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# Civil Rights, Wrong Turns, and New Directions [1962-1971]

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**“Civil Rights, Wrong Turns, and New Directions”**

*Remarks Delivered at the Seventh “Pinellas by the Decades” Program*

*Pinellas Room, Heritage Village*

*15 April 2012, 2:00 p.m.*

*by*

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**OPENING IMAGE** Welcome to the seventh program of “Pinellas by the Decades,” a series of lectures and conversations sponsored by the Pinellas County Historical Society at Heritage Village to commemorate the centennial of our independence from Hillsborough County on January 1, 1912.

Today, we take a trip back to the period from 1962 through 1971. Last month, we drove along the Gulf Coast Highway, US 19, from Pasco County to the Sunshine Skyway. **3 SKYWAY IMAGES** Today, we will start our journey atop the Skyway and return to the Pinellas peninsula. During our travels for the next hour, we will notice many new roads carved out of former groves. **HOUSE WITH TREES** We will see new suburbs on the mainland and planned retirement communities take shape. **MAD BEACH** Construction along the dredged and reshaped beaches continues at a frenzied pace. New tourist attractions appear, older ones flourish, and municipalities throughout "Peerless Pinellas" enjoy the postwar land boom.

We will encounter some potholes, however. **GREEN BENCHES** In St. Petersburg, city leaders rethink the concept of marketing the Sunshine City as a retirement mecca when outside observers refer to the crowded green benches as "God's waiting room." **MAN AT WEBB'S** At public accommodations and private establishments within view of those benches, another group of people, one long-denied the right to sit on those benches or fully use those facilities, also believed it was time for a change. Meanwhile, a Clearwater police officer named Leon W. Bradley decided his son deserved better educational opportunities, and the court case he started challenged persisting patterns of racial segregation.

**BEACH GIRLS** During this ten-year period, many old barriers fell, though some people still remained on the "other side of the tracks." New college campuses opened in St. Petersburg and Clearwater; new enclosed shopping malls

threatened their older, smaller counterparts; and new plans for regional transportation and resource management threatened to reopen old wounds across the bay. **FT HARRISON** Even if the Rolling Stones "Got no satisfaction" in the old Jack Tarr/Fort Harrison Hotel in downtown Clearwater, **OLD JIM** let's join a former student at St. Pete Junior College from the time, Jim Morrison of the Doors, and "break on through to the other side" of this decade. **NEW JIM**

Well, as we drive up US Highway 19 into St. Petersburg, once we pass the park at Maximo, we discover some construction on the west side of the road before 54th Avenue South. **FPC Aerial** During our last lecture, we talked about how Nelson Poynter, longtime editor and publisher of the *St. Petersburg Times*, joined other civic leaders in persuading other Presbyterian church officials to bring a new liberal arts college to the southern tip of the peninsula. **FPC AT BAYBORO** Florida Presbyterian was chartered in the late 1950s, and opened a temporary campus at the old Maritime Service Training Station barracks along Bayboro Harbor. **CHOIR** By 1963, the new campus took shape.

**BAYWAY AERIAL WITH DON** Nearby, a new toll road took shape: The Pinellas Bayway. The area between St. Petersburg and St. Pete Beach has largely been open bay, but dredge-and-fill operations during the 1950s and 1960s created new islands, including Isla del Sol and much of Tierra Verde. **BAYWAY AERIAL WITH TIERRA VERDE** At the northern end of Tierra Verde, a band conductor and some partners built a Port-O-Call. **GUY LOMBARDO** The nightclub and resort on the road to nowhere offered a trendy new venue far away from the city lights. **4 IMAGES OF TVIR**

If we stayed on this quiet road, we would cross over another bridge to reach Fort DeSoto, **AERIALS OF FORT** a park along Mullet Key that had once served as a protective garrison, along with the fort at Egmont Key, protecting the mouth of Tampa Bay. As we reach the end of the road and have to turn one way or another, we reach our first pothole in the road. **STOP SIGN** Of course, most people turn right and head toward the fort **FORT IMAGES** and North Beach.

