Panel 08: Peace, Quiet, and Noise in the Distance

James Anthony Schnur,
Nelson Poynter Memorial Library.

Follow this and additional works at: https://digital.usfsp.edu/npml_outreach_exhibits

Recommended Citation
https://digital.usfsp.edu/npml_outreach_exhibits/5
Peace, Quiet, and Noise in the Distance

The United States Maritime Service Training Station was decommissioned in March 1950. For the next few years, a skeleton staff maintained the facility. Knowing that the federal government had no interest in reopening the buildings, city leaders lobbied to take possession of the former base through a lease agreement with the U.S. Department of Commerce's Maritime Administration. They came to terms on May 1, 1954.

The year 1954 marked an important and transitional point in the history of St. Petersburg. In September 1954, residents of St. Petersburg celebrated the opening of the Sunshine Skyway bridge—thus ending the need to drive through Tampa or take the Bee Line Ferry in order to travel to south Florida. Also, classes began at Stetson University's new campus for its College of Law, located on the grounds of the former Rolyat Hotel in Gulfport.

With the passage of the G.I. Bill in the late 1940s, former veterans flocked to postsecondary institutions in record numbers. But residents in Pinellas County had few nearby choices. Established in 1927, St. Petersburg Junior College offered freshman and sophomore courses. Stetson provided graduate training in law. But the closest senior college was the University of Tampa, a private institution along the waterfront of downtown Tampa. Florida's three public universities were hours away in Gainesville and Tallahassee.

Community leaders began to wonder if the classrooms, dormitories, and facilities of the abandoned Maritime Base might offer a future site for a college or university.

When state officials announced that a new public university would be located somewhere in central Florida, civic and business leaders in Pinellas County proposed a variety of sites, including tracts near Oldsmar, the Maximo area (site of the present-day Eckerd College campus), and the former base. Their plans were dashed, however, when Hillsborough County was selected as the site for the new University of South Florida.

As an interim measure, St. Petersburg decided to lease the structures on the peninsula to a variety of public and private entities. The Salt Water Fisheries Division of the State Board of Conservation opened offices and laboratories in October 1955. A half century later, through many name changes, this agency continues to operate on the peninsula as the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute.

Other tenants during the mid- and late 1950s included a school for disabled children, an electronics company, a sail repair shop, an office for the State Highway Patrol, and even a square dance hall that operated in the large auditorium of the former Maritime Base administration building.

Community leaders hoped that the abandoned buildings might be used as the site for a college or university. But state officials announced plans for a new public university in central Florida. As a result, civic and business leaders proposed various sites, including tracts near Oldsmar, the Maximo area, and the former base. These plans were dashed, however, when Hillsborough County was selected as the site for the new University of South Florida.

As an interim measure, St. Petersburg decided to lease the structures on the peninsula to a variety of public and private entities. The Salt Water Fisheries Division of the State Board of Conservation opened offices and laboratories in October 1955. A half century later, through many name changes, this agency continues to operate on the peninsula as the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute.

Other tenants during the mid- and late 1950s included a school for disabled children, an electronics company, a sail repair shop, an office for the State Highway Patrol, and even a square dance hall that operated in the large auditorium of the former Maritime Base administration building.

Community leaders began to wonder if the classrooms, dormitories, and facilities of the abandoned Maritime Base might offer a future site for a college or university.

When state officials announced that a new public university would be located somewhere in central Florida, civic and business leaders in Pinellas County proposed a variety of sites, including tracts near Oldsmar, the Maximo area (site of the present-day Eckerd College campus), and the former base. Their plans were dashed, however, when Hillsborough County was selected as the site for the new University of South Florida.

As an interim measure, St. Petersburg decided to lease the structures on the peninsula to a variety of public and private entities. The Salt Water Fisheries Division of the State Board of Conservation opened offices and laboratories in October 1955. A half century later, through many name changes, this agency continues to operate on the peninsula as the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute.

Other tenants during the mid- and late 1950s included a school for disabled children, an electronics company, a sail repair shop, an office for the State Highway Patrol, and even a square dance hall that operated in the large auditorium of the former Maritime Base administration building.

With the passage of the G.I. Bill in the late 1940s, former veterans flocked to postsecondary institutions in record numbers. But residents in Pinellas County had few nearby choices. Established in 1927, St. Petersburg Junior College offered freshman and sophomore courses. Stetson provided graduate training in law. But the closest senior college was the University of Tampa, a private institution along the waterfront of downtown Tampa. Florida's three public universities were hours away in Gainesville and Tallahassee.

Community leaders began to wonder if the classrooms, dormitories, and facilities of the abandoned Maritime Base might offer a future site for a college or university.

When state officials announced that a new public university would be located somewhere in central Florida, civic and business leaders in Pinellas County proposed a variety of sites, including tracts near Oldsmar, the Maximo area (site of the present-day Eckerd College campus), and the former base. Their plans were dashed, however, when Hillsborough County was selected as the site for the new University of South Florida.

As an interim measure, St. Petersburg decided to lease the structures on the peninsula to a variety of public and private entities. The Salt Water Fisheries Division of the State Board of Conservation opened offices and laboratories in October 1955. A half century later, through many name changes, this agency continues to operate on the peninsula as the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute.

Other tenants during the mid- and late 1950s included a school for disabled children, an electronics company, a sail repair shop, an office for the State Highway Patrol, and even a square dance hall that operated in the large auditorium of the former Maritime Base administration building.

Community leaders began to wonder if the classrooms, dormitories, and facilities of the abandoned Maritime Base might offer a future site for a college or university.

When state officials announced that a new public university would be located somewhere in central Florida, civic and business leaders in Pinellas County proposed a variety of sites, including tracts near Oldsmar, the Maximo area (site of the present-day Eckerd College campus), and the former base. Their plans were dashed, however, when Hillsborough County was selected as the site for the new University of South Florida.

As an interim measure, St. Petersburg decided to lease the structures on the peninsula to a variety of public and private entities. The Salt Water Fisheries Division of the State Board of Conservation opened offices and laboratories in October 1955. A half century later, through many name changes, this agency continues to operate on the peninsula as the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute.

Other tenants during the mid- and late 1950s included a school for disabled children, an electronics company, a sail repair shop, an office for the State Highway Patrol, and even a square dance hall that operated in the large auditorium of the former Maritime Base administration building.

Community leaders began to wonder if the classrooms, dormitories, and facilities of the abandoned Maritime Base might offer a future site for a college or university.

When state officials announced that a new public university would be located somewhere in central Florida, civic and business leaders in Pinellas County proposed a variety of sites, including tracts near Oldsmar, the Maximo area (site of the present-day Eckerd College campus), and the former base. Their plans were dashed, however, when Hillsborough County was selected as the site for the new University of South Florida.

As an interim measure, St. Petersburg decided to lease the structures on the peninsula to a variety of public and private entities. The Salt Water Fisheries Division of the State Board of Conservation opened offices and laboratories in October 1955. A half century later, through many name changes, this agency continues to operate on the peninsula as the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute.

Other tenants during the mid- and late 1950s included a school for disabled children, an electronics company, a sail repair shop, an office for the State Highway Patrol, and even a square dance hall that operated in the large auditorium of the former Maritime Base administration building.