

Florida Chautauqua

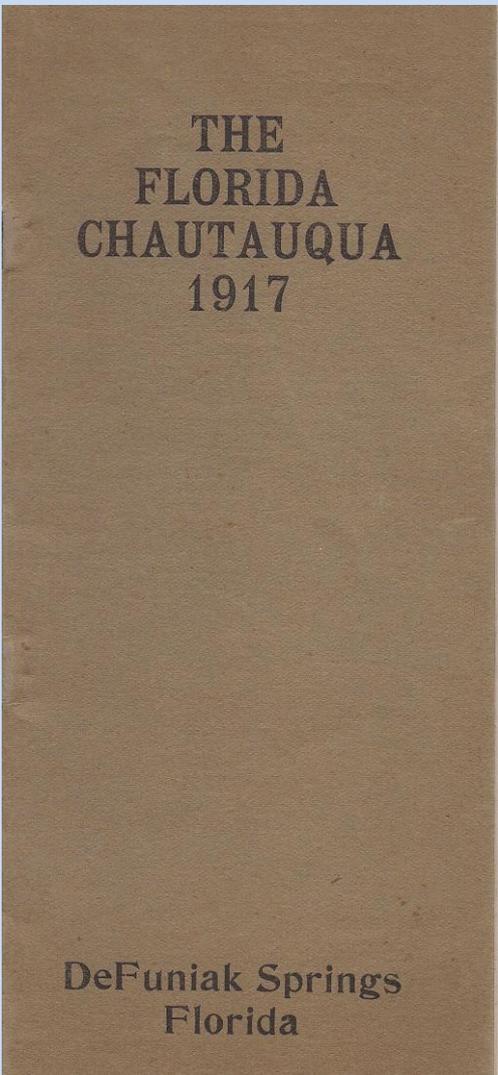
Camp and Fireside

April 2017 Volume 1 Edition 4

Association Notes



100 years ago this month, the Florida Chautauqua celebrated its 32nd Assembly. The 1917 assembly would be it first assembly planned by Malcolm Bruce, son of Wallace Bruce after the death of his brother Kenneth the year before, and the loss of his father 3 years earlier. This marked a huge change in the assembly, on April 6th, 1917,



THE
FLORIDA
CHAUTAUQUA
1917

DeFuniak Springs
Florida

one day before the close of the 1917 Assembly, the United States would enter World War I. In doing so, the United States would undergo a fundamental change, with it the Florida Chautauqua too would feel the effects of these changes. During the war, the special excursion trains that would bring people to DeFuniak by the thousands would be reallocated for war use. During the conflict, the focal point moved away from the experiences of old and concentrated on the war effort. At the end of the conflict, the United States had changed. The introduction of more mediums of entertainment, radio, more wide spread moving picture shows, other ways of being entertained -
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The 2018 Florida Chautauqua Assembly's theme is "Into the Pillars of Chautauqua" from January 25th through the 28th, 2018. Stay up to date on all the latest developments by going to our website (stated) below and update your contact information.

www.floridachautauquaassembly.org

2018 Assembly planning well underway.

The Board of Directors for the Florida Chautauqua Association have jumped off with both feet into the planning for the 2018 assembly. Themed "Into the Pillars of Chautauqua", the program promises to be as diverse and fun as the 2017 assembly. We are taking in the suggestions from all of you for ideas, changes, and things you enjoyed during our last assembly, and are building the program for 2018. We hope when you join us this year, that you will find new surprises, new experiences, and as always, old friends mixed with new. We look forward to seeing all of you as we dive into the 2018 Florida Chautauqua Assembly.

Update on the Lakeside Restoration roof project.

The Florida Chautauqua Association is pressing forward through the efforts of board member Denise Mack. Denise has attended several grant workshops, classes, and has sought out experienced help to move forward with efforts to secure a grant to replace the roof on Lakeside. While we are required to provide a cash match, as well as an in-kind match. We are close to having the needed cash to show the state. We expect with the continued support of all of you that the goal will be met and we hope the importance of the history of Lakeside, and its future for the community will help us be successful in securing the grant needed to make the needed repairs and save Lakeside. We cannot say enough about Denise's efforts and time spent working on this effort. We also cannot say enough about the support from all of you we have received.

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With these changes, the Chautauqua Movement, which once had stood as "The Most American Thing in America" as stated by President Roosevelt, became a thing of the past. Attendances began to dwindle, the excursion trains that once supplied the transportation to the assemblies never again ran for the Great Southern Chautauqua. In just 10 more years, the Florida Chautauqua Association would cease holding its annual assemblies and concentrate on putting on small plays and entertainment in the Hall of Brotherhood, which once hosted names like William Jennings Bryan, Vice President Thomas Marshall, and many other notable speakers during the Florida Chautauqua. By 1936, the Association sold the Hall of Brotherhood to the city and the Association would cease to operate. It would take 57 years before in 1993, local resident F. Diane Pickett would begin her work to bring the Florida Chautauqua back to life. In 1996 she would hold the first revived Florida Chautauqua Assembly. Now we stand 24 years after she took those first steps, and 21 assemblies later looking not back, but forward to our future.



Founder F. Diane Pickett giving a tour of the Florida Chautauqua grounds



Wallace and Annie on the porch of Dream Cottage.

The Florida Chautauqua Association has been gifted many historic items this year by the family of Wallace Bruce, including his wife's scrap book of condolence letters sent after Wallace's death. In this recent gift, not only were there scrap books, clothing, and documents, artifacts, but also photos of early DeFuniak Springs we have never seen as well as a promotional booklet on Lake Stanley. We are fortunate that we have been entrusted with these items, which help bring a clearer picture of not only the Bruce family's time here, but of life in our small town during that period.