

History & Nature

More than 150 years ago, St. Joseph was selected over Tallahassee (the territorial capital) as the site of the state's Constitution Convention because of antagonism between East Florida and Middle Florida and because of the efforts of boomtown promoters. St. Joseph, created in 1835, was a boomtown when it competed with the town of Apalachicola as a trading port. Its population quickly reached 12,000.

By 1840, it was clear that the city of St. Joseph could not compete commercially with Apalachicola; and the town laid aside its role as a commercial metropolis and served as an attractive pleasure resort. In the summer of 1841, yellow fever reached epidemic proportions in the entire territory, and St. Joseph was especially hard hit. The population declined from fewer than 6,000 to 400 in less than one year. Many of the deserted houses were dismantled and shipped to Apalachicola for reconstruction. Some still remain there today.

The first of Florida's five constitutions was drafted by a convention that met on December 3, 1838. By working diligently for 34 days, the elected delegates hammered out a framework for Florida's future and finished their work on January 11, 1839. The Territorial Legislative Council had called the convention without congressional authorization after a referendum election in 1837 showed a territory-wide majority in favor of statehood.



Florida State Parks

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks

Constitution Convention State Park

200 Allen Memorial Way
Port St. Joe, FL 32456
(850) 229-8029

FloridaStateParks.org

Park Guidelines

- The museum visitor center is open from 9:00 a.m. to noon and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Thursday through Monday. The museum visitor center is closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years Day.
- An entrance fee is required.
- Museum tours are available when the museum is open.
- All plants, animals and park property are protected. Collection, destruction or disturbance is prohibited.
- Pets are not allowed in the museum.
- Become a volunteer. Inquire at the ranger station.
- Florida's state parks are committed to providing equal access to all facilities and programs. Should you need assistance to enable your participation, please contact the ranger station.

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Florida state park.

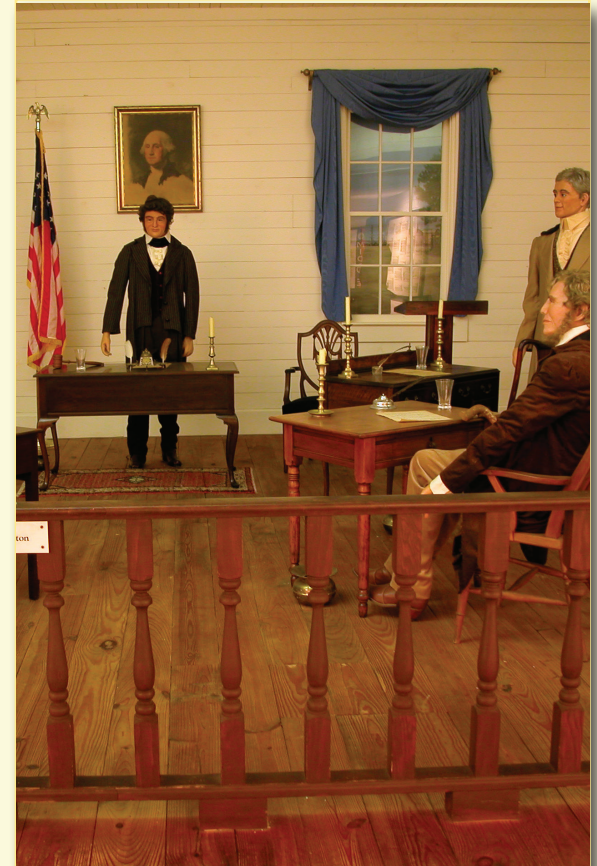


FLORIDA
State Parks
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Constitution Convention Museum State Park

Where Florida's constitution was written



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National Gold Medal Winner

Florida State Parks - "America's First Three-Time Winner"

