



THE JAILHOUSE TIMEPIECE

A NEWSLETTER FOR MUSEUM OF HISTORY VOLUNTEERS
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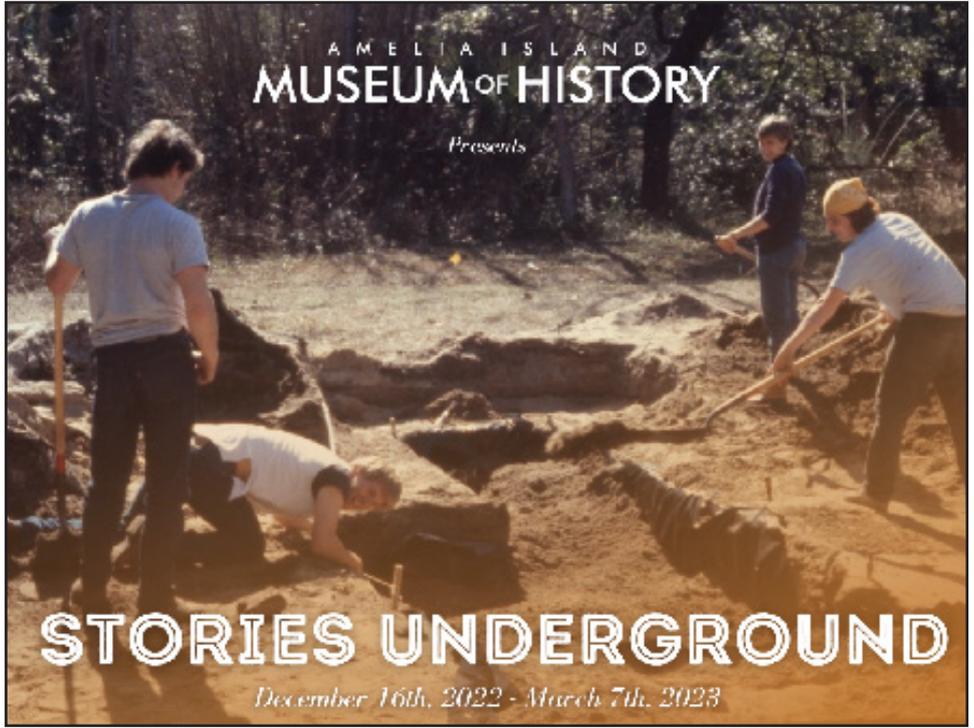
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STORIES UNDERGROUND
On view until March 7, 2023
Amelia Island Museum of History
Temporary Gallery
Curated by Summer Bias

The **STORIES UNDERGROUND** exhibit opened on December 16, 2022. It highlights significant archaeological excavations on Amelia Island—from the crude 19th century explorations of native burial mounds to the fruitful “*Dorion Dig*” on the south end in the 1980s. Of note, the exhibit opened with a lecture by UNF archaeologist Dr. Keith Ashley, who spoke about current excavations he and his students are doing on Big Talbot Island. *(Cont’d on Page 2)*

STORIES UNDERGROUND

AIMH Temporary Gallery, on view until March 7, 2023, curated by Summer Bias

Much can be learned about Amelia Island's past through written documents that have stood the test of time. However some things can only be discovered by digging into the dirt. **Stories Underground**, the Amelia Island Museum of History's newest temporary exhibit, explores significant archaeological digs on the island.

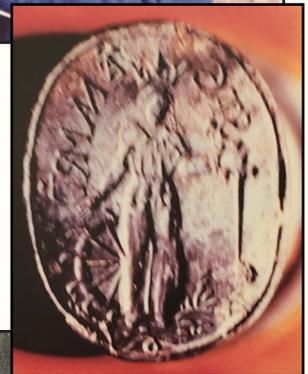
The exhibit's primary focus is the fruitful "Dorion Dig" on the south end of Amelia Island in the 1980s. It began when George and Dottie Dorion discovered human bones while clearing the land for their new home at the Amelia Island Plantation. Over six years, archaeologists and volunteers [led by University of Florida graduate Rebecca Saunders] uncovered a Spanish mission complex and some truly remarkable finds.

