

Welcome to the Museum of Florida History!

Opened in 1977, the Museum of Florida History (MFH) collects, preserves, exhibits, and interprets evidence of past and present cultures in Florida, and promotes knowledge and appreciation of this heritage. As the state history museum, it focuses on artifacts and eras unique to Florida's development and the roles that Floridians have played in national and global events. Through exhibits, educational programs, research, and collections, the Museum reflects the ways in which people have shaped and reacted to their natural and cultural environments.

Manners

You can help to preserve artifacts in the Museum for generations to come by respecting objects and other guests. FOOD, BEVERAGES, GUM, RUNNING, SHOUTING, and RECKLESS BEHAVIOR are not permitted in the Museum. Visitors who violate these rules will be asked to leave.

- **Signage and Museum staff will indicate objects that can be touched.** Everything else can only be observed, admired, and discussed.
- **Photography is allowed** except in areas where "No Photography" signs are posted.
- **Students and their chaperones must stay together at all times.**

Chaperones

Museum staff are not available to monitor students; this is the responsibility of group leaders and chaperones. A minimum of one chaperone for every seven students is required to ensure student safety.

- Student groups of thirty or more should be pre-organized into teams of ten to fifteen children with two chaperones per group. Teams will visit different areas of the Museum at different times.
- A chaperone's responsibilities include supervising his or her team, helping students to observe behavior rules, encouraging learning by pointing out interesting artifacts, asking the students questions, and staying with team members at all times, especially in Grandma's Attic and the gift shop.

When You Arrive

- Students and chaperones unload in the passenger loading zone in front of the R. A. Gray Building on Bronough Street.
- Chaperones lead students down the outside stairs to the Museum's mezzanine entrance, then into the Museum Theater if it is available. If the theater is not available, the group will gather on the bench in front of the elevators.
- The group leader signs the Visitor Registry at the Museum Information Desk to record the group name, number of children and adults.
- Food and drink are to be stored on the carts in front of the gift shop.
- If a program fee is applicable, the group leader goes to the gift shop to pay with cash or a check.

Exhibits

Explore Florida's extraordinary past through nearly 30,000 square feet of permanent exhibits.

- **Florida's First People**
- **Forever Changed: *La Florida*, 1513–1821**
- **Spanish Shipwrecks**
- **Florida in the Civil War**
- **20th Century Forestry and Agriculture**
- **Early Transportation and Tourism**
- **Florida Remembers World War II**
- **Highlights Gallery**

Learn about temporary exhibits at www.museumoffloridahistory.com/exhibits/current.cfm

Tours and Programming

- **Self-Guided Tour:** Small groups accompanied by chaperones explore MFH on their own. Free.
- **Spotlight Tour:** Free guided tours are given daily, Monday–Saturday, 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.; Sunday and holidays, 2:30 p.m. Reservations are not required.
- **High Points in History Tour:** A guided tour features the most popular exhibits and artifacts. Grades K–12; Duration: 30 minutes; Cost: \$1 per student, chaperones free; \$3 per adult; \$2 per senior.
- **Museum Treasures Program:** After a guided tour, students work in groups to select their “treasure” of Florida history. Grades 3–12; Duration: 1 hour; Cost: \$1 per student, chaperones free.
- **Themed Programs:** Contact staff for details about special hands-on programs that explore specific aspects of Florida history. Grades: various; Duration: 1 hour; Cost: \$1 per student, chaperones free.

Payment

If your program has a fee, please complete the a Program Invoice. When you arrive, give the invoice and payment to the Museum Educator at the Information Desk in the lobby. You may also return the payment by mail before the date of your program.

Location and Hours

The Museum is located on the ground floor of the R. A. Gray Building at 500 South Bronough Street, in downtown Tallahassee. It is open every day except Thanksgiving and Christmas. Hours: Monday–Friday: 9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Saturday: 10:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Sunday and holidays: Noon–4:30 p.m.

