

Friends

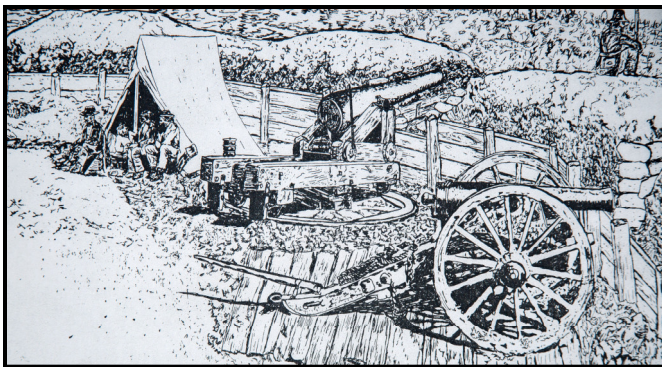
Of the Fairhope Museum of History

NEWSLETTER



Vol 5, Issue 2 April – May 2014

"Baldwin County During the Civil War: The War Comes Home!"



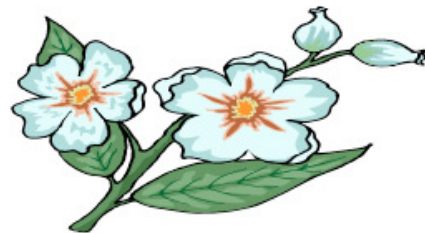
Spanish Fort Drawing by Donnie Barrett

One of the most significant milestones in the history of Baldwin County will reach its 150th Anniversary in April 2015 - the Battle for Mobile, at Spanish Fort and Blakeley.

Beginning April 18, 2014 an exhibit will open at our Museum of History commemorating those battles and highlighting events and landmarks nearby, that put the War on our doorstep. Fort Morgan, Dannelly's Mill, the Point Clear Hotel, Spanish Fort and Blakeley will be featured. Little known facts about this final major battle of the War Between the States will be on display using memorabilia from local residents and archeological finds by Director Barrett during university led explorations in the battlefields. Strategic tactics and defensive fortifications will give you a feel for the hard facts of how the War came home to Baldwin County.

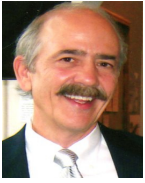
Satsuma Blossom Festival April 26, 2014

Come re-live the festival of the 1920s in Fairhope. The Satsuma, an easy-to-peel cousin to the orange, grew well in the soil of the Eastern Shore and became very popular in the 1920s. Farmers saw it as the future fruit of the Alabama Gulf Coast and markets couldn't keep them on the shelves. But only a few years thereafter, the cold weather and area climate popped the bubble. Today, while satsumas are still grown in Baldwin County, they are cherished, but hard to find. The recent cold snap in March significantly hurt this year's crop.



But still, we celebrate the history of the tasty Satsuma and the beauty of it's blossoms. On Saturday, April 26 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. inside the Museum and on the grounds, a nostalgic Satsuma Blossom Festival will take us back to the 1920s in Fairhope, with a fun filled day of games, stories and food treats spawned by the Satsuma.

Watch for posters and more information about the events upcoming to celebrate the exciting Satsuma days of Baldwin County.



Director's Desk

For the first time since our Friends organization began, we have more volunteer docents than we have time slots on the schedule. Our Friends President and docent coordinator, Mary Ann Maradik, tells us we have docents just “waiting in the wings” to host our guests. In late February, the City had a Volunteer Fair and we gained two talented new docents from that. The Smithsonian “The Way We Worked” exhibit has almost doubled our visitor attendance and we have likewise, doubled our staff. We expect the new “Baldwin County During the Civil War: The War Comes Home!” exhibit to draw even more guests. Our volunteers (about 35) do an outstanding job and their enthusiasm for their tasks show that they are having fun and loving their role. And our visitors can see it!

Our “Friends” organization has been working overtime. During the Arts & Crafts Show, our Gift Shop took to the streets. We set up a table display of shirts, hats, coffee cups and souvenirs outside on Section Street. Several docents, led by our shop manager Dacri Labrado, stood out in the sun on Friday and rain on Saturday and Sunday and really brought in the sales. Those funds help us cover expenses that aren’t in the annual museum budget.

The Satsuma Blossom Festival slated for April 26th, is definitely shaping up with Chairperson, Emogene DeMaagd. She has planned all sort of entertaining games and activities, and has things scheduled that I never would have thought about. This is going to be a fun, new event brought to you by the “Friends” of our Museum.

Donnie Barrett

Fairhope and Colony Cemetery Tours Return in April



Downtown Fairhope and the Single Tax Colony Cemetery tours will again be presented each Saturday morning throughout the month of April. Museum Director Donnie Barrett will lead the tours.

