



CULTURAL MUSEUMS AND CAPITOL BUILDINGS MEET RECREATED COMMUNITIES AND REGAL PLANTATIONS

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.— A rich and storied historical backdrop, from Hernando De Soto's 1539 winter encampment to the legendary 1824 meeting that declared Tallahassee as the territorial capital, sets the stage for Tallahassee's prolific collection of preserved archaeological digs, antebellum mansions, government buildings, Native American sites, Spanish Colonial explorations and settlements and numerous museum exhibits chronicling the state's history (www.VisitTallahassee.com).

STATEHOOD/ ESTABLISHING THE CAPITOL OF FLORIDA

Florida became an official United States territory in 1822 and soon after a capital was born. Pensacola and St. Augustine vied for title of Florida's state capital, but Tallahassee was ultimately chosen in 1824, as it was the median point between both cities. Once a log cabin, today the Historic Capitol makes up the base of Florida's Capitol complex housing the restored House and Senate Chambers, Supreme Court, Governor's Suite and the Florida Legislative Research Center. Originally constructed in 1845, the Historic Capitol has since been restored to its 1902 appearance, featuring an elaborate stained glass dome, red-and-white-striped awnings and the Florida State Seal shown over the entry columns. Showcasing 21 rooms and filled with 250 artifacts, the Historic Capitol teaches visitors of political traditions of the past.

Built in 1977 the \$43 million New Capitol structure was constructed to replace the 1845 capitol building and is a towering 22 stories tall, with a 22nd floor observation deck and art gallery featuring works from artists all over the state. As one of only four capitols

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in the U.S. that offer panoramic views of the city, visitors can see all the way to the Gulf of Mexico on a clear day. The House and Senate chambers are open to visitors who want a peak at the day-to-day legislative action. Beginning in March, the state's legislators, lobbyists, citizens, special interest groups and other politicians gather at the New Capitol for session, typically lasting 60 days.

For visitors looking to dig deeper into Florida's history, the Museum of Florida History, located downtown in the R. A. Gray Building, is the official state history museum and focuses on eras unique to the growth and development of the 27th state. The museum chronicles the history of early to present-day Florida through more than 40,000 artifacts and permanent exhibits. At the entrance, a nine-foot-tall, pre-historic mastodon skeleton (named Herman) pulled from nearby Wakulla Springs State Park stands guard as the Museum's official mascot and serves as a welcome for visitors about to embark on a tour of the state's history. From First Families of Florida, which explores gubernatorial campaign trails, mansion life and inauguration ceremonies, to the Seminole Tribe of Florida, an up-close look at the history and culture of a group that played an integral part in Florida's history, the Museum reflects the roles of those who have influenced the forming and shaping of the state's cultural and natural environments.

Indoor museums are not the only way to discover Florida's secrets. Downtown walking tours are available, with visits to haunted spots and historic sites. The leisurely stroll features sites such as Gallows Hill, the hill where old convicts were hanged and now the location of Ruby Diamond Auditorium; the home of William "Money" Williams, whose widow supposedly still haunts the antebellum mansion, waiting for the return of her husband from the Civil War; the Knott House, where the Emancipation Proclamation was read for the first time in Florida in 1865; and, of course, the Old City Cemetery, the oldest public cemetery in Tallahassee. Established in 1829, it is the resting place of those that helped create Tallahassee in the 19th century, including governors, Union and Confederate soldiers, yellow fever victims, a French prince, slaves and perhaps the most prominent, the alleged witch, Elizabeth Budd Graham, whose grave is

the only one in the cemetery not facing East. Visitors weave through gravesites on foot while learning of the cattle and hogs that used to run wild over graves and the segregated burials.

