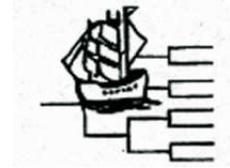


# The Tracers



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Brandon Area Genealogical and Historical Society  
PO Box 2635 Valrico, Fl. 33595-2635

## A Message From Our President,

This has been a busy quarter. We continue to offer interesting programs for our members and guests. I hope everyone enjoyed our recent program on Italian American research and an overview of the new Ybor City Museum. As a result BAGHS has become an official friend of the museum and as such our members will receive free admission on the second Saturday of each month and a 10% discount in the museum store. To take advantage of these benefits just show your BAGHS membership card when visiting the museum. For more information visit: <http://www.ybormuseum.org/>

Some of you will remember the meeting in January of 2008, when Rodney Kite-Powell of the Tampa Bay History Center presented our program about the museum which was one year away from its grand opening. The History Center is now open and I encourage our members to schedule a visit. For more information visit: <http://www.tampabayhistorycenter.org>

Noreta Wells is our contact person for the two museums so she will be passing along various emails sent to her attention concerning special events, lectures and other events which you might like to attend.

It was nice to have our treasurer, Linda Soloski, back with us after recently losing her husband. Linda has had to miss several meetings. Her husband had been sick for an extended time and had kept her from being as active as she has been in the past. Sandra Troublefield, who faithfully makes sure that we sign in each month, recently lost her father after a long illness as well. Our sympathy to both in their losses and to any others who may have lost someone recently about whom I may not have been informed.

Our appreciation always is offered for the

tremendous job Gus O'Dell does by volunteering in our genealogical room and in setting up and putting back the meeting room for every meeting. Gus was recently recognized by the library for his hundreds of hours of service. We appreciate him beyond words! An article and a picture are to be found elsewhere in this issue of our newsletter.

As the summer approaches, remember that we continue meeting the second Tuesday of each month and that we will have our traditional 4th of July picnic on our regular meeting date July 14th this year.

If you plan a trip to the areas of your ancestors, we wish you safety and good researching as well as an enjoyable time visiting family and friends.

Happy researching,

Scott L. Peeler, Jr.  
President

## Bartow, Fla 1909

*"Six thousand people assembled in Bartow today and enjoyed a good time in spite of the frowns of Jupiter Pluvius, who insisted on making 'a wet town' of Bartow in spite of all advanced local laws and ordinances. Before the procession, during the procession, and after the procession, the rain clouds would break unexpectedly, but could not cool the enthusiasm of the passing throngs which filled the awning covered sidewalks, the stores, the hotels and ice cream and soda water parlors, and the splendid new magnesian limestone courthouse which all had come to honor."* published June 29, 1909 in the Tampa Tribune

The County Courthouse celebrated its 100 year anniversary last month with a BBQ and a grand birthday cake. For more information see this article in the News Chief: <http://tinyurl.com/msclkv>

## Pioneer John Carney (1804-1856) By David Boyett

The news of John Carney's death from an Indian attack in April of 1856 brought terror to the early settlers of Bloomingdale, Valrico and Alafia. The sheer words alone on his headstone were enough to make one reconsider farming in the area.

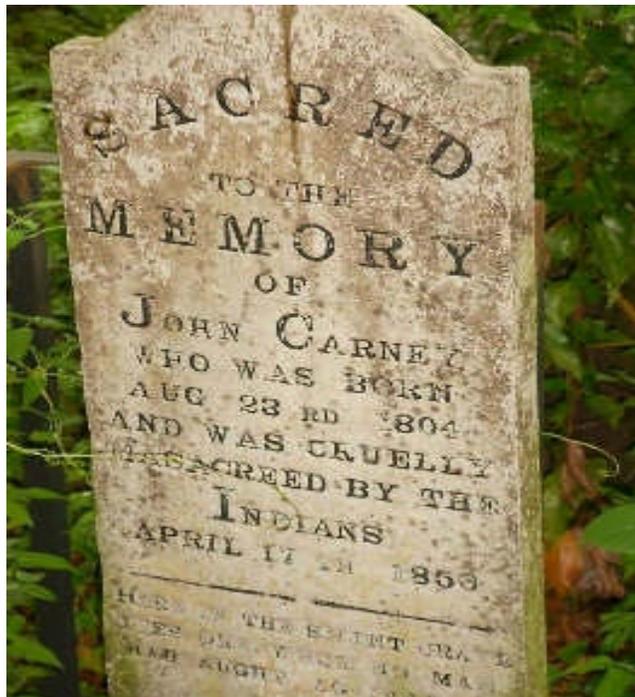


Photo courtesy of John McGuire

In 1850 John Carney and his family were living in the Alafia Settlement of Hillsborough County. The military established Ft. Alafia and the census records indicate an Army Garrison of 48 soldiers. Despite the soldiers, the area had serious problems with the Indians and all land grants awarded under the Armed Occupation Act were required to be located outside the area of the Fort.

