

1987

Director's Meeting

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

President Paul George called the mid-winter meeting to order at 9: 12 A.M., December 5, 1987, in the Florida Historical Society Library, University of South Florida, Tampa. Present were: Paul S. George, Michael Slicker, Gary R. Mormino, Samuel Proctor, Thomas D. Greenhaw, William R. Adams, Kathy H. Arsenault, Gregory Bush, David R. Colburn, Rodney E. Dillon, Robert C. Harris, Wright Langley, Marinus H. Latour, Gerald W. McSwiggan, Raymond A. Mohl, Gwendolyn Waldorf, J. Andrew Brian, and Randy F. Nimnicht. The resignation of J. Earle Bowden was read and accepted.

Douglas Drown, representing Continental Heritage Press, presented the Board with a report as to the current status of *Florida Portrait*. Stating that the publishing company had experienced financial difficulties, Drown requested that the board consider the allocation of additional funds for the completion of the project.

Without rejecting his offer, the directors requested that the book's manuscript and all photographs related to the project be returned to either Paul George or Gary Mormino within two weeks. Subsequent to the transfer of those materials, the board would decide as to whether to proceed with the project as outlined by Mr. Drown.

Represented by James L. Ghiotto (vice-president of Academic Affairs), Dr. James Horgan (History Department), Dr. Lewis Wynne (History Department), and Kay Kasuda (Librarian), Saint Leo College extended an invitation to the Society to make its headquarters on its campus. Included in the proposal were provisions for space and utilities within the Cannon Memorial Library, funds for maintenance of the Society's collection, funding in some fashion for an executive director, funding for support personnel, and a pleasant atmosphere.

Represented by Dr. Raymond Arsenault (History Department), the University of South Florida at St. Petersburg extended a similar invitation to the Society to make its headquarters on that campus. The proposal mentioned the advantages to be had on a small, intimate campus in association with a larger institution.

Included in the proposal were provisions for space and utilities in a new library being built on the campus, the full cooperation of the local and central administrations, support personnel, and funding in some fashion for an executive director.

Speaking on behalf of the Future of the Society Committee, Randy Nimnicht reported that his meeting with John Lott Brown, president of the University of South Florida, had proceeded well, that Dr. Brown had stated that he considers the Society as a valued guest on the University of South Florida campus, and that he is aware of and supports Dr. Mormino's accomplishments and successes as executive director of the Society. Dr. Brown confirmed that, despite the fact that the Society was not presently able to assume full financial responsibility for its personnel and operations as previously agreed, the University would continue to provide support for a half-time director and a full-time accounts clerk for some time to come.

To date, the search for an executive director to replace Dr. Mormino has not been fruitful. In discussion, the following points were made: (1) Ideally, the Society needs to be allowed to appoint and fire its executive director. It is difficult for a director to serve two masters. (2) The Society currently has some funds, but no revenue strength. (3) Therefore, of necessity, one of the functions of an executive director will be fund raising. (4) In order to establish financial independence, if that is to be a goal, the Society must become more of a "full service" organization. (5) The Society must move in the direction of fully meeting its financial obligations before independence is possible.

The Future of the Society Committee will continue with the following membership: Milton Jones, chairman, Randy Nimnicht, David Colburn, Hampton Dunn, Jerrell Shofner, and Paul George, ex-officio. The committee is charged with: (1) formalizing a new, three-year agreement with the University of South Florida that provides for a half-time executive director and a full-time accounts clerk, that can be terminated by either party; (2) immediately advertising for the position of executive director, and taking the responsibility for finding a suitable replacement for Dr. Mormino, as quickly as possible; and (3) corresponding with various institutions—particularly Saint Leo College and the University of South Florida, Baybor—expressing our appreciation for their interest, and suggesting that we may be in a better position to consider the possibility of a new home three years hence.

In a brief review, Dr. Mormino expressed his overall satisfaction with the Society's progress in the past few years. The Society has strengthened its financial position and has revitalized its image. The office staff are using recently purchased new equipment, and have consolidated accounts. Membership has increased, and fund-raising efforts have been significantly improved.

