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In Tampa"
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THE COVER

Col. "Teddy" Roosevelt wasn't so famous when he was stationed in Tampa during the Spanish-American War in 1898. He became a hero as leader of the Rough Riders and later was to become President of the United States. Dr. James W. Covington writes about the Rough Rider Days in Tampa in this issue of The Sunland Tribune. Photo from Hampton Dunn Collection.

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The Rough Riders in Tampa

By JAMES W. COVINGTON, Ph.D.

Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough Riders made a lasting impression upon Tampa during their brief visit at the onset of the Spanish-American War. Tourists visiting the Tampa Bay Hotel, now the University of Tampa, want to know in which room Roosevelt stayed. Old timers relate the story of the "yellow rice brigade charge" and Ybor citizens recall vividly Teddy Roosevelt and the names of his horse and dog. This account is the story of Teddy Roosevelt and his Rough Riders in Tampa—a visit that lasted only four days.

When the newspapers began playing up a possible war with Spain, military planners in Washington projected the conflict as mostly a naval action. It was planned that the United States Army would protect the American coast and help the Navy seize and hold strategic bases in Cuba. Since the American coastal defenses were hopelessly inadequate, twenty-nine million were alloted to the Navy and fifteen million to the Corps of Engineers and Ordinance Department for coastal defense from a total appropriation of fifty million dollars. Consequently little attention was paid to the organizing and equipping of any army for the
invasion of Cuba. Still, some supplies were purchased and a joint Army-Navy Planning Board began studying railroads and harbors in the South during March and April, 1898 with the object of selecting an embarkation port for an army.

**Strike Force Needed**

More substantial plans by the War Department began to develop during the spring of 1898. Since the American Navy would probably gain a victory over the Spanish Navy, a strike force of nearly 100,000 men composed of regulars would be needed to seize Cuban points. Some supporters of the National Guard defeated a plan to use only regular troops for the action in Cuba leaving the National Guard for coastal defense. Finally a board appointed by Secretary of War Alger presented a plan calling for the mobilization of the regular troops either at one camp in Chickamauga, Georgia, volunteer regiments to implement the manpower of the regulars, would be fused into larger units with the regulars either at the single camps or the port cities.

On April 15th Secretary of War Russell A. Alger selected Chickamauga as the assembly area for six of the cavalry and most of the artillery regiments and mobilization of twenty-two infantry regiments was planned at New Orleans, Mobile and Tampa. In addition to the cavalry, artillery and infantry regiments, Alger and his board saw the need for the use of some specialized troops. Accordingly, provision for the raising of three regiments of United States Volunteer Cavalry were made. Other specialist regiments to be raised included the engineers, immune infantry and signal corps. The commander of each of these units was to be appointed by the President and assigned a recruiting district. Acting under regular army supervision, the commander was given authority to appoint his officers who enlisted the lower ranks.

**Natural Features**

Tampa was selected as a port of embarkation for the expeditionary army to Cuba because of its apparent natural features. Forts were planned but not completed until 1902 at the entrance to Tampa Bay at Egmont and Mullet Keys. The long channel stretching more than ten miles into Tampa and Hillsborough Bays made the area reasonably safe from attack by the Spanish Navy. Tampa was connected with the north by two railroads and it possessed a fine hotel which would serve as headquarters during the assembly of the strike force from all parts of the country. The deep water of Tampa Bay extended to Port Tampa where a depth of twenty-one feet was available. Henry Plant had constructed a single ten mile line of railroad track from Tampa to Port Tampa where he erected the Port Tampa Inn and shipping facilities. Wharves at Port Tampa were able to accommodate as many as thirteen vessels. Still Port Tampa had been designed to handle at the most a thousand or more persons—not thirty thousand at one time.

The First United States Volunteer Cavalry which became known consecutively as the Rocky Mountain Rustlers, Teddy’s Terrors and finally as "The Rough Riders" included men mostly from New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma and Indian Territory but also a sprinkling from the Northeast. Although Secretary Alger offered Theodore Roosevelt command of the regiment, Roosevelt demurred in favor of Leonard Wood - thus Wood became Colonel and Roosevelt Lieutenant-Colonel of the regiment. Leonard Wood, a graduate of Harvard Medical School, was the family doctor of Secretary of War Alger and a good friend of Roosevelt. The two leaders of the Rough Riders knew the right people and could get favored treatment. Before going to assembly headquarters at San Antonio, Roosevelt held a meeting in Washington where he recruited fifty persons from Virginia, Maryland and the northeastern states.

**Were Self-Reliant**

Since the assigned recruiting area was the Southwest the bulk of the men in the First United States Volunteer Cavalry included Indians, Cowboys, former American and foreign army personnel, professional gamblers, Texas Rangers, miners, and even some clergymen. According to Roosevelt, these men were, accustomed to the use of firearms, accustomed to taking care of themselves in the open, they were intelligent and self-reliant; they possessed hardihood and endurance and physical prowess." Wood selected San Antonio as the assembly point for it was in the center of horse breeding country and was near an old army
1898 map shows dispersion of troops in Tampa during Spanish-American War. Drawing From June 21, 1898 issue of THE TAMPA DAILY TIMES.

Photo from Hampton Dunn Collection
post and arsenal from which material could be secured.\(^7\) The Menger Hotel which is still standing and in use served as the headquarters.

After basic training and horse breaking at San Antonio, the regiment was ordered to proceed to Tampa. Leaving San Antonio on May 29, 1898, the caravan moved through the heart of the Southland to the cheers of an admiring populace.\(^8\) The four day trip by train in seven sections was an eventful one with frequent stops for hay and water for the nearly twelve hundred mules and horses aboard. The men travelled in railroad coaches with adequate sleeping accommodations-not boxcars. In several places during a rest stop cheers turned to concern when some Rough Riders dashed to the nearest saloon, got drunk and became belligerent.

**Two Days’ Rations**

Since, the Rough Riders had been given only rations for two days when they entrained at San Antonio, they were forced to steal pigs, chickens and everything edible while enroute when the trip was extended two more days. In fact, when news of their exploits spread ahead to Tampa, the citizens drew up a petition requesting that the Rough Riders be kept in camp and presented it to Colonel Wood after his regiment had arrived.\(^9\) Route of the train led through New Orleans, Mobile, Tallahassee, state officials and capital city inhabitants entertained the troops during their overnight stay. Vegetables and coffee were given to a few hungry Rough Riders at Chaires.\(^10\)

Since the military situation in Tampa represented "an appalling spectacle of congestion and confusion" no one except Teddy and his men were surprised that there was no one to meet them or tell them where to camp when they arrived on June 3. The terminal point of the Florida Central and Peninsular was the Hillsborough River wharves, and Jackson. Street in the heart of present day downtown Tampa. Since no food was available for the arriving and hungry men, the officers, from their own funds, purchased food for the Rough Riders. Somehow Roosevelt and his men were able to locate and seize control of some

1898-EMBARKATION FOR CUBA FROM PORT TAMPA

-Photo from Hampton Dunn Collection
wagons to carry the baggage to the designated camping grounds. So far as can be determined the camp of the Rough Riders was one mile and a quarter due west of the Tampa Bay Hotel or near present day Armenia Avenue and Kennedy Boulevard. Camped nearby were the, Second Cavalry Recruits, the Fifth Cavalry, and the Third Cavalry.

**Tampa In ’98**

Tampa in 1898 had approximately 14,000 population housed in a setting of ill-sorted residences ranging from squalid to luxurious. Some of the buildings in the downtown area were frame structures, many unpainted and dilapidated but some brick buildings showed evidence of a rising prosperity engendered by a prosperous port and good railroad connections. Streets had recently been paved and concrete sidewalks and rain sewers constructed in the downtown area. In other areas including Ybor City and West Tampa industrial plants were to be found that were constructed of brick made in local brickyards. According to George Kennan a most astute war correspondent, Tampa seemed to be a huddle of collection of generally insignificant buildings standing in an arid desert of sand. Cuban and American flags were displayed in front of every restaurant, hotel and cigar shop and from many homes.

Once in the campgrounds, the Rough Riders moved to establish order within a sea of pines, sand and palmettoes. By noon on the day of arrival tents were erected stretching down long straight avenues with the officer’s quarters at one end and kitchens at the opposite end. Marching in foot drills were begun and after the horses had been rested for thirty-six hours, mounted drills were commenced.

**To Attack Havana**

The Fifth Corps commanded by Major General William R. Shafter had been assembled at Tampa for the original purpose of attacking Havana. According to General Orders issued on May 7th and May 16th the Fifth Corps commanded by Major General William R. Shafter composed mostly of regulars was created and designated as the Cuban Strike Force. On April 29th Shafter had been ordered to assemble some 6,000 regulars at Tampa and to move by sea to Cape Tunas near Cienfuegos in Cuba where weapons would be given to the rebel general Maximo Gomez and return to the United States. When Cervera’s fleet left for the West, plans for the Cuban expedition were postponed until the whereabouts of the Spanish fleet were ascertained. During the interval, Shafter continued to assemble troops and transports at Tampa. Most of the regular regiments plus the First Volunteer Cavalry and eight infantry regiments of volunteers were included with the
Fifth Corps command. These various regiments were sited in various areas from Port Tampa to Ybor City with principal encampment being in the two hundred and fifty acres of pine forest specially designated military grounds at Tampa Heights. Other units at or near Tampa included the Eighteenth Infantry, Heavy Artillery, Second Georgia, First Florida, Thirty-Second Michigan, First Infantry, Ninth Infantry, Light Artillery, Fifty-Seventh Indiana, First Illinois and Sixth New York. General Joseph Wheeler noting that his men had been camped at Port Tampa where no shade trees were available was able to move the camp to West Tampa. Also encamped at West Tampa were several hundred Cuban troops who would sail with the invasion fleet. Altogether four regiments were at Port Tampa, seventeen at Tampa and four at Lakeland. Horses and mules were kept in the Army corral located in the town of Fort Brooke near present day DeSoto Park. Some rustlers were able to steal part of the herd but the deputy United States Marshal located most of the livestock in Pasco County.

City Prospers

When $175,000 was paid out to the soldiers on their first payday, various Tampa firms prospered from the increase in business. The military was forced to provide two hundred armed guards in the downtown area to stop fights and disputes that arose. Tampa was wide open at this time with gambling widespread and the worst dives located in the Fort Brooke section. Some robbers seemed to follow the troops and residents began to report that their houses had been ransacked. Near the end of the troops’ stay discipline had declined so much that a docked British ship was invaded by soldiers who stole bananas and coconuts laughing at the police as they looted. When the office of the Florida Brewery was robbed, an insignia of the 69th New York Regiment was found on the floor.

Although to the Anglo-Saxons living in Tampa, those persons speaking Spanish seemed to be Cuban and friendly, the Latins knew very well the differences between the two groups. The Cubans knew the difference between one devoted to revolution and one who wanted Spanish rule and kept a close watch upon the Latin population of Tampa reporting to American and Cuban Revolutionary authorities any suspicious activities. A plaque placed by Mirror Lake, in St. Petersburg marks the spot where an alleged spy was detached while attempting to poison the water supply of the troops. Miss Mabel Bean of Port Tampa was employed by General Shafter to open the mail of suspected spies. Many Spaniards left Tampa when war was declared reducing the membership of the Centro Espanol by two-thirds. When the troops first arrived in Tampa they searched the Central Espanol occupying it for some time. Finally after protests by Mayor Myron Guillet the soldiers were removed but the place remained closed for the duration of the war.

Liked Cuban Bread

Uniforms of the Rough Riders, dusty brown canvas topped by a dark grey groad brimmed soft hat, mingled with the dark blue of the regulars in Tampa’s streets. Still, little time was spent in places other than the campground for the Rough Riders were in Tampa for a total of four days. Roosevelt and his men must have visited Ybor City for some time later be remarked bow he liked Tampa-style Cuban bread. When the thousands of soldiers poured into Tampa, the inhabitants found interesting shows available in the camps scattered throughout the lower bay area. The Tampa citizens like to talk with the soldiers from other areas, watch their poker games and listen to the band music. However, the show put on by foot soldiers was drab compared to the activities of the colorful Rough Riders and their horses. Soon the camp was surrounded by throngs of black and white youngsters with a few of them wearing makeshift cardboard spurs in imitation of the cavalrymen. It was the glamour of the Rough Riders with their cowboys, gunfighters, Indians and eastern blue bloods that attracted the crowds. Roosevelt's mountain lion, dog and two horses-"Rain in the Face" and "Texas" were indeed most unusual. Many young men from Florida tried to enlist in the unit but all of the places had been filled.

The Tampa Bay Hotel with its silver minarets, wide porches, and beautiful park served as command headquarters and residence for the correspondents, Cuban refugees and military attaches. Plans had been made by Resident Manager D. P. Hathaway to close the hotel at the end of the season April 1, 1898 and keep the doors shut until December. It remained closed for only several
weeks for the hotel was selected as Army Headquarters and served in addition as residence for guests and others who were in some way connected with the war. During this "rocking chair" phase of the war, it seemed that Tampa Bay Hotel was the place to meet old friends, listen to good, music and learn the latest gossip concerning the place in Cuba where the force would land.

Visit To Hotel

Not many of the Rough Riders found it convenient to visit the command headquarters. Teddy, however, was given special permission by his good friend Colonel Leonard Wood to spend every evening from dinner hour until breakfast the next day with Mrs. Roosevelt who was a guest at the hotel.20 Few of the military attaches or correspondents left the hotel to visit the nearby camps to learn how unhealthy they were or how poorly the war machine had been organized. To those keen observers who were able to make the trip to the camps the uniforms were too heavy, the food was bad, and no one knew how to organize the various regiments to work together. A few people must have gone to Eleventh Street and Fifth Avenue in Ybor City where Tampa Gas Company was testing a military balloon to carry men to Cuba. It failed when the artificial gas proved to be too heavy to supply proper lifting power.21

President William McKinley, working from a war room on the second floor of the White House which was complete with large scale maps and fifteen telephones, decided to shift the invasion point from Havana to eastern Cuba where the rebels held partial control of the coast line. It was time to move material and men aboard the waiting fleet in Tampa Bay and be ready to depart at a moment’s notice. On May 26th guns, wagons, animals and supplies began moving from Tampa to the ships docked at Port Tampa. Since there was only one track leading from Tampa to Port Tampa, it took nearly two weeks to complete the loading. Wood and Roosevelt were notified that the regiment's horses were to be left behind and only eight troops of seventy men each were to be taken to Cuba on the first sailing.

Instant Sailing

When Secretary of the Navy John D. Long became fearful that a Spanish fleet tinder Admiral Pasqual Cervera would sail from Santiago before the Americans landed in Cuba, President McKinley and Secretary of War Alger heeding his warnings ordered an instant sailing of the entire expedition. What had taken two weeks to load the baggage now became a frantic twenty-four hour embarkation for the men. On the flight of June 7th the Rough Riders were told that their expedition would depart at daybreak and any persons or units not aboard at that time would be left in Tampa. It was a case of move quickly or else be left behind. No one could rely upon support from Shafter for his Quartermaster Colonel Humphrey had bungled the entire operation.

Following orders, the Rough Riders moved to a railroad track to await a train at midnight which would carry them to Port Tampa. By three o’clock ill the morning different orders were received transferring them to another track but no train appeared. Finally, acting in desperation at six o’clock, the men seized some coal cars and persuaded the conductor to take them to Port Tampa.

