

2019 NEH SUMMER INSTITUTE: “JOSÉ MARTÍ AND THE IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES OF FLORIDA IN CUBAN INDEPENDENCE AND THE DAWN OF THE AMERICAN CENTURY”

PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

The following abstracts are listed by week in chronological order. They are subject to modification until the date of the Institute.

Following each abstract, we have included a list of Required Readings to accompany the presentations. A comprehensive list of these readings is also found under the heading READINGS.

All REQUIRED readings will be made available to the Institute participants via electronic delivery or a print reader if preferred. In addition, a copy of the Penguin Classics edition of José Martí's *Selected Writings* will be distributed to all participants. All REQUIRED and RECOMMENDED readings will be made available for Institute participants either through electronic delivery or library reserve.

WEEK ONE: The Immigrant World Of Ybor City And Key West, 1860-1900

Rodney Kite-Powell, “The Immigrant Worlds of Ybor City, 1886-1900”

The session will focus on founding and early development of Tampa's two cigar manufacturing Latin enclaves, Ybor City and West Tampa. The specific topics to be covered include the process by which Vicente Martinez Ybor and Ignacio Haya selected Tampa as the new home for their cigar manufacturing operations, the efforts by Tampa's Anglo-led Board of Trade to entice them to Tampa, and the early clashes between the mostly Cuban workforce and the Anglo and Spanish business leadership. Special attention will be paid to the similarities and differences between Ybor City and the City of West Tampa as well as the role that the cigar industry's Cuban labor force played in the War of Cuban Independence. Other themes, which will be explored in more depth in subsequent sessions, will include the role of race, sex, and class in the early years of Ybor City and West Tampa as well as labor problems and vigilante enforcement of local laws and mores.

Required Readings

Mormino, Gary and George Pozzetta. *The Immigrant World of Ybor City: Italians and their Latin Neighbors in Tampa, 1885-1985* (University of Illinois Press, 1987). [Chapter 3: Ybor City and the Beginning of a Latin Community, 1886-1900, pp. 63-96.]

Mendez, Armando. *Ciudad de Cigars: West Tampa* (Florida Historical Society, 1994). [Pp. 1-74.]

Westfall, Loy Glenn. *Tampa Bay: Cradle of Cuban Liberty* (Key West Cigar City USA, 2000). [Pp. 29-74].

Kendra Dworkin, “The Cultural World of the Cigar Worker”

Starting in the mid-1880s and becoming fully effective by the 1930s, the “curriculum of culture” Tampa’s Latin immigrant, cigar-making enclaves circulated in the spaces they and residents occupied regularly—the cigar factory, mutual aid society, the coffeehouse, and the theater (also in homes and the union hall). These Cuban (and Spanish and Italian) cultural and social values were passed on from one generation to the next, and even to non-Cubans, via reverse assimilation. The outcome was an ethnic American identity whose impact thoroughly transformed living and working spaces in a segregated, Jim Crow space, and fundamentally reshaped its landscape, foodways, and identity. Our purpose will be to examine this “curriculum of culture,” a culturally and socially situated set of values that conveyed knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors, and was contingent upon community-defined and redefined competencies regarding how not only to survive and thrive in the host society but also to be agents of their own lives and mediate social class and cultural differences. We will analyze this culture as it flourished in the abovementioned spaces and also in homes and union halls, all through historical evidence, translated theatrical excerpts, and oral histories.

Required Readings

Dworkin y Méndez, Kenya C. “Latin Place Making in the Late 19th & Early 20th Centuries: Cuban Émigrés and their Transnational Impact in Tampa, FL,” *English Language Notes* (2018) 56 (2): 124-142. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00138282-6960823>

— — — . “When a “New Deal” Became a Raw Deal: Depression-Era, ‘Latin’ Federal Theatre,” *TRANSMODERNITY: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* (1:1) <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/3rd2z64t>.

Susan Greenbaum, “Más que negro: The Anti-Racism of José Martí and the Afro-Cuban Community of Ybor City”

Slavery and racism were crucial elements of the Cuban independence struggle, but the revolutionists struggled with internal contradictions. The 19th century Cuban poet/revolutionist, José Martí, was an ardent anti-racist. He was unusual for this view when most white intellectuals believed that science supported unequal abilities and unequal treatment of Africans and their descendants. For Martí it was a matter of both principle and pragmatism. Maintaining solidarity between black and white independence fighters was essential both for military success and political succession. The Cuban exile community in Florida, a critical segment of the movement, labored under a racist regime more extreme and overt than in Cuba. Martí’s frequent visits to Tampa included both gestures and genuine partnership with Afro-Cuban revolutionists. His death in 1895 and emergent power of the US adversely affected the anti-racist comradeship of Cubans in Tampa.

