



Glimpses

Items of recent and historical interest
from members of The Heritage Library

Vol. 1, No. 1

August 2009

Late-Breaking News

🔔 Robert (Bob) P. Smith has stepped into the presidency of the Heritage Library following the resignation of Blanche Sullivan. We'll hear from Bob in the next issue of The Heritage Observer in September.

🔔 The Heritage Library is now on Facebook:
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Hilton-Head-Island-SC/Heritage-Library/108026742283?ref=ts>

About Heritage Library's New Publication, *Glimpses*

This your first issue of *Glimpses*, intended to be a forum for research and articles by our members. In this issue you will find:

- "The Feather and the Crown," by Barbara Vernasco. To the right on this page.
- "Witches in the Attic," by Nancy Burke, Page 2. Nancy has some very interesting ancestors.
- "Lowcountry Colonial Settlements," by Lyman Wooster, Page 5. Two early settlements, across the Savannah River from each other.
- "The Launching of the USS Constitution," by Barbara Muller, Page 7. This famous ship gained its nicknames "Old Ironsides" for its strong hull of southern live oak.
- "The Great Sea Islands Hurricane," by Barbara Muller. Page 8.

We are eager for articles from more of you. See Page 2.

Victor Amadeus Savoy, the Duke of Savoy from 1630 to 1637. He was titular King of Cyprus and Jerusalem, also known as the Lion of Susa. His maternal grandfather was Philip II of Spain; his maternal great-grandfather was Henry II of France. He married a daughter of Henry IV of France and Marie de Médicis.
Source: Wikipedia.



The Feather and the Crown

by Barbara Vernasco

THIRTEENTH COUSINS!

*Barbara Vernasco (l) and Valerie Cole, researching genealogy, found a mutual ancestor. Barbara is a Heritage Library member who was a valued volunteer for the Heritage Library for six years. Her book, *Passing the Blessings Along*, is in the Heritage Library. We miss her enthusiastic presence and thank her for this delightful anecdote.*



"Savoy! Is that one of the families you're working on?"

This was my genealogical introduction to Valerie Cole, a Heritage Library member who resides in Ottawa, Canada and has, shall we say, "dual spring citizenship." We library volunteers looked forward to Valerie's spring visits; Valerie, a long time genealogist, would take a neophyte under her wing and lead him or her on the path of discovery.

On this particular day as I rounded the corner of the study table and glanced at Valerie's work, the name "Savoy" jumped off the page. I had just recently ordered a copy of the book, *Savoy Heritage, 1621 to the Present*.

This book proved my link to the descendants of the Duke of Savoy. When Valerie and I compared notes we found that her twelfth great-grandfather and my twelfth great-grandmother were brother and sister. Their father was our joint thirteenth great-grandfather.

See "*The Feather and the Crown*" on Page 2

The Feather and the Crown (cont'd from Page 1)

We were cousins.

We learned that our mutual (thirteenth) great-grandfather, Francis (Prince) Savole, married Catherine Jeanne di Briard LeJune in Acadia. Catherine's mother was a MicMac Indian, Jeanne Marie Kagigoniac, born in 1610 in MicMac Village, Nova Scotia, Canada. Catherine's father was Martin Pierre di Briard, a fur trader.

Now we could design our "coat of arms," the Feather and the Crown.

I have returned to the cold regions of the north and will continue my family research in Fort Wayne, Indiana. My story of a chance encounter with a fellow genealogist demonstrates the excitement of finding the secrets of our past and the adventure of future research.



Call for Articles

Do you have a favorite period of history that has so intrigued you that it has become one of your passions? Have you, like Nancy Burke and Barbara Vernasco (whose stories are in this issue) unearthed some fascinating tidbits in your own family tree? Does your field, such as medicine or law, give you a special insight into some historical development? Might you write about the evolution of free speech, the fight for woman suffrage or civil rights, the role of disease in early settlements, the social mores of colonial plantation life, or the rigors of serving in the Revolutionary or Civil War armies?

If so, we hope you'll share your knowledge and insights with the members. You may send your articles to me, barbaraguild@earthlink.com, via email in a Word document. If you don't like to use email, you can send a double-spaced typed copy to me at the Library.

I look forward to hearing from you.

BARBARA MULLER



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Witches in the Attic

by Nancy Burke



Editor's Note: Nancy Burke first became enthralled with genealogy when she took a class with Bill Altstaetter. That opened new doors for her, and since then Nancy has been opening new doors for many others, teaching classes, running clinics, and helping people who come in the Heritage Library door seeking their family histories. Experiences such as Nancy's illuminate the fascination of genealogy

We all have family secrets that we would prefer to hide in the attic.

