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# The Sunland Tribune

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**Journal of the Tampa Historical Society**

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## President's Message

It is with great pleasure that The Tampa Historical Society resumes publication of The Sunland Tribune. Thanks to the efforts of Andy Huse, who has spearheaded the resurgence, we will be offering our yearly issue for your enjoyment. Tampa Historical Society, the oldest historical society in Tampa, is based at the Peter O. Knight House. Built in 1890, it exemplifies middle class life of the era. The Tampa Historical Society interprets life of this era through publications such the *Sunland Tribune*, lectures and programs. We invite you to enjoy the journal and join us in helping to preserve Tampa's colorful history.

Angela Spicola Morgan  
President, Tampa Historical Society, Inc. Board of Directors

## Editor's Message

We are honored to host a founder of the Tampa Historical Society and notable scholar L. Glenn Westfall to kick off this issue. His insights into the founding of the THS reminds us why it is so important to continue our efforts today. Donna Parrino's memories of Cuscaden Park help illuminate that park's role in the lives of local children. The adults who organized children's activities are given special attention here. I'm especially pleased to include two oral history transcripts that have been edited for a more pleasant reading experience. The interview with Joseph Knight reveals his involvement with the citrus industry and offers his perspective on his family, local history, and real estate development. Gary Mormino's interview traces the Florida historian from childhood to his arrival in Tampa. Tampa-Hillsborough County librarian Bill Harris takes readers deep into the "relics" of the Burgert Brothers photograph collection and has shared ten of his favorite images from those rarefied images. Former city councilman Carlo Spicola Jr., has shared his research on the Spanish-American War in "The Haunting of Egmont Key," a previously-published story that deserved to be read. Finally, in a peer-reviewed article, Brad Massey and I.j. russum highlight the post-war boosting of Ybor City through images of señoritas and female cigar workers. I want to sincerely thank Brad Massey for his assistance evaluating materials and Matt Knight for copy editing. I also thank all of authors for submitting their material. I want to thank our peer reviewers. We are very lucky to be able to call upon a wide variety of experts to review our scholarly content. Finally, I would like to thank Jason Boczar and Digital Scholarship Services for agreeing to host the journal and bring it to fruition.

Andrew Huse  
Editor



## A Perspective on Preservation in Tampa: The Anglo Side of Town

L. Glenn Westfall

Today, the only reminders of an 1892 landmark Hillsborough Courthouse are stenciled on the side of County vehicles. Designed and built in 1892 by nationally renowned architect J. A. Wood in a Moorish architectural revival style, it was built simultaneously along with Henry B. Plant's magnificent Tampa Bay Hotel on the other side of the Hillsborough River.

In 1953, a valiant but unsuccessful effort to save the Courthouse from demolition was led by Mrs. William Hunter, member of the Tampa branch of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Unfortunately, this was a time in American history when cities did not fully appreciate the significance of landmark structures. In the following decades, many historic structures were demolished, found today only in archival records.

After moving from San Francisco to Tampa Bay in 1968, I witnessed Tampa's loss of several unique historic buildings. It was apparent there was a need to broadly expand public knowledge of history and architectural preservation. City blocks of cigar casitas, factories or family owned businesses were demolished when Interstates I-4 and I-75 cut through the heart and soul of its Latino communities,

Ybor City and West Tampa. But the city was on the verge of change.

Locals still reminisced about the warehouses demolished along the Hillsborough River in downtown Tampa, sending hundreds of river rats running over the feet of frightened downtowners on lunch break. The city skyline was silhouetted with a water tower on top of the Knight and Wall building, disguised as an "Early Times" whiskey bottle. It too was soon demolished.

Just between Tampa and the new University of South Florida, opened in 1960, is a suburb known as Sulphur Springs. The Maves Hotel and Arcade was a focal point, situated at the corners of Nebraska Avenue and Bird Street. With classical white arches on the front façade, it was one of Florida's first indoor shopping centers on the first floor, with 39 rooms and apartments on the second level. The Sulphur Springs Tourist Club on the Hillsborough River had a forty-foot water slide and a gator farm. Constructed in the mid-1920s, these buildings acquired a national reputation as popular tourist attractions. Locals and tourists enjoyed swimming in the mineral water of the springs, but the peculiar combination of sulphur with orange

blossoms in the springtime were often described on postcards.

There was an imposing vista of Tampa on a balcony on top of the white 214-foot Sulphur Springs water tower. Built over an artesian well, it supplied water to local residents who didn't seem to mind the malodorous water. In 1951, the Tower Drive-In Theater was added as yet another attraction.

Sulphur Springs was a unique community unto itself, only a few miles from downtown. But by the early 1970s, in spite of efforts to save the Arcade from demolition for a parking lot, only the water tower, the Springs Theater, and the springs remain. The ambiance of Sulphur Springs was all but forgotten to urban sprawl. Other than the still-imposing tower, Sulphur Springs is now a blighted, neglected corner of town.

The most memorable individual I first met in Tampa was Dr. James Covington, Professor of History at the University of Tampa. After arriving in the 1950s, he was involved in one of Tampa's first historical organizations, the Hillsborough County Historical Commission. But by the 1970s, it was nearly defunct, serving primarily as a repository for a few artifacts stored in the Courthouse.

My first visit with Dr. Covington sparked his interest when I told him about my father's life with the Florida Seminoles in the early 1920s, one of the few white men to witness the sacred Green Corn Dance. Dr. Covington, a noted authority on the Seminoles, was also a wealth of

information on railroad tycoon Henry B. Plant.

Dr. Covington made me an aficionado of Tampa History by introducing me to local "movers and shakers." They included Leland Hawes, Herbert McKay, Hampton Dunn, Theodore Lesley, John D. Ware, Margaret Chapman, E. J. Salcines, Roland Manteiga, Jim and Martha Ferman, and Tony Pizzo.

In 1970, when I was invited to present a lecture discussing my research on Tampa's Latino Communities, Dr. Covington introduced me to a Tampa Historical Society (THS) founder, Nonita Cuesta Henson, whose grandfather Angel L. Cuesta was a legend in Tampa's cigar trade. After the lecture Nonita invited me to her home to view her private collection of cobalt blue, gold lettering Cuesta Rey stock certificates. A cigar band label collection included rare Coca-Cola bands from the late 1920s, originally placed on a limited edition of Cuesta Rey cigars. Nonita was a morale booster and financial supporter in establishing an historical organization, encouraging me to become further involved.

Prior to the actual incorporation of THS, there were several months of organizational discussions held at Nonita's home to establish an official non-profit organization. In 1970 I gave Nonita and Dr. Covington copies of the Articles of Incorporation for the Florida Historical Society. They copied it verbatim, submitting it to the State of Florida, and on May 26, 1971, Tampa Historical Society was officially registered as a non-profit organization.



In the ensuing years, lectures and events were periodically held in various city locations. Temporary headquarters were established in room 434 at the University of Tampa, compliments of Dr. Covington. Formative meetings were an opportunity to meet board members. Hampton Dunn invited me to join him on a number of his speaking trips throughout Florida. E. J. Salcines and Anthony Pizzo gave me invaluable insights to the Latino communities while Theodore Lesley invited me to go through his file cabinets overflowing with local historical papers and documents regarding the sale of family land to V. M. Ybor.

The need to preserve a disappearing history was evident at the death of Theodore Lesley. After heirs took what they wanted, the remaining historical files were placed in a garage sale. Papers were scattered across the floor as a viable local collection was destroyed. This unfortunate loss further catalyzed the need to preserve Tampa History.

In 1974, Tony Pizzo brought to the Board's attention an 1882 article in the *Sunland Tribune*, reporting: "*Tampa should have a Historical Society without delay.*" Ninety-two years later, the first issue of the new, revived *Sunland Tribune* was published, supported by local businesses and member contributions. Col. George Mercer Brook was portrayed on the front cover of the first edition with an article about his impact on early Tampa. The yearly publication expanded through the 1990s, offering publishing access for local residents as well as scholars. This was the first opportunity for members of the Tampa

community to record personal observations and memories in an official journal. The *Sunland Tribune*, an annual highlight for members, was sent out each fall to their homes. It continued recording significant stories and aspects of Tampa History that otherwise would have otherwise been forgotten to time.

The University of South Florida soon initiated its own historical journal, *Tampa Bay History*, which primarily published articles by USF professors. (It is currently published jointly by the USF Libraries and the Tampa Bay History Center.)

By 1977, I was appointed to the THS Board as an ongoing search was underway to acquire appropriate headquarters. Out of a long list of possible locations, the most affordable and historically relevant was 245 South Hyde Park, the original 1890 honeymoon cottage of Col. Peter O. Knight.

In the late 1880s, the Lafayette Bridge built over the Hillsborough River gave access to a new Hyde Park residential community. By 1890, a honeymoon cottage was constructed at 245 South Hyde Park Avenue for Peter O. Knight and his new bride. The newlyweds lived at this address until a larger, more commodious home was built. Col. Knight soon became a prominent figure in Tampa, serving as a public servant, lawyer, and President of the Tampa Electric Company.

Symbolically, two love birds were carved and placed above the front porch of the honeymoon cottage. It contained 5 rooms with an apartment connected to the back through a hallway in what is now the

Board Room. An outhouse stood along the driveway, functional until an indoor restroom was added. The driveway and sidewalks were multi-colored hexagonal blocks typical of the original Hyde Park neighborhood.

In the 1950s and early 1960s, Hyde Park declined as new suburbs became more attractive. Houses could be purchased for affordable prices. 1977 was the ideal time to acquire the honeymoon cottage at \$25,000. The cottage was accepted by the Board and an additional \$20,000 was collected and donated for renovation by the Junior League of Tampa and anonymous individuals.

Tampa Historical Society now had its long awaited home. The first official meeting at the Knight House to discuss interior renovation was in fall, 1977. The interior was badly in need of repair. Stained wall paper was peeling off the walls, dust was everywhere and an abandoned mattress was the only piece of furniture. Among members present were myself, Martha Ferman, and Lisa Barrow, Junior League representative. Martha, lovingly referred to as “the Godmother of THS” joked that sitting on a mattress in a house with no furniture was an unexpected adventure for a Southern Lady. When I mentioned I was soon planning to move, Martha said, in her charming Southern accent, “Well honey, why don’t you just move into the apartment and make yourself at home?” That’s when Tampa Historical Society became my home for a decade while serving as a volunteer, Board member, President, and Executive Director.

The interior floors of the cottage, constructed with durable termite-proof Dade County pine, were sanded and refinished while extensive shelving was installed in the designated Board Room. Walls were refurbished with Victorian wallpaper donated by interior designer Stapleton Gooch. While interior renovation was taking place I restored the apartment while assisting in the cottage’s interior and exterior renovation.

The exterior badly needed painting: the roof was leaking and the front porch had serious wood rot and termite damage. Front and backyards were frequented by transients as a place to sleep. Soon after I moved into the apartment, one transient attempted to build a fire on the front porch to keep warm in the winter until I drove him off. Garden landscaping was added along with a sprinkling system serving a dual purpose: it watered newly installed plants and went off at night to discourage transients. As an added security, a wrought iron fence was installed in the front yard with a gate in the driveway. An existing chain link fence on three sides of the property offered badly needed privacy and security.

A barren back yard was gradually converted into a lovely Victorian garden with support from the Tampa Garden Club and THS volunteers. Ninety-year-old mango, mulberry and alligator pear trees supplied bonanzas of fruit until a hard frost severely damaged them. The rear flower garden often served as an informal meeting place or for serving refreshments during in-house events.

Thanks again to the Junior League's outreach, Tampans generously donated period furniture to create a Victorian parlor and office in the front rooms with a board room and designated display room. The back room originally served as a dining room with a small kitchen.

The "Golden Years" of THS began with a unique opportunity to promote Tampa's historical and cultural legacies. I met and befriended members and a succession of Presidents, an experience which tapped into the heart and soul of Tampa. THS was filling a void in the community: no other local organization successfully promoted local history by engaging directly with members of the community while offering a sense of pride to Tampa's diverse residents. Our historical reputation was enhanced when I served as a liaison with the University of South Florida and Hillsborough Community College History Departments, who periodically supported and promoted educational lectures presented by THS by offering free lecture space.

By far, our most influential member and early supporter was Betty Phipps, editor for the society page of the *Tampa Tribune*, a contributor to articles in the *Sunland Tribune*, and a lifelong supporter of local history. Betty graduated from Florida State when it was still a school for girls. She loved attending THS events while eloquently describing them to her enthusiastic readers. This free publicity was invaluable, helping increase membership as Tampans with an historical flair avidly read her articles. Betty singlehandedly acquired more new members than anyone else,

creating a camaraderie previously lacking in Tampa. With her continued exposure of THS to the public, we increased membership to over 300--a larger number when you consider most memberships included couples. Her promotional articles were mainstays for THS, expanding its influence, prestige, and awareness throughout the community.

When I gave a lecture in the early 1980s to discuss research on the impact of the cigar industry in Key West and Florida, I used slides of Tampa cigar labels and factories from the archives of the Tobacco Merchants Association in New York City. (I later arranged to have their monumental collection of weekly tobacco newspapers from the 1870s to the 1950s donated to the Special Collections department at the University of South Florida. During my presentation, I described one image on a Tampa label as a "uniquely portrayed buck-toothed woman from a 1890s cigar label for the Emilio Pons cigar factory." After the lecture, a woman with a striking resemblance to the "uniquely portrayed woman" came up to me and said, "You know that woman you showed in that slide, that was my mutha!"

This is when I met Carmen Toney and her brother, Emilio Pons, Jr. They later invited me to their home and complained the historical marker in front of their father's Ybor City cigar factory was incorrect since it claimed their father was a native Tampan. Together we corrected this error by documenting that: "Emilio Sr. moved from Cuba to Key West where he was a

factory owner and officer in the Partido Revolucionario Cubano. He migrated to Tampa in 1887, following his Key West friend and mentor, Vicente Martinez Ybor.” They generously offered to donate a massive hand carved side-table given to their father as a wedding gift from V. M. Ybor, but it was too large to fit in our rooms. It was later donated to the Ybor City State Museum. Carmen and Emilio were among our most supportive members.

As President, I edited a new newsletter, *Tampa Historical Horizons*, with an elongated 1940s photo of downtown Tampa along that top front page. The four-to six-page newsletter contained a monthly President’s Report, announcements of upcoming events, reports on previous lectures or events, and periodic requests for volunteers. THS member Joe B. Clay printed it at cost, allowing our limited budget to increase our impact on the community, while volunteers Kaki Parrish and Lois Latimer were available each month to send it out to members.

In addition to the newsletter and the *Sunland Tribune*, THS periodically offered lectures promoting Tampa’s historic connections to Florida, Cuba, Spain, and Italy. Because of Tampa’s historical ties to fellow cigar city Key West, two tours were arranged to the island city.

The first joined the annual Key West tour of historic homes. A year later a second Key West tour joined the “La Verbena,” celebration and lecture at the San Carlos Club. It included a visit to the Porter Mansion and tea party in the tropical back yard adjacent to a cottage where Robert

Frost spent 15 winters. Many participating members were descendants of Key Westers and shared their family connections to Florida’s first major cigar city.

One of the most memorable events was the visit of the tall ship *The Western Union* to Tampa. Originally built in 1939, it was a “cable tender” connecting Florida cities, the Caribbean islands, and South America. The magnificent sailing ship is the only surviving authentic working tall ship in Florida. *The Western Union* was permanently docked in Key West where I befriended the Captain. He was easily convinced to stop by Tampa en route to the annual ship inspection in Tarpon Springs. It was a break for the crew and an experience for our members.

An on-ship celebration ensued upon arrival to Davis Islands. THS members were given a detailed explanation of *The Western Union*’s history. The following morning as the ship left Tampa Bay, the crew witnessed the rare St. Elmo’s fire. Under rare and proper conditions, this weather phenomenon creates a bright glowing blue light enveloping a ship and is considered a good omen to sailors.

Another successful yearly event was the revival of the Old Timer’s Reunion. With the support of Junior League volunteer Nancy Skemp (later THS President) a gala celebration was held at the grand ballroom of the Tampa Bay Hotel at the University of Tampa. Harpsichordists offered delightful background music while an elegant dinner was served. The oldest of the Old Timers were recognized. Interviews recorded their histories and memories of the past. There

was an amusing response to the event from supporters Lester and Yette Olsen who jokingly said, "The event was terrific, but we will hear enough harp music in heaven, no need to play it now!"

The Oaklawn Cemetery Ramble was revitalized under the presidency of Betty Nelson. Betty devoted attention to reviving the event with a request in the *Tampa Historical Horizons* for members with family at Oaklawn to record stories for the tour. What at first sounded like a rather macabre event was an annual highlight. In preparation, a concerted effort to clean up the abandoned cemetery grounds was undertaken by THS members, the City of Tampa, and Charlie Spicola's community involved Rough Riders. Overturned grave stones were up-righted, ankle high grass and weeds were cut, and broken gates were repaired. The Oaklawn Cemetery Ramble helped restore and preserve a previously abandoned Tampa landmark. After every tour, participants enjoyed refreshments and favorite dessert recipes of Tampa families. As "The Ramble" continued over the years, it collected new in-depth stories about Oaklawn residents.

Betty Nelson also promoted the unveiling of the soon- to- be-opened Ybor City State Museum, formerly the Ferlita Bakery, selected as the new home for a local historical museum. The State of Florida hired me as a consultant to develop the themes and collection of artifacts for display. We arranged a THS kick-off "before" event held in the bakery prior to renovation. Guests were seated amidst a large dough mixer, cake pans, and piles of scattered bakery records for a lecture on

the history of the bakery. Rats periodically skittered across the floor as occasional screams interrupted the lecture. This "before" experience was later followed by a tour of the completed museum a year later.

Another project of THS was to support and expand the Hillsborough County Historic Marker program, a favorite project promoted by Tony Pizzo. One of the more memorable Marker events was when Billy Graham visited Tampa, honored with an historical marker on Franklin Street where he began his lifelong crusade.

A progressive dinner held in cooperation with Tampa Preservation Inc. began with cocktails and appetizers at the Knight House, followed by a stroll across the street to the Hutchinson House for an elegant dinner, (headquarters of Tampa Preservation, Inc.,) followed with dessert and entertainment on the third floor ballroom of a nearby mansion.

As THS matured, the annual D. B. McKay awards dinner was held at the Tampa Yacht and Country Club. Each year, a person contributing to Florida History was honored, the most colorful being Mel Fisher who discovered the *Atocha* and *Santa Anna Maria* galleons filled with silver, gold, and emeralds. He surprised the audience by wearing his famous "money chain," a gold looped necklace flowing to his knees. A notorious drinker, Mel downed quite a few drinks before offering a gold link to any "interested" ladies.

By the time I left THS in 1989, there were several problems limiting its growth. The organization did not have a large meeting place, there were no computer

capabilities, and no parking facilities. THS wanted to grow but it was unable to meet City building codes in order to expand facilities. As the Tampa Bay History Center evolved and grew, THS membership dwindled.

After moving to Santa Fe, I was invited to the History Department of the University of New Mexico (UNM) to discuss my experiences in helping establish a local historical organization, how it successfully served the community, and its relationship to the broader scope of history. As a result of this symposium, UNM offers a course referred to as the “Microcosm-Macrocosm” approach to history. One example I offered of this local to international historical approach included my research on Tampa’s Latino enclave Ybor City, exemplified by studying local records then expanding to researching the name Ybor while researching for my Doctoral degree at the University of Florida. I discovered the Ybor name dates back to an Eighth-century Moorish “Ibor” family. The Ibor’s controlled an Iberian caliphate in what is now Eastern Portugal and Southwestern Spain, where the towns, river and plains called “Ibor” still exist. Researching Ybor City was like collecting pieces of a jig saw puzzle, eventually placing them into a larger picture. (The family name “Ibor” was changed to Ybor when Don Vicente Martinez Ibor fled a revolution in Cuba in 1868 to Key West. The Spanish “I” (pronounced in Spanish as an “E”) was changed since the letter “Y” in English allowed the correct sound “E” in the family name. Few individuals in Tampa today are aware of this significant fact.)

