



Notes

Sharp-eyed readers of these notes will notice that Florida's largest newspaper, the *St. Petersburg Times*, changed its name to the *Tampa Bay Times* a couple of years ago. I have tried to use the name that the paper went under at the time the story in question ran. Also, the *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel* changed its name to the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* so I have simply used *Sun-Sentinel*.

Abbreviations

<i>FTU</i>	<i>Florida Times-Union</i>
<i>MH</i>	<i>Miami Herald</i>
<i>MNT</i>	<i>Miami New Times</i>
<i>NYT</i>	<i>New York Times</i>
<i>OS</i>	<i>Orlando Sentinel</i>
<i>SHT</i>	<i>Sarasota Herald-Tribune</i>
<i>SPT</i>	<i>St. Petersburg Times</i>
<i>SS</i>	<i>South Florida Sun-Sentinel</i>
<i>TBT</i>	<i>Tampa Bay Times</i>

Prologue: The Punch Line State

Florida is a strange place Roxane Gay, "Living with My Parents in Florida, It's Difficult to Feel Like an Adult," *Guardian*, Jan. 27, 2015, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jan/27/living-with-my-parents-in-florida-its-difficult-to-feel-like-an-adult.

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Traveler, Jan. 20, 2009, <http://floridatraveler.com/worlds-smallest-police-station/>; Christopher Balogh, "Inside Cassadaga, the Psychic Capital of the World," *Vice*, Jan. 29, 2013, www.vice.com/read/inside-cassadaga; Greg Myre, "Sweetwater: Swamp Town's Colorful Past Lives On," *Lakeland Ledger*, June 22, 1986, http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=utwvAAAIBAJ&sjid=e_sDAAAIBAJ&pg=6797%2C4079094.

I reeled off a dozen If you're interested in the really weird stuff, I recommend Lynn Waddell's *Fringe Florida: Travels Among Mud Beggars, Furries, Ufologists, Nudists and Other Lovers of Unconventional Lifestyles* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013). The best Nub City story ever is Thomas Lake, "Dismembered Again," *SPT*, Sept. 2, 2007, www.sptimes.com/2007/09/02/Life/Dismembered_again.shtml; "Settlement in Donald Duck Groping Lawsuit," *The Smoking Gun*, May 12, 2011, www.thesmokinggun.com/documents/celebrity/donald-duck-groping-lawsuit-settled-625381; Sean Mussenden, "'Tigger' Will Return to His Job at Disney," *OS*, Aug. 7, 2004, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2004-08-07/news/0408070266_1_costumed-characters-chartrand-disney; Cynthia Luma and Catherine Lower, *Hunted Florida: Ghosts and Strange Phenomena of the Sunshine State* (Mechanicsburg PA: Stackpole Books, 2008), 41–47; Jessica Guerra, "Morbid Monday: The Macabre Romance of a Man and a Mummy," *Atlas Obscura*, Oct. 27, 2014, www.atlasobscura.com/articles/morbid-monday-the-macabre-romance-of-a-man-and-a-mummy.

As that line on the first Lawrence P. Lessing, "State of Florida," *Fortune*, Feb. 1948, 65–72, 211–13.

Heck, Florida even fielded: In addition, a Florida woman, U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, chaired the Democratic National Committee.

Florida offers an abundance Austin L. Miller, "Burglars Tasted, Snorted, Human and Canine Ashes," *Ocala Star-Banner*, Jan. 18, 2011, www.ocala.com/article/20110118/ARTICLES/110119714; "Cops Responding to Shots Fired Find Armed 'Pirate,'" *Florida Keys Keynotes*, June 30, 2015, www.huffingtonpost.com/ransom-riggs/wwii-photos_b_1975210.html; Keeley Sheehan, "FishHawk Mermaid Explains Her Fin Passion After Pool Ban," *TBT*, July 17, 2013, www.tampabay.com/news/humaninterest/fishhawk-mermaid-asks-board-to-change-pool-rules-against-swim-fins/2131896.

