

Florida Historical Quarterly

Volume 20
Number 1 *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol 20,
Issue 1

Article 12

1941

Report of the President

Florida Historical Society
membership@myfloridahistory.org



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Historical Quarterly by an authorized editor of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

Recommended Citation

Society, Florida Historical (1941) "Report of the President," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 20: No. 1, Article 12.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol20/iss1/12>

THE PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As president of the Florida Historical Society, I believe that I speak for all of the members when I say how deeply we appreciate the most cordial welcome which has been extended to us by the University of Miami, the members of the Historical Association of Southern Florida, and by the people of Coral Gables and Miami.

This is the first time an annual meeting of our Society has been held in this city although a regional meeting was held in October 1936 at the University of Miami.

We hope that this meeting will be the first of a large number of others to be held here. This section of the state is unique in its historical development. It embraces a city that has had a phenomenal growth in the past fifty years, from a small pioneer settlement to a city ranking near first place in population in the state. You are surrounded by some of the most colorful history that Florida has known—the Seminole Indians, the wreckers of a century ago, the earlier Tegueta Indians, to mention but a few.

We are glad to observe the forceful leadership assumed by the University of Miami and the Historical Association of Southern Florida in focusing attention to the history of the lower peninsula; and as the state organization, the Florida Historical Society will ever be willing to do everything in its power to cooperate.

The last twelve months have been active ones for the Florida Historical Society. These activities have produced some tangible results; and, in addition, the perfection of plans for future growth.

With your permission, I should like here briefly to summarize some of the progress of the past year.

At the last annual meeting, held in West Florida in March 1940, the Board of Directors and members of the Society approved three particularly important and far-reaching resolutions. The first involved the Library ; the second involved the appointment of a permanent and paid official; and the third resolution called for the inauguration of a publication program supplemental to the *Florida Historical Quarterly*.

The Society's Library, through the courtesy of the Librarian and Board of Trustees of the Jacksonville Public Library, occupied until September 1st the basement room of the Willow Branch Public Library, Jacksonville. This room, although difficult of access, was adequate until the back numbers of the *Quarterly* and infrequent donations of books filled every available space. It was becoming more and more imperative that some suitable arrangement be made to relieve this situation. In this condition, largely uncatalogued, crowded and uninviting, the Library was valueless for reference when it might have been of unusual value because of the nature of its contents. Quite unexpectedly but nevertheless welcome, the offer by the City of St. Augustine of space, rent free, in the old, unoccupied Alcazar Hotel building which the City had leased from the Florida East Coast Hotel Company with an option to purchase for the purpose of establishing a cultural center, was, under the first resolution mentioned above, accepted after a careful investigation by the Society.

Plans were formulated at a meeting of the Board held at the proposed new location of the Society's Library, on May 25, for the Finance Committee to raise by subscription among the Society's members a minimum sum of \$1500, to provide for all renovation expenses and the purchase of necessary new office and library equipment.

The second resolution, that of providing for the appointment of a permanent paid official, was realized at least for three years when a group of members of the Society, with the wholehearted approval of the Board, volunteered to contribute a certain sum of money each year to be used for the salary of the secretary and librarian.

The third resolution, providing for the inauguration of a publications program, was officially adopted by the Society when the members voted to amend the By-Laws to provide for a special publications committee, under the chairmanship of John B. Stetson, Jr., and to provide for subscribing members. Arrangements are now underway which will bring nearer the continuation of the publication program first launched in 1921 by the Florida State Historical Society and discontinued in 1933, after eleven separate and notable publications had been issued.

The Society completed the removal of its collections from Jacksonville to St. Augustine in September. The work of renovation on the new quarters, though well under way by this time, was not finally completed until the first of this year. Then followed the building of bookshelves, the purchase of necessary equipment and the arrangement of exhibits. This work was under the active supervision of the secretary and librarian who resigned his position on the staff of Rollins College to take it over.

In order to meet the expenses of renovation and other necessary matters in connection with the new location, the Finance Committee, authorized by the Board, launched a campaign among the Society's members to raise at least \$1500. This effort, headed by the Finance chairman, Mr. John G. McKay, also first vice-president of the Society, quickly resulted in the realization of approximately \$1600.

At this point a brief description of the new quarters may be in order.

The rooms now housing our collections were formerly the ball room and ladies parlor of the hotel. There is one large room; approximately 35 x 100 feet, which is used as library-museum ; there is a large office, around the walls of which shelves have been built for back files of the *Quarterly* and other periodicals; a wash room and storage room off the office, and another storage and work room near the only entrance to the library. The rooms are adequately heated and ventilated and are lighted by natural light. It has been observed by many of the visitors and members that the new quarters provide ideal working conditions for students and writers.

The Historical Records Survey, the Federal Writers' Project and the Statewide Library Project of the Works Projects Administration have all cooperated helpfully during the year. The Statewide Library Project made possible the use, without expense to the Society, of three good assistants, two in St. Augustine and one in Winter Park. Without this help the work of the Society would have suffered considerably.