Another example of the microcosm-macrocosm approach to Tampa History was when I discovered water-stained cigar labels found on the floors of deserted, soon-to-be demolished cigar factories. This resulted in studying stone lithographic printing of cigar labels. In New York City I spent three summers de-assessing hundreds of thousands of pre-1900 to post 1930s cigar labels once belonging to over thirty nineteenth century New York lithographic firms. Rare Tampa labels, previously unknown, were discovered in Master Reference Books and in one-of-a-kind proof books. I arranged to have a section of the collection, referred to as the Kane Greenberg Collection, donated to the University of South Florida Special Collections Department.

As I began researching Florida labels printed in Europe, I contacted Klingenberg Printers in Detmold, Germany and was appointed Archivist to Europe’s second oldest printers. On my first visit I was taken to an old horse barn to see a massive collection of cigar labels and proof books stored there since World War 2. For the next six summers I organized and established the Klingenberg Archives. In the collection were undiscovered one-of-a-kind pre-1900 lithographic cigar label treasures printed for Florida’s cigar centers Key West, Marti City, West Tampa, and Ybor City.

Today, the UNM History Department’s ongoing microcosm-macrocosm program promotes history based on stories and events of local residents, connecting local history with national and international events, and

works with local historical organizations in a cooperative manner.

After moving to Santa Fe, I kept in touch with Tampa friends and colleagues who told me of the gradual demise of THS. By 2016, there were only three THS members, while the honeymoon cottage and landscaping were in deplorable condition. The City of Tampa threatened condemnation of the building and grounds if they were not properly repaired, restored, and maintained.

A new generation of historical aficionados responded. Once again, Charlie Spicola and his Rough Riders came the rescue of THS. A new board seeks to restore the once viable organization. The Rough Riders and volunteers spent weeks trimming and cutting bushes and trees in the once beautiful back yard. They replaced rotted wood on the front porch while repainting the exterior. With the leadership

and inspiration of newly-elected President Angela Morgan Spicola, a new page was turned in Tampa History. This new generation of leadership hopes to combine the best of THS's past while developing innovative, interactive programs for the future.

Fortunately, I was accidentally in Tampa to attend an April 27, 2017 event reminiscent of the heydays at the Peter O. Knight cottage. Fifty-six years later, the Knight House was again filled with history enthusiasts and stimulating conversations. It was an inspiration to participate in this renaissance to restore what was once a viable organization for the community. I applaud the efforts of President Angela Morgan Spicola, the Board, the Rough Riders, and new members. Their new groundbreaking historical perspectives and leadership will renew THS for the benefit of local residents and the city of Tampa.

*Dr. Loy Glenn Westfall lives in Santa Fe New Mexico where he is active in The Wheelwright Museum of Native American Arts, The Ralph. T. Coe Foundation for the Arts, The New Mexico History Museum, The International Folk Arts Museum and promotes authentic Native American art projects in Gallup, New Mexico for the annual Navajo Ceremonial. In October 2016 he opened an exhibit at the New Mexico History Museum entitled OUT OF THE BOX: THE ART OF THE CIGAR. It was recently promoted by U.S.A. TODAY as one of the top eleven "Must-See" museum exhibits in the United States. It will be on display until March, 2018. He is currently documenting his past preservation efforts in Ybor City and Key West.*

## Memories of Cuscaden Park

Donna Parrino

In 1945 my parents built a two-bedroom, stuccoed house at 1311-17<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Ybor City. It sat directly across 14<sup>th</sup> Street from the Cuscaden Park basketball courts. Later, they moved to be nearer the rest of the family in the Carrollwood area, but, for almost forty years, 1311 was home. Our neighbors across 14<sup>th</sup> Street and adjacent to the courts were the Cuscaden family: Arthur Jr., his mother, and his granddaughter. Nestled on an extensive property amid ancient oaks and dense foliage, their house resembled a weathered yellow-pine cabin, albeit oversized, one would more readily find deep in Florida's forests. Mr. Cuscaden, who according to the 1940 US Census was a 48-year-old wholesale ammunition salesman, kept to himself, but over the years he grew to be friendly with my dad. I guess he appreciated that Daddy kept our property well-manicured and we were quiet, helpful neighbors. Occasionally, we'd hear a shotgun blast and later learn Cuscaden had killed a pesky rattler. I recall seeing him return from hunting trips with his shotgun, hound dog, and his kills. He would skin deer in his shed. It was like living next to Daniel Boone! Son of the senior Arthur who donated the land to the city for Cuscaden Park, Arthur Jr. died in 1970.

I remember the baseball leagues' games with cars all around the park. One could hardly drive down 14th Street because autos lined both sides, parked

helter-skelter. The only times I went to those games were if my dad took me, as I was too young to go alone. On game nights we could hear the roar of the crowd as the lights illuminated the skies. Those packed three-sided bleachers were just superb for watching baseball and sharing in community life. Sadly, the city did not maintain them and they disappeared altogether sometime in the '90s.

I grew up in the '50s and, like many Ybor kids, inhabited the park every day. When I came home from school at nearby Our Lady of Perpetual Help Academy (OLPH for short), I'd do my homework, have a snack, and head to the park. Pop Cuesta of local baseball coaching fame was in my class but I don't remember seeing him at the park; that's probably because he was always with Mr. Espolita at the baseball field. I do recall seeing tennis great Judy Alvarez, who competed internationally, practice, practice, practice at the tennis courts. Sometimes I'd meet friends for basketball, or volleyball if the net was up. Other times we would head to the northwest end of the park where some fun playground equipment provided thrills. There were about eight huge swings—the chains on them were so thick they could've anchored a battleship—and we'd compete to see who could swing the highest, then jump off. I don't think they install such high swings in playgrounds anymore due to cost and liability. There were two slides, one of



which could give you nosebleed it was so high! There was also a green hop-on merry-go-round which, if bigger boys hopped aboard, would go very fast and we'd have to hold on for dear life. In the northwestern-most corner some seesaws sat empty most of the time. Sometimes my friends and I would park ourselves at the breezy top of the bleachers, look out over the pool, and chat about boys or what we'd be when we grew up. In the evenings during cooler months, there'd be organized volleyball games at the courts--about 40 kids, mostly from the old Jefferson High School which served Ybor City. Ms. Viola Mexico would referee those games.

During the summer months, Cuscaden hosted a wonderful recreation program led by Ms. Mexico. She and Andres Espolita were the two full-time City Recreation Department employees at the park. Naturally, the boys hung out with him and the girls gravitated to Ms. Mexico. Both of them were held in high regard by the kids. Since Mr. Espolita hailed from Ybor, he knew many of the parents—I was aware he knew my dad—and that gave him leverage with the boys, especially. “If you don’t shape up, I’m gonna call your father,” he’d threaten and the boys would tow the line. Espolita was devoted to making good ball players and men out of them.

I don’t know how Ms. Mexico ended up in Tampa as she was a native of North Dakota, daughter of an Irish father—last name Laird-- and a Canadian mother. According to the 1940 US Census, she was born in 1894 and lived on Branch Avenue near Hillsborough High School. She was college educated and earned \$904 in 1939 as a recreation supervisor. A widow, she was raising two daughters. One of the rooms on the ground floor of the pool’s

southwest side served as Ms. Mexico’s office, and equipment space for both her and Mr. Espolita. When you arrived at the park and wanted a volleyball or basketball or baseball gear, you would go to the room and Ms. Mexico would supply your needs and say, “Be sure to bring it back when you’re through playing.” Often, kids would forget and she’d recruit volunteers to round up the stray stuff before closing. Once in a while, an older boy would be disrespectful to her and he would soon hear that a displeased Mr. Espolita wanted to talk to him.

The room was also the locale of the summer arts and crafts program, held from nine to noon. I remember lots of paste and cut-up paper. Once we made papier-mâché vases, but my favorite craft was basket-weaving. We learned to make pot holders first; then all sorts of baskets, some quite elaborate, out of pine needles sown together with raffia strung on huge needles. I have often seen such baskets in Native American museums and muse that I made similar ones in Ms. Mexico’s program.

At noontime, everyone headed home for lunch. Afterwards, we gathered at the shady bleachers where there might be a breeze, for story-time at 1 pm. Sometimes we’d experience a welcome thunderstorm there which really cooled us off. Story-time was led by Ms. Mexico and her helpers, teen-aged Dolores and Sharon Wehle. The Wehle family, who lived on 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue just west of 12<sup>th</sup> Street, consisted of the parents and over a dozen children. They told us stories and led us in songs like, “She’ll Be Comin’ Round the Mountain.” Years later I learned Dolores had become a nun, teaching in Key West. After story-time, kids would grab their towels and head to the pool for a swim; the cost was ten cents

to swim and included the locker. The Del Rios managed the pool for many years. I didn't go swimming very often as I was an only child and my mother had fears of my drowning. I did like to go up to the pool gallery to watch my friends swim. Later, the gallery was a place to watch the boys show off their diving skills. One kid, Mike Garcia from Jefferson High School, dove well enough to compete locally and beyond.

All the girls, especially, loved Ms. Mexico. She treated everyone with great respect and kindness. I recall she was always professionally dressed, never sloppy or too casual in her slacks. She kept her lipstick fresh, her hands well-manicured with red nail polish, and she had more freckles than sand on the beach almost. Always with a sports cap atop her reddish hair, she spoke with a country accent. She'd arrive in her Buick promptly at nine each morning and never left before official closing time. Although she knew no

Spanish, Ms. Mexico could communicate a caring and kind ambience to all. She died in April 1975 at age 81, having greatly impacted—like Mr. Espolita-- many lives.

Cuscaden Park was a community mecca that gave kids a lot of freedom and valuable lessons on several levels, while offering parents security in knowing their children were safe and well cared for. We learned the fun of being "on our own," of competition, and the importance of respect and sportsmanship. It also was a nurturing cradle for many great ballplayers—like Frank Permuy and Tony LaRussa who lived down my street-- emerging from Tampa. At one time, the park even sponsored a float each year in the Children's Gasparilla Parade, Ms. Mexico and Mr. Espolita marching happily alongside it. Like hundreds of others, I have fond memories of Cuscaden Park and firmly attest it truly deserves a high place in the pantheon of Tampa historical sites.

*Donna Parrino is a native of Ybor City, a retired USF administrator and educator, and a community advocate.*

## Oral History with Joseph Knight

Grandson of Peter O. Knight

Andrew Huse

Peter O. Knight [married] Lizzie, Lizzie Fries and she was from South Carolina. They had two sons: Joe, my father, and Peter O. Knight Jr. Then then my dad and my uncle had two children. He had Peter first, and then me. Phil had Rola and then Peter Knight IV. Rola was named for her mother. Phil's wife, they all called her Girly but her given name was Rola. Girly was from North Florida. We mixed up and actually we're kin to Charlie O. Knight's family, a little bit, but on the other side the Parishes. And the Parishes with kin to everybody. It's a big family, a big clan.

I don't know much about the [Peter O. Knight] house, I've only been in it a few times. It didn't look like anything else in Tampa. And we [with wife Harriet] traveled after we were married, we were up in [the old Knight home in] Pennsylvania and I began to see the similarity to his house.

He was from Pennsylvania, and so he built a brick house. Them walls were this thick. I remember lightning hit it one time just knocked a little hole [laughing]. It didn't do much damage. They lived there in 1903, they built that house and moved out of the one we were talking about, the [Tampa Historical Society] house and they lived there. She died in I think '41.

He died in '46, and he was a 33<sup>rd</sup> degree Mason, and they really send them away good, 33<sup>rd</sup> Degree Masons. It's honorary. They don't do organizations

much anymore. That used to be big, the Masons and the Shriners, and they all do good work but it's not as big a deal now as it used to be.

He came from Pennsylvania to Florida. He came by train and then took a boat to Fernandina, northeast Florida. They caught a train that ran over from Fernandina to Cedar Key. It was a train that ran through there. Then he went by boat, ended up in Fort Myers, and that would be in 1885. He was not yet of majority, and somehow he ran for mayor down there. He was elected mayor before he was 21. He was a ball of fire. But he said the reason he was in such a hurry is his daddy died real early, and he wanted to do everything he could do early. Of course he lived to be 80, but anyway that was the reason for his haste. Then he realized that Fort Myers wasn't gonna get it for him, so then he went to Atlanta, and he met his wife and they were married, I understand, up there. She was from South Carolina. On the back of that wedding picture she wrote "heaven or hell" [laughing]. She probably had that right. Then he came to Tampa, and that worked out for him, that would been at about around 1889 because Daddy was born there November in '90. And of course he lived there ever since, he and his wife.

They [local and state politicians] all knew each other, everybody knew each other and it was Democratic. There was no Republican Party. Mayor [Robert E. Lee]

Chancey, was a high shot member. I remember I was a kid in there, they were talking about one of the elections, and they ran things. This is all graveyard talk since they're all dead now, but they were trying to decide who was going in and how many votes to give them. They didn't want it to look too lop-sided. He was just kind of holding his head, but that's the way things went. There was a lot of interesting people. Charlie Wall was one, he's a story in himself.

I remember [domestic worker] Julius. It was as if he was with him till he died, the black man Julius, and Emma. There wasn't a lot of humor in that family. I mean at that time I was old but things were fairly serious. The difference in my mother's family when we went down to see [the] Parrish [side of the family], there was a lot of humor, a bunch of happy Irishman. He used to say he was Pennsylvania Dutch but [was really] Scottish and Irish.

My grandmother she and my mother didn't get along too well. [Grandmother] started claiming some kind of aristocracy in South Carolina. Mother would say, "Damned slave owners."

I'd heard my mother tell for years about [my ancestors] coming over [to the United States] on their own boat. It was true, they came over in 1650 which is way back. The pilgrims came in 1620 so they were thirty years later but [then] the [family] name was Beall.

D.B. [McKay] and my grandfather were political enemies. He also warred with trial lawyer Pat Whittaker. Grand[father] wanted to run everything his way. He did, usually. But Tampa Electric [Company had to submit] to a utility board that would set rates, and that didn't do worth a damn. He

just didn't like somebody else telling him how to run his business. He had always been fair. He fought Whittaker's bunch. Until he died, he battled the utility board. He never could accept that.

It's amazing what he was involved with in Tampa after he got there in 1890. He was involved in every damn thing. He was a Yankee interloper [among] all these old families, McKay, Whittaker, Lykes. They had a saying about him, it was "Rule or ruin." If he couldn't rule you he'd ruin you. He was strong. He was just like someone at Tammany Hall. They ran Tampa.

That Prohibition was a joke. Tarpon Springs was just as bad as Tampa. You had ways to get stuff in. The Fort Harrison [Hotel] building was the only tall one. They would signal out to the Cuban smacks whether it was safe to bring in the liquor or not.

I was born in 1927. Born at home in Elfers. Doctor Rowlett came out to stay with mama.

My grandfather was [involved in the] Tampa and Tarpon Spring Land Company. They bought a lot of land from Tarpon. Major Connolly was in charge of it and I've got some of the old maps and they were developing that area. There was nothing much up there except Elfers, New Port Richey. Elfers was a little Cracker town and [Connolly] started planting groves, mostly grapefruit. Pinellas County was grapefruit groves. Oranges got hot and grapefruit got hot in the '20s.

Daddy went out there, he was the older of the two boys, [and] got involved in farming and developing that property. There was quite a large acreage. They bought it, seemed like a dollar and a quarter an acre or something ridiculous like

that. They were way ahead of their time because in the boom crashed and it was nothing there in the thirties. After the war they began to really start developing. They started in Pasco County. It didn't have the zoning that

Pinellas did so they started these little developments and they could then build a good, cheap house without the restrictions in Pinellas County. In other words, in Pinellas County, you had to dig down and pour a footer and put steel in it then you'd come up with some block, and header block, and then you'd pour the floor. Up there [in Pasco County] they did what they call the bell footing. They'd dig down and flare out and pour the whole damn thing at one time. It was a good floor but it was wasn't up to the code [of Pinellas County]. They put rebar in, but of course some of them put it in and get it checked and pull the rebar out [after inspection]. They said it'd been pulled out so much it was shiny. They'd keep reusing it. [Laughs]

They really stopped at the county line and they started, these developers, to buy a ten-acre tract and we sold stuff to them. They would come here from outer space or somewhere, God knows where a lot of them came from. They'd take a regular ten [acre tract] and they'd run a road in and back out. They could get sixty lots on a ten-acre tract, six to the acre. It was a nice sized lot and they built these little houses and they were building them for six thousand dollars. This is right after the war and the fifties. These people come down from the north, these old Yankees and Midwesterners, and most all of them lost their money in banks during the crash and they carried their money with them. Need six thousand? They counted out, it was all cash. It was a nice house.

My brother and I, we had to grove but a good friend of his was an electrician. He'd get behind [and] we'd help him wire a house, pull wire and stuff. He could do the fine part, we were more or less just grunts. The development just grew. It was like a spreading cancer. People wanted to get out of the cold weather. They were retired. And you had a lot of service people, some that were injured then get benefits come down here. A lot of them came to Indian Rocks right after the war. They bought cars and they were usually Oldsmobiles because their feet were messed up, or legs, and Oldsmobile pioneered the gearshifts and controls under the steering wheel.

I went to grammar school there in Tarpon to the sixth grade. I was somewhat of a problem child and our family was somewhat dysfunctional I guess, or maybe quite dysfunctional. They [parents] decided I needed to go off. I went to Florida Military Academy [now Stetson Law School in Pinellas County] and graduated with high honors. I was down there six years and made a lot of wonderful friends. The problem is, they all dispersed. Admiral Farragut Academy was a competitor. They took over some old defunct hotel that has a history. It was built originally by a fellow named Taylor and he called it the Rolyat, that's Taylor spell backwards. It was a gorgeous place.

I went to service in the Army. I was lucky, my brother was in the South Pacific for thirty-nine months on an LCI [amphibious vehicle Landing Craft Infantry]. He did enough service for the both of us. I went in after the war because the G.I. Bill was going to run out. I went to Korea. I was lucky, I was there in '48 and came home. Everyone knew there was going to

be trouble, and there was. Just the luck of the draw.

I went to Gainesville and studied agriculture and met her [my wife Harriet Getzen] there. Her grandfather gave the land to the University of Florida when it was in Lake City. They were prominent in the legislature. I graduated in February of '52 and we moved to Indian Rocks. There was a cabin there that my mother had built, a summer place, and [Harriet] and I moved in. It was pretty primitive. We were there eighteen years and then we bought this lot. We've got twenty-five feet of elevation here. We had four children, '53, '55, '58 and '60 and have four grandchildren.

I went to work in the grove. I'd drive to Elfers in the morning. It wasn't a big drive then. Highway 19 was two lanes and there was one light at Gulf to Bay. Most people think you put a seed in the ground and pick fruit the next week. You plant seeds, they come up seedlings, you bud whatever variety you want of oranges or grapefruit, tie all this stuff up in a nursery and send them out. It is quite involved like any other business. It is long term, it isn't something you can get into, particularly now, the equipment is so expensive. A lot of it is rented. A piece of equipment would cost thousands of dollars [to purchase]. I remember the mule and wagon.

The developers would go to those tax assessor, "We offered him so much money, X number of dollars for this property and it's assessed at nothing. The tax assessor was a friend of our foreman [who explained that the developers] went to him and said, "we offered them \$20,000 and it's assessed at \$500. They would eventually start raising the taxes on my grove. It wasn't warranted.

A developer bought the damn thing and developed it with these \$5,990 houses, homestead it, and take the whole damn ten acres off the tax roll. And then they wanted schools, fire, police, and roads. It was bound to come. We started selling land in the '70s. When we finally decided to sell, it was kind of hard, they couldn't buy it all. They wanted to buy it piecemeal. So we needed to run it as grove as we sold it off. It wasn't total satisfaction, but you sold a piece of it. Eventually, they got it all. The one that bought the most was named Boyce. I'm retired but I'm always busy doing stuff, refinishing furniture, real estate and housing.

I'm well, happy, and satisfied. I've had a good life, a wonderful family. And I look to Harriet the way Rockefeller related to Henry Flagler. He said he Flagler was the brains of the outfit. Usually, the women are the smartest anyway. I enjoyed talking. That's about all I can do these days anyway.

