

NEWSLETTER

Lower Altamaha Historical Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 1405
Darien, Georgia 31305

March 1997

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Meetings are held at the Ida Hilton Public Library, Haynes Auditorium, on the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 P.M. The Society extends a hearty welcome to all.

**LAHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, March 20, 1997, 4:30 P.M.
HAYNES AUDITORIUM, IDA HILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY**

The members of LAHS are welcome to attend the Board Meetings.

**LAHS MEETING, MARCH 20, 1997, 7:30 P.M.
HAYNES AUDITORIUM, IDA HILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
DUTCH TREAT SUPPER, 6:00 P.M. AT ARCHIE'S**

OSSABAW ISLAND SUBJECT OF MARCH LAHS PROGRAM

One of coastal Georgia's largest barrier islands, Ossabaw, will be the focus of the March 20 meeting of LAHS. The guest speaker will be Trey Coursey of the Ossabaw Island Foundation of Savannah. Mr. Coursey will discuss the mission of the Foundation and present a slide program about the history and architecture of Ossabaw Island and the plans for future programs and activities. Mr. Coursey is a native and current resident of Richmond Hill. He is a graduate of Georgia Southern University and for two years worked on the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games. He has been with the Ossabaw Foundation since January of this year. Ossabaw was sold to the State of Georgia in 1978 by Eleanor Torrey West, whose family bought the island in 1924. Mrs. West continues to live on the island in the Spanish-Mediterranean style mansion her parents built in 1926.

SPECIAL EVENT:

FORT KING GEORGE HISTORIC SITE

March 21-22

Spring Encampment

Friday 10-4 pm

Saturday 11-5 pm

A living history portrayal of early 18th century life at Ft. King George on the frontier that was to become Georgia. Demonstrations will be ongoing through the day: musket firings, drilling, cannon firings, tomahawk throwing, domestic skills, children's games, cooking, dyeing, candle making and more.

On Saturday, the encampment will be highlighted by a battle between the British and the Spanish at 2pm. Reenactors from all over the southeast will be participating in the special event portraying Ft. King George soldiers, Independent Companies, Spanish Garrison soldiers, Rangers, and Native Americans.

The program Friday will be set aside for school groups that make advanced reservations.

GRATITUDE FOR HOSPITALITY

March--Tanis Cross and Lou McDuffie

Correction for *Living on the Georgia Tidewater*, January 1997.

The Schimdt house in Darien was purchased from Thomas Goulding Stacy rather

than Francis R. Goulding.

LIVING ON THE GEORGIA TIDEWATER

JOHN HENRY FISHER 1874-1944 & ANNE ELIZABETH McCOSKER FISHER 1883-1930 were the parents of Annie Cannon Fisher Gill and Mary Leontina Fisher Barber, F. J. (Joe) Fisher and Charles McCosker Fisher of Richmond, Virginia. The following is just a portion of their living experiences on the Georgia tidewater in the early part of this century, told by Annie Fisher Gill.

John Henry Fisher was born in his parents home located in the Ashantilly Community on January 20, 1874. He was the fourth child of John Michael and Christina Leontina Fisher. John Henry attended local schools in McIntosh County, and attended Georgia Military College in Milledgeville, Georgia. With his brothers he worked in his father's bakery and general store. By 1898 he was old enough to assume the job of baking, with the help of his brothers, and with his father still supervising.

After the 1898 tidal wave had swept over Hird Island and destroyed everything they owned, the Charles Joseph McCosker family, consisting of Annie Columbia Cannon McCosker and her seven children, ranging in age from one to seventeen years old [Anne Elizabeth was 15 years old], her two bachelor brothers, Andrew Murray Cannon, 47 years old, and Montgomery Knox Cannon, 44 years old and a nephew, Jim Derverger, 32 years old, moved into the L.E.B. DeLorme home about a half mile south of the Ridge. The DeLorme house was adjacent to the William Konetzko country home, which had previously been owned by Captain A.S. Barnwell.

It is not known how or when John Henry Fisher and Anne Elizabeth McCosker met. A double home wedding was announced for April 24, 1901 for Anne Elizabeth McCosker & John Henry Fisher and Ruth Eliza McCosker & Arthur Konetzko.

John Henry Fisher's younger brother, Freddie, suffered a ruptured appendix in April, his father John Michael Fisher went with him to Savannah for surgery and treatment. They made the trip on the regular schedule train. Johnny Fisher had to run the bakery and the wedding was postponed until June 12, 1901, when Rev. William C. Schaeffer, the Lutheran minister of Savannah came to marry them at the home of the bride.

