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## Historical Beginnings of Ybor City and Modern Tampa

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## THE HISTORICAL BEGINNINGS OF YBOR CITY AND MODERN TAMPA

by DURWARD LONG

THE STORY OF the revitalization of Tampa, Florida at the end of the nineteenth century is illustrative of many developments accompanying the expansion of cities in that era. Part of the story concerns the attempt to build Ybor City, separate from but adjacent to Tampa, based on immigrant capital and immigrant labor.<sup>1</sup> While Ybor City failed to retain its separateness from Tampa, its cigars - "Hav-A-Tampa," "Tampa Nuggets," "Tampa Straights," and many others - widely advertised this Florida city. Tampa became famous for cigars even though production began in Ybor City in 1886, and her reputation continues. As late as March 3, 1964, the *New York Times* reported: "Tampa continues to be the center for the manufacture of the finest and more expensive cigars."

Vicente Martinez Ybor was the founder of the city which bears his name. Born in Valencia, Spain in 1820, he began manufacturing cigars in Havana in 1856. Using "clear Havana" tobacco, his cigar makers produced the "Prince of Wales" ("*Principe de Gales*"), which gained a world-wide reputation.<sup>2</sup> Ybor's family lived in Havana, except for the older son who worked in his father's New York office.

The "Ten Years War," another of the many Cuban revolutions, which began in 1868, threatened Ybor's prosperous business. When he also discovered that his loyalty to Spain was under question, he decided to open a branch factory in Key West in 1869.<sup>3</sup> Key West had many advantages to offer. Besides a history of cigar making, the distance to Cuba was short, pressures of the Cuban Civil War were less, the climate was sufficiently like

1. This article is a part of a general history of Ybor City which is under preparation by the author.
2. *Tampa Guardian*, October 27, 1886, gives a brief sketch of Ybor's activities before he came to Tampa.
3. A. Stuart Campbell and W. Porter McLendon, *The Cigar Industry of Tampa, Florida* (Gainesville (?), 1939), 43; *Tampa Tribune*, January 28, 1900. This was a special "Midwinter Edition" printed in magazine format. Cited hereafter as *Tampa Tribune* "Midwinter Edition," 1900.

that of Cuba to attract experienced cigar makers, and American import taxes on finished tobacco goods, however slight, would no longer be levied. Also, local officials were enthusiastic in their invitations to Ybor, who, perhaps, already had dreams of establishing a new cigar-making city. Other cigar manufacturing companies followed Ybor, and during the next twenty-five years Key West became known as the "Clear Havana Cigar Center of the United States."<sup>4</sup>

Ybor's younger partner, Eduardo Manrara, a Spaniard born in Cuba in 1843, was primarily responsible for managing the Key West operation and for overseeing the business generally in the United States. Manrara had lived in New York and had acquired an excellent mastery of English. Ybor spoke little English, and Manrara became the spokesman for the firm. Ybor's son, Edward R. Martinez Ybor, joined Manrara in New York to learn the wholesaling and retailing aspects of the business and to learn English as well. He mastered both, and later headed the family's business enterprises.

Ybor's branch factory in Key West prospered the first fifteen years, although there were disturbances as the continuing revolutionary struggle often generated bitter feelings between Spanish and Cuban workers in the Key West factory. Labor strikes, some over very minor issues, plagued Key West manufacturers.<sup>5</sup> The island became less and less a desirable location because of its isolation from supplies, raw materials, and markets. Perhaps another factor in the firm's plans to relocate was Manrara's severe dislike of traveling by water, which he was compelled to do as long as the business was in Key West.

Manrara often went by train from New York to Cedar Keys, the farthest south that he could get by rail until 1886. When he learned that the South Florida Railroad had completed tracks to Tampa, he took the train there and stayed overnight. So impressed was he by the place, that according to one report, he decided that it "would be a much better place to make cigars than Key West."<sup>6</sup> He persuaded Ybor to open a branch factory in Tampa and to consider plans for a complete relocation.<sup>7</sup>

4. Campbell and McLendon, *Cigar Industry*, 43.

5. *Ibid.*, 44. See also J. B. Browne, *Key West, The Old and the New* (St. Augustine, 1912), 126.

6. *Tampa Tribune* "Midwinter Edition," 1900.

