

# Florida Historical Quarterly

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Volume 25  
Number 3 *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol 25,  
Issue 3

Article 7

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1946

## Obituary: Thomas Frederick Davis

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### Recommended Citation

Society, Florida Historical (1946) "Obituary: Thomas Frederick Davis," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 25: No. 3, Article 7.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol25/iss3/7>

THOMAS FREDERICK DAVIS

Thomas Frederick Davis died on October 17 last.

For many years there have not been many of his days in which Florida history did not claim at least an hour or two. His research was a continual search for the truth, not an effort to write history as he wished it to be. Only when the evidence seemed indisputable did he suggest his conclusions; more often he spread the result of his research before the reader and left it for each one to draw his own conclusions.

There is a brief biographical sketch of Mr. Davis in the *Florida Historical Society Number* of this QUARTERLY (XIX, p. 62, July 1940) ; but that scarcely indicates the large part he had as treasurer in keeping our Society going for the years when interest in it was limited, nor does the listing of his writings there show what he accomplished for our State's history.

His early historical work was on Jacksonville. In 1911 he published *The History of Early Jacksonville, Florida*, a volume of 199 pages. He continued his research on Jacksonville history, and in 1925 the Florida Historical Society published his *History of Jacksonville, Florida, and Vicinity, 1513 to 1924*, an octavo volume of 513 pages, which is a full history of the city and its district.

Then, going into the larger field of Florida history, he wrote several monographs and numerous articles, including the *Ponce de Leon Number* of this QUARTERLY, and "McGregor's Invasion of Florida, 1817," also published herein. In addition to other separate articles, he has contributed to these pages the series of narratives from early contemporaneous sources which we have called "Pioneer Florida." These have appeared in each issue of the QUARTERLY since October 1943.

His most important work for the benefit of Florida historians is his *A Digest of Florida Material in Niles' Register* which is fully described in this QUARTERLY (XVIII, p. 227). That important periodical might be regarded as a continuous, contemporaneous and semi-official history of the United States for the years of its publication, 1811-1849. Mr. Davis, in his spare time dur-

ing the greater part of two years, extracted all of the Florida historical material from the 76 volumes of the *Register* and condensed it into a single volume. This has not been printed, but he placed copies of the work in the principal historical libraries of Florida and in the Library of Congress, so it is available to any one. That volume is as much a monument to him as is his *History of Jacksonville*.