes from the Fourth Ward and politicians knew that their success on election day was often determined by Wall’s support. In return for the support,
Wall expected law enforcement officials to make only token gambling arrests, but essentially leave the bolita operators alone.

The issue of gambling was destined to become a perennial campaign topic with all candidates vowing to fight the evil, while the status quo continued unabated. During the mayoral race in 1910 between D.B. McKay, W.H. Frecker and J.N. Holmes, rumblings of gambling’s influence on the election was voiced. McKay enjoyed a close friendship and political relationship with Charlie Wall’s brother, John, and Charlie Wall was McKay’s cousin. Frecker charged in a speech that McKay was too close to the gamblers of the city and that “gambling in the city had been monopolized under the present administration by Charlie Wall,” who was “allowed to control the gambling of the city because John Wall had influence with the authorities.” McKay responded that Frecker was “in cahoots with ‘saloon men’” and that Charlie Wall expected no "special privileges" from supporting him for mayor. McKay won his first mayoral race by 136 votes, and went on to eventually serve for four terms as mayor, leaving an indelible imprint on the city.13

With so many gambling related votes for sale at election time, candidates soon found that the cost of running for office was increasing. In 1911, some civic leaders, including Mayor McKay, who had been instrumental in the formation of the White Municipal Party, complained that the white primary had become an expensive undertaking for candidates. Exactly why this new system cost more than the old was not entirely clear, but for the *Tampa Morning Tribune*, the cause was still the old bugaboo - purchasable votes. This time, however, the culprit could not be branded as the black voter, since he had been effectively eliminated from city politics. Now the offenders were gamblers, who expected candidates to pay for delivering the vote. The white primary was only pricey, wrote the *Tribune* editors, "because the men who run for office by meekly obeying the command of the grafter to 'stand and deliver' have made it so. Would it not be much better, much safer to eliminate altogether the fellows who demand money for their votes and influence, and ask the honest citizens of Tampa to make a selection?" When, lamented the *Tribune*, "are we ready to admit here in Tampa that there are enough purchasable votes among our white voters to control a municipal election?"14

Civic leaders disliked having their dirty laundry aired for it was at odds with the image they wanted to present to the rest of the state and to the nation. Maintaining an image of law and order was more important than actually having law and order. When, in 1912, a Jacksonville newspaper editor of the *Dixie*, named Claude L’Engle, sent an investigative reporter, Charles E. Jones, to Tampa to write a story on the bolita business, tempers flared in Tampa. The *Dixie* article described Tampa as "reeking in crime" and described Charlie Wall’s gambling empire and political machine that delivered votes and payoffs to public officials. Jones highlighted Wall’s control of the Latin vote and cited corruption in Ybor City: "The establishment of great cigar factories in Tampa brought to the city thousands of Spaniards, Cubans and Italians. Many of these were, and are, inoffensive, but hundreds were natural criminals. They
had no respect for law and order." The *Tampa Daily Times*, whose publisher was D.B. McKay, then the mayor of the city, lashed out at L'Engle and the *Dixie* article as being "full of falsehood" and "inspired by mean, personal motives." (L'Engle had successfully run for Congress, and the *Times* had opposed his candidacy.) The "gambling evil," maintained the *Times*, was being fought every day. The issue of gambling was raised in the 1912 mayor's race when McKay ran for re-election, and his opponent H.P. Baya condemned the current administration as being lax in enforcing the laws against gambling. Baya was unsuccessful in his attempt to unseat McKay but his campaign came out squarely against the gambling element. At one political rally, James Joseph Lunsford [see *Sunland Tribune* article, pg. 37-ed.], a Tampa citizen, spoke on behalf of Baya's candidacy:

> The police administration is not good and Baya will change that. You men know that there are men about this city who never work. They are not capitalists; they are not vagrants, yet they live well. They live on that of which they fleece the unwary. They are gamblers. The mayor does not seem to be able to explain where these men get their money. Let me tell you if Baya is elected mayor he will make these men go to work or leave the city.\(^{16}\)

Gambling continued unabated for several decades. Its effect on elections was undeniable. Historians Gary Mormino and George Pozzetta conducted extensive interviews for their study of immigrants in Ybor City with residents who had first-hand involvement and knowledge of the *bolita* business. "Many observers staunchly believe that during these decades [the 1920s through the 1940s] there was not a single honest election in Tampa/Hillsborough County," the historians concluded.\(^{17}\) Ballot box stuffing and repeat voters (voters who went from precinct to precinct to vote) were common. Gambling had clearly become Tampa's "Biggest Business," according to the *Tribune*. The Tampa Junior Chamber of Commerce produced a study in 1935 concluding, "past election frauds can be attributed directly to a fight for control of the gambling industry in the community."\(^{18}\) Being a poll worker could be hazardous business. In 1931, three masked bandits entered a Hyde Park polling place and shot two election workers in an attempt to steal the ballot box. The perpetrators of this crime were never caught.\(^{19}\) Through payoffs, violence and fraud, Wall had successfully created an empire that produced huge profits and allowed his political machine to keep sympathetic public officials in office. Isidro Stassi, interviewed in 1985, recalled the success of his father's *bolita* business in Ybor City that generated 57,000 on a "good night." Charlie Wall pocketed fifty percent of those revenues, which in turn, was used to pay off the police and other public officials.\(^{20}\)

The late 1930s brought about significant changes that loosed Wall's grip on Tampa's *bolita* empire. The poll tax, which Wall had used as a tool to control votes, was repealed by the Florida legislature in 1937.\(^{21}\) That same year, Hillsborough County residents, weary of ballot box stuffing, voted in a referendum election to change the county's voting system to a new lever style voting machine, a system more
difficult to manipulate. Embarrassment about Tampa’s elections reached a peak after the 1935 mayoral race that necessitated the presence of the National Guard to maintain order. While 65 mile per hour winds swept through the city, election workers were arrested at polling sites on charges of ballot box stuffing. The city received national publicity that depicted a lawless and politically unstable community. The 1935 election, concluded the editors of the *Tampa Morning Tribune*, represented a new height of election fraud, "never had been anything just like it in Tampa, even with all the evidence of crooked voting in the past." The next year, the Tribune heartily endorsed the new voting machine "which shuts out every form of ballot box skullduggery except the repeater." The adoption of the voting machine was a blow to the gambling syndicate’s election day shenanigans. Adept at manipulating the paper ballot by having corrupt poll workers replace or add pre-marked ballots in the ballot boxes, this new system had a decided impact on the syndicate’s control.22

Another significant change in the late 1930s revealed a transformation in the power center of Tampa’s underworld. Italian gangsters, whose interests had previously focused on illegal liquor, infiltrated the Cuban and Spanish dominated *bolita* operation. The dynamics of the *bolita* syndicate changed dramatically. Violence became commonplace. Wall himself was a target of assassins, but escaped serious injury. In 1938, the escalating violence within the gambling world reached a fever pitch, resulting in the assassination of Tito Rubio, a Wall confidante. Shaken by Rubio’s death, Wall sought out the assassins, and agreed to testify before the grand jury about the Tampa rackets. Indictments resulted, not just of Wall, but also of Sheriff Jerry McLeod and Tampa Police Chief C.J. Woodruff. ‘Fall was eventually released, but he revealed to newspapers a public acknowledgment of his role in the underworld of Tampa. "I am a fellow that seems to be the brains or the smart fellow in what is known as the underworld," Wall confessed. He refused, however, to publicly name others. "I shall not testify against anyone for gambling or operating a gambling house," Wall said. "I could not do so and retain my self respect."23 Wall fled to Miami, and the *bolita* business continued to flourish in the 1940s under the leadership of an Italian syndicate.

It took a persistent and skilled reporter, along with the crusading spirit of a newspaper publisher, and attention from Washington, to finally break *bolita*’s grip on Tampa’s public officials. Jock Murray, known by the by-line J.A. Murray, was chosen by *Tampa Morning Tribune* publisher Virgil M. "Red" Newton to ferret out the connection between *bolita* and the city’s elected and appointed officials. Newton’s crusade in the later part of the 1940s led to Tampa hearings in 1950 by the Senate Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce chaired by Democrat Senator Estes Kefauver of Tennessee. These hearings highlighted to the entire nation the unseemly side of Tampa politics.

In October 1947, the *Tribune* published the Murray series on gambling and described the post-Charlie Wall gambling "syndicate" that was made up of Italians and had thrived since 1940 with the election of former constable
Hugh Culbreath as sheriff. One article suggested that "a notorious Italian gang of northern racketeers" might have a hand in the Tampa operation, leading to an "underworld theory" of how the syndicate functioned. Clearly, Charlie Wall was no longer in the picture, but the influence of gambling on elections was as strong as ever. Sources interviewed suggested that as much as $100,000 was spent by the syndicate for a local election. Some observers noted improvements in elections. Ballot boxes were no longer stuffed, thanks to the new lever machines, and intimidation and violence at the polls had lessened. But people were paid to register, to vote and heads of large families or organizations were paid to deliver blocks of votes. Once candidates were elected to office their political dependency on the syndicate continued as some received payoffs from gamblers. Estimates of gambling revenue in Tampa totaled $5 million a year, with a percentage of the profits going for political contributions and campaign activities. "Who else but the gamblers can afford to finance elections today?" asked one former office holder. An estimate from one source indicated that the syndicate could control about 3500 votes in an election, which was "enough to control if lined up with certain other groups, not enough to put over an unpopular candidate unaided." Another Murray interviewee believed that "the gamblers are in a position to influence perhaps 50 per cent of Tampans." Another factor in the syndicate's influence was a change made syndicate's the city charter, transforming the government structure in Tampa from a single-member (ward-based) election of city council members, to an at-large system. One political observer interviewed by Murray believed that this shifted the balance of power in favor of the gamblers: "Under the old form they could have controlled one or two precincts and perhaps elected one or two aldermen. Now they are all over the city, and I am not sure they do not have the balance of power all over the city."²⁴

Murray gave top government officials an opportunity to respond to the charges made in the newspaper series on gambling. Mayor Curtis Hixon, County Solicitor Fisher, Constable Wooten and Sheriff Culbreath all indicated that to their knowledge, gambling was a minor problem that was under control. Mayor Hixon responded that he "hadn't heard a thing about it," in reference to a question about large sums of money spent by gambling interests on the last elections. Sheriff Culbreath gave a spirited rebuttal to the notion that gamblers spent money and had influence at election time, saying that election winners generally perform well all over the city, not just in Latin precincts. Further, he declared flatly, "there is no organized gambling or bolita in Tampa."²⁵

It took the death of Jimmy Velasco in 1948, a popular member of the gambling syndicate, to give the Tribune what it needed to bring the bolita business back to the front burner. Velasco had been shot to death in gangland fashion, the first such assassination since 1940. He had been the conduit between the racket and the politicians, and his records of payoffs to public officials came into the hands of Newton, the Tribune publisher. The proceeded to publish articles on Velasco's lists and payoffs, and the details of the bolita business. Though Sheriff Culbreath had made the incredulous statement to the newspaper a
year earlier that no organized bolita business existed in Tampa, his name now appeared on the Velasco list as one of the public officials who had received payoffs from this non-existent syndicate.²⁶

Sheriff Culbreath’s problems were just beginning. The Kefauver Committee, as the Senate committee became known, held hearings in Florida and thirteen other states in 1950 and 1951 on organized crime and the links to gambling, drugs and other illegal activities. Most of the hearings were televised, and the nation saw more than 800 witnesses testify to the links between organized crime, public officials, and illegal activity in American cities.²⁷ The hearings in Tampa in 1950 riveted the city, with the Tampa Morning Tribune devoting numerous pages of coverage including transcripts of witness testimony. WFLA radio, then owned by the Tribune, provided live testimony for listeners. Much of the focus was on Sheriff Culbreath who faced intense questioning from Senators. Culbreath had difficulty explaining the dramatic increase in his net worth, and witnesses fingered the Sheriff as a public official who received as much as $1000 a week in bolita payoffs. Associates of Jimmy Velasco testified of payoffs to a man known to the underworld as "Cabeza de Melon," none other than "Melon Head," Sheriff Culbreath. Tampa Police Chief J.L. Eddings and Prosecutor J. Rex Farrior were also named for taking bribes. Witnesses produced a list of 105 officially protected outlets that law enforcement officials were not allowed to tamper with. A former deputy sheriff testified "we were instructed not to make gambling and vice arrests." Culbreath, witnesses said, was one of the "real guys" in the gambling syndicate. Culbreath was indicted the following year for corruption, but was not convicted; a federal grand jury finally trapped the former law enforcement officer with five tax evasion counts in 1953 and convicted him on three of those counts in 1958.²⁸

One of the stars of the Kefauver hearings was Tampa’s "dapper dean" of gambling, Charlie Wall. Now 70 years old, Wall had not been a factor in the Tampa bolita business for ten years. Wall described the game of bolita for the Senate committee, even detailing how the game could be fixed by loading some of the balls with lead so they would drop to the bottom of the bag. Though a colorful figure in front of the Committee, he provided few details about gambling in Tampa, maintaining that any information he had was "second-hand." Wall professed not to know why there had been so many attempts on his life. "Could it be because you were influential:" asked one Senator, to which Wall replied, "I couldn’t tell. It could be, of course." The Kefauver hearings exposed to the nation tangible links between payoffs to public officials and the protection of the gambling industry in Tampa. When the hearings ended, Senator Lester Hunt, chairing the hearings in Tampa, said that the "sordid mess" was Tampa’s problem to solve, and the resolution depended on "an angry, aroused and determined public."²⁹

The close relationship between gambling and politics was part of Tampa’s culture. The 1950s saw the fading of this relationship, and symbolic of the demise of bolita’s grip on Tampa was the violent murder of Charlie Wall. On the evening
of April 18, 1955, Wall was found in his bedroom with his throat slashed and his head smashed. The murderer was never apprehended. The brutal killing made front-page headlines. Although Wall had been inactive in Tampa gambling for many years, many assumed that this was an old score that had to be settled, the kind of end that occurs to someone who spends his life engaged in illegal activity. The death of Charlie Wall seemed to some to be a fitting end to this "black sheep" of a prominent family who found a way to use his connections, brains and organizational skills to create an illegal empire that not only defined Tampa for much of the twentieth century, but also defined the political dynamics of the city.  

As bolita's grip on Tampa politics lessened, Tampa elections became more orderly and well run. One key figure in the move toward clean and honest elections was Supervisor of Registration John Dekle, who served in that position from 1932 until his death in 1965. Dekle consistently fought election fraud. He eliminated bogus names from the registration rolls, and was instrumental in the change from voting by paper ballot to the lever machine. He also established a permanent voter registration system in the 1940s that did away with the need for citizens to repeatedly register for each election. Dekle’s accomplishments are often overlooked in Tampa’s history, perhaps because more colorful and powerful characters dominate our recollection of the past.

Tampa’s growth and development during the first half of the twentieth century was shaped, in part, by its reputation as a gambling city with a political system based on cronism, factional politics and fraudulent elections. City leaders desired the image of a progressive, professional and modem city, yet the political system they fostered was diametrically opposed to that image. The arrangement did not change because it served all parties well. It kept a relatively small group of powerful men in power, and it allowed another group to make money. Tampa politics for nearly fifty years was a politics of bolita - a politics that disregarded the fundamental right of citizens - the right to an honest vote.

ENDNOTES

Pam Iorio is currently serving her second term as supervisor of elections for Hillsborough County. She was first elected in 1992 and reelected in 1996. She is president of the Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections. Pam served two terms on the Hillsborough Board of County Commissioners. In her eight year tenure, she served on a wide variety of boards of which she chaired the Metropolitan Planning Organization, Hartline, and Tampa Bay Commuter Rail Authority. She is currently on the advisory council of the Tampa Bay History Center, and the board of directors of American Victory Ship. A native of Maine, Pam attended Hillsborough County public schools and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Political Science from American University.


2 Tony Pizzo, “El Gallego Tampa’s First Bolitero.” Tony Pizzo provided a colorful


4 Tampa Weekly Journal, 14 July 1887.

5 Tampa Morning Tribune, 23 June 1895; Grismer, Tampa, A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Ray Region of Florida, 212.

6 Tampa Morning Tribune, 3 June 1908.

7 Tampa Morning Tribune, 6 April 1910.

8 Tampa Morning Tribune, 5 June 1900.

9 Tampa Morning Tribune, 1 January 1909.

10 Tampa Morning Tribune, 5 April 1910.


12 Tampa Morning Tribune, 5 April 1910. Tampa Morning Tribune. 22 April 1910. The current administration referenced during the 1910 race was that of Francis L. Wing, who served from 1908 to 1910. Wing had beaten Frecker in 1908 when Frecker ran for re-election as mayor. Curtis W. Welch, Tampa's Elected Officials: A Narrative Chronology of Municipal Elections and Tampa's Elected Officials From 1849 to 1886 (Tampa: City of Tampa Archives, 1997)


14 Tampa Daily Times, 3 April 1912. To what degree any of Tampa's mayors were controlled by gambling interests is unknown. Jock Murray, a Tampa Morning Tribune investigative reporter, who, in the late 1940s wrote in-depth articles on gambling and politics, commented on the subject during an interview in 1971: "I don't want to say that politicians who were supported by gamblers were all crooked. I know they were not. For example, I covered City Hall for a good part of D.B. McKay's regime and I would sit outside waiting to see him and sitting across the room would be Charlie Wall. One time McKay . . . mentioned that Charlie was looking after his political affairs. Well, I know that if Charlie Wall asked somebody who was running a little game somewhere to get 10 or 15 cars out to haul voters to the polls on behalf of some politician, that boy would do it. I don't think D.B. McKay ever took a dishonest nickel in his life. But I don't know if he could have won an election without Charlie Wall's engineering;" Orrick and Crumpacker, The Tampa Tribune, A Century of Florida Journalism, 255.

15 Tampa Daily Times. 9 March 1911.

16 Tampa Morning Tribune. 14 July 1887. For a recap of the 1935 election, see Hampton Dunn, "Tampa's Longest Day," Tampa Tribune, 1 September 1963. On the change from the paper ballot to the voting machine, see Tampa Morning Tribune, 11 November 1936.


25 *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 15 October 1947, 16 October 1947. Jock Murray reported in an interview in 1971 that the series "created quite a bit of interest" but did not bring about real change. The public and the grand jury seemed almost anesthetized to the issue since stories of gambling and political shenanigans had become almost an institutionalized part of Tampa’s character, *Tampa Tribune*, 255.

26 Orrick and Crumpacker, *The Tampa Tribune, A Century of Florida Journalism*, 261-264. The size of Tampa’s bolita operation was quite large in the late 1940s, during the same period of time when leading law enforcement officials declared they knew of no organized bolita operation. A *Tribune* article reported that Velasco and two other partners, "controlled only one-twentieth of the numbers concession here, but that small share in the city-wide operation was able to employ 48 peddlers, and make a profit of more than $15,000 for a typical 24-day period. Simple arithmetic indicates the size of the overall operation," *Tampa Sunday Tribune*, 6 March 1949.


"JUDGE" JAMES JOSEPH LUNSFORD: Tampa Attorney, Farmer and First Hillsborough County Law Librarian

Sydney K. Potter

During some research for an article about the historic old Hillsborough County Courthouse, torn down in 1953, there was no overlooking the quiet presence of an attorney so long a respected figure in the legal world of that era. Although he never actually occupied the judicial bench, to his fellow lawyers, especially those many, young and old, who came to him for gracious advice and counsel, he was always "Judge" Lunsford.

James Joseph Lunsford was born in Coffee County, Alabama, February 2, 1870, the eldest of five children born to George Champion Lunsford, a Confederate veteran, and his wife, Mary Hudson Lunsford. When he was a small boy, his father, a farmer, moved the family, on foot and by wagon, to Florida. As the eldest son, he walked alongside his father while the wagon carried his mother and the smaller children, along with their household goods. Apparently the move was not a success, or not to their liking, and they returned to either Alabama or Georgia.

