



### Mission

Preserving, promoting, and celebrating the unique cultural heritage of Ybor City and supporting the Ybor City Museum State Park

## *NEWS BRIEF*

April 13, 2021 marks the 135th anniversary of the first cigar rolled in Ybor City. Surprisingly, this did not occur in the the factory of the town's namesake, Vicente Martinez-Ybor. Rather, it was the Sanchez y Haya factory that won this friendly race. This first cigar marked the start of an era that eventually made Tampa the "Cigar Capital of the World", where approximately 500 million cigars were being hand-rolled annually in the industry's heyday. I hope you enjoy the stories about the Sanchez y Haya factory and Ignacio Haya, Don Vicente's good friend who he recruited to bring his cigar business to Tampa.

In celebration!

Chantal Ruilova Hevia, President and CEO

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### Tampa's First Cigar



Today marks the 135<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first cigar produced in Tampa. While Vicente Martinez-Ybor led the way in the establishment of Tampa's cigar industry and the town that bears his name, this cigar was rolled at Sanchez y Haya, the original factory of his good friend Serafin Sanchez located on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 15<sup>th</sup> Street in Ybor City.

Its first product was called "Havana Clear," and by the end of its first year, the factory was producing a half-million cigars per month. It is often noted that the Sanchez y Haya factory's ability to lead the friendly race to produce the first cigar in Ybor City may have been due to a strike in early 1886 by Martinez-Ybor's workers over increased wages. An additional advantage was the use of tobacco leaves that had already been stripped of its stems.

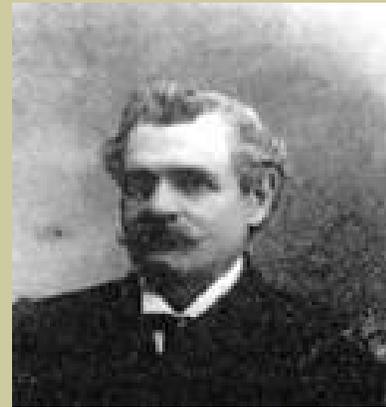
Sanchez y Haya's original factory, a two-story wooden structure, burned down in a devastating fire that consumed much of Ybor City and was replaced by a brick building between 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Streets and 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Avenues in 1906. Interestingly, this site was nearly contiguous to "La Quinta", the Ybor family's home built on 26 acres of

land. The building's modern-day use is as a U-Haul Moving and Storage facility.

Photo compliments of the University of Florida George A. Smathers Library

## Ignacio Haya

Ignacio Haya (1842-1906) was born in the town of Escalante in the Spanish province of Santander, on December 8, 1842, of a privileged family. He joined his brother Ramon in immigrating to the US at age eighteen. In New York, he and his friend Serafin Sanchez, also a native of Spain, began Sanchez y Haya in 1867.



Ignacio married a steel heiress, Fannie Milledoler, in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in 1872. They lived in New York, but when their only child died, they went to Spain and adopted Ramon's daughter, Marina. He and his brother split in the 1890s, however, because Ramon supported Spain in the Spanish-American War, while Ignacio sided with Cuba and its ally, the United States.

Meanwhile, the Haya family had become friends with the Ybor family while visiting Key West during New York winters. At Gavino Guetierrez's urging, Haya and Ybor investigated Tampa as a new location for their venture capital. They were motivated in large part because of labor unrest in Havana and Key West.

Sanchez y Haya's first Tampa brand was Haya's first Tampa brand, "La Flor de Sanchez y Haya". This cigar enjoyed immense success, in part due to Haya's quality control in his stripping department. They fully removed the central stem of the wrapper tobacco leaves, a revolutionary process for the Tampa cigar industry. Haya, who was also an advertising whiz regarding cigar box lithographic prints, featured popular celebrities or historical figures on his box art, such as playwright William Shakespeare or actress Fannie Davenport.

A street and a park in Seminole Heights have been named for Haya, but his contribution to Tampa has not been as recognized as that of his friend Vicente Martinez-Ybor. Haya's financial contributions to the community were significant, especially as the first president of the Centro Español (a mutual aid society), and it was his factory that rolled Tampa's first cigar.

