



Citizen's Guide to Preserving Historic Places in Nassau County



FRANKLINTOWN CHAPEL

The Franklinton community was first populated by ex-slaves from the Samuel Harrison plantation. Franklinton Chapel congregation was organized in 1880 by Trinity M. E. Church, located in the City of Fernandina at the north end of Amelia Island. The Reverend J. C. Howard served as the chapel's first pastor from 1880 until 1888. As the congregation grew, in 1888 ex-slave and Union soldier Gabriel Means and his wife, Martha Drummond Means, donated land for a building. In 1892, Means built the first Franklinton Chapel, a one-room, unpainted frame structure. In 1949, that building was demolished to make way for the construction of State Road 200, and a new building was constructed. In 1972, following the purchase of the entire Franklinton tract by the Amelia Island Company, the 1949 building along with the original bell from the 1902 Chapel was moved to the American Beach community. American Beach had been established as an African-American ocean playground in 1935 by the Afro-American Life Insurance Company's Pension Bureau under the president Abraham Lincoln Lewis. Today, Franklinton Chapel serves as the Gabriel Means Fellowship Hall for the adjacent Franklinton United Methodist Church.

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COVER (left to right): Franklinton Chapel historic marker in American Beach. Credit: Ennis Davis; Callahan Train Depot. Credit: Adrienne Burke; Egmont Hotel, Fernandina, late 19th century. Credit: State Archives of Florida; Historic Stillwell lodging, Yulee. Credit: State Archives of Florida.

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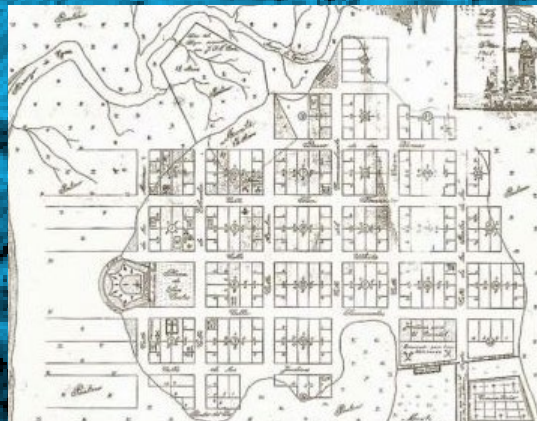
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Introduction

Nassau County is one of the oldest counties in Florida, dating to c.1824. Of course, the history in the county precedes that date extensively. Numerous archaeological sites in the county record evidence of Indigenous communities, including the Timucua people. The Timucua lived in modern-day southern Georgia and northern Florida. Groups lived in different tribes with specific territories and dialects. The people grew most of their food, fished, hunted, and gathered. Fish and seafood were their primary food source and the Timucua were skilled on the water.

Nassau was the site of early European contact, dating to 1562, with the arrival of the French on present day Amelia Island. The County has seen occupation by the French, English, Spanish, and Americans, and Revolutionary War and Civil War action. Nassau County tells the story of industry, agriculture, seafaring, railroads, tourism, and life in early Florida in general. Florida names familiar to the state's history such as Yulee, Plant, Kingsley, Reed, Delaney, and Lewis, all have ties to Nassau County.



Left: Engraving by Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, published 1591. The image is his interpretation of Indigenous community in 16th century Florida. Archaeological evidence has disproven some of these engravings. Credit: State Archives of Florida

Right: Map of Fernandina (Old Town) as platted by the Spanish, c.1811. Credit: Amelia Island Museum of History



Historic Honey-Dripper restaurant and lounge, American Beach, Amelia Island. Credit: Amelia Island Museum of History

Sites in Fernandina Beach and Amelia Island have been well-documented and preserved, but the rest of Nassau County is also home to centuries of history that have not had the same level of protection and preservation. Many towns associated with 19th century industry in Nassau County have been lost to time, such as Italia, Crandall, and Romulus. Other small towns still have a few structures remaining. Cemeteries dot the landscape of Nassau County, home to early settlers, pioneers, and families, many of whom still have descendants in the area. The history of Nassau County contributes to understanding the development of Florida.

Nassau County is also part of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor. This corridor stretches from North Carolina to northern Florida. The Gullah Geechee people are descendants of enslaved African people who were brought to the region during the era of slavery in the United States. The corridor highlights the language, cultural traditions, and historic resources associated with the Gullah Geechee people.

This guide is intended to serve as an overview of historic preservation as it is practiced in the United States and how citizens of Nassau County can engage with historic preservation locally. Information is provided about historic preservation at the federal, state, and local levels. Topics such as cemeteries, researching house history, highlighting historic sites, funding, and additional resources are included. It is hoped that this guide will encourage residents to engage with Nassau County's unique historic and cultural heritage.



Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church in Nassauville was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998. The c.1920 frame vernacular church is associated with a congregation that dates to the site in 1870. This church is connected with African-Seminole history and tells the story of African American life in Nassau County. Credit: Tom Keenan



Aerial photograph of Fernandina Beach, 1947. Credit: State Archives of Florida/Fairchild



Historic building at Fort Clinch State Park. Credit: Adrienne Burke



John Denham Palmer House, now Oxley-Heard Funeral Home, Fernandina Beach. Credit: Amelia Island Museum of History

HISTORIC PRESERVATION 101

What is Historic Preservation?

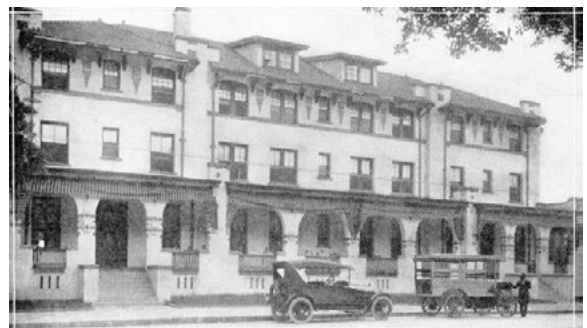
Historic preservation is most commonly viewed as protection of the built environment — buildings, objects, landscapes, and sites. Modern preservation efforts are about saving the heart of communities, and ensuring vibrant, special places full of character. Cultural heritage is also a part of historic preservation. Typically places and buildings that are 50 years or older can be considered historic.

Historic resources refers to physical elements or places that have significant historical, cultural, architectural, archaeological, or social value. These resources are typically associated with the past and are considered important for their ability to tell a story, provide insights into history, and/or contribute to a community's cultural identity.

Historic resources are part of the larger umbrella of cultural resources. Cultural resources refers to tangible and intangible elements of human culture and heritage that have historical, artistic, architectural, archaeological, or social significance. These resources encompass a wide range of assets, both physical and conceptual, that provide insights into a society's traditions, history, values, and identity. Cultural resources include historic architecture and buildings, artifacts, archaeological sites, cultural landscapes, historic documents, oral traditions, and intangible cultural resources such as language, foodways, music, or other cultural touchstones.



Centre Street in Fernandina, 1915. Credit: State Archives of Florida



Keystone Hotel in Fernandina located at 8th and Centre Street, 1919. The demolition of the Keystone kickstarted historic preservation efforts in Fernandina in the 1970s. Credit: State Archives of Florida

Why Preserve?

Historic preservation is important for a variety of reasons:

Protecting cultural identity and memories

Preserving architectural legacy

Supporting our neighborhoods

Strengthening civic pride

Capitalizing on existing assets

Avoiding loss of important places

Learning from the past

Strengthening the economy

Inspiring creativity

Being sustainable and resilient

Being good stewards of our shared past

Providing an understanding of shared history/experiences/identity

Preserving the spirit of a place

Connecting generations across time

Facilitating placemaking and placekeeping

Supporting heritage tourism

Sharing the history of cultural practices and how practices have changed over time



c.1857 Florida House Inn in Fernandina Beach, 2020. Credit: Library of Congress



Martha's Hideaway Residence in American Beach, 2019. Credit: Adrienne Burke

Architecture

For the last fifty years, historic preservation has focused mostly on architecture. Preserving the craftsmanship and special characteristics of historic buildings is an important part of retaining community identity. Architecture can help share ideas about memory, history, and culture.

Nassau County's main historic architectural styles can be grouped into the following categories: Mercantile, Vernacular, Stylized Residential, Mid-Century, and Civic.



Family in front of homestead, Nassau County, date unknown. Credit: Amelia Island Museum of History

Mercantile

One- and Two-part Commercial Block building types were typical in small and mid-size communities throughout the country in the 19th and early 20th centuries. One-part structures consisted of a storefront, while two-part consisted of a storefront at ground level and a second story (upper façade). Numerous examples are found in the Downtown Historic District of Fernandina Beach, as well as some remaining examples in Yulee (Nassau Vernacular-style) and Callahan. Historic mercantile buildings may represent differing architectural styles such as frame vernacular, Italianate, Gothic Revival, Second Empire, Neo-Classical Civic or Mediterranean.



Historic commercial buildings in Callahan, 2019. Credit: Adrienne Burke

TIME FRAME

19th and Early 20th centuries

STYLE

Varied

STRUCTURAL MATERIALS

Dependent on style; typically brick, stucco, concrete

ACCENT MATERIALS

Wood, metals, brick, marble, tile

ROOF TYPE

Dependent on style: often flat with stylized parapets; gable; hip

FOUNDATION TYPE

Dependent on style: Typically slab on grade or continuous raised foundation

WINDOWS/DOORS

Large storefront windows on first floor with single or double door entry; second floor windows (often arched) with large frame windows with divided light sashes and transoms; recessed entryways

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Dependent on style: cornices, pediments, water tables, railings, columns



Former Burbank Net Shop/C.H. Huot Building, 1986. Credit: State Archives of Florida



Downtown Fernandina Beach commercial buildings, 2018. Credit: Adrienne Burke

Vernacular

Vernacular architecture is defined as a mode of building based on regional forms and materials. Architectural styles in the 19th and early 20th century vary across the County, but the wood frame vernacular or Cracker style were common throughout. As explained in *Classic Cracker* by Ronald W. Haase, Florida Cracker refers to the unpretentious historic architecture found on farms and in rural communities that is still sprinkled throughout the state.

Cracker style buildings fall within the following typologies: *single-pen*, *double-pen/saddlebag/dog-trot*, *I-house*, *plantation* and *four-square Georgian*. Regardless of type, the primary structural element is wood frame siding, typically combined with metal roofing, raised foundations, significant open-air porches, steep roof pitch, deep roof overhangs, simple detailing, and symmetry in windows and features. Vernacular structures could be houses or businesses and are located throughout Nassau County.

