
Tampa Bay History Center

Press Kit





Fact Sheet

Address Tampa Bay History Center 801 Old Water Street Tampa, Florida 33602	Contact Main phone: (813) 228-0097 Fax: (813) 223-7021 Web: www.tampabayhistorycenter.org
Operating Hours 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily Closed Thanksgiving and Christmas	Admissions \$12.95 adults \$10.95 seniors/college students/youth (13-17) \$7.95 children (4-12) \$9/person: adult groups of 10+ \$6/student: school groups of 10+

The Tampa Bay History Center's 60,000-square-foot, waterfront building opened in January 2009 in Tampa's Channel District, overlooking the Riverwalk and Cotanchobee-Fort Brooke Park. The four-level facility features:

- Two floors of interactive exhibits
- A 2,500-square-foot gallery for temporary exhibitions
- Two theaters
- Touchton Map gallery
- Witt Research Center (library)
- Classroom
- TECO special event hall
- Columbia Cafe
- Museum Store
- Collections storage (non-public)
- Administrative offices

Amenities

Columbia Cafe

The award-winning Columbia Restaurant, founded in 1905 in Tampa's Ybor City, is Florida's oldest restaurant. The Tampa Bay History Center is proud to house the Columbia Cafe, one of the restaurant's seven locations around the state. The Cafe offers indoor and outdoor dining space with live music on weekend nights.



Museum Store

The Museum Store provides a continuation of the museum experience for visitors through the sale of related merchandise. The Store offers a wide and unique selection of Florida and Tampa Bay area-focused books, toys and games, personal and home accessories, historic prints and posters, stationery, and more.

Special Events & Rentals

With beautiful waterfront views and on-site catering, the History Center is an exceptional venue to host corporate parties, receptions, meetings, and other special events. Spaces available for private rentals are listed below. For more information, call (813) 229-5529.

- **TECO Special Events Hall**—TECO Hall features a floor-to-ceiling window overlooking Garrison Channel and offers on-site audio visual equipment, including a drop down screen and projector. Capacity: 200 seated, 300 standing.
- **Lykes Atrium and Terrace**—With a soaring 60-foot ceiling, the glass-enclosed Lykes Atrium showcases *Icons of Tampa Bay*—14 large, colorfully-lit artworks representing historic characters, events, and symbols unique to the Tampa Bay region. Capacity: 400 standing.
- **Classrooms** - Located on the second floor, our classroom can be divided into two separate spaces or used as one large room. Perfect for board meetings or presentations. Capacity: 40.



NEWS RELEASE

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Experience the Tampa Bay History Center

(Tampa, FL) – Opened on January 17, 2009, the Tampa Bay History Center is a 60,000-square-foot waterfront museum located at 801 Old Water Street in Tampa’s Channel District.

A Smithsonian Affiliate museum, the History Center includes three floors of permanent and temporary exhibition space focusing on 12,000 years of Florida’s history. The History Center also features a Museum Store, classrooms, the Witt Research Center, which is a branch of the Hillsborough County Public Library System, a map gallery, an event hall and the Columbia Cafe.

With more than 80,000 annual visitors, the History Center is one of Tampa’s premier cultural venues, and an anchor of the city’s cultural arts district. The History Center’s hands-on exhibit galleries, educational programs and community events offer a fun, educational, and entertaining experience for visitors of all ages.

The Tampa Bay History Center is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Regular admission is \$12.95 for adults, \$10.95 for students, seniors and children between the ages of 13 and 17, and \$7.95 for children ages four to twelve.

For more information, visit www.tampabayhistorycenter.org or call (813) 228-0097.

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Tampa Bay History Center Timeline

Hillsborough County was 14 times its present size when it was established by the Florida Territorial Legislature in 1834. Its boundaries included all or part of 24 present-day counties, stretching from Ocala to Lake Okeechobee and St. Petersburg to Orlando.

