

Curiouser and Curiouser!

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Pensacola is a fast growing, ever-evolving city. Over the past several years, Pensacola has been caught in the current of a tremendous forward momentum due to expansion and downtown in particular is seeing the fruits of this progress more and more each day.

But one of the things that makes Pensacola so great has always been its rich history and unique flavor. Even as the city matures, some things will never change—and that's how we like it! You see, no matter what changes may come, Pensacola will always be both a central hub for our nation's history and a city with small-town charm and

quirky charisma. Even as Pensacola continues to grow, at its core will be those great little sights and attractions that make you stop and go, "Hmm, that's cool." So why not take a moment to do just that?

Here are just a few local curiosities we think are worth checking out:



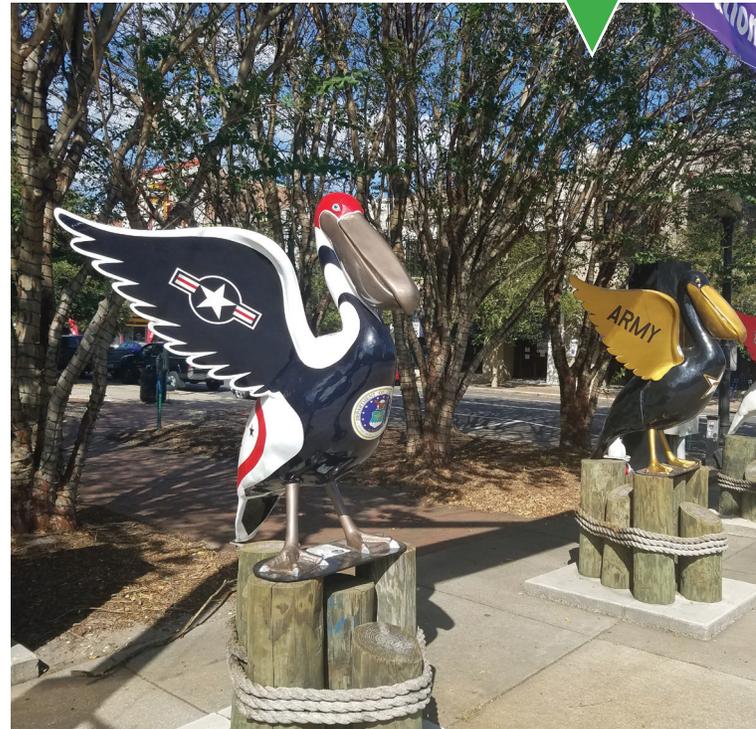


Pensacola Pelican Statues

They are everywhere. From the airport, to the public library, to streets of downtown these robust, handsome devils perch for all to admire their colorful plumage. Each pelican is sponsored by a local business, organization, or individual and is designed as fun tributes to all things that make Pensacola great. With a paint job entirely unique to each statue, many different artists took to the task of bringing these birds to life in a variety of different aesthetics, often taking creative liberties with each member of the flock. This project, originally organized by the Pensacola News Journal in 2004, began with just 21 pelicans but has since grown to 41. While many of the pelicans have flown back to their sponsors' nests, many of them still remain perched in their original locations and continue to intrigue locals and visitors alike.

Seville Square Sculptures

When Hurricane Ivan struck in 2004, it ravaged portions of Pensacola rendering them virtually uninhabitable. The damage was near catastrophic and along with the damage to homes and businesses, many of the city's landmarks bore the scars of Ivan's onslaught. Among the casualties was the huge cedar that stood on the corner of Palafox and Garden Streets which was decorated yearly for the Christmas season. The tree was so damaged that it had to be cut down. However, the old cedar found new life in the hands of the skilled sculptors Mario Parra and Elizabeth Thompson. The pair, who live in Escazu, one of Pensacola's sister cities in Costa Rica, used the wood from the trunk of the fallen tree to create the elegant statues seen in Seville Square today. The quaint figures bring a rustic charm to Seville Square while dutifully supporting the branches of the large oaks throughout the park. It's almost as if the old cedar lives on, continuing to grace Pensacola residents with its strength and timeless beauty.