But long before the roads were built to Fort DeSoto, by the early 1950s, the park board had already launched plans that would have prohibited some people from turning to the right. Instead, they would have no choice but to turn left, park at East Beach, and never spend time at the fort. **SPT 1953** Originally, East Beach

was designated as the so-called "Negro bathing beach." Although this plan never was implemented, this was just one of many challenges Pinellas County faced as a growing number of residents questioned the pervasive system of racial segregation throughout the county. **EAST BEACH**

Before we address this topic in greater detail, let's take a quick drive along the beach. As we reach St. Pete Beach, we see the Don CeSar. **DON** During this time, however, it's not filled with tourists. Used by the Veteran's Administration, its fate became uncertain during the early 1970s when the William Cramer Federal Building opened in downtown St. Petersburg. Up the road, tourists enjoyed wax renditions and year-round climate control to keep them and the figures from melting at the London Wax Museum. **LONDON WAX** In late 1964, the **Aquarium** opened along the gulf in St. Pete Beach on a seventeen-acre site southwest of the intersection of Blind Pass Road and Gulf Boulevard. **4 IMAGES** A golden, open-air dome covered a large exhibition tank, smaller training tank, and other displays. The attraction cost \$3.5 million to build. Attendance dropped as new competitors, such as Disney World and a revamped Busch Gardens, lured tourists elsewhere. In the mid-1970s, the owners tried to build attendance after the success of the *Jaws* movies by renaming the attraction Shark World, but the value of the land encouraged them to close the attraction in September 1978. After the site was cleared in 1981, developers replaced it with condominiums.

To relieve traffic congestion on the narrow two-lane **Corey Causeway**, in September 1966 construction began between St. Pete Beach and the area near the Palms of Pasadena Hospital across two islands to create the west-bound St. Petersburg Beach Causeway. In the 1970s, a second span followed this route and Corey Avenue became a dead-end road at Boca Ciega Bay. **2 IMAGES**

Driving over the **Blind Pass Bridge (4 IMAGES)**, we notice that Sunset Beach had experienced some development, but still maintained its residential character. **SUNSET** As we continue northward along Gulf Boulevard, we witness the heyday of a lively strip of glamorous hotels and motels with neon signs and neat designs. **8 IMAGES** We may want to stop and get some souvenirs (**KINGFISH**) before heading over the old John's Pass Bridge into Madeira Beach. **3 IMAGES**

By the late 1950s, the original and narrow 1926 span of the Welch Causeway had shown its age. At one point, mothers even stopped traffic on the bridge to allow school buses to cross the narrow structure without fear they would hit another vehicle. **IMAGE** On June 8, 1961, groundbreaking ceremonies took place for a replacement span. The new bridge and widened Madeira Beach Causeway are celebrated at a July 1962 ribbon cutting. **BRIDGE TODAY**

Well, since we crossed the bridge, let's take a quick detour through the Seminole area so we can watch homes replace the citrus groves. Jesse Johnson and others sparked the development of the area with the opening of the first phase of what would become Seminole Mall in the mid-1960s. **MALL NEWSPAPER** By 1970, the municipality was established. **CITY IS BORN** One of the notable developers in the Seminole area was Charles Cheezem. **IMAGE** While the newspaper archives are full of stories about Cheezem's developments, one person who knew his work quite well was a young man who came to the St. Petersburg area in the mid-1940s and became the photographer whose images framed Cheezem's ambitions, Jack Swenningsen. **2 JACK IMAGES**

Jack's photography captured the fun-and-sun lifestyle of the postwar era. His large "Mr. Sun" represented St. Petersburg, and he always found a way to incorporate a pretty kid, bathing beauty, or beauty queen into his works. **2 IMAGES** (Describe LIFE magazine special release). **5 IMAGES** (Retiree pictures) **2 IMAGES**

