

Meet Our New Curator of Collections!

By Joanna Grey Talbot
Marketing Director

This January we are very excited to welcome to the Matheson team Kaitlyn Hof-Mahoney as Curator of Collections. Keep reading to learn more about her!

What are your responsibilities as Curator of Collections?

As curator of collections I am responsible for the care and interpretation of the museum's collections. I am currently continuing the work I started as my project-in-lieu-of-thesis on the move of the collection into the new Library and Archives facility. I will also be working to create temporary exhibits in the main exhibit hall and the Mary Ann Cofrin Exhibit Hall that showcase our collections and help to tell the story of Alachua County and the surrounding regions.

What is your professional background?

I have been working as an intern at the Matheson for the past two years, helping to accession objects into the permanent collection and inventorying the collection as a preparatory step for the upcoming move. I also have curated and installed several of the museum's recent exhibits, including *Liberating Learning? The Story of Desegregation in Alachua County*. Outside of the Matheson, I have worked for two years as the Graduate Curator of the Constance and Linton Grinter Gallery of International Art at the University of Florida and worked as the Inventory Assistant at the Kentucky Historical Society in Frankfort, Kentucky.

What is your educational background?

I earned my B.A. in History at Auburn University, writing my thesis on the role of Native American women in blood vengeance in the Southeastern United States. I recently graduated from the Museum Studies program at the University of Florida with an M.A. My concentration within the program was anthropology and collections management.



Kaitlyn Hof-Mahoney in front of a portion of the exhibit *Finding the Fountain of Youth: Exploring the Myth of Florida's Magical Waters*, which she installed.



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In your experiences as a curator and archivist, what is one of the most interesting objects you have worked with?

While at the Kentucky Historical Society, I came across a nail wedding in the collection. The donor's grandfather and then father operated a general store in Keene, Kentucky. The donor's mother would play with the nails that were for sale in the nail bins. She made clothes for the nails and dressed them as dolls. She gave the nail dolls to her daughter who dressed the nails up as husband and wife and eventually had enough nails to create a wedding party. Reverend Ward Russell, minister at South Elkhorn Christian Church in Fayette County, often came for Sunday dinner. After dinner the donor would play with the nail dolls. The minister wrote a script for the nail wedding ceremony. His handwritten script is part of the donation. He wrote, "Do you Joseph Iron Nail take Dolly Sweetie Steel to be your lawfully wedded wife?"

What museum do you hope to visit one day and why?

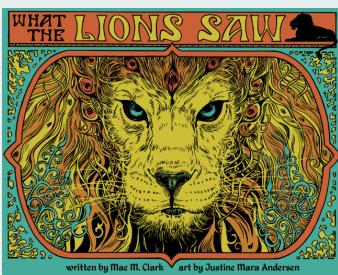
I would love to be able to visit the storage areas of the Lightner Museum in St. Augustine. This is a museum that I have visited already several times and I am absolutely fascinated by the breadth of objects on display. As a collections nerd, I want to see how they store all of the treasures that they don't have on view.

What's a unique fact about you?

My favorite animal is the cow. I have a personal collection of cow themed objects and it is a dream to one day have a cow of my own.

2018 MEMBERSHIP GIFT

We are excited to announce that the 2018 Membership Gift will be a copy of Mae Clark's *What the Lions Saw*. Master Illustrator Justine Andersen created the gorgeous illustrations. Join or renew at the Contributor membership level (\$100) or higher and receive this wonderful book created in partnership with the Sequential Artists Workshop.



Save the date!

March 21 at 6pm to March 22 at 6pm

Stay tuned for more information!

MATHESON HAPPENINGS

On October 14th we celebrated the grand opening of the Matheson Library & Archives and the Mary Ann Cofrin Exhibit Hall. We are so thankful for everyone who came to celebrate with us! *Images courtesy of Sabrina Haines Photography.*



We welcomed members and supporters to the Matheson on November 4th to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the 1867 Matheson House. The evening included honoring five families whose ancestors were in Alachua County 150 years ago and have made a significant contribution to our community's history – the Chestnuts, Hailes, Harns and Thomases, and Tom Fay, posthumously.



Clockwise: The Chestnut Family; The Harn/Cofrin Family; Evans Haile sharing his talents on the piano



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Image and Document Scanning

We need assistance with the scanning of images and documents in our archives. Training will be provided.



Oral History Projects

We are looking for volunteers who are interested in either the transcribing of oral history interviews or the conducting of oral history interviews. Training will be provided.



For more information about these opportunities please contact us at 352-378-2280 or director@mathesonmuseum.org.

