



Baker Block Museum
2023 Annual Report
North Okaloosa Historical Association



Early morning sunshine fills the Jeannette & Charles Henderson Heritage park on a cloudless Sunday morning in February. (Cover) People flocked to the Baker Heritage Day festival in 2022, the first held since 2019 because of COVID-19.



VISION, MISSION, GOALS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

YEAR IN REVIEW

ACCESSIONS

MEMBERSHIP & SPONSORSHIP

BOOK SERIES

FINANCIAL REPORT

The Baker Block Museum is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization of the North Okaloosa Historical Association, Inc., and is managed by its Board of Directors.

The Annual Report covers fiscal year October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023.

VISION, MISSION, GOALS

Vision

The vision of the North Okaloosa Historical Association is to preserve Okaloosa County history.

Mission

The mission of the NOHA is to collect, preserve and promote the history of Okaloosa County, the northwest Florida panhandle and the surrounding communities.

Goals

The goals of the NOHA are to:

- preserve historical artifacts
- capture oral histories
- educate future generations
- promote a better understanding and appreciation of this area's rich heritage

NORTH OKALOOSA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

PRESIDENT

Brenda Russell

VICE PRESIDENT

Lucille King

TREASURER

Sharry Rustin

SECRETARY

Stephanie Holcombe

Nina Adams

Joyce Arnett

Mike Bush

Tracy Curenton

Doug Hibbing

MEMBER EMERITUS

Jeanette Henderson

Phyllis Enzor

Judy Cadenhead

MUSEUM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ann Spann

BOOKKEEPERS

Trevia Buckner

Angie Holland

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

YEAR IN REVIEW 2022-2023 Year in Review at the Baker Block Museum

During the annual meeting in January, the Board approved the following 2023 goals:

- Increase membership by 30 percent
- Complete the historical marker application for the building
- Finish the pavilion with flooring, lighting, and stage
- Purchase needed equipment for digitizing library records

Of those, all but completing the historical marker application were accomplished to some extent. Membership increased by 30 percent. The purchase of a copy stand allows the Museum to begin digitizing photographs, maps, newspapers, and other research items in the library.

The pavilion, while not finished within the 12-year time frame, was sponsored by Florida Power & Light who donated \$5,000 in September for the express purpose of completing it with electricity, lights, and fans.

In May, the Board made the decision to change the fiscal year



Some of the many crafts available at the Baker Arts Festival.

from July 1 through June 30 to October 1 through September 30 to better align with the Destin Fort Walton Beach Tourist Development Department's fiscal year; therefore, products such as the Annual Report now covers the October-to-September time frame. The TDD provided the Museum \$12,000 for fiscal year 2022-2023.

Like many business and

organizations following two years of COVID-19 impacts, the Museum bounded back with a vengeance with new 3rd Saturday monthly events, and added two major events as well.

In October 2022, the Museum hosted its first Creepy Cabins haunted house in the cabins of the Heritage Park with an entry fee of \$2 per person. At the evening's end, 166 people went through the cabins for a total of \$332, plus an extra \$30 cash donation.

After a two-year absence due to COVID, the 17th Annual Heritage day festival was held in November 2022. Vendor spaces were sold out and the park was filled with demonstrations, crafts, food, and music, including a lineup of antique tractors in front of the building. The event pulled in

nearly \$4,300. Then, in March 2023, the Museum held the Baker Arts Festival, the first of what hopes to be another successful event. While it only brought in \$800, the hope is to build this into an annual spring event.

Building on the previous year's monthly events calendar, the **3rd Saturday** had a lineup of interesting presentations.

In May 2023, three people were inducted into the Family Heritage Wall of Honor. Longtime resident Margarete Allen Shelby, a Museum supporter, was posthumously inducted with members of her family in attendance, including her twin brother and sister who were in their 90s. Also inducted were North Okaloosa Historical Association founding members Jeanette and Charles Henderson. They volunteered for more than 20 years as curator and caretaker of the Baker Block Museum.

July, August, and September **3rd Saturday** events were presentations: Beginning Beekeeping in July; the History of Falco in August; and Native Plants, Native People presented by



Board member Doug Hibbing has the last scare during the Creepy Cabins haunted House.



