



FLORIDA'S COQUINA HOTEL - THE XIMENEZ-FATIO HOUSE

Students learn how coquina stone supported Florida's early economy.

ACADEMIC OUTCOMES/LESSON OBJECTIVES:

- Students read selections introducing them to the way old coquina homes changed over time: in this case from a general store in 1798 to a fancy hotel for Florida tourists in 1823.

SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS ASSESSED:

SOCIAL STUDIES 4TH-5TH

- (SS.A.6.2.1) Understands reasons that immigrants came to Florida and the contributions of immigrants to the state's history.

SCIENCE 4TH

- (SC.4.N.1.3) Explain that science does not always follow a rigidly defined method ("the scientific method") but that science does involve the use of observations and empirical evidence.

SCIENCE 5TH

- (SC.5.N.2.1) Recognize and explain that science is grounded in empirical observations that are testable; explanation must always be linked with evidence.

RESOURCES:

Florida Public Archaeology Network. 28 February 2008 <<http://www.flpublicarchaeology.org>>.

Ximenez-Fatio House Museum. National Society of the Colonial Dames of America. 14 February 2008. <<http://www.ximenezfatiohouse.org/>>.

The National Register of Historic Places. 14 February 2008. <<http://www.nps.gov/nr/about.htm>>.

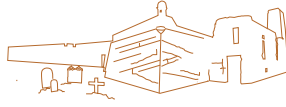
The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Florida, 15 May 2008 <<http://www.nscda.org/museums/florida.htm>>.

MATERIALS LIST:

None

ANSWER KEY FOR ACTIVITY:

There are a variety of answers for this activity. Here's a short sample. I would choose bacon because it shows that not every family had its own pig to kill for food. I would also choose potatoes to show that people could get vegetables even if they didn't grow them in their own gardens. I would choose butter and cheese because it shows there were cows in the New World, and that people didn't have to own their own cow to get butter and cheese. And I would also include salt. People probably used it as a spice or to preserve meat. I would put firewood in my display to show that if you had enough money, you could get someone else to chop your fuel for you. Also, it shows what kind of fuel they used. I would put in thread to show that people needed to be able to repair old clothes or sew new clothing. I'd include a hoe to prove that some people grew gardens, and I'd include a broom to show that they were clean people. I'd put in schoolbooks to show the town had families with kids, not just workers. And I'd also put in paper, to show that many of the townspeople could read and write. I'd put in indigo dye, silver spoons, and wine to show that some townspeople were rich and could afford these fancy items. And I'd also include tobacco to show that people smoked back then too.



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AUTHOR: Kelley Weitzel, <http://www.KelleyWeitzel.com>

STUDENT ARTICLES & ACTIVITIES:

1. Why is it called the Ximenez-Fatio House?
2. Who lived in the Ximenez-Fatio House?
3. What can you see when you visit the Ximenez-Fatio House?
4. Archaeology turns lemons into lemonade.
5. A famous artifact found at the Ximenez-Fatio House
6. **ACTIVITY:** Creating a Museum Display

VOCABULARY: Archaeological, Architecture, Boarding House, Budget, Cement, Dame, Economy, Erosion, Exposed, Frame, Funding, General Store, Historic Registry, Naturalist, Plaster, Properties, Requirements, Restore, Structures, Tourism, Will

ASSESSMENT OPTIONS:

WRITING PROMPT #1: The Ximenez-Fatio House was a popular boarding house (hotel) in early Florida. Think about the many different kinds of people that might have visited: rich vacationers with their families, soldiers fighting in the Second Seminole War, naturalists studying Florida wildlife, and sick people who hoped that Florida's warm climate would make them feel better. Write a story about a conversation that might have taken place at the hotel's dining room table during dinner.

WRITING PROMPT #2: Archaeologists at the Ximenez-Fatio (X-F) House managed to turn bad luck into very good luck. Think of a time you were faced with a bad situation and managed to make it better. Write a story about how you handled this bad luck situation.

ASSESSMENT #1: The Ximenez-Fatio House has been used for many different purposes since it was built in 1798. Describe three of these uses and how each one has supported Florida's economy.

ASSESSMENT #2: Archaeologists are learning important information from the exposed walls at the Ximenez-Fatio House. For example, they've found holes in the walls that show where Ximenez' old general store shelves were located.