The Society's activities during the year have not centered exclusively around the new location. It is a source of satisfaction to note the accomplishment of the special committees. The James A. Robertson Memorial Committee, under the chairmanship of Professor A. J. Hanna of Rollins College who was appointed to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Mr. Charles B. Reynolds, has made considerable progress toward the publication of a bibliography of Florida, materials for which had been largely collected by Dr. Robertson. Dr. A. Curtis Wilgus of Washington is editor of the bibliography. A few hundred dollars have been

raised by the Committee to defray the expenses of transcribing Dr. Robertson's handwritten notes into typewritten form.

The Publications Committee, under the chairmanship of John B. Stetson, Jr., mentioned previously, is laying the groundwork for the publication of new volumes of rare source materials of Florida history.

The Committee on Florida Archaeology, the chairman of which is Dr. Doris Stone of Tulane University, has completed three projects. First, the surveying and mapping of two Indian mounds on that part of historic Fort George Island at the mouth of the St. Johns River which is now the John F. Rollins Bird and Plant Sanctuary; second, a mound survey in the region of the Ten Thousand Islands; and third, the co-sponsorship of a "dig" by the Harvard Excavators Club in Central Florida. A little pamphlet just issued by the Committee and available to all interested, describes the purposes and plans of the Committee.

The Committee on Florida Music, Mrs. Henry L. Richmond, Jacksonville, chairman, has made good progress in the compilation of a collection of Florida music and in the study of the life and work of the composer Frederick Delius who spent a few years on the St. Johns River.

It is our pleasure to announce the appointment lately of a new committee: The Committee on the Preservation and Restoration of Florida Antiquities. The purpose of this committee is three-fold: To create and extend public interest in the preservation and restoration of Florida antiquities; to engage in this preservation and restoration, and to exhibit authentic types of historic objects and memorabilia in order to stimulate interest in early Florida days., Mrs. F. B. Crowninshield of Boca Grande, a former director of the Society, has accepted the appointment as chairman.

A summary of the activities of the Society would be far from complete without calling attention to our quarterly magazine of Florida history and the noteworthy and indefatigable work of the editor, Julien C. Yonge of Pensacola. During the past year, a large number of scholarly and interesting articles were published on nearly every phase of Florida history.

Nothing to my mind better illustrates the interest taken in the Society by members and by friends than the large number and variety of gifts received during the year. A few of the more recent donations, in addition to the funds contributed by 140 members for the renovation of the library quarters, are:

Two large Duo-Therm heaters, presented by Mrs. W. S. Barstow, Hobe Sound

Two oak library tables and 12 chairs, presented by Mrs. Henry Kohl, Palm Beach

One new Royal typewriter, presented by Julien C. Yonge, Pensacola

One metal typewriter stand, presented by the Historical Records Survey of Florida

A leather-top dark oak library table, two large oak chairs and a settee, given by M. H. Westberry, St. Augustine

The private-library of Florida printed books, pamphlets, etc., of the late Dr. James A. Robertson of Annapolis, Md., presented by Mrs. Robertson as a memorial to her husband

A large and valuable file of Quincy, Florida, newspapers, 1887-1891, and miscellaneous copies of other early Florida newspapers, presented by the heirs of the late Frank Pierce May (1852-1937) of Quincy, Florida

One hundred thirty-five miscellaneous historical items, including books, pamphlets and other matter relating to Florida, many of which the Library did not have, from Mr. T. Frederick Davis of Jacksonville

A truck load of records of the Alcazar Hotel in St. Augustine, including a scrapbook, a large number of guest registers, ledgers, correspondence, etc.

A number of original unpublished letters and documents of Confederate General W. G. M. Davis, books, newspaper clippings and pictures, etc., presented by the General's granddaughter, Mary Lamar Davis of Tallahassee

A series of five colored prints of Seminole Indian chiefs and numerous books, presented by George A. Zabriskie, president, New York Historical Society

The Society's name painted in gold leaf on two of the large windows, the cost of which was donated by A. J. Wall, director of the New York Historical Society

A number of Florida books exchanged or presented by Emily L. Wilson, St. Augustine

And a large number of miscellaneous books, maps, manuscripts, pictures, etc., presented by many friends and members of the Society.

The growth in usefulness of the Society in all its branches of activity has been most encouraging. Nearly every member has participated in some way in bringing this about. But we must not be content with what has been done; we must proceed ever more actively because we have really just begun. We must improve and enlarge our publications, double our membership, now totaling nearly 800, carry on an extended study of Florida archaeology ; cooperate fully with the program of other historical and patriotic societies in the state; hold meetings from time to time ; and, generally, carry out in fuller detail those principles for which the Society stands which were first set forth by the founders.

Calvin Horace Curry.

TREASURER'S REPORT

To the President and Members of the Florida Historical Society :

The following statements constitute the Treasurer's report on the financial condition of the Society as of March 17, 1941:

General Fund			
Balance, March 25, 1940		\$ 360.73	
Receipts			
Annual dues	\$1,269.48		
Gifts	8.00		
Sale of Publications	37.70	1,315.18	\$1,675.91
Expenditures			
Quarterly (4 issues)	1,002.56		
Operating expenses	359.47	1,362.03	
Balance, March 17, 1941		313.88	1,675.91
Library Fund			
Balance, March 25, 1940		89.40	
Receipts			
Contributing memberships	328.00		