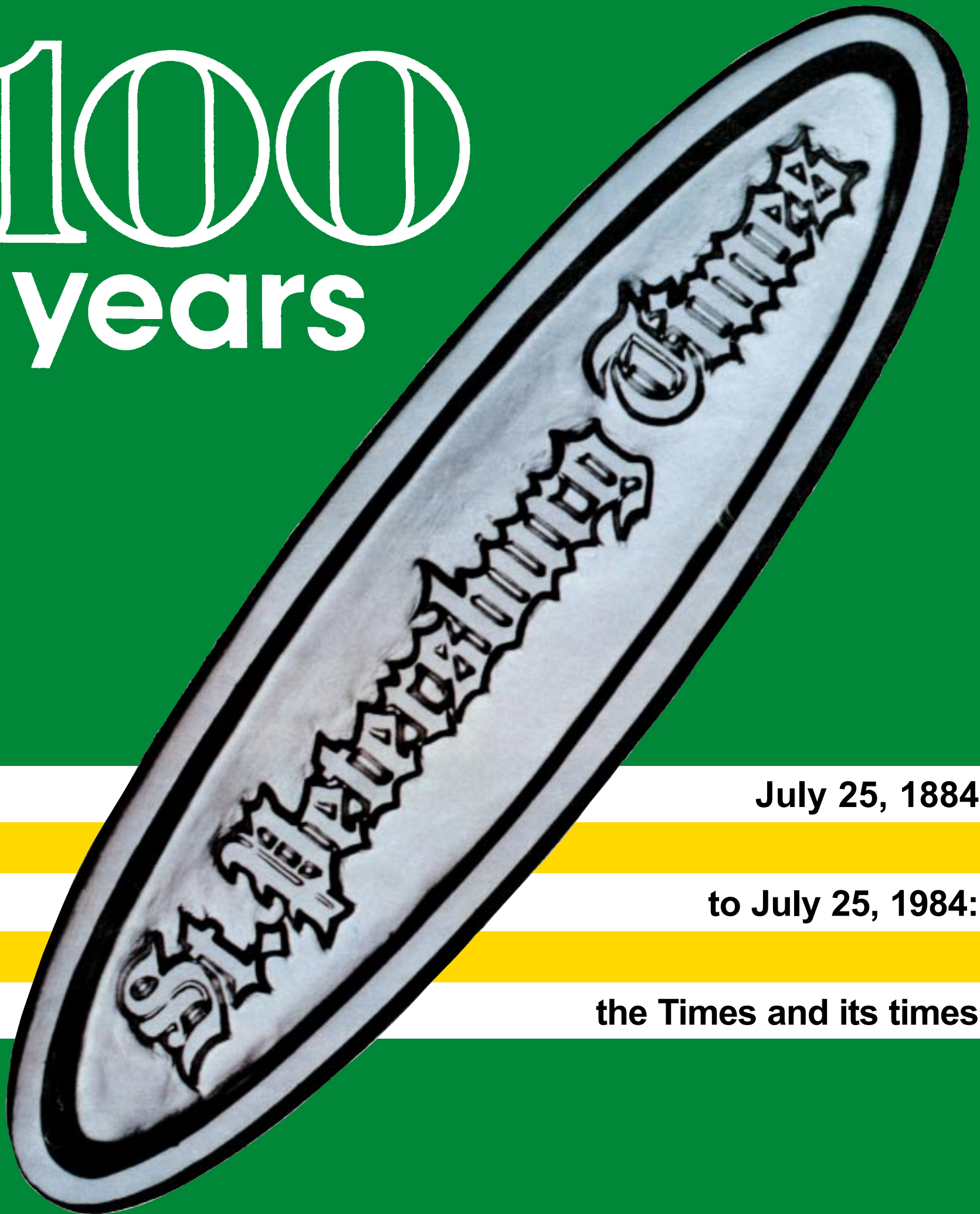# 100 years

July 25, 1884

to July 25, 1984:

the Times and its times

The Times and its times

A history, by Robert Hooker

The *St. Petersburg Times* is 100 years old today. This magazine tells the story of the *Times'* first century, from 1884 and its birth in the back room of a Dunedin pharmacy to 1984 and its selection by *Time* magazine as one of the 10 best newspapers in America. It is as much the history of St. Petersburg and Pinellas County as it is the history of the *St. Petersburg Times*, for the newspaper and its area grew up together. This history was written by Robert Hooker, deputy metropolitan editor. Hooker, who has bachelor's and master's degrees in history, has been a *Times* reporter and editor for 13 years. He spent five months researching the history, scrolling through the microfilm of back issues, combing family Bibles, memorabilia and correspondence, and interviewing scores of people. It is always awkward when an institution writes about itself; total objectivity is impossible. But the account that follows is an attempt to chronicle the history of the *Times* — failings as well as triumphs.

Robert Hooker

Design: Neville Green ■ *Cover: Joe Tonelli*

Introduction

In the *St. Petersburg Times'* hundredth year, *Time* magazine ranked it as one of the nation's 10 best newspapers; Eastman Kodak judged it to be the world's best in color printing competition, and *Times* readers gave it the largest circulation of any daily between Washington and Miami. In an era of chain journalism the *Times* retained its local and independent ownership with attention undivided by allegiances to communities other than its own. Past winners of two Pulitzer prizes, its staff represented a level of across-the-board performance unexcelled in my experience.

The newspaper speaks for itself. So we assigned a reporter, not a promoter, to write this view of the *Times'* history at its centennial. Had I written it I would have been more uncritical and less coolly detached. In honor of the occasion I would have hung out the newspaper's achievements in more heroic banners and festooned them with more generous praise than will be found here. I would not have searched as diligently as the author did for the darts of gossip and barbs of contention that supplant more flattering interpretations and diminish various leaders' infallibility, painfully including mine. Inconvenient as it was, we nevertheless felt it in best keeping with the candid character of the *Times* to invite one of its gifted reporters to arrive independently at his own view, not mine, of the central facts that give the newspaper its fair due at age 100.

So this is not a reverent biography of the *St. Petersburg Times* polished to as high a gloss of approval as I might have desired, or even the full salute to the newspaper's larger designs which I may feel it has earned. More important, though, it is a professional work of disinterested reporting that may be useful to tomorrow's historians when more fulsome promotions will be discounted and gone. It is essentially an intimately inward look at an institution whose outward commitments to the world around it can be followed publicly in its pages day by day.

Rob Hooker possessed the precise qualities required for this assignment. He took his undergraduate degree in history at Davidson and won his master's in history at Vanderbilt. His 13 years' experience on the staff of the *Times* seasoned him in the subject. Most important, his exceptional record as a fair and relentless pursuer of fact qualified him to tell the centennial story on the basis of his own disciplined judgment. He labored under obvious constraints of time and space. Yet through professional search of documents, interview and insight drawn from a century of striving, he offers this, his own highly readable, utterly objective analysis, and that's fair enough.

EUGENE PATTERSON
**Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Times Publishing Co.**

Acknowledgments

A man who figures prominently in the history of the *St. Petersburg Times* also contributed mightily to the writing of this account. That man is Tom C. Harris. He joined the paper in 1923 as a copyboy in knickers and went on to serve as an editor and executive for more than four decades.

This was to have been his work. Since retiring several years ago, Harris has been writing a book on the newspaper's history. Much of it he lived, of course. The rest he has painstakingly researched, reviewing every issue of the paper between 1901 and 1972 that was preserved. Harris' work was interrupted by illness. When it became apparent that he could not finish in time for the *Times'* 100th anniversary, the job passed to me. Ever gracious, Harris shared his partially completed manuscript, his detailed notes and his recollections.

I also relied heavily on the work of another *Times* veteran. Dick Bothwell, a beloved columnist who became a Suncoast institution before his death in 1981, wrote short histories of the paper on its 75th, 80th and 90th anniversaries. He also left behind scores of articles, interviews and memoranda on St. Petersburg and the newspaper.

I am grateful for the help of scores of others. While they are too numerous to mention, I owe special thanks to Dr. Bob Harris, curator of the Pinellas
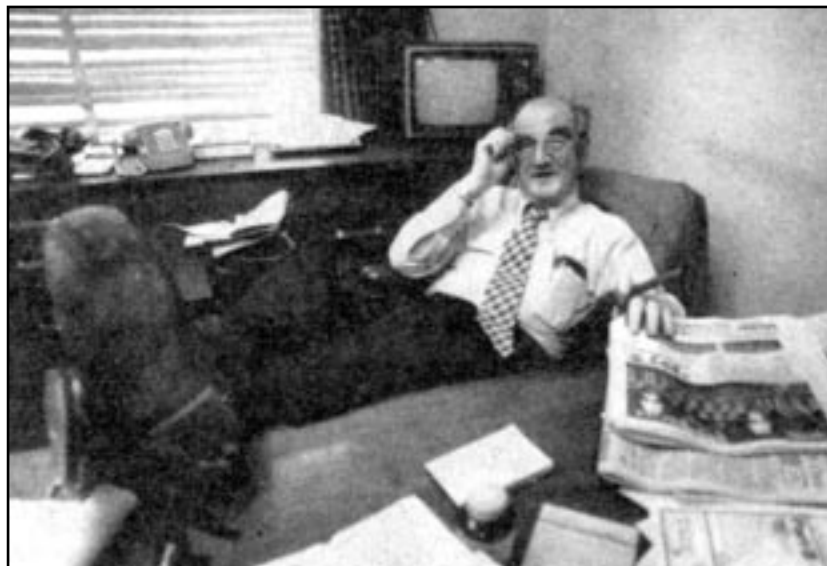
Tom Harris

County Historical Museum; Eleanor Poynter Jamison, daughter of Paul Poynter and sister of Nelson Poynter; Joe Turner, son of an early *Times* editor; Louise McMullen Judkins, daughter of one of the paper's founders; Dorothy Miller of the Dunedin Historical Society, and James Scofield, chief librarian of the *Times*.

In recounting the history of St. Petersburg and Pinellas County, I relied on published histories by Karl H. Grismer, Walter P. Fuller, W. L. Straub, Enoch Davis and Del Marth. For the recent history of the newspaper and the career of Nelson Poynter, I consulted unpublished master's theses by Donna M. Peltier (University of Florida) and Joel Whitaker (Indiana University) and an unpublished doctoral dissertation by David C. Coulson (University of Minnesota).

— ROBERT HOOKER

A paper is born on the frontier

■ The day was Thursday, July 25. The year was 1884. The Pinellas peninsula was part of Hillsborough County, Clearwater was a hamlet known as Clear Water Harbor and the town of St. Petersburg didn't even exist. In the back room of a pharmacy in Dunedin that day, three men printed the first issue of a newspaper they called the *West Hillsborough Times*.

The new country weekly, a somber-looking affair, was printed on a little hand-cranked press. Fran Flaherty of the Times' sheet-fed offset department demonstrates how the restored press works.
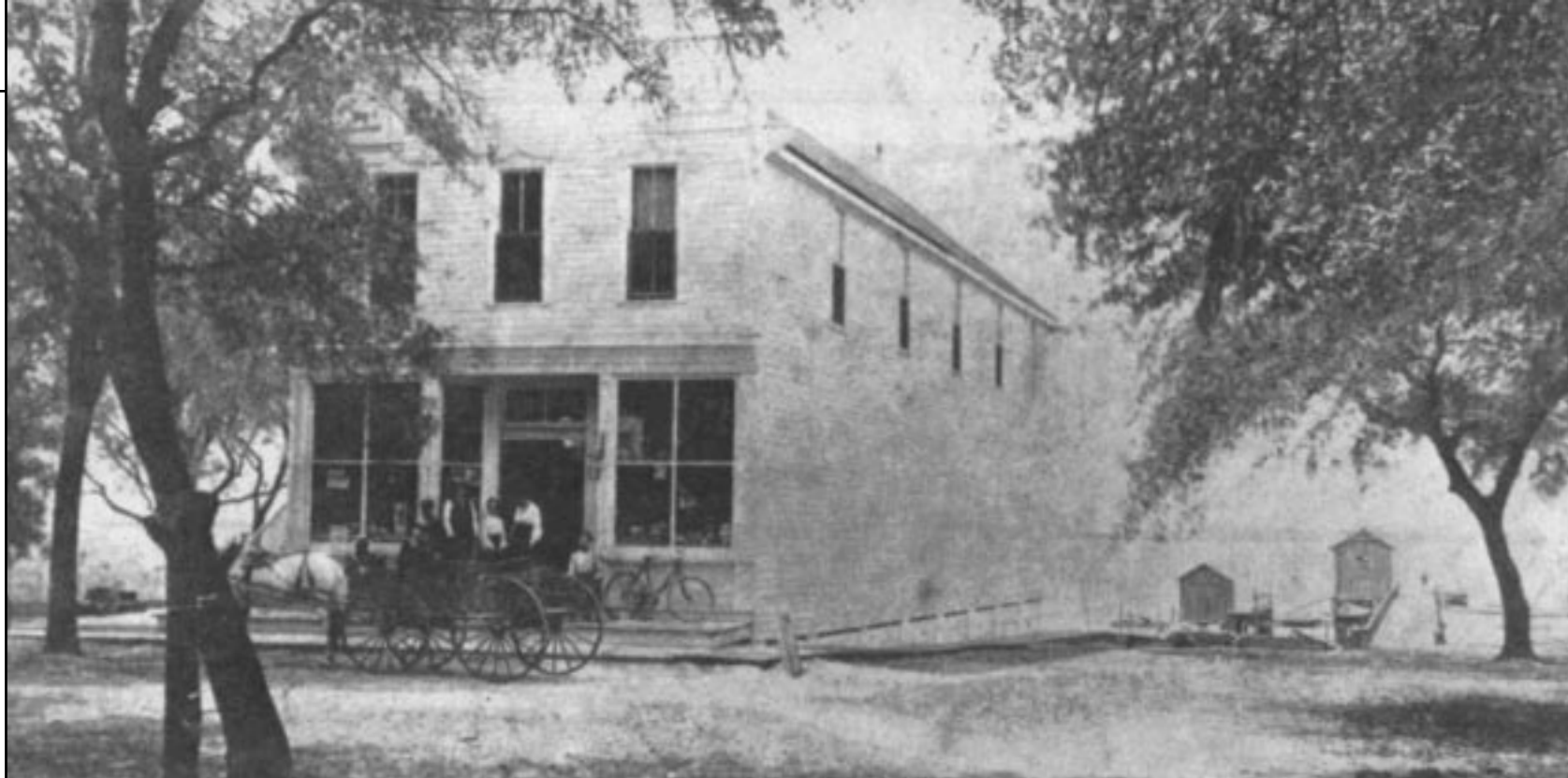
The Douglas and Somerville general store on the Dunedin waterfront in the 1880s:
The tiny town got its name from the store's owners, who came from Dunedin, Scotland.

Times co-founder J. M. "Doc" Baggett was a dentist who promised to pull teeth "without pain."

Their paper was like the community — small, humble and faced with an uncertain future. In its first issues, the little weekly promised "sprightly comment on current topics." Its four pages were a gray casserole of social chitchat, homespun philosophy, advertisements and slightly stale news from other towns and states. The circulation was 480.

The *Times'* founders were bright, ambitious men — a physician, a dentist and a printer — and they apparently had high hopes for their community and their newspaper. But it is doubtful that they envisioned that their little sheet would become one of the county's oldest and most powerful institutions, a newspaper that *Time* magazine recently called one of America's 10 best dailies. That paper is the *St. Petersburg Times*, an employer of 2,650 persons, an influential voice in the affairs of community and state, a multimillion-dollar enterprise that has an average daily circulation of 260,682 (330,089 on Sundays) — the 27th largest in the country.

A century ago, the "newsroom" and "printing plant" was a 12-by-16-foot room in the rear of a pharmacy owned by Dr. J. L. Edgar on what is now Edgewater Drive (U. S. Alt. 19) in Dunedin. Edgar, a physician, was the paper's business manager and principal financial backer. The editor was a dentist, J. M. "Doc" Baggett. A printer named M. Joel McMullen set the type by hand, one letter at a time, and ran a press that printed 200 papers an hour.

It is not clear why the men decided to start a country newspaper. Perhaps it was because they wanted their tiny community and their personal businesses to prosper.

Though it had achieved statehood nearly four decades earlier, in 1845, Florida was just beginning to come alive. The Civil War had left the state broke, and for years it had struggled to overcome a staggering bonded indebtedness. Emancipation from the yoke of debt came in 1881, when a Philadelphia entrepreneur named Hamilton Disston bought 4-million acres from the state for $1-million. Disston ultimately paid only $250,000, but his cash enabled the state to settle its debt. There followed a rush of settlers, a land boom and a spate of railroad construction.

On the west-central coast of Florida, Dunedin and Clear Water Harbor were the first settlements of any consequence. They were midway between the shipping centers of Cedar Key (then called Cedar Keys) and Key West, and much of the freight and passenger traffic bound for Tampa (population 720 in 1880) came by boat to Dunedin and Clear Water before moving overland to Tampa.

Those coastal hamlets may have been beautiful, even healthful — as their earliest settlers earnestly asserted — but they were still the frontier. Many people lived in log houses. There were no paved streets, only dusty, rutted trails. The principal business was farming, though both settlements had accommodations for a few winter-time tourists. The population of what is now Dunedin and Clearwater was about 300.

THE NEWSPAPER'S three founders were pioneers in more than journalism. They were among the area's earliest, and most prominent, residents, and all three would become even more important.

Edgar, then 41 or 42, was the first physician to settle in the area and perhaps the first in what is now Pinellas County. A slender man with a high forehead, protruding ears and full beard, he had come to Dunedin two years earlier. He was born in New York in 1842 or 1843, the son of a mariner and sea captain, and spent his youth in New York, Illinois and Minnesota.

Edgar apparently learned his medical skills during the Civil War, when he worked in a military hospital in Tennessee. He then practiced medicine for 17 years in Missouri before coming to Dunedin in 1882. The doctor made his rounds in a horse and buggy, and his days were long. Often it was well after dark before he could turn his buggy around, secure the reins, nod off to sleep and let the horse take him home. Some of his patients had no money to pay him. He got chickens, potatoes and vegetables instead.

Baggett, 28, the little community's only dentist, was
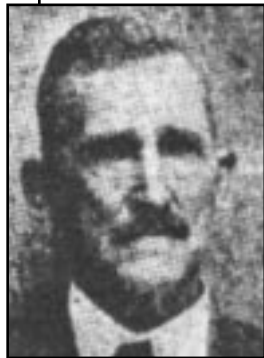
also a newcomer. A friendly man with hooded eyes and mustache, he was born and reared in Mississippi, attended dental college in Philadephia and settled in Dunedin in about 1883. He worked in Edgar's pharmacy as a part-time clerk and by 1885 had opened his own office next door. "Dr. J. M. Baggett, practical dentist," he declared in an advertisement. "Teeth extracted without pain. A full set of teeth in twelve hours after extracting."

Baggett also said that he would "visit any part of the coast when called," and that he did, apparently traveling up and down Florida's west-central coast in a sailboat. A logbook kept by Baggett in 1887 suggests that he tended to patients from Naples to Tarpon Springs, conducting his examinations and pulling troublesome molars in kitchens and on porches. "The people of this state soon learned his worth, not only as a dentist, but as an elegant gentleman as well, and his periodical visits were looked forward to by the possessors of painful molars, as well as by the social element, with pleasant anticipation," a Tarpon Springs newspaper said in a flattering profile 35 years later.

McMullen, 22, was the youngest of the newspaper's three founders. He was 5 when his family moved to the Pinellas peninsula from Brooks County, Ga. As a young man he taught school for $25 a month and went to school in Tampa to learn the printing trade. (He got there by walking. It was so far that he had to stop at nightfall and sleep along the trail.) Working conditions at the fledgling newspaper were hardly ideal for McMullen, a handsome man with a mustache and dark, wavy hair. It was so cramped in the 12-by-16-foot office that he and his wife sometimes hand-set the type in their kitchen, then carried it to the pharmacy to print the newspaper. The press that McMullen operated was a 2,500-pound, cast iron model that was manufactured in a Cincinnati foundry some time around 1850. The printing process was slow and cumbersome. After the type had been set and locked in the "bed" of the press, it was bathed in ink. Then McMullen pulled on a wooden lever to press each sheet of paper between the type and a heavy metal plate.

In the newspaper's early years, the two inside pages (pages 2 and 3) were sometimes pre-printed by an Atlanta company that then shipped them to country weeklies all over the South. Those pages contained advertisements and reading matter of general interest. Pages 1 and 4 contained local news and were printed locally.

THE EARLY *Times* was a somber-looking affair, four pages of six columns each. There were no photos or other illustrations, no headline wider than one column. What passed as national or international news was weeks old. The local report was scarcely more than snippets of information about improvements to a hotel ("soon it will be one of the finest buildings in the country"), plans for a "fine store" at the wharf in Clear Water and word that the steamer *Erie* "was at Bay View last Wednesday and also the week before." (Bay View was a settlement on Old Tampa Bay just west of today's Courtney Campbell Parkway.)

Among the advertisements in those early issues was a plug for 51 acres, "beautifully located on Clear Water Harbor," for $3,500. There was also an ad for A. C. Turner's general store in Clear Water, which declared that Turner "wants everybody to come and see him, bring dinner and stay all day — and they needn't buy a thing if they can help it."

Within four months, the same A. C. Turner had another product to sell — the *Times* itself. He bought the paper,

loaded its press and type onto a wagon and hauled them five miles to his store at the foot of Cleveland Street. An editorial in Turner's first issue, on Dec. 4, 1884, explained why the founders sold the paper so quickly. They "had expected the aid of an . . . ex-editor," the editorial said, but since the editor lived in Clear Water Harbor he was not able to help. The founders thus "wisely resolved to dispose of their interest to one (Turner) who could place it where the needed service could be secured."

That veteran newspaperman was the Rev. C. S. Reynolds. He assumed the editor's title and Turner became "proprietor."

McMullen, the original printer, also moved to Clear Water, at least for a while. Though he also eventually worked for a couple of Tampa papers, it was in politics and business that McMullen really left his mark. He was instrumental in the founding of the town of Largo, serving its first postmaster (in 1888) and its first mayor (1905-07). He served two terms as Hillsborough County tax collector and one as county treasurer (Pinellas was not split off from Hillsborough until 1912), helped run a general store in Belleair and a land development firm on the Gulf beaches and managed extensive real estate and citrus grove interests. He died Nov. 3, 1921 at 59.

The journalism experience was even more fleeting for Baggett and Edgar, the *Times'* other founders. Baggett
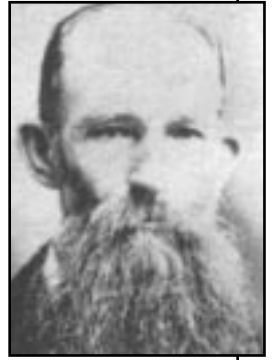
Dr. J. L. Edgar, the little paper's principal financial backer, was perhaps the first physician to settle in what is now Pinellas County.

Courtesy Louise McMullen Judkins

It was so cramped in the Times' tiny office that printer M. Joel McMullen and his wife Emma sometimes hand-set the type, one letter at a time, in their kitchen.

eventually moved to Tarpon Springs, where he became a prominent resident, ran a restaurant and served as a justice of the peace and municipal judge. He died on May 6, 1922. Edgar, meanwhile, moved his medical practice to Clear Water Harbor, apparently because that community was growing faster than Dunedin. He became the little town's health officer, and since there was no hospital he sometimes performed surgery in his own home. Edgar made his last rounds on March 10, 1907. When his dutiful horse brought him home that night, the doctor was dead.

S Fort Harrison Avenue in the late 1880s: South Ward School is in the foreground, First Methodist Church in the background.

THE TIMES 1884-1984   chapter 2

Turner's family paper

An enterprising Clear Water merchant named A. C. Turner (right) owned the Times between 1884 and 1892. He outlived three wives, fathered 20 children and lived for a time in a log homestead (above) at the corner of S Fort Harrison and Woodlawn.

■ Years later, A. C. Turner liked to recall the reaction of friends when he bought the *West Hillsborough Times* and moved it to Clear Water Harbor.

"A lot of people asked why in the world he wanted a newspaper in a fishing village," says his son, former Clearwater Mayor Joe Turner. "He told them, 'It'll not only give my boys something to do, it'll also give them an education.'"

Arthur Campbell Turner, 40 when he bought the struggling paper, was at the mid-point of a long and colorful life. Before he died in 1929, he had narrowly dodged a Yankee bullet at the Battle of Missionary Ridge, outlived three wives, fathered 20 children and owned a schooner, a general store, a newspaper, a dairy and at least two farms. And just as he had predicted, several of his children eventually worked for the *Times*.

When his family moved to what is now Pinellas County in 1851, there were about two dozen families living on the peninsula. Young Turner's education was limited. The family had a live-in tutor for a while, then Turner briefly attended what was probably the area's first school. For his time and place, however, Turner was a learned man. His son Joe — born when Turner was 63 — recalls that his father read widely, an unabridged dictionary always by his reading chair, and had a photographic memory and beautiful handwriting.

Turner was also an energetic, enterprising man. When he acquired the *Times* in December 1884, he was selling clothing, shoes, groceries, dry goods and crockery from a

new store where Cleveland Street meets the bay. He also had a 21-foot schooner to bring freight and passengers to the community from Cedar Keys and was actively selling real estate. It was to his store that Turner apparently brought the press and type for his newspaper, setting up shop on the second floor. But in February 1885 the paper's headquarters apparently was moved a mile south to another building along the waterfront, roughly where Siple's Garden Seat restaurant is now.

Clear Water Harbor in the 1880s was a lot like Dunedin — an outpost on the fringe of civilization where amenities were scarce. In an editorial on Feb. 4, 1886, the *Times* noted that there were only two stores, two boarding houses and 30 families (120 people) living within a mile of the Clear Water Harbor post office. "We have to admit that the number of houses and inhabitants are hardly sufficient to justify the appelation of town, that the term neighborhood, or settlement, would be more appropriate," the paper declared.

But Turner and his editor, C. S. Reynolds, were always quick to note the area's beauty, appeal and potential. They touted every new arrival, every new building, every week of beautiful weather as a harbinger of progress.

COOLEY SUMNER REYNOLDS, the paper's new editor, had lived in the Tampa Bay area almost as long as Turner. A native of New York, he was educated there before striking out for Florida in search of a warmer climate and better health. By the time he became editor of the *West Hillsborough Times*, Reynolds had helped found the first newspapers in Tampa (in 1854) and Clear Water (in 1873) — both short-lived — and had other journalistic ventures in Key West, Palatka and Ocala.

The man of the pen was also a man of the cloth. He was the first pastor of Midway Baptist Church, which was organized in March 1866, and later supervised the construction of a log building for services. That church, now known as Calvary Baptist, was the first organized church in Clear Water and the first Baptist church in what is now Pinellas County.

To that humble log church came the faithful of all denominations. According to church historian Bettie W.

Goodgame, the men sat on backless benches on one side, the women on the other. Reynolds, a Baptist, did much of the preaching, though the congregation also heard from Methodist ministers who rode the circuit on horseback. There were no hymn books, so the preacher would "line" the hymns, reading each line for the congregation to sing. There was also no heat. On cold days, the services were sometimes moved outside, where the little congregation gathered around a large fire.

An energetic man with a thin, angular face, piercing eyes and long beard, Reynolds set modest goals for the *Times* in its first editorial after the move to Clear Water. The area "is speaking with a thousand tongues and demands a translator and transmitter of its utterances," he wrote. "Our paper aims to become merely the telephone through which its inviting voice may be carried to many listening ears."

The staff of the paper was small — Turner as "proprietor," Reynolds as editor and Joel McMullen as printer. In February 1885, it grew by two with the addition of Turner's oldest sons, David, 13, and Henry, 11.

Reminiscing years later, David Turner recalled his first day on the job. In the office, he said, he and his brother found the old hand press and four cases of type. On the walls were "pictures of distinguished journalists of the day, men of the leading daily papers who were to be looked upon as the criterions of journalistic capability." There were also orange crates for David and his brother to stand on; without them, they couldn't reach the type stands.

As David noted, the paper "never undertook anything big, therefore never accomplished anything big."

TYPICAL WAS the *Times* of May 7, 1885, which by today's standards would be considered dingy, unimaginative and boring. Every headline was one-column wide and tiny. The most prominent story on page 1 was a two-column, fictional account of a young father and husband who succumbs to the bottle — until he overhears a critical innkeeper while in a drunken stupor and changes his life. There was also a Burlington (Iowa) *Hawk-eye* story about a report on rural schools, a *Florida Times-Union* story about fertilizer for orange trees and another

Rev. C. S. Reynolds, who preached in a humble log church, was Times editor for 15 months.

Clear Water Harbor had two stores, two boarding houses and 30 families.

Turner had a store at the foot of Cleveland Street, and the Times was apparently printed there for several weeks.

In the 1890s, the intersection of Cleveland Street and Fort Harrison Avenue was the center of town.

Ads ranged from Mexican Mustang Liniment to Salvo Remedy.

piece of fiction lifted from the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Page 2 that day included a column headed "State Items," a collection of mostly one-sentence items about the weather, agriculture and crime (for example, "Some unknown person recently called Mr. W. G. Mumpford, of Calhoun county, out of his house and then shot at him twice with a rifle, but failed to hit him.")

The "editorial column" on page 2 offered random musings such as this: "We are indebted to Hon. Wilk. Call for copies of speeches delivered by him in the U. S. Senate, in which we think he fully exonerates himself from any charge of neglecting the interests of his constituents."

Page 3 included an obituary on a 20-year-old woman who "was known as one of the most lively and amiable daughters and associates who has ever sojourned among us." But most of that page was devoted to advertisements. So was page 4; the only other copy there was a column headed "Bits of Humor." (A sample: "An actress may remain 16 years old for a good while, but when her children begin to get married she has to own up to 29.")

Then as now, advertising and paid-up circulation were crucial to the survival of the newspaper. The *Times* of the 1880s made a determined effort to boost both. One of the biggest ads in that issue of May 7, 1885 was one from the *Times* itself. It was an unabashed pitch for advertisers.

Clear Water in the early 1890s was just a settlement: the intersection of Cleveland Street and Fort Harrison Avenue.

"Merchants, Fruit and Vegetable Dealers, and all other managers of honorable business, who wish to reach hundreds of the most intelligent and prosperous fruit-growers, farmers and gardeners on the Gulf Coast, will find this paper the Best Medium For Advertising now offered," the ad declared. "No advertisements of questionable character will be admitted into the columns of our paper."

Most of the advertisements were for local businesses and professionals, but every issue also had a scatter of ads for national products. There were, for example, plugs for Mexican Mustang Liniment ("A Balm for Every Wound of Man And Beast"), for Salvo Remedy (to cure "drunkenness and intemperance, not instantly, but effectually") and for "Dr. Dye's Celebrated Voltaic Belt with Electric Suspensory Appliances." The belt was offered for a free 30-day trial period to combat "*Nervous Debility*, loss of *Vitality and Manhood*, and all kindred troubles."

The subscription rate in the mid-1880s was $1.50 a year, but attracting subscribers and getting them to pay were often cited themes. Subscribers who agreed to "settle arears" and pay for another year in advance were offered inducements like free subscriptions to other newspapers and magazines and a silver watch. Subscribers who continued to refuse payment were often chided, however. "We had heard of editor's salaries and printer's fees, and knew that they did not begin to compare with the President's salary, but we were ignorant of the number of people that will take advantage of every opportunity to swindle a publisher of his dues," declared an editorial on Sept. 2, 1886. "We hardly supposed it possible to find in so short a time, so many men that would gladly read a paper till asked to pay their subscription . . . We did not expect to find so many men, too stingy to subscribe themselves, and then have the audacity to be always on the borrow."

For reasons now obscured by time, Reynolds left the paper in the spring of 1886, 15 months after the paper moved to Clear Water Harbor. Turner took over as editor and remained there for another six years.

Then the railroad came to the Pinellas peninsula.

The Times comes to St. Petersburg

■ When the first train chugged into St. Petersburg on June 8, 1888, it signaled the end of the community's isolation and the beginning of its development as the county's largest city. The *West Hillsborough Times* was not far behind.

Before the railroad, only a handful of families lived here, farming, fishing, raising cattle and eking out an existence. There were no churches, no schools, no hotels, no newspapers. The closest point of debarkation was the wharf at Clear Water Harbor. The trip to Tampa, by foot, horseback or ox cart, took at least two days.

Two men changed all that. One was John C. Williams, an autocratic, asthmatic scion of a wealthy Detroit family who was determined to develop a city on the 1,600 acres he owned along the eastern shoreline of the Pinellas peninsula. The other was Pyotr Alexeyevich Dementyev, a dynamic, imaginative Russian emigrant who was laying railroad lines all across Central Florida.

Dementyev — or Peter A. Demens, as he called himself in America — needed a waterfront terminus for the spur of the railroad track he was laying along the peninsula. And Williams persuaded him to bring it to Tampa Bay near what is now Central Avenue. The tiny settlement at the end of the line was named St. Petersburg, after Demens' hometown in Russia; the new hotel a block and a half northeast of the ornate depot was named the Detroit, after Williams' hometown.

With the railroad serving as both a magnet and conveyor, the tiny settlement began to grow. By 1890, the federal census counted 273 persons. Two years later, a town government was organized. The new town council

A favorite fishing spot in early St. Petersburg was the Railroad Pier, which extended more than half a mile into Tampa Bay.
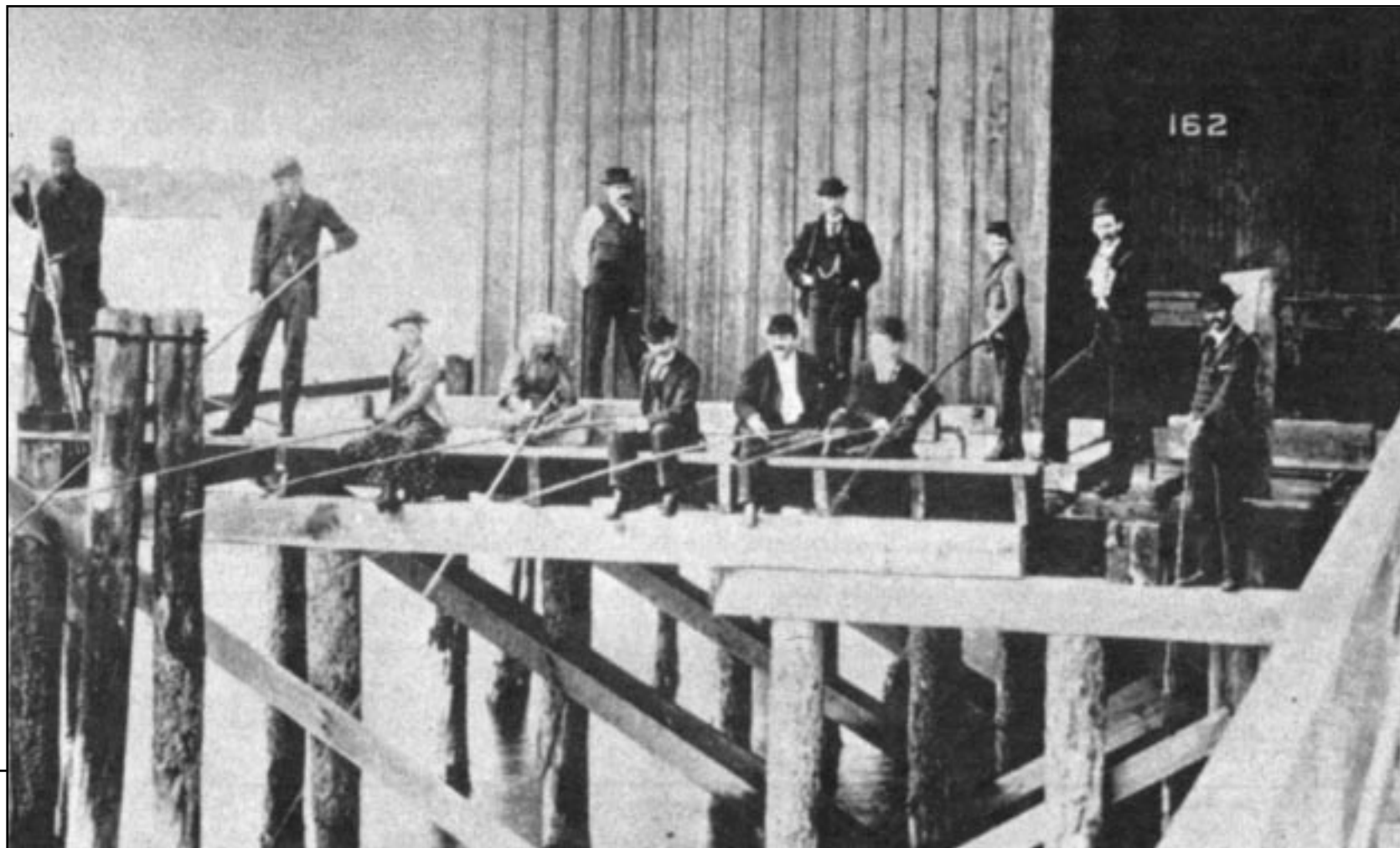
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ST. PETERSBURG TIMES.

Mrs. Almeda Davis of Tampa, Morgan's wife was active in the drive to build a wooden sidewalk along Central Avenue and his oldest daughter was May Queen in 1895.

Morgan, a slender man with bushy brows, dark mustache and hawk nose, was a writer and speaker of some note, particularly as an advocate of temperance. (He named one of his daughters for Frances Willard, the prohibitionist.) When he lectured on the "Arts and Monuments of Antiquity" at a convention of "the Chautaugua of the Tropics," he held a packed house "spell bound from the beginning to the end," according to an undated newspaper account of his speech. And when he died in 1906, a Tampa newspaper called him "a widely known writer, lecturer and minister of the gospel" and "a pioneer in the frontier style of stories now so popular in the magazines."

It cost Morgan $1,200 to buy the *West Hillsborough Times* from A. C. Turner and move it to St. Petersburg in the fall of 1892.

Little is known about Morgan's brief stint as editor, though most accounts say he moved the paper into an office on the south side of Central Avenue just west of Fourth Street and changed its name to the *St. Petersburg Times*. However, one of the few surviving issues from that era shows that the paper was called the *West Hillsborough Times* as late as June 1894. One of Morgan's employees recalled 60 years later that Morgan actually experimented with the paper's name, variously calling it the *News*, the *Times* and the *Once A Week*. The employee was J. M. Lassiter, who in a 1954 interview recalled that Morgan's printing shop, located "next door to Dr. T. F. Thomas' drug store," had "a lean-to roof covered with tar paper, and it leaked aplenty when it rained."

passed an ordinance against public drunkenness, obscene language and indecent exposure, banned pigs and racing horses from the town's few streets and authorized the first capital improvement — a jail. The two-room building was 10 feet high and 12 feet long and cost $37.68.

The jail also served as headquarters for the town marshal, who spent much of his time there on rainy days. If the jail had official guests, historian Karl H. Grismer says, the marshal had to wander the streets or go home.

THE MAN WHO brought the *West Hillsborough Times* to St. Petersburg was a peripatetic preacher, lecturer and journalist named Richard James Morgan. He was born in Columbia, Ala. in 1853 and moved to Florida as a young man. Morgan lived in central Florida before moving to Clear Water, apparently in the 1880s, where he ran a dry goods and millinery store.

From there he moved south to St. Petersburg, where he and his family became active in community affairs. For a time, Morgan was pastor of St. Petersburg's First Congregational Church (which was formally organized in a railroad car in 1888). According to his only surviving child,

St. Petersburg's founders: Demens (top), Williams.

LASSITER, 85 at the time of the interview, also said that he helped Morgan build a press to replace the old press that had printed the *Times* since its birth in 1884. He said the two men built a three-foot-high table frame, fashioned a roller out of a big live oak tree they'd found along Booker Creek (where Roser Park is now) and used a piece of slate from a pool table to make a bed for the type. To operate the press, Lassiter said, he ran the roller, Morgan fed paper into the press and a printer applied ink to the type before each impression.

"When we started up the first time, Morgan was really happy," recalled Lassiter. " 'It's a world beater!' he said. 'There's not another one like it.' " The new press "could go really fast, 28 copies a minute," added Lassiter. "It wouldn't take as long to turn out the 400-odd issues."

The June 28, 1894 issue of the paper shows that Morgan had made two other changes as well. The price of a subscription was a dollar a year (down 50 cents) and the paper was top-heavy with advertisements. More than half of page 1, for example, was devoted to ads, including a pitch for H. Giddens and Co.'s Tampa store across the top of the page.

The main story on the front page was a collection of items from around the state headed "Small But Newsy

A town's early days

One of the first people to come to St. Petersburg was John Donaldson (right), a former slave who arrived in 1868 and bought 40 acres three years later. The first bloc of black settlers was workmen who helped build the railroad into St. Petersburg in 1888. Around the turn of the century, the town's fire department was powered by horse and mule (middle). The main street (bottom) was a sleepy Sixth Avenue (later renamed Central Avenue).

