

280 St. George St.  
St. Augustine, Florida.  
March 24, 1932

Mr. Harral Ayres  
Gunter Hotel Arcade  
204 E. Travis St. San Antonio, Texas

My dear Mr. Ayres,

Your letter of December 8th, 1931 and the one received recently should have been answered long ago, but I waited to present the last letter and the OST booklet and your short history to the St. Augustine Historical Society, before writing and they are now in the Library. The Society was much interested in your letter, and what I said about the correctness of the history you had written. We all feel you deserve to be thanked for placing St. Augustine in its proper place, and at present I have no suggestions to offer about your historical article. Congress has, I believe, appropriated money to mark the place where Ponce de Leon first landed, and I hear that many places are making claims to be where he first landed, and now an army officer Col. H. L. Landers Chief of the Historical Section of the Army War College has been put in charge of going over all the evidence. Col. Landers can read the old Spanish and will I feel sure give it careful consideration. The Library of Congress, at my suggestion, secured photostat copies of many old documents concerning Ponce de Leon that I have not seen, and possibly could not read so I am very glad to have Col. Landers consider the whole question, and hope he will decide to place the marker at St. Augustine. He will consider the date 1512 or 1513 as well, and I gave him, in my interview with him in St. Augustine the result of what I had found in my researches, and since have sent him more particulars of the books to consult. From an old book printed in London on the old and new time about 1711, I found that the Pope did not make the moon date and calendar date quite agree as he should have gone back to the time of Caesar and dropped about fourteen or fifteen days instead of ten which went back only to the third century. Also in some old English Chronicles published 1548, 1568, 1577 I found that in England in 1512 Easter was celebrated on the moon date March 27, while on the continent the Pope, by an Italian history printed 1561, celebrated Easter on April 11, 1512 on which day was fought the battle of Ravenna. Spain, by an old book printed 1519, began the year with January.

Your letter about the mission near Darien is of interest, but I am afraid that I shall not see it as it is so far away, and I am like others, have little money and no cars at my disposal. I am not always able to take long trips either on account of my age, being in the last lap of life and not very strong. I note by your booklet that the large missions in the West were built during the English period of Florida or shortly before 1763. In 1728 the only stone mission in Florida was the one at Nombre de Dios near St. Augustine and the large Franciscan Convent in St. Augustine on St. Francis St. which was the head-quarters of all the missions. You may be interested in an article "The Sea Islands" in Harper's Magazine Nov. 1878 Vol. LVII a trip from Fort George Island to Beauport. Your description of the mission at Darien does not sound as though it were Spanish but belonged to the period after the Revolutionary War. The ruin on the St. Mary's River belongs to the second Spanish period, as far as I can see by the records. Even Fort Picolata was not built in stone until 1755. The English had plantations in Georgia, and even on the St. Mary's River and St. John's River the English had plantations in the second Spanish period. If you read "The Sea Islands" you will see that they used the tabby for negro houses at that time.