TIME FRAME

1824-1930s

STYLE

Frame Vernacular, Florida Cracker, Craftsman

STRUCTURAL MATERIALS

Wood, Brick, Stucco

ACCENT MATERIALS

Brick, Tabby, Concrete, Wood

ROOF TYPE

Steep pitch: Gable, Hip, Cross-Gable, Cross-Hip

FOUNDATION TYPE

Typically raised on piers or continuous slab

WINDOWS/DOORS

Large frame windows with divided light sashes and transoms; Solid panel doors

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Typically accessed by porch feature



The home-like Residence of D. H. 3615, Secretary of the Hilliard Board of Trade.



Two new Cottages Built in Hilliard at cost of \$100 each.

Left to right: Historic homes in Hilliard associated with Cornwall Farm Land Company Fruit and Truck Farms, 1910. Credit: University of Florida Digital Collections. Frame vernacular house in Yulee, 2019. Credit: Adrienne Burke. Historic home in Fernandina Beach connected to the Delaney family. Credit: Adrienne Burke

Stylized Residential

There are a variety of different types of historic homes in Nassau County that could be called “stylized residential.” This means that the architectural style of the home is clearly defined and associated with a specific time period. Homes of this type could fall into the following categories: Queen Anne, Second Empire, Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival, Colonial Revival, Spanish Mission Revival, Mediterranean Revival, and Bungalows. Each of these styles has a different look and characteristics.

In the Fernandina Beach’s Downtown Historic District, most types of these homes are found. This historic district has an excellent representation of Victorian-era architecture (late 19th century), one of the best in Florida. These homes, often characterized by the Queen Anne style, are famous for their use of decoration, multiple roof types, and variety of materials and colors.

Bungalow and Craftsman-style buildings are also common in the Fernandina Beach Downtown Historic District. A few examples are found in Yulee and Callahan. Large open-air porches, deep eaves, raised foundations, and large windows found in the Craftsman style were well-suited for the Florida climate. Buildings are typically one or one and a half stories.

TIME FRAME

1870s-1930s

STYLE

Queen Anne, Second Empire, Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival, Colonial Revival, Spanish Mission Revival, Mediterranean Revival, Bungalows

STRUCTURAL MATERIALS

Wood, Brick, Stucco

ACCENT MATERIALS

Brick, Tabby, Concrete, Wood

ROOF TYPE

Varies by style but often Gable, Hip, Cross-Gable, Cross-Hip

FOUNDATION TYPE

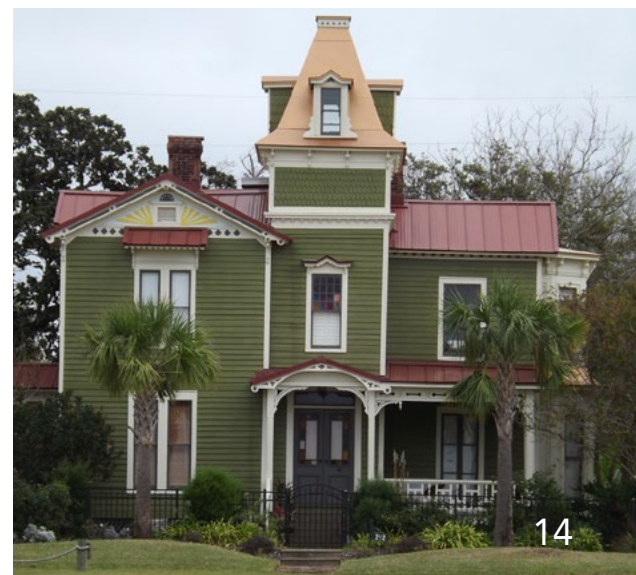
Typically raised on piers or continuous slab

WINDOWS/DOORS

Large frame windows with divided light sashes and transoms; Solid panel doors or doors with glass features

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Varies by style feature



Left to right: Tabby House shows blend of stylized residential architecture with Queen Anne elements with vernacular construction technique using tabby, 1974 HABS Survey. Credit: Library of Congress. Craftsman-style/Bungalow house in Fernandina Beach: Credit: Adrienne Burke. Captain James Bell House, c.1888, Old Town Fernandina. Credit: Ennis Davis

Mid-Century

As Florida became a tourism destination and the rise of the automobile began, transportation corridors shaped and defined the area. Highway 17 South was a major north-south route for travelers from the north journeying to Florida. There are still remnants of early auto-centric development and some remaining tourism-affiliated sites such as hotels and early gas station structures. When I-95 was built, a new transportation corridor entered Nassau County, and the traffic that previously used Highway 17 shifted to the new interstate. Businesses on Highway 17 were impacted, and traveler-related services developed around the I-95 interchange on State Road 200/A1A. Where State Road 200/A1A had previously been an east-west route for internal travel in Nassau County, it has become a primary tourism roadway bringing people from I-95 to Amelia Island.

TIME FRAME

1930s-1970s

STYLE

Mid-Century Florida/Mid-Century Modern, Ranch, Minimal Traditional

STRUCTURAL MATERIALS

Concrete, Concrete Block (Smooth or rusticated), Stucco, or Frame

ACCENT MATERIALS

Metal, Brick, Concrete, Artbrick/Veneer

ROOF TYPE

Gable, Hip, Cross-Gable, Cross-Hip; Flat or Slant. Pitch high or very low based on style.

FOUNDATION TYPE

Raised Continuous Slab or Slab on grade

WINDOWS/DOORS

Varied windows: traditional divided light sashes, large picture windows, horizontal awning, jalousie, trapezoidal, storefront. Varied doors including recessed, side entry, decorative window lights, solid panes, garage doors

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Angled/cantilevered fixtures, varied windows, incorporated garages/ carports, integrated planters, breeze block, decorative metal posts



Left to right:

Regina Motel in Callahan. Credit: State Archives of Florida

Florida Welcome Center at US 17 in Yulee, 1949. Credit: State Archives of Florida



Commercial structures related to this tourism era are reflective of Mid-Century Florida or mid-century modern architecture. With industrial facilities opening in Nassau County in the 20th century and overall U.S. population trends shifting south, new residents moved to the County. Post-WWII residential architectural styles such as Ranch and Minimal Traditional started to appear in the area, in addition to the use of Mid-Century Florida or mid-century modern. Unlike other parts of Florida, likely due to being established earlier as a populated center, Nassau County did not experience widespread use of Art Deco or Art Moderne structures.

Common elements and features for Mid-Century Florida/mid-century structures include low-pitched or flat roof with wide overhanging eaves, exposed roof beams, windows in gable ends, asymmetrical or trapezoidal design features, cantilevered elements, breeze block, natural materials and prominent front chimneys. Common building elements and features for ranch-style buildings in Florida include broad one-story shape, low-pitched hip or gable roofs, slab or continuous slab foundations, moderate to wide roof overhangs, entries located underneath the main roof, and large picture windows. Because of the prevalence of the automobile during the mid-century both styles commonly featured integrated carports or garages, either on the façade or positioned to the side.



Top to bottom:

Mid-20th century ranch-style house in Fernandina Beach. Credit: Adrienne Burke

Fernandina's Florida Marine Welcome Center (demolished), c1970s, Credit: Library of Congress.

Mid-20th century ranch-style house in Yulee. Credit: Adrienne Burke

Civic

Historic civic architecture in Nassau County was located in the County seat of Fernandina. Located in the “new” downtown Fernandina created as part of David Levy Yulee’s Florida Railroad, several significant civic structures rose during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Nassau County Courthouse, c.1891, is a brick Italianate structure with a signature clock tower. The Fernandina City Hall, c.1899, though extensively remodeled post-WWII, was constructed as a brick Italianate structure with a signature bell tower and Mission architectural features.

TIME FRAME

Late 19th- early 20th centuries

STYLE

Italianate, Italian Renaissance

STRUCTURAL MATERIALS

Brick or Stucco

ACCENT MATERIALS

Terracotta, ceramic, cast-stone, or metals

ROOF TYPE

Low pitch Hip; Gable; Cupolas/ Towers

FOUNDATION TYPE

Raised continuous slab (or appearance of such)

WINDOWS/DOORS

Tall, narrow windows, often paired or tripled, with arches/curves; Typically double doors: solid panel or single-light doors accessed by steps

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Deep eaves, brackets, cornices, pediments, cupolas/towers, belt courses

Historic Nassau County courthouse in Fernandina Beach, c.1891. Credit: Adrienne Burke



Historic Fernandina City Hall at 204 Ash Street. City Hall was remodeled in the mid-20th century to its current appearance. Credit: Amelia Island Museum of History




Public School No. 1 in Fernandina Beach on Atlantic Avenue, 2019. Credit: Adrienne Burke

The Federal Courthouse and Post Office, c.1910, reflects an Italian Renaissance style and is found in other federal buildings of the era throughout the Southeast. Italianate architecture is usually two to three stories, has a low-pitched roof with moderate to widely overhanging eaves with decorative brackets, tall, narrow windows with arches or curves at the top, and frequently has cupolas or towers. Italian Renaissance architecture also has a low-pitched roof with deep eaves and brackets, ceramic tile roof, upper story windows that are smaller and less ornate, front porches or entry areas, and a symmetrical facade. The new Nassau County Judicial Complex in the William Burgess area has elements of the Italianate and Italian Renaissance styles built through a contemporary design lens.



Drawing of Fernandina Post Office on Centre Street, 1939. Credit: State Archives of Florida

Cultural Heritage

ultural heritage is increasingly important in the field of historic preservation. Cultural heritage refers to tangible and intangible aspects of a society's past that are inherited from previous generations and preserved for future generations. It includes a wide range of aspects that shape a society's identity, values, traditions, and way of life. Cultural heritage can be categorized into two main types: tangible and intangible heritage.

Tangible cultural heritage includes physical artifacts, structures, and sites that hold historical, artistic, scientific, or cultural significance. Intangible cultural heritage refers to the practices, expressions, knowledge, skills, and traditions that are passed down from one generation to another and are deeply embedded in a community's way of life. This type of heritage is not physical and can be harder to define and preserve.