In the early 1880s, Tampa residents expressed concern that there was no organized effort to preserve and display local artifacts. In the January 19, 1882, issue of *The Sunland Tribune*, County Judge J. G. Knapp wrote, "... no time should be lost in snatching the historical artifacts from the waste and death of oblivion. Who shall do it?"

Fast forward 100 years:

1986: The Hillsborough County Commission assembles a taskforce to explore the feasibility of creating a regional history museum.

1989: The History Museum of Tampa-Hillsborough County, Inc., a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit, is established by a group of private citizens led by Tampa businessman J. Thomas Touchton. Mr. Touchton serves as Chairman of the Board of Trustees until 2000.

1993: A small museum space opens in the Shoppes of Harbour Island, showcasing objects from the museum's collection and from other local and statewide institutions.

1993: The History Museum of Tampa-Hillsborough County, Inc. officially changes its name to the Tampa Bay History Center (TBHC).

1995: The Hillsborough County Commission charges TBHC with the care, in perpetuity, of the County collection.

1996: TBHC moves to the Tampa Convention Center Annex on Franklin Street, serving the community with permanent and traveling exhibitions, public programs, tours, outreach, research assistance, and publications.

1998: The Hillsborough County Commission commits \$17 million in Community Investment Tax funds toward the planning and construction of a new museum building for TBHC.

2000: Attorney George B. Howell III succeeds J. Thomas Touchton as Chairman of TBHC's Board of Trustees and continues the commitment of the board, staff, members, and volunteers to acquire a permanent home for the museum.

2004: Tampa and Hillsborough County leaders sign an agreement to build the new History Center in Cotanchobee-Fort Brooke Park on a 2.4-acre tract secured by the City of Tampa through a grant from the Florida Communities Trust.

February 2006: To complete the process of building the new museum, *The Campaign to Create the Tampa Bay History Center Experience* is authorized by the Board of Trustees. Launched in

September 2006: The Capital Campaign is launched, requiring the History Center to raise \$28 million in private funds, \$17 million more than its initial pledge of \$11 million to the Hillsborough County Commission. Mr. Touchton chairs the campaign.

October 2007: Construction begins on the museum's new 60,000-square-foot home — Hillsborough County's first publicly-owned LEED Certified "Green Building."

October 2007: Because of the success of the campaign and the need for an additional \$4.5 million to build out the new museum, the Board of Trustees agrees to increase the private campaign goal from \$28 million to \$32 million.

March 2008: TBHC closes its museum space on Franklin Street to begin staging for the move into the new building.

June 2008: Local dignitaries, guests, board members, and staff gather with more than 200 construction workers to celebrate the last milestone of construction — the topping-out of the Tampa Bay History Center.

June 2008: The History Center receives word that it has been awarded a \$1-million challenge grant from the prestigious Kresge Foundation to help build the museum and its exhibits. To receive the \$1-million grant, the History Center must complete its fundraising campaign by April 1, 2009.

January 2009: The History Center celebrates the grand opening of its new facility.

March 2009: The History Center successfully meets the Kresge Challenge, raising \$32 million in private contributions five days ahead of schedule.

October 2009: The History Center Building, which owned by Hillsborough County, is re-named the J. Thomas Touchton Tampa Bay History Center Building.

2011: The History Center is designated as a Smithsonian Institution Affiliate organization.

2012: The History Center receives a Silver LEED certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

EXHIBITS

The museum's exhibition galleries explore 500 years of recorded history and 12,000 years of human habitation in the Tampa Bay region.

FIRST FLOOR

- ***Icons of Tampa Bay***

The museum's main entrance, the glass-enclosed Lykes Atrium, showcases 14 colorful icons representing historic characters, events, and symbols unique to the Tampa Bay region. Icons include: 1902 Oldsmobile; tug boat; Gasparilla ship; Tampa streetcar; B-26 bomber; Florida cowhunter; Babe Ruth; Tampa cigar label; longshoreman; strawberry plane citrus label; steam engine; Tampa Bay marquee; flamenco dancer; and tarpon angler.

