

# Friends

## Of the Fairhope Museum of History

**NEWSLETTER**



Vol. 8 Issue 5 October - November 2017

## Ninth Annual Elderberry Festival August 12, 2017



**Mitchell Powers**  
Elderberry Pie Eating Champion

The Ninth Annual Elderberry Festival started with a bang at 11 a.m. with the Elderberry Pie Eating Contest. Seven contestants, including Elders Dustin Southway and Bradlee Graham, two pleasant and sporty young men from Colo-



rado, in white shirts and ties, joined in for the no-hands pie eating. While dough and berries flew in the air, the young missionaries didn't get a speck

on their white shirts. The pie-eating winner was Mitchell Powers, a visitor from Charlottesville, VA., who joined the competition "for the fun of it!"

In staying with the historical theme, the Kracker Dan Band played vintage pioneer music throughout the day as the large crowd attended Director Donnie Barrett's Elderberry Demonstrations in the Old City Council Chamber upstairs. Hourly beginning at noon, and continuing into the afternoon, Donnie extolled the virtues of our native Elderberry that had become a culinary mainstay for the founders of Fairhope in the late 1890s. He entertained with history stories and recipes for

**Festival**, continued on page 3



## Director's Desk

Oh, what a glorious day this will be! Life is looking up here at the Museum! Darby is now on board and while we miss Jim Bates, who moved over to manage the Senior Center, Darby has landed with a big smile and eager to get involved. Her passion for education and working with volunteers brings a new energy to our program planning. Thanks to our many docents and volunteers, we have maintained a good stride, preparing events and meeting-greeting-and-guiding our 1,800 guests per month (the current average), through our ever-expanding exhibits.

And we couldn't live without Mary Ann Maradik, who for years has scheduled our docents and made sure we have several someones here everyday, with experience and knowledge about Fairhope and our museum. Sometime, I enjoy being a bug-on-the-wall, listening to our staff tell stories and drawing our visitors into our history by asking about their backgrounds and relating their interests into what we have on display. "Where are you from? Oh! One of our Single-Taxers came from that area and over here is an item that belonged to them when they came in 1906."

We are also at the peak of planning our Founders Day event on Saturday, November 11. The new feature this year will be ad hoc interviews with Fairhope Founders, who will come back from the past to tell us about their contributions to our city.

The Alabama 200th Anniversary in 2019 is stirring up lots of interest these days. In addition to my museum duties here, I am getting more requests to speak to groups around the county about things like Ft. Mims, Fairhope, early pioneers, even area flora and horticulture. And if I'm called on short notice, there is always my box of old relics found at the beach. I am ever thankful to our volunteers who make it possible for me to do some of these other things. For sure, it makes my job more enjoyable, knowing that the Museum is covered by Darby and our cadre of well skilled docents!

Donnie Barrett

## What makes the Elderberry a Part of Our History?



The short answer is that in the spring of 1895, the Founder's of the Single Tax Colony discovered the Elderberry to be a native flowering plant growing wild. It was abundant and very useful for food, jam, drinks and pies.

The *Sambucus canadensis*, commonly called American Elder, grows easily in the eastern U.S. It is a deciduous, somewhat sprawling shrub that grows to 5-12' tall. It is found along streams, in woodlands, in fence rows and by roadways and ditches across Baldwin County. Our soil and rainfall encourages it to grow without maintenance or special care. The tiny white flowers appear in large flat-topped clusters about 8" across, from June to November. Flowers give way to clusters of Elderberry fruit (drupes) in late summer. Elderberries are edible by people and wildlife, as both eat the fruit and flowers.

The stalk, or stem historically has been used for blowguns and airstraws, because there are no section dividers in them. The pith in the center was used as an early insulator for electric wires and handy cord for tying bundles.



"Socrates said the Elderberry flower, fruit and stem are 'my medicine cabinet,'" said Director Barrett. "He found them to have many medical properties." ~



Elderberries. Samples of Elderberry jam and drinks were available for those who wanted to discover this new taste, and most were pleasantly surprised to find them to be quite enjoyable.

The Elderberry Festival also had many delicious treats for the Food Competition. Submissions included Elderberry Soup, Elderberry Key Lime Pie, Elderberry Bread, Elderberry Cake, Elderberry Thumbprint Cookies, To-Die-For Authentic Elderberry Pie and Elderberry Lemon Coconut Squares. Elderberry cooks included Louie and Barbara Blaze, Lottie Barrett, Kate Settles and Catherine King.



Elderberry Lemon Blueberry Muffins. The judges were pleased with the participation and creativity of the competitors!