One such find occurred when a student from William & Mary (George Dorion's alma mater) dug up what appeared to be a brass doorknob. It was actually a priceless discovery: the mission seal of Santa Catalina, which had been used to emboss wax closures on the church's correspondence. This discovery justified continuing the dig. ❖

Top: George and Dottie Dorion pose with the Santa Catalina de Guale mission seal, c. 1986. It is engraved in abbreviated Spanish with the words: "Santa Catalina, Martyr."

Middle: Replica of the Santa Catalina de Guale mission seal with detail of end used to emboss sealing wax on letters.

Bottom: Rebecca Saunders, site supervisor of the Dorion Dig examining a find.



"On Egmont Estate are several very large Indian tumuli, which are called Ogeeche mounds, so named from that nation of Indians...their bones [are] entombed in these heaps of earth and shells."

—William Bartram on Amelia Island, 1791

This statement is the earliest known mention of archaeology on Amelia island.

AIMH VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



K EITH CRAWFORD was born in Statesboro, Georgia. He has an accounting degree from Georgia Southern University and has worked as a corporate real estate accountant/controller for several development companies. He and his family moved to Fernandina in 2019. Keith has always loved history and enjoys giving back to his community. Volunteering at AIMH allows him to satisfy both interests.

Says Keith, "I was a docent during the AIMH Holiday Home Tour. It was so interesting to see how families had restored beautiful old houses into warm, modern homes. It was very gratifying to learn about family heirlooms that continue to be used today. One item that caught my eye was a counter from a family's shoe store which is now their kitchen island. I hope to inform others about the intriguing history of Amelia Island and Fernandina Beach, a place I now proudly call home." ❖



C AROL MEADOWS was born in Oakdale, Pittsburgh, but lived in Atlanta most of her adult life. She and her husband relocated to Fernandina about 1 ½ years ago. Says Carol, "Once I saw Amelia, I knew I wanted it to be my home. It just took me 25 years to get here!"

Carol has an undergraduate degree in management and finance. She worked in the corporate world, in sales and sales management, and after earning a degree in education, taught for several years in a private school in Atlanta before retiring in 2007.

Carol continues, "I'm a greeter and walking tour guide for Centre Street and North of Centre Street. For years I've been an unofficial tour guide, sharing stories and facts I've gathered over the years with friends. My children used to tease me saying I should give segway tours. I must admit: the Museum allows me to pass on what I've learned to the wonderful people I've met. I live by Henry Ford's motto: 'Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young.'" ❖



M ARGARET NEWTON grew up in Rochester, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit. It was a small town then with a historic district not too dissimilar from Fernandina Beach. She moved to Fernandina in 2018 because the town reminded her of the Rochester of her youth, only with beach and sun! Margaret has worked mainly for the Apple Computer company, having spent most of her career in marketing, writing or design. She has also worked for a non-profit school specifically for students with learning disabilities. And, she has run an event photography studio, which thrived for more than 10 years.

Says Margaret, "I was flabbergasted that I'd never learned any of the Island's unique history in school. The moment I discovered there was an opportunity for me to tell Amelia Island's story, the idea sounded great. I jumped in with both feet, and am loving it" ❖

VOLUNTEER PHOTO GALLERY

At the Volunteer Appreciation and Awards Soiree

on November 10, 2022, AIMH staff feted volunteers with a delicious low country boil dinner and announced the special volunteer awards shown on the certicate at right:



2022 VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Joe Anderson: The Leah Bork Award for 20 years of dedicated service

Kathy Adams for her Greeter Routine and Information input

Susan Bowen for aiding Walking Tour Guide Training

Bob Colucci for aiding the Golf Tournament

Shelia Davison for aiding Greeter training

Pam Fox for aiding Docent Training

Barbara Herum for aiding Vertical and Library Files organization

Don Hill & Bob Danbeck for their Shrimp Greeter input

Bill Tillson for aiding Exhibit Research and Oral History

TOP: Volunteer Awardee Bob Colucci and Executive Director Phyllis Davis.

