

AAHS Newsletter

July 2021



COLUMN SUPPORTS

Many of you may have seen that wooden beams have been placed on the front porch of the Raney House to strengthen the columns. The columns are hollow and provide no interior support for the upper story of the building. They were added to the house by the Raney family in 1850. Since grant funds, if received, will not allow for column replacement until 2022, it was deemed prudent to support the existing columns.



Preserving the Port's Past

GRANTS UPDATE JULY 2021

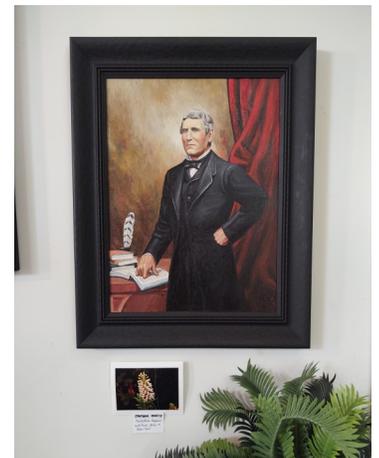
A grant to the Department of State's Division of Historical Resources "Special Category Grants" was submitted on June 1. Unlike the 2019 application (\$198k, vetoed by the Governor due to covid), this application is for \$327k, with local grant monies totaling \$74k, including pledges from the CRA (\$25k) and the City (\$15k) and donations from local citizens.

Review in September will rank applications (previously in 2019 AAHS scored #9) stay tuned...

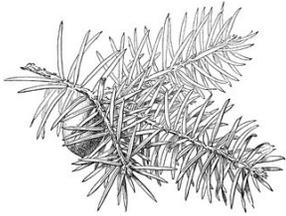
TREASURES @ THE RANEY HOUSE



Portraits of Dr. John Gorrie and Dr. Alvan Chapman now grace the front hall of the Raney House. These portraits had been on display at the old Apalachicola Municipal Library. On loan to the library, they were returned to the AAHS in 2020. Gorrie made many contributions in his advocacy for the health of the citizens of Apalachicola. He held many positions of civic importance, as well as being the "Marine Doctor" for the port.



Dr Alvan Chapman, a physician, but known for his advocacy of local botany, published the "Flora of the Southern United States" in 1860, with two additional editions before his death in Apalachicola in 1899. Chapman was a Union sympathizer and he spoke with the Union Blockade crew when they came ashore. He was known to sleep in Trinity Episcopal Church if there was Confederate activity in town. A local orchid, "Platanthera chapmanii," is named in his honor.



Torrey Tree Planted at Raney House

The Florida Torrey (*Torrey taxifolia*) was discovered around 1835 by Hardy Bryan Croom, an early botanist. Local settlers called it the "stinking cedar" because of the strong odor it gave when cut or bruised.

The Torrey once lived across North America and is one of the oldest known tree species on earth. This is interesting in light of local legend that the Florida Torrey was the Biblical "gopher wood" from which Noah built the ark. The tree was donated by Claire McCloskey with help by Jan DeCosmo, and planted by Henry Martin.



Bibliography of Local History

The Apalachicola area is unique to Florida, as its history dates back to well before the incorporation of the town in 1831. Both Cottonton and West Point were names of the settlement at the mouth of the Apalachicola River.

But how does one learn about this history?

Several books can help. (*internet resources available in a later article*)

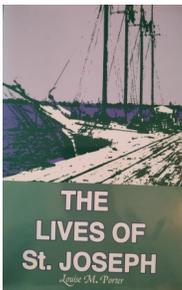
"Apalachicola Before 1861" is probably the single most comprehensive source about the town before the Union blockade beginning in 1861. It is an adaptation of Harry P. Owens' 1966 FSU PhD thesis

"A Brief History of the Apalachicola Area" is a short publication by George Chapel, recently republished by the Historical Society. It covers the history with attractive images as well.

"Outposts on the Gulf" by FSU's William Warren Rogers is a comprehensive reference book, and covers much of the colorful history of William Popham; the coffee table version called **"At the Water's Edge"** with Lee Willis III, covers the history with many illustrations.

"The Fever Man" a biography of Dr John Gorrie, hopefully soon to be re-published by the AAHS, is a charming story of the town during his life with footnotes provided

"Fair to Middlin'" by Lynn Willoughby covers the Cotton Trade so essential to the existence of Apalachicola.



"Lives of St Joseph" by Louise Porter 1975 is a treasure trove of miscellaneous historical facts with references.

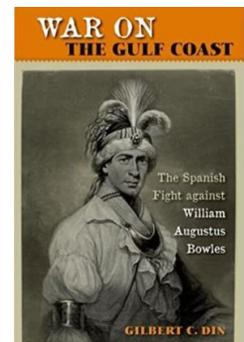
Prolific researcher and author Dale Cox has contributed much to the knowledge of local history with the publication of many books.

"Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands" by William Coker & Thomas Watson (1986) is the academic work covering the early period in Spanish Florida.

"Florida's Founder: William P. DuVal" by James Denham (2015).

"John Forbes Description of the Spanish Floridas, 1804" a brief pamphlet.

Fans of William Augustus Bowles will like **"Director General of the Creek Nation"** by J. L. Wright Jr. (1967) and **"War on the Gulf Coast: The Spanish Fight against William Augustus Bowles"** by Gilbert Din (2012).



For more books and articles go to Resources at apalachicolahistoricalsociety.org.