Pinellas County Historical Museum

Pinellas County Historical Museum

City of St. Petersburg

R. J. Morgan, a minister and temperance lecturer, brought the Times to St. Petersburg in 1892.

Don C. McMullen, who later became a Tampa legislator, apparently owned the paper for a time in 1893.

J. Ira Gore was town tax assessor and Times owner in the late 1890s.

Items About Everything Imaginable." It included blurbs about waterspouts in Key West, a big real estate deal in Citrus County, a cane crop near St. Cloud and an old black man near Silver Springs Park "who claims to be nearly 104 years of age." The local news was on page 3, where readers learned that the fishing had been good in recent days, that J. F. Bedford had sold his home on Fifth Avenue to W. R. King and that W. J. and Pearl McPherson were back in town after "cruising down the coast. They report the mosquitoes on the warpath down there."

Morgan apparently sold the paper to Don C. McMullen in the spring of 1893, then bought it back a few months later. McMullen, then just 21, went on to become a Tampa-based lawyer and state legislator and was active in real estate and business in the region.

MORGAN SOLD the paper for good in 1894 or 1895, this time to J. Ira Gore, a veteran newspaperman and politician from Cedar Key. Gore had grown up in Ocala, where he is said to have developed a penchant for politics and writing. Before coming to St. Petersburg, he published newspapers in Arcadia, Palmetto, Bronson and Cedar Key. In Cedar Key, he also served as town clerk, town council member, town treasurer, mayor and deputy collector of U. S. Customs, according to historian Charles C. Fishburne Jr.

A bright-eyed man with a high forehead and mutton-chop sideburns, Gore also got involved in St. Petersburg politics. He was elected to two one-year terms as town tax assessor in 1898-1900. Since there was still no city hall, the town council held its meetings at the *Times* office — a two-story, wooden frame structure on the south side of Central Avenue between Fourth and Fifth streets, where the lobby of the Florida National Bank is now. (The first *Times* building, under editor Morgan, was at the same general location. It is not clear whether Gore simply took over that building, or used another one.)

After selling the paper to Gore, Morgan did not pass off the scene. He was soon publishing another weekly newspaper, which he called the *Sub-Peninsula Sun.*

The town's first paper, the *South Florida Home* — a weekly that had moved from Charlotte Harbor in 1890 — was still publishing. There was also a weekly called the *Town Talk,* published by H. M. Longstreth. So for a time the little town had four newspapers. (The *Evening Independent* was not founded until 1906.)

However, the *South Florida Home* folded in 1896 and the *Sub-Peninsula Sun* was sold to the *Times* in September 1906. (The existence — and demise — of the *Town Talk* is not recorded in any published history of St. Petersburg. The late Wesley Russell, a pioneer resident, says in an unpublished manuscript that as a youngster in the mid-1890s he worked for the *Town Talk* and Longstreth. Town Council minutes of 1896 show that the council awarded some printing business to the *Town Talk* and Longstreth.)

Though only a few issues of the Gore-edited *Times* have survived, the paper undoubtedly chronicled the story of an infant village that slowly became a town in the decade just before the turn of the century.

Commercial fishing was the principal industry of St. Petersburg in the 1890s, according to historian Grismer, but the town's climate, fine fishing and improving railroad service began attracting tourists in the latter part of the decade. (The fishing was so good that the *Times* of Aug. 7, 1896 reported that Capt. John McCormick, "the hustling man on the wharf who furnishes fishing tackle and bait to the seekers after piscatorial sport," caught a jewfish that was 6 feet, 7 inches long and weighed at least 350 pounds.)

The town's first bond issue — for $7,000 to build a public school — was approved by voters in 1893, 39 to 1. In 1895, the Town Council passed an ordinance prohibiting cows carrying bells from wandering within the town limits (the jangling bells had kept some residents awake). That same year, a campaign led by the town's women to create an attractive public park was capped by the construction of a bandstand. It had taken eight years to clear the land, lay down the walkways and build a fence to keep cows and hogs out of what is now called Williams Park.

As the century neared an end, electricity and the telephone also came to St. Petersburg. A Philadelphian named F. A. Davis built an electric plant where the Yacht Club now stands and turned on the power on Aug. 5, 1897. There was one catch: The power was only on from sunset to midnight.

The first telephone line was laid by merchant Arthur Norwood the next year. Norwood had two Central Avenue stores, one at Ninth Street, the other at Fourth, and put a phone in each. So many people came to Norwood's stores to try them out, historian Grismer says, that the phones had paid for themselves by the end of the first day. By the next year, 1899, there were 18 subscribers in town talking to one another on a new public telephone system.

By 1900, the census of the town along Tampa Bay was 1,573 — up dramatically from the 273 of the previous decade. But the *Times* remained a four-page weekly with a modest circulation of several hundred copies throughout the decade.

An exception was a special "Exposition Number" published in September 1897 and designed to attract tourists. It had six pages and a clutch of photographs of St. Petersburg, including 10 on the front page alone. "No Place in Florida Offers Greater Attractions For the Tourist," declared the paper, which proceeded to tout St. Petersburg's climate, fishing, businesses and tourist accommodations.

THAT ISSUE OFFERS a word picture of what the town was like in 1897. Ticking off a list of businesses and available services for would-be tourists, the *Times* cited the following: three general stores, a jewelry shop, a novelty store, two drug stores, a barber shop, a bicycle store, a livery stable, an ice company, a cigar factory, a steam laundry, one tailor, two bakeries, two millinery shops, a blacksmith and wheelwright, a sawmill, several hotels and boarding houses, and an opera house.

St. Petersburg also had five doctors ("although the town is proverbial for its health"), two lawyers and a dentist, the *Times* reported. There was a funeral home, too, but the image-conscious paper described it like this: "About the dullest business in St. Petersburg is the undertaking business. Mr. H. P. Bussy does what little there is to do and owns his own hearse and cemetery. He carries a full line of caskets and is fully equipped for embalming."

Gore remained as owner-editor of the newspaper until Sept. 7, 1900, when he died after a year of declining health. His awkwardly worded obituary said, "The *Times* is bereft of its editor, the community of a public-spirited man . . . — one who, subject to criticism, never allowed any adverse word to sour his spirit or cause him to say an unkind word of another."

Gore's widow and son continued publishing the paper for a few months, then sold it on April 1, 1901. The buyers were three men led by a tall Dakotan named William Lincoln Straub.

The major had faith in the sun

ON Nov. 4, 1907, Willis B. Powell published Pinellas County's first daily newspaper, the *St. Petersburg Independent*. Powell, a longtime newspaperman, had founded the *Independent* as a weekly the previous year. Its first weekly edition was printed on March 3, 1906, in the Gore Building on Central Avenue, where the Florida National Bank now stands.

Now, a year later, Powell had bought a lot at the corner of Fourth Street and First Avenue S for $900 and erected a one-story structure. Copies of that first daily *Independent* sold for 3 cents; advertising cost 5 cents per column inch. The edition included a long story about Miss Ophelia Gray's progressive peanut party, and a short story about a man who fell off his bicycle while riding downtown.

On Dec. 10, 1908, Major Lew B. Brown, publisher of the *Harrodsburg* (Ky.) *Democrat*, arrived in St. Petersburg for a winter vacation. On his second day in town, he visited the *Independent* building. The city's climate had already won him over, and within days he was the afternoon newspaper's owner. The selling price: $10,000.

Brown published a poem he had written about the area's weather, "Sunshine City." Soon he was using that term in news stories and editorials to describe St. Petersburg.

The major conceived his most memorable idea while editing a circus story one day. He came across a quote from P. T. Barnum: "Any man who should connect his advertising with the weather would make a ten-strike!"

"I'm going to make that ten-strike," Brown declared. On Sept. 20, 1910, he ran a full-page advertisement promising to give away the newspaper for free on any day that the sun did not shine before press time. A few weeks later, a hurricane lashed the city, and for two days, the *Independent's* presses worked overtime to meet the demand for free papers.

Some folks warned of bankruptcy, but Brown refused to back down. Free newspapers found their way to northern cities, and stories about Brown's Sunshine Offer appeared in national magazines. When letters arrived addressed simply to "Sunshine City, Florida," the ingeniousness of Brown's publicity gimmick became apparent.

In 1942, with the war causing a newsprint shortage and Daylight Saving Time cutting into his pre-press daylight hours, Brown withdrew his Sunshine Offer. The next day the *St. Petersburg Times* announced it would pick up the practice. Brown quickly reinstated the offer. The Sunshine Offer still exists, though it has been modified. Now, only editions sold in newspaper racks are given away on the day after the sun fails to shine from sunup to sundown. An electronic sensor on the roof of the Times building registers sunlight or the lack of it, on a recorder in the lobby.

Brown left other legacies. When the hurricane of 1921 washed away the city's pier, Brown pushed for the building of the Million-Dollar Pier. Brown also supported the founding of

The Independent building at Fourth Street and First Avenue S about 1940.

Mound Park Hospital (now Bayfront Medical Center).

Through the 1920s and 1930s, the *Independent* thrived. Brown's son, Llewellyn Chauncey Brown, took over when his father died in 1944. In 1950 Brown sold the newspaper to Ralph Nicholson, who in turn resold it in 1952 to Lord Roy Thomson, owner of the largest newspaper chain in the United States as well as newspapers in Canada and Britain. However, under Thomson's ownership, the *Independent's* circulation dropped and its losses rose.

Sports writer Jimmy Mann, now a director of the S & H Golf Classic, recalls those days. "Each edition was celebrated and/or mourned by editors and staffers openly drinking whiskey from flasks, thermos jugs or bottles hidden in desk drawers," he says. Management ignored the drinking. Mann also tells of 17-hour days, 6-day weeks, salaries of $55 a week with raises given only on ultimatum. There was no pension plan. Equipment rarely was cleaned or repaired. Yet, the morale among staffers was tremendous, Mann says.

By 1962, the *Independent* was losing $300,000 a year and Thomson was looking for a buyer. In late June 1962, he asked Nelson Poynter, editor and president of the *St. Petersburg Times,* to meet him in New York.

"We're going to close down the *Independent* unless you buy it," Poynter later recalled Thomson telling him. "How much will you pay for our 'ill will?'"

Poynter offered $250,000. Thomson made a counter offer of $300,000, and the two shook hands. According to a story in the *Times* in June 1962, the Independent's circulation was put at 33,918. It soon turned out to be only 19,561.

Many of the Independent's 197 employees found other jobs or retired. Only three *Independent* journalists were rehired by the new owners. (The news and editorial staffs of the *Times* and *Independent* have been kept separate since Poynter's purchase; all other departments — such as advertising, production and circulation — serve both newspapers.)

Stan Witwer was transferred from the Times to be managing editor of the *Independent*. "We didn't have time to recruit staff," he says, "so a bunch of us from the *Times* went over to handle the *Independent* until we got it started." Despite the handicaps, "we were fighting the *Times* tooth and nail, and scooped them regularly on politics."

Bob Stiff was editor of the *Independent* for 17 years until he resigned last month. In an interview before his resignation, Stiff said that many readers "don't realize that the news staffs of the two newspapers are just as competitive as they would be if we were still under seperate ownership. We believe the residents of Pinellas County are better served with this competition than they are with the cooperative efforts or one staff producing two newspapers, as occurs in many two-newspaper cities."

After reaching a peak of 42,346 in 1980, the *Independent's* circulation has declined. In 1983, it was 37,837.

Maj. Lew Brown, creator of the Sunshine Offer.

By Judy Garnatz, Independent staff writer

W. L. Straub takes charge

■ Chance and the bitter cold of the Dakota territory had brought W. L. Straub to St. Petersburg. He was 34 years old and ill — so ill, he recalled later, that his doctors told him he probably would not survive.

Straub and two partners bought the Times for $1,300 in 1901.

But survive he did. For 38 years he was editor or associate editor of the *St. Petersburg Times*. During that time, the city and newspaper literally grew up together. The village became a city, the country weekly a spirited daily. And no one of that era had more impact on the development of the town and its institutions than Straub.

It was Straub who led the fight to separate Pinellas from Hillsborough County; Straub who championed orderly city planning, wide streets, public parks and good roads; Straub who fought for a public library and public ownership and beautification of the waterfront; Straub who preached — and practiced — civic activism and tourist promotion. He was "the greatest influence for development of the community ever to appear upon the scene," says St. Petersburg historian Walter P. Fuller.

William Lincoln Straub was born 1,500 miles from St. Petersburg, on a farm in Dowagiac, Mich. on July 14, 1867. He grew up there and got what he later called "very limited schooling" in the public schools. In a handwritten account of his early life that he apparently wrote shortly before his death in 1939, Straub said that he moved to Sargent County in the Dakota territory and at age 17 got a job managing a general store. That first winter was a brutal one, and he found himself hanging around the office of the *Sargent County Rustler* "along with the poker players who never left it." Young Straub had been "a scribbler for newspapers since my school days," and he soon found himself writing for the *Rustler* "as if it were my very own."

SOON, IT WAS. When the two owners left for Chicago and other ventures, Straub in effect inherited their modest weekly. He was also teaching school and living with his brother and a friend in a sod house. It was a rugged life. He traveled from sod house to school house to newspaper office in a horse and buggy, and had to perform his editorial duties at night, "to the accompaniment of the rattle of the poker chips and the profane conversation of the tireless players."

In 1894, Straub moved to the Oaks (N. D.) *Weekly Republican* and, in 1895, to the Grand Forks *Daily Herald*, the "largest and strongest journal in the northwest," as associate editor. There he evidently became one of the region's most prominent journalists. According to Jack Hagerty, former editor of the *Herald*, Straub was known as both a "paragrapher," a writer who condensed a news story into a single paragraph, and a cartoonist.

He was also a crusader. He was, in his own words, "militantly dry" on the prohibition issue and a strong backer of the gold standard and Republican William McKinley in the "free silver and populist wave aroused" by William Jennings Bryan in the 1896 presidential campaign.

According to Hagerty, Straub eventually found himself in the lucrative, though somewhat awkward, position of working for two newspapers. He was earning $75 a month from the *Herald* and, with the permission of its owner, he took a second job — writing editorials for a tiny weekly for the unheard-of salary of $200 a month and all the advertising profits. When the owner of the weekly learned that Straub was wearing two hats, he tried unsuccessfully to renege on his deal with Straub, Hagerty says. Eventually, he bought out Straub's contract for $1,200 — a small fortune for a young Dakota journalist.

Meanwhile, Straub's health had begun to fail. As a young boy, an icy hunting trip led to a knee and leg problem that surgery did not help. His left leg never developed properly, leaving him partially crippled. Then, in the mid-1890s, he developed a bronchial condition that grew worse each winter. His doctors advised him to seek a warmer climate. He tried Texas first, in the winter of 1897-98, but "could not see myself as a Texan." The next winter he, his wife, 4-year-old daughter and aunt set out for Biloxi, Miss. There had been a yellow fever epidemic there, however, so the Straubs changed direction for Florida and one of the few places here they knew — Tampa.

Tampa was a disappointment — "no paving, no cleanliness, no nothing desirable," he said later — and the family took a boat across the bay to St. Petersburg to go fishing. Said Straub: "As we rattled up from the pier in the little old rattletrap of a train, and noted the clear waters and bright beach and came over onto this street (Central Avenue) and noted its cleanliness everywhere and got breakfast like mother used to make, we remarked to others, 'Why, I believe this is the very place we are looking for.' "

It was. By 1900, his bronchial condition cured and his crippled leg feeling better, Straub was living year-round in St. Petersburg, sunning, fishing and raising pineapples.

He was thinking about journalism, too. When the widow and son of *Times* editor J. Ira Gore decided to sell

When W. L. Straub (above) and his family first visited St. Petersburg, Central Avenue looked like this (left). The Straubs were enchanted. "I believe this is the very place we are looking for," he declared.

the paper, Straub and two partners bought it in the spring of 1901 for $1,300. The paper, now 17 years old, was still a humble, four-page weekly. It was still located on the south side of Central Avenue just west of Fourth Street. "The plant consisted of a small quantity of badly broken type, used for both the paper and for job printing work, a Washington hand newspaper press, a small job printing press, a desk and editorial chair, and odds and ends," Straub recalled later. "The force consisted of one all-around old-time printer who could do everything, and a Negro who pulled the press and was a roustabout generally."

There were also only two cash-on-the-barrelhead advertisements in the *Times* — both for saloons — and Straub, ever the prohibitionist, promptly cut them out. That meant the only advertisements in the paper were taken out in trade.

STRAUB'S PARTNERS were A. P. Avery, a real estate man and former Town Council member, and A. H. Lindelie, another Dakota journalist. They organized the Times Publishing Co. in May 1901. In their May 4 issue, the new owners announced that the paper would cost $1.50 a year, appear each Saturday and double in size to eight pages. Four of the pages would be pre-prints from Atlanta, and four would have local news, editorials and advertisements.

Neither of Straub's partners stayed long. Lindelie departed in 1903 for Cuba and the sugar cane business. Avery left a year later to pursue other interests. He later became a prominent banker.

Their departure set a pattern of sorts for the decade to come. Straub, never a good businessman, took on a succession of partners to run the financial side of his growing enterprise, but none stayed for long. Hence, though the *Times* grew and improved as a newspaper, it apparently never really prospered as a business. Straub "always said that he was the worst businessman in the world — and he was," recalls his daughter, Blanche Straub Starkey.

It was to be a decade before Straub finally found someone to take control and leave him free to write his crusading editorials and draw his pointed cartoons.

For a time in the early 1900s, Straub's drawing of St. Petersburg's waterfront graced the masthead of the newspaper.

Cars, orange benches and mob justice

■ Delightful though it was to W. L. Straub and his family, St. Petersburg in 1901 was still a sleepy place. It was, Straub recalled three decades later, "a village of 1,500 people without an inch of paved streets or sidewalks in it." But that village was awakening to the twentieth century.

The first driver arrested for speeding was going 18 mph.

The "town" of St. Petersburg officially became a "city" in 1903 (a legal distinction that made it easier to issue bonds) and finally got a city hall — on the northeast corner of Fourth Street and First Avenue S. Central Avenue was paved between Fifth and Second streets, and there was a five-member police department led by a $100-a-month chief.

The first motion pictures came to St. Petersburg in 1901 — one-reeler silent movies that were flashed onto a curtain, according to historian Karl H. Grismer — and the first automobile made its appearance four years later. That first horseless carriage was owned by pioneer resident Edwin H. Tomlinson. It created quite a sensation as it bucked and backfired down Central at 6 miles an hour. Many people hooted at Tomlinson and his crazy contraption, Grismer says, but within a few years there were more automobiles than buggies downtown. (The first driver arrested for speeding was Mott Williams. He was appre-

hended for going down Central at 18 miles per hour, 10 miles over the speed limit, and fined $100.)

There were dark chapters in St. Petersburg's early years, too. The town's first bank collapsed in 1902. Most of the $51,000 that townspeople had on deposit there — a big chunk of the town's wealth — was lost, and there was ominous talk of a lynching before order was restored.

There *was* a lynching in 1905. A town marshal was murdered, and a black man was charged with the crime. A crowd surrounded the jail, Grismer says, and the black man was killed.

In 1910, a group of ministers started a drive to rid the town of sin, which they said included drinking, cigarette smoking, card playing and dancing. One target, according to Grismer, was a cigar store that had what the ministers called a "disgraceful and even blasphemous" sign in its window: "You had better smoke here than hereafter."

About the time the ministers tried to rid Central Ave-

Pass-A-Grille beach was a desolate place in the early 1900s. It was accessible only by boat, and the mosquitoes kept people away.

From the NORTH
From the WEST
From the EAST
ST. PETERSBURG 1 MILE
NO ROADS!
TOURIST

Editor Straub crusaded for better roads and for creation of a new county. The caption for this 1912 cartoon (left) had a tourist telling friends back home, "Don't come here! St. Petersburg's a peach, but she has no roads." Below is the Times on May 23, 1911 when it reported that the governor had signed a bill enabling the people of western Hillsborough County to create Pinellas County.

nue of sin, an imaginative real estate man was giving Central its famous green benches. That man was Noel A. Mitchell, a promoter nonpariel who invented a brand of salt water taffy, conducted real estate auctions while wearing a top hat and served a turbulent stint as St. Petersburg mayor. After opening a real estate office at the northwest corner of Fourth and Central in 1907, he installed 50 benches on the sidewalk outside for footsore customers and passers-by. The benches were bright orange, not green, and on their backsides were slogans touting Mitchell's real estate business: "Mitchell, the Sand Man. The Honest Real Estate Dealer. The Man with a Conscience. He Never Sleeps."

Soon, crowds were gathering outside Mitchell's office to rest, chat and bask in the sun. And soon other businessmen had their own slogan-emblazoned benches. The business district was awash in a sea of benches of various shapes, sizes and colors. That didn't do much for the city's appearance. So Mayor Al F. Lang, who is much better known for bringing baseball to the city, pushed through an ordinance requiring that all benches be the same size and color — green.

THE NEW EDITOR in the *Times* office on Central Avenue quickly made his presence felt. William Lincoln Straub was a six-footer with a rugged, friendly face and gray eyes that peered through wire-rim glasses. He parted his hair down the middle, in the style of the day, and in his later years faintly resembled Calvin Coolidge. Straub refused to let his crippled left leg slow him down. He used a crutch on his left side, a cane on his right, and could walk rapidly and negotiate stairs with ease. He once clambered onto the roof of his family's house to nail down some shingles.

Straub brought the same sort of determination to his struggling weekly newspaper. He had energy, vision and — as he himself put it in a 1908 editorial — "a hide utterly impervious to anything that may be said" about him. He disdained the typewriter, always writing his copy in longhand. From his big black pen came a steady stream of editorials that exhorted the little town by the bay to uplift itself with better roads, schools and government, to beau-

tify itself with publicly owned waterfront and parks, to sell itself to the tourist market up north.

Straub was not always successful, or always right (for a time, he opposed the paving of residential streets). But he was always heard. As one City Council member said later, "We often gave in to his will to shut him up."

Straub wrote with clarity, though not brevity, in the rather stilted style of that era. He frequently referred to himself by name and was fond of wrapping up an editorial with the same four words: "And there you are."

Though Straub later took some pains to separate his editorial views from the news department, there was little

Straub crusaded for public ownership of the waterfront.

such effort in the early years. Typical was a page-one story in January 1902 about two men who had been charged with murder in a barroom incident. The circumstances were apparently too telling for the teetotaling Straub. The story reported that "the whole affair is a most deplorable one, from any point of view, but deplorable affairs are never unexpected in connection with the liquor traffic."

Straub employed more than words to wage his crusades. He also did hundreds of cartoons and drawings. Some were merely sketches of prominent people and buildings and served to brighten up the dingy gray pages (photographs would not become a regular feature until the late 1920s). But he also drew pointed political cartoons that were a fixture at the top of page one for most of his first decade as editor.

ALTHOUGH STRAUB is often described as a self-effacing, gentle man who never held a grudge, his editorials were far from gentle. When a state senator riled Straub, the *Times* thundered that it was un-

the early years of the century. Straub and the *Times* endorsed it as early as 1910 — 10 years before the 19th Amendment was ratified — and in 1919 led a successful push to permit women to vote in city elections. The paper had a woman city editor, Mrs. Alliene Mitchell, as early as 1908. (See story, page 20.)

On the issue of race, however, the *Times* was a mirror of its time. It paternalistically declared itself "a friend of the negroes" but endorsed the white primary — the white power structure's way of denying blacks the vote. It denounced lynchings, too. But when there was a local lynching in November 1914 — a white mob stormed the city jail, seized a black man accused in a heinous murder and hanged him from a telephone pole — the theme of the *Times'* one-paragraph editorial reaction was not shock and indignation, but concern for the city's image. Residents should not be upset by comments from elsewhere, the paper declared, "for the whole world knows that the same brute under the same circumstances would have met the same fate in any one of their towns."

The *Times* also reprinted a short editorial from the *Star* in Ocala, where the lynching victim had once lived..
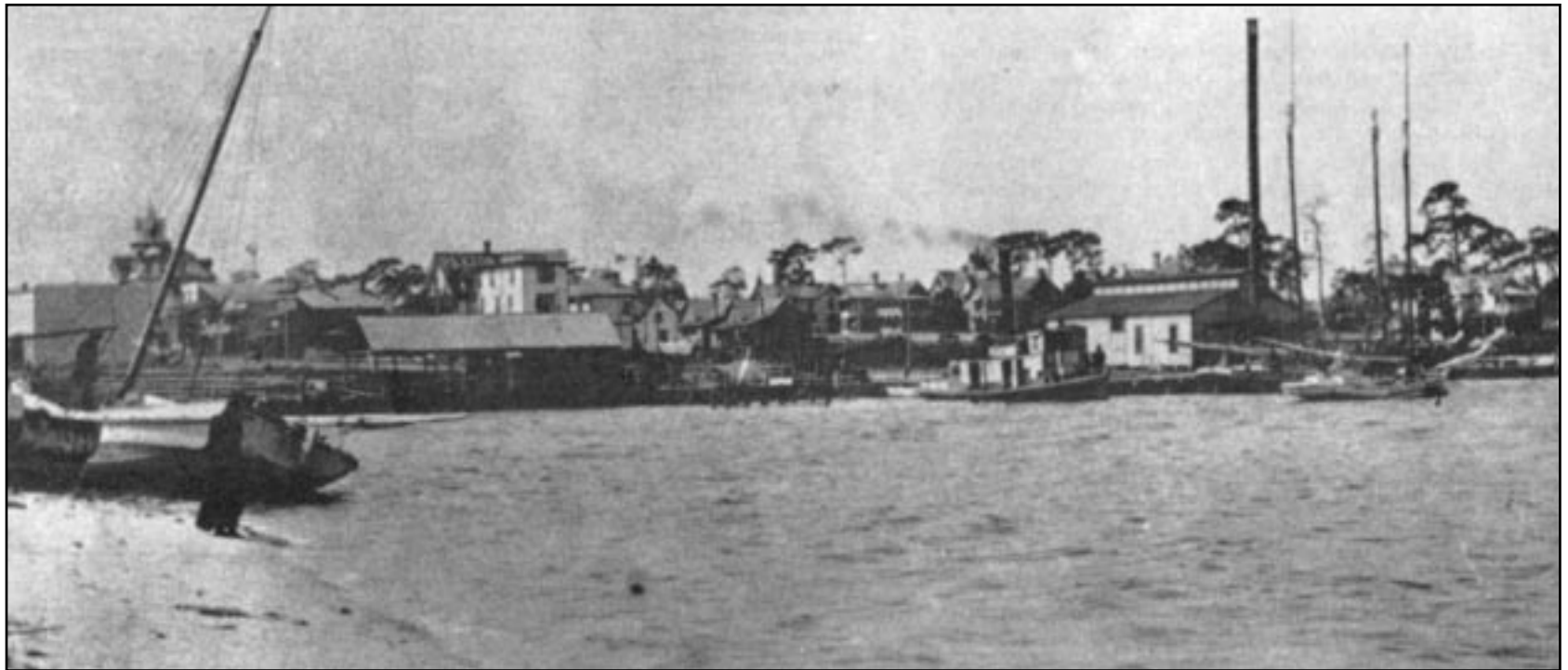
The little town's early waterfront was an unsightly clutter. Straub's editorials helped create a publicly owned waterfront.

St. Petersburg Historical Society Museum

likely "that any man capable of the perfidy shown by Sen. Crane . . . is capable of caring particularly what is thought of him as long as he obtains whatever form of reward was promised him." Another target was Dixie M. Hollins, the county's first superintendent of schools. "Poor Hollins. What can be done about such a person in public office?" Straub declared as he skewered the school official for "mischief and foolishness."

No foes, however, were as implacable as three county commissioners in 1914-15. Straub dubbed them "The Trio" and repeatedly blistered them for slighting St. Petersburg while "exploiting the funds and patience of the people for the furtherance of their own crooked political scheme." Twice, the editor's war with the three almost landed him in jail — once when an editorial angered a circuit judge, once when one of the commissioners swore out a warrant for criminal libel.

Women's suffrage was an important national issue in

"The officers here say he was a bad character and it was probably safe for the people of St. Petersburg to lynch him on general principles, whether he was guilty of the crime he was accused of or not," the editorial declared.

On the *Times'* news pages, meanwhile, blacks were rarely mentioned and then invariably in a negative context — usually crime. In a story about the lynching of a black man accused of raping a white woman near San Antonio in August 1902, for example, the rape was described as "another of those terrible crimes of the negro." Such stories sometimes referred to blacks as "niggers," "darkies," "coons" and "burrheads."

Straub's most enduring contributions were probably his campaigns to claim St. Petersburg's waterfront for public ownership and to separate the Pinellas peninsula from Hillsborough County.

When he became *Times* editor in 1901, the waterfront was already cluttered with privately owned piers, ware-

houses and docks, plus an unsightly array of boats, fishing net racks and debris. Almost immediately, Straub began calling for public ownership and beautification of the waterfront, which he called St. Petersburg's "most valuable asset." Many years and many editorials were to pass before city officials began to agree. But gradually waterfront lots were bought by the city or willed to the city, and today a vast stretch along the bay is beautiful public parkland. The section between First and Fifth avenues N is called Straub Park.

The *Times'* campaign to pry the Pinellas peninsula away from Hillsborough County was another protracted affair. Pinellas had been the often-forgotten west flank of Hillsborough County for decades. There were no bridges in those days, and a boat trip from St. Petersburg to Tampa to conduct county business took a full day. Tax dollars from West Hillsborough were collected and spent by Tampa politicians, usually on Tampa schools, roads and buildings.

There had been stirrings for separation as early as the 1880s. In his first years as *Times* editor Straub occasionally complained about the unfair allocation of county tax revenue and what he called the "studied or unconscious assumption that Tampa is Hillsborough county." Then came Feb. 23, 1907. In a long editorial that came to be known as "the Pinellas Declaration of Independence," Straub called for separation from mother Hillsborough. Ticking off statistics on population, taxes and geography, he told readers that "now is the time. Let all pull together for the common good."

The Tampa establishment was loathe to part with West Hillsborough, however, and it took four years for the Legislature to approve the separation. No one figured in the debate more prominently than Straub. He bombarded his readers and legislators (who were mailed the paper, free, for a full year) with editorials and cartoons, and even went to Tallahassee to press the issue in person.

Victory finally came in 1911. The Legislature passed a Pinellas independence bill and Gov. Albert Gilchrist signed it into law on May 23. Six months later, the proposal was overwhelmingly ratified by the voters of West Hillsborough. And on Jan. 1, 1912, the area officially became Pinellas County.

A year later, the secretary of the Tampa Board of Trade paid tribute to Straub's role in the drive for separation. "He (Straub) is the man behind the gun who furnished the facts and figures which took a slice off this county to make Pinellas," recalled the Hillsborough official, "and if we had not fought him hard and consistently, he would have stolen Tampa bay, the Gulf of Mexico and the flurry clouds from out of our skies."

City of St. Petersburg

The forerunner of today's Festival of States celebration was an annual George Washington's birthday parade. These children were at the intersection of Central Avenue and Fourth Street in 1910. Behind them was the real estate office of Noel A. Mitchell, originator of the city's famous green benches.

St. Petersburg Historical Society Museum

In about 1905, the Times' tiny staff worked in a building on Central Avenue between Third and Fourth streets. It included (from left) William Schuler, Ellen Foster, Roy Haeseker and editor Straub.

This old postcard shows what the intersection of Central Avenue and Fourth Street looked like about 1907.

For decades, the women's pages covered the 4-Fs — food, furniture, fashion and family. The 1959 staff included (left to right) Judy Cooper, Anne Rowe, Gloria Biggs, Mary Evertz, Weston Ermatinger, Mary Menke, Sylvia Lush and Nancy Osgood.

The reign of the Duchess over the women's pages

SHE was a grandmotherly widow with swept-back white hair, rimless spectacles and high-top shoes. She lived quietly in a simple home, drove a little Dodge and favored dark clothing and a pearl choker. She also held St. Petersburg's "high society" in the palm of her white-gloved hand. As society editor of the *Times* in 1931-1948 and then food writer until 1956, Diana Rowell was St. Petersburg's social arbiter. From her post in the newsroom, she decided which weddings, club meetings and teas were important enough to rate a splash of publicity — and which could be downplayed or disdainfully ignored.

Rowell typified the way the *Times* and other American newspapers covered women in their pages and treated them in their newsrooms. It was an era in which "women's news" was generally limited to society functions, gardening and cooking, an era in which most female staff members were paid less than men, barred from key supervisory roles and denied the opportunity to cover "hard news" such as government, politics and police.

Yet in both editorial and personnel policy,

Diane Rowell, the city's social arbiter, posed for a fashion photo, 1956.

the *Times* has been quicker than many newspapers to adapt to women's changing role in America. Both Paul Poynter, the paper's principal owner in 1912-1947, and his son Nelson (owner from 1947 to 1978), had intelligent wives who undoubtedly had some effect on the way the *Times* portrayed and employed women. The wives served on the Times Publishing Co.'s board of directors, as did Dorothy McConnie, Nelson Poynter's longtime executive secretary.

As early as 1912, the year the *Times* became a daily, there were enough social activities for the paper's first society editor, Mrs. W. A. Lemieu, to fill a couple of columns a day. By the early 1920s, that coverage had grown into a page or two each day that were labeled "In the Realm of Society." By the 1940s and early 1950s, the reign of Rowell, the "Society" section had two or more pages daily and a lavish spread of stories and pictures on Sunday.

Rowell may have been "Diana" to her friends. But to the staff, the imposing woman with a lacy handkerchief at her wrist was always "Mrs. Rowell" or — behind her back — "the Duchess." It was Rowell who originated the debutante ball for white families in St. Petersburg in 1937. Until

her death in 1973, she helped decide which young women deserved the honor of making a debut into society. The *Times* would invariably preview the ball with a page of photos of debs in evening gowns, then cover the ball itself with another page or two of stories and pictures.

Well into the 1960s, women's clubs were covered exhaustively in the *Times*. The paper sponsored a Club of the Year competition and an annual Salute to Women's Clubs banquet that was attended by a thousand women. (Ann Landers was guest speaker in the late 1950s. Since she is Jewish, the staff had a difficult time finding hotel accommodations for her.)

Engagements and weddings were big news, too — especially if the young woman was from a socially prominent family. "You got a two-column (engagement) picture if you were 'somebody,' a one-column picture if you weren't," recalls reporter Mary Evertz, who joined the women's section in 1954.

Rowell had been food editor since 1948, but she was still dictating the coverage of social news, Evertz says. "I was never permitted to write up any party given by Ruth or Hubert Rutland," she says. Rutland had divorced his first wife, a close friend of Rowell, and Rowell decided that Rutland and his second wife had forfeited all rights to coverage in the *Times*, Evertz says.

There was also a high society in St. Petersburg's black community — a close-knit circle of professional people who lived in big houses along Fifth Avenue S, entertained lavishly and watched their daughters "come out" in the community's own debutante ball. The *Times*' white readers never read about those families, however. Their activities were publicized on a Negro news page that circulated only in black neighborhoods. Even today, nearly two decades after the black news page was abolished, the *Times*' weekly society column focuses almost exclusively on whites.

EVERTZ says that in the mid-1950s she wanted to cover more than society and asked executive editor Tom C. Harris to move her to the police beat. She was turned down, she says, because that beat was "no place for a woman."

Anne Rowe Goldman (left) was the first woman to head a news department that included as many men as women. Metropolitan editor Janice Martin (right) supervises local news coverage.

By Robert Hooker, deputy metropolitan editor

Not all women were relegated to the women's pages, however. As early as 1908, the *Times* had a woman city editor named Alliene Mitchell. That may be misleading. It was struggling country paper then, publishing just twice a week, and the title apparently went to the tiny staff's chief reporter and headline writer. It would be more than 70 years before the paper had another woman city editor.

In the 1920s, society editor Frances Martin Reed regularly wrote features that had little to do with society or women, and the important real estate column was handled by Eve Alsman. When many of the men in the newsroom were called into service for World War II, women were hired to take their places. Suddenly, women were covering beats like police and fishing that had been the exclusive province of men. When the war ended and the men returned, however, many of the women lost their jobs.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the male domination of the newsroom gradually began to disappear. Margaret Carroll — a reporter as tough as any man — covered police and then City Hall. A copy editor named Betty Ann Rhodes rose through the ranks to become the assistant to a succession of male city editors. To the dismay of many reporters who admired her, she never got the top job herself. Instead, the first woman to head a department that included as many women as men was Anne Goldman, who became newsfeatures editor in 1966.

On the editorial page, the *Times* was generally a champion of women's causes. It endorsed suffrage for women as early as 1910, 10 years before the 19th Amendment was ratified, and led a drive that gave women the right to vote in city elections in 1919. In 1918, the paper called for equal pay for women; in 1944, for admission of women to the University of Florida; in 1949, for more women on juries, in medicine and in political office. "If the hand that rocks the cradle writes the laws, such discriminatory practices will vanish," it declared.

When change was forced on the paper itself in 1968, however, the *Times* bristled in indignation. "After Dec. 1 there will be a new amusement section in daily newspapers," it said. "It used to be called classified advertising. But due to a capricious congressional act, bolstered by a silly interpretation from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, separate job listings for men and women will no longer be tolerated . . . It is one thing to be gallant and come out for equal opportunity to be extended to the fairer sex. It is another thing to turn the classified section into a joke fest and employment offices into complete chaos."

Over the years, as women's role in American society changed, the *Times* women's pages evolved. The "Society" label gave way to a new label — "and now . . . about WOMEN" — in the early 1950s, then to "Women Today" and finally "Family Today" in 1960. The section was still traditional, however. Until the mid-1960s, says Goldman, a former editor of the section, it was limited to "the four Fs — food, furniture, fashion and family."

In 1937, the Times gave lavish spreads to women deemed important in "society". . .

. . . 17 years later, in 1954, the focus was much the same.

IN 1969, the *Times* made a dramatic change in format, starting a new section designed to appeal to men as well as women. It was called the Day section and was patterned after a similar new section, called "Style," in the *Washington Post.*

Into the Day section went many of the staples of the women's section — food, fashion, Ann Landers, engagements and weddings (now in a standardized, much shortened form). But the focus would be much broader, the *Times* explained to readers. The section would be a "daily magazine" designed to explore entertainment, culture, consumer protection, religion and other "facets of the way people live." (Last year, the Day section was renamed the Floridian.)

"Women had changed, but newspapers hadn't," says Eugene C. Patterson, chairman and chief executive officer of the Times Publishing Co. and managing editor of the *Washington Post* when it began the Style section. "Women's sections were almost an insult to women as people. They were not fluff-heads; they were full-fledged American citizens who needed to be treated as such."

Women were still treated differently in the newsroom. Before women began wearing slacks to work in about 1970, Goldman says, they felt compelled to ask for permission. Reporters Virginia Ellis and Eleanor Randolph were sent on the road to cover the 1972 presidential campaign — but only after they complained that women were being excluded. Before she departed, Ellis says, a male supervisor took her aside and said, "Don't do anything to embarrass the paper."

Within a few years, Ellis was Tallahassee bureau chief, Susan Denley was assistant chief of the Clearwater bureau, Dorothy Smiljanich was editor of the Day section, Elizabeth Whitney was business editor and Judy Sedgeman was editor of the Sunday magazine. It was not until 1982, however, that a woman — Janice Martin — was named city editor. A year later, Martin was promoted to metropolitan editor, with responsibility over the daily City/State section and the paper's five regional editions. The Times Publishing Co. also has a female corporate officer: Catherine Heron became treasurer in 1983.

Times editors have tried to keep the newspaper's language in step with the changing times. Reporters are instructed to abandon stereotypes and avoid terms that incorporate gender reference or imply that men are the norm and women the exception.

Banned from the paper, for example, are once-prominent words — now considered sexist — like "coed." "Policemen" have become "police officers," "city councilmen" have become "city council members" and "foreman" has become "supervisor."

Most women are still given honorific titles (Miss, Mrs. or Ms.) by the *Times*, though certain women, principally athletes and public figures, are treated like men. On second reference, for example, St. Petersburg Mayor Corinne Freeman is Freeman, not Mrs. Freeman.

The unconscious habits of sexism die hard, however. Earlier this year, shortly after it was announced that managing editor Andrew Barnes would be promoted to editor and president, Barnes issued the following note to the staff: "The 1984 vacation memo, over the signature of the fellow who is still managing editor, refers to a limit on the number of "deskmen" who may be on vacation at a time. Aargh. That's *editors.*"

The old and the new: In 1909, there were both buggies and automobiles at the intersection of Central Avenue and Fourth Street.

Pinellas County Historical Museum

A paper six days a week

■ W. L. Straub did more than improve St. Petersburg and the county during his first decade as editor. He also improved his newspaper.

For the first few years, the *Times* remained an awkward, unattractive sheet that offered stale news in a lifeless package of cluttered, one-column headlines. Advertising dominated page 1. The only consistent spark in the eight-page weekly came from Straub's cartoons and editorials. Circulation was small — about a thousand issues a week, according to *Times* historian Tom C. Harris — and so was the staff. Straub apparently did it all in those years, selling ads, writing stories and headlines, even wrapping papers for mailing to out-of-town subscribers.