The first tour will be on April 5 to view and experience Section Street in the early Twentieth Century. On April 12, the tour will see and hear about Fairhope Avenue, the historic main street in our “Utopia”. And on April 19, the group will gather at the Museum to

hear the behind the scenes story about the “making” of the Civil War exhibit. On April 26, the last Saturday of the month, the tour will walk through the Colony Cemetery.

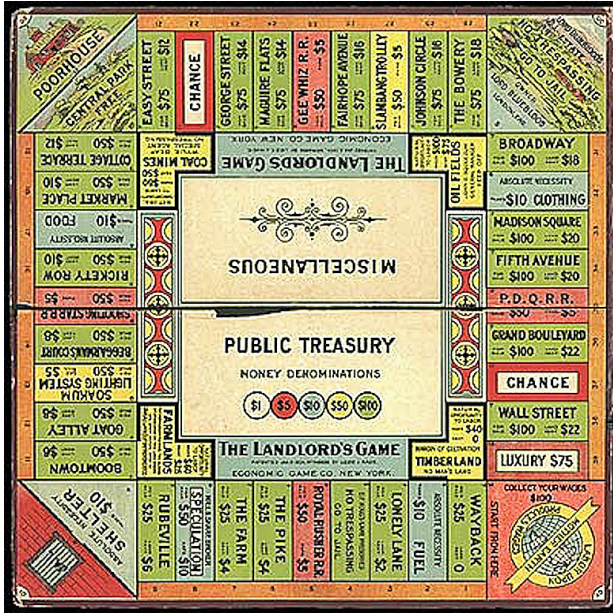
The street visits will leave from the Museum promptly at 10 a.m., while the inside story on the Civil War exhibit will remain at the Museum. The final tour to the cemetery will meet at the historic marker on Oak Street beside the Colony Cemetery. This walk will visit the graves of E.B. Gaston, town founder and his wife, Clara, the Mershons, a premier merchant family in the Single Tax Colony, Joseph Keller the first blacksmith and many other colorful people who made their mark on our community.

Tours are free and no reservations are required. The three outdoor events will be a casual one-hour walk.

These tours are a statewide initiative by the Alabama Tourism Department which began the program eleven years ago. This year, Fairhope is one of thirty-three towns to participate. Our tours are universally acclaimed as one of the most interesting events on our annual Museum agenda!

FAIRHOPE MONOPOLY BOARD

by Curt Cochran, Museum Volunteer & Writer



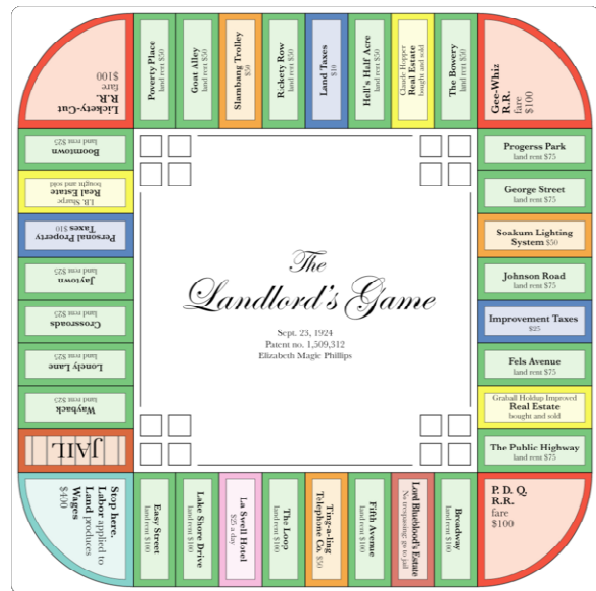
Fairhope street names appearing on an early Monopoly game Board opposite New York City is an interesting part of its early history as a Single Tax Colony. The photo is of the Arden Board, one of the very earliest versions of the game which featured Fairhope Avenue, Johnston Circle and George St. as primary locations on the board along with Wall St, Broadway and Madison Square. The Board is the familiar Monopoly type layout but was called the Landlord's game, the name given it by Lizzie Magee a professional game designer who obtained the first patent on the game in 1904. She was a Quaker and strong supporter of the Single Tax principle advocated by Henry George. She, like tens of thousands of others who were members of Single Tax clubs throughout the country, would have known about Fairhope as a Single Tax experiment. When she got the patent for the Landlord's Game she was living in the Single Tax Colony of Arden, Delaware, thus the name Arden Board.

The Arden Board was one of several versions she created to try to generate more interest in the board game and to sell more of them. The board, included with the 1904 patent, did not have street names but a tax of specific value on the board locations. The original game has two sets of rules with one set showing the virtues of the single tax approach to

land ownership and the other, the normal private ownership. She developed the game to teach the virtues of the single tax principle by showing the evils of land speculation and how the single tax on land values was a better approach to prosperity for all.

