

Friends Of the Fairhope Museum of History



NEWSLETTER

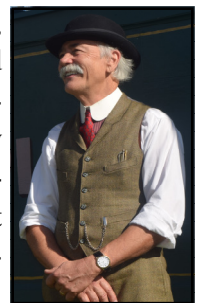
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Round Up Day 2017

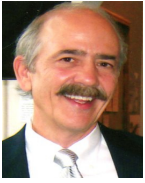


The Founders of Fairhope gathered in 1894 to establish the Single Tax Colony on the Eastern Shore of Mobile Bay. On Saturday, November 12, 2017, the *Friends of the Fairhope Museum of History* hosted another gathering to honor U.S. Military Veterans and to celebrate the one-hundred and twenty-third anniversary of that first Round Up Day! About three hundred *Friends*, guests and Museum patrons joined in the ceremony to enjoy

free hamburgers, hot dogs, cold slaw, potato salad, baked beans, chips and sodas and to watch a vintage reenactment of that first event. Eight early residents of Fairhope, dressed in vintage attire, were on - hand to report their contributions to the establishment of the Single Tax community.



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Director's Desk

Approaching the holidays is always an exciting time of year at our Museum. The annual Round-Up Day program a few weeks ago was well done by our docents and volunteers and the reenactment of Founder's Day was a pleasant new way to remind our residents of our heritage and still have a little fun looking at the past.

Getting my book out recently was a real milestone for me and our history. *Stewart, the Picture Man; Images of Fairhope* is the results of years of research and is another piece of Fairhope's history that needed to be preserved. Frank Stewart's photographs are some of the best documentation we have about our city over the years. The *Friends of the Museum* helped make that happen too. We can all be proud because each of you, whether by proofreading, making copies or helping with other time consuming tasks, you were a part of making this book happen.

Our Fairhope Founders exhibit upstairs is now complete and has drawn a lot of attention. The narrative write-ups posted with each life-size cut-out person who helped establish Fairhope, give a lot of insight into the thinking of the builders of our town. Between the documentary video done by our enactors that has been playing in our theatre, and the cut-outs of our founders, some visitors spend hours getting to know about Fairhope. Check it out while you can, as soon we will begin building our next exhibit, "Now and Then."

We now move into planning for 2018. My assistant Darby has been a great help and has really gotten into what our Museum is about. She is a great asset!

Thanks for all YOU do to make our Museum the success it has become!

Donnie Barrett

Round Up Day, continued from page 1 -

A beautiful fall day, blue sky and brisk, yet warm temperature, brought out an enthusiastic crowd to participate in the fellowship and creative reenactment by the actors and actresses.



Museum Director Donnie Barrett, portrayed the role of Jamie Swift, a 1904 Mobile-Press Newspaper reporter, who cited a news article about the new colony and came over to learn more about the new settlement. Mr. Swift interviewed the historic personalities and got mixed reactions. Shuah Mann, played by Wayne Brunson, talked about choosing this location for the single tax experiment. Marie Howland (Abby Dunlap) was pleased about starting the first library and confessed to "swimming in the bay without the benefit of a bathing suit." Authur Mershon (Paul Czajka) discussed the trials of opening the first post office and Delia Bancroft (Rosanne Gulisano) enthusiastically told of becoming the first bride to marry in Fairhope. Clara Gaston (Catherine King) waxed on cheerfully about being the first, first lady of Fairhope.

Dr. Clarence Mershon (Bob Glennon) was the first doctor in town, and Helen Bellangee Call, characterized by Museum Assistant Darby, told about her family and her recipes. Outspoken Mayor Harris Greeno, played by Louie Blaze, stole the show, complaining vehemently about being denied membership in the single tax organization and the sham of the whole "socialistic idea!"



