

*A Lifelong Passion (Cont'd from Page 7)*

about a month ago, I was typing a particular article written by Dr. Robert Peeples about one of the many long-time family names in this area, when we received a call from a DAR member in Texas who was helping a friend with a DAR application. She had called another library whose staff had not been able to help her, but a staff member had suggested the Heritage Library. The lineage about which she was calling was the very one that I had in front of me. Talk about serendipity. I was able to send her copies of the necessary documentation with very little effort on my part. She has since sent a generous donation to the Library for which I am very appreciative.

Through the years, I have done genealogical research for a lot of friends. I am not a certified genealogist, nor do I want to be, because then I would feel I should charge for my services and time. For me, it is truly a hobby, a passionate one. I am so happy to see that look of joy on someone's face when I find that elusive ancestor, or when I complete their DAR or SAR application and they are accepted into membership. It is rewarding, even when I have to tell a pa-

tron, "No, you aren't related to so-and-so after all," because I have fulfilled a responsibility to find the truth.

Genealogical research involves "the good, the bad, and the ugly", and there's no getting around that. We are not responsible for our ancestors' mistakes, nor can we take credit for their achievements. We *are* responsible for telling the full, true story, and for our own actions in the here-and-now.

I am the co-chair of the Lineage Research Committee for the Emily Geiger Chapter, NSDAR, and as such my primary responsibility is to help applicants solidify their applications with documentation for each generation, back to the Revolutionary War patriot. To be a member of DAR or SAR, one's ancestor must have contributed positively to the colonists, either by military duty, civic duty, or patriotic service such as supplying food or materiel. It has been my privilege to assist many ladies and gentlemen in acquiring SAR and DAR membership.

My motto is "dedicated to connecting you with your ancestors."

SUNNI WINKLER

**The Heritage Library Foundation**  
**852 Wm. Hilton Parkway**  
**Hilton Head Island SC 29928**



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## Awards at Volunteer Appreciation Day



**Paul & Marty Anthony**  
**Hilton Head Burial Records**



*Paul (center) and Marty (right) Anthony with their award, while Bill Altstaetter beams in the background.*

We've become accustomed to seeing Marty and Paul Anthony working at all hours: before we open, after hours, even on days we're closed. Their initial goal was to compile an index of casualties from the Civil War who were once buried here. Less conscientious researchers might have shrugged at discrepancies as unavoidable, alphabetized it, posted it, and moved on. But both were determined to solve the discrepancies, which has led them down some tortuous paths. Often I witnessed their delight at solving some particularly vexing problem. On one such occasion, they'd been unable to confirm the records of one Sharp. After more study they realized the initial "S" was actually a fancy "T" and the name wasn't Sharp but Thorp.

Working with Isobel Bitner, John Griffin, and other staff members, the Anthonys have produced an outstanding addition to our Civil War Collection.

BARBARA MULLER

**Linda Piekut**  
**Director of Information Technology**



*Linda displays her award certificate. (Black History exhibits in the background.)*

Beginning in 2010, Linda took on the responsibility for all our information systems, including the internal networks, hardware, and software for administration as well as patron research and our connections to the Internet. Her efforts over the past two years have resulted in a major overhaul of operating systems, replacement of outmoded equipment, and significant software upgrades. She also regularly conducts classes on computing-related topics for both patrons and the volunteer staff. Her ongoing efforts in support of the Foundation are consistently of the highest professional order. Many of our files were like Topsy—hey "just grewed." Linda has brought logical simplicity to their organization, no easy task.

We are extremely fortunate to have someone of Linda's many talents among our volunteers.

BARBARA MULLER



## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

**Salute to Volunteers**

In April we held a combination Retreat and Volunteer Appreciation Day. In the morning Retreat, a discussion of library goals and aspirations was ably led by Friend-of-the-Library Norm Harberger.

After a break for sandwiches and tea, we resumed in the afternoon with a discussion of new initiatives by the Library. Among these are the booklet, "Local Legends of Hilton Head Island," now in production, and the "Original Mitchelville Initiative," which, building on John Griffin's research, will attempt to construct a picture of those who first lived in Mitchelville.

Following this, awards for Volunteer of the Year were announced. There are two awards that are given annually: The Founder's Award, which is for an outstanding body of work, and the President's Award, which is for an outstanding project. See the awardees on Page 1.