The Putnam family, through whom I have membership in both the Pilgrims and the DAR, is no exception. The Putnams came to Massachusetts Bay Colony early in its establishment. Some four decades thereafter they became embroiled in one of the Colony's most tragic moments, that of the Salem witch trials. Ancestors of mine were both accusers and victims and I'd like to share just a bit of this unhappy history.

I'm sure you all have some familiarity with the trials; suffice it to say the witch-hunts took place between February 1692 and May 1693. Some 150 people were arrested and imprisoned. Twenty-nine people were convicted of the capital felony of witchcraft. Nineteen of the accused, fourteen women and five men, were hanged. One man was pressed to death under heavy stones. Trials were held in three counties, but the best-known ones were conducted in Salem Town. All twenty-six who went to trial there were convicted.

Background

Why did Salem become such a fertile ground for these trials and why were the Putnams so involved? Reviewing a little of the history of the town and its inhabitants will help us understand.

See Witches in the Attic on Page 3

Witches in the Attic (cont'd from Page 2)

My ancestor John Putnam was born about 1580 and emigrated to Salem, Massachusetts between 1627 and 1641.

John, a farmer, was, by the time of his death, very well off for the times. He acquired some eight hundred acres of land and had held positions of importance in town. The main town of Salem was primarily a commercial center; John lived in an outlying agricultural area, Salem Village.

Much of the tragedy which would visit Salem in 1692 was the result of tension between rural Salem Village and commercial Salem proper.

John had three surviving sons: Nathaniel, and two known by their military ranks, Lieutenant Thomas and Captain John. John's land was divided among his children, who married into other local families. By the third generation Putnam families owned the land surrounding the church and parsonage. By the late 1680s the Village was controlled by the Putnams and another well-to-do family, the Porters. The Porters lived in the Village but their wealth came from their commercial interests in Salem itself rather than from agricultural interests in the Village.

Conflict Develops

The Putnams were not averse to exercising their influence in the Village and there were numerous conflicts over land usage, unpaid debts, and other unfulfilled obligations.

One major dispute with the adjacent town of Topsfield went to court. Nathaniel Putnam maintained that Topsfield had improperly annexed some of his land. Legal documents were not available to settle the issue and the conflict between the Putnams and the Topsfield families—Hobbes, Esty, Howe, Towne and Wildes, some of whom lived in the Village—became an ominous fact of Village life. No doubt this affected the Putnam attitude toward several Topsfield women—Rebecca Nurse, Mary Esty, and Sarah Cloyse—who would figure in the witchcraft trials.

The Putnams also worked to make the Village independent of the old town of Salem. They pressed for political autonomy while the Porters resisted their efforts. In 1670 the Village successfully petitioned the General Court for permission to erect their own meetinghouse and select their own preacher.

Samuel Parris, the Fire-Fanner

The ministry in the new meetinghouse became a focal point of disagreement, as a succession of ministers quarreled with important members of the leading families.

These members, their dignity offended, insisted that the minister be dismissed. In 1689 Samuel Parris, who would figure prominently in the witch trials, was appointed to the post, having been selected by a committee that included Nathaniel and John Putnam and notably did not include the Porters. Moreover, Parris drove a hard bargain for his contract, even managing to secure title to the parsonage and the surrounding land. These terms, coupled with Parris' intense and rigid personality, served to exacerbate local tensions. Sadly, Parris was a difficult man in a contentious town.

Those who had opposed his ordination were determined to drive him out. They attended services in Salem rather than in the Village and withheld payment of the taxes intended to support him. In October 1691 Villagers elected a new committee made up, to a man, of Parris' and thus the Putnam's opponents.



Samuel Parris has been described as the "fire-fanning minister" of the Salem witch trials. The Massachusetts Historical Society says of this miniature "It portrays a fair-complected man ... in his 20s or 30s ... and may very well be Samuel Parris prior to his religious calling. If so, this is the only known portrait of any inhabitant of 1692 Salem Village."

Parris was now dependent on his Putnam supporters for his livelihood. Thus we begin to see the significance of the fact that, of the first four "afflicted girls" in Salem Village, two lived in the house of Samuel Parris himself and a third, Ann Putnam, was the twelve-year-old daughter of Parris' most ardent supporter, Thomas Putnam, Jr. In the coming weeks the Thomas Putnam household would produce two more afflicted girls: Mercy Lewis, a servant, and Mary Walcott, a young relative.

