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Introduction: 500 Years of Florida History— The Twentieth Century

by Connie L. Lester and Daniel Murphree

This is the last of the special issues devoted to the celebration of Florida's 500 Years of History. Launched in 2013 in conjunction with the state's commemoration of the landing of Juan Ponce de Leon on the peninsula, the *Florida Historical Quarterly* editors proposed a multi-year, multi-issue endeavor to capture a snapshot of Florida history at the second decade of the twenty-first century. As conceived the project called for 6 special issues, one each for the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 20th centuries and two for the long 19th century (1800-1920). At completion, the special issues included the work of 31 senior and emerging scholars and 749+ pages of text. Together the special issues offer a comprehensive historiography that highlights diverse, scholarly approaches to understanding Florida history. Over the course of the five-year project, the *FHQ* editors have noticed that each special issue seems to generate new manuscript submissions that incorporate methodologies or explore questions raised by the series authors. We hope that this surge in scholarship will continue.

The ambitious project called upon five senior scholars to act as special issue editors and complete two tasks: first to invite senior and emerging scholars to contribute to their issue and second, to write a lengthy historiographical essay summarizing the state of the field in their assigned century. We could not have completed this project without the commitment and intellectual input of these scholars: Paul E. Hoffman, Jane Landers, Sherry Johnson, James Cusick, and Gary Mormino. In addition, several scholars submitted more narrowly focused historiographic essays on topics such

as literature, historical archaeology, African American history, and the right to vote. We are especially grateful for the historiographic contributions of Kathleen A. Deagan, Bonnie G. McEwan, Maurice O'Sullivan, David H. Jackson Jr. and Kimberlyn M. Elliott, and Robert Cassanello. Their commitment to the project and their willingness to undertake the extensive research to write these essays expanded the intellectual range of the special issues and invited new scholarship.

The chronological scaffolding imposed by the *FHQ* editors was restrictive in some ways and can be challenged as an appropriate methodology for organizing an overview of the state's history, but it had the advantage of reinforcing the celebratory event that initiated the project. In addition, the *FHQ* editors built in flexibility, encouraging issue editors to collaborate in deciding how to cover history that did not strictly conform to century-length timelines. We also encouraged issue editors to think across disciplines and incorporate scholarship from the social sciences and literature in their presentation of the past. The thematic continuity was carried out in the covers of the special issues, which each featured a map created during the period covered. The increasing complexity of the maps over time, the shifting focus of the maps, and the evident expansion of technology depicted in the maps culminates in the first color image of Florida as seen from the Space Station. We are especially grateful to Richard (Dick) Prescott, a long-serving FHS Board Member and benefactor of Florida history, for funding the cost of the final color cover.

The expanded size Special Issues called for additional funding beyond the *Quarterly's* annual budget provided through the Florida Historical Society. Dean José Fernandez and the University of Central Florida College of Arts and Humanities fully funded the 2013 issue and partially funded the 2014 and 2015 issues; Dean Jeff Moore provided funding for the final issue. The Jay I. Kislak Foundation provided funding and use of the cover map for the 2015 Special Issue. Dr. James G. Cusick and the University of Florida partially funded the 2016 Special Issue on the nineteenth century. As previously noted, Dick Prescott funded the NASA color image for the twentieth century Special Issue. We are grateful to the Florida Historical Society and its members for their continued support of the *Florida Historical Quarterly* and to the individuals and institutions who provided additional funding for this 500th Anniversary project.

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