

Friends

Of the Fairhope

Museum of History



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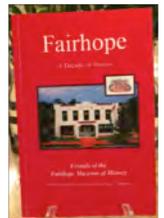
New Museum Director Phillip Bolin Comes on Board

See Introduction - Page 2, Column One

Elderberry Festival Blooms Again!

The weather was beautiful on August 11 and the fun was abundant! The Museum was abuzz as over two hundred and fifty people enjoyed a casual day of activities and entertainment at the Annual Elderberry Festival. Guests to the Museum from opening at 9 a.m., viewed exhibits for a short-while, until Kracker Dan Band kicked off vintage minstrel music. Visitors quickly filled the chairs out front and listened to a few ballads and tunes until Director Donnie Barrett took the microphone to ferret out wanna-be Elderberry Pie Eating Champions. At 11 a.m., the Challenge began! Five competitors took up positions around the table set with a pie in front of each. The time limit was one minute and only rule was: "You can not use your hands!" After a count down, the eaters put their faces into the pies and began to gobble the tasty baked morsels. When the "time's up" buzzer sounded, there were two close finishers. So much so, that Donnie recruited 2, then 3 guests, to help with the decision. After some deliberation, the winner was selected. To applause, Donnie awarded the customary trophy to the smiling winner. Unfortunately, he quick-ly darted out the front door with his award and friend, before his name could be documented.

Also downstairs, the launch of "Fairhope - A Decade of Stories" took place. Members of the *Friends* wrote the new book as a tribute to Donnie Barrett for his decade of service to our community. It is a composite of researched history stories printed in the *Friends* Newsletter since the Museum opened in the Old City Hall in 2008. Sales were brisk with all funds going to the support of Museum activities.



At 2 p.m., the Baklava Belly-dance and Raq Garden Belly Dance groups combined, to wow the crowd with entertaining Egyptian dances, including getting the audience involved in some basic and enjoyable moves.



Kracker Dan Band resumed play and upstairs, Elderberry-use demonstrations by Director Barrett began.



Festival, continued on page 2, column 2



Director's Desk

New Director Phillip Bolin - Introduction by Donnie Barrett

I am proud to introduce Phillip M. Bolin. Phillip will be the Museum Director starting on October 2, 2018. He is a native of Mobile, but has spent most of his adult life living in Fairhope. He has two grown sons and has just moved to Daphne where he lives with his girlfriend Kelley. His education is in anthropology and archaeology. He has been a collections manager at the University of South Alabama Archaeology Museum and assistant director and event manager at the Cathedral Square Art Gallery. He built the 3-D diorama of Native Americans at Five Rivers Delta Resource Center and demonstrates an overall knowledge of cultural art, museum, collections and event management.



Mr. Bolin

Phillip is quite impressed with our Museum and is very complimentary of how we operate our facility. He assures us there are no big changes coming soon. He is spending his first three weeks here learning how we do things and learning why that what we are doing here is working so well.

He has met most of the docents now and admits we have an extraordinary team of cheerful volunteers. He is impressed with their knowledge of Fairhope History and the experienced way they guide the visitors through the museum telling them all about our City's history.

Phillip is also going to have the tough job of managing the Welcome Center next door. This includes scheduling the many "ambassadors" and replacing them when they are out on vacation. His job will also be to keep the info racks filled with the many brochures and restaurant/lodging guides that we reproduce by the thousands.

Phillip, Darby and I want to see my retirement and a new director installed to go as smoothly as possible. We have such a treasure here we want to keep it the most important tourist attraction in town. The way you can help us and in fact it is essential that you do, is to keep doing the job you are doing in your polished and professional manner. This way we will see our wonderful facility only get better and better.

Donnie Barrett

Festival, continued page 1, column 2



Kracker Dan Minstrel Band has entertained for many years at the Festival; always providing foot-stomping, historic music



Another highlight of the day was the Parade of Past Queens of the Festival. Director Barrett announced the entry of Queens Mary Ann Maradik (2008), Catherine King (2010) and Lottie Barrett (2012).