- ***Theater—Winds of Change***

Beginning with Pánfilo de Narváez's landing near Tampa Bay in 1528, *Winds of Change* profiles some of the first European explorers who came to Florida.

- ***Florida's First People***

The Tocobaga and Calusa tribes resided in Central and South Florida beginning over 12,000 years ago. The Florida's First People exhibit features original and replica artifacts from pre-European contact ranging from the Paleoindian Period (12,000 B.C.-6,000 B.C.) through the Mississippian Period (1,000 A.D.-1,600 A.D.). Tools, weapons, and pottery are displayed, along with original artwork by St. Augustine artist Theodore Morris.

- ***European Exploration Story***

Using an oversized map of the Atlantic Ocean, the European Exploration exhibit details the arrival of Spanish and French explorers who landed in Florida at the beginning the 16th Century. Artifacts are related to Spanish exploration, including period clothing, weapons, and tools.

- ***Seminole and Miccosukee Story***

The Charles L. Knight Gallery features a collection of Seminole and Miccosukee artifacts, including clothing, patchwork, jewelry, baskets, tools, and weapons. Visitors can enjoy a multisensory theater experience, *Coacoochee's Story*, and view a replica chickee—a structure made of palmetto thatch over a cypress log frame.

- ***Cigar City***

This exhibit tells the story of Tampa's cigar industry and immigrant communities in Ybor City, West Tampa, and Palmetto Beach. Visitors can walk through a 1920s-era cigar store and cigar factory; explore topics such as immigration, politics, and culture; and view cigar manufacturing and label printing artifacts, original furniture, and a model of a West Tampa cigar factory.

SECOND FLOOR

- ***Your Tampa Bay***

This interactive map of the Tampa Bay region enables visitors to take a virtual tour of significant landmarks. Visitors can view photographs and detailed information about each point of interest.

- ***Cowmen & Crackers***

This exhibit puts viewers in the middle of an actual cattle drive on the Lightsey Ranch in Kissimmee, Fl. Artifacts include branding irons, whips, saddles, and other ranching-related equipment. Kids can pretend to brand a cow and ride a horse.

- ***A Place of Our Own***

Our area's natural resources support industries in phosphate mining, fishing, and agriculture. The *Land & Sea* area features a grove stand filled with "Floridiana," a restored 1908 Reo automobile, and a "design your own crate label" interactive station.

- ***Port City***

The story of Tampa's industrial ports begins with an introductory film inside an actual shipping container-turned-theater. Kids can also play with a hands-on "Tiny Tampa" port interactive.

- ***Year Round Play***

This gallery highlights Tampa's year-round recreational and social activities. The Gasparilla and Strawberry festivals are highlighted, as are Tampa's professional sports franchises.

- ***Witness to Change***

This gallery looks at significant events that were catalysts for change in the Tampa Bay region, focusing on three areas: civil rights, urban development, and the natural environment.

- ***War Stories***

Focusing on wars that have touched our state and region since the 1830s, visitors can learn about war artifacts using an interactive timeline, and view a model of Fort Brooke.

- ***A Land Remembered***

Inspired by Patrick Smith's novel by the same name, this exhibition includes a replica pioneer cabin and original artifacts. Kids can try on pioneer clothes and play games in a hands-on Discovery Center.

- ***Tampa Bay Timeline***

A series of large panels with compelling photographs, renderings and artifacts, this timeline tracks 500 years of history in Tampa Bay beginning with European contact in 1528.

- ***J. Thomas and Lavinia W. Touchton Collection of Florida Cartography***

Contains nearly 3,000 maps and charts of Florida spanning 500 years.

THIRD FLOOR

- ***Wayne Thomas Temporary Exhibition Gallery***

The 2,500-square-foot Wayne Thomas gallery houses a rotating schedule of traveling exhibitions from other institutions, as well as temporary installations developed by TBHC staff.

What People Are Saying About the Tampa Bay History Center



The History Center is Tampa's No. 1 Museum as ranked by Trip Advisor

"I had it in my mind that it would probably be a dingy old building with rusty old tools on display. To my surprise nothing could be further from the truth, it is a brand new building of stunning design and the displays and movies were great with the latest technical know-how. I was really impressed with it all."

