

FLORIDA

HISTORY

Florida has flown the flags of Spain, Britain and the United States. Native nations, soldiers, farmers and railroad builders all shaped it.

The First Peoples

People have lived in Florida for more than 12,000 years. The Timucua lived in the north and the Apalachee in the Panhandle. Both grew corn, beans and squash. The Calusa ruled the southwest coast. They did not farm. They fished with nets and built towns on huge mounds of shells.



Spanish Florida

Spain claimed Florida in 1513. The Calusa fought the newcomers. In 1565, Pedro Menéndez founded St. Augustine. Spanish priests built **missions** among the Timucua and Apalachee. Between 1702 and 1704, English soldiers from Carolina and their Creek allies destroyed most of the missions. Sickness from Europe and these wars killed most of Florida's first peoples. Spain promised freedom to people who escaped slavery in the English colonies. In 1738 those who came built Fort Mose, a town of free Black families near St. Augustine.

Three Flags

Britain took Florida in 1763, and Spain got it back in 1783. Creek people moved south into Florida and became known as the Seminoles. In 1818, General Andrew Jackson led American troops into Florida and fought the Seminoles. Spain agreed to give Florida to the United States in an 1819 **treaty**. Florida became an American **territory**, and Tallahassee became its capital in 1824.

The Seminole Wars

An 1823 treaty moved the Seminoles onto land in central Florida. An 1832 treaty said they must move west of the Mississippi River. Many refused. In December 1835, Seminole warriors attacked about 110 soldiers led by Major Francis Dade and killed all but three. The Second Seminole War lasted until 1842. More than 3,000 Seminoles were moved to what is now Oklahoma, and a few hundred stayed in the Everglades. Two Native nations, the Seminole Tribe and the Miccosukee Tribe, have their governments in Florida today.

Statehood and the Civil War

Florida became the 27th state on March 3, 1845. Cotton **plantations** spread across north Florida. Enslaved people did the work on them. Florida left the Union in 1861 and joined the Confederacy. Confederate troops won the Battle of Olustee in 1864. The Union won the war in 1865, and slavery ended in Florida that year.



Building Florida

After the war, settlers planted orange groves and raised cattle. Henry Plant built a railroad to Tampa in 1884. Henry Flagler built one down the east coast. It reached Miami in 1896 and Key West in 1912. Both men built big hotels, and visitors came for the winter sun. Later, air conditioning made summers easier, and millions of people moved in.

FLORIDA THROUGH TIME



PEOPLE TO KNOW

Osceola	Seminole leader in the 1830s war.
Henry Flagler	Built the east coast railroad.
Julia Tuttle	Got the railroad brought to Miami.
Mary McLeod Bethune	Started a school in Daytona Beach.
Zora Neale Hurston	Writer who grew up in Eatonville.

WORDS TO KNOW

mission	a settlement built around a church
treaty	a written agreement between nations
territory	land run by the United States that is not yet a state
plantation	a large farm with one main crop