

Remembering Suwannee

Eastern visitors banned during epidemic

Today, we continue our discussion of the 1888 yellow fever outbreak that caused widespread panic in North Florida.

On Aug. 15, the same day that the Suwannee County Commissioners had enacted an ordinance refusing to receive people and items from Jacksonville, the Live Oak Town Council appointed Dr. Carroll (the mayor) and Dr. Overstreet (chairman of the Council) to confer with the County Commissioners "and learn what they had done in regard to quarantining the County." The Council agreed that after the County Commission placed their police force on incoming trains, that they would discharge from the police force all but one man; however, additional men could be employed if deemed necessary.

The County set up a "suspect camp" for those who were suspected of carrying yellow fever. The County paid several men for their guard duty during the epidemic, noting their locations in the January 1889 minutes. Most of the men were stationed at Columbus (now the Suwannee River State Park), Live Oak and Branford.

In Jacksonville and other locations, there was even greater hysteria. In Jacksonville, the hotel where the first confirmed case had stayed was burned to the ground as a precautionary measure. There was a common belief that shooting guns

in the air would help kill the germs, so the day and night were lit up with the sound of gunfire. It died off when one of the most prominent supporting doctors came down with the fever. Other methods were tried, including burning barrels of tar, dousing trees, hitching posts, curbs, street cars, etc. with disinfectants made of lime or a mercury solution. Soon, no city would take residents from Jacksonville, and the surviving citizens were forced to create their own quarantine camps. Mail from Jacksonville was individually fumigated piece by piece. Ad-hoc quarantines were established in various communities by armed men with orders to shoot anyone who refused to turn back. There are various first-hand accounts of hotel staff throughout the State quitting at a moment's notice upon hearing about the epidemic, some abandoning their posts while breakfast was still cooking. Government broke down as law enforcement, firefighters and even the mayor fled Jacksonville and other communities.

In the midst of the epidemic, Live



ERIC MUSGROVE

Oak's marshal, W. P. Mosley, and Council Chairman S. T. Overstreet resigned from their positions. S. S. Sims was elected as Mosley's replacement, and W. L. Whitefield was Dr. Overstreet's replacement. A possible reason for Dr. Overstreet's resignation was that his medical services were needed to help contain the yellow fever, and he did not have time to perform his civic duties otherwise.

By the Oct. 28, 1888, meeting, the City Council was ordering that all trains from the east not be allowed to enter the corporate limits of Live Oak, nor could any passengers, train crews, or other matters be allowed until further notice. The mayor was instructed to use all diligence and to employ sufficient forces to carry out the Council's directions. In addition, the minutes reflected that "all parties who have been (in) contact with Mr. White be sent to quarantine camp." Which "Mr. White" was not addressed in the minutes.

Later in the day, the City Council met again, this time to order that all religious or other gatherings be dispersed until otherwise ordered, and that the marshal see that this order was carried out. Dr. Carroll, the mayor, resigned during the same meeting, probably to focus his efforts on dealing with patients.

A special-called meeting was held on

Nov. 1, and the marshal was instructed to disburse all crowds and congregations of all kinds in the streets. A slew of officials continued to resign, with no reason given in the minutes. Possible reasons included taking care of ailing family, dealing with the health hazard in some commercial way (like practicing medicine), or simply quitting out of fear for their own safety.

By the middle of November, the yellow fever scare was apparently dying down, as a previous Live Oak City Council order dispersing all religious and other gatherings was revoked. On Dec. 3, the City Council officially revoked all quarantine ordinances and orders. The town of Live Oak and the rest of Suwannee County seemed to settle in to a feeling of normalcy; even some of those who had resigned from their government positions to apparently deal with the epidemic returned to their posts (including Dr. Overstreet).

Although there were some financial aftereffects (such as payment for extra guards to work the railroads and quarantine camp), life carried on. The Florida State Board of Health was created the following year, largely as a result of the 1888 yellow fever epidemic.

More history next week!

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Uninvited insects in your vegetable garden

Most vegetable gardens are in full swing and the anticipation of harvesting is not far off. Some pests may already be reaping the benefits of your hard work planting the garden. The warmer weather brings out insects that have been overwintering and are now looking for a free meal. It helps to scout for harmful insects every couple of days. Be sure and check under the leaves and along stems. The University of Florida has a free, publication to help you identify harmful and helpful insects, *Insect Management in the Home Garden* by Susan Webb and Freddie Johnson. You can go follow this link, <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh036> or stop by our office for a printed copy of it.

