



# The Heritage Observer

## News from The Heritage Library

*Bringing the Past to Life*

Vol. 5, No. 2

JUNE 2013

SAVANNAH COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN

### Evaluating the Baynard Museum

The Heritage Library has signed an agreement with the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) for historic preservation students to perform a structural study of the Baynard Mausoleum in the Zion Chapel of Ease Cemetery. The study has been paid for by matching funds initiated by J. Ward and Carol Mathis.



*SCAD students at the Baynard Mausoleum. Measuring (with the ruler) is Lauren Jones; recording the measurements is Vicky Bischof.*

The SCAD classes, HIPR446 Cemetery Preservation and HIPR747 Conservation in Cemeteries, began in late March under the direction of Dr. Thomas Taylor, Professor of Historic Preservation. Dr. Taylor and nine graduate and undergraduate students were on-site at the mausoleum on May 17 and 18. The Library asked our contractor, Kyle Mulligan, to provide some scaffolding and to remove the mausoleum door so the students could see the inside structure.

The students were broken into three teams: one worked inside the mausoleum; another outside the

mausoleum; and a third was assigned to study and record the gravestones in the cemetery. It was a pleasure to see the students so enthusiastic and dedicated to their task. On Saturday, May 18, several of the students and Dr. Taylor came to the library to research the records and maps that are available here.

The final report from the classes will be presented to the library by June 17 and a presentation of the results will be scheduled in the fall. Dr. Taylor mentioned that one of the construction protocols that was the norm at the time the mausoleum was built may have led to the larger problems we have today. The metal anchors that were used to tie the stones together have corroded. One of them has actually lifted the front left corner of the roof -- amazing given that the roof probably weighs over 2000 pounds.

It was exciting to have the study accepted as a project for SCAD and we look forward to the final report and presentation.

LINDA PIEKUT

*Editor's Note:* Local papers gave us excellent coverage. See story on Page 8.



*Bill Altstaetter of the Heritage Library discusses the evaluation of the Baynard Mausoleum with Dr. Thomas Taylor, Professor of Historic Preservation, Savannah College of Art & Design (SCAD). Students of historic preservation spent two days studying the oldest extant structure on the island. Photos by Linda Piekut.*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

## A Picture of Our Membership

Many thanks to those who took the time to respond to our Membership Survey. The results are in and there weren't many surprises.

The majority of respondents have been with us for more than five years and that is good news. Seventy-five percent joined for the genealogy programs and support so it was not surprising to see that the top four benefits of the Library are: Genealogy Research Assistance, Genealogy On-line Databases, Genealogy Classes, and History Lectures.

Respondents were evenly divided between males and females and all were over 66. The improvement mentioned most often is to increase our experienced genealogists staff so more are available when you need help. Believe me, we would love to do just that. If you, or anyone you know, would be interested in working at the Library, we would love to talk with you.

Genealogists are like eagles: they don't fly in a flock, and we must seek them out, one at a time.

We have added two people to our Library staff; Tom Brady, who is working on Thursdays, and Janice Niver, a long-time volunteer in the Membership Department, who will be spending part of her time in the Library working with patrons. We have lost our dear Isobel Bitner, Head Librarian and a volunteer with the Library since 2000, who officially retired at the end of April. Rumor has it that she sneaks in on the weekends and works on a couple pet projects.

LINDA PIEKUT



## LIBRARIAN'S CORNER

## Finding Adoptive Parents

One of the most difficult requests we get is from a patron who was adopted and wants help in locating birth parents. So I held out little hope when Ray and Margie Evenson came to the Library in search of his biological parents. As they had already discovered, sealed adoption records are a formidable brick wall.

But Ray had few pieces of information. He had known since childhood that he was adopted but the matter was never discussed. When his adoptive mother moved to Florida, Ray's brother found the adoption papers while closing her New York home. The papers gave Ray's birth mother's name, Ruth Kleine, and address, but nothing else. Ray and Margie had done what searching they could but with little progress.

