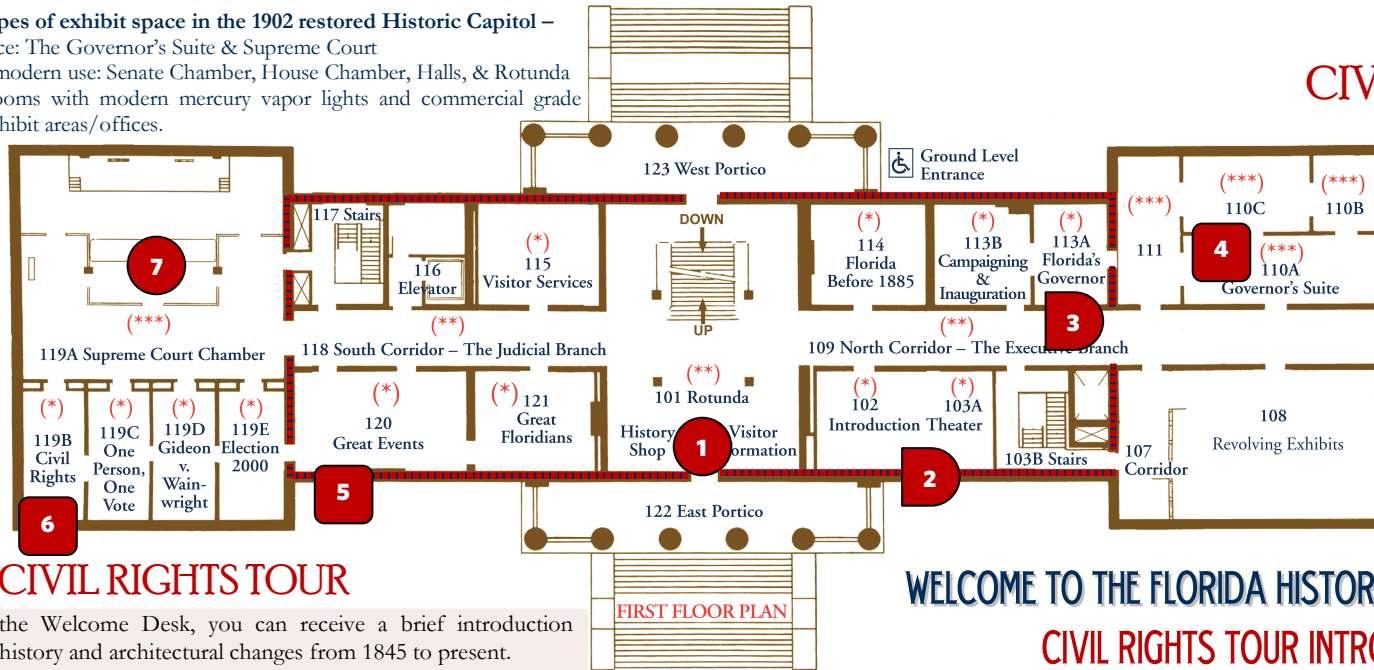


# A SELF-GUIDED CIVIL RIGHTS TOUR

Asterisks indicate the types of exhibit space in the 1902 restored Historic Capitol –  
 (\*\*\*) Strictly restored space: The Governor's Suite & Supreme Court  
 (\*\*) Restored space for modern use: Senate Chamber, House Chamber, Halls, & Rotunda  
 (\*) Adaptive space: Rooms with modern mercury vapor lights and commercial grade carpet are used as exhibit areas/offices.

