

A Story of Florida Told in 100 Buildings

HOW THE
SUNSHINE STATE
HAPPENED



CRUDEN BAY BOOKS

INTRODUCTION

Imagine a group of settlers arriving in an undeveloped location. First come shelters in which to live and then structures in which to work and shop. There are buildings for worship and education. As the community grows government buildings are required. With prosperity comes places in which to spend leisure time. And each step along the way builds a story only Florida can call its own.

That story is all around you in the work of those who came before you. In these pages you'll learn the explanations behind the quirks, the traditions and the secrets that make Florida uniquely Florida. What city hall looks like a set piece from *The Thief of Baghdad*? Solved. How did Frank Lloyd Wright come to desing an entire Florida college campus? Mystery solved. The smallest of America's 31,322 post offices? Identified. The only Florida building remaining to be a movie studio in the silent film era? Revealed.

Spanish souvenirs...college football...Art Deco...the "Eighth Wonder of the World"...iron horses...sponges...Black culture...roadside architecture...spring training...cattle...the CCC...speedboat racing...horse racing...auto racing...kit houses...diners...the golden age of motoring...orange groves...early aviation...tourist attractions...shuffleboard...dredging...Frank Lloyd Wright...trailer parks...space travel...miniature golf...Sears kit houses...This book will have you telling stories like a native in no time.

Almost all of the selections within are open to the public, or at least visible from public spaces. So, if you haven't seen these landmarks in person, fire up your GPS and get out and see the story of the Land of Enchantment standing in plain sight on Florida streets!

**A STORY OF FLORIDA TOLD IN 100 BUILDINGS...
HOW THE SUNSHINE STATE HAPPENED**

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Crystal River Indian Mounds

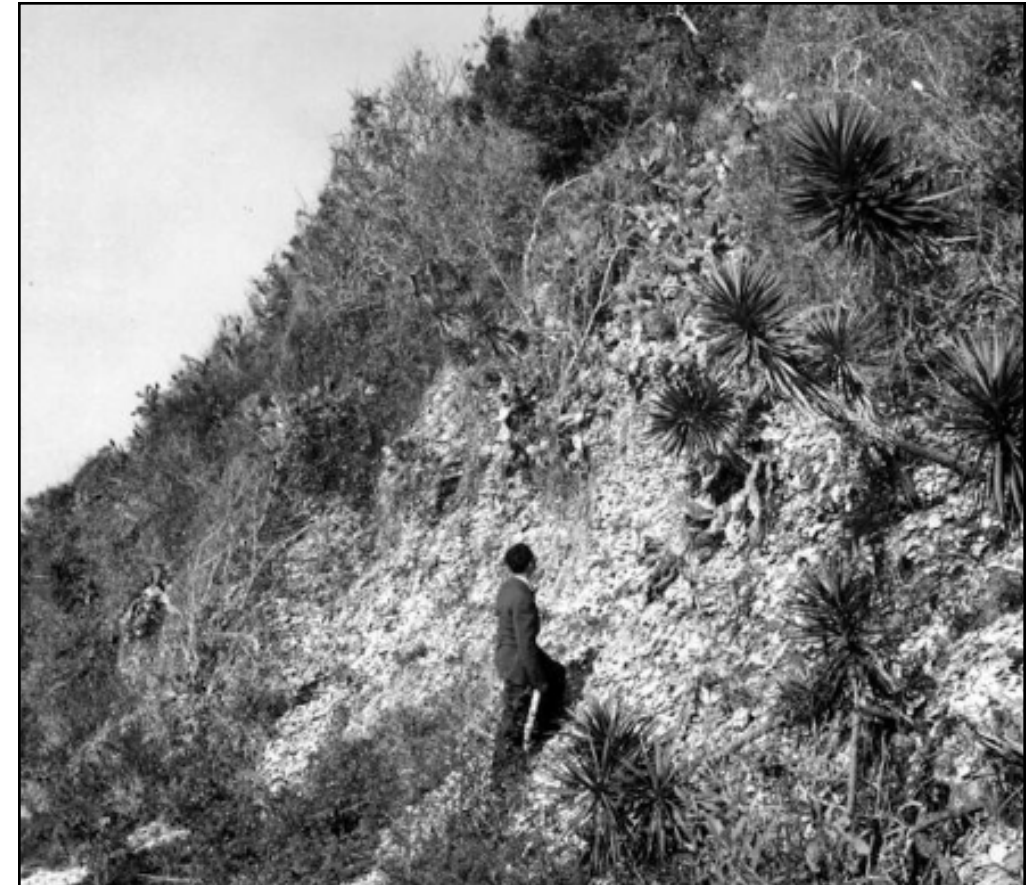
Crystal River
prehistoric



Crystal River lays claim to being the oldest continuously occupied space in Florida, perhaps more than 2,500 years before it became a National Historic Landmark. The site consists of a series of mounds used for burials, ceremonies, and trash. Researchers are still attempting to decipher the clues unique to prehistoric living in North America. The largest mounds at Crystal River are believed to have been platforms for wooden structures that high-status community figures would call home. As impressive as these monuments are today they are just a fraction of the story written here - most of the mounds were carried away by road crews for fill before Crystal River became a state archaeological park.

