



The Heritage Observer

News from The Heritage Library

Bringing the Past to Life

Vol. 6, No. 3

July 2014

Volunteer of the Year: Dee Phillips



Dee Phillips and Lou Benfante

Dee Phillips retired from teaching high school English in Hudson, Ohio, in June 2012. Then she and her husband, Ken, moved to Palmetto Hall on Hilton Head Island.

Dee began looking for volunteer opportunities towards the end of 2012 and completed a Heritage Library volunteer application. She immediately became involved with Sondra Hardy to help create a new “Historic Sites” presentation. For the last year and a half, Dee and Lou Benfante have jointly presented “Historic Sites,” kibitzing

as they go. She has also given the presentation solo. Their presentations have been receiving a very favorable response from attendees.

Dee has spent many hours adding to Sondra’s presentation on the “Role of Women in the History and Development of Hilton Head Island.” She has presented this program to the Zonta Club at Indigo Run, Palmetto Hall’s Women’s Club, and at sessions held at the Heritage Library.

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President’s Award: Pre Moore

Pre Moore was born and raised in Philadelphia. Both of her parents grew up in Charleston, SC, and each summer she visited her grandparents in the lowcountry where she developed an early interest in the “War Between the States.” She moved to Bluffton in 2005.

Pre became a Heritage Library volunteer in 2007 when she signed on as a bookkeeper to assist Ben Russell who was Treasurer.

Pre later moved on to work with the Library’s databases using her skills to transcribe difficult

handwriting, faded microfilms, and the demands of a spreadsheet.

Pre has worked with the Land Sold Records for Beaufort County after the Civil War, with the Hilton Head Military Hospital Records during the Civil War, and with National Archive Microfilms dealing with the Civil War era. While transcribing Civil War records from microfilm, Pre found her great grandfather’s signature on a document promising to pay for goods received after the cotton crop came in the fall.

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Linda Piekut and Pre Moore



Linda Piekut and Bob Smith

Lifetime Achievement Award: Bob Smith

Bob Smith was born in Richmond, Virginia and lived in the Philadelphia area for many years before he and Betty-Jane moved to Hilton Head Island in 1990.

Bob is a graduate of The Virginia Military Institute with a degree in Civil Engineering. Following graduation he studied Naval Ar-

chitecture and during WWII he provided specialized services for the fleet vessels designed, built, and repaired at the Norfolk Navy Yard.

Bob has maintained a strong interest in music, performing as a soloist and presenter with various choral groups. Family history research and golf are his main interests in retirement.

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 852 Wm Hilton Parkway Suite 2A
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 843-686-6560

www.heritagelib.org

Editor:

Elizabeth R. Hanson
erhanson@hargray.com

Editor's Note:

Our volunteers are engaged in a wide variety of activities; some are listed in the article about Volunteer Awards. We are always looking for new talent; see Wish List. So, if you're not a volunteer now, why don't you volunteer to share your know-how with the Library?

Letter from the President

It is wonderful that the community is becoming aware of the Heritage Library, until recently an undiscovered gem of an organization dedicated to preserving Hilton Head Island's history and providing a world class family history research center.

Last year's 350/30 Celebration, which was produced primarily by the Heritage Library, brought us in contact with over 30 other Island organizations who worked together to put on the weeklong celebration of Hilton Head Island. Heading up that celebration was Linda Piekut, Executive Director, whose tireless efforts and dedication to the Heritage Library are primarily responsible for the recognition that the Library has been receiving

Besides the 350/30 celebration, Linda has spearheaded our successful Speaker Series and worked with ancestry.com and the Clemson University's Pan-African Studies Department to help discover some of our native Islander's roots; to find the names of Mitchelville's residents. She has been the driving force behind our United States Colored Troops project. Linda has spoken on the Library's behalf at Town Council meetings, applied for grants, taught classes on family history research, organized a Family History Trip to Salt Lake City, and used her experience and knowledge to make the Heritage Library a more influential organization and a more efficient workplace for our volunteers.

For our community, our volunteers, our members and our Board: Thank you Linda.



By Lou Benfante,
President

Letter from the Executive Director

Wow! We have had a busy spring. Our Speakers Series, "Hilton Head in the Modern Era" has been very successful, with a total of 330 registrations. The series begins again on September 23 with Rebekah Dobrasko speaking on "Lowcountry Schools 1920-1970," and Robert Onorato speaking on "Developing 2000 Acres in the Middle of Paradise" on November 18. Watch our news articles — we have one more in the works for December 9th.

