

The Altamaha Echoes

Lower Altamaha Historical Society Newsletter January 2002

LAHS Board of Directors Meeting, January 17, 2002 – 4:30 P.M.
St. Andrew's Parish House

LAHS Meeting, January 17, 2002, 7:00 P.M. – St. Andrew's Parish House
HOSPITALITY Oscar & Daneen Brinckmann, Norman & Shirley Larson
Dutch Treat Supper, 5:45 P.M. at B & J Pizza

"Medicine & Treatment in Eighteenth Century America" will be the program, presented by Scott Hodges. Hodges, a Professional Actor, will take on the character of Dr. Dalzell, to present this interesting, informative and entertaining subject. Dr. Dalzell was the first surgeon at Fort King George. The Fort built in 1721, was the first English Settlement in Georgia.

Scott, a native of Hodges, South Carolina, studied history at William and Mary College in Virginia. He served his apprenticeship at Williamsburg and Jamestown Virginia. Scott has worked very closely with the staff at Fort King George with the reenactments at the Fort. As a professional actor, Hodges has been in several Documentaries for the State of Georgia. He was a member of the cast in Columbia Pictures, Inc. productions "Last of the Mohicans" and "Patriot".

Scott and Debra his wife and Allysa his 10 year old daughter live in Brunswick.

LAHS Meeting, February 21, 2002, 7:00 P.M. – St. Andrew's Parish House
HOSPITALITY: Robert & Elizabeth Ewing, Carolyn Hill
Dutch Treat Supper, 5:45 P.M. at B&J Pizza

"Military Operations in Coastal Georgia during the Civil War" will be the program, presented by Buddy Sullivan. Buddy will cover both land and naval forces as he explains this critical time in our country's history.

Buddy Sullivan is on Board of Curators of the Georgia Historical Society and serves as Vice-President for Coastal Georgia for this organization. He is President of Richmond Hill Historical Society, and immediate past president of Lower Altamaha Historical Society. He is Director of the Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve. Buddy is author of twelve books on various aspects of coastal Georgia history, including comprehensive histories of McIntosh and Bryan counties. His primary areas of research interests are nineteenth century tidewater rice cultivation and Georgia coastal maritime and navigational history.

LAHS Board of Directors Meeting, March 21, 2002, 4:30 P.M.

Location – To Be Announced

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

LAHS Meeting, March 21, 2002, 7:00 P.M.

Location -- To be Announced

HOSPITALITY: Rogers & Casey MacMillan, Dee Ingram

Dutch Treat Supper, 5:45 P.M. at B&J Pizza

"**Life and Times of Scots in Darien**" will be the program, presented by Dr. Anthony W. Parker, FCS, ILTM, Director, School of American Studies, University of Dundee, Scotland UK.

Tony Parker was graduated from the University of Georgia with a BA (Magna Cum Laude) and an MA in History under the supervision of the late Professor Phinizy Spalding. He then attended the University of St. Andrews, Scotland where He studied under the Historiographer Royal for Scotland, Professor I. C. Smout. He received his PhD in Scottish History in 1996. His book, *Scottish Highlanders in Colonial Georgia: the recruitment, emigration, and settlement at Darien, 1733-1748*, was published by the University of Georgia Press in 1997. Dr. Parker has been recently recognized by **Who's Who in Scotland** for entry in the 2002 edition.

**Fort King George
Scottish Heritage Days**

Friday and Saturday March 22nd & 23rd 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

In 1736, General James Oglethorpe brought a group of Scottish Highlanders to Southeast Georgia. Valued for their tenacity on the battlefield, these men were commissioned, along with their families, to defend the southern frontier from possible Spanish incursions. In this event we pay tribute to those brave Scots who settled Darien and were so instrumental in expelling the Spanish as a threat to Britain's hold over this area.