Mrs. Straub was office manager. The title "city editor" went to the person who gathered and wrote most of the news. The city editor in the summer of 1908 was William B. Tippetts. He had to leave that fall, however — to return to high school. His replacement was Alliene Mitchell, the paper's first woman administrator.

In July 1904, Straub moved the *Times* one block east to a building on the south side of Central Avenue between Third and Fourth streets. There was apparently more room there,

In 1912, after a $1,000 robbery, the Times printed its first extra.

and an editorial explained that the move put the paper closer to the business center of town.

In the *Times'* old quarters between Fourth and Fifth streets, another competitor appeared in March 1906. An Illinois man named Willis B. Powell established a weekly he called the *Independent*. By November 1907, Powell had moved his paper into a new building on the southwest corner of First Avenue S and Fourth Street, turned it into an afternoon daily and begun a spirited war with the *Times*.

Perhaps spurred by the competition, Straub began publishing his paper twice a week in December 1907. He also made a series of changes to make the *Times* more attractive. Advertising virtually disappeared from page 1, and bigger, brighter headlines appeared over the stories there (sample: "Walter Bruen Falls From Telephone Pole"). Much of the writing remained pedestrian, however; a story on the City Council reads like the official minutes of the meeting. There was still virtually no national or international news (readers were expected to get

The Times was at the southeastern corner of First Avenue S and Third Street 1912-21.

that from the Jacksonville and Tampa papers).

Baseball was becoming the national pastime, and the *Times* tried to keep current. A full baseball box score appeared for the first time in October 1908, following two games between teams from St. Petersburg and Key West. A story about the games described a Key West rally like this: "Three more goose eggs and in the eighth a chap sent a two-bagger into the left field, got third on a grounder to short by his successor . . . and both came home on a good hit into left field by the third man up."

THERE WERE other firsts as well. The *Times* serialized a novel, *Jane Cable* by George Barr McCutcheon, in October 1908. A section of classified ads began appearing regularly in 1910. That same year, says historian Harris, the paper acquired a new machine so that type no longer had to be set by hand. It was called a linotype machine. Printers could now sit at the machine and punch a typewriter-like keyboard. The machine produced type matrices in a line (automatically adjusted to the correct length) and then cast a solid lead slug (called "hot type") for each line. The linotype greatly increased the speed of composition, but there was an awkward period of adjustment. The *Times* warned readers to expect "some queer punctuations, transpositions and leave-outs . . . as the force is trying to master the new machine."

The staff and its new linotype machine were now in yet another building — this one on the southeast corner of First Avenue S and Third Street. Straub and the Times Publishing Co. leased the first floor of the narrow, 100-foot-long building in August 1909 for $400 a year. The building, which was torn down in 1981, was to be the *Times'* home for 12 years. It was in that building, in January 1912, that the *Times* began daily publication (except Mondays). To prepare for the change, Straub installed a bigger, faster press and subscribed to the so-called "pony service" of the Associated Press. The press, which apparently once printed the *Ladies Home Journal*, could print eight pages at a time and 1,200 copies an hour.

The new AP service enabled the paper to receive highlights of national and international news. The highlights arrived, via Western Union, in a shorthand jargon. It was up to local editors to translate the jargon into words and fill in missing words and background.

Now, the once-provincial paper was calling itself the *St. Petersburg Daily Times* and offering readers a spate of stories from places such as Washington, New York, Lawrence, Mass. and Osaka, Japan. When the 1912 baseball season began, the *Times* ran the major league standings and schedules, plus a line score for each game. There was a short weather story almost every day, and the paper's first "society editor" — Mrs. W. A. Lemieu — made social items a fixture. The *Times* also published its first extra edition on March 21, 1912 — after a jewelry store at Central and Third Street was robbed of $1,000.

On the editorial page, meanwhile, Straub occasionally felt compelled to explain a skeleton in his personal closet. Those were the days of the one-party South, and virtually everyone of consequence in St. Petersburg was a Democrat. In North Dakota, however, Straub had been a Republican, an affiliation he maintained in the first year or two he lived in Florida. Straub's critics seized on his past with glee, pounding him repeatedly with the club of political infidelity. In response, Straub explained that, even as a Republican in his native Northwest, he had been an ardent advocate of progress. As a new Democrat in Florida, he said, "we strive for the same ideals and ends that we strove

for in the Republican party in the northwest, all that seems to us modern, progressive and elevating."

ALTHOUGH STRAUB'S paper was growing, it was apparently not prospering. Straub finally decided that owning and managing it was too much trouble. He had little talent for business, balance sheets, equipment and circulation. Though he hoped to remain as editor, Straub placed an advertisement in trade journals offering the *Times* for sale.

It is not recorded how many inquiries the ad attracted. But the wife of a young Indiana publisher spotted it and called it to her husband's attention. Soon, publisher Paul Poynter was bound for St. Petersburg to get a closer look at the little daily with the for-sale sign. He had some reservations, but for the most part Poynter liked what he saw — a "fine little city," a potentially profitable newspaper, a respected editor. In early September 1912, Poynter bought the majority stock in the Times Publishing Co., assumed the paper's outstanding liabilities (mostly the debt on the new press and machinery) and took the title of manager. Harris, the *Times* historian, says that it cost Poynter $3,000 to buy the stock from Straub and an estimated $10,000 altogether.

On Sept. 4, Poynter wrote to his wife Alice back in

The Times staff in 1913: (from left) Bill Dykes, Tom McLeod, John Merrinell, Otis Brumby, Iva Irmish, Peck Walters, Bayard Lang, Bill Johnson, Russell Roberts, Tyson Harris, Rolla Thomas, Dave Kennedy and Rubin Jenkins (seated).

Indiana to report his acquisition. "I am actually in charge of the business here and a bad mess it is," he wrote. "The machinery is in bad condition . . . most of the force suffering from . . . hookworm and absolutely inefficient." But Poynter also expressed confidence that "I can make the proposition pay me dividends and at the same time put the property in condition that it can be sold to others if I choose within a few months."

Straub remained as editor. He was a well-known local figure, which Poynter — who would be largely an absentee owner — needed. He was a Democrat and a prohibitionist, like Poynter. And he had the same crusading bent that had marked Poynter's career in Indiana. For many of the next 27 years, Straub would wield the editorial pen while Poynter concentrated on the paper's business affairs.
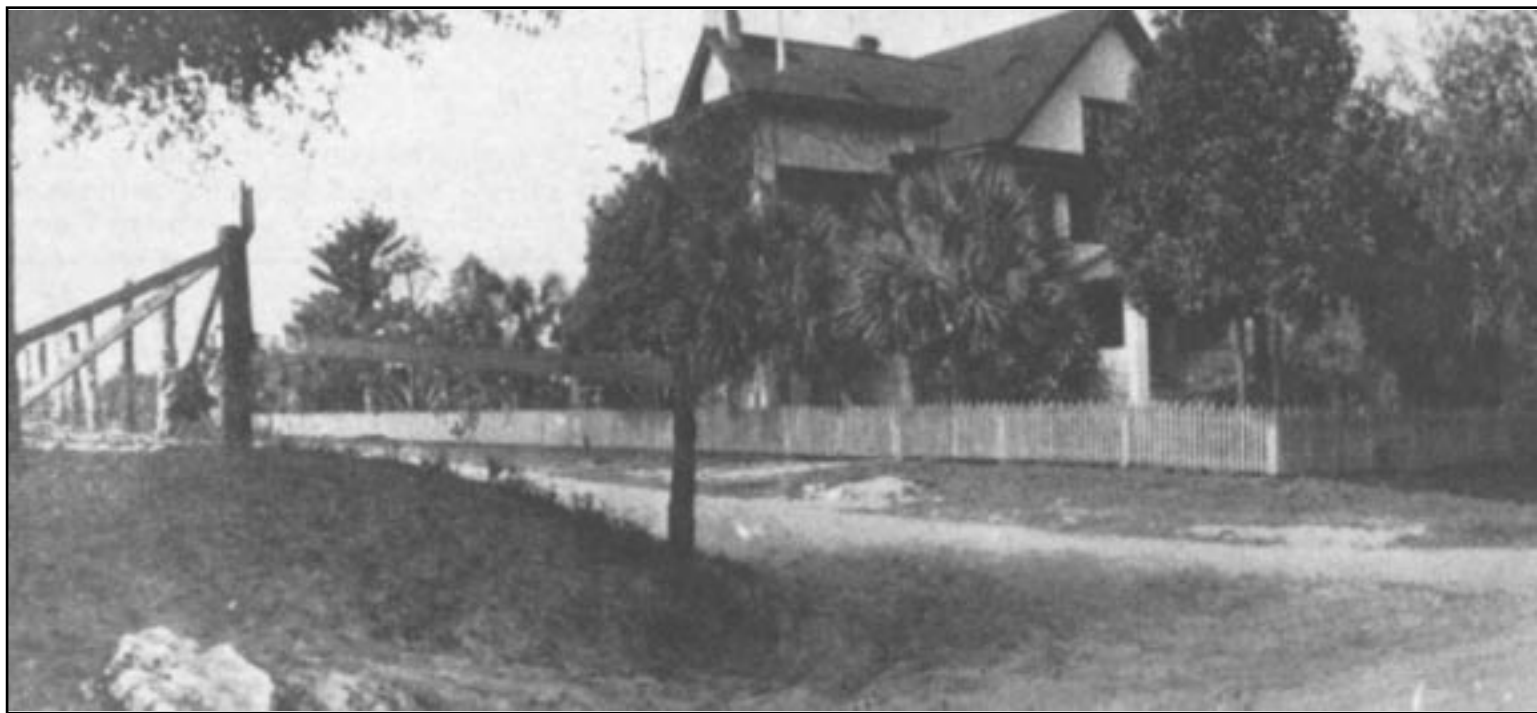
Paul Poynter, optimist

■ The *Times'* new owner was a short, portly man of 37 with a bulldog countenance and kindly demeanor. His full name was Saint Paul Poynter, and he had been in the newspaper business in Sullivan, Ind. since 1897.

Courtesy Eleanor Poynter Jamison

Young Paul Poynter, owner of the Sullivan, Ind. paper.

Courtesy Eleanor Poynter Jamison

The portly Poynter (right) became a prominent man in St. Petersburg. In the late 1920s, the Times publisher helped Babe Ruth (above, right) celebrate his birthday.

Courtesy Eleanor Poynter Jamison

For most of the 38 years he published the *Times*, in fact, it was Sullivan that had first claim on Poynter. He kept his permanent residence there until the mid-1930s, leaving the *Times'* day-to-day affairs in the hands of associates like Straub. Even a part-time resident can have a high profile, however, and Poynter became a figure of prominence in St. Petersburg. He supported Straub's continuing campaigns for better government, better schools and better roads, and eventually Poynter was known as something of a crusader, too.

Like Straub, Poynter seemed to have boundless energy and optimism. Even in the darkest days of the Depression in the 1930s, he was upbeat about St. Petersburg's future. The staff liked to recall the time Poynter came through the composing room with some visiting dignitaries. To their surprise, they found the composing room foreman, feet on his desk, reading the *Daily Racing Form*. One visitor asked Poynter if he were bothered by the foreman's casual approach to work. "If he's got things so organized he can sit back and read the *Racing Form*, then that's the kind of executive I like," Poynter is said to have replied.

A dignified, friendly man, Poynter neither drank nor smoked (except during the New Deal, when he occasionally puffed on a cigarette through a long holder, in the manner of his political hero, Franklin D. Roosevelt). He also was a staunch Christian Scientist. The *Times* routinely ran the full text of local Christian Science lectures, and Poynter had to be dissuaded from devoting even more

Ninth Street S and Seventh Avenue about 1915: The wooden bridge in the background crossed Booker Creek. The city trolley lines are at the right.

space to the church's activities.

Poynter was born in Eminence, Ind. on March 29, 1875. His father, a drummer boy during the Civil War, was a blacksmith and wagon maker in Cloverdale, Ind., and as a youth Poynter was an apprentice in his father's shop. The father's occupation did not rub off on the son, however. Neither did his political philosophy. The elder Poynter was a staunch Republican, and the tenets of the Grand Old Party — a high tariff, the gold standard and big business — were articles of faith in the family household.

Young Paul Poynter grew to think otherwise. At Depauw University, where he worked his way through school, he studied political science and economics. He also became caught up in the fervor for William Jennings Bryan, the Democratic presidential candidate in 1896 and 1900, and the Great Commoner's crusades for free silver, prohibition and trust busting.

Poynter had saved a few hundred dollars from his job as business manager of the college yearbook. When he graduated from Depauw in June 1897, he borrowed more money, bought the *Sullivan Democrat* with a $500 downpayment and set out to champion the causes he now held dear. One of them was prohibition. He had a life-long abhorrence of liquor, and in those early years the young publisher pushed hard for elimination of saloons and legalized drinking. The liquor interests in Sullivan were powerful, however, and it was dangerous to oppose them in the rough-and-tumble political environment of the early 1900s. Before Poynter's campaign succeeded, there were boycotts and threats against him. "I grew up in fear that my father was going to be killed," his son Nelson recalled years later.

WHEN POYNTER took over the *Sullivan Democrat* on July 9, 1897, he set out his credo as follows: "The policy of the paper is very simple and easily stated. Our purpose is merely to tell the truth in the pursuit of the truths . . ." In 1951, a year after his death, a shortened version of that credo ("The policy of our paper is very simple — merely to tell the truth") began appearing on the *Times'* editorial page. It is still there.

Poynter also declared that a "good newspaper is a public utility without a franchise. If it properly fulfills its duties to the state and its community — by fulfilling its duties to its readers — it is bound to prosper."

In retrospect, it seems accurate to say that Paul Poynter was an entrepreneur first, a journalist second. During his lifetime, he bought or started 10 newspapers in Indiana, North Carolina and Florida. That meant he was an absentee publisher. In Florida at least, he also became heavily involved in real estate — so heavily involved that during the Depression he came close to losing control of the *Times*. In part because he was away from St. Petersburg so much, Poynter began importing others from Indiana to help him publish his new newspaper. The son of his banker was summoned to become circulation manager. The son of another prominent Sullivan family became news editor, and still another Hoosier became head of the composing room.

No Hoosier was more important in those early years than Charles Carl Carr. He was 30 years old when he came to St. Petersburg to become general manager and part-owner of the *Times*. Carr had been with Poynter in Sullivan in a similar role. When Poynter needed someone to help run his new St. Petersburg operations, Carr traded his Sullivan stock for stock in the *Times* and came south.

He was "C. C. Carr" in formal transactions, "Charlie" to his friends. For two stretches, 1914-23 and 1927-34, he ran the business side of the *Times*. A dapper, outgoing man with a small mustache, Carr met the payroll, ordered the newsprint, kept the machinery in working order and helped Poynter represent the paper in civic endeavors. *Times* historian Tom C. Harris recalls that Carr, a reporter during his college days, sometimes wrote news items, too. Carr was also active in Democratic politics and served three years on the Pinellas County School Board.

When editor Straub gave up his day-to-day role at the *Times* in 1916-23 to serve as St. Petersburg's postmaster, another Hoosier — a college friend of Carr's — was imported to take charge of the paper's news operations. He was Edwin E. Naugle, a tall, heavyset man with piercing blue eyes and a face that grew florid when his customary affability yielded to a quick temper. Since his father was a newspaper editor, too, Naugle literally grew up in the

C. C. Carr, a Hoosier like Poynter, was the paper's general manager.

Poynter bought his first paper with a deposit of only $500.

newspaper business. He worked for papers in Indianapolis, Jacksonville and Kissimmee before coming to St. Petersburg as managing editor, then editor.

Editorial policy changed little during the Naugle years, in part because Naugle apparently agreed with Straub's philosophy, in part because Straub — who retained his stock in the newspaper company and took the title of vice president — kept a close eye on the *Times'* editorial page. (In his own mind at least, Straub was always editor in fact, though not in title, newspaper historian Harris says.)

Naugle was a big baseball fan. In the days before radio, at World Series time, crowds would gather around the *Times* building to await the scores. Play-by-play information would come into the newsroom by telegraph, and Naugle, using a megaphone to project his already booming voice, would broadcast it from an upstairs window. The developments (the line-up, score, ball-and-strike count) also would be posted on a display board called a "Playograph" in front of the building.

Still another Hoosier in those early years was Ralph D. Reed. He worked for Poynter's paper in Sullivan as a teen-

to the press room one floor below. One day, however, the rope broke, scattering four pages of type all over the floor.

Because the paper only rarely ran photos in those early days — the reproduction process was simply too complicated and expensive — there were no staff photographers until the 1920s. Almost all of the few photographs that appeared were taken by commercial photographers, then sent to Jacksonville or Tampa for processing.

Reed's first beat was the waterfront. St. Petersburg was renowned for its fishing, and he would be at the dock daily to check with each fishing boat on the day's catch.

Another responsibility of Reed and every other reporter was the *Times'* daily "personals" column, a collection of one-and two-sentence items about the doings of townspeople and visitors. (For example, "Mrs. Sarah Stebbins, who has been spending the summer in Jacksonville, has returned to her home at Big Bayou.") Although limited in news value, the column was a sure way of getting many names in the paper, thereby boosting circulation. Poynter "always demanded lots of personals so our quota was at least 50 a day," Reed recalled. The staff filled that quota

Editor Edwin E. Naugle (right) was a baseball fan. During the 1924 World Series, a crowd gathered around the Times office (left). Play-by-play information, which reached the newsroom by telegraph, would be relayed to the crowd by Naugle through a megaphone (above), then posted on a "Playograph."

ager, came to St. Petersburg for his health in 1913 and went to work for the *Times* a year later, at age 19. Before he retired 46 years later in 1960, Reed had served as a carrier, bill collector, pressman, reporter, city editor and Clearwater bureau chief. Reed became county historian and established a county history museum.

The *Times'* press and entire staff, perhaps 20 persons, were located on the ground floor of the narrow, wooden building at the southeast corner of First Avenue S and Third Street when Reed reported for work in 1914. The "newsroom" was crowded underneath the stairway, he recalled years later.

Later, Straub's office, the newsroom and composing room were moved upstairs, leaving the business office and press downstairs. Straub, who used a crutch and cane to maneuver, "could go up and down stairs as fast as anyone," Reed said. But on one occasion the trip was disastrous for a few pages of type. Since the composing room was upstairs, Reed said, the staff used a wooden dumb waiter attached to a pulley and rope to move pages of type

by visiting the front desk at each major hotel, riding the street cars ("each reporter and editor carried a pocket full of street car passes which he could use to ride anywhere") and greeting the passengers who disembarked from the ferries from Tampa and Bradenton.

Another way was to clamber aboard the "tourist special" trains at the edge of town. "We would swing aboard the rear coach," Reed said, "and before the train reached the downtown station we would interview each passenger and ask where from, where to and how long."

The most colorful city editor in those days was a man named John Kepler, Reed recalled. Kepler wore a derby hat and spats and carried a cane. He frequently brought his small dog into the office. Every day he also brought a bottle of whiskey, which he stashed in a bottom drawer and sampled from all night.

"I wonder now why Mr. Poynter never caught him because he would fire anyone found drunk," Reed recalled. "He hated liquor more than anything."
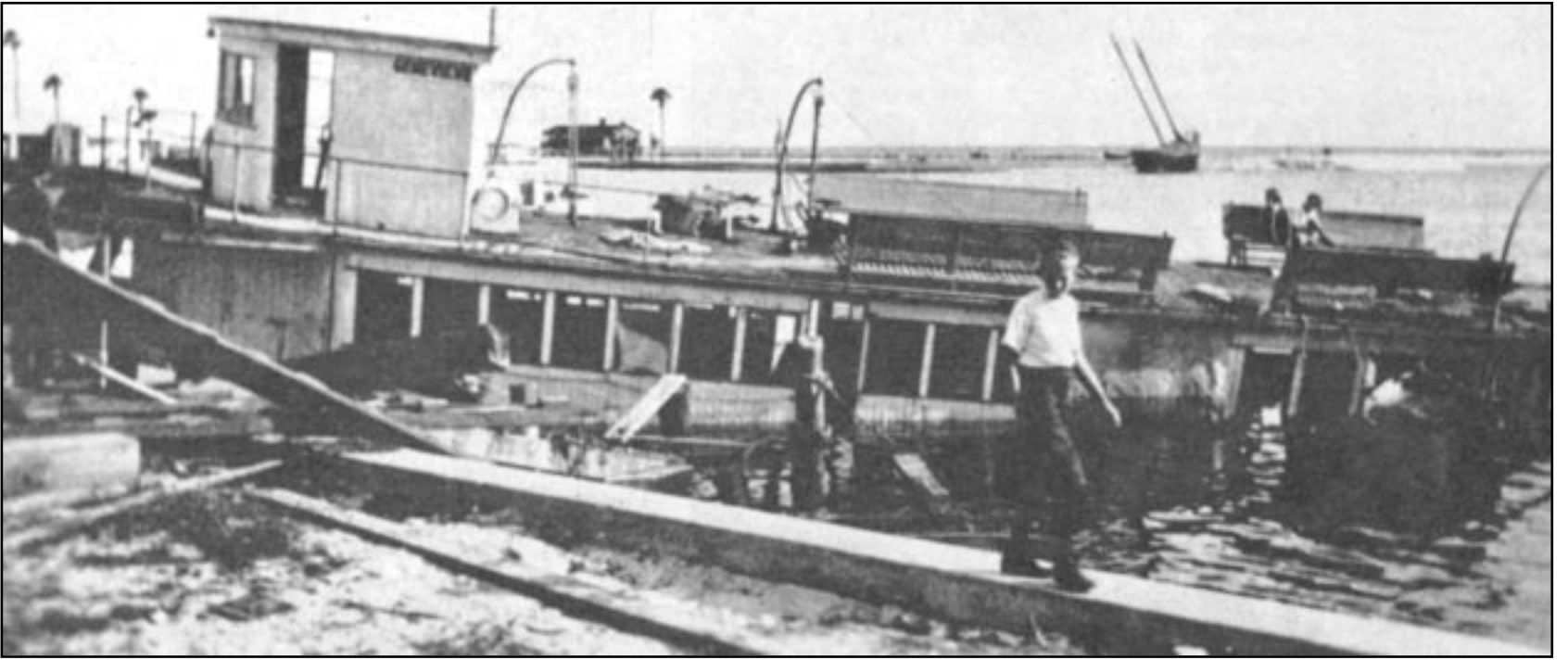
The hurricane of 1921 — the worst storm in 73 years — devastated this boat and others along St. Petersburg's waterfront.

Publishing in a hurricane

■ Paul Poynter and his first Hoosier associates arrived in St. Petersburg toward the end of a five-year-long real estate boom that helped the town and the *Times* grow. It was a time when men with imagination, vigor and money — men like Charles Roser (inventor of the Fig Newton), C. Perry Snell and H. Walter Fuller — began buying swaths of real estate and building homes. As they bought and built, St. Petersburg's boundaries grew south to 17th Avenue S, north to 22nd Avenue N and west to Boca Ciega Bay. By the end of the decade, the town's population stood at 14,237, more than three times the census of 1910.

The hurricane left the 4-year-old Yacht Club at the foot of Central Avenue engulfed by water.

the Mirror Lake branch) in 1915 and the open air post office in 1917.

Many of the workmen during this building boom — and an even bigger boom in 1920-26 — were black. Most of them were brought to St. Petersburg by construction companies. Hundreds of these workmen eventually settled in the bustling town, moving into inferior, white-owned housing in strictly segregated neighborhoods.

One important building did *not* go up in St. Petersburg. That was a county courthouse for the new Pinellas County. In his campaign for separation from Hillsborough County, *Times* editor Straub had suggested that the county seat belonged in Clearwater. The separatist urge was not as strong in upper Pinellas as in St. Petersburg, and Straub evidently felt that people there would be more inclined to push for independence if they knew they would get the county seat. Some in St. Petersburg disagreed with Straub, however — a fact well known in upper Pinellas. Fearing that St. Petersburg would try to claim the county seat for itself, a group of Clearwater men hastily built what came to be called the "overnight courthouse." That building, at the northwest corner of Fort Harrison and Pierce (where Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church is now), lasted until 1917, when a sturdier building (now part of the so-called "Old Courthouse" on S Fort Harrison Avenue) was erected.

Thanks to Albert F. Lang, a transplanted Pennsylvanian who missed baseball, St. Petersburg became the spring training site for the St. Louis Browns in 1914. Within 11 years, there were two teams here each spring (the New York Yankees and Boston Braves) and St. Petersburg was being called the winter headquarters of big league ball.

St. Petersburg also became the site of the world's first commercial airline service when pilot Tony Jannus and a passenger flew from St. Petersburg to Tampa on Jan. 1, 1914 in a 26-foot-long biplane. The trip took 23 minutes. The next day, the *Times* sent a bundle of papers to Tampa via the new St. Petersburg-Tampa Airboat Line. It proclaimed itself the "first newspaper in the world to use flying machines for delivery purposes."

As the decade progressed, the *Times* grew larger and

Afraid that St. Petersburg would try to become the seat of the new Pinellas County, a Clearwater group hastily built what came to be called the "overnight courthouse" in 1912. Most of the infant county's elected officials posed for this photo, including Dixie M. Hollins, the first superintendent of schools (far right).

The *Times* now sometimes had two sections or more, with plenty of real estate ads. It had plenty of news, too. The first municipal pier, a wooden structure, was built out into Bayboro Harbor in 1913. The first city hospital, a five-room cottage that opened in 1910, gave way to the Augusta Memorial Hospital in 1913 on the site of what is now Bayfront Medical Center. A municipal gas plant was built just south of downtown in 1914, a public library building (now

In 1921, the Times bought a Hoe press (left), capable of printing a 24-page paper. In the stereo room (above), curved metal casts of pages were made and locked onto the press.

more sophisticated. It acquired another new press — a Goss Comet flatbed press — in about 1915 and a nationally syndicated cartoon service in 1916. In 1916, *Times* historian Tom C. Harris says, reporter Arnold Heidt got the paper's first byline; it went over a story about porpoises.

Two years later, the newspaper's readers saw their first photograph of World Series action — a shot of Morris Rath of Cincinnati scoring the first run of the opening game between the Cincinnati Reds and the Chicago White Sox. Since the equipment that transmits "wire photos" had not been invented, *Times* editors had the photograph sent by special delivery. It was published three days later. In a story describing the processing and delivery of the picture, the paper boasted that "every step taken worked in with each succeeding one like the cogs of a machine."

IN JANUARY 1921, its average daily circulation still only 3,137, the *Times* left the narrow wooden building at Third Street and moved two blocks to a new, three-story brick building at the southeast corner of First Avenue S and Fifth Street (site of the main building today). Inside the new plant was another new press — "the same kind of a press used by large city newspapers," the *Times* noted with pride. The paper that the new Hoe press was printing — up to 24 pages at a time — had a different look, too. The paper was called the *Times*, not the *Daily Times*. It had eight columns instead of seven. For the first time there was also a page devoted primarily to sports.

The most important change, however, was the addition of the Associated Press' full wire service, which replaced the limited "pony service" of news highlights. The new service enabled the paper to receive and publish full reports from all over the globe, plus a complete stock market report (which generally filled two columns). The AP stories came over a telegraph line installed inside the *Times* building. Until automatic printers completely replaced the telegraph line in 1934, there was a telegraph operator (called a "Morse man") in the newsroom almost around the clock.

The first transmission was sent at 6:03 p.m. on Oct. 25, 1920 and received in the newsroom by telegraph operator

F. E. Blackburn. It said: "LONDON, Oct. 25 — King Alexander of Greece is dead." It was played in a box on page 1.

The new press and the new wire service were useless, however, when the worst hurricane in 73 years hit St. Petersburg on Oct. 25, 1921. The storm struck with little warning. Weather forecasting was still unsophisticated. Few people had a radio (then in its infancy), and that morning's *Times* was little help. "City Escapes Big Hurricane," said a one-column headline over an eight-paragraph story toward the bottom of page 2.

The storm had developed in the western Caribbean, skirted the western end of Cuba and moved northward before bearing down on the Tampa Bay area. When the storm reached land, tides climbed to 10.5 feet above mean low water and sustained winds reached an estimated 90

Tony Jannus made aviation history on Jan. 1, 1914.

miles per hour. (A precise reading was impossible; the wind and water ruined the National Weather Service's wind instruments.)

Destruction was widespread. Two wooden bridges to the beaches were demolished. So was the Municipal Pier, most of which ended up a mile away along Snell Isle and Coffee Pot Bayou. The waterfront was littered with the debris of sunken and disabled boats. Two persons were killed. For hours there was no electric power and no communication with the outside world. At the new *Times* building, the staff worked by candlelight and lanterns. Without electricity, however, how could they set the type and print the paper?

The first problem was solved with a motorcycle. The staff borrowed a motorcycle from a young man named Otis

The new building (left) was located on the southeast corner of First Avenue S and Fifth Street, site of the current building. In June 1921, the newsroom (above) had two telephones and desks for six reporters and a city editor.

STORM **St. Petersburg Times** EXTRA

St. Petersburg, Fla., Wednesday Morning, Oct. 26, 1921

TROPICAL STORM SWEEPS CITY

Property Damage May Reach $5,000,000; Two Men Die

RUMOR PASS-A-GRILLE WIPED OUT

With property loss estimated at $5,000,000, and two known dead, the water front a sea of debris and sunken ships, St. Petersburg Tuesday was swept by the worst tropical storm in the history of the West coast, striking about 5 o'clock in the morning and lasting until late in the afternoon, unroofing hundreds of hotels, apartment houses and homes, tearing down power lines and isolating the city completely from the outside world.

Communication was completely cut off from Pass-a-Grille, where reports estimated the loss of life from 15 to 150, with the resort under five feet of water.

SECOND **St. Petersburg Times** EXTRA

St. Petersburg, Fla., Wednesday Morning, Oct. 26, 1921

NO LIVES LOST AT PASS-A-GRILLE

Property Damage May Reach $3,000,000; Two Men Die

TROPICAL STORM SWEEPS CITY

At 1 o'clock today C. E. Letzring, of the Wilhelm Company, returned from Gulport and reported that Captain Sweet had weathered the hurricane at Pass-a-Grille and had brought the news that there had been no loss of life on the island. He said the property loss was heavy.

The sub-chaser 69 left at 10:30 for Pass-a-Grille, carrying Red Cross supplies and a Times representative, but had not returned at 1 o'clock. Wild reports were circulated by other publications that 90 persons had perished. Early estimate of losses in the city and vicinity was lowered to not more than three million.

Fortunately for the residents of Pass-a-Grille, the rumors published in the Times' first hurricane extra (top) proved erroneous and were corrected in a second extra (bottom).

Beard, brought it to the second floor of the *Times* building and — with the assistance of two men from the local Oldsmobile dealership — hooked a belt of the cycle to the fly wheel of a linotype machine and set enough type for two tiny extra editions.

Since the new press was useless without electricity, the extras were printed on a small manual press. "Two men turned the big flywheel by hand; I hung onto the rear arm, pulling it down while we ran off several hundred copies," reporter Ralph Reed recalled later.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE staff's reporting did not match its ingenuity. With Pass-a-Grille beach and its 200 residents cut off from the mainland and no way to get information, the *Times* breathlessly reported all that it had — rumors. A bold headline declared, "Rumor Pass-a-Grille Wiped Out." Rumors, said the story, "were that 150 persons had been drowned and that the water was five feet deep in the street." By mid-day Wednesday, however, it was apparent that no one had died at Pass-a-Grille and that flooding there was not nearly so extensive. The second extra, published that afternoon, had the same story but a markedly different headline: "No Lives Lost at Pass-a-Grille."

Flawed though it was, the *Times'* performance that day kept intact a record: Throughout its history, the paper has apparently never missed an issue.

The next day, with electricity restored, the staff was able to print a 16-page paper full of news about the storm and the damage. Since the paper's telegraph line was still out, the only news of the outside world was a series of AP bulletins obtained with the help of a local radio station.

The tone of that day-after issue was decidedly upbeat. "City Comes Up Smiling After Storm Passes . . . Whiners To Get Little Hearing," declared two of the headlines.

When the storm was over, the *Times* reported, "there stood in the midst of it all, Gibraltar-like, the indomitable will, spirit and energy that had made St. Petersburg the queen of the West Coast of Florida, whose right to reign supreme remains undisputed."

The hurricane struck with little warning, leaving the city's waterfront littered with the remains of disabled boats.

BOOM

■ In ordinary times, St. Petersburg might have taken years to bounce back from a devastating blow like the hurricane of 1921. But in the early 1920s, the times were far from ordinary.
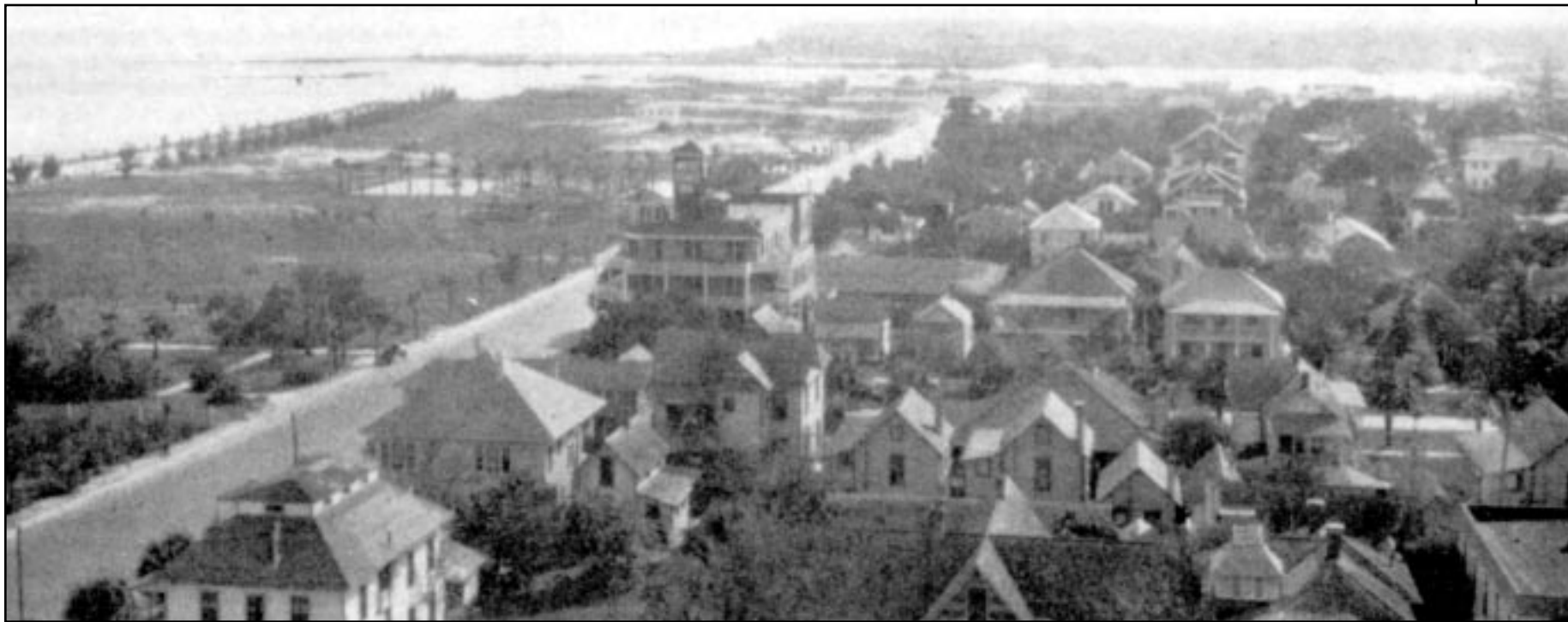
with permission of Earl "Rick" Jacobs

First Street S, downtown waterfront in the mid-1920s: Today, the Bayfront Center and Bayfront Concourse Hotel stand here.

It was a period that came to be called the Boom, a dizzying six years (1920-26) that gave St. Petersburg a city-like skyline, $56-million in new buildings and dozens of roads, bridges and other public facilities. The period also saw the town's morning paper reach dramatic new heights in revenue and circulation.

During World War I, the United States' factories and farms flourished. When the war ended in 1918, many Americans emerged flush with spending money and a yen to travel. Suddenly, Florida was "discovered." By the thousands, tourists descended on the state — many motoring from the North in one of Henry Ford's inexpensive new Model T's — to vacation, buy new homes and invest their money.

Invariably, they invested in real estate. A symbol of that giddy era was a pair of knickers (sometimes called "acreage britches"), the uniform worn by many of the estimated 6,000 real estate salesmen who hawked lots that were being hacked out of the palmettoes and pines. The buying and selling was so frenzied that empty lots changed hands repeatedly, going up

One Boom-giddy architect proposed that the Times build a 21-story skyscraper.

in price each time. The late Walter P. Fuller, a long-time realtor and St. Petersburg historian, paid $45.27 for a 40-acre parcel in 1920 and sold it for $40,000 cash four years later. Land along Fourth Street N could be had for $50 per acre in 1921, according to historian Karl H. Grismer. By 1924, it was bringing $5,000. One of the speculators was Al Capone. In 1925-26, the gangster owned considerable property in the area and held more than $300,000 in home mortgages.

The horde of newcomers needed places to live, work and worship. So builders, often using black laborers imported from Alabama and Georgia, constructed office buildings and apartment houses, several magnificent churches and thousands of new homes. Also stretching into the skyline were a dozen big hotels like the Vinoy, the Suwannee, the Rolyat (now Stetson Law School) and the Don CeSar.

No building project was more important, however, than the Gandy Bridge. When builder George S. "Dad" Gandy linked the Pinellas peninsula to Tampa, he effectively ended St. Petersburg's isolation from the rest of

For Tom Harris, the news came before long pants

As a copy boy and cub reporter in 1923-24, Tom Harris wore knickers and used a non-dial telephone. When he became a full-fledged reporter, a colleague bought him a pair of long pants.

HE was a gawky, shy kid in knickers on his first day at the *Times*. Tom Harris put out a neighborhood newspaper after school hours, business manager C. C. Carr explained to the staff, and now he wanted a job with a real newspaper.

Tom was only 14, but he had big plans. "He says he wants to be editor of the *Times*," said Carr, a twinkle in his eye. Within three years, the lanky teen-ager *was* an editor — perhaps the youngest the paper ever had. And for nearly half a century Tom C. Harris ("TCH" to the staff) was a key executive as the *Times* grew into one of the South's biggest newspapers.

An indefatigable man with a hawk nose, bushy brows and piercing brown eyes, Harris was at one time or another city editor, telegraph editor, managing editor, executive editor, executive vice president and general manager and, finally, associate editor. When he retired in 1968, he had stayed 45 years — one of the longest stints in the paper's history. (The longest, 48 years, belongs to Eddie Zwick of the circulation department. **See story, page 44**).

The teen-ager in knickers went to work as a copy boy. That didn't last long. Late on a stormy night in February 1924, word came that

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By Robert Hooker, deputy metropolitan editor

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a St. Petersburg insurance man and his wife had been murdered. Since there were no reporters in the newsroom, the city editor dispatched Harris, who ran to a funeral home a block away and caught a ride to the scene in an ambulance. It was a sensational murder — the couple had been killed by their deranged son. Harris handled it so well that he was assigned to help cover the trials that followed.

"The distinction of being one of the youngest reporters in the country ever to cover an important murder case is held by Tom Harris whose stories on the Frank McDowell trial appear in today's *Times*," the paper reported under the headline "Boy Reporter Stars at Trial." The byline on the story read: "By Tom Harris, Times 16-Year-Old Boy Reporter."

The boy reporter needed something before he could become a regular reporter, however. "I told Tom that he ought to get some long pants," reporter Ralph Reed recalled years later. So Reed, who had been entrusted with the job of training Harris, took the youngster to a clothing store and bought him a pair for $4.

WITHIN two years, Harris was Reed's boss. The city editor suddenly took a leave of absence, and managing editor John W. "Jack" Falconnier came into the newsroom looking for a replacement. Harris says Falconnier asked if anyone on the tiny staff (about two dozen people) could write headlines — an important requirement at a time when editors were expected to handle many responsibilities. Harris put up his hand.

"Where did you learn how to write head-

The Gandy Bridge cut the 43-mile trip to Tampa to 19 miles.

Florida and America. No longer was it 43 miles from Tampa to St. Petersburg; Gandy's 2½-mile bridge reduced that to 19 miles. Seventeen governors were on hand when the bridge — one of the longest of its type in the world — was officially opened on Nov. 20, 1924.

There were other notable additions to the St. Petersburg landscape as well — a Coliseum for big bands and dances, the 2,300-seat, six-story Florida Theatre (torn down in 1968) and the Million Dollar Pier, which replaced the municipal pier demolished by the hurricane. (The *Times* opposed construction of the new pier, fearing that it would be lined with tawdry concession stands). In 1925, a young entrepreneur from Tennessee named James Earl "Doc" Webb opened a tiny drugstore at the corner of Ninth Street and Second Avenue S and began the salesmanship that eventually gave St. Petersburg the "World's Most Unusual Drugstore."

When the Boom finally ended, historian Grismer says, St. Petersburg had $56.8-million worth of new buildings and a population that jumped from 14,237 in 1920 to 40,425 in 1930.