The Old City Council Chamber on the second floor was filled to capacity for each of the half-hourly Elderberry use programs done by Mr. Barrett. He showed how to identify the berries, how to process them and how to make many tasty foods and drinks from pies, to cookies, jams, jellies and wines.



This common Baldwin County wild fruit, sure enough, tastes pretty good! The Festival this year consolidated some of the most enjoyable activities of past festivals for attendees of all ages. ~

Early Fairhope Industries

Michael Titford

The Populists and Single-Taxers who came from around the United States to create Fairhope in 1894, had multiple talents and put them to good use. They created businesses and small industries that provided them with incomes to support their families and continue the growth of Fairhope.

The original intent of early Fairhope settlers was to create an agrarian community, but other businesses and industries soon took over. The first of these was tourism, which is still with us today. Soon after Fairhope was created, tourists came to see “What the crazy Yankees were doing in Fairhope” (Most early Fairhope residents had come from the Mid-West). One of those “Crazy Yankees” was Mr. John Hunnell, who constructed changing booths down on the beach for tourists wishing to bathe in the bay. Mr. Hunnell then died suddenly and unexpectedly, and has the dubious distinction of being the first burial in the colony cemetery. Hotels to accommodate these visitors included *Tip Top Hotel* on the bluff near the present day Henry George Memorial, and later, the *Colonial Inn* overlooking the pier. Other hotels over the years were located mainly on Fairhope Avenue and Magnolia Street and included *The Whittier*, the *Gore Hotel*, the *Mackintosh*, the *Fairhope Hotel*, the *Tumble Inn* and *The Gables*. The *Hotel Volanta* was located north of town. The visitors to Fairhope often stayed for long periods. Early photographs show them sailing, fishing and strolling leisurely along the bluff.

Another attraction was the Fairhope Golf, Gun and Country Club and its nine-hole golf course near Fairwood Blvd and Mershon Street, (pictured below).



The clubhouse with its spacious veranda and fine entrance way, still exists and is now a private residence.

In the 1920s, the Casino was built down by the pier. There you could purchase a sandwich or soft drink, change to go swimming, use the bowling alley, or attend a dance on Saturday night. (It was *not* like Las Vegas!). Adjacent to the beach at different times, were a baseball diamond, a boxing ring and an open air theater; in the 1950s a small amusement park was added.



Magnolia Park Beach

A short walk on South Mobile Street brought you to Burkel’s Magnolia Beach Pavilion, which nearly rivaled the Casino in popularity, and further south still was the LaCarona Club where the Elks Club now stands. The Pagoda Club was further south in the settlement of Battles Wharf. Tourism is now Fairhope’s number one industry. We will talk about the nudist camps another time!

Another industry with a long history, is agriculture. Farms were already established in the area before the Single Tax Colony was created and the colonists purchased their own farmland for their single tax experiment. In later years, local farming was aided by the “Farm to Market” Program in the 1950s, where newer paved roads helped farmers when selling their produce. After WWII in Fairhope, where the library now stands, Schermer Pecan Company had a flourishing business, purchasing not only pecans, but also potatoes, cucumbers, tomatoes and satsumas from local farmers. This produce was then taken to Robertsedale and shipped by rail, across America.

The Native Americans in pre-Columbian days used



Clay City Kiln on Fish River

local clay for pottery making, and the early Fairhopeans continued the tradition. Frank Brown started a clay works where Thomas Hospital now stands. Ten years later, it moved to the banks of Fish River, four miles east of Fairhope; it became known as Clay City. An early photograph shows five kilns in use. Bricks and tiles were made there, including the Roman brick seen on the Fairhope Greer's supermarket wall and at other locations around town. A large number of Clay City bricks (or tiles as they were called) were used to build many buildings in town, including the Museum. On a drive around the local countryside, you will see many other red Clay City tile buildings. Now only one kiln remains at the Clay City site, which is now used for other purposes. When they ceased operations in 1985, the land was sold for private development and now includes retirement homes and weekend getaways along the banks of Fish River. Other businesses making building blocks were Dyson and Son's, located on Fairhope Avenue beside Stacks Gully and the Littlefield Artificial Stone Company. At the same time, the Stimpson sawmill, located where the Post Office is today, provided wood for building Fairhope's houses.

