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NEWS AND NOTES

Civil War Centennial Commission

On the 29th of September, 1959, Governor LeRoy Collins, by Proclamation, established a Florida Civil War Centennial Commission, calling upon it to:

- (1) develop statewide promotion and publicity for Florida's Civil War Commemoration,
- (2) encourage proper observances and suitable commemorative ceremonies of Civil War History,
- (3) sponsor appropriate educational activities, and
- (4) perform all other duties which serve their program and support the national objectives of the observance of the Centennial of the Civil War.

The Proclamation further stated that the Commission should be composed of interested, able and qualified citizens who were to serve at the pleasure of the Governor and without compensation.

The Governor appointed the following persons as Commissioners :

Dr. Weymouth T. Jordan
Miss Roumelle Bowen
Mrs. Murray Forbes Wittichen
Mrs. Herbert O. Vance
Mrs. T. Aubrey Morse
Mr. Guyte McCord
Mrs. L. A. Davis
Dr. A. J. Hanna
Mrs. Harry E. Wood
Mr. W. A. Coldwell

Later others were added and as of April 30, 1960, the entire Commission consisted of the original 10 and the following:

Mr. Adam G. Adams	Mrs. Willis B. Maxwell
Mr. E. M. Covington	Mr. James Messer, Sr.
Mr. James C. Craig	Mr. H. Plant Osborne
Mr. Grover C. Criswell, Jr.	Dr. R. W. Patrick
Mr. Rolland Dean	Mr. Lucius S. Ruder
Mr. Carl E. Duncan	Dr. C. W. Tebeau
Mr. Harley L. Freeman	Mr. T. T. Wentworth, Jr.

Dr. John E. Johns
Judge James R. Knott

Mr. James H. White
Judge Ben C. Willis

Mr. Guyte P. McCord acted as temporary chairman for a meeting held on December 12, 1959, and Mrs. T. Aubrey Morse was elected to serve as secretary to the Commission.

On January 30, 1960, Mr. McCord was elected honorary chairman; Judge James R. Knott, temporary chairman; Dr. John E. Johns and Miss Roumelle Bowen, vice chairmen.

At a meeting on April 30, 1960, Mr. Adam G. Adams was elected chairman, whereupon the offices of the Commission were established in the chairman's office at 208 Valencia Avenue, Coral Gables, Florida.

The principal business of this meeting was consideration of the report of the steering committee: Dr. C. W. Tebeau, chairman, Mrs. Wittichen, Mrs. Vance, Mr. McCord and Judge Willis. This report was unanimously adopted, including eight particular items which, it was hoped, would be financed by an appropriation of the Legislature.

In brief, the objects sought were:

- (1) the monthly publication of a chronology of events in Florida or affecting Florida, beginning in December, 1960;
- (2) the creation of a revolving fund for the purpose of publishing books on the Civil War and Reconstruction period;
- (3) the collection and preservation of printed, manuscript, and artifact sources of Florida history during the War years;
- (4) development and publication of a bibliography of printed and manuscript sources of Florida history in the War period;
- (5) creation of a panel of speakers available for talks on the Civil War;
- (6) appointment of an Executive Secretary with facilities for conducting the business of the Commission;
- (7) and, to provide expense money for the Commission.

In addition, the steering committee recommended the creation of local committees, the encouragement of publications in historical magazines, and the marking of historical sites.

The Commission was, by private contributions and money from Governor Collins' contingent fund, able to begin publication of the monthly leaflet *Florida A Hundred Years Ago*. Prior to the

meeting of the Legislature, Governor Farris Bryant contributed from his contingent fund so that publication has been uninterrupted.

Governor Bryant issued a Proclamation on the 9th of January, 1961, proclaiming the years falling between the dates, January 10, 1961, and April 9, 1965, as "Florida Civil War Centennial Years."