Back to the beaches, with these images by Jack of the **Redington Reef** at the Redington/North Redington town line, and a backyard **picnic** along the intracoastal. A court case in the late 1960s helped to reshape the conversations about dredging and slowed the reshaping of the coastline. The United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals issued a ruling in *Zabel v. Tabb* in regards to Alfred G. Zabel's longstanding plans to dredge Boca Ciega Bay to expand his trailer park into the bay by approximately twelve acres. Since the time that the Ratner Fill that created Isla del Sol had gained approval in the 1950s, new environmental laws and the 1968 National Estuary Protection Act offered greater protection for sensitive estuaries. After Army Corps of Engineers Colonel R. A. Tabb denied

Zabel's permit, Zabel sued in the spring of 1967. Ultimately, the government prevailed. Despite earlier permissions that Zabel may have received, the court ruled that they could take under consideration the cumulative effect of dredging on the waterway. This Pinellas-based decision by the court in New Orleans had national consequences for future dredge-and-fill projects. **2 WATERFRONT**

Up the road in Indian Shores, Frank and Jo Byars operated a small but popular gift shop, the Signal House, along Gulf Boulevard near the intersection of 196th Avenue. **3 IMAGES** After it caught fire in May 1963, they quickly rebuilt the shop and added a Polynesian theme. They also received permission to expand and modify their land holdings along the Narrows of Boca Ciega Bay with a dredge-and-fill permit. The gift shop reopened in December, and the new name Tiki Gardens debuted in mid-March 1964. The Byars sold Tiki Gardens to investors from Australia in 1992. Tiki Gardens closed shortly thereafter and the property later became a public beach access point owned by Pinellas County. **3 IMAGES**

The **Clearwater Pass Bridge** opened, connecting Clearwater Beach with the northern tip of Sand Key, in December 1962. Its opening promoted the development of areas between Belleair Beach and Clearwater Beach as homes, hotels, and later condominiums appeared along an area that was formerly used as a bombing range during World War II. The bridge became a popular route to the northern Gulf Beaches, with the one-millionth vehicle crossing the span in November 1964, less than two years later.

As cars headed out to the beach, new waves of controversy hit the coastline. In January 1964, Mayor R. Samuel Rileigh of Belleair Shore, the smallest municipality in the county, told members of the Clearwater League of Women Voters at a luncheon that he believed the Gulf Beaches communities should be permitted to secede from mainland Pinellas and create a separate county. Some of this issue involved complaints about road construction needs along the northern beaches of Sand Key, though Belleair Shore itself is unique in that the incorporated community of sixty-seven lots and thirty-three homes lacks any streets whatsoever. If the beginning of the year brought complaints about a lack of

roadways, residents along Dunedin could at least celebrate the opening of the Dunedin Causeway to Honeymoon Island in December 1964.

Road improvements to other areas promoted business and industry. Areas around the intersection of Park and Starkey had more homes as families settled east of Lake Seminole, though Bardmoor and many other developments remained more than a decade away. **Park/Starkey** Expansion took place at General Electric's **Pinellas Plant**, now the Young-Rainey STAR Center. Other Cold War and high tech industries of that era included the **Sperry Plant** in Oldsmar, **Honeywell (2 IMAGES)** at the intersection of Ulmerton Road and US 19, and **ECI (3 IMAGES)** in St. Petersburg, site of the recent ground contamination issue.

People sought "newer" solutions to the "older" problem in places such as St. Petersburg. During the 1920s land boom, Florida welcomed seasonal retirees. In the 1940s and 1950s, the city even sponsored a filmmaker to create promotional films about St. Petersburg, the world famous "Sunshine City." The 1960 decennial census changed the focus of the conversation. In 1960, half of the population of downtown St. Petersburg, as defined by census tracts, was over the age of 66. During the early years of the 1960s, city leaders tried to reinvent and reinvigorate the city, wanting to toss aside the image of retirees on green benches and replace those scenes with a lively, invigorated community. **DOWNTOWN**

Soon, many of the green benches disappeared. Some benches of other colors arrived, but fewer people congregated on them. In part, the decline of the crowds of retirees was the result of a concerted effort to transform the downtown, whether it was removing green benches or replacing **Million Dollar Piers** with **"Inverted Pyramid" Piers**. However, other factors were involved, such as the presence of climate controlled community rooms and retirement communities **5 IMAGES**, as well as the growing influence that television and other forms of media had in our lives **WTOG**.