Reenactments of "Battle of Mosa" (outskirts of St. Augustine, 1739, victory for the Spanish), and Battle of Bloody Marsh (St Simons Island, 1742, Scottish Highlanders get their revenge) will be conducted. Activities and festivities relating to Scottish culture, including Bagpipes and Kilts (modern and original) will be prevalent at the Fort. Presentations of Colonial Crafts and Coastal Georgia Native Americans may be seen at the Fort.

Ida Hilton Public Library, Darien: During the week, Scottish Films and Lectures to be held. Books will be on display.

"**Life and Times of Scots in Darien**" by Dr. A. W. Parker – March 21, – (see above)

"**Kirking of the Tartans**" First Presbyterian Church, Darien – March 24, – 11:00 a.m.

Living on the Georgia Tidewater – In 1997, the University of Georgia Press, published Dr. Tony Parker's book, *Scottish Highlanders in Colonial Georgia – The Recruitment, Emigration, and Settlement at Darien, 1733 – 1748*. The following are excerpts from this book. Dr. Parker will be autographing his book during the Scottish Heritage Days.

The Founding of Darien

The morning of 10 January 1736 launched a day filled with excitement, anticipation, and, no doubt, some trepidations for the newly arriving immigrants from the Highlands of Scotland. On board ship was a mixture of people preparing to make a new start in a new world: ardent Jacobites and strong supporters of the Hanoverian government, Episcopalian and Presbyterians, a mariner, a surgeon, three tailors, one joiner, one weaver, four men listed as gentlemen, twenty-five farmers, seventy men named as servants or laborers, a minister, and the complement of women and children that made up the families of this settlement on the British southern frontier in America. As Savannah came into view, the *Prince of Wales*, commanded by Captain George Dunbar, sailed into the harbor at Tybee Roads on the coast of the colony of Georgia, after nearly three months on the wintry Atlantic. As ordered, Lieutenant Hugh Mackay immediately set about sending the immigrants to Barnwell's Bluff on the Altamaha River, which was to become their new home. Mackay left first with a detachment of the men in the periaguas to take possession of the site and erect a shelter for the rest.

of the families, who were to follow later.

The little flotilla sailed down the coast of Georgia and in less than a week reached the mouth of the Altamaha River. They then traveled through the low marshy islands that divided the broad river into narrow channels until the group landed at the foot of the first high ground. This had been the site of Fort King George, Britain's first attempt to defend the southernmost frontier of her continental colonies. It had been abandoned in 1727. Within a mile and half of the fort's ruins, the Highlanders decided to make their stand and build their settlement. They called the town Darien "at their own desire," certainly named after the failed attempt at a Scottish settlement in 1698 on the Isthmus of Darien in Panama. That venture failed because of tropical illness and the efforts of the Spanish to eliminate the settlers. Choice of Darien as a name seems to have been a gesture of defiance on the part of these new immigrants against the Spanish in Florida.

The spot designated was situated on the mainland, about twenty miles northwest of St. Simons Island. The town was built on a branch of the Altamaha River on a bluff twenty feet high; the site was surrounded on three sides by woods. The soil was sandy and black, with little to recommend it as fertile ground, but the site had not been chosen with agriculture in mind. The Spanish treat was to the south, which was the reason for the Highlanders' settlement at Darien. Some of the Carolina people tried to persuade the Scots to settle in Carolina and not to antagonize the Spanish by settling on the Altamaha. They attempted to discourage the Scots at their landing by saying that the settlement would be so close to the Spanish fort that the Highlanders would be shot from within the Spanish houses. With typical Highland bravado, the Scots replied, "We will beat them out of their fort and shall have houses ready built to live in."

Under Hugh Mackay's direction, the Highlanders immediately set to work to secure the site. The relatively mild temperature and clear sunny winter days in south Georgia, similar to the late spring and early summer of the Highlands, were an opportune time to do the heavy labor of clearing land out of a wilderness. The palmetto brush and scrub pine soon fell before axes, swords, and fire; within weeks Darien was taking shape. By the time General James

Oglethorpe arrived on 22 February, the Scots had constructed a "battery of four pieces of cannon, built a guardhouse, a storehouse, a chapel, and several huts for particular people." They had got so far as to build a house for the widow of one of their men who had died on the journey.