Examples of Tangible Cultural Heritage

- Historic buildings and architectural structures
- Artworks, sculptures, and crafts
- Artifacts and historical objects
- Monuments and memorials
- Archaeological sites
- Cultural landscapes

Examples of Intangible Cultural Heritage

- Oral traditions, storytelling, and folktales
- Rituals, ceremonies, and traditional performances
- Music, dance, and theater
- Language and dialects
- Traditional knowledge and skills related to crafts, agriculture, and medicine
- Culinary traditions and traditional food preparation methods

Preserving cultural heritage is important for many reasons:

- Identity and Sense of Belonging
- Education and Research
- Tourism and Economic Value
- Cultural Diversity
- Social Cohesion
- Inspiration and Creativity
- Protection of Rights

In historic preservation, cultural heritage can help share components of a community's history beyond buildings. This is especially important where buildings may no longer exist or sites are gone, especially in a place like Florida where natural disasters are one of many threats facing our historic sites. **Cultural heritage may still exist in an area even when buildings are no longer standing or have been significantly changed.**

Cultural Heritage Preservation in Nassau County

An example of cultural heritage preservation in Nassau County is the **Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor**. The Corridor was designated by an Act of Congress and authorized as part of the National Heritage Areas Act in October 2006. The Gullah Geechee Corridor celebrates, preserves, and shares the important contributions made to American culture and history by African Americans known as Gullah Geechee people who settled in the coastal counties of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

The Corridor highlights tangible and intangible heritage of the Gullah Geechee community: culture, language, legacy, celebrations, crafts, and rice heritage. Community members are working to promote and share the culture and legacy of the Gullah Geechee in Nassau through historic preservation, historic markers, community events, storytelling, and education. There are also still visible remnants of rice heritage within the County. For more information on the corridor, visit www.gullahgeecheecorridor.org.

Distinct from the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor is the Gullah/Geechee Nation, led by Queen Quet, Chieftess of the Gullah/Geechee Nation, the elected head of state and official spokesperson. The Nation advocates for the people's living culture that emerged on the Sea Islands from Jacksonville, NC to Jacksonville, FL and 30-35 miles inland. The Gullah/Geechee people are a declared minority group with their own language and traditions passed down from their enslaved African ancestors. The Gullah/Geechee Nation was founded in 2000 to sustain their cultural heritage and to make the public aware of the social and environmental issues facing the Gullah/Geechee community. For more information, visit <https://gullahgeecheenation.com>.

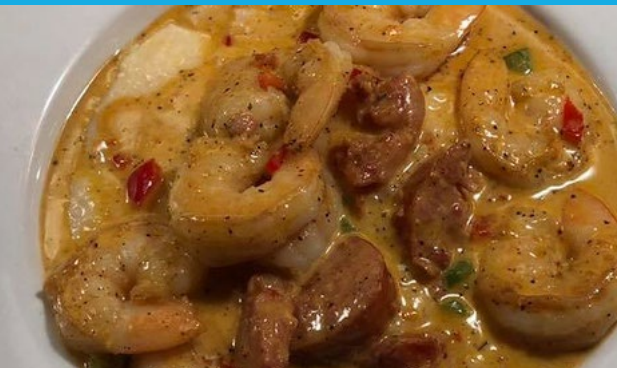
- Oral traditions, storytelling, and folktales
- Rituals, ceremonies, and traditional performances
- Music, dance, and theater
- Language and dialects
- Traditional knowledge and skills related to crafts, agriculture, and medicine
- Culinary traditions and traditional food preparation methods



Logo for the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor. Credit: Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission



Gullah/Geechee Nation logo. Credit: Gullah/Geechee Nation



Clockwise from top:

Fashion show at American Beach Community Center, 2019. Credit: Adrienne Burke

2023 aerial view showing historic rice fields in northern Nassau County associated with Zephaniah Kingsley plantation and enslaved Gullah Geechee people. Credit: Google Maps

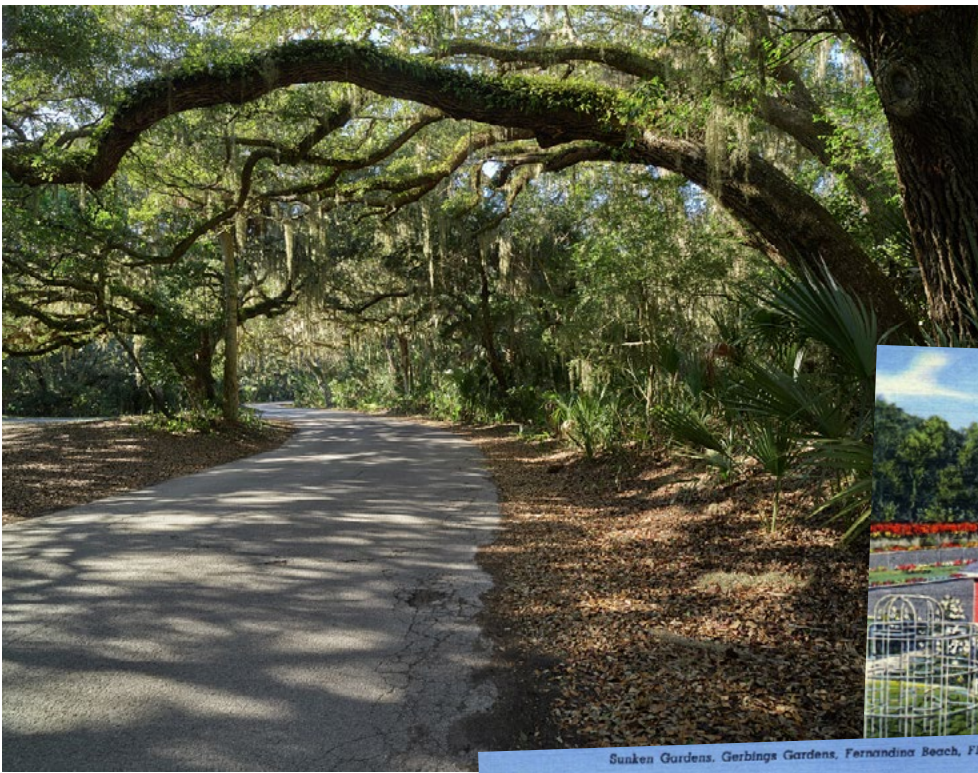
Traditional foods prepared by Chef Andrea Bryant-Smith at Green Legacy Farm including collard greens, okra, peas and red rice. Credit: Glenda Simmons Jenkins

Local food connected to Gullah Geechee foodways. Credit: Ennis Davis

Queen Quet, Chieftess of the Gullah/Geechee Nation accepts a Nassau County Board of County Commissioners proclamation recognizing Gullah Geechee heritage from Commissioner Pat Edwards, 2019. Credit: Adrienne Burke

Cultural Landscapes

Another concept in historic preservation is cultural landscapes. What are cultural landscapes? They are landscapes that have been affected, influenced, or shaped by human involvement. These landscapes can be associated with a person or event, can be thousands of acres or a tiny homestead, can be a grand estate, industrial site, park, garden, cemetery, campus and more. Cultural landscapes are works of art, narratives of culture, and expressions of regional identity. Cemeteries are a recognizable example of cultural landscapes.



Canopy Road showing natural landscape as modified to accommodate park use (historic and vernacular landscape), Ft. Clinch State Park, 2020. Credit: Library of Congress



Gerbing Gardens was a botanical garden (designed landscape) in the Amelia City area of Amelia Island, c.1947. Credit: State Archives of Florida

Historic St. Peter's Episcopal Cemetery, Fernandina Beach, 2019. Credit: Adrienne Burke



There are four types of cultural landscapes according to the Cultural Landscape Foundation:

DESIGNED Landscapes that were formally designed or created by a landscape architect, designer, master gardener or an amateur gardener working in a recognized tradition. This includes sites such as the Cummer Museum Gardens in Jacksonville, FL or Bok Tower Gardens in Lake Wales, FL. It could include formally designed cemeteries like Evergreen Cemetery in Jacksonville.

ETHNOGRAPHIC Landscapes containing a variety of natural and cultural resources that associated people define as heritage resources. These landscapes include places such as sites associated with the Gullah Geechee community or the Everglades associated with the Seminole community.

HISTORIC Landscapes that are significant for their association with a historic event, activity or person. This could include sites such as the Old Town Historic District in Fernandina Beach or the ancient section of Bosque Bello Cemetery in Fernandina.

VERNACULAR Landscapes that evolved through use by the people whose activities or occupancy shaped those landscapes. Agricultural landscapes are an example of a vernacular landscape such as rural areas of western Nassau County

Cultural Landscapes in Nassau County

An example of a cultural landscape that is local to Nassau County is Fernandina Beach's historic working waterfront. This is an example of a vernacular cultural landscape that evolved over time in response to the community's use of the space. Elements that relate to this history include docks for shrimping fleets, buildings for processing shrimp, and the historic Pogey Plant in Old Town. These uses are in direct relationship to the natural resource of the Amelia River. The railroad running along Front Street also speaks to the historically industrial nature of this part of town. Modern uses like the Port of Fernandina still speak to this area as a working waterfront. Fernandina Beach was designated an official Waterfronts Florida partnership program member in 2005 in recognition of this unique history, landscape and ongoing use.

The cultural heritage of Fernandina's working waterfront survives through events like the annual Isle of Eight Flags Shrimp Festival.



Shrimping boats at the Fernandina waterfront, 1951.
Credit: State Archives of Florida



Images of Fernandina Beach historic working waterfront, 2023. Credit: Adrienne Burke



Left: Billy Burbank II weaving shrimp nets, 1980.
Credit: State Archives of Florida/Bulger

Below: People weighing shrimp in a processing facility, Fernandina, 1957. Credit: State Archives of Florida/Holland



Blessing of the Golden Knight Shrimp Boat, downtown Fernandina waterfront, 1971, during the Isle of Eight Flags Shrimp Festival. Credit: State Archives of Florida/Holland

Workers in Fernandina box Royal Red shrimp for shipping, 1957.
Credit: State Archives of Florida/Holland

Archaeology

Archaeology is the scientific study of the human past through the examination and analysis of physical remains, artifacts, structures, and other traces of ancient and historic civilizations. It seeks to uncover and understand the lives, cultures, and societies of people who lived in the past by examining the material and environmental evidence they left behind. Archaeology encompasses a wide range of methods and techniques to excavate, interpret, and reconstruct past human activities and behaviors.

Archaeology could be considered a component of historic preservation, although it stands as its own field. This guide does not focus on archaeology, with the exception of historic cemeteries, which are often the domain of archaeologists. Archaeological sites and artifacts are cultural resources. Archaeological resources could include sites such as shell middens related to Indigenous people, or cemeteries related to more recent people.

