



# Wakulla County History Guide

A Celebration of the Rich History of Wakulla County



# Festivals and Events

With a long, rich history that spans several centuries and many major historical milestones, Wakulla County is the perfect place to get a modern-day glimpse at the past. From popular events that celebrate culture and traditions to landmarks with historical significance, you can explore all the wonders of Old Florida and days long past right here in Wakulla County. We've put together some of the most popular places to visit or festivals to attend to fully appreciate the deep history of Wakulla.



## STONE AGE & PRIMITIVE ART FESTIVAL

 Ochlockonee River State Park, 429 State Park Road, Sopchoppy, Florida

**FEBRUARY 2020** 9:30 A.M. - 5 P.M.

Wakulla County's homage to the stone age and primitive times, this annual event offers guests demonstrations on primitive weaponry, the art of arrowhead making, hide tanning, basket weaving, pottery making and lessons in carving shell, bone, antlers or wood. The festival also offers several kinds of ancient contests, such as an archery/atlatl competition, for guests to participate in.



## AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE CELEBRATION

 Hudson Park in Crawfordville

**FEBRUARY 15** 11 A.M. - 2 P.M.

This celebration is Wakulla County's tribute to African-American culture and co-insides with America's annual recognition of Black History Month. From ethnic food to African American arts and crafts and live performing artists, there's never a dull moment. The event always features an African American-themed parade, complete with the sounds of local high school marching bands.





## SOPCHOPPY WORM GRUNTIN' FESTIVAL

 Downtown Sopchoppy

**APRIL 11 7 A.M. - 10 P.M.**

The Sopchoppy Worm Gruntin' Festival has easily become one of Wakulla County's most popular and largest events each year. The celebration draws thousands from Wakulla County and the surrounding areas who come to see the famed Sopchoppy worms rise from the ground and crown a new Worm Gruntin' King. This all-day celebration begins bright and early with a 5K race, then features a "Worm Gruntin'" demonstration and competition in the afternoon, and ends with live music late into the night. The event attracts nearly 100 food, arts and crafts vendors every year, and the evening culminates with the Annual Worm Grunters' Ball, featuring a slew of live performances from local artists.



## SOPCHOPPY 4TH OF JULY CELEBRATION

 Hudson Park in Crawfordville

**JULY 4 10 A.M. - 9:30 P.M.**

Another of Wakulla County's oldest traditions is the Sopchoppy 4th of July Celebration in the heart of downtown Sopchoppy. The festivities begin the morning of Independence Day with a parade, followed by an all-day and all-night festival – complete with arts and crafts and food vendors – at Sopchoppy's famed Myron B. Hodge City Park, which rests on the banks of the Sopchoppy River. The evening is then capped with a spectacular fireworks display that will illuminate the sky over the picturesque waterfront.



# Historical Sites

Step back in time when you travel to these historical sites across Wakulla County. The whole family will love learning and experiencing these unique locations first-hand.



**OLD WAKULLA COUNTY JAIL**

📍 24 High Drive, Crawfordville, FL 32327

[WWW.WAKULLAHISTORY.ORG/MUSEUM.HTML](http://WWW.WAKULLAHISTORY.ORG/MUSEUM.HTML)



**WAKULLA COUNTY FLORIDA TIME CAPSULE**

📍 3056 Crawfordville Highway  
Crawfordville, FL 32327

**GO TO WEBSITE**





## FORT SAN MARCOS DE APALACHE

 148 Old Fort Road, St. Marks, FL

### GO TO WEBSITE

The collection of colorful flags that greet visitors at the gates of Fort San Marcos de Apalache Historic State Park represents the long and varied past of this historically significant site. The recorded history of this National Landmark first began in 1528 when Spanish explorer, Panfilo de Narvaez arrived in search of gold. Likewise, Hernando de Soto followed not long afterward in 1539. The first fort built in 1679, positioned strategically at the point where the St. Marks and Wakulla Rivers come together, was made of wood painted to look like stone. Later an actual stone fort made of quarried limestone would be built. Through the centuries the site at Fort San Marcos would be occupied several times by the Spanish, a short time by the English (1763), by an independent Creek nation of Indians led by William Augustus Bowles for a five brief weeks (1800), by General Andrew Jackson (1818), by United States troops (1821), and finally by Confederate troops (1861).

