

1981

## Directors' Meeting

Florida Historical Society  
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MINUTES OF THE DIRECTORS MEETING  
Florida Historical Society

Dr. John K. Mahon, president of the Florida Historical Society, called the mid-winter meeting of the Society's board of directors to order at 9:30 a.m., December 12, 1981, at the Florida Historical Society Library, University of South Florida, Tampa. Present were William R. Adams, Paul E. Camp, Linda V. Ellsworth, Lucius F. Ellsworth, Kendrick Ford, Mildred L. Fryman, Thomas Graham, Ernest Hall, W. Sperry Lee, Randy Nimnicht, Olive Peterson, Samuel Proctor, Glenn Westfall, and Linda K. Williams. Samuel J. Boldrick, Paul S. George, Thomas Greenhaw, Peter D. Klingman, Eugene Lyon, Paul W. Wehr, and Jerrell H. Shofner were absent.

Dr. Mahon announced that Marjorie Patterson had resigned her directorship. Dan Hobby, District 4, Fort Lauderdale, was appointed by the board to serve as interim director until the next annual meeting of the Society.

The board approved the minutes of the April 30, 1981, directors' meeting in St. Petersburg, as they were published in the *Florida Historical Quarterly*, LX (October 1981), 253-59, with one amendment. To correct an omission in the minutes, Lucius Ellsworth's name was added to the list of those present at that meeting.

Paul Camp, executive secretary, presented the financial report for the period from January 1, 1981, through September 30, 1981. This report lists the Society's total assets as of September 30, 1981, as \$78,966.54, representing an increase of \$10,831.76 since December 31, 1980, and an increase of \$4,633.87 since the report to the membership at the 1981 annual meeting. Income from membership was \$16,368.50; receipts from sales totaled \$776.47; interest and dividends provided \$8,255.98; contributions and annual meeting income brought the total income for this period to \$29,638.70. Disbursements for the same period totaled \$14,736.47. Major expenses included the printing, mailing, and other publication costs for the *Florida Historical Quarterly*; expenses incurred for the annual meeting; and the operating costs of the Society's executive office. Mr. Camp noted

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that income and expenditures for the first three quarters of 1981 were within budget estimates prepared for fiscal year 1981. Attendance at the annual meeting, luncheon, and banquet fell below estimated totals, resulting in a deficit in the overall meeting budget. The board asked Mr. Camp to compile statistics for the past four years showing the number of persons pre-registering for each annual meeting and the number purchasing tickets for the luncheon and banquet. Mr. Camp informed the board that more stringent preregistration procedures would be instituted for any meal events planned for future annual meetings. Mr. Camp then presented budgetary estimates by category for fiscal year 1982. Estimated income for 1982 is \$33,585, subject to changing interest and dividend rates; estimated disbursements total \$29,749. The board voted to pay the expenses incurred by the banquet speaker at the 1982 meeting. The board requested that Mr. Camp prepare comparative budget figures showing income and expenses from 1979 to the present for the directors before the spring 1982 meeting. Lucius Ellsworth moved that the board approve Camp's financial report as a general guideline with discussed adjustments. The board approved.

Dr. Samuel Proctor, editor of the *Florida Historical Quarterly*, reported continuing improvement in the quantity of articles submitted for consideration for publication in the journal. The poor quality of many articles received continues to be a matter of concern to the editor. Dr. Proctor expressed the need for more photographs suitable for use in the *Quarterly* and on its cover and urged board members to help locate such items. He also conveyed the hope that more articles on the roles of women, blacks, and other ethnic groups in Florida's history would be forthcoming. At the suggestion of Thomas Graham, the editor will consider the possibility and feasibility of adopting a glossy stock for the cover of the journal. Dr. Proctor expressed thanks to the E. O. Painter Printing Company for the continued high quality and reasonable cost of its services. He also expressed gratitude to his editorial board, graduate assistants, and to the University of Florida for its support services.

Randy Nimnicht presented a progress report from the committee appointed at the April 30, 1981, board meeting to consider the book review and book note policies of the *Quarterly*. Suggestions on that subject are being considered, and recom-

mendations will be made at the spring 1982 meeting following consultation with the editor of the *Quarterly*.

Dr. Mahon called the boards attention to the current Society membership tally prepared by the executive secretary. The organizaiton gained 146 members and lost seventeen members, in addition to 126 deliquent memberships, for a total of 1,593 as of November 30, 1981. This is an increase of only three members since the end of 1980. Dr. Ellsworth suggested the preparation of a list of members by category in future membership reports, and Dr. Proctor requested a breakdown of members by districts. Mr. Camp will compile such data for circulation to the directors before their spring 1982 meeting. Linda Ellsworth reported that she found after a canvass of other historical societies that they were experiencing problems similar to that faced by the Florida Historical Society, and that they are also striving to hold their membership levels at a steady figure without substantial membership recruitment programs. Dr. Mahon indicated that no expenditures for public relations purposes had been made from the sum for that activity approved by the board at its spring 1981 meeting.

