



The Heritage Observer

News from The Heritage Library

Bringing the Past to Life

Vol. 1, No. 1

July 2009



Researching their ancestors are (at the computer) Jillian Angner; others, from left, are Nicole Arnold, Jacqueline Tobin and Kendall Bulloch. Bill Altstaetter is providing guidance.

Girls “Scout” Their Ancestors

In June, ten Junior Girl Scouts came to the Heritage Library to look up their grandparents and great grandparents through our facilities. They were working on their “My Heritage” badge, which is one of the tasks necessary to attain the Bronze Award, the highest honor a Junior Girl Scout can earn.

According to the Girl Scouts’ Web site, “Working towards this award demonstrates her commitment to helping others, improving her community and the world, and becoming the best she can be.”

Members and Guests at Open House

It was a lovely party. With Collins Group Realty and Harbourside Bank, we all celebrated new quarters at 852 Wm. Hilton Parkway. Visitors exclaimed over the sense of bright airy spaciousness experienced in our new quarters. Entertainment was donated by jazz greats Bob Masteller and Martin Lesch, wine by Wine Times 4, hors d’oeuvres and flowers by Board members.



This and our sister publication *Glimpses* are designed to keep you informed about news and projects at your Library. More about them on Page 5.



Meet Our Board: from left, Robert Smith, Vice President; Dr. Emory Campbell, Advisory Board; Iva Welton, Director; Nancy Burke, Secretary; Isobel Bitner, Head Librarian; Blanche Sullivan, President; Dr. Harvey Varnet, Director; Dr. J. R. Rose, Director and Ed Dowaschinki, Director. Not shown: William Leitner, Treasurer (see Page 4) and Chip Collins, Director (see Page 5); Earl S. “Smittie” Cooler; Natalie Hefter; Elizabeth Mayo; Gail Quick and Dr. Larry Rowland

New African-American Heritage Source to Feature Dr. Rose's Work

Going online this fall at ProQuest will be a new program designed to help researchers find elusive ancestor information for African-Americans. A key part of the project is the book *Black Genesis* written by James Manuel Rose and Alice Eichholz.

Many African-Americans have found researching their ancestors a daunting project. Records of slaves are often extremely incomplete, and legal requirements of record-keeping have changed. In announcing their new program, ProQuest wrote: "Records made prior to the Civil Rights era were segregated and are difficult to find, and oral histories passed down from generation to generation may be incomplete or inaccurate."

The services available at ProQuest are designed to "provide a comprehensive and useful guide for researchers by presenting relevant and unique content as well as providing insights and suggestions on how to further their searching." Vital information will include "U.S. federal census, freedman and slave records, birth, marriage, and death records, church records, court and legal records, genealogies and family histories."

ProQuest's announcement stated: "ProQuest African American Heritage will ... [include] a special online edition of *Black Genesis* ... an exhaustive guide that makes locating resources pertaining to slaves and free blacks easier. Written by Dr. James Manuel Rose and Dr. Alice Eichholz, this essential reference work features an extensive compilation of African-American resources for all fifty states, Canada and the West Indies.

"With these resources, ProQuest African American Heritage provides connections to important assistance and mentoring from experienced African-American genealogists, which greatly increases the researchers' success."



Historical Projects at the Library

Volunteers at the Heritage Library are involved in a number of projects to make information more accessible about the Island's history and former residents. Among these:

Tax Commission Land Sales

During 1863-64, a number of properties in Beaufort County were sold for taxes. The sale certificates for these sales during those two years were obtained from the National Archives and Records Administration on microfilm. Volunteers have digitized 650 of these records and placed them on our Web site.

Hilton Head Residents in the Civil War Era

Contemporaneous writing held by the Library has been checked for names and other relevant information of people living and working on the Island during the Civil War, including military personnel and freedmen. The information compiled is now available in an Excel file at the Library.

The Plantation Book

A fascinating record compiled by Lyman Wooster and Nancy Burke, this notebook has a page for every plantation on record that once existed on Hilton Head Island. References to each plantation's history have been collected.

U.S. Colored Troops Pension & Service Records

A trove of interesting detail, these records have been obtained from the National Archives and are being examined for historical and family information.