Other changes were a sign of the times. Railroads may have brought the first stream of settlers to St. Petersburg, but by the 1950s the downtown terminals caused colossal traffic headaches. **2 IMAGES** In 1959, the Seaboard Air Line moved its terminal to Fairfield Avenue South just east of US Highway 19 and just north of Gibbs High School. The terminal remained in operation until 1968, and the former building still stands, owned by a private company. **4 IMAGES** Due to a growing number of complaints about traffic jams caused by passenger trains in downtown St. Petersburg, the Atlantic Coast Line also moved its depot out of the downtown to the area near 38th Avenue and 31st Street North, a few miles northwest of the downtown. **4 IMAGES** With railroad service pushed out to the suburbs, improvements along downtown corridors, and especially along First Avenue South, were able to occur. **10 IMAGES**

On February 12, 1971, railroad freight service ceased at the Pinellas Park depot. The facility, approximately sixty years of age at that time, was called an "eyesore" by Mayor Mel Dinsmore. A week later, the Seaboard Coastline Railroad sought possible places to move the structure, but a newly passed ordinance prohibited it from being relocated within the city limits, dashing hopes of those who wanted to restore it as a museum. The structure presently along the tracks at Park Boulevard came much later. By this time, Largo's depot had already been demolished. As railroad service began to decline **2 IMAGES**, automobiles became more numerous on the roadways, though some stretches of highway, such as the intersection of Ulmerton Road and Belcher still seemed quaint in the early 1960s. **2 images** The development of suburbs brought the first signs of sprawl to much of Pinellas, something certainly aided by the development of new shopping plazas that competed with older establishments, such as **Webb's City** in St. Petersburg.

In November 1961, groundbreaking took place for a twenty-five store project anchored by a Sears on unincorporated land at the intersection of Missouri Avenue and Lakeview Road. The shopping center, known for many years as ***Sears Town***, promoted suburban development in the area between Largo and Clearwater as stores opened by 1962. Clearwater made plans to annex the site

soon after construction began. During the spring of 1964, the 1,200 residents of Ozona, a community between Dunedin and Palm Harbor celebrated plans for the area's first shopping center. Located at the intersection of Orange and Florida avenues, the store would have six tenants. Many of the commercial fishers and grove workers who once lived in the area had started to be replaced by northern transplants that had more disposable income. Commercial fishing had ended with the dredging and filling of St. Joseph Sound. The recent development at Dunedin beach and the Causeway Shopping Center a mile to the south led to more residents in the area.

Much excitement came to Missouri Avenue in Clearwater in September 1968, when traffic jams and gold ribbons punctuated ceremonies at the opening of **Sunshine Mall**, called the "Suncoast's largest shopping mall," the third largest in Florida at the time, and "the longest straight one in Florida." The enclosed, air-conditioned shopping center contained seventy-one stores. The site was previously home to citrus groves. On this opening day, more than 60,000 customers came to the store between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., more visitors than the population of Clearwater at that time. Backups of eight to ten miles were reported on the two-lane roads, such as Missouri Avenue, as residents flocked to see this newest and totally enclosed shopping complex located across Missouri Avenue from Sears Town. Some people parked as far as Highland Avenue and walked to the mall, leading a mall representative to proclaim that "It shows the people of this area want an air-conditioned mall." Other malls soon followed this fully enclosed format, such as the first Clearwater Mall, Countryside Mall, **Gateway Mall**, Tyrone Square Mall, and an expanded **Seminole Mall**. Ironically, crowds had all but disappeared from the mall by the mid-1990s, as most consumers traveled to other shopping centers. Thirty years after opening, Sunshine Mall was demolished in 1998 and replaced by condos.