The board discussed ways in which the *Florida History Newsletter*, edited by Dr. Thomas Greenhaw, could present more information about the activities of local historical societies. Dr. Proctor agreed to confer with the *Newsletter's* editor on the subject of increasing that publication's focus on local history news and coordinating such an approach with the History News section now appearing in the *Quarterly*.

Paul Camp reported on plans for the 1982 annual meeting to be held May 6-8 in Fort Lauderdale. Olive Peterson will serve as the board's liason with the local arrangements committee. Dr. Mahon reported that the program committee has arranged three sessions focusing on the theme of women in Florida history. Linda Williams indicated that the program of the Florida Historical Confederation meetings (May 6-7) is being coordinated with the Society's program. The Society banquet will be held on Friday evening, rather than on Saturday night as in the past. Dr. Mahon proposed that the Saturday luncheon be deleted from the agenda of the 1982 annual meeting and that the business meeting of the Society take place after the Saturday morning program session. Individuals will be responsible for obtaining their own

lunch before the tours and other afternoon events. Dr. Ellsworth put this proposal into a motion, which was passed.

Mrs. Peterson asked that the local arrangement committee for the 1983 meeting at Daytona Beach make a preliminary report to the Society at the 1982 business meeting.

Linda Ellsworth moved that the board of directors approve the constitution of the nominating committee for 1981-1982 as listed in the published minutes of the April 30, 1981, board meeting in order to conform with the Society's by-laws. This motion was approved. Dr. Mahon asked Mrs. Peterson to prepare a slate of suggested members of the 1982-1983 nominating committee for consideration by the board at its spring 1982 meeting.

Dr. Ellsworth reported on the activities of the junior historian committee. A successful history fair took place in Alachua County, organized by Patricia R. Wickman and others. Plans for other history fairs as authorized by the board at its spring 1981 meeting are underway in St. Lucie, Escambia, and Volusia counties. Through the efforts of Dr. Ellsworth and Dr. Jane Dysart, University of West Florida, the Society has received a grant of \$5,000 from the National History Fair Committee to develop its history fair program. These funds will enable ten local winners to attend the Society meeting in Fort Lauderdale, where their exhibits will be displayed. One state winner will be selected who will be eligible to participate in the national history fair contest. Certificates of participation have been issued to every student taking part in a fair; certificates are also presented to the winners. Dr. Ellsworth reported that fairs held to date have been successful and have met the goals for which the program was designed. Ten other localities have demonstrated interest in holding fairs. He reported also that the junior historian committee will convey to the board at its next meeting its assessments of the history fair program and its recommendations regarding future activities. Mr. Nimnicht suggested that awards be made to teachers sponsoring winning students. The junior historian committee will consider this proposal. Dr. Mahon, on behalf of the board, commended Ellsworth and Dysart for their efforts in securing the \$5,000 grant.

Mr. Camp reported that the series of biographical vignettes of early Floridians compiled by June Hurley Young with funding

from the Florida Endowment for the Humanities is ending. The articles were published in approximately twenty-five Florida newspapers. The board commended Dr. Mahon, Mr. Camp, and others for investigating this activity and others so as to increase the Society's visibility.

Dr. Ellsworth reported on the responses to the questionnaire which polled the membership on its perceptions of current and future services and programs of the Society. Approximately one-third of the members of the Society responded. Dr. Ellsworth distributed tabulations of the responses to each question. He summarized the responses to seven major categories addressed by this questionnaire. A high level of interest in the Society was demonstrated by the quantity and quality of responses which indicates the interest of members in the activities of the organization. The *Florida Historical Quarterly* is in general well received; many respondents suggested increased use of graphics in the journal. Over one-half the respondents stated that they had not attended any of the last four annual meetings; the questionnaire did not reveal strong support for changes in meeting format or location policies. On this latter matter, the board supported a suggestion by Glenn Westfall that comments be solicited from persons attending each annual meeting through inclusion of a suitable form in registrant information packets. Three-quarters of the respondents favored the history fair concept, and there is strong support for expansion of this program. More than two-thirds of the respondents support public activity for the Society, including increased visibility for its activities and positive political involvement in matters relating to the teaching, collecting, and interpreting of Florida history. About one-half of the respondents expressed the opinion that the board of directors adequately represents the Society's membership, but many indicated that the board does not satisfactorily communicate its varied activities to the membership. The board agreed that the Society's *Newsletter* could become more of a vehicle for highlighting major activities to supplement the publication of board minutes in the *Quarterly*. About one-fifth of the respondents indicated that they had at one time or another used the Society library at the University of South Florida.