AT THE NEW *Times* building at Fifth Street and First Avenue S, the growth and pace were also frenzied. Circulation went from 3,137 in 1920 to 10,570 in 1927. The paper began publishing seven days a week (rather than six) on Nov. 3, 1924. The new press was straining under the load.

It ran around the clock in putting out mammoth issues like a 124-page Festival of States edition in March 1924 and a 232-page Festival edition two years later. The *Times* declared that the 1926 edition, which had 19 sections, was "the largest paper ever printed on the West Coast of Florida and one of the biggest ever produced in America."

In 1925, the peak of the Boom, the *Times* published 25,159,568 lines of advertising, a figure topped by only one other American newspaper, the *Miami Herald*. In February 1924, the advertising was so heavy that the *Times* ran out of paper. It was able to borrow a week's supply from the *Tampa Tribune* and had to print the Sunday, Feb. 10 edition on pink paper borrowed from the *Tampa Times*. "It has become a matter of considerable trouble to get enough paper to care for the large business now enjoyed by the *Times*," a front page story explained.

The staff was growing, too — from a mere 20 persons during the war years to 60 in 1924 and 200 in 1925. For a time, says *Times* historian Tom C. Harris, the employees had to work in shifts. And for about 30 minutes, they even had *two* managing editors.

Poynter and the paper's new general manager, David B. Lindsay, had failed to communicate about that key job in the newsroom when it became vacant in 1924. Each hired a new man, and both reported for work on the same day. Poynter's man, John W. "Jack" Falconnier, arrived first and was introduced to the staff as "your new boss," recalls Harris, who was then a cub reporter. Twenty minutes later, Lindsay's man appeared. "Poynter and Lindsay had a conference. Poynter's man won out and we never

lines?" Falconnier asked.

"On the old typewriter at the police station while waiting for news to break," Harris replied.

"You've got the job," said Falconnier.

Harris was city editor or wire editor until 1933, when he became managing editor, by some accounts the youngest (at 25) in the South. In 1941, he stepped up to executive editor, second only to editor Nelson Poynter.

Harris was a workhorse. For years, he worked 12 to 14 hours a day, seven days a week. On a typical day, he would awaken about noon, eat lunch at Simpson's Restaurant on Central Avenue and then amble into the *Times* building. ("When TCH would enter the newsroom saying, 'Everybody in town's talking about so-and-so,' you knew he'd gotten it from some guy at Simpson's," the late Dick Bothwell, a *Times* reporter and columnist, once said).

Harris was a restless editor. He would prowl through the newsroom, tugging at his thinning hair, flipping a copy pencil in the air and chewing on a long Cuban cigar. He would confer with colleagues, scrutinize page proofs, sometimes even saunter into the composing room to help put the type and headlines into place. When the paper had finally been put to bed, Harris would usually join staff members and his friend Wally Bishop, a cartoonist who drew the nationally syndicated Muggs and Skeeter comic strip, for a post-midnight dinner.

WITH his dark brows, receding hairline and 5 o'clock shadow, Harris strongly resembled one of the 1950s' best-known figures, the red-baiting Sen. Joseph McCarthy. It was a likeness that amused Harris. In fact, Harris seemed to care little about his appearance. Although he was a Boy Scout "and learned to tie every knot in the book," his friend Bishop once said, "he still can't tie a cravat and make the ends come out even. He will buy an expensive, custom-tailored suit, and on the first cold day stick a heavy sweater under the coat, load the handkerchief pocket with cigars, two pencils and a fountain pen, pack a four-inch-thick wallet into the hip pocket of the trousers — and wonder why the suit doesn't fit."

Harris' formal education ended when he graduated from St. Petersburg High School. But he became a wise editor. Even before Reed bought him that first pair of long pants, he had set out to learn everything he could about the mechanical side of the operation.

Once, Harris had to play detective, too. To his astonishment, a plate used to make counterfeit $20 bills was discovered in the *Times'* photo engraving department. He called in the Secret Service, then helped agents identify the counterfeiter, who went to jail.

Harris developed a life-long interest in Latin American affairs. He traveled widely there, and when he retired from the *Times* in 1968, he became executive editor of the largest Spanish-language paper in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He came back to St. Petersburg and the *Times* building in 1975 to take on yet another assignment from Poynter: a book on the *Times* history, to be published this year on the paper's 100th anniversary.

For several years, he scrolled through microfilm of virtually every issue of the paper
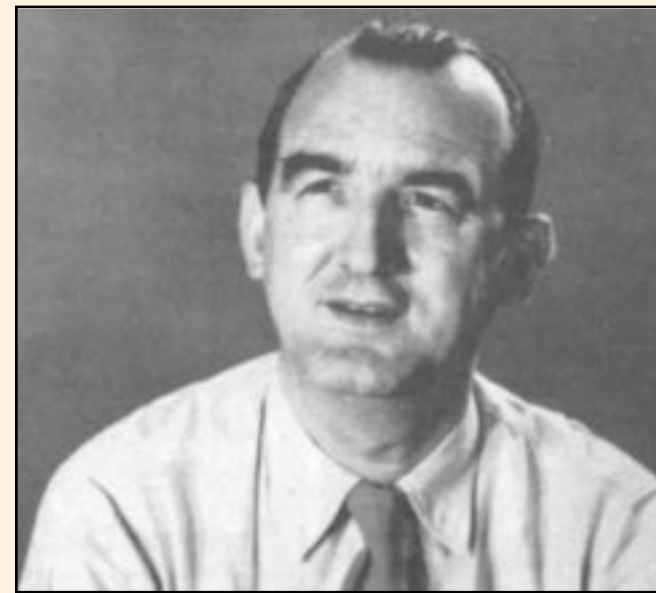
Harris became managing editor of the Times in 1933, executive editor in 1941. For years, he worked 12 to 14 hour days, seven days a week. Harris was amused by his strong resemblance to one of the 1950s' best-known figures, Sen. Joseph McCarthy.

published since 1901 (earlier issues were not preserved), reading every page and reliving the stories he and his staff once covered. His health was not good, however. Eventually Harris had to lay aside his mountain of notes and unfinished manuscript — at least for a time.

"I'll finish it one of these days," he says.

heard what happened" to the other editor, Harris says.

One of Falconnier's first challenges as managing editor was the competition offered by a new St. Petersburg newspaper, a sassy tabloid owned by former Mayor Frank F. Pulver. Pulver was a flamboyant, controversial figure. He had made a fortune in the chewing gum business before moving to St. Petersburg to buy the Detroit Hotel and get into other business ventures. As mayor, Pulver did much to promote the city up north. His trademark was a snow white suit. To draw attention to St. Petersburg, he would parade down Broadway in New York City in mid-winter dressed in white from shoes to straw hat.

IF THE ERA was slightly crazy, then so was its politics. Pulver had been elected mayor to succeed Noel A. Mitchell, the realtor who originated Central Avenue's green benches and grew renowned for conducting real estate auctions in a tuxedo and top hat.

Although Mitchell had spent time in a mental institution, he was elected mayor in 1920 — perhaps in part because he liked to wave his competency papers while campaigning and declare himself "the only candidate proved not crazy." Mitchell's behavior in office was erratic, however. He feuded with other officials, had a fist fight with one of them and hosted what was described as a wild "booze party" in the mayor's office. The voters recalled him in April 1921, and Pulver was elected to succeed him.

Pulver was also controversial. He was a blunt, forceful

Pinellas' first county-owned school bus, 1922: It ran between the Lealman area and St. Petersburg High School on Mirror Lake.

man with little appreciation for the subtleties and niceties of politics, and eventually the voters recalled him from office, too.

Unable to implement his ideas from the mayor's office, Pulver decided to push them through a newspaper. He began publishing a tabloid, which he called the *St. Petersburg Daily News*, in March 1925. The new paper featured

A Mitchell ad in the Times: Land was sold, and resold, at public auction.

The Florida Theatre had seats for 2,300 patrons when it opened in 1926 at the northeast corner of First Avenue S and Fifth Street. It was torn down in 1968.

A daily crossword puzzle made its debut in December 1924.

To publicize St. Petersburg, Mayor Frank F. Pulver strode down Broadway in a snow-white suit. Later, he started a short-lived newspaper.

crusading editorials, sensational stories, big headlines and — most of all — pictures. The paper claimed it had a circulation of 8,447 and 140,000 lines of advertising, historian Harris says, but it was still a business failure. Pulver had lost an estimated $200,000 when his tabloid folded in October 1926.

Although the *Times* scarcely mentioned its new competitor, Pulver's fondness for photographs did not go unnoticed. The *Times'* first and only "staff photographer" — a commercial photographer named S. H. Beck who worked for the paper part-time — was joined by three more photographers. A company that specialized in engraving, the expensive process used to make photos ready for publication, was persuaded to lease a room in the *Times* building. Soon the *Times* was printing more pictures.

The increase in local photographs wasn't the only change that *Times* readers noticed in the Boom era. A column about radio, an infant industry that was soon to invade America's living rooms, began appearing in 1922. Daily radio listings came two years later. A daily crossword puzzle made its debut in December 1924.

The *Times* declared in February 1922 that it was trying to hew to the "modern idea" that editorial opinion should be limited to the editorial page ("there and there only are the views of the newspaper set forth") — a pronouncement that some critics would dispute even today. In 1925, it opened a news bureau in Clearwater, the county seat, according to historian Harris.

WITH THE STAFF working in shifts and the press operating at capacity, it soon became obvious that the Boom would produce yet another downtown building — a new headquarters for the *Times*. But where should it go and what should it look like?

Lindsay, the paper's new general manager and part-owner, was a tall, well-tailored man who sometimes wore knickers like many of the trend-conscious real estate sales-

men. As he recalled it later, he favored a site near Mirror Lake. Poynter, however, wanted to stay on First Avenue S. So the new building went up halfway between Fourth and Fifth streets, just behind the 1921 building.

For a time, there was apparently some thought of making the new building a skyscraper. An architect heady with Boom fever drew a sketch of a 21-story tower flanked by wings of eight-stories each. Poynter and Lindsay ultimately settled on a much more modest eight-story building (the eastern portion of the current *Times* and *Evening Independent* building today) at a cost of about $625,000. The bottom four floors were devoted to newspaper operations, the top four to modern offices that were leased to professional concerns.

The staff moved into its new quarters in two stages, the mechanical department in June 1926, the editorial department a year later. To move 57,000 pounds of equipment, including 14 typesetting machines, a platform connecting the second floors of the two buildings was constructed above the sidewalk along First Avenue S. Already in place on the ground floor of the new building were two new presses, a Goss and a Hoe, each capable of printing 48 pages at one time. This temporary separation of the newsroom from the typesetting machines and presses meant that, for a year, copy boys had to make regular trips between the old building and the new.

For one less-than-industrious copy boy, the half-block trip was too far. According to Harris, this copy boy got into the habit of tucking the copy of one trip under the railroad tracks that ran along First Avenue S until it was time for his next trip. His laziness went undetected until the night a train rumbled over a batch of hidden copy and mangled it. The staff "had to work frantically and overtime to replace the missing copy" and get the paper out, Harris says.

Surprisingly, the copy boy, a lad named Irvin "Red" McDonald, was not fired. He went on to become the *Times'* police reporter and sports editor, then left to work elsewhere. He was serving as a combat correspondent with the Army when he was killed during the invasion of Normandy in June 1944.
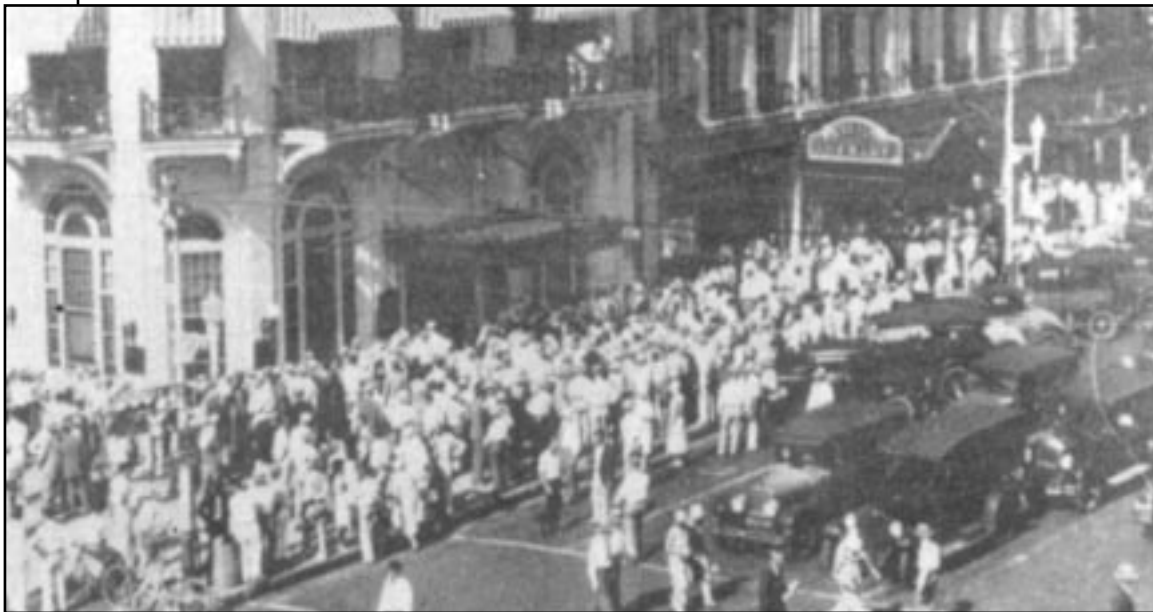
Most of St. Petersburg's banks failed during the Depression. The Central National Bank at Central and Fourth Street collapsed after this run in 1931.

A sign of troubled times: Jobs were so scarce that notices like this were posted on the outskirts of town.

BUST

■ Long before the news department finally moved into the new building in 1927, it was obvious that the *Times* had far more space and equipment than it needed. The Boom had gone bust.

Just as quickly as they had begun, the good times turned bad. Prices fell. Land speculators were caught short of cash. Building stopped. Merchants found themselves with inventories they couldn't sell. Tourism dropped off precipitously. Banks weakened, then collapsed. Thousands of people left St. Petersburg in a mass exodus. Some who stayed, says historian Walter P. Fuller, were reduced to stealing sidewalk tile from abandoned, weed-filled subdivisions to eke out a living.

Then, in 1929, the Great Depression hit America. St. Petersburg, already reeling from its own private calamity, was devastated. The town was overbuilt, without any major industry (except tourism) and deep, deep in debt. Giddy with Boom fever, town officials had repeatedly sold bonds to finance roads, bridges, sewers and other public improvements. When the bottom fell out, St. Petersburg was saddled with a bonded indebtedness of more than $26-million — or $802.06 for every person in town, according to Fuller. In May 1930, the financially strapped town finally defaulted on its bond payments. It remained in default for seven years.

The bust and depression that followed were especially hard on black residents, historian Karl H. Grismer says. Most of the men were unskilled laborers, most of the women domestic servants. Now, there were no building projects to employ the men. Many of the women were let go by their white employers.

I N AN EDITORIAL on Jan. 28, 1927, the *Times* solemnly acknowledged that the good times were gone. The "exciting game of pyramiding and ballooning land prices all over Florida, including even St. Petersburg, could not possibly go on indefinitely," it declared, noting that "the inevitable cessation and then reaction must hurt everybody concerned."

The newspaper was among the injured. The sudden collapse saddled it with a bond issue of more than $200,000 and outstanding bills of more than $400,000. Advertising, which had hit 25-million lines in 1925, plummeted to 9.5-million lines in 1927, according to newspaper historian Tom C. Harris. Advertisers owed the paper about $300,000, much of which was never collected.

With advertising on a steep decline, the size of the paper began shrinking, finally hitting a low of just eight pages. The staff shrank, too. Some employees left voluntarily; some were fired. In July 1934, the *Times'* 50th anniversary, the news staff consisted of 15 persons. Straub was still editor-in-chief. His assistants included a managing editor (Harris), telegraph editor, sports editor, city edi-

The supper special at Morrison's was 21 cents.
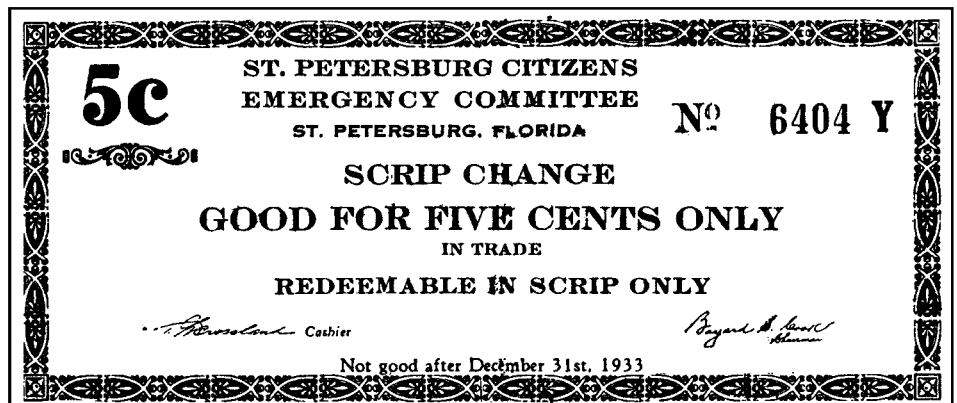
Money grew so short that scrip was issued by a Citizens Emergency Committee. Purchases were made with a combination of scrip and cash.

tor and society editor. There were four news reporters, two "cub reporters," one Clearwater reporter (Ralph Reed), one society reporter and one sports reporter. There were six telephones in the newsroom.

Strapped for cash to meet its payroll, the paper began negotiating trades with merchants. To pay for its advertising in the *Times*, a store would turn over certificates, which the paper would parcel out to employees on payday. The employees could then use their certificates to buy groceries, clothing and other goods. One staff member furnished his house with certificates, Harris says.

In time, money grew so short in St. Petersburg that a Citizens Emergency Committee issued scrip that could be used in lieu of cash. Many employers, including the *Times* and the Pinellas County School Board, paid their employees at least partly in scrip, which was honored by merchants all over town. Getting paid partly in scrip "was not so bad since everyone was in the same fix," reporter Reed recalled years afterward. "We bought all our groceries, clothing and almost anything, including automobiles, with scrip and part cash. In turn, the merchant would turn this scrip back, plus a little cash, to pay for his advertising."

JUDGING BY advertisements in the *Times* of July 1934, prices were not steep — at least by today's standards. The two supper specials at Morrison's Cafeteria — roast chicken with dressing and baked ham with pineapple sauce — were each 21 cents. At Nolan's Grocery, a pound of coffee was 28 cents, five pounds of sugar 25 cents and boneless rump roast 20 cents a pound. The Firestone Service Store offered to adjust a set of brakes for 75 cents. A nine-piece living room set at Mather furniture was $79.50. A double feature was playing at the Cameo Theatre at 100 Central — Joan Crawford in *Sadie McKee* and John Barrymore and Carole Lombard in *20th Century*. Admission was 10 and 20 cents.

Though times were bleak in 1934, the *Times* published a 72-page edition on July 29, its 50th anniversary. In an upbeat editorial headed "The Half Century Mark," the paper pledged to "continue the kind of newspaper" that people "wish, expect and are entitled to for their Sunshine City."

Within less than a year, however, the future of the paper seemed very much in doubt. The bust and depression had hit Paul Poynter hard. He had a big new building and

two new presses — and precious little advertising revenue to pay his debts and meet his expenses. He owned property all over the county, including a hotel in Clearwater, and took on even more as payment for debts. According to Harris, he was $1.3-million in debt.

To keep his struggling newspaper alive, the financially strapped Poynter took on new partners. In 1929, brothers William J. and Frank G. Smith of Waukegan, Ill. became stockholders and members of the board of directors. The next year, they were joined by the family of E. J. Ottoway of Port Huron, Mich., who ultimately controlled 20 percent of the stock.

One of Ottoway's sons, James H. Ottoway Sr., says that his family took a dim view of Poynter's extensive outside interests and his business ethics. Poynter "skidded awfully close to the edge" in his business dealings, says Ottoway, now 72, who uses words like "chicanery" to describe his onetime business partner. Ottoway says, however, that his family was as surprised as Poynter when, on July 1, 1935, the Smiths wrested control of the *Times* from Poynter and, in effect, kicked Poynter out of the building.

Three years earlier, Poynter had borrowed heavily from the Smiths to help finance his real estate ventures. Now, the Smiths used that obligation as leverage in ousting Poynter and installing William J. Smith in his place.

"About 12 o'clock (that day) Mr. Poynter came into my office and said, 'They're trying to take my paper away,'" recalls then-managing editor Harris. "He said, 'Go ahead and run it (the paper) like you always do,'" and then walked out of the building. Poynter set up shop in an office building that he owned two blocks away and filed suit to try to regain his newspaper. At issue in the seven-week legal battle that followed was 2,900 of the 4,688 shares of *Times* stock. Smith and his late brother's wife said they had controlled (and voted) those shares since their 1932 loan to Poynter. But Poynter contended that the shares were merely collateral for the loan.

Eleanor Jamison, Poynter's daughter, says that Poynter's family and friends rallied to his support. Many of the *Times'* advertisers threatened to cancel their accounts if Smith persisted, Mrs. Jamison says, and many *Times* employees vowed to resign. In addition, Poynter's family and friends, including former business manager C. C. Carr, helped him raise enough money to strengthen his bargaining position, she says.

EVENTUALLY, POYNTER and Smith made their peace. The Smiths transferred stock back to Poynter, and on Aug. 21 Poynter's name was back on the editorial masthead as president and manager. Smith remained on the board of directors for several years. But the Ottoways — "fed up with the whole kit and kaboodle," according to James Ottoway — sold their 20 interest back to Poynter and left the company. Mrs. Jamison has a different version. She says the Ottoways assisted the Smiths in the attempted ouster, and that her father eventually exercised his option to call in the Ottoways' stock.

Although he regained control of the *Times*, Poynter was unable to hold on to some of his other newspapers during the Depression. He eventually sold all but the *Times* and his paper in Sullivan, Ind.

It is not recorded what Poynter thought of his prolonged financial predicament and the near loss of his newspaper. But it was to become obvious that his son Nelson, then a 32-year-old newspaper executive in Columbus, Ohio, had been watching and learning.

Beauties and the beach: Photos like this one, taken at Spa Beach in about 1928, were sent to northern papers to promote St. Petersburg.

City of St. Petersburg

Nelson Poynter takes command

■ If ever a man was born to the manor of newspaper journalism, it was Nelson Paul Poynter. He spent his youth hanging around his father's newsrooms in Sullivan, Ind. and St. Petersburg, had a front-page story in the *Times* when he was 11 and was covering the courthouse in Sullivan at 15. "It never occurred to me to be anything but a newspaperman," he once said.

Yet this newspaperman was far different than his father. He had his father's short stature, affability and passion for the democratic ideals of Franklin D. Roosevelt, but as journalists and businessmen the father and son were worlds apart.

Nelson Poynter began buying his father's stock in the *Times* in 1935. And when he came to St. Petersburg in 1938 to take an active role in the newspaper's management, it was apparently with the understanding that he would eventually acquire control. "Even though we had no philosophical differences, editing is also a matter of tim-

courtesy Eleanor Poynter Jamison

Nelson Poynter as a young editor: After arriving in St. Petersburg in 1938, he became one of American journalism's most conspicuous figures.

Poynter's first crusade

NELSON POYNTER'S first crusade as editor of the *St. Petersburg Times* was also his most satisfying. He arrived in 1938 to find the agencies of local government in a state of near-paralysis, victims of their own recklessness and amateurism. The spending sprees of Florida's Boom times had put them deep in debt, and the upheaval of the bust and Depression left them too broke to pay.

The *Times* had a woeful balance sheet, too. But Poynter made its massive debts more manageable by consolidating many of them and negotiating more favorable terms. Then, he urged local governemnt to do the same.

It was a highly personal campaign, with big headlines, charts and cartoons, as Poynter prodded officials to re-examine their bond debts and try to refinance them at lower interest rates. "Your School Bonds May Gyp Your Child of a Full Term," declared the headline over a long Poynter story in October 1939. "It's A Long and Sorry Story —Important To You. We Recommend You Read Every Word." Poynter helped pay for one refinancing study and

made sever al trips to Washington to seek the counsel of experts

The daring ideas from the new man in town did not sit well with local bond dealers, who had a virtual monopoly on the local bond business and little interest in improving the terms for taxpayers. One of them was Ed C. Wright, who made a fortune off state government bonds and real estate. After one editorial, Wright said that Poynter had "deliberately misrepresented the facts." Ask Paul Poynter "to put somebody else on the job," Wright told the School Board

Poynter's first editorial campaign was a highly personal one. He succeeded when local government officials agreed to refinance their bonds under more favorable terms.

in October 1939. "I wouldn't deal with his son at all if I were you, but Mr. Paul Poynter is a sensible man."

The young editor reacted to the criticism by encouraging more. "Please, please never hesitate to fight with this newspaper," he wrote. "We always give ample space to those who are in honest disagreement with us ... Let it not be said that any reader, be he however humble, is not free with complete immunity to throw a brick at the Times."

Eventually, the County Commission, School Board and City Council took Poynter's advice. All three agencies were able to refinance at least part of their bond debts. The County Commission shaved $4.5-million off its $17.6-million debt.

The experience of Pinellas governments helped prompt a chain reaction around the state that led to new statutes and savings of several million dollars. Years later, Poynter looked back on his refinancing campaign as "the one which makes me most proud. Since it resulted in state legislation, it had a broader fiscal effect, a more measurable effect, than other campaigns."

After Nelson and his sister Eleanor went fishing (left), Nelson, 6, had her hold the catch while he posed grandly for the photographer.

courtesy Eleanor Poynter Jamison

courtesy Eleanor Poynter Jamison

St. Petersburg, 1913: Nelson and his mother Alice waiting for the streetcar to Gulfport, where they took a boat to Pass-a-Grille Beach for the day.

Behind the amiable exterior was a driven, intensely private man.

ing," Poynter said years later. "My father was always more mellow than I. It wasn't a question of the age difference. I think I always slugged harder than he did, and that would have been painful for him."

Once in control, in fact, the younger Poynter often acted as if he were another man's son. The father was an ardent prohibitionist and Christian Scientist; the son loved martinis and disdained organized religion. The father owned papers in 10 towns; the son devoted his energies to one. The father immersed himself in outside (and sometimes conflicting) business interests; the son studiously tried to avoid them. The father was so incautious he got himself and his papers in financial trouble; the son was such a fiscal conservative that he routinely made multimillion-dollar purchases in *cash*.

Perhaps Nelson Poynter patterned himself more after his mother. Friends say he greatly admired her. Alice Poynter was a strong-willed, independent person, an early feminist and longtime member of the trustees and parole board of Indiana Woman's Prison. Long after her husband died in 1950, Mrs. Poynter regularly came to the *Times* in a black, chauffeur-driven Cadillac. She rarely went inside the building; instead, her son would leave his office and come out to the car to confer with her.

Over the four decades he ran the *Times*, Nelson Poynter transformed his father's small, financially wobbly paper into a large, robust enterprise. He also became one of American journalism's most conspicuous figures — a liberal in a conservative town, an innovator in a sometimes stand-pat industry, a loner in a field increasingly dominated by chains. He was damned as a Communist, a fool and a

meddler, praised as a patriot, a genius and a leader. And before he died in 1978, he did the most remarkable thing of all: He gave away his highly profitable newspaper, insuring that it would remain under the control of a single person — safe from the clutches of an outside chain.

POYNTER WAS BORN in Sullivan on Dec. 15, 1903, nine years before his father acquired the *St. Petersburg Times*. Although he grew up in Sullivan, he spent many of his vacations and holidays in St. Petersburg. He happened to be on the waterfront one day in 1915 when locally famous aviator Tony Jannus crashed. Jannus and a passenger were not seriously injured; Nelson had a story on page 1 of the next day's *Times*.

The publisher's son was bright and ambitious. He skipped two grades in the Sullivan public schools, and when his father's courthouse reporter was called to duty in World War I young Nelson took his place. He went on to Indiana University, where he was a friend of Ernie Pyle (later a well-known columnist) and editor of the student newspaper. When he graduated in 1924, he traveled abroad till his money ran out, hooked on with an English-language newspaper in Japan for a time and then earned a master's degree in economics at Yale in 1927.

Over the next decade, Poynter embarked on an odyssey that saw him work for seven newspapers in a variety of roles. An early stop was Clearwater, where he bought the *Clearwater Sun* from his father and later sold it at a profit. He also bought and sold the *Kokomo* (Ind.) *Democrat*, this time to escape Depression-era debts. Next he joined the Scripps-Howard chain and wound up as editor-publisher of the chain's *Columbus* (Ohio) *Citizen*. There, in 1937, Poynter learned the perils of bucking absentee owners. He was fired for supporting President Roosevelt's so-called "court-packing" plan for the Supreme Court.

Poynter came to St. Petersburg for good in 1938 and took the title of general manager. A year later, editor W. L. Straub died after several years of declining health, and Poynter succeeded him as editor.

The new editor was 5 feet 5, and as wiry as his father was rotund. He had dark hair, a toothy grin and freckled face. With his soft-spoken manner and trademark bow tie, he hardly seemed like a newspaper executive. In later years, staff members used to joke that the unimposing little man looked more like a file clerk. Behind the courtly, amiable exterior, however, was a driven, intensely private man who used to say that he had a one-track mind powered by a racing engine. When his first wife divorced him in 1942, she said Poynter had become a slave to his duties. "He said . . . he hoped if he was on his death bed when he was 85 he would have to say, 'Darn it, I can't die today. I have got to get up to New York to see a man,' " Mrs. Poynter testified.

WHEN POYNTER moved to St. Petersburg, the town and the newspaper were still reeling from the bust and Depression. Paul Poynter and the *Times* (circulation 17,581) were deep in debt. If the son needed proof of the paper's precarious footing, it came when he applied for a bank loan to buy up some inexpensive newsprint after a Miami Beach newspaper folded. His application was denied.

As the *Times'* general manager, one of Poynter's first moves was to consolidate the paper's many debts with a first mortgage bond issue through the Jefferson Standard

What happened to the paper boy?

A Times paper boy of yesterday: a rare sight.

THE *West Hillsborough Times*, later to become the *St. Petersburg Times*, was initially sold from the newspaper's office, then expanded to become available in drugstores and the like. The first home deliveries were made by carriers who rode bicycles or walked a subscription route. A few early carriers even rode horses.

While the "newspaper boy" is an integral part of the histories of most newspapers, the *Times* employed young people as newspaper carriers only once, during World War II. That's when Dave Fluker, presently circulation manager of the *Times*, joined the newspaper. Fluker was a teen-ager who got up at 2:30 a.m. to deliver his 300 subscribers the newspapers he carried on his bicycle. His route was 20 miles long.

Back then, there were only 70 or 80 carriers delivering the papers. Before and since the war, the *Times* has employed only adults for delivery duties.

Today, a circulation "army" descends on the *Times'* 34th Street plant each morning to pick up papers as they come off the presses. In all, more than 1,000 people work in the circulation department. Of these, 540 drive the cars that home deliver the paper, while another 70 make sure the newspaper is available in racks and stores. Eighty-three trucks — about half of them capable of operating on pollution-free propane gas — deliver the papers to substations and outlying areas.

As the newspapers roll off the presses, they are bundled, labelled by destination and placed on a loading dock. They are then picked up by the trucks and taken to various substations, where carriers congregate to receive their subscribers' papers.

Life Insurance Co. That apparently helped clear the way for installation of new presses, four Goss units purchased from the *New York Daily News* in 1940.

As *Times* editor, Poynter's first major crusade was a campaign to persuade local governments to refinance their own staggering debts **(see story, page 37).**

Though the 1930s were a time of economic stagnation and upheaval, St. Petersburg continued to grow. The population reached 60,812 in 1940. City Hall and Bartlett Park were built through the federal government's new Depression-era public works effort. A big veterans' hospital and administration center went up at the western end of town. Weedon Island, off northeast St. Petersburg, temporarily became a movie set (Buster Keaton and other stars came to town, but all three movies filmed here were flops at the box office). And a fledgling National Airlines made St. Petersburg its national headquarters. Its executive offices were in the *Times* building, its operations based at a new airport along the waterfront. The airport was named for Albert Whitted, a native-son aviator who was killed in a 1923 air accident.

PERHAPS NO controversy of the time was hotter than a proposal to expand a public housing project for blacks. St. Petersburg's race relations have never been laudatory, especially in the twenties and thirties. Jim Crow was the rigid rule in education, housing and business, and some of the town's most prominent residents were members of the Ku Klux Klan. In the late 1920s, the klan had a meeting hall in the telephone company's office building and sponsored a float each year in the Festival of States parade. One of its leaders later served on the *Times'* board of directors.

The *Times* was a voice of Southern orthodoxy throughout the 1920s. It staunchly defended white supremacy, contending that "the Negro is but a few generations removed from savagery," and was tepid toward the klan. The KKK was innocent of some of "the outrages charged to it," the paper declared in 1928, noting that its members included "many fine men and citizens."

By the late 1930s, however, the paper's position had shifted considerably. When 200 hooded klansmen marched through the black community in October 1937 in an attempt to discourage blacks from voting in a city referendum, the *Times* branded it "a shameful episode." Seven months later, when klansmen drove blacks off a softball field in Clearwater, the paper scorned them as "a bunch of white-robed men who take it upon themselves to correct some situation which, in their super-colossal, star chamber judgment doesn't seem to be right . . . We don't need and don't want this kind of goings on in Pinellas County or in Florida."

The newspaper had long deplored the conditions in which many blacks lived, and it quickly jumped to the fore in the push for better housing. By the late 1930s, historian Karl H. Grimser says, most blacks were living in squalid, white-owned tenements that had neither paint nor plumbing. "A large percentage of the houses were nothing but tumble-down shacks, hardly fit for cattle to live in," Grismer says. "Slum districts developed which were a disgrace to the community."

St. Petersburg was one of the first cities to respond when the federal government began financing low-cost public housing projects in 1937. A project called Jordan Park was erected along 22nd Street S with 242 dwelling units. But when the local housing authority moved in 1940 to expand Jordan Park, the City Council — under pressure from white slumlords — blocked it.

The *Times* reacted with indignation. It accused the council majority of kowtowing to slumlords. It repeatedly ran photos of slum housing. It joined the Chamber of Commerce, the *Evening Independent* and other groups pushing the Jordan Park expansion. Eventually advocates of the proposed expansion mounted a petition drive that forced the issue to a referendum.

On Sept. 24, 1940, the expansion was approved by the city's voters, 2,731 to 2,081. "Housing Project Wins," the *Times* declared in a banner headline the next morning. It was a "victory for the people, a victory for better living in St. Petersburg," the paper said in a front-page editorial.

By the late 1930s, the paper's attitude toward the klan had changed.

In 1940, the Times campaigned for expansion of Jordan Park. It helped lead to what the paper called "a victory for better living."

From newsroom to pressroom

The reader sees the reporter's byline in the paper. But it takes a team of people, most working behind the scenes, to get that story from the reporter to the newspaper.
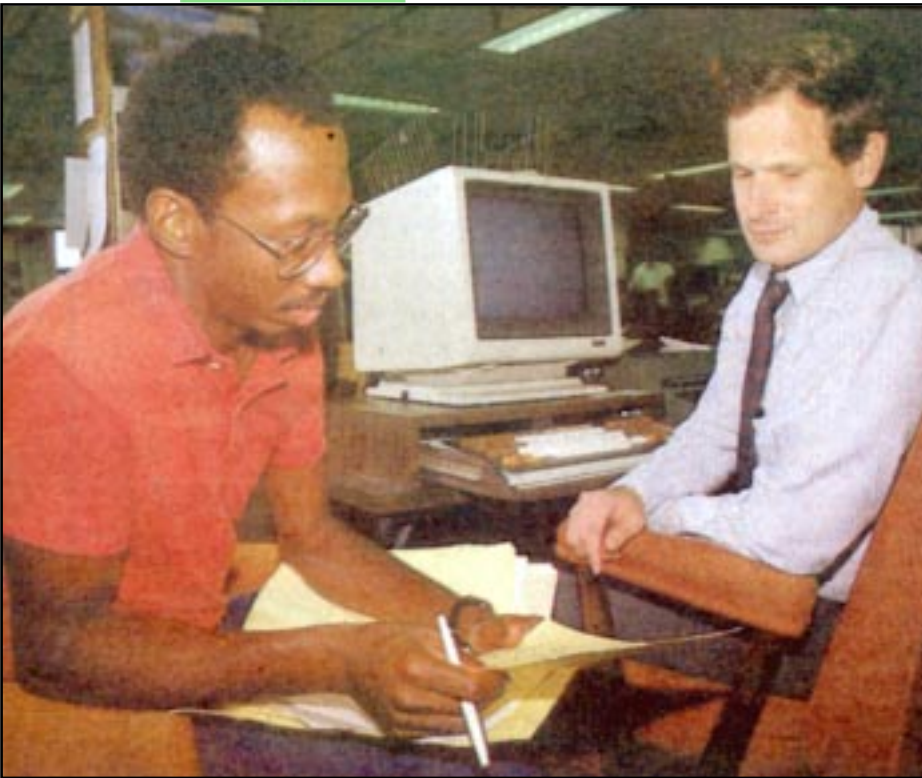
1

The process starts with a reporter, who works with a supervising editor as a story develops. The reporter gathers the information, conducts interviews and writes the story on a computer terminal. The editor reads the story, checking its organization and accuracy, and in consultation with the reporter has any necessary changes made. When the editor is satisfied that the story is ready for publication, it is sent to the copy desk.

4

In the composing room, the type is trimmed, waxed and pasted on a board following the copy editor's design of the page.

2

Copy editors, after reading and re-checking the story, design the pages. They choose and size pictures, write headlines, and finally typeset the story.

3
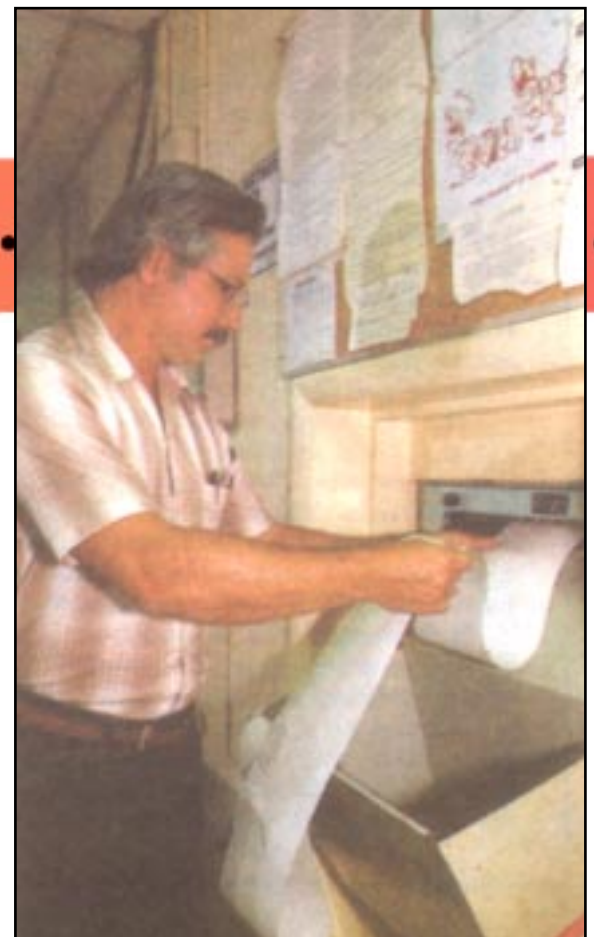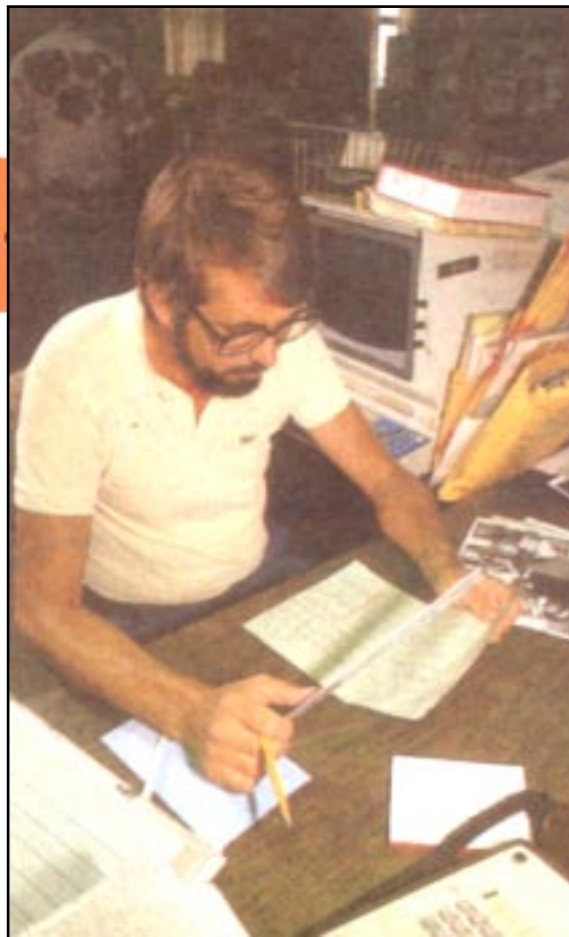
Mu
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5 When the page has been pasted up, a photocopy is made and it is checked for errors. When everything is ready, the completed page is sent to the camera department (above), where a picture of the page is taken .