Adolf Berglin arrived in Fairhope in 1896 and started a dairy-based industry in Fairhope. He initially used the new ammonia process to make ice cream at the foot of Wharf Hill, selling cones to passengers getting on and off of the bay boats. Later he moved to the center of town and took over the colony's co-operative icehouse and creamery. The Berglin family built up their business with a large fleet of trucks, supplying milk to schools in Alabama, Mississippi and the panhandle of Florida. There were dairies in Fairhope in earlier days, on Ingleside

Avenue, the Ingersoll's all-Jersey milk dairy on Greeno Road, plus Hoffren's Dairy on Morphy Avenue. Hoffren's Auto Diagnostic Shop now occupies the old cow barn.

Fairhope's mild climate and plentiful rainfall has been suitable for plant nurseries. At the Bradford Amaryllis Gardens on Bancroft Street behind the Museum, camellias, amaryllis and azaleas were grown and shipped out of town. Amaryllis varieties such as "Clown", "Lady Bradford" and "Tappy" were developed there. A plaque now marks the site. In 1903, Mr. Delamare started his nursery on Delamare Avenue, building two greenhouses, but he did not stay in Fairhope long. Green's Nursery started on Section Street next to where the Hampton Inn is now located. The original building can be seen there with flower motifs on the façade. Part of the family relocated to Greeno road where they are still in business as a wholesale nursery. A fledgling satsuma industry in the early 1920s did not survive the periodic and unexpected deep freezes that occur in the winters here. Extracting turpentine from pine tree sap - an industry started in colonial times - continued into the Single Tax period. Older trees with the distinctive cuts on them can still be seen. There was also a short-lived cigar industry in town with Mr. Andy Cullen manufacturing the *Single Tax Stogy* and the *Fairhope Blunt* on the corner of Bayview St. and Fairhope Avenue, using locally grown tobacco.

The motor car caught on quickly in Fairhope and in a few short years there were service stations located around town to sell gasoline and to service automobiles. Some businesses transitioned from livery (care of horses) to automobiles. Klump Livery became Klump Auto Livery and then Klump Chevrolet, while Gaston Livery became Gaston Auto Livery and then Gaston Motor Company. The car firms relocated to the main Highway 98 in Daphne in the '70s and later changed hands to new owners.

An industry of sorts was the School of Organic Education. Progressive parents around America sent their children to the Marietta Johnson School for the excellent education it provided, and teachers around America wanted the experience of teaching there and moved to Fairhope. The Organic School Home, located where Borom Hall is now located, boarded the students from out of town.

This short article has described the many ways the early Fairhope settlers worked to create businesses and industry in and around Fairhope. They helped the community grow and flourish which it continues to do to this day. ~

Retirement Party for Director

Donnie Barrett

*Sponsored by the Friends of the
Museum*

On September 16, 2018, the *Friends* hosted a Retirement Celebration for departing Director Donnie Barrett at the Fairhope Yacht Club. About one hundred *Friends*, well-wishers and long-time acquaintances packed the large reception room to enjoy a fun and whimsical farewell to Donnie. The party, organized by docents Claudia and Jerry Fortis, was a typical Donnie-Fest, wrought with laughter, musical tributes and accolades for over ten years of service by Mr. Barrett. He was recognized for



building a remarkable museum and a complement of docents and volunteers to serve and support the creative facility. Ms. Catherine King expressed appreciation to the City of Fairhope and the Single



Tax Corporation for assistance in establishing the Museum, and Mrs. Claudia Fortis told enjoyable experiences that made Director Barrett the perfect choice to lead the Museum. Mrs. Susan Pearce, the first president of the *Friends of the Museum*, gave an enjoyable recollection of the history of the *Friends* and the need for “unusual” funding to buy artificial trees and rubber flounders, items not customarily authorized by the City purchasing system. Hence, the need for a *Friends* organization was born; and it was indeed - to be managed by and decisions make by, the membership.



