

1986

Director's Meeting

Florida Historical Society
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MINUTES OF THE DIRECTORS' MEETING
FLORIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Paul S. George, president-elect of the Florida Historical Society, called the mid-winter meeting of the Society's board of directors to order at 9:00 A.M., December 6, 1986, at the Florida Historical Society Library, University of South Florida, Tampa. Present were Paul S. George, Hampton Dunn, Michael Slicker, Gary R. Mormino, Patricia Bartlett, Gregory Bush, David R. Colburn, Robert C. Harris, Wright Langley, Raymond A. Mohl, Owen North, Larry E. Rivers, William M. Straight, Kyle S. VanLandingham, Gwendolyn Waldorf, Patricia Wickman, and Randy F. Nimmicht. Also present were Hayes Kennedy, Milly St. Julien, Thomas D. Greenhaw, and Jerrell Shofner.

The board unanimously approved the minutes of the May 1, 1986, directors' meeting in Bradenton as published in the *Florida Historical Quarterly* 65 (October 1986), pp. 256-62.

Dr. Mormino announced the resignation of President Lucius Ellsworth. Dr. Harris moved that the resignation be accepted, and Mr. Nimmicht seconded. As per Article II, Section 3, of the Society's By-Laws, Paul George assumed the presidency, to be served until the May 1987 annual meeting. Lucius Ellsworth, elected to the presidency in May 1986, has moved to Nashville, Tennessee, to accept a position as associate executive director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.

Dr. Gary Mormino, executive director, presented a financial report for the period of January 1, 1986, to September 30, 1986. He explained that the slight deficit was because several revenue sources do not arrive until the last quarter of the year, and that in actuality there will be a surplus of \$4,000 to \$6,000 in the Society's accounts. Contributing to this surplus are revenues from the library account and the fund raising campaign begun in September 1986. The 1986 financial statement reflected the purchase of an IBM computer and associated training course, a Minolta photocopy machine, and the salary for the associate director.

Dr. Mormino noted the increase in contributions which total more than \$12,000 for 1986. These include \$5,000 in matching funds from an anonymous source to institute a "President's

Award”; \$1,000 from the Wentworth Foundation; \$800 from Ron Schon, in conjunction with a series of historically-oriented radio spots; \$1,000 from Charlton W. Tebeau; \$500 from Glenn Dill; \$500 from Gerald McSwiggan for the History Fair; \$500 from an anonymous source; and average donations of \$27 each from ninety individuals. The Society also received grants from the Saunders Foundation and the National Middle School Foundation. The Society has recently received tax-free status from the state of Florida and will no longer pay sales tax on many of its purchases. The Society is involved in two major income-producing projects. Continental Heritage Press is publishing, in cooperation with the Society, *Florida Portrait*, a photographic history of the state. The National Middle School Resource Center will use images from the Society’s archives for a series of slide presentations— “Women in Florida,” “Afro-American Experience in Florida,” and “Florida in the 1880s.”

Dr. Mormino attributed the success of this year’s fund raising to the influence of the President’s Award fund, the utilization of the computer, and the fact that the Society is involved in many programs and projects and is consequently more visible.

A report on the status of the President’s Fund followed. The Fund will provide two prizes— one for the best paper written by an undergraduate student, and one for the best paper written by a graduate student on some aspect of Florida history. The committee supervising this project includes Robert Pittman of the St. Petersburg *Times*, Larry Rivers, and David Colburn.

Dr. Mormino suggested that in order to simplify bookkeeping records and secure a higher yield on Society investments, multiple accounts should be consolidated. In response, Mr. Nimnicht moved that there be two accounts, one large investment account and a smaller checking account. The consolidation process should include a determination of the current dollar values, and the percentage values for each of the individual funds and accounts. Also, the consolidation process would include an annual evaluation of each fund, with financial reports providing individualized dollar amounts. The need for individualized reporting was reiterated. Most of the accounts are in minimal-interest accounts; consolidation will provide additional revenue for the Society. The motion passed.

The accounts currently total (percentage of the whole is in parenthesis): Wentworth Publication Fund, \$10,000 (28.6 per

cent); Charlton W. Tebeau, \$5,000 (14.3 per cent); Father Jerome Library Fund, \$5,000 (14.3 per cent); Arthur W. Thompson, \$5,000 (14.3 per cent); President's Award, \$7,500 (21.3 per cent); Rembert W. Patrick, formerly Yonge, \$2,500 (7.2 per cent). Dr. Mormino reported that this has been "a banner year" for membership, and that overall financial well-being of the Society is due mainly to the increase in membership over the past few years. In 1982, membership was 1,318; membership is now nearly 2,000.

Dr. Mormino noted the assistance and cooperation of many local historical societies. Several local societies— St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, Volusia County, St. Augustine, Bay County, Fort Myers, Spanish Point, Sarasota, Nassau County— and the University of Florida Alumni Office, provided the Society with their membership lists, and allowed the Society to do a mailing soliciting membership. Dr. Mormino will continue to use local and regional mailing lists, and asked for help in obtaining such lists. All materials will be treated with confidentiality.

