

## A HISTORY OF THE FLORIDA MAYFLOWER NEWSLETTER

The Florida Mayflower Society's very first newsletter (i.e., "NEWS LETTER - No.1" dated "January, 1955") was 3 pages hand typed and signed by Governor Dorothy B. Andrews, reporting on the events taking place at the 17<sup>th</sup> annual meeting held on 20-21 Nov 1954 in Ft. Lauderdale. Two items of note were

Isn't it wonderful that in the last year of Governor [Alice (Houser)] Machlan's term of office the membership increased from 157 to 195? [Note: this was a 24% increase in one year!]

and

At the Annual Meeting the motion was made, seconded and carried raising the dues to the State Society from \$1.00 to \$2.00, therefore, \$3.00 should be sent to the State Society Treasurer as \$1.00 of that amount is forwarded to the General Society and \$2.00 retained by the State Treasurer.

The second issue (i.e., "NEWS LETTER - No. 2") was also 2 pages hand typed and signed by Governor Andrews dated April 1955, reporting on the events taking place at the BOA meeting on 29 March 1995 at the Coral Gables Country Club. Items of note included:

The Treasurer's report showed a balance of \$427.98 as of March 20, 1955.

\* \* \* The Francis Cooke Colony of Daytona Beach will be the Host Colony for the State Meeting to be held at the Whitehall Hotel, Daytona Beach, November 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. \* \* \* The Banquet will be held Friday night, November 19<sup>th</sup>, \$2.50 including tax and tip. The room rates at the Whitehall during November are \$5.00, single; \$6.00 double.

"NEWS LETTER - No. 3" dated December 1955 again was 3 pages hand typed and signed by Governor Andrews, reporting on news from the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting held at the Whitehall in Daytona Beach. There were 75 members and guests in attendance. Total membership had increased to 208, broken down as follows:

<u>Membership By Colonies</u>	
State Society	32
Elder William Brewster	65
John Alden	30
Governor William Bradford	60
Francis Cooke	<u>21</u>
Total Nov. 17, 1955	208

Junior membership increased by 129 (i.e., from 54 to 183) since the year before.

"NEWS LETTER - No. 4" dated September 1956, again was hand typed and signed by Governor Andrews, and reported that the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting would be held November 16-17, 1956, at the Soreno Hotel in St. Petersburg, that dinner would be Friday evening November 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 P.M. at a cost of \$3.50, and that

The Soreno Hotel has sent out letters listing the following prices:  
European Plan:       Single room with bath - \$6, \$7, \$8 daily.  
                              Twin room with bath - \$9, \$10, \$12 daily.

The chartering of a new colony was also in the works:

Your Governor has had the honor and privilege of appointing Mrs. Stuart Summers of Ponte Vedra Beach as Organizing Lieutenant Governor of St. Johns and Duvall [sic] counties. With Mrs. Summers interest and enthusiasm we feel that it will not be long before the new colony will be organized.

[Note: Richard Warren Colony was officially chartered 15 Nov 1957.]

Membership had increased from 208 to 220, distributed as follows:

<u>Membership By Colonies</u>	
State Society	34
John Alden	32
Governor William Bradford	60
Elder William Brewster	68
Francis Cooke	<u>26</u>
Total	220

"NEWS LETTER #5," 2-pages again typed and signed by Governor Andrews, was dated the following month (i.e., October 1956) and gave notice to members of 3 proposed amendments to the State Society's constitution to be considered at the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting the following month at the Soreno Hotel in St. Petersburg:

1- To amend Article III, section 5 to insert before the last sentence in the first paragraph of section 5 the following: "Junior Member of the Society is automatically a Junior Member of the Colony whose member is the sponsor."

2- To amend Article IV, Section 3 to make it read as follows: "All officers shall be elected for a term of two years. No officer who has been elected and who has served a full term shall be eligible for re-election the next succeeding term."

3- To amend Article VI, Section 2 to insert the word "Americanism" after the word Finance in the list of standing Committees to be appointed by the Governor.

It was also reported that Mary Jane Case Newlin (Mrs. F. E.), Florida #24, one of the 24 original charter members of the Florida Society and the organizing member of the Francis Cooke Colony, had passed away.

Apparently, minutes were prepared and distributed of the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting held November 16-17, 1956, at the Soreno Hotel in St. Petersburg, and of the BOA meeting held April 6, 1957, at Brewster Hall in Bradenton ... but the next "NEWSLETTER" [unnumbered] was not distributed until July 1957. It announced that the 21<sup>st</sup> Triennial Congress of the General Society would be held September 9-11, 1957, in Plymouth and solicited members to attend as delegates from the Florida Society. Total membership was reported as follows:

State	37
Elder William Brewster Colony	70
John Alden Colony	40
Governor William Bradford Colony	67
Francis Cooke Colony	<u>30</u>
Total	244

Finally, it was reported that the 20<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Florida Society would be held November 22-23, 1957, at the McAllister Hotel in Miami. The newsletter was issued in the names of William B. Tippetts, Governor, and Blanche E. Karnegy, Secretary, but was not hand signed as had been the practice during Governor Andrews' tenure in office.