It was a long train that, the Rough Riders had hoarded. Somehow several flatcars had been attached ---one holding a dynamite gun with two barrels and another the Colt machine gun purchased by Lieutenant Tiffany with his own funds. How and why the Rough Riders were carrying a two barrel artillery piece that could propel a dynamite bomb a distance up to a mile was not known.22 Teddy stood in the open door of a boxcar watching the progress of the train. As usual his khaki uniform looked like he had slept in it. Like all Rough Riders he wore a polka dot blue bandanna handkerchief around his neck. The trip through the Interbay Peninsula was uneventful for there were only three homes between Tampa and Port Tampa. Since the water depth at Ballast Point was fifteen feet, it was used for cattle shipments to Cuba and a few shacks and a dock were erected there.
Finally reaching Port Tampa the coal train with its begrimed passengers moved past "Last Chance Village" complete with bars and brothels to the dock where more chaos awaited. "Last Chance Village" had been erected by some entrepreneurs in the area near the docks at Port Tampa. Along the one street of the village were scores of black women frying chicken on Cuban claystoves under large umbrellas stuck in the sand—last chance for fried chicken. Tents had been erected to serve as a saloon, the bartenders stood behind a counter made of two planks laid across two empty beer or whiskey barrels. Here was the last chance to get a drink of whiskey or a cold beer. Some bought a one-two punch whiskey first then a beer. Then there were the inevitable girls available in the bars and in one large frame building with the sign of restaurant about it.23

The Rough Riders moved quickly past 'Last Chance Village" for the trip to Cuba was foremost in their thoughts. No one knew which of the thirty-one transports had been assigned to the regiment. Finally Colonel Humphrey in charge of the loading operation was located and he assigned the Yucatan to the Rough Riders. While Wood was using a launch to board the ship anchored off the dock, Roosevelt discovered that the ship actually had been assigned to another volunteer regiment and a regular regiment. Moving quickly he marched his men aboard the ship which had been moved to the dock, to load the men. Soon those troops who had been assigned to the ship arrived demanding their places. Roosevelt was able to bluff the Lieutenant-colonel in charge of a regular regiment that he was acting under orders and to hold his position. Four companies of the Second Regular Infantry did manage to squeeze aboard but the regiment of volunteers had to find, accommodations elsewhere.24 Although the Yucatan was filled to capacity, Roosevelt, catching sight of two movie cameramen who did not have places, made room for them aboard his ship so that the Rough Riders would be assured of good coverage.

By midday June 8th most of the ships had been loaded with the seventeen thousand men destined for Cuba. Places had even been found for Roosevelt’s horses "Rain in the Face" and "Texas." Perhaps the mountain lion and dog were left in Tampa. Since word had been received that Cervera and his fleet may have escaped from Santiago Bay, the armada remained for a week anchored: in Tampa Bay. It was a rough week for the weather was hot, the food was bad and everything was terribly overcrowded.

The Rough Riders spent their time drilling themselves from a book of tactics. Separate classes were held both for officers and non-commissioned officers. When the classes were concluded some men were able to enjoy themselves by swimming in Tampa Bay. Some regiments aboard other ships practiced landing drills on sandy islands in the bay. Perhaps the best show of all was the accidental burning of the tents and frame shacks in "Last Chance Village".

Finally on June 14, 1898 the fleet set steam for Cuban and a place in history. The news came that Cervera’s fleet had been located in Santiago Bay and it was time to move to Cuba. A few horses and mules were loaded on the ships. A crowd gathered, the band played "Till We Meet Again" and the fleet headed out into Tampa Bay. In the convoy were thirty-five transports filled with eight hundred and three, officers and fourteen thousand nine hundred and thirty-five enlisted men. All of the regiments aboard were regular forces with the exception of the Rough Riders, Seventy-First New York and Second Massachusetts. It was a narrow and long passageway that the convoy moved through Tampa Bay marked by buoys and wooden frames. Finally Mullet Key and Egmont Key occupied by units of the Tampa Naval Reserve were reached and the fleet sailed into the Gulf of Mexico. In Cuba, the Rough Riders suffered losses of a third of the officers and one fifth of the men being killed or wounded. Tampa had played a most suitable place in history as the port of embarkation for these gallant men. Now, most of the country and the world knew where Tampa was located.
1 Graham A. Cosmas An Army for Empire: The United States Army in the Spanish American War, (Columbia, 1973), 82-93

2 Ibid, 116

3 Ibid, 131-134

4 Karl Grimser Tampa: A History of the City of Tampa, and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida (St. Petersburg, 1950), 206-207

5 Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography (New York, 1943), 218

6 Ibid, 227

7 Ibid, 219

8 Theodore Roosevelt The Rough Riders (New York, 1899), 50

9 Tampa Morning Tribune, June 15, 1898

10 Robert H. Ackerman Theodore Roosevelt in Florida (Lakeland, 1958), 5

11 A general map of army camp sites can be found in the front of Hampton Dunn's Yesterday's Tampa (Miami, 1973)

12 George Kennan Campaigning in Cuba (New York: 1899), 2-3

13 Roosevelt, The Rough Riders, 55

14 Cosmas Army for Empire, III

15 See map in Yesterday's Tampa

16 Black soldiers of the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Infantry were at Tampa Heights, the black cavalrmen of the Ninth Cavalry nearly but the all black Tenth Cavalry was at Lakeland. Serious racial problems developed in both cities during the stay of the troops. In one riot at Tampa on June 7, 1898 twenty-seven black soldiers were injured. Willard B. Gatewood Jr. Black Americans and the White Man's Burden: 1898-1903 (Urbana, 1975), 47-53

17 Tampa Daily Times, June 21, 1940

18 Tampa Morning Tribune, June 15, 1898


21 Tampa Daily Times June 21, 1940

22 The machine gun and dynamite gun were landed in Cuba but were of little use due to lack of transport by horses or mules.

23 Charles J. Post The Little War of Private Post (New York, 1961), 65

24 Roosevelt The Rough Riders, 60.
Was Jose Gaspar, a real person of history or is he only a legend? This question can garner lively discussions among the natives. A history\(^1\) states that a diary of Gaspar’s first 12 years as a pirate of the high seas resides in archives in Madrid, Spain-making this another first and only—a diary written by a pirate. Mr. Lambright quotes liberally from the written exploits. Yet one account\(^2\) (obviously fictitious) makes reference to the hanging of Gaspar from an oak tree in the downtown streets of Tampa.

Fact or fiction? Regardless, the legend lives and is briefly told on a historical marker near the boat slip that houses the modern
day ship complete to busty figurehead at the Tarpon docks on Bayshore Drive.

The June 1969 Popular Science magazine shows a map listing the only sunken treasure vessel between Cedar Key and the lower Keys as the frigate Gasparillo 2nd sunk in 1821 on reefs 4 miles off the south tip of Soldier’s Key in 12 fathoms of water. There is reputedly $1,000,000 aboard seized by the hijacking pirate. Under Florida law any recoveries of artifacts or money must be reported and a 25% share belongs to the state. Is this the legendary Gaspar’s vessel sunk by the USS Enterprise with Lt. L. Kearney in command? And did Gaspar jump overboard with a chain around his waist to weight him as reported by the other pirates who were taken prisoner and brought to trial for their misdeeds?
Only Working Pirate Ship

Nonetheless today, the only working pirate ship in the world resides at its dockside Tampa berth year round except for the towaway period prior to the yearly invasion by the pirate band of modern day followers of Jose Gaspar which are in reality prominent social and civic leaders of the area.

In 1904 a May festival was inaugurated which was the forerunner of the modern day Gasparilla parade. They captured the town on horseback with the king riding in a carriage dressed in rich colorful robes and masked to conceal his identity. At that first parade an imposter, George Fuchs, chosen by the king himself, rode in the parade as King Edward of the house of Gunby, with few the wiser as to the deception. The rightful ruler did not appear personally until the Royal Ball the following night.

The first ball and parade was an instant success. Captain George Hardee and his Krewe worked hard. The first change was to move the festivities from May to coincide with the Florida State Fair then held in November. The second parade saw the first automation with three cars participating, however it was 1913 before the entire parade was mechanized. Still today the parade captains ride horses.

The First Invasion

The Gasparilla event has been continuous except for 1907, 08 and 09, and the World War years. 1911 witnessed the first invasion by boat. However it was not until 1953 that
the Krewe had built their own flagship, a replica of a West Indianman such as was used by the 18th century pirates, making it the only ship ever built in modern times for exclusively piratical purposes.

Today's parade and events of the swashbuckling renegades is a gigantic extravaganza. The parade winds through the downtown area, around Bayshore Drive with floats, bands, pirates shooting their guns -with blanks but noisy nonetheless -plus a cannon atop one of the pirates own floats. The local festivities begin with the hoisting of the Jolly Roger over City Hall and demanding the city's surrender by the Mayor to Gaspar and his men.

The Ybor City Navy next invades and captures the U.S. Navy vessels in port to prevent their defense of Tampa Bay. This additional event of over two decades is now joined by the Ybor City Army and Air Force. A nine star admiral leads his group from the SS Ybor and brandishes loaves of Cuban bread hoists the colors of the Ybor City Alcaldessa aboard the captured ships while also awarding their prey the gifts of cigars and black beans, Cuban bread and Italian wine.

Three years ago, after completion of the Cross-town Expressway the pirate vessel
could no longer go under the bridge, so nowadays a royal float transports the guests and royalty to the river side of Curtis Hixon Hall. An honor guard stands at attention while they debark and receive the keys to Tampa from the mayor.

**Ybor City Night Parade**

The public events culminate with the night Ybor City parade which is preceded by an afternoon of feasting on 1500 gallons Spanish bean soup along with cafe con leche and 125 yards of Cuban bread all prepared the day before the free street treat for the Pirate Fiesta Day in Tampa’s Latin Quarter. The parade, marking its 31st year in-1978, is dazzling with its lighted floats. The night parade has been headed by the Sant Yago Krewe since its formation in 1971 thereby adding more balls and festivities to the busy week. The Sant Yago King and Queen float is joined by the Gasparilla parade floats, and is the first time the newly crowned rulers make their appearance. 1965 saw the last pirate band depart amid fireworks and fanfare aboard the pirate ship. Nowadays the last public appearance is the Saturday night parade followed later by a private closing ball.

**Gasparilla Royalty**

Election to the court of Gasparilla has always been a highly regarded social honor of time. The balloting is secret. The young ladies of the court are selected from the list of Gasparilla, debutantes while the courtiers are elected from a list compiled of young bachelors of the Krewe. The king is selected from a nominated group of prominent businessmen of the Krewe. This honor replaced the King’s election from among the younger Krewe members. Aside from the honor, the king also is a visiting emissary from Tampa to varied festivals throughout the, country, and it was found that many younger men establishing their careers could neither take time away from their jobs to make the trip nor had the income to afford the many functions etc., for which the king is host.

The Queen’s election has altered less. From 1932 until the resumption of the festival after the war, the queen was elected from the four maids of the prior year except in 1935 when all four maids married prior to the election date hence disqualifying themselves.

The balls are lavish employing varied themes throughout the years. It was not until 1923 that the first imported orchestra came for the coronation ball which in subsequent years Rudy Vallee, Paul Whiteman, Eddie Duchin, Peter Duchin, Xavier Cugat, and other big names have played for the dancing and enjoyment of the buccaneers and their ladies.

**The Lost Crown**

The Queens’ crowns are now the gift of the Krewe for the Queen. Many of them are loaned every year so they may, be, viewed at the Historical Commission exhibit (Court House) of Gasparilla memorabilia. The crown of Mary Lee Douglas (Mrs. W. L. Ligat), the first Queen of the Krewe, was handmade by George Hardee and Georgia Towmey, Sr. It was of cardboard covered with gold paper, pearls appearing at the top were in reality hatpins. It is said that the two men sat up all night assembling this creation.

The only other untoward event was the loss of the 1941 Queen’s crown by Ruth Binnicker Swann (now Mrs. Jack Eckerd) as she started on the float for the parade—which at that time formed near old Memorial
Highway. A search in the grass did not turn up the missing headpiece. It was not until 1952 that the lost crown reappeared and was returned to the Krewe.

The rogue himself is enshrined in death as never in life. Aside from the festival and Krewe bearing his name -along with their pirate ship -he also has a statue erected to him at Guernsey City on the shores of Tampa Bay. This was the first, if not only, city to have such a monument.

At Winter Park, Rollins College Walk of Fame has a Gasparilla pirate stone from Boca Grande which was one of the chain of islands near Captiva and Sanibel where Gaspar and other pirates held their captives.

So, who’s the Jose Gaspar that gave Gasparilla its name? Is he Fact or Fiction? In truth the F stands for fun and frolic for Tampans as well as promoting Tampa to tourists. See you there Monday Feb. 13, 1978.

1 Gasparilla-Last of the Buccaneers, Edwin Lambright, 1936

2 South Florida: Its Builders and Its Industries, 1924 published by The Tampa Daily Times
It was "The Roarin’ 20s" and many subjects, both zany and serious, occupied the minds and imaginations of Americans. The country "chose up sides" and followed with unsurpassed curiosity the strange drama that was unfolding in the court house of the tiny town of Dayton, Tennessee.

It was the nationally famous trial of an obscure school teacher named John Thomas Scopes for violating the anti-evolution statute of Tennessee. The law passed and the trial was held the same year-1925, fifty two years ago.

There was an exciting sequel to those events in Tennessee right here in Florida. Shortly after the Tennessee battle, and as a direct
offshoot of the big stir in Dayton, a similar bill to the law under fire in Tennessee was introduced in the Florida Legislature. It created a national conversation piece, brought widespread publicity to our Legislature, and the bill itself almost became law!

'A Good Purpose’

The sponsor of the Florida measure was a young Tampa lawyer, Leo Stalnaker Sr., who had served as Municipal Judge, and who still practices law in his home town. Stalnaker was and is a staunch admirer of William Jennings Bryan, one of the antagonists in the Dayton legal struggle. Bryan, three times the Democratic nominee for President of the United States and in his latter years a resident of Florida, tangled with equally famed Clarence Darrow in that historic trial in Tennessee.

To this very day, Stalnaker, key figure in the Florida anti-evolution controversy, firmly believes his was a good bill. He also feels that even though it failed to clear the State Senate before adjournment of the 1927 session, it served a good purpose.

he Tampa attorney reminisced to this writer the other day about the hullabaloo his proposal caused. He said that during House hearings on his bill, he produced and displayed "15 or 20" books bought from the University of Florida and Florida State College for Women (now F.S.U.) that quoted Darwin’s views on evolution "as fact rather than a theory." Stalnaker appeared pleased as he reported that the Universities discontinued use of the texts he found objectionable.

Now 80 Years Old

Looking back, Stalnaker mused, "I thought it was a good bill then, and now that 50

Once upon a time there was a message service known as Postal Telegraph, and it delivered a telegram from the Optimist Club of Tampa to State Rep. Leo Stalnaker Sr. in support of his anti-evolution bill which stirred the Florida Legislature in its 1927 session.
years have passed and I am more than 80 years old, I still feel it was a good bill."

Recalling the floor fight on his proposal, Stalnaker said his main argument for passage was that "the money of Christian taxpayers should not be used to pay the salaries of instructors to teach their children an atheistic philosophy as fact, a theory that is repugnant to them and not in keeping with the Biblical account of the creation of man in its accepted interpretation."

**Text of Bill**

Stalnaker's bill as passed by the House of Representatives by a whopping 67 to 24 majority read as follows:

"It shall be unlawful to teach as fact in any school supported in whole or in part by public funds in this state any theory that denies the existence of God, that denies the Divine creation of man or to teach in any way atheism or infidelity.

"It shall be unlawful for any professor, teacher, instructor or text book committee or commission to use or adopt for use in any school in this state, supported in whole or in part by public funds any text book which teaches as fact any theory that denies the existence of God, that denies the Divine creation of man, or which teaches atheism or infidelity or that contains vulgar, obscene or indecent matter."

