YOUR favorite mug, your garden planter, your kitchen backsplash, your toilet—like the examples of various old and new pottery pieces shown above, all of these everyday items are ceramics. In its most basic definition, a ceramic is clay, a naturally occurring material, which has been fired or hardened by extreme heat.

(Cont.'d on Page 2)
Pottery (ceramic vessels), one of man’s earliest inventions, was developed roughly 20,000 years ago. And because ceramics do not break down easily over time, pottery is one of archaeologists’ key means of learning about the material culture of the past.

Pottery is all around us, but the process behind it is much more complex than many people realize. Failure can occur at every stage of its creation. The not yet-fired piece may crack in the initial drying process. It may also crack during the first firing. During the second firing, its glaze may inadvertently run too much or adhere to the kiln itself. And lastly, its glazes may not react well together, resulting in an unsightly mess.

**EARTH & HEAT**, the Museum of History’s newest temporary exhibit, takes an expansive look at how local pottery is crafted, from the works of native Timucuans to contemporary potters on the island today. 

Inset: Spanish olive jar.

**Top Right:** Widely celebrated ceramic artist Lee Shank throwing a pot. He is a renowned local treasure among Fernandina’s artisans.

**Bottom Right:** Plate design inspired by the Santa Catalina de Guale Spanish mission on Amelia Island.
SAY Farewell & Welcome

Jarrett Hill, has been appointed the Museum of History's new Curator. He is a proud University of Florida graduate and received his MA in Museum Studies at Cooperstown, NY. After getting his start as a volunteer at the Matheson Museum in Gainesville, he has worked at museums all up the east coast and ventured as far north as Billings Farm & Museum in Woodstock, VT. Please welcome him.

Says Jarrett, “I am so excited to return to my home state and really appreciate this wonderful opportunity to explore and share chapters of this region of Florida’s unique story, which is unlike any other. I am eager to both learn from and serve our Museum community. I look forward to meeting you all and working alongside you to support the Museum. If you see me in town or around the Museum, please say hello!”

Summer Bias is leaving her position as the Museum of History’s Curator. She has been a dedicated member of the Museum’s staff for 2½ years. Please wish her farewell.

Says Summer, “I am relinquishing my position as Curator to move to the Baltimore, MD area with my fiancé, who has accepted a position at Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory.”

She continues, “A big part of AIMH is its volunteers! I will miss AIMH very much and have so enjoyed getting to know you all as board members, greeters, docents, archivists, oral history interviewers and, importantly, as people willing to move heavy stuff or operate power tools. You make AIMH a great place to work!”

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TOP LEFT: Docent Kathleen O’Dea at a Museum exhibit. She is also a Museum Greeter.

TOP RIGHT: Docent Kathy Adams prior to going on duty at the Museum.

BOTTOM LEFT: Docent Anne Oman stands beside a lifelike statue of a Timucuan Indian.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Museum Greeter Glo Gaines gives a welcoming smile.
TOP: Museum of History volunteers Rob Hull, Sylvia Chandler, and Dave Roeser assembling the traveling 2022 Smithsonian exhibit.

CENTER LEFT: Volunteer Rob Hull stirs the gumbo pot at the 2023 Shrimp Festival.

CENTER RIGHT: Volunteer Donna Kraus prepares hot dogs and rice for the gumbo at the 2023 Shrimp Festival.

BOTTOM LEFT & RIGHT: Favorites at the 2023 Shrimp Festival: delicious gumbo and hot dogs.
I moved to Fernandina in 2020, knowing little about the South and nothing about Florida’s history. Always a lover of history, I thought becoming a Museum volunteer would be a great way to get to know my new home better. And was it ever! But allow me to preface what I’ve learned about Fernandina’s history with a little personal back story.

Growing up in the 1960s, I traveled to the South just once. It was in 1964 right after three Civil Rights workers were murdered in Mississippi. That traumatic occurrence led me to believe that the South in its entirety was certainly not a place of diversity and inclusivity.