This Round Up Day / Founders Day event was the tenth annual celebration of the occasion by the Fairhope Museum of History. ~

Fairhope Christmas 1901

The Fairhope Courier

We are quite sure that the young and old of no town in the union, of its size, had a better time than those of Fairhope. On Christmas Eve the Christian Church Sunday School presented quite an elaborate program,, the chief feature of which was a Christmas Cantata, in which almost the entire school took part and which with its bright costumes and the catchy music of its solos and choruses, were heartily enjoyed. Santa Claus in the person of Charles Wilson - and a good hearty rotund Santa he made - superintended the distribution of presents from the bountiful tree which reached clear to the lofty ceiling and no child was forgotten. From the church, the crowd went to the town hall where the ladies of the Village Improvement Club were in charge of entertainment and another fruitful tree. Nothing elaborate in the way of a program was attempted but there was music by the popular Fairhope Band, rousing Christmas Choruses by a choir, some recitations, a Christmas tree and a Santa in the person of Dr. Greeno, who filled his part admirably with his ruddy cheeks and frosty whiskers and with a handsome Angora fleece or two about his shoulders. The Doctor you know, is an Angora enthusiast.

Captain Anderson had the steamer *Fairhope* cabins artistically decorated during holiday week.

- E. B. Gaston, Editor



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Fairhope Christmas 1903

The Fairhope Courier

On Xmas Eve there were two Christmas trees in the Hall and in the church and the usual entertainments. The program was full and long. On Christmas night, there was a family reunion at Dr. Clara's and I was honored by bring one of the very few outsiders invited. There was mistletoe over one of the doors and the boys, my "cherub" Gaston, and the broad-headed handsome little Jerome, grandson of our Mr. Mann, were determined to kiss every girl or woman who passed under it!

- Marie Howland, Associate Editor

The *Fairhope* was off Christmas week, having repairs made to her stern bearing.

The History of Law Enforcement in Fairhope

research by Donnie Barrett - story by Bob Glennon



Police History Display in the Fairhope Museum of History

A civic minded group of Northerners made their way up from Battle's Wharf after unloading all of their belongings from the bayboat, *Jas A. Carney*. The settlement of the Single Tax Colony of *Fairhope* was taking root. They were mostly city folks, but some brought guns for shooting game and perhaps personal security, since the newcomers, mostly from Iowa, didn't know what to expect in this new land by the bay. From 1894 to 1904, the community spent its resources building and getting organized for the single tax experiment. They were a spirited group, but tolerant. Law enforcement was generally the Golden Rule: *Do unto others...*

The only sobering civil event that happened early on, was the drowning of John Hunnell, found floating in the bay on July 4, 1895. Residents dismantled a picnic table, made a casket and had a funeral. Otherwise, everyone tended to their own matters through the early years. There were heated debates and occasions of raucous behavior, but these were squelched by neighbors coming to take the wrangling citizens home for dinner, or to dry out on their own front porch. In 1904, the Single Tax Corporation was formed and law and order was managed by residents

Law Enforcement, *continued on page 4*

Law Enforcement, *continued from page 3*

who helped one-another. Citizens felt that they had to solve their own problems anyway, now that the county sheriff and courthouse were all the way up in Bay Minette; a day's carriage ride away.

Everyone in Fairhope was not a Single-Taxer and the backlash vote against the community property and economic experiment folks, gained momentum and the need for conventional government was founded. In 1908, the Single Tax Corporation and the City of Fairhope found a way to coexist. The first city mayor was Major Harris Greeno, a former U.S. Army officer in the War Between the States, defeated E.B. Gaston, the leader of the Single Tax Corporation.

With city government, came municipal law enforcement. The first town sheriff was Ernest Dean Swift, who had no gun, vehicle nor shoes. The expensive horseless carriage was just being invented and it seemed a bit extravagant to build a livery stable to buy, house and feed a horse. So Mr. Swift walked or ran to respond to any call that came by shouts, gun shot in the air, alarm bell, or via Dr. Merchon's new fangled telephone system.