The penalty set for violation of the law was fines of not more than $100.

The Florida bill had been watered down (some in the Legislature said at the time it had lost its "teeth") from the law that had

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**Bible Biology Text To Be Used In Dallas**

DALLAS (UPI) - The school board has indicated it will introduce into classrooms a high school biology text which relies heavily on Christian religion to explain creation of man and the universe.

"There are two main theories of creation - that of Darwin and the special creation as set forth in the first chapter of Genesis," board president Bill Hunter said.

"Giving only the Darwin version is not a balanced presentation. This textbook offers both the Darwin idea and the biblical one. I think the approach is very sound."

HUNTER SAID IT was highly likely the book - entitled "A Search for Order in Complexity" - would be approved for use Wednesday night at the board's next regular meeting despite the State Textbook Committee's rejection of the text last spring.

Last May the nine-member board voted unanimously to instruct school superintendent Nolan Estes to lobby for the book's adoption before the State Textbook Committee. But the committee rejected the book and recommended five others, none of which included the biblical account.

"We used the state committee's recommendations on-textbooks but we can make our own choice of classroom resource material," Hunter said. "We are not going to replace the textbooks now being used. We are just providing teachers and students with a resource to balance out the presentation."

The book, co-authored by professors at Michigan State University and the University of Texas-El Paso, and is funded by the Creation Research Society.

"HEY, THIS IS a very scientific book," Hunter said. "The society has about 500 scientists. Their approach is to study scientific evidence and along with the biblical approach."

The book makes several references to the creation theory, including one reference which said science had not been able to answer how life began.

In a note to the student in the accompanying lab manual, the authors said "this lab manual emphasizes good biological principals, and the glories and the handiwork of God in His marvelous creation are made evident."
been enacted in Tennessee. The Tennessee anti-evolution act, still in effect today despite a 1960 effort to wipe it off the books, had been sponsored by a farmer named John Washington Butler. It forbids schools and teachers "to teach the theory that denies the story of the Divine creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals."

Overrides Committee

The Stalnaker bill had its ups and downs in that 1927 session. At first referred to the House Committee on Education, it cleared that unit without a dissenting vote. But then a pocket of opposition to the bill had developed and this hostile group of Representatives succeeded in having the bill referred to a special committee made up of all five House Judiciary Committees. (Rep. Fred H. Davis of Leon County was House Speaker that year). The special Judiciary group gave the Stalnaker bill an unfavorable report which might have killed it except by then public interest had built up in the measure and a movement swept the House to override the unfavorable committee report. The move succeeded by an overwhelming vote and the bill returned to the House calendar, and passed by the nearly three to one margin.

The anti-evolution bill sailed throught the Senate’s Education Committee, but the session was nearing the end and the bill bogged down on the Senate calendar. And that ended the Florida movement for a Tennessee-type bill.

Hostile Legislators

Among the hostile legislators bucking the Stalnaker bill was a 21-year-old lad from Calhoun County, the youngest member of the Legislature. He was Rep. Fuller Warren, of Blountstown, who later was to become Governor of Florida.

Another personality in the scrap, this one on Stalnaker’s team of supporters, was the late J. M. Lee, then a Representative from Highlands County, and later State Comptroller for many years.
In one of the arguments on the House floor, Representative Getzen of Sumter County characterized the original bill as "a disgrace to the state and the worst thing which ever happened in a Florida Legislature."

As the Florida "evolution bill" gained national publicity, the battle lines were drawn in ranks of the public at home.

**Tampa Stirred Up**

In Stalnaker’s home town of Tampa, a group calling itself the Florida Society for the Advancement of Science was formed for the sole purpose of fighting the bill. Many years later, in 1951, one of the leaders of that organization, A. M. Wade, recounted the fight from his viewpoint in a letter to a local newspaper historical page.

"Nothing could have made me 'see red' more emphatically than such an enactment," Wade wrote of the Stalnaker bill. "As one schooled in the field of evolution, it struck me that such a law would undermine the very foundation of education and make Florida a laughing stock among the progressive states of the union.

"To me, the basis of all knowledge was well grounded in the doctrine of evolution. The term 'theory of evolution' had long since been dropped from my category and I accepted it as a principle of law..."

**1200 at Mass Rally**

Wade reported that his group staged a mass public rally in the elegant old Tampa Bay Casino and that more than 1200 persons turned out for the meeting. Among those leading the opposition locally, Wade recalled, was Dr. H. Spencer Lewis, at the time head of the Rosecrucian order in the United States which then had its headquarters in Tampa but which has since moved to California.

Supporters of the Stalnaker bill all over the state also got fired up, and shouted their approval of what the Tampa legislator was trying to do.

Calvary Baptist Church of Jacksonville wired that 1500 strong it was "squarely behind your anti-evolution measure." A man in Defuniak Springs wrote, "If there are any monkeys or apes in the Legislature they ought to be unseated, but of course you cannot tell who they are as some of them resemble a man so much but after the vote is taken then you can tell by their vote who are the monkey’s descendants.

"Moses Is Right"

The Jacksonville Baptist Ministers Conference backed Stalnaker, so did the Protestant Ministerial Association of Polk County, the Starke Ministerial Association, the "Betsy Ross Club" of Tampa, the Clearwater Wesley Brotherhood, the ministers of Leesburg, and numerous other groups and individuals got behind the bill. The Leesburg ministers reported results of polls of their congregations and summarized it that out of 650 persons, 644 were for the bill, that is for opposing "the teaching of evolution in our schools" and four were neutral and two were against it.

A gentleman in Starke wired: "Seventy five percent of the people are with you on your antievolution bill. The mothers of the state want their children taught facts not theories. There is no case where one species is derived from another species. Moses is right, God created. Don’t let them bluff you with filibuster."
In West Palm Beach and elsewhere, sermons were preached from the pulpits. Cried Dr. Joseph Taylor, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church: "The significant thing about the anti-evolution, anti-atheism bill now before the Florida Legislature is that some of the legislators believe it necessary to protect our youth from the ravages of atheism and unbelief."

**Stalnaker For Governor**

It was a burning issue in the newspapers of the day, too, and some of them started a boomlet for Stalnaker for Governor.

**ANTI-EVOLUTION BILL BACKING-ISSUE REVIVED**

Clipping from THE TAMPA TRIBUNE of Saturday, Jan. 22, 1977, reports on Bible biology text to be used in Dallas, Tex., schools.

Leo Stalnaker, Tampan who sponsored the antievolution bill in the 1927 Florida Legislature, commented after this story appeared: "The article about the textbooks for use in the Texas schools containing the Biblical account of creation also, indicates that our thinking of 50 years ago-that the teaching of the Darwin theory of creation as an established fact was false-and that giving only the Darwin version is not a balanced presentation; that the Biblical version should be presented also."

Stalnaker told this writer that he had no direct contact with the Great Commoner, prior to his death, but that he did get wholehearted support of his measure from George E. Washburn who was the associate teacher of Bryan’s Sunday School class in Miami. Bryan died in Dayton a few days after the Scopes trial ended.

But Bryan had done much to stir up Floridians in his fight against evolution. When he published his famous pamphlet, "The Menace of Darwinism," in 1922, Bryan sent 200 copies to his very close friend, Dr. A. A. Murphree, president of the University of Florida, for distribution to the faculty and students taking sociology.

**Bryan At University**

The national figure, by then active in many Florida affairs and a booster of the Gator institution, came to Gainesville on Feb. 22, 1922, and spoke to the student body ripping into the practice of teaching evolution.

According to an account of this event, published in the Florida Historical Quarterly by Dr. Samuel Proctor (Vol. XXXIX, No. 1, July, 1960) the student newspaper, the Florida Alligator, gave a glowing report on Bryan’s campus visit, and declared "the students were completely under his (Bryan’s) spell throughout the entire evening, laughing or serious, thoughtful or jubilant, just as he pleased. Applause interrupted the discourse throughout, and a 'long Gator' was lustily given at the end."

Bryan had in mind pushing anti-evolution laws in the Florida Legislature. He had said in a Tallahassee speech, "We only ask that if you will not permit Christianity to be taught in public schools that you do not allow the atheists, or the Darwinists to spread their doctrine."

Agan in 1924, Bryan spoke in Gatorland. Of that series, Dr. Murphree wrote to a friend saying that "His (Bryan’s) foolish notions on evolution came in for a round, though he was not so bitter and not quite so unreasonable..."
But Bryan literally went down fighting for the cause of anti-evolution. Less than a week after the Scopes trial ended, and while he was still in the little town resting, Bryan died. On the afternoon of the day he died, he was busily preparing a speech on evolution. His finishing touches on the speech were:

"Faith of our fathers—holy faith,
We will be true to Thee till death."

So excited was the young Tampa lawyer, Leo Stalnaker Sr., about the Scopes trial and the death of his hero Bryan, he made a special trip to Dayton and took pictures of the room where Bryan died and of other scenes in the notable community.

Darwinism is still a controversy but its use is spreading in American public schools, according to an Associated Press survey several years ago. Tennessee and two other states, Arkansas and Mississippi, have laws barring Darwinism from the classrooms.

Florida’s proposal on the subject didn’t make the grade-50 years ago.
Recipients of
Tampa Historical Society
The D. B. McKay Award

For Distinguished Service
in the Cause of Florida History

D. B. McKay
. . . Publisher, Mayor
Historian

Frank Laumer, 1972
Dade City, Florida
Author of book, Massacre!
For his thorough research and excellent
book on the 1835 Dade massacre that took
the life of Maj. Francis Dade and almost an
entire detachment of 100 foot soldiers from
Fort Brooke-Tampa.

State Senator David McClain, 1973
Tampa, Florida
For his courageous, statewide fight to save
the State Capitol in Tallahassee.

Gloria Jahoda, 1975
Tallahassee, Florida Author of River of the
Golden Ibis, the romance of the
Hillsborough River, and other Florida
historical works.

Circuit Judge James R. Knof, 1974
West Palm Beach, Florida
For his successful ten year struggle, on a
state and national level, to restore the name
Cape Canaveral to the bulge on Florida's
East Coast which was changed to Cape
Kennedy after the assassination of President

Harris H. Mullen, 1976
Tampa, Florida For his great restoration
program in Ybor City and other efforts in
behalf of Florida history and preservation.
Publisher, Florida Trend.

Dr. James W. Covington, 1977
Tampa, Florida Professor of History,
University of Tampa, for his many books
and scholarly articles on Florida history, and
for his activity in historical affairs.
Few lives offer a study of such violent contrasts as that of Louis S. Oppenheimer, often known in his time as "Dean of the Florida Profession." Repeated early failure contrasted to later success; the joys of family and of practice contrasted with frequent depression; the raw, harsh atmosphere of late 19th century West Coast Florida contrasted with his polished cultural background.

Louis Oppenheimer was born January 24, 1854, at Louisville, Kentucky, the son of devout orthodox Jewish parents who had emigrated from Germany as steerage passengers. These humble parents devoted their entire lives and their total earnings to
the education of their children. At the age of six Louis began violin lessons and the study of English, German and French.

The family moved to Montgomery, Alabama, where Louis had his early formal education. In 1873 he entered the College of Medicine at the University of Louisville, graduating in 1875. After his internship at Louisville City Hospital, he took the customary grand tour of the European clinics to round out his medical training.

**Spoke Six Languages**

A meticulous, lifelong keeper of notes, the 23-year-old Louis wrote that his life in Vienna, Munich and Paris was not entirely devoted to study. His descriptions of the beer gardens, parties and ladies of Europe leave no doubt that his maturation, although delayed, occurred rapidly during this period. By the age of 24 he was able to read and speak fluently in six languages.1

Returning to Louisville he was appointed a Demonstrator of Histology at the College of Medicine and one year later Lecturer on Diseases of Women. Although his success as a teacher was unquestioned, he was never able to establish a private practice. He recorded, "I failed to make a living in Louisville, so after four years, moved to Seymour, Indiana, where I barely existed for another four years." Chronically depressed and sometimes contemplating suicide, he abandoned the practice of medicine. At the urging of his younger brother, Joe, he moved to Savannah. Joe was "the flower of the flock, a most lovable, idea character" who had married into one of the leading families of Savannah. On learning that Louis intended to give up the practice of medicine and was planning to become a prescription clerk in a small drug store in Savannah, this aristocratic family "turned up their noses at me, snubbed me, and humiliated me without reserve." In the face of such hostility, Louis left Savannah after two years. It was during these years that thoughts of suicide recurred frequently.

**Years at Bartow**

At this dismal moment in life, Oppenheimer first encountered the all-powerful forces which were to shape not only his life but that of tens of thousands of others for the next two decades Henry B. Plant and the railroads of Florida.

Plant was a canny New Engander who had modest capital, shrewd business sense and unlimited vision for the potential of development of Florida. He had acquired, for almost nothing, several small railroads in southeastern Georgia, all of which had failed following the Civil War. Meanwhile, the state of Florida had become virtually bankrupt as a result of the reckless spending of the Florida Internal Improvement Fund. In order to put public land to use and to acquire tax funds, the legislature had authorized the granting of 3,840 acres of land for every mile of railroad track built in the state. At times even larger acreage per mile was granted.2 With his Georgia railroads as a base, Plant expanded his lines at an almost unbelievable rate into northern and western Florida. Learning from railroad officials that there were very few qualified physicians and almost no drug stores in Florida, Oppenheimer simply boarded the train and rode it to the end of the line. The southern terminus of the South Florida Railroad was the rough, raw town of Bartow. The combination of huge deposits of phosphate and availability of transportation by rail had quickly made Bartow one of the busiest towns in the state. In addition, the citrus industry was just
reaching its first full production in mid-Florida.

**Flea-Bitten Majority**

It was here that Dr. Oppenheimer achieved his first success. He immediately established a large practice and opened the only drug store in the entire area. In his notes he described Bartow as "the County seat of Polk in South Florida in 1890 with many earmarks of a frontier town; deep sandy streets, plank sidewalks, two blocks of assorted stores, a single barroom, nestling on the corner opposite the primitive Court House, with its usual well-furnished gambling adjunct in the back room. In front of the Court House there was a row of sour orange trees. Nobody ever wanted more than a single taste of tempting, golden fruit. However, the trees served several useful purposes; namely as hitching posts for horses, mules, and oxen; and as scratching posts for his flea-bitten majesty, the Florida Razor-back hog."  

For seven years Dr. Oppenheimer was one of the dominant men in Polk County. In addition to his many professional activities, he continued his interest in music and in the violin. He established the first classical music group and was instrumental in organizing the public school system. During these activities he met a young school teacher and musician, Alberta Dozier, who had come down from Macon, Georgia, to take charge of a small school near Bartow. Their courtship was short and intense but was virtually brought to a halt by the objection of their families to the mixing of religion in their marriage. Both Louis and Alberta set out to charm the members of each other's family. In a short time they were successful and were married in 1888. Fifty years later Dr. Oppenheimer recorded that, "Since that day my wife and I have never discussed any question of religious belief except in a casual manner." He describes his wife as "the ideal woman, beautiful, dignified, refined, educated, strong, intelligent." Their marriage was a perfect union.

Amidst this happiness, the "big freeze" of 1895 devastated the Florida citrus crop. Great losses occurred in Bartow and other citrus areas but the nearby city of Tampa, lethargic for some 35 years, had suddenly exploded under the Midas touch of Henry B. Plant's railroad.
Plant became interested in Tampa in 1881, having just bought the South Florida Railroad. He then quickly purchased the Tampa Bay, Jacksonville, Tampa and Key West Railway which had run out of money. With this charter Plant received the incredible grant of 10,000 acres of land plus alternate sections within six miles on each side for each mile of track laid. Thus, he received a total of 13,840 acres for a mile of track. By official records Plant received a total of 4,202,038 acres of Florida land in grants and there is substantial evidence that he acquired even more. His railroads lost money for years but such losses were insignificant in the face of such enormous land acquisition.