7. *Ibid.*

There is a more accurate description of Ybor's move to the Gulf coast. Apparently he and Manrara had decided to look for another location in 1883, and became interested in the Tampa area the following year. One version has it that in November 1884, Gavino Gutierrez, a Spanish broker from New York, entered the picture. Hearing that Tampa's climate was ideal for growing guavas,<sup>8</sup> he investigated the possibility of establishing a tropical fruit, paste, and jellies business there. Then, after surveying the area and deciding against the guava venture, he set out to visit his old friends V. M. Ybor and Ignacio Haya in Key West. When he learned that the two manufacturers were considering moving to Galveston, Texas, he urged them to look into the possibility of relocating in Tampa.<sup>9</sup>

Gutierrez had already decided to remain in Tampa. He purchased land northwest and east of Tampa, and in 1886-1887, sold part of the tract that was to become Ybor City.<sup>10</sup>

Tampa at the time was struggling for growth. After a population decrease in the period 1870-1880, there were signs of revitalization. Still, in 1884, there were few businesses, no real port, and few prospects until Henry Bradley Plant extended his South Florida Railroad into Tampa. Local businessmen, hoping to promote the city in a more effective manner, organized the Tampa Board of Trade on May 7, 1885. Dr. John P. Wall was chosen president, John T. Lesley, vice-president, and Thomas A. Carruth, secretary.<sup>11</sup>

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8. Though Gavino Gutierrez' exact part in influencing Ybor to come to Tampa, and whether he was a "civil engineer" in the modern sense, is unknown, it is fairly well established that he was influential in the venture and that he was Ybor's building overseer. For a brief summary of Gutierrez' activities in Tampa, see Jesse L. Keene, "Gavino Gutierrez and His Contributions to Tampa," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXXVI (July 1957), 33-41.
  9. Quien Sabe, *Ybor City: Early Days of Ybor City and the Beginning of the Cigar Industry* (Tampa, 1929), Federal Writers Project typed copy, 29. Condensed version by Jules Frost and Felix Cannella, "History of Ybor City," (Federal Writers Project unpublished Mss. See also "Ybor City: General Description," Federal Writers Project unpublished Mss., 159-60; Emilio del Rio, *Yo Fui Uno de los Fundadores de Ybor City* (Tampa, 1950), 8-10.
  10. The map of Ybor City in 1886 shows land purchased by Ybor from J. T. Lesley, S. M. Sparkman, S. P. Haddon, C. W. Wells, J. B. Spencer, L. Siever, and G. Gutierrez. The map is on record in the office of the Hillsborough Clerk of the Circuit Court, Plat Book 1, 11.
  11. Minutes of the Tampa Board of Trade, May 7, 1885, 1.

In the meantime Ybor, Manrara, and Haya arrived in Tampa. They had previously investigated the Bradenton area but had not been pleased with their reception there. They were shown several tracts of land in Tampa and decided on Lesley's subdivision, a low area spotted with marshes and lagoons which lay east of Tampa and just north of the Fort Brooke military reservation which separated the tract from an extension of Tampa Bay. A strip of South Florida Railroad property also ran through the area. The asking price of the tract was \$9,000, however, and Ybor thought this too high. There was other land available, but Ybor was adamant and made plans to leave. W. B. Henderson, one of the tour hosts, thought that a compromise might be worked out.

A meeting of the board of trade was called on October 5, "for the purpose of working some arrangements in order to retain the cigar factories in Tampa." W. B. Henderson presided. During the discussion it developed that Ybor had offered Theodore Lesley \$5,000 for the land, but Lesley wanted \$9,000. The board then agreed to raise the \$4,000 and appointed W. C. Brown, A. J. Knight, W. B. Henderson, and Packwood Fessenden as the committee in charge.<sup>12</sup>

Henderson informed Ybor of the board's action. On October 22, 1885, V. M. Ybor, Edward Manrara, and Edward R. Martinez Ybor (known as Ybor and Company) purchased from John T. and Margaret Lesley blocks 1, 2, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, and 35 of "Lesley's Subdivision," for \$9,000. The same day, the company bought nearly thirty-eight additional acres from Stephen and Mary Sparkman for \$1,500.<sup>13</sup> Other purchases from S. P. Haddon, J. B. Spencer, C. W. Wells, Lebury Seiver, and Gavino Gutierrez followed.

The "Ybor Fund" committee proceeded to solicit from local businessmen contributions in cash or land to make up the \$4,000 subsidy. Their progress was not as prompt as Ybor or the board of governors wished. In response to a letter from Ybor, the board, on March 19, 1886, reported that "progress" was being made.<sup>14</sup> On June 29, H. L. Crane, who had been added to the original com-

12. *Ibid.*, October 5, 1885, 15.

