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New visitor center at Mission San Luis

Editor | December 9, 2009 | 0 Comments

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Guest columnist Derek Boyd Hankerson reported to Historic City News that he recently returned from Tallahassee where he made a presentation at the new visitor center at Mission San Luis on the topic of America's Underground Railroad.

Hankerson reports that the Mission is incredible. "All visitors will be delighted in its design, architecture, and accurate depiction of American history", Hankerson said.

Mission San Luis is the National Historic Landmark site of the western capital of Spanish Florida. From 1656 to 1704, Mission San Luis was home to 1500 Apalachee Indian and Spanish residents. Today, life in the early 1700s is re-created through costumed interpreters, reconstructed buildings, exhibits, archaeology, and special events and programs.

Historic City News readers are invited to attend the free grand opening on Sunday, December 13, 2009, from 3 to 5 p.m. Everyone is also invited to participate in the annual commemorative mass; honoring over 100 Spanish missions that existed in La Florida in the 16th and 17th centuries. Mass will be held in the re-created Franciscan church at 2 p.m. and will be officiated by Bishop John Ricard.

The day's activities will include:

A militia muster of The St. Augustine Spanish Garrison, a member unit of Florida Living History, Inc.

Special exhibit of Spanish colonial art and artifacts on loan from Calynne and Lou Hill

Native American and Spanish craft activities for children

Period music and drama

Sampling of wines, traditional paella, coffee, and desserts sponsored by Premier Beverage Company of Florida, Florida Coca-Cola Bottling Company, Juan Ten's Real Paella, Starbucks, and the University Center Club

An opportunity to tour the new museum gift shop, Mission Room and reception hall, classrooms, and theatre

Living history, including a Las Posadas procession at 12:30

The 24,000 square-foot Visitor Center's architecture evokes Spanish colonial traditions, but is designed to meet contemporary needs. Graceful colonnades and patios, soaring wooden-beamed ceilings, and natural floor and wall finishes combine to blend Mediterranean elegance with modern technology while maximizing function and energy sustainability.

The Art in State Building Program commissioned Erick Villanueva to carve ceremonial wooden doors depicting themes from the Mission for a grand entrance to the new center.

According to Executive Director Bonnie McEwan, "Ever since construction began on May 3, 2008, we have been anticipating this day. The new and expanded exhibit hall, theatre, classrooms, and gift shop will enhance our visitors' experience for orientation, interpretation, and education. The 250-seat Mission Room banquet hall and other reception spaces provide entirely new resources to assist in our efforts to meet the community's needs. We look forward to welcoming you to San Luis on December 13 and throughout the coming years."

The new entrance is located at 2100 West Tennessee Street in Tallahassee, Florida. Mission San Luis is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free through December 2009; the site will begin charging admission on January 1, 2010: Adults, \$5; Seniors, 65+ \$3; Children ages 5-17, \$2. Members, children under 5, and active duty military and their families are free.

Mission San Luis is managed by the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Archaeological Research. For more information, please call 850.245-6406 or visit www.missionsanluis.org.

Photo credit: © 2009 Historic City News photographer Derek Boyd Hankerson



I have always felt that one of the great lacks among Americans of this country in their knowledge of the whole Spanish influence and exploration and development the 16th in the Southwest United States which is a tremendous story.

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AGENDA

Grand opening at Mission San Luis with Spanish support

Date: 12-13-2009

Time: 3pm

Mission San Luis, the National Historical Landmark site of the western capital of Spanish Florida, will open its new Visitor Center. The public is cordially invited to attend the free grand opening on Sunday, December 13, 2009, from 3 to 5 PM.

The 24,000 square-foot Visitor Center's architecture evokes Spanish colonial traditions, but is designed to meet contemporary needs.

The España Florida Foundation 500 years has contributed to the construction with a donation of 2000\$. In this sense, the Foundation will appear in the special number of the Tallahassee Democrat.

