



# The Heritage Observer

## News from The Heritage Library

*Bringing the Past to Life*

Vol. 2, No. 2

MARCH 2010



Above. John Griffin had an overflow crowd (only a portion shown here) for his talk on Gullah heritage.

Below: Iva Welton introducing John to the attendees.



## John Griffin Fills the House

They kept coming, and volunteers kept rousting up more chairs. Before John's talk was over, there were people sitting and standing in the doorway to the training room.

Among the attendees was David Lauderdale, who wrote about the talk in the *Island Packet*. See Page 5.

Events such as these bring more people to our doors, help spread the word of the resources available here, and eventually add to our membership.

## Coming in May

Hilton Head Island every year celebrates its art and cultural offerings during May's Bravo events.

This year the Library will offer three history lectures on May 5, 12 and 19 at 2 p.m.

"Colonial Hilton Head" by Bill Altstaetter, "Hilton Head in the Civil War" by Robert P. Smith, and "Hilton Head After the Bridge" by Natalie Hefter..

There will also be an open house, date TBA.

## MEET OUR BOARD



**Harvey Varnet**

Harvey Varnet has served as Director of Libraries for University of South Carolina Beaufort since 2008; he is currently also serving as Interim Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

With an undergraduate degree in English and graduate degrees in Educational Media and Library Science, Harvey has had a varied professional career. His experience in higher education has included work at all levels—community college, college, and university. He has been a librarian for over forty years.

Varnet's career includes work in four states (Massachusetts, Kentucky, Illinois and Rhode Island) and three other countries. In 1979-80, he was a Fulbright Professor at the University of Calabar, Nigeria. In the mid-1980s, Harvey worked on the building of the first university in Oman, Sultan Qaboos University. Prior to coming to USCB, he was Library Director at the American University of Kuwait.

*Cont'd in next column*

Varnet has also been involved in the training of several cadre of Iraqi librarians and library science educators. As part of a team that has its base at Simmons College in Boston, Harvey helped bring up to speed approximately 60 Iraqi colleagues. These training sessions occurred in Amman, Jordan and Al Ain in the United Arab Emirates.

In his career, Varnet has had positions at every library level, from cataloger to director. His university-wide involvement has included the usual academic committees, and he has experience in collective bargaining and faculty contract administration..

He joined the board of the Heritage Library in 2007, after visiting the library on behalf of USCB to discuss the challenges of space considerations. Varnet has a great deal of experience in library physical facilities, and has been helpful in providing advice to the Heritage Library Foundation as it planned its move to its present quarters.

*Editor's Note: Harvey Varnet reflects on the future of libraries. See Page 7.*

## The Southeast Family Expo

It was a most successful Saturday, February 20, with an attendance of 275 people (not counting volunteers and presenters) at the Southeast Family History Expo. Most of the attendees stopped by to look at our exhibit, pick up brochures, and ask questions. Nancy Burke and John Griffin were really great and Sunni Winkler also helped with the staffing of our booth. Bill Altstaetter's workshop was well attended and received good reviews.

Twenty-one people signed up to have information sent to them and several indicated interest in our workshops. Heritage Library contributed a number of door prizes, including copies of Carse's book *Hilton Head Island in the Civil War*, an autographed copy of *Short & Tall Tales of Hilton Head Island* by Margaret Greer with photographs by Barry Lowes (a valuable coffee table book) plus five one-day visitor's passes to do research here. Recipients were thrilled, and we are looking forward to having them visit us at the Library.

GWEN ALTSTAETTER

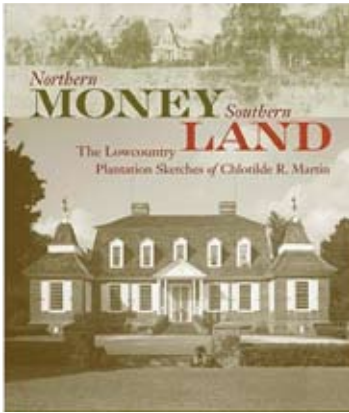


*The Heritage Observer* is published by Heritage Library • 852 Wm Hilton Parkway Suite 2A  
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## THE LIBRARIAN'S CORNER

## Library Acquisitions



Donated to the Library is a newly published book on local history: *Northern Money, Southern Land: the Lowcountry Plantation Sketches of Chlotilde R. Martin*, edited by Robert B. Cuthbert and Stephen G. Hoffins.