Turtle Mound

New Smyrna Beach
prehistoric



Shell middens are found in only a few countries and a few states in the Southeast. The most - about two dozen - have been discovered in South Carolina's Sea Islands. The oyster shells have been carbon-dated to 3,000 years ago but the purpose of their construction is still a bit of a mystery. Middens are assumed to be a refuse heap but why keep piling so high? Turtle Mound is one of the largest shell mounds on the Florida Atlantic coast - at 50 feet it was used by mariners as a navigational device. It was thought to have once been half again as high, reduced in recent times by shellrock mining. Hiking trails in Cape Canaveral National Seashore lead to the top of the midden.

Castillo de San Marcos

St. Augustine

1672



This is the oldest masonry fort in the United States, constructed of soft shellrock coquina. Construction began in 1672 and was mostly completed by 1695, although modifications would continue until 1756. With outer walls 12 feet thick at the base and space on the diamond-shaped bastions for over 70 cannon, the Castillo de San Marcos stood defiantly at the northernmost point of Spain's claims in the New World, the largest empire ever created. It replaced the series of wooden forts that had defended St. Augustine for more than a century. The stronghold was never taken by force but changed hands half a dozen times through treaty. When the British were here it became St. Marks and after the Americans bought Florida it was Fort Marion, named in honor of the venerated South Carolina Revolutionary patriot Francis Marion, The Swamp Fox. Its last official duty was as a prison for deserters from the Spanish-American War; it has been a National Monument and tourist destination for almost a century.

Gonzalez-Alvarez House

St. Augustine

1723



When you are the oldest continuously occupied city in America a bunch of "oldest this" and "oldest that" infiltrates the streetscape. Oldest store. Oldest academy. Oldest church. Many come with qualifiers based on their building materials. Oldest *masonry* fort. Oldest *wooden* schoolhouse. The Gonzalez-Alvarez House certifies itself as the oldest house in Florida by operating as The Oldest House Museum. Occupation here dips back into the 1600s but the house with thick, insulating coquina walls probably dates to the year of Tomas Gonzalez Hernandez' wedding. Regardless of its origin date the house is a microcosm of residential life in Spanish colonial Florida. The dwelling follows the "St. Augustine plan" of construction with open areas facing south or east so prevailing winds ventilated large rooms. When the British assumed control they validated the wisdom of the design and simply tacked on a wooden second story. The landmark home has been tended by the St. Augustine Historical Society for more than a century.

Cathedral Of St. Augustine

St. Augustine

1797



This parish dates its beginnings to within 48 hours of Don Pedro Menéndez's landing on September 8, 1565 when a celebratory Mass was held. After Britain ceded Florida back to Spain in 1784 the Spanish crown ordered the construction of a new parish church. The cornerstone for this cathedral was laid in 1793 and the first Mass conducted on December 8, 1797. Following a fire in 1887 the building was restored - thanks to its flame-fighting coquina blocks - and a Spanish Renaissance bell tower added next door. James Renwick, Jr., an architect famous for his work at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington and St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, drew up the plans for the bell tower. Then in his seventies, Renwick was living on Anastasia Island across the Matanzas Bay at the time.

Kingsley Plantation

Jacksonville

1798



There is a lot to unpack at Florida's oldest plantation house. American Revolution veteran John "Lightning" McQueen was rewarded by the Spanish government with Fort George Island where he built a version of an English gentry house with corner pavilions that enhanced air circulation. Despite free labor from 300 slaves, McQueen went bankrupt. Zephaniah Kingsley settled in the house in 1814 and made it the centerpiece of a string of plantations that totaled 32,000 acres. He had married a former slave, Anna, an arrangement common in East Florida. Kingsley also kept a contingent of co-wives with Anna reigning as matriarch. She was an enthusiastic slaveholder herself, managing the Fort George Island plantation. The freewheeling days at Kingsley Plantation under Spanish rule ended with Florida's incorporation into the United States. Kingsley was a slave trader who penned a vehement defense of the institution of slavery while at the same time doting on his multi-racial family and arranging passage for many of his slaves to the free black republic of Haiti. Kingsley Plantation is today managed by the National Park Service that interprets the many facets of slavery through the remains of 23 tabby slave cabins and the owner's house.

Audubon House

Key West
1830



John Geiger was an accomplished harbor pilot and skilled enough at salvaging wrecked ships to build this handsome home large enough for his nine children. The Geigers filled their garden with lush tropical plants which attracted naturalist John James Audubon who spent considerable time with the Geigers during an 1832 visit. Audubon ultimately found 18 species in the Keys to paint for his unparalleled masterpiece, *Birds of America*. The house remained in the Geiger family for more than 125 years but not much money filtered down. When it was decided to sell the property for a gas station in 1958 it still lacked indoor plumbing. Mitchell Wolfson, the owner of Miami's first television station, sent the developers packing and executed the first restoration project in Key West, launching the preservation effort that has left Old Town Key West the cherished streetscape it is today. Wolfson opened the Audubon House, with 28 first-edition prints, as a museum in 1960.

