



THE JAILHOUSE TIMEPIECE

A NEWSLETTER FOR MUSEUM OF HISTORY VOLUNTEERS

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AMELIA ISLAND
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Fernandina Beach, FL

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AMELIA ISLAND
MUSEUM OF HISTORY
PRESENTS

Right Whales of Amelia Island

ENDANGERED - ELUSIVE - ESSENTIAL

December 19, 2025 – April 5, 2026

A special exhibition created
by the Amelia Island Whale
Ambassadors

See our Right Whales
...before they go extinct.

The Museum is located
at 233 S. 3rd Street,
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034.
Open: Mon-Sat 10am-4pm,
Friday until 6pm,
& Sun 1pm-4pm

For a schedule of presentations, please scan this
QR code. For more information, contact Isabelle at
904.261.7378 x103 or isabelle@ameliamuseum.org,
or visit <http://ameliamuseum.org/>

During the winter months, the warm southeast coastal waters off Georgia, and the northeast waters off Amelia Island beaches become the center of the calving and nursery grounds for the critically endangered North Atlantic Right Whale. **RIGHT WHALES OF AMELIA ISLAND: ENDANGERED—ELUSIVE-- ESSENTIAL** explores how humans have caused right whale numbers to drop to near extinction. The exhibit also proposes that these awesome creatures **CAN** survive--but only if humans choose to adopt the technologies that are readily available to save them. (Cont.'d on Page 2)

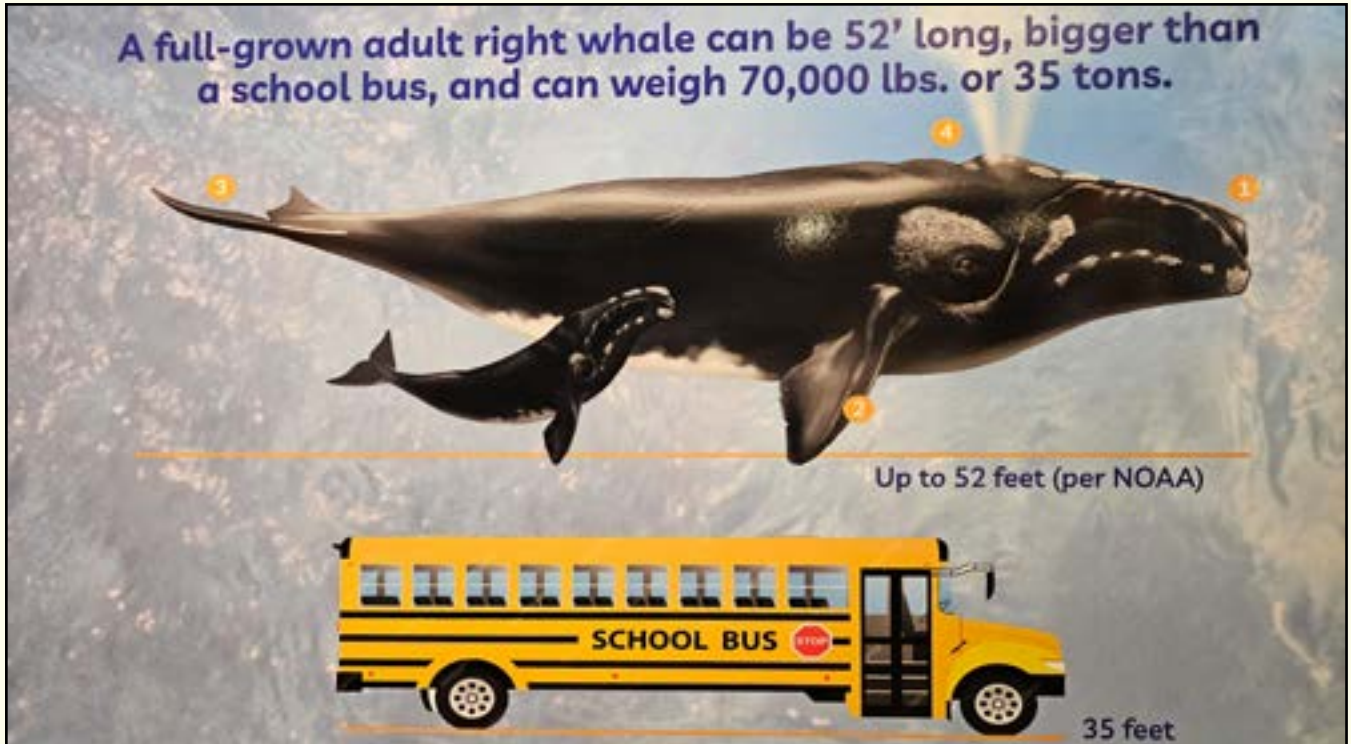


Right whale mother
and calf. Watercolor by
local artist
Debra Strobel.