Actually, Coffee County in Alabama is in close proximity to both Florida and Georgia, and it appears that there was quite a bit of travel back and forth across state lines. The census of 1880 shows the family living in Hamilton County, Florida.

The South was still in the midst of reconstruction, following the devastations of the Civil War, and this state of affairs probably contributed to the young Lunsford’s formal education not going beyond the fourth grade.

At a time when his family may have moved to Thomasville, Georgia, he went there to live in the home of a high school principal, who undertook to help him further his education. After some years the principal advised his pupil that there was no more that he could teach him.

So it was time to move on again, walking again, and working at whatever jobs he could to sustain his journey. This included splitting ties for a railroad, long hours in the fields, and also working as a roofer in 1890 helping to build the Opera House in Monticello, Florida. This is a remarkable building, once the grandest opera house in north Florida, with its stained glass windows and marvelous acoustics, and it still stands. Originally known as the Perkins Opera House, it became the Monticello Opera House when a non-profit group bearing the name Monticello Opera Company was formed in 1971 to save the old building from demolition. Now restored, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Somehow, somewhere during this period, in Georgia and working his way down through Florida, apparently restless and ambitious, he found time to, in the vernacular of the day, "read the law." There is not much information about this period in his life, although there is evidence that he spent time in Thomasville and Monticello, also with a firm in Tallahassee, where it is reported that he lived in a one-bedroom apartment above the offices where he worked.
After some additional schooling - he once mentioned "three months" - he took the examination and was admitted to the bar. One is reminded of Abraham Lincoln in his early years.

At age 29, apparently seeking broader horizons, Lunsford elected to move south to Tampa.

He arrived in Tampa in 1899, just eight years after Henry B. Plant had completed and opened the Tampa Bay Hotel, his Moorish palace alongside the Hillsborough River, and one year after Theodore Roosevelt and his Rough Riders had arrived and departed on their way to Cuba and San Juan Hill.

In 1900, Lunsford formed a general law practice in partnership with Thomas Palmer, a well known criminal lawyer, and he was on his way. Although leaning toward corporate law, records indicate that he also participated in the firm's sometimes tumultuous criminal law practice.

A story in the *St. Petersburg Times*, May 1901, relates that, "While engaged in trying a criminal case at Tampa last week, lawyers George F. Raney, Jr. and J. J. Lunsford were only prevented from engaging in a fight by deputy sheriffs. Both showed their teeth."

While this may or may not have been a contributing factor, it does appear that young Lunsford made an early impression upon the community. In 1901 he was helping to found the Peninsular Telephone Company, and in 1903 he was engaged in drawing Company, Tampa's City Charter, which was approved by the next session of the Florida Legislature.

For the telephone company, working with founder W. G. Brorein and law partner Thomas Palmer, he drew up the organization papers for the fledgling corporation, bringing a more modern telephone service to Tampa. At that time, as noted in the 1971 book, *The People Machine*, written by Dennis R. Cooper for The General Telephone Company of Florida, Tampa was being served by equipment mostly obsolete and poorly maintained, sometimes so full of static that callers had to shout to be heard. There was no long distance service.

Lunsford went on to serve as a director of General Telephone, at one point, vice-president, and remained the company's chief counsel until his retirement in 1926.
shows him seated with other executives of the company, made easily recognizable by his baldness. W. G. Brorein is seated to his right.

Concerning his baldness, he would tell the story that when he was a young man, working as a laborer, he had worn a black felt hat, and his hair would remain wet with sweat for days at a time, for "forty days and forty nights." It was his belief that this caused his hair to fall out, leaving only the fringe around the sides and back. He claimed that this actually helped him, making him appear older than he really was when he began to take on new and important responsibilities early in his law career.

Later on he met young Pat Whitaker, just arrived in Tampa. According to family legend, they met in a "blind tiger," slang for a drinking establishment of that era. They took a liking to each other and began practicing criminal law together.

It was a highly successful venture, and they both prospered, becoming particularly well-known for the eloquence of their pleadings.

Despite the success, Lunsford found himself becoming uncomfortable in this area, and his wife, Geraldine, whom he had married in July 1910, urged him to withdraw from criminal law, which he did. For the most part he then devoted himself to his growing and very lucrative corporate law practice. However, Whitaker and Lunsford remained friends, and each Christmas Whitaker would send his former associate a bottle, perhaps
reminiscent of their first "blind tiger" meeting. It is interesting that, like his earlier law partner, Thomas Palmer, Pat Whitaker went on to become a member of the Florida Legislature and president of the Senate.

In addition to Palmer and Whitaker, at various times Lunsford also was associated with several others well known in Tampa's legal fraternity, among them Edwin R. Dickenson, Thomas M. Shackleford, Jr., Dozier A. DeVane, and C. F. Blake.

During his early years in Tampa Lunsford lived in the Hyde Park area, first at 201 Beach Place, close by the Bayshore, then later at 111 South Brevard Avenue. It is believed that he built the home at 201 Beach Place, his residence with his first wife, May, and daughter Dorothy. The single-family house was later converted into an apartment building, then acquired by the county in 1975 for use as a shelter for runaway children.

There was a movement in the 1980s, sparked by the local historic preservation board, to preserve and put the old home, along with several others in the area built between 1897 and 1907, on the National Register of Historic Places. But, the old building, in bad condition and considered a fire hazard after years of neglect and deterioration, was finally demolished, along with 205 Beach Place, to make room for a new facility for runaways.

The 111 South Brevard location is now a vacant lot. In 1918 Lunsford bought a house in what was then a fashionable neighborhood on Nebraska Avenue. He and his second wife, Geraldine, and his growing family, lived in this house for a number of years. Known as Belvedere, a picture, with two of his children on the front porch, shows it to be a spacious and imposing residence. It burned shortly after he sold it in 1926 and
arson was suspected. The block where it once stood, at 3203 Nebraska Avenue, across the street from what was then the First United Brethren Church, is now zoned commercial and occupied by businesses.

The church, a red brick building in the 3300 block, still stands. Lunsford’s eldest son, James Jr., known as Jay, attended Boy Scout meetings there, in the basement, along with Ed Blackburn, Jr., whose father was a member of the Tampa City Council. Ed Blackburn, Jr. was destined to become Hillsborough County’s sheriff, and later a member of the Florida Legislature.

In addition to his work for the telephone company, Lunsford continued an extensive private law practice. One of his more interesting clients was the Belgian Princess de Montys-Lyon, Countess do Mercy Argenteau, the subject of an article in D.B. McKay’s *Pioneer Florida*, and in an article by him in the *Tampa Tribune*, April 13, 1952.

Lunsford is mentioned as her attorney, and his older children recall that he would never call upon her alone in her home, in Belmont Heights, but would always recruit at least one of them to go along. To them she was Madame Argenteau, and they remember being impressed by her beauty and the magnificence of her jewelry and the fine furnishings and paintings in her home. By all accounts she was an intriguing, even flamboyant, personality, and her sudden and unexpected death in 1921, followed by the mysterious disappearance of her many valuables, raised suspicions of foul play, perhaps poison. Her body was laid to rest in Myrtle Hill Cemetery.

Altogether attorney Lunsford was carrying a very heavy load, and it was beginning to affect his health. He frequently traveled to the spa at Hot Springs, Arkansas for treatment, and he was warned by his doctor that he was facing severe health problems if he didn’t ease off and reduce the stress. In fact the doctor recommended that he quit his law practice altogether, rather than just cut back.

Accordingly, in 1923, he bought a 94 acre farm in the Brandon-Valrico area, bordering the west side of Lake Valrico. In 1926 he resigned from his law practice, sold the home on Nebraska Avenue, and moved with his family to *Veltmere Farms*, the name given the farm by his wife.

Full of enthusiasm for this new project he had built a fine, two-story red barn. He bought 120 dairy cattle, a pair of matched bay saddle horses, four mules, and a tractor and wagons necessary for farm and dairy work, and to take care of the three orange groves already on the property. He also installed an irrigation system, an innovation for those times.

In addition, with his usual thoroughness, he studied horticulture and the weather, knowledge necessary to becoming a successful farmer. He became such an expert on the weather that, according to a 1946 article by Frank Klein, Jr., of the *Tampa Tribune*, he was often consulted by his farmer friends in Valrico for advice.

He also became an outstanding horticulturist, developing hybrid strains that enhanced both the quality and the yield of his crops. He amassed a store of medical knowledge that he used to keep both his family and his livestock healthy. He would also use that knowledge to act as a veterinarian for farmer friends with sick livestock, and who often could not afford a regular vet. Such services were always, of course, performed for free.
He had a great ability to absorb knowledge, always generous in sharing it with those in need, and it was during this period of helpfulness to his neighbors that he first began being referred to as "Judge" Lunsford.

There was a house on the farm into which he and his family moved, but he had plans for a finer home to be built down by the lake. Unfortunately it was not to be.

Although his dedication and methods were making *Veltmere Farms* into a model operation, and for a while an undoubted success, Lunsford found his future and the future of his farm being shaped by events quite beyond his control.

The first setback was the loss of a field of fine cantaloupes, probably hybrid, that he had developed and carefully nurtured into early maturity. He had planted early, gambling, or perhaps having reason to believe, weatherwise, that there would be no frost. There was no frost, and the crop was ready for market when prices were sky-high. He had driven into Tampa to pick up shipping crates when a massive thunderstorm struck. Hailstones - reported by some as big as "grapefruit" - pummeled the field. The size was perhaps an exaggeration, but of course grapefruit were not as large then as they are today. Nevertheless, the crop of cantaloupes was totally destroyed.

It was a devastating blow, both financially and otherwise. He lost not only the revenue that the cantaloupes would have produced, but also the considerable investment spent in getting them ready for early marketing.

There was more to follow. The "boom" in Florida was winding down. Banks failed and the Great Depression set in. Lunsford continued to grow fine crops, but the bank failures had cost him his savings, the people had no money and there was no market. He was forced to sell off his livestock, and finally was reduced to selling his produce on the streets of Tampa. He also supplemented the family income by working for the New Deal’s Works Progress Administration, supervising laborers doing road work.

The farm, heavily mortgaged, eventually became too much of a burden and he was forced to give it up. In 1936 he moved his family to a home at 5801 2nd Street, in the Ballast Point area of Tampa. This home, built in the 1920s and recently refurbished, still stands.

Today the area alongside Lake Valrico once occupied by *Veltmere Farms* is a scene of winding roads and attractive homes. There is no vestige of the farm remaining other than some fine old oak trees, the same trees once so joyously climbed by the children of farmer Lunsford.

Although no longer a practicing attorney, Lunsford was nevertheless still held in high regard by the community, particularly amongst the legal fraternity. In 1937 he was asked by the city attorney to come out of retirement to revise and bring up to date the City Charter that he had first written in 1903. At age 67 this was a new challenge and one that he welcomed.

Shortly after, a committee of prominent attorneys, Frank T. Phillips, Edmund Worth and William T. Thompson, organized to establish a County Law Library. They offered him the position as Hillsborough County’s first Law Librarian.

There was probably nothing during his long and lucrative law career that pleased him more than this opportunity "to renew my friendships among the older lawyers and to get to know the young ones coming up," as
quoted in the aforementioned article by Frank Klein, Jr. "This library is a great thing. You can't know the law without the books."

In addition to donating his own law library, Lunsford prevailed upon others to loan or contribute volumes to be available to young lawyers who were in no position to set up libraries of their own.

Beyond the books, Lunsford made himself and his legal expertise available, and quite often, as noted in Frank Klein's article, a lawyer who had called would arrive at the library to find the appropriate volume on the table opened to the subject in question. Over the years it naturally followed that he became "Judge" Lunsford, a mark of the affection and esteem in which he was held by his colleagues.

Devoted to his work, for many years he would not even take a vacation, although failing health finally forced him to curtail his hours. His office was located on the second floor in the northeast wing of the old courthouse. There was no elevator, and after transporting him downtown, his son-in-law, Wayne Bevis, would help him up the stairs. Even if for only a few hours, Lunsford continued to show up for work every day.

Over many objections, the old courthouse building, designed by architect J. A. Wood, who also designed the Tampa Bay Hotel (now a part of the University of Tampa,) was slated to be torn down. The block where it once stood, bordered on the west by Franklin Street, and on the south by Lafayette Street (now Kennedy Boulevard,) is now occupied by the Tampa Police headquarters in what was formerly The Marine Bank & Trust Company building.

The Law Library, along with other county offices, was scheduled to be moved to the new courthouse under construction on Pierce Street.

Although Judge Lunsford had worked with the architect in designing the new facilities for the Law Library, and had readied the books to be moved, he was not fated to move to the new location. According to an October 22 story in the Tampa Tribune, on Monday, October 20 he was on the job at the old building, with the prospect that the books would be moved. However, rain interfered and delayed the transfer.

But Judge Lunsford's work was complete. On the very day of the opening of the new courthouse, October 21, 1952, he died in his sleep.

Certainly his was a most interesting life, intertwined with and having an impact upon the history of Tampa, then emerging from a settlement into a modern city. As a fitting honor and tribute, the Hillsborough Board of County Commissioners voted unanimously on October 18, 2000 to name the County Law Library for James Joseph Lunsford.

ENDNOTES

Sidney K. Potter is a Tampa native, and graduated from Brandon High School. It was while attending Brandon High that he first met two of James Lunsford's daughters. Mr. Potter was employed by Swift & Company, Meat Packers, in Miami, St. Petersburg and Tampa. It was after his transfer to Tampa in 1942 that he met Judge Lunsford's daughter, Thalia, and became reacquainted with her family. Mr. Potter was employed by National Airlines, Eastern Airlines in Tallahassee, I.W. Phillips & Company, Wholesale Hardware and Building Materials in Tampa, and, after
Phillips was acquired by Ace Hardware Corporation in 1975, remained with that corporation until, after 35 years with the two companies, he retired in 1984. He and his wife are the parents of three children.

James Joseph Lunsford, the "Judge," had lost his wife of 30 years, Geraldine, in 1940 after having moved from the farm back to Tampa. Some measure of the devotion that they must have felt for each other comes forth in the eulogy that he wrote, speaking of her as "My beloved sweetheart, bride and wife."

Judge Lunsford is survived by his daughter Thalia, Mr. Potter's wife of 55 years, four other daughters, and two sons. The author is much indebted to them for delving into their recollections and their files and making available much of the material contained in this article. An older son, Jay, died in 1977.

Numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren of "Judge" Lunsford can be found, not only in this area, but also in England, New York, California and points in between.
THE PAINS OF ANTICIPATION, 1861-1862 "The state of things - Tampa is fearful."

The excitement persisted for days. On Monday, militia colonel William I. Turner stoked the martial fires by occupying Fort Brooke's grounds with a small force of followers. One historian of the action described the company as "undoubtedly ardent secessionists in civilian dress, armed (if at all) with the weapons used to fight Billy Bowlegs warriors." Still, the military had returned to Tampa, a condition with which local people were quite comfortable. On Thursday, they came together at the courthouse to vent their own enthusiasms and to hear the brass band's rousing airs once again as soon as the politicians had had their say. That night fireworks lit the sky to the delight of those assembled, doubtlessly expressing the common understanding that, just as was true of the fireworks, the secession excitement would not hurt anyone once the confusing dust of disunion had cleared.2

That is one important point to remember when casting back upon those heady days of secession. Most people did not believe there would be a war. Merchant John Darling, one of Hillsborough County's delegates to the secession convention, later summed up the early 1861 sentiments of many of the locality's white people. "In giving this vote [for secession, I] was not influenced by any hostility towards the Govt. of the U.S.," he declared, "but it was given under the conviction that it was a rightful and proper remedy to break down the policy of Negro emancipation believed to be intended by the Republican Administration then about to come to office." Darling added, "Nor had [I] any idea that war would be the result until [President Abraham Lincoln's] proclamation of 15th April 1861." The Florida Peninsular
confirmed Darling’s memories. On February 2 it reported, "The tenor of news from Washington this week is quite pacific." Temporary editor Erasmus M. Thompson (editor Simon Turman was away at the secession convention) then quoted the Charleston Courier as concluding, "The question of separate State secession is at rest."3

In those days before President Lincoln called for Union volunteers in the wake of the surrender of United States troops at Fort Sumter in South Carolina’s Charleston Harbor, the whole idea of disunion could be seen as a lighter thing, an action without serious or, at least, lethal consequences. It allowed the politicians to bluster, while offering the young men a way to express loyalty to their state and region, an action which they would have defined as patriotism. Thus, when one-time Bowlegs War officer John T. Lesley announced the formation of The Tampa Guards in late January, local boys and young men flocked to its banner. Drills held at least weekly kept the guards (later called The Sunny South Guards) eager for the cause. On the other hand, they suffered at first from little threat of discomfort, dislocation, or danger. As one student of the company has noted, they avoided "orders [that] might have called them from the parties, parades, and parlors to the digging of earthworks." Eventually, though, frustration due to the lack of any real military responsibilities would lend itself to a desire for a greater show of commitment. And, that would cause problems for Tampa.4

Local loyalists likely were the first to bear the burden of ardent young Rebels with time on their hands. At first, a climate of tolerance for differing opinions graced the town. On January 26, for instance, the Peninsular boasted that "No ‘Reign of Terror’ has marked the overthrow of a great government; no Cromwell or Robespierre has been needed to kindle the flames of popular disaffection; no crowns have fallen; no blood has flowed." In such an atmosphere Unionists proclaimed their convictions. Among them stood lawyer Ossian B. Hart, merchant, James McKay, army veteran Robert Jackson and his wife Nancy Collar Jackson, undertaker John T. Givens, storekeeper Louis G. Covacevich, farmers Samuel and Jesse Knight, the brothers Vincent and Bartholomew C. Leonardy, and numerous others. "I always opposed those wicked heresies," Hart recollected, "and could not agree nor act with them, simply because they precipitated us into secession, rebellion, and war against our country, as too many others did."5
As the weeks passed, though, the young men of the Sunny South Guards could not restrain their passions and began efforts to intimidate their opponents, a circumstance common in Florida at the time. This increasingly became the case after the organization of the southern confederacy in February, Abraham Lincoln's inauguration in March, and, in April, Fort Sumter's surrender and the eruption of fighting at Pensacola. A Jacksonville man explained the general state of affairs. "The Union men . . . for two or three months [after secession] continued to utter their sentiments of opposition to the movement," he recorded, "but gradually the reign of terror gained full swing and the time came when for a northern man to utter openly his love for the Union would be almost suicide." The man added, "Men who were born and reared in the south could speak against secession long after it was unsafe for northern men to do so." Details of the anti-Unionist campaign at Tampa are lacking, but O. B. Hart described the consequences. "By the events of war the protections of the National Government could not reach him," a newspaperman noted, "and common prudence compelled silence."  

Trial for Treason

The hardening of the times and of relations between Tampans already could be seen clearly by late March. By then the Confederate States flag floated on a staff above James McKay's store. Not far away, at the establishment of New York-born W. G. Ferris the United States banner yet waved, except that its owner had turned it upside down. The pull toward greater conflict then accelerated with ensuing events. Not later than mid-April Colonel William I. Turner had conscripted "every available man" to build earthworks at Fort Brooke and was placing a set of five cannons along the waterfront. After the Peninsular cried "To Arms! To Arms!" on April 20, it took only a few days before many of Tampa's older men desired to prove their allegiance to the new Confederate States by organizing a volunteer company of their own. Labeled The Silver Grays, the unit contained almost all the town's leading secessionists and major slaveholders, as well as a few Unionists. William Cooley headed the company as its captain, with John Darling and John Jackson assisting as officers. Louis G. Covacevich and John T. Givens now stood in the ranks shoulder to shoulder with Alfonso DeLaunay, John P. Crichton, Jesse Carter, William B. Hooker, and Franklin Branch.  

