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July launches a sparkling array of things to do at the Orange County Regional History Center

Shake off any mid-summer doldrums and keep the cool good times rolling this July at the Orange County Regional History Center, where the family-friendly fun kicks into high gear on July 5 with “History Alive” activities inspired by a trio of fabulous Floridians: author Zora Neale Hurston, artist Bob Ross, and astronaut John Young. More July programs look at a little-known chapter in Florida’s cow culture, score with some soccer history on Sensory Sunday, and offer expert genealogy help for folks interested in tracking down their family legacy. At Third Thursday on July 17, guests can take advantage of free admission from 5 to 9 p.m. and also learn about a rich slice of downtown’s past. Mark your calendars and learn more at TheHistoryCenter.org/Events!

History Alive: Famous Floridians

Saturday, July 5, 2025, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

What do Zora Neale Hurston, Bob Ross, and John Young have in common? They all called Central Florida home! Learn about the impact they had not only on our region but on the world. The event features guided museum tours and family-friendly activities. Try your hand at writing a poem on a vintage typewriter, like Hurston might have done; test your zero gravity skills using NASA boxes designed to mimic real astronaut training; and create your own artwork using oil pastels. Remember, as Ross would say: There are no mistakes, only happy accidents!

Guided museum tours: 10:30 a.m., Noon, 1:45 p.m., 3:30 p.m.

Details: TheHistoryCenter.org/Event/History-Alive-Famous-Floridians-2/

Lunch & Learn: Florida’s Snubbed Cow Culture

Friday, July 11, 2025, Noon – 1 p.m.

The people who worked raising cattle in Florida long forged their own legacy in the swamps, prairies, and pinewoods of the Sunshine State – until a smear campaign in August 1895 painted the state’s cow culture in a less-than-flattering light. Discover the history of our state’s distinctive ranching traditions and the stories of iconic figures who shaped our cow past and continue to influence our cow present. Participate online or in-person. Closed captioning is available online.

Cost: Free for History Center Members; General Public \$5. Cost with lunch: \$12 for History Center Members; General Public \$17. (Lunch must be ordered by 9 a.m. on Thursday, July 10.)

Details and to register: TheHistoryCenter.org/Event/Cow-Culture/

Third Thursday @ The Museum

Thursday, July 17, 2025, 5 – 9 p.m.

The History Center will be open late with four hours of free admission, which includes a fascinating, free talk on an important part of downtown Orlando (details below).

Details: TheHistoryCenter.org/Event/Third-Thursday-the-Museum-2/

From Railroads to Rosie's: The Evolution of the Church Street Block

Thursday, July 17, 2025, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Learn about people, places, and events that helped shape the City Beautiful in this fun, illustrated talk focusing on the Church Street block between the historic railroad depot and Garland Avenue. Bumby's, Belk's, and Bob Snow all played a role in this important block at the heart of Orlando. The program is presented in conjunction with our special exhibition *Orlando Collected*, which observes the 150th anniversary of Orlando's incorporation in 1875.

Our speaker, Orlando-based writer and graphic designer Rick Kilby, is the author of books including *Florida's Healing Waters: Gilded Age Mineral Springs, Seaside Resorts, and Health Spas* (2020), which received the silver medal for Florida nonfiction from the Florida Book Awards.

Details: TheHistoryCenter.org/Event/From-Railroads-to-Rosies/

Sensory Sunday: Kicking it with History

Sunday, July 20, 2025, Noon – 4 p.m.

Soccer is a beloved sport, perfect to play during a hot summer's day. Learn all about the history of famous Orlando soccer teams as you participate in family-friendly activities at one of our Sensory Sundays, designed to provide a welcoming, comfortable experience for guests with autism spectrum disorder and sensory processing sensitivity.

Details: TheHistoryCenter.org/Event/Sensory-Sunday-Kicking-It/

Preserving Your History Series: Genealogy

Wednesday, July 23, 2025, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Join folks from the Central Florida Genealogical Society as they help you track down your family legacy and show you ways to continue the exploration on your own! Every participant will meet with a genealogy expert and receive a packet to help them get started and inspire them to keep going. This program begins a special three-part series presented in conjunction with our special *Orlando Collected* exhibition. The series continues on August 27 and September 17, 1 – 4 p.m.

Details and to register: TheHistoryCenter.org/Education/Preserving-Your-History-Series/

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.

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