Other factors contributing to membership growth include the executive director and associate director's travel campaign. This past year, they have spoken and represented the Society in more than thirteen communities in Florida. Simultaneously, membership losses are substantially less than they have been in recent years, and the Society has taken a more active role, and has sponsored more activities, including History Tours conducted by Gary Mormino and Paul George.

Dr. Mormino complimented both Milly St. Julien and his secretary for their work and efficiency. He noted that their work load greatly increased during the past year, and he urged that the Society reward them in some way, perhaps in the form of a bonus. The board concurred with the director's evaluation, but tabled discussion of bonuses pending the assessment of our current financial obligations.

Dr. Colburn reminded the board of its agreements with the University of South Florida, and that the term of those agreements was drawing to a close. The need to extend those agreements and assure the cooperation of the University was affirmed. The subject of a full-time executive director was discussed, but the feeling of the board was that securing a director, without the support of the State University System, would be unwise anytime in the near future.

The president appointed Dr. Colburn to chair a committee, with Mr. Nimmicht and Dr. Straight, to meet with representatives of the University of South Florida for the purpose of obtaining a written agreement covering the following: a definition of the relationship of the executive director, as an administrator and as a scholar, with the University of South Florida; an understanding of the extent of the long-term commitment of the University of South Florida to the Society, and specifically, to the executive director; an outline of the evaluation procedure for defining the executive director's contribution to the University of South Florida; an "overview" of the continuing relationship of the Society to the University of South Florida; and a more complete understanding of the relationship and use of campus facilities by the Society, and vice versa, with special emphasis on the director's secretary and the Society's library collections. In presenting a proposal to the University of South Florida, the board emphasized the advantageous relationship that currently exists and the need to continue the relationship. The director also emphasized the need to show the breadth and scope of Dr. Mormino's activities, and their worth to the University of South Florida.

Dr. Proctor reported on the activities of the *Florida Historical Quarterly*. A total of thirty-one articles were received. Sixteen were published in 1986, with topics ranging from pre-colonial to recent Florida and southern history. Sixty-nine book reviews were published; sixteen books involved Florida topics, and thirty-one books dealt with the South. Twenty-two other books were reviewed, including volumes dealing with black history, women's history, Indians, politics, and other matters relating to Florida history and archaeology. In the Book Notes section, forty-two books were reviewed that dealt with Florida. The *Florida Historical Quarterly* is always interested in reviewing books dealing with all aspects of Florida history. Review copies should be forwarded to the *Quarterly's* box (14045 University Station, Gainesville 32604), together with full information on the cost of the item and how it can be ordered.

Dr. Proctor thanked the members of the editorial board, and everyone else who helps to make the publication of our journal a success. He also thanked the University of Florida for its continued support.

Dr. Colburn then reported that the Department of History

at the University of Florida, has been authorized by the dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to begin a search for a Florida historian in January of 1987. It is hoped that this person will eventually assume the editorship of the *Florida Historical Quarterly*.

Dr. Thomas Greenhaw, editor of the *Florida History Newsletter*, reported the changes that will be instituted in that publication. Jerrell Shofner reported that he will have his manuscript for "Florida Portrait" completed by April 1, 1987. He also reported on the status of "Readings in Florida History," a collection of articles from the *Florida Historical Quarterly* that he is editing. He anticipates a July 1987 completion date. The book is proposed as a supplemental text in the field of Florida history, and will be published either by the University Presses of Florida or independently with funds from the Wentworth Publication fund.

Subsequent discussion noted a number of other possible publishing ventures, including a volume of primary-source documents relating to Florida history, various unpublished WPA documents, including the "Florida Negro" and some slave narratives, and any of several local history monographs.

Dr. George requested that these various questions and points be referred to the Publications Committee with Dr. Proctor, chairman, Dr. Colburn, Jan Matthews, and Earle Bowden. The committee will recommend funding and scheduling for present and future publications, a distribution plan, in case the Society becomes involved in the marketing of any of its publications, and the method to acquire "remainders," and if need be, funds for their purchase. President George will arrange a meeting with the committee. Such action should be taken expeditiously, in anticipation of any of the several problems that might arise in the near future. Patty Bartlett and Mike Slicker offered their assistance to the committee.

Kyle VanLandingham reported that the financial condition of the Society is generally healthy, in spite of lower interest rates in 1986, and the prognosis of low rates for 1987. The committee will begin the process of consolidating the accounts.

Pat Wickman reported that the executive committee of the Florida Historical Confederation had met the previous afternoon, December 5, 1986. The committee had reviewed the 1986 Confederation Awards and established guidelines for the 1987

awards. A review committee of the articles of the Confederation is nearing completion of its work. Its recommendations will appear in the *Florida History Newsletter*. Adoption will be considered by the membership at the May 1987 meeting. The topic of the day-long workshop in St. Augustine will be "The City as Museum," with Fred Rath, secretary of the Eastern National Park and Monument Association, as the keynote speaker. For a second year the Confederation has received support from the Florida Endowment for the Humanities, with a grant of \$3,098. The Endowment has also requested that the Florida Historical Confederation add \$1,000 to its budget, in return for Ms. Wickman acting as editor/publisher for the FEH Proceedings, "Minority History for the Majority."

