



## FLORIDA PIONEER MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

December, 2011

M.C. Bardsley Editor

### **REOPENING OF THE FLORIDA PIONEER MUSEUM WAS ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup> OUR THEME FOR THIS YEAR IS "CELEBRATING THE 100 YEAR OF THE FLAGLER RAILROAD.**

The Pioneer Museum is housed in the original Homestead FEC Railroad station agent's house originally sitting on Flagler Avenue and was moved to its present location. It was constructed by Henry Flagler's Railway in 1904 for about \$1500.00. It was one of the first buildings constructed in South Dade. On display in the Museum are archeological items dating back hundreds of years to Florida East Coast Railway memorabilia. Life in early South Dade County is shown in rooms outfitted much as they were 100 years ago. Local early churches are highlighted in a photo display of church buildings and other items associated with the churches including commemorative china plates. Books and videos of our early history are also on sale.

**THE MUSEUM WILL BE OPEN ON WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY AFTERNOONS FROM 1 TILL 5PM. WE ARE ALWAYS WILLING TO SCHEDULE SPECIAL GROUPS AT ALMOST ANY TIME WE CAN GET ENOUGH DOCENTS TO HELP. DOCENTS ARE ALWAYS NEEDED. PLEASE CONTACT MEDA JENSEN (305-248-0976)**

Please remember our membership drive begins in January and it would be fantastic if we increased our membership. We had 91 members for 2011. We had 23 individual members, 22 Couple Memberships, 12 Family Memberships, 14 Settler Memberships and 20 Terrific Pioneer Memberships. Thanks so very much for your support and we just know that it will continue in 2012.

As for the CABOOSE, it hasn't moved yet, and there's a group of us that would love to be there when they actually put it on a flatbed and roll up Krome Avenue. What a sight that will be and if at all possible I'll be there for pictures.

The following historical information is given by our President Bob Jensen who states that January 22, 2012 will mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the completion of the construction of the Florida East Coast Railway Extension from Homestead Detroit-now Florida City-to Key West. On that day Henry Flagler, the 82 year old owner of the FEC Railway, stepped off his private railroad car onto land at Key West. An engineering feat of mind-boggling complexity, the FEC Extension was thought by some to be the 8<sup>th</sup> Wonder of the World.

It is estimated that Henry Flagler spent \$20 million dollars of his own money constructing the extension from Homestead to Key West from 1906 until 1912. (\$22 million in 1912 dollars is about **\$32.7 Billion** in today's dollars) It was the prospect of garnering freight for his FEC Railway from the construction of the Panama Canal and from increased trade with Cuba that propelled Flagler forward with his dream which he may have had as early as 1895.

A man well known in Homestead history, William J. Krome, at age 32 stepped in and finished the construction of the Extension when project engineer Joseph C. Meredith died in 1909. Krome had earlier done the survey which led to the path taken by the Extension. After the construction was completed he purchased land near Homestead and became a world renowned tropical fruit agriculturalist.

The anniversary is being celebrated up and down the FEC line from Palm Beach-Lake Worth to Key West through 2012. The Florida Pioneer Museum has small collections of FEC memorabilia ranging from actual track, spikes and tools from the Extension to FEC dining car dishes and utensils. Also twenty five photos taken from postcards heralding construction of the Extension are available for viewing.

**HOPE TO SEE YOU HERE AT THE FLORIDA PIONEER MUSEUM THIS YEAR!**

FLORIDA PIONEER MUSEUM

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