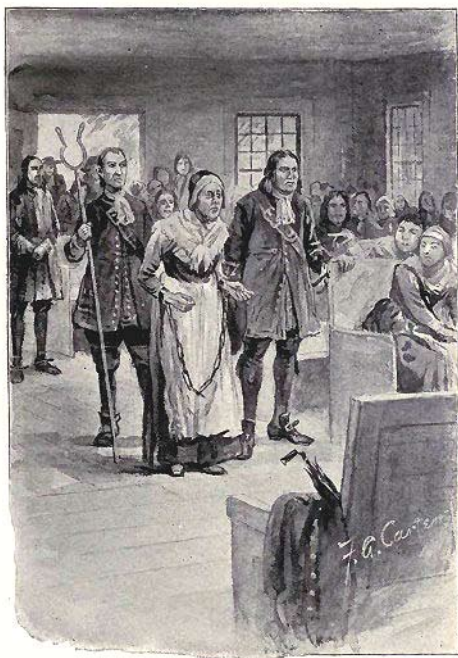
The winter of 1692 was exceptionally cold and difficult. Indian raids were terrorizing outlying towns and the political situation in the colony was unsettled as the Crown had revoked the colony's charter. It was a difficult, tense time. Nine-year-old Betty, the daughter of Samuel Parris, fell ill and the doctors could not

See "Witches in the Attic" on Page 4

Witches in the Attic (cont'd from Page 3)

find a medical cause. Betty was not merely sick in bed; she dashed about, screamed and dove under furniture. Soon Abigail Williams, Samuel's ward, followed suit and shortly others of Betty's friends, including Ann Putnam, Mercy Lewis, and Mary Walcott, were ill as well. No one really knows the cause of their symptoms, but it seems likely it started as a childish prank among a group of adolescent girls, a prank that grew to uncontrollable and devastating proportions. Convinced that the strange behavior of the children stemmed from malevolent witchcraft, Parris and Thomas Putnam urged them to identify their tormentors.

The roles played by the Putnam family and Samuel Parris, the minister they brought to Salem Village, are most disturbing. I've noted that Betty Parris, Abigail Williams, Ann Putnam, and Mercy Lewis had connections to the Putnam family and many of the accused were people with whom the Putnams had disputes. The most widely known of those victims is Rebecca Nurse, a member of the Towne family of Topsfield and thus an enemy of the Putnams. A 71-year-old wife, the mother of nine children, and a respected member of the Village community, she stood accused of witchcraft by Edward and John Putnam. Her youngest two sisters, Mary Esty and Sarah Cloyse, were indicted as well. Rebecca Nurse is also my ninth great grandmother.



The Witch of Salem, or Credulity Run Mad, by John Musick, published in 1893, contained this illustration with the caption: "The Sheriff brought the witch [Rebecca Nurse] up the broad aisle, her chains clanking as she stepped."

Nathaniel Putnam, the patriarch of the Putnam family, honestly believed in witchcraft and in the statements of the girls. His opinion would have carried great weight, but he could not stand by in silence and let Rebecca be found guilty. Among his papers is this statement:

Nathaniel Putnam, Sr., being desired by Francis Nurse, Sr., to give information of what I could say concerning his wife's life and conversation, I the above said, have known this aforesaid woman forty years, and what I have observed of her, human frailties excepted, her life and conversation have been according to her profession, and she hath brought up a great family of children and educated them well, so that there is in some of them apparent savor of godliness. I have known her [to] differ with her neighbors, but I never knew or heard of any that did accuse her of what she is now charged with.

Thirty-nine other persons of the village, including seven other Putnams, signed a similar statement. Nevertheless, Rebecca was found guilty, and she was hanged on July 19, 1692, along with four others. The bodies were placed in a shallow grave but Rebecca's family recovered her remains and reburied them in the family plot. She was immortalized in Arthur Miller's play, *The Crucible* and today a marker stands in Danvers in her memory. Mary Esty, her sister, was hanged on September 29, 1692.

In 1706 her accuser, Ann Putnam, publicly apologized to the Nurse family for accusing innocent people. In 1711, the government compensated her family for Nurse's wrongful death. In a bitter stroke of irony, the Nurse family homestead fell into the hands of Putnam family descendant, Phineas Putnam, in 1784. The Putnam family maintained control of the property until 1908. Today, it is a tourist attraction that includes the original house and cemetery on 27 of the original 300 acres. Ann later died unmarried and was buried with her parents in an unmarked grave. Little is known of the fates of the other girls.