The membership of the Confederation continues to show steady growth, and now represents about 100 agencies and government bodies throughout Florida. After a discussion about the potential for increasing the membership of the Confederation, Mr. Nimnicht suggested that the Confederation submit its annual dues solicitation in the form of a well-worded invoice and courtesy note.

Gwendolyn Waldorf, chairperson for the History Fair, reported that information has been distributed to each of the sixty-seven counties, and that her committee has received replies from ten counties. This year's fair has been enlarged to include written and media projects. Florida will probably be sending approximately fourteen young people to the national competition. A discussion followed Ms. Waldorf's report regarding arrangements for History Fair participants at the annual banquet. Providing for such a large crowd of students and parents presents both logistical and economic problems. The need for ceremony and encouragement of the youngsters is recognized. The directors requested that the History Fair committee explore some alternative modes of recognition, including the possibility of formalizing the proceedings at each year's reception to allow for introductions and awards.

On the President's Award, Dr. Mormino reported that \$2,500 has been raised toward the goal of \$5,000 needed to match the challenge grant. Milly St. Julien described our participation in a series of slide presentations in conjunction with the National Middle School Resource Center, located on the campus of the University of South Florida. The Resource Center will

provide a \$5,000 grant, and the Society will prepare three slide presentations and pay the costs of preparing them. The Center will be responsible for the promotion and distribution of the slide presentations, and any profits will be divided between the two organizations. The presentations are expected to be available by September 1987.

Dr. Mormino reported on the arrangements for the annual meeting in May. Former presidents of the Society will preside at many of the sessions and will speak at the banquet on Friday evening. There is no convention hotel. Accommodations will include many of the city's bed-and-breakfast inns. Sessions will be held at the Government House, the reception at the Lightner Museum, and the banquet at Flagler College.

The nominations committee has been appointed with Milton Jones as chairman. Dr. George asked the committee to look into the status of Hampton Dunn as vice-president, and the effect of Dr. Ellsworth's resignation on his position.

Dr. Harris suggested that future program committees look into the possibility of changing the format of some of the sessions at the annual meeting to include more audio/visual materials and panel discussions, and encourage the distribution of copies of the papers beforehand, all of which will provide an interesting format and encourage audience attendance and participation. Other suggestions for possible changes were offered by other members of the board, including concurrent sessions, roundtable discussions, broader roles for moderators, luncheon groups, etc.

During the discussion, Dr. Colburn noted two difficulties that need to be considered as the directors evaluate the sessions and their current format: the Society membership is a mixed audience of amateurs and professionals, each group with different needs and expectations, and secondly, to achieve the goal of increased audience participation requires a stronger commitment and responsibility to the audience.

These matters will be referred to the 1988 program committee, with a request that it consider some "alternative" sessions. The board, of course, understands the problems encountered in planning a program, and it wants the committee to maintain its latitude and flexibility.

Dr. Harris requested that the Florida Historical Society support a nationwide effort to refurbish and restore state monu-

ments and memorials at Gettysburg National Park. Mr. Nimnicht moved that the Society appropriate an amount not to exceed \$300 to the National Gettysburg Project. It passed unanimously.

Dr. George noted the untimely and tragic death of Dr. J. Leitch Wright, Jr., a former board member and a strong supporter of the Society. In ensuing discussion, board members considered several possibilities for a memorial to Dr. Wright, including: "Run through the Antiquities" in St. Augustine (remembering his love for the sport and his attempts to organize his colleagues each year for such a run). The president appointed Ms. Waldorf as chair of a committee to present a proposal to the board at its May meeting.

Gregory Bush expressed his concerns on the "lack of visual literacy" in our contemporary culture, and the fact that historians seem to have relinquished their role as purveyors of history to the entertainment industry. It is also frustrating to note the visual media's apparent lack of historical knowledge in general, and Florida history in particular. He urged the board to establish a committee for the purpose of studying the feasibility of creating a series of films or videos related to Florida history. Several ideas were discussed, including holding a forum or conference on the use of video as a history tool; the Society offering fellowships for students or newspeople doing work in the field; exploration of grant sources for some of these projects; the use of local cable television franchises in promoting local history; and the production of a "Connections"-like series related to Florida and its history. Patty Bartlett moved that a film and video committee be established, with Gregory Bush as chairman, to examine the Society's relationship to the audio/visual field, and the feasibility of a possible role for the Society within that field. The motion passed.

Dr. Harris urged that at future annual meetings more time be allocated for much-needed socializing. After some discussion, the consensus of the board seemed to be in favor of keeping the Friday night banquet, in spite of the difficulties it presented for informal socializing. Other directors noted that the formality of an evening banquet is in keeping with the dignity involved in the awards, that there is no other time available, and that the increased attendance at the banquet indicates that the membership is pleased with the format.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 P.M.