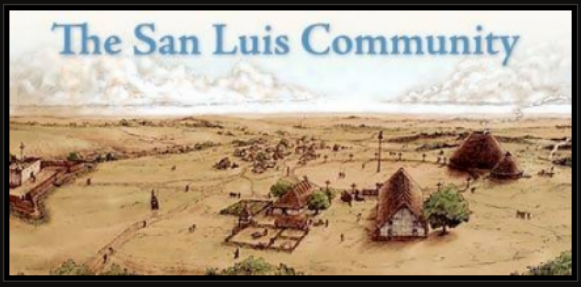
Also, the Foundation has achieved the donation to mission San Luis of a statue of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés by Asturian renown sculptor Favila. The statue will be permanently displayed at the Mission's new Cultural Center.

Mission San Luis provides a unique perspective on Spaniards' moderate settlement principles and practices as expressed in the context of a powerful southeastern chiefdom, and the reasoned responses of Native Americans who were drawn into the European orbit under rapidly changing geopolitical conditions. As the first European immigrants to settle in western Florida, the Spaniards' adaptive strategies were shaped by the dominating Apalachee presence and the natural resources of the Florida frontier. Traditional native practices were tempered by Spain's recognition of individual rights, state religion, moderate social and political practices, and integration and assimilation. The resulting pattern of cultural development incorporated indigenous and European forms of government, deeply held belief systems, and a highly adaptable material and social order. Although these legal and social ideals were not uniformly expressed throughout Spanish America, the findings at Mission San Luis provide an important case study. The site also presents a significant counterpoint to Anglo-American perspectives on colonial history, and a 17th century preview of inclusion evident in American society today.

There are a number of preconditions that have made research at San Luis unique and significant. San Luis is one of two mission sites in Spanish Florida whose identity has never been lost (the other is Nombre de Dios in St. Augustine). St. Augustine and San Luis were La Florida's eastern and western capitals, and served as the anchors of Spanish Florida's El Camino Real or royal road. San Luis was also the only settlement beyond St. Augustine to have a significant European population; several hundred Spaniards resided there by the end of the 17th century, almost all of whom were related by blood or marriage to Spaniards in St. Augustine. This is significant since it is the only mission with a Spanish village where the native population had sustained contact with a range of Spaniards (rather than a single friar) and negotiated power sharing over the course of nearly three generations.

San Luis is also remarkable because it represents the establishment of Apalachee and Spanish capitals in the same location and at the same time. Thus the site has provided a critical material baseline from which to assess the conditions and practices of life, the nature of cultural exchange, and the development of early Hispanic-American culture and institutions from both Indian and Spanish perspectives.

Place: Mission San Luis (Tallahassee)



<http://artnews.conteart.com/2009/12/mission-san-luiss-new-cultural-center-promotes-hispanic-heritage>

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Mission San Luis's New Cultural Center Promotes Hispanic Heritage

MIAMI, FL (EFE).- The new cultural center at Mission San Luis in Tallahassee, which during the 17th century was an important Spanish military and religious enclave in Florida, will now serve to showcase the importance of the Hispanic historical legacy in the United States. In the new cultural center covering 2,200 square meters (23,650 square feet) that was inaugurated over the weekend are exhibitions of objects from the Spanish colonial period, lecture halls for workshops and seminars, as well as a gift shop. The new building and museum will give the mission new purpose and will arouse interest among history lovers who want to learn about this unique legacy of Spanish colonization, director Bonnie McEwan said. Florida Gov. Charlie Crist at the inauguration referred to the importance of the cultural center in this "new chapter in the 350 years of history of the Mission San Luis," the only such establishment in Florida besides St. Augustine's still-surviving Mission Nombre de Dio

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January 6, 2010

New Visitor's Center opens at Mission San Luis

The new Visitor's Center at Mission San Luis held their Grand Opening celebration Dec. 13.

Prior to the celebration, a commemorative mass in the re-created Franciscan church was held. The commemorative mass was officiated by Bishop John Ricard and honored over 100 Spanish missions that existed in Florida during the 16th and 17th centuries. Construction began on the new visitor's center on May 3, 2008. Its completion has been met with a great deal of anticipation. The new building has an expanded exhibit hall, theatre and classrooms, as well as a gift shop that all work to enhance the experience of visitors to the mission. Mission San Luis is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission costs \$5 for adults, \$3 for seniors 65 and over and \$2 for children, ages five to 17. Members, children under five and active duty military and families are admitted free of charge. For more information, visit www.missionsanluis.org.

— Text and photos by Elliott McCaskill/FSView