To get people to these new shopping destinations, mass transportation became an emerging topic of discussion. While St. Petersburg had a municipal transit system of buses, many areas of central and northern Pinellas lacked regular

service. In October 1970, Sunshine Mall (in Clearwater) and Seminole Mall became the first anchors of a new mass transit service to link Clearwater routes already in existence with outlying areas such as Oldsmar, High Point, and the Gulf Beaches. The Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, state Department of Transportation, and local authorities partnered to create the Central Pinellas Transit Authority (CPTA). Initial fares were ten cents. The CPTA later combined with the Clearwater system as the primary bus service for central and northern Pinellas County. Routes entered St. Petersburg at locations such as Tyrone Square Mall, so riders could transfer to the buses operated by the St. Petersburg Municipal Transit System. Later, these services merged into a single Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA). We've been driving around quite a bit, and by April 1968 we could take comfort in knowing that local radio station WDAE began renting an airplane that allowed them to offer "1250 Sky Patrol," the first traffic-related broadcast in the region to use aircraft to ensure accurate reports on conditions below.

Of course, we also know buses can be used to transport students as well as shoppers. While many of us remember "busing" as a hot-button topic during the 1970s, we must remember that for many years school buses were frequently used in Pinellas County to transport children away from nearby schools because of their race, not to INTEGRATE, but instead to maintain segregation. **OLD BUS** One parent who knew that was Leon Bradley, an African American resident of Clearwater who also served in that city's police department. Although the May 1954 *Brown* decision required an end to "separate" schools, Pinellas and other segregated systems tried first to maintain segregation by beefing up African American schools. As demands to end Jim Crow schools continued, they offered token integration, a few children in a school, as a gradualist approach. To Bradley and others, this was not enough and truly violated the spirit of the court decision.

The legal attack on Pinellas County's dual system began with a class action suit filed in the U.S. District Court in Tampa on May 7, 1964. Bradley met with four other Clearwater residents and an individual from St. Petersburg. This group

agreed to challenge the school board's gradualist strategy. The NAACP Legal Defense Fund assigned a young attorney named James Sanderlin to the case. In *Bradley v. Board of Public Instruction of Pinellas County*, Sanderlin, **SHOWN HERE** argued that nearly a decade after Brown, less than two percent of the county's black pupils attended desegregated schools. He contended that the district permitted whites to transfer to all-white schools, while blacks could enroll in a white school only if it was the nearest facility.

The case went through the court system throughout the mid and late 1960s. Various plans were discussed, including the clustering of schools in certain geographic areas. Although progress was made, many schools remained largely or entirely segregated. Court decisions in other areas, including a notable case in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina, led the federal court system to move forward with a court order that allowed the same bus system that had maintained segregation to start transporting students with plans for integration.

Tensions remained high at certain schools, especially Boca Ciega, Dixie Holins, and Gibbs high schools **2 IMAGES** as the implementation decree went into full force in the fall of 1971. One group, Parents Against Forced Busing, made strong arguments against attempts at racial integration. We will continue our conversation about these events as we get into the 1970s.

They were not, however, the only challenges to customs and traditions from the past. A native of segregated St. Petersburg, Joe Waller came into a world that condoned and often celebrated segregation. After getting involved in the civil rights struggles of the early 1960s, Waller--then in his mid-20s--joined others in St. Petersburg's African American community who saw the work of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the NAACP, and similar groups as too gradualist. Familiar with a large mural that adorned the stairways of St. Peterburg's city hall, Waller and others grabbed this mural, with its caricatured black man crooning in a racist portrayal, and took it from city hall in 1966. **2 IMAGES** Waller faced immediate arrest and a long series of court trials. Before the end of the decade, the Junta of Militant Organizations and the African People's Socialist Party were

organized by Waller--later known as Omali Yeshitela--and others. They took their concerns to a larger, international stage through the Uhuru Movement.