Projects Planned

There are a number of projects that could use help by volunteers who can extract relevant information. Among them: Island cemeteries; updating a Beaufort County bibliography; information on Chicora Foundation sites; and U.S. military burial records.

If you are interested in helping with these or other historical projects, call Isobel Bitner at 686-6560.

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Why Does History Matter?

Historical knowledge is (necessary) for those who want to build a better world.

LUDWIG VON MISES

The mission of the Heritage Library Foundation is, essentially, to preserve and promote history and genealogy and we could not fulfill this mission without the support of the foundation's valued and generous members. Why is this mission important? There are many reasons.

Understanding our heritage and our history enables us to learn from past mistakes, as well as past successes. Reviewing and evaluating previous actions and their resulting consequences can assist us in making future decisions more effectively.

Exploring and preserving one's roots can be a very rewarding and fulfilling experience, one that helps evoke pride. Determining one's origin can also satisfy curiosity and the basic human need to feel connected – to our families, to our communities, to the world.

Additionally, understanding what our ancestors achieved, endured and overcame can help instill a sense of appreciation for what we have today and inspire us to excel.

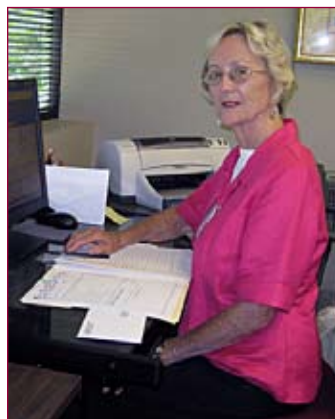
Preserving historical sites and structures enables us to pay tribute to or commemorate past events and persons and protect elements of architectural and archaeological interest. Such sites and structures serve as powerful visual reminders, or windows to our past.

It is with great pleasure that we present this inaugural issue of *The Heritage Observer*, designed to enhance your membership experience and help the Heritage Library Foundation achieve its mission.

We thank you for your support and look forward to hearing from you.

BLANCHE T. SULLIVAN
PRESIDENT

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP DESK



Welcome New Members

We have a great start for 2009 with 27 new members since January. From Pennsylvania we welcome Eleanor Phillips, and Karen Purnell. Karen heard about us when she attended the FGS Conference in Raleigh. Angelina LoGrasso is joining us from New York and Barbara Muller from Virginia.

The rest of the new members are from Beaufort, Bluffton and, of course, Hilton Head Island. The following – Donald and Veronica Draves, Connie Ebersole and Mary Lou Stark are from Bluffton; from a little farther away, Beaufort, we welcome Ellen Donnell, Dan Huff and Nancy Kates; joining us from Hilton Head are Shirley and Hank Bourgaux, Charles Calvert, Barbara Canham, Velma Docherty, D.M. Graefenecker, Janice Hunter Malafrente, David Malkin, Charles and Eleanor O'Key, Nancy Ronning, Peter and Mary Saladino, Sara Tiffany and Dawn and John Wickline. We also welcome back Richard Oriage and Vernie Singleton who are once again working on their lines.

A special "thank you" to all of our members who are renewing their memberships. Not long ago we received a note from a member with her renewal, saying that although she was not doing research at the present time she wanted to renew so when she was ready we would be here to help her. Your continued support is essential to The Heritage Library keeping up to its high standards and meeting the needs of those researching their family's beginnings.

We look forward to seeing you in our new location on the second floor of the Harbourside Bank Building. The new hours are 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Monday, Thursday, and Friday. We are closed on Saturdays during the months of July and August.

GWEN ALTSTAETTER

Editor's Note: We are delighted to see a constant flow of new members. This issue of *The Observer* includes new members through late June. Members enrolled since then will be acknowledged in subsequent issues.

The Move: Successfully and Smoothly Accomplished

FROM THE HEAD LIBRARIAN



We did it! After months of searching, negotiating and planning, the Library's move to new quarters was successfully and smoothly accomplished the last week of March, 2009.

"Successfully and smoothly accomplished" was only achieved through the efforts of a number of volunteers. **Tom Senf** scoured the Island by bike and car, checking various commercial sites;

Norma Harberger spent countless hours negotiating a contract with the Harbourside Bank; **Bill Altstaetter** invested much time on the computer, planning the physical layout of the new space, ably assisted by the expert advice of **Dr. Harvey Varnet**.

