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## **This August at the History Center, Check into Fascinating Hotel History, Explore Tales from Gatorland at 75, Warm Up for School, and More!**

As August begins, school is just around the corner for many Central Floridians, and we're ready to welcome it at the History Center with a super-special "Historymakers Back 2 School Bash." We still have vacations and travel on our minds, though, as we dive into stories about the colorful Florida hotels where visitors ventured to "take the waters" in America's Gilded Age, during a program that complements our latest pocket exhibit, *Home Away from Home*. We'll also explore the history of our museum's own venerable home: a transformed Orange County Courthouse from the era of the 1920s land boom.

Here's a brief look at our historic August adventures. Learn more at [TheHistoryCenter.org/Events](https://TheHistoryCenter.org/Events).

### **Lunch & Learn: Gatorland – A Bite-Sized History of an Orlando Icon**

*Friday, August 2, 2024, Noon – 1 p.m.*

Sink your teeth into the rich history of a beloved Central Florida attraction, marking its 75th anniversary this year! Our curator of exhibitions, Katie Kelley, will reveal the story behind the creation and evolution of Gatorland, from its start as a humble roadside attraction to its status today as a must-visit destination.

Cost: Free for History Center Members; General Public \$5. Cost with lunch: \$9 for History Center Members; General Public \$14. (Lunch must be ordered by 9 a.m. on Thursday, August 1.)

**More information and to register:** [TheHistoryCenter.org/Event/Lunch-Learn-Gatorland/](https://TheHistoryCenter.org/Event/Lunch-Learn-Gatorland/)

### **Historymakers Back 2 School Bash**

*Saturday, August 3, 2024, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.*

Kick off the school year at this unique celebration, combining the excitement of back-to-school preparations with the wonder of historical discovery. Highlights include school-supply giveaways (first come, first served), fun and educational games, and information about after-school program. Free admission makes this a perfect opportunity to explore our exhibits, too!

**More information:** [TheHistoryCenter.org/Event/Historymakers-Back-2-School-Bash](https://TheHistoryCenter.org/Event/Historymakers-Back-2-School-Bash)

### **History Alive: Exploring Our Courthouse Home**

*Saturday, August 3, 2024, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.*

Order, order! Visit the History Center on a special day of free admission as we honor our building's past as an Orange County Courthouse. Enjoy a day of fun activities and learning as we delve into the history of this icon of Orlando architecture and the era it represents. Guided museum tours: 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

**Details:** [TheHistoryCenter.org/Event/Exploring-Our-Courthouse-Home/](https://TheHistoryCenter.org/Event/Exploring-Our-Courthouse-Home/)

### **Third Thursday @ The Museum**

***Thursday, August 15, 2024, 5 – 9 p.m.***

The History Center is open late on the third Thursday of each month with four hours of free admission! It's part of a wider event organized by Orlando's Downtown Arts District celebrating arts, culture, and history at various downtown venues. This month, venture with us into Florida's hotel history (see below).

**More information:** [TheHistoryCenter.org/Event/Third-Thursday-The-Museum-2/](https://TheHistoryCenter.org/Event/Third-Thursday-The-Museum-2/)

### **Gilded Age Hotels at Florida's Mineral Springs**

***Thursday, August 15, 2024, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.***

Join author Rick Kilby as he explores the Victorian-era resorts at Florida's springs where America's elite ventured to "take the waters." The rapid growth in tourism infrastructure that began during the late 1800s lasted well into the 20th century, as these now-lost resorts helped boost the economy of modern Florida. Through a wealth of historical images, Kilby will show how Florida's natural wonders were developed and promoted as restorative destinations for an emerging upper class in search of better health and exotic experiences in a wild paradise. As part of Third Thursday @ The Museum, this event is free.

**More information:** [TheHistoryCenter.org/Event/Gilded-Age-Hotels/](https://TheHistoryCenter.org/Event/Gilded-Age-Hotels/)

### ***Home Away from Home: Historic Hotels of Central Florida***

**On display in the History Center lobby**

Central Florida has long been one of the world's premier vacation destinations, featuring a wide range of accommodations for the travel-weary to rest their heads. From Orlando's San Juan and Angebilt hotels to lesser-known lodgings throughout the region, this pocket exhibit features fascinating ephemera from hotels that played a role in the rise of the tourism juggernaut we know today. The exhibit also highlights the three original Walt Disney World resorts that opened in 1971.

*Pocket exhibitions are short-run displays that showcase recent acquisitions and topics that might not fit into a major exhibition but still tell an interesting story of Central Florida's history.*

**More information:** [TheHistoryCenter.org/Exhibition/Home-Away-from-Home/](https://TheHistoryCenter.org/Exhibition/Home-Away-from-Home/)

**The Orange County Regional History Center**, housed in a historic courthouse at 65 E. Central Blvd. in downtown Orlando, features four floors of permanent and special exhibitions. The museum is a Smithsonian Institution affiliate and accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. It is funded in part by Orange County Government through the Community & Family Services Department under Orange County Mayor Jerry L. Demings and the Board of County Commissioners. The Historical Society of Central Florida Inc. is supported by United Arts of Central Florida and sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture, and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture. For more information, visit [TheHistoryCenter.org](https://TheHistoryCenter.org).

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