Vendors were on hand with Sno-cones, barbeque sandwiches and soft drinks. Popular Fairhope Potter, John Rezner demonstrated his potter's wheel and sold his wares in the Bancroft St. courtyard.

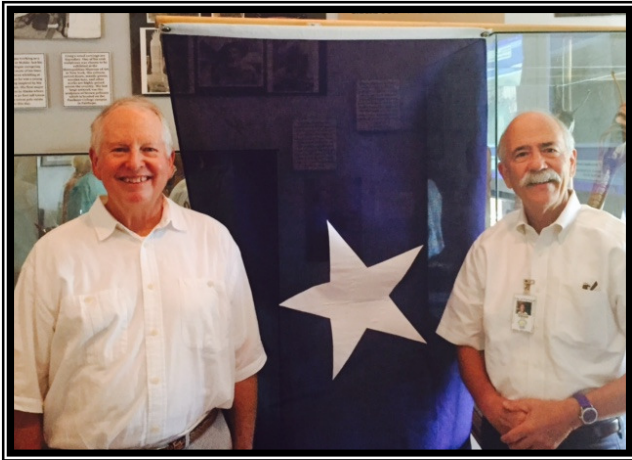
The beautiful weather appealed to many who also explored the Bicentennial Daub and Waddle Indian Hut and the full size replica People's Railroad Car outside.

About five hundred people attended the event. ~



The ribbon for the 2017 Best Overall Elderberry Treat was presented to Claudia Fortis for her

# *The West Florida Republic*



## Spanish West Florida Day

A special program emphasizing the uniqueness of Coastal Alabama in our political history, was presented on Saturday, August 19, 2017 at our Fairhope Museum of History. Donnie Barrett and Special Guest Speaker David Bagwell, an expert on the West Florida Republic, filled the Old City Council Chamber to standing room only.

When the Louisiana Purchase occurred in 1803, the Louisiana Parishes and Coastal territory between the Mississippi and Perdido Rivers, became a separate Spanish Territory.

Donnie gave an overview of the occasion in 1810, when the Republic of West Florida came into existence for a brief period in our history. Mr. Bagwell then told the rest of the complex story of the West Florida Republic.

In 1810, some U.S. settlers, impatient at the delay of the U.S. Federal Government in taking a hand in the matter, and assisted by the inhabitants of Bayou Sara [Louisiana], and others then living below Elliott's line of 31 degrees latitude, organized themselves at St. Francisville into a body which they called "the patriots" and marched upon and seized Baton Rouge. Spanish Governor Grandpre was killed in the attack and the Spaniards saw the resistance and retired to Pensacola. The Spaniards near

Mobile, however, did not yield their territory.

The "patriots," many of whom were old Spanish subjects, were intent on forming a government independent of the U.S. Union and Spain. They proclaimed the *West Florida Republic*, with a solitary white star on a royal blue flag. While the flag never flew as a national banner, it was used by Americans in a military encounter which included action in Baldwin County during an incident called "the Kemper Expedition."

Before the new republic was annexed to Louisiana, the West Florida Republic Convention dispatched Colonel, Reuben Kemper to the Tombigbee River, to enlist an army for the purpose of expelling the Spaniards from the Mobile district. Kemper operated in conjunction with Colonel James Caller, a man of wealth and considerable frontier influence, at whose house he lodged. Troops were secretly raised. Flatboats, with provisions were dispatched down the Tensaw River to the Boat Yard, (Tensaw) where they were joined by Dr. Thomas G. Holmes and a company of horses under Captain Bernard. Arriving at the White House, one mile above the present Blakeley, Kemper dispatched young Cyrus Sibley (founder of Montrose) with a letter to Spanish Governor Folch, who had just taken command of Mobile, demanding the surrender of Fort Carlotta, as the Spanish called it. The Governor rejected it idea. In a confrontation shortly thereafter, Cyrus Sibley was recognized as the bearer of the dispatch to Folch and was seized and sent to Moro Castle Prison in Havana. He remained a Spanish prisoner for five years.

The complicated political matter of ownership of the territory was resolved when President Madison, acting under authority of an act of Congress, early in 1813 directed General Wilkinson, who was then in command at New Orleans, to take possession of Fort Carlotta (Conde), in Mobile. The Spanish agreed to leave if the Americans would pay for their provisions and provide transport to Pensacola. They agreed to do so. ~



**An Alabama 200 Event**



## New Feature on the Facebook Site *Friends of the Fairhope Museum*

The *Friends of the Museum* Facebook team continues to produce short Stories on the *Friends* website of those items that, by themselves, do not compose a full Museum exhibit.