Fort Pickens

Pensacola Beach
1834



For many, the name Geronimo is synonymous with the American West and the subjugation of the native peoples. But the legendary Apache leader's story is not complete without his chapter at Fort Pickens. Geronimo was a Bedonkohe Apache who married into the Arizona Chiricahuas. After his mother, wife and children were murdered by Mexican soldiers in 1858, the 29-year old medicine man (he was never a chief) vowed revenge and led a marauding band of Apaches against settlers and the Army for the next three decades. Geronimo was eventually betrayed by Apache scouts and captured at Skeleton Canyon in 1886. The entire Chiricahua tribe was herded onto trains and shipped into exile to Florida. The Apaches were to be sent to St. Augustine but several Pensacola civic leaders, with dollar signs in their heads, convinced the government to hold Geronimo at Fort Pickens, the largest of the forts built to protect the Pensacola harbor but that had been vacant and decaying since the Civil War. The proud and famous Indian was thus reduced to tourist sideshow. As many as 459 gawkers visited on one day and the typical daily crowd was at least 20. Pensacola reaped the benefits of his imprisonment for 18 months. Geronimo continued his strange odyssey as a prisoner/curiosity, appearing at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair and in President Theodore Roosevelt's Inaugural Parade. The sad final third of his life ended with his death in 1909.

State Capitol

Tallahassee

1845



The first territorial state capitols were log structures, the last of which was torn down in 1839 for construction to begin on this brick building that was completed in 1845, months before Florida entered the Union as the 27th state. South Carolina architect Frank Milburn executed an Italian Renaissance makeover in 1902 with a lavish 136-foot high copper and glass dome. The large wings to the north and south ends, used as House and Senate chambers, came along in 1936 and 1947. By 1969 it was determined that a new building was needed to house the government of America's fastest growing state. Plans submitted by New York architect Edward Durell Stone calling for a 22-story, 331-foot tower, America's fourth state to utilize a tower treatment for its capitol, were approved and construction completed in 1977.

Fort Jefferson

Dry Tortugas

1847



Fort Jefferson is the largest masonry defensive structure in the United States, employing over 16 million bricks - and it was never finished. Engineers feared that Garden Key couldn't handle the weight of any more bricks and cannon so the Army stopped building in the 1870s. The brickwork is especially decorative for a military installation and boasts some 2,000 arches. Fort Jefferson's main use was as a prison camp beginning in the Civil War. The most notorious detainee was Samuel Mudd who set presidential assassin John Wilkes Booth's broken leg in the hours after Abraham Lincoln's shooting. Mudd's part in the murder plot is still undetermined; he was convicted of conspiracy but released from Fort Jefferson in 1869 by pardon of President Andrew Johnson. Now a national park, the fort's ruins, set against impossibly blue tropical waters, are among the most picturesque in America.

Gregory House

Torreya State Park

1849



Jason Gregory was the dominant planter in Calhoun County and he built a suitably grand Southern mansion on eight-foot high piers at Ocheese Landing to lift the house out of reach of the annual Apalachicola River floods. It was a popular rendezvous spot for Confederate officers during the Civil War but the conflict hit Gregory hard in the pocketbook. In 1873 he sold his 3,000 acres to pay taxes and moved to Gainesville. The bluffs of the Apalachicola across the river from the forgotten Gregory house were selected as a spot for one of Florida's first state parks during the New Deal - one of the world's rarest conifers, the small evergreen torreya grows here. The Neal Lumber Company donated the dilapidating husk and it was taken apart and carried across the Apalachicola on barges to be put back together with the original wooden pegs. The entire project required three years to complete, longer than it had taken Jason Gregory.

Gamble Mansion

Ellenton

1850



In 1842 Congress passed the ominous sounding Armed Occupation Act to populate the Florida wilderness. The deal was that anyone cultivating five acres for five years would get 160 free acres and one year's rations from the federal government. All that the Feds asked was that you be willing to provide militia service against the warring Seminole Indians. Robert Gamble was one who said, "Deal!" He arrived at the Manatee River in 1844 and began carving out one of the South's largest sugar plantations. Gamble parlayed his 160 acres into 3,500 and set his slaves to building this Greek Revival mansion from oyster shell-based tabby. The good times were brief, however, as the sugar market cratered and Gamble sold his estate in 1856. After the Civil War Confederate Secretary of State Judah P. Benjamin took refuge in the house before fleeing to the Bahamas. That brief stay proved fortuitous for the Gamble mansion. In 1925, with the tabby crumbling, the United Daughters of the Confederacy purchased the house and did a complete restoration as a memorial to Benjamin; it is now the only remaining antebellum plantation house in peninsular Florida.

