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Sesquicentennial Preface

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SESQUICENTENNIAL PREFACE

President John Tyler, on March 3, 1845, signed the bill admitting Florida into the Union as a state. The bill had passed the House of Representatives on February 13 and the Senate on March 1. The twenty-seventh star in the American flag belongs to Florida.

This year Florida is celebrating its sesquicentennial with a variety of ceremonies, exhibits, and programs in Washington, Tallahassee, and throughout Florida. A stamp commemorating the sesquicentennial has been issued, and there will be an exhibit of historical documents and memorabilia at the Library of Congress.

United States Senator Connie Mack invited the acting editor of the *Florida Historical Quarterly* to help prepare the Resolution that saluted Florida on its anniversary. Connie Mack introduced the Congressional Resolution in the Senate on March 2, 1995, and it was adopted unanimously. The following day Senator Bob Graham addressed his colleagues in the Senate about the sesquicentennial commemoration. His remarks were published in the *Congressional Record*.

President Bill Clinton extended his greetings to the citizens of Florida with the following letter written from the Oval Office:

For the better part of our nation's history, Florida has provided a loving home to Americans of every race, belief, and background. From families who have run their businesses generation after generation to retirees who come seeking the warmth of the Florida sun, Florida's residents uphold the finest traditions of southern hospitality and the highest standards in American values.

As you reacquaint yourselves with Florida's rich history— from the landing of Ponce de Leon to the signing of the statehood bill by President Tyler— I hope that all of you take renewed pride in your state's unique heritage and in the great possibilities of the future.

Best wishes to all for a wonderful anniversary year.

The *Florida Historical Quarterly* dedicates this issue to the celebration. The four articles, written by Florida historians, pertain to

the important formative years between 1821 and 1845, when the citizens living in Territorial Florida were preparing for statehood. It was a time for chaos, bloodshed, and violence, but it was also a time for change and growth.