The next issue, also unnumbered, was "NEWSLETTER ----- October 1957" and was intended to give members notice of the annual meeting the following month in Miami:

ROOMS AND RESERVATIONS. Since the McAllister Hotel does not mail out this information it is necessary for us to issue this bulletin so as to advise members about rates and also to tell them to send their reservations direct to the hotel. The hotel has made the following special rates:

Singles .....	\$6.00	\$7.00	\$8.00
Two persons in a room with double bed .....	8.00	9.00	10.00
Two persons in a room with twin beds .....	10.00	12.00	14.00

All of the rooms are air conditioned, with private bath and free television.

Notice was also given, as required, of nine proposed amendments to the state society's constitution, the last one of which would substitute "By-Laws" for "Constitution" wherever it appeared. Among deaths, the loss of another of the original 24 charter members of the Florida Society was reported:

Mrs. Frank B. Capps, 814 Ibis Road, Jacksonville, Member of the State Society, passed away on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 1957, State #21 and General #13207.

The last item contained in the newsletter was this:

NEW RICHARD WARREN COLONY. A petition has been received from fifteen members of the State Society for permission to organize a Colony in St. Johns and Duval Counties, Florida, to be known as the Richard Warren Colony. Mrs. Stuart (Elaine Gregory Pring) Summers is the organizing Lieutenant Governor. They are now working on their proposed by-laws and as soon as these are approved they will be ready to organize and expect to have the new colony formed before our annual meeting. \* \* \*

Additional issues of the "NEWSLETTER," all unnumbered, were published by Governor William B. Tippetts in February 1958, July 1958, October 1958, and November 10, 1958.

The next five state Governors (1958-1967) each published an unnumbered "Newsletter" once, twice, three or four times during their 2-year term of office. The one in the Fall was usually a notice of the upcoming annual meeting, including dates, location, registration information and hotel reservation details.

- Newly elected state Governor Marjorie Fobes Graham began publishing a 1-page typed "Governor's Newsletter" with "Number 1" dated "15 December 1958" and followed by

Governor's Newsletter, Number 2	26 September 1959
Governor's Newsletter, Number 3	11 December 1959
Governor's Newsletter, Number 4	28 January 1960

- Helen Delano Bailey was elected state Governor at the 1960 annual meeting and she issued her first "Newsletter" dated "May 1961," followed by additional unnumbered issues dated October 1961, May 1962 and October 1962.
- Blanche E. Karnegy was elected state Governor at the 1962 annual meeting and she issued her first newsletter in May 1963, followed by additional unnumbered issues in May 1964 and October 15, 1964.
- Mary Katharine Cushman was elected state Governor at the 1964 annual meeting and during her tenure unnumbered issues of a "Newsletter" were published in April 1965, October 15, 1965, and October 15, 1966.
- Mrs. Hardgrove Norris was elected state Governor at the 1966 annual

meeting and during her tenure an unnumbered issue of a “Newsletter” was published on October 12, 1967.

- Elizabeth A. Kraan was elected state Governor at the 1968 annual meeting and she published an unnumbered issue of a “Newsletter” in October 1969.

Whether this practice of each new Governor publishing a “Newsletter” continued between 1972 and 1985 is not known, as those records have not been available to me. But in early 1985 (probably January or February), a 4-page mimeographed publication called “Florida Mayflower Newsletter” began to be regularly published. In Vol. X, No. 2 dated April 1985, the state governor Willard I. Staples, Jr., of Tampa wrote:

“The first edition of the Florida Mayflower Newsletter was well received and it is planned that there will be three issues each year under the editorship of Dr. Alma J. Payne. I hope that those members who have items of interest will forward them to her.”

Since 1985, there have been seven editors of the newsletter, including two former state governors and four past and two current colony governors:

1985	Dr. Alma J. Payne (governor 1987-1988, Myles Standish Colony, Naples) Bonita Springs, FL
1990	Frank A. Ineson (governor 1987-88, John Howland Colony, Winter Park) Kissimmee, FL
1993	Willard I. Staples, Jr. (Florida Society Governor 1984-86; governor 1980-1982, William Bradford Colony, St. Petersburg) Tampa, FL
1998	Betty M. Styer (Florida Society Governor 1990-93; governor 1988-1990, Elizabeth Tilley Colony, Sarasota) Sarasota, FL
2003	Louise Rumnock Port Orange, FL
2009	Nancy Fodi (governor 2011-14, Myles Standish Colony, Naples) Naples, FL
2011	Richard S. Wheeler (governor 2011-14, Richard Warren Colony, Jacksonville) Eustis, FL