NATIVE AMERICAN

Native Americans occupied Anhaica, now known as Tallahassee, for more than 12,000 years. Their remnants and culture are displayed today in museums and sites throughout Tallahassee. A restored community that once housed the Apalachee Indians and families from Spain, Mission San Luis now serves as an instrument to educate visitors about the past way of life in a community laced together by religion, military and economic purposes. Guests travel the re-created villages by foot observing old world structures from sports plazas and the council house to the church and house of the Spanish Deputy Governor and watch as the people of San Luis go about the tasks that sustained life centuries ago. Mission San Luis is Florida's only Spanish colonial mission that has living ancestors – The Apalachees – and has been meticulously uncovered and restored.

The Tallahassee Automobile Museum, in addition to a rare collection of classic automobiles, houses an assortment of Native American artifacts passed down from a local Native American family. Featuring Native American bowls and ancient tools, the Tallahassee Automobile Museum is as much automobiles as it is Americana. The museum highlights collectibles ranging from Steinway Piano's and the Batmobile from Batman Forever to antique toys and cash registers.

The area around Tallahassee's Lake Jackson was once inhabited by Native Americans more than eight centuries ago. Today the area is know as the Lake Jackson Mounds Archeological State Park and features six earthen temple mounds and one mound that is thought to be a burial mound. Visitors can picnic in a grassy area near the most prominent mound, standing 36 feet high, or explore the pre-Columbian artifacts

found at the Indian mounds, including copper necklaces, bracelets, anklets and breastplates.

SPANISH COLONIAL

During the 1500-1600's, Spanish explorers arrived in Florida in search of gold, with Hernando De Soto as the most famous of them all. Traveling from the Tampa Bay area to spend the winter in Tallahassee, the conquistador took over an Apalachee Indian Village in 1539 in a location that is now downtown Tallahassee and held the very first Christmas celebration in North America. A kiosk marks the site of De Soto's winter encampment, while the artifacts from the site are housed at the Museum of Florida History. As the De Soto Historic & Archeological Site is the only confirmed site of De Soto in North America, it also marks the trailhead along Florida's De Soto trail, which follows his exploration of the state.

CIVIL WAR & EMANCIPATION OF SLAVERY

In the early and mid 1800's, farmers and planters bought miles and miles of fertile land that stretched across five counties, creating a large plantation belt full of crops ranging from cotton and corn to tobacco and rice. Now, this plantation belt houses the largest collection of antebellum plantations – 71 plantations and 300,000 acres – in the country.

Tallahassee visitors have the rare opportunity to step back in time when visiting Goodwood Museum and Gardens. Built circa 1840, this expansive antebellum plantation home is perfectly preserved as it was in the years surrounding World War I. The main house, which is now open to the public as a museum, houses a unique collection of art and furnishings that reflect a variety of eras and tastes. One of the finest plantation homes ever built in this region, Goodwood features some of the earliest fresco ceilings in Florida. Travelers are encouraged to step outside the home and also view the significant horticultural features of the property including an extensive collection of Old Garden

Roses, heirloom bulbs and centuries-old live oak trees and magnolias. To preserve the original design and presentation of the garden, Goodwood staff and volunteers use only heirloom plant material that was available in North Florida at the turn of the century.

Every March Tallahassee visitors stand in awe during the reenactment of the Battle at Natural Bridge. The site of the second largest Civil War battle in Florida is now marked by the Natural Bridge Battlefield Historic State Park. Toward the end of the Civil War, the Union emerged on the Natural Bridge area with the intent of capturing Fort Ward and marching north to take over Tallahassee, Florida's capital city. Tallahassee volunteers met the Union soldiers at Natural Bridge, ultimately winning three major attacks and forcing the Union to retreat. Today, Tallahassee holds the honor as the only Confederate capital east of the Mississippi not captured by the Union.

