

The City Manager's Case for Taxes

During the month of April, our thoughts inevitably turn to taxes. In 1943, Fernando J. Torras, City Manager of Brunswick, issued a leaflet, now preserved in the Coastal Georgia Historical Society archives, which outlined how city tax dollars benefitted local residents. On a house and lot assessed at \$2,000, he indicated that annual police and fire protection accounted for \$8.02 of the \$42.00 tax bill. The fee for operation of the hospital, medical clinics, city parks, and cemeteries was \$2.34. The garbage collection fee was \$4.62, while school taxes made up the largest portion at \$14.00. Those living on their properties were, however, exempt from the school tax. In view of the many services provided by the city, Torras concluded that "your tax dollar is your best investment."

A native of Brunswick, Torras served as City Manager for over 18 years. He was best known locally as chief engineer of the causeway between the mainland and St. Simons Island, which opened in 1924 and now bears his name. A graduate of Georgia Tech, Torras spent the early years of his career in South America, where he built railroads, bridges, and roads before returning to Coastal Georgia. During World War II, in addition to being City Manager, he was resident engineer for the U.S. Maritime Commission at the J.A. Jones Construction Company shipyard in Brunswick, where Liberty ships were built.

This month's image of the 1943 leaflet is accompanied by a photograph of Fernando Torras, also in the Historical Society archives.



Our monthly images on this page are from the vast archives of the Coastal Georgia Historical Society. The Society's mission includes the "administration, restoration and maintenance of historic facilities and resources ... preserved as a living part of the historical and cultural foundations of our coastal community." Society facilities include the St. Simons Lighthouse and Museum, the A.W. Jones Heritage Center, and the World War II Home Front Museum at the Historic Coast Guard Station. To learn more about the Society, its diverse programs, and the benefits of Society membership, please call 912.638.4666, or visit coastalgeorgiahistory.org.