Meanwhile, the secession convention and the legislature were attempting to rule the
state as it careened toward war. In doing so both bodies tackled several high-voltage issues that further stirred public excitement. Before the legislature adjourned in early March, it approved a military bill that called for raising troops and the organization of a more-effective militia system. The convention delegates thereafter carried on without the legislature and upon their own authority. Particularly, they moved to take control of all United States lands located in Florida. Tampans delighted in the action because it gifted them with a boon. Tucked away in the law’s details was a special provision that authorized the Hillsborough County commission to survey, subdivide, sell, and otherwise administer the Fort Brooke military reservation. Profits loomed rich for the taking thanks to secession.8

Lastly and with local repercussions not far distant, the convention defined and penalized treason. It specified, in part, that the crime was committed "If any person shall, by speech or writing, strive to stir up a rebellion in this State against the authority of the State or the Confederate States, or shall by word or deed endeavor to create sedition or be engaged in any seditious or rebellious meeting, assembled to incite resistance to the authority of this State or of the Confederate States, or shall endeavor to seduce any one in the military or naval services of this State or of the Confederate States to desert or betray a trust reposed in him or them." The Peninsular published the ordinance in full in its May 18 issue.9

Coincidentally, public anger had been building at, of all people, James McKay. Since November 1860 the captain and his partner Jacob Summerlin had been shipping one boatload of cattle after another to Havana, Cuba. The venture’s success had pleased area cattlemen enormously, but many of Tampa’s businessmen still chafed at McKay’s temerity in relocating the enterprise from their town to Charlotte Harbor. That act had deprived the merchants of a slice of a potentially lucrative pie, particularly since McKay was importing Cuban goods into Florida for direct sale to frontier families. Among the irate merchants stood John Darling, whose conflicts with the captain could be traced back at least one decade. In the circumstances, Darling took action by organizing a public meeting on May 4 to protest cattle shipments to Union-occupied Key West. The principal shipper, of course, was McKay. Now, tempers seethed at the man who, until recently, had been lionized as Tampa’s hero.10

McKay took several precautionary steps in light of the changed circumstances, but soon events took a turn for the worse. Especially, he protected his large cattle holdings from possible seizure under the treason law by
transferring them to his partner Summerlin on May 31. Then, the captain’s position deteriorated with the coming of June. Emotions flowed early in the month when, at the Southern Baptist Convention’s request, the local Baptist church conducted a day of fasting and prayer for the Confederacy. Less than two weeks afterward the Confederacy’s own "day of humiliation and prayer on account of "national sins, etc.," as proclaimed by President Jefferson Davis, heightened sensitivities further. These acts combined with the strains of the recent past to send tempers flying. At the Baptist Church members summarily dropped longtime supporter Jesse Carter from their rolls for "unchristian conduct" in the wake of an argument with a fellow Baptist. Down at the masonic lodge, the spirit of fellowship fared no better. The same week, one-time county sheriff Edward T. Kendrick suffered expulsion as a result of accusing lawyer James Gettis of accepting a bribe from Darling’s late business partner. Darling joined with Gettis, William B. Hooker, and Henry L. Mitchell to eject Kendrick as a blasphemer and "habitual liar."11

As these scenes and circumstances unfolded, attention shifted back to McKay. Word trickled from Key West to Tampa’s Confederates that the captain had been cooperating with old friends of his who now commanded United States forces at the island city. He had brought them supplies, helped them to deport secessionists to the mainland, and leased them his steamer. For the young men who made up the "Sunny South Guards" this was all too much. They prepared to act.12

McKay discovered his change of fortune when he landed in a fishing smack at his wharf on June 26. "Within half an hour after our arrival at Tampa," he related, "an armed posse of men went down & took possession of the smack, stating that she belonged to Unionists, and must be seized; they being reckless, ignorant people." The guards’ action in seizing private property proved too much for many of Tampa’s merchant leaders, even for John Darling. He - along with McKay, C. L. Friebele, L. G. Covacevich, Edward A. Clarke, and Franklin Branch - sought to interpose the authority of their friend Colonel William I. Turner over that of guards captain John T. Lesley. The businessmen long had associated closely with Governor Madison Starke Perry, and he acceded to their wishes, giving McKay an order for return of his vessel.13

The Sunny South Guards refused to bow. The gubernatorial appeal took some time, during which the local unit was mustered into the regular service of the Confederate States as Company K, Fourth Florida Infantry. This removed them from state jurisdiction. Two days later, on July 3, 1861, a United States gunboat, the R. R. Cuyler, took up station in Tampa Bay, initiating the Union blockade of the port. Within twenty-four hours, after the guardsmen celebrated the Fourth of July "in a manner clearly indicating their appreciation of the Liberty bequeathed to them by the Revolutionary Sires," they prepared to act once again. "The night previous to which the Smack was to be turned over to me," McKay explained, "the persons who held her in charge set fire to her, and burned her up."14

The crisis was building to a crescendo. When McKay headed north to discuss affairs with the governor, word circulated that he was "a general agent of the Government and a traitor and should be hung." Many of the rumors derived from a Peninsular letter penned by the captain’s old nemesis State Senator James T. Magbee, who was more than ready to avenge...
McKay’s role in the senator’s 1858 removal from federal office. Then, word arrived of the South’s victory (or so it was seen) at the First Battle of Bull Run. Amid the swirl of excitement, Magbee found his opportunity to strike. State Attorney Henry L. Mitchell had resigned to enter Confederate service with the Sunny South Guards. The senator volunteered to act in Mitchell’s stead and filed petty treason charges against McKay. When the accused returned to town, Magbee ordered him arrested.15

Strange turns of events were about to become the rule. The trial convened on August 10 at the county courthouse. Three justices of the peace weighed evidence presented by Magbee, who sought a sentence of death by hanging. Rebuttal came from McKay’s lead attorney O. B. Hart, who was assisted by secessionist James Gettis. Brigadier General Joseph M. Taylor of the Florida Militia, an old associate of the defendant who temporarily had relieved Colonel Turner of Fort Brooke’s command in late July, "sat himself on the trial." Cattlemen threatened to break up the "long and acrimonious" proceedings before the justices agreed to set McKay free on $10,000 bond pending a new trial during the circuit court’s October term. Taylor then arranged for the captain to pass the R. R. Cuyler’s blockade in a schooner bound for Key West. There, McKay retrieved his steamer, the Salvor, and headed for Havana. He picked up a cargo that may have included supplies for the Fort Brooke garrison (guns and ammunition reportedly were found aboard). Unfortunately, while steaming through the keys toward Tampa on October 14, a United States warship intercepted the Salvor. Finding contraband on board, the warship’s commanding officer seized the vessel and held its captain as a prisoner of war. James McKay would not see Tampa for seven months.16

Troubled Times

As the tumult of the McKay trial subsided, the military presence at Fort Brooke came before long to resemble an occupying force more than the band of patriotic neighbors that had taken up the abandoned post in January 1861. Colonel Turner resigned his militia position to accept a captaincy in the Confederate States army. This act placed Captain John T. Lesley in charge by August 21. His tenure proved short-lived. With Confederate army orders in hand, Major Wylde Lyde Latham Bowen of Lake City took up the reins of authority in early September, bringing with him two companies of the Fourth Florida Infantry and an intention to wring order out of chaos. Bowen quickly stationed Lesley and the remaining Sunny South Guards away from Tampa at Shaw’s Point near the Manatee River’s mouth. As the major sought to
institute regular drill and discipline among the post's remaining garrison, Lesley battled for redress, refusing to recognize Bowen's authority. That status quo held for the time being. Just as Major Bowen and Captain Lesley began to lock horns at Fort Brooke, Key West's Union authorities acted to introduce another factor into the Tampa equation. On September 6 Major William 11. French had ordered all residents of Key West to take an oath of allegiance or else be removed from the island. He also directed the families of local men who had joined Confederate forces to leave. The act, according to a report dated September 8, "caused a vast amount of commotion among the secessionists here, and they are about to commence their flight Northward or towards secessia." The correspondent added: "A large number leave with their families and household goods and gods next week. All go to the first rebel port, Tampa - a poor and unimportant town in the bay - already filled to repletion with half starved rebels from Key West, and unable to support any considerable increase to her population."

The Key West refugees arrived at a difficult time, although Major Bowen sensed a bright lining to the cloud. Rains had pelted Tampa through September, complicating attempts to supply the 250-man garrison (including the Sunny South Guards). With little food available and fevers sending many of his men to sick quarters, Bowen recognized the need to put the newcomers to work. He directed the construction of an artillery battery on a small, marshy island three-quarters of a mile out in Hillsborough Bay. "Both Soldiers and Citizens have done considerable work on the Battery &[,] to continue the work[,] there will be [a need] to secure the aid of the Citizens," he recorded on November 24.

Fortunately, newly installed governor John Milton helped to regularize the refugees' labor contribution requirements in late November. In implementing the legislature's military act, the governor called into Confederate service the Florida Volunteer Coast Guard. It was to be made up, in good part, of one-time Key West residents. He placed one company in the charge of ship captain Henry Mulrennan, reportedly "the first man [at Key West] to hoist the rebel flag and salute it with seven guns." Mulrennan, in turn, sent a detachment to

John A. Henderson in his Civil War uniform.
Tampa under Lieutenant Walter C. Maloney. They called themselves The Key West Avengers.\(^{20}\)

If Major Bowen believed that he would be around to supervise the Key West Avengers, events proved him incorrect to the detriment of Tampa’s civilian population. In early December 1561 he and the Sunny South Guards received orders, just as the Avengers were taking up their posts at Tampa, to report immediately to Fernandina. Essentially, this left the Avengers, who tended to be rough-hewn seamen or else hard-bitten frontier characters, to set the tone for community affairs. As Methodist minister R. L. Wiggins noted in January 1562, "I sincerely hoped that many of them would seek and obtain religion; but alas!"\(^{21}\)

The problems with the Avengers did not evidence themselves clearly until the new year had gotten fairly under way. Although rumors of attacks constantly aroused the fears of Tampans, they remained safe for the time being from assault. Nearby areas fared less fortunately. On January 16 United States military personnel raided Cedar Key and destroyed the Gulf terminus of Senator David L. Yulee’s Florida Rail Road. Ten days later elements of the Tampa Bay blockading force captured Captain Archibald McNeill’s sloop Mary Nevis. Tampa had depended upon the vessel to haul mail and supplies to and from the small settlement at Manatee (now Bradenton). In early February the raiders returned to the Gulf coast, attacking Manatee directly and also occupying for a time Abel Miranda’s settlement at Big Bayou on Point Pinellas. The incursions naturally added to Tampa’s refugee population.\(^{22}\)

All of these events took place as news of greater Confederate disasters rained on Tampa. Among other things, General Ulysses S. Grant took control of the Tennessee River by capturing Forts Henry and Donelson on February 6 and 16. On the eighth federal troops scored another victory at the Battle of Roanoke Island, leaving Pamlico Sound and much of the North Carolina coast under Union authority. Even before Donelson fell, Confederate General Braxton Bragg had called for Florida’s abandonment so that Confederate assets could be concentrated elsewhere. Meanwhile, a United States fleet was assembling at Key West aimed at an advance upon the South’s largest and richest city, New Orleans. The war for southern independence had turned sour.\(^{23}\)

Through January the Avengers had responded to events with restraint. Chasing around the bay area kept many of them busy much of the time. Then, threats of attack upon Tampa prompted them, despite poor winter weather, to construct artillery positions at the mouth of Spanishtown Creek in today’s Hyde Park section. "All hands at work on the batteries today," recorded one member of the company on January 22. "Had to knock off several times in consequence of rain but finished the one that was began yesterday and nearly finished another." He added, "Rained very heavy all night with a plenty of thunder and lightning." Fearful Tampans, grateful for whatever protection they could receive in increasingly difficult circumstances, embraced the coast guardsmen despite their less-than-sophisticated demeanor. "I received an invitation from some ladies in Tampa to call over and spend the evening," noted Robert Watson on February first. "I accepted the invitation and went over after supper." Of the occasion, Watson commented, "Was introduced to several of the fair sex and passed a very pleasant evening."\(^{24}\)
February’s disasters altered conditions markedly, and not for the better. Food supplies had dwindled, miserable weather had fostered illness and bad tempers, and threats of wartime violence had erected a pall of fear over the community and garrison. By March 1 refugees were informing authorities at Key West that "the Confederates [at Tampa have] grown desperate since the loss of Fort Donelson, proclaiming death to all Union men who dare express their sentiments." Further, the refugees reported that "the Confederate soldiers plunder the gardens in the neighborhood of Tampa as fast as any edibles are produced." As these events unfolded, the local people discovered that they no longer possessed the authority to protect themselves. On February 22, Fort Brooke’s commander declared martial law in the town and suspended civilian government. For some Tampans, the hunters had just become the hunted.25

An important change in the Fort Brooke military command had taken place prior to the declaration of martial law, but it took some time for the development to make itself truly felt. It occurred on February 10 when Major Robert Brenham Thomas took command upon the orders of General James H. Trapier, then heading Confederate forces in Florida. Thomas was a well-regarded Tampan. A West Point graduate of the Class of 1852, he had served until resigning his commission in 1856, when he went into business with his father-in-law W. G. Ferris. Sadly, his wife and daughter soon died. In 1858 Thomas remarried, this time to Sallie McKay, daughter of Captain James McKay. He taught at the Kentucky Military Institute for one year before returning to Tampa to run the Florida House Hotel. He had helped to organize what became the Sunny South Guards in January 1861, but yearned for service closer to the front. "When the rebellion was raised, I, like others, deemed it my duty to go with the state," he explained. "I entered State Service, was transferred from that to what was called Confederate States Army and was commissioned First Lieut." Thomas distinguished himself in Virginia and Kentucky, but by the late winter of 1862 he suffered from serious illness. The Tampa assignment was intended to allow him to recuperate.26

The situation faced by Thomas upon his arrival at Fort Brooke would have taxed an officer in perfect health, more so a man who needed rest and family care. His forces consisted principally of Co. E, Fourth Florida Infantry (Lafayette Rangers) and the Key West Avengers. Both units presented problems. "The military conditions which greeted Thomas at Fort Brooke were appalling," observed one historian. Thomas sought to enforce discipline as best he could, but his efforts availed little. This stayed the case even after Thomas swore the Avengers...
into Confederate, as opposed to state, service in March as Co. K, Seventh Florida Infantry.  

The unmilitary demeanor of the Rangers may have exceeded that of the Avengers, although the condition differed only by degree. One Avenger expressed shock in a diary entry about the condition of the Rangers’ barracks in mid-May. "Went over and had a look at the quarters and of all the dirty houses that I ever saw they beat all," he wrote, "hog pens are cleaner." Reports continued to flow into Key West about depredations visited upon local residents by the soldiers and guardsmen, and northern newspaper correspondents were all too happy to share the tidings with their readers. In early April, it was said that "the rebels [are] growing more and more desperate, refusing rations to their prisoners who were unwilling to enlist in the rebel cause, and threaten[ing] them with violence." Deserters confirmed several weeks later "reports of want and desperation previously received from that quarter."  

One shining moment of heroism was allowed to Major Thomas. On April 14 a United States schooner, the Beauregard, drew to within one and one-half miles of the fort. Under a flag of truce, Lieutenant William B. Eaton demanded Fort Brooke's surrender, threatening "to bombard the town" after twenty-four hours if appropriate action were not taken and suggesting that noncombatants depart. Thomas forthrightly responded, "I cannot accept the proposition to surrender, though for the sake of humanity, I accept your terms in regard to the removal of the women and children." For once his troops backed their commander. "Our men gave three cheers at the prospect of having a fight," recorded Robert Watson, "which made the men in the Yankee boat look down in the mouth as they expected to see us all look frightened and ready to surrender." Most civilians did depart, but the threat proved an empty one. Maria Louisa Daegenhardt remembered that her father took the family to a farm nine miles from town. "We took all we could carry with us not knowing what we would find when we came back," she related. "We staid 5 days but when we came back the gun boat was gone & they had not thrown a shell."  

When the Beauregard pulled away from Tampa, the time in town of the Rangers and the Avengers was growing short. Fernandina, Jacksonville, and St. Augustine had been occupied by the Union in March. That month, the state abolished all of its militia organizations and the Confederacy decided essentially to abandon coastal defense in Florida. On April 7 General Grant, however narrowly, bested the Confederates at Shiloh. By month’s end New Orleans had surrendered. About the same time, Pensacola came under the United States flag. Orders arrived at Tampa in May for the departure of the Lafayette Rangers, an act accomplished on the twentieth. The Avengers moved from Spanishtown Creek into the Rangers abandoned quarters, but only temporarily. They simply awaited the arrival of replacements before themselves departed on June 27. With individual exceptions, they would not be missed.  

Civilian Decline  

Through the months as Fort Brooke's garrison changed and circumstances altered its relationship to the community, Tampans endeavored to adjust their lives to swings of fortune and, eventually, to survive increasingly trying times. Interestingly, they had begun the period by attempting to do away with their municipal government. Amid the hoopla of secession in January
1861, unnamed "TAXPAYERS" proposed a "PUBLIC MEETING!" in order "to devise means for relieving this place from the encumbrance of a Corporation." Their call argued: "The one which now exists is beneficial to none, save a few Officers; it is a source of needless expenses to the people, and, as troubles are likely to come upon us soon and the State may be levying additional taxes, it will be well to retrench superficially."31

It turned out that Dr. Franklin Branch and *Peninsular* publisher William J. Spencer lay behind the scheme to abolish local government. When the citizens met, though, Henry L. Mitchell on behalf of the town council convinced the men to support continuation of the corporation but agreed to a suspension of tax collections for the ensuing year. The gathering then nominated a "no taxation" ticket. Headed by Hamlin V. Snell as mayoral candidate, it carried Spencer as its choice for town marshal. Tampa's larger merchants, with John Darling's leadership, attempted to forestall the attempt to curtail town services. They failed. On February 2 the "no taxation" ticket prevailed, although it appears that the results pleased few. When the town's second newspaper - Alfonso DeLaunay's staunchly pro-secessionist *Sunny South* - carried on February 19 a report of the mayor's inaugural ball, it noted, "There was but slim attendance, considering the general invitation to the citizens of Tampa - and visitors."