Ernest Hemingway House

Key West
1851



Asa Tift probably thought he was famous enough for his house to become a museum. When Tift constructed this French Colonial manor house in the mid-19th century he was the biggest marine salvager in Key West, a big deal back then. But it did not earn national landmark status until 32-year old Ernest Hemingway and his wife Pauline Pfeiffer moved into the decaying estate in 1931 and fixed it up. The writer-adventurer created some of his best-loved works in the carriage house-turned studio. In between writign sessions were stints on safari in Africa and covering the Spanish Civil War that fueled those stories. Hemingway left for Cuba in 1939 ahead of his divorce and Pfeiffer remained until her death in 1951. After Hemingway's suicide a decade later the property was auctioned out of the family to become a private museum and Key West's biggest tourist draw.

Yulee Sugar Mill

Homosassa
1851



David Levy Yulee was the first United States senator to represent Florida after statehood in 1845; he was also the first Jew to serve in the nation's Upper Chamber. After losing a bid for re-election in 1851 he returned home to become the most influential businessman of his era. He started with the 5,000-acre Margarita Plantation to process sugarcane into molasses and rum. Next he set to work on a dream to link both Florida coasts by rail, chartering the Florida Railroad. Work began in 1855 and just weeks after Florida seceded from the Union in January 1861 the first train from Fernadina on the Atlantic Ocean chugged into Cedar Key on the Gulf of Mexico. During the war his plantation house was burned but Union troops left the sugar mill unscathed because they couldn't find it. Still, operations were never continued and after hostilities ended the "Father of Florida Railroads" spent nine months in federal prison, accused of aiding Confederate President Jefferson Davis's escape attempt. The machinery still seen in the stone ruins are testament to the sophistication of the engineering used to tame Florida's early wilderness.

Lloyd Depot

Lloyd
1858



This is the oldest brick railroad station in Florida and one of only three constructed in the state before the Civil War that still stands. It was constructed by the Pensacola and Georgia Railroad which built a depot in Tallahassee that is also still extant. The Lloyd Depot served faithfully until 1966 when the Seaboard Air-Line System stopped coming to town. The Gulf Wind Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society breathed new life into the building. It is now the community post office.

Silver Springs

Silver Springs
1878



Is there any object that says "Florida" more clearly than the glass-bottomed boat? In 1878 Hullam Jones created the first version by mounting a pane of glass on a dugout cypress canoe to better see the waters of the largest artesian spring in the world. Phillip Morrell used the concept on a rowboat so he could charge money for rides at Silver Springs and Florida had its first tourist attraction. For many years the land around the springs was privately owned with different concessionaires offering varying themes on the rides. Hollywood brought *Tarzan the Ape Man* to Silver Springs in the 1930s and Lloyd Bridges battled underwater bad guys in television's *Sea Hunt* for several years. The American Broadcasting Company gobbled up much of the land around the headwaters in the 1960s and started commercializing the area at the same time the springs were being declared a National Natural Landmark. The safaris and water parks had run their course by the early 2000s and in 2013 Silver Springs became part of the Florida state park system.

DeLand Hall

DeLand

1884



In 1876 Henry DeLand was 42 years old and rich in New York from manufacturing baking soda when he became Florida-curious. His brother-in-law was living in some place called Persimmon Hollow and DeLand wanted to see what that was all about. He liked it enough to start buying land and set out to create the "Athens of Florida." He built a hotel and gave land for a church. He built the courthouse and a grand tree-lined boulevard. In 1883 he founded DeLand Academy which became John B. Stetson University when he got his friend, the famous hat-maker, to throw in money. It is Florida's oldest private college and DeLand Hall is the oldest educational building in continuous use in the state. Florida was gripped by The Big Freeze of 1894-95 and DeLand had promised to cover any and all losses from citrus growers who moved to his town. Sadly, Henry left his Athens and moved back to New York to run a chemical company to pay off all his obligations, which he managed to do before dying in 1908.

Seminole Lodge

Fort Myers

1886



In 1885, when the population was about 349, Thomas Alva Edison came to town on a hunt for the ideal filament for his incandescent light bulb. He believed the answer might be in the bamboo that grew in abundance along the Caloosahatchee River. It wasn't but Edison stayed the next 45 winters anyway and convinced his friend Henry Ford to move into a bungalow across the street known as The Mangoes. Edison started a botanical garden on his property in a quest to produce synthetic rubber. His research team conducted over 500,000 tests on more than one thousand plants from around the world but was never able to find a commercially viable latex substitute. The Edison Botanical Research Laboratory remains as do the rows of majestic Royal Palms the Wizard of Menlo Park planted around town that gave Fort Myers its enduring nickname, "City of Palms." The Edison-Ford Winter Estates on McGregor Boulevard opened for public tours in 1947 and the co-joined property is now one of the most popular historic home sites in America.