On April 17<sup>th</sup>, while working his land, John Carney was killed by Indians. His headstone reads, "Sacred to the memory of John Carney, who was born Aug. 23rd 1804, and was cruelly masacred [sic] by the Indians April 17th 1856."

The Florida Peninsular (Tampa, Florida) of Saturday, April 26, 1856, reported:

### *Latest Indian News One Man Killed*

*The Indians who were reported last week to have committed the latest depredations on the Manatee, and whose trail was pursued to the vicinity of Bull-Frog Creek, made their way to the Alafia, and on Thursday morning, the 17th inst., murdered John*

*Carney, a citizen of enviable character—a man beloved by his neighbors, respected by his friends, and admired by the public.*

*Mr. Carney had some time previous to his death moved his family to this place, but, not feeling able to lose his improvements, he continued to work in his field, not without taking the precautions, however of being well armed. On the evening previous to the fatal attack, Mr. C. heard occasional whistles around his field—this and other little occurrences, occasioned him some uneasiness, and he went to his neighbor's John Vickers' house, and remained all night. Mr. Vickers informs us that Mr. C. was restless during the whole night—almost constantly walking the floor—and seemed to be laboring to shake off some presentment of evil, which seemed to intrude itself upon his mind. Early in the morning, he returned to his field, and continued plowing. About 10 o'clock a.m., Mr. Vickers heard several guns fire in that direction. As soon as Mr. V. could dispose of his family, securely, he went over to Mr. Carney's place, found the horse hitched to the plow in a half finished furrow, but no driver. On looking around a hat and handkerchief were discovered, which Mr. V. readily recognized as the property of his friend Carney. He then cut the horse out of the harness, and went to the Alafia Store, a distance of five miles, taking the hat and handkerchief to prove the truth of his assertions.*

*Next morning, before day, Capt. Lesley arrived at Mr. Carney's Place with a small force, prepared to pursue the Indians, after making a hurried search of the premises, by torch light, without discovering the body of Carnes, he started the trail of the murders.*

*Early the same morning, another party from this place, composed of Messrs. Mitchell, Edwards, Maranda and Roe, arrived at the house of the unfortunate man. On approaching the field, the body of Carnes was discovered, about 500 yards from it, lying on its back. Perforated by fine balls, mainly in the breast. It seems he had either been shot while at the plow, or while running as his shoes were full of blood. [Paper creased, two lines missing.] by his weeping friends, within a few rods of the house.*

*Mr. Carney's demise leaves a widow and several children, bereft of the strong arm that had ever been raised in their behalf, to battle this unfriendly world. They have the sympathies of the entire community.*

Like many settlers who were killed or died on their farms, he was buried on his land which is now located on Stearns Road, several blocks east of

Lithia-Pinecrest Road. He had been resting in his grave for about 150 years when in 2004 the headstone was vandalized and removed from the location at 3403 Stearns Rd, Valrico. Luckily, a local resident, John McGuire, had taken a photo of the headstone prior to it being removed.

Shortly thereafter, a strange set of circumstances brought to light the story of John Carney. Reporter, Susan Green of the Tampa Tribune wrote a series of stories informing the public what could be considered John Carney's fight for peace from his grave.

Someone had questioned the Hillsborough County Property Appraiser about the tax exempt status of the Carney Cemetery and a Florida law that land can not be owned by a dead person as it appeared to be in this case. While the Property Appraiser was in the process of removing the Cemetery Status and mailing the tax bill to Mr. John Carney of 3403 Stearns Rd in Valrico the word leaked out.

Hillsborough County was sending a property tax bill to a dead man and not only that, but if the taxes are not paid the property would be sold at auction by the County. John has already lost his head stone and now he is about to lose his place of rest!

Several local historians went to work attempting to locate heirs to transfer title and keep the Cemetery status. None were found but they located Military Records that John Carney was serving in Captain Leroy G. Lesley's Mounted Volunteers 1856 Seminole War and quickly placed an official military headstone.



**Photo by David Boyett**

In 2005, the Hillsborough County Historic Resources Review Board recommended the John Carney Gravesite for Landmark designation under the County Land Development Code.

**Researching Italian Genealogy in Ybor City**

The Society sends a special thank you to several Italian Family Researchers who visited us in April.