In Samuel Parris' sermon on November 26, 1693, he admitted giving too much weight to "spectral evidence." He never achieved acceptance with the congregation and in July 1697 he left Salem Village.

It was a tragic episode in our country's history and a sad episode in the history of the Putnam family.



Lowcountry Colonial Settlements

by Lyman D. Wooster

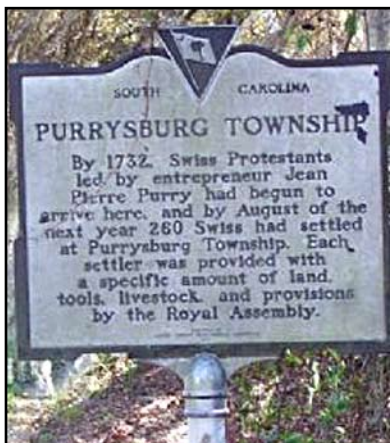
Lyman Wooster was born in Kansas in 1917. His colorful career includes stints as a political science teacher at the U. of Pennsylvania, a civilian analyst of Soviet military and political affairs in Army Intelligence, then in Defense Department Intelligence, and subsequently an analyst with the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. He moved to Hilton Head in 1988. His interest in history led him to the Heritage Library, where he has contributed both research and articles.



Two diverse European sects from different countries sought religious freedom in the early 18th century by migrating to America. They settled on opposite sides of the Savannah River, with major elements of each sect arriving in about the same year.

One such group, led by Jean Pierre Purry, was composed of Swiss Huguenots, three fourths being French-Swiss and one-fourth German-Swiss. They founded a town on the South Carolina side of the river called Purrysburg (sometimes spelled Purrysburgh). If it still existed it would be the second oldest town in the area once known as the district of Beaufort.

An advance party laid out plans for the town in 1732, and the settlers began arriving two years later. By 1736 there were 100 houses and 450 residents. The British crown gave its support to such settlements in the Lowcountry, believing them to provide protection from incursion by the Spanish then occupying Florida.



Purrysburg Historical Marker: At 32° 18.344' N, 81° 7.209' W. Marker is in Hardeeville, South Carolina, in Jasper County. Marker is on Purrysburg Rd (State Highway S-27-34) near Honey Hill Road (State Highway S27-203), on the right when traveling south. Best seen viewed from North to South. (Historical Markers Data Base, www.hmdb.org/)

Purrysburg has historical significance as the first headquarters of General Benjamin Lincoln's American Army during the Revolutionary War. In 1822 it was granted a U. S. Post Office, a grant that lasted 26 years. But the town did not prosper—the bank of the Savannah River was an unhealthy site. Disease and the fact that the area was short of arable land led to the settlement's eventual demise. It survived as many years



General Benjamin Lincoln. He participated in Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown. Lord Cornwallis had sent word he would not attend the surrender formalities (pleading illness) but would send his second-in-command, Charles O'Hara. General Washington in turn decided not to attend; he sent Lincoln in his place. This portrait was painted by Charles Wilson Peale while Lincoln was Secretary of War under the Confederation Congress, 1781-83. (General Lincoln was probably not related to President Abraham Lincoln.)

as it did largely because it was the major crossing point of the Savannah River on the King's Highway, at the time the principal route from Charleston to Savannah. Though the town is no more, there remain in the area a cemetery and a river landing that is still in use. There are also several fine and modern homes. But there is no longer a Purrysburg post office nor does its name appear on South Carolina maps as it did in the 19th Century.

Purrysburg may be best remembered today for the fact that many of the 18th Century Huguenots who abandoned the town, (some moving to Georgia and others going to other sites in South Carolina) became prominent, successful, and highly regarded American citizens. Their descendants retained their distinctive French and German family names. Jean Purry's son Charles moved to Beaufort where he became a successful merchant until poisoned by a slave in a notorious case.

See Lowcountry Colonial Settlements on Page 6

Lowcountry Colonial Settlements (cont'd from Page 5)

Across the river in Georgia the Lutherans from what is now Austria settled at the invitation of General James Oglethorpe. They founded Ebenezer (meaning “stone of help”) in 1734. It was one of Georgia’s original settlements primarily intended as a military defense for Savannah.