## Oral History with Gary Mormino

Andrew Huse

It's an improbable story. As I've gotten older I kind of pinch myself. I did not come out of the conventional backgrounds. I don't think anyone who knew my situation would have said this guy's destined to become a professor. Very working-class family. My father's side of the Sicilian immigrants, my grandparents, came to Napoleonville, Louisiana to cut sugar cane. There's a lot of room for upward mobility when you begin your life cutting sugarcane. I finally had a chance to go to that village. Man, it's a desolate place an hour west of New Orleans and I think about half the males of this community of Alia in Sicily left for Texas, Louisiana, places like that and somewhere around they heard of opportunities in the St. Louis area. I'd do anything to go back and interview them because my uncle Angelo was born on the Hill in St. Louis.

[The Hill] it's a famous Italian community in St. Louis, southwest St. Louis, and they [my ancestors] claimed they were run out of the community because northern Italians didn't like the southern Italians. I've always been told they left because there was jobs in these oil refineries but they wound up in the little community of Wood River Illinois, across the river from St. Louis, entirely devoted to oil refineries. It was built for that purpose. The community had five oil refineries and you can imagine that in the community surrounding it, Alton,

Illinois, Madison had two or three steel mills, Granite City, there was an East Alton, a place that made ammunition, there was a paper mill. It's astonishing this was a dream setting for my uncles and my father, largely uneducated. These were Union jobs, pretty decent jobs for that era.

[It was] very, very much a Union town as well. My father always told me that my ass would be royally kicked if anyone ever saw me cross the picket line. My grandparents moved to Wood River, six uncles born there, two aunts, and my grandfather was a bricklayer for Standard Oil Refinery. The legend always passed down is that every day he took home a brick in his lunch pail and one day they had a checkpoint and the guard says "why are you stealing a brick from Mr. Rockefeller?" – he worked for Standard Oil – and my grandfather said "I want to show my sons what I do" and the family legend is thirty years later he had enough bricks to build a house. That the house was built of wood is in the tradition [story].

My father was a fourth-grade dropout. Education was not valued. My father always thought I should have my ass kicked, I should join the army and get a little discipline, and that years later I can have a pension. It was a very large family, there were six siblings and it was very well-known that there was no money for college.

One year they allowed the sons of refinery workers to work for the summer. These were Union jobs, I mean this was three or four times what you get [working] at a root beer stand, so my father got me that job. And then he got me another job, you had to see the City Council, this was a state job, I think some money was exchanged, and I got a job working for the Illinois State Highway Department; and to put it in perspective, in those days I if I could save a thousand dollars in the summer I could get through [college] with no debt. I had scholarships [and] I went to this little school Millikin University.

My mother's side of the family, they were more respectable. I had an uncle do a little time in prison. The first time I ever remember meeting him he was coming back from the Korean War and he had punched out an officer; it was a dishonorable [discharge]. [I remember] this big party for Uncle Lou coming back. My poor mother, and she was born at a coal mining community in southern Illinois [in] a burned-out coal mining community, desperately poor, and then her mother married Phil Stasi, so I had two Italian grandfathers and Phil was about as colorful and disreputable as you can be. He had one arm and had a tavern. I had several taverns in the family and Phil did a little book on the side. He let me work at his bar; in the mornings, I'd stock up. So I had two or three jobs; I was desperate to get out of Wood River, really desperate to start a new life and I was such a loser in high school and insecure and thought I was going to be a chemist, I was absolutely certain. I liked math and science and then I got into college calculus and figured, "well, I like history," be a high school history teacher, something like that.

I went to school, Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois. It probably was good for me I wasn't undisciplined, because I was a hard worker, but no one had ever set me down and told me about how to write, how to study. I didn't really [learn] until graduate school. I was a good student at Milliken and I had some very gifted teachers who encouraged me to go on. The reason I went on to graduate school at the University of North Carolina, no one does these things like this anymore, the only reason I went to UNC I was absolutely clueless. I liked European history as much as American history, but no one ever set me down said well you got to do one or the other. I had a very kind and very good professor named Robert Haywood who was a big historian of Kansas who was at Millikin and he had gone to UNC and he said you know I think you'd like it, so I applied. I think I was accepted at Colorado and Texas and I wanted to get out of Illinois and at the time I didn't realize I would also be married. Lynne and I got married in [1969].

I graduated in May of 1969 and we were married in June. The first car I ever had was a Chevy Malibu and we had a little trailer in the back with about one square yard of belongings. We arrived in Chapel Hill, the most beautiful place I had ever seen, and I get my draft notice. Oh man, I was opposed to the war but you know, you're married and figure, well okay maybe what I should do is go to Officer's Candidate School and get something out of it. My logic was you know maybe they'll teach me Russian and I'll come back and be a Russian historian and I was this close to signing if they had just, if he had just said yes we guarantee you language. I was going to Navy intelligence and he would not budge on that. The next day I'm at the UNC Union



and I see it the thing about draftee jobs and I got a draftee job training dogs for Vietnam. I had also been a Psych major; I thought about going in higher education as an administrator. I had not only been a Psych major, I had worked at a mental hospital in Illinois that they were just opening, this new mental hospital for juvenile delinquents in Illinois; these were really more delinquents than anything else. I spent my senior year taking classes at the University of Illinois, behavioral Psych which is what animal training. I'd always want to know what happened to those poor dogs, but I did that for about six months until Nixon came out with the lottery and my lottery pick was high enough.

I mean the one thing my father gave me was a work ethic; nothing is going to be handed to you. He thought you need to work and so I worked first as a paperboy; must have worked delivering morning and afternoon papers for six or seven years and then I worked at a root beer stand and the most interesting job was at Kentucky Fried Chicken, which was relatively new. At that time the Colonel had sold the franchise, but he was the spokesperson, the traveling brand. Has there ever been a brand like the Colonel? I come in after school one day and I hear this cursing. I'd always heard through the managers that no one could curse like the Colonel, that he was like a sailor. The manager, who was the brother-in-law of the owner of the place, the Colonel reamed him out. He saw me and was rather kind to me, he actually came up and said, "Son," he said "would you show me the gravy?" I'd also heard that the one thing that just drove him crazy about the new owners is that they shortchanged the gravy. We made gravy in six gallon soup pans and you simply pour this little packet of what looked like

plaster of Paris and everything would coagulate and you then throw the chicken skin cracklings in to make it interesting. He took one bite and ordered me to throw it out. Then he sits me down and gosh, I wish I had a videotape of this. He said, "Son, have you considered a career with Kentucky Fried Chicken?" I said I really wanted to go to college. He wasn't mad as he was just upset and he says, "You know son, you just walked away from a million-dollar deal!" I've often wondered about those stock options you would have had then. He may have been right, but you would have died at a young age of the chicken vapors and grease.

In college, I worked at the admissions office and I worked at a sorority clearing tables and figured it would also be good for dates. I was so unprepared academically, just the idea that you're supposed to seek an advisor and usually you go to a school because that school has certain strengths and I was lucky for UNC's strength with southern history and I had some wonderful professors there. But the irony of ironies, my adviser was a Millikan graduate named Roger Lotchin. About two years ago he retired. He was at UNC for years and he taught a year of high school so he was a fifty-year man; he had been an All-American basketball player at Milliken, but his field was urban history, he did a lot of studies of California cities but he instilled in me the idea of him getting to know a city, walk a city. He liked the idea of interviews and things like that. I know I got better in graduate school as I learned the game.

I still remember the first paper I got back was marked "passive voice" three exclamation marks. I had no idea what passive voice was. I don't think I was a very

good writer but I worked very hard to become I think a decent writer. Chapel Hill was the most wonderful place. All I have to do is return there even after a long drive, just walking that beautiful quad is soothing, relaxing. One of my sisters became a nun and I've often thought that was the [childhood] house and the city was so noisy, the factory whistles, the smell and that eight in the family, I always thought she sought the sanctuary and silence.

There was also George Brown Tindall, a legend, his text is still being used. He was the first really to demand good writing and he had these commandments, "thou shalt not use passive voice." It was also a time when the profession was changing. Anyone who came out of grad school got a job because schools were just exploding everywhere, the baby boom, people who traditionally didn't go to college.

[May 1970] was interesting -- Kent State -- they closed the Millikan campus and the chair of the department called all the first-year grad students, so we were just finishing our first year. He says "gentlemen," and I think there was one woman in the room, he said "the great feast is over. I'm getting these [application rejection] letters." For the first time he could remember, people weren't getting jobs and he said "listen, you all only put a year in. I cannot encourage you to go on, but if you'd like to that's good. But be prepared."

I took the law boards test without even opening the book and got on the waiting list at UNC. Lynne was working and fortunately was able to transfer her job there in Social Security. Each year I liked it a little better and became a graduate assistant.

It was an exciting period to be a young historian. History from the bottom up was coming. There was a guy there named Don Matthews; he had actually been one of Ray Arsenault's professors at Princeton and he was there. He was strange. He had an expensive French Wolf Hound that he would only speak French to. He was the first to really get into the new social history, they were calling it. I read that a little bit and that really attracted me. Howard Zinn came to campus. There was also really good literature on slavery [being published] every year. There was a guy there named Hugh Lefflen who was mister North Carolina, he was probably seventy-five. A bunch of us were studying for [exams] that they really took that seriously in those days, your written and oral [exams].

He was saying that when he graduated from Harvard I think he said in 1915, this would have been fifty-five years later, he could truthfully say he had read every important book in American history. You could actually do that. By the time I was graduating I'm not sure you could do that in some subfields like slavery [with] the sheer volume of material coming out.

One of my great regrets is the year I left Jackie Hall came; she was kind of High Priestess of oral history, particularly civil rights. One of the guys in my class stayed. He became director of history of Smithsonian, and he got a job as director of the North Carolina Humanities Council and then Smithsonian, Greg Glass. Eventually, I think everyone got jobs, a few people decided not to stay in the profession.

In 1974 I was ABD (all but dissertation). I decided to write my dissertation on Italians in St. Louis. Again, looking back, not a rational decision. I've

been very lucky these kind of gut decisions have worked out. I think I read an article in *Time* magazine about this place that I had never been to. It was twenty miles from my house, one of most famous Italian communities [in the country.] We just didn't get around much. I hardly knew St. Louis other than the ballpark and downtown. I finally got to see the place. It was the summer of '73. I got a fellowship at Newberry Library; it was on the new family history.

I was going to spend the rest of the summer, about three months, on the Hill. Lynne and I moved there. I'll never forget the first time I drove up to the Hill. It was an early morning probably June, July 1973, and [I saw] this big guy, I mean a huge guy of a t-shirt. I found out later he was kind of a vigilante squad. The Hill was surrounded by some bad neighborhoods. I said, "Excuse me, is this Dago Hill?" He walks over and said, "Son, you better be Italian." All the locals called it Dago Hill.

The St. Louis Historical Society had this incredible archives in the Public Library downtown. They have one downtown and they had one at the Missouri Historical Society in Forest Park. I go there and I write my name. [The clerk] said, "We have a tradition here. You need to go say hello to get a blessing from this little lady" who's camped in a blanket, about 85 years old, she was one of the survivors of the Titanic. I introduce myself and she asked "What are you studying?" I said, "Italians in St. Louis." She said "why would you want to study that?" The archives had nothing, I mean when I say nothing. They had a couple articles from Italians in the early century, but this was a very elitist organization interested in French fur trappers and the first fathers of St. Louis. [After a half a day

at the archive,] I'm thinking I've got a lease for three more months in my apartment in St. Louis, what the hell am I going to do? This is where I developed my avocation of reading newspapers, I had piles and piles of note cards. I'm thinking I'm going to return and say, "I made a mistake, I need a better topic." But I still have three months and I wonder, "Why don't you talk to the people in the neighborhood?"

So I bought a cheap tape recorder and anyone who looked like over 60 years old, I must have done a hundred interviews that summer, some of the most remarkable interviews I've ever done. There's one lady because she must have been close to 90, she said sure, I'll bring some friends you could talk to as well. There were three or four women, each about 90 years old, they were telling me about an event that took place about 1900--this is 1973 now.

She said they lived in the small community in Lombardy called Cuggino, and there's a knock at the door. There's a woman there they don't know and the mother tells them to go to their room and the woman is basically proposing that her son marry this woman's daughter, but they had never met. She's kind of a marriage broker and she said "My-a son is a bigga shot in America, he works for the railroad in Saint-a Louis. I think it would be nice if you're going to marry my son in America." They would bargain, what do you have to bring to this marriage? Well, we have a mule and some linens, a mulberry tree. Then they called the daughter out, "great news, you're going to be married next month in St. Louis and they showed her a picture of her fiancé in a store-bought suit and gold tooth.

All four women were called picture brides because they had only seen pictures

of their future because all the young men like my grandfather Sharon went there to work. If you went back, you'd lose two or three months of your life to expend a lot of money. Everyone trusts their mother, right? They all went with a chaperone on a ship to New York, railroad to St. Louis; at the train station they met their fiancées and were married the next morning. And divorce is unheard of in these days because you're not marrying for love. You're marrying for survival. I mean if you're a young woman in Italy at this time, all the young men are married. If you don't marry an Americano, is what they call them, you entered the convent. If you were the youngest daughter you were the old maid, you took care of the older relatives.

I talked to some mobsters. It was just amazing and really totally unmethodological. I've read a lot of the books about oral history and they really bore me. What I want out of it is some good stories that will make a more colorful book. I'm not interested in the academic nature of oral history, and yes I understand they may not be telling the truth but I can check this out. To me it was also getting to know the community.

The finished book is called "Immigrants on the Hill: Italians in St. Louis." The circle comes around when I met George Tyndall. I met [him] at the Conference of Southern Historians. I think I had been at USF for a few months and I said I'm looking for a publisher. He said I know very good friend at the University of Illinois Press, a big-time press, and that's how it happened. I got the book published at University of Illinois and it came out in 1986.

The Hill was so different than Ybor City. Religion was the cornerstone. In fact,

it's interesting there was a priest, I think he was in the article that got me interested in the Hill. His name was Salvatore Polizzi. He was called the guerrilla priest. In 1973, he was one of the hundred most influential young Americans you know under age thirty. He had been born in St. Louis and it seemed like everyone on the Hill wanted their daughter to be a nun.

There was no reason for the Hill to still be standing. Most communities like the Hill had been bulldozed over. The housing was not superior, it was kind of in a not-great area of St. Louis surrounded by some [worse] areas. But it was a community, and that's the other thing that I really honed, was that is a community everyone seemed to want.

The government wanted to build an interstate highway through the community and they did but [Polizzi and the church] got them to put in an overpass. That galvanized the community in the early seventies, and [Polizzi] created this organization called Hill 2000. He said, "I want everyone in the community to agree that if you sell your house, you will sell it to the Hill 2000 nonprofit. We promise you will get top dollar, you can even work with us. We want to ensure that the new families are the right fit and that doesn't simply mean white. We'd like to get Italians, but we want people committed. Are you willing to coach soccer? Are you willing to do Meals on Wheels? There was a place called Rosa's bocce court at a tavern with an arbor of grapes growing over it.

Polizzi more than anyone else saved the community. From the first time we met I got off on the wrong foot. I think he saw me as an interloper, that he knew a lot more about this; he was suspicious, and I could never get him on my side. I said

wonderful things about him and ironically the book wins this prize from the American Catholic Historical Society.

The book is about to be published and the guy from the University of Illinois press, since I'd also interviewed Yogi Berra and Joe Garagiola, there's a chapter on sports in there. Garagiola liked it so much he was telling me, I'm getting you on the Today Show. Unbeknownst to anyone he sends it to Polizzi; then I get a call from the publisher, he's saying, "bad news. The priest demands that you delete a chapter in the book." There's a chapter called "A Still On the Hill" about prohibition. Everyone I interviewed was eager to talk about prohibition. It seemed like there must have been a bootleg still in everyone's basement but it did not lead to dysfunction and crime, it led to upward mobility.

Your first home would be the basement. My uncle had a place like that, it was just a basement with a flat roof about three feet above the ground. If you had money later you build a floor on top of that. Seemingly, they weren't even drinking the stuff. They had their Chianti and things, but it was a kind of positive aspect of the community. There's no way I'm going to delete the chapter and so he said, well good luck when you return to the Hill.

I haven't seen him since but I gave a talk about two years ago on the Hill. This group invited me back and many of the children of the people I interviewed were there. Someone comes up and said Father Polizzi would like to talk. Here's his phone number. I feel terrible I never called him. I still have it. If I learned a lesson there, you probably need to be a part of the community. I lived there and everything but it was a means toward an end.

I'm teaching and about this time Milliken calls UNC and the guy there I knew said, "Someone's on sabbatical, would you like to come for one year?" Lynne's from Decatur Illinois. It's two hours from St. Louis. So I did that and the guy came back. During [giving] my first final examination, this would be in December 1974, Nixon's resigned, is kind of interesting time. I tell the class "I've got great news, my wife is pregnant" and she had just found out. Afterwards three coeds come up and they said haven't you read [The Population Bomb]. They were indignant, how can you bring up a child in this world?

So June came, the job's over, Lynne delivers in July, so I spend a year babysitting Amy and finishing the dissertation. I had no car, there was nowhere to go even if I wanted to take the stroller. I had a radio. I taught my first and third years [as a post-graduate student]. I don't think there was ever any optimism on my side that this was going to be permanent. The first salary I made was nine thousand a year in 1974 and in 1976 I made twelve thousand. I even applied for a policeman's job there.

I was about to take my physical exam and I had been to a conference in Atlanta where I met the guy and I interviewed at the University of South Florida. They wanted someone in immigration. John Behllovak was on the committee and they asked me to come back to campus. I came back in May of 1977, I got the job offer. Luckily, we sold our house easily enough. In those days we were in the quarter system and classes didn't begin till late September. The reason I know it was August, Elvis had died. In transit, I was in Chattanooga [where the] waitress was in tears and she said, "Honey, the king has died."

We bought a place in Temple Terrace and I badly needed a haircut. On 56<sup>th</sup> Street, [I found the] newly-opened Temple Terrace Barber College. There are three students, pimply seventeen year-olds and about a 65 or 70- year-old guy with a Van Dyke beard and the guy says “you choose.” The old guy is humming a little Italian opera as he’s cutting my hair. At the end I said, “Please don't think I'm being nosy, but why would you at your age think about barber college?” He said, “I just retired from 40 years of teaching at the University of Tampa and my pension is so bad I need extra income.” I'm about to start my career. I wrote this up years later I think it was my 30th year in Tampa. I wrote it in Leland Hawes’s column but I never got the guy’s name. Three of the students wrote me and said “you've answered our question. We were walking by Wolf Brothers, a downtown men's store, and we noticed that our former music professor was cutting hair.”

I had never heard of Ybor City. Even at UNC which specializes in southern history, I can't ever recall Florida being mentioned. A blank-slate would be too kind. Most of the research on the Hill book was finished and I think my first day in Tampa I went to see Tony Pizzo. I swear it was the first or second day. He couldn't have been nicer and looking back at it I'm a very lucky guy. Things fell in place. It is also the un-Hill. On the Hill religion was the cornerstone; here it was almost an annoying institution. [On the Hill,] there was no labor movement and there was also no documents. [In Ybor,] you had documents.

At the time very few people had studied Ybor. There was this guy named Duward Long. I have always been curious

why he didn't do a book. He was a very good historian. I'm not sure there was anything else in English. A woman named Gloria Jahoda did a couple books at that time [in which] Ybor is casually mentioned. I probably would not have studied Ybor had it not been for one of my UNC buddies George Pozetta.

Both George Pozetta and David Coburn arrived a year before me. Both of them had been Marine captains in Vietnam. How many Vietnam vet professors do you know? I bet you can name them on one hand. These guys were smart; they were both married, had kids, they had Master's degrees. Clearly they were [advancing quickly], ready to move on with their lives, and they're also very disciplined.

George was studying New York Italians at UNC, an unlikely place for both of us to be studying Italian immigrants. North Carolina may have had the fewest number of Italian immigrants in America, but we were there and then George and I became very close friends. He got a job at the University of Florida. Mike Gannon hired him in '71-'72. George was a year into doing a history of Italians in Ybor City. George did not have to say, “Let's do this together.” I think George realized we were a really good team: a classic co-authorship. I was a better stylist than George, George was a better analyst. He liked to look at you know the where this fits in the big picture. I never really liked that and he knew I had the ability to interview these people, I was here. It made a formidable team. Back to back books.

