

A New Way to Experience Atlantic City

Multimedia exhibit documents highlights and history of the original Boardwalk resort.

By [Tom Wilk](#) | September 3, 2019



The Atlantic City Experience, photos courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library

From its days as a fledgling tourist destination after the Civil War to its rise as a gambling and nightlife center, Atlantic City has enjoyed a rich history.

That's well documented in the Atlantic City Experience, [a new attraction](#) that provides an entertaining and educational journey through the resort's past. Based at Jim Whelan Boardwalk Hall, the multimedia exhibit, which opened in July, includes photographs, memorabilia and video tracing the city's development.

"It's a way to showcase Atlantic City's history," says Don Latham, public information officer for the Atlantic City Free Public Library, which oversees the exhibit and draws from its archives.

Displays highlight the city's moments on the national stage, including a period when it served as a wartime military training base with hotels transformed into barracks and medical facilities. Then there was 1964, when Convention Hall hosted the Democratic National Convention.

Other displays highlight the resort's role in the Miss America pageant, which got its start as the Inner City Bathing Beauty Contest. The attraction also documents entertainers who performed there, including the Beatles, who are pictured with an oversized hoagie from White House Subs. A ticket on display indicates it cost \$4.90 to see the Fab Four at Convention Hall in August 1964.

Heather Halpin Perez, former archivist for the city library and now the Stockton University archivist, says the Experience replaces the Atlantic City Historical Museum and offers a more central location for visitors. She says exhibits at the Experience will rotate. In 2020, for example, a possible exhibit would commemorate the 100th anniversary of Prohibition.

The Atlantic City Experience is open 9 a.m.–5 p.m., Monday–Friday. Admission is free.