She renewed her patent on the Landlord's Game in 1924 to try to maintain control of the game. The second board added the Fairhope street name Fels Avenue. Joseph Fels was a wealthy Philadelphia man who contributed extensively to Fairhope in support of the Single Tax Experiment. By this time, other individuals had developed and published similar board games with different names such as Fortune, Money and Real Estate. None of these Monopoly type games became widely popular mostly because their creators were unable to interest the large game publisher Parker Brothers in publishing and marketing them. Parker Brothers had published other games written by Lizzie Magee but they considered the Landlord's Game unsatisfactory because it had too many rules and took too long to play.

In the early 1930s, and unemployed salesman in Germantown, PA named Charles Darrow developed a similar board game using streets names in Atlantic City, New Jersey like Park Place, Marvin Gardens, Baltic Ave., etc. and called it "Monopoly."



Lizzie Magee's 1924 patent for the Landlord's Game. Fels Ave. is added and Fairhope Ave. is not there.

"Fairhope Monopoly Board", continued on page 5, column 2



Fairhope's Own Lawnmowers

By Curt Cochran

Director Donnie Barrett admires his most unique display at the Fairhope Museum of History. When he collected the Easycut lawnmowers for the display, he told Ken Jansen, son of the company founder, that he was going to “build a tornado out of his daddy’s lawnmowers”. They are all suspended from a rack near the ceiling in a big swirl just like a tornado. The caption on the displays says that they were manufactured by Jansen Manufacturing Co. from 1950 to 1972 and that they were painted blue and gold - the Fairhope High School colors. It is a fitting tribute to one of city’s most distinguished businessmen, entrepreneurs, and characters, Claude Jansen. Manufacturing the “Easycut” lawnmower was just one of his many accomplishments during his long and productive life in Fairhope.

Claude was born in Tennessee, but moved to Fairhope at a very young age and spent most of his life here. He attended the Marietta Johnson School of Organic Education through the eighth grade, when he left school to learn through experience. He was exceptionally creative and adventurous in a variety of business ventures which started at age twelve when he piloted a boat across

Mobile Bay. He had a variety of different jobs including important work in the Mobile shipyards during WWII. In the late 1940s, Claude got to know Reuben Rockwell who was somewhat of a mechanical genius and a bit of character himself. He had developed and patented the plans and technique for building these lawnmowers. In 1950, Rockwell had grown tired of Fairhope and decided to move to Costa Rica to be part of a active utopian experiment. Before he left, he sold the plans and patents to Claude, who started producing the lawnmowers within months. Claude installed the two presses and other manufacturing equipment into his building at 259 N. Ingleside St. The product line fit right in with his boat, motor and trailer business.

The manufacturing process for the Easycut lawnmowers was pretty simple. There was a large press that stamped out the frame of the mower from a 36 inch square of aluminum. Another press formed the handles from one inch diameter aluminum tubes. Claude bought the aluminum in large sheets and cut the pieces for the press. The tubes were in 20 foot lengths. The 36 inch square aluminum pieces were trimmed to the shape needed for the frame and the other supports for the mower. Good-year supplied the wheels and a variety of vendors (Briggs and Stratton, Clinton, Lawson and Tecumseh) supplied the motors. The blade was sharpened on both sides so it could be turned over and used twice as long between sharpenings. The mower was really sturdy and lasted a very long time. It was relatively easy to maintain as replacing the motor, blade or any other part, was easy. The manufacturing was simple.

Claude could do all the manufacturing himself, but did have a man named Arthur Keller to help. Ken Jansen, his son, helped after school. They were able to produce five to ten mowers a day and usually made about 30 in a week. To solve any problems, he could borrow mechanics from his boat, motor and trailer business located in the same building.

After a week of production, Claude would load the mowers on his truck and head out to various parts of the Southeast to do the distribution himself. His prime customers were hardware stores where he would place two or three mowers on consignment. The price was \$109, which made them a specialty item priced more than twice the going rate for a power mower, which was typically \$49. These mowers were handmade. Of course, he would sell to individuals or organizations. On occasion, he would stop at any overgrown yard and ask if he could demonstrate his mower. After doing some cutting, he would ask if they would like to buy the mower.



He was a great salesman and sold all that they could produce, which amounted to about 15,000 during the 22 years they were in business.

A safety problem became evident with the mower over the years. The frame is very short and barely covered the blade. Any hard object caught by the blade would be thrown out. The low frame made it easy for the operator to put his/her foot on it to pull the starting cord. Any misstep however, would result in pulling the mower with a turning blade over the foot. After a few of these accidents, Claude decided to stop producing the mowers and an iconic Fairhope product came to an end.