13. Record of Deeds, Hillsborough County, Book R, 175.

14. Minutes of the Tampa Board of Trade, March 19, 1886, 24; *Tampa Guardian*, March 3, 1886.

mittee, announced that \$3,687 had been committed. Although the Tampa *Guardian* reported on August 25, 1886, "We are informed that the full amount of the Ybor City debt has been made up by the Board of Trade," in fact it had not. As late as December 15, Crane stated that there was still a small amount lacking, but he had hoped it would "be completed by the following Saturday."<sup>15</sup> Shortly afterwards, deeds for land valued at \$3,300 and nearly \$700 in cash were turned over to Ybor.<sup>16</sup>

Ignacio Haya did not commit his firm, Sanchez and Haya of New York, until his partner had an opportunity to view the setting in May 1885, when Serafin Sanchez visited Tampa at the invitation of the board of trade. On December 16, the company purchased ten acres of land from Chauncey and Caroline Wells for \$2,500,<sup>17</sup> and construction of their factory began shortly afterward. The land, like Ybor's, was located about two miles northeast of Tampa. It was flat, densely wooded, and dotted with sandbeds, marshes, and ponds. To assume the overseeing and direction of the new branch, Haya moved to Tampa.

Gavino Gutierrez became Ybor's engineer and construction foreman. Using local labor for construction, he proceeded to lay out the land in lots and streets and to oversee the general construction of what was to become Ybor City. The new factory buildings were to be multi-story; Ybor's was to have three and Haya's two floors. Ybor first constructed a frame building for a temporary factory, then let contracts for four brick buildings on the corner of Ninth Avenue and Fourteenth Street. One of these was to be his permanent factory. Haya built a frame structure on Seventh Avenue. Stripped tobacco, ready for rolling into cigars, was transported from the Sanchez and Haya warehouse in New York to Ybor City as it was soon called. Ybor shipped bales of unstripped tobacco from Key West. While both firms opened the same day, March 26, 1886, the Sanchez and Haya firm, beginning with stripped tobacco, had the first shipment to leave the new city.

The two companies also built dwellings for their workers. By May 1886, the Ybor-Manrara interests had completed eighty-nine

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15. Minutes of the Tampa Board of Trade, December 15, 1886, 33.

16. This total was summarized from a list of contributors made in the handwriting of William C. Brown, the Ybor Fund Committee chairman. List in private possession.

17. Record of Deeds, Hillsborough County, Book R, 256.

houses, including thirty-three two-family units. A hotel was constructed and the factory was soon in full operation. After a fire swept through Key West in early 1886, Ybor transferred all his Florida operations to the Tampa area, bringing 120 strippers to Ybor City. By May, Ybor had ninety-six cigar makers on his payroll.<sup>18</sup> The first group of workers arrived on the *Huchinson* and had to be transferred to flat bottom boats to reach shore because Port Tampa was so shallow it was inaccessible by ship.

Within two months after operations had begun, a local newspaper editor praised the enterprise: "Tampa can not too greatly appreciate her fortune in having so immense an enterprise adjacent to her border." Attributing relief from hard times to the new industry, the paper believed that the factories spawned faith for the future in providing work for labor, business for merchants, and a market for farmers.<sup>19</sup>

In the fall of 1886, "Cuban fast mail service" was begun between New York and Havana via Tampa, largely as a result of the Plant system and the sudden growth of Ybor City. Steamship service from Tampa to Havana was inaugurated soon after completion of the South Florida Railroad to Tampa. The steamship *Mascotte* performed this service for eight months, but the volume of passengers and other business was so great that the ship had to be enlarged. The mail contract with the federal government stipulated semi-weekly trips from Tampa to Havana until November 1, after which the service was to be tri-weekly.<sup>20</sup> A second ship, the *Olivette*, was added to carry the additional traffic.

To explain this expanded activity in the Tampa area, the *Savannah Morning News* editor said: "It may sound singular to say that the Cubans are developing South Florida but it is nevertheless a fact." The newspaper described the transformation of Ybor City which was no more than "a small cigar factory and a few shanties at the beginning of the present year [1886] but is now composed of large factories and quite a village of Cubans."<sup>21</sup>

18. *Tampa Guardian*, May 5, 1866.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Report of the Internal Commerce of the United States, Commerce and Navigation, 1886*, Part II, Treasury Department (Washington, 1886), 408.