While many people, then as well as today, may find some or parts of their message controversial, the early years of the Uhuru Movement did not occur in a vacuum. Racism in St. Petersburg and other areas of Pinellas was pervasive, and measures such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 provided little relief when obscene discrepancies remained. Some of the people doing the hardest and most thankless work demanded respect. Although a strike by St. Petersburg sanitation workers had taken place in 1966, a larger strike began in May 1968, a few weeks after Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination. Workers were forced to endure 48-hour workweeks and few raises had been offered. The strike brought their concern for their struggles to the larger community as trash baked under the heat of the Sunshine City's warmth. **2 IMAGES**

While the disparities in St. Petersburg and Clearwater have been well documented, we must remember that this was a problem throughout the county. Let's briefly focus on a community few of you may have heard of that is "on the other side of the tracks" from Safety Harbor. First, the good news. On November 10, 1964, William Blackshear became the ***first***-ever African American elected to a city office in Pinellas County when he won a seat on the Safety Harbor city commission in an election held on this day. He took his oath of office and was seated on November 23.

Fast forward to the early months of 1970. In the small African-American settlement of Brooklyn, a youth group began digging trenches so that residents would have access to fresh water. Most of the thirty-five families in the area north of the Safety Harbor city limits lacked any internal plumbing, and had, at most, a community spigot. Residents had to carry water to their homes from a community water tap in buckets and containers. Even this single tap was considered a luxury in earlier years: The reason the City of Safety Harbor installed the tap was to provide a source of fresh water after an outbreak of infant

dysentery had occurred in Brooklyn so the outbreak could be contained before it had a chance to spread to the white community. The families in this small four-block area near the railroad had lived there for three or four generations under such conditions.

As pipeline construction began to bring additional running water to the Brooklyn settlement near Safety Harbor, another improvement residents sought was to have the sandy streets covered with a layer of shell. Their initial request for the county to provide approximately \$850 in shell to improve some streets was denied on April 14. Volunteers from the community even agreed to provide the labor necessary to spread the shells for the pavement. A September 1970 compromise led to county workers spreading the shell on these roads after Brooklyn's financially challenged families raised \$1,100 by auctioning household goods and their few possessions to pay the county for this simple improvement. Work on shelling the roads was finished in mid-October 1970. Residents installed mailboxes in June 1971 and, for the first time, regular postal delivery service began that month. Improved trash collection services came in the fall. Finally, a tiny enclave forgotten by the larger world was allowed to enter the twentieth century!

During this busy decade, the sponge industry of Tarpon met a similar fate as the cigar industry of Ybor City, as workers in these industries sought new opportunities. The once busy docks and Sponge Exchange began to find new life with tourism, curio shops, and restaurants. **9 IMAGES** Not that the city was entirely quiet. A visit by Vice President Spiro Agnew to Tarpon brought crowds in 1969. **2 IMAGES**

Other politicians also made their marks in Florida during this time. **2 IMAGES** Sidney Colon, the man who had named a city for his son Kenneth in the 1950s, brought his plans for development to the Countryside area east of Clearwater. During the late 1960s, his "On Top of the World" condominium community became a popular planned community surrounded by groves that soon gave way

to shopping centers. **2 IMAGES** Before the end of the decade, "condomania" began to grip Pinellas, and even boats could enjoy condo-like accommodations.

### **BOAT CONDO**

Inexpensive gas **OLD STATION** allowed tourists to visit the region's many attractions, such as Sunken Gardens. **5 IMAGES** Tourist attractions even appeared on the outskirts of Largo, as Citrus City now celebrated the arrival of **Shell Land** along US 19. That attraction did not last very long, and neither did the plans for the National Football League's newest team, the **Miami Dolphins**, to use unoccupied acreage at the site of "Dolphin Village" in St. Pete Beach, as their training facility. The decision probably had to do with all of the shells in the dirt that cut the players as they scrimmaged. Spring training remained a popular annual event as crowds came to Pinellas. **AL LANG** And new venues, such as the Bayfront Center, brought new life to downtown St. Petersburg year-round.