**KEY**

- = Exhibit
- = Historic Site
- = Both
- = Core Structure

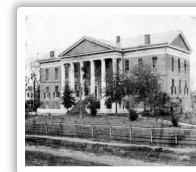


## FIRST FLOOR CIVIL RIGHTS TOUR

## WELCOME TO THE FLORIDA HISTORIC CAPITOL MUSEUM

### CIVIL RIGHTS TOUR INTRODUCTION

- 1 Rotunda**—At the Welcome Desk, you can receive a brief introduction to the building's history and architectural changes from 1845 to present.
- 2 Introductory Theater**—This film offers a short overview of Florida's political history, highlights the state's diverse populations and their struggle for political equality, and recognizes the importance of civic engagement in American democracy. Also, Florida's first black Cabinet Member, Jonathan C. Gibbs, used 103A and adjacent 103B as his office, when he served as the Florida's Secretary of State from 1868-1873.
- 3 113A: Florida's Governors**— Civil rights issues concerning actions (or inaction) of Florida's Governors are discussed on four panels in this room, entitled "Clemency: Lee & Pitts," "Suspension & Removal," "Appointment," and "Ocoee & Rosewood." This room was also the Governor's private office from 1845-1901.
- 4 110A: Governor's Suite**— This room contains portraits of Florida Governors. Of particular interest is Governor Perry, the state's Confederate Governor who committed suicide after the Civil War; Reconstruction Governors Reed, Hart, and Stearns; and Governor Leroy Collins, whose moderate tone after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision is credited with minimizing racial strife in the state.
- 5 120: Great Events**—The events leading up to Emancipation in Florida and its ceremonies at the Capitol are discussed in the "May 1865" panel in this room.
- 6 119B: Civil Rights**— The struggle for Civil Rights in Florida is highlighted in this room with information about judicial decisions on civil rights issues in the state as well as the impact of Governor Leroy Collins' stance on desegregation.
- 7 119A: Florida Supreme Court Chamber**—The Supreme Court resided in this room from 1902 until 1913, where it heard several important civil rights cases. One was *Florida v. Patterson* (1905), which overturned a segregated streetcar law. A year later that ruling was undone when new segregation laws were upheld in *Patterson v. Taylor* (1906) and *Crooms v. Schad* (1906). This Court also heard *Montgomery v. State* (1908), where the Court declared that a black defendant "is entitled to have a jury selected and summoned without illegal discrimination of any character."



Florida State Capitol (1870s)

*Throughout its time as the Capitol of Florida, many important chapters in the struggle for black civil rights took place in and around this building. In 1982, this building was restored to its 1902 appearance, so the interpretation of the building may not reflect the later Civil Rights Movement. The exhibits intend to fill this gap and highlight the long, continued struggle for equal civic and political participation in the state. Marked on the floor plans on both sides of this tour guide are rooms with historic significance as well as exhibits, which discuss the civil rights efforts in more detail.*

Slavery was a central issue as Florida entered statehood. In 1845, Florida was admitted to the United States as a slave state, along with Iowa, a free state. The first State Capitol was completed that same year, likely with slave labor. That structure forms the core of today's building.

During the Civil War, this building served as the state's Confederate Capitol. After the war, 111 black legislators served here in the State Senate and House of Representatives from 1868 to 1889. Florida's first black Cabinet Member was Jonathan C. Gibbs, who served as the Secretary of State (1868-1873) and then as the Superintendent of Public Instruction (1873-1874). The Constitutional Convention of 1868, which was held in this building, included 17 black delegates.

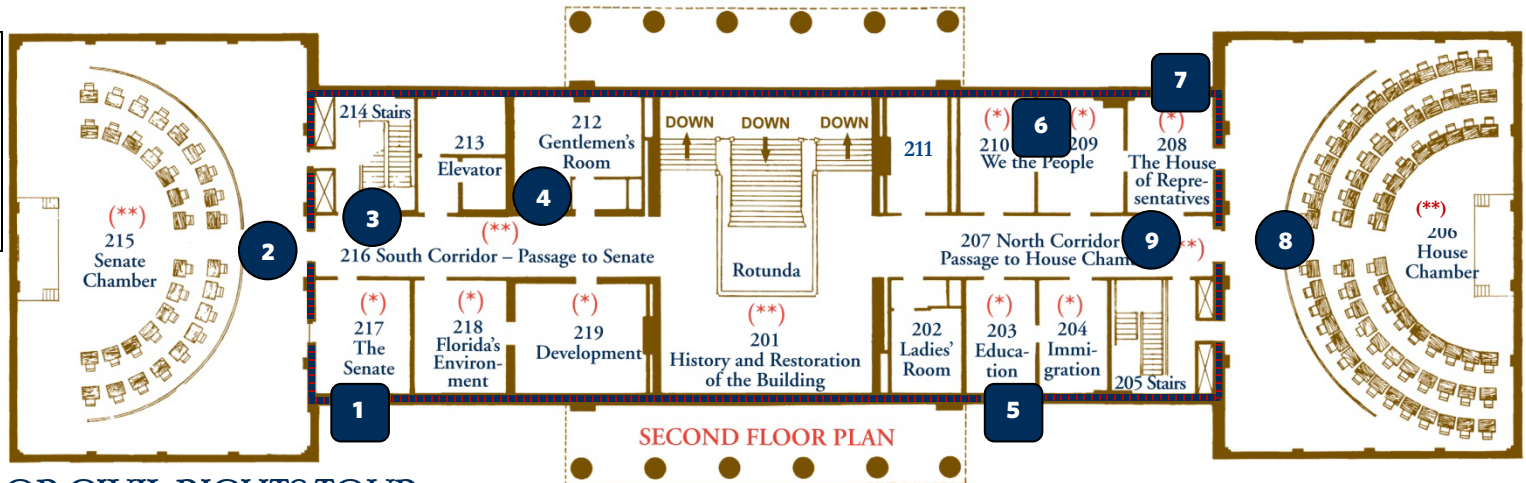
In 1876, Governor Stearns ran for reelection with David Montgomery, a black sheriff and former state legislator from Madison County, as his running mate. However, they lost and white Democrats regained political power in Florida. Newly-elected Governor Drew replaced many local black officials with white Democrats. Meanwhile, Democratic legislators began changing voting laws to favor their party and ensure its lasting political dominance in the state.