Director Barrett has adopted a fun way to find items of interest; on camera, he selects an archive box on an aisle, shelf and row by drawing numbers from 3 antique jars. Then he tells the history of the items in the box. Mementos of early Colonists, historic restaurant menus, a first telephone in Fairhope and children's toys have been shown recently.



The above coffee pot and chamber pot were in the old Bishop house which burned in 1912. The milk can belonged to the Mike Bowen family, circa 1920s. Mr. Bowen was mayor of Fairhope in 1915.

Go online to [facebook.com/FairhopeMuseumofHistoryFriends](https://www.facebook.com/FairhopeMuseumofHistoryFriends) for the latest fun facts and features.

*Helping Fairhope Tell its Story!*

## Welcome Darby! Museum Assistant Joins Staff



On August 31, 2017, Darby began her new role as Museum Assistant at our Fairhope Museum of History.

Darby grew up outside of St. Louis, Missouri, regularly visiting many fantastic (free!) museums. She studied Education, earning a Bachelor of Science from Southeast Missouri State University and Masters of Education from Harvard Graduate School of Education. She began her career in museum education and gallery management at the world's largest children's museum in Indianapolis, in 2003 with a focus on family learning. In 2008, she came to the Gulf Coast to work at the Mobile Museum of Art as Curator of Education for adult programs, where she oversaw the volunteer department programs in conjunction with many exciting exhibitions.

Darby has called several places home, including New Orleans, LA., Cambridge, MA. and Mobile. She has also enjoyed global adventures, teaching in Samatra, Indonesia and Wales, United Kingdom. Interspersed with her academic studies, she has worked as a freight train conductor, education consultant, university alumni coordinator, retail sales associate, marina attendant, and on-line vintage shop owner. She now lives in Fairhope.

She says, "I feel absolutely honored to be invited to be a part of such a vibrant, happy place – helping preserve and tell the stories of then, now, and the future of Fairhope. It's great to be part of a team doing our best to make learning and discovery fun. I look forward to learning from Donnie, the exquisite team of volunteer docents and my fellow Fairhopeans."

Be sure to stop by and introduce yourself, and welcome Darby to our Museum! ~

## *Tea for Two*

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

### *Upcoming Programs*

**October 3 – Karen Rhea** – Baldwin County Master Gardener will speak on Floriology, a light-hearted look at the secret language of flowers and their deeper meanings.

**October 10 – Fairhope Store** – Lisette Normann grew up in Fairhope and returned in 2008 with her family after a career as an artist and designer in New Orleans and St. Simon's Island. Come hear about Lisette's vision to create the first logo design that is uniquely Fairhope.

**October 17 – Paul Ripp** – Paul Ripp writes the Ripp Report. He has been in the news a lot lately. Come hear what he has to say about his Baldwin County Legal Eagle column.

**October 24 – Carswell “Mac” Walcott** – A highly notable Fairhope developer, builder and architect involved in key community structures including Centennial Hall and the most elegant homes on the Eastern Shore.

**October 31 – Donnie Aonie-Omi** will read palms, gaze into the crystal ball and read tea leaves to celebrate this spooktacular day. Come learn your future!

**November 7 – Nall** – Nall has spent half his time in Fairhope and half in France and has become a world famous artist. Come hear his stories and why he loves Fairhope.

## *Tea for Two*

**November 14 – Dale Linder** – A walking encyclopedia of the inner secrets to why our city is one of the most beautiful in the country, come see the community through the lens of our Sanitation/Fleet Supervisor for the City of Fairhope.

**November 21 – Gene Sellier** – Baldwin County Master Gardener will present a multimedia presentation about ways to get the best results when photographing your garden and flowers.

**November 28 – Bob Glennon and Claudia Cambell** – Members of the Baldwin County Historic Development Commission will tell about the County's four-year historical marker program to celebrate our state's 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

## *FOUNDERS DAY CELEBRATION*

*Saturday, November 11,  
2017*

**Come meet  
some of our Fairhope Founders**

*Food, Fun and Activities*

### **The Newsletter**

The Friends Newsletter is the official publication of *Friends of the Fairhope Museum of History, Inc.*, 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. Editor: Robert M. Glennon, at [Fairhopemuseumnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:Fairhopemuseumnewsletter@gmail.com).

## **Fairhope Museum of History**

24 North Section Street (251) 929-1471

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

<http://www.fairhope-museum-of-history-friends.com>

*Like us on: [facebook.com/FairhopeMuseumofHistoryFriends](https://www.facebook.com/FairhopeMuseumofHistoryFriends)*