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Florida produces so much The list of blogs includes “FloriDUH” by Barbara Hijek, www.sun-sentinel.com/news/strange/floriduh-blog/; “Off the Beat” by Will Greenlee, <http://offthebeat.blogs.tcpalm.com/>; and “WTFFlorida,” *MNT*, www.miaminewtimes.com/topic/wtf-florida-6433165. The Twitter accounts include mine, @FloriDUHgal (Hijek), @OffTheBeatTweet (Greenlee), @ThatsMyFlorida, and the famous @_FloridaMan and @_FloridaWoman. Miami documentary filmmaker Billy Corbin (@BillyCorben) and Associated Press reporter Tamara Lush (@TamaraLush) often tweet about weird Florida stories too. AP reporter Brendan Farrington compiles an annual roundup of weird Florida stories. Long-time *Palm Beach Post* reporter Elliott Kleinberg, who has written two books collecting various weird Florida stories under the titles *Weird Florida* and *Weird Florida II: In a State of Shock*, maintains a Facebook page called “Weird Florida,” www.facebook.com/weirdflorida. There’s also a popular Reddit category called “Florida Man.” Finally, the syndicated “News of the Weird” column, which aggregates oddities from all over the world, is by Chuck Shepherd, who lives in Florida.

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To live in Florida Lynne Holt, David Colburn, and Lynn Leverty, “Boomers or Bust in Florida and the Nation,” University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research, www.bebr.ufl.edu/articles/boomers-or-bust-florida-and-nation.

Florida recently passed New York “Florida Passes New York to Become the Nation’s Third Most Populous State, Census Bureau Reports,” U.S. Census Bureau press release, Dec. 23, 2014, www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2014/cb14-232.html; Jamal Thalji, “Florida Broke Record in 2014 with 97.3 Million Tourists,” *TBT*, Feb. 16, 2015, www.tampabay.com/news/politics/stateroundup/gov-scott-to-announce-2014-tourism-numbers-today-at-tampa-international/2217819.

I grew up hunting Mullet are delicious when fried or smoked. They are also the only fish I know of to be declared birds by a Florida judge. In a 1918 case, Wakulla County Judge R. Donald McLeod reasoned that because mullet have gizzards and fowl have gizzards and other fish do not have gizzards, therefore mullet are fowl, not fish—and thus he acquitted local fishermen accused of violating state fishing laws. Don’t get me started about the state officials who, in 1962, tried to get everyone to start calling mullet by a name they considered more marketable: “lisa.”

1: Growing Up Floridian

I have an unusual hobby Ransom Riggs, “8 Intimate, Beautiful WWII Photos,” *Huffington Post*, Dec. 12, 2012, www.huffingtonpost.com/ransom-riggs/wwii-photos_b_1975210.html.

Those of us who grew up Rick Allen, “Remembering Six Gun Territory,” *Ocala Star-Banner*, Dec. 29, 2010, www.ocala.com/article/20101229/ARTICLES/101229740; Amy Bennett Williams, “Cypress Knee Museum Now a Ruined Roadside Relic,” *Fort Myers News-Press*, Oct. 19, 2014, www.news-press.com/story/news/local/amy-williams/2014/10/19/cypress-knee-museum-now-ruined-roadside-relic/17498905/; “Atomic Tunnel,” Florida’s Lost Parks Web site, <http://lostparks.com/atomicunnel.html>; Craig Pittman, “Last-of-Its-Breed Florida Wildlife Park on Endangered List,” *TBT*, Dec. 18, 2010, <http://beaches.tampabay.com/news/environment/wildlife/last-of-its-breed-florida-wildlife-park-on-endangered-list/1140923>.

But don’t assume all Florida kids Short John Atanasoff bio at www.johnatanasoff.com/biography.php?sub=basic_facts. If you want more, I recommend Jane Smiley’s *The Man Who Invented the Computer: The Biography of John Atanasoff, Digital Pioneer* (New York: Doubleday, 2005).

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I grew up on Pensacola is considered the “Cradle of Naval Aviation,” and is home to the Pensacola Naval Air Station, www.cnic.navy.mil/regions/cnrse/installations/nas_pensacola.html; Fort Pickens on the National Park Service Web site, www.nps.gov/guis/planyourvisit/fort-pickens.htm.

To someone growing up “The Banty Rooster” was W. D. Childers, a longtime state senator who later became a county commissioner and then a defendant in a corruption

case. “The He-Coon” referred, originally, to U.S. Rep. Bob Sikes, a veteran Panhandle congressman who also ran into ethical problems, and after retiring from politics got into a tussle with his handpicked biographer. Later that nickname was appropriated by Gov. Lawton Chiles in his reelection campaign against a young Jeb Bush. The flying saucer house was one of fewer than one hundred “Futuro” homes designed to be installed on mountainsides for skiers. There are two in Florida—the other one’s a Tampa strip club. Here’s a site that tracks them: www.thefuturohouse.com/.

