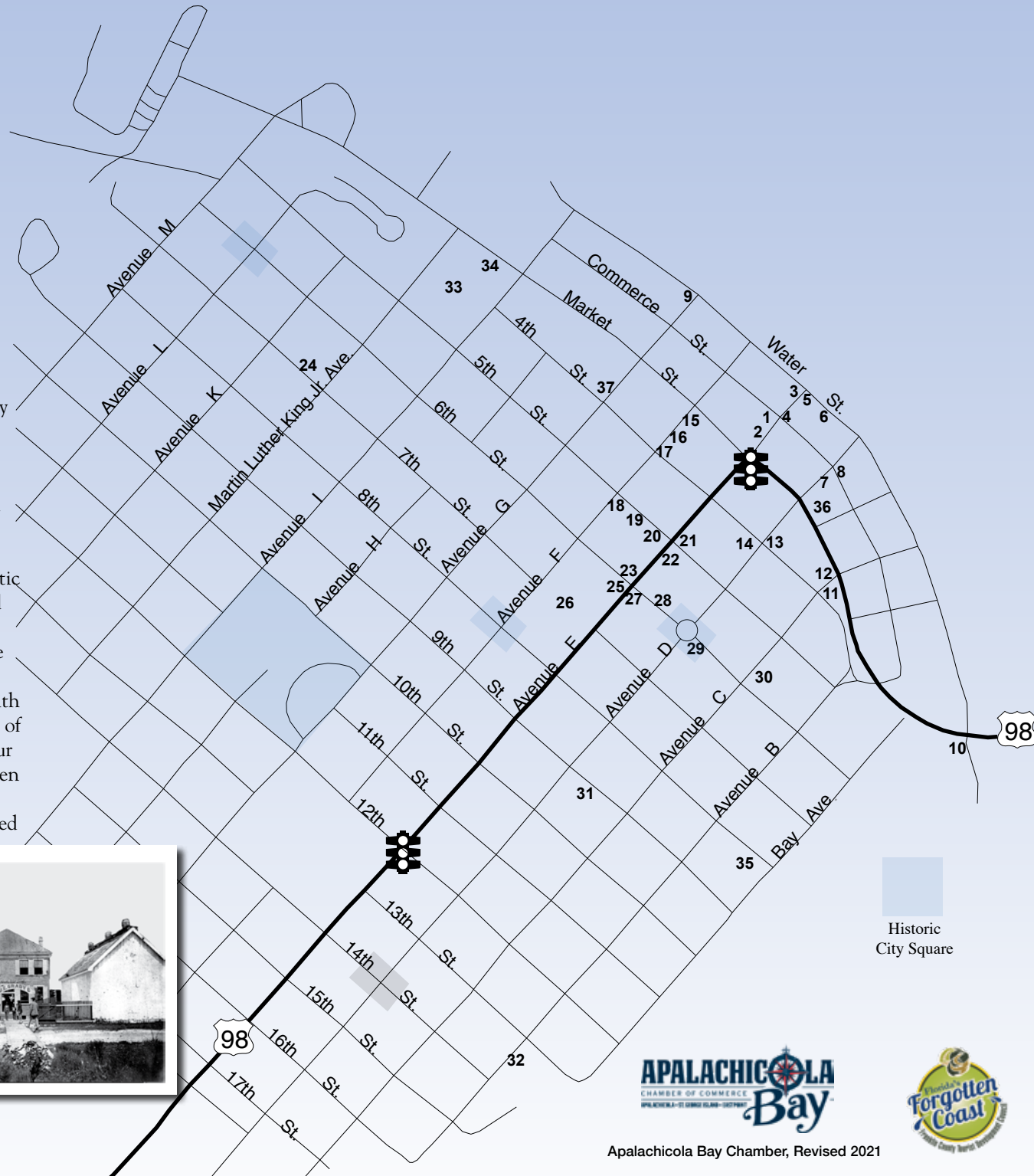




## Apalachicola History

Visitors to Apalachicola immediately know that they are in a very special place. Apalachicola is synonymous with character and authenticity. Its colorful and diverse past remains very visible today through its many historic buildings, homes and historic sites. The original town plan, developed in the 1830s, remains intact. It features wide tree-lined streets, rows of brick and granite cotton warehouses, a working waterfront and a charming commercial center. Ship's stores, old net factories and a sponge warehouse now house a mix of eclectic and discretely sophisticated shops, restaurants and galleries. These locally owned and operated businesses create a quaint and friendly atmosphere for visitors as well as local residents. Far from a typical "tourists town", the waterfront is dotted with fishing vessels proudly showing the patina of years of service. The seafood industry is the highlight of our maritime legacy. The business district is interwoven with oyster houses, shrimp packing plants and an original ice house. Restaurants are nationally noted for using locally harvested seafood, produce and tupelo honey. The community's arts and cultural programs have evolved from historic roots and continue to be housed in 19th century buildings, churches and significant homes. Apalachicola was named one of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Dozen Distinctive Destinations in 2008.