Surprisingly, with all of this effort and investment, Mr. Plant had never visited Tampa. He had made the decision to extend his railroad by simply studying maps and navigation charts. On December 1, 1883, Plant entered Tampa in triumph aboard his own train accompanied by the president of the South Florida Railroad, James E. Ingraham. The party given that evening at the old Orange Grove Hotel, now the site of the Federal Building, still stands as one of Tampa’s monumental social occasions.

Another great loss occurred in 1895. Dr. John P. Wall of Tampa, a great medical and civic leader and a past President of the Florida Medical Association, died in April while addressing a session of the Florida Medical Association. Responsible citizens
of Tampa were searching for a physician to take his practice and to assume some of his many civic duties. Dr. Oppenheimer, with his established reputation both as a physician and surgeon and with his wide cultural background, was a natural choice. He had attracted the interest of Colonel Peter 0. Knight (grandfather of Tampa internist Peter 0. Knight IV) two years prior. Colonel Knight, then in the process of establishing Tampa Electric Company, urged the Oppenheimers to move to Tampa.5

This move occurred in 1896, and the Oppenheimers occupied the house of the late Dr. Wall. This house and its supporting stables were located on the spot where the Tampa Federal Savings Bank now stands. In spite of its recent growth, Tampa was still a primitive frontier town without water supply or sewers. It retained much of the color and character of the Old West, as its major industry was still the exportation of cattle to war-torn Cuba.6 The sandy streets, board sidewalks, armed cowboys and noisy saloons were typical of a cattle town. The shoot-outs was still socially acceptable as a proper way to resolve an argument.

The most common currency in use was the Spanish doubloon and the American silver dollar. Spanish paper currency from Cuba was worthless. The Florida cattle barons accepted only the solid gold doubloon—a coin worth $16.80 each.6 Their motto was "if you can bite it, you can spend it." On the other hand, the Spanish and Cuban cigar makers living in Tampa, suspicious because of past civil strife and labor disputes, did not trust American currency. They demanded payment in silver. This led to the building of a narrow gauge railroad, with a woodburning locomotive, which carried the heavy load of coins from the bank on Franklin Street to the -cigar factories of Ybor City. The coins could not be carried by horse-drawn wagon through the sandy ruts.

Once again, Oppenheimer fell even more deeply under the influence of Henry B. Plant. Largely in an effort to outdo his friend and rival, Henry Flagler, Plant had begun in 1888 to build the Tampa Bay Hotel, as the southern terminus of his railroad. The hotel that architect J. A. Wood of New York created was indeed unique—a dark red castle of Moorish architecture modeled after the Alhambra in Granada. It was a tremendous rambling building, five stories high, two blocks long, and covering six acres. By the time it was completed in 1891, it had cost $3 million to build and $11.5 million to furnish with European art treasures. Moorish arches supported all of the balconies and over it towered 13 silvery domes, each topped by a minaret. It contained 500 rooms and if operated as a hotel today would still be the largest in Tampa. All the floors and ceilings were made of concrete reinforced with countless tons of steel rails salvaged when the South Florida changed its tracks to standard gauge. It was in the atmosphere of this hotel that Oppenheimer finally came into his true element.

**Medical Practice**

The medical community in Tampa by 1895 was divided into two opposing factions, those physicians who practiced in a conventional manner and those who practiced under contract to the large Latin health societies. A generous contract as Surgical Director was offered to Dr. Oppenheimer by a coalition of these societies. He was forced to resign from the Hillsborough County Medical Society in order to accept this position. After two years of these duties, he could no longer stand the censure of his peers. He resigned his post
and was readmitted to the county society. By this time the Tampa Bay Hotel was open, and Oppenheimer had developed a warm friendship with Plant. It was Plant who enabled him to build a home across the street from the hotel and who appointed Oppenheimer as house physician to the Tampa Bay Hotel.

Oppenheimer was friend, confidant and physician to Plant. With a mastery of six languages, he was indispensable to the Hotel as a translator. His charm, wit and intelligence made him one of the true personalities of the Hotel. With the beginning of the Spanish-American War in 1898, it was obvious that embarkation of troops would occur somewhere in Florida. Both Plant and Flagler set out to have their hotel and port accommodations designated as this point. Each had his physician (Dr. Worley of St. Augustine representing Flagler) write a glowing account of the health facilities available at each hotel. These quasimedical pamphlets, both published in 1898, are liberally sprinkled with descriptions of port facilities, hotel accommodations and tourist attractions. Dr. Oppenheimer appeared to be the more skillful writer. The War Department chose Tampa as an embarkation point and the Tampa Bay Hotel as its headquarters.

With the arrival of Theodore Roosevelt, his staff and thousands of American troops destined for Cuba and the Spanish-American War, the Tampa Bay Hotel reached its zenith. "The big lobby of the hotel exploded in a flash of golden braid, glittering sword hilts, and boots bright with polish. Wide-brimmed Stetsons and the dark blue uniforms of the army men were the prevailing note, but here and there were monocled men in foreign uniforms, the military attaches of European nations, standing by to see what they could of the show. Also, there were officer's wives and a throng of newspaper men from northern cities."

A tragic story of a wealthy hotel guest appears later in the doctor's journal. In February 1905, he was called to see an attractive young woman in her thirties. She occupied a room on the second floor fronting the doctor's residence on the opposite side of the park. She was quite upset emotionally and confided that she had come to Tampa to obtain a divorce from her alcoholic husband. She was still deeply in love with her husband but could endure his abuse no longer. He was insanely jealous of her and when drinking had threatened to kill her.

The following morning when Mrs. Oppenheimer went into her children's room facing the hotel, she found a small hole in the windowpane and a spent bullet lying on the floor. Dr. Oppenheimer put the bullet in his pocket and set out on his usual morning rounds in the hotel. It was then that his patient told him that her husband had come to her room intoxicated and had fired at her with a pistol, and then hurried away. When the flattened bullet was taken from his pocket and shown to the patient, she exclaimed, "Doctor, you got the bullet..."
instead of me. What shall I do?” She refused to have the house detective protect her and was seen later in the day walking with her husband in the park, conversing calmly.

Early the next morning the housekeeper hurriedly called the doctor to the patient’s room. On the bed lay the man and woman, both fully clothed in their finest ballroom attire—arms closely clasping each other-dead. The bedside table contained a small empty bottle of potassium cyanide tablets.3

**Surgeon for Seaboard**

His practice was by no means confined to the hotel. He enjoyed a large private practice in the town and was also Surgeon-in-Chief for the Seaboard Airline Railroad. He performed the first appendectomy in the City of Tampa in 1896.9 This was noteworthy in view of the fact that acute appendicitis had only recently been differentiated as a surgical emergency from typhilitis and perityphilitis by the brilliant Boston pathologist-internist, Reginald Fitz.10 Dr. Oppenheimer recognized the disease in a ten year old boy and operated on the family kitchen table with chloroform, anesthesia. The boy’s rapid recovery was considered near miraculous by the lay community. This was a fairly accurate assessment in view of the site and circumstances of the operation.

Innovation came easily to Dr. Oppenheimer. In addition to the first appendectomy, he established many precedents in Tampa including the first fixed traction splint, first Red Cross Aid Station (at the Florida Fair), installation of the first x-ray equipment, and the first use of anti-sera for rabies and tetanus. He used the first diphtheria antitoxin in the city to treat his youngest daughter, Carmen.9

His surgical experience varied widely, even into neurosurgery. He recalls in his journal that one morning he was called to the Seaboard Railroad yards where Negro section hands had been sleeping in abandoned box cars. One of the men had been beaten in the left temple with a bloody hammer, which lay on the floor. “I ordered a bucket of water, a basin, a cake of soap, and as many clean towels as they could gather up. How clean these towels were may easily be imagined. They were steeped in a weak bichloride of mercury solution and squeezed as dry as possible. After cleaning and disinfecting the scalp as thoroughly as possible and cutting away all the hair, I found a crushed skull over the left temple. A mass of brain was protruding from the wound. After enlarging the wound with a scalpel and removing all loose bone, I cut away all projecting brain down level with the meninges, about a large tablespoonful in all. The wound was carefully cleansed again, a small drain was inserted, and the wound was closed lightly with silk sutures. He did not move or make a sound during all these rough, crude, unsterile manipulations.”

"Three days later I was astounded by the patient, who marched into my office, assisted by a fellow section hand. He had no pain or fever, but was utterly unable to speak a word. Obviously, the speech center in his brain had been injured or destroyed. He was told at this time that he had more sense with less brains than he ever had before. Several years before I operated on a similar patient, a young doctor who had accidentally shot away the same region of his skull in a hunting accident. I removed about the same amount of brain in this patient, and prognosed the loss of speech. His wife wrote me some years after that he had recovered his speech to a great extent after about three years.”3
The Final Years

The Oppenheimer children, five daughters and a son, were no less vigorous or gifted than their father. Growing up in a world filled with fine books, music and sober industry they found it easy to share and to emulate their father’s accomplishments. Daughter, Hortense (Ford), became incensed at the City Hall had no tower clock to give the proper time. Yielding under the pressure of Mrs. Ford and her irate band of ladies the mayor erected a large clock in the City Hall tower with four faces. Inevitably, it was named "Hortense" and it still keeps accurate time today. The other sisters, Irma, Olive, Dorothy and Carmen, are still involved in the cultural affairs of Tampa, including the Friday Morning Musicale which was established by Dr. Oppenheimer.

One of the most prolific medical authors in Florida, Dr. Oppenheimer covered the widest variety of subjects. He provides an exhaustive description of the diagnosis and treatment of cholelithiasis in the Western Medical Reporter of June, 1881. Two years later in the same journal, he expressed sharp criticism of the excessive use of surgery to correct retroversion of the uterus. In 1923 he defined a management of endocervicitis which would still be acceptable. Five years later he is found chiding the plastic surgeons for their failure to use cosmetics and tattooing in the correction of deformities of the face and eye. In spite of the improper title of "Worship of the Sun" a 1937 paper predicts many of the problems of solar injuries encountered by the currently overexposed population.

On the philosophical side, there are papers on "Some Incongruities in the Medical Profession," "Music in Medicine" and "The Victories of the Disabiliteer." The latter is a classic description of the modes and methods of both patients and lawyers seeking disability benefits. With the exception of the whiplash injury, these vignettes are virtually unaltered 45 years later. In advice in 1936 on how to "Live Longer" he advocates lowering the serum lipids by dieting.

Testimonial Dinner

In his later life Dr. Oppenheimer received many honors from his medical colleagues. Newspaper clippings and an old printed program reveal that on the night of March 11, 1932, at El Pasaje Restaurant in Ybor City, a testimonial dinner was held by the Hillsborough County Medical Association in his honor. The Society President, Dr. Leland Carlton (uncle of Tampa surgeon Leffie M. Carlton), presented Dr. Oppenheimer with a gold watch, chain, and fob suitably inscribed with the sentiments of the Society.

Minutes of the Hillsborough County Medical Association record that on January 24, 1936, a formal banquet was held at Palma Ceia Golf and Country Club with Dr. Oppenheimer as the guest of honor. On this, as on other occasions, he was lauded as the "Dean of the Florida Profession."

Death came as no stranger to Oppenheimer. At the age of 83 he suffered a severe myocardial infarction and, contrary to most expectations, made a partial recovery. Confined by angina and cardiac failure he predicted that he would die within a year. It was then he undertook the formidable task of writing, not an autobiography, but rather an extensive set of notes and recollections spanning his entire life. One of his opening remarks on these pages is a rather sage
observation that "no sane-man will write a complete history of his life."

During his last illness, on Sunday, January 2, 1938, the Tampa Tribune\(^1\) devoted an entire page, including several pictures, to the doctor's rich life and varied experiences. This yellowed, 33 year old page gives ample evidence of the respect and affection held for him. How many physicians practicing today would merit such an accolade?

An accurate clinician to the last, Dr. Oppenheimer died on June 12, 1939, 33 days within the limits of his own prognosis.

**ADDENDUM**

The author is deeply grateful to the late Mrs. Hortense Oppenheimer Ford for her generous aid and unfailing enthusiasm in the preparation of this biographic sketch of her father. A few days before completion of this manuscript, Mrs. Ford suffered a coronary occlusion and died on May 28, 1971.

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The Italian Heritage in Tampa

Italians at Tampa Bay in the Days of Conquest and Exploration

It is little wonder that the Italian historic connection with Tampa should start with Juan Ponce De Leon and the discovery of Florida. On his odyssey of discovery De Leon sailed his small fleet of three vessels into the Gulf of Mexico. On May 24, 1513, the expedition entered the mouth of Tampa Bay. The explorers tarried there for nine days. The flagship of the fleet was named Santa Maria de la Consolacion, and its captain and master was an Italian named Giovanni Bono. With typical Italian zest for la doice vita it comes as no surprise that an Italian should have been with Ponce De Leon on his famous quest for the illusive Fountain of Youth!

When the great, but ill-starred Conquistador, the Adelantado Hernando De Soto and his six hundred men landed at Tampa Bay, May 30, 1939, four Italians formed an important part of his expedition. One of them was Captain Micer Espindola, a native of Genoa, who was in charge of sixty halberdiers of De Soto's guard. Another key figure was Maestro Francisco Aceituono, a Genoese engineer, and a great craftsman in carpentry and shipbuilding. The other two were calkers. Unfortunately, their names have been lost to history, but we know that one was a Genoese, the other one a Sardinian.

For three centuries after the glittering cavalcade of De Soto had faded into history, Tampa Bay remained a remote and forgotten harbor. Only the seagulls and Indian canoes were seen upon the lonely water. Through the long and silent years, an occasional Cuban trader or fisherman, ventured into the secluded bay. There is no record of a settlement on the shores of Tampa Bay until Fort Brooke was established at the mouth of the Hillsborough River by the Americans in 1824.

Italians at Fort Brooke During Second Seminole War

The small fort on Tampa Bay was startled into action on December 28, 1835, when the Seminoles took to the war path. Fort Brooke became the chief depot of supplies, and the center of military operations. During the bloody seven year struggle two names of Italian origin became linked with Tampa history. On March 26, 1836, a Major Lawrence Taliaferro is reported to have repelled a band of Indians concealed in a hammock within the present day city limits of Tampa. Administering to the sick and wounded was a surgeon with the name of Dr. L. J. Trotti. It is believed that Trotti was a Floridian and a descendant of Gaspar Trotti who is listed a residing in Saint Augustine in 1773. In 1830, James F. Trotti, a bank examiner, and most likely a relative of Dr. Trotti signed a petition to President Andrew Jackson asking statehood for the Territory of Florida.
Italian Settlers in Pioneer Tampa

After the devastating hurricane of 1848, that all but wiped out the fort and emerging village of Tampa, a fair number of inhabitants from Saint Augustine were attracted by the rebuilding boom that followed that catastrophe. By 1850, Tampa Town boasted of a population of one hundred and eighty-five souls. Among the new-comers to Tampa were descendants of the one hundred and ten Italian colonists who came to Florida during the English period to settle New Smyrna in 1768. They became a part of the pioneer fibre of the spunky little village, and provided the heritage of Italian participation for the immigrants who would arrive in Tampa a few decades later. These colorful people brought their musical names such as Leonardis, Pacettis, Maestres, Papis, and Canovas to the little Anglo Saxon community.