Parking

Car parking is available in the garage immediately south of the R. A. Gray Building, accessible by the entry ramp on the west side of Bronough Street. Visitors must go to the gift shop in the Museum lobby to receive a free parking token. Bus parking is available on the west side of the Capitol Complex on Duval Street or in the parking lot on the west side of the R. A. Gray Building, accessible from Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

Florida’s History Shop

Our retail shop specializes in Florida-related books, toys, memorabilia, art, and other items. Souvenirs can be pre-ordered online at www.floridashistoryshop.com or by calling (850) 245–6397.

Dining Options

Located in the lobby, The Egg Express is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Menu items or boxed lunches can be ordered in advance by calling the café at (850) 907–3447. Boxed lunches **MUST** be ordered in advance. Lunches and coolers can be stored in the Museum lobby while tours or programs are underway. An outdoor picnic area on the Museum mezzanine accommodates about 30 children.

Please Keep in Mind

- If you plan to visit several sites in one day, allow time not only for students’ educational experiences, but also for travel and shopping.
- If you know that you will be late, contact MFH education staff at (850) 245–6330. Guided tours or programs may be shortened or canceled if groups are not on time.
- Tallahassee is in the Eastern time zone. If you are coming from the Central time zone, we are an hour ahead of you.
- Museum staff need to be informed in advance if special assistance is required.

Educational Resources

Lesson plans, exhibit background information, and other materials are available on the MFH web site under Educational Resources (www.museumoffloridahistory.com/education/resources.cfm).

Pre-Visit Activities

Protecting the Story of Florida's People

This activity illustrates why people cannot touch objects on display in museums. It is natural to want to handle real artifacts as a way of learning; however, most people do not realize the cumulative damage that results when artifacts are repeatedly touched over time.

Objective: Students will recognize that improper handling can harm artifacts.

Grade level: K–12

Time required: 20 minutes

Materials: Two pieces of white paper

Procedure:

1. Pass one piece of paper around the classroom and set the other piece aside.
2. Ask each student to rub the paper between his or her fingers before passing it along.
3. After everyone has touched the paper, ask students to compare it to the untouched paper.
4. Discuss the condition of the paper that was passed around. Is there evidence of dirt and smudges on the sheet? Is it wrinkled or torn?
5. Explain that thousands of people visit the Museum every year. Ask students to speculate about the condition of the paper if thousands of people had touched it. Tell students that museum staff members always wear white cotton gloves when they handle artifacts. Discuss the importance of preserving artifacts for future generations and what we learn from artifacts.
6. Ask students to identify artifacts that they would preserve and why they are important.

Building History

This activity explores methods that historians use to understand and interpret history. Since students cannot touch most museum artifacts, they will learn the questions to ask while observing an exhibit.

Objectives: Students will

- recognize different methods and challenges of interpreting history;
- practice critical thinking skills (analysis, deduction, inference, synthesis); and
- identify primary sources.

Grade level: 3–12

Time required: 50 minutes

Materials: Objects and documents assembled by the teacher

Procedure:

1. **Preparation:** Prepare a story from a time during your own life (e.g., a vacation to New York) and collect objects and documents—five to ten each—from that experience. Using the NYC vacation example, objects might include an “I ♥ New York” t-shirt and a subway token, and documents might include excerpts from a journal, a road map, ticket stubs from a Broadway play, and photos or postcards.
2. **Separate the class into three groups.**
 - a. Group 1 examines only the objects.
 - b. Group 2 examines only the documents.
 - c. Group 3 listens to the story about your experience. Tell it only once to simulate an oral history.
3. **Each group answers the following questions by analyzing only the information they were given.**
 - a. Where did I go?
 - b. When did I go?
 - c. What did I do?
 - d. Who went with me?
 - e. How did I get there?
 - f. Why did I go?
4. **Ask each group to select a spokesperson to present their findings to the class.** Discuss how all the pieces fit together to tell the complete story. Explain that the objects, documents, and oral history are only three types of primary sources among many; and that historians use a combination of primary sources to draw conclusions about people and events of the past.