Ybor Building

Tampa
1886



Vicente Martinez-Ybor was 67 years old and had been selling his popular Prince of Wales brand cigars for nearly 30 years in 1885 when he decided to uproot his business in Key West. He fielded several offers from emerging towns around the Gulf of Mexico but extracted his best deal from Tampa. He built a wooden factory and started creating a company town on 40 acres of scrubland. A year later this imposing three-story brick factory was in operation. The world's largest cigar factory was literally surrounded by sand streets and not much else. To keep his work force in Ybor City, where cigar rollers carried guns to get past the alligators and bears in the streets, Martinez-Ybor built small houses called casitas that he sold at cost. Tampa counted 3,000 people when it annexed Ybor City in 1887; duties collected at its port were less than \$1000 a year. So many cigar makers followed Martinez-Ybor that within a decade the total was \$625,000. At its peak in the 1920s "Cigar City" was producing 500 million smokes a year.

Hotel Ponce de Leon

St. Augustine
1887



This is the building on which Henry Morrison Flagler, a co-founder of Standard Oil, launched his Florida empire, establishing St. Augustine as a fashionable resort destination for travelers on his Florida East Coast Railway. Flagler borrowed the construction techniques his friend Franklin Smith used in his house across the street and the hotel became the first major building in America to be crafted using poured concrete. He hired Thomas Hastings and John M. Carrere, who would later design some of the country's most elegant classical buildings, for their first major commission. They delivered a pioneering Moorish-style palace with tall spires, turrets and wide, red-tiled roofs. Louis Comfort Tiffany, fresh off his interior redesign of the White House, provided much of the interior elements that include Tiffany stained glass, imported marble and carved oak. Thomas Edison, a Flagler friend, made sure the entire hotel was wired for electricity when it greeted the first guests in 1887. In 1968 the hotel became the centerpiece of the newly-established Flagler College.

Little White House

Key West
1890



In an interview in 1955 Harry Truman answered a question about what he did to relax by saying, "Well, my only relaxation is to work." So when he was suffering from exhaustion in 1946 and came to Key West to "rest" there was not much question that his quarters would become a working version of the Washington White House. Other presidents had come to Key West before, staying in the converted officer's quarters, but Truman was the one who was most identified with the building. He spent 175 days of his seven-year presidency here. Despite his protestations to the contrary there were fishing trips and famous

late-night poker games in between the presidential memos. The Little White House has been open for tours since 1991 but the occasional President or government dignitary will still show up for a bit of tropical rest and relaxation.

The Barnacle

Coconut Grove
1891



The Barnacle is one of the last places to experience Miami as it was before transforming into a major international metropolis. Ralph Munroe was leading the life of a comfortable 19th century New Yorker, propped up from the money his family had from his grandfather's invention of the lead pencil in 1812. Munroe bought his first sailboat at the age of 10 for \$2.00 and his passion never left the sea. He learned about Biscayne Bay from a chance meeting with Miami co-founder William Brickell on a yacht off the coast of Staten Island in 1874. After several trips Munroe was a permanent Florida resident, plunking down \$400 and once of his yachts (valued at another \$400) for 40 acres of bayfront property in 1886. The next year he founded the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club. Through the years Commodore Munroe filled many of the slips himself, designing 56 yachts. On land he built his house only after his boathouse, calling it "The Barnacle" for the arthropods that tend to attach themselves to more important creatures and objects. Barnacles are tough hombres once entrenched and during the Great Miami Hurricane of 1926 the boathouse was destroyed but the house, now an historic park, stood strong.