Peggy Pickett then presented for the volunteers her interpretation of Eliza Pinckney. She has added new material since the first time I saw it and it is still amazing. She can talk in Eliza's voice for 20 or 30 minutes without notes and without a break. It was a real treat for all of us.

We ended the day with wine and cheese.

**Like Us**

Thanks to Faye Leach for updating our Facebook page.

Please go there, "like us," and perhaps contribute. Our volunteers are accomplishing so much that should be out there for the world to see. Send your items and photos to Faye.

**More Volunteer Opportunities**

See Page 7 for more places where volunteer efforts are needed.

**Other News**

We get interesting visitors. See Page 4. For the latest developments on Mitchelville and the Gullah Museum, see Pages 5 and 6, respectively.

BARBARA MULLER

**Photos from Volunteer Day**

Norm Harberger, left, guided the discussions of library goals, based on earlier strategic planning.

Photos by Linda Piekut.



The day was rather informal, with a free-flowing discussion in the morning. An afternoon treat was a presentation by volunteer Peggy Pickett of Eliza Pinckney, based on her extensive research of the family.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**Friday Mornings at Honey Horn**

The Market at Honey Horn has been a great success. At our tent there, representatives from the Heritage Library talk to the patrons, local and visitors, about the Library's services in history and genealogy. Breakfast and lunch are offered on the site. Volunteers are on hand from 8:15 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

If you can help, please call Iva Welton at 671-4865 or leave a message at the Heritage Library at 686-6560.

**Unearthing Mitchelville**

We hope to soon start on an extensive project to find more of the original residents of Mitchelville. The work will involve searching through microfilm for pertinent records. If you're interested, call Barbara Muller at 715-0153 or leave a message at the Library, 686-6560.

(Cont'd from Page 2)

**A Lifelong Passion**

of the resources of the SAR Library as well as the Filson Club which specialized in Kentucky genealogy and history as the Heritage Library does for South Carolina.

Our travels brought us to Hilton Head Island and I learned about the Heritage Library, which at that time was located in its former facility near Sea Pines Circle. I would occasionally do research there when we were on the Island and I learned how to do research on the computer. After I retired from Fairfax County Public Schools where I had spent most of my 31-year career as a teacher/administrator, we spent January through April 1996 on the Island, our first winter as "snowbirds." In 1997 we again spent January through April on the Island, only to return to Virginia where Tom had a fatal accident at our home. I had lost my best genealogy buddy.

Continuing to do genealogical research on both my lineage and Tom's became doubly important to me. I felt I owed it to him to carry on what we had begun and for the sake of our son and daughter, both of whom are also interested in "climbing the family tree." In late summer of 1997, as part of my healing process, I decided to once again go to that mecca of genealogical research, Salt Lake City. One of the first items I found there was the death date and burial site of one of Tom's ancestors, a man who had died young and had been very elusive all

those years. I could only look heavenwardly and utter a grateful "thank you" to my special genealogical angel.

My current husband Roy Winkler and I moved to Hilton Head Island full time in early 2011. I knew I would suffer withdrawal pains if I did not find a way to stay involved with genealogy. I thought about the Heritage Library and learned of its new home. I wanted to become fully involved in learning about my new home as well as becoming involved in meaningful activities on the Island. One such step was to join the Hilton Head Plantation Women's Club. Introduced as a new member, I was asked to say a few words about myself. I said, "My hobbies are genealogy, counted cross-stitch, genealogy, reading, genealogy..." Bill and Gwen Altstaetter were there (Bill was the featured speaker) and I saw them both smiling.

Bill encouraged me to get involved with the Heritage Library—and the rest, as they say, "is history."

Since I have been at the Library, I have helped a number of men and women become members of local DAR/SAR chapters. That in and of itself is reward enough. But one of my most rewarding services at the Heritage Library came after I had assisted two sisters—one who lived here and the other lived "away"—to find a lot of information about their ancestors that they had not had previously known. After the visiting sister got back home, she called me and asked if I could help her husband, and then uttered those three words even professional genealogists hate to hear, "He is adopted." I usually do not touch adoption lineages because they can be virtually impossible to crack. In this case we had a small advantage because the man had been adopted as a child, not as an infant, and he had a document that gave his birth parents' names.

