

History & Nature

Following the Second Seminole War (1836-1842), which removed many Indians from Florida, Congress passed the Armed Occupation Act. The Act promoted settlement of the frontier and offered settlers 160 acres if they would live on the land for five years. In 1843, Major Robert Gamble, Jr. of Tallahassee claimed his acreage along the Manatee River, a region then remote from civilization, to establish a sugar plantation. His mansion took six years to build using slave labor and local craftsmen. Gamble eventually accumulated almost 3,500 acres and was producing large amounts of sugar, but fortune did not favor his efforts. Natural disasters and a fickle sugar market drove him into debt by 1856. He sold the plantation in 1859.

At the end of the Civil War (1865), the U.S. Government ordered Confederate cabinet members arrested. Judah P. Benjamin, Confederate Secretary of State, fearing trial for treason, escaped by traveling through Florida. He is thought to have briefly sheltered at the mansion. Benjamin escaped and traveled to England, where he became a Barrister. In 1873, Major George Patten bought the property for delinquent taxes of \$3,000. Unable to maintain the mansion, the land was subdivided and sold. In 1925, the United Daughters of the Confederacy purchased the property and deeded it to the State of Florida. Gamble Mansion and Patten House have been restored to the appearance of their respective



Florida State Parks

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks

Gamble Plantation Historic State Park

3708 Patten Avenue
Ellenton, FL 34222
(941) 723-4536

FloridaStateParks.org

Park Guidelines

- Hours are 8:00 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- Guided tour fee is required.
- Plants, animals and park property are protected.
- Pets are permitted in designated areas only. Pets must be kept on a handheld leash no longer than 6 feet and well behaved at all times.
- Fireworks and hunting are prohibited.
- Consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited except in designated areas.
- Become a volunteer. Inquire at the ranger station.
- Florida's state parks are committed to providing equal access to all facilities and programs. Should you need assistance to enable your participation, please contact the ranger station.

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request at any
Florida state park.



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State Parks
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**Gamble Plantation
Historic State Park**
Southwest
Florida

The only surviving antebellum mansion
in South Florida



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National Gold Medal Winner
Florida State Parks - "America's First Three-Time Winner"

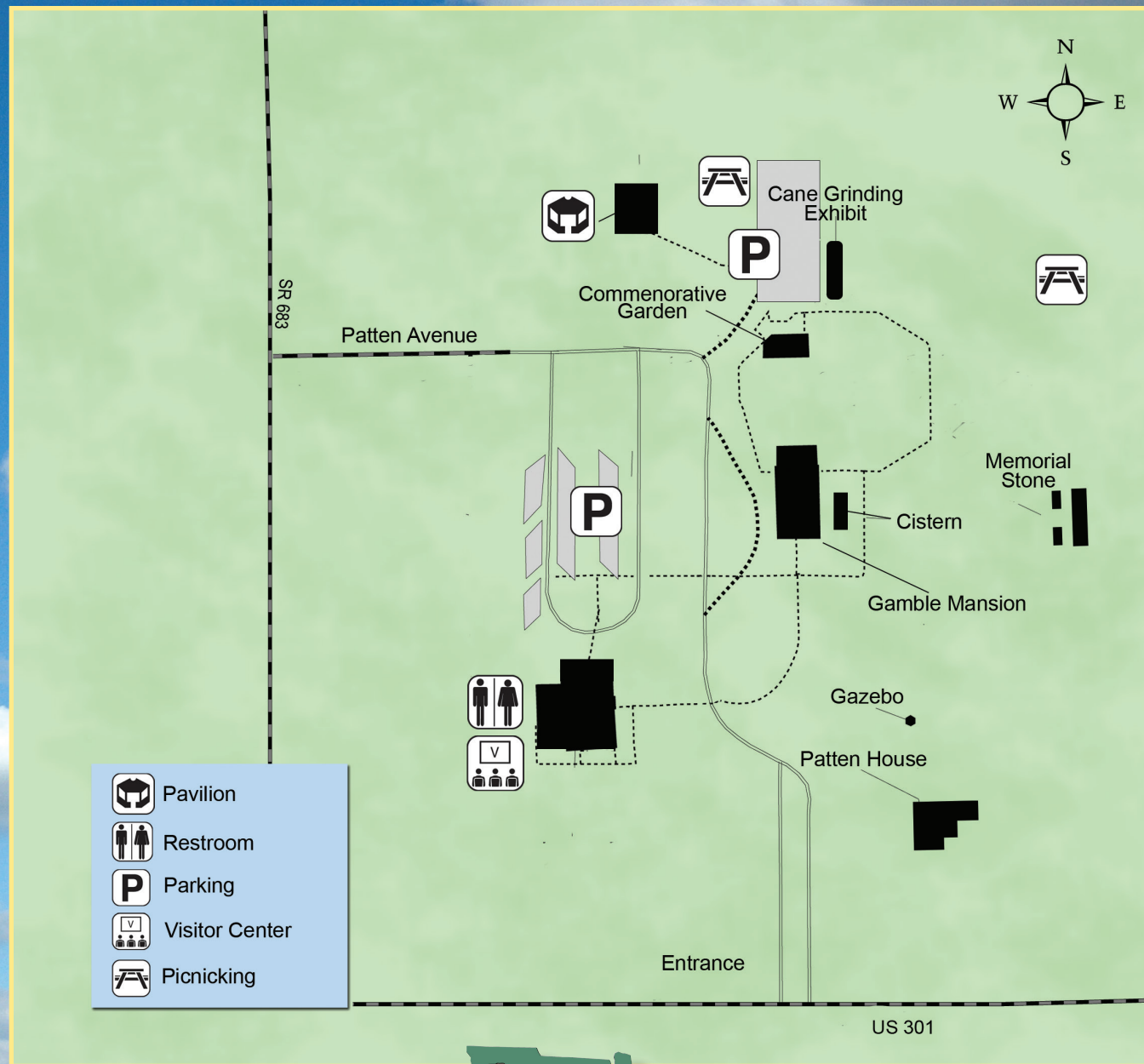
Real Fun in ...the Real FloridaSM

Gamble Plantation Historic State Park preserves the mansion of an antebellum sugar plantation. Built in the mid-1800s, the mansion is the only one of its kind on Florida's west coast and is the oldest building in Manatee County. Visitors will learn about a way of life and an economic system that were swept away by the Civil War.

Join park staff for a **guided tour** of the Gamble Mansion. Learn about the challenges of living on a 19th century Florida frontier sugar plantation. Guided tours of the mansion are offered six times daily at 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 1 p.m., 2 p.m., 3 p.m. & 4 p.m., Thursday through Monday. A **visitor center with a museum** is open Thursday through Monday, 8 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. and 12:45 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. The visitor center is closed and tours are not available on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.

Special events held throughout the year include open houses, reenactments, demonstrations and period crafts. Hosts wearing period clothing interpret the lives of people who lived and worked here. Ask for a schedule of these events.

The park grounds, picnic areas and **gazebo** at Gamble Plantation are available for private weddings, receptions, picnics and other social events. There are fifteen acres of manicured lawn with two **picnic areas**: one among the majestic live oaks, the other under a spacious, covered **pavilion**. Reserve space by calling (941) 723-4536.



Directions

From I-75, take exit 224. Head west for 1 mile on U.S. Highway 301. Look for the landmark white picket fence and turn right into the main park entrance.