

ARCHER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Whistle Stop News

Art at the Archer Depot Festival March 13th 2021

For the first time the **The Art at the Archer Depot** was held on the grounds of the Archer Community Center. On December 23rd a turbulent storm crossed central Florida causing wide spread damage including tearing off a portion of our depot roof.

For safety reasons it was decided that the event should be moved to the community grounds. We have had several Vintage Markets held there and it became an easy option.

We had over 35 vendors, music, food, children's area and a visit from a *Mustang* from the *CZ Mustang*. It was a great event and everyone was pleased, and looking forward to next year.

Because of monies used for the repair of the Depot roof **\$4000**, the restoration of the depot's ticket office floor had to be delayed.

Raising funds is always necessary and at this time even more so. The opening of the Depot will have to be delayed if the necessary funds are not raised. A campaign has now begun to raise those very funds.

On the Archer Historical Society's Web Page ArcherHistoricalSociety.org there is a donation button. No amount is too small. Let your friends and facebook friends know. You may also send checks to AHS PO box 654 Archer, Florida 32618.



Alda Kerr's Painted Planters

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Voter Fraud, Archer and the Election of 1876

Archer gained some notoriety during the presidential election of 1876, one of the most contentious ones in U.S. history. This election presaged the end of Reconstruction Era in 1877 whereby the Democrats conceded the election to the Republican Rutherford B. Hayes in return for an end to Reconstruction and the withdrawal of federal troops from the South. (In Florida, most Blacks and many White expatriates from the north were Republicans whereas most southern Whites were registered Democrats.)

The election in Florida was especially close. Despite winning only 50.1% of the popular vote, Hayes was able to garner all four of this state's electoral college votes (Florida currently has 29 votes). That narrow margin of victory in Florida proved all the more critical given that Hayes managed to win the nation's electoral college results by only a single point, i.e. 185-184. Not surprisingly, allegations of election fraud were rampant on both sides during the election campaign of 1876, especially in Florida.

With a relatively high population of Blacks in 1876, Alachua County leaned Republican (1,984 for Hayes and 1,267 for his Democratic rival). However, these results were viewed askance by Democrats who claimed many ballot boxes were stuffed with illegal Republican ones. Particularly suspicious in

this regard were the 219 ballots found in Archer precinct's box No. 2.



Leonard G. "Little Giant" Dennis

According to local historian Rance Braley (1990) "Democrats declared that Archer's returns were invalid because of illegal procedures. They charged that blank ballots had been signed by voters which were then filled in with the Republican's name by two precinct officials in a back room of the polling place and then substituted for the ballots in the box." However, an investigative committee consisting of six Democrats and seven Republicans decided that proof of election fraud was lacking. This questionable verdict led to the sardonic local quip, "six won't beat seven."

Republican Leonard G. Dennis, a native of Massachusetts and former member of the Union Army during the war was implicated in this scandal. He became a prominent politician, residing in Gainesville and becoming wealthy as a "political boss" by doing favors on behalf of his party. At first the "Little Giant" denied any role in the Archer affair but had to confess otherwise after the Democrats took control of the House of Representatives in 1878.

by Bill Zettler Phd.

Whats New

This past year in addition to painting and repairing the ticket office we have also created an Archer Historical Society 'Face Book Page' We believe it will be an asset in getting news out to members and the community. It will also allow us to share pictures of people, items and the history of the area. We have received great feedback from readers, sharing their experiences and knowledge. This page is also linked to our 'Web Page' another important source that reaches beyond the community in sharing history. With these resources a digitized archive can begin. This will protect, particularly paper items, from harm for future generations to enjoy.

This past year has also brought a new event, 'Archer's Vintage Market Sale'. We held two markets and our second sale, because of the website was more noticed and thus more attended.

'Art at the Archer Depot' is still our main event and next year will be held Saturday March 12th from 9-3:30 on the grounds of the historical depot. This past event has been lots of fun for everyone with live music, a children's area and lots of items to see and purchase. We will have art, woodworking, jewelry and informational booths and much more.. If you have a talent and would like to share please let us know. We also take pride in helping new vendors.



Music by Pete Enwall



CZ Mustang



THANK
YOU
ALL



Music by Ann Green
and Cale Batey



First United Methodist
Church of Archer



Farmhouse Crafts



Gainesville Irish Dancers

A special thanks to everyone who participated in and attended Art at the Archer Depot. Your time and talents make our event a success. We hope to see you all back again next year, on March 12th, 2022



Archer Historical Society
P.O Box 654
Archer, Florida 32618



Music and Host Josh Taylor



Frazier's BBQ and Catering



Shanna Rose 'Farmhouse Crafts'



Lisa Weston 'Lisa's Lovelies'



Johnie Jackson Woodwork



Joan White Crochet

We dedicate this event to the memory of our much missed former co-chair, Mary Bennet, who passed away last summer.