6 The negative from the picture is sent to platemaking, where the image of the negative is burned onto a specially coated aluminum plate.
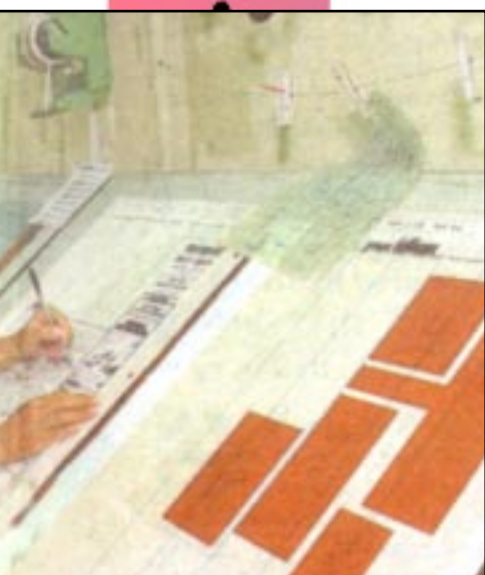
3 Much of the process that takes the story to the press involves photo technology. When the editor pushes the typesetting key on his computer terminal, it starts a process that translates electronic impulses on to specially coated paper, simply referred to as film, in a phototypesetting machine. The film then goes through a processor (left), which develops the words on the film.

7 The plate is put on the press. On the Times' offset press, water goes over the plate. Areas that contain type or pictures repel the water. Ink appears on those areas. The image is transferred to a rubber roller and then to the newsprint.

photography: Ricardo Ferro

Southern Pinellas County was a major training center during the war. These troops set up their tents near the Vinoy Park Hotel and marched up and down Fourth Street.

The war at home

City of St. Petersburg

EXTRA *St. Petersburg Times* **EXTRA**

VOL. 58, NO. 136   COMPLETE ASSOCIATED PRESS, UNITED PRESS AND INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE   ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1941   ★   FIVE CENTS

JAPAN OFFICIALLY DECLARES

WAR

JAPS ATTACK HONOLULU, MANILA; F. D. R. ORDERS ARMY, FLEET INTO ACTION

TOKIO--Monday--(A.P.)--Japanese imperial headquarters announced at 6 A.M. today that Japan had entered a state of war with the United States and Britain in the western Pacific as from dawn today.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 7.--(AP)--Japanese airplanes today attacked American defense bases at Hawaii and Manila, and President Roosevelt ordered the Army and Navy to carry out undisclosed orders prepared for the defense of the United States. Later it was reported it was all quiet at Manila.

The White House said that Japan had attacked America's vital outposts in the Pacific -- Hawaii and Manila -- at 3:20 P.M. (E.S.T.) and that so far as was known the attacks were still in progress.

Announcing the president's action for the protection of American territory, Presidential Secretary Stephen Early declared that so far as is known now the attacks were 'made wholly without warning -- when both nations were at peace -- and were delivered within an hour or so of the time that the Japanese ambassadors had gone to the state department to hand to the Secretary of State Japan's reply to the secretary's memorandum of the 26th.

Turn to Page Four a Complete Pacific Map

The "War" headline was prepared two weeks before Pearl Harbor.

■ "WAR," screamed the headline atop the *Times'* extra edition on Dec. 7, 1941. It was the biggest event in the lives of many Americans — and the second biggest headline in the *Times'* history.

The headline, seven inches high, filled almost half the front page. The paper had no type that big. On a hunch, executive editor Tom C. Harris had had the word "war" set in the biggest type available, then photographed, enlarged many times and set in a zinc engraving, just in case the United States was drawn into the conflict. Two weeks later, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor.

World War II could have been disastrous for St. Petersburg's still-fragile economy, since travel restrictions and the rationing of gasoline and tires all but wiped out the city's only major industry — tourism. Fortunately, however, the military capitalized on the area's mild climate and hundreds of empty hotel rooms. It turned southern Pinellas County into a major training center for Army Air Corpsmen, merchant seamen and fighter pilots.

Wave after wave of young men in khaki and olive drab descended on St. Petersburg in 1942 and 1943 to live in the hotels, drill in the parks and streets and relax at the bars and beaches. At one point, housing was so scarce a "tent city" had to be built in the Jungle area of west St. Petersburg. Altogether, about 120,000 military personnel passed through the city during the war.

St. Petersburg and the beaches were also a magnet for military personnel stationed at other facilities and camps around Florida, according to historian Karl H. Grismer. It was a great place to be on a furlough or weekend pass.

FOR THE permanent residents of St. Petersburg, the war brought some of the same restrictions, inconveniences and anxiety that were felt over America. Blackouts were imposed. Essential food items were rationed. Gasoline was hard to get (new tires were virtually impossible to find) and the maximum speed for automobiles was 35 mph.

The *Times* had to live with wartime restrictions, too. It did not publish certain details about the number and activities of military personnel here. Like many other newspapers, it published "Victory Editions" once (sometimes twice) a week to conserve newsprint. These papers, usually Monday editions, were limited to eight pages and stripped of all advertising but the classifieds, which the editors decided were a "vital public service in the lives of thousands of readers."

The paper also did its bit for the men overseas. In September 1942, it began publishing a "News From Home" feature, a summary of local news that could be clipped out of the paper and mailed to loved ones. The next year, it began another service, this one for servicemen who had left a newborn baby back home. At no charge, the paper would photograph a wife and baby, publish the picture and then send it (along with a message from the wife) to the proud father overseas.

Without fanfare, the *Times* also began publishing another kind of photograph — photographs of black people. It seems incredible now, but for most of the first half of the century, black people generally made the news only if they had committed a crime or somehow figured in a highly unusual event. Pictures of black people were even rarer.

In 1939, the *Times* had begun a weekly page of "Negro news," a collection of news items about black churches, schools, sports events and society that was gathered and written by black people working out of their homes. But that page circulated primarily in black neighborhoods and was never seen by most white readers. Thus it was noteworthy when a photo of scientist George Washington Carver appeared alongside a feature about him on page 14 of the July 23, 1942 *Times*. It was, recalls then-executive editor Harris, one of the first times a photograph of a black person had appeared in *all* editions of the paper.

One of the first photographs of a local black person to appear in all editions came the next year, alongside a feature about a woman named Mary Johnson. She was, the *Times* reported, one of four black women who had been pressed into service as a common laborer on the railroad because of the wartime shortage of men.

Looking back on the decision to begin publishing blacks' pictures, Harris recalls little deliberation among editors. It was, he says, a natural progression from the Negro news page to the full-run edition. The war itself was probably a factor as well. Black people were fighting and dying in the battle of "democracy against fascism," and it was to have a profound effect on race relations in a country that had paid lip service to equality.

T HE WAR DID NOT end the *Times'* longtime tradition of unabashed boosterism of St. Petersburg and Pinellas County. When the *Evening Independent*, citing paper shortages and problems created by "war time," dropped its famous "Sunshine Offer" after 31 years, the *Times* announced that it would take it over. The stunt of giving away the paper on the rare days that the sun does not shine "has been a grand promotion for St. Petersburg" and should not die, the paper declared. The *Times* never had to give a paper away, however. Five days later, the *Independent* changed its mind.

The *Times* also took steps to counter the widespread impression that the soldier-filled city had no room for tourists. On Nov. 1, 1942, the eve of the winter season, the *Times* published a "Refute Rumors Mail-It-Away Edition" with a headline declaring, "We Want More Visitors." "Yes, the Army is here," the main story said, "but

Many Pinellas hotels were filled with soldiers. The Times published this "Refute Rumors Mail-It-Away Edition" to help assure tourists that plenty of accommodations were still available.

Stan Witwer (left in left photo) was named city editor and Sandy Stiles sports editor in 1942. Reporter-turned-soldier Alfred M. Kohn (above) was killed in France.

Eddie Zwick's 48-year record

THOUSANDS of men and women have worked for the *St. Petersburg Times* in the past century, but none of them stayed on the job longer than Eddie Zwick. When he retired 10 years ago with 48 years service, the affable Zwick set a company record that still stands.

Zwick was a St. Petersburg High School student when he started working in the *Times'* mailroom in 1925, bundling and stacking newspapers as they came off the press. He soon worked his way up to a job as circulation district manager. His Packard convertible with the back seat removed functioned as a circulation truck because the *Times* didn't have any.

"The company only had one truck back then and that was used to go over to Tampa and pick up newsprint two or three times a week at the port," Zwick said. (Today the com-

By Helen Huntley, staff writer

Eddie Zwick in 1946 and today: He used his Packard convertible as a newspaper truck in the 1920s.

pany has 85 circulation trucks.)

Trucks weren't the only thing the circulation department lacked then. Carriers in those days also had to do their job without the help of plastic bags to keep the newspaper dry. When rain was predicted, carriers delivered papers right to the door, Zwick said. If rain wasn't predicted and came anyway, he could count on a busy morning replacing soaked papers.

Selling subscriptions always has been a top priority for the circulation department. In the early years of Zwick's career, he and other managers sometimes caught the train in Clearwater and rode it to downtown St. Petersburg so they could sell subscriptions to passengers coming south for the winter.

Three other *Times* employees have come within three years of Zwick's record, by compiling 45 years of company service:

■ Sanford H. "Sandy" Stiles, who retires this week as corporate marketing director. He started out as an apprentice proofreader, and held jobs ranging from police reporter to composing room supervisor.

■ Ralph Reed, who joined the newspaper staff in 1914, was the *Times'* first fishing columnist, covered city and county politics and opened the Clearwater bureau. He died last year at the age of 88.

■ Tom C. Harris, who joined the *Times* staff in 1923 as a 14-year-old copy boy (**see story page 32**).

The senior active staff member once Stiles retires will be Zwick's former boss, Circulation Director **David Fluker**, and he's been with the company a mere 38 years.

Wartime opened up many jobs for women at the Times.

THE CITY EDITOR during the war was a relatively new arrival, a convert from the sports department who was to become one of the paper's most prominent figures over a career of nearly four decades.

Stan Witwer, 29 when war broke out, was a garrulous man with an angular face and gravelly voice. As a boy in Ohio, he dreamed of becoming a railroad man. But by the time he was 16, he was a sports writer on the *Dayton (Ohio) Herald*. Witwer got to know the *Times* in the late 1930s, when he came to Tampa to cover the Cincinnati

we still want winter visitors and still have accommodations for thousands."

Since many of the *Times'* male reporters, copy editors and administrators answered the call to wartime duty, the newsroom staff was both thin and disproportionately female during the war. The fishing and police beats — long the exclusive province of men — were filled by women. But men continued to monopolize key supervisory slots.

One of the women reporters, Virginia Ann Laughner, created turmoil in the newsroom in the spring of 1942. Laughner was a member of a socially prominent family. Her late father, a wealthy Pennsylvania oil man named Aymer Vinoy Laughner, had built the Vinoy Park Hotel. She was engaged to a Texan, and the *Times'* staff laid out the front page of the Sunday society section with a prominent spot for the announcement and a four-column photograph of the bride-to-be at the top of the page.

Laughner had a change of heart on her way to the altar, however. The night before the story was scheduled to run, she eloped with a *Times* colleague, reporter William Percival. When the staff learned the news, the Sunday paper was already on the press. Harris had the story rewritten and the page recast, and the press was about to start again when Laughner's mother appeared in the newsroom. Mrs. Laughner, who heartily disapproved of her daughter's impetuosity, had apparently just learned of the elopement herself, Harris says. She pleaded with Harris not to print the story. "It just can't be true," she declared.

The story was published.

Reds and spring training. He also got to know Harris, who brought him to St. Petersburg to head the *Times'* two-man sports department in 1939. His salary was $35 a week, Witwer says, and his instructions were to run only one sports picture each day. It cost too much to publish more.

By the time he retired in 1977, the versatile Witwer had held a host of titles in the newsroom and had served as vice chairman and then chairman of the board that oversaw the development of educational television in Florida.

As city editor, Witwer was a traditionalist who wanted clarity and simplicity in his reporters' copy. He liked to recall the words of his first city editor in Dayton, who constantly preached simplicity. " 'Just tell it simply . . . if one word tells it, use one word,' " Witwer recalled him saying.

In the *Times'* staff-short newsroom during the war, Witwer, Harris and other key staff members routinely worked a seven-day week.

When the long-anticipated invasion of France began, they were ready. Once again, a one-word headline — INVASION — was already prepared. It was a quarter inch taller than WAR and the biggest headline the *Times* has ever published.

Witwer was in charge of the front page make-up on V-J Day a year later and laid out all seven editions — four regular editions and three extras — that day. Hundreds of war-weary people milled around outside the *Times* building, eagerly awaiting every scrap of information on the momentous news story unfolding halfway around the world, Witwer recalls. "We'd run off a couple of thousand copies" of the paper, "wait 15 or 20 minutes" until more news arrived from the wire services, then update the front page and run off a couple of thousand more, he says.

When the war ended, a number of *Times* employees who had gone into service returned to the newspaper. At least a dozen returned to the newsroom. One did not.

Staff Sgt. Alfred M. Kohn, a St. Petersburg police reporter who became a war correspondent for *Stars and Stripes*, the armed services' newspaper, was killed during the invasion of France. Like a good reporter, Kohn had commandeered an abandoned civilian car to get closer to the fighting he was covering. His body, riddled with German machine gun fire, was found later inside the car.

The intersection of Tyrone Boulevard and Ninth Avenue N, 1957: The city's first shopping center, Tyrone Gardens (foreground), was under expansion and Crossroads shopping center (extreme upper left) was just a handful of stores.

The good times return

■ St. Petersburg emerged from the war to find itself in yet another building boom, the third in its history. Only this boom was longer and better.

The bust of the late 1920s, the Great Depression and then the war had brought building to a standstill, even though the population steadily increased. Now, with peace restored, optimism abounding and money available, there began a frenzy of building that lasted 15 years and doubled the number of single-family homes. The population of St. Petersburg increased from an estimated 85,184 in 1945 to 181,298 in 1960.

It was, on the whole, a happy era. Once flat broke, the city of St. Petersburg now had money for streets, waterfront improvements, a park at Lake Maggiore, an expanded hospital, a new police station and a new baseball stadium. As the city spread outward, it also grew upward; the first high-rise apartments appeared. Air conditioning was introduced. The first modern shopping center, a miniature version of today's Tyrone Gardens, opened in 1951; the second, Central Plaza, a year later.

Some of the new residents worked in one of the defense-oriented industries that moved to Pinellas County in the mid-1950s. The so-called Big Four — Honeywell, Electronic Communications Inc. (ECI), General Electric and Sperry-Rand — brought fat payrolls, hundreds of well-educated engineers and, eventually, a number of subcontract suppliers. Higher education moved into the county as well. Stetson Law School took over the old Rolyat Hotel in 1954, and in 1958 St. Petersburg was chosen as the site for a prestigious Presbyterian college (now called Eckerd College).

A capstone of the post-war era was the opening of the Sunshine Skyway bridge between Pinellas and Manatee counties in September 1954. No longer were St. Petersburg and Pinellas landlocked at their southern end.

There was tragedy, too. In 1950, a popular young lawyer and state legislator named Charles J. Schuh Jr. was

murdered in his Central Avenue office. (His son, Charles E. Schuh, served as a City Council member and mayor in the 1970s.) In 1953, the worst fire in the county's history killed 32 persons at the Littlefield Nursing Home near Largo. The *Times* printed an extra edition (apparently the last it ever published) with a huge photo of the smoldering remains.

NELSON POYNTER, the *Times'* new editor, had spent most of the war in Washington and Hollywood working in the federal government's wartime propaganda program. When he returned to St. Petersburg, he acquired enough of his family's stock in the newspaper to become majority stockholder in 1947.

The newspaper's average daily circulation that year was 31,336. Poynter was deeply in debt. Concerned about the future of the struggling enterprise, he wrote and published 15 "Standards of Ownership" to guide his heirs and advisers should he die unexpectedly. Like much of Poynter's writing, the document is wordy and rather awkwardly phrased. (Throughout his career, Poynter repeatedly found himself ensnarled in convoluted sentences and clumsy syntax.) But the goals he set are remarkable. They included his belief that ownership of a publication is "a sacred trust" and "great privilege" and his vows to avoid chain ownership, to achieve financial stability in order to maintain a strong editorial policy and to hire above-average staff members and provide them with above-average wages, decent pensions and a share of the profits.

In point 10 of his standards, Poynter addressed what he felt was one of the *Times'* most urgent priorities — the

extensive real estate holdings that the paper had acquired under his father. While working in Washington and Columbus, Ohio during the 1930s, Poynter had seen how a newspaper's real estate portfolio can affect its editorial policy. The *Times* "should not be tinctured with ownership in enterprises not related to newspapering," he declared. He had the holdings appraised, then sold each one as soon as a buyer was prepared to pay the set price.

Poynter also expected his staff to have no holdings that could embarrass the newspaper. Years later, when he learned that *Times* business executive Laurence T. Herman was an investor in a controversial yacht, tennis and condominium complex, Poynter was furious. Herman eventually was asked to leave the paper.

As editor and then chairman of the board, Poynter was a restless dynamo who was never content with the paper. He was "maddening to work for" because "there was no way to satisfy" him, says former executive editor Robert J. Haiman. "He'd always say, 'What about tomorrow?' "

In 1962, *Newsweek* magazine published a photograph of Poynter shaving; the caption cited his "lather of ideas." It was apt. Poynter's brain was busier than a Fourth of July sparkler. On a little pad that he carried everywhere he constantly jotted down reminders, suggestions, admonitions and praise to send to his staff.

The interests of readers, Poynter liked to say, "must always come ahead of advertisers, staff and owners. Without readers we are useless to the advertisers; without readers, we have no need of staff." He pushed his staff. When told an idea was impossible or impractical, he sometimes grew impatient. He would take a dime (then the price of the paper) out of his pocket, place it on the balky editor's desk and declare, "I'm a reader; don't tell me you can't do it."

Poynter also maintained that "there are no dull news days, only dull newsmen." When Haiman, then the paper's young wire editor, complained one day that it was "a dull news day," Poynter had a terse reply. "Well, in that case, we don't need you, do we?" he said.

Poynter liked to say that he had never been wrong, "just premature." In fact, he *was* ahead of his time. He made the *Times* a pioneer in the use of color and graphics, in typesetting and printing, in consumer and environmental reporting, in editorial crusades for racial equality and other unpopular causes. For years, he was content to plow most of his modest profits back into the paper for new equipment and better staff. It was relatively late in his life that the *Times* became the highly profitable enterprise that it is today.

"Not many people in their lifetime get to work closely with an honest-to-God genius," says former editor and president Donald K. Baldwin. "And I think by any definition Poynter was a genius."

Poynter's perfectionism sometimes made him hard to work for, however. Some of his complaints were invalid, some of his ideas bad. Though he was a man of great insight, he could be wrong. In 1977, as Angel P. "Joe" Perez was about to retire as a top executive at Florida Power Corp., Poynter directed his editorial writers to give Perez "a good send-off." A few months later, *Times* reporter Patrick Tyler disclosed that Perez had taken $193,255 in kickbacks in a "daisy-chain" scheme that drove up the price that Florida Power and its customers paid for oil. Perez later served four months in jail.

It was Poynter's belief that St. Petersburg and the Suncoast should be the best place in the world to live. Through his newspaper and its editorial columns, he tried to make it so. To him, that meant an informed electorate, strong public schools, good government and two-party politics, integration and racial justice, a clean environment

When the Sunshine Skyway bridge opened in September 1954, the Times heralded it with a fat special edition.

and controlled growth, efficient transportation and a thriving downtown.

Many of the *Times'* stands were unpopular, perhaps in part because the editorials tended to preach at readers rather than try to persuade them. Poynter's enemies, who were legion, accused him of arrogance, of king-making, of trafficking with Communists. But Poynter was a man of rugged independence. "He was a solitary man, Emersonian in his self-reliance," says his friend and successor, Eugene C. Patterson. "He trusted his instincts, was never swept along by the passions of the moment, the comfort of consensus . . . He was his own man."

No paper in the South, for example, was ahead of the *Times* in calling for racial equality in the schools and endorsing the U. S. Supreme Court's 1954 decision outlawing segregation.

Four years later, the governor, City Council, County Commission and Chamber of Commerce endorsed a plan to refinance the Sunshine Skyway bridge and use the money to build additional roads. That meant that the toll, which was scheduled to end in 1968, would remain at $1.75 indefinitely. Poynter and the *Times* had campaigned relentlessly to get the Skyway built, and now they thundered against the proposed refinancing. Twice the proposed refunding was defeated. But in 1966, then-Gov. Haydon Burns finally pushed through a new bond issue on the Skyway that continued the toll indefinitely.

The *Times* also fought — and lost — a proposal to build the Pinellas Bayway, a system of toll causeways from south St. Petersburg to Tierra Verde, Fort De Soto Park and St. Petersburg Beach. The proposal was a financially shaky boondoggle that would enrich private developers while despoiling the environment, the *Times* declared.

Poynter was a life-long Democrat, and the *Times* has never endorsed a Republican for president. But the paper cheered the county Republican Party through its infancy and adolescence in the 1940s and 1950s, publicizing its activities and candidates for office. A succession of GOP leaders credited the *Times* with helping bring two-party politics to Pinellas County.

No cause was dearer to Poynter than education. He figured prominently in the campaigns to bring Stetson Law School, Eckerd College and a branch of the University of South Florida to St. Petersburg. He supported a series of bond issues for the county's public schools.

Y ET POYNTER was also a man of apparent contradictions. His editorial pages called repeatedly for women's equality, yet he saw no conflict in his membership in private clubs that barred women. ("Most men have very dull wives," he once explained.) He endorsed integration and civil rights, yet rarely, if ever, had blacks as guests in his home. He championed labor unions and the right to organize, yet worked vigorously to keep unions out of his newspaper. He lamented the ravaging of Florida's fragile environment, yet contributed to the Suncoast's unchecked growth by publishing lavish special editions that touted the area's virtues while glossing over its problems. He declared that his staff deserved only the best, yet let salaries in the newsroom get so low that some of his best reporters led an unsuccessful union drive in 1974.

There was, says Baldwin, a streak of elitism in Poynter, who "thought the Poynter name was very important." Poynter "had no hesitation about requesting and getting special favors, like permission for his car to sit outside the airport when he picked up relatives and getting his grandchildren first on the plane — these things that go with po-

sition," Baldwin says. "And yet he was very gracious. He didn't throw his weight around. He just assumed that this was the way it was going to be."

Poynter held to no idea more firmly than his desire to keep his newspaper locally controlled, in the hands of a single person, once he died. But to do that, he had to take the extraordinary step of giving away the paper.

For years, it was his plan to leave his stock in the company to the Poynter Fund, a charitable trust he and his second wife created in 1953. When federal tax laws changed, however, he stipulated that his stock would go instead to a nonprofit educational institution that he established to help train working and would-be journalists.

The institution would own majority interest in the *Times* and its stock would be voted by a single person whom Poynter designated as his successor. Thus were Poynter's objectives achieved: His beloved newspaper would not have to be sold to pay estate taxes. It would be locally owned, safe from chain ownership. And it would be in the hands of a single person — a journalist, not a business person — who in turn would name his own successor.

Largo Nursing Home Destroyed

32 DEAD IN FIRE

Twisted Metal Bed Frames Stare Up From Site Of Tragedy

27 Survivors Of Pinellas' Worst Tragedy

The worst fire in the county's history devastated a nursing home near Largo, killing more than half of the 59 elderly patients.

Poynter looked for a way to give away his paper.

Who owns the Times?

THE *St. Petersburg Times* is operated under one of the most unusual newspaper ownership arrangements in the United States. The paper has become highly profitable in recent years, but its majority stockholder — the guy who gets most of the dividends — is a small, non-profit educational institution with cramped offices in an old converted bank building on Central Avenue.

As corny as it sounds, how one of the America's largest daily newspapers became the property of a school is the story of one man's commitment to corporate excellence and local control. Nelson Poynter's gift — valued in the hundreds of millions of dollars — has been called both a noble gesture and a tax dodge.

But there is no question that Poynter's two primary goals were achieved: A school was established to teach journalism in innovative ways; and the *St. Petersburg Times*, Poynter's life work, was kept after his death within the control of people he knew shared his feelings on what a local newspaper ought to be.

"Nelson used to say," recalls current editor Andrew Barnes, " 'A lot of people were interested in this until they learned that the only way to make it work is to give the paper away.' "

Actually, ownership of the *Times* is a little more complicated than that. There are even a few minority stockholders.

The Times Publishing Co. — which publishes the *Times*, its companion newspaper the *Evening Independent*, *Florida Trend* magazine, *Congressional Quarterly* and *Editorial Research Reports* — is owned largely by an entity known as the the Times Holding Co., which in turn is owned almost entirely by the non-profit Poynter Institute for Media Studies Inc.
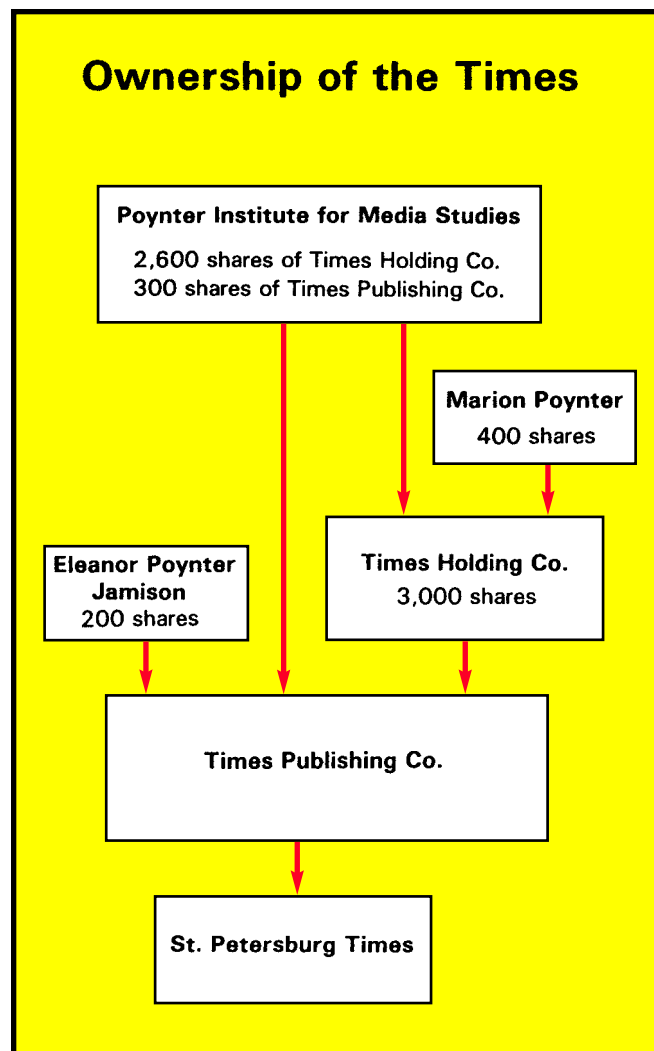
More specifically, the ownership is apportioned like this: There are 3,500 shares in the Times Publishing Co. The Times Holding Co. owns 3,000 of these, including a comfortable majority (300) of the 500 voting shares. The other 200 voting shares are owned by a trust controlled by Nelson Poynter's sister, Eleanor Poynter Jamison, and her two daughters. Thus, Mrs. Jamison owns 40 percent of the voting shares and roughly 6 percent of the total stock in the company.

The other 300 non-voting shares in the publishing company were donated several years ago by Poynter's own daughters to the Poynter Institute.

The Times Holding Co. was formed in the late 1950s, according to long-time executive Clifton D. Camp Jr., so that Poynter could subdivide his majority interest without jeo-

By James Harper, staff writer

pardizing his margin of control. At one time top executives were allowed to buy shares in the holding company. Over the years, however, Poynter bought them back, and today, all but 400 of the 3,000 shares in the holding company are owned by the Poynter Institute, including all of the voting shares. Poynter's widow, Marion K. Poynter, owns the remaining 400 non-voting shares and serves on the publishing company's board of directors.

Ultimately, then, the Poynter Institute owns and controls the *St. Petersburg Times*. So

Ownership of the Times

Poynter Institute for Media Studies
2,600 shares of Times Holding Co.
300 shares of Times Publishing Co.

Marion Poynter
400 shares

Eleanor Poynter Jamison
200 shares

Times Holding Co.
3,000 shares

Times Publishing Co.

St. Petersburg Times

who controls the Poynter Institute?

Nelson Poynter had strong feelings that a newspaper must ultimately be controlled by one person. So he arranged that, upon his death in 1978, the Poynter Institute's shares would be voted, as trustee, by the chief executive officer of Times Publishing: in the immediate case, his friend and successor, *Times* editor Eugene Patterson. Patterson was also given the exclusive power to name his own successor. After recently taking Poynter's old title of chairman and chief executive of the publishing company, Patterson named Barnes editor and president.

Patterson's power is exclusive, but in practical terms, it has its limits. "It's not some Hearstian figure slinging thunderbolts from on high," he laughs. "I'd sling us right out of business in a hurry if I tried that."

AT the company's annual stockholders' meeting, Patterson typically votes alone to determine the board of directors. On business decisions he relies on board members for advice. Their recommendations are so well researched and clearly argued, he says, "that the decisions are damn near made for me . . . But the final veto authority has to reside somewhere. The question is, do you have it in an individual or in a committee?

"A newspaper is a highly individualistic entity," he says. "It's almost like a person. I honestly believe that one person should have the authority to say yes or no, and have to take the responsibility or the blame . . . It's not an invitation to Caesarism because running a newspaper is also a complicated job."

Patterson feels just as strongly about local control. "If you own a chain of papers, which one do you love the best?" he asks. "Which town do you serve the most? The strongest contribution a newspaper can make to a community is to be locally owned, to be responsive to that community above all others . . . Your readers can come in to see you when they want to complain. They don't have to be fobbed off on some distant corporate headquarters."

Today's ownership has its origin in the 1930s, when Nelson Poynter began acquiring stock in the *Times* from his father Paul. The younger Poynter was working for Scripps-Howard, a newspaper chain, at the time. He gained majority control in 1947 but remained deeply in debt. Soon afterward, he and his sister Eleanor quarreled over the management of the company, even landing briefly in court. The dispute was settled privately. Eleanor Jamison retained her minority interest, although not an active role in the company.

As the newspaper and its affiliates grew more financially secure in the 1950s and 1960s, Poynter devoted more thought to how his properties would be distributed when he died. "Even in interviews in 1959, he had already made it clear that he was going to leave his newspaper stock to the Poynter Fund (a charitable foundation that Poynter and his second wife, Henrietta, had formed)," recalls former publisher John B. Lake. "I knew definitely that it wasn't going to be inherited by a bunch of relatives and sons-in-law."

Poynter toyed with the idea of leaving the newspaper to its staff, as a few other publishers had done. But he worried that employees, as a group, might be unwilling to put off immediate gains in favor of the company's long-term future. Instead, Poynter established a profit-sharing plan to give employees a stake in the company without ceding them control.

There was one thing Poynter resolved not to do — sell out to a chain. Donald K. Baldwin, a former *Times* editor, recalls that John S. Knight, owner of the *Miami Herald* and later
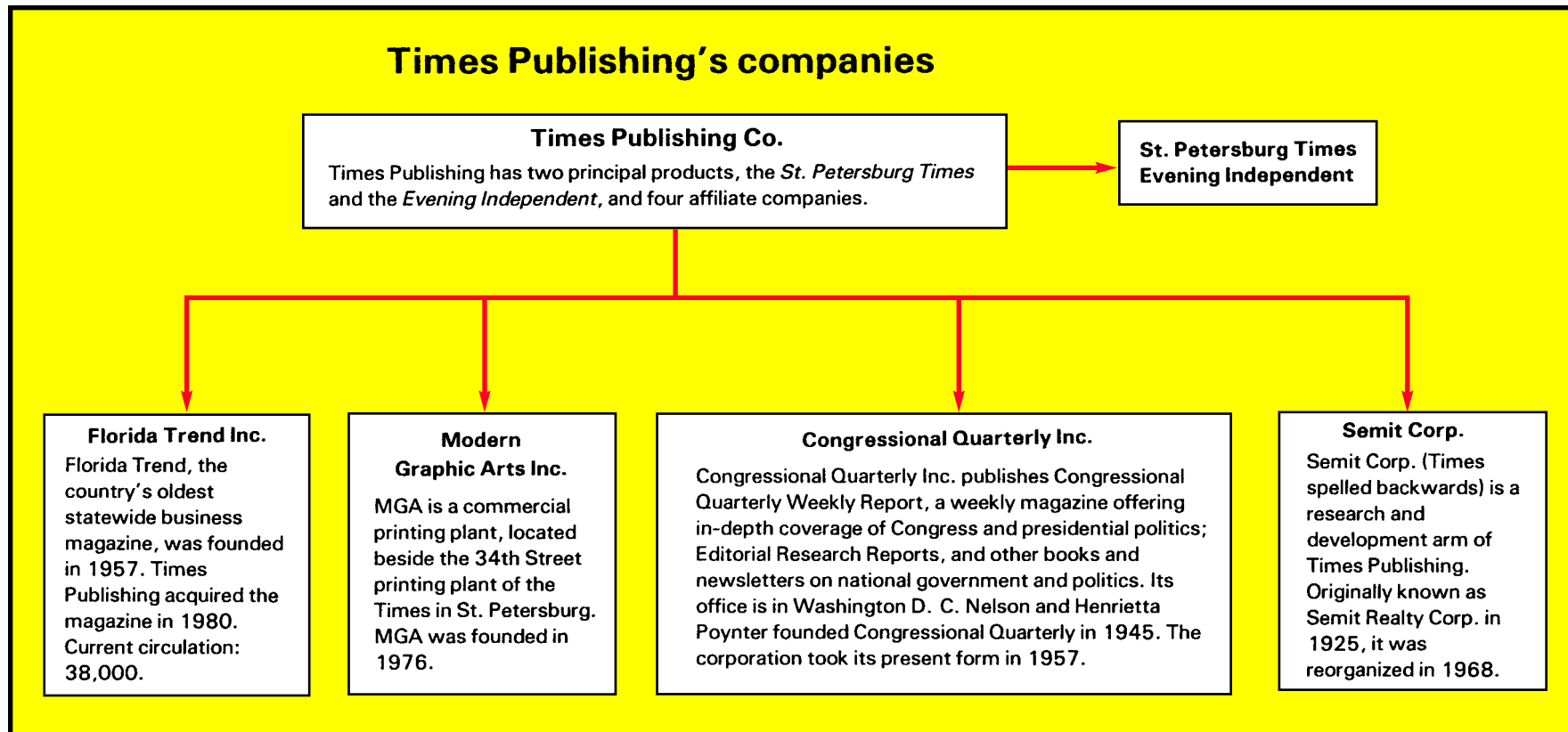
chairman of the Knight-Ridder chain, invited Poynter to a Gridiron Club dinner in Washington during the late 1960s. Over dessert Knight made a pitch for the *Times*. "Poynter was absolutely furious," says Baldwin. "I don't think he ever felt as warmly about Jack Knight again, and they'd been good friends."

Baldwin says Poynter was determined also not to take his company public. "He was terrified of stockholders trying to influence editorial decisions. He was always afraid of his sister doing it, but she never did."

In 1969, Poynter wrote readers of the *Times* that he saw no contradiction between his plan to leave his holdings to a foundation and the newspaper's editorial position that private foundations ought to be taxed. "Eventually they will be taxed because so many have abused their tax exemption," he wrote. "But such taxation will not interfere with existing continuity — it will merely mean that the Poynter Fund will have less to give away."

TAX reform did arrive, but not in the way that Poynter foresaw. Instead, foundations were prohibited from owning more than 20 percent of a profit-making enterprise, and Poynter's plan flew out the window.

"We immediately started looking for other vehicles," says Lake. "And Nelson, being a frustrated college president anyway, was glad to accept the recommendation of our Washington attorneys that an educational institute was the way to go."

Lake says it would be unfair to call the new plan a simple expedient. "Nelson's second love was education. He had a strong attachment to Yale, Indiana University and the University of South Florida."

Baldwin says Poynter had been thinking of establishing some kind of journalism school, supported by the Poynter Fund, as early as 1960; Baldwin wrote some of the early memos. Poynter's idea was to find and fill gaps in existing journalism education. Plenty of colleges turned out journalism graduates, some of whom went to work for newspapers. "But Nelson had the feeling, generally, that newspapers also hired bright young people out of college who had excellent backgrounds in history and English and political science, nurtured them along for about five years and then abandoned them," Baldwin says. "He saw the possibility of starting an institution for young reporters." What finally developed was a small institution headed by Baldwin: Modern Media Institute.

When Poynter died in 1978, MMI had been a functioning, non-profit journalism school for several years. Directors had taken care to keep the institute at arms length from the *Times*, so that authorities would not consider it a training subsidiary for the paper. There was a period of uncertainty until the Internal Revenue Service ruled, as hoped, that Poynter's bequest of the newspaper stock was a charitable contribution. Without such a ruling, the company would have had to be sold in order to pay the inheritance tax, Patterson says.

"It was not a tax-dodge, but a way to avoid a tax situation that would have hurt the newspapers," says senior vice president Camp.

If the IRS had rejected MMI, then Poynter had instructed that his stock go to Yale.

But the genius of the successful plan, says Baldwin, was that Poynter "retained control of the newspaper in the hands of one man while leaving the stock somewhere else. He couldn't have done this if he had left the stock to Indiana or Yale."

EARLIER this year MMI changed its name to the Poynter Institute for Media Studies. Patterson, the institute's chairman, continues to vote the stock. Baldwin retired as founding director of the institute, and Robert J. Haiman, formerly executive editor of the *Times,* took his place in 1983. The institute announced plans for a new building across Third Street from the University of South Florida, where it will continue its programs in writing, graphics and design, ethics and newspaper management; seminars are attended by students, writers, editors and managers from all over the country.

The ownership arrangement means that Times Publishing can afford to invest its earnings in ways that typical investors might not allow, says editor Barnes. "Publicly held companies are forced to measure their profits quarter by quarter. We are much more inclined to measure our profit by years and decades."

For example, in the late 1970s the company was able to make heavy investments of people and equipment in its North Suncoast operation, beyond the expectation of any reasonable immediate return. Such long-range flexibility makes the company a formidable opponent in the marketplace, Barnes says.

Beyond that, however, Times Publishing functions similarly to many medium-sized corporations. Between 15 and 20 percent of the company's pre-tax profit is distributed annually to employees. Half of the remainder goes to the federal government in income tax. Although most of the rest is re-invested in the company, Patterson says directors strive every year to increase the dividend paid to stockholders — to both the Poynter Institute and the minority owners.

Without printers, the copy for each story had to be typed on an electric typewriter, photographed and made into an engraving like a regular newspaper photograph. The result was a vastly different front page.
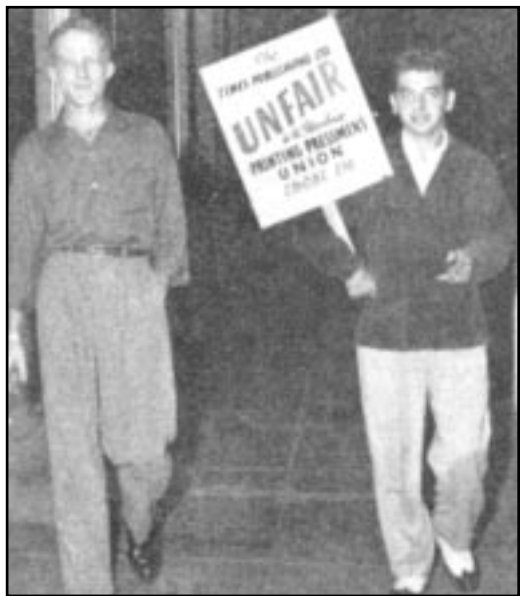
Twice in the early 1950s, pressmen struck and picketed the Times.

Making the most of it

■ When *Times* readers opened their paper on the morning of Nov. 21, 1945, they got a surprise — a funny looking front page with a gaping hole running down two-thirds of the page.

Suddenly, a champion of labor was having labor problems.

"Don't shoot, we're doing the best we can," the *Times* said in a statement to readers. The printers — the people responsible for typesetting the news and advertising copy — had gone on strike, forcing the *Times* to resort to a new way of setting type. The result, the paper acknowledged, was a "fuzzy and inconvenient" newspaper.

The strike was over money and hours. Management had made generous proposals to the printers, the *Times* reported, but their union had rejected two offers and refused to submit the matter to arbitration. The union had no comment. It had been offered space on the front page to present its case, but declined — hence, the hole.

The printers were a vital part of the staff. They operated linotype machines, the complex equipment with typewriter-like keyboards that set each line of type in a solid lead slug called "hot type."