### **AERIAL**

Some institutions appeared and grew. In addition to Eckerd College, Pinellas County celebrated the arrival of a new campus of St. Petersburg Junior College in Clearwater in the mid 1960s **SPJC CLWR** and the establishment of Clearwater Christian College at the approach of the Courtney Campbell Causeway in 1966. Meanwhile, USF President John Allen had to find a temporary overflow campus to deal with enrollment in Tampa. (Give brief USFSP history with its establishment in 1965.) **2 IMAGES**

As Pinellas passed its fiftieth anniversary, concern for preserving its history grew. In the basement of the old courthouse, Ralph Reed carefully collected many treasures, most of which are here at Heritage Village today. **2 IMAGES**

We must remember, however, that much of the focus during this decade was forward-looking rather than retrospective. New businesses supported a growing population. **BANK** Schools, such as Largo High School here **2 IMAGES**, continued to experience enrollment booms.

Last month, we ended our lecture with Al Boyd and his family establishing Boot Ranch in northeastern Pinellas, around Oldsmar and East Lake, as a refuge for the cattle and open range at a time when growth came to much of the rest of the region. As these images from an Oldsmar nursery show, much of this area remained rural in character well into the late 1960s. **NURSERY 2 IMAGES** Even here, however, threats loomed. As developers carved new suburbs east of Lake Tarpon, many of the pasturelands disappeared. In 1970, locals worried that plans to develop a small, one-runway airport on a fifty-acre tract one mile east of East Lake Road and one-quarter mile south of Keystone Road would disrupt cattle and dairy production in the region. They came together and established the Rural Protective Association as a non-profit organization to oppose the airport and prevent suburban encroachment. Gathering at Al Boyd's Boot Ranch, a large agricultural ranch once noted for its prize cattle and horses with a seventeen-foot high boot by its entrance, residents of the sparsely developed area fought a last ditch—and ultimately unsuccessful—battle to preserve their rural lifestyle in the frontier range of northeastern Pinellas County. Despite their lobbying efforts, members of the Rural Protective Association could not halt the wave of development that spilled along the eastern shores of Lake Tarpon after the opening of this small airport, known as Tarpon Air Park.

Al Boyd sold Boot Ranch “on a handshake” to a land development company in 1972 and the Boyd family's landholdings shrunk to under 500 acres by the late 1980s. Developers transformed tracts formerly owned by Boyd into the East Lake Woodlands, Lansbrook, and Boot Ranch subdivisions. Ironically, the site that caused such consternation, today seems so underdeveloped. **AERIAL OF AIRPARK** Yet, as our plane gains elevation, we can look down and notice that the East Lake area of 2012 differs greatly from the cows, trees, and groves that were dominant before the Air Park opened and Boyd sold his holdings. **2D AERIAL**

Well, we need to land somewhere, and since Tarpon Air Park is no longer open, let's land into another regional rivalry, one that doesn't just involve Pinellas and

Hillsborough, but much of central Florida. During the 1950s and 1960s, **St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport** and **Tampa International Airport** both offered regular flights from major airlines. During the 1960s, officials across Tampa Bay laid out plans to expand TIA's presence from its quaint headquarters at the northern end of Westshore Boulevard **NIGHT IMAGE**, to take advantage of the wide open spaces west and north of the runways **TAMPA AIRPORT MOTEL**. While development around St. Pete/Clearwater Airport limited the possibility of expansion for our airport on this side of the bay, in 1971, the new Landside and Airside Terminals of Tampa International Airport replaced the **crowded facilities of the late 1960s**. This new facility, recognized globally for its design, came into operation at the perfect moment. **2 IMAGES** A few miles up the road, near Kissimmee, something else opened up in late 1971 **DISNEY OPENS**, and TIA was perfectly situated to serve as the primary airport for the new attraction while little **McCoy Field** in Orlando remained a small destination.

There you have it. By 1971, the Tampa Bay region was starting to take shape. During this busy decade we watched Pinellas grow and get through some growing pains. As enter the 1970s, we will see that sometimes those pains and challenges remain as the region reaches maturity.

Thanks for coming today. I do have time for questions.