In 2010 Ray and Margie moved to Sun City. They joined the Genealogy SIG (Special Interests Group) there who referred them to me at the Library. The only new clue I could find was a reference in an Ancestry.com family tree to a Ruth Kleine, Ray's mother's name. I then sent an inquiry to Ancestry which was forwarded to the person posting Ruth's name. An answer came immediately and I connected the responder with Ray. The responder turned out to be Ray's biological sister. In one day's exchange of phone calls and emails, Ray discovered the name of his father, who was Ruth's second husband, and learned that he had five sisters and a brother. DNA testing has confirmed the relationship. Amazingly, Ray's biological family and his adoptive family had lived only a few miles apart in New York during his childhood.

Ray and Margie have made several trips to New York to meet his new family and they keep in touch. When my husband and I had dinner recently with Ray and Margie we were interrupted with a phone call from a newly found nephew hoping to visit him.

Finding birth parents is not easy, but it is so satisfying when everything falls into place.

NANCY BURKE



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**MITCHELLVILLE PROJECT**



DRAWING BY CAL CALLAHAN

*Editor's note: Volunteers at the library are researching available records to try to determine who actually lived in Mitchelville during the Civil War. Some of this is based on similar research already done; some of it will be completely new. Elizabeth Hanson plans a regular feature in the Observer on its progress.*

**The People of Mitchelville**

Our Mitchelville committee has created a Mitchelville Timeline as a research guide. Committee members are working with Lowcountry Africana, the Mitchelville Preservation Project, the Gullah Museum, the Coastal Discovery Museum, and other resources, to produce an accurate and detailed record of as many as possible of the 1500 people who lived in Mitchelville from 1862 to 1868. Members are looking for people, especially descendants, who can provide information about Mitchelville residents from that period.



Elizabeth Hanson

They are also eager to find family photographs. They have already been able to locate one family descending from Mitchelville, complete with the family's ancestral chart.

The March research visit of the Pan African Studies students from Clemson University was a great success – the students were eager to work and participants said they were wonderful to work with. Each student paired with a community partner and a Library genealogist volunteer to assist him or her. The community partners were: Tom Barnwell, Murray Christopher, William and Dorothy Driessen, Bill Ferguson, and Dorothy and Vernie Singleton.

I'yanne Purnell worked with Bill Ferguson and Sunni Winkler. I'yanne said, "I could do this every day. I don't think I could be able to stop until I had found 'everything'. I think I've found a new hobby."

Henrietta Sweeney worked with Nancy Burke and did research on her own, starting to work on some names furnished by Cal. Henrietta plans to continue her research back at Clemson. Monica Magcalas

worked with Murray Christopher. She was very excited when they found the death certificate for Murray's great, great grandmother Margaret, wife of Samuel Christopher.

Kamairi Fayall worked with Thomas Barnwell. She is a pre-law student and found the research, in her words, "fun". The students will continue their research at Clemson, investigating those things that made Mitchelville successful and those that caused the town's demise.

The students will return in October to continue their research on the people of Mitchelville. We will be working to have a Mitchelville presentation at the 350/30 celebration.

Members of the committee are: Lou Benfante, Nancy Burke, Murray Christopher, Joseph Long, Pre Moore, Barbara Muller, Linda Piekut, and Ezra "Cal" Callahan, Chairman.

CAL CALLAHAN & ELIZABETH HANSON



**Clemson Students Research Mitchelville**

The students are (from the wall) Monica Magcalas; I'yanne Powell (seated), who says she thinks she's found a new hobby; Kamairi Fayall, a pre-law student, and Trent Brunson (seated).

The students are finding material on line, and are hoping to find some photographs of persons studied.

## James Manuel Rose, 1941-2013

The Heritage Library has suffered a blow in the loss of our champion and friend, Dr. Jim Rose, who has succumbed following a long battle with cancer.

He joined the Library's board of directors in 1999 and throughout his service was an advocate for local African-American genealogy, a field in which he was nationally known.



