

St. Augustine Timeline

Important Historical Events for the Nation's Oldest City

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- 10,000 B.C.
(12,000 BPE) At the end of the last Ice Age, humans first inhabit Florida.
- A.D. 700-
1600s Native group that the Spanish will call "Timucua" lives in northeast Florida.
- 1513 Juan Ponce de León explores Florida, discovers Gulf Stream.
- 1519 Spain's interest shifts to Gulf coast of Florida, closer to the silver deposits in Mexico.
- 1526 Short-lived Spanish settlement of San Miguel de Gualdape on Sapelo Sound, Georgia; settlers build houses and church.
- 1559-61 Pensacola settlement attempted by Spain, survives for a 1½ years.
- 1564 French settlers led by Rene de Laudonnière establish Fort Caroline on St. Johns River.
- 1565
Sept. 8: Pedro Menéndez de Avilés founds St. Augustine.
Sept. 20: Menéndez captures Fort Caroline, renames it Fort San Mateo.
- Sept. 29 &
Oct. 12: At Matanzas Inlet Menéndez captures and kills shipwrecked Frenchmen from Fort Caroline, eliminating French presence in North America.
- 1566 Spanish establish Santa Elena as La Florida's capital on Parris Island, S.C.
- 1566-1572/73 Town of St. Augustine is located on Anastasia Island.
- 1570 Spanish crown begins financial support for Florida colony, which will sustain St. Augustine for 2 ½ centuries.
- 1572/73 St. Augustine moves from Anastasia Island to mainland.
- 1573 Franciscan missionary friars arrive in La Florida.
- Circa 1573* Mission Nombre de Dios established.
- 1574 Pedro Menéndez dies in Santander, Spain.

- 1576 Residents of Santa Elena (capital of La Florida located on Parris Island, S.C.) are evacuated to St. Augustine, resulting in sudden population surge.
- 1577 St. Augustine becomes capital of Florida (for next 244 years: 1577-1821).
- 1580 Spanish discover coquina stone on Anastasia Island.
- 1586 St. Augustine is sacked and burned by the English freebooter Francis Drake.
- 1587 Santa Elena (reoccupied in 1577) is abandoned for second and final time. Residents relocate to St. Augustine and other Spanish areas.
- 1597 Native Americans in Guale (Georgia coast) and in Cape Canaveral area rebel against Spanish presence.
- 1598 Governor Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo reports he has assured that the city of St. Augustine is laid out according to and complies with requirements of Spanish royal ordinance of 1573 for establishing towns.
- 1599 Fire burns half of St. Augustine, including Franciscan monastery. Hurricane destroys part of town.
- 1602 Inquiry held by Spanish crown about whether to maintain St. Augustine.
- 1603 Enslaved blacks escape from St. Augustine to Indian town in Cape Canaveral area.
- 1606 Bishop Juan de las Cabezas Altamirano reports 3,000 Indians converted to Christianity.
- 1607 English found Jamestown settlement.
- 1608 Governor receives royal decision that St. Augustine will not be dismantled.
- 1608 Franciscans begin establishing missions to the west of St. Augustine.
- 1668 English pirates led by Robert Searles (a.k.a. John Davies) loot and burn St. Augustine.
- 1670 English begin settlement of South Carolina colony. English presence becomes a continuing threat to St. Augustine.
- 1672 Spanish begin building Castillo de San Marcos in response to the pirate threat, to English founding of Carolina, and as part of defensive upgrades throughout Spanish America..
- 1683 & 1686 Pirates land near St. Augustine, but are repelled before they can attack: English corsairs in 1683; French pirates led by Nicholas Grammont in 1686.

