

Press Release

March 1, 2016

St. Augustine, FL – The Honorable Terens Spenser Nikolaos Quick, Deputy Minister to the Hellenic Parliament was greeted by Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos and Mayor Nancy Shaver at St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine on Sunday, February 28th. Mr. Quick is the first member of the Greek Government to make an official visit to the City of St. Augustine. He was accompanied by Consul General Adamantia Klotsa and the diplomatic corps of the Greek Consulate office in Tampa, FL.

Mayor Shaver presented Mr. Quick with the City of St. Augustine coin. Polaxeni Hillier, director of the St. Photios National Shrine and Dr. John Symeonides of AHEPA Daytona Speedway Chapter gave a tour of the Shrine to the visitors. His Grace, Bishop Dimitrios, on behalf of the St. Photios Foundation, presented the Deputy Minister with the St. Photios medal.

The delegation of 50 persons from the Tampa Bay area and Greece were served traditional Greek fare prepared by Mrs. Lesley Alex Phillips and Mrs. Vasso Poulos. Hostesses were Mrs. Jo Condaxis of St. John the Divine Jacksonville, Mrs. Nicola Lykam and daughter, Sophia, of Holy Trinity, St. Augustine and from the Orthodox Christian Mission Center, Sarahjeane Campbell.

The group then went to the oldest planned cemetery of Florida, the Tolomato Cemetery, where many of the survivors of the New Smyrna Colony are interred. The group was greeted by the director, Elizabeth Gessner and members of the Preservation Association. Deputy Minister Quick placed a white and blue wreath at the plaque honoring the Greeks and others of Mediterranean descent buried on the grounds. The tour included the Varela Chapel and the gravesite of Mary Genopoly Darling, the first teacher at the Wooden Schoolhouse and daughter of Ioannis Ioannopolis (Juan Genopoly).

Next stop was the Oldest Wooden Schoolhouse, built by Juan Genopoly, one of the New Smyrna colonists who were granted sanctuary in the Avero House in 1777. Visitors enjoyed the original schoolhouse and gardens with informative plaques. Juan Genopoly purchased the property on October 1, 1780, added a second story to his cedar crafted home and transformed the house into a co-ed school in 1788. The second-story provided Juan and his family the seclusion they needed to separate his public and private life.

After lunch at the award winning Columbia Restaurant, the delegation proceeded to Saint Augustine National Cemetery. Deputy Minister Quick placed a wreath at the burial site of Ambrose Callistus Masters. Private Masters was a veteran of WWI and

descended from the Greek Minorcans who came to America in 1768 with the Turnbull expedition known as the New Smyrna Colony.

The memorial hymn was sung and the group then dispersed. The Deputy Minister and Mayor Shaver discussed establishing a Sister City relationship with a city in Greece. Both look forward to continuing to honor the Greeks in the Diaspora who are an integral part of the American immigration story.

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