The Leonardis were of well known Italian ancestry. The founder of the Leonardi family in Florida was Rocco Leonardi, born in Modena, Italy, in 1749. He helped found New Smyrna in 1768. His wife was Esperanza Valle Bolla. Five of Rocco Leonardi’s grandchildren who came to Tampa with their families were two brothers Bartholemew C. Vincent, and their three sisters, Theodosia, (Mrs. John P. Andrew), Jane (Mrs. Robert Canning), and Florencia who was Mrs. Haager, a widow with six children who later married Louis Bell, Jr. They had two sons.

Bartholemew raised a family of three children, and was active in community affairs throughout his life. He was a member of the first brass band organized in Tampa in 1860. In 1866, he was elected to the City Council, and became the first member to serve on the council bearing an Italian name.

Vincent Leonardi married Venecia Andrew of Saint Augustine. He was a skilled architect and master mechanic; he built some of the finest homes in early Tampa. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he volunteered his services to the Confederacy. He was captured by the Federals and imprisoned at Fort San Marco in Saint Augustine for the duration. In later years Vincent was engaged in farming, fruit culture and stock raising. He developed the Leonardi grapefruit, the most flavorful variety cultivated up to that time. Old timers remembered him as a highly respected citizen, “honest and truthful.”

In Oaklawn, the old cemetery of the Tampa pioneers there are five tomb stones bearing the Leonardi name. To this day their descendants continue the tradition of dedicated service to the Tampa community for which their forebears fought, and so dearly loved.

In 1853, civilization began to make its mark on the geography of the area which thirty-five years later would be known as
Ybor City. Helping as a chainman for a survey team was a young man named Andrew Pacetti. He did not stay on this job very long. On February 16, 1856, Tampa had its first election in history. The little town elected their first mayor, councilmen, and a town marshal. The first Town Marshal of Tampa was the former chainman Andrew C. Pacetti, a third generation descendant from Trapani, Sicily. It is very likely that Pacetti is the first Italian elected as Town Marshal in the United States.

During the Civil War, the Italians of Tampa also served the cause of the South as home guards, supplying cattle to the rebels fighting in the North, and tending salt works. Although the Town of Tampa was pretty well bottled up by the Federal blockade, Tampa blockade runners, men of great daring, the likes of Captain James McKay, Christopher L. Friebel, and Edward Clarke, risked running the blockade. Eventually, one by one these blockade runners fell captive and were sent to military prisons in the north. Among the Union sailors lurking in the Gulf of Mexico on the prowl for rebel blockade runners was an Italian by the name of Bancroft Gheradi. He was in command of several blockade ships. This Italian Yankee later became chief of the North Atlantic Squadron, and retired with the rank of rear admiral.

Antonio Papi came to Tampa in 1848, he was a descendant of Gaspar Papi and Anna Pons of Saint Augustine. Three of the Papis gave their lives fighting for the Confederacy.

The members of the Maestri family who came to Tampa were scions of an old Florida family who originally carne in the name of the Spanish sovereign. The progenitor of the Maestri family was Pietro Maestri, a native of Villafranca, Italy. The early history of the Maestri family describes them as Indian fighters, stock raisers, and farmers. They are known today by the name of Masters, and are numerous throughout Florida.

The year 1849 saw the arrival of Captain Dominico Ghira, a native of Ravenna, Italy. He was the first native born, Italian to come to Tampa and remain permanently. In 1850, at the age of twenty-four, he married Domenica (Masters). Maestre, a voting lady from Saint Augustine of Italian parentage. They made their home on Florida Avenue.
on what was then known as the Ghira block, and what, is now the present, site of the Exchange National Bank Building.

Captain Ghira in early life was engaged in sea fearing pursuits. Later conducted a mercantile business. In 1864, he was appointed by the Hillsborough County Commissioners to run the river ferry. Through the years he acquired valuable pieces of real estate and accumulated considerable wealth.

When Henry B. Plant connected Tampa with his railroad to northern markets, the first enterprise attracted to the seaport town was the fishing industry. Three large fishing companies moved to Tampa, one of which was owned by Captain John Savarese, a friend of Henry B. Plant. This young Italian, a native of Naples, came to America at the age of ten in 1872. Captain Savarese developed his wholesale fishing business into one of the most important enterprises seen in Tampa up to that time. By 1895, his operations employed five hundred and fifty men. His fishing fleet consisted of fifteen sailing vessels, one hundred and fifty small craft and a large steamer, the Mistletoe. Savarese was shipping more than 1,700 barrels of fish per month to all parts of the country. Tampa became the most important fish-shipping center in the South.

John Savarese served as the first Italian Consul of Tampa, was elected to two terms on the Tampa City Council, and served on boards of business firms and financial institutions. Savarese was one of the founders and served as first commodore of the Tampa Yacht and Country Club.

The Coming of the Sicilians

During the month of March, 1886, a momentous event occurred in Tampa that would have a long lasting influence and vitally affect its destiny. About two miles into the wilderness, east of Tampa, three Spaniards and a Cuban had established a small settlement and started manufacturing hand-made cigars. They were Vincente Martinez Ybor and his Cuban associate Edward Manrara; Ignacio Haya and his associate Serafin Sanchez. The little village was predominantly Cuban, and christened Ybor City, but the crackers in the immediated area called it Cuba City. These Florida Crackers, delighted and proud with the coming of the cigar industry which was bringing instant prosperity to the sleepy little village of Tampa, patriotically switched their smoking habits from corncob pipes to the fragrant clear Havanas!

At about the same time at the St. Cloud Sugar Plantation, near Kissimmee, a handful of Italians were barely eeking out a living earning seventy-five cents per day

La Unione Italiana – The Italian Club. This magnificent neoclassical building has been the center for social, cultural, and educational functions. Throughout the years, the palatial headquarters has been a symbol of pride to Tampa Italians, and a memorial to the glorious past of Italian civilization. Photo made in 1919.
producing granulated sugar. Rumors began spreading throughout the state that a Cuban boom town near Tampa had sprung up like a mushroom in the night, and was the wonder of Florida. Exciting stories were told of Cubans and Spaniards coming in large numbers, tobacco workers, and construction men earning, unheard of wages, and that Mr. Plant, the railroad magnate, was offering one dollar and twenty-five cents per day for hands needed in the extension of his railroad to Port Tampa, and in the construction of a Byzantine Palace, his Tampa Bay Hotel! These exciting reports fired the imagination of the humble Italian immigrants at St. Cloud. They envisioned Ybor City as their "pot of gold" at the end of the rainbow.

The origin of these Italians were the bleak hills of central Sicily. Although this island had been under Spanish rule for more than four centuries, Spaniards were rarely treated as enemies or considered as foreign by the Sicilian population. Intermarriage was common, and through the years the official language of administration and social life was Catalán and Castillian. The impact of spganolismo on the mold of Sicilian culture had been extensive. The Sicilian dialect is flowered with many Spanish words. Among
the Sicilians arriving in Tampa in the early days there were some bearing Spanish names such as Reina, Pardo, Miranda, Marcello, Castellano, and Barcellona.

The first trail blazers from St. Cloud to Ybor City were from Santo Stefano Quisquina, Province of Agrigento, Sicily, a hill top village dating to the Middle Ages. In the vanguard were three Cacciatore brothers, Antonio, Calvatore and Angelo, and other paisani named Pietro Martino, Ignazio Camparetto, Francisco Di Bona and Salvatore Reina. A short time later others followed, and their descendants form a very important segment of today’s Italian community-some of these were: Ignazio Pezzavecchia, Giuseppi and Gaspare Vizzi, Nicholo Russo, Giovanni Cacciatori, Angelo Piazza, Carlo Palermo, Gaetano Ferlita, Antonio Spoto, Giuseppe Vizzi, Nicola Lo Chierro, Paolo Panipinto, Antonio Castaglia, Nicola Russo, Angelo Piazza, Giovanni Afflito, Domenica Zambito, Ignazio Leto, Nicola Albano, the brothers Francisco and Luigi Pitisci, Vencenzo Pullara, Stefano Giunta, Francesco Frescia Salvatore, Di Dio, Stefano Zambito,, Giovanni Parrino, Francesco La Longa, Castrenze Ficarotta, Giovanni Provenzano, Andrea Furia, Salvatore Giglio, Filippo Dino, Filippo Francisco and Niccolo Ippolito. Other early arrivals from nearby communities were the Pizzolatos, Saccos, Clesis, Geracis, Schiros, De Leos, Costantinos, Lalas, Falsones, Pendinos, Pizzos, Pugliis, Albanos, Demmis, Licatas, Barones, Di Maggios, Di Chirras, Lo Ciceros, Scagliones, Midullas, Motos, Ciminos, Friscos, Capitanos, Grecos, Bellancas, De Cortes, Macalusos, Oddos, and many others.

The trickle became a torrent! In central Sicily, glowing reports (often times exaggerated) from the new Americans, fueled by steamship companies and others who would profit from their coming began to spread through the villages of central Sicily. The flames of propaganda were spreading the fame of Tampa and Ybor City as a place! where workers were paid in solid gold coins, and one could live a life da cristiani (a life of christians-a life worthy of human beings). The people of the neighboring villages of Santo Stefano such as Alessandria Della Rocca (the second largest number of Italians in Tampa came from this village). Bivona, Cianciana, -nd Contessa Entellina were most affected by those incredible tales. These villages experienced a virtual exodus. The village of Contessa Entellina differs from others in that it was settled by fleeing Albanians from the Turkish occupation of the Balkans in the Fifteenth Century. The people of La Contessa are Catholics of the Greek rite, and after five centuries retain a distinct identity.
with their own dialect, Albanian-Greek dialect, national costume, and folklore. There are two distinct groups in Albania, the Ghegs and the Tosks. The Albanians who migrated to Sicily were of the Ghegs. They created nine new villages in Sicily of which Piani degli Albanesi is the most famous. Sicilians refer to them by their ancient name "Gheg-Ghegs." The late Frank Falsone, a descendant of this group and a highly respected citizen of Florida, once stated, "These are the most industrious people on earth. You will never see one a bread line."

Today the Italian population of Tampa is predominantly composed of descendants from these five villages, with only small numbers coming from other sections of Italy.

Among some of the outstanding Italian pioneer families who came from Naples are the Savareses, Marsicanos, Fantinis, Antuonos, Costas (Philip Shore), Grimaldis, Verris, and DeLeos.

The first Italians settled on the eastern fringe of the small settlement of cigarmakers. Tampa's "Little Italy" in the 1890s extended from Seventeenth Street on the west to about Twenty-Sixth Street on the east. The south boundary was Fourth Avenue, and at Twenty-Second Street the boundary line veered south and included Second and Third Avenues. The north boundary was Michigan Avenue—today’s Columbus Drive. In the beginning, their small wood-frame houses barely dotted this area of wilderness.

Within the Italian area there was a scattering of Spanish and Cuban families. In the heart of this section was a Spanish settlement known as La Penguena Asturis. It stretched along Twelfth Avenue between Seventeenth Street and Twenty First Street. Some of the Italians moved into rental cottages while others made purchases from Mr. Ybor on the installment plan. The Italian quarters became known as La Pachata after a Cuban rent collector.

The Mortellaro Macaroni factory started on Seventh Avenue, near Nineteenth Street in a very small way. In time, business prospered, and the factory was moved to this three story building located on the southeast corner of Eleventh Avenue and Twentieth Street.

The early beginning for the Italians in Ybor City was obviously not Alvin and pasta. One of the first arrivals was Giovanni Cacciatore. In 1935, at the age of 75, he related his first impressions of Tampa upon his arrival in 1887.

"Several friends described Tampa to me with such glowing colors that I soon became enthused, and decided to come here, and try for my fortune. Accordingly, in 1887, leaving my wife in New Orleans, I took the train to Mobile. At Mobile I took the boat that brought me here. We disembarked at La Fayette Street. I was then 27 years of age. I had expected to see a flourishing city, but my expectations were too high, for what I saw before me almost brought me to tears. There was nothing! What one may truthfully say, nothing! Franklin was a long sandy street. There were very few houses, and those were far apart with tall pine trees surrounding them. The Hillsborough County Court House was a small wooden building. Some men were beginning on the foundation of the Tampa Bay Hotel.

"Ybor City was not connected to Tampa as it is today. There was a wilderness between the two cities, and a distance of more than one mile between the two places. All of Ybor City was not worth more than one cent to me. At different places in Ybor City a tall species of grass grew (saw grass), proper of
swampy places. This grass grew from five to six feet high. I was completely disillusioned with what I saw. There was a stagnant water hole where Centro Espanol Society (Seventh Avenue and 16th Street) is today located. A small wooden bridge spanned this pond. I remember that I was afraid to cross that bridge, and especially so at night, because of the alligators that lived there. They would often crawl onto the bridge and bask there in the sun all day long.

"The factory of Martinez Ybor had some twenty cigar-makers; Sanchez y Haya had some fifteen; while Pendas had about ten. I worked for a time at to work the factory of Modesto Monne as stripper (one who removes the center stem from the tobacco leaf) and made 35c for my first day’s work. Of course, I was then only learning the cigar business, and could not expect to make more. When I became more skilled in my work as a stripper, I would make from $1.00 to $1.25 a day.

While still at this work, I gradually began learning the cigar-makers trade as I saw that they were making a much more comfortable income. When I had become somewhat proficient as a cigar-maker, I was earning from $14.00 to $15.00 a week.

Ybor City at one time had five Italian schools. In the early beginning of the Italian Colony these schools actually served as pre-schools to entering the little county school which was located on Eighth Avenue—the southwest corner of 14th Street, and popularly called by all the Ybor City inhabitants as the "free school." Note the healthy, and well dressed appearance of the children. The above photograph was made in 1903 by H. Weimer, a tall affable German photographer. He had been a buffalo hunter out west and had a striking resemblance to "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Everyone in Ybor City loved the Spanish speaking, and kindly German.

"When I had been in Tampa some two years, I sent for my wife. When she arrived in Tampa she burst out crying at what she saw: wilderness, swamps, alligators, mosquitoes, and open closets (out-houses). The only thing she would say when she arrived was: Why have you brought me to such a place?

"At about this time Mr. Ybor was offering homes for sale at very low prices. I went to him, and purchased a house on Eighth Avenue and Eighteenth Street for the price of $725.00. I paid $100.00 in cash and the rest in monthly terms. In all I worked twenty-eight years in the cigar factories." With the passing of time, Cacciatore amassed important land holding. Upon venturing into La Pachata, or the Italian area, one would immediately become aware of their sense of self sufficiency and frugality—frugality was their overwhelming passion. Each family had a bread oven in their backyard. The oven, shaped like an igloo, was made of concrete and fire-bricks, resting on four sturdy wooden polings. In their neat vegetable gardens were to be found new and exotic varieties of vegetables which were unknown to Floridians. For example they introduced escalor, or endive; cardone, a thistle-like plant often called carver's comb; cardiofo, artichoke, eggplant, and a variety of cucumbers from Sicily called cucuzza. They also brought a specie of cactus which thrives throughout the Island of Sicily called Ficco di India. Its delicious prickly pears with blood-red pulp is highly prized by Sicilians. Anthony Diecidue, a retired wholesale produce dealer, cultivates some of the most beautiful cactus plants in the area.

In cages they kept rabbits, and pigeons. Chickens roamed in the backyards along
with a few guineahens. Their milk-cows, and goats were scattered throughout the area in vacant lots. Like all Mediterranean people, they had a penchant for capretto arrosta, roasted goat meat.