The Salzburgers, as they were known, were eight weeks crossing the Atlantic aboard—oddly enough—the Purysburg [*sic*]. Their initial settlement was several miles from the Savannah River but two years later the Salzburgers moved and founded New Ebenezer, closer to the Savannah River. By 1741 the town, which had been laid out in the form of Savannah, had a population of 1200. While malaria and other diseases plagued the community, it nevertheless prospered with the production of a silk culture, with the establishment



Jerusalem Evangelical Lutheran Church in Georgia, across the river from the site of Purrysburg, was completed in 1769. Inside its twenty-one-inch walls, services are still held every Sunday. Photo by Lyman Wooster.

of Georgia’s first sawmill and first rice and grist mill, and with farming and the raising of cattle.

New Ebenezer was for a time politically significant—Georgia’s first royal governor, John Treutien, was from the town—but the settlement’s influence declined after Georgia became a royal colony. In 1767, the Salzburgers began the construction of a church using bricks made by hand from local clay; the church, with walls that are 21 inches thick, was completed in 1769. While the church was not harmed during the

American Revolution when the British burned New Ebenezer, the town never fully recovered from that destruction.

In addition to the church, there is now in the area a cemetery, a Salzburger home built in 1755, and a Salzburger Museum. There is also a Georgia Salzburger Society organized by the descendents of the early settlers with an office in Rincon.

The town that was once Purrysburg in South Carolina is today marked by a simple monument: a large stone cross that was erected by the Huguenot Society of South Carolina in 1941.

In Georgia, Jerusalem Evangelical Lutheran Church is more than a memorial; it is credited with being the oldest surviving intact building in the state and, more important, it is today active with religious services held every Sunday morning at 11 :00 a.m.



Monument to Purrysburg. The inscription says, “Erected 1941 by the Huguenot Society of South Carolina.”

Photo by Lyman Wooster.

Sources:

Rowland, Moore, and Rovers, *The History of Beaufort County, South Carolina*, USC Press 1996.

Georgia Salzburger Society, 2980 Ebenezer Road, Rincon, GA 31326

The New Georgia Encyclopedia (the Georgia Humanities Council in partnership with the University of Georgia).



History cannot give us a program for the future, but it can give us a fuller understanding of ourselves, and of our common humanity, so that we can better face the future.

ROBERT PENN WARREN

The USS Constitution

Its Launching

It must have been a splendid gathering in the Boston Naval Yard in September 1797; President John Adams and Massachusetts governor Increase Sumner and their “respective suites” were among the attendees. The lieutenant governor as well as other persons of distinction were also invited to see one of the country’s first naval vessel go down the ways.

Three years earlier, president George Washington had signed an act providing for the country’s first navy. Six ships were to be built to protect the country’s merchant fleet who were regularly being raided by the Barbary pirates from Algiers, Tunis, Morocco, and Tripoli.

The builder, George Claghorn, was justifiably proud of this oak-sided frigate. (The sides were of southern live oak, milled in Gascoigne Bluff in Georgia.)

Evidently he had escorted many visitors aboard the ship, for he remarked that he had extended “to his fellow citizens all reasonable gratification of their laudable curiosity.”

The invitation also lamented that there was not enough room to accommodate all the persons who might be curious. Consequently, he requested that no one else be allowed to pass into the Yard. The reason, his announcement said, was “prevent interruption or confusion . . . which will be critical, under the most favorable circumstances, and indispensably requiring perfect silence and obedience to orders.”

He cautioned that spectators, women and children especially, should not stand too close to the wharves, “as the sudden entrance [into the water] of so large a body as the Frigate will occasion an instantaneous swell.”

He was quite concerned about this sudden swell, and advised that those who wished to watch from the water

“should place themselves . . . at due distances . . . as the agitation of the water may be somewhat hazardous.”

Claghorn’s pride in his ship was manifest in his final exhortation: that those who would build stands for spectators should see that they are well secured, for “the loss of life of a single citizen would mar the satisfaction and pleasure that the Constructor otherwise would enjoy, of building and conducting into the ocean a powerful agent of national justice, which hope dictates may become the just pride and ornament of the American name.”

As indeed it would become and still is.

But one might not have thought so that day -- the launching was hardly propitious. The mighty swell that Claghorn envisioned did not materialize.

Instead this mighty frigate—all fifteen hundred tons of her—slid all of twenty-seven feet down the ways before grinding to a halt. Its immense weight had caused the ways to sink into the ground.

The second attempt was a little better: this time the Constitution slid another 31 feet and stopped once again.

Finally, after a month rebuilding the ways, the USS Constitution was launched on October 21, 1797, with Captain James Sever christening it with a bottle of Madeira wine.