# APALACHICOLA HISTORIC WALKING TOUR



Apalachicola Bay Chamber, Revised 2021



### Apalachicola Bay Chamber of Commerce

17 Avenue E  
Apalachicola, FL 32320  
(850) 653-9419 [www.apalachicolabay.org](http://www.apalachicolabay.org)  
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National Trust For Historic Preservation's  
Dozen Distinctive Destinations 2008

**1** Apalachicola Bay Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center. This chamber, established in 1836, is Florida's oldest chamber. Start your visit here with information on sights, activities, restaurants and accommodations. 17 Avenue E.

**2** Dixie Theatre. Built in 1912, the Dixie Theatre soon became the entertainment center of Franklin County. Renovated by the Partington family in the 1990s, today the theatre hosts an annual performance season and operates as a museum.

**3** Apalachicola (former) City Hall. In 1837 the Apalachicola Land Company built 43 identical sturdy brick and granite cotton warehouses along the waterfront. Apalachicola City Hall is one of two that remain today. 1 Avenue E.

**4** Sponge Exchange. Built in 1840, this was one of two warehouses used to store sponges. By 1895 between 80 and 120 men were employed in the sponge trade in Apalachicola. Corner of Avenue E and Commerce Street.

**5** Cotton Warehouse. Erected in 1838 by the Apalachicola Land Company, this was one of 43 structures built 30 feet wide and 3 stories high along the river. East corner of Avenue E and Water Street.

**6** Grady Building. Originally built in the late 1880's and rebuilt after the 1900 fire, it served as a ship's chandlery and general store. The French government maintained a consulate on the second floor to oversee the interests of its citizens who shipped timber and other goods. 76 Water Street (The Grady Market and The Consulate Luxury Suites).

**7** United States Post Office. Initially built as a Customs House in 1923 it is one of the few structures in Apalachicola with a basement and has a tunnel that encompasses the interior of the building. Avenue D and Commerce Streets

**8** O.E. Cone Building. Built after the May 25, 1900 city fire, it was once the site of a barbershop, laundry and wood yard. Mr. Cone was an African American businessman who owned and operated this commercial building. 67 Commerce Street (Downtown Books)

**9** Riverside Cafe Building. This historic wood-frame structure once served as a popular Greek community cafe beginning in the 1920s. It has since served as a bus station, warehouse and today, the restored building lives on as upscale commercial retail. Corner of Avenue G and Water Street.

**10** Battery Park and the City Marina. Boat launch, park with picnic tables and playground. Bay Avenue between 4th and 6th Streets.

**11** Willoughby C. Marks Memorial. Dedicated to a local Army lieutenant killed while trying to rescue a comrade in Argonne, France in 1918. Avenue C between the John Gorrie Bridge and The Gibson Inn.

**12** The Gibson Inn. Built as a hotel in 1907, this downtown landmark, renovated in 1985, is the cornerstone of preservation efforts in Apalachicola. One of the few inns on the Federal Register of Historic Places that is still operating as a full service hotel.

**13** Hays House. The Hays House was built in 1908 of black cypress and heart pine from East Bay, across the River. Corner of Avenue D and 4th Street.

**14** Fort Coombs Armory. Said to be the oldest building continuously used by a National Guard Company in the U.S, construction began on the Armory in 1901 and completed in 1905. 66 4th Street. Corner of Avenue D and 4th Street.

**15** The Raney House. The three decades prior to the Civil War were prosperous ones for Apalachicola. Revenues from the cotton trade built several fine mansions, including the Greek-Revival Raney House, completed in 1838 by David Greenway Raney. The Apalachicola Historical Society gives tours. Corner of Market Street and Avenue F.

**16** Raney Guest Cottage. The cottage was built in 1860. It is now one of a number of in-town cottages available for nightly or weekly rental. 46 Avenue F.

**17** Messina House. Built in 1885 by Antone E. Messina and Catherine Peraro Messina, this classic revival style home now serves as 50 Cherry guesthouse. 50 Avenue F.

**18** Fry Conter House. This Greek Revival house was built in 1845 by Daniel Fry, an illustrious riverboat captain. It has witnessed much of the history of the town's once burgeoning River trade. It now serves as the St. Vincent National Wildlife Visitor Center. Corner of 5th Street and Avenue F.

