

Journey Report
Tallahassee Outbound, May 2 through 8
Lenne Orona, Ambassador Coordinator

Our journey to the Tallahassee club was filled with information we all found amazing. In the area, we visited plantations learning that a plantation is not just for growing cotton but rather, tenant farming, and a place just to hunt and grow timber. Many have been turned over to the state to preserve the rich heritage that created them and as education training grounds. Each plantation has a vision to establish or finish memorials to the enslaved past as a healing and learning tool.

We were welcomed on May 2 with a lovely potluck dinner and then treated to a Handbell concert at one of the Tallahassee club members' community center.

On May 3, we spent a full day exploring the Goodwood Plantation and the Old and New Capital Complexes. The old capital stands right behind the new one as voters of the state refused to let the old one be torn down. We witnessed a mostly peaceful demonstration at Governor DeSantis office, with some being taken away by police by refusing to leave when the building closed. A visit to the Korean War Memorial finished out the afternoon.

Goodwood Plantation, also known as Old Croom Mansion, was a medium sized cotton plantation of about 1675 acres, established by Hardy Bryan Croom. The land was originally part of an 1824—23,000-acre land grant to the Marquis De Lafayette for his service to the nation during the Revolutionary War. Today the grounds cover 19 acres, with the plantation added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places in 1972. The home is filled with original family furniture, porcelain and textiles, very many personal effects of this family.

Thursday found us visiting Tall Timbers a quail hunting plantation located in northern Leon County Fla, established by Edward Beadel in 1895. It is recognized as the home of the study of fire ecology and is an advocate to protect the right to use prescribed fire for land management. In the Red Hills landscape, the primary research focus is the ecology and management of fire-dependent ecosystems, and its wildlife, including bobwhite quail, in the Southeastern Coastal Plain. Reforestation through controlled burns, identifying and providing haven to endangered bird species, a participant in the Feral Swine Control program is among the many habitat programs they offer. Tall Timbers heads a project to reclaim habitat for the Bob White Quail in other states by educating people and then translocation of the quail. We did a wagon tour of the property to see the positive results of a controlled burn.

Thomasville History Center & Lapham Patterson House.

The Thomasville History Center grew out of Mrs. William A. Watt's concern that the history of Thomas County Ga be written. Mrs. Watt began the process of gathering historical documents, buildings and personal effects that tell Thomas County's story. There are 7 buildings representing Thomasville's past all with period pieces within. **Lapham Patterson House's** most significant feature is its completely intentional lack of symmetry. None of the windows, doors, or closets are square. The house is a Georgia Historic Site and is also a National Historic Landmark, designated in 1973 for its architecture. The three-story structure has a mellow-yellow exterior with brick-red roof and chimneys. At the core of the house is a hexagonal-shaped room. There are at least 50 exits; Mr. Lapham had been in the Great Chicago Fire and subsequently became paranoid about being trapped in a burning building.

No one can go to Florida without experiencing the water. On Friday we went to the **Gulf Specimen Lab**, an independent not-for-profit marine research and education organization and public aquarium in Panama and then a boat ride at Wakulla Springs.

Gulf Specimen Marine Lab has worked to preserve coastal wetlands and in particular was directly involved in the preservation of 35,000 acres of wetlands in the Florida Panhandle and the Florida Big Bend region through government lobbying, appearances at public meetings, television and radio appearances, and popular articles and books about marine wetlands. Our group enjoyed “hands on” learning by being able to feed and touch some of the fish, crabs, and rays with the caveat, “don’t leave your hand near the edge of the tank”. Jack and Anne Rudloe were the founders of the lab, with its initial task of supplying specimens to marine scientists. The organization has worked hard to keep the Specimen Lab and the land around it free of commercial buildings to preserve the coastal waters. Education was Anne’s passion and through her efforts children were introduced to marine study by her mobile lab. Our Ambassador Coordinator gifted the group with dried anchor crabs.

On the boat tour everyone enjoyed seeing the marine habitats of the alligators, turtles, manatees and many fish.

Saturday morning found each of the ambassadors and their host exploring on their own. In the afternoon we visited **The Grove Museum**. The mission of The Grove Museum is to preserve and interpret the Call-Collins House, its surrounding acreage, and its historical collections, in order to engage the public in dialogue about civil rights and American history.

Built by enslaved craftspeople, the ca. 1840 Call-Collins House at The Grove is one of the best preserved antebellum residences in Florida. Home to several generations of the Call and Collins families, most recently LeRoy and Mary Call Collins, the site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. The house and 10.5-acre grounds underwent an award-winning rehabilitation under the leadership of the Florida Department of State and opened to the public in 2017 as The Grove Museum.

Our last day was full including a visit to Mission San Luis, the Tallahassee Automobile Museum, and the Farewell Dinner. At Mission San Luis, meticulous reconstructions of Apalachee Indian and Spanish structures re-create a community that disappeared three centuries ago. At 120 feet in diameter, the council house is among the largest Indian structures ever built in the Southeast. It was common for the council house to hold 1,500 or more people in the 1690’s. The Tallahassee Automobile Museum is a real favorite for people traveling through Florida. Although automobiles are the highlight, this museum contains thousands of items from dolls to Elvis memorabilia. Francis Youngblut loves building replicas and he found a 1930 American Bantam—this automobile’s history is also related to the development of what we know today as the Jeep.

The Farewell party was held where we all met for the first time. It was a great time, we related what we found most surprising and interesting. Ginny Renda, FFGDM President, closed our program by inviting Tallahassee to visit us in October.

The evening ended with live entertainment by Cary Moon.