Governor Bryant appointed a Commission consisting of the following:

Mr. Adam G. Adams	Judge James R. Knott
Miss Roumelle Bowen	Mrs. T. Aubrey Morse
Mr. John Boyles	Mrs. Herbert O. Vance
Mr. E. M. Covington	Mr. T. T. Wentworth, Jr.
Mr. James C. Craig	Judge Ben C. Willis
Mr. Grover C. Criswell, Jr.	Mrs. Murray Forbes Wittichen
Mr. Ben L. Cunliff, Jr.	

naming as chairman and secretary the persons who formerly served in those capacities.

This Commission met in Tallahassee on March 20, 1961. This meeting largely looked forward to the probability of receiving an appropriation from the Legislature. It was announced that Dr. Samuel Proctor of the Department of Social Sciences of the University of Florida, will undertake the assembling of events in *Florida A Hundred Years Ago*.

Through the able assistance of Judge Willis, Miss Bowen, and Mrs. Morse, House Bill 1440 was enacted into Chapter 61-404 with an annual appropriation of \$12,000 for the biennium July 1, 1961, to June 1, 1963.

This bill named the Governor, Secretary of State and Superintendent of Public Education as the Florida Civil War Centennial Commission and specified that the Commission should appoint a planning committee of twelve members to carry out the wishes and objects of the Commission. The Commission appointed the same persons who had been acting as the Commission prior to the enactment of the Legislation.

Members of the old Commissions and the planning committee have attended the third National Assembly at St. Louis and the fourth National Assembly at Charleston, as well as meetings of the Confederate States Civil War Centennial Conference at Atlanta, Richmond, Charleston, and Jackson.

The Commission will publish, early this summer, a manual for the use of local committees which should stimulate interest in commemoration of the Civil War Years throughout the State. This manual will contain a short history of the National and the Florida Commissions, and an expression of why commemoration is desirable, how commemoration should be conducted, suggested procedures for local committees, and an outline of projects. It will also contain an outline "Contract of Loan" under which an individual may temporarily deposit historic materials with the State and a "Contract of Gift" by which an individual may give materials to the State of Florida.

The Commission particularly would welcome information about speakers who are willing to make talks on the Civil War period.

Of utmost concern to local centennial committees will be the problem of raising funds. The State Commission is unable to cooperate through financial contribution but the Commission stands ready to lend advice and to perform whatever services it can to assist in any project.

Archaeological-Historical Salvage

The Florida State Cabinet has made a significant step toward the preservation of historical materials found in Florida waters by the appointment of a committee of professional historians and archaeologists to act in an advisory capacity to the Cabinet. The following appointments to the committee have been made by the Governor: Charlton Tebeau, University of Miami; Robert Fuson, University of South Florida; Charles Fairbanks, Florida State University; John Goggin, University of Florida; and J. C. Dickinson, director, Florida State Museum. Van Ferguson, director, Internal Improvement Fund, will serve as ex-officio chairman. The Cabinet, acting as trustees of the Fund, is charged with the control of state owned waters and the licensing of any salvage operations in them. The awareness by the state's governmental leaders of the importance of salvaged materials to the knowledge of our history is gratifying indeed.

News of Local Historical Societies and Commissions

Overseas Railway Marker Dedications and Motorcade

The fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the first Florida East

Coast Railway passenger train at Key West was commemorated by the dedication of markers at Homestead and at Key West during a day-long celebration on January 20, 1962. The Historical Association of Southern Florida organized the extensive activities which included a motorcade between the two points, breakfast, luncheon, dinner, and addresses on the history of the railway. Mrs. Jean Flagler Gonzales, granddaughter of Henry M. Flagler, and William H. Krome, a son of William J. Krome, chief engineer of the overseas railway, unveiled the marker at Homestead. At Key West, the marker was unveiled by Mrs. Gonzales and Mrs. Nora K. Smiley, author and historian, and a sister of William J. Krome. These two markers bring to a total of nineteen the number of markers erected by the Association.