Required Readings

Greenbaum, Susan D. *More than Black: Afro-Cubans in Tampa*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002; pp. 57-147.

Gerald E. Poyo, “Key West’s Revolutionary Community, 1868-1898”

Almost from the moment of the outbreak of Cuba’s Ten Years War on October 10, 1868, Cubans began arriving in Key West to escape Spanish persecution. Within a year, an activist exile community formed that for thirty years remained actively committed to struggling for Cuban independence. My presentation will examine the growth and development of the community and explore its nationalist thought, revolutionary strategies, relations with José Martí, and unwavering commitment to the independence war of 1895.

Required Reading

Poyo, Gerald E. *Exile and Revolution: José D. Poyo, Key West, and Cuban Independence* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014): pp. _____.

Lisandro Pérez, “José Martí, New Yorker”

José Martí lived most of his adult life in New York. This presentation places Martí in his New York milieu and identifies the ways in which the city influenced his life and work. From democratic culture, corruption, expansionism, stark social contrasts and social justice, Martí was exposed to what New York had to offer: a look at the new patterns of urban modernity. New York was also the premier setting, for decades before Martí arrived, of émigré activities on behalf of Cuban separatism. Félix Varela, the annexationists, the exiles from the Ten-Years War, and the autonomists, all represent a tradition of Cuban activism in the city. Martí applied the lessons he learned from the failed history of Cuban separatism in New York to his campaign for independence, accomplishing what no Cuban émigré leader has been able to do, before or after him: create a unified civilian movement that initiated a sustained war effort in Cuba. His foresight also proved prophetic when the events of 1898 frustrated the quest for Cuban sovereignty. The focus of this presentation is on Martí as a New Yorker, in all its dimensions, from the political and intellectual to his everyday life in the city.

Required Readings

Pérez, Lisandro. *Sugar, Cigars, and Revolution: The Making of Cuban New York*. New York: University Press, 2018. [Introduction: “New York Stories” (pp. 1 – 15); Chapter 8: “José Martí: New Yorker” (pp. 270 – 299); Epilogue: “Martí Should Not Have Died” (pp. 301 – 321)]

Week Two: José Martí at the Intersection of Empires

James López, “Jose Martí: Life and Works”

This presentation will provide an integrated portrait of José Martí’s life and work in his historical and intellectual context, living on the edge of the two Americas, and of two epochs. Martí gave his life in the heroic pursuit of national liberation, but unlike the heroes of South American independence at the start of the 19th century, Martí did so with greater awareness than any other Latin American of his time of the full force of 20th century modernity that was on the verge of being unleashed upon the world, “the giant with seven-league boots” as he called it in his extraordinary essay “Our America.” He learned this as an exile in New York City at the height of the Gilded Age, where he lived for fifteen years, and before that as an exile in Venezuela, and before that in Guatemala, and before that in Mexico, and before that in Spain, always one step ahead of imprisonment and death. His fascinating life, and the writing it produced, is paradigmatic and exemplary, and will be carefully and coherently traced in this lecture.

Gabriel Cartaya, “Tampa’s Response to José Martí”

José Martí’s first visit to Tampa in November 1891 surpassed his expectations and set in motion the process that would lead to the creation of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, an organization that was able to unite the Cuban independence movement around a program that imagined political independence as the first step toward the founding of a free, democratic, working class republic dedicated to social justice. The patriotic atmosphere and the level of social cohesion among the Cuban immigrant community of Tampa increased after Martí’s first visit to the city, in large part due to their identification with the principles outlined in his speeches “With All and For the Good of All” and “The New Pines.” The writing of the “Tampa Resolutions,” which were conceived, discussed and approved by the Cuban immigrants of this city, represents the moment when Martí emerges as the undisputed leader of the Cuban revolutionary movement and the one charged with forging the image of an ideal republic that would respond to the deepest aspiration of the Cuban people. The principles that Martí communicated during his first visit to Tampa, and which modeled the future republic he hoped to create, became from then on the foundation of the model *patria* that continues to frame and inspire the political discourse among Cubans both on and off the island nation.