It's also a miracle were even having this conversation. It was a very tense time in the history department and again I blame some of it on myself. It was an immensely talented department; that was one of the

problems. There was so much talent and so little money and I didn't subscribe to some of the politics of the time. When I came up for tenure the first time I had contracts with the Hill book and it was "in press." They definitely sent a message to me; they turned me down. I got a zero for research. Technically it wasn't turning me down, it was allowing me one more chance. In hindsight, I could have very easily been let go. It was not a happy place.

In 1980, I got a one-year Fulbright fellowship to Sicily teaching. George was also going to be in Italy at that time in Florence. Lou Perez, one of the most talented people I ever knew, probably the best stylist. I don't know anyone who writes more and better. Lou said, "You're out of your mind taking the Fulbright because you need to get your book out [to earn tenure]." I was defiant, I'm going to go. Consequently, I got not a dime from the University [for Sicily]. From the research and language point of view, it was worth it. It's always been one of the highlights of my life and I was able to get invaluable research both on the Hill book and Tampa with the archives there.

It also changed my path. I remember when I was in [Sicily] in '81, I would go in every week to the American Embassy library in Rome. It was a tumultuous year in Florida. I'd go in and read *The International Herald Tribune* and Florida is in flames, you had the race riots in Miami, the Haitian boatpeople, Mariel and I'm thinking when I get these two books done I think I'm going to make a transition to Florida. It seemed to me that at that time there weren't many people studying Florida and this is going to become a pretty important state. I realized only at that time that the greatest story in my lifetime maybe

was happening in Florida every day. I'll have tenure, so if I write a book I'm not gonna write an academic book, I'm going to write a popular book. So that was a very critical time.

George and I went down there [Santo Stefano, Sicily]; we arrived St. Joseph's Day. Tony Pizzo gave us the name of the school principal. He took both of us, took our arms and we walked down the Main Street. He would just kind of nod to people and saying "the Americans have arrived." The Italian anti-defamation league is organizing and it's this period they call the ethnic revival. The buttons, "Kiss me, I'm Italian!"

[I tried and failed to interview Santo Trafficante.] I did interview Danny Alvarez [in] Seminole Heights where Danny Alvarez is; poor guy just lost one his legs to diabetes, but his story is worthy of a screenplay. He's a young kid during the Spanish Civil War his father is obviously very supportive of the Republican side and then Franco triumphed. The father comes home gives his sons hugs which he thought was strange. He goes back, shoots his boss who's a Franco sympathizer, and then kills himself. His poor kid is essentially an orphan and he gets a job at a Seminole Heights drug store run by Curtis Hixon, who becomes a city councilman, and Alvarez may be the first Latin policeman there. Hixon brings him on as his bag man and he's telling me about making these pickups during elections. He'd say "I'd get a hundred, two hundred." I said "dollars?" He said, "No, hundreds of thousands." He'd take money to Tallahassee.

I interviewed [Tampa Mayor] Nick Nuccio three times; he would always dress up. The poor man if he ever had money he took illegally, he was hiding it, because he

would wear a suit that had holes that moths had eaten. I'd go down to Ybor City twice a week, often to the Italian Club, Cuban Club, and there would always be people there and those having coffee. I don't think anyone ever turned me down. The only one who turned me down was the crazy man at El Pasaje, Jose [Luis] Avellanal.

USF did not have an oral history program at that time. UF gave me the tapes and I don't think they transcribed all of them; eventually I think USF transcribed the rest. The other thing that cannot be underestimated is [USF Tampa] Special Collections. I don't know if [director] J. Dobkin had any great interest in Ybor but was willing to support [relevant collections]

and probably change the direction of the Special Collections. The Pizzo and Hampton Dunn collections were huge [acquisitions]. Glenn Westfall should be given credit for bringing in the cigar label collections, Osterweil. Looking back at it the real story is just the synergy between the history department and Special Collections.

When we all arrived this was a very understudied city. It wasn't the most harmonious group. You had Nancy Hewitt, Lou Perez, Robert Snyder in American Studies, Jack Moore, Glenn Westfall, Bob Kerstein. Bob and I arrived the same year. Bob was in St. Louis when I was in St. Louis [but] we didn't know one another.

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*Andrew Huse is an archivist and historian in Tampa. He is employed at the University of South Florida Tampa Library's Special Collections.*



## Finding Relics in the Burgert Brothers Photographs

Bill Harris

The Burgert Brothers Photographic Collection presents a pictorial record of the commercial, residential, and social growth of Tampa Bay and Florida's West coast from the mid-1800s to the mid-1960s. The photographs came from Burgert Brothers Inc., a commercial photography studio founded in 1917 after Al and Jean Burgert purchased William A. Fishbaugh's commercial photography studio.<sup>1</sup> The Burgert Brothers' studio took approximately 80,000 photos during its operation up to the mid-1960s. After the Burgert Brothers Studio closed, the photographs and negatives were stored in a tin-roofed garage in South Tampa. Many negatives were destroyed by heat, humidity, and rain.

In 1974, the Friends of the Library for the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public

Library recognized the historic significance of the photographic images and purchased the collection for the community so the Burgerts' photographs would be accessible to the public.<sup>2</sup> The Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library has over 15,000 Burgert Brothers photos in its collection and houses the collection at the Florida History & Genealogy Library located at the John F. Germany Public Library. The library also has 14 ledgers that were utilized by the studio to record the details of the photos. In book 14, there is a section titled "Relics." There are many parts to this collection that can be researched and discussed, but we are going to concentrate on the content, time period, and photographers of the Relic sub-collection for this article.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Snyder and Jack B. Moore, *Pioneer Commercial Photography - The Burgert Brothers Tampa, Florida* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1992), 12.

<sup>2</sup> "Collection History & Preservation," *Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative*, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017, [http://hcplc.org/hcplc/research/burgert/history\\_burgert.html](http://hcplc.org/hcplc/research/burgert/history_burgert.html).



Burgert Brothers Photography Studio at 407 East Lafayette Street, front facade with entrance and porch: Tampa, Fla.  
Negative number. R179 (BB10) | Print number 470 – Taken July 20, 1922  
Courtesy, Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System

In their ledgers, the Burgert Brothers did not define what classified a photo as a Relic. In their book about the Burgert Brothers, Robert E. Snyder and Jack Moore state that older negatives from the Fishbaugh collection, including glass-plate negatives, were marked with an R, apparently for Relic.<sup>3</sup> However, since we have an inventory of the glass-plate negatives the Friends of the Library purchased in 1974, we know that only some of the glass-plate negatives were signified as Relics. We also know that the negatives included more than just photos from William A. Fishbaugh, since a vast majority of the Relic photos are after 1917, which is

the date the Burgerts purchased the studio from Fishbaugh.

The earliest subject matter shown in the ledger as a Relic photo is from 1846. However, the photograph was likely taken much later. The photo is of an engraving of Fort Brooke. The caption at the bottom of the photo says “Scene at Tampa Bay, Florida 1846.” In *Yesterday’s Tampa*, Hampton Dunn states that the photo is of the Old Carew Homestead at Franklin and Platt streets in the year 1846. Dr. Edmund S. Carew was a pioneer Tampan who acquired a huge tract of land for homesteading.<sup>4</sup> Karl Grismer, in his book on the history of this

<sup>3</sup> Robert E. Snyder and Jack B. Moore, *Pioneer Commercial Photography - The Burgert Brothers Tampa, Florida* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1992), 78.

<sup>4</sup> Hampton Dunn, *Yesterday’s Tampa* (Miami, FL: E. A. Seemann Publishing, Inc., 1972), 16.

area, contends that Dr. Carew arrived in Tampa on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1883 and moved into the officers' quarters.<sup>5</sup> This would suggest

that this photo depicts the officers' quarters in 1846, where Franklin and Platt streets are located today in downtown Tampa.



City Hall on southwest corner of Florida Avenue and Lafayette Street, with Police Department: Tampa, Fla.

Negative number. R156| Print number 307 – Taken July 20, 1922

Courtesy, Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System

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<sup>5</sup> Karl H. Grismer, *Tampa – A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida* (St.

Petersburg, Fl.: The St. Petersburg Printing Company, Inc., 1950), 169.



Copy of engraving showing activity at Fort Brooke: Tampa, Fla.  
Negative number. R289 | Print number 559 – Engraving from 1846  
Courtesy, Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System

The second-oldest subject matter is a copy of a photo of Seminole chief Billy Bowlegs posed in Indian attire. The caption below the photo says 1852. Billy Bowlegs was the Seminole leader during the Third Seminole War and ended up leaving the state at the end of the war in 1858.<sup>6</sup> Tony Pizzo states in *Tampa Town* that the original

daguerreotype for this photo was owned by Theodore Lesley, who was a Hillsborough County historian when the book was written.<sup>7</sup> These two photos demonstrate that the Burgerts were more than willing to obtain photos taken by others and add them to their Relic Collection.

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<sup>6</sup> Karl H. Grismer, *Tampa – A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida* (St. Petersburg, Fl.: The St. Petersburg Printing Company, Inc., 1950), 126.

<sup>7</sup> Anthony P. Pizzo, *Tampa Town 1824 – 1886 The Cracker Village With A Latin Accent* (Miami, Fl.: Hurricane House Publishers, Inc., 1968),



Seminole leader Billy Bowlegs posed in Indian attire: Florida  
Negative number. R290 | Print number 560 – Taken 1852  
Courtesy, Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System

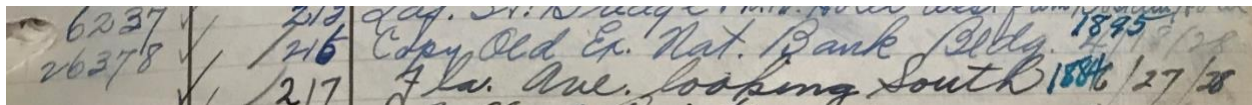
Most of the Relic entries in the ledger are for photos taken from the 1880s to the 1920s. There are a few scattered photo entries from the 1930s and one photo from 1940.



Airplane on the tarmac of Peter O. Knight Airport on Davis Islands  
Negative number R474 (v2219) | Print number 560 – Taken December 20, 1940  
Courtesy, University of South Florida Special Collections

There are 481 photo entries for the Relic section in the ledger. Three of the entries are duplicates and have two distinct Relic negative numbers. Therefore, the 478 unique Relic photos in the collection are less than 1% of the entire Burgert Brothers Photographic Collection. Many of the photos listed in the Relic section that were taken after 1917 also have entries in the other 13 ledgers. It is likely that they have two negative numbers because these photos were originally taken by the Burgerts and logged at that time. It was a later decision to add these photos to the Relic Collection. We may never know the whole reason for creating new entries for these photos, but it suggests that the Burgerts wanted to give added significance to these entries. It is also very possible that

different employees, photographers, or even owners during this time period had varying opinions on what made a relic, especially considering the date range of the entries. We do not know how long the Burgerts were adding to this particular ledger or when they started the ledger, but it is safe to assume that it was being modified over decades. For example, you can see in the sample below that Relic 217 was taken in 1884, but was copied into the ledger in 1928. This demonstrates that it is likely the photos before Relic 217 were copied into the Relic ledger before the year 1928. This is also a good example of the different colored inks you will see on the ledger pages. The varied inks likely shows that the photographers made modifications over time.

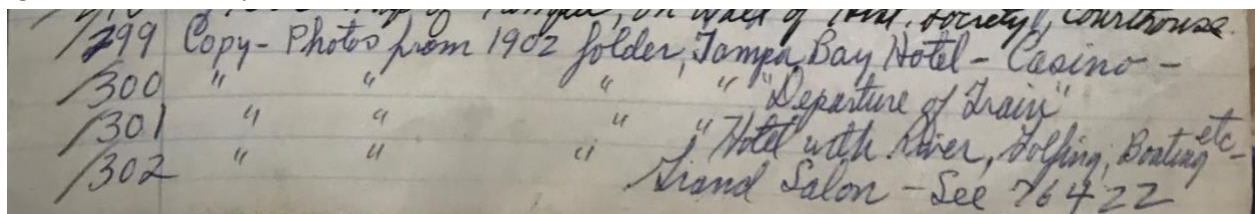


Ledger Sample from Ledger 14 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Page in Relics Section - Courtesy, Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System

The second example shown below gives another snapshot of when a particular entry was written. In the relic entry for #302, the ledger refers to 76422. The entry for 76422 shows that the copy of a 1902 photo of the Grand Salon in the Tampa Bay Hotel was taken in 1958. This entry was after Al Severson and Thiel Burgert, who was a nephew to the

brothers, purchased the studio and the Burgert brothers left the photography business in the 40s.<sup>8</sup>

The firm recorded the first half of the records in the late teens or 1920s, and the last half toward the end of the Burgert Brothers Inc. corporate life span from 1958 to the mid-1960s.



Ledger Sample from Ledger 14 – 5th Page in Relics Section - Courtesy, Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System

<sup>8</sup> Robert E. Snyder and Jack B. Moore, *Pioneer Commercial Photography - The Burgert Brothers*

*Tampa, Florida* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1992), 14.

The Burgert family came to Tampa in the mid-1890s. The father and all of the sons were involved at some time during their lives in the photographic industry. One of the first newspaper articles in the Tampa Bay area that includes a Burgert photograph is from January 1896. It mentions that Willy Burgert will be delayed from returning from Key West. The article also mentions that he is an Ybor City photographer and a volunteer fireman.<sup>9</sup> The Burgert family's studio first appeared in 1897.<sup>10</sup>

We know some of the photos included in the collection were not created by the Burgerts. One example is Relic 103, which was taken by pioneer photographer James Cooley Field.<sup>11</sup> Mr. Field was a member of the Tampa City Council and one of the first commercial photographers in this area.<sup>12</sup> It was taken at the county courthouse and shows the intersection of what is today called Florida Avenue and Kennedy Boulevard, but at that time was known as Monroe and Lafayette streets.



Intersection of Monroe and Lafayette streets, viewed west from Court House: Tampa, Fla.  
Negative number. R102 | Print number 77 – Taken 1882  
Courtesy, Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System

The Relic Collection also includes many of W.A. Fishbaugh's work from his studio. One example is Relic 369, which shows Main

Street in West Tampa with a view east from the Howard Avenue intersection. This photo was taken in 1911, which is likely the start

<sup>9</sup> "No headline," *Tampa Tribune* (Tampa, Fl.), Jan. 28, 1896.

<sup>10</sup> "As Quick As a Wink," *Tampa Tribune* (Tampa, Fl.), Aug. 4, 1897.

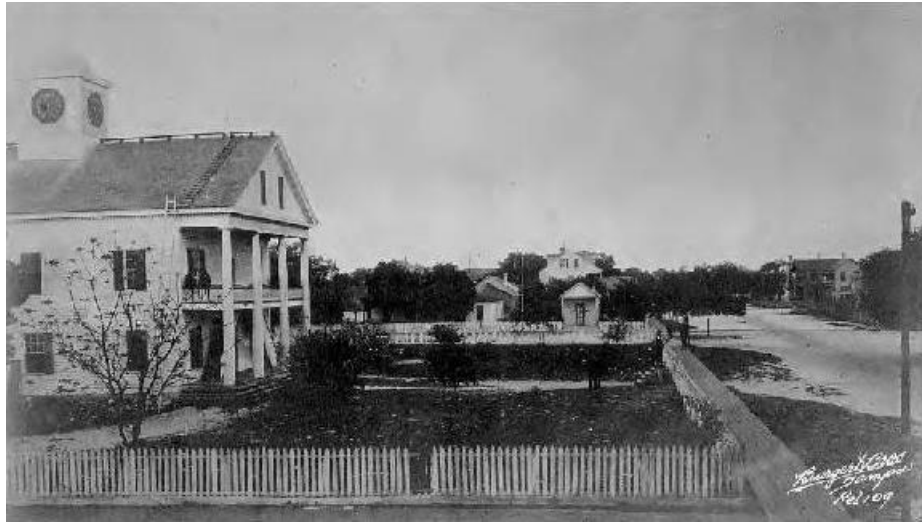
<sup>11</sup> Anthony P. Pizzo, *Tampa Town 1824 – 1886 - The Cracker Village With A Latin Accent* (Miami, Fl.: Hurricane House Publishers, Inc., 1968), 40.

<sup>12</sup> Leland Hawes, "Photographer snapped up business," *Tampa Tribune* (Tampa, Fl.), Aug. 15, 1993.



of Fishbaugh's studio in Tampa. On the bottom of the photo you can note his signature. West Tampa was incorporated on

May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1895 and became part of Tampa on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1925.<sup>13</sup> This is one of the few photos available of West Tampa's center.



Hillsborough County Courthouse, Lafayette Street entrance, looking east from intersection with Franklin Street: Tampa, Fla.  
Negative number. R109 (V555) | Print number 83 – Taken 1885  
Courtesy, Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System



Main Street, view east from intersection of Howard Avenue: Tampa, Fla.  
Negative number R369 (V13) | Print number 617 – Taken 1911

<sup>13</sup> Karl H. Grismer, Tampa – A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida (St.

Petersburg, Fl.: The St. Petersburg Printing Company, Inc., 1950), 302.



Courtesy, Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System

Note: The signature is in the bottom right, which has been enlarged in the second image.

The vast majority of the relics were taken by the Burgert Brothers studio after 1917. Relic 381 is one of the more popular photos in this collection. It shows passengers on a sidewalk in front of the Tampa Union Station. The contract for building the train station was for \$100,000 and was awarded in 1911 by the Tampa Union Station

Company, headed by Peter O' Knight. Tampa Union Station was completed on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1912.<sup>14</sup> This photo was taken ten years later in 1922; it is another example of a Burgert photo with multiple negative numbers. It is included in another ledger under the negative number V350.



Passengers on sidewalk in front of the Tampa Union Station: Tampa, Fla.  
Negative number R381(V350)| Print number 623 – Taken May 12, 1922  
Courtesy, Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System

The Burgert Brothers Photographic Collection is an important resource for any researcher interested in learning more about the Tampa Bay area. We are very fortunate that the Friends of the Library

were able to purchase this collection in 1974 so that future generations can see these photographs of our past. The Relics

<sup>14</sup> Karl H. Grismer, *Tampa – A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida* (St.

Petersburg, Fl.: The St. Petersburg Printing Company, Inc., 1950), 237.

are just a sample of the fascinating photos included in this collection.



Parade on Zack Street (400-600 blocks) honoring World War I draftees, with uniformed troops: Tampa, Fla.  
Negative number R348 (V137) | Print number 600 – Taken September 19, 1917  
Courtesy, Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System

In September 2017, the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Burgert Brothers studio with a series of events. The collection is housed at the Florida History and Genealogy Library located at the John F. Germany Public Library in downtown

Tampa. The Burgert Brothers Photographic Collection is also a part of the library's digital collections which can be found on our website: <http://www.hcplc.org>. We hope that after reading this article you will stop by the library or go online to enjoy this important collection.

## The Haunting of Egmont Key: A Soldier's Story

Carlo G. Spicola Jr



*For Antoinette, my loving wife and best friend for over one half century. Thank you for always being there for me.*

*I have been urged by family, friends and associates over the past half century to put my research of history, particularly local and military history, to print. Over thirty years ago while serving as a City of Tampa Councilman, I called for a thousand volunteers to form once again the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry Regiment 'Rough Riders' so as to celebrate 'Roosevelt's visit to Tampa in 1898. This was successful and the organization survives to this day involving itself in charitable, educational and historic preservations projects. This work is a result of some of that research.*

It was deep in the winter of 1896 when John O'Neil left home in Scranton, Pennsylvania. His mother had been widowed several years before when her husband was killed in a steel mill accident. No social security or company insurance policies were available in those days, so she endeavored to keep her home and household going by taking in boarders as well as washing and cooking for others. John had obtained the equivalent of a third grade education through his mother's efforts and the helpfulness of some of her boarders. It was from one of the boarders, Señor de la Cruz, a peculiar older fellow, with grey hair, beard and a heavy Spanish accent that John had learned of silver prospecting in New Mexico. Indeed, Señor de la Cruz had told many tales of adventure while prospecting in New Mexico. He related that on one stormy night he had taken refuge in a large crevasse or narrow cave on the side of a mountain in the New Mexico Jemez Range and by force of habit had taken a few sample stones from the narrow opening. He had hurriedly left the next morning heading for an area near Los Alamos where several recent silver strikes had been made. He had that evening built a roaring campfire, inspected the stones and discovered them to appear to be over 75% pure silver ore. He could never find the site again but did find a vein of silver later on in the Nacimiento Mountains, enough to retire on once he sold his claim.