AAHS DOCENTS AT RANEY HOUSE MUSEUM

PROFILE OF DOCENT LINDA THOMPSON

Linda Thompson has served as a docent for longer than all the other docents put together. Born and raised in Apalachicola, Linda has been involved with just about everything in town at one time or another. She manned the Chamber of Commerce office in the front hall of the Raney House shortly after the house was purchased by the City of Apalachicola in the early 1970s. They called her the "hostess." She is a retired teacher as well and worked for Anchor realty for a long time. To the AAHS her "institutional memory" is invaluable, and we are thankful. She has a large extended family, with three children, nine grandchildren and thirteen great grandchildren. Her maiden name was Johnson.



SAVE THE DATE HERITAGE DINNER

Saturday October 16, 2021

Plans are being made to re-start this popular event. Tickets will be \$50 with a full menu of locally prepared dishes.

The theme will be the "Territorial Period" in honor of the 200th anniversary of the transfer of Spanish Florida. Historian Dale Cox will be the speaker. He is hoping to bring keel boat re-enactors to



commemorate the evacuation of Forts Scott and Gadsden in 1821.



The AAHA manages the David G. Raney House Museum located at 128 Market Street in historic downtown Apalachicola. The museum is owned by the City of Apalachicola, operated by the AAHS, and supported by the Franklin County Tourist Development Council. The Raney House is open from 10:00 to 4:00, Tuesday - Saturday. Admission is free, but door donations are gladly accepted.

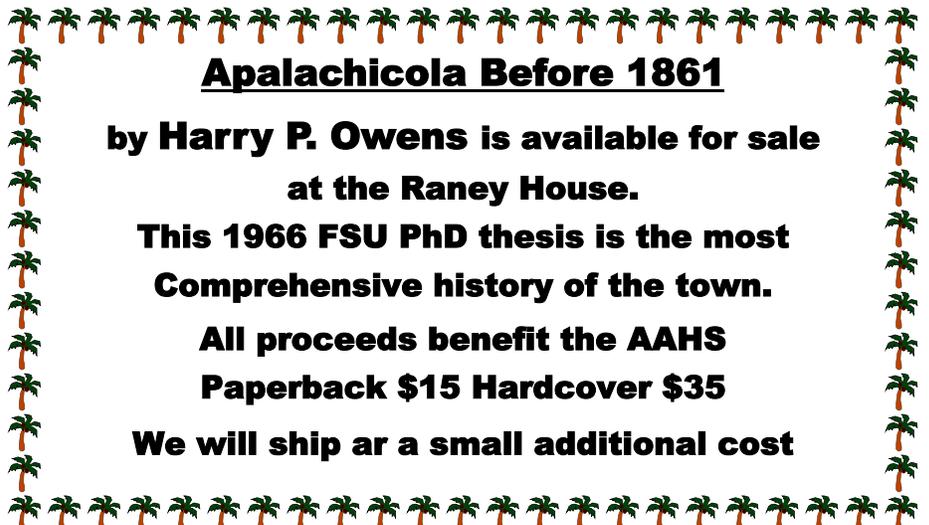
AAHS phone number: 850-653-1700

AAHS website:

apalachicolahistoricalsociety.org

AAHS Facebook page:

Apalachicola Area Historical
Society



Apalachicola Before 1861
**by Harry P. Owens is available for sale
at the Raney House.**
**This 1966 FSU PhD thesis is the most
Comprehensive history of the town.**
All proceeds benefit the AAHS
Paperback \$15 Hardcover \$35
We will ship at a small additional cost

AAHS BOARD April 2021

Caty Greene, President

Pam Richardson,

Vice President Elect

David Adlerstein, Director

James Hargrove, Director

Mark Curenton, Historian

Judy Allen, Adjunct Historian

Kim Davis, Treasurer

Vacant, Recording Secretary

Report of the AAHS:

Spring Speaker Series: TDC-funded annual series January to May Dale Cox, James Hargrove, historic Florida maps, Margo Stringfield, Kevin Bair

Ghost Walks TDC-funded annual series: October 2020 & May 2021

NEW If this House Could Talk 30 participating locations with "Storyboards"

Grants update

NEW Newsletters

The Heritage Dinner was not held due to covid concerns

Raney House visitation steady, TDC grant for docents

Vacancies: one Director & Recording Secretary

Committee volunteers needed (Raney House, Membership, Fundraising, Website)

APALACHICOLA AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

\$15 INDIVIDUAL; \$25 FAMILY; \$100 SUPPORTER ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Become informed and be involved in the history of Apalachicola and the surrounding area and receive notification about events and activities. The AAHS is dedicated to preserving our history through the preservation of land, buildings, cemeteries, artifacts, and verbal and written materials, and we need your help.

AAHS operates the David G. Raney House Museum (owned by the City of Apalachicola) funded in part by the Franklin County Tourist Development Council. We welcome visitors to this valuable historic building. Special tours can be arranged, call 850-653-1700 or through email: AAHS.Raney@gmail.com; www.apalachicolahistoricalsociety.org (Memberships and renewals also available online)

NEW MEMBER: _____ RENEWAL MEMBER: _____

NAME(S): _____

EMAIL ADDRESS (please): _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

CONTACT PHONE: _____

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A VOLUNTEER: YES NO or SERVE ON A COMMITTEE: YES NO

WHAT ARE YOU INTERESTED IN: _____

AMOUNT PAID: _____ CASH: _____ CHECK: _____ OTHER: _____

RETURN FORM TO: Treasurer AAHS P. O. Box 75 Apalachicola, FL 32328