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Notes and Comment

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NOTES AND COMMENT

Tequesta, the Journal of the Historical Association of Southern Florida

The second issue of ***Tequesta***, dated August 1942, has appeared. The editor of this number is Dr. Robert E. McNicoll, professor of Latin-American history in the University of Miami and director of its Hispanic-American Institute. It is a well-edited and well-printed book of eighty pages, and is published as a bulletin of the University of Miami. There are six papers, as well as other features.

The leading article is a brief biography of George E. Merrick, founder and builder of Coral Gables, and one of the founders and first president of the Historical Association of Southern Florida. This is a condensed story of his whole life written by one who was his friend during the greater part of it, Mrs. Helen C. Freeland. As Mr. Merrick was one of the noteworthy figures of South Florida, this is a worthwhile contribution to the writing of the State's history.

Ceremonial Practices of the Modern Seminoles, by Robert F. Greenlee, was read at the annual meeting of the Florida Historical Society in Miami, March 27, 1941. Mr. Greenlee has lived among these Indians and here records much of what he has been told by them, especially by a medicine man of the Big Cypress settlements. In comparing the present-day Indians with their ancestors of the period of the Seminole wars he says : ". . . we find a people radically transformed both in material aspects of life and in their ideas and religious customs . . . [with] vestiges of a much richer life which has vanished, due to the coming of white people in ever-increasing numbers."

In ***Food Plants of the De Soto Expedition 1539-1543***, Adin Baber endeavors to determine what the

Spaniards lived on for more than three years after their original stores were exhausted. Much of their food is mentioned in the several journals and narratives of the expedition, and the author tries to identify these plants by localities and present habitat and by their more recent use as food.

Henry Perrine, Pioneer Horticulturist of Florida, by T. Ralph Robinson, is reprinted from **Proceedings of the Florida State Horticultural Society** 1937.

. . . **Some Plant Reminiscences of Southern Florida** is a paper read by David Fairchild under the title **Plant Introductions in Southern Florida**, at the annual meeting of the Florida Historical Society in March 1941 in Miami, at a session held at Fairchild Tropical Garden ; but, in the main, it is on neither subject, as Dr. Fairchild himself implies. Rather it is a plan - a plea

. . . that the history of horticulture in Florida be something more than . . . a book to please . . . something that will keep on display actual objects, or the best possible photographs, or life-size models . . . of new things . . . something besides those futile word-descriptions which so often merely confuse the mind. That it be an institution of education where thousands of children will come and see for themselves . . . the living *elements*, other than man-fashioned, which make the world of actualities. . . .

"In my imagination I picture a historical scene in which the origin of the citrus groves of Florida would be shown; the kinds of citrus fruits from which the orange arose in China; the palm groves of the tropics, the industries which have been built around the various species; the nut trees, the spice trees, the poison trees; the hundreds of kinds of fruit species,

with opportunities for tasting the fruits; the gorgeous vines from all over the tropics; the fiber plants; and the host of flowering trees and shrubs the use of which about our homes will transform them into abodes of beauty such as the world has never yet seen."

Shall we not all say *amen*.

The longest article is *The Administrative System in the Floridas, 1781-1821* by D. C. Corbitt. Professor Corbitt teaches history in Candler College, Havana, Cuba, and has carried on extensive research in the colonial archives there, some of the results of which have appeared in this *Quarterly*. The present paper is in three parts—"the Captaincy General of Louisiana and the Floridas", "The Intendancy of Louisiana and West Florida", and "The Government of West Florida, 1779-1821." The intricacies of these administrative systems, as gleaned from the records they left, are treated of in some detail.

There is an appreciative review of Mrs. Carson's *Fabulous Florida*; and descriptive notes of *The Mangrove Coast* by Karl A. Bickel (N. Y. 1942), *The Commodore's Story* by Ralph M. Munroe and Vincent Gilpin (N. Y. 1930), *Pioneer Reminiscences* by Mrs. Harlan Trapp (p.p. 1940), and the Florida Writers' Project's *A Guide to Miami and Dade County* (1941, 250 p.).

Watt Marchman, our librarian, contributes a selected list of publications relating to Florida issued in 1941 including articles in periodicals and fiction with a Florida background.

There is, too, a letter of appreciation and good wishes from Governor Spessard L. Holland, the constitution and by-laws of the Association, and a list of its officers and directors, and its members.

