

COLLIER COUNTY



Museum

Vacationers and residents alike are often surprised to discover that Collier County's rich and colorful past is completely different from other parts of the country and actually stretches back many thousands of years.

Humans have lived here for centuries, beginning with the first hunters and gatherers who drifted down the Florida peninsula at the close of the last Ice Age in search of warmer winters. But it was not until the late 1880s that the first pioneer settlements began to take root and another 40 years before roads and railroads finally pierced the rugged Florida wilderness to unlock the area's enormous agricultural and resort potential.

Begin your adventure back over more than a million years of history and heritage at the main [Collier County Museum](#), located in the County Courthouse complex in East Naples. From prehistoric saber cats and long-vanished civilizations, to Spanish explorers, Seminole Indian warriors, plume hunters and Cracker cattlemen, we'll introduce you to the hardy and colorful folk who tamed a wilderness swampland the size of the state of Delaware.

Set in Naples' restored [Seaboard Air Line Railroad station](#), the [Museum's branch facility](#) in downtown Naples takes visitors back to the boom days of the Roaring Twenties and explains how generations of Southwest Floridians used technology and transportation to conquer a seemingly impenetrable frontier. Seminole dugout canoes, a mule wagon, antique swamp buggy, restored rail cars, and new inter-active exhibits tell the story of how trade and travel

helped transform Naples into today's glittering Gulf coast resort.

Then spend a lazy afternoon exploring the history of nearby Everglades City at the [Museum of the Everglades](#), a faithfully restored 1920s-era commercial laundry originally opened for workers building the famed Tamiami Trail. Permanent and rotating exhibits take an in-depth look at over 2,000 years of human history on Southwest Florida's lush "River of Grass."

Complete your journey into the past with a visit to Immokalee, Collier County's largest inland community, and the [Immokalee Pioneer Museum](#). Originally home to cattleman Robert Roberts and his family, this restored 15-acre living history museum offers a rare opportunity to experience daily working life on a Southwest Florida pioneer homestead and citrus grove from the early 1900s.

It's a story that's far too big to be told in just one visit... or one museum. So plan on visiting all four of the Collier County Museums and discover a story that's well worth exploring with the whole family. *

Credit:
Collier County Museum Director Ron Jamro.