RIGHT WHALES OF AMELIA ISLAND

ENDANGERED—ELUSIVE—ESSENTIAL

On view at Amelia Island Museum of History's TEMPORARY GALLERY until APRIL 5, 2026



An adult right whale can live 70 years! It can grow to be 52 feet long (bigger than a school bus). It can weigh 70,000 lbs. (that's 35 tons)! What's more, healthy whale populations can mean a healthier world because they release essential nutrients that support plankton growth and fertilize marine habitats—which powers the ocean food chains and produces oxygen.

Sadly, right whale deaths due to vessel strikes and injury being entangled in fishing ropes, have reduced their population to an estimated 370 to 384 individuals. These incredible animals are literally being killed faster than they can reproduce.

If you believe mankind has a duty to share our planet with all species, be sure to visit the **Right Whales of Amelia Island** exhibit to learn what needs to be done to help them rebound. ❖

Top: Panel sponsored by Barry and Kim Evans
Chart: <https://fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-life-distress/2017-2025-north-atlantic-right-whale-unusual-mortality-event>



MUSEUM STAFF THANKS VOLUNTEERS AT MOCAMA SOIREE



The Mocama Beer Company was the club-like venue for the Museum's **Volunteer Appreciation Soiree**, on Monday, Nov. 3, 2025 from 4-6 pm. The theme: "Island Vibes" and a tasty array of finger foods kept volunteer spirits high as each staff member extended heartfelt thanks to everyone for their hard work.

TOP: Museum staff: L. TO R. Archivist Ronda Outler, Director Phyllis Davis, Education Director Thea Seagraves, Operations Assistant Christopher Collins, Media & Operations Manager Helen Meyers, and Director of Exhibits & Public Programs Isabelle Bournigault. Operations Assistant Sydne Johnson was not present.



MIDDLE LEFT: Larry and Susan Bonnett.



MIDDLE RIGHT: Education Director Thea Seagraves (right) thanks Sarah Harris.

BOTTOM LEFT: Bill and Susie Birdsong.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Paul Condit and Johanna Cleary.

VOLUNTEER PHOTO GALLERY



TOP: At the 2025 Volunteer Recognition Soiree, L. to R. Andrea LaVecchia, Mary Louise Hester and Laura Giordano.



TOP LEFT: At the 2025 Volunteer Recognition Soiree, Susan Martin and Arlene Filkoff.



TOP RIGHT: At the 2025 Volunteer Recognition Soiree, Steve and Jodie Skolnick.



MIDDLE LEFT: At the 2025 Volunteer Recognition Soiree, Bob Duffy and his wife, Marsha.



MIDDLE RIGHT: At the 2025 Volunteer Recognition Soiree, Doug Leatherbury and Peggy Bulger



BOTTOM: At the 2025 Volunteer Recognition Soiree, L. TO R. Kathleen O'Dea, Judy Sherman, Dennis Rankin, and Monsignor Robert A. Rankin.

VOLUNTEER PHOTO GALLERY



TOP: At the 2025 *Dickens on Centre* event, L. to R. Barb Smith, Susan Murphy, Susie Kawecki, Chris Outler,

MIDDLE LEFT: At the 2025 *Dickens on Centre* event, Susan and Larry Bonnett.

MIDDLE RIGHT: At the 2025 Car Show, L. to R. Gene Freund, Peter Hill, and Thea Seagraves.



BOTTOM LEFT: *Denim & Diamonds Tea* table decor, January 18, 2026, Photo: Laura Giordano. Page 5

TWO HARRIETS: ONE WAR

by Johanna Cleary, Ph.D



While living in North Florida in the 1860s-80s, Harriet Tubman and Harriet Beecher Stowe—two iconic figures of the American Civil War—added significant “second acts” to their personal stories.

In 1849, prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, Harriet Tubman made an estimated 13 to 19 trips into the South to lead at least 70 enslaved people to northern free states. Although Tubman’s first years with the Underground Railroad were carried out in the shadows, by the early 1860s, she had become a hero in the abolitionist movement. The Union Army asked her to join their southern campaign in North Florida. In 1863, Tubman moved to Fernandina, where she served as a nurse and herbalist, helping treat dysentery at the Union Army infirmary in Fort Clinch.

But that was her “day job.” At night (with the Union Army’s knowledge and support) Tubman was a guerilla spy and scout. What’s more, she not only recruited many African-American men to enlist in the Union Army, but is also believed to be the first woman to lead U.S. troops on a mission to raid South Carolina plantations.

Another icon, Harriet Beecher Stowe, was the author of the bestselling novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, a book Abraham Lincoln said rallied the northern public against slavery. In 1866, Stowe and her husband built a winter home on river-front land in Mandarin, an affluent neighborhood of Jacksonville, Florida.