By the time of the February election, some Tampans already were voting on the town's future with their feet. As early as December 1860, Leroy G. Lesley had advertised that he was selling out preparatory to a move to Hernando County. With the passage of time, numerous others followed. Candy maker Jose Vigil departed for New Orleans in early 1861, for example, while Lesley made good on his earlier declaration. By the next year the trickle had mounted to a slow stream, especially after Fort Donelson's fall in February. William B. Hooker removed his family to a Hernando County plantation. Christopher L. Friebele closed his Tampa store and reopened at Brooksville. John Jackson carried his loved ones "some 10 or 15 miles from town." Others trod similar paths.33

Some Tampans likely followed another stream, that of area Unionists seeking United States military protection. By mid-summer 1861 Union troops had landed on Egmont Key in Tampa Bay's mouth, and thereafter the tiny island and the ships that called there served as a beacon for refugees. The island's status became official in the winter of 1862. "I mentioned in one of my late letters that Capt. Eaton of the barque *Ethan Allen* was about to take possession of a light house in the neighborhood of Tampa Bay, and make it a refuge for the Union men of Florida, who come off to seek protection on board his ship," reported a correspondent of the *Boston Daily Journal* on March 7. He added, "I learn that his plan is working successfully, and that he has a colony of several families within range of his guns." The refugee camp remained on the island through the war, a thorn in the side of local Confederates.34

Perhaps even more Tampans would have departed the vicinity in 1861 and early 1862 had it not been for the opportunity to share in the potential prize of Fort Brooke. Secession meant that the United States government no longer controlled its large military reservation at Tampa. As seen, the Florida secession convention acted in April 1861 to assume authority over it. The delegates, in doing so, handed control to the Hillsborough County board of
commissioners. Three months later the commissioners advertised for proposals to survey the property. W. T. Coons won the bid. The Confederate military’s presence slowed down his work, though. Coons managed to deliver a preliminary map in February 1862 (he named the principle new east-west avenue as "Jeff Davis Street"), but the surveyor proved unable to deliver a completed plat satisfactory to the board. Meanwhile, the county lawmakers champed at the bit to obtain desperately needed funds from land sales, while Tampa speculators’ expectations of profit soared high. Conditions thereafter slipped so low that in May 1862 the commission suspended the survey attempt and removed all documents connected with it, together with the rest of the county’s records, to Cork, a rural community four or five miles west of today’s Plant City.35

(Note: Superscript for endnote 36 omitted from text)36

The disappointment of the speculators could not possibly have matched the heartbreak by then suffered in many Tampa households. It began with some mothers’ tears as their sons prepared to go to war. Later news of casualties stirred even more widespread grief. Nancy Jackson believed that her "sorest trial" during the war came with "the enlistment of two of their sons in the Confederate army." She related her experience to an interviewer:

When my John enlisted with the Confederates I though I could not have it so. His father was sick then and I knew they were to be sworn in that day [April 25, 1862]. I slipped out just from my own impulse, with my sunbonnet on my head, and went over, or started to go over to where Captain Robert Thomas had the boys in camp. John was under age, only a schoolboy, and I was his mother and was going to forbid their taking him away. When I got near enough I saw them all in line with their hands raised to be sworn in. I knew I was too late. I nearly fainted. I stopped where I was under a tree, and finally got back home. Father saw something was the matter with me as there were tears in my eyes, and he said, "Mama - that is what he always called me - what is the matter?" I managed to tell him. He tried to comfort me, telling me he did not believe Thomas would have paid any attention to me if I had got there before they were sworn in.37

While many of Tampa’s women stood loyally and enthusiastically behind the Confederate cause and the service of their men in support of it, complications necessarily arose that divided families and loved ones. A number of couples married in order to enjoy intimacy and the strength of commitment before the young husband departed to an uncertain future. Not unusually they did so without parental consent or, at least, the consent of both parents. Maria Louisa Daegenhardt recalled such a situation and the loneliness of a bride who could not acknowledge her marriage publicly. Her story stemmed from the June 1862 nuptials of her sister to blacksmith John Henry Krause, a private in Company B, Seventh Florida Infantry, and from the young couple’s concerns about father John Daegenhardt, a "true Christian" who "did not believe in slavery." As Maria remembered:

They wanted their marriage to be very secret as he was to leave right away to join his company in Charleston. Sister Mary gave me .50 cents to keep quiet about it, but I just had to tell my Teacher [Louisa B. Porter]. I knew she loved
sister Mary. She sent her a large bunch of Roses & sister wondered how she knew, but I never told of it and afterward bought a prettie brown Pitcher for my 50 cents & thought I made a big bargan. I kept it so long.38

John Henry Krause’s departure from Tampa for service in the Confederate States army highlighted yet another drain on the town’s population during 1861 and 1862. Some young men - such as Robert B. Thomas, James McKay, Jr., Peninsular publisher William J. Spencer, its editor Simon Turman, Jr., Drew Givens, and T. W. Givens - could not wait to serve the cause. They left Tampa in 1861 searching for a unit in which to enlist. As time passed, local companies such as the Sunny South Guards entered Confederate service and were called northward. A second spurt of enlistments came in February and March 1862, after the Confederate Congress passed a conscription act covering white males eighteen to thirty-five years of age. Rather than await the draft, dozens of the area’s remaining eligible men signed up with what became Company B, Seventh Florida Infantry. Krause served in its ranks. Captain James Gettis, and Lieutenants William B. Henderson, John A. Henderson, and Robert F. Nunez led its men.39

The departures, from whatever cause, left Tampa a place populated mostly by white women, children, and older men, plus a declining number of slaves (some left when owners moved away) and whatever troops made up the garrison. This particularly was so after Company B, Seventh Florida Infantry, filed from town in the summer of 1862. For the civilians, conditions deteriorated with the local economy’s collapse and pressures on available food and supplies brought about by the influx of Key West refugees. Already in the spring of 1861, times had turned hard. "Business is quite dull," reported William Ferris on May 3, "we are scarcely doing anything in the line of selling goods." Less than one year later, rumors reaching Key West insisted, "The state of things - Tampa is fearful." The account continued: "They are literally starving. They have no coffee, no tea, no flour, no cloth of any kind, except their common homespun, for which they pay $1.25 per yard. They all say they cannot hold out much longer if the blockade is not broken by England."40

If ever a situation cried out for leadership, this one was it. By late spring 1862 Tampans yearned for better days and for a guide to take them there. As events proceeded, the assistance of the United States government permitted them to turn once again to the man upon whom they repeatedly had relied in the past for answers to difficult problems. A hint that such a possibility existed came in late spring. Key West Avenger Robert Watson, then stationed near Clearwater Harbor, noted the moment in his diary. "A horseman came from Clearwater with the information that Lt. Maloney had arrived at that place," he recorded on May 16, "and that Mr. Jas. McKay & sons had arrived at Tampa."41

ENDNOTES

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The editor of *The Sunland Tribune* and the Tampa Historical Society are grateful to the University of Tampa Press, Tampa Bay History Center, and the author for permission to reproduce a portion of *Tampa in Civil War and Reconstruction*. This handsomely designed and illustrated book is No. 10 in the Tampa Bay History Center’s Reference Library Series published in 2000 by University of Tampa Press. The book focuses on Tampa’s unique cast of wartime and post-war characters and the events which occurred in the Tampa Bay area during the tumultuous years 1860 to 1877.


2 Ibid.; *FP*, January 19, 1861.

3 John Darling to Andrew Johnson, August 19, 1865, Case Files of Applications From Former Confederates for Presidential Pardons, 18651867 ("Amnesty Papers"), Office of the Adjutant General, M-1003, roll 15, NA; *FP*, February 2, 1861.

4 *FP*, January 26, May 11, 1861; *TST*, December 6, 1959; Zack C. Waters, "Tampa’s Forgotten

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38 Maria Louisa Daegenhardt, reminiscences (Historical Association of Southern Florida, Miami) 2-3; TST, May 4, 1952.

39 Hartman and Coles, Biographical Rosters, II, 694-704, IV, 1376-77; McKay, "Tampa of the Olden
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An array of sepia photographs from many decades past lay strewn about Judge Crockett Farnell's Clearwater home, helping to bring the story into focus in my mind. It is the life of Kittie Martin Lea, Judge Farnell's great-grandmother. A woman of amazingly strong character, fitting for a pioneer who came to Florida at the age of 22 with her husband and three young sons, who eked out a respectable life for her boys and generations of the family that followed.

Having read The Reminiscences of Kittie M. Lea, 1877-1891, I was familiar with this woman's unwavering spirit in the face of extreme adversity. Her diary chronicles the day the Leas arrived in Jacksonville, ready to stake their claim on Florida's mostly unsettled land. She relates in grainy detail their arduous pioneer life of settlement in Sumter County, the cruelties of Florida's yellow fever epidemic of 1887-88, and ends two years later with the family's comfortable life in Tampa. Kittie Lea's memoir reveals a personal account of her life in Jacksonville and Tampa, a place she describes as a "town" with only one red brick house within its borders. It is also a valuable source of information regarding doctors' and citizens' wild speculation on the prevention and treatment of yellow fever before the actual perpetrator of the dreaded disease, the "treetop mosquito," had been widely accepted by those in the medical profession.

Of the family photos once hidden by dust and time in Judge Farnell's closet, one stands out among the rest. This one shows Kittie's innocent teenage eyes as she sits for a portrait in Mobile, Alabama, the place she and her husband's families had called home since before the Civil War. Yet another photo is that of the same woman, this one taken in Tampa. She is decidedly older and appears steady - a woman who's seen it all.

Traveling by ferry from Jacksonville in 1877, the Leas arrived in Yahala, a small town near Leesburg. They were much like countless other settlers in Florida during the late nineteenth century as they made their way with much hope and trepidation into unknown territory from a world of abundance. Having come from a well-to-do background, Mr. Henry Clinton Lea longed for a place where his family could possibly start an orange grove, and "live and plan" for themselves alone. "It would be hard sailing for several years . . . but soon we would be to ourselves, just ourselves to live and plan for," Kittie writes. ". . . 'Kittie it would be heaven to me'" was how Kittie remembered her husband's words, "So we began to get ready." A sense of promise permeated the undeveloped state, and Kittie recounts Mr. Lea's shared opinion, "It won't be long before we have railroads, then tourists . . . I feel this in my bones." When speaking of the abundant game, fish, and grove land, Kittie explains hopefully, "Now you can see we had something to build our castles on."

Like many other pioneers they watched set up homes in Central Florida, Mr. Lea came from a family of stature. He had received his college degree, served the Confederacy during the Civil War, and even assisted in, and narrowly escaped, Southern efforts to overtake Nicaragua prior to the Civil War.
Kittie, herself, was from a respected family in Mobile, but Yahala was unsettled land; virtually devoid of the culture and refinement she and her husband had grown accustomed to. Though Kittie anticipated the dramatic changes pioneer life would hold in store for her, she was unaware of the strength she would find within herself as she faced such trying times.

Describing the conditions her family would have to endure as they took a glimpse of their first homestead, Kittie tells of a one-room house, ten feet by twelve, with two glass windows. That very day, only after her husband had left the house and the children were occupied did she put aside her veneer of content and begin to sob. "I looked back at house, around in the move." Every direction for a hill, a feeling of utter desolation came over me and without realizing it I was crying, tears running down my face and sobs made me helpless. I could not think. I felt as if I was in a dungeon or pit, there was no way of seeing or getting out. Never before or since have I had such a feeling of helplessness." This was only the first in a series of moments in Kittie’s new life that would be filled with despair.

Learning to avoid alligators, for this was and still is "gator country," as well as keep and clean her house and children in what could certainly be considered primitive conditions, were daily triumphs for Kittie. However, the death of her youngest son in her first short pioneering year would test her will like nothing had before.

While playing alongside his brothers, Algernon and "William, five-year-old Henry called out to his mother that he'd found something on the ground to play with. Recognizing the small object to be a corroded bullet, she sternly warned him not to place it in his mouth. After those words of caution, however, Henry called out that he had swallowed the bullet. "Mama, I am going to die. Don't know why I put it in my mouth, but went right down my stomach, couldn’t get it out." Kittie frantically sent for a doctor as she realized the severity of the situation. She remembers that despite the care Henry’s condition worsened, and "In a few days one eye was crossed, he said, 'Momma when I look at you I see two Mamma’s.'" Within a matter of days, Kittie states, "Henry did not know us." At one point, both Kittie and Mr. Lea sat by their child’s bed and watched helplessly as "Henry opened his eyes and looked at us, the dearest smile came over his face. He said, ‘Papa, Mama, Mama,’ as the breath left his
Kittie M. Lea with her son William, his wife Janie, and their two daughters, Kittie and Jane. From left to right: Kittie’s granddaughter Kittie R., Kittie M. Lea, William’s wife Jane, son William, and granddaughter Jane Lea. Photograph taken approximately 1915. (Courtesy Judge Crockett Farnell)
precious body. OH! He knew us and said Mama last, yes, Mama last, and all was well with our little man." Though grief poured over her, Kittie realized, "All his life he was my comforter and in this time of such great sorrow I realized that God sent him to me to give me strength to do the work I was sent to do."4

Soon after Henry's death, the Leas decided it best to move into "town," that being the more populated area of Yahala. Their unsuccessful attempts to begin a profitable grove of their own and a longing for closer neighborly companionship prompted the move.5

Having held herself and her family together after Henry's sudden death, Kittie did not know that her courage would he tried again so soon. Though knowing full well of her husband's "problem with drink" as he struggled to find work aiding other settlers' groves or through various odd jobs, she trusted Mr. Lea completely when he made a promise to her never to take another sip of alcohol. She was to find out otherwise when, walking through the town, she looked inside the Yahala store and recognized Mr. Lea sitting at the bar, with full drink in hand. During a time when the mere presence of a proper lady inside a drinking establishment was abhorred, Kittie writes, "I rallied, walked into the store . . . directly to Smith who was serving the drinks and asked, 'Chauncey I want a drink.'" After downing this fateful glass, Kittie "walked out without right or left." Only a few moments later did Mr. Lea meet her at home and state, "I am disgraced forever, can't raise my head or look a man in the face." He then promised her, "if you will never let me see you take another drink, you shall never see me take another."6

While this occasion proves Kittie's virtue, tenacity, and strength, she had her moments of weakness as well. More than once Kittie wrote of times when her family's venture was still new, the children still small, and her will tested to its limits; times when she felt it would be easier to end her misery by succumbing to the waters of Lake Harris near their home. Her husband's love of drinking, the constant trials of moving and starting new homesteads from virtually nothing but a few pieces of furniture and her will became too much for Kittie to cope with. The loneliness she found living in the Florida wilderness - when her closest neighbor was a mile and a half away - and the knowledge that her once wealthy and cultured life was seemingly forever behind her merely compounded the problem. She writes, "I took my three babies and went down to the river bank, crawling out on overhanging roots of Cypress trees and begged God to take the four of us. I could not see a ray of light as to the future, I was a coward, couldn't think or plan, so would the Lord only take us as we sat quiet, all cuddled up close." Kittie tells of the grace of God infringing on her feelings of desperation the split second before she acted on her thoughts. It was the thought of her children that ripped through her trancelike state. "I looked and Will, the baby, and Algernon were asleep. So peaceful and trusting in me their little faces looked . . . The black waves of discouragement rolled away, the beauty of the shore and the river, that I had gone to in deep despair, began to shine out . . . I crept back with Algie and Will in my arms, guiding Henry, until we were on the ground, and there stood Mr. Lea, as pale as death. He put his arms around the babies and me, held me to him without a word, I could hear his heart beat in great throbs."7
Soon after the Leas moved from the wilderness of Yahala to the more populated area of the town, the overwhelming trials of harsh pioneer life subsided greatly. They were in the company of other newcomers "gifted in all lines" and participated in "musical theatricals." Culture and company were two of Kittie’s greatest comforts, setting her tired heart at ease.

In the early 1880s, the Lea family moved to a larger home in Blue Springs. It was there that they would have the pleasure of living in a home far from their original humble beginnings in Yahala, for this one was complete with five rooms, a hall, and a wide front porch. It was also in Blue Springs that they encountered numerous other settlers from all parts of the United States, as well as foreign countries. Ironically, Kittie states, "the axe and saw could be heard from daylight to dark . . . the outlook was dismal for city folks. They were afraid of everything. Sunk a lot of money, went back to city life after three years." Despite her earlier fears, it was these new people who were now afraid of "everything." Clearly, this excerpt sheds light on Kittie’s developing mind-set that she and her family were an integral part of the land, not to be separated from it by heading back to their past lives of comfort and culture.

All was not well for long. Henry Lea could rarely find steady work and Kittie was stricken with malaria in 1887, ten years after arriving in Florida. Upon a chance meeting with her Aunt and Uncle, Mr. and Mrs. John Chapman of Plymouth, Florida, Kittie decided to rest under their care as Mr. Lea and the boys, both in their teens, set forth to find a home in Tampa. In pursuit of better financial conditions and employment, the Leas’ hopes were set on this burgeoning town.

Following her family’s move to Tampa, Kittie floated along the Hillsborough River in a boat lined with pillows and blankets, as she recovered from her bout with malaria. She reveled in the relief the sun and fresh air brought her and the beautiful landscape surrounding the area as the boys swan nearby. It is in this section of the memoir that Kittie describes Tampa as a "straggling town," and her husband confessed, "I feel like a coward, but I have walked the streets and tried [to find work] ‘till I am hacked. Such a small town I don’t believe there is a chance for me." Yet another testament to the limited development of Tampa in 1887 is Kittie’s dismay that no bridge crossed the Hillsborough River, but only a ferry that crossed at a just one point near a hotel. She also states in her memoir that there were few homes on the west side of the river as it was mostly forest and orange groves. Primarily, Kittie states, bands of "gypsy camps" lived along the east side.

The Leas chose to reside downtown at 705 Jackson Street, at the Pierce Street intersection. This large home was not all their own, however, but a boarding house in which they paid rent to the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Hubbs. As Mr. Lea’s various attempts at employment with lumber and shipping businesses did not provide sufficient income to cover the expenses of rent and furniture, Kittie began cooking the owners’ daily meals.

At this time, Jackson Street had no sidewalks or paving, and as Kittie describes, "this part of town had not more than a thousand inhabitants." In August of 1887, just a few months after moving to Tampa, "Mr. Lea anticipated yellow fever" in the growing town due to a
"recent epidemic in Key West." Growth in Tampa was to come to a temporary stand still, as Mr. Lea's worst fears were confirmed. Charlie Turk, a man living merely a few streets down from the Leas, was the first known stricken and also the first in Tampa to die of the disease. Residing at Jackson and Florida Avenue, Turk was a merchant from Key West who had transported fruit into the port town. With his goods came the mosquito classified as *Aedes aegypti*, later proven to be the carrier of the dreaded disease. As the disease began to spread, citizens of Tampa who could afford the cost fled to northern cities, and those who could not fled into the woods to escape exposure to the fever that was believed to come from contagious victims or filth and squalor.

Though Dr. John P. Wall of Tampa had dedicated much of his life to proving that the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito was the carrier of yellow fever, his findings were not generally accepted by medical professionals or even citizens who respected his views during the time of the epidemic. This can clearly be presumed from reading Kittie's memoir, as she states that even though Dr. Wall was the Leas' doctor during the epidemic as well as during her illness with malaria, she and the rest of the city maintained no clear cut theory of how the disease was contracted. There was a "hush and a feeling of dread as to who the unseen enemy with the touch of death would touch next . . . not sure why or where it would be next." Not a word of caution toward mosquitoes can be found in her memoir.

There was a general belief held by Kittie and fellow Tampa residents, however, and throughout the South, that heat exacerbated the fever's spread. This was certainly the case, but not because the noxious fumes of garbage were heightened during this period, thus causing yellow fever as one common theory proclaimed. Rather, it was because the disease-carrying mosquito thrives in the heat, and was most often introduced to Americans through vessels from South America and the Caribbean. In Tampa, as well as in other cities in Florida, including Jacksonville, the epidemic did not end during the mild winter of 1887. Instead, the fever raged on into the next year like a "forest fire." Kittie states, it would "blaze up . . . break out in unexpected spots . . . then die down for a few days, when we would hear of another case, so the dread of it never left us."