The caretakers at the X-F House could use this information to recreate the 1700s general store. However, this would not match with the rest of the displays, which are set up to look like an 1800s boarding house.

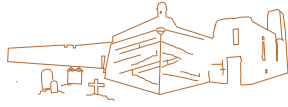
What would YOU decide to do if you were the caretaker of the X-F house?

- A. Cover the wall holes and make these rooms match the rest of the boarding house?
- B. Rebuild the shelves to look like the general store?
- C. Or just let the holes show and put up a sign that tells about the old general store?

Explain why you would make this choice and how it might affect the rest of the Ximenez-Fatio House museum.



This project has been financed in part with historic preservation grant assistance provided by the Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State, assisted by the Florida Historical Commission.



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WHY ARE WE STUDYING THE XIMENEZ-FATIO HOUSE?

The people of early Florida had very little stone to build with. Because wooden buildings eventually burn or rot away, most of Florida's early structures have disappeared. The ones built of coquina, however, have lasted hundreds of years. The Ximenez-Fatio house (X-F House for short) is one example of an early coquina building. When it was built, the X-F House was a general store (and a home for Andres Ximenez and his family). Later, when Florida became a territory, more visitors started traveling to our state. They needed a place to stay, so the X-F House became a hotel. By studying changes in the ways people used coquina buildings, we can learn about the changing needs of Florida's early people.

WHY IS IT CALLED THE XIMENEZ-FATIO HOUSE?

In 1973, the X-F house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. When a building is listed in this Register, it must be named a certain way. This name must include the FIRST person who owned the house and the LAST person who owned the house before it was registered.

In this case, Andres Ximenez (*On-dre He-men-ez*) was the first owner in 1798. Louisa Fatio (*Lou-ee-sa Fay-she-o*) was the last owner in 1875. The Register combined these two names, and the building became the "Ximenez-Fatio House."

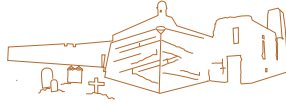
WHAT IS THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES? It is a list of buildings and other sites that should be preserved because they are important to U.S. history.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO LIST HISTORIC BUILDINGS ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER? It's important because it allows the people taking care of these buildings apply for government funding. They can use this money to make repairs on the buildings. They can also use the money to convert these old buildings into museums. Each museum is designed to have fun, interesting activities for class fieldtrips and other visitors.

HOW DOES A HOUSE GET LISTED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER? The house must be more than 50-years-old. It must also meet one of the following three requirements.

1. **THE BUILDING MUST BE LINKED WITH AN IMPORTANT HISTORICAL PERSON OR EVENT.** For example, the *Mala Compra* house was owned by Joseph Hernandez, Florida's first delegate to Congress. His home was listed in 2004 because Hernandez was an important historical person.
2. **THE BUILDING MUST PROVIDE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INFORMATION ABOUT OUR NATION'S HISTORY.** For example, Spanish explorers built the fort at Castillo de San Marcos. Later, British and American soldiers also occupied this important site. Archaeologists have discovered many artifacts at the Castillo. Artifacts like cannonballs, tools, and dishes help us learn about the people that shaped Florida's history. The Castillo was listed in the National Register in 1966.
3. **THE BUILDING MUST HAVE AN IMPORTANT KIND OF ARCHITECTURE (BUILDING STYLE OR MATERIAL).** For example, the Ximenez-Fatio House is built of coquina stone. This stone played an important role in Florida's history. It was used to build forts, sugar mills, stores, and homes. Because coquina is an important architectural material, the X-F house was listed in the Register in 1973.

WHO TAKES CARE OF THE XIMENEZ-FATIO HOUSE? The X-F house is maintained by a group of women called "The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Florida." These Colonial Dames buy and restore (repair) important old buildings. They convert these old buildings into museums where people can learn about our nation's past. The Colonial Dames take care of more than 50 different properties across the United States.



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WHO LIVED IN THE XIMENEZ-FATIO HOUSE?

Andres Ximenez started building his home in 1798 and got a license to run a general store on his property. His family (including his wife and five children) lived on the top floor of the house, and the general store took up the entire bottom floor. A general store sells the everyday items that people need, including foods, candles, school-books, and tools. Ximenez also had a pool table, so that people could visit and have fun. His store supported the economy because it provided goods and services that Florida's people needed.

