

# Altamaha Echoes

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Lower Altamaha Historical Society Newsletter

August 2010

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*"The Mission of the Lower Altamaha Historical Society is to Preserve and Disseminate the History of McIntosh County."*

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2009-2010

Our 2009-2010 program year included the following: our picnic at Fort King George in July; Command Sergeant Major Clifton Johnson and his contingent from Fort Stewart visited in August to share the work of a sustainment brigade and its involvement with the community; and in September Teresa Williams, VSU's Graduate School's administrative coordinator and history instructor, told us about the roles women played during the Civil War, in particular, a black woman.

October was a very special month, as we met at Ashantilly to celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and to dedicate our brand new historical marker for Ashantilly, co-funded with GHS. Ashantilly Center and LAHS jointly sponsored the community festivity and the publication of Buddy Sullivan's history of Ashantilly. He was master of ceremony for the big day. Bill Merriman and his crew installed the new marker. Both groups provided the food and drink, and the Lord blessed us with a beautiful day that saw more than 100 people join us for the afternoon.

In November Michael Jordan brought his fascinating documentary, "Ships for Victory: Liberty Ships of the Georgia Coast." We learned of the magnitude and importance of all the Liberty ships built during WWII in Brunswick and Savannah. It was especially nostalgic for those of us whose family members were a part of that effort. We enjoyed another in a long line of fabulous Christmas parties in December at Belvedere Plantation Clubhouse thanks to our accomplished hosts, Bob and Jean Hawkins, and our eggnog master, Everett Moriarty.

Then in January, we had another return engagement with Pam Mueller as she gave us a review of her 3<sup>rd</sup> historical novel, "*Splendid Isolation: the Jekyll Island Millionaire's Club*," written from the perspective of four longtime employees. February saw the arrival of Ensign John Stewart (in the body of Jon Burpee from Fort Frederica National Monument) who told us the story of how he came to join the service of the British Crown, leave England, and end up in the Battle of Bloody Marsh. Our own dear Buddy Sullivan came in March to relate the story of sawmills, timber ships, and bar pilots in the saga of the logging industry in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Darien and McIntosh from his newest book, "*High Water on the Bar*." While he was handy, we awarded him an honorary life membership in LAHS – much deserved.

In April another old favorite of ours, historian Bill Ramsaur, brought to life the action of the Revolutionary War in 1778-1779 when the British devastated Liberty County, which at that time also included McIntosh County. A return visit from Al Sandrick came in May as he told us of Georgia's hurricane history, highlighting several major storms in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We ended the year with our picnic in June at Fort King George with the added bonus of playing some of the games that children and families in the early days of America's history enjoyed – researched and led for us by Jessie Clavin.

We lost a number of faithful members during the past year and they are missed. We are fortunate to have gained many wonderful new members, attracted in part by Howard Klippel's super programs and in part by our friendly members. Speaking of members, Everett Moriarty has been a member of LAHS for 26 years and in all that time has missed only one LAHS meeting. WOW!

This year's Buddy Sullivan Scholarship was awarded to Jacob Caldwell, an outstanding MCA graduate.

The Archives continues to be open every Thursday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and we received several valuable gifts during the year: maps and map table from Dan Good, and genealogical materials from members Ronnie Bacon and Richard Smith. We also purchased a much-needed

dehumidifier for the Archives building. Wonderful, fascinating materials are there for all you "history buffs" to delve into. Our book sales are a major source of income for us, with the Ashantilly book and "High Water on the Bar" as well as a new supply of our cemetery book which had been out of print for several years.

We started a scrapbook again, we printed an updated LAHS brochure, and continued our memberships in the Chamber of Commerce and the Altamaha Riverkeepers. An ad hoc committee did a complete assessment of all historical markers in McIntosh County, and as a result two new posts have been installed and a "missing" marker (Ardoch) was found and will be recast and returned to its site. The marker work will be ongoing as we try to clean up sites and make repairs. Maybe others of you could help with this effort.

We took an informative and delightful historic tour of St. Mary's, led by author, long time resident and local authority Eloise Thompson. Super time!

We continue our support of Fort King George, and they reciprocate, hosting our meetings and our Archives building, and we are very happy with this cooperative arrangement. Thanks, Steven. Others to whom I extend my thanks are Carole Williams ("Echoes"), Carol Churi (membership), Jim Bruce (web site), Ann Howard (scholarship), Casey MacMillan and Martha Carney (Archives), and Everett Moriarty (hospitality). Couldn't have done it without you!

My congratulations to our new leadership slate for 2010-2011. Give them your support. This organization is dear to my heart.

Harriet Roberson

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**LAHS MEETING, Thursday, August 19, 2010, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Fort King George Historic Site**  
**Dutch treat supper, 5:45 p.m., B&J's Steak & Seafood**

The fascinating story of "Flight 19," the loss of the TBM's in the Bermuda Triangle on December 5, 1945, will be presented by Walt Raczynski. Join us to find out what sparked his interest in this mystery.