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

Liberating Learning? The Story of Desegregation in Alachua County Schools

Main Exhibit Hall

The story of desegregation of schools in Alachua County is one of people from different backgrounds coming together to make a difficult time as painless as possible. There were some bumps in the road, such as the boycott of Lincoln High School in November of 1969 and the riot at Gainesville High School in March of 1970, but overall the black and white schools came together as smoothly as could be expected. On February 6, 1970 Alachua County had its first full day of desegregated classrooms, seven months earlier than planned. This “Fruitbasket Turnover” required closing Lincoln High School, a pillar of the black community, and transferring all of its students and staff to formerly white schools. This loss is one that is still felt today.

The exhibition includes images from Lincoln High School and Gainesville High School yearbooks and images on loan from the Lincoln High School Alumni Association.



**(left) Class of 1973 officers in the 1971 Gainesville High School Hurricane yearbook;
(right) Lincoln High School marching band in the 1958 UF Homecoming Parade,
courtesy of the Elmer H. Bone collection**

Finding the Fountain of Youth: Exploring the Myth of Florida's Magical Waters

Mary Ann Cofrin Exhibit Hall

This exhibit is based upon Rick Kilby's award-winning book, *Finding the Fountain of Youth: Ponce de Leon and Florida's Magical Waters*. The former traveling exhibit was created by the Florida Museum of Natural History and was donated to the Matheson by author Rick Kilby. The exhibit examines how the legend of Ponce de Leon's quest for restorative waters shaped the Sunshine State's image as a land of fantasy, rejuvenation and magical spring-fed waters.



Beauty Above and Below, Silver Springs, Florida, courtesy of the Matheson History Museum collection

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

**Daughters of Sweet Waters: Oshun in Florida
with Marlowe Moore Fairbanks and Lesley Gamble
Saturday, February 24
2pm-4pm - FREE**

Dancer/choreographer Marlowe Moore Fairbanks presents *Daughters of Sweet Waters*, a dance-film collaboration with underwater videographer Lesley Gamble of the Springs Eternal Project. The work celebrates Oshun, the African Orisha of Love and fresh waters from the Yoruba tradition, who manifests in Florida as our springs and rivers. This workshop includes a talk about the importance of African heritage and wisdom to our understanding of embodiment both in, and as, nature. It concludes with a guided movement workshop where we explore AfroCaribbean dance techniques as another way to connect with—and discover more about—Florida's springs. No previous dance experience necessary. All are welcome.

**The Florida Highwaymen with Gary Monroe
Saturday, March 3, 4pm - FREE**

In the late 1950s in rural Florida, a group of young, self-taught African American artists began to paint optimistic and colorful Florida landscapes. They periodically left their backyard studios and took to the highway to sell their works to white customers, earning the name The Highwaymen. Their glowing images represented the American dream. Photographer Gary Monroe got to know these artists and will speak about their work and their legacy.

**Finding the Fountain of Youth: Ponce de León and Florida's Magical Waters
with Rick Kilby
Saturday, March 17, 4pm - FREE**

Author Rick Kilby will explore the myth of Ponce de Leon's search for the Fountain of Youth and why we need to protect Florida's fragile springs. This book is the basis for the exhibit that is currently on display in the Mary Ann Cofrin Exhibit Hall, which was donated by Kilby. A book signing will follow.

**Tacky Tourist Party—Amazing Give Kick-Off
Wednesday, March 21, 6pm—\$25**

Wear your best tacky tourist costume and help us kick-off the 24-hour Amazing Give fundraiser! The evening will include a costume contest, Florida-themed food and drink, photo booth, and Florida trivia challenge. Dig out your fanny packs and Hawaiian-print shirts and join us!

**Florida Soul: From Ray Charles to KC and the Sunshine Band
with John Capouya
Friday, April 13, 6pm - FREE**

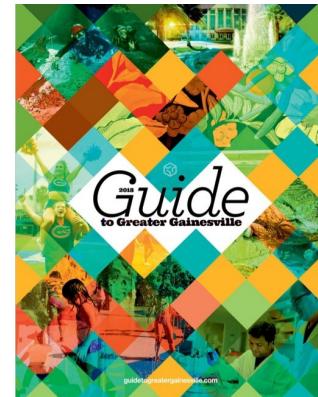
Florida Soul celebrates great artists of the Sunshine State who produced some of the most electric, emotive soul music America has ever heard. Capouya will share about the artists who began their musical journey in Florida and how that music is still a part of our collective culture today. A book signing will follow.

Did you know?

ARTICLES IN LOCAL PUBLICATIONS

Matheson staff members frequently write about Alachua County's history for local publications.

- Peggy Macdonald, Executive Director, has a regular column in *Gainesville Magazine* entitled "Gainesville Remembered."
- Joanna Grey Talbot, Marketing Director, has written for the second year the history of Alachua County for the *Guide to Greater Gainesville*. She also has three upcoming local history articles in *HOME Magazine*.

