

An Orange Flavored Dream: Florida's Architectural Self-Promotion at the 1893 and 1964 World's Fairs

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Background

- For generations, World's Fairs gave visitors a unique opportunity to experience the world's cultures and resources firsthand.
- To the nations, companies, and US states that exhibited, these fairs provided a platform to present a curated image of themselves to the world.
- Florida exhibited at four World's Fairs, and this study compares the first and last, 1893 in Chicago and 1964-65 in New York.
- All of the structures examined in this study were demolished soon after the close of the fairs, so this project uses newspaper accounts, planning documents, and World's Fair visitor guides to understand what these structures were like, what influenced their design, and how they were received by audiences.

1893: "Relic of the Dark Ages"

- Florida's participation was organized by a non-Floridian, and was funded by private donations.
- The pavilion was a recreation of St. Augustine's Castillo de San Marcos, and displayed Florida's natural resources.
- Florida also presented exhibits in the Horticultural Building, Forestry Building, and Hall of Mines and Mining.
- While some visitors enjoyed Florida's contributions to the fair, the people of Florida saw it as a disgrace and as an unfair representation of their state.



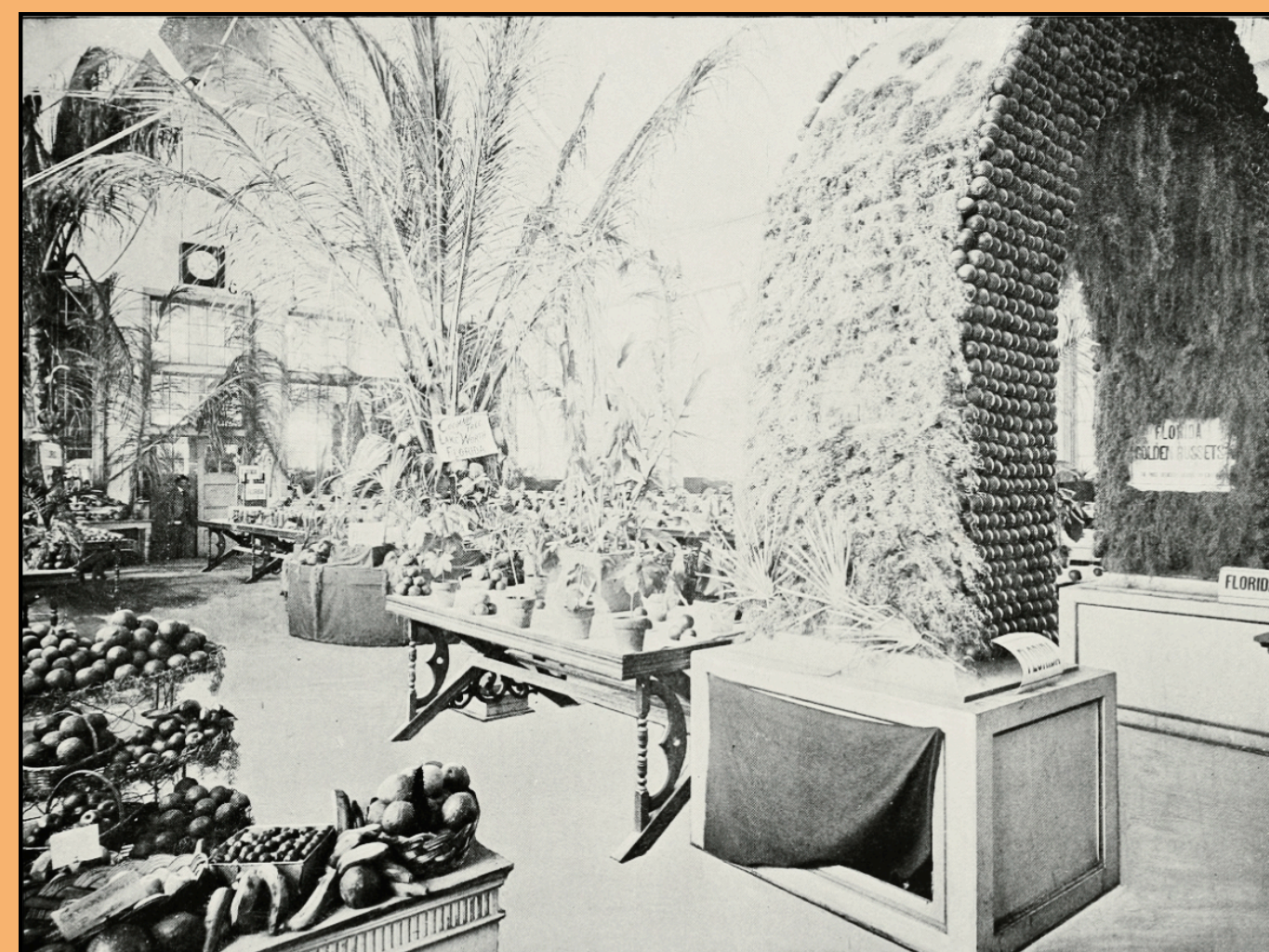
Left: 1893 Florida pavilion. From *Bancroft's Book of the Fair*.



Right: Aerial view of the 1964-65 Florida pavilion (State Archives of Florida).

1964: "Fabulous Florida"

- Florida's 1964-65 participation was organized by a government authority, and received significant funding from the State of Florida and the Florida Citrus Commission.
- For the pavilion site, bright modern buildings were constructed, including an exhibition hall, a porpoise arena, a 100-foot tall tower, a model home, and an Everglades entertainment area.
- Florida continued to promote its natural resources, as well as its growing tourism and real estate sectors.
- The pavilion presented an entertaining and appealing image of life in Florida, but it ignored racial tensions plaguing the state at home.



Above: Florida's display in the 1893 Horticulture Building. From *Shepp's World's Fair Photographed*.

Right: Florida's Citrus Tower at the 1964 World's Fair (State Library of Florida).



Left: Interior courtyard of the 1893 Florida pavilion. From *Bancroft's Book of the Fair*.

Left: Interior of the 1964 Florida Exhibition Hall (State Library of Florida).



Comparison and Conclusions

- Both pavilions attempted to promote Florida's resources as was appropriate at the time.
- The 1964 pavilion was better supported by the people of Florida and was more cohesive in its goals and more effective in its execution.
- However, while the 1964 pavilion presented a possible picture of life in Florida, it was still a picture that was unrealistic and unwelcoming to many.
- Although built to be temporary, studying these Florida pavilions gives us insight into what certain Floridians felt was important and how the state was perceived by outsiders in different periods of American history.

Acknowledgements

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Selected References

Secondary Sources

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Primary Sources

- Florida World's Fair Authority Collection, State Archives of Florida, Tallahassee.
- Various historical newspapers accessed through newspapers.com. Titles referenced include *Tallahassee Democrat*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *Florida Agriculturalist*.



Left: Civil Rights protestors being taken away from the opening day of the 1964 fair. (State Library of Florida).

Right: Seminole Indian exhibit and model chickee at the 1964 Florida pavilion (State Library of Florida).