*Dr. James M. Rose*

He received his doctorate in Interdisciplinary Studies, with a concentration in African-American genealogy. In the 1970's, he served as a research consultant with Alex Haley on the Kinte Library Project, a forerunner of Alex Haley's *Roots*. Rose and co-author Alice Eichholz, founded the Ethnic Genealogy Research Center at Queens College (N.Y.) The two of them also wrote *Black Genesis*, available online exclusively through ProQuest.\* This key reference work includes an extensive compilation of African American resources for all 50 states, Canada, and the West Indies.

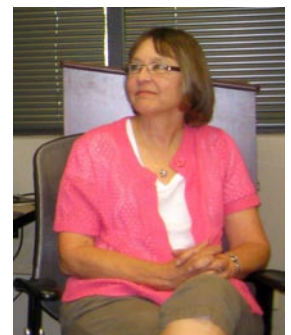
ProQuest has on their February, 2011, Web site an interesting story typical of Dr. Rose's research. He tracked the descendants of a woman named Indiana Jones, born into slavery in 1834, until the present day, including a veteran of WWII and a great-great-niece who was alive at the time.

He also had a keen interest in Beaufort County African-American heritage in general, and Mitchelville in particular. Recently he turned over to the Library his voluminous papers on the subject, which, when catalogued and indexed, promise to be a valuable addition to our archives.

Dr. Rose was the author also of *Black Roots in Southeastern Connecticut, 1650-1900; Tapestry; Free Black Heads of Household in the New York State Federal Census, 1790-1830*, and, published in April of this year, *Generations: The WPA Ex-Slave Narrative Genealogical Database*. Ari Wilkins, a partner with Dr. Rose in the Black Genesis Web site, said, "He was an accomplished researcher and lecturer and will be greatly missed."

*\*The Library has a few copies available for sale.*

## 2013 April Volunteer Day Awards, Food and Fun



*The Altstaetters were honored for their years of service beginning with the establishment of the Library. Left, Gwen looks through her Memory Book, while (above) Carol Clemens, who created the book, looks on. Center,*



*past president Barbara Muller gave the Volunteer of the Year Award for 2012 to volunteer Sunni Winkler. Below, president Linda Piekut presented Bill Altstaette with a Lifetime Achievement Award.*



# A Heart-Felt Thank You to our Volunteers



*Volunteers gathered at several tables set up in the Learning Center and schmoozed over sandwiches, salads and tea. In this group were, from left, facing the camera, Ivan Bennett, Janice Niver, Peggy Pickett, Diana Luellen, and Jane Michel. From left, back to camera: Dave Schofield, Anne Marie Meyerink, and Elizabeth Hanson.*

## President Linda Piekut Presents Lifetime Achievement Awards

At the April Volunteer Day, Linda Piekut made four Lifetime Achievement Awards. Two went to the our beloved Altstaetters, Gwen and Bill, who have been the lifeblood of the organization since its founding. Bill is famous for having served in every official capacity and some extra-official -- some more than once. Gwen

has served on the Board of Directors, managed the book store and public relations and, most recently, as chairman of the membership committee. She officially resigned as of the first of the year, but she is still very much part of the library.

Two others were recognized for their many years of service: Isobel Bittner, shown below, left, with Bill in the old quarters of the Courtyard Building, and John Griffin, shown in 2005.

John, a native New Yorker, came to the Heritage Library in 1998, having served in the predecessor Genealogical Society of Hilton Head Island. Retired from NBC as Director of News-Technical Operations, he moved to Hilton Head in 1996.

From Linda's prepared remarks: John became interested in the Gullah culture on Hilton Head Island and has been instrumental in advancing the research of numerous native island families, and has the re-



*Lifetime Achievement Awards Cont'd from P. 5*

spect of the Gullah community. He was awarded the Directors' Award twice, and headed a team from the Foundation making presentations at the annual meeting of the United States Colored Troops Association in October 2004 at Charleston, South Carolina..