Anne and Johnny Fisher lived in the Fisher home at Ashantilly settlement until winter, when they moved to the apartment over the store in Darien. They went back to the Ashantilly settlement in the spring where their first son, John Michael Fisher II was born May 2, 1902. Johnny Fisher had two sons, Alford George and Robert Richard by a previous union. Ann and Johnny never moved from this home again. Mom Catherine Francis, born into slavery, was the Mid-Wife that attended Ann at the birth of her seven children in this house Today this Ashantilly settlement house is occupied by Joe Fisher and his daughter and her husband, Lottie and Dan Hawthorne. About 1900, John Michael created "Hopesfield" on the Shell Road for his home with his other sons.

Before 1900 some of the sawmills had closed down, some stores closed and their owners moved away. The economy was very poor. The Fisher family continued to operate the bakery and store. The John Henry Fisher family continued to grow ; Rosa Phillipina born 1904, Annie Cannon born 1906, Charles McCosker born 1908, William James born 1910.

Mr. Jesse A. Britt was Ordinary (Probate Judge) he owned and occupied the brick store directly across Broad Street from Fisher's Store. This long, low, brick building (still standing) was partly partitioned into several segments. The segment nearest Screven Street was the grocery store in which he sold the usual items and also fresh vegetables from the garden he planted just below the store toward the Darien River. The next segment was the Ordinary Office, nicely furnished. From the third section Mr. Britt sold used furniture and coffins. The City of Darien owned a hearse but there was no undertaker.

On April 26, 1911 Charles Joseph Fisher died of Bright's Disease at Hopesfield. Family and friends did whatever was necessary to prepare the body for burial. The coffin was placed in the middle of the living room on two high back dining room chairs. All other furniture was pushed back against the wall. All of John Henry Fisher's children were brought in to tell Uncle Charlie "Goodby". Mrs. Clauda Legare Britt picked up the smaller children so they could see his face and just say "Goodby Uncle Charlie". The smaller children did not attend the burial in St. Andrew's Cemetery.

John Michael Fisher was now nearly eighty years old and his health had not been good for some time. He had pneumonia, recuperated and then had pneumonia again. Dr. P. S. Clark insisted he must give up riding his horse to and from town. This upset him. He really resented being driven to town by his youngest son, Willie, in a Basket Buggy drawn by the marsh tacky, Lou. He died at home at Hopesfield, May 10, 1913 and was buried at St. Andrews Cemetery.

Johnny Fisher was now responsible for running the business which had always been managed by his father. He continued with the bakery with the help of Freddie and Willie and his son Robert. Robert learned early to be a good cook and baker.

One room of the servant house in the Fisher's yard was converted to a school house. Rev. William McWirr Young's granddaughter Lilly Bud Long had been away at college and when she came home she taught the older boys Robert and John for awhile. Alf, Robert and John Fisher walked to the McCosker home to meet Montgomery and John McCosker and Wallie Konetzko [Ruth McCosker Konetzko daughters] to walk on to the Ridge to school. It wasn't until 1912 that the Fisher children started attending Darien school. They continued to walk to and from school for some time. The first school bus was a Reo Low- Geared delivery truck converted to a school bus. The first driver [perhaps owner] was Willie Blount. He said it was a waste of time to stop for the Fisher children because by the time he got the truck stopped and started again, the Fisher children were already in town.

Each class in school was taught calisthenics each day by their teachers.

Each teacher had two grades in her room. Students were taught how to walk correctly and erectly by balancing a book on one's head. That is the way the Fisher children walked to school most of the time.

On April 8, 1915 Alfred Fisher, 17 years of age, enlisted in the U. S. Army. He was assigned to the Eleventh Cavalry at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia.

He had not been away from home before and didn't realize he should have sent his parents his address. It took some time through our Congressman to find him. Alf was upset that he hadn't received any mail from home. The Cavalry was a natural for him. He had been around horses and guns all of his life.

In January he came home on a ten day furlough. In March his troop was sent to New Mexico on their way to fight Pancho Villa in Mexico. They were in Mexico about a year before returning to Fort Oglethorpe. Almost immediately they were sent to New Port News, Virginia. In September he was transferred to the Eighty second Division at Camp Gordon, Georgia. He was put in Company "C" of the Three Hundred and Nineteenth Machine Gun Battalion. The "C" Company was transferred to the Three Hundred and Twentieth Machine Gun Battalion and was made "D" Company. On April 12 they left Camp Gordon for Upton, N.Y. On April 24, they left camp on troop ship CRONIA and sailed for Europe. On May 7th they arrived at Liverpool about 2 o'clock and boarded a train for Camp Woodley at Ramag England.