Many thanks to Coligny Theater for making us feel at home. It has been a perfect venue for these talks. We have begun to work on the 2015 series.

In May, we had a big book sale, clearing over 600 books from our shelves to give us some much-needed shelf space. It was very successful, raising \$1,400 which helped to cover the Library's expenses. Now we have to re-arrange our books to take advantage of the increased space.

Also in May I attended the National Genealogical Society's National Conference in Richmond. It made me remember that researching my family tree is the reason I joined the Heritage Library in the first place. My ancestors came from Virginia and I made good use of some of my time by walking down the street to research in the Library of Virginia. It is a wonderful research library.

I can't wait to visit the Family History Library in Salt Lake City in September. The Heritage Library is offering a packaged trip for 15 individuals for the week of September 7-13, 2014. The deadline for registration is July 15, so by the time you see this article the trip may be full. If you are interested, call the library, 843-686-6560, to see if there is space available.

Have a wonderful summer.



By Linda Piekut,
Executive Director

Volunteer Recognition Luncheon

The Heritage Library's annual Volunteer Recognition Luncheon was held at the Library on May 21. Lou Benfante, President, opened the meeting. He closed his welcoming remarks with, "I am constantly amazed at the high caliber of our volunteers. I enjoy working here."

While conversing during lunch, Carol Clemens remarked, "Everyone plays a part in the success of the Library. My part is teaching classes, which as a retired teacher, I love to do."

Elizabeth Hanson replied, "Although I have no background in genealogy or Hilton Head Island history, as a Library volunteer, I have been able to contribute my organizing, writing, and editing talents — a real plus for me in my retirement."

Lou, Linda Piekut, Executive Director, and Nancy Burke, Head

Librarian, reported on current projects. Then Nancy presented the President's Award to Pre Moore, Lou presented the Volunteer of the Year to Dee Phillips and Linda presented the Lifetime Achievement Award to Bob Smith.

The gist of what Bob said upon receiving his award:

"It is a great pleasure to come to the Library today and see many friends that I have enjoyed associating with over the years.

"The thing that seemed to make it so rewarding for us volunteers is the passion with which we approach our activities here. Regardless of what we all do with our middle years, this passion may be the most important ingredient for enjoying them.

"I think of the middle years as the years between leaving our working life and getting too old to do much anymore. As

people live longer, these years get to be a bigger and bigger part of our life span. So finding something that is fun, interesting and that one can be passionate about, like our work here at the Library, becomes ever more important. That is what it has meant to me and I know it can be that way for all of you.

"After all, the work at the Library is but an extension and variation of things that the culture of mankind has always had people doing. From the beginning of civilization, mankind has treasured and preserved the memories of ancestors and events. Early on, before writing, reciters in the early tribal settings kept mythology and history alive. So, like the honoring of history throughout the ages, volunteers at the Library can be looked upon as carrying these great cultural traditions forward into modern day — hopefully with all the passion they can muster."

[DEE cont'd]

Dee is a docent for Fort Mitchel tours which the Library holds in conjunction with the Coastal Discovery Museum on Thursday mornings from April through November. She assisted with the preparations for History Day during the 350/30 Celebration and spent that day at Fort Mitchel helping to host over 150 visitors.

Dee has spearheaded the Library's

efforts to create a curriculum on "Mitchelville and the Gullah Culture" for South Carolina schools. Neither subject is currently being taught. One of our other volunteers, Mary Ann Cyr, taught the course to her 6th grade Social Studies class at Hilton Head Prep as a test run. Dee was also instrumental in getting an ancestry.com scholarship for Hilton Head Prep so Mary Ann's students could search for Mitchelville's residents.

[BOB cont'd]

Bob joined the Heritage Library volunteers in 2000 and became the Librarian-in-Charge on Fridays. Soon after, he was elected to the Heritage Library Foundation Board, becoming Vice President. In 2009 he became President, continuing in this capacity until 2011 and remaining on the Board until 2012.

Bob worked to issue a mission statement and to have the Library increase its emphasis on history. He taught online genealogy classes and was responsible for the Library's first website features. He created and delivered several Civil War lectures. Bob became interested in the Mitchelville Preservation Project and he represented the Library on the committee.

Bob has compiled information on African-American heritage and the two large binders are on the Library's shelves. He researched, compiled and produced, *How to Use Our Library Resources – A Librarian's Resource and Training Book* and recently he produced a family history book for his own family.

[PRE cont'd]

Pre's work on the hospital records has proven invaluable to the People of Mitchelville project. In fact, the bulk of Mitchelville's original inhabitants was found in the hospital records.

