

# Friends

## Of the Fairhope Museum of History

NEWSLETTER



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The Second Annual Satsuma Blossom Festival will be held on April 18, 2015 at the Museum. Emogene De Maagd, Chairperson of the event for the second year, says, "We are working hard to top last year's act! It will be hard to have more fun and be more successful than last year since the weather was great, attendance was high and everyone had a great time."

*Satsuma Blossom Festival*, continued on page 5, column 2

## Baldwin County during the Civil War; The War Comes Home! Exhibit's One Year Run Coming to an End

On May 16, 2014, Mayor Tim Kant cut the ribbon on the best attended Exhibit ever presented by the Fairhope Museum of History. In April 2015, we will commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the final decisive battle of the Civil War which occurred here in Baldwin County - The Battles of Spanish Fort and Fort Blakeley. The Confederates surrendered at Blakeley four hours after Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox, VA. on April 9, 1865. After April 9, the Exhibit will be dismantled and the new "Bay Boat Era" exhibit will begin construction.

"The War Comes Home exhibit broke records for the number of visitors and participation throughout this past year here at the Museum," said Director Donnie Barrett. The event featured an hour long video entitled "The Battle of Mobile Bay" produced by Michael Marr, a Fairhope documentary producer. The DVD played continuously in the theatre and there was *always* someone there watching the story of the battle. The relics on display were provided by Fairhopeans who had personally found them, or had them passed down to them through their family.

The displays were designed by Director Barrett and many were constructed by the Museum staff, docents and volunteers. "I learned something new every time I came to work, said Louie Blaze, docent and Vice President of the *Friends* of the Museum. We had an awesome response to the program. ~



## Director's Desk

This past couple of months have been really busy with all the snowbird visitors in town. We would break over a hundred people two or three times a week with so many folks visiting. We find that our winter visitors (most from Michigan, it seems) are good museum guests. They are interested in the stories we are telling them, are not in a hurry, and are easily entertained. They seem to come in clumps and this keeps our docents on their feet. My compliments to all the docents that really buckled down and made our many guests feel welcomed and appreciated. Our docent staff are front line ambassadors for our City and go overboard to make a good impression.

I hear almost every day at shift change time that "we had some interesting guests today!", when we have interesting guests most every day. Whether they are from a foreign country or a far away state, we can have some engaging conversations with our visitors. They are quite interested in Fairhope and what makes it tick.

Last Saturday when it was quite busy, we all had to be docents. After two hours of non-stop tourists, the docents had a huddle by the back door and we counted that we had explained Single-Tax 17 times! It is our number one question and our number one story.

Last month Jim Bates and I had the chance to visit behind the scenes at the Mobile History Museum. We had a look at how they archive and catalog items and saw how they would conserve and store documents and some of the more sensitive materials. We learned a lot, but what was the most impressive was the docent at the desk showed us their gate count. We have the same number of visitors that they do! People like our Museum and say really nice compliments about us and it looks like the word is spreading.

Donnie Barrett

## The Bay Boat Era



In May 2015, the Fairhope Museum of History will launch its own maritime exhibit about *The Bay Boat Era*, Memorabilia, relics and six precise scale model bay-boats will be on display to remind us of the twentieth century culture built around the boats and the bay.

The colorful history of Fairhope is enriched by bay-boats like the *Fairhope*, pictured above, docked at the Fairhope wharf, while youngsters swim nearby.

Bay-boats were specially designed shallow draft steamboats used for passenger traffic from Mobile and New Orleans to the Eastern Shore even before the founding of Fairhope.

Mobilians came over the bay in summers to avoid the Yellow Fever that was believed to be brought by visiting ships from Europe and the Caribbean. The vegetation and higher elevation of the Eastern Shore greatly reduced the infestation of mosquitoes that in fact, were the causes of the disease in the city.

The bay-boats provided transportation and entertainment, as families would gather at the wharfs to meet fathers returning from Mobile and distant relatives who took the train to Mobile, then the bay-boats.

The new Bay Boat Era exhibit will open in May 2015 and will be featured at the Museum for 12 months. Admission is free.

A Somber Recollection of

## The Battle for Mobile - April '65

Bob Glennon, Editor

Thirty-two thousand of the 43,000 Federal troops to later participate in the Battle for Mobile, had gathered and camped for three weeks at Dannelly's Mill on Fish River in south central Baldwin County. The Civil War had had carried on for 4 bloody, exhausting years. Most thought it would last less than a year. Forts Gaines, Powell and Morgan that had gallantly fortified the entrance to Mobile Bay, fell eight months before, but the U.S. fleet had been unable to approach the city of Mobile due to defenses and obstructions placed in the shallow bay. Mobile was the last seaport to remain open even though the blockade of Federal ships had inhibited all but the boldest of blockade runners. Even that was now stopped since the bay was occupied by Federal gunboats. This city that thrived by the sea would be attacked by land. Foot soldiers coming overland from Pensacola and those staged in Baldwin County were closing in on Spanish Fort and Blakeley. Spanish Fort and Fort Blakeley were manned and ready, with 4000 Confederates defending their pride. For the Federals, it was a mission to restore the United States. For the South, it was protecting the farm and life style.