Eventually, the Ximenez family moved away. Since coquina stone is a very sturdy building material, their house was in great shape. A man named Vicente Llerena rented the home in 1806 and even ran the general store. In 1823, a woman named Margaret Cook rented the house and turned it into a boarding house (an old-time hotel). In 1830, after she bought the house, she installed hardwood floors. She liked these floors better than the old tabby floors from Ximenez' time. Mrs. Cook's friend, Eliza Whitehurst, managed this popular boarding house. During the winter months, the guest rooms at the X-F House were always full. Mrs. Whitehurst ran the boarding house until she passed away in 1838. She was buried nearby in the Huguenot Cemetery. (Many gravestones in this cemetery are made from coquina just like the X-F House.) After Mrs. Whitehurst's death, Mrs. Cook decided to sell the house.

Who bought it next? Sarah Anderson purchased the house in 1838. She needed a new place to live because the Seminole had burned her old home at the Dunlawton Sugar Plantation. (The Dunlawton Sugar Mill was made from coquina just like the X-F House!) In 1855, Mrs. Anderson decided to move to Tallahassee, so she sold the house.

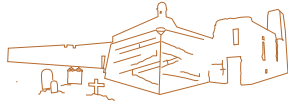
Miss Louisa Fatio bought it next. She had plenty of experience running a boarding house, so she opened the building to guests again. Her hotel was busiest from October through April, sometimes hosting as many as 30 visitors. During the winter months, these people traveled to Florida to experience its warm winters. The boarding house was important to Florida's economy because it provided a service to the tourists traveling into Florida. Miss Fatio continued to run the boarding house until her death in 1875.

In 1939, the Colonial Dames bought the Ximenez-Fatio property. They wanted to preserve this important coquina building. Today, the X-F house isn't a home, a general store, or a boarding house. It's a museum that helps us protect and learn about Florida's coquina past. The museum also builds Florida's tourist economy by attracting visitors who want to learn about the past. While these visitors are in our state, they spend money at restaurants and hotels. This improves our economy!

WHAT CAN YOU SEE WHEN YOU VISIT THE HOUSE?

Today, the Ximenez-Fatio House is set up to look like an old-style boarding house. Since a boarding house is like a hotel, you should expect to see plenty of rooms. Most of these rooms are filled with old-time beds, desks, and other furniture that show visitors what the hotel looked like back in the 1830s. Mosquito netting covers each bed since the building's windows had no screens to keep the bugs out.

When Miss Fatio bought the boarding house, she added some extra rooms and cut some new windows. Archaeologists can tell which windows she added by looking at the shape of the windows' wooden frames. Back in 1798, Ximenez built windows in the Spanish style. Spanish window frames were angled to let in the maximum amount of light. About 60 years had passed when Miss Fatio cut additional windows into the coquina walls, and styles had changed. She installed the style of window that was popular in her time. These newer window frames were flat instead of angled. We use a similar style in our houses today.



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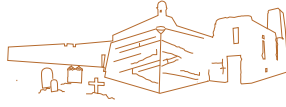
Mosquito Netting and Peeling Walls
Why are the walls peeling? Read the next article.



Angled Window Frames and Exposed Coquina Stone
Why is the coquina exposed? Read the next article.



This shows a room at the X-F House. It is set up as a hotel room for vacationing families. This photo also shows what the walls looked like before the plaster and paint started peeling.
Why did the walls peel? Read the next article.



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ARCHAEOLOGY TURNS LEMONS INTO LEMONADE

Have you ever heard the expression, “turning lemons into lemonade”? It means turning something sour into something sweet OR turning bad luck into good luck. A few years ago, the caretakers at the Ximenez-Fatio house ran into some seriously bad luck. The plaster and paint inside this important coquina building was beginning to peel and crack. They hired some coquina experts to check out the problem.

It turns out that someone had plastered the outside of the coquina walls with Portland cement in the early 1900s. These people probably thought it would look nicer and protect the coquina from erosion. Unfortunately, they didn't realize that coquina stone needs to be exposed to the open air. Unlike bricks and concrete, coquina stone naturally soaks up water: from rain, from moisture in the air, and from the muddy earth. Normally, this isn't a problem. The extra water just evaporates away. However, when you cover coquina with a thick coating of Portland cement, you block the evaporation process. The coquina stone continues to soak up water from the ground, but this water can't escape.