- 1689 Construction of private coquina houses in St. Augustine begins.
- 1693 Spanish king's decree offers sanctuary and possible freedom to slaves in English colonies who flee to Florida.
- 1695 Castillo de San Marcos construction complete. Spanish begin first stone seawall from Castillo to plaza.
- 1702 English invaders from Carolina lay siege to Castillo for 52 days. English are not successful, but destroy the town as they withdraw.
- 1704-05 Cubo Line earthwork is built from Castillo to San Sebastian River to strengthen the city's defenses.
- 1706 The palisaded Hornabeque Line is built from Mission Nombre de Dios to San Sebastian River to secure farming area for mission Indian refugees.
- 1718-19 Rosario Line earthwork is constructed at city's west and south limits.
- 1726 Free black Francisco Menéndez is appointed captain of St. Augustine's slave militia.
- 1733 James Oglethorpe leads founding of British colony of Georgia.
- 1738 Florida Governor Manuel de Montiano establishes the town of Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose for free blacks. Francisco Menéndez is appointed captain of Mose's free black militia. Fort built at Mose village in 1739.
- 1740 British invaders from Georgia and South Carolina commanded by General James Oglethorpe arrive, destroy Fort Mose and bombard St. Augustine for 31 days. Mose residents retreat to St. Augustine.
- 1740-42 Fort Matanzas is built 14 miles south of town.
- 1742 Spanish from Florida retaliate for 1740 siege with (unsuccessful) attack at St. Simon's Island, Georgia.
- 1752 Fort Mose is rebuilt. Governor orders free blacks to re-populate the village after living in St. Augustine for 12 years.
- 1763 Great Britain receives Florida by Treaty of Paris at conclusion of Seven Years' War. Spanish residents leave for Cuba and Mexico. British divide Florida into two colonies: East and West Florida. Entire Atlantic coast of North America is now in British control
- 1768 Minorcans, Greeks and Italians arrive to work Andrew Turnbull's plantation at New Smyrna.

- 1774 King's Road is built from New Smyrna to Georgia-Florida border
- 1776-83 American Revolution—East Florida remains loyal to British crown. St. Augustine fills with refugees from the rebelling colonies
- 1777 Six hundred Minorcans, Greeks and Italians relocate to St. Augustine from Turnbull's plantation.
- 1780 Thomas Heyward, Jr., Arthur Middleton, and Edward Rutledge, signers of the Declaration of Independence, are among American rebels held prisoner in St. Augustine.
- 1783-84 Second Treaty of Paris, ending the American Revolution, returns Florida to Spain. Majority of East Florida's British residents leave, but many remain.
- 1790 Spanish slave sanctuary policy ends.
- 1791 Revolution in Haiti (Saint-Domingue) begins. Planters and their slaves flee to Florida and other areas of southeast.
- 1792 Construction begins on new Roman Catholic parish church for St. Augustine (now the Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine).
- 1794-95 Georgians invade Spanish Florida. Rural residents seek refuge in St. Augustine.
- 1796-1801 General Jorge Biassou, black chieftain from Hispaniola, heads auxiliary Spanish troops sent to protect East Florida.
- 1808 City Gate coquina pillars are built. Cubo Line is rebuilt.
- 1812-14 In the Patriot War, Americans aided by U.S. troops invade East Florida. Patriots occupy Fernandina and most of East Florida, surround but do not occupy St. Augustine. St. Augustine fills with refugees from countryside.
- 1812
Sept. Spanish Florida free black militia ambush occupying Patriot troops at Twelve Mile Swamp, which ends Patriots' blockade of St. Augustine
- 1813 Public square renamed Plaza de la Constitución to commemorate Spain's Constitution of 1812. Monument to Spanish Constitution completed in Jan. 1814.
- 1821 East and West Florida join the United States as a single U.S. territory.
- 1823 Legislative Council of Florida meets in St. Augustine.
- 1823 Treaty of Moultrie Creek signed near St. Augustine; Seminoles agree to relocate to central Florida.
- 1825 Castillo de San Marcos is renamed Fort Marion for Revolutionary War hero Francis Marion.