When John had reached New Mexico, he had found towns such as Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Santa Fe and Silver City to be roaring boomtowns with all the appearance and activities of earlier

"Gold Rush Days" in California. It was 1897 and John had stayed clear of the towns as much as possible that first year, other than visiting for supplies and taking advantage of the local "watering holes" and "bawdy houses" that inevitably spring up when and where necessity dictates. Otherwise, he stayed clear of "civilization".

It was early August of 1897, when John, having worked over eight months in the Jemez Mountain Range, hit pay dirt. It appeared to be the same crevasse Señor de la Cruz had by chance found, taken refuge in and lost several years before. The ore was spectacularly rich, nearly 80% pure. The distance between his strike and the nearest claims office was forty miles as the crow flies and nearly three times that distance by the Indian trace paths and trails of that period. He wasted no time getting there and filing his claim.

John's pack mules could only carry about four hundred pounds of ore each and an abundance of outlaws in that area made for very dangerous trips from his mine to buyers in Albuquerque.

Seven months of pure mining took its toll on John, as he was used to hard work but mining was brutal labor. In addition one had to keep an eye open at all times for claims jumpers and bandits. It was February of 1898 when he brought what was to be his final load of ore to Albuquerque. The Battleship *Maine* had exploded and sunk in Havana Cuba's Harbor and war fever was abundant. News of Spain's cruelties directed at Cubans incited anger among New Mexico's citizens. O'Neil was taken up with war fever, too. On March 9<sup>th</sup>, Congress

unanimously appropriated \$50 million to be used by the President for national defense. On April 20 President McKinley demanded Spain withdraw from Cuba and within days, five companies of Georgia Militia arrived in Tampa, followed by New York's 69th Regiment. The units camped side by side in Tampa's Desoto Park, The Georgia Militia clothed in Confederate Gray and the 69th New York in Regular U.S. Army Blue, an unusual sight over 30 years after the U.S. Civil War.



President McKinley, within two months of the *Maine's* destruction and after intense but fruitless negotiations with Spain, asked for a declaration of War. Heavy lobbying by Assistant Secretary of The Navy Theodore Roosevelt and Colonel Leonard Wood resulted in permission to form a one-thousand-man volunteer western cavalry unit under Colonel Leonard Wood and newly commissioned Lt. Colonel Theodore Roosevelt. O'Neil quickly sold his claim, packed up some silver he had smelted and had it shipped to his mother in Scranton, Pennsylvania via wagon, then train. The letter he mailed her to tell of its shipment was never delivered. Then, along with one

hundred and seventy nine others from New Mexico, traveled to San Antonio, Texas to join Roosevelt's "Rough Riders." Volunteers were being mustered in from The Arizona, Oklahoma, and The Indian Territories as well as Texas, with a smattering coming in from many other areas including a few New York City Policemen and Ivy League Athletes. Hispanics, American Indians, Former Western Indian Fighters and Lawmen, many were tough and wild cowboys, some hardened miners and a few undoubtedly wanted men. A number of millionaires were included in their ranks as well. O'Neil did not quite reach that lofty status but with the sale of his claim he had moved in that direction when he had joined up.

The regiment having been put together and trained during the month of May, 1898 was eager and ready to leave San Antonio, Texas. The four day trip to Tampa, Florida, the port of embarkation, would prove to be tedious but stimulating. The night before leaving San Antonio, a concert was held honoring the regiment.



The music was conducted by the most famous band master in all of Texas,



Professor Beck, to signify closure at the end of the concert, three Rough Riders were to stand and fire their blank loaded pistols in the air. When the presentation ended, the three stood and fired. Suddenly, bedlam broke loose as hundreds of viewing Rough Riders, thinking they should do the same, arose and fired their loaded pistols into the air. Thousands of viewers in the audience panicked as hundreds of live round projectiles fell to the earth, virtually as a shower of metal.



*Rough Riders Training with Colt Machine Guns, Donated by Tiffany's*

It took seven locomotives and seven sizeable train sections to transport over 1200 horses and mules as well as to carry 999 Rough Riders to Tampa. The first stop was in New Orleans, Louisiana, where the men were given supervised permission to

visit the French Quarter. The quarter in 1898 was literally without inhibition. Houses of ill repute, oyster, beer and whiskey joints were plentiful and varied. Some advertised their wares by installing swings just inside enlarged windows and having some of the scantily clad girls swing out and over the sidewalk and over pedestrian's heads. John and many others had never seen or experienced commotion and sinful activity at such a magnitude, so they gleefully took part in it to the extreme.

The next stop was Tallahassee, Florida where news of their shenanigans had preceded them to the extent that they were met at the edge of town by citizens and law enforcement officials with food and refreshment and firmly told to stay out of town. It appeared that chickens and hogs had seemingly disappeared at nearly every rest stop made by the Rough Riders on their way towards that point in their journey to Tampa.

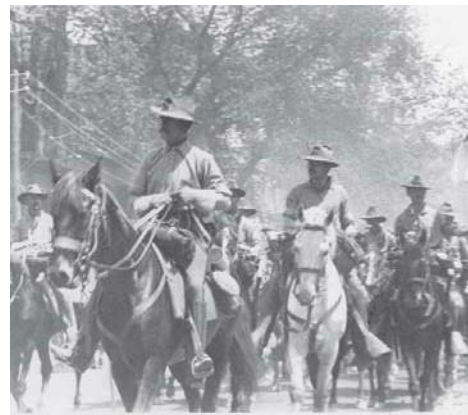
Their last stop before Tampa was Lakeland, Florida which in 1898 was a very rural farming and ranching area with very strong conservative Old South attitudes. These feelings surfaced quickly when black American troopers of the 10th Cavalry "Buffalo Soldiers" tried to get haircuts at a local barber. The barber refused and a shooting occurred leaving the barber dead and a black trooper in jail. He was later broken out by his fellow troopers. On June 1, Tom Tiger, Chief of The Seminole Indians of Florida, visited The Lakeland Camps of the Rough Riders asking if he and members of his tribe could join as scouts so as to be able to participate in the fight for Cuban Independence. Tom Tiger was at least six

and one half feet tall and created quite a sensation.

Tampa appeared to sit on pine-covered sand flats with occasional clusters of Live Oak Trees clad in Spanish moss. A collection of handmade wooden buildings and houses occupied most of the town except for the nearby Ybor City section's cigar factories, some of which were constructed of red brick. The greatest exception was the Tampa Bay Hotel, itself made of red brick, with several beautiful silver Moorish minarets crowning its roof. It was at this enormous winter hotel, that the army expeditionary force commanded by Major General William R. Shafter made its headquarters. At night, it was ablaze with light and music from its band was heard for miles in the darkness and silence of the surrounding town. The exception being the red brick El Pasaje Hotel and gaming palace, recently erected by the owners of the Ybor & Manrara Cigar Factory along with a nearby brewery. The Ybor Cigar Manufacturing and Latin Quarter District was about two miles away from the Tampa Bay Hotel. Tampa's main three industries in 1898 were cigars, fish and beer, in that order.

Upon their arrival, the Rough Riders Regiment traveled mounted through town along with their supplies loaded upon commandeered wagons. They were stopped by the Tampa Police Chief and presented with a Tampa City Council petition to "Keep Teddy's Terrors" within camp bounds. The petition was quickly disposed of by Colonel Leonard Wood, The Rough Riders senior commander.

The regiment rested for one day, then began drilling, first on foot then on horse. It was later learned that all cavalry units would have to leave their horses behind in Tampa due to a shortage of transports. In the evening, those who could afford it were given leave to visit local establishments for their refreshment and/or amusement. John O'Neil, having a number of fellow New Mexican troopers of Spanish descent always at his side and having learned a good bit of the Spanish language in the past year, blended in well with the local Spanish/Cuban population. Tampa Town's population in 1898 contained thousands of individuals of Spanish and Italian descent and nearly all favored Cuban independence from Spain. In fact many of those same ethnic groups had given cash donations directly to Cuban independence leader Jose Marti several years before, upon his last visit to Tampa. (Donors of \$5.00 in gold, more than a week's salary in 1894, included the grandfather of this writer.)



Tampa was divided into four sections in June of 1898 – The Ybor City Latin Quarter District, old Fort Brooke, Downtown Tampa which included the Tampa Bay Hotel and Port Tampa which

was about eight miles distant from the other three. All had their special items of interest.

The Ybor City District had become in just a few years “The Cigar Manufacturing Capital of the World.” Its Latin-majority population spoke Spanish and most worked in the cigar industry. Old Fort Brooke contained the remnants of Tampa’s earliest military post that had been active during the Seminole Indian wars, as well as a Confederate facility during the Civil War. The Fort was closed in 1882 and partially occupied by squatters and individuals who set up low-brow establishments out of the reach of local lawmen. Port Tampa was a shipping area nearest the deep water channels to the Gulf of Mexico. Immediately adjacent to it sprang up a ramshackle boom town called “Last Chance City” solely to supply “the needs” of the soldiers before they boarded the transports for the invasion of Cuba.



At one point on June 7th as the transports began to take on soldiers, supplies and equipment, there was a line over a quarter mile long leading upstairs over one shabby “Last Chance City” sundry store.

John O’Neil had brought along over \$1,000 in gold and silver coins, considered a

small fortune in those days and just a small part of his earnings from mining and the sale of his claim. He and his close New Mexican fellow troopers gravitated to the “Cherokee Club” located in Ybor City’s El Pasaje Hotel. The hotel and club had been erected by The Ybor & Manrara Cigar Manufacturing Co. to entertain important cigar dealers and distributors from all over the world. Accommodations or service of any kind was available there.

On his first visit to the Cherokee Club one evening, John had met a beautiful lady, possibly a server, in its restaurant area. Her name was Antonia DeTavola. He was struck by her classic beauty and charm. Her parents had emigrated to the U.S. from Sicily a few years before and had the misfortune of contracting yellow fever and passing away a year before. Antonia had tried working in the cigar factories but her fair skin had reacted badly to tobacco. John learned that she was of noble birth with ancestor’s traceable back to the time of the Eastern Roman Empire. The brutal advance of the Ottoman Empire’s Armies had forced family predecessors and tens of thousands of others to flee to Italy and Sicily. John spent every off-duty hour with Antonia utilizing the surprisingly modern Tampa Electric Street Car Line to tour the city and lunch at The Tampa Bay Hotel as well as at Ybor’s Las Novedades Restaurant. It was a torrid affair, only three remarkable evenings and parts of three days before Most Rough Riders, including John, were ordered to Port Tampa, eight miles distant, to board a ship for Cuba. He had offered to marry her but she was afraid and had refused, citing it was too soon and that they



would marry upon his return, a decision she immediately and forever regretted.



*The Tampa Bay Hotel hosted TR Roosevelt & Army Headquarters*

Chaos reigned as the transports loaded at Port Tampa. Several regiments of a thousand men each were regularly assigned the same ship, capable of holding less than one half that many. The Rough Riders fared no better after first having to commandeer a coal train to convey them eight miles to Port Tampa. They were allowed to take less than 600 of their 1000 man regiment and only a few officers' horses along with some mules.



When the invasion force had completed loading, they pulled out into the channel to await orders to depart. During the delay of several days, people set fire to "Last Chance City" near the shore line. A spectacular fire resulted, quite entertaining to the bored shipboard troopers. On June 13, 1898, the invasion force now called the 5th Corps finally sailed for Cuba, past Tampa's lighthouse on Egmont Key at the Mouth of Tampa Bay. Nine days of steaming brought them off the coast of Daiquiri, Cuba, a small coastal town near Santiago de Cuba. The shoreline was bombarded with naval cannon, the troops were then put ashore in lifeboats, horses were thrown overboard so as to make their own way ashore. After one night's rest, the "Rough Riders" were marched up the coast to the town of Siboney to rest and await reinforcements for the upcoming battles.

Early the next morning the regiment marched towards Santiago to an intersection of two trails in a heavily forested area called Las Guasimas. Upon approaching the crossroads, a dead Cuban insurgent was found on the trail, prompting the Rough Riders to disperse to the left and right. The movement had not yet been completed when the Spanish opened fire with their Mauser rifles, utilizing smokeless powder which made it difficult to spot them. Captain Allyn Capron and Sergeant Hamilton Fish were acting as point for the advance, in skirmish line fashion, under heavy Spanish Mauser fire. Within minutes that seemed like an eternity they had helped force a Spanish retreat at the cost of their lives. The "Rough Riders" had sustained thirty-four wounded and seven

killed. The dead were quickly gathered and buried alongside one another at the summit of the Las Guasimas Trail before the dreaded Cuban land crabs could get to them.



Several days had elapsed as the American Army's 5th Corps moved slowly toward Santiago. The first obstacles were a line of forts and entrenchments stretching from the town of El Caney to Kettle Hill and San Juan Hill, surrounding Santiago. The objective of the cavalry units, including the Rough Riders, was Kettle Hill, while the infantry targeted San Juan Hill and the fortified town of El Caney. The bombardment of El Caney began the day's fighting followed by a frontal assault by General Lawton's Infantry Division on its fortifications. A severe and brutal charge with fixed bayonets was ordered and after intense fighting the town was captured. Prior to the assault, many U.S soldiers had pinned their names on their backs so as to be readily identified should they fall in battle, a practice not unknown during The U.S. Civil War. The cavalry units and General Hawkins's Infantry advanced upon hearing the cannon bombardment of El Caney. The advance and disbursement of the regiments

was particularly hazardous in that their movements were easily visible to the entrenched Spanish troops in their fortified hillside positions. Many cavalymen were killed or wounded as they dispersed and lay under scant cover awaiting orders to advance, which seemed an eternity in coming.

Roosevelt was near desperate to charge the hillside. He sent messenger after messenger asking for orders to advance, as his men were suffering greatly from Spanish Mauser fire. Finally Lt. Col. Dorst on horseback rushed up to Col. Roosevelt with permission from General Sumner to "advance and assault the hill to your front."

Roosevelt's crowded hour had begun. He leaped upon his horse and ordered the men forward in skirmish column formation. The men first moved forward slowly, then more and more rapidly. They took casualties and exchanged fire with the entrenched Spanish troops. Finally, nearing the hilltop they leapt forward at a run until they swarmed over the Spanish trenches. Roosevelt having been fired at virtually point blank by a Spanish soldier, returned fire and killed his assailant. Upon taking Kettle Hill, the Rough Riders directed their fire at nearby San Juan Hill which was being assaulted by elements of Gen. Kent's infantry Division led by Gen. Hawkins. At nearly the same instant Lt. Parker's Gatling guns opened up on the Spanish positions, at first startling the Rough Riders, then causing them to cheer. The first Rough Riders to reach the hilltop were of Troops G, E and F. John O'Neil, of course, was in E Troop and virtually the first to reach the top uninjured, having clubbed

senseless two Spanish soldiers with the butt of his empty carbine after emptying his magazine into several others. The regiment along with the two other dismounted cavalry units rested only momentarily before moving forward to the next line of hills fully in sight of Santiago. There, they encountered heavy air-bursting artillery fire from the city itself which incurred casualties among the Rough Riders and other units. Spanish snipers also inflicted casualties until proper trenches could be scraped out by hand, rifle butt or the few digging tools available. The final siege of Santiago de Cuba had begun.

That evening the cavalymen lay in their shallow scraped-out depressions shivering in the coolness of the night and the settling dew, when at 4:00 a.m. rifle fire broke out from the Spanish lines and a fitful counterattack had begun. It was immediately beaten back by combined rifle fire from United States cavalry and infantrymen and the firing died out within a few minutes.

The next day Lt. Parker brought up his Gatling gun and placed it alongside the "Rough Riders", along with their Colt machine guns and a dynamite gun they had brought (forerunner of the modern portable mortar). In days to come they were used effectively against well-entrenched Spanish positions.

On the second and third day of the siege it became apparent that Spanish sharpshooters and guerillas were inflicting more casualties than the enemy regulars. It appeared that many of their positions had been overrun by rapid U.S. advances and

they had no time to escape. It was later learned that they had been told that U.S. troops showed no mercy or quarter if one surrendered. These "snipers" would shoot medical personnel, the wounded, water bearers, all with indifference. It became an unbearable situation so Col. Roosevelt sent out twenty hand-picked men and moved them into the jungle before dawn so as to spend the entire next day searching for the snipers and any other unfortunate Spaniards who exposed themselves. This they did with skill and daring.

It was July 4th, after three days of fighting that a truce was declared, even after which two guerillas to the rear had continued to fire on our men. Roosevelt dispatched his sharpshooters, one being John O'Neil, and the Spanish guerillas were swiftly sent into oblivion. Time passed slowly between the July 4 truce and the city's formal surrender on July 17th. Three days after the surrender, the Rough Riders were moved back to the foothills near El Caney where they went into camp. The area looked clean and healthy, but it was not, as the men were already suffering from lack of proper food as well as mosquito-borne malarial fever and the cool clear pond and creek waters contained deadly amoeba. Many of the troopers, sick or wounded, were sent back towards Siboney, most had to walk or be carried on litters. Few wanted to be sent to the makeshift hospitals which lacked cots, proper food and even cover. Many sick or wounded refused to leave the regiment and took their chances with their fellow soldiers. In many cases Roosevelt and his officers used their own money to buy fresh rations for their men. Finally by July

23, fresh meat was obtained, the men fared better but malarial fever was crippling. Yellow Fever broke out among the Cubans and caused a near panic among medical authorities in Cuba as well as in Washington D.C.



John O'Neil had contracted malaria and amoebic dysentery as well and was sent to Tampa's Egmont Key Quarantine Station, via an ill-supplied and staffed ship, where a field tent hospital had just been erected. He arrived there on July 31, 1898 with 180 other ill soldiers but no one had informed the station of their imminent arrival, hence few if any proper supplies were on hand to care for them. A great scandal erupted, mainly reported in *The New York Times*, it seems the Treasury Department was responsible for setting up the quarantine stations, only no one, particularly The War department, had informed them as to how quickly they would be needed. The Reverend Charles Herald returned on the same ship and reported the station was adjacent to a swamp of putrid stagnant water and the food was unfit for human consumption. Herald had to beg for and pay a dollar for a cup of coffee. The beautiful sandy beach was off limits to "detainees", guarded by sentinels with orders to shoot if need be. To

complicate matters, three days after their arrival, a tremendous storm blew over many of the tents which were old and leaky at best, soaking the ill, weakened soldiers. Antonia had heard of John's arrival on the Key on the day of the storm so she immediately booked passage on the day steamer that supplied the station and reached there as the exposure to cold rain extracted the last bit of John's strength. He had believed she would soon be present and had forced himself to live long enough to see her again. He passed away in her arms.



John was buried on the Island Key but disinterred in 1909 and reburied in The St. Augustine Florida Historic Military Cemetery with no mention of the war, his military unit or even date of death on his headstone until the year 2003 when discovered by the Tampa 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry Regiment "Rough Riders" In cooperation with Barbara Schmidt, a leading Egmont Key Historian and Preservationist. At their insistence and with the cooperation of the Florida National Cemetery staff of Bushnell, Florida, a new proper headstone was created and dedicated with proper military honors.



John's mother in Scranton, PA had never received his letter, but she did finally receive the proceeds of his silver mine after he had passed. She never had to labor again. Antonia never married but the results of their brief courtship produced a child and the funds John had left her in one of Tampa's two banks allowed her to purchase a small restaurant that exists to this day. John Jr. served in World War I, II and Korea, and his son in Vietnam and Desert Storm, both as highly decorated officers. His grandson presently serves in Afghanistan as a Special Forces operative, a most dangerous but necessary task.

It is now known to Egmont's more frequent visitors, that at dusk and even the very dark early morning hours, when normally all one could hear would be the soft lapping of waves on its vacant sandy shore, that movement, the sound of shuffling feet through sand and grass, along with soft voices, can barely but surely be sensed. One would wonder why until reading some of the known history of the Key.