In announcing Isobel's award, Linda said: Isobel Bitner has had a distinguished career in library science. She was born in Rugby, England, the next town over from the town where Esther was born. She earned her Master's Degree in History from Edinburgh University. She is a Chartered Librarian of the Library Association in London and has had a long career as a Reference Librarian in public, corporate and university libraries. She came to the United States in 1956 and joined the Heritage Library Foundation in 2000. In her years with the library, she has catalogued almost the entire collection of the library. Isobel also served on the Board, and was named Director of the Library in 2005. She announced to the officers at our staff meeting that she will be retiring at the end of April from her librarian duties. However, that doesn't mean she will be gone. She will be coming in on reduced hours to finish organizing of the People's papers, a project that she would like to see through to the end.

## The History Department



Lou Benfante

In February, we began weekly Historic Sites lectures on Tuesdays at 10:30 AM at the Library. We also resumed our weekly Fort Mitchel tours in conjunction with the Coastal Discovery Museum at 10:00 AM on March 7<sup>th</sup>.

With the help of Sondra Hardy and Dee Phillips, we created a new Power Point presentation on the History of Hilton Head Island, which has been very warmly received. Through the end of May, we have had 110 on-site attendees on our Tuesday morning history presentations. The presentation was also given to 47 attendees at the Spanish Wells Club on March 6 and to 115 members of the Sun City *On the Go Travel Club* on May 14.

We began the Fort Mitchel tours on March 7 and had

39 attendees through the end of May.

We will be working on several additional new presentations this year. We have created a 30-minute Historic Sites presentation which can be used in Hilton Head Island schools during the 350/30 celebration. Bill Altstaetter presented a lecture on the history of Spanish Wells Plantation to 42 members of the Spanish Wells Club on May 16. Sondra Hardy is creating a presentation on the "Role of Women in the History and Development of Hilton Head Island." We already have a booking for Sondra's new presentation at a Zonta Club meeting in September. We are also scheduled to do a presentation on the Battle of Savannah at the Spanish Wells Club in November.

We have begun a Marketing campaign to help publicize and create more interest in our programs among both Island residents and visitors. We will be making face-to-face visits to hotels and timeshares to meet the concierges and encourage them to recommend our programs to their guests.

We are involved in and working with the 350/30 Celebration committee and with the "People of Mitchelville," our Original Mitchelville Initiative. In preparation for the 350/30 celebration, we have been writing articles for *Hilton Head Monthly* magazine on different historic sites on the island.\* We will also be preparing some Public Service Announcements (PSAs), 60-second and 90-second radio spots on our historic sites which will be aired by Monty Jett on his daily radio program on The Island, 93.5 FM and 1130 AM.

We appreciate the assistance and continued support of all the volunteers and officers of the Heritage Library Foundation.

LOU BENFANTE

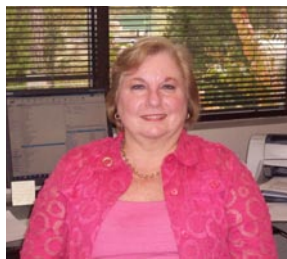
*Editor's Note:* See Lou's article on the Talbird Oak on p. 16 of the current (June) issue of the *Hilton Head Monthly*.

## 350/30 is a Celebration of History



Plans continue for the once-in-a-lifetime celebration of island history initiated by the Heritage Library for this October. The Web site is now up. See it at [www.celebrationhhi.org](http://www.celebrationhhi.org),

## From the Membership Desk



Laurette Doscher

Since February 2013 our membership has grown, with 20 new members, and we have had many renewals. They are listed below and are from South Carolina unless otherwise noted. HHI is Hilton Head Island.

### New Members

**Glenda Blakeney** Bluffton • **Edmund Bridgewater** HHI • **Ronald Craig** Norway • **Lorraine and William Cronin** Hampton NH • **Will Drop** HHI • **Joe Grant** Bluffton • **Roma Holmes** Buchanan MI • **T.J. Jett** HHI • **Barbara and Joseph Kardas** Bluffton • **Mary Kull** HHI • **Deborah Kusiak** Bluffton • **Pam and Bruce Lambard** HHI • **Judith McCracken** Cedar Rapids IA • **John McLaughlin** Cedar Rapids IA • **Dee and Ken Phillips** HHI • **Joyce Rappaport** Charleston • **Rose Russo-Aten** Okatie • **Emma Simon** Savannah GA • **Carlton White** HHI • **Mary Williamson** Bluffton

### Renewals

We thank you for remaining faithful by renewing your membership & support.