Sisters of St. Joseph
burial plot, Bosque Bello
Cemetery, Fernandina.
Credit: Adrienne Burke



Threats to Historic Resources

Historic and cultural resources come under threat in a variety of ways. The following are common threats to historic sites, and more than one threat may be present at one time:

- 1 Development** - Due to Florida's rapidly growing population, development is probably the most common threat to historic resources. Because of the value of land and the ability to build more than was historically allowed or needed, historic buildings are often seen as an obstacle in the face of development.
- 2 Neglect** - Historic resources may deteriorate over time due to neglect. This may be due to absentee owners, lack of financial resources of the owner, disinterest of the owner, or other reasons. It is important to help work with property owners to understand how neglect can harm historic sites and help find solutions.
- 3 Changing climate** - Stronger hurricanes, increased flooding, and sea level rise are all scientifically demonstrated. Fernandina Beach has one of the oldest tide gauges in the state, and it shows a rise of sea level of 0.68 feet from 1897 to 2015. Predictions continue to show a steady rise over time. While this may not seem like much on its own, storm surge and king tides make sea level rise worse. The Callahan area also experiences severe flooding events. Historic buildings and cemeteries are very vulnerable to these changes.
- 4 Changing attitudes** - People's opinions of what is historic and valuable changes over time. Many early 20th century buildings were lost after World War II because there was an emphasis on new and modern buildings. Similarly, we lose many of those post-World War II buildings today because people do not view them as historic. It is not possible to save everything, of course, but helping communicate why buildings are historic and the value of historic preservation helps.

5

Lack of knowledge - If historic resources are not documented and not known to the community, local/state/federal government, and developers, they are at risk. Ensuring that historic resources are recorded and shared with the local and state government is very important.

6

Lack of understanding or appreciation - Many people are not aware of the long history in the state of Florida and Nassau County. They may not understand or appreciate why sites and places in Florida are historic. Community outreach and education is important in helping communicate the historic significance of places. This is especially true where many new residents move to Florida every day from other parts of the country and are not yet familiar with local history.

Right: Downtown Fernandina after September hurricane, 1898. Storms have historically impacted Nassau County and continue to remain a threat to historic and cultural resources. Credit: Library of Congress



Below: New development is one of the biggest challenges in historic preservation, especially along the beach where new building construction codes can make updating historic structures more difficult. Credit: Adrienne Burke



Above: Postcard of Cavalier Motor Court, Hilliard, date unknown. Changing attitudes about lodging and travel have put many historic motels and hotels at risk of demolition. Credit: State Archives of Florida

Protecting Historic Resources

This document explores the tools that exist at the federal, state and local levels to help protect historic resources. Main considerations in protecting these important resources include: documentation of sites and buildings, continued use and attention, and community engagement. In some instances, moving a historic building may be an option for protection. Specific policy tools such as zoning and land use regulations and historic preservation ordinances are some of the best ways to help protect historic resources at the local level. And of course, community advocates who speak on behalf of these special places are one of the most critical pieces in a successful preservation effort.



Historic home in Fernandina Beach being relocated for preservation to another site, 2014. Credit: Adrienne Burke

FEDERAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION FRAMEWORK

Historic preservation and cultural resource protection is addressed at the federal level through such legislation as the **National Historic Preservation Act**, the **Antiquities Act of 1906**, the **National Environmental Policy Act**, the **Archaeological Resources Protection Act**, and **Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act**, and the **Abandoned Shipwreck Act**.

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 created:

- National Register of Historic Places
- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- State Historic Preservation Officers
- Certified Local Government Program
- Section 106: Review of Federal Undertakings

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the country's official list of historic places worthy of preservation and recognition. Districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant are found on the National Register. These places may be important for history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. Typically the National Register includes properties 50 years and older.

The National Register does not place any restrictions on a property. It is an honorary designation. Standards of significance and integrity are utilized in making determinations about property eligibility for the National Register. There is a movement in the preservation profession to have more diverse sites included. Only approximately 8% of sites on the National Register are associated with women or racial and ethnic minorities.

Properties on the National Register may be eligible for certain incentives like eligibility for grants or federal tax credits. The first step in seeking a National Register nomination is to work with the Florida Division of Historical Resources.



Left: The Amelia Island Lighthouse was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. It is the oldest lighthouse in Florida. It was originally built in 1820 on Cumberland Island and relocated to Fernandina in 1839. Credit: Adrienne Burke. *Right:* The Amelia Island Museum of History, 1980. The Museum is located in what was the Nassau County jail and is listed on the National Register. Credit: State Archives of Florida

Nassau County National Register Spotlight



American Beach was listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district in 2001. American Beach, located on the south end of Amelia Island in Nassau County, has the distinction of being one of the few remaining beach resort communities in the nation developed specifically by and for African Americans. Developed by the Afro-American Life Insurance Company in 1935, American Beach was until the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act one of the few beaches in the Southeast available to African Americans during Jim-Crow era segregation. Even with the increased availability of beach

Historic image of beachgoers at Evans' Rendezvous in American Beach. The mother and daughter, center of picture are Aria Rogers Peterson and her daughter, Linda Gail Peterson, circa 1950. A part of this beach crowd included members of Second Baptist Missionary Church in Jacksonville of which they were members. Credit: Amelia Island Museum of History

resort opportunities for African Americans, American Beach continued to survive during the 1960's and 70's as a distinctive beach community composed predominantly of single family beach cottages with business uses such as restaurants and lodging. (Source: Historic Building Survey of American Beach, 1998)



Evans' Rendezvous at American Beach was an oceanfront restaurant, bar, and entertainment venue that was the community heart of American Beach. It was open from 1948-2000, operating during the height of the Chitlin' Circuit. The Chitlin' Circuit refers to the touring circuit that African American musicians took across the South during Jim Crow-era segregation. Credit: Ennis Davis



A.L. Lewis descendant Peri Betsch leads a tour of American Beach, 2018. Credit: Adrienne Burke



Ervin's Rest, one of the historic homes in American Beach, 2018. Credit: Adrienne Burke

A.L. Lewis was one of the founders of the Afro-American Life Insurance Company associated with the founding of American Beach. His family's was the first home built at the beach. Lewis' great-granddaughter MaVynne Betsch was a dedicated advocate for the environment and history of American Beach and became known as the "Beach Lady." She was a champion for preservation of the large beach dune in the community, which she called NaNa Dune. Today the dune is preserved and owned by the National Park Service. The A.L. Lewis Museum at American Beach honors the history and legacy of American Beach.



Charles, Jr., Eve, Kenny and Marsha Rosier at American Beach, 1958. Credit: State Archives of Florida

Section 106 Review

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to take into account the effect of an “undertaking” on any district, site, building, structure or object that is included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. The definition of an “undertaking” is very broad. An example of Section 106 review would be roadway projects that involve the use of federal money. Outside parties are allowed to comment on the federal plans related to the historic structure or site. Having historic places documented is very important so that when a federal project occurs in an area, federal and state officials know there are historic resources there.

Secretary of the Interior’s Standards

The National Park Service issues the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards (SOIS) for the Treatment of Historic Properties. There are four sets of SOIS Standards: Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing. The most commonly used set of guidelines is Rehabilitating. The Standards are utilized as the foundation for how to manage changes to historic properties. The Standards commonly form the basis for historic district design review at the local level. One of the most common applications of the Standards is for adaptive reuse projects. This means taking a historic building and turning it into another use than it was originally built for.

Historic American Buildings Survey

The Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) is a federal program that documents and preserves historic architecture. It is one of the oldest federal preservation efforts that was started in 1933 as part of New Deal initiatives. The main purpose of HABS is to create an archive of measured drawings, photographs, and written documentation of historic buildings and structures in the United States. Additional federal documentation efforts include the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS). Many buildings in Fernandina Beach have been documented for HABS. Records are maintained by the Library of Congress and available to view at the Library of Congress website.



Left: Fernandina Train Depot (102 Centre Street, Fernandina) HABS Drawing, 1974. Credit: Library of Congress

Right: First Presbyterian Church (19 N. 6th Street, Fernandina) HABS Drawing, 1974. Credit: Library of Congress

State Historic Preservation Officers

All 50 states have adopted historic preservation laws. They are overseen by State (or Tribal) Historic Preservation Officers, a framework created under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

“Your State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) is the appointed official in each of 59 states, territories and the District of Columbia who is responsible for helping to save the places that matter. Whether it is guiding citizens through the process of listing important historic resources or neighborhoods on the National Register of Historic Places, or considering the impact of large renewable energy projects on historic landscapes or archeological sites, your SHPO is your partner in preservation.” – National Park Service

In Florida, historic and cultural resources are protected through Ch.267, Florida Statutes. Our SHPO is the Florida Division of Historical Resources. The Florida Division of Historical Resources oversees the nomination process for National Register sites in the state, administers grant programs, the Certified Local Government program, the Florida Master Site File, and the state historic marker program, in addition to other responsibilities.



Florida State Preservation Plan

Every five years, the Florida Division of Historical Resources revises the **Florida Statewide Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan**. This plan provides priorities for historic preservation at the state level. Goals and recommendations are included in the plan. The document also provides information on state efforts to protect historic and cultural resources.

Florida Master Site File

The Florida Master Site File is an official inventory of documented historic and cultural resources. Resources listed on the Site File include archaeological sites, historic structures, historic cemeteries, historic bridges, and historic districts, landscapes and linear features. There are over 200,000 cultural resources included on the Site File.

This is a very important resource for protecting historic resources. As noted, when a historic site is not documented, it is more at risk and there is less information available. Having sites on this list is a great first step in helping a historic site. Staff at the Florida Master Site File can assist you in finding out if a building or site is already included or not.

Anyone can submit a Florida Master Site File form. There is no cost to submit a form. Being listed on the Master Site File does not apply any rules or regulations to a property. Forms can be updated when more information becomes available.

Like statistics about the National Register of Historic Places, sites associated with women and historically excluded communities are underrepresented on the Florida Master Site File. Having more sites associated with these communities documented on the Florida Master Site File is needed.



“The Florida Master Site File is administered by the Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources, under the Florida Department of State. The Site File is a clearing house for information regarding Florida’s archaeological sites, historical structures, and the field survey of archaeological and historical sites. The Site File is the first place anyone will look for information on historic sites, including cemeteries. If a site is not recorded in the Site File, protection is more difficult, simply because there is a lack of basic knowledge and lots of opportunity for confusion. Although the Site File manages information on historic properties of all types, inclusion in the Site File offers no special protection or legal status for a site.”