While some believed outrageous speculation such as the infection spread underground at a rate of three feet every twenty-four hours,
the general consensus at this time was that yellow fever was a highly contagious disease. All were susceptible, unless one had been sick with fever previously. While it is true that those having survived a prior bout with the disease had little or no chance of contracting it a second time, the belief of contagious spreading is most certainly false. During Tampa's 1887-88 epidemic, however, in which some 79 deaths resulted, those who died of yellow fever were often wrapped in their bed sheets, placed in coffins, and buried in order to stifle the spread of the disease.19

Both Mr. Lea and Algernon contracted the fever and recovered with moderate speed.20 Tampa's epidemic was severe, resulting in over 750 cases in a population of 4,000. From Tampa, the disease spread south to Manatee and east to Plant City, the latter area having been hit the hardest.21 It was, in fact, a man from Plant City who was believed to have carried the disease to Jacksonville, thus becoming the supposed catalyst for the city's ensuing epidemic of 1888.22

Since Kittie had survived a previous experience with the fever in Mobile, she felt safe to follow her husband to Jacksonville as they filled the desperate need for makeshift nurses. Always a woman of strength and principles, when Mr. Lea questioned the possibility of his wife adjusting to such harsh conditions upon arrival, she merely stated, "I am needed here."23

Various methods of yellow fever prevention are revealed through Kittie's detailed description of the state of Jacksonville during their own epidemic. She walked from patient to patient as barrels of tar burned in the streets in attempts to purify the miasmic air suspected of causing the rapid spread of the disease.24 As mentioned in an interview

The hotel that Kittie M. Lea owned and operated in Tampa from the 1880s until her death in 1943. Her husband William had died in 1896. Kittie is pictured standing in a garden possibly outside the hotel. (Photograph courtesy of Judge Crockett Farnell)
of Jacksonville epidemic survivor, William F. Hawley, this burning tar did have a positive effect, however unintentional. While smelling of "fire and brimstone," this method produced an extraordinary amount of smoke, thus "exterminating the mosquitoes by suffocating them." Yet another inadvertent mosquito repellent was St. Jacob’s oil. Some people in Tampa smeared this oil, head to toe, in an attempt to create a barrier between themselves and the germs believed to cause yellow fever. It is now understood that this oil was perhaps an even more successful mosquito repellent than a protectant from "contaminated air."26

In Jacksonville, as in Tampa, firing cannons into the air as well as shooting rifles, in compliance with the theory that microbes could be destroyed by "atmospheric concussion," combated what was believed to be germ-filled air. Because this method of prevention broke windows and further disturbed the suffering, the practice was soon abandoned.27

Homes were disinfected with a mixture of copperas, sulfur, and lime, while many healthy residents drank champagne as it was believed to be a potent preventative solution.28

Beyond attempts at prevention, however, there was little Kittie could do to cure or even treat the symptoms of her patients. Serving a sick or dying patient orange leaf or hot mustard tea was common, as well as efforts to keep patients as comfortable as possible. D.B. McKay, a Survivor of Tampa's yellow fever epidemic, wrote in his weekly *Tampa Tribune* column of the prevention methods he remembered as a young man. A teaspoon of pulverized charcoal in a glass of water taken daily was known to be a successful method of prevention, according to McKay. He also wrote of a potential cure in a good dose of sugar of lead.29 According to Kittie, though, nothing could save the afflicted from death aside from time and fate. She stated, "In twenty-four hours, what was to be the outcome, twenty-four death or to live, was decided." Tracking down food for the crying babies of mothers stricken with the fever, comforting loved ones, and treating patients’ symptoms was the most she and other nurses could do to help, though her efforts were gratefully received by all she cared for.30

When the temperature dropped to 32 degrees in November 1888, Jacksonville's devastating yellow fever epidemic drew to a close. Over 430 people died by the time the quarantine was lifted from the city.31 Though moved by the desperation and despair in Jacksonville, Kittie was relieved to finally return to Tampa and her two boys, who were being cared for by a family friend. Tampa's epidemic came to a close with the first winter frost, and while the town made attempts at economic recovery, it would be a full two years before many residents came back to their homes and new settlers again felt safe moving to the town.32

Soon after she and Mr. Lea's return, Kittie learned of the death of her landlord, Mrs. Hubbs. She decided to take the boarding house over and open up a dining room. With the boys' help she began furnishing the rooms and soon Lea's Hotel was a "gathering place for tourists from all parts of the United States."33

The growth of Tampa at this time is revealed as Kittie writes of a bridge finally being built across the river in 1890 and the groundbreaking construction for the Tampa Bay Hotel. It was "the finest hotel in the South," she describes, "and so immense it was a mile around it. There were as many as six hundred laborers at work on the building
It was at this time that Kittie tells of Tampa’s first City Hall, a two story brick building which was being built on the corner of Lafayette and Florida Avenue. Cutting through the lot where she and her sons, William and Algernon, were living, one can not help but sense the unrest this must have caused Kittie’s family and her boarders.34

In 1896, Mr. Lea died of a stroke at the age of 48, leaving Kittie to run the hotel by herself. Her two sons pursued fire fighting with the “first fire fighting company in Tampa,” led by Lamont Baily, and “none over fifteen belonging to it.”35

(Note: The superscript for endnote 36 has been omitted and there is no corresponding entry at the end)36

Kittie remained proprietor of Lea’s Hotel until her death in 1943, and it was this very boarding house that Kittie’s great-grandson, Judge Crockett Farnell, has some of his earliest memories. Among the slew of photographs Mr. Farnell, William Lea’s grandson, shares with me a unique family story not found in Kittie’s Reminiscences. The tale of Lea’s Never Failing Hair Tonic began in 1905 when one of Kittie’s boarders, a kind man with a proposition, introduced her to his tonic.37 The man claimed the tonic cured dandruff, eczema, and other skin trouble while “bringing hair which had been faded or white back to its natural color,” as well as “bring hair back on bald heads.” Kittie found that the formula did indeed work, and as photos show, up until her death her hair remained glossy and brown.38

Discovering later that this kind gentleman had been convicted of arson and of murdering his wife, and believing this man to be innocent, Kittie agreed to his one plea. 14e would allow her to sell as much tonic as she wished if she would only help in his defense. Though she did what she could, he remained in prison near Ocala for many years thereafter, and while incarcerated, decided to repay Kittie’s kindness by giving her the potent and profitable formula. From 1912 until 1990, the Lea family’s tonic virtually sold itself as William Lea, and later his son and grandson, took over and operated the business.39

Like a quilt pattern, the photos and stories shared by Mr. Farnell begin to form a vivid image of Kittie in my mind. It is a vision of a woman with an indomitable spirit, strong will, and giving heart. The Reminiscences of Kittie M. Lea, 1877-1891 shed light on a time when Tampa was just beginning to open doors of opportunity to those daring enough to accept the challenges and rough conditions. Kittie’s writings reveal first hand accounts of the yellow fever epidemic that plagued Tampa and Jacksonville, and look back into the past when pioneers left families, comfortable surroundings, and security to settle the unknown. Throughout her memoir, a reader can sense that Kittie M. Lea did indeed pass from ”girlhood into a mature woman,” and realized that her family’s loss of money and affluence upon their arrival in Florida had led to ”blessings of trust and understanding.”40

ENDNOTES

Jennifer Tyson is a graduate of the University of Florida with a degree in history. Employed as a teacher with the Hillsborough County school system, she has interned at the Tampa Bay History Center.


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1877-1891, 11; Hilda Montesino, Tampa Bay History Center Library.


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6 Ibid., 33-34.

7 Ibid., 11.

8 Ibid., 38.

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11 Ibid., 75-83.

12 Larry Omar Rivers, "‘They . . . exalt humbug at the expense of science and truth:’ Dr. John P. Wall and the Fight Against Yellow Fever in Late-Nineteenth Century Florida," *The Sunland Tribune*, 25, 1999, 14.


14 Rivers, "‘They . . . exalt humbug at the expense of science and truth:’ Dr. John P. Wall and the Fight Against Yellow Fever in Late-Nineteenth Century Florida," 12.


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27 Shepherd, "William F. Hawley".


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33 Ibid.

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35 Obituary, Tampa Weekly Tribune, 15 April 1896.

36 Judge Crockett Farnell, interview with author, 5 October 2000.

37 *Kittie M. Lea, "For My Granddaughters; Concerning My Ownership of Lea’s Never Failing Hair Tonic,"* 30 August 1931.
39 Judge Crockett Farnell, interview with author, 5 October 2000.

Tampa at Midcentury: 1950

Dr. Gary Mormino

The 1950s triggered Tampa Bay’s Big Bang. National prosperity, Social Security, and Cold War defense spending made the Florida Dream possible to new generations of Americans. Technological wizardry, most notably air conditioning, DDT, and superhighways, made Florida endurable and endearing. In 1950, Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties totaled 409,143 residents. By the end of the decade, the two counties combined had almost three-quarters of a million residents, an astounding population increase of 89 percent. Demographers, bureaucrats, and wordsmiths coined new terms to describe the changes sweeping the new decade: suburban sprawl, climate control, and metropolitan area.

When officials released the results of the 1950 census, local and county leaders reacted with expected ballyhoo. Upon closer inspection, the tabulations posed more questions than answers. In 1950, census takers counted 124,681 Tampa residents, making the Cigar City Florida’s third largest city. The tumultuous decade of the 1940s experienced dizzying population mobility, but Tampa had grown a scant 15 percent. If Tampa’s growth was modest, Hillsborough County’s increase was spectacular, its population expanding 39 percent to 249,894.

For all of the self-congratulation, Tampa’s expansion paled when compared to its urban rivals. While Tampa grew by 15 percent during the decade of 1940-1950, St. Petersburg and Miami surged by 59 percent and 45 percent respectfully. To most Tampa leaders, the lesson was simple: Expand or Die. Indeed, the early 1950s spawned a number of annexation attempts to bring into Tampa’s boundaries the population rich neighborhoods of Palma Ceia, Beach Park, Sulphur Springs, and Port Tampa City.1

The schism between Tampa and Hillsborough County widened in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when for the first time, the county’s population gains outpaced the city’s. For almost a century, Tampa had claimed the lion’s share of Hillsborough County’s population. It was not that Hillsborough County’s other towns threatened Tampa’s hegemony; in fact, in 1950 Plant City numbered 9,230, Port Tampa City 1,497, and Temple Terrace only 423. Rather, new growth was settling in the county’s unincorporated areas. New developments were springing up along South Dale Mabry Highway, Sulphur Springs, and especially the Interbay peninsula. In 1950, Fowler Avenue was a crude dirt road while Temple Terrace Highway, the future Busch Boulevard, was a two-lane road. To the north, east, and west was undeveloped, cheap land.2

Midcentury downtown combined curious parts of dynamism and decay. Downtown Tampa still claimed the area’s most powerful banks, most envied corporations, and most prestigious stores, but the central business district had been stagnating for some time. No significant new building had been erected for decades. The era’s most colorful baseball player and philosopher,
Yogi Berra, could have been describing Tampa’s central business district when he said of a certain restaurant, "No one ever goes there anymore. It’s always crowded!" Shoppers and commuters complained incessantly of downtown’s lack of parking lots, overabundance of parking meters, and rush-hour traffic. By the end of the decade, shoppers literally and figuratively steered away from downtown Tampa, electing to patronize the new shopping malls and suburban businesses.

As the Tampa Bay area began to grow very rapidly in 1950, and the population grew more prosperous, the newest automobiles were just the way to move families of baby-boomer kids to homes in new suburbs. Shown is the Oldsmobile 88 Holiday hardtop coupe for 1950. Cost? $2183. (Photograph courtesy of Ferman Motor Car Company)

In 1950, real estate traffic was brisk. New construction filled in vacant lots in the city, but the most frenzied development occurred in the unincorporated county. No single individual comparable to David P. Davis had yet sketched out a vision for Tampa’s postwar suburbs; indeed Davis Island still had large sections waiting for homebuilders. Large numbers of young Latin families left Ybor City in the 1950s, gravitating toward West Tampa, but also to the more Americanized neighborhoods "off limits" to Latins before the war. In 1950, a family could buy a new 3-bedroom home in Beach Park for $10,250. In Hyde Park, Miss Jonnie L. Cape purchased the Peter O. Knight "honeymoon" bungalow for $11,000. The home, located on Hyde Park Avenue, later became the headquarters for the Tampa Historical Society.

Honeymoon bungalows and Mediterranean Revivals in Palma Ceia and Hyde Park graced the real estate section of the Tribune and Times, but the era’s most popular home was the inexpensive, concrete-block ranch
Tampa faced competition not only from suburban Hillsborough County, but Pinellas County. The 1950s was a decade of reckoning. St. Petersburg and Pinellas County, once regarded as a quaint collection of beach resorts and small towns, began to challenge Tampa. Surging numbers of new residents, chiefly retirees from the Midwest and Northeast, buoyed the populations of Dunedin, Kenneth City and Pinellas Park. Trailer parks were the rage. St. Petersburg grew dramatically during the 1940s, adding 36,000 new residents. The average age of the population of St. Petersburg made it one of America’s oldest cities. Almost one in every four residents was 65 years and older; in Tampa the proportion was 1 in 11. By 1950, Pinellas County was Florida’s most densely populated county, with over 600 inhabitants per square mile. Pinellas had grown by 73 percent during the 1940s, in contrast to Hillsborough’s 39 percent.

Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties battled for supremacy throughout the 1950s. The rights to fresh water, the location of a public university, and the recruitment of industry fostered a bitter rivalry. Historic jealousies notwithstanding, the U.S. Census of 1950 confirmed that Florida’s west coast was becoming a major population center. Henceforth, announced officials, Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties would be considered one metropolitan unit. Tampa Bay, once a body of water, had become an urban yardstick, the largest population center in the fastest growing state in America.

Tampa Bay may have been Florida’s most populous metropolitan area in 1950, but it still had no public
university. That year did bring good news to the University of Tampa. Since its founding as a private junior college in 1931, the University of Tampa had struggled in depression, war and peace. Returning veterans had bolstered enrollment, but the school’s academic and financial woes persisted. In 1950, the University received news that accreditation was imminent. The G.I. Bill, accreditation, and an endowment of $500,000 saved the University of Tampa. Future civic leaders, such as Bob Martinez, Sam Rampello, and Dick Greco took advantage of educational opportunities at the University. In 1950, a new faculty member, historian James Covington, arrived under the Minarets.

The 1950s also brought a "golden age" of football to the University of Tampa. Playing in front of small crowds at Phillips Field, the University’s football team, the Spartans, delighted local fans. Since the 1940s, the University of Florida had played one game a year at aging Phillips Field but this ended in 1950 when Auburn University refused to play at such a "small stadium." Florida State University, however, was delighted.
to be invited to Phillips Field. On New Year’s Day 1950 the Seminoles’ fledgling football team played in Tampa’s Cigar Bowl. The Cigar Bowl represented Tampa’s attempt to lure tourists to the city. Hosting teams such as Missouri Valley, Rollins, Delaware, and Wofford, the Cigar Bowl hardly rivaled Miami’s Orange Bowl. In the late 1950s, teams from Wisconsin La Crosse Teachers College and Valpariso accepted invitations to play at the last Cigar Bowl. Betty Jo Grubbs was crowned Cigar Bowl Queen. A bedazzled reporter wrote, "The lovely daughter of Mr. and Mrs. T.W. Grubbs stepped from a giant cigar box to receive a jeweled crown of cigars . . . " In 1950, two Tampans, Rick Casares and Nelson Italiano, had just begun remarkable athletic careers at the University of Florida and Florida State University.9

The most entertaining event of 1950 was played not at Tampa’s Phillips Field but in the political arena. For sheer melodrama, Florida’s U.S. senatorial race had it all: compelling personalities, a poisonous environment, and a captivated audience. Though only 50 years old, U.S. Senator Claude Pepper was Florida’s senior U.S. senator. With passion and conviction, Pepper had served the Sunshine State since his improbable election in 1936. (He might have been elected senator in 1934 had it not been for blatant vote fraud in Ybor City and West Tampa.) A champion of New Deal liberalism and government activism, this passionate spokesman for President Roosevelt’s programs dutifully brought home “pork” in the form of military bases, highway construction, and jobs. Floridians cheered Pepper’s liberalism during an economy of scarcity, but postwar prosperity and the Cold War created new anxieties.

Pepper’s once vaunted political instincts failed him in the years preceding 1950. A series of political gaffs left the senator vulnerable and embarrassed. He visited the Soviet Union where he praised "Generalissimo Stalin." Pepper idolized Franklin Roosevelt, but frankly thought Harry Truman was a lightweight. When he sought to block Truman’s nomination at the 1948 Democratic convention, the president was furious. Harry Truman never forgot nor forgave him. An overconfident Pepper also challenged the South’s color line. Earlier in his career, Pepper had trimmed his liberal sails on the race question - even using the phrase "white supremacy" - but in the late 1940s he openly courted the African-American vote. The Florida Sentinel, Tampa’s black newspaper, urged newly politicized readers and voters to support Pepper. To place an advertisement in the Sentinel was one thing; to share a New York City stage with singer-actor-activist Paul Robeson, suspected Communist, was quite another.

Conservative Floridians had waited for this day: "Red" Pepper stood square in the cross hairs. For a decade, Pepper had openly and bitterly clashed with the most powerful man in Florida. Ed Ball, the senator’s arch-nemesis, managed the duPont Trust. The entangled Ball controlled powerful interests in the state’s communications, railroad, banking, and industrial sectors. Ball easily found allies in his crusade to destroy Pepper. The American Medical Association loathed him because of his steadfast support for nationalized health care. President Truman summoned to the
White House a little known congressman, informing him, "I want you to beat that son of a bitch Claude Pepper."10

George A. Smathers was the antithesis of Claude Pepper. Whereas Pepper was homely and ungainly, Smathers was dashingly handsome and a decorated athlete. "The people don't care whether a homely man or handsome man goes to the Senate," laughed Pepper. "If it had been a Hollywood contest, I wouldn't have put up a qualifying fee." Ironically, Smathers worked to elect Pepper while an undergraduate at the University of Florida, where he served as a cheerleader and student body president. During World War II, the square-jawed Smathers enlisted in the Marines and saw combat in the South Pacific. A close friend of fellow Congressman John F. Kennedy, Smathers was simply an irresistible candidate in 1950.11

The election attracted national and international attention because of the fascinating personalities and the high stakes prize. The election also served as a vote of confidence for Wisconsin's U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy. In January 1950, the roguish-looking McCarthy may have been America's least known senator; but, by May, he was the most revered and despised man in Washington. McCarthyism burst upon the national scene like a Cape Canaveral rocket in Wheeling, West Virginia, when in February 1950 the 41-year-old ex-Marine announced that he had in his hand "a list of 205 Communists known to be working in the State Department." At times, one might have thought that Josef Stalin was on the ballot. Each time the Daily Worker, the American Communist party newspaper, trumpeted the achievements of Senator Pepper, the Smathers' team smiled.12

Endorsements from Pravda and the Daily Worker notwithstanding, the 1950 campaign was determined by voting blocs along Tampa Bay, Central Florida, and the Gold Coast. Claude Pepper counted heavily upon his past accomplishments. A military hawk, he worked tirelessly to build an arsenal and citadel. During each visit to Tampa Bay, Pepper pointed with pride to shipyard contracts, military bases, and federal grants he had helped steer home. His wife Mildred was a St. Petersburg native, as were mounting numbers of retirees from Ohio and New York who

Cover of "The Red Record of Senator Claude Pepper," a fiery tabloid published by supporters of George Smathers during his successful campaign to unseat Pepper. (Courtesy of the Special Collections, Library, University of South Florida.)
now called St. Petersburg home. His impassioned defense of Social Security made Pepper a popular speaker in Pinellas County. The senator assumed that the transplanted seniors who brought their life-long associations with the Republican Party would support the candidate *Time* magazine had called "Roosevelt's weather cock."

The campaign took on the passion of a religious crusade, as the candidates traded insults and accusations. Pepper complained of "dirty literature," "race prejudice," and "religious prejudice;" Smathers bewailed the interference from organized labor and "delusion, deception, and trickery." Florida's last great old-fashioned election, the 1950 primary was refreshingly free of TV soundbites (only Miami and Jacksonville operated television stations and then only a few thousand households owned television sets.) The candidates endured a punishing cross-state campaign, filled with hundreds of speeches, handshaking, and fried chicken benefit suppers. Politics was still spectacle, and in Tampa no respectable rally was complete without a courthouse square appearance. Spectators appreciated pit barbecue, live music, and old-time oratory. WDAE and WFLA, Tampa's two premier radio stations, bombarded listeners with interviews and political commercials.13

In Tampa, Pepper relied upon his pro-labor record to turn out union supporters. He closed out his campaign with huge rallies at Tampa's Courthouse Square - ironically, the much-loved courthouse would soon fall to the wrecker's ball - and St. Petersburg's Williams Park. Pepper used the occasion to announce a million dollar federal grant to Mound Park Hospital.14

Race was a major issue in the 1950 election. "This is the most important primary held in Florida since the turn of the century," wrote C. Blythe Andrews, publisher of the *Florida Sentinel*. Pepper enjoyed the support of an energized black electorate, but social and political customs lingered. Manuel Garcia helped manage the Smathers’ campaign in Hillsborough County. A lawyer by training and confidante of Governor Fuller Warren, Garcia knew intimately the details of the 1950 election. He recalled, in a 1982 interview, that he hired bodyguards to ensure that no African-Americans were ever photographed shaking the hand of George Smathers. Indeed, Smathers canceled a scheduled address at the Metropolitan Bethel Baptist Church in St. Petersburg, a black congregation, because a *St. Petersburg Times* photographer threatened to take pictures. Pepper also played the race card, accusing his opponent of "buying the Negro vote." Smathers "tells the white people I [Pepper] am too friendly with the Negroes and he is telling the Negroes I have betrayed him."15

A master of mullet fish fry and hushpuppy oratory, Pepper failed miserably convincing Florida's leading newspapers that he deserved another term in Washington. Among the state's leading dailies, only the *St. Petersburg Times* and *Daytona Beach News-Journal* endorsed the incumbent. The *Tampa Tribune* and *Tampa Times* deserted their old friend, taking up arms with the hard-charging Smathers.