Following are a few guidelines that should help you with your insect management strategies. First, we must realize insects can attack roots, stems, leaves, flowers and fruits at any growth stage. Many different insects attack vegetable crops and it is impossible to know from one season to the next which of these pests will cause problems. Some cause problems every year while others rarely appear. There are also many insects which are beneficial, and in some instances essential, to producing vegetables. Obviously, it is best if we can learn the difference between harmful insects and beneficial insects.

Some common insects that attack underground plant parts are wireworms (the larval stage of the click beetle), cutworms, mole crickets, grubs and lesser cornstalk borers. (The publication mentioned above provides more in-depth information about each insect).

Chewing insects that feed on leaves and stems are primarily caterpillars, loopers and some beetles. Be on the lookout for the following caterpillars; beet armyworm, fall armyworm, southern armyworm, yellow striped army worm, loopers (especially cole crops like cabbage, collards, cauliflower, broccoli), tomato hornworm and bean leaf rollers. Look along the midrib on the underside of the leaf or along the stem for the dastardly hornworms. They are almost the same color of the leaf and do an excellent job of camouflaging themselves. A few of the unwelcome beetles are Colorado potato beetle, Mexican bean beetle, cucumber beetle and flea beetles. Other leaf feeding pests are leaf miners and pinworms.

Piercing and sucking insects that feed on the plants' leaves and stems are aphids, leaf footed plant bugs, leafhoppers, silver leaf whitefly, spider mites, stinkbugs and thrips. One of the other issues with these insects is that they spread viral diseases which are incurable. You can plant trap crops like Giant sunflowers, buckwheat or triticale depending on the season to trap stinkbugs. Plant the trap crops on the perimeter of your vegetable garden to intercept the overwintering stinkbugs that emerge from nearby woods.

Problem pests that feed on seeds, pods and fruits are the corn earworms, pickle worms, cow pea curculios, pepper worms, potato tuber worms, stink bugs, tomato hornworm and wireworms.

Yikes, what can we do about these pesky insects? Follow these guidelines to help reduce unwelcome garden pests:

- Rotate individual crops or families of crops within the garden so that the same vegetable family is not grown in the same location more than once every three years.

- Lightly till the soil at least 30 days prior to planting. If soil test indicate lime is needed, it should be added 90 days before planting.

- Monitor or scout the garden three to four times per week. This includes inspecting the plants from the bud to the soil including both upper and lower leaf surface.

- Often large insects can be removed by hand and destroyed without use of chemicals; this should be practiced if possible. They will sink and drown if they are put in a container of soapy water.

- Learn to identify beneficial insects (praying mantis, lace wings, spiders, big-eyed bugs, assassin bugs, lady beetles, and all parasitic wasps). Often chemicals are used in error against these beneficial insects.

- Learn to properly identify garden pests and use chemicals only when a serious pest problem exists. Carefully follow all directions on labels.

- When a chemical is used, be sure to spray the plant thoroughly. Horticultural oils and insecticidal soaps work well on aphids, spider mites and mealy bugs. To kill caterpillars, hornworms and loopers, use Bt, (*Bacillus thuringiensis*).

- To reduce bee and other pollinator mortality, sprays are best applied late in the afternoon or early evening hours. Also, many garden pests are night feeders, so spraying later is more effective. To reduce spray burn, make sure the plants are not under moisture stress. It is best to irrigate the garden thoroughly before spraying.

- Pesticide sprays usually give better results than dusts. In many cases dusts will drift and kill many beneficial arthropods. Also, dusts are easily washed off by rain and irrigation, or blown off by wind, and it usually requires more actual insecticide in the dust form than in the spray form to accomplish the same degree of control.

- Harvest the fruits, seeds, leaves, etc., as soon as they are ripe. Allowing over-ripe fruits to remain on the plants often invites additional insect, rat, and/or mice problems.

- As soon as a plant is no longer productive remove it from the garden and destroy it. Do not pull it up and leave it in the garden area.

- When the entire gardening project is over, cut down all remaining plants and plow them into the soil or take them out of the garden area.

For more information visit UF's online resource center, EDIS, <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/> for a variety of free publications to help your vegetable gardening experience a successful one. Happy growing and enjoy the fruits of your labor!

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