– Florida Division of Historical Resources

Page 1
 Original
 Update

**HISTORICAL STRUCTURE FORM
 FLORIDA MASTER SITE FILE
 Version 4.0 1/07**

Site #8 Na80 _____
 Field Date 10 / 29 / 10 _____
 Form Date 10 / 29 / 10 _____
 Recorder # _____



Shaded Fields represent the minimum acceptable level of documentation. Consult the Guide to Historical Structure Forms for detailed instructions.

Site Name(s) (address if none) **Fort Clinch State Park** Multiple Listing (DHR only) _____
 Survey Project Name _____ Survey # (DHR only) _____
 National Register Category (please check one) building structure district site object
 Ownership: private-profit private-nonprofit private-individual private-nonspecific city county state federal Native American foreign unknown

LOCATION & MAPPING

Address (include N,S,E,W; #, St. Ave., etc.) **2601 Atlantic Avenue** _____
 Cross Streets (nearest) between _____
 USGS 7.5' Map Name & Date **USGA Fernandina Beach QUAD 10-28-2010** Plat or Other Map _____
 City / Town (within 3 miles) **Fernandina Beach** In City Limits? yes no unknown County: **Nassau** _____
 Township **14** Range **3** North Section **29** east ¼ section: NW SW SE NE Irregular-name: _____
 Tax Parcel # **14-3N-29-0000-0001-0000** Landgrant _____
 Subdivision Name _____ Block _____ Lot _____
 UTM: Zone 16 17 Easting _____ 0 Northing _____ 0
 Other Coordinates: X: _____ Y: _____ Coordinate System & Datum _____
 Name of Public Tract (e.g., park) _____

HISTORY

Construction Year: **1847** approximately year listed or earlier year listed or later
 Original Use: **Strategic Fortification** From (year): **1847** To (year): **1898**
 Current Use* Historic Site From (year): **1936** To (year): **present**
 Other Use* From (year): _____ To (year): _____
 Moves: yes no unknown Dates _____ Original address (if moved) **NA** _____
 Alterations: yes no unknown Dates _____ Nature* **NA** _____
 Additions: yes no unknown Dates _____ Nature* **NA** _____
 Architect (last name first): _____ Builder (last name first): _____
 Ownership History (especially original owner, dates, profession, etc.) _____

Is the Resource Affected by a Local Preservation Ordinance? yes no unknown Describe _____

DESCRIPTION

Style: **3rd System Fortification** Exterior Plan* **Open parade ground** Number of Stories **2**
 Exterior Fabric(s) * **Brick Cement**
 Roof Type(s) * **A Frame** Roof Material(s) * **Shingle, metal**
 Roof secondary strucs. (corners etc.) * _____
 Windows (types, materials, etc.) * _____
 Distinguishing Architectural Features (exterior or interior ornaments) **Constructed using pentagonal masonry 3rd system coastal fortification.**

Ancillary Features / Outbuildings (record outbuildings, major landscape features; use continuation sheet if needed.) **The Fort consists of five gun port bastion and several out buildings including: Central Kitchen, guard room, office, secondary kitchens, laundry, bakery, blacksmith shop, carpenters shop. The permanent works were flanked with water batteries, and strengthened with sand embankments. Behind the fort are high sand dunes covered with dwarfed live oaks and cedars, their top flattened by the prevailing east winds.**

Consult Guide to Historical Structure Forms for preferred descriptions (coded fields at the Site File).

DHR USE ONLY		OFFICIAL EVALUATION		DHR USE ONLY	
NR List Date / /	SHPO - Appears to meet criteria for NR listing: <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> insufficient info	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> insufficient info	Date / /	Init.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Owner Objection	KEEPER - Determined eligible: <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Date / /		
	NR Criteria for Evaluation: <input type="checkbox"/> a <input type="checkbox"/> b <input type="checkbox"/> c <input type="checkbox"/> d (see National Register Bulletin 15, p. 2)				

Certified Local Governments

Certified Local Government programs are where federal, state, and local historic preservation laws meet. This is a federal program for local governments that is managed by the state, that then requires local governments to have a preservation ordinance in order to participate. Being a part of this program enables communities to have access to certain grant funds and technical assistance. Fernandina Beach is a Certified Local Government. The City of Fernandina Beach has had a historic preservation ordinance since 1975 and manages a preservation program for two historic districts and multiple individual historic properties.



Downtown Fernandina Beach, 1978. Credit: State Archives of Florida

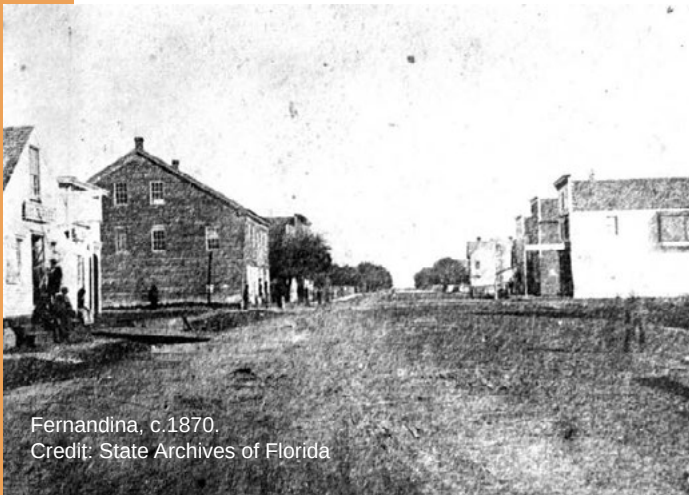
Ash Street in Fernandina Beach, early 20th century. Credit: State Archives of Florida

Historic postcard image of Centre Street in Fernandina, c.1910. Credit: State Archives of Florida



Florida Main Street

Florida Main Street is a program operated by the Florida Division of Historical Resources. Florida Main Street works with the National Main Street Center. The Main Street program offers technical assistance, education and networking for revitalization of historic commercial and downtown areas. Main Street was a program created by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1980. Historic commercial areas that are active and vibrant create jobs, save tax dollars, preserve historic resources, and build community pride. Fernandina Beach became part of the Main Street program in 2015. Learn more at fernandinamainstreet.com.



Fernandina, c. 1870.
Credit: State Archives of Florida



Centre Street, Fernandina, 1965.
Credit: State Archives of Florida/Johnson



Centre Street,
Fernandina,
1978. Credit:
State Archives
of Florida



Centre Street, Fernandina, 2018. Credit: Ennis Davis

Historic Preservation Ordinances

Historic preservation is the most important at the local level because this is where historic places and sites can be legally protected from change or demolition. This is done through policies adopted by a local government. This is done as a historic preservation ordinance.

In 1978, the United States Supreme Court held that historic preservation is a “permissible governmental goal” and a historic preservation ordinance is an “appropriate means” to accomplishing that goal. This case was called *Penn Central Transportation Company v. City of New York*. This case is the foundation for local governments to be able to regulate historic resources.

Historic preservation ordinances vary from state to state based on requirements in state law. In Florida, there is not a state law about local historic preservation ordinances. Communities have flexibility to adopt an ordinance that makes sense for their community.

Historic preservation ordinances have processes for creating local historic districts, designating individual properties as historic sites, and outlining how property owners apply to make changes to their properties. Ordinances create a review board of people who review applications from property owners who want to make changes to their properties.



Entrance signage to Old Town Historic District in Fernandina Beach, 2023. Credit: Adrienne Burke



Downtown Fernandina Beach commercial buildings, 2017. Credit: Ennis Davis



Trinity United Methodist Church, c.1891, in Fernandina Beach's Downtown Historic District at 715 Ash Street. Trinity is associated with the African American community in Fernandina and the building construction was largely funded by freedmen and women. Credit: Adrienne Burke

Preservation ordinances spell out what these boards can and cannot do. The ordinances spell out any architectural design review criteria and meeting procedures. Preservation ordinances may also include archaeological resources.

Local historic districts are created through local historic preservation ordinances. Local historic districts are not the same as National Register of Historic Places historic districts. Local districts can regulate changes to properties and demolition of properties. National Register Historic Districts do not have any such protection.



Peck High School, built in 1927, was the African American school in Fernandina Beach. It is a Rosenwald School and is an individually designated site in Fernandina's historic district at 516 S. 10th Street. Credit: Ennis Davis

Local Preservation in Nassau County

Section 37.09 of the County Land Development Code addresses historic and archaeological protection. This section of County Code allows for nomination of individual properties for historic designation. This designation creates an “acknowledgement of local historic significance.” However, there is no process in the Code for reviewing any changes or demolition of these designated structures. It is honorary only. Currently, there are no local historic districts or individually designated historic sites in Nassau County.

This section of the County’s Code also includes archaeological resources. In certain cases, an archaeological survey may be needed for certain developments where it is known or documented that there are historic resources. If resources are found during the survey, work may stop for further investigation. Nassau County had a countywide archaeological survey completed in 2004.

The County Code also directs the County to have historic property surveys completed. These surveys identify and document historic sites and places in a community. This is extremely important for knowing where our historic sites and spaces are. This documentation is sent to the Florida Division of Historical Resources for inclusion on the Florida Master Site File.



Bryceville Methodist Church in Bryceville, 2019. Bryceville Cemetery is adjacent to the Church, which was built c.1904. Credit: Adrienne Burke

The County started this effort with a first phase of a historic property survey in 2020. The survey is taking place in phases because of the size of the County. This first phase looked at properties in Callahan, Boulogne, Bryceville, Nassauville, and portions of US-1, US-17, and State Road 200 constructed in or before 1970. 558 historic resources were recorded for the Florida Master Site File.

Nassau County also has an overlay district that addresses architecture, but are not historic districts. Overlay districts are a zoning tool that include a specific area and add additional criteria to the area in addition to the basic zoning requirements. Overlays are usually created to protect or preserve resources (like historic or environmental resources), or to help address specific goals for development in an area. The overlay district that addresses architecture in Nassau County is the William Burgess Overlay District.

Fernandina Beach has had an historic preservation ordinance since 1975. Today, the historic preservation ordinance is found in Chapter 8 of the City's Land Development Code. The ordinance addresses the City's Historic District Council, creation of historic districts, and processes for review of changes to and demolition of historic resources.

Sometime following the Civil War, the Nichols family built an oyster canning plant at the Nassau River and San Juan Creek, near what is now Nassauville. It was purchased by H.W. Hide around 1886, who built facilities to steam, shell, and pack the oysters. Saul S. Goffin, a Russian immigrant, purchased it in 1893. He continued to expand the business and also began what is considered the first planned community in the area. This included a commissary and a post office by 1899, along with homes and a church for the Black residents. The plant also processed crab and shrimp (a staple among Nassau fishermen), and many of the roads in the area were paved and repaired with the shells. In Callahan, a brickyard was started sometime prior to 1895 and provided bricks to construction projects as far south as Jacksonville. Around the same time, Coca-Cola opened a bottling plant on Mickler Street between Railroad and Green.