They would visit the home over the next 17 years and while there, Stowe wrote a series of 57 articles and her second-best selling book, *Palmetto Leaves*. These works made her a prominent early promoter of Florida tourism and development. Stowe also joined the “Yankee Strangers,” a movement that supported educating and medically assisting illiterate poor black and white citizens. Her worldwide reputation drew significant attention to this need. Also, while living in Mandarin, Stowe was a reading teacher and contributed substantial funds to build a school and church across the street from her home.

These two “Harriets” are prime examples of the fascinating and transformative individuals North Florida has attracted in its long history.

THE PATRIOT FLAG BACKSTORY by Susan Martin

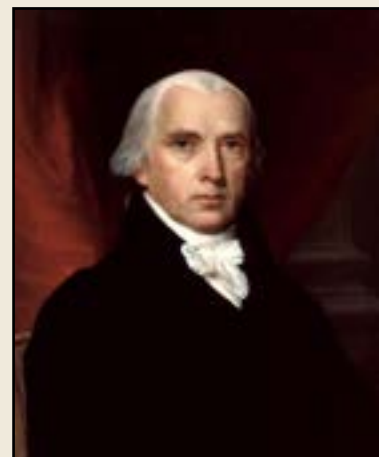
Few people know the multiple causes that led to The Patriot War of 1812-1815 (often termed “The Second War of Independence”). This is why it is perhaps the least understood Anglo-American conflict.

The backstory begins with the 1783 Treaty of Paris, which ended the American Revolution; gave the United States all land west of its colonies to the Mississippi River— *and* ceded Florida back to Spain. Fledgling America was sandwiched between British colonies on the north and on the south, a faltering Spain, whose ailing treasury made it highly unlikely the country could retain and defend Florida. Add to the mix that to help allay its fear that America would ultimately annex Canada, Britain supplied arms to Native Tribes, who sought to create their own buffer state in the Pacific northwest.

Despite disagreeing about whether or not to war with England again, most Americans were staunchly displeased with Britain. In addition to disrupting U.S. trade with France, Britain’s active support of Native Tribes forestalled potential U.S. expansion northwest to the Canadian border. And the coup-de-grace was that Britain had also forced kidnapped American sailors to serve against their will in the British navy.

In advance of the looming war, two-term President James Madison (1809-1817) decided America must secure its southern border—especially the deep-water port of Fernandina. He reasoned that if the British captured Fernandina, the U.S. would be put in a vise.

Thus, Madison secretly condoned the dissatisfaction of a group known as American Patriots. On January 15, 1811, a closed session of Congress passed "The Secret Act". Ostensibly, using vague language, congress funded \$100,000 and authorized U.S. troops to place Florida's Fernandina territory under U.S. control.



Then, on March 3, 1811, Madison passed an act which prevented neither the January nor March acts from being published or printed in the Congressional Record until 1818—well after the war ended.

When Patriot troops advanced to occupy Fernandina, the Spanish gave up without a fight. The Patriots raised their Patriot flag, which they replaced the next day with the Stars and Stripes, signaling that America held Amelia Island “in trust for Spain”. The War of 1812 was declared on June 18, 1812. The British never came to Fernandina. ❖

TOP: Florida Patriots Flag, circa 1812, bears the Latin phrase: *Salus populi lex suprema*, "The safety of the people is supreme law."

BELOW: James Madison, (Born 1751, Died: 1836). U.S. President, two terms (1809-1817).

TEA DATES SEASON 2026



—Sun., March 15, 2026, 1 pm
Mad Hatter Tea,
Best hat will merit a surprise!

— Sun. April 5, 2 pm
Easter Bonnet Tea.

—Sun., May 24, 2026, 2 pm
Fashion Show & Tiffany Sale Tea.

PHOTOS WANTED!

EVERYTHING YOU DO
FOR THE MUSEUM,
EVEN THE SMALLEST
CONTRIBUTION,
IS MEANINGFUL.
PLEASE KEEP SNAPPING
THOSE PHOTOS
OF YOUR
MUSEUM EXPLOITS
AND SEND THEM TO:
**VOLNEWS@
AMELIAMUSEUM.ORG**

COTTAGES & COURTYARDS



COTTAGES AND COURTYARDS

Sat., March 28, 2026 10 am—4 pm

Mark your calendars for the 2026 **Cottages and Courtyards Tour**. Celebrate Spring by visiting delightful cottages and courtyards in lovely historic downtown Fernandina Beach. For more information, please visit: www.ameliamuseum.org

SAVE THE DATE

23rd ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT!

APRIL 10, 2026
AT THE GOLF CLUB OF AMELIA

A day of fun and giving back. Event highlights:

—Entry Fee: \$200 per player
or \$750 per team

—Noon Shotgun Start

—18-hole tournament with prizes
for every team, longest drive,
and closest to the pin.

Interested in becoming a sponsor?

Call 904-261-7378

or visit our website at: www.ameliamuseum.org.