It is known that Ponce de Leon sailed past it in 1513 in his failed quest for

gold and the fountain of Youth. In 1528, the ill-fated Panfilo de Navarez expedition passed near it with four hundred eighty men only all to die or be killed except three who finally reached Mexico. In 1567, Pedro Menendes de Aviles, founder of Saint Augustine, sailed past the key to visit Tocobaga, a Timuqua Village located near present day Safety Harbor, Florida. In 1757 Francisco Celi of Spain surveyed the Key followed by British Surveyor George Gauld in 1763 who named it Egmont after John Perceval, Second Earl of Egmont in England. In 1821 Florida became part of The United States and a state in 1845. In 1846, Congress funded a lighthouse to be constructed on Egmont. It was in operation only a short time before the hurricane of 1848 struck Tampa Bay, severely damaging the lighthouse (The Lighthouse keeper saved himself and his family by tying a rowboat to several palm trees for him and his family to ride out the storm in) and virtually destroying Tampa's Fort Brooke. In 1858 Egmont was used as a prison for Seminoles being shipped to Western Reservations and that same year a second and stronger lighthouse was completed. In 1861 The Union Navy fortified the Key to use it as a blockading station, prison and haven for runaway slaves as well as Union Sympathizers.

In 1882 it was declared a Military Reservation and in 1898 at the onset of The Spanish-American War, Fort Dade was constructed upon it, along with a Quarantine Station for soldiers returning from that conflict. The key is now a wild life refuge as well as a Florida State park. The burials on the key were many, some deaths

caused by wounds, sickness, hunger and/or despair. Of those burials many were disinterred and moved in 1909 but many others, whose wooden markings, if any, were lost to hurricanes and brush fires are unknown as to exact location. Is it any wonder why strange sounds and happenings have been heard and even observed there?



## **BOOKS OF INTEREST, REFERENCES AND SOURCES**

*The Rough Riders* by Theodore Roosevelt

*Roosevelt's Rough Riders* by Virgil Carrington Jones

*Pioneer Florida* by D.B. McKay

*Tampa* by Karl H. Grismer.

*The Story of Florida* by W. T. Cash

*Cuba and the Fight for Freedom* by James Hyde Clark

Egmont Key Preservationist Barbara Schmidt

Florida Parks Ranger Tom Watson

*The New York Times* August 15, 1861, July 28, 1887, August 4 and 12, 1898 and September 12, 1898

*The Tampa Morning Tribune* June 3 and 28, 1898

*Lighthouses of Egmont Key* by Neil E. Hurley and Geoff Mohlman

Dr. James Covington

The Spicola Family Archives

## Señoritas and Cigarmaking Women: Using 'Latin' Feminine Types to Rebrand and Market Ybor City, 1950-1962

Peer reviewed

Brad Massey and I.j. russum

"Pretty señoritas" and "tractable" cigarmaking women were two Latin female types created by marketers to promote Ybor City—historically known for industrial cigar production, Latin immigrants, and labor strife—as both a major tourist destination and continuing cigar manufacturing center after World War II. This article—through an examination of promotional materials, news accounts, and other archival sources—describes how Anthony Pizzo, Tampa mayor Curtis Hixon, and other area businesspersons and politicians used señoritas and female cigar workers to rebrand and market postwar Ybor City as a distinct and exotic hybrid space, which combined industrial production with tourist-centered consumption.

This essay opens with a description of the creation and utilization of the promotional Ybor señorita. Like the 'Southern Belle' archetype used in Mississippi and other regions of the Deep South to market Confederate Lost Cause mythology to tourists, the Tampa señorita was used by Ybor's Alcalde initiative, the Tampa Chamber of Commerce film *The Flower of Tampa*, and other promotional materials to depict Tampa as a place of hospitality and sensuality.<sup>1</sup> Yet unlike the belle, and her accompanying ensemble of plantations, magnolia trees, iced tea, and fictionalized Uncle Remus-like former slaves, Ybor boosters used señoritas to market Tampa as an exotic—but safe—borderland between Latin America and the American South.<sup>2</sup> After describing the creation and utilization of the señorita, this

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<sup>1</sup> The Alcalde program was created in 1952, and was charged with publicizing and encouraging capital investment in Ybor City. The Alcalde program/initiative is described at length later in this essay. Scholars have examined the use of female sexuality in Florida advertising and promotional campaigns, but not the 'pretty señorita' construct created by Tampa's promoters. See Nicole C. Cox, "Selling Seduction: Women and Feminine Nature in 1920s Florida Advertising," 89 (Fall 2010): 186-209 and Shemuel Fleenor, "Manufacturing the 'Magic

City': Miami From Frontier to 'Roaring Twenties,' Thesis (Ph.D.)—University of Florida, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Karen L. Cox discusses marketing a fictionalized Deep South to tourists from the late 1800s to the 1950s in, *Dreaming of Dixie: How the South Was Created in American Popular Culture*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 2011), see especially pgs. 51-57. The belle also furthered "an ideal of femininity that was southern in origin."



article then shifts to examine the tractable<sup>3</sup> female cigarmaker, another feminine Latin archetype that was used by Tampa cigar industrialists to operate the increasing number of cigar manufacturing machines that were used in factories after the 1920s. Even though the city's cigar workforce was reduced from over 10,000 in 1929 to approximately 6,000 by 1950, cigarmaking was still an important component of Tampa's economy after World War II, and by 1957 nearly 95% of Tampa cigars were machine-made by women. Like the señorita, female cigarworkers were used to promote Tampa. Yet unlike the señorita, the public image of these laborers were crafted to highlight Tampa's continuing role as a major American cigar manufacturing capital, one without the labor strife of the past thanks to its now-feminized workforce.<sup>4</sup>

Together, señoritas and tractable cigarworkers came to represent a Tampa-specific form of 'gentrified exoticism,' that

Ybor's promoters marshaled in an attempt to attract tourists and ensure continuing industrial cigar production. Ultimately, however, the failure to build a space for Ybor señoritism, Tampa's multi-faceted economy, the Cuban Revolution, and the 1962 Corral-Wodiska cigarworkers strike, stymied boosters attempts to transform Ybor into a major tourist attraction.<sup>5</sup>

### Making and Marshaling the Señorita

Dreams of turning Ybor City into a tourist attraction began in the 1930s, as employment in the cigar industry shrunk from over 10,000 workers to approximately 6,000, and thousands of tourists trekked to Florida after the U.S. economy slowly rebounded after 1932. But reinventing an industrial town known for labor strife, gambling, and corruption, into a tourist destination in a state known for sandy beaches, sunshine, and roadside attractions was no easy task.<sup>6</sup> Although Tampa was

<sup>3</sup> An American Tobacco Company executive was one of the first factory administrators to argue that women were not bothered by the monotonous nature of cigar machine operating, like men were, and that women were more "tractable." He made this statement in the 1930s, as more machines were being brought into the factories. This idea was often shared by other factory owners--like Stanford Newman--and the Tampa Cigar Manufacturers' Association. Ingalls, *Urban Vigilantes in the New South*, 46, 158-159 and Stanford Newman, *Cigar Family: A 100 Year Journey in the Cigar Industry*, (New York: Forbes Custom, 1999).

<sup>4</sup> Although employment in the industry declined dramatically after 1929, 10% of Tampa's civilian workforce still labored in cigar factories in 1950. See Kerstein, *Politics and Growth in Twentieth-Century Tampa*, 337 (n. 74). For more on the move toward a female workforce see Ingalls, *Urban Vigilantes in the New South*, 46, 158-159. Nancy Hewitt, "Women in Ybor City: An Interview With a Women Cigar

Worker." *Tampa Bay History*, Fall/Winter 1985, 161-165; Marilyn L. Figueredo, "Cigar Women," *Cigar City Magazine*, Vol. 2, Issue 7, Nov/Dec 2006, 46-54. ; "Tampa Cigar Output Jumps Sharply Over Last Year," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, September 3, 1954; "NLRB Studies Cigar Union Vote Request," *Tampa Daily Times*, August 22, 1956; George Knight, "How to Add to Old Tampa Cigar Factory," *Tampa Sunday Tribune*, October 13, 1957; "Cigar Making is Thriving," *Tampa Tribune*, February 18, 1958; "Steady Gains Recorded in Cigar Output," *Tampa Tribune*, March 12, 1958; Steve Raymond, "Cigarmakers Here Win \$450,000 in Pay Raises," *Tampa Tribune*, August 27, 1959

<sup>5</sup> For an overview of the digital materials available for Ybor City and Tampa, see Cameron B. LeBlanc, "Preserving the Memory of Ybor City, Florida," *Southern Spaces*, December 22, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> The vast majority of scholarship on Ybor City and the Tampa cigar industry has emphasized the industry's early years and it's "Golden Age" of



home to Henry Plant's well-known Tampa Bay Hotel, unlike Miami the city never developed a robust tourist economy. In fact, even its cross-Tampa Bay rival St. Petersburg attracted more tourists annually in the early 1900s. In short, as one guidebook author wrote in 1940, "once intended to rival the towns of the East Coast as a tourist resort...[Tampa] developed largely into a commercial and manufacturing city, and as a winter playground is far surpassed by St. Petersburg."

From the 1890s to the 1930s, Tampa was instead a cigar-manufacturing center with a large Cuban, Spanish, and Italian immigrant workforce. Although the Tampa Bay Hotel's minarets dominated the city's skyline, cigars and strikes dictated Tampa's

economy and society, not vacationers. During its so-called cigarmaking "Golden Age," Tampa had over 100—counting both big and small—factories, which employed 50% of the city's working population in 1910 and 25% in 1930. Although these percentages declined in the 1930s and 1940s, the industry still employed several thousand workers after World War II. Yet, like Tampa's hopeful tourism promoters, the guidebook author saw the tourist potential for the industrial city, writing, "to me the most interesting thing in and around Tampa is the section of town known as Ybor City. Here you might imagine yourself abroad."<sup>7</sup>

World War II, however, put tourism development plans on hold, as war-related industries shaped the city more than

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cigarmaking (late 1880s to the 1930s). Gary Mormino and George F. Pozzetta, *The Immigrant World of Ybor City: Italians and Their Latin Neighbors in Tampa, 1885-1985*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998). Chapter ten of this work considers post-World War II Ybor City, but the postwar years are not its primary subject and the feminization of the cigar workforce and postwar tourist initiatives are not examined. Gary Mormino and Anthony Pizzo, (*Tampa: The Treasure City*, (Tulsa: Continental Heritage Press, 1983), chapter 7; Susan Greenbaum, *More Than Black: Afro Cubans in Tampa*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002); Irvin D.S. Winsboro and Alexander Jordan, "Solidarity Means Inclusion: Race, Class, and Ethnicity Within Tampa's Transnational Cigar Workers' Union," *Labor History*, Volume 55:3 (2014), 271-293; Durward Long, "The Historical Beginnings of Ybor City and Modern Tampa." *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 45 (July 1966): 31-44; Durward Long, "La Resistencia': Tampa's Immigrant Labor Union." *Labor History*, 6 (Fall 1965): 193-213; Durward Long, "Making Modern Tampa: A City of the New South, 1885-1911." *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 49 (April 1971): 333-345; Durward Long, "The Open-Closed Shop Battle in Tampa's Cigar Industry, 1919-1921," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 47 (October 1968):101-121; Robert Ingalls and Louis Pérez, *Tampa Cigar*

*Workers: A Pictorial History*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003). Chapter 10 of this pictorial work briefly chronicles the decline of Tampa cigarmaking. For a more general study of Tampa in twentieth century see Robert J. Kerstein, *Politics and Growth in Twentieth-Century Tampa*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001). For an examination of elite-sponsored vigilante activity used to control Tampa cigar workers from the 1880s to the 1930s see Robert P. Ingalls, *Urban Vigilantes in the New South: Tampa, 1882-1936*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993). For a history of 'golden era' cigarmaking making in the United States see Patricia Cooper, *Once a Cigar Maker: Men, Women, and Work Culture in American Cigar Factories, 1900-1919*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987). For a look at pre-Disney Florida attractions see Tracy Revels, *Sunshine Paradise: A History of Florida Tourism*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> George W. Seaton, *Cue's Guide to What to See and Do in Florida*, (New York, Prentice-Hall, 1940), 69-72. For statistics on cigar industry employment see Kerstein, *Politics and Growth in Twentieth-Century Tampa*, 53.

tourist-centered endeavors.<sup>8</sup> For example, in 1942 businessman Matthew H. McCloskey built a facility “to construct concrete ships for the war effort,” just south of downtown Tampa, and the federal government built MacDill Air Field, which was home to 15,000 military personnel by 1944.<sup>9</sup> But following the war, as the military’s footprint shrunk statewide and tourists flooded Florida in record numbers, the idea of turning Ybor into a tourist attraction was resurrected. In 1949 alone, a reported 4.7 million tourists visited Florida and spent a combined \$825 million, statistics that renewed interest in remaking Ybor. But how could Tampa’s promoters market a city best known for organized crime, Cuban and Italian immigrants, and labor strikes? How could they sell a city that

in 1950 one magazine author called “the hellhole on the Gulf Coast” to America’s postwar tourists (Figure 1 and 2)?<sup>10</sup>

The promotional señorita was one answer to this question, and she was widely adopted in a variety of post-World War II tourist-centered marketing campaigns and initiatives in Tampa. Although before the war señoritas had been occasionally used to publicize Tampa’s cigar industry, in particular during the *La Verbena del Tobacco* festivals of the 1930s (Figures 3 and 4), it was not until after the war that Ybor boosters enlisted señoritism in earnest to rebrand, advertise, and market the “Latinness” of Ybor City and its cigar industry to American tourists, consumers, and investors.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For how the war influenced greater Tampa see Gary Mormino, *Hillsborough County Goes to War: The Home Front, 1940-1950*, (Tampa: Tampa Bay History Center, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> Kerstein, *Politics and Growth in Twentieth-Century Tampa*, 94-95; “Military Bases in Florida 1941,” Preliminary Military Bases Study: 1942, *Year Books Series*, No. 1, Data Compiled by the Research Division, Florida State Chamber of Commerce, John F. Germany Vertical Clipping File, Folder: MacDill Airforce Base; Scott, *Tampa People with a Purpose*, 111-115; “We Get the Big Air Base,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, July 14, 1939; “Base Planned as Beautiful Military City,” *Tampa Daily Times*, December 28, 1939; “Peterson Base to Eventually Cost \$20,000,000,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, July 14, 1939.

<sup>10</sup> Tampa’s gambling rackets, gang-related murders, political corruption, and other criminal activities of the 1930s and 1940s contributed to its designation as a hellhole. For a look at the growth and development of postwar Tampa see Gary Mormino, “Tampa: From Hellhole to the Good Life,” Richard M. Bernard and Bradley Rice, eds. *Sunbelt Cities: Politics and Growth since World War II*, (Austin: University Press of Texas, 1983), 138-161. Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*, 76-77; Liz Cohen argues

that the division between citizenship and consumption collapsed after World War II, and that the “*purchaser as citizen*” meant American consumers’ purchases, even in excess, stabilized the postwar economy. Thus, purchasing things, like a Florida vacation, both served the national interest and was patriotic, even more so if you drove to Florida in a new car. Cohen, *Consumers’ Republic*, 6-9.

<sup>11</sup> The 1930s *La Verbena* cigar events/festivals were promotional tools developed to market Ybor and its cigars. For an overview see Emanuel Leto, “Viva La Verbena: Tampa’s Original Cigar Festival,” *Cigar City Magazine*, September/October 2007. For an example of a editorial that attempts to remarket and sell Ybor history see D.B. McKay, “Writer Points to Practical Value of Restoring Ybor Old World Charm,” *Tampa Tribune*, April 22, 1951. In this ‘historical’ piece, McKay described Tampa’s relationship to the late nineteenth-century Cuban Revolution and cigar production. About the cigar industry and cigarmakers he wrote, “The Latins employed in the industry and related enterprises...are as a rule good and loyal citizens, supporting the organized charities generously and giving aid to all worthwhile projects and plans calculated to benefit Tampa. Therefore it is not unreasonable that they ask and anticipate united and active support in furtherance of their

At the forefront of this initiative was Ybor City's Alcalde program. In the early 1950s, Anthony "Tony" Pizzo and other Ybor businesspersons developed the Alcalde initiative to market and encourage investment in Ybor. The Alcalde promotional program was centered on electing a ceremonial mayor/boss of Ybor, whose job it was to publicize the Latin character of the neighborhood and advocate for public and private capital investments in order to redevelop, reinvent, and sell the *barrio* to tourists. Making its dramatic public debut at the grand opening of the Tampa International Airport in August 1952, the Alcalde program described Ybor as a place of Latin food, Latin business ties, Latin architecture, and Latin señoritas.<sup>12</sup> In a letter sent to the editor of *Life* magazine, Pizzo—the first Ybor Alcalde—wrote that Ybor's attractions included "pretty Spanish girls, a distinctive and interesting architecture of old Ybor City buildings, [and] tempting and attractive Spanish foods." Pizzo went on to write that Ybor "has its serious side, too. Tampa and

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ambition to create here a beautiful and novel community typical of the land from which they—or there forebears—came, a lodestone for tourists." This statement highlights how much things in Ybor had changed after the 1920s, as McKay was earlier a stalwart conservative opponent of cigarworker unions and other forms of organized labor. For McKay's earlier views on organized labor and his relationship to vigilante committees see Ingalls, *Urban Vigilantes in the New South*, 105-106, 203.

<sup>12</sup> "Tampa International Airport Terminal Dedication Attracts More Than 10,000 Persons," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, August 18, 1952; "This Is Ybor City—A State of Mind Without Limits" and Richard F. Warner, "And This is Ybor City's Own Alcalde," *Miami Herald*, October 12, 1952; Paul Wilder, "Birth of a New Nation—Ybor City," *Tampa Sunday Tribune*, June 15, 1952.

Ybor City are just now advocating to get more Latin American trade and travel."<sup>13</sup>

Alcalde promotional materials were printed, business trips to Havana and other Latin American cities were scheduled, and politicians and businesspersons were invited to various banquets and balls. All the while, promotional señoritaism—along with Latin food—were marshaled in support of the Alcalde cause (Figure 5, 6, and 7).<sup>14</sup> The Alcalde developed a 'navy' to participate in Tampa's annual promotional Gasparilla pirate invasion and street parade.<sup>15</sup> Yet unlike the other ships, the Alcalde naval vessels used pretty señoritas to distract and repel the Gasparilla invaders. Various other events also utilized the Ybor señorita. In a telling memo outlining one Alcalde promotional event, Pizzo was reminded by a local booster to visit Ybor City cigarmaker's social clubs and arrange to have a picture taken with "a dozen domino players who have typical Latin faces...old timers in beret[s] are most appropriate" and not to forget to be accompanied by "pretty señoritas." In yet another instance,

<sup>13</sup> Letter from Tony Pizzo to Coles Phinizy, *Life* magazine editor, and "Announcing the First Annual International Banquet," undated flyer. Both from Box #1 Academy—Alcalde (1953) Folder: Pizzo-Alcalde 1953 (Tony Pizzo) (Pt. 1), Anthony P. "Tony" Pizzo Collection at the University of South Florida Special Collections (hereafter cited as USFSC-Pizzo).

<sup>14</sup> "50 Mayors, Latin American Officials Are Invited to First Alcalde Banquet," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, July 9, 1952.