Figure 5. George W. Bryce (Nassau Reflections).

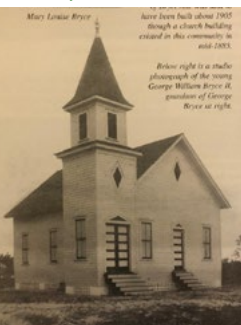


Figure 6. An undated photograph of the Bryceville Methodist Church (NA01291; Nassau Reflections).

In 1871, George W. Bryce (Figure 5) purchased 80 acres of property near what is today Bryceville (named after him) and began a milling and turpentine business that lasted 80 years. He established Bryceville in 1886 and had a house constructed at 6344 Church Avenue in 1901 (NA01293, Figure 7). In 1905, a Methodist church was constructed nearby, just on the other side of the railroad tracks (NA01291, Figure 6). Part of the parcel served as a cemetery (NA01009), with burials dating from as early as 1891. Bryce, who died in 1906, is buried here. Following his death, the business was taken over by his son William Creighton "Kay" Bryce, who built additional facilities a mile south of Bryceville.

The county was unexpectedly struck by a hurricane on September 29, 1896. Homes, churches, and mills were heavily damaged. In Boulogne, school was in session and six or seven children were killed and the same number severely hurt when the schoolhouse was destroyed.



Figure 7. An undated photograph of George W. Bryce's home at 6344 Church Avenue (NA01293; Nassau Reflections).

Excerpt page from
2020 Nassau County
Historic Resources
Survey discussing the
history of Nassauville
and Bryceville. Credit:
Terracon

Historic Preservation Planning

Historic preservation planning is another local process that can help prioritize protection of historic resources in a community. A preservation plan can communicate, organize, plan and strengthen preservation efforts. Preservation planning is a process that can:

- Organize preservation activities
- Identify vision, goals and priorities
- Provide proactive way to address historic and cultural resources and community character
- Serve as a basis for development of a preservation program
- Strengthen existing preservation programs
- Help resolve policy conflicts between competing land-use goals by prioritizing historic or cultural resources

Preservation plans can vary by type. These plans might be a standalone document, part of another plan, general to an entire city or town, specific to a neighborhood or area, for a specific historic site, or for a cultural landscape. Preservation plans can connect historic preservation with other larger planning issues in a community such as housing, resilience and sustainability, land conservation, equity and inclusion, economic development, and arts and culture.

One of the biggest pieces of preservation planning is working with people in the community. Working on a preservation plan is a collaborative opportunity for the community to work together. The community provides input that directs and aids in identifying priorities. It is a chance for the community to have a voice in planning and policy processes. Involving a broad cross-section of the community is essential to understanding the perspectives, priorities, and motivations of all participating members of the community.

Preservation Planning in Nassau County

Nassau County has completed a preservation-related plan through the Western Nassau Heritage Preservation Plan. This is a stand-alone plan that includes preservation goals as well as larger planning issues. This plan was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 2019.

In response to a Fall 2017 Urban Land Institute report on the impacts of growth on Western Nassau, the Nassau County Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) formed a subcommittee, the Western Nassau Heritage Preservation Committee (WNHPC). Five PZB members who live in Western Nassau served on the WNHPC. The committee was charged with discussing the future of Western Nassau, and to work with Planning staff to determine how they can best assist in planning efforts. The Committee's logo "Our Heritage, Our Future" echoes the historic Hilliard Poultry Association signage as a recognition of the County's past.

On March 26, 2019, after a year and a half of extensive community feedback to understand the wishes of the community, the WNHPC adopted the following mission statement: "The



Hilliard Town Hall, 2019. The Town Hall is an adaptive reuse project. The building was originally a Methodist Church. The Town of Hilliard purchased and renovated the church into city offices which opened in 2007. Credit: Adrienne Burke



Hilliard Poultry Association building in Hilliard, early 20th century. The signage on the building served as the inspiration for the Western Nassau Heritage Preservation Plan logo (above). Credit: State Archives of Florida

Western Nassau Heritage Preservation Committee exists because there is a genuine desire on the part of our citizenry to ensure what our name implies--Preservation! We enjoy a rich heritage in Western Nassau County. Through purposeful community engagement, we are driven to gain perspective and insight for inevitable growth. The underlying impetus of our goal is to maintain a high quality of life, preserve rural character, and ensure fiscally sustainable and appropriately controlled development."

The Committee and County Planning staff then translated community input into the Vision Book's goals, objectives, and strategies to be implemented over the planning horizon through 2045. Objectives and strategies relate to community goals including history, natural resources, health, quality of life, recreation, jobs and education, and public spaces and infrastructure. Community partners and other related County planning efforts such as Vision 2032 and the County Comprehensive Plan are also included in the Vision Book.



Community engagement photos from the WNHPC planning process. Credit: Nassau County Planning Department

RESEARCHING PROPERTY HISTORY

Architect Lori Miranda of Fernandina Beach's Miranda Architects provided the following information on researching your property history. With this information, you too can become a house historian!

Elements of a house history include:

- location (address/legal description)
- ownership trail
- any significance
- historic information (date of construction, builder, chain of title)
- community/state/nation historic context
- current condition
- floor plan and description of interior and exterior
- site plan, photographs, and a bibliography.

Getting Started

To get started, you need your address. It may also be helpful to have your parcel ID number as recorded through the County's Property Appraiser's office.

Resources

Resources that you can use to find information about your house history are: family papers, United States censuses, city directories, phone books, deeds, probate records, maps (historic and current), building permits, architectural drawings, tax records, newspapers, photographs, books, historic resource surveys, and oral histories. Libraries, the Property Appraiser, and County Clerk are places that could help locate information. [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) has city directories available online. The University of Florida has Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps available online that show historic building footprints and building materials.

Investigate the Building

Looking at the building can also give you insight into the evolution of your building. Investigate the architectural style, layout, construction methods, building materials, and fixtures. Looking at the neighborhood also provides context. Study when neighboring buildings were built, whether buildings look similar, landscaping, streets, and sidewalks as additional clues.

Sharing What You Learn

You can do different things with the information you find about your house history. You could write about your findings, do presentations, share with family, add your personal stories to the timeline of the building, and share the information with the County. Depending on the age and significance of the building, you may be able to consider National Register of Historic Places nomination or local historic designation.



7th St. Maj. Geo. R. Fairbanks' residence



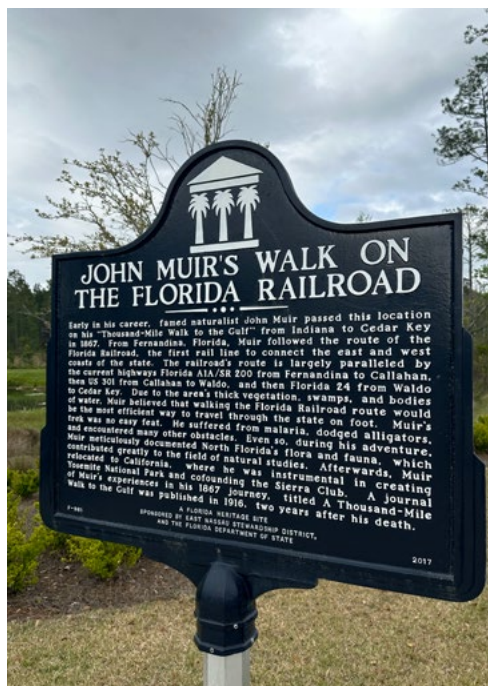
Clockwise from top: c.1885 Italianate residence, the Fairbanks House, in Fernandina Beach, 2023. Credit: Adrienne Burke. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map illustrating the Fairbanks House (in red circle), 1903. Credit: University of Florida Library Digital Collections. Historic image of the Fairbanks House. Credit: Amelia Island Museum of History.

HIGHLIGHTING AND PROTECTING HISTORIC SITES

State Historic Markers

The Florida Historical Marker Program is one of the Division of Historical Resources' most popular and visible public history programs. It is designed to raise public awareness of Florida's rich cultural history and to enhance the enjoyment of our historic sites by citizens and tourists. These markers allow us to tell the stories of the places and people who created the Florida that we all enjoy today, by identifying the churches, schools, archaeological sites, battlefields and homes that represent our past.

State historic markers are approved through an application process. The Florida Historic Marker Council meets several times a year to review applications. Application information is available on the Florida Division of Historical Resources website. **Having a state historic marker placed on a property does not apply any rules or restrictions to that property.**



Clockwise from left: State historic marker for a Dune System called NaNa at American Beach. State historic marker dedicated to naturalist John Muir and his walk through Florida, Yulee. State historic marker ceremony for Good Shepherd Church, Fernandina Beach. Pine Forest Community High School alumni members celebrate placement of state historic marker, Callahan, 2019. Credit for all photos: Adrienne Burke.

When a Historic Place is Gone

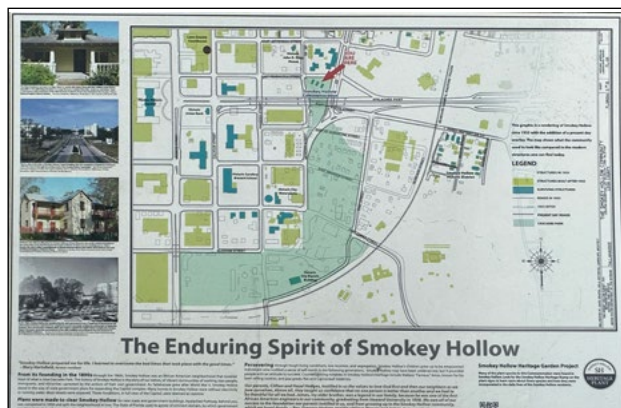
Even though a historic building or site may be gone, there are still ways to honor that heritage. Communities could use state historic markers or create a heritage trail to tell the story of a place. Public art such as murals can communicate history as well. “Ghost structures” are outlines of historic buildings that no longer exist. Community events, storytelling, and oral histories are additional ways to celebrate and preserve information around historic sites that may be gone.