21. Quoted in *Report of the Internal Commerce of the United States, 1886*, 409.

Ybor-Manrara continued to expand their operations. By October 1886, they owned at least 111 acres in Ybor City, and a 1,000 acre tract east of town.<sup>22</sup> To administer these holdings and to develop Ybor City as a cigar center of clear Havana, the Ybor City Land and Improvement Company was organized on October 10, 1886.<sup>23</sup> V. M. Ybor was president; Eduardo Manrara, vice-president; George T. Chamberlin, secretary-treasurer; and Peter O. Knight, attorney. It was hoped that other cigar firms would locate in Ybor City, and a policy of subsidizing new companies with land and buildings was adopted.<sup>24</sup> The company also undertook to organize the city and administer to its public needs. It sponsored a volunteer fire company called *El Cuartel de Humanidad*. It is likely that this company cooperated with fire-fighting groups organized in Tampa in 1886. It employed a man to supervise sanitary conditions, and a local paper reported that "all privies are cleaned once a week and disinfectants used." A small guard force was employed to keep the peace.<sup>25</sup> It is assumed that Ybor's firm bore the main responsibility in these matters, aided by small contributions from other manufacturers.

From the beginning, Ybor was determined to build adequate houses for his workers. According to the *Tampa Guardian*, he inaugurated a policy of selling these residences to workers on an interest-free installment plan in order to avoid a "conflict and clash between labor and capital." A frame house cost from \$750 to \$3,500.<sup>26</sup>

While Gutierrez was talking with Ybor, Manrara, and Haya in Key West in late 1884, another New York cigar manufacturer, Enrique Pendas, a partner in Lozano, Pendas, and Company,<sup>27</sup>

22. *Tampa Tribune* "Midwinter Edition," 1900.

23. Notice of the company's incorporation, advertised in the *Tampa Tribune* during September, 1887, stated that the company's purpose was in the "buying, improving, and selling of real estate. . . ." Its capitalization was described as \$50,000 in capital stock of shares of \$100.

24. *Tampa Tribune* "Midwinter Edition," 1900, gives a list of companies which received subsidies from the Ybor City Land and Improvement Company and the value of each subsidy.

25. "Ybor City: General Description," 164. See also *Tampa Guardian*, October 27, 1886.

26. John Cacciatore, one of the early settlers in Ybor City, recalled that he bought one such house in 1887 for \$725 with \$100 down and monthly payments. Cacciatore's reminiscences are given in "Life History of Mr. John Cacciatore," Federal Writers Project unpublished Mss., 3.

27. "The History of Ybor City as narrated by Mr. Domingo Genesta," Federal Writers Project unpublished Mss., 25.



was considering a move to the island city. Pendas was urged to join Ybor and Haya in Tampa, and the Ybor City Land and Improvement Company offered to build a three-story factory on a city block of land, and to lease it to him rent-free for ten years. An undisclosed cash bonus offered by the Tampa Board of Trade made the proposition irresistible, and Lozano, Pendas, and Company began operations in Ybor City in January 1888.<sup>28</sup> With only slight variance, this pattern was repeated during the following ten years to attract a number of cigar companies to Ybor City: the R. Monne Interests; Emilio Pons and Company; Trujillo and Venemelis, Gonzalez, Mora, and Company; Seidenberg and Company; Cuesta, Ballard, and Company; M. Perez Company; Amo, Ortez, and Company; Arguelles, Lopez and Company; Jose M. Diaz and Brothers; and the Creagh, Gudnich and Company.<sup>29</sup> Many of these moved from Key West after an extended and violent strike there in 1889. Others came from New York, and one moved there from Atlanta.

In most cases, a factory was built by the Ybor Land Company, one or two blocks of land were given, a residence for the manager was constructed - all rent-free for ten years upon the condition that the new business employ a stipulated number of workers and produce a certain quantity of cigars. Occasionally, the Tampa Board of Trade also contributed a cash bonus or other subsidy as a "sweetner." For example, Edward Manrara wrote the board on March 17, 1888, that a certain company was willing to relocate in Tampa for a subsidy of \$8,000, plus "other things."<sup>30</sup> Apparently, the Ybor City Land and Development Company was interested in far more than cigar manufacturing. It soon became the major realtor and developer of the new settlement.