Required Readings.

Martí, José. “With All and For the Good of All,” “The New Pines,” and “The Tampa Resolutions”

Esther Allen, “José Martí as a U.S. Writer”

In June of 2018, during a gala ceremony, José Martí was inaugurated, along with five other writers, living and dead, into the New York State Writers Hall of Fame. The event received no attention from the Anglophone U.S. media, but was the subject of several articles in Spanish-

language Cuban media on and off the island. Most of this coverage simply took note of the facts, but an essay in the Cuban journal *La Jiribilla* by Luis Toledo Sande, author of a biography of Martí, expressed certain tacit concerns, and wondered whether it was the case that “la iniciativa neoyorquina se asume con perspectiva ni colonizante ni colonizada.” His question deserves serious consideration. What happens when we think of Martí not simply as someone who happened, through an unfortunate series of circumstances, to end up living in and writing about the United States, but as a writer who—like Alexis de Tocqueville, or the 17th-century Dutch lawyer Adriaen van der Donck, of New Amsterdam—deserves to be read as part of the U.S. canon, alongside Walt Whitman, William Carlos Williams, and Gloria Anzaldúa?

Required Readings

Required readings:

Otheguy, Emma. *Martí's Song for Freedom / Martí y sus versos por la libertad*, illustrations by Beatriz Vidal. Lee and Low 2017.

Pérez, Lisandro. *Sugar, Cigars and Revolution: The Making of Cuban New York*. NYU Press 2018.

Toledo Sande, Luis. "Salon de la Fama en Nueva York se honra con José Martí," *La Jiribilla* 846 (27 de junio al 31 de julio de 2018). <http://www.lajiribilla.cu/articulo/salon-de-la-fama-en-nueva-york-se-honra-con-jose-marti>

Anne Fountain, “José Martí and American Thinkers”

José Martí was a thoughtful and well-informed reader of books, newspapers and articles that reflected the intellectual as well as the political pulse of the United States from 1880 to 1895. His knowledge of U.S. authors and their works affected his life, his political perspectives and his writing. In the nearly fifteen years that Martí lived in the United States, he liberally absorbed ideas and concepts from American writers, especially Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman, but also from proponents of social change such as Helen Hunt Jackson, who championed the cause of North American Indians. Emerson’s ideas permeate Martí’s work after 1882 and are a presence in the Cuban’s most popular poetry, *Versos Sencillos*. Whitman’s verses reinforced Martí’s deep humanitarian and democratic instincts and confirmed the importance of new poetry for a new hemisphere. American thinkers exerted a significant influence on the Cuban writer, and this presentation will offer notable examples.

Anne Fountain, “José Martí and American Thinkers”

Martí’s time in the United States coincided with the aftermath of Reconstruction, a reliving of Civil War events, and a recounting of the efforts of U.S. abolitionists. Martí reported on brutal attacks against former slaves in the South as well as on the success of educated blacks in the

North. His accounts described the racial climate of the time and ideas such as Social Darwinism. Challenges faced by poor immigrants from Europe and by Chinese laborers are also part of the picture. In addition, Martí dedicated numerous chronicles to the plight of North American Indians. This presentation will highlight how U.S. race relations influenced Martí's plans for racial harmony in Cuba and will offer examples of his evolving perspectives on questions of race and ethnicity. A close look at Cuba and the United States in the context of Martí's life helps to underscore some important differences between the two slave-holding nations.

Required Readings

Fountain, Anne. *José Martí and U. S. Writers*. Gainesville, FL:University Press of Florida, 2003.
[Chapter 3 "Martí and American Authors," pp.21-26 and Chapter 9 "Reading America," pp. 120-124: This entire book will be available to all free of charge.]

Fountain, Anne. *José Martí, the United States, and Race*. University Press of Florida, July 2014.
[Chapter 4 "African Americans and the Post-Civil War United States, pp.48-58]

Martí, José. *Selected Writings*. Edited and translated by Esther Allen. ["A Town Sets a Black Man on Fire," pp. 310-313 and "My Race," pp. 318-320: This entire book will be available to all free of charge.]