With continued effort, the financial picture for 1988 looks bright. The board agreed to establish an interest-bearing General Endowment Account, to be funded by surplus assets and other monies accruing at the close of each fiscal year. Use of the interest from the account must be approved by the board. The principal in the account may be used only in extraordinary circumstances, and only with the approval of seventy-five percent of the board of directors. The board agreed that the Society should reimburse Dr. Mormino for incidental expenses incurred in the course of Society activities. The board recognized that with impending financial obligations over the course of the next few years the Society will be faced with major fund-raising problems.

The future strength of the Society depends upon increased membership. To that end, a membership committee was established to address the issue of taking the message that Florida history is important to the corporate public. Wright Langley will chair the committee that includes Robert Harris, Patsy West, Patrick Rogers, and Patricia Bartlett. The membership is approximately 2,000, the largest in the history of the Society. Strong efforts are being made to increase membership and to persuade members to renew their membership.

In his mid-winter report Dr. Samuel Proctor, editor of the *Florida Historical Quarterly*, noted the new computer technology in his office which will enable the publication of the journal to proceed more efficiently. He reported on the number of articles submitted for consideration for publication and on the number of articles and book reviews printed. He also reiterated the *Quarterly's* need for cover photographs.

Dr. Thomas Greenhaw, editor of the *Florida History Newsletter*, requested that local and regional organizations add the *Newsletter* to their mailing lists. He will then be able to publicize their events and activities. The manuscript, *Essays in Florida History*, compiled and edited by Dr. Jerrell Shofner, has been completed, the author has been paid, and various local publishers are currently considering the manuscript for publication.

The manuscript and photographs of *Florida Portrait* are currently in the hands of Douglas Drown of Continental Heritage Press. The Society has verbally (through its executive director and president), personally (at the unanimous request of the board), and in writing (through its legal advisors) requested the return of the manuscript and photographs.

Karen Singh is completing the indexing of the *Florida Historical Quarterly*, volumes fifty-four through sixty-four. After approval of Dr. Singh's work, the board has authorized Dr. Proctor to obtain a bid for printing costs from E. O. Painter Printing Company, to report his findings to Dr. George, and if that the bid seems reasonable, to proceed with the printing of the *Index*.

Gregory Bush presented a proposal to the directors to create a series of films or videotapes with a Florida history theme. The proposal was tabled pending the resolution of some of the other business before the board. The board did recognize, however, that familiarity with video techniques and processes are important and should be considered by the next director.

Andrew Brian reported that the Florida Historical Confederation's new by-laws will be published in the *Newsletter* prior to the May meeting. At the annual meeting, the Confederation will present an expanded schedule and concurrent programs. The programs in May will focus on "Education Programs as Revenue Sources," archival techniques, and reference libraries.

David Chapman, coordinator of this year's History Fair, reported that letters had been sent to all county school districts in the state, and that response for this year's History Fair has been typical—good in the northern part of the state, poor in the southern part. In order to expand the Fair's financial base, Mr. Chapman has solicited several Black History and Women's History groups for contributions, and has also made contact with some of Florida's theme parks for contributions.

Discussion of a proposed reapportionment to make representation on the board of directors a more accurate reflection of membership was tabled.

Gerald McSwiggan, chairman of local arrangements for the annual meeting, reported that the convention hotel will be the DuPont Plaza in downtown Miami. The programs are nearing completion, with some emphasis on Florida's Hispanic roots. Members of the board requested that the program committee consider requests to "beef up" programs for the meeting, and

make use of some "non-traditional" sessions. Jacksonville and Gainesville have both indicated interest in hosting the 1989 annual meeting.

Reviewing the by-laws, the board recognized that Paul George is filling the vacancy as president left by the resignation of Dr. Lucius Ellsworth. He may be nominated for a two-year term as president in May 1988. Hampton Dunn has been serving as vice-president. The nominating committee will need to offer the names for a president-elect and five directors at the May meeting.

At Gwendolyn Waldorf's suggestion, the board agreed that the Florida Historical Society should place an historical marker, in the name of J. Leitch Wright, Jr., commemorating the life and accomplishments of William Augustus Bowles. The subject of the marker would coincide with the interest and work of Dr. Wright. Sponsoring a marker will cost \$1,270. A slip soliciting pledges for the marker will be included in the registration packets for the annual meeting. The Leitch Wright Memorial Run will continue to be a part of the ongoing activities of each annual meeting.

The board expressed appreciation and gratitude to Dr. Mormino for his continued involvement with the Society, and for all of his various contributions.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 P.M.