Pre has helped Nancy Burke, Head Librarian, with the United States Colored Troops abstract book.

In the years since 2007, Pre has pitched in and helped with many Library projects. When the Library moved to its current address she sorted through mounds of stuff, packing the things which were going to the new location. She worked on the Yard Sales the Library used to have and currently she worked on the Library's Book Sale.

Discovering My Irish Side

IRELAND — September, 2013

Since childhood I've been aware that both my parents were born in Co. Wicklow, Ireland, and that the majority of the family was still there. Ireland was always referred to as "home" by my parents and was spoken of almost daily which led to my curiosity about their home and a desire to visit.

September 2013 was my third visit to cousins in Ireland but this time I was driven by a desire to locate birth, marriage and death documents as well as to locate grave stones and gather more information. Over several years of researching on ancestry.com, two paternal cousins had contacted me; one through ancestry.com and the other through FindaGrave.com. While in Dublin we were delighted to meet with them and other cousins, catching up and piecing together missing parts of both sides of our family history.

We headed to Ireland's most important research asset, the National Archives in Dublin, where genealogists are available to direct you to find relative information either in the National Library in Dublin, the General Register Office or in the town and parish where the documents were kept. After spending several days researching in the Library, my husband, Walter, and son, Thom, our driver, were anxious to begin our driving tour of this beautiful country. Having ascertained where I would find documents relative to my paternal second great grandfather, Martin Doyle, in Kilanerin, Co. Wexford, we began our drive.

Several weeks later, arriving in Co. Wicklow to visit with maternal cousins, we detoured to Kilanerin Co. Wexford, and were fortunate to locate SS Peter & Paul Church and the parish priest who gave us access to the marriage and birth ledgers. Unfortunately, his copier



By *Anne Marie Meyerink*



Sean Kenny, cousin; Walter Okrongley, husband; Rev. Fr. Hamel; John Kenny, cousin; Anne Marie Meyerink

was broken but technology is wonderful and, with our phones, we were able to take pictures of the ledger discovering Martin's marriage took place in Carnew, Co. Wicklow, the maiden name of his wife, and that they had six children; facts I had been unable to ascertain up to that point. It was the highlight of my "research" trip.

Our next project was to pay our respects to the deceased, so my cousin, John, came with us and directed us to several cemeteries, scattered throughout Co. Wicklow, where we were able to take pictures and place flowers. My great-grandparents stone was worn and covered with moss, lichens and barely readable. A cousin, another branch of the family, took it upon herself to clean it so that we could read the inscription. I am so grateful to her.



Gravestone of Christopher and Annie Doyle, Arklow

Our maternal family still resides in the town in which my mom was born and our visit there was delightful. My cousin, John, held a party for us in the local hotel and invited half the town, most of whom were cousins and typically Irish. All had a story to tell about "the old days." Music, singing, and dancing took place all evening bringing back memories of my childhood and the stories my parents told of growing up in Ireland. The event was memorable and when we left the town several days later it was time for tears and promises to return.



The party

Exploring our Collection

At a time when technology, digitizing and the internet have become so pervasive, it's tempting to think that all answers in genealogy can be found on the web. An amazing amount is there, but most information remains to be found in print.

When starting your research, once you have checked the censuses online and worked your way through the databases there, you still need to check the Library's catalog for more sources and to browse the shelves for unexpected surprises. Cemetery transcriptions, wills, probate records, compilations of the vital records of countless towns and cities, photographs and drawings of local historical sites, lists of emigrants and immigrants, and newspaper articles — all are often available only in print.

For generations researchers have compiled their family lines, written their county and city histories, and produced biographies of local inhabitants. They have written dictionaries of old occupations and old names for diseases. They have authored books on reading old handwriting and preserving old photographs. They have provided guides to regional records, citing your sources, organizing your research, producing a book of your own. All these printed materials can not only add facts to your research, but can also add background material which will give your work more depth and give your work direction and new techniques.

Be sure to check the catalog.



By Nancy Burke,
Head Librarian

Ancestry Recognition

In Ancestry's *Moments in Time* series, the Heritage Library was recognized for its People of Mitchelville Project.

Juliana Smith, author of the article, was intrigued by the fact that Mitchelville was the first self-governed town of freed slaves in America. Her article included a short history of Mitchelville and the fact that Clemson University's Pan-African Studies Program is working with Heritage Library on the project.

She commented, "It is a wonderful thing when a community, a local library, and college students can come together to preserve the legacy of a historic community — one family history at a time."



