

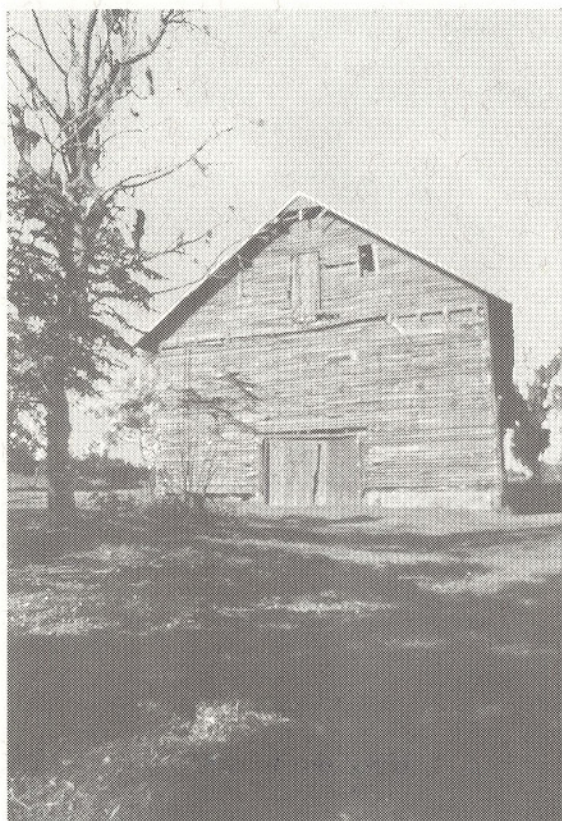
If you are interested in learning more about public access and interpretation for Florida's privately owned historical buildings, please contact:

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Division of Historical Resources
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250
(850)487-2299
FAX (850)414-2207
<http://www.flheritage.com>

For information on National Register status and benefits, please contact:

Bureau of Historic Preservation
(850)487-2333
also at the address above.

PUBLIC ACCESS AND INTERPRETATION FOR FLORIDA'S PRIVATELY OWNED HISTORIC BUILDINGS



This historic tobacco barn and others like it found throughout the Panhandle are reminiscent of the days when tobacco was a major North Florida business.

Division of Historical Resources
Florida Department of State
Katherine Harris, Secretary of State

People can gain a better sense of Florida's history by visiting its wealth of historic standing structures located across the diverse landscape. While some of the most important historic buildings are located on public land, most are in private ownership. Privately owned buildings, however, can be made accessible to the public and enjoyed by everyone in a variety of ways that are compatible with private ownership.

Why give public access to historical structures on private property?

The variety of historic buildings in Florida range in type from frame vernacular and bungalow residences to Mediterranean Revival commercial buildings. Each connects us to an earlier time and to a way of life that is

different than ours; one that we are curious about, and one that can help us understand our shared heritage.

Providing public access to historic sites adds character and interest to our towns and cities. Such sites contribute to economic vitality, civic pride, and revitalization of older town centers, as well as providing many other public benefits. Most important, they provide a link between the present and the past, a way to understand how things came to be, and a chance to consider how we would like our communities to grow in the future. For property owners, providing public access can contribute to an appreciation of a community's heritage, can support local tourism, and can even provide tax benefits for sites listed on the Nation Register of Historic Places.



This historic home in Tarpon Springs is periodically opened to the public.



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What are some of the ways in which the public might access a privately owned historic structure?

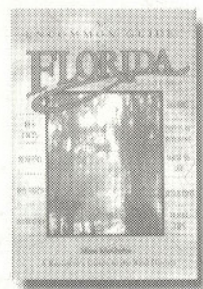
Historic buildings represent a rich variety of architectural styles, historical periods, uses, and ownership arrangements. Similarly, there are many kinds of public access. Not all kinds of access are appropriate for a particular building. Some options are listed here.

Open House Days

Public access to a historic home can be planned to accommodate an owner. Many private owners enjoy opening their historic homes on a monthly basis. Others prefer less frequent visits and open their homes to visitors for seasonal events. Open house days are often organized by local historical societies or community groups. An admission is sometimes charged to benefit charitable organizations. Often, a number of buildings in a community are open on the same day.

Published Materials

Whether or not private historic buildings are opened to the public, they can be interpreted through a wide variety of published materials like brochures, pamphlets, walking guides, driving guides, historical narratives, books, and newspaper and magazine articles.



Historical Walking Tours

Walking tours are often organized by historical societies, historic preservation groups, or by local tour businesses. If there are a number of buildings located in an area,

such as within a historic district, they can be organized in a single tour. Other historic features such as streetscapes, parks, cemeteries, and places connected with significant people or events can also be made accessible to the public in this manner. Many owners find this appealing because walking tour groups view privately owned buildings from the street and need not access the interiors.

Virtual Tours

Interpretation of historic buildings on the internet offers great opportunities for public access without visitation. The multimedia capabilities of the Internet allow text, photographs, video, and even sound to be available to millions of people. Many Internet sites



Historic grave markers are an interesting facet of Tallahassee history that can be visited at the Old City Cemetery, or found on line at the site's web page.

are interactive and feature interior views along with architectural and historical information. This medium is very cost effective and will present even greater opportunities in the future.

Exhibits

Historic buildings can be featured as exhibits in museums, visitor centers, libraries, and other public places. They include not only text and graphics, but also objects related to the buildings or the families that have lived in them.



Opa-locka City Hall is an example of the Moorish Revival style utilized by the African American community of Opa-locka in northwest Miami to celebrate their unique heritage. It is one of many historically significant Florida sites included as part of Florida's Black Heritage Trail.

Heritage Tourism

Tourism and preservation can be profitably combined with entertainment, education, conservation, and business. There are many opportunities to develop heritage tourism in Florida, and historic sites of all types should be included as an integral part of any such plan. Many community organizations are active in promoting tourism: tourism development councils, heritage and historical non-profit organizations, and local governments. They should be contacted to ensure that historical buildings are included in tours.

For more information

Publications

Florida Black Heritage Trail. Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation, Tallahassee, Florida, 1992.

Florida's Historic Homes and Gardens. James Pike Ltd., Daytona Beach, 1979.

Florida Tourism and Historic Sites. Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation, Tallahassee, Florida, 1988.

Getting Started: How to Succeed in Heritage Tourism. By National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington DC, 1999.

Historical Traveler's Guide to Florida. By Eliot Kleinberg, Pineapple Press, Sarasota, Florida, 1997.

Internet Resources

Old City Cemetery: The Virtual Walking Tour
www.state.fl.us/citytlh/public_works/occwhead.html

SOHO New York City: Virtual walking tour
www.sohonyc.org/tour2.html

The Betsy Ross House: Virtual tour
www.ushistory.org/betsy/index.html