The group discussed Italian migrations from Southern Italy/Sicily directly to New Orleans. Many of these early families traveled to St. Cloud, FL to work in the sugarcane fields. Later migration started to factory jobs in Ybor City near downtown Tampa.



From Left to Right: Kenneth Ferlita, Arturo Fuente, Vienna Locicero Santisteban, Vince J. Pardo, Scott Peeler Jr., and Chantal Ruilova Hevia

One word of advice from our guests, when researching Italian names take in account the practice of changing Italian legal names into Americanized names. For example, Filippo Costa becomes Phillip Shore.



**Mr. Jack C. Bolen**, past-president and member of the Tampa Chapter, Florida Society, Sons of the American Revolution, presents a program on the

Lee and Jackson Families of Virginia.  
The focus of his program was on several members of two great military families. From the Lee family, Major General Henry Lee III (Light Horse Harry), 9<sup>th</sup> Governor of VA and his son General Robert E. Lee. From the Jackson Family, General Thomas Jonathan Jackson, who became known as General Stonewall Jackson from the First Battle of Bull Run.

Robert E. Lee was very well educated having been 2<sup>nd</sup> in his class at West Point and part of the elite families of Virginia. Thomas Jackson on the other hand was a Scots/Irish serving out a seven year indenture in Maryland for being labeled as a thief in England and later served as an Indian Spy in 1787.

General Lee led the military and naval forces during the Civil War until he surrendered to General Ulysses Grant in 1865, which marked the end of the war. Thomas Jackson's greatest victory was when he led his troops around the Union right flank at Chancellorsville to route the 11th Corps. However, he was wounded and died eight days later on May 10, 1863.

For more information on these famous generals:  
[http://www.sonofthesouth.net/leefoundation/Confederate\\_Generals.htm](http://www.sonofthesouth.net/leefoundation/Confederate_Generals.htm)

Jack C. Bolen can be contacted at:  
[jbolen@mindspring.com](mailto:jbolen@mindspring.com)

### **Polk County Historical and Genealogical Library by David Boyett**



Located only a short 30 miles from our meeting place in Bloomingdale is a real treasure trove of historical records. The Polk County Historical and Genealogical Library opened to the public in January of 1940. According to Director Joe Spann, the library was originally located in the County

Attorney's office and kept in a locking metal cabinet. That same cabinet is still in use at the library today!

Since 1992 the library has occupied the entire eastern wing of the Historic Courthouse and currently holds over 42,000 items. Many of the books, maps and photographs are one of a kind and all are rare.



**Library Director, Joe Spann, [jspann@pclc.lib.fl.us](mailto:jspann@pclc.lib.fl.us)**

I recently took a trip over to Bartow and visited with Joe and was surprised to find materials from all over the eastern United States including some records from my Nansemond Co VA ancestors from the 1600's.

Last year over 42,000 patrons used the collection, either in person or via the internet. Currently the Library website makes over half a million historical Polk County records available to the public.

But it isn't just the public who use the library. Government entities like the Florida Department of Transportation and Florida Public Archaeology Network have used vital historical information preserved at the library to plan intelligently for future growth.

One suggestion, before going to the library for research, you can locate items of interest from the on-line index. Select In: Hist & Gen for the correct library: <http://www.pclc.lib.fl.us/>

The **LIBRARY NEEDS OUR HELP!** On Monday, July 20 the Polk County Board of County Commission will conduct a public hearing concerning future funding and oversight of the library. Please take the time to attend this meeting

and support our friends in Polk County. The meeting starts at 9:00 am in the Neil Combee Administration Building, 330 West Church Street, in Bartow.

### **Congratulations to Gus O'Dell By Monique Groulx**

On the evening of April 29th, 2009, an appreciation dinner was given at the Bloomingdale Regional Library to honor the many volunteers who spend numerous hours helping the library function at its best. One of our genealogical society's members, Gus O'Dell, was honored for having spent 288 hours in the genealogical room during the 2008 year waiting to help anyone in their family's genealogical research.



In this photo, Vickie Trice, a representative from the library presents a certificate of appreciation as well as a special gift bag to Gus for his dedication.

Furthermore, Gus is a valuable member of our society. He is always ready to help setup and breakdown our meeting room the second Tuesday of each month.

Anyone interested in getting help from Gus this year can find him in the genealogical room on Tuesdays from 4:00 to 6:00 P.M. If you are unable to meet with him at this time. You can e-mail him at [floyd752@yahoo.com](mailto:floyd752@yahoo.com) and request to meet him at a different time & date.