According to a local newspaper, the establishment of the cigar factories increased Tampa's population from 2,308 to 3,684 during 1886-1887, while Ybor City's population at the end of

28. *Tampa Tribune*, January 12, 1888.

29. *Ibid.* "Midwinter Edition," 1900. All the companies listed were assisted by subsidies of the Ybor City Land and Improvement Company.

30. Edward Manrara to W. N. Conoley, March 17, 1888, Letter in private collection. The writer believes the company in question was the R. Monne Company. Also, the *Tampa Tribune*, June 7, 1888, stated that the business council (board of trade?) "only a few weeks ago . . . gave \$11,000 to a large New York cigar manufacturer to move" to Tampa.

its first year was approximately 2,000.<sup>31</sup> Tampa was made a port of entry in 1887, and the customs collections, primarily on imported tobacco, jumped from \$2,508 in 1885-1886, to \$4,232 in 1886-1887, and to \$88,578.15 the following year.<sup>32</sup>

No sooner had the foundations of the new city been laid than the Tampa Board of Trade proposed that it be annexed. The legislation committee of the board of trade prepared a request to the Florida legislature to permit Tampa to extend its boundaries, and suggested that Ybor City and all territory east of Nebraska Avenue be included in the second ward. The Tampa Board of Trade held a special meeting on April 11 to hear the legislation committee's report on the bill providing for a new charter for Tampa in which Ybor City would be included. The report was approved after slight amending and referred to Hillsborough County's legislative delegation.<sup>33</sup> Dr. John P. Wall, president of the board of trade and state senator from Hillsborough County, introduced an incorporation and annexation plan in the Florida Senate on April 14. It would abolish the corporate charters of the "towns" of Tampa and North Tampa and provide for an expanded municipal Tampa, including old Tampa, North Tampa, and Ybor City. The measure was favorably reported from committee on May 2, at which time protest petitions from Hillsborough citizens were read. Three petitions asked that their lands not be included in the new bounds of Tampa. One of these documents was signed by "H. R. Benjamin, and 30 others"; another was signed by "Wm. A. Morrison, and 75 others"; and a third, "W. Martinez,

31. Plant City *South Florida Courier*, January 15, 1887. Elizio Carbonnell Malta, an early settler of Ybor City, erred in giving 22,000 as the population of Tampa during this period. Malta stated that forty per cent of the 22,000 were Cubans. Malta's manuscript was one of the sources for the article, "Tampa at the Close of the Nineteenth Century," by Jose Rivero Muniz, translated by Charles J. Kolinski, *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XLI (1963), 332-42. The figures given in this "history" are much too large, even for all of Hillsborough County in 1890, at which time it was 14,941 according to the *Eleventh Census of the United States: 1890*, 25 vols. (Washington, 1892-1897), 1, Part I, 84.

32. I. J. Isaacs, *Tampa, Florida: Its Industries and Advantages* (Tampa, 1905?), 11.

33. Minutes of the Tampa Board of Trade, April 11, 1887, Ledger I, 42. The committee on legislation had made the recommendation to the board of trade on February 16, 1887. See *ibid.*, February 16, 1887. The Ybor City interests protested the annexation in the April public meeting, *Tampa Journal*, April 14, 1887. Attempts at compromise were unsuccessful, *ibid.*, May 12, 1887.

Ybor & Company, W. Martinez, C. A. Martinez, and Gibson & Brigham.”<sup>34</sup>

Ybor described his enterprise begun “twelve months ago” and his huge investment of over \$250,000 which was threatened by the annexation. He claimed that if his interests were “subjected to the municipal laws and taxes of the city of Tampa,” it could cripple his operations. Ybor also argued that his business would profit little from the incorporation since the Ybor company had “already graded the streets, laid sidewalks, erected lights, and enforced such sanitary measures and work as they have deemed necessary and proper.”<sup>35</sup> Morrison’s petition pointed out that a majority of the people affected by the proposed action had rejected it in a vote the previous year. The Benjamin grievance stated that the only purpose was to place a city tax on agricultural land cultivated for citrus. Another petition signed by “E. A. Clarke & Co. And 53 others” supported the legislation.<sup>36</sup>