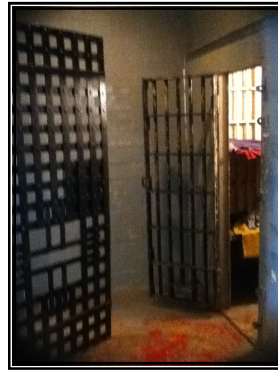
On July 10, 1908, the city's criminal docket shows that the first arrest was for drunkenness; it included a fine for "one of our town's gentlemen," of five dollars. Whether he was confined or not, is not stated, but the jail at the time was portable, made of wood and was moved wherever it was needed. That was, until an inebriated inmate burned it down. Signaling an emergency became easier when the city got electric service in 1915. If anyone needed action from the sheriff, they now simply blinked the lights twice and Mr. Swift came running.

William Steele became the town sheriff in 1924 and served for three years. He philosophically proclaimed that a horse was better for taking you home after drinking than an automobile. The car would end up in the ditch; no problem for the horse.

In 1928, the first police station, firehouse, city hall and Public Works took up residence in the newly constructed city hall at 24 N. Section Street. This Spanish Mission Revival style build-



ing is now the Fairhope Museum of History. The police department was located on the ground floor of the building, past the mayor's desk, behind a metal wall. The original safe, on display at the Museum, inscribed "Town of Fairhope," was built into a closet near the Section St. entrance.



The jail, still in its original 1928 location, was used to house inmates until 2002 when the police department moved across Section Street. The original cells are believed to have been built using doors and bars from the old county jail that stood in Daphne until 1901.

Jack Titus became "Town Marshal" in the 1930s and continued until the early 1940s. The marshal lost the use of his right arm after a drunken butcher reportedly paralyzed him during an arrest. He had what was described as "a very mean monkey," in his office to "help keep the prisoners in." He also had a vicious little dog that went with him on all his calls.

In the 1930s more jail cells were built in the police department near the current Museum elevator. Those cells were made of Clay City tiles. Only a few of the popular tiles remain, surrounding the two cells there today. The outer tile cells were demolished in 2007 when the building was reconfigured for museum use.

The first uniformed officer of Fairhope was Albert Funk in the early 1940s. During this time, Mayor Ruge was known to have slot machines in his *Blue Light* service station, store and sandwich shop. The Fairhope city council voted and declared, "No one cares anything about that state law" and the mayor was allowed to keep his slots. Not long thereafter however, they reportedly could be seen in Fly Creek at low tide.

More space was needed in the City Hall building. The original fire truck bay that you see today, became the city clerk's office and a cell for female inmates; a lean-to was built on the north side of the building (now a bank driveway) to house the fire truck. The outline of the women's jail (about 7' x 16') can still be seen when you look up at the ceiling behind the fire truck.

Police Chief McLaurin had four men and the first po-

Law Enforcement, *continued on page 5, column 1*

lice car in 1946. The chief reported that, "Traffic is our big problem, as eight-hundred cars daily drive through our town. Major crime and juvenile delinquency are a thing of the past."

By 1957, the police department had five men. Bud Gilheart joined the force and was promoted to Chief in 1963. Jean White was one of the first female officers in the Police Department in the 1970s. By the 80s and 90s, there were several woman working for the department.

In 1974, city government moved out of the building, leaving 24 N. Section Street entirely to the police department. The police safe sat in the corner downstairs. The city clerk was the only person who knew the combination and she died suddenly, taking the combination with her. The safe sat unopened for the next 37 years! In 2011, it was opened by a professional security firm and several tattered bags of marijuana used as court evidence, were found inside.

The police department bought its first Galvanometer breath analyzer in 1975. By 1977, the Fairhope police department had 12 men and women.

In 1978, the old city hall was renovated into a modern police facility. An institutional kitchen with stainless steel appliances was added in the back corner of the building next to the Clay City tile cell block. Inmates would wash city vehicles out back, behind the building.