Michael Conniff, "The Spanish-American War and Semi-Independence I and II"

Three themes begin this presentation: U.S. desires to annex Cuba, Cubans' efforts to win independence from Spain, and longstanding economic and cultural ties between Cuba and the United States. José Martí's efforts to free the island from Spanish colonialism culminated in a military attack in which he died in 1895. Two military veterans of the independence struggle, Antonio Maceo and Máximo Gómez, continued to fight and after two years stood on the verge of victory. Spain's vicious counterattacks drew adverse attention from the American public and U.S. investors in the island. Jingoistic voices in the United States, especially in the press and Theodore Roosevelt's expansionist wing of the Republican Party, pushed for and got a declaration of war against Spain in spring 1898. The four-month conflict led to U.S. victory and army occupation of the island during the next four years. U.S. authorities kept Cuban independence leaders out of the new government and, after debating annexation, committed to granting independence, under strict limits imposed by the Platt Amendment.

Required Readings

Clayton, Lawrence A., Michael L. Conniff, and Susan M. Gauss. *A New History of Modern Latin America*. 3rd ed. (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017): pp. 230-31, 240-48.

Perez Jr., Louis A. *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*. 5th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015): chaps. 5-7.

John Tone, “José Martí and the Nature of Cuban Independence”

Cubans and Spaniards fought a particularly brutal war from 1895 to 1898 that left 45,288 dead Spanish soldiers and as many as 170,000 Cuban dead, the vast majority of them civilians. Disease produced almost all of the deaths on the Spanish side, but the actions and policies of both the Cubans and the Spanish caused the vast majority of Cuban deaths. For this reason, some have characterized what happened in Cuba as genocide. This presentation will discuss the nature of the warfare in Cuba, paying particular attention to the role that José Martí played. Martí's skill as an organizer and propagandist were decisive in producing American intervention, which Cuban patriots both encouraged and feared. The tragic death of Martí in the early days of the conflict was also crucial, as it cleared the way for the unimpeded pursuit of total war by Máximo Gómez, whom Martí had opposed. The burnt earth policy of Gómez, in turn, paved the way for the even more destructive Spanish response known as Reconcentration. Cuba became independent, eventually, at the end of all of this destruction, but the island had been transformed into something Martí would scarcely have recognized.

Required Readings

Maluquer de Motes. Jordi. *España en la crisis de 1898*, ch. 2.

Stucki, Andreas. *Las guerras de Cuba*. Introduction.

Tone, John Lawrence. *War and Genocide in Cuba*. ch. 14.

Denis Rey, “The Geopolitical Consequences of the Spanish-American War”

[FORTHCOMING]

Gary Mormino, “Ybor City Lives: Wars, Revolutions, Great Depression, Great Society, Urban Renewal, and Americanization”

For more than four decades, my life has been intimately involved and intertwined with Ybor City. The enclave remains the most interesting place I have ever encountered. Upon arriving in 1977, I began interviewing elderly immigrants who had rolled cigars in the factories, endured the sting of protracted labor strikes and the heartbreak of urban renewal. My illustrated talk will review the most significant challenges in 20th-century Ybor City. The decades between 1900 and 1930 represented the golden age of Ybor City. Hundreds of cigar factories made Tampa synonymous with hand-rolled Puro Habana cigars. Around ten thousand Cuban, Spanish, and Italian immigrants created one of America's most distinctive ethnic enclaves. Immigrants constructed some of Florida's most beautiful and functional mutual aid societies. There, immigrants enjoyed cradle-to-grave benefits: social solidarity, cultural entertainment, and the benefits of cooperative medicine. A fiercely militant and left-leaning labor movement thrived. The decade of the 1930s

and 1940s shattered the colony's insularity and optimism. The Great Depression ravaged the cigar industry while the Spanish Civil War augured the future. World War II took away thousands of young, second-generation men and women. It was Ybor City's finest hour, but also signified a roll call. Veterans and their wives did not wish to return to Ybor City; many moved to the burgeoning suburbs. The history of Ybor City in the decades after 1950 is a story of assimilation, Americanization, urban renewal, urban and cultural revival.

Required Readings

Mormino, Gary R. and George Pozzetta. "Spanish Anarchists in Tampa," in *Hidden Out in the Open: Spanish Immigrants in America*, edited by Ana Varela-Lago and Phyllis Martinelli, University of Colorado Press, 2018.

Mormino, Gary R. "Ybor City Goes to War," in *Latina/os and World War Two*, edited by Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez, University of Texas Press, 2014, pp. 13-42.

Mormino, Gary R. and George E. Pozzetta. *The Immigrant World of Ybor City* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987). [Chapter 4 "The Culture of Labor in a Latin Community", 97-142].