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Discovering Our Heritage : Researching State & Local History

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LIBRARY COOPERATIVE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

A Publication of the Pinellas Public Library Cooperative

December 1999

DISCOVERING OUR HERITAGE: RESEARCHING STATE & LOCAL HISTORY

by Jim Schnur

Instructor, Program for Experienced Learners - Eckerd College

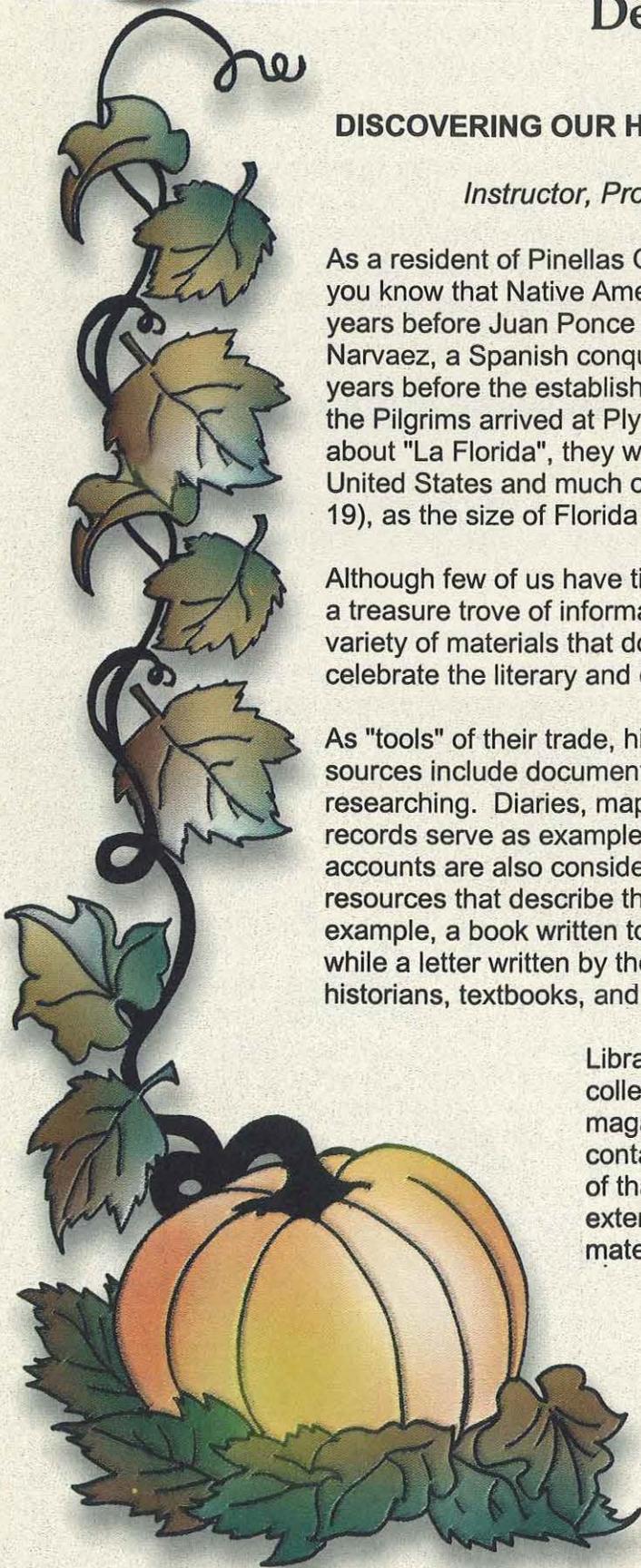
As a resident of Pinellas County, you live in an area with a long and rich history. Did you know that Native American civilizations developed along our shoreline thousands of years before Juan Ponce de Leon encountered Florida in 1513? Or that Panfilo de Narvaez, a Spanish conquistador, visited the Pinellas peninsula in 1528, nearly 80 years before the establishment of the Jamestown colony in Virginia and 92 years before the Pilgrims arrived at Plymouth Rock? Indeed, when early Spanish explorers talked about "La Florida", they were describing an area that included most of the continental United States and much of Canada! And we all know (especially as we drive along US 19), as the size of Florida decreased, the population of Florida has increased.

Although few of us have time to take a class in Florida history, we are fortunate to have a treasure trove of information available at our local public libraries. You will find a variety of materials that document our local history, as well as other "Floridiana" that celebrate the literary and cultural heritage of our state.

