



Florida Department of State
Kurt S. Browning
Secretary of State

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New Exhibit - Florida Cattle Ranching: Five Centuries of Tradition

Tallahassee, FL—Secretary of State Kurt S. Browning is pleased to announce a new exhibit by the Florida Folklife Program titled *Florida Cattle Ranching: Five Centuries of Tradition*. The exhibit opens at the Museum of Florida History on March 11 and extends through August 9, 2009.

“We are very happy that the Florida Folklife Program has had the opportunity to work with the Museum of Florida History and a number of other prestigious organizations to create this attractive and educational exhibit for the citizens of Florida to enjoy,” said Secretary Browning.

Florida Cattle Ranching: Five Centuries of Tradition tells the story of one of Florida’s oldest and most important cultural activities. Cattle ranching in North America began when Spanish explorers introduced horses and cattle in the 16th century, and flourished in the hands of the Seminoles, Crackers, and other Floridians. Today, ranching is an essential economic activity that preserves many aspects of the natural landscape, protects water resources, and maintains areas used by wildlife or for recreation. Yet, few know about Florida’s unique ranching traditions, which have been adapted to the subtropical climate, and influenced our distinctive history.

The exhibit traces cattle ranching from its early beginnings in Colonial Florida through present-day cattle ranching. Some of the topics included in the exhibit are Colonial Florida, Seminole cattle ranching, Cracker cowboys, cow dogs, auctions, oral traditions, rodeos, and material culture. The exhibit includes artifacts, archival photos, artwork by cowboy artists, cowboy poetry, audio and video components, and images by guest photographers Jon Kral, Bob Montanaro, Jimmy Peters, and Carlton Ward, Jr.

The Florida Folklife Program in the Department of State, with the assistance of grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, has documented cattle ranching traditions throughout Florida over the past two years. Now, in partnership with Florida Cultural Resources, Inc., additional funding from the Florida Humanities Council, Florida Division of Cultural Affairs, Florida Cattlemen’s Foundation, Florida Cattlemen’s Association, the Florida Cracker Cattle Association, Susan and Pete Clemons, Lalla Rook Tomkins, Iris Wall, the National Endowment for the Arts, and others has made the exhibit and related programming possible.

The Museum of Florida History is located in the R. A. Gray Building at 500 South Bronough Street, Tallahassee, Florida. Hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Sunday and holidays, Noon to 4:30 p.m. The Museum is also open First Fridays, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. and Third Thursdays, 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Admission is free. To learn more about the Museum, contact 850.245.6400 or go online to www.museumoffloridahistory.com.