**Lynne Armfield** HHI • **Bruce Arnold** West Chester PA • **Jill & William Bender** HHI • **Lou Benfante & Laurette Doscher** HHI • **Carolyn & G.W. Broman** Spicer MN • **Lois & Bart Bubnell** HHI • **Sheila & Robert Buck** HHI • **Nancy & Joseph Burke** Bluffton • **Roberta Burke** Jacksonville FL • **Ezra Callahan** HHI • **Mary & Carey Clark** Beaufort • **Mary-Ann Compher** HHI • **Beverly & Tom Conner** HHI • **Priscilla Dement** HHI • **Jane Grob** HHI • **Mary Hess** Glen Ellyn IL • **Dorothy Hood** Beaufort • **Suzanne Huey** HHI • **Allan Jones** HHI • **K.B. Keeling** HHI • **Virginia Keller** HHI • **Faye & Dennis Leach** Lake Hubert MN • **Janis Legere** Scotia NY • **Connie Melton** Bluffton • **Nancy Mestrovic** HHI • **Anne Marie Meyerink** HHI • **Hedy & Thomas G Moore** Bluffton • **Susan & Edward Morgan** Okatie • **Robert Nelson** HHI • **Janice Niver** Bluffton • **Bonnie Jo Nolte** Bluffton • **Constance & Robert Prescott** Camp Hill PA • **Donna & Robert Rombauer** HHI • **James Sims** Bluffton • **Barbara & Hugh Terreri** HHI • **Madeline Thiessen** HHI • **Barbara Vernasco** Hantertown

IL • **Jean Wheatly** HHI • **Kathleen Wiese** Beaufort • **Sunni & Roy Winkler** HHI • **Margaret & Robert Zabawa** HHI.

*Upgrades:* Two members upgraded their membership to Premier. Did you know that as a Premier member you can access our HeritageQuest subscription and our library data bases from home? Many of our members find this extremely convenient. Any time you want to upgrade, let me know, and I'll be happy to process it.

Please tell your friends and neighbors about the Heritage Library's classes, lectures, and the Free Hour of Research Assistance Program. If you have any questions, email me at laurettehd@yahoo.com. I will be happy to assist you.

LAURETTE DOSCHER, MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN



Photo by Kevin L. Lewis, Sr.

## Heritage Library Among Beneficiaries of Equestrian Exposition

Thanks to Dr. Sandy Termotto and Hall of Fame jockey, Eddie Maple\*, and the Equestrian Exposition Committee for their continuing support of the Heritage Library. The Ninth Exposition and Polo match was held at historic Rose Hill Plantation on May 19, 2013 and was a successful, fun-filled day with a large turn-out. There were many tailgates on both sides of the field. It was a visual treat with riders in red-coats and a polo game making the day memorable. The Heritage Library was honored to be a beneficiary.

IVA WELTON

\*Jockey Eddie Maple retired in 1998 after riding over 4300 winners. He was inducted in the National Museum of Racing's Hall of Fame in 2009..

## SCAD Class, Baynard Mausoleum, Library, Get Local Headlines



The *Hilton Head Sun*, a relatively new monthly newspaper, featured the Heritage Library on the front page of

its June issue. It is published by B. J. Frazier, who also publishes *Bluffton Sun*. He said “This is our second year in Hilton Head. We’re here to stay. Every community needs its own paper.”

*The Island Packet* also ran a front page story on May 17 about the SCAD class studying the Baynard Mausoleum. You can retrieve the story at <http://www.islandpacket.com/2013/05/17/2506829/photo-scad-students-studying-hilton.html>

**The Heritage Library Foundation**  
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## Publication Date Announced

Arcadia Press has advised us that *Legendary Locals of Hilton Head* will be published on October 28. Copies will be available at several local outlets as well as the library.

The book, which showcases some of the many interesting personalities of the Island, was written by Barbara Muller as a contribution to the Library which will receive the royalties. We await ordering information.

