


1964

Historical News

Florida Historical Society
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Recommended Citation

Society, Florida Historical (1964) "Historical News," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 43 : No. 2 , Article 12.
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol43/iss2/12>

HISTORICAL NEWS

Local and Area Societies and Commissions

Alachua County Historical Commission:

Jess Davis, chairman of the Commission, reports that copies of the *History of Alachua County*, published by the Commission, are available at Mike's Book Store, 116 S. E. First Street, Gainesville, for \$6.95 each.

Duncan Lamont Clinch Historical Society of Amelia Island:

The annual Fiesta of Eight Flags, held at Fernandina Beach in June, had as its guest of honor Juan R. Parallada, consul general of Spain. A special feature of the fiesta was "Romance of Eight Flags," a pageant presented on two consecutive evenings in the courtyard of Fort Clinch which dramatized the community's early history. The Historical Society, whose president is Mrs. Jay Bartels, sponsored the pageant. It was directed and produced by Maurice Geoffrey who also directed "Next Day in the Morning," presented in Jacksonville in 1962, in conjunction with the quadricentennial anniversary of Jean Ribaut's landing in Florida.

Gulf County Historical Commission:

At the June meeting of the Commission, held in Wewahitchka, it was announced that the dedication of the Fort Crevecoeur historical marker would be held June 25, 1964, on U. S. Highway 98 near the Brouillette residence at St. Joseph Beach. Dr. Joseph D. Cushman, Department of History, Florida State University, was guest speaker at the dedication. The Commission is making an effort to have the Florida Outdoor Recreational Planning Committee acquire the historic Porter home in Apalachicola and move it to Port St. Joe, where it could be properly restored and used as a museum.

Madison County Historical Society:

At the spring meeting of the Society, Warren H. Wilkinson, member of the Alliance for Preservation of Florida Antiquities, described DeSoto's march through Florida, pinpointing crossings of the Suwannee and Aucilla Rivers and the route that the explorer followed through Madison County. The Society has decided to sponsor a scholarship at the North Florida Junior College as a memorial to Carlton Smith.

Marion County Historical Commission:

Ernest H. Jernigan, former director of the Florida Historical Society and chairman of the Social Studies Division, Central Florida Junior College, has been succeeded as chairman of the Commission by J. Ed Blocker of Ocala. Other members are John P. Chazal, vice-chairman; John F. Nicholson, secretary; Mrs. Ned Folks; Mrs. George O. Zane; Mrs. E. G. Peek, Sr.; Mrs. Frances Sheppard; Wilbur A. Willis; Vernon Goin; and Senator L. K. Edwards. The Commission's growing collection of valuable books, maps, pictures, newspapers, and other historical data will be stored temporarily in the old Marion County Courthouse. The Commission's Bulletin, edited by Martin LaGodna, is being widely circulated in Florida and throughout the country.

Martin County Historical Society:

The Society continued its active program of art and historical exhibits, film showings, and meetings throughout the summer months at the House of Refuge and Elliot Museums and in the Jensen Beach Bank and First Bank of Indiantown. E. W. Dutton, curator of the museum's film library, received a special citation from Governor Farris Bryant on June 18, in recognition for his important contributions in the field of nature photography. The trustees of the Society held meetings at the Elliot Museum on July 7 and August 4.

Peace River Valley Historical Society:

The Peace River Valley Historical Society, organized last February, meets on the third Tuesday of each month in the sever-

al cities and towns along the valley of the Peace River and its environs. Dr. Gordon H. McSwain of Arcadia is president of the Society. Its other officers include Vernon E. Peebles of Punta Gorda, 1st vice-president; T. Mabry Carlton of Wauchula, 2nd vice-president; Colonel Read B. Harding of Arcadia, secretary; and, William H. Bevis of Fort Meade, treasurer. An interesting series of program meetings, highlighting the history of Florida and the area, are being planned for the fall and winter.