As "tools" of their trade, historians rely upon primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include documents that were created in the past, and describe the time you are researching. Diaries, maps, written journals, photographs, family papers, and archival records serve as examples of primary sources. Oral history interviews and first-person accounts are also considered primary sources. Secondary sources include those resources that describe the past, but that include interpretation and analysis. For example, a book written today about Pinellas pioneers would be a secondary source, while a letter written by the early settlers would be a primary source. Books written by historians, textbooks, and documentaries on television are also secondary sources.

Libraries provide a variety of resources, from specialized collections of primary sources to an array of books and magazines. For example, the Tarpon Springs Public Library contains books and microfilm newspapers that trace the evolution of that community, while the Largo Library has developed an extensive research collection of historical and genealogical materials. The Gulf Beaches Public Library has a vertical file with clippings about the barrier islands, while the Safety Harbor Library has materials about the life and legends of Odet Philippe, as well as the Tocobaga Indians that built mounds throughout the area.

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Dunedin Library

223 Douglas Avenue, Dunedin, FL 34698 • 727-738-4489 • <http://www.ci.dunedin.fl.us>
Mon, Tues, Wed: 10 am - 8 pm; Thur, Fri: 10 am - 6 pm; Sat: 9 am - 5 pm; Sun: 1 - 5 pm
• Closed December 24, 25, 26, 27 & 31 •

YOUTH PROGRAMS

Laptime: (12 - 36 mos.)
Wednesdays, 10 - 10:20 am.
Preschool Storytime: (3 - 5 yrs)
Thursdays, 10:30 - 11 am.
Super Saturday Program: Sat.,
Dec. 4, 10 - 11 am. Storyteller
Michael Bryan will regale our
audience with holiday stories
celebrating the various holidays
that occur in December:
Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Christmas.

ADULT PROGRAMS

D.A.R. Genealogy Help:
Thursdays, 1 pm, Study Rm #4.
**Great Decisions Discussion
Group:** Dec. 14, 7:30 pm.
**Great Books Discussion
Group:** Dec. 21, 7 pm.

Writer's Group: Dec. 18, 10 am,
Study Room #4.
Health Video Series: Dec. 2 &
16, 2 pm.
Holiday Concert: Dunedin High
Falconsaires and Madrigals. Dec.
3, 1 pm.
**Contemporary Book
Discussion Group:** *Reading in
the Dark* by Seamus Deane.
Dec. 28, 7 pm.

INTERNET CLASSES

How to send email: Dec. 1,
10:30 - 11:30 am.
Shopping for a vehicle online:
Dec. 1, noon - 1 pm.
**Genealogical Resources
online:** Dec. 7, 5 - 6 pm.
**Airline/Hotel/Car Reservations
online:** Dec. 14, noon - 1 pm.

How to use the Internet: Dec.
28, 2 - 3 pm.

**Library catalog searching from
home:** Dec. 28, 3:30 - 4:30 pm.

FILMS

All films are shown on Tuesdays
at 2 pm.
Dec. 7: *Portrait of America:
Colorado*
Dec. 14: *Portrait of America:
Connecticut*
Dec. 21 & 28: No films

FRIENDS BOOKSTORE

Sun. 1 - 5 pm
Mon. & Wed. 10 am - 8 pm
Tues., Thur. & Sat. 10 am - 4 pm
Fri. 10 am - 5 pm
Closed Dec. 24 - 27 and 31.

Discovering Our Heritage: Researching State and Local History

Continued from page one

Another important resource for researchers is the Genealogy and Local History Room at the main branch of the St. Petersburg Public Library. You may want to examine the Florida Index, a card catalog with citations of newspaper and magazine articles that may be of interest. You can browse microfilm editions of the St. Petersburg Times, the now-defunct St. Petersburg Evening Independent, and other newspapers. The library retains old city directories, phone books, topographic and historical maps, aerial photographs, and other materials.

The library at Heritage Village in Largo (11909-125th Street North) contains a variety of resources that document the entire county, from the Anclote River to Fort DeSoto. For more information, call (727) 582-2123. During your visit to Heritage Village, enjoy a leisurely stroll through the historic buildings and take a look at the museum exhibits.

Some libraries have started to provide access to digitized images and documents. To look at images scanned by the State Archives of Florida, point your Internet browser to <http://fpc.dos.state.fl.us>; the Special Collections department of the USF Library in Tampa also offers links to photographs by visiting its site at <http://www.lib.usf.edu/spccoll>. Finally, for general information about other Florida history resources, visit: <http://acasun.eckerd.edu/~schnurja>.

As we approach the end of the millennium, take an opportunity to learn about our past. I am sure that you will find this a worthwhile journey.