

Mosquito Territory

Descendant Of Early Settler Learns About Her Ancestor

By ANN HICKS

A descendant of Mosquito Territory settlers learned about her ancestors yesterday from local historian Ianthe Bond Hebel.

Mrs. Jean Anderson Hopkins, Reddick, drove over to visit Mrs. Hebel for the day as the result of a month long search by Mrs. Hebel to locate a living descendant of the fabulous Frances Dunn Kerr.

Mrs. Hopkins, it turned out, couldn't tell Mrs. Hebel nearly as much as Mrs. Hebel told her.

Mrs. Hopkins' ancestors once owned the site of the Lost Mission and Old Sugar Mill in Port Orange, said Mrs. Hebel.

"I've seen all those advertising signs," said Mrs. Hopkins, "but I never knew the land was in the family."

Frances Dunn Kerr owned a 450 acre plantation in the Tomoka and a 2,000 acre grant of land in what is now Daytona Beach.

Jean Anderson Hopkins is her great great granddaughter.

Mrs. Hebel filled in some more details.

Mrs. Kerr and her husband were among some 20 families who came from the Bahamas in 1803 to settle New Smyrna Beach. Most of them were from families which once had migrated the other way, Tories who left the U. S. in the Revolutionary War era.

In 1798, Mrs. Hebel continued, the cotton crop failed in the Bahamas. These people came to New Smyrna, bringing their slaves with them, and grew cotton and sugar.

Mrs. Hebel said Mrs. Kerr obtained 2,000 acres of land here north of what is now Volusia Ave. from the Spanish Govt. (The Williams family, also among the settlers from

the Bahamas, purchased the land south of Volusia Ave.)

Daytona Beach, itself, wasn't to become a town until 1876.

Mrs. Kerr sold her Daytona property to buy 450 acres on the Tomoka, just north of the Tomoka Bridge on U. S. 1. Last time Mrs. Hebel was out there, she saw outcroppings of the old stone foundation of the plantation house. The old plantation bell lay on the ground. There were several unmarked graves.

Then Mrs. Hebel brought out a translation (from Spanish) of Frances Dunn Kerr's will, signed in St. Augustine, Sept. 2, 1820. Mrs. Hebel obtained a copy from the Library of Congress, and Margaret Booth translated it.

Mrs. Hopkins read the strange document with delight. Mrs. Kerr left her property mostly to her daughter, Mrs. Sarah Anderson.

Her plantation on the Tomoka was valued later, by executors, at a total of \$12,371. Of this amount, \$4,070 was the value assigned her 35 Negro slaves. There were five slave families.

In her will, Mrs. Kerr described her Tomoka estate in Mosquito Territory, and said 85 acres were planted in cotton and corn.

She directed that three of her house servants be freed at her death "in consideration of the faithfulness and good services" given by them. They were, she wrote, "Old Lidy, her younger daughter named Haga, and the mulatto, Fanny."

Executors inventorying the estate reported there were a dwelling house, a corn barn, a temporary cotton house, a kitchen and a slave house on the plantation.

They listed other valuable items—the large canoe valued at \$80 which Mrs. Kerr observed in her will would "carry eight or ten bales of cotton," a small canoe, valued at \$10; 14,000 pounds of stone cotton,

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\$700; 16 bales of ginned and packed cotton, \$1,200; and two bales of yellow cotton, \$80.

The inventory also listed two mahogany tables, five iron kitchen pots, a pair of waffle irons, two Dutch ovens, and two pairs of flat irons.

Mrs. Kerr's daughter, Sarah Anderson, dwelt on the Tomoka plan-

tation with her sons, John and James. They built the Dunlawton Sugar Mill in Port Orange. Both fought in the battle of Dunlawton during the Seminole War. The plantations were ruined. The Anderson family fled to St. Augustine, where they lived in what Mrs. Hebel says was "a fine old home on Aviles St."

Frances
Dunn
Kerr