**19** The Witherspoon House was built in 1871 for Captain Witherspoon and his family. Completely restored in the 1980's, it now serves as a private residence. 94 5th Street.

**20** The Marks/Clark House. Originally built in St. Joe in the early 1800's, this house was relocated to Apalachicola in 1854. It is one of a few structures that survived Apalachicola's disastrous 1900 fire. 65 Avenue E.

**21** First United Methodist Church. The disastrous fire of May 1900 started in the kitchen of a nearby house and went on to destroy the original 1846 church and 72 other downtown buildings. The present structure was built in 1901. Corner of Avenue E and 5th Street.

**22** The Coombs Inn Annex. Known locally as the Marks House, it was built in 1903 and is now part of the Coombs House Inn B & B. Corner of Avenue E and 5th Street.

**23** The Flatauer House. Built in 1908-09 for Adolph Flatauer, the house was completely renovated as a bank. Now serves as a B&B. Corner 6th Street and Avenue E.

**24** Holy Family Center. This building is the site of a former Catholic church and school now renovated into a multifaceted senior center and cultural hub. The Holy Family Center has been an integral part of the Hillside community dating back to 1920. 203 Dr. Frederick Humphries Street.

**25** The Chapman House. Served as the mid-1800's home of internationally known botanist, Alvin W. Chapman. In the early 1800's Chapman was a physician and friend of Dr. John Gorrie. He also wrote the Flora of the Southern United States. Corner of Avenue E and 6th Street.

**26** Chestnut Street Cemetery. Established in 1831, this is one of the more significant cemeteries on the Gulf Coast. The gravestones reflect the history of the Apalachicola community, its religious beliefs and burial traditions. Avenue E between 6th and 8th Street.

**27** Coombs House Inn. This house was considered the most elegant residence in Apalachicola when James N. Coombs, a local lumber magnate, built it in 1905. A classic Queen Anne style home with ornate staircase and verandas, it is currently a B & B. 80 Avenue E.

**28** Trinity Episcopal Church. This Greek-Revival building was shipped in sections by schooner from White Plains, New York and assembled with wooden pegs in 1838. Its early members included Dr. John Gorrie and botanist Dr. Alvin Chapman. 79 6th Street.

**29** John Gorrie State Museum. Contains a replica of the ice machine created by Dr. John Gorrie in an attempt to cool his yellow fever patients. His invention later became the basis for the ice industry and air conditioning. Corner of 6th Street and Avenue D. Open Thursday-Monday 9am-5pm.

**30** St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church. Organized in 1845, the congregation originally met in an ornate wooden structure with elaborate stencil work that was replaced in 1929 with the present Romanesque building. Corner of 6th Street and Avenue C.

**31** First Baptist Church. Originally built in the 1850's on the corner of 6th Street and Avenue H, it was rebuilt at its present site in 1902. Corner of Avenue D and 9th Street.

**32** Lafayette Park. Established in 1832, the park was named in honor of the Marquis de Lafayette. Renovated in 1992, it is now the site of open-air concerts and weddings and has interpretive signage and picnic tables. Avenue B between 13th and 15th Street.

**33** The Orman House. Built in 1838 by Thomas Orman. The wood for this two story house was cut to measure in New York and shipped to Apalachicola by sailing vessel around the Florida Keys. It was then assembled on the bluff overlooking the Apalachicola River. Open Thursday - Monday. 177 5th Street.

**34** Three Servicemen Statue South. Veterans Memorial Plaza was created in 2008 to honor veterans for their service to our country. The block-long park consists of the Circle of Freedom walkway and the striking Three Servicemen Statue Detail, a bronze sculpture by Fredrick Hart that depicts a realistic image of Vietnam servicemen. Located on 230 Market Street just north of downtown.

**35** Star of the Sea Convent. In 1901 the Sisters of Mercy of Mobile built the St. Mary Star-of-the-Sea Convent on the corner of Bay Avenue and 8th Street overlooking Apalachicola Bay. The building housed the St. Patrick's Catholic School until 1950. Today the building serves as a private residence.

**36** Historic Orman Building. According to the 1860 census, Thomas Orman (1799-1880), a prominent merchant, owned lots in 22 blocks downtown, including extensive wharf space. Constructed of hand fired brick and tabby mortar (lime, sand, oyster shell, water), exterior stucco was probably applied between 1920-1930. The building has an irregular front, designed to match the 135 degree angle created by the intersection of Avenue D and Market Street.

**37** 49 Palmetto. ca. 1890. A classic Georgian four-square with a large central hallway flanked by two rooms. Vacant for decades, the home was renovated and now serves as an art gallery and studio space.