In 1980, the Fairhope police department bought ten bullet proof vests and four helmets. Henry Nolte, who joined the force in 1958, became police chief in 1985. He served as chief until 1989, when Jerry Anderson took over. He had been on the police force since 1965 and served as chief until 2002. He was the last chief to work in the building that began as city hall. On May 31, 2002, the Fairhope police department moved into its new facility at 107 North Section Street, next to city hall.



Joe Pettis started working for the city in 1982. He became an officer in 1991 and was promoted to police chief in 2013. Chief Pettis, a native Fairhopean, now proudly serves as our Chief of Police. He has earned a faithful following of officers and citizens. ~

Impromptu Halloween Party Thrown at Museum for *Friends of the Fairhope Museum of History*



To spark the moment and highlight the Halloween spirit, docents and guests for the Tea for Two Program on October 31st found themselves in a fun party, entertained by Donnie Aonie-Omi, reader of tea leaves and mystic of all sorts.

As can happen at our Museum, attendees were granted a look into their future by Director Barrett, who appeared on this occasion as



Donnie Aonie-Omi. It was a real treat; no tricks!

- *Docent News* -

Party at the Plantation

Director Donnie Barrett and his wife, Lottie, hosted a funfest for the volunteers, docents and staff at their Tea Plantation on Saturday evening, November 4, 2017. The decorations and games were wild! Congratulations to Debbie Czajka for throwing the only unbroken egg! There was again fun, frivolity and fantastic food shared by all. It was so much fun, they forgot to take any pictures. Maybe, just maybe, that was a way to hide any incriminating evidence! ~

Tea for Two

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

Upcoming Programs

December 5 – Wayne Dyas– As the City of Fairhope’s Planning and Zoning Director, Wayne knows about the changes now happening in Fairhope. He will tell us all about the building explosion that will start after the first of the year.

December 12 – Christy Wells – Christy is a talented musical artist who will play us a number of songs and share her stories. Her husband Roger, President of Fritz Brothers Guitars, will talk about how they build their fine guitars.

December 19 – Faye Earnest – An acclaimed exhibit artist and one of our museum docents, Faye will bring several canvases and tell us how she paints abstracts from natural earth formations.

December 26 - *Merry Christmas - Museum closed.*

January 2 - *Happy New Year! - Museum closed.*

January 9 - Officer Julie Joyner– A Fairhope native, Officer Julie Joyner is now a police officer dedicated to protecting her home town which we all love! We are always honored to have one of our police department members speak at our Tea for Two programs. Come help us show our support for Julie and learn about her life, work and journey.

January 16 - George Shorter– George is an archaeologist at the University South Alabama Center for Archaeological Studies. He has conducted archaeological digs at Alabama’s first capital, St. Stephens (1817), and will deliver a program related to the 200th anniversary of this historic site.

January 23 - Josh Gambino – A wealth of information about a long-time Fairhope favorite, Gambino’s Original Italian Grill; come hear Josh’s fascinating stories about his family, Fairhope, adventures in restaurant management... and maybe even some old Mafia rumors!?

January 30 - Patrick Waldrop – Patrick investigated fires for the Alabama Forestry Department and is a Longleaf Pine expert. He is in charge of burning Knoll Park and will tell us why it is important to do so.



Director Donnie Barrett on November 16, 2017 at the Annual Lighting of the Trees in Fairhope.

The tradition of Lighting the Trees began in 1985 in front of Stowe’s Jewelers. The city had just planted the five-foot high Bradford Pear trees on Fairhope Avenue and Mrs. Stowe put a string of white twinkle lights on each of three trees near her store. When she plugged them in, they attracted so much attention and excitement, she added more lights. By the next year Mrs. Stowe influenced some of the other downtown merchants, and the city put lights on the whole block downtown.

It has now grown into a \$30,000 project with thirty-five trees and a million LED lights, drawing 10,000 people for the lighting event! ~

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. Contact: Fairhopemuseum-newsletter@gmail.com. Editor: Bob Glennon.

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>

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