However, my docent training at the Museum of History has taught me that at the end of the Civil War, Fernandina became a leader in Universal Male Suffrage. At that time, many southern states, including Florida, resisted giving freed Black men the vote and denied freed Blacks suffrage.

Yet Fernandina, our small island town (which had been a haven for runaway slaves during the war) held the first integrated elections in Florida, three years before it became law.

After the Civil War, Fernandina attracted Northerners, Southerners and Blacks, all wanting to restart their lives on Amelia Island. These diverse residents strove to put aside their differences. And by learning to cooperate they prospered.

This very diversity and inclusivity helped Fernandina become a sophisticated city, drawing wealthy tourists to its harbor and leading to the town’s second boom period—the Golden Age of the late 1800s. To learn more about the Golden Age and other reasons why Fernandina’s appeal continues, be sure to visit the Museum of History.
Recently, the Museum’s Baker Hall was transformed into a chic boutique for the Breakfast at Tiffany’s Jewelry Sale fundraising event. Guests who entered the Hall could not help but be dazzled not only by mimosas, freshly baked croissants and spring tulips, but by the opulently laden tables that lined the entire perimeter of the room.

Each table showcased jewelry by color: gorgeous blues and turquoises, rich ambers, lustrous pearls and multihued rhinestones. The riches on display even included antique necklaces, bracelets and earrings.

As the classic movie Breakfast at Tiffany’s played on a large TV screen in the background, Museum volunteers elegantly dressed in all black attire, modeled the jewelry for sale to assist and entice each guest to choose just the right piece.

Guests were also thrilled by glamorous evening dresses and shoes, belts, handbags and faux fur jackets, all donated by generous benefactors. Some shoppers knew exactly what they were looking for while others, after browsing or trying things on, eventually found treasures they simply couldn’t do without.

Thankfully that included this lucky volunteer, who found her own piece of Breakfast at Tiffany’s sparkle: a bejeweled watch. Many thanks are due to the volunteers who helped make the sale a success, the proceeds of which will help the Museum fund the purchase of new costumes!
LYNN CROMER wanted me to be sure to include her thanks to the Museum’s Garden Angels and to the many generous folks who help keep the Museum’s garden thriving. In particular, she wanted to extend kudos to Paul Ferreira and Doug Leatherbury, who recently completed a new bench. Also, thanks to several anonymous donors, the Museum now has a wonderful new garden shed to store tools and supplies. Donna Kraus and her mother have donated a much needed new wheelbarrow. Also, many thanks to those who have donated mulch, plants, tools and money. You are all so appreciated.

MUSEUM IS IDEAL SPECIAL OCCASION VENUE!  by Docent Tina Pierce

Ever experience an event so enjoyable you ask yourself: Why did I wait so long? That exactly describes the high tea bridal celebration my dear friend Valerie Gosnell and I planned in her honor at the Museum. The number of our group was 10 ladies, but the Museum can accommodate 40 guests.

What made our Museum tea so unique was that rather than just being a lovely event with tasty food and good company, it was a walk back in time to Fernandina, circa 1840’s. What’s more, the event was so unusual because Arlene Filkoff came as a “time traveler,” dressed in period costume. With wit and charm, Arlene expertly recounted local history with anecdotes about Old Town. And all in fun, she engaged the bride to be by incredulously asking such questions as why Valerie would wish to remarry after already having been married for 50 years! That quip alone elicited hearty laughter from us all.

The Museum usually holds teas one Sunday each month at 2 pm from January to May. The atmosphere at these events is relaxed, with ample time to settle in, chat a bit and take photos. AIMH serves Amelia’s Spiced Tea, its own special brand. Everyone raved about the three courses of scrumptious finger sandwiches and several types of scones followed by a variety of desserts. If you have a special occasion to celebrate, don’t wait to plan a tea party at the Museum! You’re sure to have a memorable time.

LYNN CROMER THANKS GARDEN ANGELS!

Hugh Michael Brown, Timepiece Editor