In school we had to learn Learning about Florida was in the fourth-grade curriculum. Some schools took it more seriously than others. One of my friends tells me his class actually did several field trips to important historical sites. Sadly, this is no longer required of Florida children. “Americanism vs. Communism” was approved by the legislature in 1961 and not repealed until 1983.

I wish my teachers Wilson Robertson, “Viewpoint: Why Fly the Five Flags?” *Pensacola News Journal*, Dec. 15, 2014, www.pnj.com/story/opinion/2014/12/15/viewpoint-fly-five-flags/20455575/.

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That wasn’t all they left out Eric A. Powell, “Diving into History: Tristán de Luna’s Ships,” *Archaeology*, July/Aug. 2009, <http://archive.archaeology.org/0907/underwater/florida.html>; Steve Pinson, “The Tristán de Luna Expedition,” Pensacola Archaeology Lab, www.de-luna.com/pal.html.

That’s why St. Augustine can boast “City of St. Augustine: The Nation’s Oldest City,” www.staugustinegovernment.com/visitors/nations-oldest-city.cfm.

The teachers could have told us Herbert J. Doherty, “Andrew Jackson vs. the Spanish Governor, Pensacola 1821,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 34, no. 22 (Oct. 1955): 142–58; “Aboard the Underground Railroad: British Fort,” National Park Service, www.nps.gov/nr/travel/underground/fl1.htm.

We did learn Gloria Jahoda, *Florida: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984), 49.

Another thing our teachers National Park Service, Fort Pickens Web site, “Determining the Facts: The Civil War in the Pensacola Area,” www.nps.gov/Nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/38pickens/38facts1.htm.

But no Fort Mose Historical Society Web site, www.fortmose.org/; Margo Harrakas, “Voyages of Freedom,” *SS*, Feb. 2, 2005, http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2005-02-22/lifestyle/0502210267_1_underground-railroad-cape-florida-lighthouse

-slave; Robert N. Rosen, *The Jewish Confederates* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2000), 55–62; Grunwald, *The Swamp*, 68.

We didn't even learn One of the best books about this period in Florida history is Charles W. Pierce's *Pioneer Life in Southeast Florida* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1970). It should be required reading for every Floridian and maybe all the snowbirds as well.

This devilish description Bayard Kendrick and Barry Walsh, *A History of Florida Forests* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007), 22. Apparently it's not always fatal, but it's never pleasant. See Nicola H. Strickland, "Eating a Manchineel 'Beach Apple,'" *British Medical Journal* 321, no. 7258 (Aug. 12, 2000): 428.

Perhaps living so close William Souder, "How Two Women Ended the Deadly Feather Trade," *Smithsonian*, March 2013, www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/how-two-women-ended-the-deadly-feather-trade-23187277/?no-ist; Hampton Dunn, "Keys' Lighthouses Wrecked the 'Wreckers,'" Digital Collection, Florida Studies Center Publications, paper 2618, 1960, http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/flstud_pub/2618; Kendrick and Walsh, *A History of Florida Forests*, 34–37. In 1844, the U.S. attorney for West Florida reported that he couldn't get any indictments for stealing timber from public lands because those charged included most of the grand jury, including its foreman.

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2: Flirting with Disaster

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- ment of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles; H. C. Sumner, "North Atlantic Hurricanes and Tropical Disturbances of 1948," Weather Bureau, Dec. 1948, 277–80, <http://docs.lib.noaa.gov/rescue/mwr/076/mwr-076-12-0277.pdf>.
- Then, in 1970, the legislature* Journal of the Senate, State of Florida, June 4, 1970, 866–67; R. H. Simpson, Arnold Sugg and Staff, "The Atlantic Hurricane Season of 1969," National Hurricane Center, April 1970, 293–306, www.aoml.noaa.gov/hrd/hurdat/mwr_pdf/1969.pdf.
- Why do we get so many* Morton D. Winsberg, "Anticipating Heavy Rain in Florida," Florida Climate Center Web site, <http://climatecenter.fsu.edu/topics/specials/anticipating-heavy-rain-in-florida>; Cynthia Barnett, *Rain: A Natural and Cultural History* (New York: Crown, 2015), 250.
- Starting around 1920* Wynne and Knetsch, *Florida in the Great Depression*, 14. A fuller examination of the 1920s land boom is in chapter 3.
- But then the railroads* Nick Wynne and Richard Moorhead, *Paradise for Sale: Florida's Booms and Busts* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2010), 142–46.
- The boom sputtered* *Ibid.*, 153–55.
- Florida's soggy* Barnett, *Rain*, 16.
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