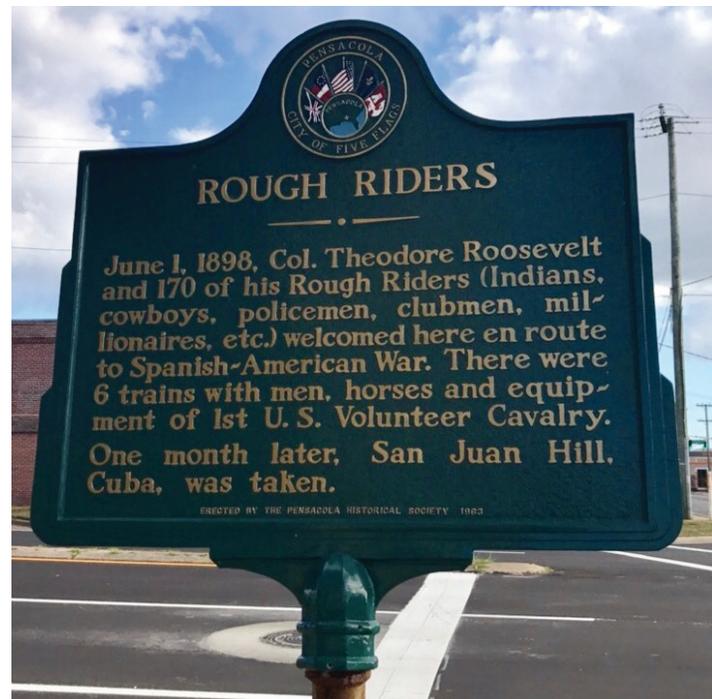


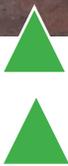
Crystal Ice House

If you are looking for a little reprieve from the sweltering Florida heat, then the Crystal Ice House is the palace of your dreams. This quaint little Pensacola gem located on the corner of North Davis Highway and East Jordan Street has been catching local's eyes since 1932. Back in the days when ice was more of a luxury item, residents could take a trip to this oh-so-convenient drive-thru location and stock up on this precious commodity. This little outpost stood out as much then as it does now, with its glittering icicles and snow-covered peaks. You just couldn't miss it. Shopping for ice was made even easier by their very own order code, which consisted of a series of simple hand signals illustrated on a plaque affixed to the building. For example, to let the attendant know you wanted 50 pounds of ice, you would hold up two fingers; for 100 pounds you'd hold up one, for 20 pounds you'd hold up three, and so on. Though it's no longer in use, the Crystal Ice House is officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is considered one of the "Seven Wonders of Pensacola."

Rough Riders

In 1898 an alliance of military service members, miners, Native Americans and cowboys rode out on horses while carrying shotguns, making their way Tampa. From Tampa, they would sail to Cuba and square off against the Spanish in what has come to be known as the Spanish-American War. The United States would go on to have their victory. These men, led by Theodore Roosevelt himself, were the famous Rough Riders and it turns out that they are a little piece of Pensacola history as well. On June 1, 1898 the Rough Riders rode through Pensacola on their way to Tampa. They stopped for water and a quick rest before blazing a trail forward to victory. The plaque on East Wright and Tarragona Streets marks this historic appearance.





Miniature House on Main Street

If you've ever cruised through downtown Pensacola, no doubt you've caught sight of the miniature house that sits at the corner of Spring and Main Streets and wondered, Why is that there and what on earth is it for? Standing 12 feet high and 19 feet long, this doll house sized home was built in 1955 to cover a gas regulator station. It is an exact replica of the Pantan-Leslie Trading Post, one of the first and most successful business hubs in West Florida, established by a Scottish businessman named William Pantan in 1772. While the gas pipes and fittings are long gone, the house holds its place as a small part of local history.



Bike Racks

As downtown Pensacola has begun to blossom with new life, more and more people are ditching the cars and taking to the street by foot or by bike. Though cycling has always been a favored Pensacola pastime, finding a safe place to park your bike while popping into a café for lunch or meeting friends for coffee was a chore and a half. In 2014 that all changed. Suddenly, modern bike sculptures serving as bike racks appeared on street corners downtown. In a variety of lively, playful colors, these 20 bike racks were designed not only with functionality in mind but also as a way to get the community excited about biking. Mayor Ashton Hayward saw this as just another way to make Pensacola a “more walkable, bikeable, livable city.”