Marker on African American Heritage Trail in St. Petersburg's Deuces neighborhood illustrating buildings lost to urban renewal. Credit: Adrienne Burke



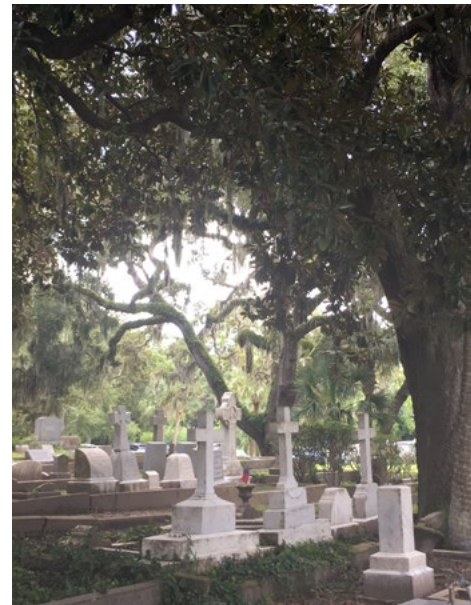
Features in Perry Harvey, Sr. Park in Tampa's Central Avenue neighborhood utilize historic imagery and Sanborn Fire Insurance maps to share the history of a neighborhood destroyed by urban renewal. Credit: Adrienne Burke



"Ghost structures" and interpretive signage in Tallahassee commemorate the Smokey Hollow neighborhood that was erased by urban renewal. Credit: Adrienne Burke


Historic Cemeteries

Nassau County is home to numerous historic cemeteries. Cemeteries represent culture and customs, history, purposeful or organic design, and craftsmanship. Cemeteries face many of the same threats that other historic sites do. [The Amelia Island Genealogical Society is a wonderful resource for information on all cemeteries within Nassau County.](#) Their website includes a database of information for most of the recorded cemeteries in the County.



Clockwise from top left: Bosque Bello Cemetery, Fernandina Beach, 2019. St. Peter's Episcopal Cemetery, Fernandina Beach, 2019. Historic Franklinton Cemetery, Amelia Island, 2019. Credit (all photos): Adrienne Burke

State Statutes Governing Historic Cemeteries

 emeteries are regulated under Chapter 497, Florida Statutes. Many of the laws in this section of the statutes deal with professionally owned and managed cemeteries that are still in operation. Cities owned by local governments are exempt from many of the requirements in this chapter. Historic cemeteries are not specifically addressed in many places in this chapter of Florida law. There are sections that deal with abandoned cemeteries (§497.284, F.S.) and inactive cemeteries (§497.286, F.S.).

Florida Statutes Section §704.08 allows relatives and descendants of any person buried in a cemetery to be able to access that cemetery in a reasonable time and manner. Relatives may also request the owner of the cemetery to maintain the cemetery, and if the owner refuses or fails to do so, the relatives have the right to maintain the cemetery.

Chapter 872, Florida Statutes deals with crimes related to human remains and graves, which cannot be intentionally disturbed (§872.02, F.S.). It is a felony under Florida law to willfully and knowingly destroy, mutilate, deface, injure or remove any tomb, monument, gravestone, burial mound, earthen or shell monument or any associated burial artifacts, as well as any structure designed for a memorial. This law also applies to trees, shrubs or plants within a grave enclosure. It is also a crime under this law to willfully and knowingly excavate, expose, move, remove or otherwise disturb the contents of a grave or tomb (human remains).

Chapter 872 also deals with situations where a human burial is discovered outside of an archaeological excavation (§872.05, F.S.). If a human burial is discovered, the activity must stop immediately and the local medical examiner must be notified.

If you have any questions regarding state statutes and how they relate to cemeteries in Nassau County, please contact the Nassau County Attorney's Office at (904) 530-6100.

Florida Historic Cemetery Inventory

It is very important to document historic cemeteries, just like other historic sites such as buildings. Knowing where cemeteries are located is critical, especially in a growing county like Nassau that is experiencing a lot of growth and development. Having cemeteries identified and mapped helps avoid any negative impacts to the cemetery.

Having cemeteries included on the Florida Master Site File is a great first step to helping a historic cemetery. You can contact the Florida Division of Historical Resources to find out if a cemetery has already been included on the Florida Master Site File.

You can also submit a form through the Florida Historic Cemetery Inventory. This inventory is a shared project between the Florida Division of Historical Resources and the Florida Public Archaeology Network. Information about cemeteries submitted through the inventory is verified by the state and FPAN. If it has not already been included on the Florida Master Site File yet, FPAN can help to get it included. <https://www.fpan.us/projects/florida-historic-cemetery-inventory/>



Florida Historic Cemetery Inventory logo. Credit: Florida Division of Historical Resources

African American Cemeteries

Historic African American cemeteries have been neglected, forgotten, or intentionally destroyed over the years. This is a tragic situation that has resulted in the loss of culture, history, and respect for those buried. These cemeteries are a unique and important aspect of Black culture and history. By recognizing and preserving these cemeteries, the invaluable contributions of Black individuals and communities to Florida's history and culture are recognized.

In 2021, the Florida legislature initiated the Task Force on Abandoned African American Cemeteries, which was generated in response to high-profile cases in the Tampa area including Zion Cemetery. Recommendations from the Task Force were translated into legislation in 2022, but did not pass. The legislation returned in 2023, and was successful. The Governor signed HB49 into law on May 25, 2023. This Abandoned and Historic Cemeteries legislation includes:

- Creation of a Historic Cemeteries program within Division of Historical Resources (DHR)
- Creation of a Historic Cemeteries Program Advisory Council
- Authorizes certain entities to acquire conservation easements to preserve cemeteries aka community groups
- Provides \$1 million for historic African American cemetery grants (non-recurring) and recurring funds for three staff positions in DHR

Other resources for African American cemeteries include the African American Burial Ground and Remembering Project at the University of South Florida, and the Florida African American Heritage Preservation Network.

African American Cemeteries in Nassau County

There are many African American cemeteries in Nassau County that honor the history of Black residents. These cemeteries have a connection to the cultural heritage of the Gullah Geechee community. Cemeteries are located throughout the County from Amelia Island to western Nassau. The Gullah/Geechee Nation has been working with the Florida Public Archaeology Network to draw attention to preservation of these sacred spaces.



Historic O'Neal Community Cemetery.
Credit: Adrienne Burke



Callahan Community Cemetery.
Credit: Adrienne Burke



Florida Public Archaeology Network

The Florida Public Archaeology Network's (FPAN) mission is to promote and facilitate the conservation, study and public understanding of Florida's archaeological heritage through regional centers throughout the state. Nassau County falls within FPAN's Northeast Region that is based at Flagler College in St. Augustine. FPAN conducts many educational programs around archaeology for the public.

One of FPAN's programs is called Cemetery Resource Protection Training (CRPT). This educational program for the public shares information on laws and best practices for maintaining historic cemeteries. The program also includes a field component where students learn how to properly clean headstones. This training has been held in Fernandina Beach and Callahan. Anyone is welcome to contact FPAN to schedule a CRPT training.

FPAN also offers guidance to local governments on including archaeology in local policy. FPAN archaeologists also are available to answer questions on cemeteries and archaeology for citizens in the Northeast region. FPAN works primarily with publicly-owned properties on physical projects, but training and information is available for people in the region who inquire.



Cemetery Resource Protection Training classroom training, West Nassau Museum of History, 2018. Credit: Adrienne Burke



Cemetery Resource Protection Training field work, Jones Cemetery in Callahan, 2018. Credit: Adrienne Burke

Cemetery Headstone Cleaning

General cleaning process

Always check the stability of the headstone before cleaning. If it is unstable, stay safe and select another stone for cleaning.

- 1** First gently brush away any dirt or debris from the stone using a soft, dry brush.
- 2** Wet the stone with water. If using D/2 Biological Solution, spray the stone. Water alone can be very effective, however.
- 3** Using a soft brush, start at the top of the stone and gently clean in a circular manner, working towards the bottom.
- 4** Clean the stone with water again.

Stone cleaning complete, until next time.

Do

- Use soft brushes or toothbrushes
- Use water
- Use D/2 Biological Solution



D/2 Biological Solution is safe to use for cleaning headstones. This solution can be cut with 50% water and still work effectively. The solution continues to clean even after use, and will last for some time. Credit: Adrienne Burke

Don't

(all of these can damage stones)

- Use metal or abrasive brushes
- Use bleach
- Pressure wash
- Make gravestone rubbings



The headstones of the Mordecai family in Bosque Bello Cemetery before and after cleaning with D/2 Solution. The Mordecai family were a prominent African American family in Fernandina. Credit: Adrienne Burke

Creating a Cemetery Friends Group

Most cemeteries in Nassau County are under private ownership. This means that the County does not own the cemeteries or maintain them. One way that interested citizens and volunteers can help take care of cemeteries is to form a Friends group. Friends groups are volunteers who come together to support a cemetery or cemeteries. The volunteers may donate time, political support, money, or supplies to help a cemetery. It does not matter how small the cemetery, people can form a Friends group. Friends groups may be formal or informal. The key component is having people come together to help the cemetery. One very important thing to consider is that the Friends group is able to continue working over a long period of time, or have plans for future volunteers, as maintenance and care of a cemetery is ongoing.

The Association of Gravestone Studies has created a Guide to Forming a Cemetery Friends Organization. This document provides information on how to form a group, what types of planning and projects the group can do, finding volunteers, event planning, and resources for funding.

https://www.gravestonestudies.org/images/Field%20Guide_Cemetery_Friends_Web.pdf

There are many active Friends groups across the country to look to for examples. While in most cases these groups are in partnership with cemeteries that are owned by local governments, Friends groups can be organized for privately-owned cemeteries.

