



HISTORY OF THE SAN MARCO PRESERVATION HALL

Mrs. Harriet R.C. Stevens founded the St. Paul's Episcopal Church after her home-church services outgrew their space. Stevens lived in Rushford, Minnesota, but spent her winters in South Arlington, where she had a home on Pottsburg Creek. In 1880, the Stevens family began holding church services at their winter home, with the cooperation of Dr. R. H. Weller, Rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Jacksonville. The services quickly outgrew the space. In 1887, Mrs. Stevens planned to build a church facility, and provided the funding along with gifts from her friends and relatives in Minnesota.

In 1888, a small Carpenter Gothic church — a popular architectural style in the mid-19th century — was erected on the corner of Atlantic Blvd. and Bartram Rd., and was called the St. Paul's Church. The carpenter gothic style was reminiscent of the Middle Ages gothic style. It is characterized by the pointed arch and dramatic height of the ceiling, which was so often made of wood by a master carpenter. The wood in the St. Paul's Church is mostly yellow pine.



D. H. Murnahan, a carpenter from Michigan, moved his family to Jacksonville in 1887. He oversaw the construction of St. Paul's Church, but died during the Yellow Fever Epidemic, in October 1888.

Supporters of the Underground Railroad in Rushford, the Stevens' home ministry included Sunday School and Bible literacy classes for former slaves — at the time, still a dangerous endeavor. Two years after St. Paul's construction, she donated the blueprints, land, and lumber for an identical church to be built for use by the African American community.

St. Paul's Church was used continuously from 1888 until 1977. In 1911, the church was moved from its original location to a point about 300 yards west on Atlantic Boulevard, where it came to face east. Later, when the road was widened, it was moved farther back, and turned to face north. However, in 1913, all of the church records, then kept at the All Saints Church, were accidentally destroyed. In 1937, the bell tower was added to the church.

In 1977, St. Paul's built a new, bigger church, so the original St. Paul's Church left its longtime home on Atlantic Boulevard. Through a grant from the Rotary Club of Jacksonville, it was relocated by barge to the grounds of the Jacksonville Museum of Arts and Sciences (later MOSH) on the Southbank to be used as a children's theater, in order to preserve the architectural style. Restorations were made in 1978 under the guidance of architect Kenneth Smith at a cost of around \$65,000.

In 1994, the St. Paul's Church building was donated to the San Marco Preservation Society when expansion plans at the museum required the building to be moved. Once again, in 1995, the building was moved by barge and rolled down Atlantic Boulevard to rest at Fletcher Park in San Marco. Repairing, repainting, and landscaping for the chapel began in early 1995 by the San Marco Garden Club and the San Marco Preservation Society. A historic bell was donated by Henry and Mable Ford and added to the chapel in 1996, and the San Marco Preservation Society renamed the building San Marco Preservation Hall.

Today, the Hall is a local historic landmark and event space, neighbored by Stockton Cottage. Both Preservation Hall and Stockton Cottage are maintained and operated by the San Marco Preservation Society, and are available for rental for weddings and other special events.



HISTORY OF THE SAN MARCO STOCKTON COTTAGE

When Confederate Colonel William Tennent Stockton died in 1869, his widow was left with seven children, who then moved to Jacksonville. The Stockton sons grew up and began opening businesses that would become some of the most well-known in Jacksonville.

James Stockton, with partners Brown Whatley and Joseph Davin, founded Stockton, Whatley, Davin & Company in the late 19th century as a mortgage banking, real estate, and insurance firm. The company traces its origin back to 1884, when Telfair Stockton entered into the real estate partnership of Barrs, Hunter & Stockton. A year later, he took over his partners' interests and continued the business as an individual. In 1908, Stockton catapulted into the land development business with the founding of the Stockton & Budd firm.

In 1910, Telfair Stockton formed the firm of Gamble & Stockton and erected a brick and tile manufacturing plant in South Jacksonville at a cost of \$300,000. The site of the plant and brickyard was located just south of the town of South Jacksonville. It was later transformed into present-day Lake Marco in the San Marco subdivision.

In 1919, Telfair's son, James R. Stockton, joined Telfair Stockton & Company and shortly thereafter succeeded his father as the executive head. He spent the next 50 years developing it into one of the largest mortgage banking firms in the nation. When Whatley, Davin & Company merged with Telfair Stockton & Company in 1946 to form Stockton, Whatley, Davin & Company, James R. Stockton served as chairman, Brown L. Whatley served as president, and Joseph W. Davin served as Vice President and Secretary.

Stockton Cottage was built in 1938 as a temporary sales office for Telfair Stockton & Co. during the development of the San Marco neighborhood. It was designed by architects Marsh & Saxelbye and built by Colonial Homes of Jacksonville at the intersection of Hendricks Ave. and San Marco Blvd. — facing Alford Place — at 2101 San Marco Blvd. It was moved from its original location either in 1941, when the first gas station was constructed in San Marco, or when Starling's was constructed in 1966, and was then used as a playhouse by one of the company owner's daughters, located at 909 Arbor Lane. After the Arbor Lane home sold to new owners, the building was donated and used as a public lending library for a time. In the early 2000s, the San Marco Preservation Society partnered with the City of Jacksonville to move Stockton Cottage to the 1.5-acre Fletcher Park. Renovated in 2021, it is presently located next to San Marco Preservation Hall and is often used as a bridal suite for the many weddings that are held in San Marco Preservation Hall.

HISTORY OF FLETCHER PARK

First known as Belote Green, named for prominent South Jacksonville politician William Belote, the park was established in 1918 as part of Fletcher Park federal housing development, which was created to provide homes for workers building naval ships at the nearby Merrill Stevens Shipyard during World War I. Prominent architect Henry Klutho designed the Fletcher Park development, which was named for U.S. Senator Duncan U. Fletcher. Fletcher was a Jacksonville resident who served continuously for 27 years and introduced the legislation that provided the funding and construction for the wartime employees' housing. Later, Belote Green became known as Fletcher Park, which has seen many improvements since the San Marco Preservation Society relocated the old St. Paul's Episcopal Church in 1994 and the Stockton Cottage in 2003 to the grounds.