Pensacola Civil War Round Table:

In May, members of the New Orleans Civil War Round Table toured Forts Barrancas and Redoubt at the Pensacola Navy Yard and Fort Pickens on Santa Rosa Island during their annual battlefield tour. Members and officers of the Pensacola Civil War Round Table acted as guides and interpreters. That evening a joint dinner-meeting was held in the city library. At the June 16th meeting, William W. Clayton, Jr., described the Civil War activities of his grandfather, Confederate General Henry DeLamar Clayton, who brought the First Alabama Volunteers into Pensacola during the war to help defend the Florida coast.

Pensacola Historic Preservation Society:

T. T. Wentworth, Jr., former director of the Florida Historical Society and presently a member of the Florida Library and Historical Commission, has received the Preservation Society's award for outstanding leadership and service during the years 1960-1963 in working to make the history of Pensacola and Florida known and appreciated. In 1962, Mr. Wentworth, who maintains a private historical museum in Pensacola, received similar recognition from the American Association for State and Local History.

St. Lucie Historical Society:

On July 8, 1964, the St. Lucie Historical Society and the St. Lucie Historical Commission rededicated a bronze marker, commemorating the white settlement of 1843 at Fort Pierce. The marker was originally erected in 1926, but it had been moved and was nearly lost. Through the efforts of Walter Hellier, direc-

tor of the Florida Historical Society, the plaque was retrieved from a bank along the Indian River. It is now permanently affixed to a column at the entrance of the Palm Cemetery in Ankona. Participating in the rededication ceremonies with Mr. Hellier were State Senator John McCarthy and the officers and members of the Historical Society and Historical Commission.

Mission of Nombre de Dios Library

The Mission of Nombre de Dios Library has acquired microfilm copies of the Pedro Menendez Papers to add to the collection of East Florida Papers (microfilm dealing principally with the second Spanish period, 1783-1819), secured earlier this year from the Library of Congress. A photographic team was sent to Spain by the St. Augustine Foundation which supports the mission library to film the Menendez documents.

The original Menendez papers are in two privately-owned Spanish archives. The largest collection belongs to the Count of Revillagigedo, lineal descendent of Pedro Menendez and present bearer of the title "Adelanto de la Florida." This collection contains the diary of Father Gonzalo Solis de Meras, one of four diocesan priests who accompanied the Menendez expedition. One of the best extant accounts of the voyage and landing is included in this diary. The other collection contains family papers, including letters written by Menendez from Florida to members of his family. It is owned by a city official at Valencia, Spain.

The Menendez Papers are available in the mission's research center at St. Augustine, where a major effort is being made to gather together all of the extant documents and papers relating to early Spanish Florida that can be found either in this country or abroad. The mission library is rapidly becoming a major storehouse of historical data for scholars and historians.

The Mission of Nombre de Dios Library in St. Augustine desires to obtain the services of a qualified Catholic historian, holding at least a master's degree, to research and write a history of the parishes in the Diocese of St. Augustine. The scope of the writing will include the history of the pioneer parishes of the sixteenth century as well as the numerous parishes founded in modern times. Brief biographies of the pastors of the parishes

will also be included. The completed work will be published in book form during St. Augustine's Quadricentennial, 1965-1966, under a grant from the St. Augustine Foundation, Archbishop Joseph P. Hurley, chairman. The historian commissioned for this work, which should occupy about one year's time, will be paid a generous salary and all expenses. Catholic historians who are interested in applying for this commission should address themselves by letter to Father Michael V. Gannon, Director, Mission of Nombre de Dios, P. O. Box 381, St. Augustine, Florida.

George Mason Papers

The papers of George Mason of Gunston Hall, Virginia, are being catalogued by Dr. Robert A. Rutland of the University of California at Los Angeles, and will be published by the University of North Carolina Press. The project, which will be of tremendous value to American historians, is being financed by Mrs. Lamont duPont Copeland of Delaware and it is being sponsored by the Board of Regents for Gunston Hall (Mason's Virginia home) and the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg. Mrs. Judson Freeman of Jacksonville is the Florida representative on the board.

George Mason was the author of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, which served as a model for the Federal Bill of Rights, and played an important role in the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia. Papers from Mason, to him, or about him are needed. Anyone having such documents are asked to write to Dr. Rutland, Economics Building, 74A, U. C. L. A., Los Angeles, California.