The experiences of a new world were not without lighthearted predicaments. En route to visit the new Scots' settlement, Oglethorpe's party met a boat carrying Hugh Mackay and John Cuthbert, who were coming from Darien bound for Savannah. Mackay and Cuthbert returned with Oglethorpe to Darien. Along the way Cuthbert told Oglethorpe's group the story of an unidentified Highlander's first encounter with a persimmon tree loaded with ripe fruit on one of the islands. The Scot could not climb the tree because it was too tall and thorny. Frustrated and not to be denied, the Highlander cut down the tree and "gathered some dozen," not thinking of future harvests.

As Oglethorpe arrived to view the new settlement and meet his southernmost defenders, they turned out under arms and presented a "most manly appearance with their Plaids, broadswords, targets, and firearms." This was a proud moment for the Highlanders as they donned their plaids and carried their traditional weapons, perhaps for the first time since the carrying of weapons by clansmen had been outlawed in Highlands in 1726. The young men who had signed on for the adventure of the frontier and were hopeful at the prospect of fighting the Spanish must have felt a keen sense of exhilaration when the general's boat landed on the shore at the foot of their settlement.

Oglethorpe was well pleased with what he saw at this busy new frontier outpost. In honor of the Highlanders, he had come dressed in the Highland "Habit." He must have looked comfortable and natural in it because Samuel Eveleigh, a member of Oglethorpe's party, reported later that when they arrived at Darien, several of the settlers cried out, "Mr. Oglethorpe, where's Mr. Oglethorpe?" — not being able to recognize him from the "rest of their brethren."

SAPALO ISLAND

National Estuarine Research Reserve

Sapelo Island enables visitors to see virtually every facet of a barrier island's natural community, from the diversified wildlife of the forested uplands, to the vast expanses of salt marsh and the complex beach and dunes systems. The Visitor Center, located near the mainland ferry dock brings to life both the natural and cultural history of Sapelo, while guided tours of the island enable visitors to experience the African-American community of Hog Hammock, the University of Georgia Marine Institute, the Reynolds Mansion and Sapelo Island's 1820 Lighthouse.

SAPALO ISLAND VISITORS CENTER 912 437 3224 in Meridian is open daily except Mondays. This interpretive center for Sapelo has much to offer. Reservations for the four hour regular tours of the Island on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays and the six hour extended tour on the last Tuesday of each month are made here. A Gift Shop which includes Books, Art Objects, Pictures and Posters and wearing apparel is available at the Visitors Center.

SAPALO ISLAND NATIONAL
ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE
P.O. Box 15, Sapelo Island, Ga. 31327
Phone 912 485 2251, FAX: 485 2141

The SINERR is managed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Division, and is administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

FORT KING GEORGE STATE HISTORICAL SITE

P.O. Box 711-Darien, Ga. 31305----- 912-437-4770

SCOTTISH HERITAGE DAYS

Friday and Saturday March 22nd & 23rd 11a.m. - 5 p.m.

LOWER ALTAMAHA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Corporate & Life Memberships

Corp: Sapelo National Bank, William Parker, President
The Book Shop, Inc., Harold & Virginia Hicks
Coastal Georgia Historical Society

Life: Muriel Bell - Darien Telephone Co.
Mrs. Caroline B. Davis - Gus & Marg Hallum
Alfred W. Jones - Chris & Ward Milner
John Reehling - John & Mary Dean

LOWER ALTAMAHA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 1405 - Darien, Georgia 31305

Meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 P.M. The Society extends a hearty welcome to all.

LAHS OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2001-2002

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Secretary	Ann Baggett
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Past President -	Buddy Sullivan

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Darien, Georgia 31305
P.O. Box 1405

Lower Altamaha Historical Society, Inc.