Once I found the marriage record of his birth parents and heard his story of visiting an old woman that he thought was probably his grandmother, I was able to track his father's lineage back many generations; the old woman was his paternal grandmother. We are still looking for the mother's lineage, but the wife, that "away" sister, tells me that, now in his 60s, he finally feels he belongs to a family. He has located a half-brother that he is contemplating contacting.

Sometimes my success as a researcher at the Heritage Library is a "back-door" one; I may help a patron disprove a lineage rather than prove a lineage. This, while not quite what the patron (or I) would prefer, can be helpful because it allows you to move beyond a brick wall toward other research.

It's rewarding to know that the Heritage Library has such a fine reputation as a site of genealogical information. One day

Cont'd on Page 8



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## Gullah Museum Recognized

The Gullah Museum, a project of famed history-teller Louise Cohen, was the site of celebrations the day a historical marker was unveiled. The museum is housed in a tiny cottage built in the 1930s on land purchased by Louise's grandfather, William Simmons, who had escaped from slavery on Lady's Island, served in the Union army, and settled on Hilton Head Island. The cottage was built for Simmons' grandson, Duey Simmons.



Counter-clockwise from left above: Heritage Library's John Griffin presents to Louise Cohen an update of her genealogical record; weavers of sweetgrass baskets were on hand to celebrate Gullah culture; unveiling participants gathered early under the live oaks.



Volunteers worked to preserve the only remaining Gullah home on Hilton Head. They rid the cottage of termites, installed a new roof, replaced rotting beams, and installed a Plexiglas window so visitors could see what a Gullah home of the 1930s looked like inside.



FROM VOLUNTEER SUNNI WINKLER

## A Lifelong Passion for Genealogy

I was 16 years old, a senior in high school, and ready to conquer the world. I had a wonderful American History/Government teacher who gave us one final assignment—produce a family tree of at least three generations, not including ourselves. If we could do both paternal and maternal lines, we would get extra credit. I was all for that.

I grew up in middle Tennessee, an only child, knowing only one grandmother out of four grandparents. Finding the rest of those missing relatives had not been high on my priority list. But when I started on that family tree, a whole new world opened up to me.

By talking with my parents and my one grandparent, I was able to piece together my three-generation tree on both sides. I didn't have all the dates and places, but I had names and I had stories, some of which I had never heard before. And I got that promised extra credit from my teacher.

In my senior year of college I met the man with whom I would spend 38 glorious years researching his family and mine. Thomas Jefferson Bond, Jr., was the son and grandson of East Tennessee educators. As a high school senior, he had received an award as "Good Citizen of the Year" from a local chapter of the National Society, Sons of the American Revolution. Tom had often looked at that certificate and wondered if he had an ancestor who participated in the American Revolution. He did—at least six of them—all with interesting stories of their own.

Together we stomped through over-grown cemeteries, rummaged through shoeboxes of old documents in musty courthouses, and listened to countless stories from others researching the same lines. We were true Southerners; most of our ancestors came from Tennessee, North and South Carolina, Kentucky, and Virginia. The first Revolutionary War patriot Tom found was born in Delaware, but fought from his home in North Carolina as did six of his sons.

Living in the Washington, D.C. area, we had access to wonderful resources such as National Archives, the DAR Library, and the National Genealogical Society. We traveled throughout the South doing on-site research as part of our vacation time. Since Tom was quite active in the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, we traveled to Louisville, Kentucky, at least twice a year and sometimes three times, where I could take advantage

FROM THE

## Membership Desk

As I write, it is another beautiful day in paradise! Days such as these simply reinforce why we are here.

Since our last newsletter we have several new members. From Bluffton: Carol Gorn, and Thomas and Barbara Redmond. We welcome



back Barbara Anderson.

Joining us from the Island are Lou Benfonte, Laurette Doscher, Barrett and Elisabeth Riordan, Arthur Champen, Allan Jones, Arthur O'Neill, Sharon Kay Kidd, and Mario Malchi.

Laurette and Lou have also started volunteering as has Rita Chietera from the March group of new members. You will find Laurette at the front desk on Thursdays and Rita will be greeting you on Fridays. Lou is doing research in preparation for presenting lectures for the fall. We look forward to having more of our members volunteer their skills. We always need volunteers since there are many openings and we hope to hear from more of you.