From the USS Constitution’s log, 22 Sept. 1810

“1100: Informed that pilot boat bringing rum and firewood to the ship had swamped. Sent boats.

1200: Boats returned without the wood but fortunately retrieved the rum.”

The Constitution and the Guerrière

One hundred and eighty-three years ago this August during the War of 1812, the USS Constitution captured the British frigate Guerrière after a fierce battle. The following is from Theodore Roosevelt’s description of the contest in his *The Naval War of 1812*:

At 6.00 the Guerrière bore up and ran off under her top-sails and jib, with the wind almost astern, a little on her port quarter; when the Constitution set her main-top gallant sail and foresail, and at 6.05 closed within half pistol-shot distance on her adversary’s port beam. Immediately a furious cannonade opened, each ship firing as the guns bore. By the time the ships were fairly abreast, at 6.20, the Constitution shot away the Guerrière’s mizzen-mast...

See *The USS Constitution* on Page 8



This beautifully-detailed model of the USS Constitution was crafted by Earle Nirmaier of Hilton Head Island. The hobbyist has built more than twenty such models of famous ships.

The USS Constitution (cont'd from Page 7)

[The Constitution], ranging ahead, put her helm apart and then luffed short round her enemy's bows, delivering a heavy raking fire with the starboard guns and shooting away the Guerrière's main-yard. Then she wore and again passed her adversary's bows, raking with her port guns. The mizzen-mast of the Guerrière, dragging in the water, had by this time pulled her bow round till the wind came on her starboard quarter; and so near were the two ships that the Englishman's bowsprit passed diagonally over the Constitution's quarter-deck, and as the latter ship fell off it got foul of her mizzen-rigging, and the vessels then lay with the Guerrière's starboard bow against the Constitution's port, or lee quarter-gallery. The Englishman's bow guns played havoc with Captain Hull's cabin, setting fire to it; but the flames were soon extinguished by Lieutenant Hoffmann. On both sides the boarders were called away; the British ran forward, but Captain Dacres relinquished the idea of attacking when he saw the crowds of men on the American's decks. Meanwhile, on the Constitution, the boarders and marines gathered aft, but such a heavy sea was running that they could not get on the Guerrière. Both sides suffered heavily from the closeness of the musketry fire; indeed, almost the entire loss on the Constitution occurred at this juncture.

BARBARA MULLER

Read more at

<http://www.ecst.csuchico.edu/~beej/constguerr.html>.



The battle was a favorite subject for naval artists. This color-tinted engraving was made by C. Tiebout after Thomas Birch, published by James Webster at about the time of the battle and inscribed to Captain Isaac Hull, Constitution's Commanding Officer, his officers and crew. The scene represents the later part of the action, as Guerrière's fore and mainmasts collapsed.

Courtesy of the Naval Historical Foundation.

116 YEARS AGO THIS AUGUST

The Great Sea Islands Hurricane

The night of August 27, 1893, there was a full moon, but surely no one on the Sea Islands was able to see it. The wind was howling at over 120 miles an hour, as one of the worst storms ever to hit the United States roared ashore just south of Tybee Island

Meteorologists have since rated the storm as a Category 3 or 4. There was a storm surge of 16 feet that completely submerged many of the Sea Islands. Those who survived spent a fearful day clinging to trees for dear life.

Reports of the storm traveled up the East Coast by telegraph to *Scribner's Magazine*, who sent a writer down to view the destruction. The Scribner report, published the following February, said the storm's devastation was "unparalleled in its completeness. In the track of the cyclone everything was wrecked. Nearly two thousand people were killed and five million dollars worth of property blown as it were from the face of the earth."

In October, Clara Barton, now 72 years old, arrived. Finding 30,000 people still in need of food, clothing and shelter, she began distributing supplies.

Thirty years before, Clara had stayed briefly in Hilton Head Island, helping to set up hospitals and distributing supplies to Union soldiers. While here, she must have made friends with the local residents; according to the Red Cross, some of the black veterans she had known at the time came forward to help feed the masses. She personally hired them, paying them in food for their families. An exhibit in the Red Cross Museum says:

These workers assisted with the mass feeding ... [T]hey cut and peeled potatoes and then used the sprouts to establish vegetable gardens. African Americans also transported essential relief materials. In ... *The Red Cross in Peace and War*, Clara Barton wrote that a black man named Ben Green, who lived on Hilton Head Island, "placed his boat and the services of other men" at her disposal "without fee or reward of any kind for several months."

BARBARA MULLER



Illustration from Scribner's Magazine February 1894