With the printers gone, the *Times* had no one qualified to set type in the traditional way. So the editors tried a new method: the copy for stories and advertisements was typed on electric typewriters and then photographed and made into an engraving like a regular newspaper photograph. It looked crude, especially at first, but the *Times* could boast later that it never missed an edition and never had to reduce the size of the paper. For two months, it published all or part of the paper by the new method (now called "cold type" or "photocomposition") while training new printers to replace the strikers.

It was an awkward time for Nelson Poynter. He had established himself as a rarity — a Southern editor who unequivocally befriended organized labor. An anti-union ethos ran deep in the South (and still does), but Poynter repeatedly spoke up for working people and their right to bargain collectively. He had strongly endorsed the Wagner Act, the New Deal-era measure that established basic

Because he championed liberal causes in a conservative town, some of Nelson Poynter's enemies said he was a Communist.

Fighting the 'red' smear

A GOVERNOR once called him an "emotionally unstable" coward. A state transportation official called him "a ruthless, arbitrary" man with "an all-consuming ambition to rule or ruin." Evangelist Gerald B. Winrod called him "a dirty, low-down, white-livered, unfumigated, unmitigated liar."

As a crusading, liberal journalist in a conservative town, Nelson Poynter attracted opponents' thunderbolts like a lightning rod. For a time, the charge he heard most often was that he was a Communist. In whispers, right-wing newsletters and ploitical speeches, some of Poynter's enemies stuck on him the most

By Robert Hooker, deputy metropolitian editor

odious label of a hysterical era: "red."

It was a curious charge to level against an unabashed capitalist like Poynter. It was also untrue. This is how it happened:

America's emotions were sometimes raw in the years following World War II. There were setbacks in the Cold War, highly publicized spy cases, a war in Korea, the emergence of an extraordinary demagogue named Joseph McCarthy and the hesitant beginnings of the civil rights movement. With "Security" suddenly paramount, loyalty oaths and guilt-by-association were widespread and reformers found themselves under siege.

Poynter was the sort of reformer who made people angry. To some, his call for an end to tolls on the Gandy Bridge sounded suspiciously like a Communist take-over of private property. His repeated insistense on equality and harmony in race relations was suspect, too. In calling him a Communist, however, his opponents generally cited these incidents:

■ During World War II, while serving in the government's Office of War Information in Hollywood, Poynter was guest speaker at a fund-raising dinner sponsored by an organization called the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee. The guest of honor was singer Paul Robeson. Later, in its highly politicized search for "subversives," the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) decided that the committee was "subversive and Communist." Robeson, the son of a slave, was widely villified for his criticism of American racism and his admiration for the Soviet Union.

■ After the war, Poynter repeatedly assailed HUAC members (including Richard Nixon) for hunting "reds" in the movie industry. Some committee members responded in kind, denouncing Poynter and his affiliations in the *Congressional Record.*

■ In 1944, Poynter asked to appear before HUAC to testify on behalf of the managing editor of *Press Research*, a Poynter-founded journalistic research organization and predecessor to *Congressional Quarterly*. The man had been labeled a suspected Communist and subpoenaed to testify. Poynter was not permitted to testify, but he exchanged highly-publicized accusations with the committee. The committee discovered later that, in its zeal, it had mistaken the editor for another man with the same name. But by then, even though Poynter was never allowed to testify, his name was in HUAC's files.

So now Poynter's enemies could say that Nelson Poynter's name was "in the files of the House Un-American Activities Committee" and that critical comments about him were in the *Congressional Record.* Time after time in the 1950s and 1960s, some did precisely that. The Ku Klux Klan, the St. Petersburg Women's Republican Club, the chairman of the State Road Board — all accused Poynter of being a fellow traveler. Even today, an occasional critic will suggest the *Times* has a red taint.

Eugene C. Patterson, Poynter's successor at the *Times,* says he faced the same charges while he was editor of the *Atlanta Constitution,* another southern paper with a liberal editorial policy. "If you're going to take positions that are markedly different from the conservative leadership, you're going to be called a Communist by the know-nothing elements," says Patterson. "It's the commonest smear in the world to throw at a liberal."

Poynter himself liked to say that the best reply to the charge was publication of "a good newspaper which shows that it has nothing in common with totalitarianism or fascism."

"It was gratifying to me that most people had sense enough not to be taken in by those charges," Poynter told journalism graduate student Donna M. Peltier in 1974. "Our advertising and circulation never suffered a setback because of them."

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rights for organized labor, and the *Times* was the only paper in Florida in 1944 to oppose a right-to-work amendment to the state Constitution, which it branded a "grotesque proposal."

The printers' strike in 1945 was the first of several labor crises that the *Times* faced during Poynter's four decades as editor and then chairman of the board. In 1949 and again in 1952, the paper was struck by its pressmen, and occasionally thereafter there were unsuccessful attempts to unionize various departments of the paper.

As the *Times* itself ruefully acknowledged, the three strikes put the paper in an uncomfortable position — a champion of labor having labor problems. ("The *Times* is getting a hell of a ribbing," it said in 1945). Yet that did not stop the paper from moving aggressively every time it felt threatened by unions or the possibility of unionization. It broke all three strikes, apparently rehired none of the strikers and even published a booklet designed to help other papers cope with a printers' strike. By the 1970s the paper's executives were proud that the *Times* did not have a single union. Poynter and his top executives maintained that he was not anti-labor, and that there was no contradiction between Poynter the editorial writer and Poyn-

ter the businessman. "What Nelson set out to build here was a company that didn't need that third party between him and his staff, a company that would do what it ought to do without being forced to do it," says Eugene C. Patterson, Poynter's successor.

Poynter's reaction to the 1945 printers' strike was typical. Instead of fretting unduly over the acrimony and inconvenience, he gloried in the challenge and the opportunity it presented to experiment with photo-engraving. As crude as the first papers looked, Poynter was "ecstatic," recalls then-city editor Stan Witwer. "He said, 'What we're doing is pioneering cold type.' "

W E THINK we have had a glimpse of the newspaper techniques of the future," the *Times* declared in the booklet published the following year. ". . . the things we learned from this experience convince us that the newspaper production line as we have known it is approaching obsolescence."

Once again, Poynter was ahead of his time. In the years that followed, the *Times* remained a pioneer in the use of

In the use of 'cold type,' the Times was ahead of its time.

In 1955, Shirley Fry was a copy girl in the Times newsroom. In 1956, she won the women's singles championship at Wimbledon.

Lorna Carroll, once the "darling of Broadway," was a Times reporter for 28 years.

A former boxer, city editor Bob Fowler knocked a colleague to the newsroom floor.

Sometimes, the staff made headlines

IN the 1940s and 1950s, several *Times* reporters became personalities in the community. A tough reporter named Jerry Blizin covered police and City Hall with insight and irreverence. His handling of the "hot rod murder" of 1949 — so named because the killer fled the scene in a hot rod — later brought a television crew to St. Petersburg to make a film about Blizin's role for the *Big Story* show.

The first to cross the Sunshine Skyway bridge, two months before it was completed in 1954, were *Times* outdoors writer Rube Allyn and photographer Bob Moreland. In a publicity stunt, the two traversed the full length of the bridge, including almost a mile of latticework 11 stories above the water.

In May 1946, reporter Bette Swenson landed the role as the double for actress Lizabeth Scott when scenes for Humphrey Bogart's *Dead Reckoning* were filmed in St. Petersburg. In her reports to *Times* readers, Swenson — now Bette Orsini — disclosed that her character had married a man twice her age to get his money, then joined Bogie in a plot to murder him.

The staff regarded Henrietta Poynter with awe and terror.

cold type. In the early 1950s, it became the first daily newspaper in the United States to set advertising copy by photocomposition. In 1974 the entire paper was converted to that method of production.

Despite the labor problems, the post-war years saw the paper grow rapidly, achieve financial stability and adapt some of the business techniques that were to help turn the *Times* into one of America's most prosperous newspapers. The paper's average daily circulation, 31,366 when Poynter became principal owner in 1947, tripled over the next 11 years. In November 1951, the *Times* expanded westward on First Avenue S with a four-story, $400,000 building. Into the new building went eight recently purchased units of Goss press. Those presses enabled the paper to print an 128-page paper at 24,000 copies per hour — twice the previous capacity.

In the *Times'* business offices, Poynter began assembling a cadre of young executives under the leadership of a general manager named Alvah H. Chapman Jr. These executives attended what Chapman called the "*Times'* college of newspaper knowledge," working in departments throughout the company to broaden their perspective and

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The Times newsroom in the early 1950s: The entire staff fit into the space where the features staff now works.

improve corporate camaraderie. In 1957, Chapman moved on; he is now president and chief executive officer of the giant Knight-Ridder newspaper chain. But some of the business and budgeting framework he established is still being used today.

In the newsroom, the staff of executive editor Tom C. Harris mounted several noteworthy campaigns. In one, political writer Morty Freedman and others wrote a series on Florida's flimsy campaign-finance laws. The stories prompted the 1951 Legislature to enact the Who-Gave-It-Who-Got-It law, which imposed stricter limits on contributions and required candidates to disclose where they got and how they spent their money.

In another campaign, the *Times* pushed for creation of a state agency to regulate power companies. Success came in a roundabout way. Stymied in the effort to get a state board, the advocates of regulation were able to create a Pinellas Utility Board in 1947. Ultimately, $1.1-million was rebated to consumers, the county board was disbanded and a Florida Railroad and Public Utilities Commission (now called the Public Service Commission) was created.

The *Saturday Evening Post* commended the *Times* in 1952 for a dispassionate series on a highly publicized Central Florida case in which four black men were accused of raping a white woman. (One of the accused was killed by a posse. Later, after the U. S. Supreme Court ordered a new trial, two others were killed in "self-defense" by the Lake County sheriff.) The series was "a restrained examination of a controversial case, but for Florida it was almost unprecedented," the *Post* said.

Then in 1956, reporter Lowell Brandle showed the need for better care of Florida's retarded children in a series entitled "Disaster Calls You Daddy."

NO STAFF MEMBER of the 1950s and 1960s was more important than Henrietta Poynter, and no

The staff also had a *real* actress named Lorna Carroll. In the mid-1920s, when she played the heroine's role in the hit play *Abie's Irish Rose* on Broadway, the *New York Times* called her "the darling of the Broadway stage." As a *Times* reporter from 1938 to 1966, Carroll retained a flair for the dramatic. To research stories about St. Petersburg's elderly, she dyed her hair gray, then spent a week living in downtown hotels among the poor, the rich and the in-between.

Columnist George Bartlett had a show-biz background, too, with several years as a Hollywood script writer and actor-writer for CBS radio in Chicago. He wrote thousands of stories during 20 years with the *Times*, but it was a column entitled "They Came Here To Live" that was his best-known work. It was about elderly people who retired to Florida expecting to die, then found new life in the warm climate. Some 900 people, from admirals to Ziegfield beauties, were profiled in Bartlett's column before he retired in 1964.

One of Bartlett's bosses was a lanky young city editor named Bob Fowler. But Fowler did not stay in management long. A former intramural boxing champion in college, Fowler became so irritated at a colleague one day that he floored him with a punch. Fowler's victim was not especially popular, and most staff members secretly applauded. But Fowler's superiors thought otherwise. He was taken off the city desk and resigned.

Columnist George Bartlett featured people who "came here to live."

Reporter Jerry Blizin was portrayed on a TV show.

Bette Swenson (now Orsini) turned actress in 1946. She served as a double for actress Lizabeth Scott in a Humphrey Bogart movie about intrigue and murder.

wonder: She was married to the boss. A former editor at both *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* magazines, Mrs. Poynter met and married Poynter during World War II, when both had posts in the government's propaganda program. At the *Times*, she had a title (associate editor), an office and a seat on the board of directors, but served as a sort of editor-without-portfolio, with no specific duties except advising her husband.

Friends describe Mrs. Poynter as a warm, thoughtful person who never forgot a birthday or anniversary. But the staff regarded her with an admixture of awe and terror — a remote figure in long, flowing skirts, dark stockings and large jewelry who periodically strode through the newsroom looking neither right nor left. She could be brusque and tactless. "I'm trying to explain this in terms *you* will understand," she once told a reporter who dared engage her in conversation about some issue. On another occasion, she startled the hostess at a large dinner party when, weary of the prolonged pre-dinner pleasantries, she sat down at the table, banged a knife against a glass and announced, "Time to eat! Everybody sit down."

In her homeliness and intellectual brilliance, Mrs. Poynter was like another controversial woman, Eleanor Roosevelt. She read the *Congressional Record* every day, took an intense interest in the *Times'* coverage of politics, women and culture and commanded an encyclopedic knowledge of Congress. "Give her a subject (for an editorial) and she'd sit right down and write it; she didn't need to research it," recalls longtime *Times* editor Witwer. Only half in jest, Poynter once confided to a friend that his wife "just terrifies me." But she also stimulated and channeled his thinking, served as his sounding board and wrote a Sunday column with him.

Together, they founded *Congressional Quarterly*, a *Times* subsidiary in Washington, D. C. that sells substantive research and background on Congress to newspapers and other clients, and she devoted much of her time and energy to its management. She also made sure that, in both St. Petersburg and Washington, her husband mingled socially with important people in public life.

The frequent dinner parties at the Poynters' waterfront home on Park Street were carefully orchestrated by Mrs. Poynter. When the guest list included especially notable people, she made sure that her other guests were well briefed. "We had to propose toasts," recalls former editor and president Donald K. Baldwin, and Mrs. Poynter decided who would toast whom. "Then we'd all gather out there an hour ahead of the dinner party and *rehearse*."

When Mrs. Poynter died in 1968, friends say, Poynter was devastated.
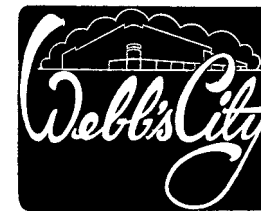

Henrietta Poynter helped found Congressional Quarterly and carefully orchestrated the frequent parties at the Poynters' home.

James Earl "Doc" Webb demonstrates a bubble bath in his store in 1953: In the Depression, he was the savior of the ad-starved Times, buying many full-page ads.

Doc Webb liked to price his ad items at the last minute, which often caused him to miss the Times' deadlines. So, for the early edition, the note above would run.

Advertising: from liver pills to a $96-million business a year

IN the spring of 1886, the Florida Press Association passed a plan to fix statewide advertising rates. But the two-year-old *West Hillsborough Times*, later to be the *St. Petersburg Times*, wouldn't go along.

Revulsion toward rate-fixing apparently had nothing to do with it. In fact, the *Times* judged the plan "fair" in a subsequent editorial. However, "It does not seem just . . . to exact men's wages for boys' labor, and that is about the service that our paper and many others in State now render," the editorial contended. "The circulation of the *Times* is increasing, and we expect soon to make it as valuable an advertising medium as there is in Florida. Then our rates will be advanced in proportion to the services rendered."

Ninety-eight years later, that promise holds. Advertisers in the 1886 *Times* reached maybe 500 subscribers. Today, 260,682 people read the *St. Petersburg Times* daily, 330,089 on Sunday. A one-inch, one-column ad in the 1886 *Times* cost 75 cents. Today, with a slightly wider column, the same ad would cost $43.32. Last year, advertisers spent $96.5-million in the *Times* and *Evening Independent*, or 86 percent of the newspapers' gross sales. The *Times*

ranks among America's top 10 in ad volume.

Yet advertising is more than the financial taproot of a newspaper. Its development parallels the growth of the *Times* and the community it has served for 100 years.

On Aug. 1, 1884, the second edition of the *West Hillsborough Times* carried three front-page ads. A Dunedin store, Douglas & Somerville, boasted a "full Assortment of fall, winter goods." The Rev. C. S. Reynolds offered 51 acres of land for $3,500. A. C. Turner's general store in Clear Water Harbor had clothing, crockery, drugs, tobacco, sewing machines, you name it. "Well, now, if you want to know what he has got, go and see . . . " Turner's ad counseled. "No trouble to show goods; in fact, he loves to do it — thinks it just the way to keep the dust off."

Back then, the Pinellas peninsula was still part of Hillsborough County. The town of St. Petersburg didn't exist. Clear Water Harbor had just two stores, two boarding houses and about 120 people within a mile radius.

The ads of 1886 show snatches of Suncoast life. There were orange groves for sale in Dunedin. A roller skating rink in Dunedin charged 10 cents admission ("Those not caring to skate can have a good 10 cents worth of laughter"). Capt. James Ogden urged folks to "Go Turtling!" in his schooner for $4 a day. A Tampa merchant, A. S. Lenfestey, claimed equal proficiency in furniture sales and burials: "Embalming a specialty."

Patent medicines formed the bulk of pre-1900 national ads:

■ "Is Life Worth Living?" demanded Dr. C. McLane's Liver Pills. "It has been well said it depends on the liver."

■ "Why are the tallest people the laziest?" asked Taylor's Cherokee Remedy of Sweet Gum and Mullein. "They are always longer in bed than others and if they neglect their coughs or colds they will be there still longer."

■ Dr. Bigger's Huckleberry Cordial called itself the "Great Southern Remedy for the bowels . . . The wearied mother, losing sleep in nursing the little one teething, should use this medicine."

Cures Biliousness, Sick Headache, Sour Stomach, Torpid Liver and Chronic Constipation. **Pleasant to take**

ORINO
Laxative Fruit Syrup
SOLD BY D. W. RUDD & CO.

Cleanses the system thoroughly and clears sallow complexions of pimples and blotches. It is guaranteed

Many patent medicine ads appeared in the Times in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Wild boasts of the medicines' powers were common.

By Larry King, staff writer

In the early days of this century, a classified ad could be bought for a penny a word.

Despite the *Times'* insistence on "no advertisements of questionable character," many medicines made wild boasts. Johnson's Anodyne Liniment claimed to cure diptheria, croup, "bleeding at the lungs," kidney trouble, diarrhea, spinal diseases and 11 other ailments.

Editorial writers didn't mind pitching favored products such as the 1886 Demorest sewing machine. "We have one in our office, which we will be pleased to show to any one wishing to order," a *Times* editorial said.

BY the 1890s, railroads had opened the Pinellas peninsula to development, spawning the city of St. Petersburg and a host of new Tampa advertisers in the *Times*. More illustrations and front-page ads made turn-of-the-century editions resemble modern-day tabletops at Wendy's restaurants. About five of the seven front-page columns were taken by ads. Some ads, called "readers," looked like news stories, and weren't clearly labeled as advertising.

As volume increased, ad rates actually went down. In 1894, a one-inch square ad cost 50 cents. "Reader" ads cost five cents per line.

In 1901, W.L. Straub and two partners bought the *Times*. A prohibitionist, Straub banned the paper's only two cash-paid ads — both for saloons. The paper would not pitch liquor again until the 1950s.

A relentless city booster, Straub saw his paper as a promotion tool for St. Petersburg. In kind, he occasionally brow-beat businessmen who didn't run ads. "How can a paper give the outside world a correct idea of the town without an advertisement of your business in it?" Straub wrote in a May 11, 1901 editorial. "If you want and expect a paper to tell the world what St. Petersburg has, put your ad in it. There isn't any other way."

Under Straub, the paper expanded to eight pages, and the first classified ads appeared. A sampling of those that ran Jan. 12, 1907 includes "a light one-horse wagon," a "competent colored cook and laundress combined," "eggs for hatching from S.C.," and "two fine teams of mules, cheap."

By 1906, the paper was well-stocked with ads from Tampa merchants, doctors, lawyers and service outlets who wanted to tap the growing St. Petersburg market.

The first Maas Brothers ad ran Nov. 3, 1906. Maas, which had a store only in Tampa, told St. Petersburg residents that it was fine to shop for some items at local merchants, but that for the "many things which you need and which your home merchant cannot be expected to keep, particularly in the better class of goods, buy in Tampa." (Today, Maas Brothers is the *Times'* biggest advertiser. The firm has even seen fit to do business on this side of the bay.)

Ad rates continued to decline, hitting 10 cents an inch in 1907. Classifieds could be bought for a penny a word.

Meanwhile, Straub launched a 1907 edi-

torial campaign against "the tyranny of Tampa." He wanted — and later got — a separate Pinellas County. But when someone suggested that the *Times* accept no Tampa advertising, Straub drew the line. "We think it is (proper) — quite so," he wrote. A newspaper would be "foolish to decline to sell advertising to a business of some other town."

In 1912, the *Times* began publishing every day but Monday, and the first mini-boom of real estate ads began. Not even war could deter the rush to buy Florida turf. The *Times* itself editorialized in 1917: "Buy Florida real estate. No matter what comes, war or peace, it will continue to be the best investment."

By 1919, advertising rates were up to 26 cents per inch, and volume kept growing. That

1923, there were 22 real estate offices in the 600 block of Central Avenue alone. One realtor bought a 40-acre parcel for $45.27 and sold it four years later for $40,000.

On Nov. 3, 1924, the *Times* started a Monday edition. "Advertisers demand that they be permitted to reach the reader with their messages on Monday morning," the editors wrote.

Advertising rates shot up, from 49 cents per inch in 1924 to 84 cents per inch in 1926.

The retail advertising manager during the boom was a thin, cigar-smoking man in a white Panama hat named Alfred E. "Pop" Newman, who sold ads for the *Times* until 1955. One afternoon, Newman got a frantic call from an advertiser wanting a full-page ad the next morning. "Pop Newman sighed and said he was

The first Maas ad to run in the Times, on Nov. 3, 1906: At that time, the only Maas store was in Tampa, where — according to the ad — the "better class of goods" was sold.

winter, recalled former society editor Frances Martin Reed, "tall, swarthy Nathan Kaufman was the one and only advertising man." Not much else is known about Kaufman, except that he soon would need lots of help. The *Times* was entering the boom era of 1920-26. By 1920, St. Petersburg had grown to a population of more than 14,000, triple the count of 1910. Real estate salesmen in knickers invaded the town in droves. The paper's circulation was up to more than 3,000.

THE boom lasted seven years, and the *Times* has never grown so rapidly. The boom brought $56-million in new buildings to St. Petersburg. By the end of

sorry, but there were no full pages left," *Times* historian Tom C. Harris recalled. Instead, he offered two facing pages. "The real estate man quickly said, 'I'll take it,' " Harris said. "That,' Newman told later ad men, 'is the way to sell.' "

By mid-1926, it appeared the boom was ending. The *Times* resisted such talk with a full-page ad scolding the city's "calamity howlers, those weak-hearted gentry who invest little and talk overmuch." But on Jan. 28, 1927, the *Times* editorial page admitted good times were over. From 25-million lines in 1925, advertising would drop to 9.5-million in 1927.

More than $300,000 in uncollected fees from bankrupt real estate men would never be paid. From its prodigious spreads of the mid-20s, the

Times shrank again to eight pages in 1927. Soon the *Times* was accepting trades for its advertising. Merchants would pay with certificates, which the *Times* gave to employees on payday. Later, during the early 1930s, up to 50 percent of the paper's payroll was paid in scrip, which often returned in the form of ad payments.

"The boys in the classified department set up a racket by buying scrip at 50 percent discount and then using it to buy cars which they sold for cash," recalled the late Ralph Reed, a longtime reporter. "It got so bad the office eliminated the racket."

If the *Times* ever had a Depression-era savior, it was a little merchant from Tennessee named James Earl "Doc" Webb. Caught up in the boom, nobody much noticed when Webb first advertised his Cut Rate Drug store in the mid-20s. But with the wizardry of sales gimmicks, low prices and constant expansion, his business flourished during the Depression. By 1936 his sales topped $1-million.

"Webb's City was one of the places that pulled the *Times* through those very bad days," says Sandy Stiles, corporate marketing director of the Times Publishing Co. and a one-time employee of Webb's. "The exposure that Webb's got was in the A (front) section, big and bold, and that had great influence on the success of their business, too."

Webb sometimes ran as many as five or six full-page ads a day. According to some estimates, he occasionally filled 20 percent of the *Times'* advertising space.

Through the *Times*, Webb promoted his gimmicks, such as selling 2,500 one-dollar bills for 89 cents each. The next day he bought them back for $1.35 each, but most had already been spent in his store. Once the *Times* erred and advertised Webb's cigarettes for 5 cents, instead of 15 cents. Webb called the ad director, saying a mile-long line had formed. When the ad director offered to make amends, Webb retorted: "Hell no, I don't want that. Once I get 'em into the store I can sell them something else."

ERNIE PYLE once wrote of Webb: "He is the small wise guy going down the street. He talks 'country' Tennessee and is nervous as a witch (and) sharp as the serpent's tooth."

And he was fanatical about undercutting his competitors' advertised prices. According to Jack Holley, a former Webb executive, his success at doing so was no accident. Until the late 1930s, Holley said, Webb would send his advertising manager, Sam Harrington, to the *Times* backshop after the day's ad deadline had passed. Harrington checked the competitors' ad prices and then got the Webb's ads changed.

"Sam told me that one night one of the competitors was waiting for him and said, 'What the hell are *you* doing down here?'" Holley said. "Finally, the *Times* put their foot down on that. Sam got burned out by Doc for divulging the secret."

Webb's City also played havoc with *Times* deadlines. Holley said the Webb staff always read the competition's ads in the *Evening Independent* before submitting its copy to the *Times*. Occasionally Webb didn't make deadline for the early editions, and the paper ran a blank page except for the following notice: "This space reserved for Webb's City."

In 1944, editor and president Nelson Poynter hired the *Times'* first overall advertising director, Irwin Simpson. He was the first man to supervise all three of the ad divisions — national, display and classified. For the previous

Alfred E. "Pop" Newman (left), one-time retail ad manager, used ingenuity to persuade advertisers to buy bigger ads; Irwin Simpson, the first overall advertising director, soon discovered where Nelson Poynter drew the line on ad placement.

20 years he had been the paper's national advertising representative, based in New York.

Simpson soon discovered Nelson Poynter's one sacred cow when it came to ad placement. It happened when he suggested putting ads on the editorial page. "Poynter said, 'You listen to me. You've got ads on the front page, you've got ads opposite the editorial page, ads practically every place except the editorial page. Out of 48 pages I've got one lousy page for my stuff, and the hell with you,'" Simpson said.

Simpson also introduced the paper's first pre-printed insert ad. These are the inserts that fall out of the paper into your lap on Sunday mornings. They are printed by the advertiser, then placed in the paper for a fee. Simpson says the first local pre-print was for Liggett Drug Co. around 1946. "I had a rough time selling the management on letting me do it," he said. "They felt that the paper was just being used as a cheap vehicle for the ads." Simpson prevailed by charging pre-print advertisers the same rates as other merchants.

Advertising flourished under Simpson, growing from 7.8-million lines in 1941 to 22.7-million lines in 1951. Growth continued as shopping centers sprouted, starting with Tyrone Gardens in 1951 and Central Plaza in 1952.

Simpson is credited with upgrading training standards, hiring saleswomen, and bringing in staff artists to let ad representatives concentrate more on selling. He also wrote the first version of "Advertising Standards of Acceptability," a handbook used to this day to determine which ads the paper deems acceptable.

SIMPSON'S successor, John B. Lake, began a push for more color advertising in 1960. Within two years, the *Times* had risen from 43rd to 17th in volume of color lineage among the nation's morning dailies. Today, having installed offset printing techniques that allow better-quality reproduction, the *Times* runs more color advertising than any other newspaper.

Today's ad department has 179 full-time employees and up to 38 who work part-time. They handle a total of 9,000 clients who have advertising contracts with the *Times* and *Evening Independent*, says advertising director Leo Kubiet.

While a large majority of the advertising employees are devoted to sales, some are assigned to check the honesty and taste of advertisements to see whether they measure up to the newspaper's standards. All advertisers are asked to fill out a questionnaire that is subject to verification, Kubiet says. For example, the *Times* recently refused to run ads for weight-reduction products that include chemical ingredients supposed to burn off body fat while you sleep. The revenue lost was "a big chunk of money," Kubiet says.

After abuses by home-repair advertisers were exposed in a recent series of news articles, the *Times* decided not to accept such advertisers until it can determine whether the repair businesses are properly licensed. "We believe that self-regulation is the best regulation," Kubiet says. "It isn't in our best interest to just sell any ad that anyone wants to offer, because we have to live in this community too. We have to look in the mirror."

There are also standards set for taste. "We are constantly on guard for innuendos that either have sexual connotations or profanity," Kubiet says. But occasionally, a prankster slips one by. In 1980, the *Times* ran a classified ad for a fictitious piece of "heavy machinery" that in fact graphically described the dimensions of a part of the male anatomy.

"That embarrassed the daylights out of us," Kubiet says. "A mature grandmother accepted that ad and never gave it a second thought. She was not mechanically inclined."

Doc Webb didn't care about the wrong price in the ad — people flocked to his store.

Looking to the future

■ In the late 1950s, a decade after he had achieved control of the *Times*, Nelson Poynter made two moves to upgrade the newspaper. To improve its appearance, he invested $2.5-million in a new printing plant stocked with 10 new press units. To improve its content — and begin grooming his eventual successor — he installed a new executive in the newsroom.

Executive editor Tom C. Harris had labored long and loyally for the Poynters. But Harris was almost 50, only five years younger than Poynter himself, and Poynter told Harris it was time to begin preparing for the future. Poynter's choice was Donald K. Baldwin, 40, a 6-foot-3 Idahoan and veteran of the Associated Press (AP). The Poynters got to know Baldwin in Japan, where he was AP news editor for the Far East, while on a round-the-world trip in 1957. A few months later, Poynter offered Baldwin the managing editor's job.

Baldwin had grown up in Pocatello and Moscow, Idaho, where his father was a college professor. He graduated from the University of Idaho and worked for newspapers in Pocatello, Idaho Falls and Santa Barbara, Calif. before joining the AP in 1943. Baldwin was *Times* managing editor for three years, then executive editor and — in 1969 — heir apparent to Poynter himself, with the title of editor and president.

A lanky, bespectacled man with silver-streaked dark hair, Baldwin was a boisterous executive with an explosive — and sometimes public — temper. His enthusiasm was infectious. When he liked a reporter's work, he would

Donald K. Baldwin, the new managing editor, was a boisterous, animated executive.

bound across the newsroom, pound a fist on the writer's desk and boom out, "God d---, that was a good story!"

After 15 years with a wire service, Baldwin had a lot to learn about how a newspaper operates. When Poynter's offer arrived, he recalls with a chuckle, "I rushed over to the Foreign Correspondents' Club and checked out a book to find out what a managing editor did, because I didn't have the foggiest idea." But even if the technical side of the business was a mystery to him, Baldwin was a hardened pro at newsgathering. He soon made clear to the staff that he wanted the news reported straight, hard and fast, like the wire services do it, and that he still liked to immerse himself in it. When a reporter came to him with a particularly troublesome story, Baldwin would often roll a piece of paper into his typewriter, pound away for a moment or two, then ask, "What if we do it this way?" When a fire broke out at Webb's City one night, Baldwin rushed back to the newsroom. Most of the reporters were out on the story, but no one was yet coordinating and condensing their telephoned reports. With deadline looming, Baldwin sat down at a typewriter and — oblivious to the chaos around him —

The end of a landmark: The Million-Dollar Pier was razed in 1967.

The Times' first Pulitzer Prize:
It started with an anonymous call

THE voice on the other end of the telephone line was earnest, but anonymous. He was an employee of the Florida Turnpike Authority, he said, and he was upset "by things going on" there.

Martin Waldron, 37, was used to anonymous telephone calls. As chief of the *Times'* state capital bureau, he was renowned as a scourge of the high and mighty, a reporter of boundless intuition and gall. People with information made a pilgrimage to his messy office in the sub-basement of the Capitol. Waldron was also persuasive. When the tipster called back later, Waldron talked him into turning over a sheaf of records that suggested extravagance and financial abuses in the construction of the Sunshine State Parkway.

The tip, followed by weeks of reporting and dozens of stories, led to the ouster of the Turnpike Authority chairman and a reorganization of Florida's auditing and bonding practices. It also led to journalism's most coveted award, the 1964 Pulitzer Prize for meritorious public service. The Pulitzer was a watershed in the history of the *Times* — an award that helped propel the paper into the big leagues of American journalism. "It was national recognition of something that we had known for a long time here in St. Petersburg, that . . . far from any big metropolitan area, in a city that some people made jokes about, was a class-act paper," says Robert J. Haiman. As wire editor in 1963, Haiman designed the presentation of many of the stories.

The prize-winning story was a team effort by a dozen reporters, photographers and artists. But the key player was "Mo" Waldron, one of the best reporters — some would say *the* best — in *Times* history. A beefy, unkempt man, Waldron talked and acted like a hillbilly from the south Georgia turpentine country, where he grew up. He had worked for the Associated

By Robert Hooker, deputy metropolitan editor

The relentless reporting of Martin Waldron won a Pulitzer Prize in 1964.

Press and the *Tampa Tribune* when the *Times* hired him for its Tallahassee bureau in 1961.

Tallahassee has long been a place where the *Times* sends its best reporters. And Tallahassee and Waldron were perfect for each other. He had ideal instincts for the secrets and bureaucratic gamesmanship of a government town, and he was 250 miles from his editors, most of whom he regarded with contempt.

Stories about Waldron's prodigious appetite for work and life soon abounded. He could down two steak dinners and eight martinis in a sitting. He drove an ancient convertible with a top that wouldn't go up. His clothes were so rumpled that former Gov. LeRoy Collins later remarked that Waldron's "idea of semiformal dress was having his shirttail in." Even *Times* editors were in awe of him, and his expense

accounts were the stuff of legend. But when Waldron was on the trail of skullduggery, he was relentless and exuberant. "I think he had more fun than any reporter I've ever known," says Donald K. Baldwin, the *Times* editor who hired him.

The Turnpike Authority stories were vintage Waldron. He and colleagues Jack Nease and Don Meiklejohn repeatedly showed how the authority — unaudited for years — had spent taxpayers' money recklessly. The authority's profligate chairman soon resigned, and the Legislature overhauled the state's bonding and auditing practices.

The *Times'* most memorable story took Waldron and Meiklejohn to a swanky Miami restaurant to conduct an experiment: Could two men really spend $30 on dinner, as two Turnpike Authority officials had? (In 1963, $30 was a lot of money.) As Waldron recounted the experiment for *Times* readers, he and Meiklejohn "approached the problem . . . with open mouth." They started with two drinks apiece, then studied the menu for its highest priced entrees. Meiklejohn suggested the chateaubriand for two, since it cost $11.50.

" 'Ah, but here's a double sirloin for $12,' I rejoined. 'Let us not equivocate.' "

After salads (Waldron had a Caesar salad, because it cost $1.50 extra), the double sirloin, cherries jubilee, coffee and brandy, Waldron instructed the waiter to add up the bill. It came to only $23.10. Not even a third glass of brandy and a $5 tip would bring the bill to $30, Waldron wrote, adding this account of what happened next:

"How much will this brandy glass cost if I should want to buy it?" I asked the waiter.

"One moment, please," he replied. He left to find the captain.

"One dollar," said the captain.

"Fill it up and put it on the bill."

Success. The bill was $30.95, including tip. The experiment was over. It *was* possible for two persons to have a $30 dinner.

■ ■ ■

Although the *Times* gained a prestigious Pulitzer, it eventually lost the prize-winning reporter. Two years later, Waldron left Tallahassee for the *New York Times*. He was still on that staff, exposing financial ties between New Jersey politicians and the casino gambling industry, when he died of heart disease in 1981.

quickly wove together a long story.

Some people, particularly certain *Times* veterans, did not like their tempestuous new boss, however. Over time, even some of Baldwin's admirers felt the lash of his famous temper. He repeatedly clashed with some of the editors, and at least two left the staff.

IN ST. PETERSBURG and Florida, government-in-secret had long been the byword of government. Whenever a topic threatened to get delicate, elected officials liked to bar the door to the press and conduct the tax-

payers' business in private. With Baldwin at the helm, the *Times* — like newspapers elsewhere — fought back.

Reporter Charles Patrick wrote so many stories about the St. Petersburg City Council's secret meetings in the early 1960s that some at City Hall dubbed him "Secret Meeting Charlie." Once, when the council sneaked away to meet at Moock's Tavern, Patrick and colleague Margaret Carroll discovered the hideout, eavesdropped throughout the meeting and reported the proceedings in the next morning's paper.

Later in the decade, reporter Maryanne Awtrey was arrested when she refused to leave a City Council meeting. State capital bureau chief Don Pride was expelled from
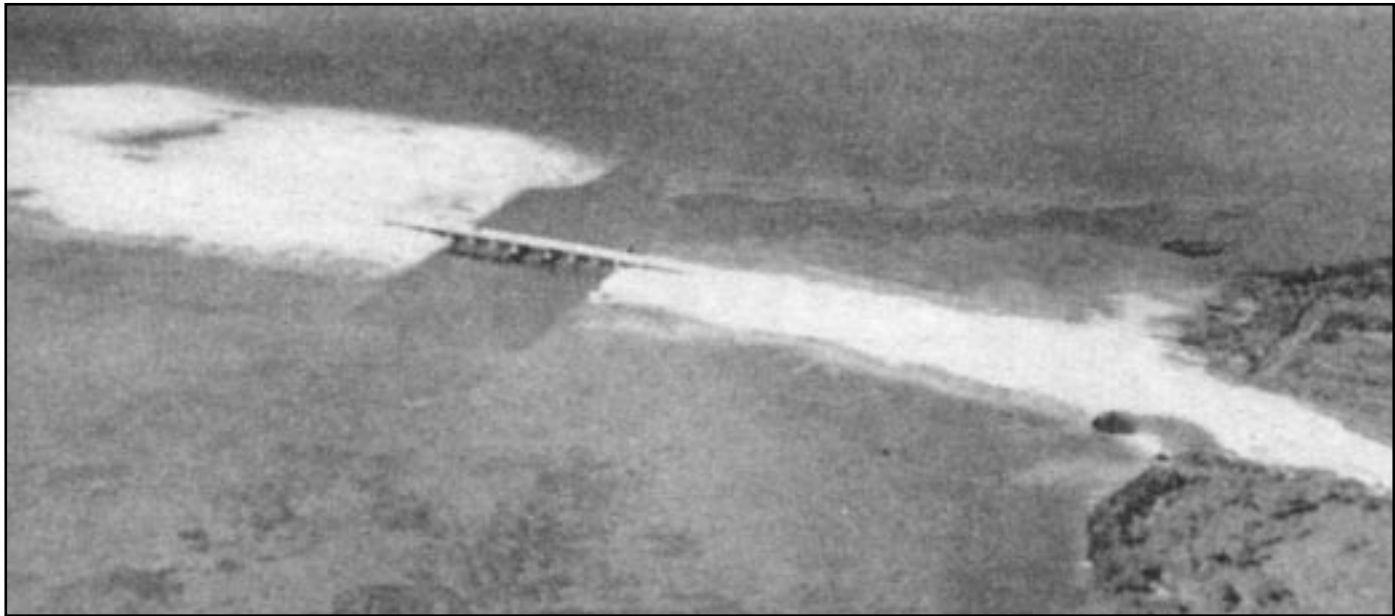
The Pinellas Bayway was just beginning in 1961. It linked 54th Avenue S in St. Petersburg (above, right) to St. Petersburg Beach (below) and eventually became the site of Point Brittany and Isla del Sol.

the gallery of the Florida Senate when it held a secret session — its last. And the *Times* sued the Pinellas School Board after it barred Patrick, Bette Orsini and other reporters from a meeting. Amid the hullabaloo, the Florida Legislature passed, and subsequent court decisions strengthened, an open meetings measure called the Government-in-the-Sunshine Law.

The Baldwin era was a time when the *Times* grew rapidly, finally cracking the 100,000 mark in average daily circulation in 1959, and published some noteworthy reporting. A courtly, acerbic state capital reporter named Frank Trippett exposed the fools and foolishness in state government. Reporter Elizabeth Whitney published a major inquiry on "The Swamp Peddlers," unscrupulous agents who sold unusuable Florida land to unsuspecting buyers out of the state and country. Martin Dyckman's series on problems in the state's criminal justice system led to a spate of legislative reforms. And a team led by Martin Waldron produced such compelling stories on financial shenanigans at the Florida Turnpike Authority that the *Times* was awarded its first Pulitzer Prize.

The *Times'* performance was not always so laudatory, however. In 1967, the editors were stunned to learn that their real estate writer had apparently profited on the sale of land that figured in a proposed downtown development that the reporter had covered. Opponents of the proposed development disclosed the conflict in the *Times* itself. They took out an advertisement that accused veteran reporter Douglas Doubleday of being a member of a group that made $38,000 on the land sale. The same day, the *Times* reported — without explanation — that Doubleday had decided to take "early retirement" from the staff.

A few years earlier, Orsini wrote a story disclosing that Floyd Christian, the superintendent of county schools, had used students and material from the school system to build an elaborate bar on the patio of his home. The story was never published, however. It was killed after Christian made an emotional appeal to *Times* editors. A decade lat-

BRRRRRRRRR!!

