

## History & Nature

In 1528, Panfilo de Narvaez traveled over land from Tampa and arrived at this site with 300 men. Impressed by the area located at the confluence of the Wakulla and St. Marks rivers, Narvaez built and launched the first ships made by white men in the New World. In 1539, Hernando de Soto, along with 600 men, followed the same route taken by Narvaez.

By 1679, the Spanish Governor of Florida started construction on the first fort built at the junction of the two rivers. The logs used were coated with lime to give the appearance of stone. The fort stood for three years before it was looted and burned by pirates. In 1718, Captain Jose Primo de Ribera arrived to construct a second wooden fort.

Construction began on the first stone fort in 1739. Progress was slow, and the fort was less than half complete when it was delivered to the English in 1763. By 1787, Spain regained control of the fort, reoccupying it for 13 more years. Spanish rule was challenged in 1800 by a former British officer named William Augustus Bowles. Bowles attempted to unify and lead an independent Creek nation of 400 Indians against the Spanish, eventually capturing San Marcos.

In 1821, Florida was ceded to the United States, and U.S. troops were sent to occupy the fort. Three years later, the fort was abandoned and turned over to the Territory of Florida. By 1839, the fort was returned to the U.S. Government and construction of a federal marine hospital began 18 years later, utilizing stones from the Spanish fort.

The final confrontation at San Marcos occurred in 1861 when the Confederates took the fort, renaming it Fort Ward.

### Florida State Parks

Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Division of Recreation and Parks

#### San Marcos de Apalache Historic State Park

148 Old Fort Road  
St. Marks, Florida 32355  
(850) 925-6216

[FloridaStateParks.org](http://FloridaStateParks.org)

### Park Guidelines

- The historic site is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Thursday through Monday. The park is closed on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.
- There is no entrance fee required to enter the park. However, there is a nominal fee for museum admission.
- All plants, animals and park property are protected. Collection, destruction or disturbance is prohibited.
- Pets must be well behaved and kept on a hand-held leash no longer than six feet at all times. Pets are not permitted in the museum.
- Become a volunteer. Inquire at the museum.
- 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 administrative office at (850) 922-6007.

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request at any  
Florida state park.



**FLORIDA**  
**State Parks**  
*...the Real Florida<sup>SM</sup>*  
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## San Marcos de Apalache Historic State Park

Northwest  
Florida

Florida History from the Spanish Era  
to the Civil War Period



*...the Real Florida<sup>SM</sup>*



**National Gold Medal Winner**

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

## Real Fun in ...the Real Florida<sup>SM</sup>

The many different flags flying over San Marcos de Apalache Historic State Park welcome visitors to the park and demonstrate the colorful history of this site, from the Spanish explorers to the present day. The history of this National Landmark dates back to 1528 when Panfilo de Narvaez arrived in the area with 300 men; however, the first fort was not built until 1679. Andrew Jackson occupied the fort for a brief time in the early 1800s.

The **museum** at the park displays pottery and tools unearthed near the original fort. **Interpretive displays** explain the history of the San Marcos site. A **video** recounts the days of the Spanish, English, American and Confederate forces that once occupied this site. A **self-guided interpretive trail** is open to visitors. **Guided tours** are available with two week's notice.

A **picnic** area is available featuring picnic tables and barbecue grills. Tucker's Point offers a **scenic view** at the water's edge where the St. Marks River joins the Wakulla River and flows out into Apalachee Bay. The point is an excellent spot for **fishing**. Species commonly caught at this unique spot where fresh and salt water come together include redfish, speckled trout, sheepshead and even largemouth bass! A Florida fishing license is required for persons 16 years of age or older.