MIDDLE: Volunteer Awardee Kathy Adams and Media & Operations Manager Helen Meyers.

BOTTOM: Education Director Thea Seagraves and Volunteer Awardee Shelia Davison.

VOLUNTEER PHOTO GALLERY



TOP: AIMH staff blow volunteers a kiss.

CENTER LEFT: Executive Director Phyllis Davis and Education Director Thea Seagraves accept Leah Bork Award for Joe Anderson.

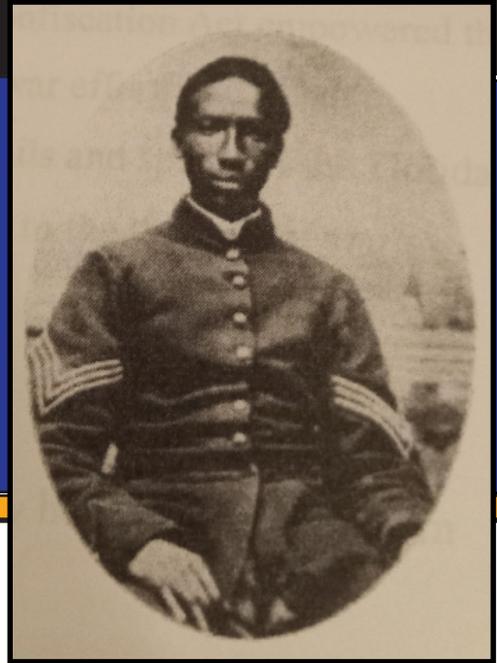
CENTER MIDDLE: Curator Summer Bias and Volunteer Awardee Bill Tillson.

CENTER RIGHT: Executor Director Phyllis Davis and Archivist Ronda Outler attend the bar at the Volunteer Appreciation Soiree.

BOTTOM: Executive Director Phyllis Davis, Timepiece Editor Hugh Michael Brown and Education Director Thea Seagraves.

BRAVER MEN NEVER LIVED

BY ANNE OMAN



Sergeant Robert Sutton

A glass case in the History Museum displays a pair of light blue trousers and a deep blue belted jacket, topped by a brimmed cap. Although no human figure wears the outfit, it is much more than an empty suit. It is imbued with the valor of the men in the United States Colored Troops, who wore this uniform with conspicuous pride.

In 1862, Congress empowered President Lincoln to recruit ex-slaves into the Union Army. One local man who joined up was Sergeant Robert Sutton. He escaped in a dugout canoe from a plantation on the Florida side of the St. Mary's River, then made his way to Camp Saxton in South Carolina. There he joined the 1st South Carolina Infantry—an African regiment commanded by Colonel Thomas W. Higginson, a Massachusetts abolitionist and Unitarian minister.

In January 1863, the regiment set sail for the St. Mary's River with orders to retrieve bricks and lumber from a plantation-cum-sawmill near Woodstock, which just happened to be the place where Sutton had been enslaved. The ex-slave piloted the party up the river.

About the plantation, Colonel Higginson wrote, "The chief house, a pretty one with picturesque outbuildings, was that of Mrs. Aberti, who owned the mills and lumber wharves adjoining. There was enough lumber to freight half a dozen steamers." In addition to the lumber, the raiding party delivered railroad iron and bricks to Fort Clinch and a piano, which was presented to Fernandina's school for African-American children.

Because Fernandina was occupied by Union troops, the town became a haven for escaped slaves. Freedom Fighter Harriet Tubman, who visited Fernandina during the War, encouraged former slaves to join the struggle against the Confederacy.

According to Fort Clinch historian Frank Ofeldt, two additional companies of the United States Colored Troops were organized by the Provost Marshal's office in Fernandina, and several other black companies also served at Fort Clinch. One such company fought in the Battle of Olustee, sustaining heavy casualties in what was the only major Civil War battle fought in Florida.

All in all, some 180,000 African Americans wore the uniform of the United States Colored Troops. The courage of these men is even more impressive given the Confederate proclamation that "any person of color captured in uniform would be put to death."

Said Colonel Higginson of his troops: "Braver men never lived."