Senator Wall and the Clarke petition carried the day with little legislative opposition. A minor amendment concerning the new boundaries relieved a few orange grove owners, but the bill was quickly approved by the House and signed by the governor on June 2, 1887. Ybor City was thereafter a part of Tampa, comprising the fourth ward. Ordinance Number 6 (1887) described the fourth ward as “that part or portion of the city bounded on the north by the center line of Michigan avenue, on the east by the center line of Livingston avenue, on the south by the South Florida railroad and on the west by the center line of Nebraska avenue. . . .”<sup>37</sup>

In the first election Candidor Ybor, son of the entrepreneur, was elected to the city council representing the fourth ward. He served on the committees on wards, sanitation, schools and hospitals, and police and fire departments.<sup>38</sup> City police were promptly assigned to Ybor City and brought such a change that the *Tampa Tribune’s* editor observed: “Sunday at Ybor doesn’t seem like the same day since the city limits have been extended and policemen appointed to that place.” The practice of “going out to Ybor City on Sundays to get on a spree,” now seemed to be ending.<sup>39</sup>

34. *Florida Senate Journal* (1887), 273-75.

35. *Ibid.*, 274.

36. *Ibid.*, 273-75.

37. *Tampa Tribune*, October 13, 1887.

38. *Ibid.*, July 15, 22, 1887.

39. *Ibid.*, July 22, 1887.

Ybor City was becoming more habitable. Seventh Avenue was "paved" with small blocks of wood, board sidewalks were constructed, and the streets, wide for the time, were made more attractive by the planting of shade trees along each side. Dwellings were enclosed with white picket fences, and drainage ditches were constructed. A single-track railway, using steam-operated cars, was in operation in 1887. The cars were named for the daughters of one of Ybor's business associates. The Knights of Labor, organized in 1886, met on the second floor of the saloon at the corner of Fifteenth Street and Eighth Avenue.

Many other small saloons gave Ybor City a flamboyant reputation which the community resented. The rash of county options on the sale of liquor in 1887 threatened the drinking habits of Ybor City inhabitants. Many Tampans opposed the unrestricted availability of whiskey, but they wondered what effect prohibition might have on business. When Martinez Ybor was asked his opinion, just prior to the option election, he said, "if prohibition means to deprive our workmen of the facilities to get, at the restaurants and other places, the light wines which they have been accustomed to use in their meals from their childhood, the effect would be in our opinion a general exodus." Workmen will go, Ybor felt, to places "where people are not dictated to as to how they are to dress and what they are to eat or to drink."<sup>40</sup>

In a full discussion of the issue, the *Tampa Tribune* asked, "What has [*sic*] the cigar factories done for us?" The paper observed that the factories had transformed "about two hundred acres of almost worthless land into improved and valuable tax-paying real estate, worth hundreds of dollars per acre." Buildings in Ybor City were worth "nearly half a million dollars," and almost 3,000 people had moved into the area, creating markets for a profitable mercantile and truck-farm business. Weekly payrolls of \$8,000 to \$10,000 added to the economy and the manufacturers helped support the steamship line. "Drive these factories away from here and we would have to depend for our money upon the crop of winter visitors," the paper concluded. Though the story had avoided a direct reference to the prohibition issue, its meaning was obvious.<sup>41</sup> In the election, prohibition was defeated by a small margin.

40. *Ibid.*, September 15, 1887.

41. *Ibid.*

The saloons and small cafes became the major social centers for the workers. Ybor's first factory, the frame one he used temporarily until the permanent brick building was completed, was sold to a group of Cuban cigar makers and became *Liceo Cubano*, a center for amusement and recreation.<sup>42</sup> An opera house was constructed, and light opera, sacred cantatas, plays, vocalists and benefit "festivals" were performed.<sup>43</sup>

The first Spanish paper in Ybor City was *El Yara*, edited by Cuban Jose Dolores Poyo. *El Imparcial*, edited by Jose Naranjo, was the second.<sup>44</sup> A third paper, *La Revista de Florida*, edited by Ramon Rivero y Rivero, was started a year later in 1888. Little is known of these journals except that the editors were Cubans who strongly espoused the cause of independence. They had migrated to Tampa from Key West, and, to quote a contemporary, were "principally concerned with modern labor philosophy and ideology."<sup>45</sup>

Despite the efforts to build a modern city, problems developed which to the immigrants seemed insurmountable. The prevalence of sickness and disease, particularly malaria and typhoid, coupled with the reluctance of Tampa physicians to make themselves easily available to the Cubans, made the need for medical treatment urgent. A partial solution was found in 1887, when Guillermo Machado, a Spanish doctor (the third one to come to Ybor City), organized a medical cooperative called *La Igual*. In return for a weekly premium of fifty cents, Dr. Machado offered medical services whenever needed.<sup>46</sup> In 1887, a yellow fever epidemic hit Tampa and took at least seventy-live lives.