<sup>15</sup> Gasparilla is annual Tampa promotional event that began in 1904. It involves a "pirate invasion" and parade through the city. It is sponsored by Tampa's Ye Mystic Crewe, which is largely composed on influential members of Tampa's business community.

boosters encouraged Pizzo to be accompanied by women “looking like the pick of the Goldwyn Girls.” Along with señoritas, Latin food was also central to the Alcalde cause. Spanish bean soup, an Ybor specialty, was served at festivals, causing long soup lines in Ybor streets, and in the mid-1950s one Alcalde official declared war on any “foe or enemy that dares to intrude on or molest the traditions of our world famous Spanish, Italian and Cuban cuisine.”<sup>16</sup>

Señoritaism and Latin foods were also deployed to promote Ybor during the 1950s’ and 1960s’ Cigar Week celebrations. The year 1956 marked the 70<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of Tampa cigar manufacturing, and Tampa businesses and politicians held a weeklong celebration to honor the industry and attract tourists. Cigar Week events included parades, banquets, balls, and the coronation of a cigar king and queen. “Eight pretty girls,” all with Latin names, competed

for the crown of Cigar Queen, and the week’s festivities utilized señoritas to promote tourism and the importance of the Tampa-Cuba tobacco connection. In 1960, the ties between Ybor’s food and promotional señoritaism was prominently displayed when promotional photographs were taken of the annual Cigar Queen serving food to middle-class diners (Figure 8 and 9).<sup>17</sup>

The extensive use of Cuban bread, Spanish bean soup, and señoritas was central to the Alcalde initiative’s attempt to craft an amalgamated (Spanish, Italian, Cuba, and American) marketable “Latin” identity, which is evidenced by the Alcalde’s red, white, blue, green, and yellow flag design and pledge (Figure 10). The flag intentionally incorporated the colors of the American, Spanish, Italian, and Cuban flags, and at its center was an Ybor cigar made of Cuban tobacco.<sup>18</sup> The flag was certainly an appropriate symbol of the Alcalde’s attempt

<sup>16</sup> Letter From Ye Mystic Crew official J.R. Mickler to Tony Pizzo, January 29, 1953, Box #1 Academy—Alcalde (1953) Folder: Pizzo-Alcalde 1953 (Tony Pizzo) (Pt. 1), USFSC-Pizzo; “Win a Trip to Cuba Gasparilla Festival,” promotional flyer, undated, and Memo to Tony Pizzo, September 15, 1952, Box #1 Academy—Alcalde (1953) Folder: Pizzo-Alcalde 1953 (Tony Pizzo) (Pt. 1), USFSC-Pizzo; The above cited Pizzo folder also includes the following newspaper clippings “Shrimp Boat Ybor Navy Cheerfully Fails Again,” *Tampa Tribune*, undated. “Tony Pizzo Heads Alcalde Group to ‘Resist’ Gasparilla Invasion,” *Tampa Tribune*, undated. Also see “Ybor Navy Maps Strategy, Readies Defense,” *Tampa Times*, February 9, 1959.

<sup>17</sup> The entire front page of the November 25, 1956 *Tampa Sunday Tribune* was designated to promoting and romanticizing the industry. Headlines on the front page included “Tampa Cigar Industry 70 years Old,” “Worker is Industry’s Backbone,” “Hand Made Cigars, Pride of Tampa, Have Made City the Smoke Capital of the World.” For other stories describing

Cigar Week and the industry see D.B. McKay, “They Were Looking For Guavas and Found Cigars,” *Tampa Sunday Tribune*, October 30, 1955, 20-C; Tom O’Connor, “Cigar Festival to Mark 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday of Industry,” *Tampa Sunday Tribune*, November 11, 1956; “Jaycees Plan Revival Here of Cigar Bowl,” *Tampa Daily Times*, November 26, 1956; “Tampa Cigar Story Starts on the Island of Cuba,” *Tampa Sunday Tribune*, November 25, 1956; Wilton Martin, “Parade, Ball Next Saturday Tops Program,” *Tampa Daily Times*, November 26, 1956; “Eight Pretty Girls Vie Here for Title: ‘Tampa Cigar Queen,’” *Tampa Daily Times*, November 26, 1956; “Tampa Pays Tribute to Cigar Industry,” *Tampa Daily Times*, November 28, 1956; “Cigar Luncheon Set Today,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, November 27, 1956; “Bean Soup in Congress,” *Tampa Daily Times*, February 12, 1958.

<sup>18</sup> Bill Boyd, “Fun-Loving Ybor Latins, With Their Own Flag, Setting Out to Conquer the World,” *Tampa Tribune*, August 29, 1952.

to create a gentrified Latin exoticism that could be safely consumed by tourists.

Señoritaism and the Alcalde initiative crescendoed in the late 1950s with the unveiling of the Latin Plaza plan. The plan called for the demolition of a large swath of Ybor and the construction of new tourist-oriented infrastructure. Boosters believed the Latin Plaza would transform industrial Ybor into a suitable space for showcasing señoritaism and Tampa's Latin foods (Figure 11).<sup>19</sup> The plaza was slated to include coffee shops, outdoor cafes serving Cuban bread and coffee, tropical gardens with plants from South America, and Spanish carriages to transport tourists to various sites that included the location of Tampa's first duel, which was of course fought in 1887 "over a beautiful señorita." Pizzo and others argued that the Latin Plaza was essential if Ybor was to be transformed into a tourist mecca and gateway trade area for all of Latin America (Figure 12). Other boosters argued that the Latin Plaza would be as popular as central Florida's Cypress Gardens. Although a few argued, most notably *La Gaceta* editor Roland Manteiga, that those concerned for Ybor historic fabric should work to protect its *actual* industrial history and existing infrastructure—not advocate for its destruction and remaking—businesses in Ybor largely cheered the plan. The Plaza, they hoped, would do for Tampa what the French Quarter had done for New Orleans, and señoritaism was integral to

their vision. Another integral aspect, however, was the continuing production of cigars in Ybor, which was still essential to the area's economy, and founded on women's labor.

### Docile Hands at the Machine

While the Alcalde program held banquets, elections, and paraded señoritas to rebrand Ybor, thousands of other women labored at Tampa cigar machines. The transition to a predominately female labor force in the city's factories began in the 1920s and 1930s, but women had worked in Tampa's tobacco industry since its inception. Although the craft of hand-rolling cigars had generally been a male occupation during the first decades of cigar production, women regularly worked as tobacco strippers, bunchers, banders, and in other capacities in early production. Even though slumping sales in the early 1930s caused cigar manufactures to increase factory mechanization levels and layoff thousands, Tampa continued to be a center of domestic cigar production, particularly of the "Clear Havana" Cuban tobacco variety, and female cigarworkers were the backbone of Ybor's consolidated—yet continuing—large-scale cigar manufacturing.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> "Latin Quarter Movements Unified," *Tampa Tribune*, January 30, 1956.

<sup>20</sup> "Expert Workers Make World's Finest Cigars In Tampa Factories," *Tampa Sunday Tribune*, January 1, 1933. Westfall, "Don Vicente Ybor, the Man and His Empire: Development of the Clear Havana Industry in Cuba and

Florida in the Nineteenth Century," Thesis (Ph.D.)--University of Florida, 1977, 86, 106. The first mechanized factory in Tampa began production in 1889. It failed, however, and hand-rollers ultimately replaced machines. Thus, unlike cigar factories in other American cigar-producing cities, most large Tampa factories production was centered on hand-rolled cigars before the 1930s. Hav-A-Tampa had a

The cigar industry consistently employed between 5,000 and 6,000 workers, and though cigarette consumption continued its meteoric rise after the war and into the early 1970s, American cigar consumption steadily grew; ensuring cigar production was still an important part—although no longer the centerpiece—of Tampa’s economy. In 1951, *Tampa Tribune* reporter J.A. Murray highlighted this reality when he wrote “Tampa cigar factories are vital to the future of Tampa, as the citrus industry is vital to the future of Central Florida, and tourists to all of the state.” By

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long history of anti-unionism. Campbell, A. Stuart, *The Cigar Industry of Tampa Florida*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1939), 28-30, 35, 37.

<sup>21</sup> Aside from a dip in consumer spending on cigars from 1949 to 1952, spending on cigars increased steadily after World War II, from \$547 million in 1947 to \$701 million in 1969. “Consumer Expenditures for All Goods and Services and For Tobacco Products,” Box 1976 #4, Folder: W&M Cigar Industry, Sam Gibbons Papers at the University of South Florida Special Collections (hereafter cited as USFSC-SGP). Cigar marketers, unlike cigarettes advertisers, did not target female consumers, thus the vast majority of cigar smokers continued to be men. Tenant, Richard. *The American Cigarette Industry: A Study in Economic Analysis and Public Policy*, (Hamden:

Archon Books, 1971); J.A. Murray, “Tampa Needs Vital Cigar Industry,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, September 24, 1951; “Cigar Unions Say Industry Needs Selling, Not Machines,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, October 5, 1951; J.A. Murray, “Cigar Factories Lured From Tampa By Cheaper Operation Costs in North,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, September 26, 1951; Stanford Newman, *Cigar Family: A 100 Year Journey in the Cigar Industry*, (New York: Forbes Custom, 1999), 93; “Cigar Production Total Increases,” *Tampa Daily Times*, July 2, 1949; “Tampa Cigar Production Greatest in Four Years,” *Tampa Daily Times*, November 2, 1950; “Tampa-Made

1949, Tampa cigar firms produced over 500,000,000 cigars a year, and industry boosters were optimistic about future profits. In 1951, a Tampa trade group predicted \$50,000,000 worth of cigars would be produced.<sup>21</sup> In 1952 the city produced over 592,000 cigars, and though the industry did not create new jobs, workers’ wages did not stagnate. Instead, new contracts increased thousands of women workers’ wages substantially in 1954 and 1959, and in 1961 the city set a production record when over 750,000,000 cigars were made.<sup>22</sup>

Smokes Total 552,034,047,” *Tampa Daily Times*, January 2, 1951; William Gober, Jr., “State Cigar Industry Booms; \$50 million 1951 Sale Seen,” *Tampa Sunday Tribune*, April 29, 1951; “113 Factories Devoted to Cigar Making,” *Tampa Daily Times*, December 28, 1939. The year 1929 has often been cited as the high production mark of the Tampa cigar industry, when in fact the city produced more cigars in 1961; Kerstein, *Politics and Growth in Twentieth-Century Tampa*, 53-54, 94, 113, 122-123, 337 (n. 74).

<sup>22</sup> “Tampa Cigar Output Hits 592,573,642,” *Tampa Tribune*, January 3, 1953; “Cigar Output Rises, Mostly in Higher Price Brackets,” *Tampa Tribune*, October 2, 1954; Leland Hawes, “Cigar Factories Here Sign Contract With AFL Unions,” *Tampa Tribune*, July 27, 1954; Vernon Bradford, “4000 Cigar Workers Get Raises,” *Tampa Tribune*, January 27, 1954; “Tampa Cigar Output Jumps Sharply Over Last Year,” *Tampa Tribune*, September 3, 1954; “NLRB Studies Cigar Union Vote Request,” *Tampa Daily Times*, August 22, 1956; George Knight, “How to Add to Old Tampa Cigar Factory,” *Tampa Tribune*, October 13, 1957; “Cigar Making is Thriving,” *Tampa Tribune*, February 18, 1958; “Steady Gains Recorded in Cigar Output,” *Tampa Tribune*, March 12, 1958; Steve Raymond, “Cigarmakers Here Win \$450,000 in Pay Raises,” *Tampa Tribune*, August 27, 1959; “Hoffa May Come Here to Woo Hav-A-Tampa Votes,” *Tampa Tribune*, September 30, 1960; “Cigar Union Applauds Teamsters At Cigar Firm,” *Tampa Tribune*, September 8, 1960.

By 1957, the same year the Alcalde program was advocating for the Latin Plaza, 95% of Tampa's cigars were machine-made, and women operated nearly every cigar machine in the city.<sup>23</sup> This was largely due to management prerogatives, as cigar executives actively recruited women to operate machines, arguing that they were better suited for machine-based cigar manufacturing. Some companies even employed women exclusively. For example, when Standard Cigar Company relocated its operations to Tampa in the 1950s, the company recruited female workers solely, hoping that women laborers would undercut what it saw as unnecessary unionization efforts. The company even publicly pronounced it preferred inexperienced women who lived outside of Tampa proper.<sup>24</sup> Union shops, however, like Corral-Wodiska, also hired women to operate machines, and thus female employment was not synonymous with anti-unionism. It was instead a widespread industry trend. In short, it was clear by the 1950s that most Tampa cigar factory managers agreed with an American Tobacco Company executive who declared that women were not bothered by the

monotony of operating cigar machines and were more "tractable" than male cigarworkers (Figure 13).<sup>25</sup>

Further highlighting the importance of these women workers, was that fact that the vast majority of cigarmakers—in unionized and non-unionized factories—were important family wage earners. Cigar machine-based manufacturing may have been tedious and monotonous at times, but high wages motivated many women to continue working even after they established families, and with fewer and fewer young adults launching careers in cigar production, workers tended to hold onto their jobs. A study of the industry uncovered that the majority of industry workers were over forty years of age in 1959. A 1962 report revealed that 50% of Tampa's women cigarworkers were their respective household's primary source of income, even though the vast majority of these women were married to working husbands. Although employment figures in the cigar industry had been reduced—from 50% percent of Tampa's working population in 1910 to 10% in 1950—that 10% and the approximately 6,000 workers it represented remained important to the economy.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> "Tampa Cigar Output Hits 592,573,642," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, January 3, 1953; "Cigar Output Rises, Mostly in Higher Price Brackets," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, October 2, 1954; Leland Hawes, "Cigar Factories Here Sign Contract With AFL Unions," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, July 27, 1954; Vernon Bradford, "4000 Cigar Workers Get Raises," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, January 27, 1954; "Tampa Cigar Output Jumps Sharply Over Last Year," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, September 3, 1954; "NLRB Studies Cigar Union Vote Request," *Tampa Daily Times*, August 22, 1956; George Knight, "How to Add to Old Tampa Cigar Factory," *Tampa Sunday Tribune*, October 13, 1957; "Cigar Making is Thriving," *Tampa Tribune*, February 18, 1958; "Steady Gains Recorded

in Cigar Output," *Tampa Tribune*, March 12, 1958; Steve Raymond, "Cigarmakers Here Win \$450,000 in Pay Raises," *Tampa Tribune*, August 27, 1959; "Hoffa May Come Here to Woo Hav-A-Tampa Votes," *Tampa Tribune*, September 30, 1960; "Cigar Union Applauds Teamsters At Cigar Firm," *Tampa Tribune*, September 8, 1960.

<sup>24</sup> Newman, *Cigar Family*, 97.

<sup>25</sup> Ingalls, *Urban Vigilantes in the New South*, 46, 158-159

<sup>26</sup> Nancy Hewitt, "Women in Ybor City: An Interview With a Women Cigar Worker." *Tampa Bay History*,

Though the Golden Age of cigarmaking was over, many women were still profitably employed in the industry, and boosters depicted them as content workers happily operating cigar machines.

The ‘pretty señorita’ and the ‘tractable’ female cigar machinist were thus created and juxtaposed to feminize Ybor City in an attempt to mold it into a tourist attraction for America’s vacationing post-World War II middle class and a continuing site of large-scale cigar production. This juxtaposition is displayed most prominently in the 1958 film *The Flower of Tampa*.<sup>27</sup> This film summed up the optimism of Tampa boosters, while juxtaposing señoritas with docile cigar workers. Sponsored by the Tampa Chamber of Commerce and the Cigar Manufacturers Association of Tampa, the film takes viewers on a Tampa tour that highlights the cigar industry’s operations and Ybor’s consumable Latinness. In the film, a young Tampa native named Ricky—who has just returned to the city in search of employment—is given a tour of the town which includes a meal at a Latin restaurant, attending the Gasparilla invasion, observing hand and machine cigar manufacturing processes, the crowning of a Latin fiesta queen, a Latin dance performance, and a flirtation with Maria, a cigar factory manager’s daughter. The film brings together everything that Ybor’s hybrid proponents promoted: señoritas, tractable cigar workers, Latin amusements, and Cuban tobacco cigars. What it did not depict was Tampa’s radical labor history, or the difficult task of marketing an industrial

space to American tourists. Nevertheless, boosters hoped and dreamed that the film represented what Ybor had become. But their dreams of reshaping were stymied by political realities.

See *The Flower of Tampa* here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDuM8yQVrB0>

### **The Failed Attempt to Make Ybor a Tourist Mecca**

Events of the late 1950s and early 1960s undercut señoritism, cigar production, and the attempted hybridizing of Ybor City. First, the death of the Latin Plaza project dashed—what boosters deemed—an essential Ybor tourist initiative. It also revealed the limits of señoritism and the gentrified exoticism boosters were trying to promote. Tampa’s City Council ultimately balked at the cost of the Latin Plaza project and refused to fund it. Because of the city’s pluralistic economy, Tampa City Council members had divergent agendas, and proved unwilling to invest such a sizeable amount towards a single tourist initiative. The suburban growth economy, local agribusiness, MacDill Air Force Base, and the phosphate industry, were all generally ambivalent about the Ybor City project, as their profits were derived from non-Ybor related industries. Thus, though Ybor boosters wanted to make the neighborhood less industrial and more tourist-friendly—via the invention of a more marketable

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Fall/Winter 1985, 161-165; Marilyn L. Figueredo, “Cigar Women,” *Cigar City Magazine*, Vol. 2, Issue 7, Nov/Dec 2006, 46-54.

<sup>27</sup> *The Flower of Tampa*, 1958, Tampa Chamber of Commerce Collection, courtesy of the Tampa Historical Society, City of Tampa Archives.



history, the demolition of large sections of Ybor City, señoritaism, and the building of new Latin-esque infrastructure—Tampa's economic realities erected hurdles that thwarted their plans and redirected the interests of local politicians.

City Council ultimately reallocated the bond money slated for the project in the direction of the non-tourist growth economy. Although 3,000 supporters signed a petition protesting the diversion of funds for other capital projects, which included updating the city's water treatment facilities, the city was unwilling to finance the project, especially after a report claimed it would cost well over its \$1.5 million estimate.<sup>28</sup> After the Latin Plaza was killed, new plans were later drawn up, one of which included making Ybor a walled city with bloodless bullfights. Yet grandiose plans for Ybor never materialized, and though señoritaism held on in the form of local flamenco dances and Latin festivals, the failure to secure a constructed place for Ybor's señoritas undermined señoritaism's marketing potential.

The idea of Ybor as a gentrified exotic place with señoritas galore was also

challenged by Cuban Revolutionary politics. In November 1961, a confrontation at Ybor City's José Martí Park revealed how volatile Ybor politics could still be. While giving an anti-Castro speech at Martí Park, Luis Aguero was disrupted by Tampa-area residents Elpido Baso and Richard Ysidron. According to police reports, during Aguero's speech Baso and Ysidron rushed the stage, brandished weapons, ripped the microphone from Aguero's hand, tore down an American and a Cuban flag, and incited a riot. Both were arrested and charged with disturbing the peace and displaying a deadly weapon, and Baso and Ysidron received six-month sentences in the city jail. This incident—the likes of which were unfathomable in Tampa's recently opened Busch Gardens or Orlando's later Walt Disney World, along with the establishment of the pro-revolutionary Tampa Fair Play for Cuba Committee, highlighted Ybor's contested political relationship to Cuban Revolutionary politics and the ways in which this relationship made the *barrio* a decidedly un-touristy locale of political confrontation.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, a cigarworker strike undermined the tractable worker construct

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<sup>28</sup> "Taxes and the Plaza," *Tampa Tribune*, October 4, 1958; Leland Hawes, "Ybor Said 'Up in Arms Over Killing of Plaza,'" *Tampa Tribune*, date unknown, USFSC-Pizzo; "An Open Letter...To the People of the City of Tampa," *Tampa Times*, October 18, 1958; "Duncan Says Ybor Leader Has Apologized For Blast At City Board In Plaza Row," *Tampa Tribune*, October 15, 1958.

<sup>29</sup> On a fund-raising visit to Tampa in the early 1950s, Castro raised a small amount of money and said that the "the Republic of Cuba is the daughter of the cigarmakers in Tampa." For an examination of the links between the Cuban Revolution and Tampa cigarworkers see Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *On Becoming Cuban*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina

Press, 1999), 46-47 and Lillian Guerra, *The Myth of Jose Marti: Conflicting Nationalisms in Early Twentieth-Century Cuba*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 30; Frank Steven DeBenedictis, "The Cold War Comes to Ybor City: Tampa Bay's Chapter of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee," Thesis, (M.A.)—Florida Atlantic University, 2002, 51. Neva Murray, "Castro's Success in Cuba Fires Wild Celebration in Tampa Area," *The Tobacco Leaf*, January 10, 1959; Chuck Schwanitz, "Seven Convicted Here in Near-Riot Over Castro," *Tampa Times*, November 27, 1961; "Two Arrested in Marti Park Fight Get Six Months," *Tampa Times*, November 28, 1961.

Ybor promoters had worked so diligently to create since the end of World War II. In 1961, the Tampa cigar industry's fear of losing access to Cuban tobacco became a reality when President Kennedy signed the Cuban embargo order. Both Tampa cigar executives and workers believed that Cuban tobacco was the indispensable element that Tampa's cigar reputation rested on, and that there was no substitute for high-quality Cuban leaf. Although several Tampa manufacturers acquired as much Cuban leaf as possible as rumors of an embargo circulated, when the embargo order was signed it was clear that Tampa's cigar industry would be altered.

