

# APALACHICOLA'S SIX HISTORIC SQUARES



## KEY TO MAP



GORRIE MEMORIAL



COM-MUNITY GARDEN



ONCE USED AS GRAZING PASTURE



WATER TOWER



LIVE OAKS



TENNIS COURT



OLD COUNTY COURT-HOUSE



BASKET BALL COURT

PALMS



# Washington Square

**Avenue G between 10th and 11th Streets**

Washington Square, likely named for the country's first president, is located in the approximate geographical center of the Historic District. Covering a four block area, it is the largest of the squares and the only one of the six to have remained physically intact - that is, not intersected by streets. It is believed that Washington Square was originally meant to be the center of town, but development naturally gravitated to the river and the bay.

In the early 1900s, local resident Patsy Philyaw said her father remembered that he led the family cow to graze on Washington Square all day while he was at school. Washington Square remained open space until 1892, when the County erected an imposing, Romanesque-style brick building on it. The building served as the Franklin County courthouse until 1940 and later as the county health and welfare departments before being dismantled in 1957 to make way for Weems Memorial Hospital. Also in 1892, the now defunct County Jail was located on the northwest quadrant of Washington Square. Today, Weems shares Washington Square with the Love Center Church, the County Health Department, and the Apalachee Center.

# Franklin Square

**Avenue L and 6th Street**

Franklin Square occupies the northeast corner of both the City's Historic District and the traditionally African-American neighborhood known as "the Hill," due to its elevation above the river and the downtown. At one time stately homes were scattered across the Hill, but most of these were either moved or destroyed. A large number of shotguns - the iconic Southern workforce housing - once lined the Hill's streets, but these too have mostly disappeared. Franklin Square abuts one of the town's best examples of Mission-style architecture: the Holy Family Senior Center. Constructed as a church and Catholic school for African-American children in 1928, it was the hub of the black community here for half a century before being renovated to serve its current purpose. The interior remains virtually unchanged and a photographic exhibit, paying homage to the school and the community, is on permanent display (M-F, 10 to 2). Franklin Square, named for Benjamin Franklin, features a recreation center, basketball and tennis courts, a playground and picnic pavilion, and one quadrant of open green space, used every February for the Annual African-American History festival. This last named quadrant's use conforms fairly closely to the intended purpose of the squares.

# Madison Square

**Avenue L and 14th Street**

James Madison (1751-1836), after whom this square is named, was the fourth President of the United States. He helped draft the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights (the first ten amendments to the Constitution), and he served as Secretary of State under President Jefferson.

Madison Square was undisturbed until 1920 when streets bisected it. The water tower on the southeast quadrant erected in the 1960s is still in use. In 2010, the City allowed a skateboard park to be built on the southwest quadrant named for an Apalachicola native, who was a musician and avid skateboarder. The two north quadrants remain unused and are currently wooded.

This square is ready for restoration to its original intended purpose as open space for community use, the goal of Restore Apalachicola's Historic Squares project.