### **Ybor City Museum Society By Chantal Ruilova Hevia, Executive Director**

The past few months have been a flurry of activities related to three major endeavors, the *Spain and the*

*Creation of Modern Tampa: 1886-2009* exhibit and program series, our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Legacy Awards (presented on June 7 to Richard and Casey Gonzmart, Dr. Jack Fernandez, and Joe Howden) and Cigar Heritage Festival (November 21). During the festival, an attempt at a new Guinness record for "World's Longest Cigar" will be made by Grand Master Cigar Maker, Wally Reyes.

The Society's significantly expanded programs, services and many other pursuits were accomplished through the concerted efforts of our energetic and dedicated Board of Directors, volunteer corps, Society staff and Park Services personnel, and with the support of community collaborators and Society members. I encourage you to become involved, participate in our activities and visit the Ybor City Museum State Park.

### **Spain and the Creation of Modern Tampa: 1886-2009**

A special exhibit was unveiled at the Ybor City Museum State Park on March 20, 2009, to commemorate and celebrate the significant contributions that Spanish immigrants made to Tampa and its cigar industry. Members, friends and guests of the Ybor City Museum Society enjoyed tapas and the music, arts, dances, and costumes of the northwestern regions of Spain in a festive reception in the Mediterranean-style garden. The exhibit will be on display through December 31, 2009.

Who were Tampa's early Spanish immigrants? They came mostly from Asturias and Galicia. Many made their way to Cuba and learned the cigar-making trade before following Vicente Martinez-Ybor to Tampa. Nearly 80% worked in the cigar factories of Tampa by 1910. By 1930 they represented the third largest number of native-born Spaniards of any city in the U.S. The significance of their mutual aid societies helped Ybor City earn the designation of National Historic Landmark District.

The exhibit opening kicked off a year-long series of exhibits and programs themed around the cultural, social, political and work aspects of the Spaniards who helped Tampa transform from a small fishing village of the early 1880's to the vibrant city it has

become. A second exhibit, *The Story of Asturian Emigration to the Americas*, presented by the Centro Asturiano, is now on display in their historic building in Ybor City.

Two additional exhibits presented by the Society will be on display at the historic Centro Español building in West Tampa, through fall of 2009. *Tampa and the Spanish Civil War* opened on May 15, and *The Spanish Mutual Aid Societies: the History of Centro Asturiano de Tampa and Centro Español de Tampa* will open on July 16 at a reception co-hosted by the West Tampa Chamber of Commerce and Tampa Museum of Art. Visit [www.ybormuseum.org](http://www.ybormuseum.org) for more information.

The Society has collaborated with Centro Asturiano, Centro Español, Club Iberico, University of South Florida, Hillsborough Community College, Opera Tampa, The Dali Museum, Tampa Museum of Art, Tampa Bay History Center and many other organizations to bring authenticity to its programming. Community partners and sponsors include Arts Council of Hillsborough County, City of Tampa, GSP Printing, Pan American University Women and WMNF Radio.

The Ybor City Museum State Park, located at 1818 East 9th Avenue, Tampa, FL 33605, Tel. 813.247.6323 is open 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. daily. Entrance fee is \$3 and children 5 years and younger are free.

For more information on exhibits, programming, or membership, contact the Ybor City Museum Society at [director@ybormuseum.org](mailto:director@ybormuseum.org) or 813.247.1434.

### **Burbank, CA June 26, 2009**

Last week the Southern California Genealogical Society held its 40th annual conference at the Burbank Airport Marriott, along with the standard courses on family research, members discussed new technology. Some of the highlights were the use of DNA in genealogy and using Facebook and Twitter to keep in touch with families and researchers. Do you TWEET! Follow your newsletter editor at <http://twitter.com/boyett>

**Check Upcoming Events:** <http://www.baghs.org>

### **Note from the editor:**

We are looking for articles from our members and welcome suggestions for our next newsletter. Please contact David Boyett [davidboyett@aol.com](mailto:davidboyett@aol.com) or discuss articles with him at our monthly meetings.

### **OFFICERS**

**President:** Scott L. Peeler Jr.

**Vice President:** Bob Rooke

**Secretary:** Annettee Lee

**Treasurer:** Linda Soloski

**Directors:** Noreta Wells, Guss O'Dell, Marilyn Martin

### **COMMITTEE CHAIRS:**

**Library:** Gus O'Dell

**Historian:** Anna Jean Springer

**Membership:** Sandra Troublefield

**Newsletter:** David Boyett

**Publicity:** Noreta Wells

**Webmaster/IT:** Kent Akselsen

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