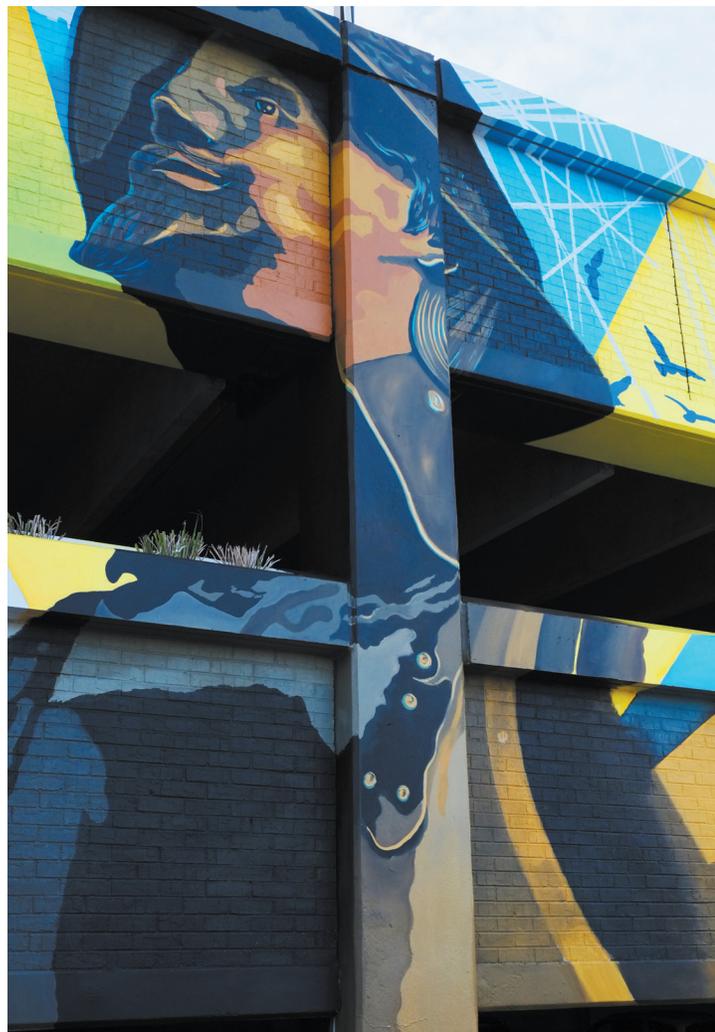


Pensacola Post Card Mural

Brew Ha Ha hasn't even opened their doors yet and already has the public abuzz with anticipation. In just 11 days, Niceville resident and local artist, Patti Gillespie transformed the wall on the side of Brew Ha Ha's into a work of art, creating an elaborate mural in celebration of Pensacola. The mural, designed as a replica of a vintage 1940s–50s postcard, is a clever compilation of other famous Pensacola postcards fitted into each letter of the word "Pensacola" and features various images of important local landmarks. It is approximately 21 by 14 feet tall and has been turning heads since its installation.

Jefferson Street Mural

Though relatively new to town, this eye catching mural is quickly becoming a local favorite and promises to be a staple among landmark tours in the future. Covering 250 feet total, the mural adorning the Jefferson Street Parking Garage has garnered a lot of attention and interest since its fledgling stages last year. In celebration of the 2016 Foo Foo Festival, artists Ashton Howard and Evan Levin launched the project in honor of the town they hold so dear—and what better way to show their affection than through this eye-popping, artistic labor of love. The mural features integral figures to Pensacola's history and heritage past and present such as Tristan De Luna, Fort Pickens, the Spanish national flag and the Blue Angels.





First City Arts Center Mural

You can't miss it. The large gold eyes peer out, the bone white face frozen in a gleeful, permanent smile as bright festive colors and shapes swirl and swim around the unearthly portrait. The mural covers the entirety of the First City Arts Center on North Guillemard Street. According to Suzanne Findeisen media correspondent, the mural was funded by Foo Foo Fest, 2016 and was created by a member of Art Beyond Walls, a group that regularly meets at First City Art Center.

"Six artists created the skull art on the East outer wall of First City Art Center, which was done in conjunction with the Gonzalez Street Memory Wall," Findeisen said.

The First City Arts Center is a hub for "hands on learning" and artistic expression so it only makes sense that the creativity fostered there spills beyond its walls making the world its canvas.

DeVilliers Mural

Pensacola is a city rich in history and we celebrate its heritage with events like the Fiesta of Five Flags. However, often overlooked is Pensacola's African American history—not so on "The Blocks." Encompassing a cluster of buildings at the intersection of Belmont and DeVilliers streets, The Blocks have always been home to a thriving business and art community. During the times of segregation and Jim Crow, African American-owned trade and entertainment businesses comprised a self-contained hub of industry in The Blocks. Highly successful clubs like Abe's 506 Club featured artists like B.B. King, Fats Domino, and Aretha Franklin and thrived for many years. Today, we see tribute to the contributions of African Americans here in Pensacola in the form of local artist Carter J. Gaston's mural on the Belmont-DeVilliers building. Gaston's mural features influential figures such as General Daniel "Chappie" James Jr., the first African American four-star general and F.E. Washington, and the publisher of The Colored Citizen. Their history lives on in brilliant color.



So swing by some of these fun locations, take a bike ride downtown, find all the pelicans, and feast your eyes on some of the lesser known but no less loved curiosities Pensacola has to offer.