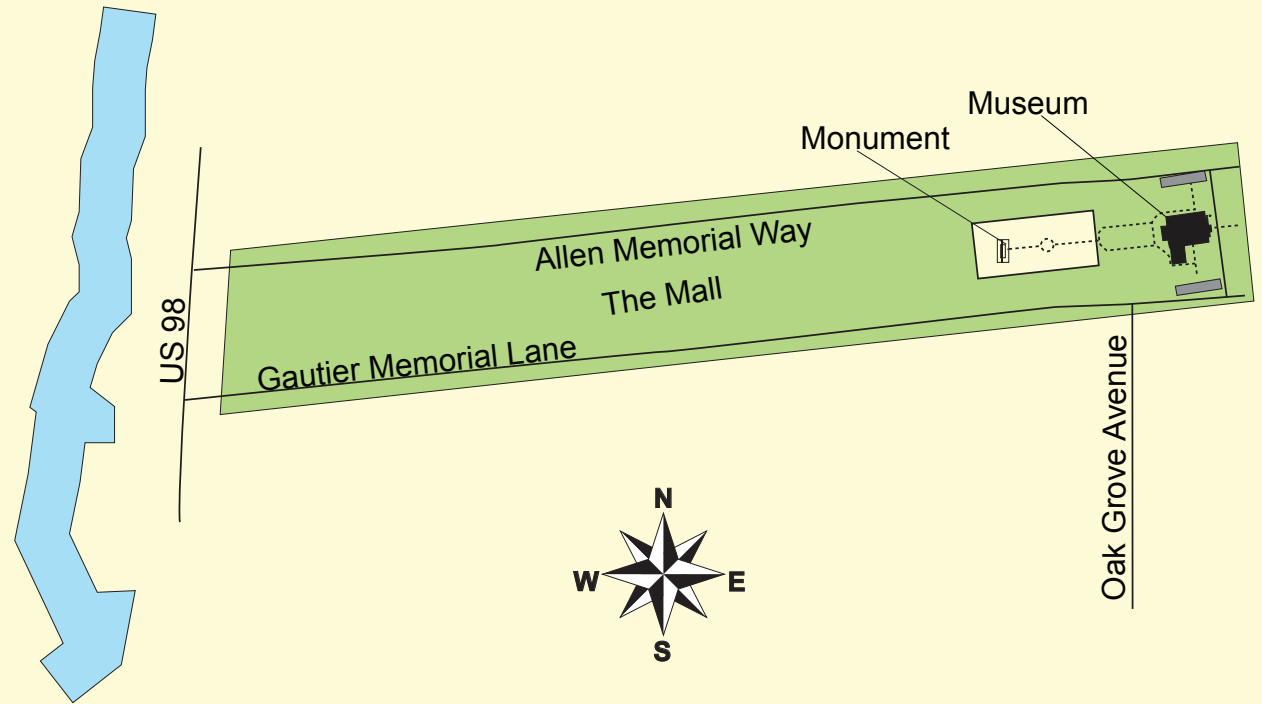
Real Fun in ...the Real FloridaSM

Welcome to Constitution Convention Museum State Park. Visit the museum and 14-acre park to learn about the territory when its constitution was written. Located just outside of historic Port St. Joe, the museum displays give insight into a time when Florida was only a territory.

Spend a few minutes or the day at the museum and experience a nostalgic look at this great period in time. The location is popular with local residents and visitors.

A self-guided tour leads visitors through displays and exhibits of the era of the late 1830s referencing life in the town of St. Joseph. Railroad moguls mixed with high society in this prosperous time. It was this affluence that brought the state's first constitution convention to the town of St. Joseph in 1838. A replicated convention hall takes visitors into the debate of delegates Robert Raymond Reid, William P. Duvall, David Y. Levy and Thomas L. Baltzell. These life-size, audio-animated mannequins bring a realistic touch to the pomp and circumstance of drafting a state constitution.

The museum commemorates the work of the 56 territorial delegates who drafted Florida's first constitution in 1838. Following four more constitution conventions, Florida was finally admitted to the Union in 1845 as the 27th state. A boomtown founded in 1835, St. Joseph competed with Apalachicola as a trading port on Florida's coast on the Gulf of Mexico. The original settlement lasted only nine years, but during its short life the city hosted Florida's first State Constitution Convention.



Directions

Constitution Convention Museum State Park is located on U.S. 98 in Port St. Joe, Florida.

