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Photos of the Ponce de Leon Celebration

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Ponce De Leon Celebration-Old Spanish Trail



April 2, 3, 4, 1929-St. Augustine, Florida

First Day-Continued

After a brief greeting is given the Princess, the women of the village, who have gathered on the outer edge of the circle at her approach, escort her to one of the village tepees. The warriors then smoke the pipe of peace and bury the tomahawk as the token of the peace pact.

Arrangements are being made for the wedding when the festivities are interrupted by the arrival of an Indian runner announcing the return of Apalache and his warriors, who come in with the horses of the Spanish and their prisoners bound to the horses' backs. Stakes are driven and the captives bound to them. The warriors make preparations for a war dance, while some of the Indians make their way down to the shore. Just as the prisoners are about to be burned, the Indians down at the shore see the Caravel Dolores with Ponce de Leon aboard heading for the shore. They give the alarm. The prisoners are cut loose from the stakes and Timucua and most of the band leave the village, taking with them the Spaniards and the horses, retiring to the shelter of the woods. Other Indians skulk along the shore, hiding behind palmettos and palm trees. As the caravel turns toward the village most of them repair to the village where they gather about the chief and hold council. A few remain along the shore as lookouts, but these withdraw as the caravel approaches. They hide behind the trees and shrubbery and watch the Spaniards as they come ashore.

The caravel bearing Ponce de Leon and his immediate party effects a landing near the Indian village. Spanish infantry with pikes fixed is landed from the ship and form in protective line as the Spanish banners are brought ashore, followed by Ponce de Leon and his grandees, priests and knights, including his pilot, Anton de Alimos, and his companion and close friend, Don Juan Pirez. Ponce de Leon surveys the land before him and kneeling on one knee he raises his sword, taking possession of the land in the name of Ferdinand and Isabella, the grandees and courtiers kneeling with him as the priests bless the land which has been added to the possessions of Spain.

The land having been blessed, Ponce and his retinue arise and upon looking around them discover a few of the Indians who, attracted by the ceremony and glittering costumes of the landing party, have ventured forth from their hiding places.

In the party with Ponce de Leon is Lucayan, chief of the tribe of Indians known as Lucayos, who, with several Borinquenos of Atamara's tribe, have accompanied the Spaniards from the Bahamas. Thinking that Chief Lucayan would know the customs and speech of the natives the best, Ponce de Leon sends him forward with instructions to persuade the red men to come and talk with him and to assure them he had come with no evil intent, if they were minded to be peaceful.

Chief Lucayan obeys the orders and advances, when he is greeted by a flight of arrows. The Chief halts and holds up his hands, signifying that he is unarmed and comes in peace, at the same time giving utterance to a peculiar cry. An answering cry comes from the village, and forth steps an Indian dressed and ornamented as a chief. The latter approaches to where Ponce de Leon stands, and a Spanish officer motions him to kneel, as vassals should. The Indian returns a gaze of cool defiance and with a few words, interpreted by Chief Lucayan, makes it known that the red men of the land are not slaves and bend the knee to none but the Great Spirit. Ponce de Leon now asks through his Indian interpreter to see the great chief of all the Indians.

An Indian runner is sent back to the point in the woods to which the Indians have retreated with their captives. The messenger returns, accompanied by Cacique Timucua, the Great Incohonee of all the Indians. The band of Indians with the captives and horses come forth from the woods, but remain in the background. The chief walks forward alone. Ponce de Leon and the Great Incohonee communicate with each other through Chief Lucayan. Ponce de Leon assures the Cacique that his party come as friends, and calling for a bright scarf, throws it over the shoulders of the great chief, who is very much pleased and gratified.

So pleased was the Great Incohonee that he sends for the Princess Arriola and presents her to Don Juan, who, struck for an instant by the beauty and youth of the young Indian girl, immediately bows as a true cavalier and kisses the hand which she extends toward him, not, however, to the pleasure of Timucua.

Just as the Princess is returning after her meeting with the gallant Spaniard, the Spanish Caballeros come upon the scene, having followed the Indians up overland from Matanzas. They prepare for an attack, but seeing the friendly parley being held, advance and join the group.

Having come to this enchanted land in quest of the wonderful spring which gave perpetual youth, Ponce de Leon asks the Indians as to its whereabouts and is told by the Indians that it lies to the north, so with his retinue and soldiers the great explorer mounts and rides away in search of the Fountain of Youth.

GRAND STREET PARADE-11:30 A. M.

The Grand Street Parade will be participated in by all troops, Indians as well as the Royal party under Don Juan Ponce de Leon. The parade will form on the fort green, passing out of the west entrance, where the marshals will take over the procession.