Mrs Martin, a Beaufort widow, wrote in the 1930s a series of articles for the *Charleston News and Courier*. In them she names the northern owners of land in Beaufort, Jasper, Hampton, Colleton, and Berkeley counties—land bought mainly for hunting, but which in the last century has been drastically changed by development.

Two chapters on Hilton Head include material on owners Rainey, Hurley, Clyde, Thorne and Loomis, who all had estates on the Island prior to World War II. Beaufort County estates are extensively covered, including chapters on the islands of Dataw, Lady's, Callawassie, and Cat (a nudist colony), and mainland properties such as Rose Hill, Honey Horn, and Palmetto Bluff. There is also information and illustrations of the houses built on these estates.

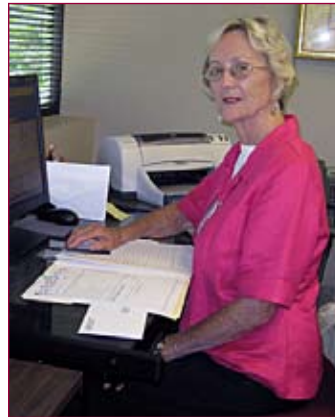
Similar information is given on the other Lowcountry counties. The titles of the original newspaper articles are listed in footnotes, and there is a good bibliography.

This fascinating book fills a gap in the history of this area between the Civil War and post World War II development.

From a review posted on Amazon.com:

“In the 1920s, as poverty and weather ground away at South Carolina’s formerly grand plantations, Sam Stoney of Medway was known to say, ‘Lord, please send us a rich Yankee.’ Chlotilde Martin’s engaging articles provide fascinating insight into an overlooked era of history that largely determined the shape of today’s Lowcountry landscape. As a native South Carolinian, I often thank the Lord for the rich Yankees who decided that their adopted land was too beautiful to despoil, and consequently helped launch one of the

## FROM THE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR



By the time you receive this, spring will have actually arrived, and not a minute too soon! Although there was one advantage to this cold weather: a number of people looking for something to do indoors found us.

The following are new members we are delighted to welcome to The Heritage Library: from the state of New

York, Lawrence Lenahan and Sue Z. Hall; from Bluffton and Hilton Head, Peggy Garnier, Dorothy Head, Michael Lamarre, David Butterworth, and John and Kathy Taggart. Dorothea Lieberman joins us from Indian Land, South Carolina, and from Georgia we welcome Daniel Powers and academic member Kate Hanzalik. Also we welcome back John Carney from Bluefield, Virginia.

We also want to thank Pat Roche for her latest contribution of books and papers to our collection.

We are also pleased to welcome Joan Mustard and Ed Nash who have joined the volunteer staff in the Library. They will be working on projects and will be trained to assist our members with their research. We appreciate the time and energy they are giving and hope more of our members will want to participate. Working here can be very rewarding with, of course, the opportunity to spend some time working on your own family research. There are many opportunities for our members. The latest was the Southeast Family Expo held in Savannah. (See article on Page 2)

Once again, we appreciate all our members who are renewing their memberships in support of the Library.

GWEN ALTSTAETTER

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nation’s most successful conservation movements.”— *Dana Beach, executive director, Coastal Conservation League.*

A subscription to the magazine *American Spirit* has been given to the Library by the William Hilton Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. We thank them for their donation. The first issue is now on the periodicals rack.

ISOBEL BITNEER

*Cont'd in next column*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

**Why Volunteer?**

National Volunteer Week is April 18-24 in 2010, and a good time to reflect on volunteering. When people speak of volunteering, one often hears the expression “give something back.” But there’s more to it than that: most people volunteer because they enjoy it. We also read that those who volunteer improve the quality and length of their lives.