Ken Jansen still has some of the lawnmowers and one of the presses in the back of his "Fairhope Tire Co." building on Highway 98. He says that he has some that still work, but most are just there in storage to show on occasion when someone comes by to look at his large scrapbook of EasyCut memorabilia.

Now, more than 40 years after the last mower was produced, many visitors to the Museum claim that they have one that still runs. Donnie Barrett claims that at least one of those on display will still operate. The Jensen Mfg Co. is no more and the plant at 259 Ingleside Street is now the family home for Ken Jensen. It is a fine tribute to the interesting by-gone times in Fairhope.

The mowers are on permanent display at the Museum.

Helping Us Tell Fairhope's Story!

Darrow was able to convince Parker Brothers to publish the game through a family connection to one of the Parker Brothers executives. The Monopoly game published in 1935 became an instant hit selling by the tens of thousands. Darrow was paid royalties and became a millionaire; Parker Brothers had their most successful board game ever. With the success of the Monopoly game, Parker Brothers became concerned about intellectual property rights and did a patent search. They found at least three existing patents that they decided they had to address. Lizzie Magee's was one of those. She accepted five hundred dollars for her rights to the two patents that she had filed. Some historians write that she was happy with this deal since she thought it would publicize the Single Tax principle. Two other patent lawsuits were settled for many thousands of dollars. The lawsuits continue for many years as the Monopoly game sold by the millions.

Although other similar games were created, Monopoly remained by far the most popular. Atlantic City street names became known to millions and Fairhope Ave. to only a few. A Monopoly 50th Anniversary magazine article stated that Atlantic City and the streets made famous by Monopoly were in decline and pretty run down. Fairhope of course, is doing just fine.

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Upcoming Friends Meetings

The Next meetings of the Friends of the Museum will be April 15 and May 20, 2014, 3:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber Room upstairs at the Museum. Non-members are invited to attend and participate in Exhibit and Event planning with us.

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## 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. Contributing Writers vary with each issue. Contact: [Fairhopemuseumnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:Fairhopemuseumnewsletter@gmail.com). Editor: Bob Glennon.

# Tea for Two

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

## Upcoming Programs

**April 1** - The Smithsonian exhibit, "The Way We Worked" is being dismantled. No Tea for Two today due to equipment, crates & safety concerns.

**April 8 - Michelle Kurtz** is the leader of the Homeowners Hurricane Initiative (HHI) and will talk about their efforts to bring fairness to coastal Alabama regarding insurance premiums.

**April 15 - Peggy Sagon** is well known as Joe Faust's (our representative in the AL State Legislature) sister and will tell her tales of growing up in Fairhope.

**April 22 - Arthur Bosarge** has been the assistant director of Fairhope Public Works for many years. He also does mission work for his church which has taken him to several foreign countries. He will give details when he gives us his life story.

**April 29 - Michael Patrick** and his parents were natives of the Eastern Shore but he worked most of his professional career teaching at the University of Missouri and has returned to Fairhope. He will tell us his story.

## Fairhope Museum of History

24 North Section Street (251) 929-1471

Hours: 9 – 5 Tuesday through Saturday

Admission: Free!

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

# Tea for Two

## Upcoming Programs continued

**May 6 - P.T. Paul** is a local poet who will tell us about April being Poetry Month and of the local Pensters writers organization. She will read some of her very interesting poems.

**May 13 Pete Blohm**, widely known as "Panini Pete" and often seen riding his Segway, will tell us his story of his successful Panini business.

**May 20 - Tamara Dean**, Director of the Fairhope Library, will tell about her work at the Library and her personal story about how she came to Fairhope.

**May 27 - Anthony Gasbarro** is the Alabama District #1 Director for Americans for Fair Taxation. He is interesting and enthusiastic and will make you rethink taxes.

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## Wouldn't Ya' Know...

The *Friends of the Fairhope Museum of History* organization has been "in business" since March 2010. Since that time, a series of interesting stories and events have evolved, making our Newsletter one of the most valuable pieces of newly documented civic history in the State of Alabama.

The *Newsletter* has photographed and reported on **historical tours of city landmarks** and the **Colony cemetery**, to show off our **Single Tax Colony**. We've enjoyed feature articles about our **Old City Hall** - turned Museum, **Fairhope's Black History**, the heritage of **area pottery**, our **1934 fire truck**, the **bay boat "Fairhope"**, the **People's Railroad**, the history of **flowers of Fairhope**, our municipal **golf courses and Mardi Gras**. And it has reported annual events like **Round Up Day** and the **Elderberry Festival**. All of these articles have been researched and written for the city archives by the docents and members of the *Friends of the Museum*. They are now a part of our city's history!