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Report of the President

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membership@myfloridahistory.org



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devote a page to the memory of those who have died during the year.

The chairman requested the president to appoint the committee on building fund.

A communication from Mr. John B. Stetson, regretting his absence from the meeting, was read.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned.

FRANCIS M. WILLIAMS,
Secretary.

REPORT OF ARTHUR T. WILLIAMS, PRESIDENT, TO THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FLORIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, SOUTHERN COLLEGE, L A K E - LAND, FLORIDA, FEBRUARY 7TH, 1928.

Members The Florida Historical Society:

It has been approximately one year since the officers and members of The Florida Historical Society assembled in twenty-fourth annual meeting within the halls of Rollins College at Winter Park. In retrospect, the time seems incredibly short and the spell of that extraordinary meeting lingers, delightfully, within the memory of all privileged to attend. Contact with the brilliant assemblage of personages which greeted the historians at Rollins College furnished an impetus which has evidenced itself in material, as well as in mental benefits throughout the year.

Today, again we are gathered within the walls of an honored institution of learning, a college of our State dedicated to the propounding of lofty ideals to the youth of today. I wish it were possible for The Florida Historical Society to express, through me, the profound gratitude which we feel for your gracious invitation to assemble herein in annual meeting. The

work of your college—of all the colleges of our State—is dear to the heart of this Society, for we thoroughly understand and are in hearty sympathy with the worthy motives which prompt your unselfish service. It seems to me that an historical society and an institution of learning are two separate, though identical parts of an invisible whole. You are equipping the youth of today with the essential attributes of mind and character which will enable him to make history, and we are jealously guarding for him man's achievements of the past, in order that he may know, in truth and verity, that the foundation upon which he stands to make his fight is solid ground. The library of our Society and the knowledge we have gleaned through research is at all times open to students, and there is no information which we more gladly or cheerfully give than that given to these youthful seekers after historical truths. May we assure the officers of Southern College, and each individual student, of our hearty co-operation? Your courtesy and your gracious hospitality have already formed an indissoluble bond between us.

The growth of the Society has been most gratifying during the year. Last February, at the time of annual meeting, the roster of the Society contained a total of 327 names. Today there are 392 members, an increase of 65. This wholesome increase is enlightening, for it is not only steady, but substantial. Comparatively few of those who have affiliated with the Society during the past eighteen months have severed connections with the organization, save through death. Formerly, and most particularly during the hectic days of 1926, many transients enrolled who, when fortune frowned upon them, journeyed again homeward or passed on to other States. Then, but naturally, their active interest in Florida and in Florida history waned, dues fell in arrears, and

names were erased from the roll. I mention this fact in order that the attention of our members may be focussed upon the healthy renewals of membership, and prompt renewals,—which are infallible indications of healthy organizations in which interest is being daily stimulated. Never before, in the history of the Society, has greater interest been displayed by the individual member as has been the case during the past year. Each member has been vitally concerned with the affairs of the Society and through his interest has aroused among his associates the desire to affiliate with the organization and work together in a common cause. New memberships have resulted, and with new members, a steady expansion of the work of the Society. To women's organizations throughout our State, and throughout the country, has come the desire to perpetuate and worthily mark for posterity prominent historical sites. To these we extend our appreciation and every assistance within our power which may enable them to attain their desires.

These indications of awakening interest produce, of course, a healthy financial condition. The total expense of the Society has been promptly met during the past year entirely from the dues of members. This has not been the case formerly. Moreover, our Treasurer's report, which will be read shortly, shows a much larger balance in bank than heretofore. This is indeed gratifying to me and it is with pleasure that I pass the knowledge on to you.

Stimulated and encouraged by the above stated conditions, it appears to me that the time is now propitious for the putting into effect those plans which must ultimately lead to the realization of a worthy ambition of the Society—the ambition to erect a permanent building in which may be housed the valuable library, relics and maps which have been entrusted to

our care. As you are aware, these possessions are now temporarily on exhibition in a fire-proof building in Jacksonville. They are carefully stored and faithfully guarded, but the quarters designated to them are totally inadequate to permit of satisfactory display. I am confident and, indeed, I have been so told, that were the Society the owner of its own building, many extremely valuable historical documents would be presented to us in order that we might preserve them, intact, for posterity. In my report of last year I transmitted to you the generous proposition made to us by a friend of the Society who modestly wishes, at present, to remain unknown. This proposition was, namely, that he, personally, would give five thousand dollars to The Florida Historical Society towards the erection of a permanent home if the officers and members of the organization would raise, by their own efforts, an additional ten thousand. Certainly, when the gods drop such beneficent gifts in our very laps, we must arise collectively to express our thanks and bestir ourselves, energetically, in order to prove that we are worthy of the gift. It is my suggestion, therefore, that a committee be appointed during this meeting to assume charge of a campaign to raise the necessary funds. With funds in hand with which to construct a creditable building, it is my belief that one of the cities of our State would, gladly, donate the ground upon which to erect it.

Being authorized during the business session of last annual meeting to appoint a committee to locate the routes of DeNarvaez and DeSoto through Florida, I now submit to you the personnel of said committee ; Frederick Cubberly, Frank Drew, A. F. Knotts, and C. Seton Fleming. One member of this committee has recently informed me that he can definitely locate twenty sites on the routes of these early and impor-

tant explorers. An examination of the territory by the committee will be in order before a definite report can be submitted. Such an examination is contemplated for the coming year.

It is with a feeling of sadness that I approach the final clause of my report to you. The hand of death has fallen heavily upon the Society within the past twelve months, and many valuable and beloved members will gather with us no more in annual meeting. Some of the departed ones were not native born, but all of them loved Florida. Though the homes of some were in other states, Florida held for them dominant interests and was the verdant ground upon which their life dreams were abundantly realized. This was the State of their adoption and its colorful, engrossing history held for them increasing delights. All of them were students and lovers of history, but among their number were also many who made history. The nation, not alone Florida and this Society, mourns their passing, for their names are enrolled upon the indelible rosters of fame and achievement for all the world to read. They are :

Admiral Victor Blue, United States Navy

Rhydon M. Call, Judge of the United States District Court of the Southern District of Florida

Jeannette Thurber Connor, philanthropist and historian

Major Douglas F. Conoley

George C. Currie

Van Winder Shields, Doctor of Divinity

Dr. A. H. Walker

S. Davies Warfield, President of the Seaboard Air Line R. R.

It is my wish that an entire page of the April quarterly magazine, the mouthpiece of the Society, be