"My Red Hat Chapter members gave rave reviews for this museum. Everyone was so impressed with the beauty of the building, the exhibits, the historical information and the professionalism of every single staff person with whom we came into contact."

"Fantastic! I really enjoyed the mix of fun and education. One of the best museums in Florida!"

"In one day I learned more about Tampa than living here since 1984. I look forward to bringing the rest of my family and friends here. Look forward to growing with you."

"We are more knowledgeable now and more able to spread the word of the positive aspects of the city."

"I loved this museum – it was very well presented and quite diverse."

"BRAVO! We brought our 5-year-old grandsons and both generations learned something. This is a marvelous thing on Tampa and Florida. Thank you!"

"I was born in Tampa. This museum is beautifully planned and executed. I'm very proud of it."

"This place rocks! I love it!"

Key Personnel

C.J. Roberts, Frank E. Duckwall President and CEO



C.J. Roberts has served as the President and CEO of the Tampa Bay History Center since September of 2005. He was hired to lead all facets of the planning, construction, opening, and operating of the History Center, which opened in January of 2009. Building a new museum was a familiar task for Roberts. He was selected by the late author/historian Stephen Ambrose to lead the team that built and opened The National World War II Museum, formerly the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana on June 6, 2000 to an international audience of World War II veterans, political officials, and celebrities.

Prior to assuming his role with the Tampa Bay History Center, Roberts served as the President & CEO of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, Georgia. During his five years at the helm of this organization, he led successful initiatives that enabled the museum to dramatically expand its facilities and audiences. He is most proud of the fact that during his tenure, he and his staff were able to retire approximately \$14 million in debt incurred during the facility's initial building in 1996.

Roberts also served as Director of the George C. Marshall Museum at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia and as a park ranger with the National Park Service at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

C.J. Roberts received his B.A. in History and Folklore and a M.L.S. (Master of Library and Information Science) from Indiana University. He is a graduate of the distinguished Getty Museum Management Institute and is active in numerous professional museum and historical organizations.

Roberts is a 2007 Leadership Tampa graduate. He serves as a board member of the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce, the Tony Jannus Distinguished Aviation Society, and as a member of the USF Florida Studies Center Advisory Council and the CEO Council of Tampa Bay. In September 2008, Roberts was profiled as a Governor's Choice (former Governor Bob Martinez) as one of 50 "World Changers"---Floridians who will change the state in the coming years feature in *Florida Trend* magazine.

R. James Robbins, Jr. Chair of the Tampa Bay History Center Board of Trustees



Jim Robbins is one of the founding attorneys of Tampa-based Hill Ward Henderson, and serves as the firm's Managing Shareholder. His practice primarily involves business and real estate transactions, as well as a wide range of sophisticated commercial business and real estate matters, including land acquisition and development, mergers and acquisitions, leasing and financing transactions.

Jim is active in leadership positions with several of Tampa's civic, charitable and social organizations. In addition to chairing the History Center's Board of Trustees, he has served on the Boards of Directors of The Florida Aquarium, Jesuit High School, The Academy of the Holy Names, and Positive Coaching Alliance, Tampa Bay. Jim is also a long-time youth baseball coach.

Rodney Kite-Powell, Saunders Foundation Curator of History



Rodney Kite-Powell is the Saunders Foundation Curator of History at the History Center, where he joined the staff in 1994. His academic degrees include a Bachelor of Arts in History from the University of Florida and a Master of Arts in History from the University of South Florida.

Born and raised in Tampa, he has written extensively on the history of Tampa and Hillsborough County. He is the author of *History of Davis Islands: David P. Davis and the Story of a Landmark Neighborhood* (History Press, 2013). In addition to his duties at the History Center, Mr. Kite-Powell is the Chairman of the Historic Riverwalk Monument Committee and has served as an adjunct professor of history at the University of Tampa, where he taught courses on Florida History.