A number of people were fascinated by the bees during the July Beginning Beekeeping 3rd Saturday event.

the Florida Public Archaeology Network in September. All three were attended by audiences of 25 or more people.

The Museum received a number of sponsorships during the 2022-2023 fiscal year. SignsOfHope.com was a start-up electronic billboard company. The owner, looking for content, approached Executive Director Ann Spann and offered to publicize Museum events free of charge. One advertised event equated to more than \$3,000 making SignsOfHope a platinum-level in-kind sponsor.



Antique tractors line up in front of the Museum during the first Baker Heritage Day festival since 2019 due to COVID-19 closures.

In December 2022, the Board approved hiring a new bookkeeper effective January 1, 2023. Trevia Buckner, a certified public accountant was hired in February. When

QuickBooks raised its annual membership fee to \$800 a year, Ms. Buckner offered to include the Museum on her account and gave us a letter of agreement, thus making her a bronze-level sponsor of the museum.

In January 2023, the North Okaloosa Historical Association received a legacy gift of \$2,711 from the estate of Margarete Allen Shelby who passed away in 2022.

During the fiscal year, the building housing the Museum underwent some much-needed



The 3rd Saturday presentation about Falco drew a number of people who lived and went to school there.



Members of the North Okaloosa Historical Association, Inc., board of directors, are presented with a \$5,000 grant from Florida Power and Light to go toward completing the pavilion with electricity, lights, and fans.

refurbishment after a recreational vehicle caught fire in the parking spaces in front of the building in 2021. Board member Brenda Russell and her husband, Raymond, re-caulked windows and painted doors and walls, generally spritzing up the front. Okaloosa County also replace the three air conditioning units

throughout the Museum. And a new highway sign was installed along State Road 189 north of the traffic light in Baker.

Finally, after more years than anyone can remember, the Board approved a \$100 a month raise for the executive director.

ACCESSIONS



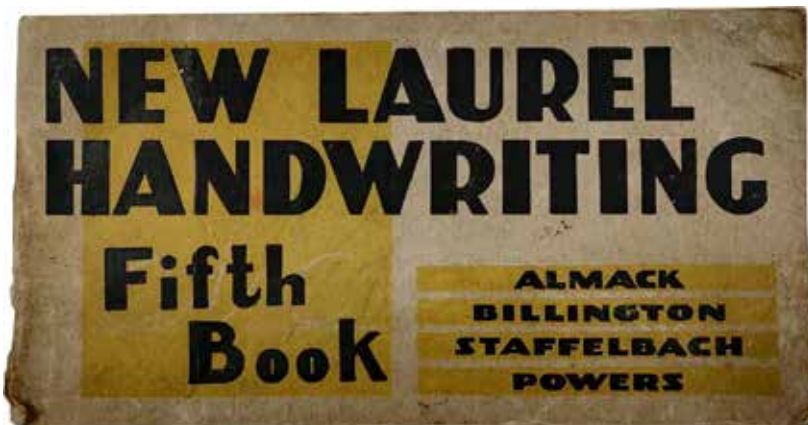
Clockwise from upper left: A 1980 cheerleader letterman sweater and a late 1960s/early 1970s band uniform; remnant of a sparkleberry tree with a hand-forged logging chain and log dogs embedded in it; a pair women's rink roller skates with wooden wheels.



A 1942 U.S. Army footlocker made by Shwayder Bros. Inc., the company that coined the word "suitcase" and later made Samsonite suitcases.



A primitive handmade baby cradle held together by square-head blacksmith nails, dating back to the 1800.



Top: This is the drafting set used by Lieutenant Ed McCracken when he was a U.S. Army Air Corps weather forecaster during World War II. McCracken later became the first president of Okaloosa-Walton Junior College.

Bottom: A New Laurel Hill Handwriting book. The book, copyrighted in 1937 and published in 1945, instructs students how to write in cursive, a skill no longer taught.

