



Celebrate Black History Month Where the First Free Blacks Arrived in North America!

St. Augustine, FL (January 20, 2023) – The storied past of Black American history is well documented and celebrated throughout the year in St. Augustine, Florida. Black History month gives us the opportunity to better share the important stories about Black culture from the 16th century through the Civil rights and today.



Best known for its Spanish and British history, the Nation's Oldest City was significantly impacted by African American culture as well. From its beginnings during the Spanish Age of Exploration to the American Civil Rights era, African Americans have played key roles in the story of St. Augustine.

Africans were among the first to explore Florida upon its discovery. In the 1500s, they joined Ponce de Leon and Pedro Menendez as soldiers in the service of Spain. Then African Americans established the first legally sanctioned free black settlement in the U.S. in 1738. Escaped British slaves found freedom in St. Augustine by converting to Catholicism and joining the Spanish in defending their territory. Their home was [chartered as the settlement of Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, or Fort Mose for short](#), where free men and their families formed a militia and the northern defense post for the nation's oldest city.

The summer of 1964 in St. Augustine was hot – as is every summer. But in this year, for the first time in the long history of the Oldest City, the June weather was not the main topic of conversation. Instead, it was the daily struggle for (and against) civil rights taking place in the city's ancient streets that captured the attention of millions of people worldwide. Starting with local protests against racial segregation, the marches and rallies soon attracted America's most well-known civil rights leaders and organizers.

[Black History](#) month is a time to recognize the pages from St. Augustine's Black History. There are dozens of important [Historic sites](#) that can be visited everyday throughout the year, and in February there are a several events, exhibitions, and programs that help tell this story.

February 2-4: Flight to Freedom

Flight to Freedom tells the story of the journey of freedom seekers from the Carolinas and Georgia to Spanish Florida between 1687 and 1763. Learn about Spanish, African and Native American food traditions and culture from guest speakers and demonstrators. Musket and cannon demonstrations will be presented by the Fort Mose militia. Tours and military and culinary demonstrations take place from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. daily. And, from 11 a.m. to noon, there will be a special African drumming demonstration. Event admission is free. 15 Fort Mose Trail, St. Augustine. 904-823-2232 www.fortmose.org/flight-to-freedom

Jan 19 – February 25: I Lived Here as Well – Together

This experience at Ximenez-Fatio House Museum tells the story of urban slavery from the male and female perspectives of living and serving in the Ximenez-Fatio House during the 19th century. will run on **Thursday, Friday, and Saturday mornings at 10 a.m.** The tour is open to the public, led by costumed historical actors, and lasts approximately 60 minutes. Admission is \$22.00 per person and must be purchased in advance. 20 Aviles St., St. Augustine. 904-829-3575 www.ximenezfatiohouse.org/ILHAW



February 4: Militia Muster and Training at Fort Mose Historic State Park

From 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. members of the Fort Mose Militia offer visitors the opportunity to participate in the children's militia training, using wooden toy muskets and authentic uniform accessories. Admission is free and admission to the museum is \$3 per person. 15 Fort Mose Trail, St. Augustine. 904-823-2232 www.floridastateparks.org/park/Fort-Mose

February 9-14: The Woman Behind Frederick Douglass: Anna Murray Douglas

[The Lincolntonville Museum and Cultural Center](#) and the Woman's Exchange of St. Augustine will host a be celebrating Anna Murray Douglass, wife of Fredrick Douglass, during a week of interactive, educational, social and fun activities at the Cultural Center and at the historic Peña-Peck House. The week will culminate with a celebration of Fredrick Douglass's birthday on the 14th and a commemoration of St. Augustine's many great thinkers and historic moments that helped shape history as we know it.

February 10 -19: Fort Mose Jazz & Blues Series

Over the course of two weekends, February 10-19, Fort Mose (moe-say) State Historic State Park will host its second annual Jazz and Blues Series. This year's edition features some of America's most well-known and accomplished performers including the legendary Mavis Staples and Gladys Knight! The Series consists of six unforgettable performances at the heart of Black History Month. Additional performers include Christian McBride's New Jawn, Christone "Kingfish" Ingram, Rhiannon Giddens and Valerie June. <https://discoverfortmose.com>

February 25: Martin's Big Words: The Life of Martin Luther King Jr.

[The Lincolntonville Museum and Cultural Center](#) presents the San Marco Chamber Music Society in a production of the children's book "Martin's Big Words: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr." by Doreen Rappaport with an original score by composer Kevin Day. A quartet will perform the day composition and other arrangements during a multi-media presentation.

[Click here](#) to learn more about Lincolntonville, and [here](#) to learn more about St. Augustine's rich black history.

Located midway between Daytona Beach and Jacksonville, Florida's Historic Coast is home to St. Augustine, the oldest continuously occupied European settlement in the U.S. and attracts visitors from all over the world to experience its old-world charm, historic landmarks, pristine beaches, and world-class golfing as the home of the PGA Tour and location of THE PLAYERS Championship. For more information on events, activities, holiday getaways and vacation opportunities in St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches, go to the Visitors and Convention Bureau website at www.FloridasHistoricCoast.com, become a fan on [Facebook](#) or call 1.800.653.2489.