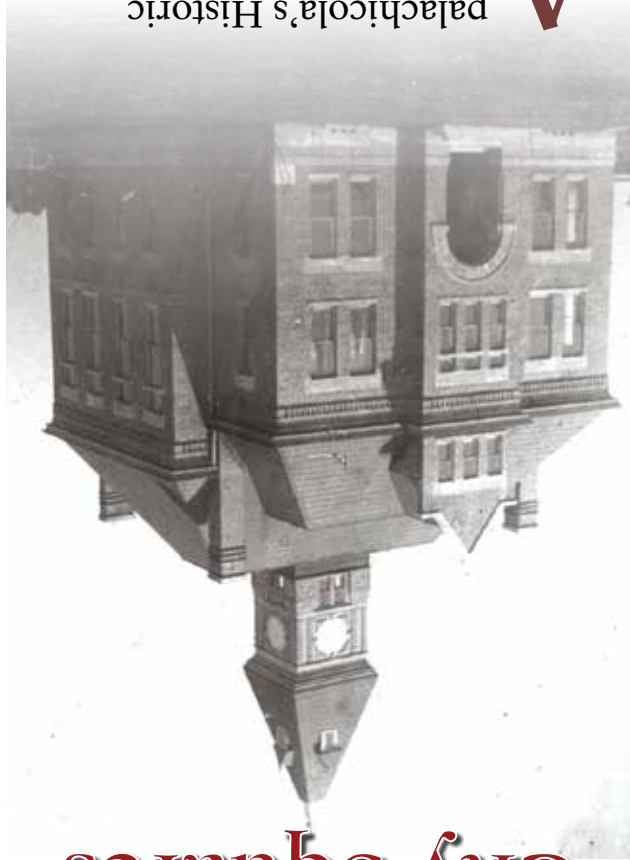
# Chapman Square

**Avenue D & 14th Street**

Chapman Square was originally named "Marshall Square", in honor of Chief Justice John Marshall who rendered the 1835 US Supreme Court's decision confirming the much-disputed Spanish land grants to the Apalachicola Land Company. A newspaper report in July 1909 states that a "Mr. Morgan was instructed [by the City Commission] to tear down the old stable on Marshall Square." At some point after 1909, this square was renamed for the noted botanist, Dr. Alvan W. Chapman (1809-1899), a friend and colleague of Dr. John Gorrie. Dr. Chapman discovered many rare plants and trees in the region and is best known for his book *Flora of the Southern United States* (1860). He is also remembered for having led the choir at Trinity Episcopal Church on Gorrie Square. Chapman opposed the secession of Florida, and during the Civil War years he was known to hide from Southern patrols in Trinity Church. Chapman's home, now restored, is located at the corner of Avenue E and 6th Street. The Chapman Botanical Garden adjoining the Thomas Orman House is on Market Street. Alvan Chapman is buried alongside his wife in Chestnut Cemetery, directly behind his former home. Chapman Square, has open space in three quadrants of the Square and tennis courts in the fourth, and conforms well to the intended use of the squares.



Apalachicola's Historic Squares are identified as Washington Square, Gorrie Square, Chapman Square, Franklin Square, Madison Square, and City Square.



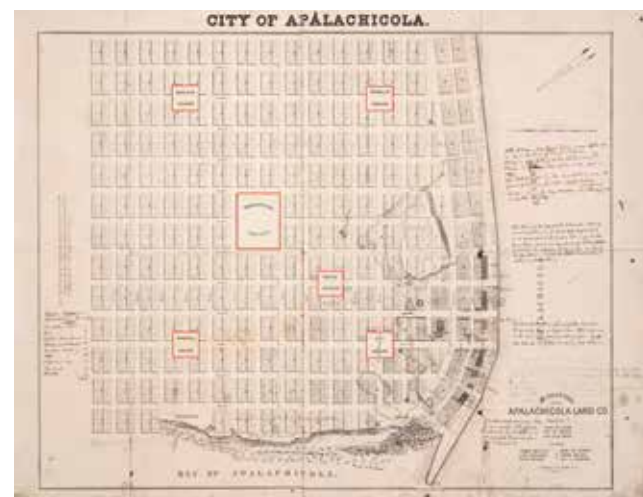
Apalachicola  
Historic  
City Squares

# Apalachicola and Franklin County

Named for scientist and diplomat Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) of Philadelphia who helped draft the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution, Franklin County was created in 1832 with Apalachicola as its seat. The land which comprises Franklin County was originally occupied by Seminole and Creek Indians and then claimed, at various times, by Spain, France and Great Britain.

The county, one of 25 by the same name in the US, contains about 350,000 acres and a population of almost 12,000. Before the Civil War, Apalachicola prospered as the third largest cotton port on the Gulf. Later, lumber and seafood, especially oysters, became its leading industries. Carrabelle, to the east, is the only other municipality in Franklin County. During WWII, Carrabelle Beach was a training ground for the D-Day invasion of Normandy.