Tampa Bay Hotel

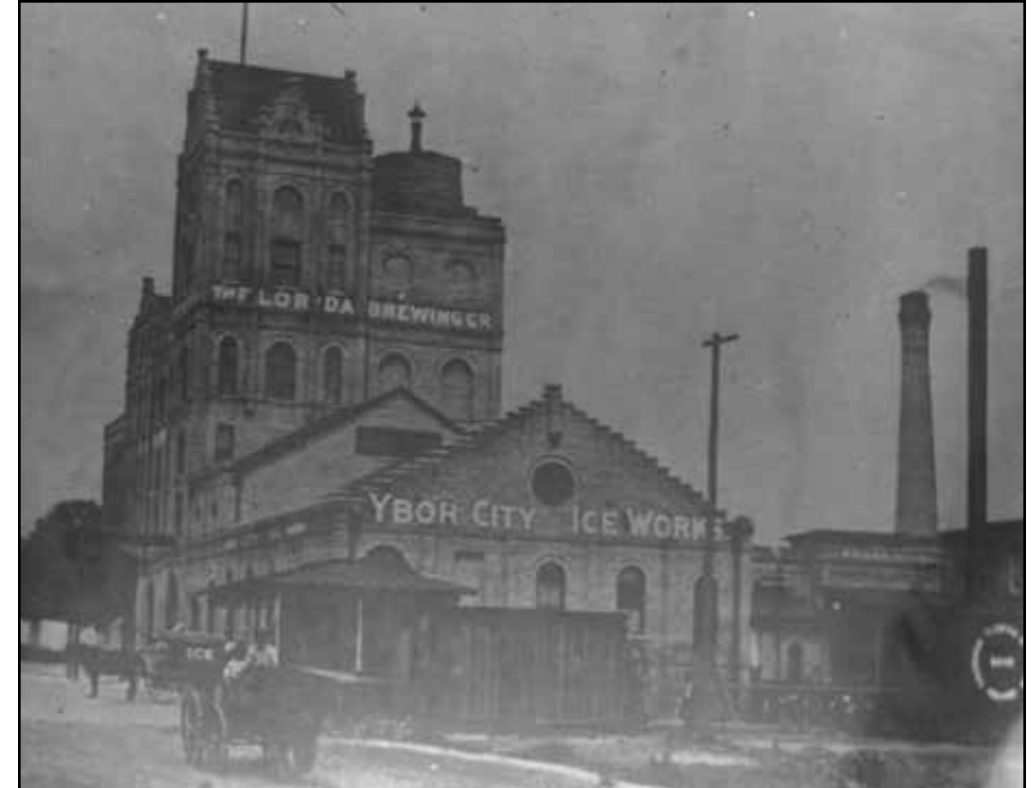
Tampa
1891



After the Civil War Henry Bradley Plant bought several ruined railroads at foreclosure sales and by 1882 he was ready to begin a push across Florida towards the prize of Tampa's deepwater harbor. Plant would build eight hotels along his railroad line, including the Port Tampa Inn on stilts in the bay. For his signature property Plant sunk almost \$3 million into the Tampa Bay Hotel. The 511-room guest house covered six acres by itself and another 21 buildings were scattered around the grounds. John Wood provided an exotic Moorish Revival design to appeal to globe-trotting Victorian travelers of the day. When they arrived visitors would find the first elevator, finished in polished Cuban mahogany, installed in Florida and the first guest rooms to have electric lights and telephones. Henry Plant died in 1899, and his heirs sold the facilities to the City in 1904. The hotel closed in 1930 and has been leased to the University of Tampa ever since. In the 1990s the main building received a meticulous restoration, including returning the hotel's six minarets, four cupolas and three domes to their original stainless steel state.

Florida Brewing Company

Tampa
1897



Vincente Martinez Ybor and Edward Manara opened Florida's first brewery in 1897 and produced the Sunshine State's only beer - as many as 80,000 barrels a year at its peak - until 1913. At 82 feet, the Florida Brewing Company was the tallest building ever constructed in the state in the 19th century. Florida Brewing shipped more beer to Cuba than any other U.S. brewer. In Florida, Prohibition was, as Bill Murray's Peter Venkman put it in *Ghostbusters*, "more of a guideline than a rule." But Ybor's son Salvador did jail time for selling illegal beer when he was in charge in the 1920s. The brewery survived Prohibition but couldn't make it past the American embargo on post-Revolutionary Cuba and shut down in 1961. The building lives on as a refurbished law office, still the tallest building in Ybor City.

Wesley House

Freeport

1897



This property on the south shore of Tucker Bayou was home to the Wesley Lumber Company during Florida's first timber boom prior to World War I. In addition to a sawmill, planer mill and dry kiln, there was a cluster of about 20 company-owned homes where the workers lived. A dock extended into Tucker Bayou where barges were loaded with freshly milled pine and cypress boards. William Henry Wesley built a mansion home at his mill in 1895, said to be modeled after an antebellum plantation house where he was given shelter on his return from the Civil War. The 5,500 square-foot house started a design trend that influenced the entire Florida Panhandle at the time. Its two stories, divided by a central hallway on both floors, was ideal for allowing cooling breezes to blow through the house. In 1972, Ray Milland met his doom on film at Eden Gardens State Park as a wealthy despoiler of nature savaged by a herd of murderous frogs. Many of the 500 frogs and 100 giant South American toads escaped onto the estate after shooting on *Frogs* wrapped.

Jacksonville Public Library

Jacksonville

1902



After selling his U.S. Steel company for \$400 million and becoming the world's richest man, Scottish-born industrialist set out to give away all his money. One of his pet projects was public libraries. He funded over 2,500 of them around the world, although not every community greeted Carnegie's largesse with open arms. In a citywide referendum the Jacksonville citizenry narrowly voted to accept a \$55,000 Carnegie grant to erect a library in 1902. The Jacksonville money was the most awarded by Carnegie in the Sunshine State, where ten public libraries were built; six still survive. Henry John Klutho won a design competition with this splendidly proportioned Neoclassical building. The library is fronted by a quartet of fluted Corinthian columns and if you look closely you can see the faces of Aristotle, Plato and Shakespeare nestled in the capitals. The limestone and copper building served as the town's main library until 1965.