Sundays were festa time. The mid-day meal was a genuine feast. This tradition prevails to this day. Relatives and friends gather for a mangata or tavolata. The main course was pasta prepared with delicious tomato sauce. The dazzling aroma of Italian bread baking in the numerous ovens, and the slow simmering of tomato sauce in the various kitchens cast a bewitching aroma throughout the little Latin settlement. Other Sicilian dishes introduced by the new arrivals which are a delight are macaroni and sardines made of salted sardines, raisins, pine-fruits, and wild fennel; spaghetti agghiu e oggh’u (with garlic and oil); spaghetti with clam sauce; Pasta al Forno -includes anelleti, tomato, minced meat, hard boiled eggs, salami and cheese; macaroni and fried-on-pan broccoli; roast sausage; spidini, (stuffed veal pillows) thinly cut veal cutlets stuffed with ham or proccuito ad mozarella; and Bruchuluni, slices of meat filled with ham, grated Romano cheese, boiled egg slices, green peppers, salt and pepper, and boiled in tomato sauce.

Vegetables are a main stay of the Sicilian cuisine. Vegetables such as fennels, green beans, broccoli, cabbages, green and black olives, capers, tomatoes and cucumbers, are widely used. The Sicilians of Tampa like those on their native island in cooking egg-plants (fried, stuffed or, capunata), squashes (fried or stuffed); peppers artichokes and cardoons (fried with butter and bread crumbs) are in a class by themselves.

Sicilians have a sweet tooth, and are most ingenious in creating the most unusual and delicious desserts. Regardless of their station in life, their dolci (desserts) are always superb. To tantalize the taste buds try the world famous cassata cake; cannoli (fried pastry filled with sweet ricotta), sugar soaked sfingi di San Giuseppe (cream puffs), sugar coated almonds, and piniolatti. Sicilians introduced ice cream to the French, but not in the varieties they introduced to Ybot City. The Cubans who are great lovers of cafe solo began enjoying the new pleasures of Sicilian gelati, such as granita or lemon sherbet and even the more exotic ice creams with the flavors of mulberry, prickley-pears, jasmine, cinnamon, almonds, and watermelon. They added a new dimension of pleasure to la bella vita in the new Latin town in Angelo-America.

On Sunday afternoons, small groups would gather under the shade of a mulberry tree which were numerous in the area, to enjoy the balmy Florida weather which so reminded them of Sicily. It was appropriate for them to sing O’Sole Mio, since an old proverb claims that the sun is Sicilian. Even the mocking birds in the trees seemed to join with the sounds of the mandolins and guitars. Songs were heard everywhere-nearly everyone sang who wasn’t talking. The air was filled with the happy sounds of children playing, and the mellifluous, tones of the Sicilian dialect.

The, men would gather to, play at the! game of bocce, a game played by rolling wooden balls toward a target on a hard packed sand court. It’s the grandpa of modern ten-pin bowling.

Old traditions died hard in Ybor City. Among the traditions which eventually passed on was the, Sicilian style of mourning. Widows in those times spent their
life-time dressed in drab mourning garb
--shrouded in black from head-shawls to
shoes.

Another custom which attracted curiosity,
and has also vanished with the passing of the
first arrivals was the common scene of
Italian mothers happily and proudly rocking
on their front porches, humming a Sicilian
lullabye to their bambinos sucking on their
exposed breasts.

Funerals were occasions of high solemnity,
and were attended by virtually the entire
Italian colony. They were a closely knit lot.
If they weren’t related, they were paisani and
in those days being a paisano (countryman)
was tantamount to family. The Italian
cemetery located on Twenty-Second Avenue
and TwentySixth Street dates back to those
days. The funeral procession left from the
home where the body laid in state. The
cortege was led by a black baroque hearse
pulled by two white horses covered with
black mesh. Families who could afford a
band hired the only band available at that
time-a musical group of Cuban cigarmakers.
The band led the cortege playing funeral
dirges, while small groups, wearing
vestments of fraternal orders, carried
banners and standards. Following on foot,
trudging through the sandy streets, the
seemingly endless line of Italian mourners,
solemnly accompanied their compatriot to
the cemetery where they paid their last
respects. The more extravagant ones rented
a horse and carriage for one dollar. Four or
five would share the rental cost, and thereby
demonstrated their frugality in their
extravagance. The last funeral procession
led by an Italian band was the funeral of
Pietro Pizzolato during the Spanish flu
epidemic in 1918. Pizzolato was the
maternal-grandfather of the author. He was a
native of La Contessa Entellina, and had
migrated to Sorocco, New Mexico in 1879,
where most of his children were born. He
came to Tampa in 1892, and established a
grocery store and a horse trading enterprise
on Eighth Avenue and Eighteenth Street *
The family continues in business at the same
location under the firm name of Castellano
and Pizzo.

The Italians from Sicily at the outset found
work laying out tracks for the Plant System,
in the construction of the Tampa Bay Hotel,
as porters in the cigar factories, and in the
construction of residential and commercial
buildings of the budding community. Others
became engaged in truck, and dairy farming,
opened grocery stores, confectionary stores,
fruit stands, saloons and fish markets. Some
pursued their trades as cobblers, tailors,
stone-masons and some of the: house wives
were. able to better the family lot by sewing
and embroidering. The art of pundina or
crocheting attained its highest art form at the
hands of the Sicilian donn. 

Impressive vegetable farms began to appear
between Twenty-Fifth Street and the Tampa
Northern Railroad, from Seventh Avenue as
far as Michigan Avenue. Antonio Capitano
utilized a stream in that section known as the
Two, Mile Branch to cultivate excellent
water-cress, a vegetable highly prized by
Italians. One of the finest farms was located
south of Adamo Drive between
Twenty-Second Street and the Estuary. The
rich black soil produced the, finest celery
and other vegetables. It’s owner, Vicenzo
Zambito, better known by his nickname
Maraune, was a first class agriculturalist
who gave a life-time to farming. In later
years the -land became too valuable for
farming, and the heirs were compelled to
sell the acreage for industrial use.

The early farmers who converted the
palmetto flats of Ybor City into lush and
profitable farm lands were the Lazzaras, Mastinos, Valentis, Scolaros and Capitanos.

Today the descendants of the Valentis, Geracis and Lazzaras are engaged in nationwide produce enterprises which include the operation of farm lands in California. Others who have been prominent in the fruit and produce business are the Schiros, Pupellos, Fillipellos, Rizzos, Ippolitos, Lallas, Diecidues, Manalis, Barones, Naplis, Ferlitas and the Macalusos.

A vital part of Sicilian life is the love of wine. It is therefore little wonder that as early as 1887, Italians were engaged in the cultivation of grapes in this area. Vincent De Leo, who was manager of the City Barber Shop located on Franklin and La Fayette Streets, established a twenty acre vineyard of malaga and scuppernong grape varieties on the Hillsborough River. In May, 1891, the Tribune reported that "a number of Cubans and Italians have bought sixty acres, and will go into grape culture this fall-near Tampa." Bartolo Filogamo, a young emigrant from Trapani, and a very capable accountant, with Y. M. Alvarez, a cigar manufacturer, went into grape culture near Lake Bilows. If wine was ever made from these vineyards it must have been on a non-commercial basis as no later records of sales are known. Nearly three quarters of a century later (1973) Joe D. Midulla, Sr., a member of a prominent family of wine merchants established the first winery in the history of Tampa.

Salvatore Scolaro farmed along the west bank of the Two Mile Branch, a fresh-water stream near 27th Street and 7th Avenue. His farm lands reflected the loving care he gave to the cultivation of his beautiful celery.

Many Sicilians went into business as soon as they learned about fifty words in English-more- to cope with the Anglo-Saxon salesmen than with his clientele who were predominately Cubans. If he opened a grocery store, a sign went up in Italo-English, Grosseria-Italiana. In some cases the cycle was from push cart to wagon-peddler, then to the privilege of a fruit stand and then a grocery store. Enticing displays of luscious fruits exemplified the pride with which they advertised their wares and artistic abilities. Among the well remembered fruit stand operators were Minico Ficarotta, 1702 Nineteenth Street; Nicola Marsicano, 903 Seventh Avenue; Charles Pitisci, 1630 Seventh Avenue; Peter Pullara, known as Tardiolo, 1806 Ninth Avenue; Antonio Spoto, 2106 Seventh Avenue; Angelo Telese, 1114 Seventh Avenue; Nicolo Tramontana, 2010 Seventh Avenue; Antonio Papy, Franklin and La Fayette and Louis Moses, California Fruit Stand, La Fayette Street.

The Italians love celebrations. Here they are shown forming a caravan to go on an Italian Club picnic to DeSoto Park, or Ballast Point or Rocky Point. These were the popular spots for an outing in those days- this was circa, 1912. The photo was taken from the old Italian Club building, and the empty lot in the foreground is the site of the present Club building on 7th Avenue and 18th Street.

B-1910, there were fifty-four Italian grocery stores in Tampa. From this humble group of merchants emerged one of the miracle stories of American business. From very meager beginnings Salvatore Greco, parlayed his small grocery store located at 2705 E. Columbus Drive into a multi-million dollar grocery chain known as Kash 'n Karry. In 1946, Salvatore pooled the resources of his family and launched into his great enterprise. He was ably assisted by his sons Joe, John and Mac, and by his
sons-in-law Frank Giunta and Joe Dominguez.

The fame of Tampa Bay as a great fishing ground and the coming of many Italians, attracted fishermen who soon made Tampa a major Italian fishing community. Their names are well known to Tampans today as Mirabella, Felicione, Matassini, Boromei, La Bruzza and Agliano. Their success has been of long duration. For many years they owned large fishing fleets, and distributed their catch by refrigerated trucks throughout the Southeast. In recent years some of them have gone into the seafood restaurant business with much success.

The ever enterprising Italian soon established the first macaroni factories in Ybor City. Onofrio Mortellaro and Filippo Lodato established their factory at 1908 7th Avenue, and a little later Antonio Cacciatore opened his factory at 1806 8th Avenue. In the 1920’s Greco and Ginex bought the firm from Cacciatore and continued into the years of the depression.

In the story of Italian activities in Tampa, the Reinas fully deserve a place of honor. The first Reinas came among those heroic nine immigrants whose coming marked the dawn of Italian contribution to the culture of Tampa.

Salvatore is the progenator of the Tampa Reinas. Today Domenic Reina, and Salvatore, 96 and 94 years old respectively are agile and enjoying a healthy life. Carrying on in the business life of Tampa, Dick heads the Reina Bros. Grocery Wholesale Co., and Hugo runs the De Rio Packing Co.

The early Italian diaries were quite numerous with twelve operations being reported in 1910, and doing good business. At Spanish Park in the vicinity of 40th Street, and out into the outskirts, were located Giuseppe, Guagliardo, Luiggi Massaro, Frank Albano, and at nearby Oak Park was located the dairy of George Coniglio. At Palmetto Beach, on the Hookers Point Peninsula, were located the dairies of John Spoto, Antonio Massaro, and Salvador Buggica; the others were Joseph Cutro, 3101 Second Avenue; Ignazio Gaetano, Thirteenth Street and Twenty-Seventh Avenue; Dominico, Militello, Thirty-First Street and Michigan Avenue; Antonio Sabatino 252 Arch Street, Ignazio Spoto, Michigan Avenue and Thirty-First Street.

One of the very first dairies was owned by Castenzio Ferlita and Salvatore N. Reina. In 1894, they established a milk dairy which they operated until 1916. Later from earnings realized in the successful dairy enterprise, they established the Cosmopolitan Ice Co., and the Tropical Ice Cream Company.

From these pioneer dairies emerged Florida Dairy, one of the largest dairy enterprises in the state. The founder was Giuseppe Guagliardo, a Stefanese. He started business, in the most humble circumstances, with only two milk cows and a horse and buggy to make his deliveries. At the beginning his daily house deliveries totaled seven quarts and two pints. Today, the herd exceed several thousand head of cattle.

One of the amusing oddities which confounded the Italians when they first arrived in Ybor City was finding a black bartender in the Mascotte Saloon which was located on Tenth Avenue and Fourteenth Street, with the name of Christopher Columbus.
The earlist Italian meat-market was located at 1816 7th Avenue and was owned by five Cacciatore brothers, Giuseppe, Ignazio, Silvestro, Filippo and Salvatore. For some unknown reason, the butchershop was always referred to as Gamilla. Their meats were always of the best quality, and they adhered to the wishes of the Latin public in supplying Spanish style cuts. With the coming of Urban Renewal, this business disappeared, but two offshoots of this pioneer meat-market still exist and are operated by descendants a Cacciatore Brother at 2301 W. Buffalo Avenue, owned- and operated by Philip Cacciatore and Cacciatore and Son at 3614 N. Armenia Avenue, owned by Angelo Cacciatore. At the beginning of the century, the following Italians were operating meatmarkets: Giuseppe Canova, Salvatore Castellano, Giuseppe Castaglia, Vicenzo Lazzara, Peter, Frank and Salvatore Leto, Rafalle Massaro, Salvatore Monteleone, Ignazio Zambito and Salvatore Pitisci.

Carmello, Testesecca, established one of the first Italian bakeries. It was located at 2009 10th Avenue. Other bakeries were Angelo Ferlita’s La Joven Francesa at 1818 Ninth Avenue. This bakery building has been selected to house the Ybor City State Museum which will highlight the cigar industry and Tampa’s Latin heritage. Other bakeries owned by Cosimo, Anastasia, Salvatore Muleo, S. Reina, and G. Ficarrotta.

It is sad to see the custom of making pupi di zucchero (sugar-dolls) disappear from the scene. These attractive candies were sold during All Saints Day, better known to modern day Italians as Halloween! The joy of the children waking up on the morning of All Saints Day and finding an array of lovely Pupidi, sweet as heaven, neatly arranged on the night table, was a supreme pleasure to the doting parents.

The great majority of the Italians who were attracted to Ybor City came with the aspiration of becoming cigarmakers. The earnings were excellent and the cigar industry offered them an opportunity to quickly elevate their economic status.

In the course of a few years, six cigar factories with Italian affiliations emerged upon the scene. They were: George F. Borrotto, La Vatiata, Leonardi-Hayman, Filogamo, and Alvarez, V. M. (Val) Antuono, Andrea Re, and the Marsicano Cigar Co.

Of the six above factories, the one owned by Val Antuono marketing the C. H. S. label (Clear Havana Segars) became, a fabulous success. His brand, became famous from coast to coast. Antuono came to Tampa from Naples in 1886, at the age of twelve and soon learned to make cigars and dreamed of the day he would have his own factory. He married Jennie Geraci, and soon thereafter the young couple commenced making cigars in their home on Twelfth Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues. In time he was able to employ three cigarmakers and moved to LaFayette and Tampa Streets. The site became known as Val’s Corner until the First National Bank acquired the property. Subsequently he built a large cigar factory and amassed large real estate holdings. For many years he served as consular agent of Italy.

Today the V. Guerrieri Cigar Company is the only large cigar factory owned by an Italian in Tampa. This firm was established in 1937, and has become one of the major plants in the city.
In 1935, there were seven Italian cigar factories: Francisco Capitano, John B. Leto, Antonio Martorano, Alessi Scaglione, S. Spoto, Andrea Valenti and Antuono.

El Lector, the reader, held a position of high esteem in the cigar factories. It was required that the reader possess a resonant, clear voice that could be heard throughout the large workroom. The reading was always done in the Spanish language. In the history of the Tampa cigar industry only one Italian had the distinction of being a reader. He was Onofrio Palermo from Santo Stefano, a man of intellectual powers who possessed an excellent command of the Castilian language. He was excelled in vocal delivery and for years was a favorite at the Villazon factory.