Source: *Apalachicola: Economic Development Through Historic Preservation*, 2009 by architect Willoughby Marshall, pp 29-25 & 89-91.



Apalachicola's layout, with its central square and rectilinear grid of streets and blocks, harkens back to Spain's 16th century "Laws of the Indies," a codified process to aid Spanish colonists in building settlements in the Americas. These design guidelines were ultimately used in a variety of cities, including Philadelphia, which is said to have served as the model for Apalachicola. Both cities have a large central square and five smaller squares. The Apalachicola Land Company generously gave the City of Apalachicola its six squares, its streets, and other lots for public use. Philadelphia's squares were meant to be open space and perhaps the same was true in Apalachicola. Former Mayor Jimmie Nichols wrote "although the original city planners hoped citizens would build their homes around the squares, it was not to be". In November 1980, the Apalachicola Historic District (as seen on the map above) was added to the US National Register of Historic Places, and all six of the City's squares lie within the Historic District. Of interest also is the fact that four of the squares (Madison, Franklin, Chapman and Gorrie) can be seen one from the other. The visibility of the squares would be enhanced by the erection of a monument, fountain, statue or sculpture in the centers of these four squares.

Today, our squares have "lost their identities". Streets cut through them, and in many cases buildings and other structures have been constructed on them. Many people may not even be aware of their existence. Restoration of the squares is now being undertaken by the Historic Apalachicola Foundation, a 501c3. **Follow Apalachicola's Historic Squares on Facebook. Donations may be made on [gofundme.com/apalachicolas-historic-squares](https://www.gofundme.com/apalachicolas-historic-squares). Questions? Email @ [restoresquares2020@gmail.com](mailto:restoresquares2020@gmail.com).**

# Gorrie Square

**Avenue D & 6th Street**

The 1836 Apalachicola Land Company map shows that the original name for this square was City Square. Its name was changed after a monument was erected here in 1899 to honor Dr. John Gorrie (1803-1855), the Apalachicola physician who was granted the first U.S. patent for mechanical refrigeration, leading to the air-conditioning we enjoy today. Gorrie's list of accomplishments includes positions as mayor, postmaster, bank president, secretary of the Masonic Lodge and a founding vestryman of Trinity Episcopal Church. The monument to him is in front of Trinity Church. In 1906 a steel water tower for Apalachicola's first water system was erected at the center of the square where it stood until a hurricane toppled it 1885. In 1956-7, on the southwest quadrant, the Gorrie Museum was built, and Gorrie's grave - after several relocations - now lies in the southeast quadrant. Gorrie's is one of 2 statues of Floridians in the Washington D.C. Capitol Statuary Hall. The two cannons in the Square's center moved there around 2000 are the remains of seven cannons and a mound of cannonballs obtained in 1913 from Fort Barrancas near Pensacola to decorate Battery Park. An 1857 map shows no roads having been cut through this square, but a later map reveals that to have changed by 1915. Some old-timers report that cows and at least one goat were sometimes brought to this square to graze.

# City Square

**Avenue F & 8th Street**

City Square, just southeast of Washington Square, was first known as "White Square" for lawyer Joseph White (1781-1839), a delegate from the Florida Territory to Congress and a trustee of the Apalachicola Land Company. He was instrumental in the Apalachicola Land Company's legal acquisition of what became Apalachicola and Franklin County. This square was renamed in the early 1900s when the original "City Square" became Gorrie Square. In the early decades of the 20th century, City Square's southeast quadrant housed a "Pound," but this was finally closed due to repeated complaints of odors. The northeast and northwest quadrants which today are home to the City's Community Garden were the site of a trailer park in the 1970s. City Square is most notable for its connection to the historic Chestnut Street Cemetery, the oldest burying ground in Apalachicola. Many people who were significant in the history and development of the town are buried here, as are Civil War veterans, both Union and Confederate. There are 596 identifiable graves in this cemetery, but there are many more unmarked ones, and a few graves are nameless, marked only with simple wooden crosses or a blanket of shells. Recently a pavilion was built on City Square's southwest quadrant.