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Fernandina  
Beach

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# Join in Fernandina Beach festivities



The Palace Saloon was built in 1878  
... it's the oldest bar in Florida

Here's a plan-ahead activity for you and your family to think about for next weekend.

Fernandina Beach on Amelia Island, 32 miles north of Jacksonville on A1A, will be dedicating its revitalized Centre Street on Saturday, April 29.

Activities will include a parade at 3:30 p.m., complete with pirates, and the crowning of the 1978 Shrimp Festival Queen.

The formal dedication will occur at 4 p.m. with an open reception afterward at the new Fernandina Beach public library on North 4th Street.

The eight-block area to be dedicated dates back to the 19th century and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Centre Street is noted for its uniform concentration of late-Victorian architecture. Many of the 1873-1910 buildings have been restored in a six-year restoration effort. The buildings house shops, restaurants, the local Chamber of Commerce and the Palace Saloon, Florida's oldest drinking establishment.

Fernandina Beach itself dates back to the Spanish era. Once a haven for pirates and smugglers, the town was moved to its present site in the 1850s to become Florida's first cross-state railroad terminus.

Fire destroyed the wooden depot and three blocks of the historic district in 1876. In the following two decades, Victorian brick buildings were constructed, and almost all of them have been preserved.

The town, which today has a population of 8,500, became a major tour-

ist spot in the 1870s and 1880s. A New York steamship company regularly transported wealthy visitors to Fernandina's two elegant hotels.

In addition to being a major vacation area in the late 19th century, Fernandina Beach prospered from the lumber and phosphate industries.

But in the early 1900s, Henry Flagler constructed a new railroad line which completely bypassed the busy little seaport.

Fernandina Beach offers a variety of recreational opportunities in addition to its Historic District. Fort Clinch State Park sits on the northern tip of Amelia Island. Camping, fishing, hiking and picnicking facilities are available.

The jetties off the state park beach are excellent fishing grounds for flounder, bass, drum, bluefish, sea trout and whiting.

A pre-Civil War fort is the park's focal point. Although never completed, the fort was used in both the Civil War and the Spanish-American War.

The island's Atlantic beach lies to the southeast of Fort Clinch State Park. A moderate surf is excellent for fishing, and the Ocean Park amusement center offers evening entertainment.

For more information about next weekend's dedication celebration, or about Fernandina Beach in general, contact the Amelia Island Fernandina Restoration Foundation, Inc. at 904-261-6487 or 904-261-3693, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Or write: P.O. Box 742, Fernandina Beach, Fl. 32034.