When the next Constitutional Convention was held here in 1885, just seven black delegates participated. This constitution decentralized the state's executive branch and authorized the enactment of a poll tax. Still, the black delegates were successful in pushing for a strong public education section, which led to the passage of a bill in 1887 creating the State Normal School for Colored Students (which became FAMU). In 1889, the last year black legislators served in the Legislature until 1968, Florida became the first state to pass a poll tax. Other southern states soon followed Florida's lead.



**KEY**

- = Exhibit
- = Historic Site
- = Core Structure



## SECOND FLOOR CIVIL RIGHTS TOUR

- 1** **217: The Senate Room**—Specific Jim Crow legislation passed in the Florida Senate in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is discussed in more detail in this room.
- 2** **215: Senate Chamber**—Restored to its 1902-1922 appearance, this Chamber is where many early segregationist laws were enacted in the Senate at that time (see Rm. 217).
- 3** **213, 214, 216, 217, 218: Original Senate**—From 1845-1901, the Florida Senate met in this location. A total of 18 black Senators served in this Senate from 1868-1887.
- 4** **212: Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (1868-1902)**—Before the 1902 renovation, this room was an office for the Superintendent of Public Instruction. After serving as the state’s first black Secretary of State, Jonathan C. Gibbs served in this position from 1873 until his death. In this room, he fell ill on August 14, 1874, and died later that day from apoplexy (likely a stroke or heart attack).
- 5** **203: Education**—Panels in this room discuss public education and desegregation in the state, the development of Florida’s historically black colleges and universities (as well as their students’ role in civil rights protests), and the history of pay inequalities for white and black (and male and female) schoolteachers in the state.
- 6** **209-210: We the People**—Exhibits in this room discuss political barriers enacted to prevent black participation in state politics. Panels also discuss civil rights efforts by Harry T. Moore and the NAACP, the bus boycotts and sit-ins in Tallahassee, and the Martin Luther King Jr.’s speech during the St. Augustine riots. Artifacts, including a segregation-era restroom sign and voting roll, are also on display.
- 7** **208: The House of Representatives Room**—Panels in this room highlight State Representatives, including early black legislator, Thomas V. Gibbs, and more recent legislator, Gwen Cherry. A section on Jack Orr, a white legislator and outspoken critic of segregation in the 1950s, and a panel discussing “White Primaries” are also in this room.
- 8** **206: House Chamber**—Similar to the Senate, the House has been restored to its 1902-1922 appearance. Early segregationist laws were passed in this Chamber, though the House was less eager than the Senate to pass Jim Crow bills during this time.
- 9** **202, 203, 204, 205, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211: Original House of Representatives**—From 1845-1902, the Florida House of Representatives met in this location. A total of 101 black Representatives served in the Florida House between 1868 and 1889. The Secession Convention met here and signed the Ordinance of Secession in January 1861.

## CIVIL RIGHTS TOUR CONCLUSION

During the early half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many Jim Crow laws passed through legislatures in Florida and across the South. These laws mandated racial segregation in public facilities using the "separate but equal" doctrine to justify separating white and black Americans. While claiming equal treatment, conditions were decidedly not equal. Here and elsewhere in the South, protests (along with some victories) against these laws occurred, though these are more often overlooked in the public’s understanding of civil rights history.

In Florida, boycotts and litigation followed from state and municipal laws segregating streetcars in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see Supreme Court description on other side for more information). In the 1930s-1940s, petitions to state and federal courts finally brought equal pay for white and black teachers in the state. These efforts for civil rights slowly brought new political power to black citizens in Florida. By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, these efforts expanded into the much wider Civil Rights Movement, with many marches and protests taking place in and around this Capitol building during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.



Civil rights demonstration on west side of the Capitol (1960)

In 1968, Joe Lang Kershaw became the first black candidate to win a seat in the State Legislature since 1889. Others, such as Gwendolyn Sawyer-Cherry (1970), Mary Singleton (1972), Arnett Girardeau (1976), and John Thomas (1978) were also elected to serve in the Legislature over the next ten years. In the Spring 2012 Session, there were 24 black Members of the State Legislature (six in the Senate and 18 in the House).

Though the Historic Capitol no longer serves as the center of governance for the State of Florida, the building remains a historic part of the struggle where both noble and regrettable chapters of the civil rights struggle have been written, and as a place where protests that aim to protect the good of all the citizens of Florida are still held to this day.

400 South Monroe Street • Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100  
 Phone: (850) 487-1902 • Fax: (850) 410-2233 • [info@flhistoriccaptol.gov](mailto:info@flhistoriccaptol.gov)  
[www.flhistoriccaptol.gov](http://www.flhistoriccaptol.gov)

Hours: Monday–Friday: 9am-4:30pm; Saturday 10am-4:30pm; Sunday & Holidays: Noon-4:30pm  
 Closed Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day