**Motivation & Benefits**

There are as many motivations and benefits cited for volunteering as there are volunteers. Some of the most often mentioned reasons include

- to share and keep alive a professional skill
- to get to know a community
- commitment to a cause
- to gain leadership skills
- satisfaction from accomplishment
- to keep busy
- for recognition
- because there is no one else to do it
- to learn something new
- for freedom of schedule
- to belong
- to be challenged
- to make new friends
- to explore a career
- to help someone

- as therapy
- because the place is nearby
- to do what you love
- because you were asked
- to test yourself
- to build your resume
- to be an agent of progress
- to offer your personal experience

And, finally,

- for fun!

**Volunteering at the Heritage Library**

There are many delights to be had working with other volunteers. At the Heritage Library you will meet people who share your interests. You can greet patrons, and help them find the answers to their questions. You can help with administrative tasks, the Web site, or publications. If you have a special skill to share, you can teach others. You can help with fundraising or preparing grant applications. You can set out on a quest yourself, choosing to explore one of the many projects that are waiting for a willing hand and curious mind. For example, there are many fascinating stories about events on Hilton Head that need to be rediscovered, fleshed-out and made into interesting narratives for publication in our news letters. There are a host of details about postbellum life on the island that can be dug out of pension records.

The list goes on and on. Perhaps you can add to it. If so, call 843-686-6560 and ask for the Volunteer Coordinator.

BOB SMITH

## The New England Historic Genealogical Society in Hilton Head

NEGHS is one of the oldest and largest genealogical societies in the country, with over 33,000 members. The day-long presentation at the Hilton Ocean Resort included Christopher C. Child’s discussions of the Society’s on-line resources and the uses of DNA, in genealogy, a question-and-answer session, and a discussion by David Dearborn on New England tax and probate records.

Volunteers Nancy Burke and Gwen Altstaetter from the Library helped register the capacity crowd.



## Heritage Library Embodiment of Rich, Brave History of Gullah Residents

*From the Island Packet, February 11, 2010*

Richard Oriage smiles as he holds a loose-leaf notebook full of information about his family.

It's precious to Oriage because facts about his heritage are hard to come by. His forebears came to the Low Country as slaves. When a name was recorded, it often was a single name. When last names later were adopted, they were often the names of plantation owners. And in some cases, one person could go by several different names.

But despite the hardships, Oriage can wrap his hands around a thick file on his family. The notebook is a result of his diligence and the proactive volunteers at the private, nonprofit Heritage Library and Research Center on Hilton Head Island.

Oriage, 82, was born on Hilton Head and educated at Penn School on St. Helena Island and S.C. State University in Orangeburg. He spent a career as a social-work case manager in New York City, then returned home, where he is a deacon at Mount Calvary Missionary Baptist Church.

Years ago, while preparing for a family reunion, Oriage showed up at the Heritage Library. It's known for its genealogical resources and volunteers who help others trace their lineage, whether it leads to Poland or Pocotaligo.

But Oriage needed information unique to the Low-country's history. He and volunteer John Griffin gleaned

public records to discover that Oriage is a direct descendant of an islander named Pauldore Fields, who probably lived most of his life as a slave, served in the U.S. Army in the Civil War and later bought land as a free man in Beaufort County.

And he can show a full family tree with names, dates and places invaluable to all of the Oriage and Orage families.

"I wanted my children and grandchildren to have answers to the questions we always had," Oriage said Wednesday after a presentation at the library by Griffin. The lecture -- "Overview and Discussion of Ongoing Gullah Genealogy" -- was part of the 14th annual Hilton Head Island Gullah Celebration, which has events throughout the month.

A room full of people heard about resources, databases and special projects that continue to enhance the library, located above The Savannah Bank at 852 William Hilton Parkway. The gold mine comes from U.S. Army pension records, which can include long narratives from interviews conducted by picky pension inspectors.

"Any of you who served in the Army can appreciate that at every step of the process, someone was pushing a pencil," Griffin said.

Those pencils now give voice to "lost" generations, who seem to shout from the darkness their stories of perseverance and courage.