42. This information was gleaned from a number of sources including *Tampa Guardian*, 1886-1887; *Tampa Tribune*, 1887-1888; del Rio, *Yo Fui Uno de los Fundadores de Ybor City*; "Ybor City: General Description."

43. The local newspapers of 1886-1888 are replete with announcements of performances in the opera house. From all indications they were patronized by a number of prominent Tampans as well as Ybor City citizens.

44. *Tampa Tribune*, July 1, 1887.

45. Ramon Rivero y Rivero published *El Ecuador* in Key West before coming to Tampa in February 1888, to look into the possibilities of a paper there. In April 1888, he announced that his paper, *La Revista de Florida*, would begin the following month. According to the *Tampa Tribune* Rivero's paper would be "devoted to the interests of Tampa, Ybor City and the laboring classes." See the *Tampa Tribune*, February 2, April 26, 1888. See also Muniz and Kolinski, "Tampa at the Close of the Nineteenth Century," 339.

46. Lindsay M. Bryan, "Fifty Years of Group Medicine in Tampa, Florida," Federal Writers Project unpublished Mss., 2.

In the following year, a group of businessmen headed by Enrique Pendas discussed the problem of providing medical treatment for the workers. These manufacturers were motivated by a desire to reduce worker absenteeism as well as by the humanitarian compassion to provide relief for the sick and needy. They agreed to sponsor an association named *El Porvenir* and to employ a physician on an annual retainer basis to treat any member requiring medical attention. Membership in the association was open to anyone at the monthly rate of \$1.25 per person.<sup>47</sup> The cigar manufacturers encouraged workers to join the association, but they did not contribute any portion of the monthly premium. Cooperative medicine of the contract type had begun in Ybor City.

Difficult social problems were also experienced in the city. Constant clashes between Cubans and Spaniards, between Americans and foreigners, and between capital and labor made the community dangerous and volatile. In Ybor City the scarcity of women contributed to still another cause of violence and immorality. Many workers preferred coming to the frontier town alone, leaving their families behind until the place was better established. The presence of large numbers of men and only a few women, gave rise to much prostitution. The high resultant incidence of venereal disease among the workers added to the already great need for medical attention.<sup>48</sup>

With an increase in the number of Spaniards in Ybor City after 1889, the tension between them and the Cubans increased. Violence often erupted in a frontier saloon over the Cuban-Spanish issue of Cuban independence. The attitude of the county officials, according to one early settler, was to ignore any violence among the foreigners as long as it was isolated in Ybor City. Ybor's small guard detachment was reluctant to become involved in political controversies and to do much when it did become involved. It was because of these conditions that the Spanish organized the *Centro Espanol* in 1891. Ignacio Haya and Enrique Pendas were leaders in the effort, joined by B. M. Balbontin and Ramon F. Lopez. Its main purpose was to serve as a protective

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47. *Ibid.*

48. "History of Ybor City as Narrated by Mr. Jose Garcia," Federal Writers Project unpublished Mss., 10; "The History of Ybor City as narrated by Mr. Domingo Ginesta," 15. See also del Rio, *Yo Fui Uno de los Fundadores de Ybor City*.

association, although it attempted to provide other services. The club's charter required members to be "Spaniards by birth and by patriotic inclination or that they be loyal to Spain and its prestige in America."<sup>49</sup>

Within five years after the founding of the new town it was well established with people and industry, institutional beginnings were under way, and a structured community was developing all of which gave Tampa a unique flavor in its social and political development. More importantly, Ybor City provided the economic catalyst which launched Tampa as a modern city.

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49. *Sociedades Espanolas* (Tampa, 1931), 3 ff; *La Accion Latina En Tampa, 1879-1933* (Tampa, 1933), n.p.; Stetson Kennedy, *Palmetto Country* (New York, 1942), 297 ff; "Ybor City: Historical Data," Federal Writers Project unpublished Mss., 8; "Ybor City: General Description," 168; "Mr. B. M. Balbontin's Personal Opinion Given Especially to the Ybor City Sociological Study," Federal Writers Project unpublished Mss., 2. See also *Tampa Tribune*, January 28, 1934.