Mr. Raczynski was born in New Jersey and lived there until he joined the Navy in August 1942. He made his first solo flight in St. Bonaventure. After further training, he graduated in October 1943 as an Ensign. He later was stationed in Jacksonville where he met his future wife, Bea Varnadoe. They were married in San Diego. He served as a Navy pilot in the South Pacific, including Guadalcanal and the Philippines. After 11 years service in the Navy, he attended Georgia Tech and graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering. He worked for GE for 30 years. He retired to Brunswick to fulfill a promise to his wife to return to her hometown.

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**LAHS MEETING, Thursday, September 16, 2010, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Fort King George Historic Site**  
**Dutch treat supper, 5:45 p.m., B&J's Steak & Seafood**

Harold Hicks will be speaking on his experience at the Dachau extermination camp and his part in the liberation of the survivors on April 29, 1945. He recently attended the 65<sup>th</sup> Holocaust Remembrance in Washington, D.C., where "liberators" were able to meet those who had been liberated from the many concentration/extermination camps.

Mr. Hicks, a Shellman resident, was commissioned with the U.S. Army Reserves in 1940, and called to active duty in September 1941 with the 62<sup>nd</sup> Coastal Defense Artillery. His unit shipped to England in 1942 where they were then assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps for Invasion Operation Torch in North Africa. That led to Operation Husky in Sicily, then assignment to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division in 1943. Mr. Hicks then served seven military campaigns with the Dog Face Division until the war ended. He left the Army in 1946 with the rank of Major.

**LAHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**Thursday, October 21, 2010, 4:30 p.m.**  
**Fort King George Historic Site**  
**LAHS members are always welcome.**

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**LAHS MEETING, Thursday, October 21, 2010, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Fort King George Historic Site**  
**Dutch treat supper, 5:45 p.m., B&J's Steak & Seafood**

*"Savannah Survives Sherman's March to the Sea"* – Jim Jordan returns with a presentation on Major General William T. Sherman's attempt to conquer the Confederate defenders and General William J. Hardee's subsequent escape. Jim will also describe the early days of the Union occupation and how local residents reacted to and survived under it.

Mr. Jordan is an historian, author, and lecturer specializing in the history and architecture of the 19<sup>th</sup> century South. His first book, *"Savannah Grey,"* an historical novel about life in Georgia during the thirty years leading up to the Civil War, was nominated for the 2007 Michael Shaara Award for Excellence in Civil War fiction. His article about the illegal, 1858 voyage of the slave ship *Wanderer* and the man who masterminded it, Charles Lamar, appeared in the fall 2009 issue of the *Georgia Historical Quarterly*. He is currently working on a non-fiction book about the northern newspaper reporters who worked undercover in Charleston during the months leading up to the attack on Ft. Sumter. Jim and his wife Kathleen live on Callawassie Island, S.C.

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News From the Board:

- We would like to welcome new Board Members Walter Pitts and Dee Slagle. Also, a new Board Member will be chosen to replace Lloyd as she serves as President.
- *"Cemeteries of McIntosh County,"* which lists every cemetery and grave through 1998, has been reprinted and is available for purchase on our website or at regular meetings.
- Chuck Bryans has agreed to serve as Books & Publications Chairperson.

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*Coming Events:*

*Saturday, August 21, 7:00-8:00 p.m.:* AN EVENING WITH JAMES EDWARD OGLETHORPE, as he recounts tales of settling Georgia, Fort Frederica National Monument

*Saturday, September 11, 7:00-8:00 p.m.:* AN EVENING WITH FRANCIS MOORE, Oglethorpe's Secretary, as he recounts tales of Frederica Town, Fort Frederica National Monument

*Saturday, November 13, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.:* THE DEBATABLE LAND AUTUMN ENCAMPMENT, with a battle reenactment at 2:00 p.m., Fort King George Historic Site

**In Memoriam**

Virginia Hicks

Marion F. Ricker, Past President LAHS

**LOWER ALTAMAHA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
P.O. Box 1405 – Darien, GA 31305  
[www.loweraltamahahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.loweraltamahahistoricalsociety.org)

LAHS Officers

|                          |                   |              |
|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| President (2010-2011)    | Lloyd Y. Flanders | 912-437-4504 |
| Vice-President (2009-11) | Jack Godfrey      | 912-832-5622 |
| Secretary (2010-2012)    | Lota Bryans       | 912-832-5421 |
| Treasurer (2009-2011)    | Betty Cleveland   | 912-832-2166 |

Board 2009-2011

Vivian Amason  
Chuck Bryans  
Jessie Clavin

Board 2010-2012

Betty Ewing  
Walter Pitts  
Dee Slagle  
Carole Williams

Past-President  
Director Emeritus

Harriet Roberson  
Buddy Sullivan

Committee Chairpersons

|                    |                              |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Ft. King George    | Steven Smith                 |
| Membership         | Carol Churi                  |
| Programs           | Howard Klippel               |
| Scholarship        | