History is lost on old fort at New Symrna

Hampton Dunn
HISTORY IS LOST ON OLD FORT AT NEW SMYRNA

By HAMPTON DUNN

NEW SMYRNA BEACH --- They're standing there today, just as they have for possibly centuries, but their origin and history remain unknown. "They" are the foundations of an old fort that overlook the riverfront here just across from the yacht basin.

Believed to be an old Spanish fort, the landmark was discovered back in 1854 when an Indian mound was excavated. The relic is in good shape and makes an ideal play fort for youngsters of today, just as it probably has for many generations. The old fort is situated on Hillsborough Street between Washington and Julian streets.

New Smyrna's roots in history lie deep. It is said to have been occupied by Don Pedro Menendez de Aviles in 1565, after which his group deserted the spot and headed up the coast to St. Augustine.

The first developer was Dr. Andrew Turnbull who obtained a grant for 60,000 acres under the English Occupation Act in 1767. He brought over a colony of 1,500 persons of many nationalities. Included were Scotch, Syrians, Minoroans, Spanish, Moorish, Greek and others.

Turnbull's dreams of a prosperous sugar and indigo plantation did not pan out. By the time of the Revolution, he was ready to give up. The pioneers were permitted to leave New Smyrna if they wished. The majority went to St. Augustine.