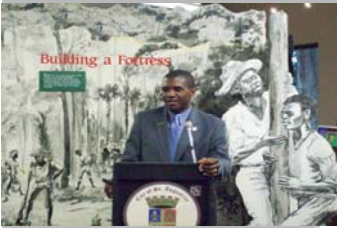


Fort Mose Historical Society

Community of Freedom

ISSUE 2, FALL 2009



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Fort Mose Historical Society

13th Birthday Celebration

On June 19, 2009, with Commissioner Errol Jones presiding, The Fort Mose Historical Society held its thirteenth birthday celebration at the Visitors Center at Fort Mose Historical State Park.

Four plaques emblazoned with West African symbols of Mose were presented to Senator Tony Hill, our very special guest.

The more than eighty guests in attendance were inspired by the stimulating and insightful address by Dr. Patrick C. Coggins, the Hess Ball du Pont XChair of Education at Stetson University in DeLand, Florida. Dr. Coggins opened his talk with a 1926 quote from Carter G. Woodson: "When a group or individual fails to teach or learn their history and culture, sooner or later that history and culture will be forgotten and the group or individual will be rendered

nameless and faceless." He called attention to six critical events in African American History; 1. The defense of Fort Mose 269 years ago against the British in 1740. 2. The 1822 slave rebellion of Charleston, Denmark Vesey. 3. The Haitian Revolution of 1841. 4. The Underground Railroad of the late 1800's. 5. The Tuskegee Airmen fighter pilots of WWII, 1940's. 6. Rosa Parks and the Bus Boycott in 1955.

Dr. Coggins noted that "only our individual faith in freedom can keep us free." He suggested in an effort to preserve the legacy of Ft. Mose, we should encourage the study of African American history in every school district, including St. Johns recognizing that African American history is the law in Florida. Fort Mose should continue to be preserved as part of the Florida Heritage Trail. Advertisement is essen-

tial, churches and community groups must embrace and support Fort Mose. In concluding, Dr. Coggins offered this citation of George Bernard Shaw, "Life is not a brief candle to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of, for the moment, and I want to make it known as brightly as possible before handing it onto future generations."

Members are indebted to the Gypsy Cab Company for catered food, to the Prosperity Bank for its generous donations to the members of the advisory board for their assistance

Our special thanks to Senator Hill, Dr. Patrick Coggins and those of you who support and embrace Ft. Mose.

Upcoming

Events:

Ranger-Led Program of Fort Mose

Every Saturday at 11am

Guided Bird Walks

Once a month, check website for dates.

8:30am—10:30am



FPAN, kids program

Build the Fort

September 26, 2009

10:00am—11:00am

Flight to Freedom

February 27, 2010

10:00am—3:00pm

Other programs will be announced on the Florida State Parks website at::

www.floridastateparks.org/fortmose

Building and Exhibit Updates

By: Kathryn Davis

Eight sidewalk panels and six boardwalk panels were installed at Fort Mose Historic State Park in October 2008. As visitor's walk along the boardwalk or towards the visitor center, they are introduced to the history of Fort Mose, the archaeology of the site, plant/wildlife and ecosystem identification.

In the spring newsletter we featured the first of eight sidewalk panels, African Origins. In this edition, we feature the second sidewalk panel.

As visitors first walk from the parking lot toward the visitor center the second panel they encounter briefly explains the Middle Passage and the Atlantic slave trade. It reads:

During the 18th century, thousands of enslaved Africans faced starvation, torture, and even death on their journey to the



Americas, a voyage known as the Middle Passage.

The ships carried their valuable human cargos to work in the fast growing plantation economy of Carolina. Between 1709 and 1760, over 50,000 enslaved Africans disembarked in Carolina, mainly in the port of Charleston.

Most of the forced immigrants, including Francisco Menendez, had been captured or purchased in the Senegambia region or along the Bight of Biafra.

During the early years of the Atlantic slave trade, the mortality rate for Africans approached 15% - roughly one in seven died or was killed while crossing the Atlantic. Many more captives died before slave ships were loaded. Slave insurrections also cost African

lives. In 1749, 218 Africans rose against their captives on the English ship Brownlow—62 died before reaching Charleston.

The panel show pictures of slave ships and shackles used to bind.



The new exhibit that will be installed in the visitor center at Fort Mose is in the final design phase and bid process for construction and fabrication.

Fort Mose: A Hidden Treasure

By: Dr. Dorothy H. Israel

It is time that Fort Mose, claims its rightful place as one of the most significant areas not only in Florida but in the entire country. A move in that direction was spearheaded by Senator Tony Hill who sponsored a meeting at Fort Mose Historic State Park to highlight areas and ideas which should be developed to encourage tourism, internal travel and multicultural experiences.

The president of the Board of Directors of Fort Mose Historical Society, Commissioner Errol Jones, presided over a panel of distinguished scholars of African American culture and history who considered these ideas. Two panelists from the Smithsonian Institution, Dr. Lonnie G. Bunch, Director of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, and Dr. John Whittington Franklin, director of Partnership and International Programs expressed interest in assisting where feasible

to develop a viable program at Fort Mose, and to connect with other historical and cultural programs throughout the country. Other panelists were Dana St. Clair, chair of 450th celebration of St. Augustine, Dia Kuykendall, public relations, Tallahassee, and Commissioner Ken Bryant.

Senator Hill discussed the tremendous opportunities available to St. Augustine to create partnerships through trade and tourism with Caribbean and Latin American countries and added "there would be tremendous economic gain from the Heritage Tourism in St. Augustine. The Gullah Geechie Heritage corridor alone could bring 1\$million dollars a year over a ten year period."

Mr. Daniel Fils-Amie, Chairman of the Haitian-American Historical Society spoke about the need to recognize General Jorge Bissau, Haitian born leader who after the Haitian revolution became a

Spanish General and received Spain's highest military honor in St. Augustine. He lived at 42 St. George Street, worked at Fort Matanzas and is buried in an unmarked grave in Tolomato Cemetery. Alexandra Barbot well known artist unveiled a handsome portrait of General Biassau.

The guest received a tour by Mr. James Bullock. Community leaders and members of the Fort Mose Board were well represented at the meeting and spoke enthusiastically of the ideas presented of working together to bring the African American rich culture in St. Augustine to national and international levels.

The meeting was well coordinated by Mr. Derek Hankerson.

How to join the Society

Membership Categories:

Individual \$25

Family \$50

Bronze \$500

Silver \$1,500

Gold \$2,000

Platinum \$5,000

Non-profits (i.e. churches) \$300

Donation of _____

Please send checks to:

Fort Mose Historical Society

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For more information, please visit:

www.fortmose.org

Fort Mose Historic State Park

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