Gwen Altstaetter prepared the back offices for moving; **Nancy and Joe Burke, Dorothy Arwe, Joan Keating, Faye Leach, Pre Moore, Linda Piekut,** and **Cassie Sanders** all pitched in to plan the arrangement of the book stock, label every shelf and pack many boxes in preparation for the professional movers; and **Jim Sims** lent his carpentry skills on the day of the move.

Michelle Erbeck with **Tori Brainard** worked hard to ensure the safe transfer of the computers and other equipment.

The result was that the actual move only took two days, not the estimated three. The Library Division of the Savannah branch of the Mayflower Company did an excellent job of physically moving everything but the electronic equipment – at that point all we had to do was *Watch!*

Kudos and thanks to all.

The new location is attractive, brighter and looks more spacious, although the square footage is almost exactly the same as the old. There are three separate offices conveniently situated, and a computer room which will double as a meeting and lecture area.

There are also three computer stations in the main area which have proved very popular. And we share a large well-equipped kitchen with our neighbors, Collins Group Realty, which will prove useful for providing refreshments at meetings.

All in all, we are most pleased with the move, and all the comments we have heard have been most positive.

Come and see for yourselves!

ISOBEL BITNER



BEFORE: At our old location, volunteers spent hours labeling hundreds of volumes so they would be quickly and efficiently moved.



AFTER: The new location, although occupying about the same square footage, is airy, bright, and efficiently arranged so that it seems larger.

MEET OUR BOARD



William Leitner

Born in Elgin, Illinois and transplanted as a Texas A&M ("Aggie") graduate from The Woodlands, Texas to Hilton Head Island in 1986, William Leitner is the controller for the Sea Pines Community POA. He is a Heritage Library director and our treasurer.

"History will repeat itself so we should learn about people from the past and their thoughts, words, and actions so we can improve our future and that of our children. The Zion Chapel of Ease Cemetery plus Fort Mitchel each have a place in my heart. I hope that all who come to Hilton Head Island will learn more about historic places and the values, virtues, hopes, and lives of those who came before us."

MEET OUR BOARD



Chipman "Chip" Collins

Broker/Owner of Collins Group Realty, a top-five performer in the Hilton Head Island/Bluffton residential real estate market.

He was born and raised in Dayton, Ohio and is a Cum Laude Graduate of Denison

University (1991). A Hilton Head Island resident since 1992, he is a director of the Heritage Library Foundation. "I am community-service minded and interested in helping the Heritage Library grow its membership and facilities utilization."

Coming in Glimpses

Who is this man? One of our patrons and one of our volunteers found a common interest in him. Read about it in "The Crown and the Feather" by Barbara Vernasco in our August issue.

Also in August

Purrysburg: What, where, why and when? "Low-country Colonial Settlements" by Lyman Wooster

Launching of The USS Constitution ("Old Ironsides"). A detailed model by Hilton Head Islander Earle Nimaier.

The Aiken-Singleton Reunion. The two families held their 49th reunion on Hilton Head Island and are already planning their 50th for next year.

The Witch in the Attic. Nancy Burke discovers interesting ancestors..

Coming in October:

"The WPA Slave Narratives of Beaufort County" by Dr. James Manuel Rose.



Your Publications, Your Stories

Our two new publications, the *Heritage Observer* and *Glimpses*, are *your* publications. It is our hope to showcase your research, whether it is genealogical or historical. We will also publish any genealogical queries we receive.

We are looking for new light cast on some historic occasion, or learning of some little-known or largely forgotten event. These can be cross-cultural and cross-discipline – some stories we'd like to see:

Medical history: Disease & Mortality in the Colony • Legal history: Common law in S.C. • Religious history: the early church and its relationship to England • The Sea Islands before the War • Post-war Pardons (The \$20,000 Clause)

Although we seek stories of our immediate neighborhood – our Island and our State – we are by no means limited to them. The culture at any moment is a complex fabric whose woof threads may be readily visible but whose warp threads may have arisen in a distant past. We are all creatures of history: John Donne wrote four hundred years ago:

No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.