- 1832 St. Augustine residents for first time address preserving historic buildings; request that Congress allocate funds to preserve fortress as a relic of history.
- 1835 Second Seminole War begins. Old Spanish-period defense works are reinforced. Rural residents flee to St. Augustine. U.S. Army and volunteers arrive in Florida and St. Augustine
- 1837 Osceola and other Seminoles are captured and imprisoned in Fort Marion.
- 1842 U.S. Army declares Second Seminole War is ended. Some Seminoles remain in south Florida.
- 1845 Florida becomes 27th state.
- 1847-53 Father Félix Varela, called “the founder of Cuban nationalism,” returns to live in St. Augustine, his boyhood home, until his death.
- 1858 Bishop of the Vicariate of Florida Augustin Verot inaugurates a program to establish schools and churches throughout the state.
- 1861 Civil War begins. Florida secedes from United States on January 10. St. Augustine’s local militia had already taken over Fort Marion on Jan. 7.
- 1862 St. Augustine surrenders peacefully to U.S. forces and remains under Union control throughout Civil War.
- 1863 Emancipation Proclamation takes effect in St Augustine.
- 1865 Civil War ends.
- 1865 St. Augustine is headquarters for the military occupation of Florida during Reconstruction. Blacks (males only) vote and hold public office for the first time.
- 1866 Roman Catholic Sisters of St. Joseph arrive from France and open schools for freedmen and for white and black children.
- 1870 Catholic Diocese of St. Augustine is established; Augustin Verot is first bishop.
- 1872 Free Public Library is established on Aviles Street.
- 1874 Current lighthouse completed.
- 1875-78 Indians from the Kiowa, Comanche, Cheyenne, Caddo and Arapaho tribes are imprisoned in Fort Marion.
- 1883 St. Augustine Historical Society is founded.
- 1883 Railroad service arrives in St. Augustine, connecting city with points north.
- 1884 Standard Oil magnate Henry Morrison Flagler visits St. Augustine for first time.

- 1885 Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind opens.
- 1886-87 Apache Indians are imprisoned in Fort Marion.
- 1887 Casa Monica Hotel opens and soon renamed Cordova Hotel.
- 1888 Ponce de Leon Hotel opens, built by Henry M. Flagler.
- 1889 Alcazar Hotel opens, built by Henry Flagler.
- 1892 José Martí, rallying for Cuban independence, visits St. Augustine.
- 1898 Spanish-American War; Cuba becomes independent nation.
- 1909 Town of Hastings is incorporated.
- 1914 Fire destroys five blocks of downtown St. Augustine, including the Historical Society's first museum.
- 1914-1918 World War I.
- 1915-1935 St. Augustine Historical Society operates Castillo de San Marcos for War Dept.
- 1917 Dixie Highway is completed through St. Johns County.
- 1918 Florida Memorial College relocates from Jacksonville to St. Augustine.
- 1920s Florida's real estate boom sweeps the state. Davis Shores is created by filling marshland on Anastasia Island.
- 1924 Fort Marion (including City Gate) and Fort Matanzas are declared National Monuments.
- 1927 Florida real estate boom crashes. Bridge of Lions, North River Bridge, Matanzas Inlet Bridge open.
- 1936 City Commission initiates study of historic preservation program in city. Results in establishment of St. Augustine Historical Preservation and Restoration Association.
- 1940 Pier, boardwalk and hotel open at St. Augustine Beach to attract tourists.
- 1941-45 World War II.
- 1942 Coast Guard establishes training school in St. Augustine. German submarines attack shipping along Florida coast; blackouts are enacted and activities on barrier islands are restricted.
- 1942 Fort Marion is returned to its original name, Castillo de San Marcos.

- 1947 Lightner Museum established in the former Alcazar Hotel.
- 1959 The historic preservation movement is revived with the establishment of St. Augustine Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission (later reorganized as Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board [HSAPB], a Florida state agency).
- 1959 Town of St. Augustine Beach is incorporated.
- 1962 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) files integration suit against St. Johns County School Board.
- 1964 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Andrew Young, and other civil-rights activists assist local leaders in St. Augustine in marches, sit-ins and swim-ins.
- 1965 St. Augustine commemorates its 400th anniversary.
- 1968 Flagler College opens in the former Ponce de Leon Hotel.
- 1970-71 Integration plan for St. Johns County public schools is accepted.
- 1973 St. Augustine's City Hall moves to former Alcazar Hotel.
- 1986 City of St. Augustine adopts first archaeological ordinance.
- 1997 State of Florida abolishes Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board; City of St. Augustine assumes control of HSAPB's historic properties.
- 2001 King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia of Spain visit St. Augustine.
- 2005-2011 Bridge of Lions is restored.