

St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine

12th Annual Essay Contest



Cash prizes for the top essays received in each category.

Contest submission period

Now through December 31, 2016.

Results announced on February 1, 2017

Length limit: 1,000 words

On behalf of the Essay Committee, Katherine P. Bacalis, chair, invites all teens, 13 to 19 years of age, to research and write on one of these two topics:

There are many historical and sacred sites throughout the world. What makes Saint Photios Greek Orthodox Shrine a historic and significant site to Greek Orthodox Christians?

Or

Every American (other than those born of a Native American father and mother) born in the United States can trace their family's history to an ancestor who came to America from a foreign country. In your essay, compare and contrast your family's immigrant history with the immigrant history of the New Smyrna Colonists of 1768. How are the stories similar? What was unique to the individual? What have you learned from writing this essay?

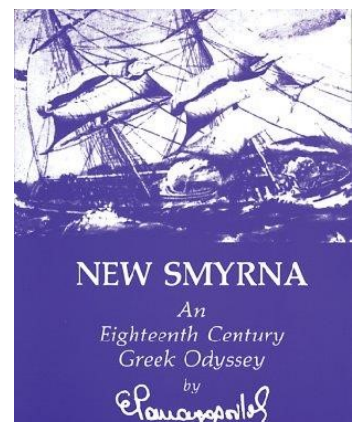
Please note that all essays will be independently judged and ranked. Certificates of participation will be sent to all participants and the top three ranked essayists will receive:

First Prize \$500

Second Prize \$250

Third Prize \$100

Deadline is December 31, 2016



The 2017 Essay Contest Committee consists of Chair, Katherine Bacalis of St John the Divine (Jacksonville, FL), Renee Gahagan and Nancy Laskos of St Demetrios (Daytona Beach, FL), and Dr. Tony Tsitos of St. Augustine, FL. Dr Constantine Santas serves as professional consult. Previously submitted essays will not be considered. Students who have participated in the contest in years past must choose a different person to interview for development of topic.

All essays become property of St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine.

The Saint Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine is a living memorial to the first Greek settlers on the American continent and to all Orthodox pioneers whose love of freedom and desire for a better life for themselves and their children brought them to this New World.

Dates of Importance...

1740-49 Casa Avero was built; Avero Family abandons house. In 1763 after 250 years of Spanish Colonial Rule, Florida, was brought under English Rule in accordance with the Treaty of Paris, 1763.

June, 1767 Turnbull arrived with Royal Navy and personal ships in the Mediterranean, and he visited Livorno, Italy; Smyrna, the islands of Crete, Melos and Santorini, & the cities of Koroni, Mani, Methoni, Messinia all in Greece; Cargese, Corsica; and Mahon, Minorca.

April 17, 1768 1,403 persons of Mediterranean descent leave Mahon, Minorca for the New World.

Virtually all enlisted under the English Indentured Servant Law, contracting to work for seven years in exchange for a 50-acre tract of land and freedom

June 26, 1768 Arrival of 7 of the 8 Turnbull ships in St. Augustine. Over 1000 persons of Mediterranean descent are registered before they leave for Mosquito Inlet to begin their indentured servitude at the New Smyrna Colony.

1255 survived the journey, registering in St. Augustine, Florida, then proceeding 75 miles south of St. Augustine to an ill-prepared land tract of 101,400 acres (410 km²) (nearly three times the size of the colony at Jamestown, Virginia)

1776 Revolutionary War – Colonists learn they cannot be kept legally against their will

Spring 1777 New Smyrna Colony begins to fail due to reduction in work force. Less than 400 survivors begin their historic long march to St. Augustine. Governor Patrick Tonyn gives Avero house as a sanctuary to the refugees.

After three uprisings, the death of over 1,000 men, women and children and the promise of land that never materialized, three colonists escaped to St Augustine, met with Gov. Patrick Tonyn, received 20 shillings, sanctuary at the Avero House and freedom papers releasing them from the broken contracts. The exodus began April 1777, and the colony was totally deserted in a matter of months.

November 1777 The Avero House is called the Greek Chapel or St. Peter's Chapel and is used for the next 10 years as a place to worship and meet.

1960 Professor Panagopoulos of San Jose, California, happens upon Greek named street signs and tombstones bearing Greek names in the Tolomato Cemetery while vacationing in St. Augustine. This spurs three years of research resulting in the book that served as his doctoral dissertation, The New Smyrna Colony, An 18th Century Odyssey.

March 1966 Avero House purchased by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America

1972 Avero House officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places

1979 Excavation of site and reconstruction of Avero House completed

February 27, 1982 Dedication of St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine commenced

February 22, 1985 Consecration of the St. Photios Chapel

2015 Dr. Dan Schafer shares information regarding the recruitment of Greeks cited in the April 16, 1767 letter from Dr. Andrew Turnbull to Dr. William Duncan (partner in the East Florida Venture)



“You will probably be surprised, Sir, that I have stayed so long here. It was to obtain a bounty on the importation of Greeks into your Province. Lord Shelburne supported me in this as much as possible, and I have at last almost finished it but as there was only £1100 which could be applied that way. I am to have forty shilling a head premium on the first 500 Greeks, small children not to reckon, and the other hundred pounds for my Greek priest with a kind of promise to put him on the Establishment for the future. This affair, however, may be of more consequence than the present advantage, as it is breaking the ice in the premium way. A letter with orders on this bounty will be sent to your Excellency as soon as Lord Shelburne comes to town which will be four days hence.”