DAVID LAUDERDALE

*Left (Page 4): Listening to Christopher C. Child (visible in the mirror) are Bill Altstaetter and Gwen Altstaetter, from the Library; Sally Noren from North Carolina; and Jason Stevens, on the Library's Board of Advisors.*

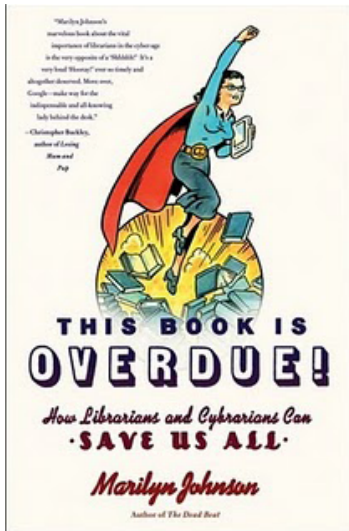
*Right: A capacity crowd heard Child discuss NEGHS's online resources for both New England and New York.*





## A BOOK STARTS A DISCUSSION

## Do We Need Libraries?



The New York Times Book Review of March 7 carried a review of *This Book is Overdue: How Librarians and Cybrarians Can Save Us All* by Marilyn Johnson. The book and its reviews have sparked a discussion of the relevance of libraries in the digital age.

(For those not familiar with the term, a cybrarian [a compound of cyber and

librarian] is a library-and-information-science professional who specializes in using the Internet as a resource tool.)

When Jed Lipinski of Salon.com interviewed Johnson, he asked if libraries and librarians were obsolete in the age of Google.

As she and several reviewers pointed out, it is precisely because of the explosion of information that we need libraries – and especially librarians. “We have this illusion that you can find anything on the Web, that you can type in a keyword and the world will open up. But you can get a lot of garbage and wrong information, and many, many things get lost in cyberspace or do not appear in digital form.”

She says of librarians, that the good ones have “all of the skills and characteristics required for that work: curiosity, wide-ranging knowledge, good memories, organizational and analytical aptitude, and discretion.”

Another Johnson, Doug Johnson, who blogs about schools and libraries, says succinctly, “computers will not replace books.”

He quotes Walt Crawford (author of a famous defense of books entitled *Paper Persists: Why Physical Library Collections Still Matter*): “A book is the best way for me to communicate a fairly lengthy and complex narrative discussion.”

Johnson adds: It’s also the best way for a reader to encounter such a discussion. Even most die-hard technology lovers will admit to printing hard copies of documents much longer than a page, since today’s monitors are just

plain hard on the eyes. The cost savings supposedly gained by having library users read information from the computer screen quickly evaporates when every reader starts printing out lengthy texts. It may not be high tech, but print resources on a cost-per-user basis are dirt cheap.

Michael Eisenberg, a specialist in the design and construction of libraries at the University of Washington, asks the same question: do we need libraries in this age? He answers with a “resounding yes, absolutely.” He writes that the main challenges of living in an information age are;

- information overload
- information quality, and
- equity of access for all.

**The Internet isn’t the solution to the challenge [of information overload]; it’s one of the main causes of the problem.**

MICHAEL EISENBERG

He points out that the Internet isn’t the solution to these challenges--it’s one of the main causes of the problem.

He adds that we want and need a rich and varied information environment, an “information common that has been thoughtfully and systematically created” —by librarians of course.

He also makes a case for browsing: “While we certainly want easy and efficient access to information ... we also want to ‘bump into’ interesting and worthwhile information that sparks new ideas and thoughts.”

As we continue to build libraries, as Eisenberg thinks we will, such facilities must support both the physical and the digital -- as does the Heritage Library where users flow easily between the physical and the digital.

Among the services libraries in the digital ages should provide, Eisenberg says:

- free and easy access to high quality databases, even from home (as Heritage does for Premiere members)
- select Web sites for inclusion in the online library

catalog or on special lists, (as the Heritage Library does on its Web site

- provide assistance in-person by trained librarians (as our volunteers do)

Computers today are a million times more powerful than they were a decade ago; Bill Gates says that in another decade their power will increase even faster. The thought of the increased stored information can boggle the mind. Libraries and trained librarians will be essential for dealing with this huge haystack of information: The librarian will take us by the hand, help us past the chaff, and lead us to the needle we seek.

