

Florida v7 Fernandina

Lot of History in Fernandina Area

Miami Herald - April 27, 1959

Amelia Island, which includes Fernandina Beach, probably has more colorful history packed away in its five-by-13 miles than any other island of comparable size in the United States.

Tucked away in Florida's northeasternmost corner of the state, Fernandina Beach is washed by the waters of the Atlantic Ocean on the east and Cumberland South to the north. The Amelia River is west and Nassau Sound is south of the island.

Visitors crossing the bridged waters over State Road A1A, also known as the Buccaneer Trail, immediately become enmeshed in a historical web that spins back to the day French Admiral Jean Ribault made a landfall in May of 1562. Eight flags have flown over the island.

Not to be discounted are the Timuquan Indians who once trod the duned beaches of this pistol-shaped island—the barrel is pointed north at Georgia—from the Atlantic Ocean to the Amelia River.

The history of the island is as much a part of the way of life of the islanders as towering white Amelia Island Lighthouse, which has cast its benign shadow over the island for some 125 years.

Situated on the highest point on the island, 70 feet above sea level, the big light still uses the original equipment.

The series of French ground lenses was first rotated by kerosene, but is now electrified.

A stone's throw from the lighthouse is the centerpiece of these historical treats.

Fort Clinch, a little over 100 years old, overlooks the waters of Cumberland Sound and the Amelia River.

Constructed in 1850, it was one of a chain of forts along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. Named for General Duncan L. Clinch, who served with dis-

tingtion in the Seminole and Mexican Wars, the bastion was for a time occupied during the War Between the States by Confederates. They beat a hasty retreat when a combined Federal Army-Navy attack threatened the seaside fort.

Fort Clinch State Park's 1,100 acres include the huge pentagonal fortress, much of which still stands, a museum filled with historical objects, boat ramps, picnic and camping grounds on the Amelia River, and a long jetty that thrusts into the Atlantic and

is a popular spot for fishermen.

In Old Town, just north of Fernandina Beach, is the site of old Fort San Carlos, built after 1784.