Florida Vital Statistics Records

Two years ago the Florida Historical Records Survey issued a seventy-page volume ***Guide to Public Vital Statistics Records in Florida***. This is an inventory of existing records of births, deaths, marriages, and divorces in the keeping of governmental agencies.

Now the Survey has issued: ***Guide to Supplementary Vital Statistics from Church Records in Florida*** (Preliminary).

Beginning in 1936 the Survey has endeavored to list all churches in Florida and to locate the records of each. This work is 75 per cent. completed ; and includes all denominations, white and black, and both active and defunct churches, to the number of many thousands. For example, one hundred seventy-nine churches are listed in the first county (Alachua) and the records of only twenty-four of these are not located.

Due to the present urgent need for vital statistics, this incomplete inventory is now issued in three continuous volumes which total 981 pages. It has been distributed to county judges, public libraries, and other depositories accessible to the public.

It is estimated that sixty million persons in the United States cannot produce satisfactory proofs of facts of birth. These volumes will be of material assistance to many in Florida who need such proof. The publication has been carried out under the direction of Louise B. Hill, supervisor, Florida Historical Records Survey.

CASTILLO DE SAN MARCOS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Congressional action restored the Spanish name of Castillo de San Marcos to Fort Marion Na-

tional Monument at St. Augustine when President Roosevelt signed House Bill 3937 on June 5, 1942.

Floridians interested in preserving the picturesque Spanish Florida place-names have long advocated the change, as has this *Quarterly*. For a century and a half, under both Spanish and British regimes, the old castle bore its name of St. Mark. And for one hundred years before that, St. Mark had likewise been the patron for the wooden predecessors of this formidable stone fortification.

Not until January 7, 1825, was the castle renamed Fort Marion by the War Department. The name honored General Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox" of the Revolution, though General Marion had had no connection with the history of the fort.

The historic landmark was proclaimed a national monument by President Coolidge in 1924, and is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. Proper pronunciation of the Spanish name of the fort is kah-STEEL-yoh day sahn MAHR-kohs.

A. M.

THE ALABAMA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

A double number of the *Alabama Historical Quarterly* (vol. III, nos. 3 & 4) is given over to the Alabama secession convention (January 7-29, March 4-21, 1861). The full story of the convention is told by David L. Darden of the staff of the Alabama Department of Archives and History. There is also a "History of the Document", an account of the Alabama secession flag which is illustrated in color on the front cover, biographical sketches of the delegates to the convention, and the speeches of the Alabama delegation upon their withdrawal from the Congress of the United States.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA

This Association held its second annual meeting on July 21 at the University of Miami. New by-laws were adopted, and the treasurer reported a membership of 349.

Officers and directors were elected who will serve for the ensuing year. They are:

President, Dr. John C. Gifford; first vice-president, Mrs. Henry J. Egger ; second vice-president, George C. Estill; recording secretary, Justin P. Havee ; corresponding secretary, Gaines R. Wilson ; treasurer, Thomas P. Caldwell; editor of journal, Dr. Charlton W. Tebeau; librarian, George W. Rosner.

Directors : A. H. Andrews (Estero), Dr. Bowman F. Ashe, William Mark Brown, Mrs. James M. Carson, Mrs. Marjory Stoneman Douglas, Dr. Edmund LeRoy Dow, Mrs. Mabel B. Francis, Mrs. William L. Freeland, Mrs. Florence P. Haden, Frederick M. Hudson, Miss Cornelia Leffler, Dr. Robert E. McNicoll, Claude C. Matlack, Mrs. George E. Merrick, Leonard R. Muller, Wirth M. Munroe, J. Arthur Pancoast, William R. Porter (Key West), Edward C. Romfh, Mrs. Robert Morris Seymour, Mrs. Frank Stranahan (Ft. Lauderdale).

In recognition of the high standing of the history department of John B. Stetson University, a chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, national honor fraternity, was installed there on May 30 by Dr. Venila Lovina Shores, official representative, who brought greetings from the National Council. Dr. Kathryn Abbey Hanna made the principal address on "What history can do."

OLD FORT JEFFERSON

In the *Saturday Evening Post* of April 18 last was an account of Fort Jefferson on Dry Tortugas by

our secretary, Albert Manucy. The article was featured and illustrated in color.

Secretary Manucy is writing a more scholarly article on the abandoned mighty fortress for the *Quarterly*, which will appear in an early issue.

“We Live with the Seminoles” is a ten-page illustrated article in the April number of *Natural History* magazine, written by one of our New Jersey members, Mrs. Ethel Cutler Freeman, of the American Museum of Natural History, New York.