



## Tampa Bay History Center Opens Largest Ever Exhibition of Florida Cartography

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A decade after Columbus sailed across the Atlantic, explorers were still speculating about the contours of the New World. Although today's historians remain uncertain about when exactly Europeans first set foot in *La Florida*, cartographers began to sketch the outlines of the peninsula by the early 1500s. By 1511, a historian named Peter Martyr labeled the unknown land north of Cuba "Isla de Beimeni," the native Indian name for what is now Florida.

Martyr's map is just one of 150 maps featured in *Charting the Land of Flowers: 500 Years of Florida Maps*, opening September 21 at the Tampa Bay History Center. The most comprehensive exhibition of Florida cartography ever presented, *Charting the Land of Flowers* traces six centuries of Florida history, bringing together maps from museum and library collections around the world, many of which will be on view to the public for the first time.

The exhibit offers a rare opportunity to see the world as the early European explorers saw it and to watch the peninsula evolve before their eyes. They'll also see that much of the earliest European exploration of North America occurred not in New England, but in Florida, while early railroad maps and travelogues show how the state became an agricultural powerhouse and America's number one tourist destination.

The exhibition includes rare maps from the Library of Congress, including the only known complete copy of Bernard Romans' 1774 "Map of East and West Florida," which will be on view to the public for the first time.

*Charting the Land of Flowers: 500 Years of Florida Maps* is on exhibit September 21 through February 16, 2014, at the Tampa Bay History Center.

For more information, visit [www.tampabayhistorycenter.org](http://www.tampabayhistorycenter.org).