Whitehall

Palm Beach

1902



There was not much time left in America's Gilded Age when Henry Morrison Flagler conceived Whitehall. The "brains" behind John Rockefeller's Standard Oil, Flagler had already done much to establish Palm Beach as a symbol of wealth with his hotels and Florida East Coast Railway. Now he wanted a high society gift for his third wife, Mary Lily Kenan, that would be right at home in Newport or on New York City's Fifth Avenue. He retained architects John Carrère and Thomas Hastings, who had a long list of Beaux Arts landmarks on their resume, and set them to work. When Whitehall was ready the *New York Herald* gushed that its 75 rooms were "... more wonderful than any palace in Europe, grander and more magnificent than any other private dwelling in the world." Henry Flagler fell down a flight of marble steps in Whitehall and died in 1913 at the age of 83. The mansion never recovered, either. It was soon in the hands of investors who saddled the property with an 11-story hotel and the whole thing faced the wrecking ball in 1959 before a Flagler granddaughter saved the property as a museum.

Mary McLeod Bethune Home

Daytona Beach

1904



Mary McLeod Bethune was a South Carolinian, the fifteenth of seventeen children born to former slaves in 1875. She seized a rare chance at an education by training to be a missionary. Instead she wound up teaching stateside and came to Daytona Beach in 1904 to start the Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute for Negro Girls with a class of five. In 1923 Bethune's school merged with the all-boys Cookman Institute of Jacksonville and this frame house on campus was purchased for her use. She was living here when the school was accredited as Bethune-Cookman College in 1931 and Mary Bethune became the first Black woman college president. She advised several United States presidents on rights for Black Americans and founded the National Council of Negro Woman. The house is maintained as it was at the time of her death in 1955, including the furnishings.

Columbia Restaurant

Tampa
1905



Casimiro Hernandez opened the oldest restaurant in Florida and the largest Spanish restaurant in the world in 1905. It was a small cafe then, whipping up Cuban sandwiches and Cuban coffee for Ybor City's hungry cigar makers. Business boomed and the restaurant expanded. The Don Quixote Room became Tampa's first air-conditioned dining room. When the cigar trade withered the family added music and flamenco dancing and a showroom for live performances. As the Columbia passed its 100th birthday, still in the hands of the Hernandez Gonzmart family, the 15 lavish rooms in the dining complex consumed an entire block with seating for 1,700.

Sponge Exchange

Tarpon Springs
1908



North of Tampa Bay, the Gulf of Mexico waters are one of the few places where natural sponges for commercial use are found in abundance. John Cheyney was the first to realize this in the 1890s and started sponge fishing with a long pole and a glass-bottomed bucket to spot his quarry. In 1905 a Greek immigrant, John Cocoris, arrived in town and observed the sponge fishing operation. Let me show you how this is really done, he said and introduced Tarpon Springs to sponge diving. Soon fellow Greeks were pouring into the area and the western coast of Florida was the Sponge Capital of the World. The Sponge Exchange was built to facilitate storage and auctions. In the 1930s the sponge crop was crippled by a blight about the same time synthetic sponges were hitting the market. You can still buy sponges at the Exchange today but the building has been repurposed as a collection of Grecian-inspired eateries and shops.

Olustee Monument

Olustee
1912



Union General Truman A. Seymour left Hilton Head, South Carolina in February 1864 on a mission to cut the Confederate supply line from central Florida and, not secondarily, induce Unionists in east Florida to organize a loyal state government. The landing on February 7 at Jacksonville was met with no resistance. The defense of Florida was placed in the hands of General Joseph Finegan who prepared to stop the Union's westward movement at Olustee, where advancing troops were confronted with only a narrow passage between a lake, Ocean Pond, and an impassable swamp. The Union force of 5,500 men and 16 cannon was cut off here by an equal number of Confederate forces in

the largest Civil War battle in Florida. Finnegan's defenders inflicted heavy losses in driving back the United States army, which was never to venture out into Florida in significant force again. After 15 years of cajoling the United Daughters of the Confederacy dedicated the Sunshine State's first historical monument here in 1912.

Overseas Railroad

Florida Keys
1912



Key West was Florida's largest city until 1900. It was reachable only by boat and most folks probably figured that would always be the case. But Key West's deepwater port, the closest to the new Panama Canal, was too tempting to ignore. Henry Flagler, who had opened South Florida with his Florida East Coast Railway, announced plans to keep going in 1905. The project was naturally branded "Flagler's Folly." It would take 4,000 workers and numerous engineering innovations but Flagler, \$50 million lighter in the wallet, would ride his private railcar into Key West just seven years later. Without exaggeration, the Overseas Railroad was acclaimed the "Eighth Wonder of the World." The Storm of the Century in 1935 destroyed 40 of the 128 miles of track and the bankrupt railroad sold the roadbed and remaining bridges to the State of Florida to create the Overseas Highway, one of the greatest scenic drives in America.

Naval Air Station

Pensacola

1914



The United States armed forces bought its first airplane, a Wright Brothers Model A Military Flyer in 1909. Four years later Captain Washington Irving Chambers recommended that a naval aviation training station be established in Pensacola and the city has been synonymous with navy flying ever since. The area's naval connections stretch back to the first days of the Florida territory in the United States in 1820. Pensacola's signature squadron, the precision-flying Blue Angels team, organized in 1946. Today, 55 buildings of the original Pensacola Naval Air Station, including the first lighthouse built by the United States on the Florida coast, are gathered into a historic district.