During the last days of the long campaign, local and state newspapers unleashed withering editorials undermining Pepper's candidacy and
even questioning his loyalty. The *Miami Herald* depicted the race "as a trial of radicalism and extremism," while the *Tampa Tribune* accused Pepper of defending "welfare proposals." In case any voters had not already been saturated with the point, Smathers’ supporters published a wicked tabloid, *The Red Record of Claude Pepper*. Incendiary quotations accompanied photographs of Pepper standing alongside Josef Stalin, Henry Wallace, and Paul Robeson. An exasperated Pepper confided to a reporter, "If they can’t make a black out of me, they want to make me a red."16

As the 1950 Smathers-Pepper race recedes deep into the past, and the warriors who clashed in the town squares of Florida die away, one imperishable memory remains. Americans first read about it in the 17 April 1950 issue of *Time* magazine. "Are you aware that Claude Pepper is known all over Washington as a shameless extrovert?" fast-talking George Smathers is said to have whispered to an unlettered, rural audience. "Not only that, but this man is reliably reported to practice nepotism with his sister-in-law, and he has a sister who was once a thespian in wicked New York. Worst of all, it is an established fact that Mr. Pepper before his marriage habitually practiced celibacy." The legend not only endures, it grows. New material has embellished the speech. "Are you aware that Pepper’s great-aunt died from a degenerative disease? That his nephew subscribed to a phonographic magazine? That his own mother was forced to resign from a respected organization because she was an admitted sexagenarian?" Smathers swears he never gave the speech and has even promised to pay a reward to anyone with evidence that he was ever so clever. Historians believe that the "wicked thespian in New York City" speech actually resulted from a bored press corps, who in the evenings following the same stump speeches in Niceville, Marianna, and Vernon, concocted a speech they wanted Smathers to deliver.17

On Tuesday, May 2, 1950, the greatest political race in Florida history concluded. In this era of the Solid South, the winner of the primary was guaranteed victory in November. The Secretary of State announced that a record one million Democrats had registered for the primary. In contrast, 69,000 Floridians admitted they belonged to the Republican Party. Pepper’s hopes soared when hours before the election, national columnist Drew Pearson predicted a Pepper victory. In the 1950s, the *Tampa Daily Times* and its radio affiliate, WDAE, earned an enviable reputation for reporting "lightning" fast election results. Hampton Dunn, the paper’s managing editor and "Palm Tree Politics" columnist, knew minutes after the polls closed that Smathers had achieved a smashing victory.18

Smathers, the upstart challenger, claimed 55 percent of the vote, winning the election by 64,771 votes. In spite of the steadfast support of the *Tampa Tribune* and *Tampa Times*, Smathers lost Hillsborough County 29,111 to 25,749. In Pinellas County, the *St. Petersburg Times’* embrace of Pepper failed to help the Senator, who lost 18,244 to 15,906. "Senator Pepper brought it on himself," editorialized the *Tampa Times*. "The news of Smathers’ victory is flashing
signals of hope to the moderates of both old parties . . . \textsuperscript{19}

Smathers’ smashing victory may have been the most exciting political story of 1950, but it was not the most significant. Quietly, a political revolution was taking place in Pinellas County. Dormant and inert since the 1880s, Florida’s Republican Party came alive in November 1950, when GOP candidates swept Pinellas County. Led by a 28-year-old lawyer and war hero, William Cato Cramer, Republicans captured all the legislative seats and every county office except tax collector.\textsuperscript{20}

On April 27, 1950, the \textit{Tampa Times} prophesied, "A confused United States of America will look to voters representing the diversified interests of Florida . . . " The Smathers-Pepper race proved to be a mirror reflecting local and national anxieties. As much as anything else, Smathers had tapped the sensitive vein of anti-communism. Midcentury America was awash in \textit{McCarthyism}. The tactic of smearing one’s opponent as "red" worked in other regions as well. In North Carolina, Willis Smith defeated U.S. Senator Frank Porter Graham, a respected educator and southern liberal. Smith’s campaign manager was a relatively unknown radio announcer, Jesse Helms. In California, Richard M. Nixon destroyed Congresswoman Helen Graham Douglas, claiming "she’s pink alright, right down to her underwear!"

In 1950, the United States may have, in Shakespeare’s words, "barest the world like a Colossus," but it was a dominion characterized by insecurity, paranoia, and fear. A litany of foreign policy fiascos and catastrophes haunted Americans: the Alger Hiss case, the "slave states" of Eastern Europe, displaced persons, the Fall of China, the Iron Curtain, and Soviet atomic spies. Joe McCarthy’s contribution to the anti-Communist hysteria was his ability to personalize the attacks. Harry Truman and Richard Nixon had long warned of treason; McCarthy spoke of traitors.

In Tampa, the bonfires of anti-communism burned brightly. One individual stood out above others in his holy crusade against the Communist menace. Maj. General Sumter L. Lowry had already packed enough exploits and
One of the many charts displayed during the Kefauver hearings in Tampa. "ORGANIZED GAMBLING, IN TAMPA" was an attempt to link Tampa's political figures with gambling, narcotics, assassinations and murders. (Courtesy of the Hampton Dunn Collection, Special Collections, Library, University of South Florida)
accomplishments into the first half of the 20th century to stuff scrapbooks. Born on the grounds of St. Augustine’s Castillo de San Marcos in 1893, he grew up on the Lowry ancestral estate in Hyde Park. Upon graduation from Virginia Military Institute, his life accelerated in newsreel fashion: chasing Pancho Villa across Mexico at Pershing’s side, leader of Company H, Second Florida Infantry, a colonel in the 116th Field Artillery, and a series of successful investments during the Florida Boom. Prior to World War II, Lowry’s most dangerous moments may have occurred while enforcing Tampa’s peace in the face of vigilantes and mobs. During the war, he saw action in New Guinea and the Dutch East Indies.

Lowry commanded the most strident voice of anti-communism. Like an Old Testament prophet hurling thunderbolts of red nightmare, Lowry attacked effete college presidents, pussy-footing politicians, and American resolve. Only a "rebirth of patriotism," believed Lowry, could save America. He saved his most withering criticism for the University of Florida, charging that the school advocated "a doctrine of world citizenship and world government." He advocated the establishment of a special school to "teach our young people how to recognize, understand, and combat Communist spheres of influence in the U.S." Adjusting his aim toward the public schools, Lowry warned that textbooks used in Florida schools were "slanted toward socialism and communism." Senator-elect Smathers applauded Lowry’s stand, urging that the U.S. consider putting "Reds under surveillance." 

(Note: The superscript to endnote 23 was omitted)

To many Floridians, Communism represented not only a threat to the United States but in the United States. A red spectre was haunting America. Tampa was not immune from the witch hunts. Dr. Ellwood Nance, president of the University of Tampa, confessed that in a fit of youthful indiscretion, he had joined a communist-front organization. When a Soviet party newspaper Izvestia branded Nance as a warmonger, the educator was delighted. Hyde Park Methodist Church seemed an unlikely setting for such fears, but in February 1950, the church’s board of stewards voted unanimously to ban all literature disseminated by the Methodist Publishing House. Citing social and political concerns, pastor O.A. Murphy explained the church’s stand:

Two of the Sunday school periodicals . . . have developed within recent months a trend in their treatment of the race problem - especially the relation of the Negro and the white races in the United States - which in our judgement is unwise.

In 1950, the Cold War turned very hot. Anti-communism, the oxygen of the Cold War, became sword and shield. The principle of containment governed U.S. foreign policy, a commitment to check Communist aggression anywhere, everywhere. The most ardent hawk could not have imagined that the principle would be tested in Korea.

A desolate and harsh land, Korea had been an afterthought since the final days of World War II. In 1945, while the U.S.
was preoccupied with defeating Japan, Soviet troops crossed Manchuria and occupied sections of northern Korea. Hurriedly, officials in the U.S. Department of Defense sketched an arbitrary line across the 38th parallel, hoping the Russians would halt their advance. They did. The United States reluctantly became South Korea’s protector. Chinese, Russian, and North Korean leaders were certain that the United States would be unwilling to fight for such a faraway land.

In 1950, many American leaders also questioned U.S. fighting capabilities. U.S. Air Force Lt. General Curtis LeMay, the architect of saturation bombing during World War II, spoke in Tampa where he maintained the U.S. had lost its military supremacy. In fact, the U.S. armed forces had atrophied to 591,000 troops.24

On June 25 1950, ten well-armed divisions of the North Korean People’s Army poured over the 38th parallel, smashing the weak defenses of the South Korean Army. "It looks like World War III is here," noted President Truman in his diary. "By God I am not going to let them have it," he told his daughter. While the United States Congress never officially declared war in 1950 - Truman declared it a "police action" - few Americans made such semantic distinctions.25

In spasms of jubilation and horror, clarity and confusion, the public attempted to understand a distant war that Americans knew almost nothing about. Newspapers brought the brutality and nobility of the conflict home. In rapid fashion, the public mood shifted wildly: the threat of an Asian Dunkirk checked by General Douglas MacArthur’s daring gamble at Inchon; the promise of a decisive victory at the Yalu repulsed by hordes of Red Chinese. Decades later veterans lamented Korea as "the forgotten war," but Tampans remembered all too vividly the Pusan Perimeter, the tides of Inchon, and the Chosin Reservoir.

The Korean War evoked stirrings of patriotism and duty, but the conflict never captured the public imagination or soul as did World War II. Soon after the war’s start, the *Tampa Daily Times*’ Man-on-the-Street Survey found support as well as frustration. "I think it is awful," said Miss Helen Waters, a restaurant cashier. "Just when we are getting settled down in peace. It is going to mess up a lot of lives . . ." Others felt the war camouflaged the real test. General Sumter L. Lowry explained it was not Korea we were fighting, "but the might of Russia."26

Tampans came to understand the war’s progress through the experiences of old friends and neighbors. From a relative’s home on Highland Avenue, Mrs. Dora Church explained how she heard frantic calls over a Seoul radio, "Prepare to evacuate!" Newspapers captured the poignant moments of wives, sweethearts, and families bidding farewell to servicemen at Union Station. One of the first local residents to be called to action was a "leather-faced sergeant," a veteran of Iwo Jima who asked not to be identified. He confessed to a reporter, in pure Tampanese, "I've been shaky for days. This kind of thing is just like bolita - sometimes you win and sometimes you lose."27

The Korean War, unlike Vietnam, was not a live, televised war. Residents of the
Tampa Bay area followed the conflict through the pages of the local papers. Time supported the war but understood the public’s frustration. "The man of 1950 was not a statesman," wrote Time; rather, the man of the year was "destiny’s draftee," the American fighting-man. Tampa had its share of heroes. Baldomero Lopez personified the citizen soldier. The son of Spanish emigrants, a 1943 graduate of Hillsborough High, Lopez enlisted in the U.S. Navy, serving eleven months until the end of World War II. Superiors recognized his leadership skills and encouraged the Ybor City native to enroll at the U.S. Naval Academy. Commissioned in the U.S. Marine Corps, First Lieutenant Lopez was killed in his first engagement, a daring assault of the Inchon beachhead. Shot while assaulting an enemy bunker, he fell upon a live grenade to save the lives of his fellow Marines. In recognition of extraordinary gallantry in combat, the military bestowed upon Lopez posthumously the Congressional Medal of Honor. Tampans learned that Lopez had written a prophetic letter to his parents on the eve of battle.

Dear Mom, Dad and Joe,

Well, here I am fat and happy and not doing much of anything at the present . . . Mom, it makes me very happy to hear you say that military
men are always subject to orders from higher authority.

. . . Knowing that the profession of arms calls for many hardships and many risks I feel that you all are now prepared for any eventuality. If you catch yourself starting to worry, just remember that no one forced me to accept my commission in the Marine Corps.

Baldy, September 14, 1950

The war produced many more stirring tales of heroism. When U.S. forces retook the capital of Seoul, Marine corpsman Luther D. Leguire planted the Stars and Stripes on the roof of the U.S. Embassy. On Thanksgiving Day, victory seemed imminent. By December, U.S. troops heard the terrifying blare of enemy trumpets and were fighting for their lives against overwhelming numbers of Chinese troops at the Chosin Reservoir in northern Korea. Albert Thomas, a veteran of the South Pacific and a lieutenant in the First Marine Division, Tenth Corps, wrote his parents on Tampa Bay Boulevard about the cruel conditions.

Dearest Mom and Dad:

Here I am, believe it or not. It was only through the grace of God that we made it out of North Korea.

We were cut off in six different places and had to fight for our lives to be taken prisoners. We were surrounded for 15 days. We couldn’t even get our feet out of our shoe pacs because the socks were frozen to the inner soles.

Thomas was one of only 31 men out of an original outfit of 400 to escape the Chinese advance.

The odyssey of Herbert Doyle Harvill was the stuff of dreams and nightmares. The son of a Primitive Baptist preacher, Harvill grew up in the rural Hillsborough County community of Keysville. When the Korean War began, he was working in the composing room of the St. Petersburg Times. Six months later he was fighting on the border of Manchuria. In late December 1950, the Times reprinted one of Harvill’s letters:

We made Inchon, Kimpo air strip and Seoul, and believe me it was hell. We lost a lot of good men.

We pulled out of Wonsan . . . The Marines drove forward into the mountains . . . The Chinese started pouring in by the thousands and the Marines were outnumbered 100 to 1. The weather was 24 below zero at the Chosin reservoir and we were pinned down.

Harvill returned from the war and began a distinguished career with the Tampa Tribune.

The Korean War may have been the first American war to be fought by integrated troops, but the contributions of black soldiers are largely invisible in the Tampa Bay dailies. The pages of Tampa’s black weekly newspaper, however, were filled with heroism. On October 21 and 30, 1950, the Florida Sentinel headlines read: "Negro Troops In Korea Were Tough and Brave," and "Negro Troops Save Beachhead In 18 Hour Fight Down To Last 8 Bullets."
To a public confident of its military, the news of 1950 was sobering. Two historic military retreats had humbled the United States. The prospects of a land war against China, argued General Omar Bradley, "would involve us in the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy." Once optimistic of victory by Christmas, the public began to doubt the war's purpose and outcome.

The home front war was equally unsettling. Tampa, more than most cities, understood the paradoxes of war: sacrifice acid profiteering, heroism and greed. The Korean war, while lacking the global sweep and domestic tumult of World War II, left its mark upon Tampa Bay.

With memories of 1940s rationing and shortages all too fresh, Tampans reacted predictably to the war's urgency. Tribune headlines captured the mood in July 1950: "Tampans Race to Stock Up Anything Money Can Buy In Incredible Hoarding Spree." Purchases included not only sugar, coffee, and nylon, but also automobiles and washing machines.31

The war strengthened arsenal and citadel. Tampa's depressed shipyards, which employed 16,000 workers during World War II, bustled again. An influx of workers, military personnel, and families flooded Drew Park. Over 720 acres of new homes and businesses suddenly appeared in an area adjacent to Tampa International Airport. World War II had endowed Tampa Bay with a military profile; Korea solidified the military-industrial complex. MacDill Air Force Base served as a "post-graduate school" for B-29 and B-50 bomber crews.32

The war also hit the University of Tampa. The registrar feared a rush of enlistments threatened to drain the school of its manpower. During the fall semester of 1950 alone, 74 students had left school to join the armed forces.33

In 1950, Tampans fought still another home front battle. While American troops fought a desperate retreat in North Korea, Cuban bolita peddlers, aging crime bosses, and a prominent sheriff stared down a congressional committee in Tampa, Florida. The U.S. Senate Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce, chaired by Senator Estes Kefauver of Tennessee, blew the lid off Tampa's corrupt establishment, reinforcing and stigmatizing the image of Cigar City as a "Little Chicago" or "Hell Hole of the Gulf Coast."

Florida has always straddled the line between respectability and licentiousness, between honest toil and a fast buck, between the rules of the Protestant Work Ethic and the dreamland of luck and chance. For all of the rectitudinous Bible thumping and sermonizing against the wages of sin, the rules were different in Tampa. Here the line between investment and gambling has always been very narrow.

Tampa's reputation for corruption was well deserved. Bolita, a version of the Cuban Lottery or numbers game, had paralleled the rise of Ybor City. What had served as an innocent vice in the 1880s became a wellspring for economic wealth, political corruption, and widespread cynicism. Gamblers sought political protection for their lucrative business, creating a chain of payoffs from the lowly bolita peddler to the
governor’s office. If gambling made a handful of survivors very rich, the business of bolita made democracy in Tampa poorer. By the 1930s, powerful gambling coalitions determined elections and ensured continuity. As the financial stakes increased, so did the violence. Beginning in the 1930s, Tampans became accustomed to gangland slayings. James Clendinen, the late editor of the *Tampa Tribune*, arrived in the city in 1935 and quickly sized up Tampa as "one of the rottenest towns in the country."34

By 1950, corruption had become intolerable. Forces locally and nationally resolved to publicize and attack organized crime. The *Tampa Tribune* led the assault locally. For decades the *Tribune* had largely ignored the problem of organized crime, but beginning in 1947, managing editor Virgil M. "Red" Newton unleashed his most talented reporters. J.A. "Jock" Murray, the state’s most feared journalist, investigated the rotten state of Tampa. The gangland murder of Jimmy Velasco in 1948 had embarrassed Tampa, but nothing like the shame which followed the reportage by Murray and Paul Wilder. The journalists persuaded Velasco’s relatives to tell all. Much of the evidence was turned over to the Kefauver Committee. Tampa’s sordid image was especially galling to an influential group of young veterans bent on reform. Beginning in the early 1950s, Chester Ferguson, Julian Lane, Ed Rood, John Germany, and Sam Gibbons brought a combination of youth, idealism, and talent to Tampa’s civic and business community.

In 1950, Senator Kefauver announced he was bringing his Senate committee to investigate organized crime to Tampa. Kefauver - he of the coonskin hat - spearheaded the investigation. Kefauver’s motivations may not have been as pure as Caesar’s wife. He quickly realized these televised hearings would bolster his bid for the presidency. Tampa, along with 13 other cities, would hold hearings for the committee.35

The announcement of Kefauver’s visit coincided with still another sensational murder. The *Tribune* headline announced, "Jimmy Lumia, Tampa’s No. 1 Gambling and Mafia Chief, Shot To Death By Gangsters." While mourners filed by Lumia’s casket, solid bronze adorned with 220 floral pieces, *Tribune* reporters persuaded the gangster’s family to share business records. It seems the capo di tutti capi’s friends inhabited the underworld and city hall.36

Fittingly, the Kefauver Traveling Road Show closed out the turbulent year 1950. Tampa’s day in the sun was not what boosters had hoped. Not since the Spanish-American War in 1898 had dateline Tampa been so associated with a national event. Even if no one in Tampa watched the hearings on live television, everyone knew about them. "Tampa is agog over the appearance here of the Kefauver Committee," wrote Hampton Dunn. Since the investigating committee had earlier visited Miami, Tampa knew what to expect: public humiliation, private ruin and sordid details.37

(Note: The superscript to endnote 38 was omitted)38

Kefauver Committee staff arrived in Tampa weeks before the hearings began on December 28. Klieg lights and elaborate crime family-tree charts
awaited witnesses. Ironically, Kefauver never came to Tampa. His place was taken by Senator Lester Hunt, a Democrat from Wyoming. The committee issued subpoenas to scores of residents, from the mayor and sheriff to bolita peddlers and bagmen.