One of the most colorful Italians to live in Ybor City was Orestes Ferrara, native of Naples. Ferrara was a revolutionary with rare oratorical talent. On occasions he would stand on a soap-box on the corner of Seventh Avenue and Seventeenth Street in his red Garbaldi shirt, and Ferra fired the Cubans into frenzy for the cause of liberty. Before leaving with his Italian friends, Federico Falco, and Guglielmo Petriccione, to join General Maximo Gomez in the wilderness of interior Cuba, Orestes promised his sweethear, Maria Luisa Sanchez, a resident of Ybor City and a daughter of General Serafin Sanchez that if he came through the war alive he would return and marry her. In 1902, when Cuba became a republic, they were joined in marriage and lived a very happy life together for some seventy years.

Ferrara went back to Cuba and, became a very wealthy man. He served as President of the Cuban Congress and later as Cuban Ambassador to the United States. He wrote several cultural and historical books. This author, corresponded with him while he lived in Rome. He died a few years ago in his nineties.

It is of little surprise to find Jose Marti, the great Cuban patriot, commenting on the Tampa Italians in Patria, the official organ of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, on September 3, 1892: "Patria renders a deserving tribute to the memory of that brave Italian Natalio, Argenta, who shed his blood for us, and under whose name the Italians of Tampa, lovers of liberty, offer their assistance to the grandiose task of liberating the Antilles."

The early Italians of Tampa, a proud people, strongly believed in self-help. Their antipathy to outside charities and the belief of helping their own led to the establishment of The Italian Club of Tampa - L'Unione Italiana. This mutual aid society was organized April 4, 1894 with 127 members. Bartolo Filogamo,omo prominenti, the first Italian cigar manufacturer, (filogamo y Alvarez Cigar Factory), was elected as the first president.

La Union provided its members with sick and death benefits. Their comprehensive health insurance program is one of the oldest examples of cooperative social medicine in the United States. The Italian Club of Tampa is considered the fore-runner of the more than fourteen hundred mutual aid societies that flourished in Italian neighborhood throughout America.

The first clubhouse was located near the northwest corner of Seventh Avenue and Eighteenth Street. It was erected during the administration of Philip F. Licata a peerless pioneer leader who served on the city council and as Italian consular agent. One day in May, 1914, the club headquarters was completely destroyed by fire. A new and
impressive neo-classic, three-story building was inaugurated in 1918 across the street from the previous building.

In 1924, Paul Pizzo, a thirty-four year old native American, proud of his heritage and seeking to strengthen the position of Italians in America, founded the first chapter in the State of Florida of the prestigious Order of the Sons of Italy. The Tampa Chapter was named La Nuova Sicilia. Pizzo served as founding president for two terms. He was the author’s father. The Order was originated in New York in 1905 by Dr. Vincent Sellaro, and his branched out into more than three thousand lodges. Today Tampa has three lodges, and in Florida there are twenty-six.

The early Italian doctors who served the community through the programs of the societies were Drs. Isidoro Cici who lived at 1120 Ninth Avenue, David Guggino, 1915 Eleventh Avenue, Cosmo Noto, 1605 Ninth Avenue, and G. Dimaio who had an office on Seventh Avenue and Eighteenth Street. These men made house calls; they were on call around the clock, they were dedicated, and it wasn’t their lot to die rich.

It was inevitable for Italians to enter politics. Their gregarious nature and desire to better serve the social needs of their people prompted their initial entry into public life. The first Ybor City Italian was elected to public office in 1911. Elected to the City Council was Nunzio DiMaggio. He was possessed with shrewd common sense, and a burning desire to get ahead. Despite the fact that he barely spoke English he was elected. This gave the Italians an aura of civic pride. It is true,” many exclaimed, “in a democracy everyone is equal.” There were many obstacles ahead, but the mental block had been breached. Intermittently others were elected to the

a, Phillip Licata, Nick City Council: Antonio Rein, Nuccio, Albert D’Arpa, Joe Bondi, Frank Cannella, James Minardi, Sam Mirabella, Dick Greco, Jr., Joe Chillura, and presently C. G. Spicola, Jr., is serving on the Council.

One of the most important Italian families in the political life of Tampa are the Spicolas. They have been politically active since the early thirties. The family dates to the pioneer days of Ybor City, and have served meritoriously through many years in the progress of the city. Charles, Sr., Angelo, A. G., Jr., and (1, C.- (Tommy, Jr.) have supported many worthwhile community projects through the Rotary and Lions Clubs. In the early days G. C. Spicola, Sr., the progenitor of the family, developed a drink to compete with Coca-Cola; its brand name was "SpiCola." The venture did not prove to be a world dazzler, and the enterprise was abandoned. Later he established a hardware store at 1815 Seventh Avenue which eventually developed into the present Spicola Hardware Company, Inc., a gigantic distributing operation. Judge Joseph G. Spicola served on the Justice Court, and his son, Joseph, Jr., served as State Attorney while his younger son, Guy W., is presently serving as State Senator. In Tampa there are 49 attorneys with Italian names. Five of these are Spicolas.

The personable Paul Antinori, Jr. became the first District Attorney with an Italian name in Hillsborough County history. Paul serves as chairman of that bella Festa Italiana given every year. In 1975 he was decorated by the Italian government.

In the judicial structure of the county, Judge I. C. Spoto has the honor of being the first Circuit Judge of Italian heritage in the history of Hillsborough County. Those
serving as Probate Judges Nick J. Falsone, and Rene Zacchini.

For many years of outstanding service to the Hillsborough County Public School System, four citizens bearing Italian names have been honored by having schools named after them: Philip Shore (Costa), Ateo Leto, A. Chiaramonte, and Angelo Greco.

Al Chiaramonte served on the Hillsborough County School Board for more than twenty years in a most creditable manner. Upon his retirement he was honored by having a new school building named after him.

Bob Bondi, the son of Philip Bondi, a retired county educator, has served on the County School Board, and is presently serving as Chairman of the Hillsborough County Commission.

Nick Nuccio, a third generation Tampan, entered politics in 1929. He served two terms on the City Council and eight terms on the County Commission. Nick Nuccio became the first mayor of Tampa of Italian heritage. Nick served the city most diligently through two terms. The boy from Eighth Avenue and Seventh Street, became a legend in his own time, and is admired as being, "A friend of all the people."

The venerable Nick Nuccio was succeeded by Dick Greco, Jr., who, at the time, was thirty-four, making him the youngest mayor of a major city in the nation. Dick, called the young lion by the press, brought a Latin "charisma' never before seen in Tampa politics. He served with great capacity and "gusto' into a second term, when he resigned to take an executive position with a national company.

For nearly eighty years the Spotos have been one of the best known families in the Latin Community. The first Spoto to come to Tampa was Antonio. He was a native of Santo Stefano, and homesteaded on the south side of Seventh Avenue near Twentieth Street. The year was 1888. Antonio Spoto bought a few milk cattle and in a short period of time had developed a profitable dairy business. In time other relatives joined him. Today there are nearly two hundred Spotos in Tampa.

Antonio’s two sons, Vincent and John, became the first two native born dentists of Italian descent. Today out of the thirty-three Italian dentists in Tampa, eight of them are Spotos. In Tampa there are 43 surgeons with Italian names, eight of them are Spotos. Judge 1. C. Spoto serves as a Circuit Judge, Rudy Spoto served as the first County Administrator and Eddie Spoto has served the Broadway Bank as President for many years. Several of them are also in education.

Since the early days the Spotos have been engaged in many phases of the commercial life of Tampa. George is one of the most affable members of the clan. He owns a successful haberdashery known as Phil Fairchild, and two other stores of men’s furnishings. Leslie Priede, the present reigning queen of Sant’. Yago, is a fourth generation of the Spoto lineage.

Madam Norma Tina Russo, the grand lady of Opera in Florida, came to Tampa via New York City in 1932. Her early vocal studies were financed by the great Enrico Caruso. Soon after arriving in Tampa she was widowed and became the sole supporter of the three children. Since she was a specialist in the bel canto technique, she became a voice teacher.

In 1954 this highly cultured lady founded the Tampa Grand Opera Association.
For years this dainty lady with the courage of a lion has struggled to keep opera alive in Tampa, and the townspeople take off their Borselinos to her.

F.S.U. halfback hero Nelson Italiano, insurance executive, and chairman of the prestigious Tampa Sports Authority, is one of Governor Ruben Askew’s closest confidants.

Joe Testa-Secca, a native Tampan, is a nationally known artist.

Arthur Schiro is serving his second term as chairman of Tampa’s Port Authority. Arthus was the founder of the Banana Trading Co., and after thirty years of operating the distributing firm he sold it to the Del Monte Co.

Judy Alvarez, (her mother is a Pupello) the girl who put Tampa on the map of the tennis world. She is the only Tampan to play at Wimbledon where she competed three years in a row.

Rick Casares, Tampa’s football sensation and "the greatest Chicago Bear runner of them all," sixth ground gainer in NFL history, five times All-Pro and all-time favorite son of Florida. (Rick is three quarters Italian.)

Tony, Jimmy and Joe Leto, the greatest family in boxing in Tampa history. They were great fighters of world renown.

Joe Schiro is a natural born athlete with a gentle personality that belies his massive strength. Joe’s athletic career spans fifty years. This highly successful businessman was selected for the Bowling Association’s Hall of Fame.

Dr. Frank Adamo, the medical hero of Bataan in World War II. A grateful people of Tampa honored him by naming First Avenue Frank Adamo Drive. For his service in the war as chief surgeon in a general hospital he was presented the Legion of Merit Award.

Joseph D. Midulla, Sr., Chairman of the Board of Tampa Wholesale Liquor Company, Inc., one of the largest distributing companies in the South, has in recent years established The House of Midulla, Inc., an import company, and Fruits Wines of Florida, Inc. These two companies based in Tampa, supply foreign and domestic products on a national basis.

Molly Ferrara, the balla donna of Ybor City, is a unique combination of superb human qualities. Molly’s Italian culture, marinating for years in a Spanish, Cuban, American environment, has given her an excitable and effervescent personality. Molly served brilliantly as Alcaldesa of Ybor City, or honorary mayor. Molly initiated the idea and fostered the founding of the first Girl’s Club in Tampa.

Anthony J. Grimaldi, Sr., often called "Mr. Draft Board" for his thirty years of service as executive chairman of the Tampa Selective Service Board. He is the president of the Ybor City Crime Commission, a past president of the Ybor City Rotary Club, and served on the committee which established the Jose Marti Park. He served as Italian Consular Agent for more than twenty years. Presently he serves as Chairman of the Board of the Columbia Bank of Tampa.

Among the missing, who departed in recent years, is one of the most respected citizens of the Italian Colony, Frank Falsone, C.P.A. He was a native of Ybor City and
throughout his life he demonstrated his community interest and love for county.

Tony Guida is no longer with us, but he will be remembered as that nice, little man who nearly lost his life in World War I, and returned home with a disabled right arm. Tony was in love with his county - America - and lived a life dedicated to the American Flag and what it stood for.
(Editor’s Note: Four students in the International Studies Program of the University of South Florida and their Adjunct Instructor, Mark Scheinbaum, researched circumstances surrounding the erection and dedication and ownership of Jose Marti Park, which honors "the George Washington of Cuba," in Ybor City. Here is one report from that Studies Program.)

In January 1976, a research team from the International Studies Department at the University of South Florida was formed to verify or negate a story that the Government of Cuba owns a small park in Ybor City, the Cuban section of Tampa, Florida. A rumor to this effect had been echoing around the community for several years. Our task: replace the rumor with facts and present them to the public. Should it be found that, indeed, Cuba does own this park, our team would continue to delve into the legal and historical angles of this case. My task was to research the county records for title to the land and follow up on any leads from that point.

THE ELOQUENT ORATOR that was Jose Marti is honored in this handsome statue in Jose Marti Park in Ybor City.

- Photo by Hampton Dunn

**Does Cuba Own Jose Marti Park?**

By JOHN SELLERS
After several visits to the Records Library at the Hillsborough County Courthouse, I did uncover evidence that the Republic of Cuba had at one time owned the land on which the Parque Amigos de Jose Marti, or Jose Marti Park, is located. That evidence is a deed\(^1\) which shows transfer of ownership to the Republic of Cuba in 1956. This in itself is not conclusive evidence that the Cuban government still owns the property.

The property is legally described as lot five of block 29 on the Map of Ybor City, Hillsborough County, Florida. Following is a brief chronology of the property’s ownership.

Ruperto and Paulina Pedroso, who owned the property at the time of Marti’s visits\(^2\) in the early 1890s, sold it in March 1905, to Hanna C. Crenshaw. In April 1925, E. H. Robson and John C. Cardwell contracted with the Crenshaw heirs to purchase the property. The following month, May 1925, Robson and Cardwell sold the property to Anne C. Chandler. Miss Chandler assumed the mortgage let by the Crenshaw heirs. Probably because of failure to satisfy the terms of the contract or by mutual agreement between the two parties, ownership of the property reverted to the Crenshaw family. On June 8, 1951, Sallie C. Crenshaw sold the property to Manuel Quevedo Jaureguizar and his wife, Mercedes Carillo la Guardia. This brings the sequence of events up to the time when parties directly involved in our search became involved.

Manuel Quevedo and his wife were Cuban citizens residing in Havana at the time they purchased the property. Their current whereabouts are unknown. It seems likely that it was their original intention to eventually give this property to the Cuban State to be used as a memorial to Jose Marti. As documented in the conveyance, the house which had been occupied by the Pedrosos remained standing in 1956:

> On the same lot is builded a wooden-walled and roof-tiled house at which, during his stay at the above-mentioned City of Tampa, resided the Apostle Jose Marti ...

So it was, on September 10, 1956, Manuel Quevedo and his wife transferred ownership ". . . for and in consideration of their love and affection for their Native Country . . ." to "Estado Cubano" -the Republic of Cuba.

The original document is written in Spanish and English translation was made on October 2, 1956 in Havana. The translation is part of the official record. In that translation, the intended use of the property is mentioned:

> That on account of the national and inter-american renown that enjoys the personality of the man who was its resident, the deponents have considered the above-mentioned house as a true relic for the Republic and the people of Cuba, that should pass to the ownership and dominium plenum of the Cuban State for its conservation and custody as a homage of everlasting gratefulness and remembrance to our Apostle from the Cuban Republic and from the present and future generations of Cubans; and for that purpose, known to the Honourable President of the Republic, Major General Fulgencio Batista Zaldivar, to dedicate the. lot and the house builded on it to do a Martian Park and Museum; therefore, they have offered the donation of the same through a writing addressed to the Minister of Public Works.\(^4\)

The official acceptance of the property by the Republic of Cuba is also documented in the
IV That he accepts for the Cuban State the cession and donation made for the purposes above mentioned, giving evidence of the gratefulness of the Cuban Republic to the donors Mr. MANUEL QUEVEDO JAUREGUIZAR and Mrs. MERCEDES CARILLO LA GUARDIA for their act of generous patriotism. ---

The house, which was to have been an integral part of the memorial, was razed before the park was dedicated in February 1960.

On November 13, 1956, the Consul of the United States of America in Havana, John H. Marvin, certified the transaction and in effect, legalized the document and transfer as far as the United States Government is concerned.

On December 5, 1956, the deed was recorded in Hillsborough County, Florida, finalizing the transaction. On January 31, 1957, a correction was entered on the county records because of an error in the legal description of the land.

The only question that remains concerning ownership of the property is whether or not there has been any transfer of ownership subsequent to 1956. If one accepts the validity and accuracy of the current Hillsborough County tax rolls which were checked and double-checked at some length in the Tax Assessor's office, then there is no doubt about present ownership of the property. On the 1976 tax roll, the owner of the property in question is listed a "Estado Cubano" and the land is classified as tax exempt.