- **Friends of Bosque Bello** (Fernandina Beach, FL) The Friends of Bosque Bello organized in 2018 to advocate for historic Bosque Bello cemetery in Fernandina Beach. The organization is affiliated with the Amelia Island-Fernandina Restoration Foundation. For more information, contact: friendsofbosquebello@gmail.com.
- **Friends of Decatur Cemetery** (Decatur, GA) The Friends of Decatur were founded in 1993 and work closely with the City of Decatur to preserve, maintain, and educate the community about historic Decatur Cemetery. <https://www.decaturga.com/publicworks/page/friends-decatur-cemetery>

- **Friends of Mount Moriah** (Philadelphia, PA) The Friends of Mount Moriah were founded in 2011 and have worked to restore the cemetery, coordinate volunteers and clean-up events, and provide education about this historic cemetery. <https://friendsofmountmoriahcemetery.org/>
- **Friends of Jacksonville's Historic Cemetery** (Jacksonville, OR) The Friends of Jacksonville's Historic Cemetery are active volunteers that work on maintenance, restoration, and preservation efforts in the cemetery. They have a cemetery block adoption program that connects volunteers with care for a specific section of the cemetery. They also conduct historic research, lead tour groups, and provide education to the community. <http://www.friendsjvillecemetery.org/our-volunteers.html>
- **The Friends of Eastern Cemetery** (Louisville, KY) The Friends of Eastern Cemetery was founded in 2014 and organizes clean-up events, community education through events, and provides education to other cemetery groups in the area about proper maintenance and care of cemeteries. <https://friendsofeasterncemetery.com/about/>
- **Friends of Ancient Cemetery** (Yarmouth, MA) The Friends of Ancient Cemetery was founded in 2018 and is dedicated to the preservation, protection and promotion of Ancient Cemetery. They organize clean-up events, headstone cleaning, documentation of the cemetery, and conduct historic research. <https://www.friendsofancientcemetery.org/>



Friends of Bosque Bello Cemetery headstone cleaning event, 2019. Credit: Adrienne Burke




Friends of Bosque Bello interest meeting, 2018. Credit: Adrienne Burke



Florida Public Archaeology Network staff guide volunteers on proper headstone cleaning technique at Mount Olive Cemetery in Jacksonville. Credit: Adrienne Burke

Grants

rant funding is not available for private properties. Grant projects are for public entities such as counties or municipalities, school districts, state colleges or universities, agencies of state government or nonprofits. Grants are competitive application processes that require management and administration. In many cases, grant applications require the applicant to provide a cash or in-kind match for the amount of award requested.

National Park Service

The Park Service provides funding for a variety of projects. Grant requirements and application deadlines vary. Grant programs include African American Civil Rights, History of Equal Rights, Underrepresented Communities, Battlefield Land Acquisition, Maritime Heritage, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Disaster Recovery, and Tribal Heritage. National Park Service grant requirements and application deadlines vary.

<https://www.nps.gov/history/grants.htm>

Library of Congress

The Library of Congress through the American Folklife Center funds cultural heritage projects for field research and documentation within diverse communities. Oral history projects and documentary efforts are examples of eligible projects. Projects are archived at the American Folklife Center.

<https://www.loc.gov/programs/of-the-people/collect-and-preserve/community-collections-grant-application/>

National Trust for Historic Preservation

The National Trust provides funding for a variety of projects. Most grants are for planning preservation projects. Other grants are limited to specific geographic regions or support nonprofit training. The National Trust funds the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund and Preserving Black Churches grant programs. National Trust grant requirements and application deadlines vary. <https://savingplaces.org/grants>

Florida Division of Historical Resources

Florida DHR provides grant funds from the State legislature and the National Park Service for preservation and protection of the state's historic and archaeological sites and properties. Two types of grants are available: small matching and special category. Small matching projects include survey, planning, National Register nominations, heritage education, and historical markers. These grants are eligible for awards up to \$50,000. Special category grants fund bricks and mortar projects such as preservation, restoration, rehabilitation or reconstruction of historic properties open to the public, archaeological research, museum exhibits for Florida history museums, and acquisition of historic properties or archaeological sites. These grants are eligible for awards up to \$500,000. Applications are typically accepted in April/May and project awards are for the following year; for example, applications accepted in 2024 are for projects that would start in 2025.

<https://dos.myflorida.com/historical/grants/>

Florida Humanities

Florida Humanities funds development and presentation of humanities-based cultural resources and public programs. Grants include funding for Florida Humanities' speakers, public media, film or digital projects, and community projects. Florida Humanities grant requirements and application deadlines vary.

<https://floridahumanities.org/funding-opportunities/>

Tax Exemptions

Federal

Tax incentives and exemptions are available for eligible private properties. The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program is administered by the National Park Service and the Internal Revenue Service. The primary incentive is a 20% federal tax credit that is available for rehabilitation of historic, income-producing buildings. The first place to start with pursuing these federal tax credits is to contact the Florida Division of Historical Resources. There are consultants who assist with federal tax credit applications.

State

The Florida legislature has authorized two types of ad valorem tax exemptions for historic preservation. These exemptions are found in Florida Statutes 196.1961, 196.1997, and 196.1998. Local governments have to adopt these exemptions as local ordinances. One exemption is available for eligible historic properties that are open to the public, and another exemption is available for rehabilitation projects on eligible historic properties. Properties that are eligible get a percentage of their ad valorem taxes exempted. The business exemption must be renewed annually. The rehabilitation exemption is valid for ten years. The City of Fernandina Beach has adopted both types of exemptions, which allows for exemption on a portion of city taxes only. Contact the City at (904) 310-3480 for more information.

Preservation Easements

Another incentive for historic preservation exists that can lead to federal tax deductions. These are called preservation easements. A preservation easement is a legal agreement between a property owner and a third party. These agreements lay out restrictions and conditions on the property that help to preserve the property. The third party is responsible for monitoring and enforcing the terms of the agreement. The tax deductions are determined based on approval by the federal Internal Revenue Service. It is recommended that if you are interested in pursuing a preservation easement on your property that you first speak with a land use or real estate attorney.

Federal

Association of Gravestone Studies <https://www.gravestonestudies.org/>

Cultural Landscape Foundation <https://www.tclf.org/>

Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor
<https://gullahgeecheecorridor.org/>

National Alliance of Preservation Commissions <https://www.napcommissions.org/>

National Center for Preservation Technology and Training Cemetery Conservation <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/ncptt/cemetery-conservation.htm>

National Park Service (NPS) <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/historicpreservation/index.htm>

NPS Technical Preservation Services Preservation Briefs <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/preservation-briefs.htm>

National Trust for Historic Preservation <https://savingplaces.org/>

State

African American Burial Ground and Remembering Project at University of South Florida <https://aae.lib.usf.edu/aabgp/>

Florida African American Heritage Preservation Network
<http://faahpn.com/>

Florida Division of Historical Resources <https://dos.myflorida.com/historical/>

Florida's Historic Cemeteries Booklet <https://files.floridados.gov/media/31938/floridahistoriccemeteries.pdf>

Florida Historic Cemetery Inventory <http://www.fpan.us/projects/florida-historic-cemetery-inventory/>

Florida Public Archaeology Network <http://www.fpan.us/>

Florida Trust for Historic Preservation <https://www.floridatrust.org/>

University of Florida Digital Collections Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps
<https://ufdc.ufl.edu/collections/sanborn>

Local

Amelia Island Genealogical Society <https://aigensoc.org/>

Amelia Island Museum of History <https://ameliamuseum.org/>

City of Fernandina Beach Historic Districts <http://www.fbfl.us/466/Historic-Districts>

Nassau County Clerk <https://www.nassauclerk.com/>

Nassau County Library <https://nassaureads.com/>

Nassau County Planning Department <https://www.nassaucountyfl.com/107/Planning-Department>

Nassau County Property Appraiser <https://www.nassauflpa.com/>

West Nassau Historical Society <http://www.wnhsfl.org/>

Yulee Historic Council <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1663937023844468/>

GLOSSARY

- Adaptive Reuse** Adaptive reuse is reusing an existing building for a purpose other than what it was first built or designed for.
- Certified Local Government** A “CLG” is a local government that has made historic preservation a policy priority. It is an application process managed by state preservation offices. CLG’s may be eligible for grants or technical assistance.
- Cultural Heritage** Cultural heritage refers to tangible and intangible aspects of a society’s past that are inherited from previous generations and preserved for future generations. It includes a wide range of aspects that shape a society’s identity, values, traditions, and way of life. Cultural heritage can be categorized into two main types: tangible and intangible heritage.
- Cultural Landscapes** Cultural landscapes are those that have been affected, influenced, or shaped by human involvement. These landscapes can be associated with a person or event, can be thousands of acres or a tiny homestead, can be a grand estate, industrial site, park, garden, cemetery, campus and more. Cultural landscapes are works of art, narratives of culture, and expressions of regional identity. Cemeteries are a recognizable example of cultural landscapes.
- Cultural Resources** Cultural resources refer to tangible and intangible elements of human culture and heritage that have historical, artistic, architectural, archaeological, or social significance. These resources encompass a wide range of assets, both physical and conceptual, that provide insights into a society’s traditions, history, values, and identity. Cultural resources include historic architecture and buildings, artifacts, archaeological sites, cultural landscapes, historic documents, oral traditions, and intangible cultural resources.

Design Guidelines	Design guidelines are a document that a local government may adopt that guides review of changes to historic properties. They are intended to be flexible and usually used with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards as additional information.
Historic Resources	Historic resources, also known as historic properties or cultural heritage resources, refer to physical elements or places that have significant historical, cultural, architectural, archaeological, or social value. These resources are typically associated with the past and are considered important for their ability to tell a story, provide insights into history, or contribute to a community's cultural identity.
National Register of Historic Places	This is a list maintained by the National Park Service. Properties are included by an application process. Being on the National Register does not protect sites from change or demolition. It is honorary.
Preservation Staff	Preservation staff are employees or contracted assistance to a local government. They typically assist with the Preservation Board and other preservation activities.
State Historic Preservation Officer	The "SHPO" is the person responsible for managing processes that are an interaction between the federal and local governments, such as the National Register or CLG programs. They may also have other duties as outlined by state legislation.
Secretary of the Interior's Standards	The Standards are federal guidance on the treatment of historic properties. The Secretary of the Interior is the Cabinet secretary who oversees the Department of the Interior, where the National Park Service is housed.

Preserving Heritage in Nassau County

Here's how you can make a difference for historic resources in Nassau County:

EDUCATE Spread the word about the importance of historic preservation. Share histories, host events, and educate others about the cultural, economic, and environmental benefits of preserving our past.

EXPLORE Visit historic sites, museums, and landmarks and invite others. By experiencing our history, you gain appreciation for its significance and inspire others to do the same.

CELEBRATE Attend heritage festivals, exhibitions, and events. Celebrating our history helps create a sense of pride and unity within our communities.

DOCUMENT Help record and document oral histories, photographs, and artifacts. These memories and artifacts contribute valuable information about our heritage, families and communities.

ADVOCATE Engage with the County, towns, organizations, and state and federal elected officials to advocate for policies that protect and support historic preservation efforts.

VOLUNTEER Get involved in preservation projects. Whether it's restoring a historic building, cataloging historic documents or leading tours, you can be a steward for local heritage.

DONATE Your financial support can support restoration projects, educational programs, and awareness campaigns that share the value of our history.

You can be a part of ensuring that Nassau County's history continues to inspire, educate, and connect us all. Working together, we can safeguard our heritage and create a future that honors our past.