Norman Studios

Jacksonville

1916



Jacksonville was Hollywood before Hollywood. The nascent motion picture industry of the early 1900s clustered around New York City. Natural light was critical and when the cold weather arrived film companies had no interest in waiting until spring to start shooting again. So south they came. The first movie studio opened in Jacksonville in 1908 and more than 30 followed. Today there is only one silent film studio remaining in the "Winter Film Capital of the World" - Norman Studios. Richard Norman opened his film compound in 1916 and soon found a niche with "race films" - movies with all-Black casts made for Black audiences. Norman wrote and directed eight feature length movies until he shuttered the studio with the coming of talkies in 1928. *The Flying Ace*, about a fighter pilot coming home to work as a railroad detective, is the only one to survive. The studio itself would not exist if the dilapidated buildings had not been identified as a lost link to Jacksonville's Golden Age of Film and rescued as a significant cultural resource in the early 2000s.

Post Office

St. Petersburg
1917



When St. Petersburg was slated to get a new post office the typical federal treatment was planned with a monumental temple resting atop a grand flight of stairs. Postmaster Roy Hanna had his own ideas. His vision involved a more user-friendly building of a single story at street level more in line with the casual Florida lifestyle. Furthermore, Hanna wanted a loggia open on three sides to give customers access to the postal lockboxes all the time. America's first open-air post office became a reality after Hanna's ideas were formalized by architect George W. Stuart. Stuart's circuitous path to St. Petersburg began in Glasgow, Scotland where he was born in 1856. The Stuart family moved to Ontario and after a college education and four years as an architect's apprentice George found himself fighting the Sioux and Blackfeet in Canada's last Indian War. He survived being shot with an arrow in the neck and resumed his architectural career in Winnipeg, Dallas, Atlanta and eventually St. Petersburg. Look up to see a colorful frieze of Mediterranean tiles and whimsical capitals with dolphins and shells on the columns of the arcaded loggia.

Pershing Highway

Tiger Bay State Forest
1917



Daytona, destined to be the speed capital of the world, got its first automobile in 1903 and the town speed limit was raised from 6 mph to 8 mph. Not that anyone was going faster on the deep sand roads. In 1917 bricks began being laid around DeLand, first to Lake Helen and then towards Daytona, one of Florida's first modern highways. In December 1918, to honor America's leader returning from victory in World War I, the road was named the John Pershing Highway. New Smyrna was connected and it became the Pershing Triangle. The brick highway was a marvel but only wide enough for a single Model T. As cars grew larger in the 1920s, pea gravel concrete was added to the sides. With the construction of U.S. 92 the road was abandoned in the 1940s. It was paved over in places and overgrown in others. Wildfires in the 1990s uncovered stretches of intact brick roadway that were cleaned up to offer one of Florida's most historic hiking trails.

Everglades Club

Palm Beach

1919



Isaac Singer made so much money off inventing the sewing machine that his 24 children could live a life of luxury. Paris, #22, spent his inheritance during World War I building hospitals in Europe and he decided to build a similar Touchstone Convalescent Club in Palm Beach. He enlisted his house guest Addison Mizner to help him but the war ended. Singer decided to convert the space to a private club, serving as sole arbiter of who got in. Mizner borrowed wrought ironwork and tile ideas from Spain and arched windows and loggias from Italy to create what became known as the "Palm Beach style" and it was guaranteed that monied South Florida would never look like Newport, Rhode Island or Boston's Beacon Hill. Mizner went on to become the quintessential "society architect" of Florida's land boom days and the Everglades Club continues as the poster child for exclusive Miami clubs.

Hialeah Park

Hialeah

1922



Pari-mutuel wagering was legalized in Florida in 1921 and Missouri cattleman James Bright and flying machine pioneer Glenn Curtiss wasted no time in building a racing facility for their new development of Hialeah. The next year America's first pari-mutuel greyhound track was taking bets. Then the founders started the Miami Jockey Club and thoroughbred racing left the gate at Hialeah on January 15, 1925. Punters could also lose their money at the country's first jai alai fronton on the grounds. Hialeah was left reeling by the Miami Hurricane of 1926 but Philadelphia horseman Joseph Widener bought the property and left for a tour of leading race tracks in Europe and North America with architect Lester Geisler in tow for inspiration. When Geisler's work was done Hialeah, with the country's first turf course, was acclaimed as "the most beautiful racetrack in the world." It was hard to argue with 10,000 royal palm trees and 100,000 flowering plants gracing the property. Widener imported 20 flamingos from Cuba and gave them a home on the infield lake. The flamingos became a beloved Florida symbol and Hialeah was declared an official bird sanctuary by the Audubon Society. The greatest horses and the most glamorous horse players beat a path to Hialeah until thoroughbred racing ended in 2001. The iconic track lives on as a casino with an occasional quarter-horse race.