Librarians, like those of the Heritage Library (for whom my admiration knows no bounds), never stop learning their craft, and it's more true than ever in this digital age.

BARBARA MULLER

*Note: I hope in future issues to discuss "Google is Not Enough" and "Why History." I will welcome input, suggestions, and comments from our members and readers on any of these subjects..*

## From Dearth to Plethora

One of the most interesting historical facts about libraries is that they have always been "early adopters" of new technologies - starting from typewriters to photocopiers to fax machines to computers and the new digital technologies. Libraries have leveled the playing field when it comes to the opportunity to learn - not everyone takes advantage of that, but libraries are uniquely American in this context.

In our world, we have moved from dearth to plethora - from hoarding what we had to figuring out just how much information there is. Libraries were originally built on the earlier model - dearth - making the few books and other materials available for all. Now, there is so much information available that we'll need to rethink our libraries and their roles. One thing not likely to change is that, in our democracy, making the opportunity to learn and grow available will still be a focus of libraries at all levels.

HARVEY VARNET

DIRECTOR OF LIBRARIES, USCB

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, HERITAGE LIBRARY



*Secretary Nancy Burke and Bill Altstaetter manned the reception desk at the Foundation's Annual Meeting in February.*

## Annual Meeting February 17

The Heritage Library Foundation's annual meeting was held on February 17. Part of the business before the meeting was the election of directors to fill the class beginning this year, for which Nancy Burke was re-elected and Barbara Muller was elected. The by-laws require that the Foundation have at least nine and not more than 15 directors.

The nominating committee, chaired by Harvey Varnet, also reported the naming of an Advisory Board, consisting of E. W. Altstaetter, Ed Dowaschinski, Gail Quick, the Rev. Dr. E. H. Peeples, Emory Campbell, Earl "Smittie" Cooler, Natalie Hefter, and Dr. Larry S. Rowland.

President Robert Smith discussed the plans for the coming year including efforts to familiarize the public, including visitors, on the history of the island, especially the two historic sites owned and maintained by the Foundation: Fort Mitchel and the Zion Chapel of Ease cemetery. He also hopes to obtain funds for improvements to Fort Mitchel.

Following the annual meeting, the Board met and elected Barbara Muller as Vice President, an office vacant since Bob Smith moved into the presidency.

Bob Smith continues to serve as president, Nancy Burke as secretary, and William Leitner as Treasurer. The remainder of the board includes Chip Collins, Dr. Beth Mayo, J. M. Rose, Harvey Varnet, and Iva Welton, for a total of nine directors.

## Coming in April

**Note:** *The efforts of the Coastal Discovery Museum and those of the Heritage Library are complementary: Coastal Discovery concentrates on natural history, while the Heritage Library concentrates on the history of people.*

### Patriot and Planters Walk

The Coastal Discovery Museum and the Heritage Library will conduct a guided tour of the 18th-century cemetery at the Zion Chapel of Ease site on Friday's at 2 pm. during the months of April and May. The roles of the early planters and the patriots who fought in the American Revolution will be discussed.

### Lowcountry Reptiles & Amphibians

On March 31 and April 3, Tony Mills from the Lowcountry Institute will present a program on the importance of snakes, turtles, lizards, alligators and other such animals to our local habitats. At the Coastal Discovery Museum in the Mary Ann Peoples Pavilion, 9:30 and 11:30 a.m.

Cost for both programs is \$12 for adults and \$7 for children. Reservations required. 843-689-6767 x 223.

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

## Soggy but Fun

The Equine Exposition was beset by weather troubles this year: on March 21 the rain dribbled all afternoon, making it too dangerous for the polo exhibition, which was postponed until March 28, and then postponed again until "a sunny day."

Despite this, food was plentiful, the horses were gorgeous, and the Heritage Foundation will benefit: members the Altsaetter, the Mullers, the Coolers, the Rowleys, Jay Fairvalley and John Myers and Iva Welton all were patrons. Tom Senf sold 15 program ads; Bob Smith and Ed Dowaschinski also sold program ads.