Some employees in the Tax Assessor's office were skeptical about the Cuban ownership even though their records bore out my findings. One employee insisted that my efforts would be fruitless because he "knew" that the City of Tampa owns the property despite what the records show. His claim was that a state law allows a governmental agency such as the City of Tampa to claim ownership of property that it has been maintaining for a certain number of years. But, the fact is that there is no record of the City of Tampa having made such a claim. If there had been a claim, only court action could effect a legal transfer of the property.

There is no doubt that the Republic of Cuba does own the property, but its future is uncertain.

"THE WORLD IS DIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPS --- THOSE WHO LOVE AND CONSTRUCT AND, THOSE WHO HATE AND DESTROY."  

--- JOSE MARTI
1 Hillsborough County, Florida's records, *Deed Book 2000*, p. 196, dated December 5, 1956.

2 See Barbara Hawkins' chapter on the history of the park.

3 Hillsborough County, op. cit., p. 193.


5 Rossell Perea, as First Undersecretary of Finance, represented the Cuban government in the transaction.

6 Hillsborough County, op. cit., p. 194.

7 See Barbara Hawkins' discussion pp. 5-6 supra.

8 This certification is part of the official record book at the Hillsborough County Courthouse, Tampa, Florida. *Deed Book 2000*, p. 197, dated December 5, 1956.


10 David Herzog discusses this further in his chapter on International Law, pp. 11-16 supra.
MEET THE AUTHORS

JAMES MAYHEW INGRAM
James Mayhew Ingram is a native of Tampa and was graduate from Hillsborough High School in 1937. He attended the University of Tampa and Duke University. He was graduate from Duke University Medical Center in 1943 and interned at Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1944. He served in the Army, had a private practice, served on the faculty at the University of Florida, 1962-70, and since has been professor and chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the College of Medicine, University of South Florida. His hobby is medical history and he is a frequent contributor to the Journal of the Florida Medical Association.

EVANELL K. POWELL
Native born Tampan, Evanell K. Powell operates the Old Bookshop at 420 W. Platt St. After her three sons were grown and off to college, she began writing her book, *Tampa That Was*, 1973. This was followed by *Bibliographical Check List and Price Guide of the Federal Writers’ Publications*, based on her own extensive, and largest anywhere, collection of WPA Writers’ materials. Her next book: *Things You Never Thought to Ask About Florida, And Didn’t Know Whom to Ask Anyway*.

TONY PIZZO
Tony PIZZO is a native of Ybor City, graduate of Stetson University, holds executive positions in The House of Midulla Enterprises; charter president Ybor City Rotary Club; author of *Tampa Town; The Cracker Village With a Latin Accent*. Honors include Tampa’s Outstanding Citizen Award, 1956; Tampa’s by the governments of Italy and Cuba; Tampa’s Outstanding Latin-American Citizen Award, and the National Award of Merit from the American Association for History. Teaches “Tampa’s Latin Roots at the University of South Florida.

HAMPTON DUNN
Native Floridian Hampton Dunn is a former managing editor of the *Tampa Daily Times* and commentator on Miami Television Station WCKT, and presently is vice president of the Penninsular Motor Club (AAA). He is author of a dozen books on Florida History, including *Yesterday’s Tampa* and writes a historical column weekly in *The Tampa Tribune* - *Tampa Times*. He was a charter Trustee of both the Historic Pensacola and Tallahassee Preservation Boards. He is post president of the Tampa Historical Society. His writings have won numerous awards, including a top award from the Florida Historical Society. The University of Tampa bestowed upon him the Distinguished Public Service Award.

DR. JAMES M. INGRAM
James Mayhew Ingram is a native of Tampa and was graduate from Hillsborough High School in 1937. He attended the University of Tampa and Duke University. He was graduate from Duke University Medical Center in 1943 and interned at Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1944. He served in the Army, had a private practice, served on the faculty at the University of Florida, 1962-70, and since has been professor and chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the College of Medicine, University of South Florida. His hobby is medical history and he is a frequent contributor to the Journal of the Florida Medical Association.

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Dr. James W. Covington is Dona Professor of History at the University of Tampa, author of four books and 50 articles. He is former president of the Florida Anthropological Society and of the Tampa Historical Society, and former member of the Barrio Latino, Commission and of the Hillsborough County Historical Commission.
All Aboard, Train Buffs!

One pleasant Sunday in October, 1976, members of the Tampa Historical Society and their friends enjoyed an outing in Pasco County. They had lunch at the historic Edwinola Hotel in Dade City and then went for a ride on the locomotive pulled train of the Trilby-San Antonio & Cypress Railroad—the Orange Belt Route. More than 100 adventuresome passengers filled the train to capacity. Shown posing for a publicity picture promoting the event are Hampton Dunn, Bettie Nelson and Phil J. Lee. It was Mr. Lee, retired vice president of the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad, who served as Conductor of this THS Special.

-TAMPA TRIBUNE Photo by Dan Fager

A Nostalgia Night At The Movies

The Tampa Historical Society put on a night of nostalgic movies in Old Hyde Park, featuring old news reels, W. C. Fields’ comedies, and other delightful flicks. There to share in the fun of reminiscing were Patti and Gabe Ayala, right. Greeting them was Tampa historian Hampton Dunn, who also was the projectionist.

-TAMPA TIMES Photo
November '76 ANNUAL DINNER
NOV. 30: Mr. James A. Williams, internationally known interior designer and antique dealer, owner of Mercer House in Savannah, gave a talk and slide demonstration on restored historic houses. Tony Pizzo presented our D. B. McKay Award for distinguished contribution to Florida history to Mr. Harris Mullen, owner of the renovated Ybor Square. The dinner was held at the Palma Ceia Golf and Country Club.

SAVANNAH’S 3rd NATIONAL LANDMARK: THS President Bettie Nelson and husband Burt, attended the gala opening of Scarborough House, completed in 1819 by William Jay, famous English architect, now the new headquarters for Historic Savannah Foundation. Tours of historic houses, sites and structures were on their agenda, plus meetings with Historic Savannah Foundation members to learn ways and means of their success. Tampa has no historic house museum.

FRANCIS BELLAMY POSTAL COMMEMORATIVE STAMP: THS set up a booth at FLOREX '76, Nov. 5-7, at the 27th annual exhibition-convention of the Florida Federation of Stamp Clubs, gaining signatures to renew a 36 year old request (our Bicentennial request) to honor this little noted national hero who wrote an original American Doctrine, the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag. Chairman Martha Turner and many THS volunteers helped. Many outstanding community and government leaders have written letters of support and inquiry as to why the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee has consistently refused to honor Francis Bellamy, and Channel 8 granted us an interview. THS is still hopeful that his house in Tampa will be, named to the National Register of Historic Places as we have requested.
PRESERVATION OF OLD FLORIDA STATE CAPITOL: THS documented public support for its preservation and use by mailing questionnaires to our membership who sent them to Tallahassee. THS Chairman Victor Yates spoke for its at a Tallahassee public forum, and Hampton Dunn spoke on Channel 13 for it.

December '76 WARD/TALIAFERRO HOUSE: Preliminary exploration of ideas with people and organizations continued. The Board of Directors of the Junior League of Tampa, Inc., expressed interest in our project, with further recommendations presented to their membership for approval.


January '77 BURDINE’S EXHIBIT: THS participated in their antique sports display with the loan of our Tampa Tarpon Tournament oil painting.

GALA RE-OPENING OF THE HISTORIC TAMPA THEATRE: THS served on the Renovation Sub-Committee, and also our members helped mend the beautiful old tapestries for re-hanging on the walls.

FLORIDA STATE FAIR: Chairman Lois Latimer solicited and collected rural and agricultural historical artifacts for THS, to loan to the Fair Authority for opening of the brand new location. Thousands of people viewed them in the reconstructed pioneer farm room at Old MacDonald’s Farm Building, and THS members were guides.

MRS. BETTIE NELSON
President, Tampa Historical Society

January '77 SULPHUR, SPRINGS: After the demolition of their historic arcade, THS supported the plan for a paved walkway, small brick retaining wall, restored gazebo, native plantings and a strolling, picknicking area, and requested some of the artifacts from the demolished arcade be used in the little park as a token of past heritage.

TAMPA BAY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL; ANNUAL MEETING: THS requested top priority for passage of protective legislation for historic areas, structures, or sites that will stand up in court, and legislation designed to make it desirable for citizens to invest their time and money into recycling, revitalizing areas or structures that represent our historical heritage. This issue paper was presented to our legislators.

February '77 THS INAUGURAL HISTORIC BUS TOUR: THS, members researched, documented facts, compiled our first Historic Bus Tour in conjunction with the opening of the Junior League of Tampa, Inc. Decorators’ Showhouse II at the historic Stovall Lee House, Bayshore Blvd. Tour Chairman was Leslie Osterweil.
PROGRAM AT JUNIOR LEAGUE OF TAMPA, INC.: Glenn Westfall, historian, author, lecturer, THS Board member, gave slides and a talk on West Tampa historical heritage and architecture, while Bettie talked on purposes in our charter and THS accomplishments.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK: Dr. David G. Wright, representing the Director of the National Park Service and the Secretary of the Interior, presented the official certificate and bronze plaque formally recognizing the old Tampa Bay Hotel as a National Historic Landmark at a dedicatory ceremony and reception. THS officers were invited.

March '77 MANATEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY: Tony Pizzo, THS Board member, spoke before this group on the early history of Tampa, and received for the THS a beautiful cobalt blue and gold hand painted plate of the old Tampa Bay Hotel.

April '77 TAMPA BOARD OF REALTORS Asked THS to participate in their contest "Rewards for Restoration" in connection with Private Property Week using qualifying structures built before 1927, partially or completely restored, and in current use.

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION: Florida members of this national organization chartered by Congress met in Tampa to hear Mr. James Biddle, President, speak at the restored Tampa Theatre. THS participated in "Show and Tell: What’s happening in Florida", a slide presentation of current activities, and as tour guides for the restored Anderson Frank House.

THE MUSICALE AND FEDERATED CLUBS BUILDING, THS was invited to the 50th Anniversary reception honoring dedicated women who built this grand old structure at 809 Horatio St. For better culture and training of youth, as well as adults, and for the betterment of their community.

HISTORIC GORRIE SCHOOL: THS supported the renovation of this, 1899 Tampa landmark elementary school with letters and speakers. (On Aug. 16, 1977 the School Board voted to go ahead with renovation plans.)

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC ZONING: THS served on this committee whose purpose besides preservation is to provide enhancement and adaptive re-use of structures and areas having historical significance. Tampa, for the first time, will soon have Historic Zoning which has long been-needed.

April '77 MAJOR ITEMS PURCHASED AND DONATED TO THS: Emily Moody purchased a Victorian sofa and Nonita Henson purchased the matching chair at the Chiseler’s Annual Thieves Market held at the University of Tampa.

"CHINA FOR THE WEST": Mr. David Sanctuary Howard, internationally known lecturer and author on Chinese porcelain, was sponsored for the University of Tampa and THS through the courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert G. McKay.
TAMPA CIGAR INDUSTRY APPRECIATION LUNCHEON: THS President was invited to attend this event sponsored by the Cigar Manufacturers Assoc. of Tampa because industry is closely connected with the economic, social, and political history and growth of Tampa. The Honorable Sam Gibbons was guest speaker.

WARD/TALIAFERRO HOUSE: Since June, 1976, THS tried to lay groundwork for the acquisition, restoration, and preservation of this beautiful house, listed on the National Register for Historic Places. On Dec. 28, 1976, the Board of Directors of the Junior League of Tampa, Inc., directed the Community Research/Project Development Committee to develop a project which would assist THS realize its goal, the acquisition and utilization of the Ward/Taliaferro House. We documented community support with letters from leading Tampa citizens and spent hours talking with others, applied for a grant from Community Development Funds 111, appeared before City Council several times. Our grant was defeated 4-3 because it was not considered "endangered". The Board of THS agreed to turn its attention elsewhere for the time being because THS alone could not shoulder total financial responsibility for Tampa's first public historic house museum. Many THS volunteers devoted much of their time on this project.

May '77 HISTORIC OAKLAWN CEMETERY RAMBLE: $15,000 had been allocated by the City of Tampa to restore old brick wall around the cemetery. Celebrating National Historic Preservation Week, Theodore Lesley, County Historian and THS, Board member, compiled facts on Tampa families and historical figures buried there for THS volunteer tour guides to give the public who came to tour this Historic Site. A plat of the 1850 cemetery was on display, the Florida Light Guard performed a drill, refreshments were served, oral history tapes were made, and donations were accepted to purchase a bronze historical marker to be erected there on Morgan Street. Also on display was the first brick made from an exact duplicate mold that the City of Tampa is restoring the old brick wall with.

MANATEE VILLAGE HISTORICAL PARK: THS President attended a May 18th meeting of the Manatee County Historical Society held at the restored Old Church which was the Meeting House of the oldest Christian Congregation south of Tampa. She saw a slide presentation of how this church, and the Old Courthouse (oldest standing original county courthouse building in the State as per State Archives) were moved to the site to begin their Historic Park. Tampa has no such historic park.

June '77 YBOR CITY STATE MUSEUM: THS President, working as a member of this Board of Advisors, attended the June 28th ground breaking ceremonies for the area’s first state museum at the old Ferlita Bakery in Ybor City.

July '77 HERITAGE PARK: Located at 125th St. and Walsingham Road, Pinellas County. The St. Petersburg Times reported in their Nov. 14, 1976 issue about Heritage Park where preservation of a generous slice of area history for this and future generations is underway. On Sept. 11, 1977, THS President attended a special Preview Reception of its opening. Four historic structures were moved to the site (two houses, a log cabin, a barn) by the Pinellas County Historical Commission, Pinellas County Historical Society,
and numerous private individuals, businesses, organizations, government, by their generous donations. Tampa has no such historic park.

August '77 THS HISTORIC BUS TOUR: This August 13th tour was to provide a public service, with any proceeds going to THS to carry on its activities for the community since we have not engaged in fund raising. Our tour includes historic sites in Hyde Park, University of Tampa, Downtown Tampa, Ybor City, Davis Islands, Bayshore Blvd., Ballast Point. The tour was very well received, even receiving reservations from Bradenton and Lake Wales. Tour Chairman was Dot Jeffery. We made a lunch stop Dutch Treat at the newly opened Rough Riders Upstairs Dining Room at Ybor Square.

Sept. ’77 “YOUR PROPERTY _ MY HERITAGE”: Producer Gary Englehardt fulfilled the terms of his grant and we received this audio-visual slide presentation for THS library. THS President was asked to speak before the Pinellas County Historical Society on Nov. 2\textsuperscript{nd} and show this informative slide program.

October ’77 THS MUSEUM COMMITTEE: Leslie McClain, Chairman, met with THS Museum Committee for several field trips to observe appropriate sites and structures for our museum/headquarters.

November ’77 THS HISTORIC PARK: THS Board of Directors voted to try to acquire a smaller architecturally significant house in Hyde Park as the beginning of our museum/headquarters, with the long range view of an Historic Park in a larger area.

MRS. BETTIE NELSON WINS BURDINE’S VOLUNTEER AWARD

Bettie Nelson, energetic president of the Tampa Historical Society, continues to get widespread recognition for her community work.

Latest honor comes from Burdine’s who presented her the 1977 Volunteer Activist Award on behalf of the National Center for Voluntary Action and Germaine Moneil which sponsor the Volunteer Activist program.
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TAMPA PASTIMES

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY COURT HOUSE, CIRCA 1905
- Photo from Hampton Dunn Collection
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<td>John R. Himes</td>
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<td>Fred D. Leary</td>
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