Hollywood central casting could not have orchestrated a more colorful opening witness. Charlie Wall, dressed in an elegantly tailored pin-stripe suit and stylish bow tie, took the witness stand amid a flutter of flash bulbs. Called by the Times and Tribune "a former overlord" of Tampa's underworld, and "an aging and much-shot-at maestro of Tampa gambling," Wall reminisced about the "old days." The scion of Tampa blue bloods, Wall waxed nostalgic about how he first worked at a gambling house and how he had been a frequent target of hit men. Admitting that he was once "the biggest" boss, Wall confessed that he had been largely an observer during the last decade.39

If Charlie Wall played to perfection the role of the aging gangster and chatty informant, Hugh Culbreath performed the part of stoic witness and besieged public official. Born in 1897 at the pioneer family homestead on Old Tampa Bay, Hugh Lee Culbreath seemed destined for something special. In 1914, he signed a contract with the Chicago Cubs, but enrolled instead at the University of Georgia. In 1917, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. While Charlie Wall was learning the intricacies of the roulette wheel and the probabilities of bolita, Culbreath was learning the mechanics of a Springfield rite and the lure of campfire poker. Following the Great War, Culbreath worked in the meat business. In 1932, he entered public life, winning the race for constable. In 1940, he became sheriff of Hillsborough County, a powerful position. A patriot, he served in the Army Air Corps during World War II, returning to office upon his return.

Hugh Culbreath was certainly not the first Hillsborough County sheriff to become a wealthy man in office, but he was the first to be questioned by the congressional committee. For three hours, crime committee attorney Downey Rice interrogated the sheriff, who asked, among other questions, why he had paid no income tax for the years 1932 through 1940, and why his spending and savings far surpassed his salary. The committee uncovered $97,698 of assets held by Culbreath, much of it scattered in out-of-town banks. Bagmen employed by Jimmy Velasco verified that they paid the sheriff - cabeza de melon (melon head) - $1,000 a week as protection money. Other witnesses described land and investment deals that benefitted the sheriff.40

Wall and Culbreath may have been the stars of the hearings, but others saw their reputations and careers suffer. Former Police Chief J.L. Eddings and State Attorney J. Rex Farrior were accused of accepting protection money from gamblers. Charles Marvin, a lieutenant in the Air Force, testified that as a member of the city's vice squad from 1947 to 1949, he was told by Chief Eddings that 105 bolita places were off limits, and not to be raided. Current Chief of Police Beasley told the committee that the records documenting 15 of Tampa's gangland slayings had all been stolen.41
Senator Hunt’s gavel ended the Tampa phase of the Kefauver hearings. Angrily, he called for "an aroused and determined public" to demand reform and clean up the city.

Two days of infamy changed everything and changed nothing. To be sure, the publicity brought humiliation and shame to the city. Earnest leaders promised change. Cody Fowler, who had recently been elected the head of the American Bar Association, resolved to clean up Tampa. Civic associations, such as the Palma Ceia Civitans and the Tampa Junior Chamber of Commerce, voted to purge the city of corruption. Sheriff Culbreath, State Attorney Farrior, and others would never hold office again. On April 18, 1955, the "dapper dean" of Tampa gambling, Charlie Wall, was killed at his Ybor City home at 1219 17th Avenue. On his side table, a book lay open. It was *Crime in America*, by Estes Kefauver.42

Cynics, however, might contend that the Kefauver hearings had more to do with cosmetics and politics, and less to do with organizations and crime. Bolita, the source of all evil, had been in decline since the late 1940s. Voting fraud had also been largely absent since the introduction of voting machines in the late 1930s. By the 1950s, compared to drugs, prostitution, and racketeering, bolita was penny ante. If Tampa was too hot, there was plenty of money to be made in Cuba. Local politicians may have been humiliated but none was sent to jail because of evidence brought to the Kefauver hearings. Others simply ignored the commotion. Santo Traficante, Sr., for instance, disregarded the subpoena, while "Red" Italiano conveniently sailed for Sicily. Organized crime in Tampa did not disappear with the Kefauver Committee.

Events of local, state, national and international importance rocked Tampa in 1950. A war abroad created suspicions at home. *McCarthyism* poisoned the wells of civility and confidence. The shrill theme of anti-communism destroyed a popular U.S. senator in what was arguably Florida’s ugliest election. Although a hot war and a hotter election captivated Florida, the event that cast the greatest shadow was a congressional indictment of Tampa’s corruption and crime.

When the calendar flipped over to 1951, few Tampans shed tears. A year of private disillusionment and public shame, 1950 was also a year of challenge and resolve. History later vindicated some of the crestfallen figures of 1950 while indicting others who succeeded. Who could have imagined that Claude Pepper would emerge in 1962 as a national icon?

ENDNOTES

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2 Ibid.


10 Tracy E. Danese, *Claude Pepper & Ed Ball* (Gainesville, 2000).


14 See Tampa newspapers, 28-30 April 1950.


16 *The Red Record of Claude Pepper*, Special Collections, Library, University of South Florida; *Tampa Morning Tribune* and *Tampa Daily Times*, 28-31 March 1950, 1-2 April 1950.

17 "Anything Goes," *Time* (17 April 1950): 27--28; James Clark, a former journalist with the *Orlando Sentinel* and an adjunct professor at the University of Central Florida. He generously shared his to-be-published study with this author.


20 “Warning Flags Fly For Democrats In Florida,” Orlando Sentinel, 9 November 1950; "Pinellas Political Primer For Democrats Rewritten By Republicans’ Sweep,” Tampa Morning Tribune, 12 November 1950; St. Petersburg Times, 8 November 1950.

21 Sumter L. Lowry, Ole 93 (Tampa, 1970).


25 Ibid., Halberstam, 69.


33 "Tampa’s Young Men Rushing To Colors," Tampa Morning Tribune, 6 January 1951.

34 James Clendinen, interview with author, 22 August 1980, Tampa.


36 See Tampa newspapers, June 6-8, 1950.


38 “Kefauver’s Aides Begin Inquiries In Tampa,” Tampa Morning Tribune, 19 December 1950; "Kefauver To Call Sheriff, Mayor, State Attorney," Tampa Morning Tribune, 23 December 1950.


Dr. Joe Knetsch

One of the constant themes of Florida frontier history is the continued threat of violence. Either real or imagined, the threat of a painful death at the hands of unknown assailants, normally alleged to be Indians, loomed in the background of every settlement on the frontier. The acts of providing settlers with ammunition, weapons and constant patrols put the U.S. Army in the middle of all potential outbreaks. Therefore, any act, or reported act, of violence by the remaining Indian population had to be investigated, thwarted or rebuffed, and the settlers reassured that the incident was either false or isolated. The Army’s predicament on the southern frontier of Florida between the Second and Third Seminole Wars becomes obvious with the study of many of the remaining documents. There was, to be sure, some violence caused by Indians straying outside of the 1842 boundary, however, some of the violence was not directly caused by this group but by whites hoping to manipulate the Army into a position of removing the remaining Indians, by force if necessary.

The Armed Occupation Act of 1842, had not yet passed when new settlers began arriving in historic Manatee County. The most notable group was the colony of Colonel Samuel Reid, on the Manatee River. The well-connected Reid recruited from his fellow Middle-Floridians a colony of thirty-two people (fifteen white males, ten black males, two black females and four black children) and settled on lands previously scouted on April 16, 1842. The colony was supplied with ten muskets, twenty musket flints and two hundred "Ball Buckshot & Cartridges." In reporting on the arrival of the colony, General William Worth commented: "the land is of Superior quality & from the character of the Gentlemen concerned, there is certainty of success."¹

The success of the Manatee colony was further assured by the arrival of other, some prominent, men from Middle Florida. They brought with them money, influence, connections to the political elite and some business acumen that many of Reid’s settlers did not have. The names of the Bradens, Gamble and others ring back the notable figures of early Manatee. As Janet Snyder Matthews has accurately recorded, this era also brought H. V. Snell, William Whitaker and Manuel Olivella into the land of historic Manatee County. This leadership core, including Reid, meant that the area was blessed with men of wisdom and connections which would allow the area to grow and prosper, even in the face of renewed Indian danger.²

The end of the Second Seminole War did not, however, bring peace to the Florida frontier. The tensions between the U.S. Army, some of the settlers and the Indians remained to incite many plans, plots and acts of violence. Accounts of Indian-related violence appeared frequently in the newspapers of the young territory. On June 13, 1843, for example, the Tallahassee Sentinel reported that in Alachua County: "Another Indian Outrage . . . We are all in arms again on account of the Indians." Wrote a correspondent from Newnansville, "On Monday, two Indians entered the house of Mr. Gideon Hague, situated near San
Felasco Hammock, and, attacking his wife, left her for dead. Herself, child and a small negro girl were the only persons at home. The girl escaped with the child and gave the alarm to the family of Reuben Hague, residing about a half mile distant . . . An attack that far north of the Manatee settlement, in an area supposedly safe from harm and devoid of Indians, increased the feeling of vulnerability for everyone on the frontier. Furthermore, early the next year, on the waters of the Choctawhatchee Bay in the Florida Panhandle, the reports of further Indian massacres could not have set well with those concerned with the security of the exposed settlements further south.4

The policy of the Federal Government at this time did not sit well with the settlers, who had hoped that the Army would finish the job of removing the last of Florida’s native population. In July of 1843, General William Worth, commanding in Florida, wrote the following to Major Wright, then commanding at Fort Brooke, Tampa Bay:

The Indians in Florida are permitted to reside temporarily in that portion of the Territory included within the red lines represented on the Map herewith furnished, where they are to remain and not to leave, except to visit this Post for the purpose of trading or other business. They are to keep at peace with the whites, and for depredations which may be done them by the whites, they are to complain here, where justice is to be done them; for depredations to them on the whites, their chief is to notice it by promptly punishing those of his people concerned . . . . There are but few Indians in the Territory and it is the desire of the Government, as soon as it can be done without the risk of renewing difficulties, to remove them West. To this they are greatly opposed and are suspicious of our wish to entrap them and force their removal. As long as they are suspicious, it will be difficult to carry out the wishes of the Government, but their suspicion may be gradually removed by constantly observing towards them an apparent indifference, making them no presents, asking few questions, respecting their people, never persuading them to visit here, and permitting them to purchase of the trader whatever they may wish and can pay cash for, including powder and whiskey for which written orders are given . . . . A trader is appointed who is required to keep on hand all articles usually wanted by the Indians, to purchase their skins, to sell at reasonable prices and in all respects to deal fairly and honestly with them; the Commanding Officer will have to look to this matter frequently . . . . In order to verify our information as to the number of male Indians the commander will keep a roll of all who may present themselves; this must be done without their observation as it may excite suspicions . . . .

Thomas P. Kennedy was given many of the normal articles of trade from the Disbursing Agent, S. G. Capers, on August 10, 1843. These articles of trade included 2,000 common "Sigars," 35 pounds of tobacco, 98 Indian shawls, 32 camp kettles, 210 yards of calico, and numerous other articles, but, noticeably lacking in this list are powder and whiskey.6 The trade was to be carried on in Tampa, however, this arrangement soon became too risky for all parties and Kennedy opened his store on Charlotte Harbor.

The Army also attempted to manipulate the Indians in the selection of a leader. It was thought that the old policy of divide and rule would benefit the policy of removal of the Indians to the west. Worth wrote to Colonel
William Belknap on December 13, 1843, about his concerns with the policy, then being followed by the Colonel: "I have some doubts as to the policy of fermenting a rivalry between Bowlegs & Assinwah for the chieftancy; and simply because the one or the other might seek the ascendancy by a war movement - this doubt aside, a rupture between them would be our gain . . . On all these matters I can but thro out hints & suggestions as every movement must be the result of circumstances - where they indicate a decided course and time permit send me an extra express - on such occasions allow no letters to be sent except those that are private & official to my self or staff - thus only can we keep our operations duly secret."7 The policy was calculated to cause dissent and diversion, thus making the opportunity for the Army to deport the Indians west that much easier. Divided, the Indian leadership probably realized that the tribes stood little chance of remaining in Florida, therefore, in the long run, this policy did not work to the advantage of the Army.

That settlers were moving into the southern portion of the territory and, especially, into the area of Charlotte Harbor was noted in a report of a scouting expedition by Lieutenant W. C. Browne. On May 24, 1844, Browne wrote that "La Costa Grande" island was inhabited by five people trading with Mobile and New Orleans, via the schooner The Water Lily, commanded by a Captain Berry, whose three children also lived with him on the island. A Captain Dewey, a New Engander, lived at "White Point" and near the head of Boca Grande, a certain gentleman named "Dexler" and a discharged soldier named Dunston lived by fishing and trapping under a company headed by Proceus, later a partner of John Darling in Tampa. Browne also noted the residence of Primo, described as a Spaniard, who lived on Pine Island and that an Irishman named MacKay and a citizen of Tampa named Stacks lived on "Matallachee Key" (Little Pine Island). He also noted that Sanibel and Captiva both had old settlements on them, but were unoccupied at the time.8 It is obvious that when Kennedy moved his store and trading post to the area, he was not alone and may not have been the only "trader" trading with the Indians.

(Note: There is no corresponding endnote 8 at the end of this essay)

Rumors of war soon, however, began to rumble over the frontier of southwestern Florida. On August 5, 1844, General Worth wrote to his commander at Tampa, Captain Montgomery, the following: "I desire you to cause the enclosed communication to be forwarded with the least avoidable delay to Colonel Reid, by the Star, if at Tampa, and not urgently employed - instruct the messenger to await for Colonel Reid's answers if he be found at his residence . . . I have further to desire that Mr. Kennedy, the Trader, and the Deputy Marshall, Mr. Ferris, may be sent to the residence of each settler on the Alafia, Simmons Hammock, Thlonotossassa, indeed all in the vicinity with a view to information on the following points . . . Have you in any instance been molested in person or property or in any way inconvenienced by the Indians since your residence? Have you entertained or had good reason to entertain apprehension from these people? On their way to Tampa to trade, have they in any case been rude and insulting - or otherwise?" Worth also wanted information from Reid on the shape of the colony in respects to crops and "prospects generally."9 The reason for the urgent dispatches was an attempt by supporters of David Levy, then Delegate to Congress, to stir up rumors of a renewed Indian war. As Worth's assistant, Captain John T. Sprague wrote to Montgomery: "Should it be known
to citizens the object of this information was to disparage infamous reports to renew the war, fabricated by the Delegates friends, the information sought would in many instances be given with reluctance.”

Throughout the remainder of 1844 and into 1845, the Army was busy putting down the rumors of war and trying to regulate trade with the Indians. Charlotte Harbor, close to the boundary of Indian territory, was an area of special concern because of the settlers and traders reported by Lieutenant Browne. There was even an attempt by the Territorial government to set up a customs office at that location, but this was opposed by General Worth and others. They were very concerned with removing the "intruders" who were already doing an illegal business in the vicinity. It comes as no surprise that the Army encouraged and provided for the moving of Kennedy’s store to Charlotte Harbor in early 1845. As Worth noted to Belknap: "... urge [upon the Indians] the advantage of a trading establishment on the waters of Charlotte Harbor & distinctly to understand that no trading can be allowed except by the regular trader we shall send there; that if any other whites go there, we shall send soldiers to remove them, the whites."  

March 3, 1845, Florida was admitted to the Union as an equal state, and with it, new political forces arose to cause renewed friction between the three groups. The power of statehood which added two Senators and a member of Congress increased Florida’s political clout. This augmented the pressures now being exerted by civilian authorities to get the Indian population removed. Florida’s first governor, William Moseley, was in constant correspondence with the Army officers in Florida and Washington during his years in that post. Writing, for example, to Captain John T. Sprague in St. Augustine, the governor stated: "I feel myself constrained to add that I am fearful the policy of the Government set forth in your communication will ultimately prove unsuccessful." Such was the tenor of the official correspondence coming from the new office of Governor of the State of Florida.

The year 1845 also saw, again, renewed efforts by certain, unnamed individuals to spread the rumors of Indian troubles. Again, Worth wrote to Belknap; "The Indian story which you refer to & which I suppose you saw in the News was known to be false in every particular. Colo. Washing’n the Surveyor has just returned & denies every syllable of it - a drunken scoundrel of his party had come in and, as previously directed brought an ‘Indian Story.’ What a set of villains!" In one of the more telling letters of the Belknap correspondence, Worth let his feelings show to the fullest: "The St. Augustine News which I seen or read & have sworn I never will: but I am told it contains two most scurrilous & abusive articles or letters from Tampa of yourself & command. You have traitors in yr camp. I suspect the man Brown - Kennedy’s partner from the language quoted to me - as for instance ‘my wharf &’ the other Brown in my opinion or perhaps Byrne would not hesitate to do the same thing. It is known indeed avowed this News was bought up when Levy was here for the express purpose of attacking the Mily." Indeed, the commanding general of the U.S. Army in Florida was accusing the Senator from the state of fomenting the constant attacks on the military by the local press; no clearer picture of the distrust between the
political and military personnel in Florida could be drawn than that just quoted.

The boundary set up to separate the Indians and whites was to be a twenty mile zone around the area designated as Indian Territory. Although the occupation of this area was to be of short term, no one knew exactly when the Indians would be ready to emigrate to the west. Roughly this area included much of the lower Peace River Valley over to the Kissimmee River and down it to Lake Okeechobee. At no point was there to be any territory recognized as Indian which had direct access to the ocean. The old fear of rearmament from Cuba or the Bahamas remained strongly embedded in the military and civilian mind. Interestingly, General Worth, upon seeing the area on a map from the Surveyor General of Florida, Valentine Conway, immediately expressed his displeasure with it, as it encompassed some lands already surveyed and settled upon by whites. Conway wrote to Washington for additional instructions and the corrected line was delineated on a new map.18

But the problems still remained for the Army in patrolling the area and keeping the whites and Indians apart. The Indians, by almost all accounts, intended to remain peaceful and caused little trouble. John T. Sprague wrote to Captain John H. Winder, commanding at Fort Brooke, on January 10, 1846, that this was, indeed, the total intent of Bowlegs and his followers which he had learned at a meeting at Kennedy’s Charlotte Harbor store.19 Just two days after penning the above letter, Sprague again wrote to Winder, this time complaining of "intruders" with the Indians along the southwest coast. He claimed these intruders were "adventurers and speculators" who were idle and profligate and who were manufacturing "Indian signs" in hopes of exciting a new war, in the name of personal profit.20 Keeping the "idle and profligate" from the Indian territory remained a major problem until the final outbreak of the Third Seminole War in 1855.

That problems loomed with the civil authorities was behind much of the correspondence of 1846. Governor Moseley was in almost constant touch with Captain Aaron Jernigan who led the militia units in the area south of Fort Gatlin, in central Florida. From the correspondence between these two, it is obvious that the Indians were mistrusted and constantly "spied" upon and that the Government, represented in Florida by the Army, was viewed as weak regarding removal. On February 24, the Governor thanked Captain Sprague for his reassurances, "that no act of hostility need be apprehended from the Indians." However, he did not believe that the situation would remain so for long and noted that every incident reported would be followed up by Captain Jernigan or some other "responsible person."21 On the same day, he also wrote to Jernigan in a much stronger tone. "It is, I assure you Sir, a matter of deep regret to me; that these savages have not long since been removed west of the Mississippi. I am quite inclined to the opinion; per the information from Capt. Sprague; that no hostile attacks from them may be expected, nevertheless their residence among us, is well calculated to keep alive passions & prejudices which would doubtless long since have subsided, had they have been removed."22 These pieces of the general correspondence indicate that the State’s governor and his associates did not consider the policy advocated publicly by the Army as adequate to the situation.