Said President Lincoln: "Without the military help of the black freedmen, the war against the South could not have been won." ✘

REMEMBERING THE SHRIMPING MUSEUM

BY BETSY MELVIN



La Donna, Eugene Lee Huntsinger. Detailed copper replica of a shrimp boat. 40 in. x 36 in x 18 in. Gift to Amelia Island Museum of History by Jo L. Thomas and Eugene Lee Huntsinger, Jr.

Friday, September 23, 2022 was sunny with a gentle breeze and wispy white clouds strewn across azure skies: another perfect day in Fernandina Beach. Yet my mood was a bit glum as I began the last afternoon shift before the Marine Welcome Center and Shrimping Museum would close for good that day.

In between visitors, who had come from various states around the country, I gazed at the treasures in this one-room museum—which housed photos heralding net making and boat building and retold stories related to Fernandina Beach, the birthplace of the modern shrimping industry.

As recently as the 1950s to the 1960s, a typical day in the era when the shrimp industry boomed would see shrimp boats making their way to the Atlantic Ocean early in the morning and returning holds laden with a bounty of ten legged crustaceans that were destined to become someone's dinner, lunch or even breakfast.

The museum also described nets, the indispensable tool to this marine industry. Burbank Trawl Makers hired numerous locals, who made the nets by hand and who customized them for each boat. Then, to help camouflage them in the blue waters, they dyed the nets a dark color and hung them

out to dry. The shrimping industry thrived until sometime around the 1970s to 1980s, when regulations increased and business costs skyrocketed, causing the number of shrimp boats to decline dramatically. The net making company reinvented itself, modifying net design in order to distribute them to sports teams throughout the country.

As I prepared to close for what was to be the last time, I took a final look at The Modern Shrimping Industry Wall of Honor, a key feature of the museum. It named approximately 100 families who had immigrated from various European ports.

They had lived and sometimes died trying to keep the shrimp industry viable. After locking the Shrimp Museum door, I paused at the Fernandina harbor to view the handful of shrimp boats that remained. I bid a silent "Farewell, Shrimping Museum" and thought about the debt of gratitude we owe those gutsy seafaring men and women. ❄️

WINTER AIMH NOTIFICATIONS



2022 HOLIDAY HOME TOUR: A ROUSING SUCCESS!

Kudos to 2022 Holiday Home Tour Co-Chairs Vicki Harnage and Mary Louise Hester. The turnout for the event was exceptional! Says Vicki and Mary Louise, "We cannot thank our fabulous team of volunteers enough for the 110% effort they gave to make the 2022 Home Tour such an unqualified success."



AIMH NEEDS VOLUNTEERS FOR SPRING 2023 GOLF TOURNAMENT

Golfers love Amelia Island. Why not join us for a good cause, good company and a round of golf? The Museum needs volunteers to help plan and execute the 20th annual Spring 2023 Golf Tournament, which will be dedicated to Ron Bork, a founder who recently passed away. All proceeds benefit the on-going operations of the Museum. Please reach out to Thea at thea@ameliamuseum.org or Phyllis at phyllis@ameliamuseum.org.



THE HOUR- GLASS REPORT



Hugh Michael Brown,
Timepiece Editor

IN DISTINGUISHED COMPANY...

On Thursday, November 10, 2022, I attended the Museum's Volunteer Recognition and Awards Soiree. It was so much fun bonding with other volunteers over a festive and delicious low country meal. During the evening, staff members presented special awards to volunteers who've gone above and beyond to give their time and talents to this unique museum. If you're a relatively new volunteer like me, you may not know about Leah Bork the person for whom the Museum's most prestigious volunteer accolade is named. As the Leah Bork Outstanding Volunteer Award states: Leah is honored for her high level of volunteer involvement as a Board Member for 12 years, AIMH Golf Tournament Membership Committee Member, Greeter and a variety of other activities. The Leah Bork awardee for 2022 is Joe Anderson. Says Education Director Thea Seagraves, "It was a joy for the staff and me to celebrate our irreplaceable volunteers with an authentic down home low country boil party." ❖



Leah Bork,
Outstanding
Volunteer