



Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



TIMUCUANS REMEMBERED AT STATE PARK

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ORMOND BEACH --- When Ponce de Leon landed on the upper east coast of Florida in 1513, his first contact with the natives were with the Timucuan tribe in this region. Their leader was a young and handsome chief named Tomokie who was said to have "the dignity of manners worthy of a Roman Senator."

Today, Chief Tomokie is honored with the statue that dominates the Tomoka State Park, two miles north of Ormond Beach on the Old Dixie Highway. Near the base of the statue is the figure of Oleeta, who, legend has it, slew him in defense of the golden cup.

This heroic group was designed and executed by the late Florida artist and sculptor, Fred Dana Marsh, and was presented to Florida by him and friends of the park. The park features the Fred Dana Marsh Museum with exhibits and artifacts of Florida geology, zoology and history. It depicts both the nature and artistic backgrounds of Florida, and thus is unique among museums in the state.

The memorial to Chief Tomokie is at the location of the site of Nocoroco, a famous Indian village which was known to early travelers. It was here that the Timucians made their last stand against the over-whelming encroachment of the white men. White men's diseases and battles with the Greeks finally brought about the almost total extinction of the Timucians, 75 years after the arrival of the Spaniards.

Chief Tomokie lamented: "How strange are the ways of the white man. He wears clothes, he builds houses so strong and lives so short a time. He steals our women, he speaks no truth. Nevertheless, I have ordered my people to be tolerant of the heathen and ungodly pale face, because he knows not of our Great Spirit who tells us to speak the truth..."