The 150th Anniversary of the battles to claim Mobile is at hand this April 2015. The confrontation began on March 27 and ended April 9, 1865. It was the final decisive battle of the War Between the States and the city of Mobile was abandoned by the Confederate defenders on the nights of April 10th and 11th to avoid the cannonade that had the might to destroy Mobile.

Fairhope wasn't a settlement yet, but Volanta and Alabama City were small villages of potters and farmers who offered no threat to the encroaching army. Most local men were away serving the Confederacy, leaving the Eastern Shore to the local militia and limited number of Southern defenders. The women and children bravely stood their ground to protect their property but the army was conspicuously dominant. Being in an "occupied" land was bizarre. Federal troops marched past homesteads on civilian roads prior to the forthcoming siege. Some were hostile while some were polite. One could not tell which, until they were face-to-face. A U.S. Illinois regiment respectfully asked permission to spend the night in the Union Church in Daphne and permission was granted, provided they would leave it as they found it. And they did. At other times, hungry troops confiscated food, crops and animals from defenseless owners or poked bayonets and pitchforks into the yards and flowerbeds of homes, searching for buried family treasures and silverware.



Nothing about the invasion was pleasant or desired, by either side. The aggressors were far from home and didn't want to be here, except for their military mission. The defenders just wanted them to go home. This was confounded by soldiers finding relatives on the other side of the line. Even humanitarian acts to aid the wounded, or feed the weak, were simultaneously lauded and drew anger.

On April 9, the gunfire stopped, but all wasn't well. Every family in America had been affected in severe ways. For the next 150 years, historians and outdoorsmen would pick up spent lead bullets, iron projectiles, uniform buttons and memorabilia - all reminders of the War. Mothers became grandmothers and great-grandmothers with sad memories of sons and husbands who had given their best for their country.

Baldwin County did not go unscathed. The last major battle of the Civil War was fought within ear-shot of our Museum. Somehow... it all wasn't worth it. ~~

# Populism or Henry George?

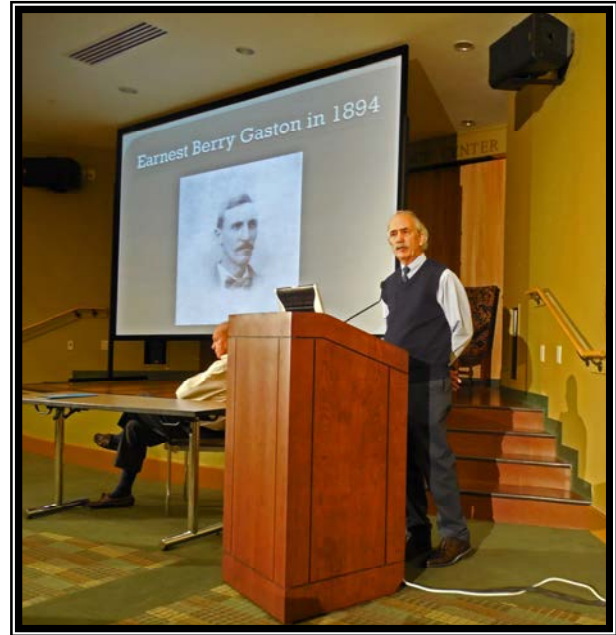
Donnie Barrett, Director

It is often said that Fairhope was founded by people from Iowa who came here to prove the soundness of the Henry George philosophy and that Fairhope was based on Henry George principles. A review of our history may show that there is more to the story.

During the 1870's, a large political movement emerged in response to rampant growth in the corporate, banking and railroad industries and their effects on society. The Farmers Alliance organizations in most every state started the People's Party known as Populism. Their presidential candidate in 1892 was General James B. Weaver, owner of the *Farmer's Tribune* newspaper, who hired a young Ernest Berry Gaston to run the newspaper while Weaver was on the campaign trail. Gaston was already the Secretary of the Iowa Populist Committee and a member of the local "Investigating Club," studying communal experiments, philosophies, and better ways to organize government and society. He was quite familiar with Henry George's 1879 *Progress & Poverty*, one of the most popular books in print to address the perceived injustices of the day and solutions to the problems.

When Weaver lost the election to Grover Cleveland, Gaston heard his calling and struck out to improve society and "put good principles to work." After looking at 175 communal failures and many philosophic options, Gaston designed and sold stock in "The National Cooperative Company." This was not a single tax structured venture, but one based on the works of Edward Bellamy, a socialist writer of the day. Gaston promoted it hard during 1893, but after a year, with too few investors, it never got off paper and failed.