The emancipation of slavery marks an important time in U.S. history and Tallahassee's Knott House played an integral role as a temporary headquarters for the Union in 1865. During this time the Emancipation Proclamation was read aloud on the front porch by Brigadier General Edward McCook. Built in 1843, the historic house was later inhabited by Dr. George Betton who trained his carriage driver, William Gunn, in medicine to become Florida's first African American doctor. Senator William Knott and his wife Lula acquired the house in 1928, which is now known as "The House that Rhymes" after Lula's poetry about the beautiful home and its regal furnishings. After extensive preservation and renovations, the Knott House Museum was opened to the public in 1992.

From Bellevue Plantation -- the home of Catherine Murat, the great grand niece of George Washington and wife to Napoleon's nephew, Prince Achille Murat -- to the red wolf habitat where visitors can spot the once-extinct-in-the-wild animal in its natural setting, Tallahassee Museum on Lake Bradford is one of the few museums in the country to combine a natural habitat zoo of indigenous wildlife with a collection of historic buildings and artifacts and an environmental center on a 52-acre lake setting. Permanent exhibits, in addition to the Florida panthers, black bears, red wolves, bobcats and other

wildlife habitats, include the Big Bend Farm, a living exhibit reminiscent of an area farm in the 1880s that grows seasonal vegetables, raises farm animals and includes restored 19th century buildings; and Old Florida, where the bygone era of life on the railroad is brought back to life through a 1920s caboose and railway exhibit.

AFRICAN AMERICAN

Highlighting African American accomplishments, Tallahassee's many museums and galleries also showcase the dance, art, music, literature and architecture important to the thriving African American community. Housing cultural objects and printed materials representing African American heritage, the Carrie Meek-James N. Eaton, Sr. Regional Black Archives Research Center & Museum collects and preserves the precious African American contributions to Florida and the Southeast. The center was officially opened to the public in 1977 by Dr. Eaton, located in Florida A&M University's Carnegie Library. In 2006 the facility expanded and currently houses more than 500,000 photographs, films, slave papers, church records, rare books and manuscripts ranging from ancient Africa to present day.

Union Bank is Florida's oldest bank building, surviving from year 1841. Opened as a museum in 1984, the bank was originally the National Freedman's Bank and supplied funds to local cotton plantations and newly liberated slaves. In 1971 the bank was moved from its original site and restored to the museum quality of today. Union Bank is a historical landmark and extension of the Florida A&M University Black Archives Research Center & Museum.

As Tallahassee and Florida A&M University played an integral role in the Civil Rights Movement, from the Tallahassee Bus Boycott of 1957 led by two female FAMU students to the Capitol protests led by activists across the state, this is an important time in both the city and state's history. The Black Archives Research Center & Museum houses many important articles from this time and reminds visitors of the struggles and victories that Florida's African American culture has endured.

Born into slavery in Leon County, John G. Riley defied the nature of the times by learning to read and write and later pursued his dreams of becoming a teacher and prominent Tallahasseean. The John G. Riley Center Museum of African American History & Culture strives to educate visitors about the African American contributions to Florida's history. Visitors to the museum listen to historical storytelling, learn through heritage education and read sermons, speeches and essays written by powerful African Americans who fought to end slavery.

Tallahassee's educational museums and historical sites give visitors a glimpse into the city's intricate history and diverse heritage. A fusion of cosmopolitan flair and charming personality defines the spirit of Tallahassee, Florida's Capital City – where it all comes together for visitors. Situated just off Florida's northern I-10 corridor, stretching along the state's Panhandle, Tallahassee is a place where college town meets cultural center, politics meets performing arts and history meets nature – a place where the vibrancy of what to do is matched only by the city's inviting hospitality. Additional visitor information is available from **Visit Tallahassee** at **www.VisitTallahassee.com** or **(800) 628-2866**.

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About Visit Tallahassee

Visit Tallahassee is the official tourism marketing organization for Tallahassee and Leon County Florida, operating as a department of Leon County Government. Visit Tallahassee promotes tourism to the area through direct sales, advertising, public relations, sports, film, product development and visitor services. For more information, visit www.VisitTallahassee.com.