



NEWS RELEASE
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Images available upon request



Rare Florida maps head to Tampa

An exhibition at the Tampa Bay History Center features hundreds of maps from the 15th century through today, charting six centuries in the Sunshine State.

(Tampa, Florida) A decade after Columbus sailed across the Atlantic, explorers were still speculating about the contours of the New World. Today's experts remain uncertain about when, exactly, Europeans first set foot in *La Florida*, but by 1511, a historian named Pieter Martyr labeled the unknown land north of Cuba "Isla de Beimeni," the native Indian name for what is now Florida.

Martyr's hand-drawn sketch is just one of more than 150 maps featured in *Charting the Land of Flowers: 500 Years of Florida Maps*, opening Sept. 21 at the Tampa Bay History Center. One of the most comprehensive exhibitions of Florida cartography ever presented, *Charting the Land of Flowers* traces six centuries of Florida history, bringing together maps from museum and library collections around the world, many of which will be on view to the public for the first time.

The exhibit offers viewers a rare opportunity to see the world as early European explorers saw it, and to watch the peninsula that would become one of the South's most populous states evolve before their eyes. They'll see that much of the earliest European exploration of North America occurred not in New England, but in Florida and the Southeast, while early railroad maps and tourist brochures vibrantly illustrate Florida's evolution into America's No. 1 tourist destination.

Charting includes rare maps from the Library of Congress, on view to the public for the first time. They include a manuscript map from 1639, and another of what was once referred to as East Florida, from 1823.

Intricate and often vibrant — pink, red, and purple hues abound — the maps in *Charting the Land of Flowers* are as much works of art as they are historical documents. Together with atlases, city maps, nautical charts, and satellite images, they chart 500 years of exploration, settlement, and growth in *The Land of Flowers*.

Charting the Land of Flowers: 500 Years of Florida Maps is on exhibit Sept. 21, 2013, through Feb. 16, 2014, at the Tampa Bay History Center.

Select maps featured in the exhibition:

- 1513 *Tabula Terre Nove*; Portrays the world as it was known at the time of the Ponce de Leon's Florida landing.
- 1786 *Maritime Observations in a Letter* by Benjamin Franklin; Includes "A Chart of the Gulf Stream."
- 1864 "The Capture of Tampa Bay, Florida;" Shows the Union capture of Tampa.
- 1917 American Automobile Association (AAA); Early Florida road map.
- 2009 NASA view of Florida from Space, taken by astronaut and Clearwater resident Nicole Stott.

Around the State:

- 1766 Pensacola
- 1783 St. Augustine
- 1792 Cape Canaveral
- 1833 Sanibel
- 1835 Keys and Tortugas
- 1859 Jacksonville
- 1886 Fort Myers (first of the area)
- 1898 Camp "Cuba Libre" (near Jacksonville) ** Army camp during Span Am. War
- 1912 Ocean Beach (became Miami Beach)
- 1947 Fort Myers from Frank B. Dolph

(End)

Charting the Land of Flowers: 500 Years of Florida Maps is supported in part by the Kimmins Foundation, the Saunders Foundation, the Duckwall Foundation, the Mosaic Company Foundation, USF Libraries, the *Tampa Bay Times*, Tucker Hall, the Florida Humanities Council, and the state-wide Viva Florida 500 Commemoration.

The Tampa Bay History Center – a Smithsonian Institution Affiliate – includes three floors of permanent and temporary exhibition space focusing on 12,000 years of Florida history. The History Center features a museum store, the Witt Research Center (a branch of the Hillsborough County Public Library System), a map gallery, an event hall and the Columbia Cafe. One of Tampa’s premier cultural venues, the History Center’s cutting-edge interactive exhibits provide a unique educational experience for all ages.

www.tampabayhistorycenter.org.