NUMBED NATION

Record Lows Face Suncoast In Cold Wave

Editorial .... Page 18-A
Here's cold weather advice .... Page 1-B
More national and state data .... Page 2-B

By DICK BOTHWELL ... of The Times Staff

FRIGID FLORIDA — HOW COLD WILL IT GET TODAY?
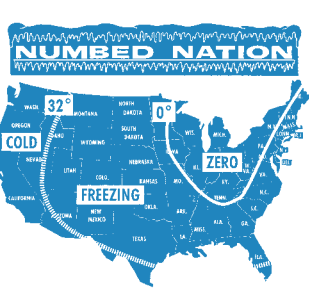
How Sub-Freezing Temperatures Tormented The Nation Yesterday
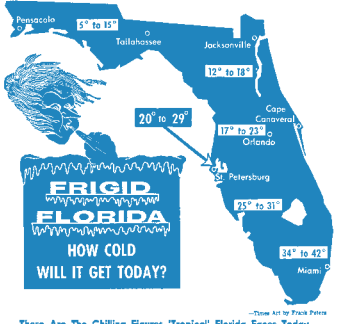
These Are The Chilling Figures 'Tropical' Florida Faces Today

EAST, MIDWEST, SOUTH SUFFER

Ice, Snow Reign

FREEZE MAY WIPE OUT HALF OF CROP

Citrus: Doomed?

Cold Everywhere: Lonely Gull Shivers in Providence; Heaters Warm Plants at Sunken Gardens in St. Petersburg

Columnist Sokolsky Dies At 69

AMERICAN 'PAPER TIGER' HAS 'NUCLEAR TEETH,' SOVIET CHIEF TELLS PEKING

Khrushchev Warns Red China, U.S. About Cuba

President Meets Press

JFK Again Backs Adlai

'Hot Line' To Kremlin Has Virtue, JFK Says

Nikita Defends His Crisis Role

News Strike Goes On

INSIDE TODAY

In the early 1960s, the Times began using color regularly, once even printing the entire front page in blue. The imaginative, colorful graphics of a former copyboy named Frank Peters (below) became a fixture on page 1.

Orsini's first story, Christian would not have risen to higher office and the state "would have been saved the disgrace" of the scandal a decade later.

WHEN POYNTER became editor in 1939, the first sign of a new hand at the helm was the appearance of the paper. It looked better. The headlines, photographs and maps suddenly were bigger, and the way they were arranged on the page — the "layout," in newspaper parlance — was more attractive. By the time Baldwin arrived in 1958, Poynter and the *Times* were taking the steps that would make the paper a pioneer in the use of color, graphics and design.

Poynter, a man who could never be fully satisfied, was convinced that newspapers should look better. As he constantly reminded his editors, *Time* magazine and the *National Geographic* had compelling illustrations and photographs, some in color, that helped readers understand a story. "*Time* gets one chance a week; we get seven," he would declare.

The *Times* had begun using color with some regularity in the 1950s, with mixed results. But when the paper opened a modern printing plant on 34th Street N in 1959, it signalled a new era. Poynter wanted only the best equipment for the plant, which he called "a $2.5-million bet on the future of the Suncoast." A team of executives traveled thousands of miles to inspect several types of press, then drew up specifications that incorporated the best features of each. When the plant opened, it contained 10 new press units weighing a total of 452 tons. It had enough land to expand by more than 400 percent ("and we expect to use it," declared Poynter). And it had a sign reading "*Color Printing Plant.*"

Now, the staff was technologically equipped to produce and publish color in abundance. To make sure that it did, Baldwin issued an order: Every section front would run color every day, unless he specifically authorized an exception. Sometimes the color "looked terrible," says George Sweers, an AP photographer whom Baldwin hired in 1959 to run the photo department. But Baldwin's edict "forced the editors to think color and it forced the pressmen to deal with it on a daily basis. Eventually, both groups came to take it for granted."

Though Baldwin encouraged — no, demanded — experimentation, he was taken aback when wire editor David Laventhol approached him in December 1962 with a proposal. Since Florida was having record freezing temperatures, Laventhol said, why not print the entire front page in blue ink? Baldwin demurred at first, then relented at Laventhol's urging. But Baldwin insisted on being at the printing plant that night when the first pages rolled off the press, just to make sure the page was readable. (Laventhol is now publisher and chief executive officer of *Newsday*. One of those blue front pages, with a banner headline reading BRRRRRRRRR!!, is hanging on his office wall).

The new plant also helped the *Times* capitalize on the work of an artist named Frank Peters. A former copyboy with a yen to draw, Peters began experimenting with maps, charts and other informational graphics. Within a few months, he had perfected a style of conveying information simply, but imaginatively, that was unique among American newspapers. Twenty-five years later, Peters' graphics are still a fixture on the *Times* front page.

By the late 1960s, the *Times* was perhaps America's No. 1 newspaper in the use of color and graphics. Poynter's wish for his paper had come true.

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er, the same reporter's stories helped drive Christian out of higher office. Orsini reported that Christian, now state commissioner of education, had done thousands of dollars in state business with a longtime friend.

Again, Christian appealed to the editors, asking that Orsini be taken off the story. This time, they refused. Christian later admitted in effect that he took $29,000 in kickbacks and committed perjury in lying about it. He was ordered to pay $43,000 in fines and restitution and served several months in prison for federal income tax evasion.

Later, Poynter would say that if the *Times* had printed

The '60s: farewell to the ways of old

■ In the 1960s, the steady growth of St. Petersburg slowed. What historian Walter P. Fuller calls the "great Single-Family Housing Boom" of the post-war years gave way to the "apartment decade." By 1970, six of every 10 new housing units were apartments. The city's population was 216,232.

When the Times' last construction loan was paid off in 1972, then-treasurer Clifton D. Camp Jr. happily burned the promissory note.

There were improvements — a $1-million Museum of Fine Arts, a new public library, a new federal office building and a new recreation and entertainment complex along the waterfront called the Bayfront Center. But it was a time that saw a rapid deterioration downtown, where decadent buildings and a lifeless spirit could not compete with the shopping centers that sprang up to the west, south and north.

City officials and civic leaders tried to fight back. They pushed for a two-block-long complex of office buildings, hotel and parking where the Bayfront Concourse Hotel is now. But the ambitious plans for the so-called Bayfront Plaza became ensnarled in controversy and died. They said the old Million-Dollar Pier was beyond repair and built a new one. But oldtimers reacted with dismay, and the new pier never caught on like the old. They also gradually pulled out many of Central Avenue's famous green benches. The benches were giving the city a bad national reputation. ("The old people sit, passengers in a motionless street car without destination," *Holiday* magazine had said). But the reputation seemed to endure.

The 1960s were also an important chapter in the city's

The original Dick Bothwell

THERE will never be another like John Richard Bothwell. For nearly 20 years a local columnist with the *St. Petersburg Times*, he brought a gentle touch to the pulse of his city. When he died of a heart attack on Jan. 30, 1981, he was saluted as "an American original" by *Times* Chairman Eugene C. Patterson.

Half humorist, half humanist, Dick Bothwell papered his literary domain in cornpone jokes and odd ocurrences. In a regular column named *O.A.T.* — *Of All Things* and a week-starter called *Brighten Up Monday,* he engaged his readers with a conversational tone, as if chatting across a kitchen table. His daily goal was to make someone smile. All in good fun, he centered tales around stuck zippers, country preachers, exploding outhouses and the like, and waged a one-man crusade against the dreaded asparagus. He was perturbed that readers never recognized what he considered to

By William Nottingham, staff writer

be his "strong resemblance to Robert Redford, as well as Robert Redford's father."

Dick Bothwell was born in Memphis, in 1917, but he claimed a stronger allegiance to the South Dakota town of Lead, where he finished high school. By the age of 21, he had taught himself to draw by correspondence course. So when *Time* magazine ran a post-Depression series of "job-wanted" letters from around the country, Bothwell dashed off a note and some sketches — which, to his surprise, were published. He promptly received some 20 replies, one of them from St. Petersburg.

Two months later, in March of 1939, he found himself stepping down Central Avenue, suitcase in hand, to report as the newspaper's editorial cartoonist. He was paid $17.50 a week. "Executives made $35 a week and up," Bothwell once recalled. "Girls toiled at typewriters for $12 or so. At Walgreen's Drug Store, a hungry young journalist could get two pork chops, vegetables, soup, juice, rolls and dessert for 45 cents. People who left dimes were big tippers."

Bothwell was drafted into the Army during World War II, and served as a sergeant in the Pacific. At war's end, he returned as the *Times'* cartoonist, but also started writing weather stories, which gradually carried him into more general reporting.

In 1962, Bothwell began writing *Of All Things,* but still kept a daily eye on the weather, with assistance from two mythical companions — the irrepressible J. Thundersquall Drip and the unpronouncable Kcid Llewhtob, Bothwell's name in reverse. Bothwell's columns would plug needy causes or poke comically at himself or his colleagues. His work became one of the most widely read features in the paper, and put Bothwell in constant demand as a public speaker or master of ceremonies.

On the occasion of his 35th year with the *Times,* in 1974, Bothwell spoke of how his beloved newsroom had changed. "We have electric typewriters, wall-to-wall carpeting and they are hiring mere children now. And I have to pay to park my bicycle. But it's still a fun place to work."

He was a fixture on the paper for another seven years, time enough to see even the fancy typewriters replaced by computers. One Thursday he was twirling a lasso and posing for pictures in a cowboy suit, the consummate ham. The next day he was dead at 63.

A four-month strike of black garbage workers in 1968 became an important watershed in the city's race relations. The strike ended in compromise, but breakthroughs had been achieved. The next year, the City Council got its first black member — C. Bette Wimbish.

In 1968, 2,000 teachers went on strike in Pinellas.

race relations. As the decade began, picketing and sit-ins led to the desegregation of St. Petersburg's lunch counters and theaters. As it ended, there was a tense, four-month strike of garbage workers — virtually all of them black — that became an important watershed in the city's race relations. Before the strike ended in a "compromise," it forced the white establishment to make some hesitant steps toward ending generations of inequality and injustice at City Hall and in the business community.

There was crisis in the county's schools, too. In 1968, 2,000 teachers left their classrooms in a bitter statewide teachers' strike that polarized the community and undermined confidence in public education. In 1971 every school in the county was desegregated under a sweeping plan that is still in effect today.

THE *TIMES* grew rapidly. Circulation, which had finally topped 100,000 per day in 1959, reached an average of 160,937 daily (182,051 on Sunday) in 1970. Just four years after it was written, the 30-year timetable for expansion of the press capacity at the new 34th Street printing plant was already out of date.

Meanwhile, Nelson Poynter twice tried to branch out into television, failing both times. And he ended up with something he always said he didn't want — a second newspaper.

Poynter had entered the broadcasting field in 1940 when he bought radio station WTSP (Welcome To St. Petersburg) and moved it into the *Times* building. The station offered considerable public service programming, including a meet-the-candidates program at the start of every political campaign and a popular "winners-losers party" at the end. The party featured up-to-the-minute election returns and interviews with the candidates. Poynter sold the station in 1956. It had become a money loser,

and Poynter — a classical music buff — was loathe to change to a rock and roll format. He also believed that ownership of the station was jeopardizing his chances of getting a television station.

Television had come to the Tampa Bay area in 1953, when WSUN-Ch. 38 went on the air at its studios at the Pier. This was the last major metropolitan area in the United States to get television, and at least 4,000 people gathered around the sets at Webb's City during the first day. Poynter was fascinated by the opportunities television afforded for public service and news. He was also afraid that a newspaper without a television station would suffer economically. Poynter first applied for Channel 8, which the Federal Communications Commission awarded in 1955 to the Tribune Co., owner of the rival *Tampa Tribune*. "I thought . . . it would be ruinous if the *Tampa Tribune* got the license and we didn't," he said later, so he tried again, this time seeking the license for Channel 10. It was an expensive, sometimes bitter fight that dragged on until 1966.

If Poynter was disappointed that the license was awarded to the Rahall family, most of his associates were not. Typically, Poynter had proposed a public-service format — praiseworthy but hardly likely to attract viewers and advertisers. Clifton D. Camp Jr., the *Times'* senior vice president and business manager, told Poynter a television license would have been "a license to lose money."

Although Poynter never got a television station, he did acquire a second newspaper — the *Evening Independent*, the *Times'* afternoon rival for 56 years (**see story, page 13**). In the 1920s and 1930s, the *Independent* had been a formidable opponent. By the 1950s, however, it was far behind the *Times* in circulation and advertising revenue.

The *Independent* was a conservative paper, and it loved to beard the owner of the liberal *Times*. With poorly concealed glee, it once reported that Poynter — an ardent foe of dredge and fill — was having fill dirt deposited along his waterfront property to improve it. In 1952, Poynter was so angered by another *Independent* story that he filed four libel suits of $250,000 each against the paper and its owner, Ralph Nicholson. He dropped them after Nicholson sold the paper to Anglo-Canadian press lord Roy Thomson.

By 1962, the *Independent* was losing an estimated $300,000 a year. Thomson had tried for years to sell it. On June 25, at a meeting at the Waldorf Hotel in New York, Thomson told Poynter that unless the *Times* bought his paper it would shut down. Poynter was torn. He had maintained for years that newspaper competition was healthy for a town, that a newspaper owner should devote his money and attention to only one newspaper. But Poynter also thought that St. Petersburg should have an afternoon newspaper. So he bought the *Independent* (circulation 19,561) for $300,000 and set out to have a circulation of 50,000 within five years. Twenty-two years later, the *Independent* still has not achieved Poynter's goal. It reached 42,346 in 1980 and has been gradually losing circulation since then.

At the *Times*, however, the good times only got better. Buoyed by its 1964 Pulitzer Prize, it expansively proclaimed itself "Florida's Best Newspaper" in 1965, a claim that is still on the front page masthead every day. It also expanded again in 1968, this time into a $1.8-million, five-story building on the southeast corner of First Avenue S and Fifth Street, site of the newsroom and press in the early 1920s. The Times Publishing Co. paid for the building in *cash*. With his memories of the Depression and his horror of debt, Poynter had permitted the company to

borrow for only one major purchase since the mid-1950s. That was a $1.5-million loan to build the printing plant on 34th Street. When that loan was paid off in 1972, then-treasurer Camp happily burned the promissory note.

MEANWHILE, THE *Times* moved to capitalize on the rapid population growth to the north and south of St. Petersburg. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, it created "regional editions" — separate sections containing local news for a particular area — for readers in North Pinellas and Pasco, Citrus, Hernando and Manatee counties.

In 1971, the corporate slogan was "Get It Done in '71." "It" was Poynter's longtime goal of passing the *Tampa Tribune* to become Florida's second largest newspaper (behind the *Miami Herald*). When the Audit Bureau of Circulation released its figures in June, the *Times* had an average daily circulation of 166,513 to the *Tribune*'s

return and apologize "and we'd go on about our business," Lake says. When he didn't, Poynter decided that Baldwin would have to go.

Baldwin says that his differences with Poynter had been building for about a year. "A relationship like that, like we had — like you *have* to have — is not unlike a marriage in many ways," he says. "And when a marriage breaks up who can say, 'Well, it's because of this or because of that.' It usually is a series of little things . . . I'm sure I was at fault as much as he or even more. When you own the paper, you're not to blame."

The issue that prompted Baldwin's profane outburst was the number of pictures of black people in the *Times*, Baldwin and Lake say. Poynter, ever mindful of the paper's total readership, thought there had been too many.

"It was his (Poynter's) feeling that if you ran too many pictures of blacks — and I must say that, in my estimation, 'too many' was not very many — that you upset (white) readers unnecessarily," Baldwin says. "He grew up in southern Indiana, and while he was a great champion for

Don Baldwin said he was taking "early retirement," but the staff was not fooled.

Television was such a novelty in 1953 that closed-circuit demonstrations at Webb's City drew a crowd. A few weeks later, the area's first TV station went on the air.

The Times owned radio station WTSP from 1940 to 1956. In this 1944 photo, Glenn Dill (right) did the announcing while Eddie Squires played the piano in the studio.

163,041. Poynter was so delighted that he threw a huge staff party at Fort De Soto Park.

The man who was supposed to succeed Poynter as chairman and chief executive officer of the Times Publishing Co. did not stay on. One afternoon in November 1971, editor and president Donald K. Baldwin gathered the news staff around him and, his voice breaking, announced that he had decided to take "early retirement." The staff was thunderstruck, but not fooled. It was obvious that Baldwin had been fired.

Trouble between Baldwin and Poynter apparently had been brewing for some time. Both were strong-willed men. Poynter, a demanding, idea-a-minute boss, could exasperate even the calmest subordinate, and Baldwin was a man whose thin skin and hot temper were renowned. The last, irrevocable break had come a few weeks earlier during a meeting in Poynter's office. As general manager John B. Lake looked on, Poynter went through the paper, criticizing things he didn't like. Baldwin simmered, then boiled over. He leaped from his chair, shouted "horse s---" and bolted from the office.

Poynter was stunned, Lake says. He had the "most pained expression on his face, just like he'd gotten word of a death in the family." Poynter fully expected Baldwin to

the minorities, he had some built-in biases." Poynter "accused the young people on the (copy) desk of deliberately seeking out pictures of blacks and making the paper top-heavy" with them, Baldwin says. "I resented that because I didn't think it was true . . . I told him that's a bunch of horse s---, and I left."

IT DIDN'T TAKE Poynter long to find a new editor and heir apparent. Eugene C. Patterson, an editor with formidable credentials, had just left the *Washington Post*. Poynter had tried without success to get Patterson to take the top job at *Congressional Quarterly*, the Times Publishing Co.'s journalistic research subsidiary in Washington. Patterson wasn't interested in that, but when offered Baldwin's job some time later, he accepted.

The rift between Baldwin and Poynter was not irreparable. To the surprise of some, they remained friendly. Baldwin says they regularly had dinner together. Just four years after Baldwin bolted out of Poynter's office, Poynter announced the establishment of the journalism institute that would become owner of the *Times* after his death. Its first executive director was Don Baldwin.

Blacks could work behind lunch counters in St. Petersburg but were denied service there. In 1960, sit-ins like this brought out "This Section Closed" signs. Lunch counters were desegregated in 1961.

The Times and blacks

TIMES society reporter Mamie Brown telephoned the bridal consultant at a downtown department store in 1958 to get a description of the gown that a bride-to-be had selected for her wedding. "Oh, you don't want to know about *her* dress," Brown says she was told. "She's a Negro."

Brown was, too, but how could the bridal consultant have known? Brown wrote exclusively about black people, and her stories about weddings, clubs and schools were published on a "Negro news page" that circulated only in black neighborhoods. The *Times* was almost as segregated as the South, and in ways both subtle and flagrant it had treated blacks as second-class citizens for 75 years.

For all its flaws, however, the *Times* was still ahead of other Southern newspapers. Editorially, no paper in the South called for racial equality earlier than the *Times,* and few covered the civil rights movement of the 1960s as fully. The paper had a fulltime black reporter as early as 1951, and in recent years blacks have filled key reporting slots on the staff.

None of the paper's top editors in recent years — all of them white — voices particular pride in the *Times'* record, however. Typical is the comment of Andrew Barnes, an editor since 1973 and now editor and president of the Times Publishing Co. "We're not doing well enough," he says. "We have made steady if very slow progress . . . The integration of our newsroom has been and remains one of the very highest of priorities."

A few black people were living in what is now St. Petersburg before the town was formally organized in 1892. Among the area's prominent pioneers in the 1870s were a former slave named John Donaldson and his wife Anna. The little settlement also had a black barber in about 1888. Historian Karl H. Grismer says the first substantial group of black residents were about 10 workmen who stayed on after helping build the railroad into the are ain 1888. They and their families lived in a cluster of shacks along Fourth Avenue S between Seventh and Ninth streets that became known as Pepper Town.

The tiny black population swelled during the building booms of 1909 - 1914 and 1920-1926, when contractors imported hundreds of black laborers to help build the town's streets, homes and buildings. Those must have been grim times for black people. For years to come, most lived in white-owned tenements in ghetto pockets, sat in the back of the bus, used separate rest rooms, attended inferior, segregated schools and earned a meager living as laborers and domestics.

The *Times* treated blacks like most American newspapers did: When it didn't ignore them altogether, it exaggerated their deficiencies. Occasionally in the late 1890s and early 1900s, the paper had a column of "colored news." It was short-lived, however. For the next 40 years, the city's black residents virtually disappeared from the paper, except when they were involved in crime. *That* was covered so thoroughly that the word "Negro" (usually not capitalized) in a headline became synonymous with "criminal." Sometimes the word was "niggers," "darkies" or

ST. PETERSBURG DAILY TIMES

ST. PETERSBURG AND PINELLAS COUNTY HAVE THE FINEST CLIMATE IN AMERICA

ASSOCIATED PRESS REPORT   THURSDAY MORNING——ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA——OCTOBER 2, 1919.   PRICE—SINGLE COPIES 2 CENTS

REDS TAKE FIRST GAME; REUTHER IS FEATURE

TWO WHITE MEN AND 7 NIGGERS KILLED IN JAM AFTER AMBUSH

SCORE, 9-1 HARD HITTING RUNSCICOTTE

REALTY CROOK ON HIS WAY, WARNING

Police Ready For Emergencies At Plants Hit By The Steel Strike

Car Loaded with Women and Children Bound for Safety Fired on from Trees by Blacks

LEADER AND MANY DARKIES ARE HELD

Feeling Reaches High Pitch in Arkansas Towns After All Day Battle Between Posses

For decades, black people generally made the news only as criminals or oddities. Words such as "niggers," "coons" and "darkies" were sometimes used to describe them.

By Robert Hooker, deputy metropolitan editor

For years, white readers of the Times saw nothing about blacks' day-to-day lives.

"burr heads." "Half 'Lit' Coon Shot At Officer," declared a headline in 1912. "Dusky Denizens of Darktown" is what another headline labeled blacks 20 years later. "The three B's, that's what you (the white press) called us — big, black brutes," journalist Norman E. Jones once recalled.

On the editorial page, the early *Times* was in lockstep with the thinking of its time. It endorsed the white orimary in 1912. It looked the other way when a black man accused of murder was lynched in 1914. It found things to commend in the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s. And it endorsed white supremacy, declaring in 1924 that "the Negro is but a few generations removed from savagery, and therefore unqualified to assume the political and economic burdens which rest upon the white man."

In the mid-1930s, the papers editorial positions began to change. It denounced the Klan, came out against the white primary and the poll tax — two barriers to black voting — and began decrying the deplorable condition of black housing. "These folks (blacks) fit into our commercial life and are needed for the work they perform," it said in 1935. The *Times* campaigned for construction of Jordan Park, the city's first federal housing project for blacks.

In October 1939, the *Times* also began publishing a weekly page devoted to news of the black community. This so-called "Negro news page" was common among American newspapers. The news was gathered and written by black stringers who worked out of their homes, and included births, obituaries, weddings, sports and church notes. White people never saw that news, however. The page circulated only in black neighborhoods. In the editions distributed everywhere else, that page had other news, generally the stock market report or movie listings. (Blacks had no use for the movie listings, it was reasoned, since they were barred from white-run theaters.)

Thus in the paper that white readers saw, there was nothing about blacks' achievements and day-to-day activities. When blacks appeared at all, it was invariably as criminals or oddities. Years later, *Times* chairman Nelson Poynter would recall a picture of a black toddler that ran on the front page in 1938. By today's standards, the photo would be considered racist; both the headline and story referred to the child as a "pickaninny." But Poynter remembered something else: Some advertisers were so angered that a black's picture had even appeared that they switched their ads to the *Evening Independent*. As late as the 1950s, the *Times,* like other Southern papers, often marked blacks in still other ways. On the Negro news page, they were treated with dignity. But in the rest of the paper, blacks were usually identified by race (as in "John Jones, Negro," or Mary Smith, colored"). Black women rarely got an honorific (Miss or Mrs.) on second reference. To avoid calling Mary Smith "Mrs. Smith," the paper would call her "the

—PICKANINNY TROUBLE—
Open Safety Pin Threatens Life of 15-Month-Old Baby

—Times Staff Photo by Walter Davis
Little Leonora doesn't feel so good. Not with an open pin wending its way through her tiny stomach. Unaware of her peril, she just wishes she felt better. Maybe, say doctors, in three to

Until the 1940s, the Times almost never published photos of black people in its regular editions. The word "pickaninny" in the headline over this picture, which appeared in 1938, would be considered racist today. Some white advertisers were so outraged that the photo appeared at all that they cancelled their advertising.

Smith woman" or simply "Mary."

During World War II, black soldiers died fighting for "democracy" and blacks everywhere gained new work skills and self-confidence. When the war ended, the times and the *Times* slowly began to change. With increasing frequency, stories and photos about blacks appeared in all editions of the paper. The Negro news page changed from a weekly to a daily in October 1948, and in December 1951 the staff got its first fulltime black reporter — Calvin Adams. He had a desk in the newsroom and was put in charge of the Negro page. Within a year, Adams had an assistant. Mamie Doyle (later Mamie Brown) was hired as the paper's first fulltime black society writer. It was her job to cover black engagements and weddings, school and church news, achievements and club meetings. By then, black St. Petersburg had a "high society" just like white St. Petersburg, and its mainstays — women like Fannye Ayer Ponder, Olive B. McLin, Mary McRae and Altaire Leggett — kept Brown busy covering their club meetings, teas and debutante balls.

When groups of white schoolchildren toured the newsroom, Brown recalls, some of them were so unused to seeing a black person that "they peered at me." But most of her white colleagues went out of their way to help her and make her feel welcome, she says.

The *Times* was far quicker to endorse racial equality on its editorial page than it was to practice it in its newsroom. When Poynter, 35, succeeded longtime editor W. L. Straub in 1939, there was a marked change in the tone of the editorial column. One of his first campaigns was a successful drive to expand Jordan Park, the black housing project.

By the late 1940s and the early 1950s, the *Times* was saying the unthinkable: Blacks de-

A St. Petersburg family, about 1895: The first substantial group of black settlers were laborers who stayed on after helping build the first railroad into town in 1888.

Pinellas County Historical Museum

served equality and maybe, just maybe, segregation was wrong. "It is inevitable that . . . legal segregation will become as extinct as the slavery from which it stemmed," the paper declared in 1951. Read today, that might sound unremarkable, even timid. But in the early 1950s, Jim Crow still had a vise-like grip on the South and its institutions. When the *Times* promptly endorsed the 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing segregated schools, it apparently was the first major paper in the South to do so.

Over the next few years, the paper firmly asserted that desegregation should come but urged a go-slow approach, noting in 1956 that "desegregation cannot be made peaceful and satisfactory unless it comes gradually." It chided the white establishment for its recalcitrance, urged school officials to begin planning for desegregation and repeatedly warned readers that racial trouble only brought bad publicity to an area that depended on tourism to survive. Even before lunch counters were desegregated in 1961, the *Times* joined Gov. LeRoy Collins in asserting that it was "morally wrong" to deny blacks service. Though segregation might be legal, the paper said, "racial discrimination cannot withstand a moral examination. The Declaration of Independence and the Holy Bible — both revered by every good citizen — utterly condemn such practices."

Not every act of black protest won the *Times'* endorsement, however. In 1966, what had been a peaceful campaign for equality turned militant. A group of young blacks tore down a large painting at City Hall. The painting, which showed black musicians, was denounced as "racist" by the group's leader. The *Times* called the protestors "extremists" and their behavior "hoodlumism." In objecting to the painting, it said, the blacks "showed a lack of poise and common sense."

IN 1960, a young man with two bachelor's degrees and a master's degree replaced Calvin Adams on the *Times'* news staff. Samuel Adams (no relation) started out on the Negro news page, but soon his byline was appearing over the datelines of the civil rights movement — Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, St. Augustine, Washington and Albany, Ga.

In 1964, Adams wrote a series called "Highways To Hope" about the experiences he and

For 28 years, most news about blacks appeared on a page that white readers never saw. When it began Oct. 22, 1939 (above), the page appeared weekly. In 1948 it went daily, and in 1967 it was abolished.

his wife Elenora had as they traveled the South testing compliance with the new Civil Rights Act. When *Newsweek* singled out the best reporters on the "most dangerous domestic assignment in U. S. journalism — the race beat," one of them was Adams. Later, he won the prestigious Green Eyeshade Award from the Atlanta chapter of Sigma Delta Chi, a national journalistic honorary society, for a series on Florida's migrant labor camps.

Tough reporting had its price, however. In February 1965, Adams and other *Times* reporters disclosed financial irregularities at the city's black junior college. Two top officials were indicted, and one went to jail. It was the first time that the *Times* had investigated a black institution, and it was the beginning of the end for the college. Its status as an autonomous institution ended, and it became a branch of the white-dominated St. Petersburg Junior College and eventually closed.

Many blacks reacted to the *Times'* stories with dismay. To some, Adams was a traitor, a dupe of the white establishment. One critic was Mamie Brown, who says her resignation from the staff was partly prompted by the stories.

Another critic was the reporter who replaced her, Peggy Peterman, who is still on the staff. She wanted the junior college "to be right," Peterman says, but in hastening its demise the *Times* harmed black students, since the white junior college was slow to admit blacks. Moreover, since Adams had once worked at the junior college, he "had access" there that white reporters lacked, Peterman says. "I felt they (*Times* editors) were using him." Adams now shrugs off the criticism. His supporters far outnumbered his critics, he says. "I could have been elected mayor of the (black) community."

Peterman, a law school graduate and daughter of a civil rights activist in Tuskegee, Ala., joined the *Times* staff a month after the junior college stories appeared. By then, the barriers of segregation were beginning to crumble. Picketing and sit-ins led to the desegregation of St. Petersburg's lunch counters and theaters in 1960 and 1961. Spa Beach, the Pier and Bayfront Medical Center were opened to blacks. St. Petersburg Junior College was desegregated in 1961, the county's secondary schools in 1962.

Peterman was part of the push for equality. In a letter published by the *Times* three years before she joined the staff, she wrote that her son had become a victim of discrimination "when he was only five days old." Twice, she had been refused diaper service because of her race, she wrote, and a photographer had refused to take her son's picture even though she had a coupon entitling her to a free photo. "How do you explain to the most innocent human form on Earth that he is not wanted in certain businesses — not because of his structure, his features or his background, but simply because he is of color?" Peterman wrote. "I know not yet how I will answer these questions that all Negro parents must answer. I do know, however, that I will tell him that it is his moral, Christian duty to fight this ugliness . . . I will dedicate my life to the liberation of the Negro from second-class citizenship."

After she joined the staff, Peterman set out to topple another vestige of segregation — the *Times'* Negro news page. By then, some news about blacks was regularly appearing elsewhere in the paper. Black obituaries and stories about black churches, predominantly black schools and black sports figures were seen by white readers. The biggest breakthrough was probably the integration of weddings and engagements. When a few black faces began appearing among the brides' photos, some St. Petersburg whites were so upset that they passed up the opportunity for publicity.

This partial integration of the news was one of the points that Peterman says she cited in urging executive editor Donald K. Baldwin to abolish the Negro page. The "page" was often only a couple of columns anyway, she said, and whites needed to read about blacks' doings and achievements. The city itself was integrating, and it was wrong for the newspaper to help perpetuate segregation.

Some white brides refused to have their photos in the Times after black faces appeared.

Others were telling Baldwin the same thing, and on May 1, 1967, the page was abolished. (For a time, the for-blacks-only advertising that ran on the page continued, and so did racial labeling in classified advertising.) Baldwin says that he and *Times* chairman Poynter had some reservations. "Nelson, while he understood (the move), saw the disadvantages of it," says Baldwin. "He said, 'You're robbing these people of some coverage that does a wonderful thing for them. It lets people who are potential leaders in the black community gain the recognition that they need to become leaders.' "

In truth, "black news" now competed with the rest of the news, and an event that once warranted a few paragraphs on the Negro page rarely made the paper anymore. Moreover, many blacks felt uncomfortable dealing with white strangers instead of the black reporters they once contacted regularly.

The late 1960s and early 1970s brought important changes to the social fabric of St. Petersburg. A four-month strike by predominantly black garbage workers in 1968 put City Hall under a spotlight, and there were reforms. The next year, the City Council got its first black member, C. Bette Wimbish. There were major improvements in housing, including periodic crackdowns on housing code violations and a marked increase in the percentage of black homeowners. In 1971, the county's schools came under a sweeping desegregation plan that is still in effect today. Most of the busing was imposed on black children, but it insured that the all-white School Board would treat all schools more evenhandedly.

Editorially, the *Times* had pushed hard for countywide school desegregation. "The need is for action, not reaction," it declared in July 1969. When the School Board, under pressure from a federal court, ordered full desegregation, the paper was quick to commend it. When school began that fall, the *Times* had a staff member at every school in the county to monitor the peaceful opening.

DURING the 1970s, blacks in St. Petersburg made some significant gains. By 1980, the number of blacks in white-collar jobs had tripled since 1960, a third of the black population had achieved middle-class status and the number of black high school graduates had doubled. One place where blacks gained was the *Times* newsroom. Throughout the 1970s, the paper had a handful of black reporters whom it used on key beats and important stories. The newsroom still seemed to remain several paces behind editorial policy, however.

A young reporter named Joe Oglesby got his start at the *Times* in 1970. He had been a summer intern and the paper had sent him to a summer program for minority journalists at Columbia University. Oglesby says he has "very good feelings" for the paper, but he left in 1972. His requests for better assignments had gone unanswered, he says, and the city editor insisted that his byline read "Joseph Oglesby"

even though his given name is Joe. Oglesby is now an editorial writer and columnist at the *Miami Herald*. His editorials helped the *Herald* win a Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing in 1983. When Oglesby left the *Times*, then-managing editor Robert J. Haiman wrote a letter to a young black prospect, a friend of Oglesby's whom the *Times* hoped to hire. "In all candor, we feel that we are responsible to a degree for Joe's decision" to leave, Haiman wrote. "Even the thickest of honkey editors can learn. And we've learned . . . I want you to know that this city staff and its editors are ready now to provide a fine environment for a good young black professional to grow and develop."

In 1952, Mamie Brown became the paper's first fulltime black society writer.

Samuel Adams' reporting was singled out by Newsweek magazine.

Peggy Peterman pushed for abolition of the Times' Negro news page.

Marcia A. Slacum helped lead a team that produced 40 stories on the black community.

That reporter declined the *Times'* offer, but others came and grew. They covered police, transportation, housing, education and City Hall. The *Times* also redoubled its efforts to hire black staffers, editors say. When good prospects become available, they are hired even if there is no staff vacancy, editors say.

But good prospects are hard to find, says chairman of the board Eugene C. Patterson. "As a result, we (American newspapers) pass around the talented blacks, one paper to another, and this isn't good." Patterson says that publishers must learn to identify and train potential prospects in high school, then help

them through college, to "create a vast pool of black talent . . . Until we do that, we're spinning our wheels."

In 1980, black reporter Marcia A. Slacum helped lead a team of reporters and researchers on one of the most comprehensive projects the staff has ever undertaken. What is it like to be black and live in St. Petersburg? That was their thesis. Nearly 900 people, black and white, were polled by the *Times'* research department. Then Slacum, John Harwood and other reporters spent six months interviewing and researching a series of 40 articles that ran over a two-month period.

That same year an editor's column in the *Times* touched off a furor within the staff. Dorothy Smiljanich, an assistant to Patterson, wrote a column attempting to explain the editors' reasons for sending black staffers Slacum, Johnnie L. Roberts and Jackie Greene to cover rioting in a black section of Miami. The column quoted two unnamed *Times* staff members who questioned if black staffers could be objective in covering such a story.

The staffers were stung at what they took to be an insult — an editor letting unnamed colleagues publicly question their objectivity. *Times* executives agreed. In a follow-up column, Haiman apologized, saying that the column "conveyed an unintended implication about the abilities of the reporters." Smiljanich, who disagreed that her column had contained "an unfair or insensitive tone that should be rectified publicly," had resigned from the staff, Haiman added. And Haiman, who had approved Smiljanich's column before publication, had to endure the humiliation of hearing Patterson bluntly criticize him in front of the staff.

Two and a half years later, the *Times* had to publicly apologize again for insensitivity. At issue was a story that described a black neighborhood as "a rectangle of filth and crime" and "a sleazy, broken-down, poverty-stricken slum neighborhood." The *Times* acknowledged that it had erred, noting that the majority of the residents were hard-working, law-abiding citizens.

THOUGH black reporters have held key reporting jobs on the staff for more than a decade, it was not until last year that the *Times* got its first black editor — assistant city editor Paul Jerome. Reporter Peterman, who says that some city editors were guilty of "distinct racism" during the 1970s, says that the 1980s constitute "the first time I've felt proud of what the newsroom has done."

Editor and president Barnes laments that the *Times* has not done better in hiring and keeping black reporters. But "we have pushed as hard as we know how to," he says, "and there have been steady gains, both in employment and in the effectiveness with which we have finally come to reflect blacks as human beings and not just as oddities. Are we there yet? Well, nobody (in the newspaper industry) is there."

The 'tank commander'

Gene Patterson and Nelson Poynter in the Times newsroom. "Gene was the only writing editor I felt could make the most of the freedom and independence I could offer," Poynter once said.

■ The new man in the editor's office was a "name" in American journalism. Gene Patterson, 48, had been bureau manager for United Press in London. He had worked alongside the legendary Ralph McGill at the *Atlanta Constitution* and won a Pulitzer Prize. And he had been managing editor of the *Washington Post.*

Nowhere, however, had Patterson had what Nelson Poynter offered him in the fall of 1971 — editor of the newspaper, president of the publishing company and heir apparent to Poynter as chief executive officer. "I'd had Atlanta, I'd had Washington, and the only place that I really wanted to go to work at that point, if I stayed in the news business, would have been with Nelson Poynter," Patterson says.

Patterson would be a "writing editor," the staff was told — and write he did. His Sunday columns atop the editorial page were graceful and eloquent. But Patterson was more. Over the years that followed, he made it clear that he wanted the staff to report the news aggressively and write it clearly. He imported several prominent veterans to supplement a reporting staff that was perpetually fuzzy-cheeked, expanded the paper's foreign news coverage and imbued the staff with still higher standards of ethics. His mere presence brought greater national recognition to the often-overlooked paper on the West Coast of Florida.

A short, barrel-chested man with thin red hair, Patterson has the erect bearing and cocksure air of a commandant. When amused, he throws back his head in a throaty laugh; when angry, his blue eyes fairly blaze. The Patterson the staff sees is formal and gracious, his tie knotted tightly, his speech precise. But friends say that parties at the Patterson home often end around the piano, with Patterson taking charge of the last few bars of *Danny Boy.*

When he left the *Washington Post* in August 1971, Patterson thought he was leaving newspaper journalism for good. The can-you-top-this competitiveness of the *Post* newsroom was not to his liking, he says, and his boss,

At first, Patterson wanted to be a general, not a journalist. As a cavalry officer in 1946, he and his horse Mr. Jones performed in weekly jumping shows.

executive editor Benjamin C. Bradlee, was "a one-man band" who didn't need a managing editor.

When Poynter's offer came, Patterson and his family were living in Durham, N. C., where he was teaching at Duke University and starting a book. Poynter and Patterson had become friends in Washington. Poynter had an apartment near the Pattersons' home there, and when Poynter was in town, they frequently had dinner or lunch together. Poynter was impressed. "Gene was the only writing editor I felt could make the most of the freedom and independence I could offer," he said later.

PATTERSON GREW UP during the Depression on a small farm in southern Georgia. His mother, "the driving spirit in our family," was a country school teacher, his father a bank cashier and liquidating agent. Their house had no electricity, no indoor plumbing and no heat save a stove in the kitchen and fireplace in the living room. Patterson worked hard on the farm, but on Saturdays he liked to hang around the office of the weekly newspaper in nearby Adel. It had an old flatbed press and a linotype machine that seemed magical, and the editor let the red-headed youngster read galley proofs. "I just liked the smell of the place," Patterson recalls.

Patterson spent two years at North Georgia College, where he edited the student newspaper and earned his laundry money by writing English themes — 10 cents a theme — for classmates. Then he earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Georgia, where he compressed two years' work into one and rode horses in the university's ROTC cavalry program. The war was on. Patterson went straight from college campus to basic training, and eventually wound up as a platoon leader in the 10th Armored Division of Gen. George S. Patton Jr.'s Third Army, two months after D-Day.

The young lieutenant's first encounter with the legendary general was memorable. Patton was already driving through the German army, and he assembled every officer of the 10th Armored Division for some personal instruction. The general was every inch the legend, tall, red-faced and sarcastic, Patterson wrote later, and he delivered "what must have been the most profane set of battle orders ever dispensed by the commander of an American army." One line was particularly chilling: "You can tell a division isn't fighting when it isn't getting enough lieutenants killed."

The officers were stunned, Patterson says, but "if war was the wallow of swine, then maybe it was just as well to know how to grunt." Later, some of the men of the Third Army realized that Patton's audacity had shortened battles and saved lives. "You can go back in the histories now and find that for all the glory that we got in the Third Army, we lost fewer people," Patterson says. Some of that glory was Patterson's. He won a Silver Star for gallantry in action and a Bronze Star with oak leaf cluster for heroic achievement.

When the war ended, Patterson decided to become a general. He stayed in the Army, took flight training and won his wings as a pilot. Inside his captain's uniform, however, was a journalist trying to get out. On an impulse, he resigned his commission and applied for a reporting job at the first newspaper office he found, in Temple, Texas. The cub reporter went from Temple to Macon, Ga., and then — with United Press (now United Press International) — to Columbia, S. C., New York and London. As bureau manager in London, Patterson helped the UP score a memorable scoop.