Based on a stories from Friends of the Riverwalk and Holden Rasmussen, J.C. Newman Cigar Co.

## El Lector ("The Reader")

El lector had perhaps one of the largest classrooms in Ybor City. While workers would



roll cigars, el lector would sit above them reading from the newspaper or popular literature. Lectores were chosen by a committee at each factory and their selection was based on who the workers thought would make them well rounded. This also allowed them to pass on their knowledge to their children. Sometimes, lectores would spark

controversy due to reading of left-leaning articles, angering some factory owners. By the 1930s, lectores were banned from Ybor City due to concerns from factory owners that they were spreading communist propaganda.

Story by Ashley Rocks; Photo compliments of JCNewman.com

## COOKING CORNER

### Mojo Pork

Mojo pork is a dish that is delicious on its own or inside of a Cuban sandwich. Mojo pork is the only ingredient in this sandwich that hails from Cuba. In Tampa, you will find sandwiches made using a type of "Cuban bread" that is Tampa's own invention.

Mojo sauce has its roots in the Canary Islands, as many "Islanders" settled in Cuba. While the sauce in Cuba is made from different ingredients than that made in the Canary Islands, it utilizes similar techniques and ideas. Mojo from both countries incorporate a mixture of olive oil, garlic, and local spices/seasonings.



Cuban mojo, especially when used roasting pork, incorporates the juice of sour oranges. As this is harder to come by in the United States, many recipes use a mixture of orange and lime juice to mimic the flavor. When Cubans immigrated to Ybor City, they brought this dish with them, where it then became a staple and one of the main ingredients in Tampa's Cuban sandwiches.

[Get the Recipe](#)

### DO YOU LOVE HISTORIC BUILDINGS ?

The Ybor City Museum Society owns six historic "casitas", which it preserves and maintains. These irreplaceable buildings are always in need of a little TLC. YCMS is currently looking for someone



who can help with their maintenance by handling small repairs and overseeing larger projects. Inquiries should be directed to [info@ybor-museum.org](mailto:info@ybor-museum.org) or 813.247.1434. This part-time work is likely to grow when we open the Tampa Baseball Museum at the Al Lopez

House in a few months. The "casita" pictured here is at 1903 N. 19th St. in Ybor City. It is the new home to the Ybor City Vegan Deli, which opened this week.

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## The Ybor City Museum State Park is Open

The Ybor City Museum State Park is again open to the public. To ensure your safety, masks are required to be worn during your visit.

Admissions can be paid by cash or credit card, however you are requested to bring exact change if you are paying by cash. The "casita" portion of the museum tour is closed due to

Covid-19 restrictions but you can enjoy the Museum Garden during your visit. **You can also enquire about renting the Garden, a beautiful 10,000 sq. ft. outdoor space, by [clicking here](#).** It is a unique venue that creates its own ambience for your special event.



**New Hours of Operation:** 9 am - 4 pm Wednesday - Sunday  
Admission: \$4 per person, free for children 5 years and younger  
1818 E. 9th Avenue, Tampa, FL 33605, 813.247.6323

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### Please Join Us

Member benefits make it easy for you to strengthen your connection to Tampa's roots and experience the unique cultural heritage of Historic Ybor City. Now that the Ybor City Museum State Park is reopening, you can use the free admissions included in your membership. Thank you to our current members, whether you have been part of our family for years or have just joined us. For your convenience, new or current members can [join or renew your membership online](#).

### With Gratitude

History teaches many lessons and gives us a lens to the future. While 2020 was a year to pause and reflect, we have benefitted in many ways as our friends and followers came together to celebrate the landmark events that make Ybor City such a unique community. Thank you to those who supported our programs and educational activities last year. For those who enjoy this newsletter and learning more about Ybor City's cultural heritage, please consider a donation to support our 2021 programming.

DONATE

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The Ybor City Museum Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Federal Tax ID No. 59-2274494. While we do not give tax advice, donations are tax deductible to the extent the law allows.

[YborMuseum.org](http://YborMuseum.org) ■ [Info@Ybormuseum.org](mailto:Info@Ybormuseum.org) ■ 813.247.1434