Membership

Memberships

- Individual — \$25
- Family — \$50
- Student — \$15
- Lifetime — \$250

Lifetime Members

- Dr. Wanda Batson
- Joyce Blalock
- Ronnie Bryan
- Tom & Linda Barrow
- Larry Bulger
- Michael Bush
- Mark Curenton
- Phyllis Enzor
- George & Cathy Griffith
- James Griffith
- James & Tammy Griffith

- Henry & MaryAnn Griffith
- Claudene Hall
- Jeanette Henderson
- Martha Jordan
- Wanda Reeves Kelly
- A.E. & Mary Moses
- Jo Nagel
- Margaret Sasser
- Faye Shaw
- Ann Spann

Sponsorship

The Museum would like to thank our generous sponsors throughout the year of 2023. Without the support of these organizations, many of the programs would not have been possible.

Platinum — \$1,500 and above

- Destin Fort Walton Beach Florida
Tourist Development Dept.
- Okaloosa County
- FP&L
- Signs of Hope
- The Restroom
- Racetrack Bingo

Bronze — \$750-\$999

- Trevia Buckner, CPA

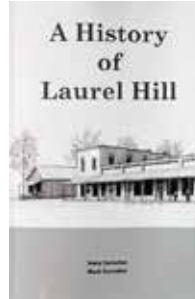
Other — \$500-\$749 and in-kind

- Altus Shooting Solutions
- Adams Sanitation
- Baker Metal
- Baker Auto Parts
- Baker Pic-N-Save
- Enzor Management
- WAAZ 104.7 FM/WJSB 1050 AM

Okaloosa County History Series



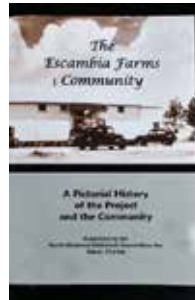
Give me the Grace to Shout and Shine, the newest book in the history series, focuses on the three most prominent gospel singing methods in the northwest Florida panhandle throughout the years: Sacred Harp, also known as fasola, five- or seven-shape note convention singing, and later, the gospel quartet.



Drawing from interviews, newspapers, public records and photographs, *A History of Laurel Hill* tells the story of this historic town. The book covers the early history of the area under Spanish rule through the Civil War, the coming of the railroad, the Great Depression and into the modern era.



Turpentine in the Florida Panhandle casts turpentine as a significant element impacting the way of life in the Northwest Florida panhandle. It describes an integrated experience—culture, industry, and human condition—in the lives of those who lived it.



Present Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal program included aid to American migrant workers and tenant farmers. The Resettlement Administration created a planned farming community in the northwest corner of Okaloosa County in 1936 known as Escambia Farms. By 1939, the community had grown to 72 families and included a school.



Okaloosa County has a rich military history. *Okaloosa Strong: The Homefront* is a sampling of the people, places, stories, and events during wartime in the county.



Officially founded in 1883, Crestview became a stop on the Pensacola & Atlantic Railroad. The geographic center of the county, the town became the seat of the newly established county seat in 1917. Crestview is situated on a rise between the Yellow River 4 miles to the west and the Shoal River 4 miles to the east. *A Pictorial History* illustrates how Crestview changed into the largest city in the county.

The 2023 Numbers

Income

Mercantile Sales	\$3,747
Donations	\$10,021
Sponsorship	\$5,850
Membership	\$220
Rent	\$8,400
Events	
Baker Arts Festival	\$695
Creepy Cabins	\$362
Baker Heritage Day	\$2,497
Farmers Market	\$50
Non-profit funding	\$5,185
Dividends	\$651
Total Income	\$37,678

Expenses

Mercantile cost of goods sold	\$382
Operations	\$6,416
Utilities	\$3,358
Maintenance	\$5,097
Insurance	\$6,899
Payroll	\$19,317
Total Expenses	41,469

Number of visitors: 4,709*

3,112 increase from 2023

Average number of visitors per month: 392

Visitor locations

Florida counties:

Bay County
Escambia County
Holmes County
Jefferson
Lake County
Okaloosa County
Osceola
Pinellas
Santa Rosa County
Suwannee County
Walton County
Washington County

26 states 52% of the country represented

2 countries: Canada & England

**Numbers based on Museum visitors only. Park numbers not included.*



One of the rooms of the dog-trot cabin is transformed into a spider lair for the 2022 Creepy Cabins haunted house during the **3rd Saturday** event in October.