A special thanks to members who in April supported our participation in the World's Largest Yard Sale. Sunni Winkler and Diana Luellen led the way with supervising the set-up, organizing displays, and spending the day as super sales persons. Connie Blain spent many hours pricing the items and Sheila Buck served as cashier. Others who gave of their time were: Linda Piekut, Bob Clemens, Bob Buck, Hedy and Jerry Moore, Harry Eschenbach, Pre Moore, Joan Keating, Jeanne Hickey, and Bill and Gwen Altstaetter. Also, nonmember helpers Beth Altstaetter, Greg Goldberg, and Alex Vitto deserve mention. It is great to have family lending a hand.

As members, please know that you are our best publicity. Your support is needed to make sure we are able to continue our reputation as an outstanding resource for history and genealogy in the Low Country.

We want to thank "snow bird" Faye Leach for indexing the Kirk letters 1803-1868 which are now available in the Family History section. Another wonderful project making material in the Library more user friendly.

See you at the Library.

Cont'd on Page 7

GWEN ALTSTAETTER



## Volunteer Sunni Winkler Receives Award for Genealogical Work



Tireless volunteer Sunni Winkler added to her collection of awards in April when the Dr. George Mosse Chapters of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) presented her with an Oak Leaf Cluster for the Medal of Appreciation. In addition to her work at the Heritage Library, Sunni co-chairs the Lineage Research Committee for the Emily Geiger Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR).

## “Diva Daze” Visit



Member Ezra (“Cal”) Callahan (far left) and volunteer Nancy Burke explain some of our activities to the women of Diva Daze a group who says “we enjoy good times, good food, good weather, and good books.”

An energetic, multifaceted group of women who love reading and history, among them novelists, journalists and genealogists, called upon the Heritage Library in May. Passionate about African-American history, they came to hear about what we are doing on the subject.

## A Visitor Finds Her Heritage

In what appears to be a growing trend, Nora Parks Anderson’s children gave her a trip to the Heritage Library as a gift for a special occasion, in order for Mrs. Parks to learn more about her ancestors on Hilton Head. Delighted with her trip, Mrs. Anderson wrote us:

Dear Heritage Library,

Thank you so very much! We had a grand time visiting and listening to such wonderful history. I cannot thank you enough for taking the time with our family and helping to make our roots real. Everything was so clean, organized and left us feeling safe. Thank you, everyone, especially Bill and Marty for making it all work. Heritage Library is remarkable and I know that much energy and time has been put in to make it so. We love Hilton Head Island and are proud to be a part of the Heritage.

NORA PARKS ANDERSON



Left, Bill Altstaetter assists Nora Anderson with a map of Hilton Head Island.

Below, Nora Anderson sent us this photo of herself at the Zion Chapel cemetery.



## Mitchelville in the News

In the meantime, the *Packet* ran several articles about the efforts in the South Carolina legislature to get funding to buy land for the Mitchelville Preservation Project. At last word, the project had survived efforts to strip the funds from the bill. We should know more when the legislature completes its session.

### The Gathering Area



This kiosk forms the entry into the Gathering Area at Fish Haul Park. A winding pathway leads to benches beneath towering live oaks.

The unveiling of a “Gathering Area” in Fish Haul park celebrating the history of Mitchelville sparked a spate of local news stories.

On Sunday May 12 an article by Tom Barton in the *Island Packet* gave an extensive rundown on the history of Mitchelville’s establishment in 1862, predating the Emancipation Proclamation. See it at <http://www.islandpacket.com/2012/05/12/2067750/mitchelville-supporters-fight.html>.

Also Sarah Welliver at *The Island Packet* produced a video “Preserving Mitchelville.” It featured, among others, Ben Williams, Dot Law, and Louise Cohen. You can see it at: <http://www.islandpacket.com/2012/05/12/2068169/video-preserving-mitchelville.html>

The following day Dr. Monica Tetzlaff, a University of Indiana historian quoted frequently in Barton’s articles, wrote the editor describing her ongoing research into villages of “contrabands” which sprang up elsewhere at about the same time as Mitchelville. So far, we believe that Mitchelville is unique because they built the town with their own hands, elected their own leaders, and established schooling as mandatory.

The following days brought other letters of support: from Mitchelville Preservation Project advisor Bill Payne and one from the Heritage Library seeking volunteers to help with our own Mitchelville research.



These benches make a fine Gathering Area under the live oaks. A series of panels, like the one below, sketch out the history of Mitchelville, including the story of General Ormsby Mitchel, for whom the village was named.



This plaque dedicating the Gathering Area was installed by the Leadership Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Class of 2012.