HISTORY DEPARTMENT

By Lou Benfante, History Chair

We have put our lectures on hold for the summer months, but so far in 2014 we have spoken to 233 folks at our Historic Sites lectures. We have also resumed our Fort Mitchel tours in conjunction with the Coastal Discovery Museum, and will continue these on Thursday mornings through November.

Lou Benfante will be teaching three classes in the fall semester at USCB's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute: The Patriots and Planters Tour of the Zion Cemetery, The Battle of Fort Pulaski, and a class on Mitchelville.

Our presentation on the History of the Island from 1950, when the lumbermen arrived, until the present has taken a back burner to the Role of Women in the History of Hilton Head Island. Sondra Hardy created the presentation and Dee Phillips has added to it, bringing in women who have been instrumental in the modern developmental era of Hilton Head Island. We have been contacted by the Women's Association of Hilton Head Island to form an Interest Group based on this series.

As part of the People of Mitchelville Project, a school curriculum about Mitchelville and the Gullah culture was taught by Mary Ann Cyr in her 6th grade Social Studies class at Hilton Head Prep. We are hoping to have this curriculum on our website by the end of the year, so that it will be available to teachers in all South Carolina schools in time for Black History month, February 2015.

We are also supporting the Gullah-Geechee Consortium whose goal is to make Beaufort County the central focal point of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, which stretches from Jacksonville, Florida, to Wilmington, North Carolina. The Heritage Library will be the history and genealogy resource for the Consortium which hopes to create a Gullah cultural and historical trail throughout the area, involving kiosks at each cultural or historic site.

The Beaufort County Historical Society is going to purchase a Historical Marker for Fort Mitchel. Iva Welton and Lou Benfante prepared the text for the marker and the application is in process. Barry Riordan has submitted our application to have Fort Mitchel listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Iva Welton is working on our application to have the Zion Cemetery listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

As always, we appreciate the assistance and continued support of the officers and volunteers of the Heritage Library Foundation.

Cemeteries: Oh, The Stories They Tell

Having been involved for two years on a cemetery inventory project for the Emily Geiger Chapter, NS-DAR, I have found that the cemeteries of Beaufort and Jasper counties have a wealth of genealogical information and some wonderful inscriptions on the headstones.

Some of these cemeteries are in excellent condition, obviously serviced frequently and kept clean and neat. Others are apparently considered dumping grounds with considerable damage, wear and tear. In some cases descendants have brought flowers and other mementos but when these items are past their prime they just decay there and may be thrown against the nearest fence as trash.

There are wonderful histories in these marble orchards just waiting to be harvested by an interested person. You can find humor, romanticism, grief and sorrow, and pragmatism among the many inscriptions.

For example, there is the headstone of a dentist who died in 1901. The inscription on his headstone at St. Luke's Memorial Gardens reads, "He filled his last cavity." St. Luke's UMC on Hwy 170 in Bluffton has two cemeteries. The older one at the front and side of the small white church is the historic cemetery, established not for profit but for the members of the church. In the larger, more spacious, burial grounds at the rear of the church, known as St. Luke Memorial Gardens, plots are available for purchase by anyone wishing to be buried there. Several stones in the Memorial Gardens section carry the names not only of the deceased but also parents and children.

St. Helena's in Beaufort is another cemetery that has two parts. In this case, there is the "churchyard cemetery" which is the older. Across the side street a newer cemetery was started when there seemed to be no more space in the churchyard. Both are equally informative.

Carved into stones are religious symbols, Bible verses, long poems, wedding dates, military service information, and relationships including beloved husband, wife, mother, father, brother, sister — even aunt, uncle, grandmother, grandfather. Nicknames abound and you wonder where some came from. There are stones with society lineage, fraternal order symbols, and items such as flags. A stone may signify the country of origin, "A native of ..." or "born in ..." Headstones found in Beaufort and Jasper counties include Scotland, Ireland, England, Germany, Sweden, and others.

There are stones with school information. "Big G *

GODAWGS" or "Graduate Winthrop College Class of 1907." There are letters from big sisters to their little brothers, comments from one spouse to another, laments from parents. All serve to tell you something about the individual who has left this earthly life. When one sees a stone for a female which reads, "She Hath Done What She Could" one is not sure if that is a compliment or an "oh, well."

Many older stones, and certainly stones of children, will indicate the rank in the family, "fourth son of . . .," but even when the stone only reads "daughter (or son) of . . .," you have obtained some valuable genealogical information. Sometimes you can even find a stone indicating which marriage it was for the deceased. All the spouses may be listed, or the inscription may be "Second Wife of . . ."