After constant reports of Indian depredations, various attacks on wagon masters, mail riders, etc., the general state of
affairs continued to decline. Indians, it was reported, who had camped on Lake Istokpoga (Highlands County) had badly mistreated the negro of a Mr. Hancock. Senator James D. Westcott of Florida wrote to President James K. Polk insisting that Captain Sprague had underestimated the size of the Seminole population greatly and that they were more powerful than the Army was willing to admit. Sprague, himself, was doubting the trustworthiness of the Seminoles and wrote to William Medill of the Department of Indian Affairs that they were, "more subtle, or vindictive, and inimical to the whites," than any other tribe in the United States. Trader John Darling, soon to enter into a partnership with Thomas Kennedy, wrote from the Charlotte Harbor store: "I have been some time at this station as agent for the Seminole Trader trading with the Indians, and I have seen enough of them to induce me to think that the policy at present pursued by the General Government, if the purpose is removal, ought to be changed." He then continues and directly attacks Captain John Casey: "The Indians are now permitted and encouraged to go out of the Reservation for the purpose of trade, ostensibly, but in reality to enable the Seminole Agent to keep up a quasi communication with them without personal inconvenience to himself. You are aware that the present Agent is an officer in the United States Army, and in command of troops at Fort Brooke." These representative reports and observations continued to fan the flames of possible war on the Florida frontier, and the motives of those involved did not appear pure and devoid of personal interest.

The great Indian Scare of 1849 brought out more intense passions and tensions on the Florida frontier. The murders on Indian River and at Paynes Creek heightened the call for renewed warfare against the Seminoles and Miccosukees. The scare depopulated the Indian River settlements, the New River Settlement and much of that originally found on the Miami River. In a word, it nearly depopulated southeastern Florida and made the impact of the Armed Occupation Act nearly void in that region.

The impact on the Sarasota-Manatee area was also devastating at first. As Janet Snyder Matthews has written, the settlements were in a panic and a meeting was called to discuss the matter and decide on the appropriate course of action. Volunteer units were called up by the Governor and H. V. Snell, and Joseph Woodruff, of Sarasota Bay, signed up to serve under Manatee merchant, Henry S. Clark, although this unit was not officially mustered into service. Unfortunately, the Army sent a Lieutenant J. Gibbon to reassure the settlers that all was well. His men, however, appeared at the Manatee settlements on "ordinary draft mules" and presented anything but a quick response unit capable of delaying or destroying attacking Indians. Captain John C. Casey, in writing to Adjutant General R. Jones, noted that his guides had found the usual signal for a peace parlance, a white flag made of feathers and tobacco with white beads, left by the Indians on an elevated point on Sarasota Bay. His commanding officer, Brevet Major General D. E. Twiggs, an old veteran of the Indian Wars, wrote on August 27, 1849:

Some days previous to my arrival a white flag was found at Sarasota, as has already been reported to the department by Captain Casey. Yesterday I sent a company to the Manitou river. On reaching the district bordering on the river, from which the inhabitants fled, two white flags were found at Mr. Addison’s, at the head of the river, and signs of the tracks of two ponies.
Nothing had been injured on the premises, and nothing but a few pounds of flour taken from the house; indications from which something favorable may be hoped, in the expected meeting of Captain Casey and the chiefs.\textsuperscript{31}

This revealing passage indicates that the settlers on the Manatee had, like most others in the exposed positions, left for the safety of the nearest fortifications. Indeed, as early as July 25, 1849, just four days after the Payne’s Creek murders, Casey noted in his diary, "people forting."\textsuperscript{32}

By September 6, 1849, Casey was reporting to his superior officer, Major W. W. Mackall, that he had heard from Bowlegs and that the latter regretted the recent murders and that every effort would be made by the tribe to bring the guilty parties, whom were identified as five young Seminoles from the Kissimmee River area, to justice as soon as possible. Casey also noted that Sam Jones had contacted Bowlegs urging him to take the lead in keeping the peace with the whites. Casey then reported the good news, that the guilty parties had been overtaken on their way to the settlements by Chitto Hajo. The Captain stated: "The chiefs all disavow and regret these murders; and all the Indians are averse to hostilities. They are satisfied with their country, and with the treaty under which they are living; and they now earnestly desire to do justice in this matter." Broken sticks were exchanged at the end of the September 18-19th conference and peace soon prevailed again on the frontier.\textsuperscript{33}

Casey’s efforts to meet with Bowlegs and resolve the problems met with great success and at no time did he bring up the question of removal. Yet, he was deeply troubled by the knowledge that General David Twiggs would bring up emigration at the next conference, calling this an, "apparent breach of faith."\textsuperscript{34}

In his remarkable letters from the Florida frontier, Brevet-Major John C. Pemberton reported that the subject of removal was brought up with Bowlegs at the next conference. Twiggs traveled to Charlotte Harbor in mid-October to personally receive the prisoners who had perpetrated the murders on Indian River and Payne’s Creek. He took into custody three live prisoners, the hand of another (killed while attempting to escape) and a promise to capture the fifth culprit. After securing the prisoners, Twiggs brought up the eminent emigration, to which the Indians "expressed great surprise & showed great sorrow." Having just demonstrated their desire and faithfulness to the cause of peace, this reaction is understandable. Pemberton struck the final note by observing that the remainder would now resist any attempt at removal and predicted a "long and wearisome war" before they would finally capitulate.\textsuperscript{35}

The reports of violence on the frontier continued, however, to flow back to the Governor, now Thomas Brown. One of the typical letters read like the following:

Sir, rumors say the Indian hostilities has been recommenced. Six waggons or teamsters has been Killed on Rout from Fort Mellon to Fort Frazer on the Kissimmee the truth I cant vouch for but I fear it is tru for the Indians has not met Gen Twiggs. Sir I merely request that you would commission me and Lieut William Kendrick Lieut Horn has left the Dist.\textsuperscript{36}

Indeed, the frequent reports of violence to teamsters, mail riders, etc., lead one to wonder about the political machinations going on along the frontier, especially when
the rewards were a captaincy or some other officer’s rank in the local militia. Some, like John Darling, actually were reported to have attempted to thwart negotiations, but were stopped by cooler heads.37

The immediate result of the Indian Scare of 1849, was the establishment of a line of fortifications, if they can be called such, along the southern frontier. Camp Gamble was occupied near the Gamble plantation on the north side of the river and another unit was stationed at Dr. Braden’s place on the south side. Little was done from these "posts" and the incidents of the earlier part of the year were soon over and life went ahead. In some instances, soldiers were simply put up in local homes and plantations, such as those reported by Brevet-Major Pemberton. The Major’s wife gave birth to a ten-pound baby girl just shortly after leaving the house of a "Presbyterian parson" whose house was the last one of the Manatee River settlement.38 The panic, which had been complete at one stage of the Scare, did not fade from the memories of those who lived through it and caution was now the watchword for everyone.39

The political leaders, although happy at the end of the immediate crisis, wanted more troops deployed, hoping to entice the final battles that would lead to removal. In this hope they were disappointed. On August 7, 1849, Secretary of War George Crawford, wrote to the Governor, "I think that the force which is in process of being placed on the Southern Settlements of the Peninsula, will be adequate to their full defense. That force, when assembled, will, in numerical Strength, be quadruple that of the Indians. You propose to raise a force, which would be greater than the entire force of the Indians. I confess I do not see the propriety or necessity of employing the volunteers of Florida, and without which, I could not advise the President to muster them in the Service of the United States." This letter effectively ended the hope at that time of raising the troops for the final push.40

The outline of a plan by the Army for securing the frontier settlements, of course, had already been in the works. On October 3, 1849, this plan was sent to Washington by General Twiggs. Again, the central role of the Manatee settlements comes out clearly in this document. "Preparatory to a movement into the Indian country," Twiggs wrote, "I would make every effort to secure the frontier settlements against an eruption of the savages. To do this, I should propose a line of posts from the Manatee to the Indian river, passing between Kissimmee on the South and Cypress lake on the north. On this line of 200 miles, posts of two companies each, 10 miles apart, would be required, making 40 companies. Also depots at Miami, New and Indian rivers, St. John’s on the east, Manatee, Charlotte Harbor and Caloosahatchee, on the western side of the peninsula. . ." Twiggs also noted that the garrisons would comprise about thirteen companies, including a mounted force of 300 men. He continued by detailing the type of boats to be used in Florida’s shallow creeks and rivers. The naval force, as used in the last war, was not efficient enough and would not be needed. Fighting the Indians of Florida, who gave no pitched battles and fled at the approach of every force, Twiggs declared, "Your numbers, then, must make up for his intelligence and fleetness."41 The plan, it is clear, was similar to one developed toward the end of the Second Seminole War by General Worth.

Throughout the 1850s, until the outbreak of the Third Seminole War in 1855, the tensions continued to mount. A general policy of continued pressure on the Indians
was fully implemented. The U.S. Deputy Surveyors were ordered into the "neutral ground" to lay out public lands as a signal to the Indians that civilization, as the whites knew it, would soon be encroaching on their land. The Army continuously sent in reconnaissance missions (called surveys by some) to map out the hiding places and growing fields of the Indians. Lieutenant Hartsuff was on one such mission when his troops were attacked, beginning the last of the Seminole Wars. The State legislature regularly passed bills prohibiting trade with the Indians and resolutions calling for immediate removal. The Third Seminole War was no accident. It was a fully contrived exercise of continual pressure to force the final issue of removal. Few on the South Florida frontier were surprised when the war finally did come; most, it may be assumed, were relieved.

ENDNOTES

Dr. Joe Knetsch is a Senior Analyst with the Bureau of Survey and Mapping, Division of State Lands, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and is a regular contributor to The Sunland Tribune and other journals of Florida history. Knetsch has been published in each of the last eight issues of The Sunland Tribune and this volume contains two of his articles. He received his B.S. from Western Michigan University, his M.A. from Florida Atlantic University and his Ph.D. from Florida State University.


3 Tallahassee Sentinel, June 13, 1843, 3. Tallahassee Sentinel, February 6, 1844. Discusses the murder of one man and a negro woman by renegade Creeks twelve miles west of St. Andrews Bay, which makes the description nearer to Choctawhatchee Bay. These Creeks remained on the run until mid-1847.

4 William Worth Belknap Papers, Folder 13, Princeton University Library, Princeton, New Jersey. Memorandum for Major Wright, dated "July 1843".

5 Belknap Papers. Folder 13. List and signed receipt by Thomas P. Kennedy, dated August 10, 1843.

6 Belknap Papers. (No folder or box indicated). Letter of December 13, 1843. Worth to Belknap.

7 Belknap Papers. (No Box or Folder numbers) Letter of May 24, 1844. Lt. W. C. Browne to Belknap.

8

9 Belknap Papers. (No Box or Folder Number) Letter of August 5, 1844. Worth to Montgomery, commanding at Tampa.

10 Belknap Papers. (No Box or Folder Number). Letter of August 6, 1844. Captain J. T. Sprague to Captain Montgomery.

11 Belknap Papers. (No Box or Folder Number) Letter of August 9, 1844. Montgomery to Thomas P. Kennedy and Ferris.


13 Belknap Papers. (No Box or Folder Number) Letter of September 10, 1844. Worth to Belknap.


16 Belknap Papers. (No Box or Folder Number) Letter of July 7, 1845. Worth to Belknap.

17 Belknap Papers. (No Box or Folder Number) Letter of July 13, 1845. Worth to Belknap.

18 Territorial Papers, Volume XXVI, 1076-82.

Archives. Letter of January 10, 1846. Sprague to Winder.


24 Ibid., Letter of January 10, 1848. Westcott to Polk.


29 Matthews, Edge of Wilderness, 182-90.

30 United States Senate Executive Document No. 1. 31st Congress, 1st Session. 1849.

31 Ibid., 119.

32 John C. Casey Diaries (United States Military Academy Library, West Point, New York, CU 551) Entry for July 25, 1849, in Book labeled "1849". The author would like to thank Mr. Alan Aimone of the Academy for his kind assistance in researching and copying the necessary parts of the diary for this article.

33 Ibid., 121.

34 Casey Diaries, entry for October 8, 1849.

35 Pemberton Family Papers (Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) File, "Pemberton, John C.," Letter of October 26, 1849, John C. Pemberton to Mrs. R. C. Pemberton. The author would like to thank Dr. Canter Brown, Jr. for his assistance in locating this source and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania for providing copies of this correspondence.


37 Casey Diaries, Entry for September 10, 1849.

38 Pemberton Family Papers, Letter of November 11, 1849, John C. to Israel Pemberton.

39 Matthews, Edge of Wilderness, 186-89.

40 Florida Department of State, Archives and Records Management, Series 679, Carton 2, Folder 3, Letter of August 7, 1849, Crawford to Brown.


42 Joe Knetseh, "John Westcott and the Coming of the Third Seminole War: Perspectives from Within," Florida Historical Society Annual Meeting, May 12, 1990. (Copies are available at the University of South Florida Library, Special Collections; P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville; and the Florida Room of the State Library of Florida, Tallahassee, Florida.)
REVISITING THE HISTORICAL MARKERS OF WEST TAMPA

Arsenio M. Sanchez

WEST TAMPA CENTENNIAL
1895 - 1995

Hugh C. Macfarlane, an immigrant from Scotland, purchased land in November 1886 and built a cigar factory that started production on June 15, 1892. Macfarlane and other developers offered free land and buildings, bringing in more cigar factories and growth that led to the formation of the City of West Tampa on May 18, 1895. Other immigrants from Cuba, Spain, Italy, Scotland, Ireland, Germany and different parts of the United States made up the population, giving the town its distinctive, vibrant character. After thirty years as a prospering municipality West Tampa was annexed to the City of Tampa on January 1, 1925.

Donated by the Tampa Tribune
Sponsored by the Tampa Historical Society
May 18, 1995

On May 18, 1995, the West Tampa Centennial Society celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of West Tampa. People were invited to the West Tampa Convention Center for refreshments and dancing. Historians Arsenio Sanchez and Armando Mendez unveiled the historic marker presented to West Tampa by the Tampa Tribune.
THE BEGINNING OF THE CIGAR INDUSTRY IN WEST TAMPA

A cigar factory built on this site in June 1892 by Hugh C. Macfarlane brought the first industry to the community of West Tampa. First operated by A. Del Pino and Company, it failed financially. In 1894 the O'Halloran Cigar Company occupied the building. On May 18, 1895, a bill passed Florida's legislature creating the municipality of West Tampa. Its first mayor was Fernando Figueredo, a prominent figure in the Cuban revolution.


The first public library was dedicated on January 1, 1914 on the site of the O'Halloran Cigar Company factory in West Tampa.

While the Carnegie Foundation donated $17,500 to erect the Free Public Library building at 1718 North Howard Avenue at Union Street in West Tampa, they did it with the agreement by the city that no less than $1,750 a year would be spent for maintenance.
THE WEST TAMPA BOYS CLUB
On this site, the West Tampa Boys Club was organized around 1923 at the Rosa Valdez Settlement, a Methodist mission. From 1926 until 1944, the club was a major project of the Tampa Rotary Club. Under leadership of E.S. "Pep" Krantz and Charles "Stretch" Murphy, it became Florida's largest. With club sponsorship, Tony Pereira started Boy Scout Troop 38 here in 1930. ‘Vest Tampa Boys Club became part of Boys Clubs of Tampa, Inc., in 1944.

Erected by Jose and Mirta Gonzalez in 1991
Sponsored by the Tampa Historical Society

West Tampa dedicated the historic marker for the West Tampa Boys Club, at what is now the Rose Valdez Learning Center at 1802 North Albany and the corner of Union Street.

The newspaper photograph shows Jose and Mirta Gonzalez, sponsors of the marker, with historian Arsenio Sanchez.
MORGAN CIGAR FACTORY
A SYMBOL OF TAMPA’S ROMANTIC CIGAR INDUSTRY
In 1907 William T. Morgan erected this three story cigar factory and soon his Juan De Fuca label attained wide acceptance throughout the country. By 1910, the company had to move to larger quarters to accommodate 1,000 workers.

After Morgan vacated this building, it was occupied by six other cigar factories. In 1991, Advanced Promotional Concepts, Inc., purchased the building and restored it to its original state.

Established by Advanced Promotional Concepts, Inc.
Sponsored by the West Tampa Historical Society, March 11, 1993

The Morgan Cigar factory, constructed by Colonel WT. Morgan in 1907, produced some of the finest handmade cigars in Tampa. In 1991, the factory was renovated by Barbara Baker, president of Advanced Promotional Concepts, Inc., shown at the marker’s dedication.
ACADEMY OF HOLY NAMES
On Sept. 14, 1896, Sisters of the Holy Names established The Academy of the Holy Names by order of Bishop John Moore. Sisters Mary Emilie and Mary Hubert were the first teachers in this brick school. On Nov. 29, 1896, Fr. William Tyrrell, S.J., offered the first Catholic mass in West Tampa in the second floor chapel. It is here that the history of St. Joseph Parish begins. In 1930, when the Academy was moved to Bayshore, the Salesian Sisters took charge of the school renaming it St. Joseph School. In 1955, the school moved to Cherry and MacDill.

Donated by
West Tampa Centennial Society, Inc.
Sponsored by Tampa Historical Society
September 14, 1996
THE ANDRES DIAZ BUILDING

In 1908 John Drew built this cigar factory for Andres Diaz and company of New York. One of the most modern of its day, it produced fine Havana cigars under the labels *Terreno*, *Flor do A. Diaz* and *La Flor de Scott*. West Tampa was becoming the Ciudad de Cigars, a world center for fine Havana cigar production. It attracted 178 cigar factories that employed some 8,000 workers. A. Dial closed its operation in 1925, after which the building housed a number of other factories. Renovations began in 1980 to turn this architectural landmark into an office building.

Sponsored by the Tampa Historical Society and the West Tampa Centennial Society. 1996.
Donated by D. Russell and Karen Stahl

The Andres Diaz cigar factory was constructed by West Tampon developer John Drew. In 1908 the beautiful four story building was completed and Andres Diaz moved his New York operations to the West Tampa site at 3102 North Habana Avenue and Kathleen Street where two hundred people were employed. Andres Diaz owned it until 1925, when it was sold to Francisco Arango and, later, Tampa Cuba Cigar Company.
Hugh C. Macfarlane, the "Father of West Tampa," built the first cigar factory on the corner of Howard Avenue and Union Street in 1892. A native of Scotland, Macfarlane immigrated in 1865 to the United States with his parents. He studied law and practiced in Boston and New Orleans before settling in Tampa in 1883. (Photograph courtesy of Special Collections, Library, University of South Florida.)
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Larry Eugene Risers, Recipient of the 2000 D.B. McKay Award

Dr. Larry Eugene Rivers, professor of history at Florida A & M University, was the recipient of the Florida Historical Society's Arthur W. Thompson Memorial Prize in 1981 and The Journal of Negro History's Carter G. Woodson Prize in 1994. Rivers has been a professor of history at Florida A&M University since 1977. The University Press of Florida has recently published River's book, Slavery in Florida, Territorial Days to Emancipation, the first and only comprehensive study of slavery in Florida. In a review of the book by William Warren Rogers, emeritus professor of history at Florida State University, Rogers states, "At last Florida has a work on slavery that compares favorably with that of any other Southern state, and, equally important, it will stand for many years as the standard work on the subject . . .

The thoroughly researched monograph establishes Larry Rivers as a leading scholar on slavery. It is a major study." During almost two decades spent researching and writing Slavery in Florida, Rivers also published numerous history articles and chapters for books by other authors. His chapter, "A Troublesome Property: Master-Slave Relations in Florida, 1821-1865," is included in The African American Heritage of Florida.

Dr. Rivers, a native of Georgia and graduate of Fort Valley (Ga.) State University, earned a master's from Villanova and Ph.D. from Carnegie Mellon. He and his wife, Betty, have been married twenty years, live in Tallahassee, and have two sons. Their oldest, Larry Omar, is attending FAMU and is the author of an article in the 1999 edition of The Sunland Tribune. Their younger son, Linje, is a junior at Tallahassee's Leon High School.

For his significant contribution to Florida's history, Larry Rivers is the recipient of the Tampa Historical Society's 2000 D. B. McKay Award.

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