Today, visitors can take a leisurely self-guided journey along an interpretive trail through park grounds that include remains of Confederate earthworks and powder magazine, Spanish bombproof, bastion wall and moat, and gravesites of American

soldiers in a small cemetery. A museum is constructed upon the foundation of the former Marine hospital built to serve victims of yellow fever (1859), and displays exhibits and artifacts unearthed near the original fort. A short entertaining video interprets site history and can be watched on demand in the auditorium.

Tucker's Point is a quiet spot with benches for a scenic view at the water's edge where the St. Marks River joins the Wakulla River and flows out into Apalachee Bay.

The historic site and museum located in St. Marks, off S.R. 363, 148 Old Fort Road. Open from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. Thursday through Monday. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Free park admission, small entrance fee to the museum. Parking, picnic, nature trail, visitor center, restrooms.





## HISTORIC SOPCHOPPY TRAIN DEPOT

📍 34 Rose St., Sopchoppy, FL

### GO TO WEBSITE

The historic Sopchoppy Depot was built around 1891. Originally the Depot was part of the Carrabelle, Tallahassee & Georgia Railroad Company which was then absorbed by the Georgia, Florida and Alabama Railroad (G. F. & A.), referred to fondly as the “Gopher, Frog & Alligator.” The line first started running in 1893 and operated until 1946. The GF&A brought tourists to the Gulf Coast and transported lumber, turpentine products, honey, farm goods, and soldiers to the seaport terminal. When ice became available, fish and oysters were packed in barrels and shipped back up to northern markets and towns along the line. From the Sopchoppy River came shipments of caviar from the river sturgeon, frog legs, and catfish.

The Sopchoppy Depot was once a busy railroad hub for both passengers and freight. From the Depot adventuresome passengers could transfer to the mule-drawn tramcar to brave the 2½-hour, 7-mile trip down the wooden rail track to Panacea. There they bathed in the highly touted mineral springs and toured the big hotel located about 400 yards south of the springs. Other passengers continued on the train to the coast where

they could “enjoy a dip in the brine and drink in the salt air of the Gulf.” The train crossed over the Sopchoppy and Ochlockonee Rivers and traveled through the thick swamps and piney forests of Franklin County before emerging into the open air of the coast. Final destination was the Lanark Inn, a grand hotel boasting a casino, dining, a dance pavilion on the beach, a swimming pool constructed around a sulfur spring, and 2 large bathhouses for ladies and gentlemen, respectively.

The historic Sopchoppy Depot is the only remaining depot still standing in Florida on the G F & A. It was beautifully restored in 2010 and now serves as a museum with historical exhibits and a collection of old photographs, memorabilia and recovered artifacts.





## HISTORIC WAKULLA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

📍 23 High Dr., Crawfordville, FL 32327

[WWW.WAKULLACLERK.COM/  
HISTORICAL.ASP](http://WWW.WAKULLACLERK.COM/HISTORICAL.ASP)

The stately Historic Courthouse which stands proud in the heart of Wakulla County, Florida is much more than just a historically significant structure. Woven together with the strong threads of its communities, its traditions and customs, and its people, the courthouse stands in magnificent tribute to the heritage of its citizens past and present. The earliest of the Wakulla courthouses was destroyed by arson with a kerosene lantern. The second courthouse, still standing, was sturdily constructed of heart pine cypress and completed in 1894. The 3-story structure has a steeply pitched roof with four intersecting gables. A weathervane carved of tight grain heart pine in the shape of a mullet, a commercial fish important to the history of Wakulla, graces the top of the prominent cupola with distinction.