At the X-F house, water wasn't able to escape through the outside of the coquina wall, so it started to escape through the inside. That's what made the plaster and paint peel away. Eventually, this moisture would have damaged the entire coquina building. Something had to be done. Once again, the caretakers turned to coquina experts.

They learned that they would have to remove every bit of Portland cement from the walls of the X-F house. It would be expensive, but it was the only way to save this important coquina building. After the work was finished, they put a white limewash on the outside of the coquina walls. It was very similar to the whitewash used on the old Castillo. The experts chose limewash because it protects the coquina, while still allowing water to evaporate away.

The repair work is going well, but when the paint first started to peel, it seemed like terrible luck. The whole building was a mess. Outside, workers were chipping away Portland cement. Inside, they were stripping away layers of peeling plaster and paint. That's when the archaeologists got excited! Why? They'd discovered a pattern of softball-sized holes in the walls of two rooms. Someone in the past had covered up these holes, so until the plaster and paint came off, no one even knew they were there. What were they from?

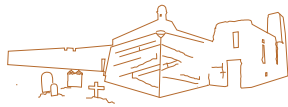


Shelving Holes in Coquina Wall

Archaeologists believe that heavy wooden shelves were once attached to those holes. But why would guest rooms have walls full of shelves? It's simple. They didn't. Those shelves were left over from Andres Ximenez' general store back in 1798. All of his store's products were displayed on those shelves. We knew from old documents that the bottom level of the house had been a general store, but now archaeologists were finding evidence to prove it! What had started as awful luck was providing important clues about Florida's coquina past.

Workmen continued to remove the plaster and paint from other rooms. This work uncovered the wooden boards that framed each doorway and window. Now that the wood was exposed, the X-F caretakers decided to study it. They hired a dendrochronologist (*den-dro-kru-na-low-jist*) to do this work. [HINT: *Dendro* means tree. *Chrono* means time. And *Ologist* means scientist. A dendrochronologist is a scientist who figures out the date that trees were cut down.]

This scientist collected samples of wood from all over the X-F House. Of course, each of these wood samples originally came from a tree. So, the dendrochronologist will use the samples to determine WHEN each tree was cut down. Why is this important? It gives us a good idea of when the boards were made. AND it tells us when each window and door was installed in the house.



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Archaeologists will use this information to figure out which rooms Ximenez built in the 1700s and which rooms Miss Fatio added in the 1800s. Old documents don't tell us which rooms Miss Fatio built. Studying the building itself is the only way to learn the answer. If the paint hadn't peeled away, archaeologists couldn't have collected samples from the wooden door and window frames. By paying close attention to detail, these archaeologists really did turn lemons into lemonade!

A FAMOUS ARTIFACT FOUND AT THE XIMENEZ-FATIO HOUSE



Caravaca Cross
(Courtesy of Ximenez-Fatio House)

The most famous artifact discovered at the X-F House is a Caravaca Cross. During a 2002 archaeological dig, this tiny bronze cross was found in an old trash pit! Because it was piled in with thousands of artifacts dating to the 1650s, archaeologists believe that the cross was also from the 1650s. That's long before Ximenez built the X-F House. In fact, it's even before the Spanish built the Castillo de San Marcos! Future archaeological digs may help us understand why this beautiful artifact was thrown away so long ago.

ACTIVITY - CREATING A MUSEUM DISPLAY

BACKGROUND: The list below shows some of the items found in the original Ximenez general store. How do we know what was in his store? We learned this information from Ximenez' will. A will is a document that describes everything a person owns. It also explains who should get these items after the person dies.

DIRECTIONS: Imagine that you are in charge of the X-F House. You've decided to set up one room to look like Ximenez' general store. First, you'll rebuild the heavy wooden shelves. Then you'll need to decide what displays to put on the shelves. You have enough money in your budget to purchase 15 items from the list below to put in your Store Display. Be sure to choose a variety of items. This will give visitors a clear idea of what the general store looked like back in 1798. Circle the items you want to include. On another sheet, write to explain why each item will help to create a well-rounded General Store Display.

Axes	Cups	Pepper
Bacon	Dishes	Potatoes
Beans	Firewood	Rice
Brooms	Hammers	Salt
Butter	Hatchets	Schoolbooks
Calfskin Shoes	Hoes	Shovels
Candles	Indigo Dye	Silver Spoons
Chairs	Ladders	Thread
Cheese	Matches	Tobacco
Coffee Pot	Candlesticks	Vases
Corn	Paper	Wine