Here are some of my favorite inscriptions:

- Always Loved, Never Forgotten
- Lord, He Loved to Pick Dem Oysters
- Don't Stand There and Ponder Which Way I Went—
Prepare Thyself to Follow
- A Virginia Gentleman
- A Southern Lady Who Gave Beautiful Memories to All
- Miss Me But Let Me Go (I've always wondered if this person wrote his own inscription.)
- My Heart ... Dances with the Daffodils

There is a double stone in the Pinckney Family Cemetery that reveals a great deal about this couple's relationship. His side reads, "A Special Man" and her side reads, "The Woman Who Loved Him."

Another stone, this one for a 24-year-old who was a father and a husband, cites the many virtues of the departed: honesty, affection, kindness, and other such traits and then urges, "Youthful Reader, Pause, Reflect."

Then there are the stones with life's accomplishments:

- Beaufort's First Woman Attorney
- Genealogist
- Missionary to the South
- Beaufort's Raconteur Extraordinaire
- Oxford scholar, artist, and friend (All on one stone, along with other attributes.)
- Attorney, banker, state legislator, storyteller, mentor, and friend (Again, all on one stone. One has to wonder of which accomplishment was he proudest.)

Why don't you take the time to wander through a cemetery, here or elsewhere, and see the stories set in stone, a marble orchard just waiting to be harvested.



By *Sunni Bond Winkler*

Heritage Library Membership

This Quarter has been active with 17 New and 48 Renewal Members added to our Heritage Library family.



By *Laurette
Doscher-Benfante*

New Members

Hilton Head Island

Nancy and Robert Breckinridge
Mary and Roger Gallagher
Charles Hunt, Jr.
Boyd McCleary
Beth O'Keefe

Beaufort

Dorothy Hood

Bluffton

Debi Bacon
Sherry Craig
Lynne Hoos
Christine McAvoy

Charleston

Ken Burger
Bonnie Grossman

Dataw Island

Diane and Joseph Roney

Out of State

Julie and William Peace, Old Saybrook CT
Elizabeth and John Preston, Knoxville TN
Elizabeth Schmeelk, Sag Harbor NY

Out of the Country

Barbara and Ray Steward, Brussels, Belgium

Renewal Members

Hilton Head Island

Lynne and Richard Armfield
Lou Benfante and Laurette Doscher
Joseph Buckingham
Audrey and Ezra Callahan
Carol and Robert Clemens
Beverly and Thomas Conner
Kenneth Dawson
Willard Dopp
Mary Duvall
John Geisler
Jane Grob
Mary Kull
David League
Betty Lightfoot
Judith Mc Cracken
Anne Marie Meyerink
Lynn Miller
Mary Murray
Sharon and David Nelson
Roberta Nelson
Dee and Ken Phillips
Pamela and David Schofield
William Standen
Barbara and Hugh Terreri
Sunni and Roy Winkler
John Witherspoon
Margaret and John Zabawa

Aiken

Ben Russell

Bluffton

Glenda Blakeney
Nancy and Joseph Burke
Alan Chaput
Barbara and Joseph Kardas
Karen and Ken Lebon
Karen and Donald Manson
Hedy and Jerry Moore
Janice Niver
Patricia A. Smith

Seneca

Gwin Hanahan

Out of State

Mary Ellen and Frederick Ackerson, Fort Belvoir VA
Tory Brainard, Brandy Station VA
Carolyn and Gary Broman, Spicer MN
Roberta Burke, Jacksonville FL
Lorraine and William Cronin, Hampton NH
Sarah and Marion Lamb, Tallahassee FL
Faye and Dennis Leach, Lake Hubert MN
Cindy and Robert Love, Greenville DE
Mary and William Porter, Big Canoe GA
Emma Simon, Savannah GA

Thank you for your continued support — Laurette Doscher-Benfante, Membership Chair

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” — Helen Keller

Library Wish List

We are wishing for volunteers to form a Special Events committee.

We are looking for a few people to form a team to organize and present special events for the Heritage Library. Events could include book fairs, speakers, Sunday programs, etc. (No, we are not doing another 350/30.) This team would work with Linda Piekut and be responsible for creating event themes, organizing

activities, recruiting participants, and soliciting donations. These events would be primarily fund-raisers for the Library. If this is something you would like to do, please contact Linda, ltpiekut@gmail.com.



Book Sale

The Heritage Library held a book sale on May 3, creating some badly needed shelf space. History books, genealogy books, shirts and miscellaneous merchandise were sold. Thank you to those who donated items for the event.



Heritage Library
852 William Hilton Parkway
Suite 2A
Hilton Head Island, SC 29928