Dr. Ellsworth made several recommendations to the board for action based on the results of the questionnaire. He suggested

that the committee considering the book review policies of the *Quarterly* also discuss with Dr. Proctor ways of including and financing more illustrations in that journal. He recommended that the statistical results of the opinion poll be printed and distributed to Society members. He stated that the junior historian committee will consider questionnaire input in formulating its recommendations for the May 1982 meeting. He also recommended that the board consider finding a vehicle for retaining a professional staff member as executive director of the affairs of the Society as an alternative to continued reliance on volunteer efforts. This position would include responsibilities such as instigating and supervising activities, assisting the Society's officers, directors, and committees, providing continuity for the organization, and establishing a stronger liason with local historical societies. The position of executive secretary would continue to exist with managerial functions similar to those currently performed. Dr. Ellsworth outlined three optional approaches to achieving the latter recommendation: 1) continue the status quo with the Society's library and headquarters remaining at the University of South Florida and investigate the availability of University resources to support the establishment of an executive director position; 2) relocate the Society's headquarters and library at another institution which is able to commit adequate resources such as space, funds, equipment, and support personnel for all existing functions as well as for the establishment of the position of executive director; and 3) continue the Society's library at its present location but relocate the executive office, including the current executive secretary functions and a new executive director position, at another institution which would provide the necessary support for these functions.

Dr. Ellsworth moved that the president authorize a committee to review these three options and others aimed at assessing how the Society should be staffed, where its headquarters and library should be located, and how a professional executive director position could be established. The committee will bring to the board at its May 1982 meeting specific recommendations for possible board decision. Mr. Camp seconded this motion. After discussion, the board approved it unanimously. Ken Ford recommended that this committee contact other societies with

executive directors for information and guidance. Ernest Hall suggested that any option other than the three presented by Dr. Ellsworth to be considered by this committee to be distributed in written form to the directors before the May meeting. The board supported both these suggestions. Dr. Mahon asked Lucius Ellsworth to chair this committee, together with Samuel Proctor and William Adams. Other members will be added to this committee.

Linda Williams, president of the Florida Historical Confederation, reported on actions taken by her board at its last meeting. A number of changes were made in the Confederation's by-laws, and Ms. Williams moved that the Society's board sanction them. This motion was passed. Ms. Williams informed the directors that the Confederation board has selected four categories in which awards will be made to local historical societies and museums: community involvement, education, publication, and membership promotion. A committee has been formed to discuss the development of this project.

Dr. Mahon informed the board of a commemorative program sponsored by the Florida Division of Recreation and Parks to be held at Dade Battlefield on December 27, 1981. He reported that, in response to resolutions adopted by the Society at its May 2, 1981, business meeting, he had written letters on behalf of the Society supporting the continuation of a federal preservation program and the funding of other programs aimed at preserving the nation's historical heritage and cultural resources.

Dr. Ellsworth moved that the board authorize the president to write letters on behalf of the Society to the State Board of Regents and to the Chancellor of the State University System supporting the inclusion of history as one of the admission criteria used in the university system and to the Florida Commissioner of Education reinforcing the position taken by the Society in past years that American and Florida history should be taught at the K through twelve levels of the state's education system. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Proctor reported that Mrs. LeRoy Collins and Mrs. Nancy Dodson have expressed their gratitude for the Society's support of the Union Bank Building (Tallahassee) preservation and restoration program.

The next meeting of the board of directors was set for 5:30 p.m., May 6, 1982, in Fort Lauderdale.

Dr. Mahon adjourned the board meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mildred L. Fryman  
*Recording Secretary*

**G**REAT EXPECTATIONS. . . . .

1982

May 6-7	Florida Historical Confederation	Fort Lauderdale, FL
May 7-8	FLORIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY– 81st MEETING	Fort Lauderdale, FL
May 12-15	National Genealogical Society	Indianapolis, IN
May 28-31	Florida Folk Festival	White Springs, FL
June 20-24	American Association of Museums	Philadelphia, PA
Sept. 21-24	American Association for State and Local History	Hartford, CT
Oct. 6-10	National Trust for Historic Preservation	Louisville, KY
Oct. 7-10	Oral History Association Workshop and Colloquium	San Antonio, TX
Act. 28-30	Florida Trust for Historic Preservation	Jacksonville, FL
Nov. 3-6	Southern Historical Association	Memphis, TN
Nov. 19-21	Southern Jewish Historical Society	New Orleans, LA
Dec. 27-30	American Historian Association	Washington, D.C.