Calendar: Events of Interest

September 15, 2009: 7:00 p.m. Hilton Head Chapter of the S.C. Archaeology Society. Underwater Archaeology. Program planned by George Stubbs, President, and Chris Amer. At Coastal Discovery Museum. Visitors welcome. See www.ASSC.net

October 8, 2009: 12:00 noon Beaufort County Historical Society, Emory Campbell, chairman of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor and member of the Heritage Library Advisory Board, will speak. Optional lunch at 11:30 am for \$10.00. Visitors welcome. 671-4865 for more information.

Ongoing at Coastal Discovery Museum. Historic walks and talks with nominal fees. Reservations recommended. Information 843-689-6767, www.coastaldiscovery.org.

History Walk: 200 years of Honey Horn history, Mondays 2 p.m.; Thursdays 10 a.m.

After the Bridge: The development of Hilton Head Island since the 1950s. September Tuesdays at 3 p.m.
Union Soldiers at Hilton Head during the Civil War era. Thursdays at 3 p.m.

The Early Years: Hilton Head in colonial and antebellum times. Fridays at 3 p.m..

Discover Daufuskie: Cruise and tour. Coming soon.

Gullah Cooking and Living: Monthly, TBA

Fall 2009 Classes & Workshops by the Heritage Library

Workshops at the Library October 2009

Note: to register for any of the classes at the Heritage Library, call 843-686-6560. Early registration is encouraged; although we have more room in our new location, space is still limited.

Beginning Family Research

Instructor: Nancy Burke

Skill Level: Beginner

Dates:

Wednesday, October 7: 1:30-3:30 pm - Session One

Wednesday, October 14: 1:30-3:30 pm - Session Two

This two-part workshop, designed for the first-time family researcher, may also have value to researchers with limited experience or those who wish to refresh their skills. Participants will be introduced to the fascinating field of genealogy, its unique nomenclature and suggested research techniques. The first session is a lecture and the second will be a hands-on workshop.

Fee: \$40 for current members of the Library Foundation and \$45.00 for non-members. Includes the textbook "Unpuzzling Your Past," hand-outs to help guide you in your search and, for those not current members, use of the library for the two weeks of the workshop.

Free Problem-Solving Clinic

Moderator: Nancy Burke

Skill Level: All

Date: Friday, October 16 – 3 :00-4:00 pm

Free problem-solving session for any family researcher experiencing difficulties with their research. Attendees will be encouraged to share their problems and seek solutions in this open topic self help environment. Open to members and non-members of the Library Foundation without charge.

Fee: None

US Census Records As an Aid to Family Research

Instructor: Bill Altstaetter

Skill Level: Intermediate

Date: Wednesday, October 21 – 1:30-3:30 pm

This session is suitable for family researchers with some experience or those who have completed the Beginning Family Research Workshop. In this session participants will examine the data to be found in the census records of the United States taken every 10 years since the first census in 1790. Actual census records will be examined and review techniques will be discussed for tracing families through multiple generations.

Fee: \$20 for current members of the Library Foundation and \$25.00 for non-members.

Genealogy On Line

Instructor: Bill Altstaetter

Skill Level: Intermediate

Date: Wednesday, October 28 – 1:30 to 3:30

An overview of genealogical research sites available through the World Wide Web. This lecture is geared toward the intermediate genealogist. Participants should understand and have experience with using search engines and web browsers as well as have a general familiarity with techniques for family research.

Fee: \$20 for members of the Heritage Library Foundation and \$25 for non-members.



Fall 2009 Classes & Workshops by the Heritage Library

Workshops at the Library November 2009

Note: to register for any of the classes at the Heritage Library, call 843-686-6560. Early registration is encouraged; although we have more room in our new location, space is still limited.

Free Problem-Solving Clinic

Moderator: Nancy Burke

Skill Level: All

Date: Monday, November 2 : 3 to 4 pm

Free problem-solving session for any family researcher experiencing difficulties with their research. Attendees will be encouraged to share their problems and seek solutions in this open topic, self-help environment.