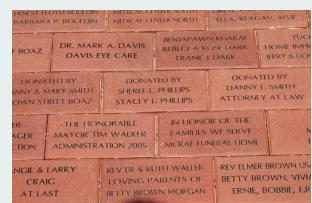


VALENTINE'S DAY BRICK SWEETHEART SPECIAL

Looking for a unique gift for the special someone in your life? Why not etch their name in history by buying them a brick to be placed in front of one of the two front doors of the Matheson Library and Archives!

For Valentine's Day we are running a special of **\$200 per brick if you buy two or more.** A single brick costs \$250.

Information about ordering can be found on our website at www.mathesonmuseum.org/brick-campaign/.



"WHAT THE LIONS SAW" BOOK LAUNCH

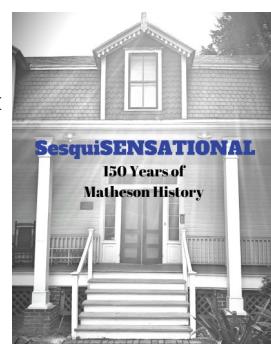
On December 14th, in partnership with the Sequential Artists Workshop, we launched "What the Lions Saw." Written by Matheson Board member Mae Clark and illustrated by master illustrator Justine Andersen, it tells the story of Alachua County's history through the eyes of the twin copper lions that used to sit atop the north and south entrances of the 1885 Alachua County Court House. Readers will learn about everything from visits from celebrities such as Babe Ruth and Booker T. Washington to famous court cases held in the historic courthouse.



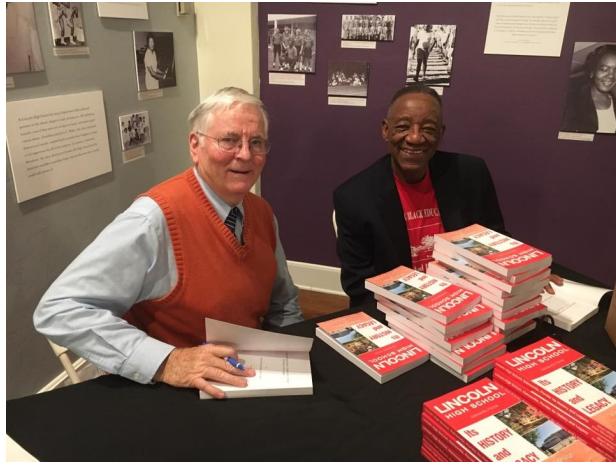
Autographed copies are available for purchase in the museum's gift shop for \$14.99!

"SESQUISENSATIONAL: 150 YEARS OF MATHESON HISTORY" BOOKLET

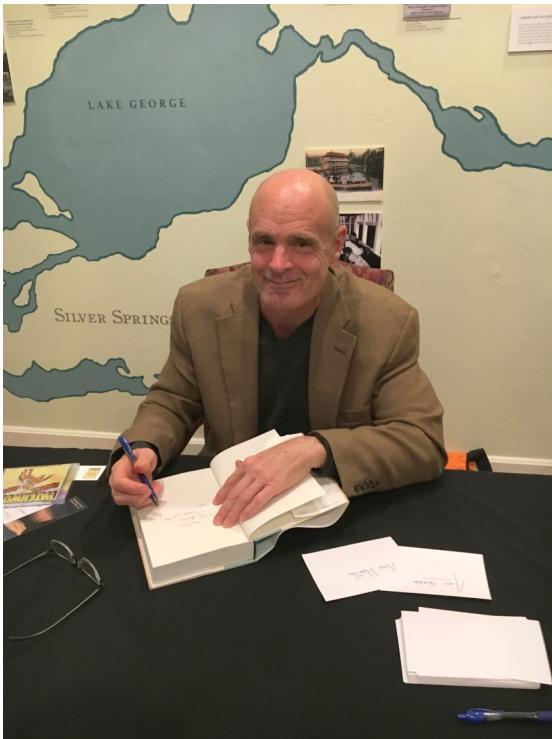
Joanna Grey Talbot, Marketing Director, wrote in conjunction with the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the 1867 Matheson House a booklet giving a detailed overview of Gainesville's history from the 1860s to today. The booklet also features short biographies of five families whose ancestors were in Alachua County 150 years ago and have made a significant contribution to our community's history – the Chestnuts, Hailes, Harns and Thomases, and Tom Fay, posthumously.



Copies are available for purchase in the museum's gift shop for \$7.99.



(left) Dr. Ibram X. Kendi discusses his National Book Award-winning book *Stamped From the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*; (right) Co-authors Dr. Kevin McCarthy and Albert E. White signing their book *Lincoln High School: Its History and Legacy*.



(left) Dr. Jack Davis signing his book, *The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea*, at its book launch at the Matheson, which was recorded and broadcast on Book TV C-SPAN2; (right) Board President Dr. Anita Spring and former Matheson Board President, Dr. Patricia Hilliard-Nunn at the SesquiSENSATIONAL: 150 Years of Matheson History fundraiser banquet.

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