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500 Years of Florida History—The Nineteenth Century to 1877

by Connie L. Lester and Daniel Murphree

Introduction

In the course of the first seven decades of the nineteenth century Floridians lived under Spanish rule (1784–1821) and spent more than two decades as a territory of the United States before gaining statehood. Florida joined the Confederate States during the Civil War. By the time Florida re-emerged from Reconstruction, the modern world of railroads, industrial capitalism, and urbanization characterized the United States. The essays that constitute this special issue document the transformation of Florida from its colonial period through the era of slavery, the Seminole and Civil wars to the post-emancipation rise of an African American physician. Future scholars will benefit from both the historiographic essay by James G. Cusick and the literary review by Maurice O'Sullivan.

This *Special Issue* is the fourth in a six part series dedicated to commemorating Ponce de León's first exploration of Florida and each century that has passed since then. Our goal is to provide readers with a sampling of the best scholarship being produced on Florida's past today. We hope these essays will promote debate and additional investigations of the time and region by both established and emerging scholars. They are not the final word on the subject but represent the culmination of research endeavors conducted over many decades. Readers will have differing opinions

on the conclusions reached, but all should note the evolution of evidence harvesting and interpretation application since historians first wrote about nineteenth-century Florida long ago.

Publication of this series would not be possible without the continued support of the Florida Historical Society and its members. The editors of this *Special Issue* are grateful to Dr. James G. Cusick and the University of Florida for partially underwriting this issue devoted to the early nineteenth-century. The collective efforts of the many supporters for the 500th Anniversary Special Issue series not only furthers the mission of the *Florida Historical Quarterly* but benefits all who are interested in the state's past.