Novelist Ernest Hemingway had been lost in the jungle. When he turned up safe, Patterson found buried in a correspondent's dispatch just the opening paragraph he was looking for. "Down in the middle of the cable," he says, "was the lead which I immediately pulled out and fired off to New York . . . 'Bulletin: ENTEBBE, Uganda — Ernest Hemingway came out of the jungle today carrying a bunch of bananas and a bottle of gin.'"

Hemingway was famous for his spare, direct prose, and it was almost as if Hemingway himself had written that lead. Every telegraph editor in America who had read Hemingway used the UP story, which Hemingway himself later praised. Patterson's UP colleague, Wilbur G. Landrey, suggests that Hemingway was libeled, however. "Anybody knows that Hemingway never would have preserved a bottle of gin for three days, and the aspersion cast shame on a great writer," quips Landrey, now the *Times'* foreign news editor.

Patterson returned to Georgia in 1956 and became executive editor of the *Atlanta Journal* and *Constitution*. Four years later he became editor of the *Constitution*, succeeding Ralph McGill, the courageous liberal who helped change the mind of the South on the race question. McGill "could write like apples of silver in pictures of gold," Patterson once declared, and he became Patterson's friend and role model. When he replaced McGill, Patterson's first column began, "The shadows on these walls are very tall."

In time, Patterson developed a national reputation of his own as an editor who urged the South to abandon the politics of pitchforks, ax handles and cattle prods. His editorials won a Pulitzer Prize in 1967, but a column he wrote four years earlier was probably more widely quoted. In the heat of those troubled times, a black church in Birmingham, Ala. had been bombed and four girls killed. All that was left for one distraught mother was her dead child's shoe. That shoe, Patterson recalls, was the emotional symbol he needed to tell his white kinsmen once again that segregation was morally corrupt. "Every one of us in

Dave Swan

Patterson's mentor in Atlanta was Ralph McGill (left). In 1975, Patterson led a delegation of editors to China, where they conferred with Deputy Premier Teng Hsiao-ping (above).

Al Lang Field, 1964: A decade later, the spring home of major league baseball was refurbished and renamed Al Lang Stadium.

As an editor in Atlanta, Patterson urged the South to abandon its old politics.

the white South holds that small shoe in his hand," he wrote. "It is too late to blame the sick criminals who handled the dynamite . . . We are the ones who have ducked the difficult, skirted the uncomfortable, caviled at the challenge, resented the necessary, rationalized the unacceptable, and created the day surely when these children would die."

There was trouble in the *Constitution*'s executive suite, however. Patterson and president Jack Tarver grew apart, and in the fall of 1968 their mutual animus reached a climax. One of Patterson's proteges had written a column that Tarver found offensive. He and Patterson clashed, and Patterson had enough. "I just said, 'Get yourself another editor,' and I quit," he says.

He landed in Washington at the *Post*, where another unhappy experience eventually drove him to Duke and, ultimately, to St. Petersburg and the *Times*.

AT FIRST, there were adjustment problems. Patterson had to learn to hold the reins of power and Poynter, now 68 but as exacting as ever, had to learn to let them go. Patterson learned early, for example, to keep Poynter fully briefed. The Poynters' cat had died while they were away on vacation, but Patterson decided not to notify them and spoil their vacation. "That was wrong," Poynter said when he returned. "If you wouldn't tell me about my cat, what else wouldn't you tell me about?"

There was another awkward moment in 1973. Without checking with Poynter, Patterson and the editorial board decided to endorse Barbara Gammon for mayor of St. Petersburg. When he learned of it, Poynter vetoed the decision. The endorsement went instead to C. Randolph Wedding, a decision that Patterson now agrees was correct. "I didn't do my job as editor that day, so Nelson did it for me," he says.

As leader of the newsroom, Patterson cut an imposing figure. He wrote so well, spoke so eloquently, carried himself so confidently. The staff, mindful of his days with Gen. Patton, called him "the Tank Commander" (or, more irreverently, "Treads"). As a manager of people and busi-

When reporter Karen DeYoung published her own salary, it moved some on the staff to mutiny.

ness matters, however, details sometimes seemed to bore him. A few of his key personnel moves backfired. "In the things he's interested in, he does a superb job; the things he's not interested in, he tends to ignore," says Clifton D. Camp Jr., one of Patterson's principal business advisers. "He's not as direct as I think he should be . . . I think people like to be told in a manly fashion what the hell's going on, and not given Pablum."

Patterson's choice of words figured in an upheaval that bitterly divided the newsroom staff during the economic recession in 1974. The kindling for that fire was the *Times'* response to the bad times — the dismissal of 150 staff members and a reduction in cost-of-living benefits. But the first spark was a story about salaries and the recession. In that story, a young reporter named Karen DeYoung disclosed her own salary, which was substantially higher than many veterans' salaries.

On his arrival in St. Petersburg, Patterson had learned that salaries were much too low and resolved to correct them. But when confronted by hurt, angry staffers, he compounded the problem by calling DeYoung a "star" who was entitled to a big salary — and implying that most others deserved far less. Patterson and other executives also assured the staff that their cost-of-living supplements — which the *Times* calls "earned dividends" — were safe. They had to eat those words later, when the benefits were reduced.

Eighteen staff members, including two assistant city editors and some of the best young reporters, mounted a drive to unionize the newsroom. Publisher John B. Lake recalls that he wanted to find "a way to get rid of all of them, one by one," but Patterson said there would be no vengeance or vindictiveness. The union effort fizzled out within three months, but damage had been done. For a time, confidence in management was shaken, morale was shattered, old friends were enemies.

In retrospect, Patterson readily shoulders responsibility for the mistakes that he says *Times* executives made. The recent changes in top management, the drastic staff cutbacks, some ineffective department heads and the low wage scale were "a prescription for chaos," he says. "So we got the chaos and, I hope, learned enough not to ever let that exact situation repeat itself."

The 1970s: growing pains

■ Despite the staff upheaval of late 1974, the 1970s were an exciting time to be in the *Times* newsroom. Pinellas County and Florida were growing rapidly, and there was crisis to be covered, corruption to be exposed.

The population growth of St. Petersburg continued to slow (increasing by only 22,000 persons, to 238,647, in 1980). But undeveloped land to the north and on the beaches was filling with new subdivisions, apartment houses and shopping centers. Every spring in the early 1970s seemed to bring a water shortage. The County Commission eventually imposed a moratorium on new building permits in the unincorporated area, and one St. Petersburg City Council member pushed unsuccessfully for a population-control ordinance that would have forced thousands of new residents to leave.

For years, the *Times* had boosted the area — and its own advertising revenues — by publishing lavish special editions touting St. Petersburg and the Suncoast to tourists and potential residents. In 1972, however, it felt compelled to add an editorial caveat to its annual Festival of States edition: "Pinellas has a lousy County Commission. Some of our sewer systems are at capacity. It is sometimes difficult to find a doctor. There has been resistance to school desegregation . . . The city has a slum area, smaller than most, but still too large to suit us. Downtown badly needs redevelopment."

In its news columns, the *Times* staff exposed the corruption that often accompanies growth. State capital bureau chief Martin Dyckman, an intense, driven man of strong opinions, wrote stories that helped drive two State Supreme Court justices from the bench. Bette Orsini's reporting helped unseat State Education Commissioner Floyd T. Christian, who became the first statewide elected official ever indicted in Florida and spent several months in jail. A two-year investigation of zoning and political corruption at the Pinellas County Courthouse by Christopher Cubbison and Robert Hooker helped send three county commissioners and two municipal officials to jail.

Patrick Tyler disclosed how a "daisy-chain" scheme drove up the price that Florida Power Corp. customers paid for oil and

Dredging created miles of waterfront homes in Boca Ciega Bay in the 1950s and early 1960s. Above: Finger fills along the Treasure Island Causeway in 1956. Below: By 1976, fills in the bay off St. Petersburg Beach were filled with homes.

Publisher John B. Lake became the Times' community activist-in-residence.

As executive editor, Robert J. Haiman was Gene Patterson's top lieutenant in the newsroom.

Patterson ordered the story of his DWI arrest put on the front page.

enriched a few greedy speculators. A top Florida Power official went to jail.

In Gene Patterson's mind, it was not enough to expose larcenous officials. He wanted the stories about those officials written clearly and artfully, so that *Times* readers could quickly grasp the context and implications of the misdeeds. In a memo to one reporter in 1972, he counseled: "Resist the appositive. Go to direct sentences. Commas, between which many pounds of words hang between clean limbs like lead in swaying hammock , distract. Catch?" He imported a young English professor to spend a year in the newsroom in 1977 as a writing coach.

In conversations with *Times* editors and in speeches around the country, Patterson began to stress what he called "explanatory journalism." In writing about increasingly complex issues like energy, inflation and welfare, he said, it was important to avoid reporting "on the installment plan; you need to explain them whole." When reporters Richard Koenig and Paul Tash published a series on Florida's troubled nursing home industry in 1980, Patterson praised them in his Sunday column. "They set out not to expose and astound, but to identify and analyze what's wrong so that the public will understand, not simply who's to blame, but what might be righted," he said.

More than ever before, *Times* editors put a premium on good writing. Charles Stafford, Jeff Klinkenberg, Neil Skene and Charles Patrick — reporters who wrote with grace as well as grit — saw their stories about government, justice and the environment given prominent display.

Over the years, the *Times* also instituted still tougher standards of ethics and openness for its staff. There would

be no freebies, no expense-paid junkets. Mistakes would be corrected promptly, on the front page of the section in which they occurred. Reporters were instructed to use "shoe leather and elbow grease" to get tough stories, rather than automatically resorting to subterfuge like posing as someone else, as reporters had done for decades. "We've inflicted pretty high ethical standards on public and private institutions . . . in recent years, and I worry a lot about our hypocrisy quotient if we demand government in the sunshine and practice journalism unnecessarily in the shade," Patterson said.

On July 4, 1976, Patterson was arrested on a charge of driving while intoxicated (DWI). Over the objections of executive editor Robert J. Haiman, he put the story on the front page. Most DWI arrests are not reported, Haiman argued, and not even the city manager would receive more than a few lines inside the City/State section. But Patterson was adamant. The editor of the paper has authority over story play, Patterson says, and when he himself becomes news he can't treat himself gently. He has "to be able to say for the rest of his life, 'I put myself on page 1, so you can't ask me not to put you there,' " Patterson says.

Throughout the 1970s, Patterson's chief lieutenants in the newsroom were Haiman, managing editor in 1966-76 and then executive editor, and Andrew Barnes, who came as metropolitan editor in 1973 and rose to managing editor three years later. Presiding over the business side was publisher John B. Lake, a plainspoken, sometimes impatient man with silver-streaked hair and flashy wardrobe. Lake, who came to the *Times* as advertising director in 1960, became known as a tough, effective executive and prominent community activist. Under the company's conflict-of-interest standards, the editors — the people who write editorials and control news coverage — cannot get involved in community projects. So Lake, from the business side, became the company's community activist-in-residence, pushing for the Salvadore Dali museum, new programs at the University of South Florida and construction of a major league baseball stadium.

Many refused to believe that Lake was, in his own word, a "eunuch" in formulating *Times'* news and editorial policy. When he became president of a company seeking ownership of a baseball franchise earlier this year, three weeks after he retired from the *Times*, there was a loud "aha!" from opponents of the proposed stadium. "We cannot accept Patterson's assertion that Lake had no influence on editorial positions," the *Clearwater Sun* declared in an editorial. It called for a federal investigation into what it called "a distinctly fishy odor surrounding that stadium."

An offset press is installed in the Times' 34th Street Plant in early 1970s during conversion from letterpress.

A new branch campus for USF was one of Nelson Poynter's dreams. It became a reality shortly before his death.

Lake did try to influence the news department once. He was so angered by the questions and complaints during a staff meeting at the New Port Richey bureau in 1979 that he returned to St. Petersburg determined to have the supervisors of the news and retail advertising staffs there fired. The advertising manager *was* fired (and later won an out-of-court settlement from the *Times* after suing the paper for age discrimination). But Lake's demand for the head of news chief Richard Morgan was pointedly ignored.

As publisher, Lake figured prominently in the realization of a 30-year-old dream of Nelson Poynter, printing a cleaner, more colorful paper. Poynter had sensed the future in 1945, when the printers' strike forced the staff to temporarily abandon traditional typesetting and use what is today called "photocomposition" or "cold type."

Since 1910, the *Times*, like virtually every other American newspaper, had used line-casting machines to set type in bars of lead called "hot type." The type was later assembled and locked inside a metal frame to form a page. A curved metal impression was made of each page and then locked onto the press for printing. It was a cumbersome, noisy process and invariably produced messy pages vulnerable to typographical errors.

At Poynter's insistence, the *Times* began changing to cold type in the early 1950s, when it began setting some advertising copy by photocomposition. The copy for those ads was set by special machines, photographed and then prepared for printing in an engraving process. In the early 1970s, the *Times* spent $19-million to convert from the old "letterpress" printing process to the cleaner, brighter "offset" method. On June 25, 1974, E. C. Adair came back from retirement to cast the last metal plate for the paper's last letterpress issue. Soon, even typewriters were disappearing from the newsroom. Reporters and editors now work on computer terminals.

POYNTER WAS a man who always thought ahead. Once he had created an educational institution to receive his stock in the publishing company and designated Patterson as his successor, he sat down in 1975 and drafted instructions for the coverage of his own death. "Most newspapers overplay most deaths of newspaper people," he said in a memorandum to Patterson. "Let's not do this in my case. A one-column head, no comment or a bunch of silly tributes. And it's a one-day story . . . Important in the story is to emphasize there'll be no change whatsoever in the Times Publishing Co. as a result of my death. I'll haunt you like the devil if the above is not carried out. Just live up to the Standards of Ownership thereafter."

Death came three years later, on June 15, 1978. Poynter had spent the morning helping break ground for one of his dreams, a new St. Petersburg campus for the University of South Florida. Next came a lunch at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club, where he heard himself praised for his relentless campaigns to improve education and create the new campus. Poynter was a man who had grown accustomed to villification, not praise, from his own community. Driving back to the office with Patterson, he quipped, "You know, I never have in all my life in this town had people say so many nice things about me. Maybe they think I'm going to die."

In the parking garage across the street from the *Times* building, Patterson says, he noticed that Poynter was having trouble with his left leg. Patterson waved to publisher John B. Lake, who had returned from the same luncheon, and together they half-carried Poynter across the street to his office on the fourth floor.

Poynter hated to admit illness; it was a matter of pride. He refused to go home, refused to discuss seeing a doctor. But when he tried to walk and fell to the floor a few minutes later, Patterson, Lake and Haiman persuaded him to go to the emergency room at St. Anthony's Hospital. By now, it was obvious that Poynter was seriously ill, the apparent victim of a stroke. But he still refused to acknowledge his weakness. "He said, 'Where's my coat? . . . I don't feel dressed without my coat,'" says Patterson. "And you know, Haiman and I had to hold him up like a sack of potatoes, had to put his coat on him before he would leave."

On the drive to the hospital in the back seat of Lake's car, Poynter refused to lie down or talk about his precarious condition, Patterson says. "He wanted to talk about 'that fine young Les Tuttle,' dean of the Bayboro campus of USF . . . It was extremely important to him, right to the end, that he not confess physical weakness and that others not note it."

Poynter's physician, Dr. Charles Donegan, met them at the emergency room. Typically, Poynter directed Patterson and Lake to return to the office, then reluctantly turned to accept the ministrations of Donegan. When Patterson left the emergency room, Poynter was kidding Donegan. He died several hours later.

Charles Stafford, Times Washington reporter since 1968, exemplifies Patterson's emphasis on "explanatory journalism."

'I'll haunt you like the devil if the above is not carried out,' Poynter wrote.

Who decides what goes

Wire desk

■ This department, which is overseen by the national news editor, produces the A section. (It does not produce the editorial and op-ed pages; for their production, see page 79.) Using material from the wire services and staff writers, editors compile the national and international report. Occasionally, a local story will make the front page, if that story is of great news or significance. For example, the story about the ship crashing into the Sunshine Skyway Bridge four years ago was bannered on the front page.

City, state and regionals

■ Local newsgathering and presentation is directed by the metropolitan editor, who oversees production of the B section (City & State) and the business report, as well as separate local news sections produced for readers in various parts of the *Times*' circulation area. The heart of the local news operation is the city desk in the *Times*' downtown St. Petersburg office. Under the direction of the city editor, writers in St. Petersburg, Clearwater, Tampa and Tallahassee contribute to city, county and state news reports published in the city & state section.

■ *Clearwater Times*, *Largo–Seminole Times*, *Pasco Times*, *Hernando Times* and *Citrus Times* are produced by editors and writers working in seven bureaus to gather news from south of Largo to north of Crystal River. One of these local news sections is delivered every day with the *St. Petersburg Times* to readers who live in these areas. Readers in southern Pinellas County receive an additional local news report twice weekly in *Neighborhood Times*.

where in the paper?

Newsfeatures

■ The newsfeatures department is second in size only to the local news staff. Under the direction of the newsfeatures editor, editors and writers in this department produce the daily Floridian D section, the Thursday Food section, Saturday Religion section, *TV Dial*, and the Arts/Travel and Homes sections on Sunday. In addition, newsfeatures staffers produce or coordinate many of the special sections that appear throughout the year, ranging from the Festival of States edition to fashion sections.

Sports

■ Section C is the place to find almost all of the news of sports, including local, national and international stories. The sports editor and the executive sports editor run the department, which also coordinates sports coverage in the regional sections. The editors choose their material from wire and staff produced stories.

Fitting the parts together

So, with all these departments working almost independently, how in the world does it all come out every morning? There are meetings, meetings, and more meetings. They are intended to coordinate and inform departmant heads about what other department heads are doing:

■ Every weekday in the late afternoon, the managing editor chairs a meeting of newsroom editors to discuss the stories for the next day's paper. On Thursday, this meeting is extended to include plans for the weekend editions and to coordinate any long-range projects. The managing editor approves department heads' decisions on play of stories and other matters relating to the news. (The managing editor reports directly to the editor and president of the company.)

■ In addition, there is a meeting of senior editors meeting each Tuesday morning to talk about matters of newsroom policy and administration.

■ The editor of the paper chairs a monthly meeting of all supervising editors on both the *Times* and the *Evening Independent* to discuss matters of journalistic importance. The editor of editorials and the chief editorial writer attend this meeting; it is the only one at which they meet with newsroom editors.

Making headlines

THE TIMES 1884-1984   chapter 19

■ The new university campus that Nelson Poynter helped create in 1978 was part of a resurgence of sorts in St. Petersburg's struggling downtown in the late 1970s and early 1980s. There was a spate of new construction and renovation, the first appreciable building activity since the days of the Boom in the early 1920s.

Andrew Barnes joined the Washington Post in 1965 (top). Nineteen years later, he was named editor and president of the Times.

The Plaza, a 15-story office and shopping complex, opened in 1979. Jannus Landing, a square block of historic, rehabilitated buildings, opened in 1982. There were several new downtown office buildings, too, including a gleaming tower for Florida Federal.

City and county officials were locked in a battle with Tampa to see which county could bring a major league baseball team to the bay area. Many taxpayers heartily disapproved of local government's prominent role in the financing of St. Petersburg's proposed $59.6-million stadium, however. And a proposed shopping and recreation center along the waterfront called Pier Park was resoundingly defeated by St. Petersburg voters in June.

For a time, there seemed to be a deadly jinx on the month of May. In May 1978, a tornado devastated a mid-county elementary school, killing three children and injuring scores more. In 1979, torrential rains and twisters pounded the Suncoast in one of the century's worst storms. A woman drowned when she drove her truck into the swollen waters of a creek in Roser Park. Another woman and her daughter were killed when flood waters swept them into a storm sewer near Tyrone Square Mall.

Then in May 1980, the Suncoast made the nation's front pages when a freighter plowed into the majestic Sunshine Skyway bridge. A 1,200-foot section of the bridge, several vehicles and a Greyhound bus plunged 150 feet into the water, and 35 persons were killed.

THE SMALL, struggling newspaper that Poynter took over in 1939 had grown from an average daily circulation of 18,222 to 198,542 in 1978, the year he died. By 1983, the circulation had soared to 260,682 (330,089 on

Sundays). It now takes 42 press units to print the paper at the plant on 34th Street (14 more units costing more than $1-million apiece will be added this year), and there are eight more press units at the Times' North Suncoast plant in Port Richey. Last year, the paper had gross sales of $113-million.

As the Times moved toward its 100th anniversary, it increasingly won plaudits from within its own industry. Time magazine called it one of the South's five "best dailies" in 1974. CBS correspondent Charles Kuralt put it among America's nine best newspapers in a 1978 broadcast. And earlier this year, Time ranked it among the top 10. The Times, said Time, is "an academy for gifted reporters" that has "taken on power companies, banks, oil-supply speculators, home-repair con artists and even that most sacred of cows, the University of Florida football program."

There was some notable reporting in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Columnist Dudley Clendinen disclosed that poor, illiterate black people were coerced into casting absentee ballots for a ruling political clique in a rural Panhandle county. Lucy Morgan showed how drug smuggling had pervaded two other North Florida counties, corrupting some of their public officials. William Nottingham's painstaking reporting on Florida's largest rural electrical utility helped lead to the conviction of two men in a bid-rigging conspiracy. Bette Orsini and Charles Stafford helped expose the Church of Scientology as a law-breaking cult that harassed its critics, infiltrated and burglarized the Times and Clearwater Sun and tried to frame the mayor of Clearwater. Their efforts won a second Pulitzer Prize for the Times in 1980.

The paper was sometimes criticized for putting too much stress on local police news, however. " . . . petty

a sensitive political issue had been compromised. If the issue arose again, Patterson says now, the company would not make another contribution.

In 1981, Patterson had a heart attack. It was not serious. But as he lay in the coronary care unit he began thinking about publicly naming his successor as chief operating officer and moving up to chief executive officer, as Poynter himself had once done. That did not happen until last Feb. 1, when Patterson announced that he was stepping aside as editor and president to become chairman of the board. John O'Hearn, 46, would replace retiring publisher John B. Lake, with the title of executive vice president and general manager, Patterson announced. The new editor, president and heir apparent to Patterson would be managing editor Andrew Barnes, 44.

Patterson declines to discuss it, but his choice for editor apparently came down to two men — Barnes and former executive editor Robert J. Haiman, president and managing director of the Poynter Institute since February 1983. Haiman, an ambitious man, had been with the *Times* since 1959, and he says that Patterson's decision was a keen disappointment. Haiman says he told Patterson that "I thought he was not making the right decision, but that I respected his right to make that decision and that he had made a good decision in picking someone competent." When Patterson made his decision, Haiman was there, gracious in defeat, to shake Barnes' hand.

PATTERSON HAD known Barnes for 16 years. They worked together at the *Washington Post*, and Patterson brought Barnes to St. Petersburg as metropolitan editor and assistant managing editor in 1973. Before he moved, Barnes says, Patterson mentioned the possibility of succeeding him one day, but "I frankly discounted it." He was more impressed, he quips, when Patterson seemed to "drive me from the Tampa airport to the beaches and

crimes and accidents receive so much attention that the city sometimes comes off as a combat zone even though, statistically, St. Petersburg is a relatively safe city in which to live," the *Washington Journalism Review* said.

The paper's executives came under fire in 1978 when the Times Publishing Co. contributed $25,000 to a group formed to defeat a casino gambling referendum. Editor and president Eugene C. Patterson defended the contribution. The pro-casino forces had seemingly unlimited funds, he said, and it was the company's duty — as a citizen of Florida — to join the fight "for the soul of the state." Some on the staff strongly disagreed, however. They complained that the paper's objectivity in reporting

Coping with a bigger backyard

Ralph Reed, first Clearwater bureau chief.

MUCH of the *Times'* rapid growth in recent years has been in northern Pinellas and the North Suncoast counties of Pasco, Citrus and Hernando.

In the mid-1920s, three decades after the paper left Clearwater and moved to St. Petersburg, the *Times* resumed regular coverage of the county seat. The only reporter, Charles Walk, was a part-timer, and his first "office" was a desk in a jewelry store.

The first fulltime Clearwater reporter was Ralph Reed. He was named bureau chief in 1932 and established the paper's first permanent office in the Scranton Arcade off Cleveland Street. "I decided what I was going to do every morning," Reed once recalled, "and then I told myself to go out and do it." He covered the County Commission, the Sheriff's Department and major court cases, then hustled to the train station to put his stories on the

afternoon train to St. Petersburg. If he missed the train, Reed had to entrust his copy to somebody driving south or else take it to St. Petersburg himself.

In the early 1950s, the *Times'* office moved to S Garden Avenue and in 1963 to a converted house on S Osceola Avenue. The staff gradually grew (there are 58 fulltime staffers based in Clearwater today), and in September 1978, it moved into a new, $1.4-million building at 710 Court Street.

To the north, the *Times* opened its first office in New Port Richey at U. S. 19 and Green Key Road in February 1968. There were three fulltime staffers: reporter Lucy Ware (now Lucy Morgan), circulation manager Clem Gaskins and advertising salesman Don Minie. A bureau chief, Richard Morgan, arrived 18 months later, and he presided over a growing staff that in 1981 moved into a $6.5-million building at 11321 U.S. 19 in Port Richey. The North Suncoast staff, which today numbers 89 fulltimers, also has offices in Dade City, Brooksville, Spring Hill, Crystal River and Inverness.

Readers along the North Suncoast and in North Pinellas now receive local news in so-

called "regional editions" devoted exclusively to their communities. The first regional, a four-page weekly tabloid called the *Suncoast Times*, circulated in Pasco and the Pinellas communities north of Dunedin. Today, there are five regionals, all dailies — the *Clearwater Times, Largo-Seminole Times, Pasco Times, Hernando Times* and *Citrus Times*. The regionals "enable us to continue to be the local newspaper to an area a hundred miles long," says editor and president Andrew Barnes.

For four years, the *Times* also had a regional edition called the *Manatee Times* for readers in Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte and southern Hillsborough counties. It began Sept. 1, 1973, 19 years after the Sunshine Skyway bridge opened and the *Times* started its first news office on the South Suncoast. The paper spent millions of dollars building a news and circulation operation in Manatee and points south and had a fulltime reporter as far south as Punta Gorda, 75 miles from St. Petersburg.

All-important advertising dollars never developed, however, and on Nov. 1, 1977, *the Manatee Times* folded. It was a rare failure for a newspaper that hopes to challenge the *Miami Herald* for the title of the largest paper south of Washington by the 1990s.

Freighter rams Skyway, span falls into sea, at least 30 die

Death rode in on early morning storm

He fell:
From the bridge, to the ship, to the sea

'I'm sure all over, that's for sure.'

"Something hit the bridge so hard it knocked my car out of its lane," said one motorist. "When I looked back, I saw it. My God, the bridge had gone down."

The paper was the *Providence* (R. I.) *Journal*, which made him a reporter and then a bureau chief for two years. After two years in the Army, Barnes joined the *Post* in 1965, becoming a reporter, deputy metropolitan editor and then education editor. In 1969, he spent a year on a fellowship, studying urban affairs in Europe and Africa.

At first, Barnes seemed out of place in the *Times* newsroom — an intellectual, sometimes inscrutable Easterner who could baffle the staff with his vocabulary. When he thinks the "lead" (first paragraph) of a story is poor, for example, he might say it is "egregiously mis-led." When he is undecided or uneasy about some important issue, he will describe himself as "conflicted." When he put out a memorandum about deadlines and Daylight Saving Time one year, there was so much confusion he had to issue another one. "Hell, I (sometimes have to) come back here and look up what he said to me," quips Clifton D. Camp Jr., the company's senior vice president and business manager.

But Barnes is also widely viewed as a skilled manager of people, able to delegate authority, quick to back his subordinates and praise good work. He can be impatient and peevish. But he is also sensitive. When longtime columnist Dick Bothwell died in 1981, Barnes wept unashamedly in his office. By the time Patterson made him editor and president, Barnes seemed to enjoy a reputation throughout the company as a forthright, able man.

As managing editor, he presided over the editors' daily news conference with a studied informality, feet on the conference table, tie askew, shirt sleeves rolled up above his elbows. With his rumpled clothes and tousled hair, he looks more like a professor of English literature than an executive for a multimillion-dollar company.

He lives the same way, passing up more fashionable addresses for a rambling house in an integrated neighborhood, driving a brown Toyota that usually needs washing and retreating to the warm fold of his family, his reading and his gardening and jogging during evenings and weekends. A private man, he acknowledges that he is somewhat uncomfortable with the social obligations that go with his new corporate role. "I think part of what you're seeing is the transition of a New Yorker to a community which is in many ways dissimilar," he says.

What Barnes calls a need for privacy could be mistaken for elitism, however, according to former publisher Lake. "I think that Andy, unknowingly, feels he is several cuts above anyone else in this community" and that could lead to his downfall as *Times* editor, Lake says.

"I have never felt the need to define very many of the peripheral aspects of life as being part of my work life, . . . and, yes, it might be a fault," replies Barnes. "Yes, I could get into trouble and, yes, that's a risk I've been running for the last 30 years and I'm going to go right on running it."

Barnes certainly won't fail because of corporate timidity. Barely three months into his new job, he and Patterson removed Robert Stiff, the popular, longtime editor of the struggling *Evening Independent*. In Stiff's place, they installed Neil Skene, a 32-year-old *Times* reporter with limited managerial experience.

then to the *Times* building without ever being out of sight of the water. How he did that I don't know."

Barnes' boyhood was divided between a four-story row house in Manhattan and a farm in northwestern Connecticut. His father was a foreign correspondent and editor for the now-defunct *New York Herald Tribune* and an editor for a book publishing house. His mother taught psychology at Sarah Lawrence College and ran an editing service. Like his father, Barnes went to Harvard, where he studied history and played clarinet in the band. His father had been president of the student newspaper, but Barnes says he never worked there and never saw journalism in his future. When he found himself jobless on the eve of graduation in 1961, however, it was to a newspaper that he went seeking work. "To this day I still don't know why," he says. "I still remember the peculiar look on my father's face . . . he was very pleased."

At first, Barnes seemed out of place in the Times newsroom.

Editorials over the years: a liberal voice in a conservative town

SOMEBODY was unhappy with the *Times*. The paper apparently had been pushing a cause that was unpopular with some, and the editors felt compelled to comment. "The *Times* is often charged with harping on something it believes in — of never letting up on it," the editorial said. "And truly enough. That is the way things have been accomplished by and for St. Petersburg. If the *Times* had not kept everlastingly at what are now some of the big and basic assets of St. Petersburg they would not have been attained, and many of those critics would not be here at all."

That editorial appeared in 1927, but it could have been any year. Over the last century, the paper *has* kept everlastingly after a host of causes, some of which were unpopular. Even a partial list of its successful campaigns is lengthy **(see list)**.

The *Times* has known defeat, too. For example, it opposed the paving of residential streets in the early 1900s (expensive and unnecessary, it said) and construction of the Million-Dollar Pier in the early 1920s. It has advocated prohibition, a single government for lower Pinellas County, a freshwater lake in upper Tampa Bay. It has opposed capital punishment for years. It fought construction of the Pinellas Bayway and the refinancing of the Sunshine Skyway bridge (to raise money for other road projects). In vain, it has called for the closing of Albert Whitted Airport since 1940. And in the last 15 years it has supported several proposals that the voters rejected — a north-south expressway linking St. Petersburg to north Pinellas, a school millage increase, a proposed Pier Park along the city's waterfront.

On some issues, the *Times*' position has changed over the years. In the 1920s, for example, it took a dim view of the Republican Party, arguing that there was enough diversity in the Democratic Party. But since the 1940s, it has advocated two-party politics for Pinellas and Florida. The paper that once endorsed white supremacy later became a champion of racial equality and desegregation. Over the years it also embraced causes and people that it later came to renounce, among them the Cross-Florida Barge Canal, J. Edgar Hoover, multi-member districts for state legislators and American intervention in Vietnam.

In its first 17 years, the *Times* did not devote much space to editorials and those it had were pretty tame, at least in the few issues that have been preserved. When W. L. Straub became editor in 1901, however, there was a change. Straub was a ripsnorting crusader who took his stands in windy editorials and front-page cartoons.

Straub was editor for more than three decades. When he died in 1939, Nelson Poynter — son of principal owner Paul Poynter — became editor. Poynter's editorial policy revolved around the projects and causes that he believed would make St. Petersburg and the

Suncoast "the best place in the world to live."

Many of the editorials of the Nelson Poynter era were written by a portly, bespectacled man named Warren Pierce. He served as chief editorial writer for all but three years from 1948 to 1967. Like Poynter, Pierce was a Hoosier. He was Poynter's chief editorial writer when Poynter was editor and publisher of the *Columbus* (Ohio) *Citizen* in 1935-37, and they worked together in the federal government's Office of War Information during World War II.

Poynter and Pierce were philosophical soulmates. They conferred frequently, and then Pierce would set to work, often with a black ceramic cigarette holder clenched in his teeth. From his typewriter flowed a steady stream of editorials that had Poynter's philosophy and Pierce's deft, quick touch.

For years, Warren Pierce was Nelson Poynter's philosophical soul-mate and chief editorial writer.

Robert Pittman, a tall, gentlemanly North Carolinian, has been editor of editorials since 1964.

IN 1963, another editorial writer arrived. This was Robert Pittman, a tall, gentlemanly North Carolinian with an unflappable personality and unshakably liberal convictions. He became editor of editorials in 1964, a title he still holds six years after Poynter's death.

The *Times*' editorial policy remains what it was in Poynter's lifetime, Pittman says. "It is fundamentally the desire to make St. Petersburg, Fla. the best place to live, work and visit and to be open to the changes that would achieve that objective," he says. To Pittman, that means strong, desegregated schools, a clean environment, efficient transportation and honest, responsive government.

As a liberal newspaper in a conservative town, the *Times* often angers readers. Some suggest that the paper's views are so different that it diminishes its capacity to persuade and lead. "I don't believe in editing by surveys and committee," responds editor and president Andrew Barnes. "If your position is widely disparate from that of the community and the community is wrong, you don't compromise. You do your best to argue and persuade. I don't think we would be doing our job if everybody always happily agreed with us."

A champion of causes

This is a partial list of causes that the Times has championed successfully over the last century:

■ Creation of Pinellas County (once part of Hillsborough County).
■ Public ownership and beautification of the St. Petersburg waterfront.
■ City manager form of government for St. Petersburg, county manager form for Pinellas County.
■ An efficient network of roads and bridges, including the building of a Gulf coast highway (now called U. S. 19).
■ Removal of tolls from the Gandy bridge and Courtney Campbell Parkway.
■ Construction of the Sunshine Skyway bridge.
■ State regulation of electric utilities.
■ The who-gave-it-who-got-it campaign finance law.
■ The constitutional amendment requiring financial-disclosure by public office-holders.
■ Voting machines instead of paper ballots.
■ A strong system of public education.
■ Desegregation of schools and public facilities.
■ Two-party politics for the county and state.
■ Long-range planning for the city and county.
■ A system of public parks, including the purchase of what is now Fort De Soto Park.
■ Removal of the railroad station from downtown.
■ A civic center and auditorium for St. Petersburg (the Bayfront Center).
■ A statewide network of educational television.
■ A universiry campus at Bayboro Harbor (University of South Florida), a law school in Gulfport (Stetson) and a college in south St. Petersburg (Eckerd College).
■ A clean environment.
■ Tough state regulation of nursing homes and facilities for the retarded.

How a color photo is reproduced in the Times

1 Usually, we start with a transparency, like the 35 mm one on the top of the facing page. It's the same sort of positive color image that photographers shoot for projection on a screen.
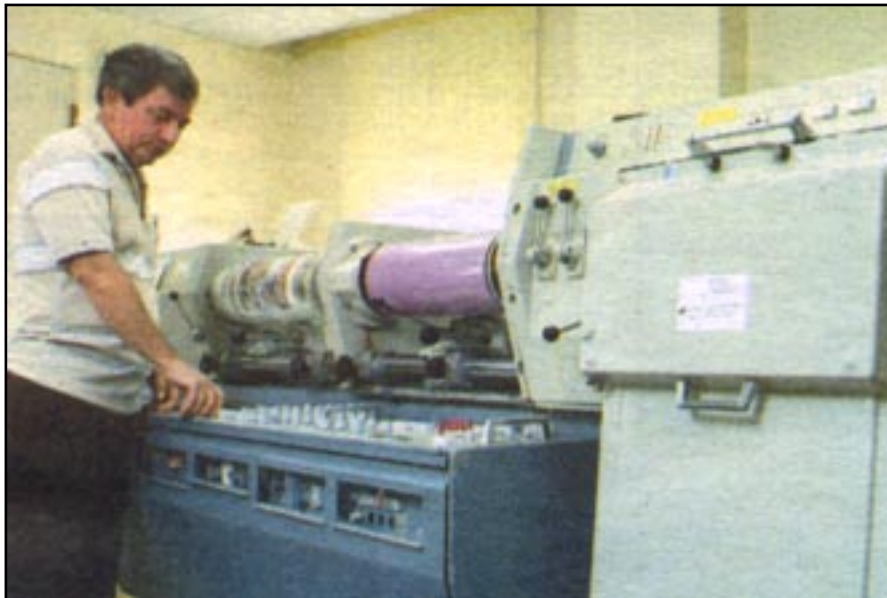
2 Now comes the phase in which the picture is broken down into its basic colors. (Why this is done will soon become apparent.) This process is called color separation and at the Times the separation is done on a laser scanner, an electronic device (left). After the size that the color photo will be in the paper has been determined, the transparency is taped to a clear plastic drum on the laser scanner. The drum then is rotated at a high speed. A lens moves along the rotating transparency and records the picture's color information in a series of scan lines.

3 A series of filters, prisms and electronics in the scanner then produces separate black-and-white images (top row, facing page) that represent the yellow, magenta, cyan and black portions of the color transparency. (To put it simply, magenta is a more pure form of red, which commonly contains a measure of yellow; cyan is a more pure form of blue, which commonly contains green.)
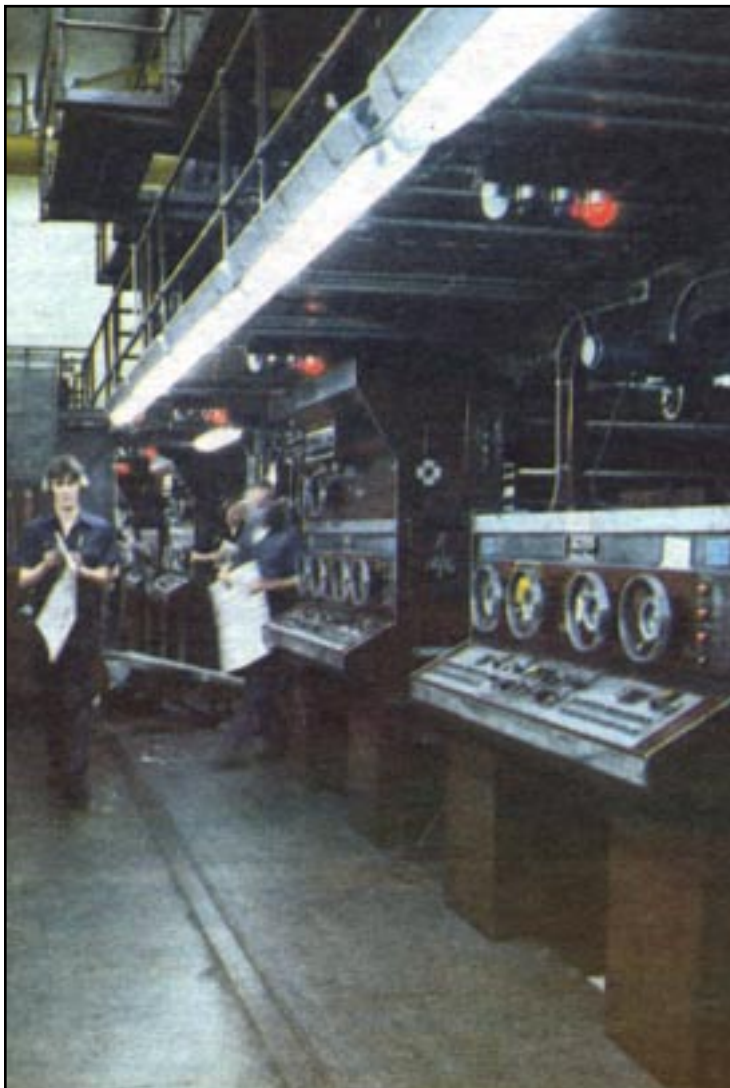
4 These four separate images are then transferred to plates that go on the press. When the appropriate color inks are applied, the plates appear as they will print on the press (bottom row, facing page).

5 When these four separate images are printed on top of one another on the press in exact registration, you have the photo as it appears in your paper.

The photo of the clown used in this explanation represents quite an accomplishment for the *Times.* In a Kodak competition earlier this year, our reproduction of this photo was selected as the best piece of newspaper color printing in the world, beating out some 500 other entries.

YELLOW

MAGENTA

CYAN

BLACK

St. Petersburg Times

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