The St. Augustine Historical Society: Earle W. Newton, executive director of the St. Augustine Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission, addressed the Society on "The Meaning of Restoration for Americans" at the January meeting. J. Tyler Van Campen was re-elected president; W. I. Drysdale was named vice president; Otis Barnes, treasurer; and Mrs. M. W. Kettner, secretary. The January issue of *El Escribano* commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of the extension of the Florida East Coast Railway to Key West. This issue carries a supplement containing reprints of some of the contemporary material in the Society's archives relating to the "Eighth Wonder of the World," as the overseas railway once was called.

The Palm Beach Historical Society: The opening of the old Royal Poinciana Hotel in Palm Beach in 1894 was commemorated on January 21 by the unveiling of a historical marker on the hotel site. Mrs. Jean Flagler Gonzales unveiled the marker. This ceremony in Palm Beach was one of several in Florida east coast cities in observance of "Henry M. Flagler Day." Recent speakers before the group include Mrs. Murray F. Wittichen and Mrs. Henry J. Burkhardt, who arranged a program on Jefferson Davis. Charles W. Arnade, University of South Florida, spoke in January on "Three Hundred Years of Spanish Rule in Florida." This Society, with headquarters at lovely Whitehall, has received a number of gifts of source materials on the area. A recent donation was a collection of diaries, memoirs, and letters written from

the Palm Beach area during the early 1890's, a gift of Vincent Gilpin of West Chester, Pennsylvania.

The Hillsborough County Historical Commission: A plaque commemorating the visit of President John F. Kennedy to Tampa on October 18, 1960 (when he was a candidate for the presidency), was dedicated at the west entrance of the Hillsborough County Court House in November. The plaque is one of a score at the county's historically significant sites which have been placed by the Commission during the last five years. Theodore Lesley is chairman of the markers committee.

Martin County Historical Society: "Pioneer Days" was sponsored by the Society and the Stuart Chamber of Commerce on November 17-18, 1961. During this celebration the Elliott Museum, gift of retired industrialist Harmon P. Elliott to the Society, was dedicated. Designed and built by Mr. Elliott, the museum houses a valuable collection of antique vehicles which he had collected over the years. Mr. C. O. Rainey, a former president of the Society, was a close collaborator with Mr. Elliott in this project.

New officers of the Society are Maurice Hartman, president; Mrs. Hugh Willoughby, C. A. Porter, and R. C. Fernon, vice-presidents; Mrs. Cornelia Abbott, secretary; and Mrs. Justin Smith, treasurer.

Pensacola Honors T. T. Wentworth

The City Council of Pensacola adopted a resolution on February 8, 1962, commending Mr. T. T. Wentworth, Jr., for his untiring efforts in preserving the historical treasures of the region. A director of the Florida Historical Society and a member of the Board of Editors of the *Quarterly*, Mr. Wentworth has long been known and admired for the single-minded dedication which he has brought to the collecting and displaying of historical artifacts connected with Florida. His collections are presently displayed in his own museum at Pensacola. In recognition of his devoted services the Council saluted him "as a generous and outstanding citizen of this community whose only reward shall come from the admiration and commendation of his fellow men, but which is and shall be rich and sincere."

The Council also resolved to erect and dedicate at some suit-

able place within Pensacola a public marker commending its honored citizen.

Where is the Bemrose Manuscript?

In 1940 the *Quarterly* published portions of an Indian War manuscript which consisted of memoirs by an English hospital steward named John Bemrose. The Society library has a typescript copy of this manuscript but the location of the original is now unknown. The manuscript was edited for the *Quarterly* by Robert Charles Stafford, who had purchased the original from Dr. Arthur Freeman. Dr. John K. Mahon of the University of Florida History Department, now preparing a history of the Indian War, would like very much to see the original manuscript and will be grateful for any assistance our readers can give to him in locating either of the above gentlemen, or the Bemrose manuscript.