In late 1893, Gaston wrote his paper "True Cooperative Individualism," which even today is a masterpiece document. He was weighing the balance of socialism and capitalism. He thought Henry George was a bit too individualistic but still liked the land value based taxation idea, called the "single tax" by Henry George admirers. At this point Gaston wrote the "Fairhope Plan" of applying the single tax, which "wasn't George" to many of Gaston's detractors. Gaston founded the Fairhope Industrial Association in January 4, 1894 with ten of his Populist friends intending to start a single-tax colony. When they got to the Eastern Shore,



Museum Director Donnie Barrett speaking on Populism at the Fairhope Public Library as a part of the 2015 Lecture Series on Fairhope History, March 3, 2015.

they installed Populist policies: money system, People's Railroad, bayboats, home phone system and several cooperatives, which were not single tax attributes.

Henry George never came to or acknowledged the Fairhope Colony so it is a misplaced honor to credit him *solely* with Fairhope's high level of success. Henry George was highly influential to many, one of the most famous people of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but founded no social experiments or colonies to prove his theories would work. Ernest Berry Gaston did. He and his colleagues devised a hybrid plan coupling populist reform ideals with single tax principles. He dedicated his life to the "Fairhope Plan," made adjustments as circumstances warranted, but never wavered from his core principles. He was "boots on the ground" demonstrating good principles put into practice and good theories at work. So instead of calling Fairhope a Henry George experiment, perhaps we should give credit where due: to Ernest Gaston and his fellow communitarians who founded the Utopian dream of Fairhope, and whose principles, adjusted to the twenty-first century, still stand firm today. ~

# April Walking Tours are afoot again

Each Saturday in April, Museum Director Donnie Barrett will lead an historical walking tour of Fairhope. This is the eighth year in which Fair-



hope has participated with over thirty other cities in Alabama, to support a statewide initiative of the Alabama Tourism Department to feature the history and highlights of our State.

Fairhope has become a tourist destination because of its history and beauty and the tours are an easy and inexpensive (free!) way to get to know the heritage of our “Utopia,” as it was called by the Single-Taxers. In the decade that the program has been active, the Fairhope tours have become one of the most informative and enjoyable in the State. It truly does endorse our Museum’s communication theme:

## *Helping us Tell Fairhope’s Story!*

The walking tours on April 4th and 18th will leave from the Fairhope Welcome Center at 20 North Section Street, promptly at 10 a.m. On April 11, the tour will meet on the bayfront at the foot of the pier and on April 25th, the group will gather in the Colony Cemetery at Oak Avenue and N. Section Street. The popular tours will begin on time, even if the weather is inclement, although the route may vary as necessary to avoid the rain.

Come enjoy another fun day at the Fairhope Museum of History . ~

## **Satsuma Blossom Festival**, continued from page 1

Over 200 people attended last year. The magician, musicians and



games will be back. Decorated WWII veteran Mauk Arnold, will again oversee the cake-walk that was a big hit in ‘14 and local celebrities will be on hand. This is a Family event - Don’t miss it!

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## - Docent News -

Docent Paul Czajka took a trip to the South Pacific a while back. He enjoyed it so much, he recently published a book about his trip entitled, *Tales of the South Pacific; Travels by Land and Sea in French Polynesia*. He now gets to re-live his experiences through his new coffee table book published by Blurb Publishing. He is already scheduling his next trip on the rivers of Europe with camera and pen in hand.

The Museum has at least five active docents who are published authors!

## *Tea for Two*

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

### *Upcoming Programs*

**April 7 – Bob Glennon** – Bob will wrap up our observing the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary with his program on the end of the Civil War.

**April 14 – Fred Marchman** – Fred will present a program on his 1973 book, “Portals to Paradise.” Fred is a local college professor with a whimsical and entertaining style.

**April 21 – Mayor Jim Nix and daughter Vicky Nix Cook** – This dynamic duo will feature Vicky’s book “Fairhope Watercolor Sketches” about James P. Nix’s Beautification Program.

**April 28 – Chief Joseph H. Petties** – Chief Petties is the Fairhope Police Chief and a graduate of Fairhope High School. He joined the police force in 1986 and became the police chief in 2013.

**May 5 – Tod Jonson** – Tod worked in the Hollywood film industry for 45 years as a movie gossip columnist for Warner Brothers. He also owned his own documentary film production company winning 4 Oscars for his works.

**May 12 – Eric Nager** – Eric has written a children’s book on “special children” which has received wide acclaim. But today, he is going to talk about his “Chess Book,” which is really about team building and helping U.S. education.

## *Tea for Two*

### *Upcoming Programs, continued*

**May 19 – Billy Garner** – Billy grew up on the Auburn Agricultural Experimental Station after his father helped build it in the 1930’s. He has some great adventures to tell about this very interesting Fairhope farm.

**May 26 – Jessie Patterson** – Jessie is now working to re-establish the Fairhope Courier as the roots of the Fairhope Colony. He is also the VP of the Organic School board and will tell us of current efforts to revitalize the school.

## *Satsuma Blossom Festival*

April 18, 2015

Fun - Games - Treats

Storytellers - Area Celebrities

Remember the day to come out and play!

### 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.

# Fairhope Museum of History

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Hours: 9 – 5 Tuesday through Saturday

Admission: Free!

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