To make room for construction of a new courthouse in 1948, the Historic Courthouse has moved a block away by painstakingly pulling the solid building by hand-wrench on wooden rollers across laid timbers. The structure was used for a time as the public library. By 1996, when the Chamber of Commerce took over occupancy, the old building had fallen into sad disrepair.

Through tremendous citizen support driven by the vision to restore the courthouse to its former glory, renovations were begun. The building was moved a short distance a second time to the location where you see it today. With blood, sweat, and tears, the first two floors of the building have been lovingly returned back to historically correct splendor, complete with a custom set of replicated gas light fixtures and replacement of all the windows with mouth-blown glass imported from Germany.

The Historic Old Wakulla County Courthouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, one of only three existing wooden courthouses in Florida.





## EDWARD BALL WAKULLA SPRINGS STATE PARK



465 Wakulla Park Drive  
Wakulla Springs, FL 32327

Open 8 a.m. until sundown year-round

[WWW.FLORIDASTATEPARKS.ORG/  
WAKULLASPRINGS](http://WWW.FLORIDASTATEPARKS.ORG/WAKULLASPRINGS)

Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park sits atop a wondrous maze of underground caverns and is among the world's largest and deepest fresh-water springs. The 6,000-acre park overflows with wildlife that can be seen daily on the 45 - 55-minute riverboat ride through the protected corridor of the Wakulla River. It is a nature photographer's delight. The historic Wakulla Springs Lodge, built by financier Edward Ball in 1937, still welcomes guests for lodging with a full-service dining room, soda fountain, gift shop, and bathhouse with seasonal concessions. A lovely beach for swimmers edges the spring basin and an observation/diving tower overlooks the mainspring. Ask about "Old Joe", picnic pavilions, and grills. Children will enjoy the playground. Nature trails are at their best in fall, winter, and spring. Wakulla Springs State Park and Lodge is listed on the Natural Register of Historic Places and is designated as a National Natural Landmark.

### Park Entrance

- \$6 per vehicle with between 2 - 8 people.
- \$4 per vehicle with a single occupant.
- \$2 per extra vehicle occupant
- \$2 per pedestrian or bicyclist

### Glass Bottom or River Boat Tours

- \$8 (13 years old and up)
- \$5 (3 - 12 years old)
- Free (under 3 years old)

(850) 561-7276



## Where to Eat



**HAMAKNOCKERS BBQ**

 2837 Coastal Highway 98  
Crawfordville, FL 32327

**(850) 926-4737**



**POSEY'S STEAMROOM & OYSTER BAR**

 1506 Coastal Highway  
Panacea, Florida 32346

**(850) 984-5243**



## Where to Stay



### EDWARD BALL WAKULLA SPRINGS STATE PARK

 465 Wakulla Park Drive  
Wakulla Springs, FL 32327  
(850) 561-7276

[WWW.FLORIDASTATEPARKS.ORG/  
WAKULLASPRINGS](http://WWW.FLORIDASTATEPARKS.ORG/WAKULLASPRINGS)



### SOPCHOPPY RIVER HOUSE

 Sopchoppy, FL 32358  
(920) 535-0242

[WWW.SOPCHOPPYRIVERHOUSE.COM](http://WWW.SOPCHOPPYRIVERHOUSE.COM)



### SWEET MAGNOLIA INN BED & BREAKFAST

 803 Port Leon Dr  
St. Marks, FL 32355  
(850) 925-7670

[WWW.SWEETMAGNOLIAINNBANDB.COM](http://WWW.SWEETMAGNOLIAINNBANDB.COM)



### WAKULLA SPRINGS LODGE

 550 Wakulla Park Dr.  
Crawfordville, FL 32327  
(850) 421-2000

[WWW.THELODGEATWAKULLASPRINGS.COM](http://WWW.THELODGEATWAKULLASPRINGS.COM)



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