



THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



Published by the Department of Public Affairs, City of St. Augustine, Florida

April 6 2010

Opportunities lost to save history

The tragic end to the historic Clark-Worley House on West King Street by fire last week was destined to happen. It was one of our forgotten treasures, and opportunities to save it failed.

Owned by the Broudy family as part of their complex at US 1 and West King, they offered it for one dollar - provided it be moved. A city police officer contemplated such a move, but costs were too great. A location scout for CVS Pharmacy said they'd move it back over the railroad tracks, if they could buy the Broudy complex - which didn't happen.

The Clark-Worley House was listed in 2004 by our Citizens for the Preservation of St. Augustine, Inc. (CPSA) among eleven Threatened Historic Places in St. Augustine, and while others have been saved, this "towered landmark . . . architectural entryway to the historic West Augustine neighborhood" failed to draw attention.

Among those other threatened places, the Knights of Columbus Hall, Ponce de Leon Golf Course, and block bounded by Genoply and Alfred Streets are lost; Echo House, St. Benedict the Moor School, and brick streets are in restoration; the Villa Rosa restored; the La Punta Mission and Civil Rights Landmarks are being noted with markers; and the extensive listings in the Lincolnville National Register District are largely unchanged.

Visit the CPSA [website](#) for details on our threatened places.



Ponce Company prepares for 2013 commemoration

Juan Ponce de Leon carried with him a military contingent as he explored this new world in 1513-1521, and that Company of Juan Ponce de León will be revived with its first living history muster April 9-11 at our [Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park](#).

Organizer Davis Walker says the muster will feature interpretations and demonstrations of period weaponry, including the crossbow, arquebus, and Spain's sword-and-shield troops, the rodeleros, as well as some history on Ponce's world.

La Compañía de Juan Ponce de León can be expected to play an important role as we celebrate the 500th anniversary of his discovery of La Florida in 2013. The company is part of [Living History, Inc.](#), a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to accurate portrayal of our history.

Finding our roots in the Plaza

Art & Craft Spring Festival

They protested moving the Art & Craft Festival from our Plaza to Francis Field a dozen years back, and likely sent up a howl half a century ago when it moved from the Old Spanish Treasury on St. George Street to the Plaza.

But each move provided a larger venue for the St. Augustine Art Association-sponsored semi-annual festival, held Thanksgiving weekend and the weekend after Easter. Next weekend's festival runs Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

It will feature top local and national artists in the great variety of arts, with proceeds supporting the ongoing programs of the Art Association. Details on the Art Association [website](#).

Our Plaza de la Constitución, the oldest public space in America, was surrounded by the town's principal buildings when laid out under 1573 royal ordinances for town plans.

That much history should yield significant artifacts beneath its modern landscaping, and City Archaeologist Carl Halbirt, MelissaDezendorf, and their volunteer corps are continuing efforts to find them in an exploration expected to continue into April.

You'll find them in our Plaza most weekday mornings. And check our city's archaeological [website](#) for details on digging our past.

Resident joins presidential alumni

Community activist Derek Hankerson has become a member of the distinguished alumni of President George H. W. Bush appointees, in fact serving both Bush administrations over a 20-year Washington career.

His far-ranging assignments included the offices of both Presidential and Vice Presidential Advance, Public Liaison, and the Department of Energy.

In our community, Derek has been active with the Fort Mose Society, successfully pushed for inclusion of Fort Mose in the National Underground Railroad Network, and is spearheading a drive for inclusion in the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor.

Join Our Mailing List!

Previous Issues

Neighborhood Associations at work

When our city's neighborhood associations program was developed, the focus was on neighbors helping each other and improving interaction with city government.

The Flagler Model Land Neighborhood Association is holding to that neighborly pledge, hosting a Wine/Food Tasting Fundraiser at The Bakery at Opus 39 on Cordova Street Sunday, April 18, from 4 - 7 p.m. to benefit neighbor St. Augustine Youth Services on Saragossa Street. Tickets are \$20 - by presale only - at Opus 39 or Mullet Gallery, both on Cordova, or through [Sandi Smith](#) or [Becky Greenberg](#).

[Over on North Davis Shores, a neighbor urged refurbishing of the state historic marker at Oglethorpe Park, and the North Davis Shores Neighborhood Association \(SANDS\) with corporation of the City, got it done. The marker tells the history of British General James Oglethorpe's siege of St. Augustine in 1740.](#)

[Also recently completed: the Pena-Peck House marker, in a program funded by the state's Division of Historic Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation.](#)



History's Highlights

Ponce's quest believable in its day

One in a series of historic features as we prepare for our commemorations, drawn from research by George Gardner

... There is an island about 325 leagues from Espanola. . . in which there is a continual spring of running water of such marvelous virtue that, the water there being drunk, perhaps with some diet, maketh old men young again.
Secretary, Council of the Indies, ca. 1512

Juan Ponce de Leon is best known to the world for his search for the fabled fountain of youth, a quest dismissed as futile today, but not at the time.

In the early 1500s, much of the civilized world was still wrestling with the idea that the world might not be flat, navigators could reckon latitude but not longitude, and mariners returned home with stories of fantastic new lands beyond the horizon. And tales from natives of these new lands of a fabulous fountain could be believable.

The idea of a miraculous fountain of youth had existed for generations in men's minds. It was embedded in the Hindu religion, and Semitic cultures believed in a river of immortality. Over time, the legend spread around the globe.

Now, in 1513, Ponce de Leon was granted royal commission to explore the northern lands, specifically Bimini at the northern tip of the Bahamas, and to lay claim to the fabled fountain, if found. Bimini best fit the description of an island where Indians suggested it would be.

The commission came to a man whose first journey of discovery was with Columbus in 1492, and whose administrative skills brought him appointment as governor of Puerto Rico in 1508.

His discovery of Florida, only the tip of a vast new land, is history, and whether he thought he found eternal youth in this land's waters is moot.

In 1521, he began a second voyage as Adelantado and governor of Bimini and Florida, to establish Spain's claims to this new land. Exploring the west coast area near present-day Sanibel Island, he was wounded in the thigh by an Indian arrow. Retreating to Cuba to recover, he died at the age of 61.



The St. Augustine Report is published by the Department of Public Affairs of the City of St. Augustine each Tuesday and on Fridays previewing City Commission meetings. The Report is written and distributed by George Gardner, former St. Augustine Mayor (2002-2006) and Commissioner (2006-2008) and a longtime newspaper reporter and editor. Contact The Report at gardner@aug.com

Email Marketing by