Fee: None. Open to members and non-members of the Library Foundation

Turning Your Photos and Genealogy Research into Great Gifts

Instructor: Carol Clemens

Skill Level: Intermediate

Date: Wednesday, November 11: 1:30-3:30 pm

Work with photos to create unique gifts that will allow you to share your research with other family members without overwhelming them.

You'll learn to edit photos with a simple and free program, insert them in a Word document to create a Pieces of Your Past project, easily create a free Web site, "redo" old photo albums to share on-line or print professionally. This class assumes that those attending have basic computer skills including how to get photos onto your computer (as scanning or adding from a digital camera), ability to work with a word processing program as Microsoft Word, Office, or Works, and have Internet access (for projects 2 and 3).

Fee: \$20 for members of the Heritage Library Foundation; \$25 for non-members.

Special Educational Outreach Programs

With Lifelong Learning of Hilton Head

Beginning Family Research

Instructor: Nancy Burke

Skill Level: Entry

Dates:

Tuesday, November 3: 1:30-3:30 pm - Session One

Tuesday, November 10: 1:30-3:30 pm - Session Two

Our entry-level program Beginning Family Research exclusively for members of Life Long Learning of Hilton Head Island.

This two-part workshop, designed for the first time family researcher, may be of interest to researchers with limited experience or those who wish to refresh their skills. Participants will be introduced to the fascinating field of genealogy, its unique nomenclature and suggested research techniques. The first session is a lecture and the second will be a hands-on workshop.

Contact: Those interested in attending should email Harriet Reimers at hsr007@aol.com for addition information and fees and to make reservations.

With OLLI of USCB

Beginning Family Research

Instructors: Nancy Burke and Jack Lopez

Skill Level: Entry

In partnership with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at USCB we are presenting Session One of the Beginning Family Research workshop to members of OLLI at the Pineland Station Campus on Hilton Head Island. Participants will be introduced to the fascinating field of genealogy, its unique nomenclature and suggested research techniques.

Contact OLLI for further information at:

Bluffton office at 843-208-8247,

Beaufort office at 843-521-4113,

Hilton Head office at 843-208-8239.

Or, contact the OLLI Director Dan Campbell at 843-208-8249 or Campbe35@uscb.edu.

IN THE NEWS

Freedmen's Records Online

A new useful source is now on FamilySearch, one of the sites available to HLF members: digitized records from the Freedmen's Bureau in Virginia.

The Associated Press story July 10 notes:

"The online database that lists marriages, birth certificates, contracts and even some personal narratives will offer a trove of detail to historians descendants of slaves who have struggled to piece together family histories obscured by the institution of slavery."

The Virginia compilation is the first in the nation, but organizers said their efforts would be repeated throughout the South.

Read the complete story here:

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/florida/AP/story/1134810.html>

**Volunteers Urgently Needed**

Today more than ever people like you, with interests like yours, are needed here at the Heritage Library. Volunteers staff the administration and do research. Ever-new problems to solve make for interesting and rewarding work. We are all volunteers; without us the Library would not exist.

Even if you are available only a few hours a month, you'll find something here waiting for your personal touch. You can be a greeter at the reception desk, or assist with one of several of our ongoing research projects (some are listed on Page 2), or help with our growing map collection. The vertical files always need help and have the potential of yielding fascinating unpublished items.

Perhaps you would rather become a librarian on duty for a given day where your knowledge of history or genealogical research can assist our patrons in their work.

We will train all new volunteers and will be grateful for your help. If you would like to know more, please call Isobel Bitner at 843-686-6560 or stop in to see her on a Thursday.



Our tent at the Hilton Head/Savannah Equestrian Exhibition. "It was a most successful day and great fun as we enjoyed the equestrian events of the day. We also served refreshments to those guests who stopped by," wrote Iva Welton. As a beneficiary of the event, the Hilton Head Library Foundation appreciates receiving a check from Equus Ventures, Dr. Sandy S. Termotto, President.

**Know Anyone Who Needs Office Space?**

In making our move, we had to leave behind 369 square feet in the Courtyard Building on Hilton Head Island that was on a separate lease. We would consider renting it at a bargain price until our lease is up. (After that, the renter would deal with the owners of the building.)

Two offices, a closet, and an entry hall. For more information call Bill Altstaetter at 843-686-6560.