An ‘unrehearsed’ customized rendition of “Thanks for the Memories” was sung by docents Claudia Fortis, Catherine King, Rosanne Gulisano and past Museum Assistant Jim Bates to exuberant applause!

- Book Signing -

WABF 1480 Radio

They heard about the Museum *Friends*’ new book

Fairhope – A Decade of Stories

and invited us over to the station on Church Street during the Art Walk on October 5 to have a party and launch the book!

All ten writers of Fairhope history stories will be there to sign and release this tribute to Director Donnie Barrett.

Come by the Station between 5:30 pm and 8 p.m. and join the fun. Pick up a copy of this latest and well-rounded history book of Fairhope.

Retirement Party, continued from column 1 –

Mrs. Fortis invited Donnie and Lottie Barrett to the podium and presented them each, with engraved plaques of appreciation.



Donnie topped off the program with thanks to his many friends and workmates over-the-years. And after a few anecdotes about retirement, he concluded with his own free-spirited version of Frank Sinatra’s “I did it my way.” After that, Louie Blaze proposed a toast to Donnie, followed by hor d’oeuvres and the cutting of a large Retirement Cake that were enjoyed by the guests. ~



Tea for Two

Each Thursday 2 p.m. in the Museum Council Chamber

October 4 – Fairhope Police Officer – Again we will feature one of Fairhope’s officers and tell the story of the men and women who risk their lives to keep our city safe. These are great presentations.

October 11 – Tom Jones, the famous potter on Fish River, is a Fairhope Native who is throwing pottery in a historic pottery building. He will bring some of his highly prized Halloween pottery.

October 18 - Ben Raines, known as the “Wizard of the Wilderness” is the senior newspaper reporter for the Press Register. He will make a presentation on his current projects.

October 25 – Mary Riser – The Fairhope Film Festival has become one of Fairhope’s feature events in only a few short years. Mary Riser, the event director will bring some clips to show us of a few of this year’s featured films.

November 1 – Clarence Bishop of B&B Pecan Company will come and entertain us with his many old Fairhope stories.

November 8 – Rodney Rocconi, M.D., Associate Director of Clinical Research with Mitchell Cancer Center, will speak about developing a clinical trials program, immunotherapies, targeted therapies and vaccines for cancer including strides in his research in ovarian cancer.

* Your \$2 donation helps support on-going programs *

Speakers, *continued in column 2*

Tea for Two

Speakers, continued:

November 15 – Doris “Toodles” Dorgan is a Fairhope native and will tell us lively stories of her growing up here and especially stories of Fairhope schools.

November 22 – Thanksgiving. Museum Closed.

November 29 – Richard Peterson, Fairhope’s public works director, will tell us what is new going on in this very important part of the city government.

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Friends of the Fairhope Museum of History – 2018

Louie Blaze – President
Claudia Fortis - Vice President
Lottie Barrett – Treasurer
Catherine King – Secretary

and over seventy docents, volunteers and contributing members

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Newsletter

The Friends Newsletter is the official publication of the *Friends of the Fairhope Museum of History*, an Alabama Corporation organized exclusively for charitable, scientific and educational purposes within the meaning of Part 501 (c) 3 of the United States Internal Revenue Code. Contributing writers vary with each Issue. Inquiries and comments may be directed to Robert Glennon, Editor, at FairhopeMuseumNewsletter@gmail.com.

Fairhope Museum of History

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Hours: 9 – 5 Tuesday through Saturday Admission: Free!

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