



MUSEUM NEWS

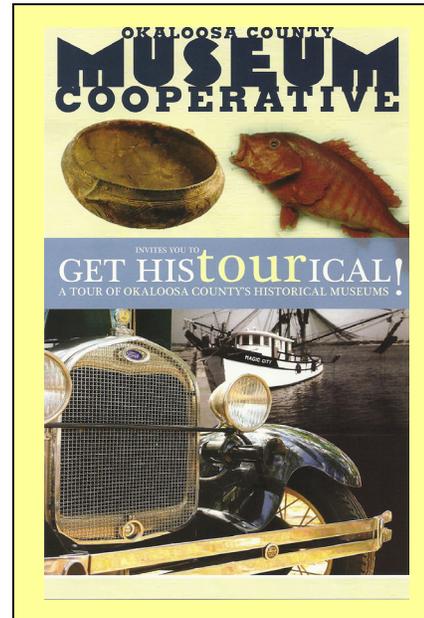


The Museum is a member of the Okaloosa County Museum Cooperative. Other members of the Co-Op are the : Heritage Park & Cultural Center in Ft. Walton Beach, the Heritage Museum of N.W. Florida in Valparaiso, the Governor Stone Schooner which is a traveling exhibit from port to port, the Robert L.F. Sikes Office & Collection at N.W. FL. State College, the Air Force Armament Museum outside Eglin AFB, the Baker Block Museum in Baker, and the Carver-Hill Museum in Crestview.

Representatives from these museums meet regularly to seek ways to encourage residents and visitors of Okaloosa County to visit.

In April the Co-Op was able to have a tri-fold brochure created and 5,000 copies were printed. This project was made possible with the cooperation and support of the Emerald Coast Convention & Visitor's Bureau. Copies have been distributed at each museum, the TDC Information Center, the local airport, and local facilities.

Museums of Okaloosa County



"The historical museums of Okaloosa County strive to preserve and promote our region's rich heritage. Through exhibits, public programs and the care and management of historic collections, they ensure that N.W. Florida's unique history and culture are a part of the future."



Ships Ahoy—A Voyage in Boating History exhibit during June features the history of boats in Gulf waters. On special display will be an exhibit of the Governor Stone, a coastal schooner built in 1877, and a scale model of the Wanderer, the last whaling ship to sail from New Bedford. In addition, original artwork from private collections and local artists featuring boats and ships will be on display.



Pioneers of Paradise



Captain Homer Jones

Written by: Jean Melvin

Homer Jones was born in Point Washington, Florida to Eula Lee Flowers and John Thomas Jones. When Homer was born his father worked for the sawmill at Pt. Washington. His occupation was to sail the newly sawed lumber from the mill to Pensacola to be sold. John Thomas did this on his two-masted schooner *Nelly*. He brought goods back to be sold to the settlers. Homer learned to handle a boat at a very early age by working with his father. In 1905, at the age of 16 he moved to Destin to work with Captain Leonard Destin, Jr. in his fishing business. He came with O.T. Melvin and John Melvin who would later become his brothers-in-law.

At the time, 1905, Captain Destin's crew seine fished from "pull boats" called *yawls*. The *yawls* were manned by long oars. Two of these fourteen foot seine boats with four men to a crew fished as a team. The Captain and two crewmen were in one boat and handled the seine. The other crewmen and boat served as tenders. The seine nets were 135 fathoms (810 ft.) up to 250 fathoms (1500 ft.). The seine boat could handle approximately 2,000 lbs. of fish. The tender could handle 2,500 lbs. of fish. The catches were rowed to shore, sorted, processed for market and sold in Pensacola.

In 1910, Homer signed on to work with Fred Williams on a two-masted snapper smack, the *Fletcher*. He often referred to Fred as the best fisherman he had ever known, and named his second son after him.

By 1916, Homer had built himself a seine boat, the *Savage*, and established his own fish camp. That same year, as the story goes a small squall had come up and by the time Homer realized it had turned into a hurricane. He was already having a difficult time saving the *Savage*. At the last minute, he was able to "take a wrap" around a pine tree and climb inside the boat where he rode out the storm the rest of the night. In the hurricane, Homer's camp was washed away about 500 yards down the harbor.

In 1918, Homer received his navigation license which enabled him to hire on as a navigator with large ocean going vessels. His captain's license was received in 1920. Since his heart had been captured by Miss Kathleen Melvin, he chose to stay in Destin. They married in 1920 and the current Red Door Saloon is the house (a remodeled fish camp house) where he brought his bride.

In 1928, a young man hired on to work with Homer. His name was Reddin Brunson and they worked together to fulfill a need for the fisherman. In 1937 Homer realized a need for the Destin boats to have a fuel dock and began buying fifty-five gallon drums of fuel and sold a whole drum to each boat. The individual boat names were placed on each drum. As the boat needed fuel it was siphoned into the boat from the drum. At this time Homer was running the seine boat *Correll Lee*, which he built and named after his mother-in-law Correll Lee Melvin. This fuel business grew into Destin's first marina. Reddin and Homer built East Pass Marina in 1960. It is still in operation.

Homer and Reddin worked together until Homer's death in 1976 at the age of 87. Kathleen and Homer had four children, Aubrey, Mildred, Correll and Fred. Kathleen continued to live in their home overlooking the Destin Harbor until her death in 2001.