With Cuban tobacco shipments blocked, Tampa cigar companies began to lay off employees, which led to labor unrest on the part of allegedly docile women workers.<sup>30</sup> Factory owners argued that reduced tobacco supplies, thanks to the embargo, made a workforce reduction necessary, and hundreds of workers were let go in a matter of weeks.<sup>31</sup> The layoffs led to worker protests, and on October 2,

1962, 500 Corral-Wodiska workers, the vast majority of them women, violently struck in reaction to unemployment and new contracts that emphasized speed over quality, and that they claimed disempowered workers.<sup>32</sup> On the first day of the strike the *Tampa Tribune* reported that "Latin tempers flared and rocks flew" at Corral-Wodiska as strikers ringed the entrance of the factory and blocked strikebreakers from entering (Figure 14 and 15).<sup>33</sup> Ultimately fifteen strikers, the majority of them women, were arrested for various offenses—including throwing bricks, cans, paint infused eggs, concrete, and other items on strikebreakers and their vehicles. One car's window was shattered, and strikers allegedly "rushed toward cars they suspected of carrying strike breakers."<sup>34</sup> The environment around the factory was so frenzied that when strikebreakers left the plant in the afternoon, police officers planned to use fire hoses to disperse any rioting protestors.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Kenneth Love, "Cigar Lay-Offs Starting in Tampa," *New York Times*, February 8, 1962.

<sup>31</sup> "600 Cigar Workers Lose Jobs in Tampa," *Tampa Times*, February 20, 1962.

<sup>32</sup> Tom O'Connor, "Workers at Tampa Cigar Factory Accept New Pact," *Tampa Tribune*, June 27, 1962; "Not Reluctant to Change, Cigar Union Chief Report," *Tampa Tribune*, June 15, 1962; "Not Reluctant to Change, Cigar Union Chief Reports," *Tampa Tribune*, June 15, 1962; Chuck Schwanitz, "Cigar Strike Looms by Mid-September," *Tampa Times*, August 24, 1962.

<sup>33</sup> For a sympathetic take on the strikers and a critical view of police action see "Actos de Violencia Frente a Corral-Wodiska, Varias Huelguistas Recibieron Golpes," *La Gaceta*, October 12, 1962

and Ronald Manteiga, "As We Heard It," *La Gaceta*, October 12 and 19, 1962.

<sup>34</sup> Two riots were triggered on the strike's first day. The first erupted when six women entered the factory to work in the morning, and the second when the same women left in the afternoon. Nine women and eight men were arrested. "Tempers Flare at Strike-Bound Corral-Wodiska Cigar Plant," *Tampa Times*, October 8, 1962.

<sup>35</sup> Duane Bradford and Fred Smith, "15 Jailed As Cigar Strikers Riot Here," *Tampa Tribune*, October 9, 1962; Ronald Sustana, "Cigar Strike Vote Set," *Tampa Tribune*, September 28, 1962; "Strikers Marking Time," *Tampa Tribune*, October 3, 1962; "Cigar Union Warns on Strikebreaking," *Tampa Times*, October 4, 1962; "Cigar Workers Extend Contract With Corral," *Tampa Tribune*, September

The strike lasted for several weeks, and strikebreakers reported receiving harassing phone calls, having Molotov cocktails thrown at their residences, and—in one instance—having a shotgun fired at a strikebreaker's home. In the end the strike failed, and by the mid-1960s only approximately 3,000 cigarworkers were still regularly employed in the industry. Not surprisingly, the promotional passive Tampa cigarworker soon faded from the public view, while the city's economy moved farther and farther away from cigar production.<sup>36</sup>

### Conclusion

Tampa boosters attempted to reengineer, rebrand, and market Ybor City as a tourist destination and locale of continued industrial cigar production after World War II. To reach this objective, Ybor boosters constructed two Latin feminine archetypes. The first, the *señorita*, was crafted and deployed to attract tourists to Ybor. The second, the tractable female cigarworker, was created to highlight that Tampa was a deradicalized and stable cigar manufacturing capital. Combined, these feminine types were utilized to market and

brand Ybor City as a gentrified exotic Latin tourist destination.

Although boosters' use of Latin feminine types to advertise products and promote industries was far from unique to postwar Ybor City, the simultaneous use of the *señorita* and tractable cigar worker—one strictly promotional and consumption centered and the other industrial and production centered—reveal the Ybor business community's attempt to frame their barrio as a unique place in the postwar American South. Though some Deep South locales used belles, while others—like Miami—used bathing suit-clad women to allure tourists, these promoters constructed a marketing campaign unreplicated in Florida history, a fact that highlights both Tampa's distinctiveness and the difficulty its boosters faced when attempting to craft a postwar brand based on both tourist consumption and continuing industrial production. Even though the reinvention of Ybor as a dual-purpose neighborhood failed to coalesce, their construction and utilization of the *señorita* and the tractable cigarmaker underscores another aspect of Tampa's unique history.<sup>37</sup>

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16, 1962; Chuck Schwanitz, "5 Work at Cigar Plant," *Tampa Times*, October 9, 1962. Mary Frederickson has argued that southern women's labor history has focused on two distinct sets of women: older heroines and girl strikers. The first were mother figures dedicated to the cause and the latter feisty and often disorderly girls with "intense desire...to define their lives as workers." Although the media sometimes framed the Tampa cigar strikers as feisty, the women on strike—due their age, their roles as essential household earners, and their Latin identities—do not fit easily into either category. Mary Frederickson, "Heroines and Girl Strikers: Gender Issues and Organized Labor in the Twentieth-

Century American South," Robert H. Zieger ed., *Organized Labor in the Twentieth-Century South*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 85-112.

<sup>36</sup> Ronald Sustana, "Cigar Strike Ends; Union Renews Pact," *Tampa Tribune*, November 17, 1962.

<sup>37</sup> Emanuel Leto, "Ybor City Before and After Urban Renewal," *Cigar City Magazine*, May/June 2008.

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A picture of a 1950s Alcalde election. Note the señorita policing the ballot box while women cigar workers cast their ballots for the ceremonial mayor of Ybor City. The señorita and the female cigarworker were the central symbolic components of the attempt to reinvent Ybor City after World War II. *Tampa Daily Times* photo, undated newspaper clipping but late 1950s, University of South Florida Special Collection, Anthony "Tony" Pizzo Papers, Box #1, Folder: Alcalde.



Figure 1: This postcard captures a section of Ybor City during its industrial period. Note how the cigar factories are interspersed amongst residential homes. During the Great Depression, Tampa's cigar industry contracted and many factories closed, causing Ybor boosters to attempt to reinvent this industrial neighborhood, best known for its large immigrant population, labor radicalism, elite-sponsored vigilante committees, and political corruption. Courtesy of the Special Collections Department, University of South Florida.



Figure 2: The Corral-Wodiska factory was one of the most important postwar factories, and was the location of a 1962 strike. Hundreds of factory photographs, like this one, were taken of Ybor's cigar production centers during its pre-Great Depression industrial heyday. Note the caption "Bering Havana Cigars." Up until the Cuban Embargo, which drastically altered the industry, Corral-Wodiska and other Tampa factories' reputations and branding efforts were based on Cuban tobacco. University of South Florida Special Collections, Florida Studies Center Gallery, Burgert Brothers Collection of Tampa Photographs, Photo Taken in 1926.







Figures 3 and 4: The above two photographs are from the 1937 La Verbena cigar festival and marketing campaign. Both highlight the early prewar attempts to use señoritaism to sell cigars and Ybor City. Note that the women are packaged and ready to be sold to consumers. Also note the Ybor City emblem on top right-hand section of the open cigar box lid in figure 4. The campaign was a precursor to the full-scale attempt to use señoritaism to market Ybor City to tourists after World War II. University of South Florida Libraries Digital Collection, Burgert Brothers Photography Collection, “La Verbena del Tabaco Festival Queens,” 1937.



From Tampa's Famed Latin Quarter

# WIN a TRIP to CUBA

At Today's and Tonight's

# GASPARILLA FIESTA

The Ybor City Chamber of Commerce invites you to be guest today for three exciting events on East Broadway in Tampa:

### FREE BEAN SOUP

More than 750 gallons of Ybor City's famous Spanish Bean Soup, prepared by the nationally-known Columbia Restaurant, together with 1500 loaves of Cuban bread, will be distributed to out-of-state visitors from three booths set up on East Broadway, between 15th and 18th Streets, from 3:30 to 5:30 P. M.

### COSTUME CONTEST

You or anyone else in Florida can compete for the prizes to be awarded for the best costume in a contest beginning at 4 P. M. on East Broadway at 18th Street. There are no rules, you only have to show up in costume to be considered.

First prize will be a round trip to Havana for two aboard the Steamship Cuba. Second prize will be \$150 in merchandise scrip, good at any member store of the Ybor City Merchants Association. Eight other prizes will range from \$50 to \$5 in value.

Judges will be Ybor City's Alcaldesa Molly Ferraro; former alcaldes Tony Pison and Johnny Diaz; Priscilla Parker, fashion coordinator for Mass Bros., and Earl Mullen, director of the Pan American Commission.

### NIGHT PARADE

One of America's most spectacular night parades, the annual Gasparilla Fiesta parade through Ybor City, will get underway at 7 P. M., and can be seen from a two-mile-long parade route along Broadway and to the Florida Fair Grounds. The floats with gorgeous Latin beauties will be specially illuminated, and many floats of the Mystic Krewe of Gasparilla will be in the assemblage.

### YOUR CHANCE

If you have always heard of Ybor City and the hand-made cigar capital of the United States, but never visited, tomorrow's your opportunity to combine sight-seeing with participation in a nationally famous pageant which is one of the events of the Gasparilla carnival week.

### SOUP'S ON

More than 5000 Florida visitors received free servings of Ybor City's famous Spanish Bean Soup and Cuban Bread at the Gasparilla Street Fiesta last year. Above is one of the booths. Even greater attendance is expected this year.



## Ybor City Chamber of Commerce

Cooperating:

## The Columbia Spanish Restaurant

TAMPA, FLORIDA

Figure 5: Along with señoritaism, food and ties to Cuba were central components of the Alcalde initiative. Note the long soup line and the trip to Cuba trip giveaway. USFSC-APP, Box #1, Folder: Alcalde, flyer undated, but likely mid-1950s.



## Ole! Dancers for Alcalde Ball



**WILL TAKE SPOTLIGHT**—Marta Munoz and Jorge Rodriguez will execute two colorful dance numbers during the floor show at the Alcalde Inaugural Ball tomorrow night at the Cuban Club patio. 10-29-54





Figures 6 and 7: The above *Tampa Tribune* photographs highlight the use of the “pretty señoritas” at promotional events. Figure 5 was taken at an Alcalde ball and Figure 6 at a banquet attended by Tampa Mayor Curtis Hixon and other local power brokers. Note that the señoritas are holding an Alcalde flag in the bottom photo. The man standing on the far right-hand side of the photo is Tony Pizzo, the first Alcalde of Ybor. Figure 5 *Tampa Tribune*, October 29, 1954 and Figure 6 *Tampa Tribune*, August 29, 1952.





Figures 8 and 9: Photos of the 1960 Cigar Queen posing and serving food to middle-class patrons in an Ybor City restaurant. Tampa's Cigar Queen was invented to publicize Tampa as both a tourist destination and a locale of continuing cigar production. The photos highlight the connection between promotional señoritaism and food. Both photos Courtesy of State Archives of Florida, Florida

Memory Photographic Collection, Photos Taken by Charles Barron, Image Numbers C032995 and C032990, 1960.

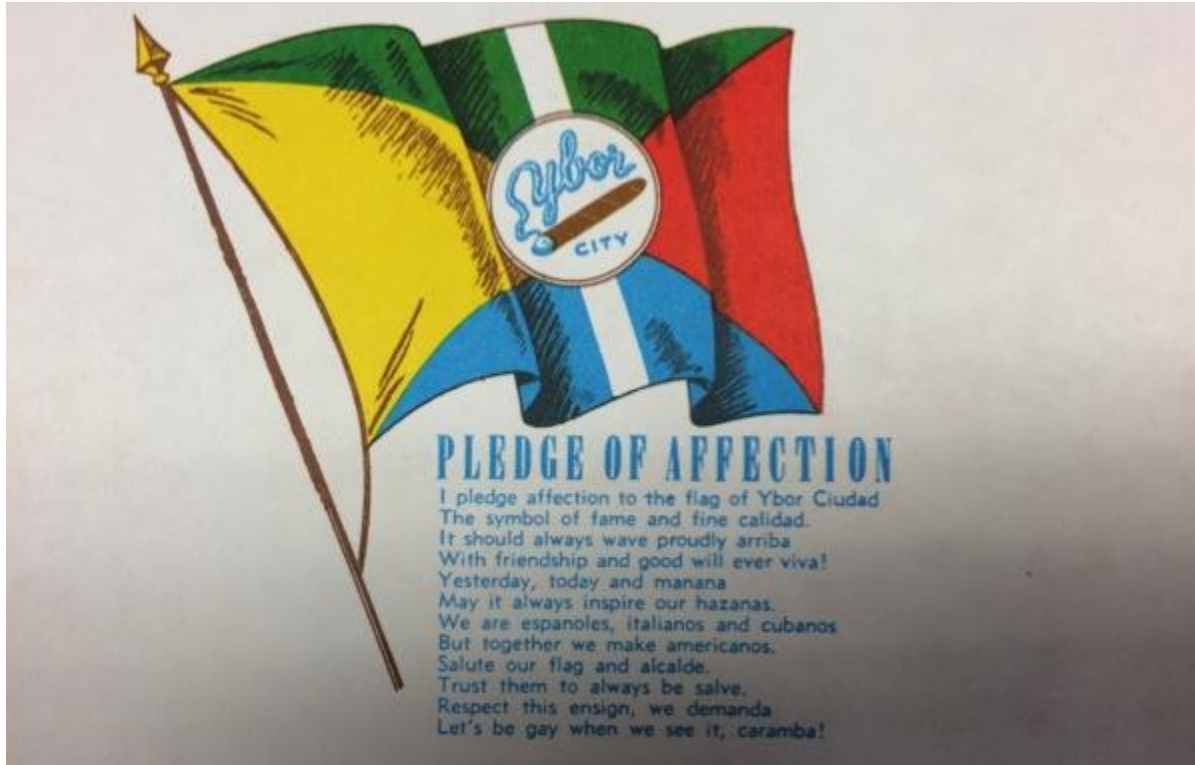


Figure 10: A promotional card with the Alcalde flag and pledge. Note the colors and cigar in the center. Also, note how the text merges “espanoles, italianos, and cubanos” into one distinct Latin group of “Americanos” for marketing purposes. The flag is a symbol of the Alcalde’s attempt to create consumable gentrified exoticism. USFSC-Pizzo, Box #1, Folder: Alcalde.





Figure 11: Artistic rendering of the Latin Plaza. The plaza was to be the centerpiece of a reinvented Ybor, and home to several 'Latin' food and entertainment vendors, as well as a constructed space for consumable señoritaism. *Tampa Daily Times*, March 19, 1957.

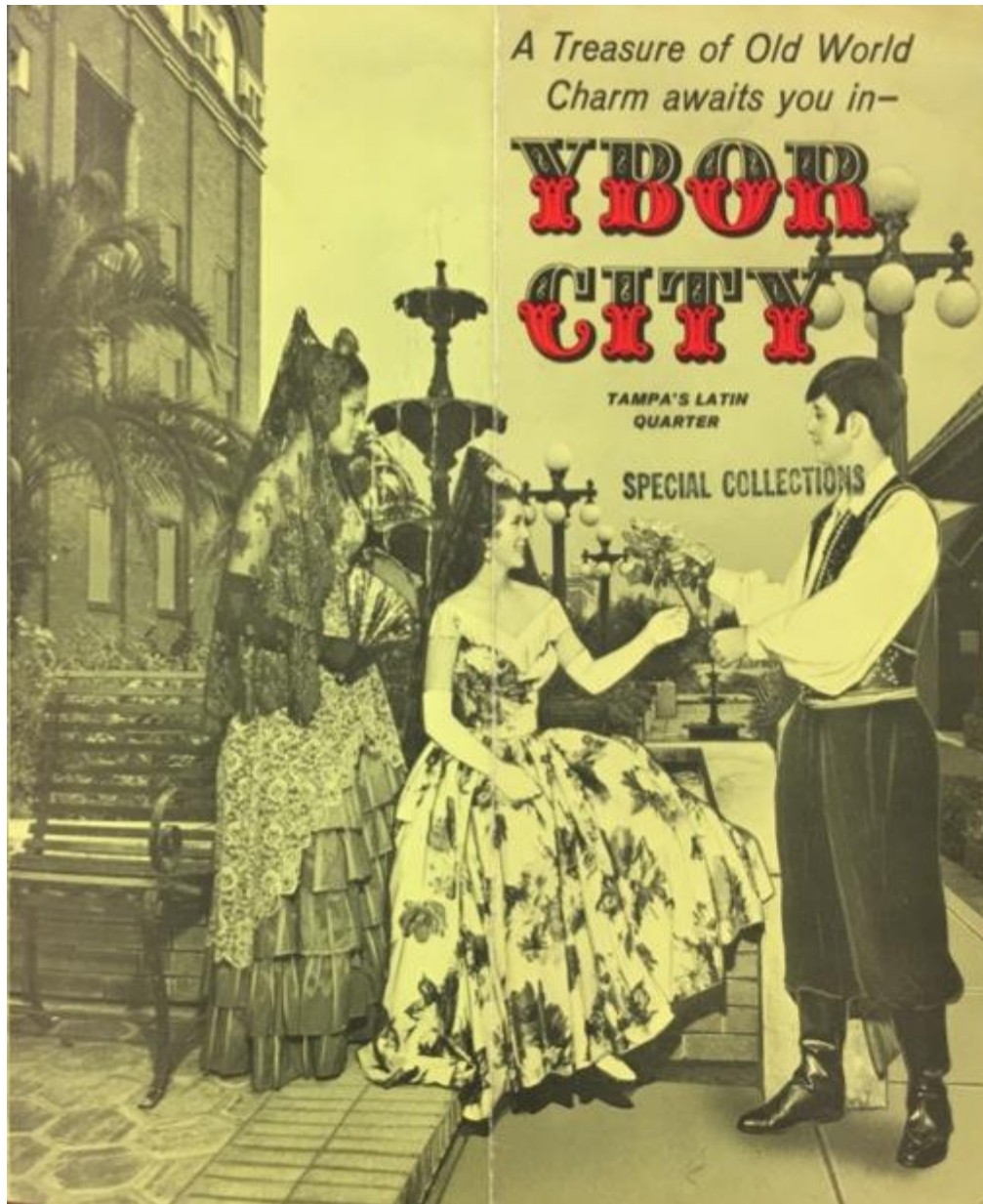


Figure 12: In this Ybor City promotional pamphlet, we see two 'Old World' versions of the señorita. The 'Old World' señorita was used to connect Ybor to traditional Spanish customs, which were far removed for Ybor City's actual industrial history and reality, but were central to the Latin Plaza project. John F. Germany Public Library, Vertical File Collection, Folder: Ybor City.





Figure 13. This 1949 picture captures the labor of two of the thousands of women that operated cigar machines in Tampa after the war. Nearly every postwar cigar industry photograph that chronicled women's labor, mimicked the framing style shown above, in that they pictured faceless woman, engaged in labor, not looking at the camera. University of South Florida Libraries Digital Collection, Burgert Brothers Photography Collection, "Women Making Cigars at Machines at Swann Products, Incorporated," Image # B29-00065252



Figure 14: The above *Tampa Times* photo is of a disgruntled cigar worker angered over the Cuban Embargo. Scenes like these and the Corral-Wodiska strike challenged the 'tractable' cigar worker archetype boosters' crafted in the 1950s. *Tampa Times*, March 8, 1962.



Figure 15: Fifteen women were arrested in front of the Corral-Wodiska factory on the 1962 strike's first day. The women that struck at the Corral-Wodiska factory challenged the postwar construct of the docile female cigar worker, which boosters' marshaled in an attempt to make Ybor a place of tourism and stable industrial production divorced from Tampa's radical labor past. *Tampa Tribune*, October 9, 1962.