By 1993 under Mr. Staples, it was still typewritten but had grown to 8 pages. In 1998 under Betty Styer, it was called “Florida Newsletter” and appears to have been professionally printed and mailed

from Sarasota. With Vol. 24, No. 1, in April 1999, which welcomed the addition of the William Mullins Colony in Ocala, the newsletter's name was changed to "Florida Pilgrim." Editor Betty Styer explained in this note:

"We dedicate this issue to our colonies. It is they who give strength and stability to our State Society and help us to be better able to carry out the objectives of the General Society.

Please note our newsletter name change. Your editor has been contemplating this for some time and after considerable research and consultation with her son, a renowned newspaper man in Michigan, suggestions were made to the Board, where it was determined by an unofficial vote that the name be changed to Florida Pilgrim. We hope you like it."

Black-and-white photos and graphics were improvements added under Louise Rumnock's editorship in 2003 and have been an increasingly frequent feature ever since. Louise has the distinction of being the longest-serving editor ... six years from 2003 to 2009.

The Fall of 2007 was especially busy as the Florida Society, with our own Col. Edward Delano Sullivan of Ft. Lauderdale serving as the incumbent Governor General, hosted the General Society's Board of Assistants meeting on September 14-16 at the Crown Plaza Hotel near Orlando International Airport. On November 16-17, the Florida Society held its 70<sup>th</sup> annual meeting at the Bayfront Hilton Hotel in St. Petersburg.

From the Winter 2009 to the Summer 2011 issues, the editor was Nancy Fodi of Naples and, for the first time, it was posted on the state society's website with 12 or 16 printed pages full of color photos. Due to cost considerations, however, the printed version mailed to members had (and still has) to be produced in black-and-white.

A new masthead and graphics featuring a painting of the Mayflower by Dr. Jeremy D. Bangs, Director of the Leiden American Pilgrim Museum in Leiden, Netherlands, were introduced under Richard Wheeler's editorship with the Winter 2011-12 issue in December 2011, coinciding and coordinating with improvements in the state society's website under new webmaster Ron Dailey.

Most recently, at its 21 April 2012 meeting, the BOA approved Wheeler's proposal that, as an experiment in increased member communications and environmental consciousness ("save a tree"), the Pilgrim be published three (3) times a year (i.e., a "spring" issue in May 2012, a "fall" issue in October 2012, and a "winter" issue in December 2012) instead of twice a year (i.e., January and July) as in the recent past. This will permit: (1) a more prompt reporting in the new "winter" issue on each November's annual meeting and the numerous colony meetings held in September-December each year (as was already done in the Winter 2011-2012 issue distributed in December 2011); (2) full coverage in the new "spring" issue of colony meetings held between January-April each year (as is being done in the Spring 2012 issue distributed in May 2012); and (3) a new "fall" issue devoted to news of the state scholarship winner, the upcoming annual meeting, and any Compact Day observances in our colonies.

For budgetary reasons, increasing from 2 to 3 issues a year is not economically feasible unless we change the manner of distribution of the Pilgrim. For the last 2 issues, 85% of our members received a printed copy by mail. Ever-escalating printing and postage costs will “break the bank” on the Pilgrim’s budget unless we reduce this 85% to 50% or below. If only 50% of our members get a printed copy by mail, we can publish 3 issues a year for less than what’s already budgeted for 2 issues.

We have the technology and information to meet this goal. We already have email addresses for 42% of our members. Under the plan approved by the BOA, we will post the next 3 issues of the Pilgrim on the “Newsletters” page of the Florida Society’s website, [www.flmayflower.com](http://www.flmayflower.com), where it can be viewed in full color and downloaded by members onto their own computer, smart phone, iPad or Kindle-type device. Those members who’ve already opted for “online” distribution will receive an email notice that each new Pilgrim issue has been posted. Those members who’ve already opted for “email” distribution will receive an email with a pdf file containing each new issue of the Pilgrim. Those members for whom we have email addresses but who have not previously opted for “online” or “email” distribution will not receive a printed copy by mail of the next 3 issues but will receive an email notice and pdf copy unless they affirmatively take action to notify the Editor that they wish to continue receiving a printed copy by mail. Member understanding and support are essential for this experiment to work.

The newsletter and website are two of the most important membership communication tools of the Florida Society, designed and intended to keep all members informed of events in their own colonies and in the other colonies throughout the state. We welcome any and all comments and suggestions as to ways in which we can better serve you, our most valuable resource, the individual member.

Revised 21 May 2012

Richard S. Wheeler  
Editor  
The Florida Pilgrim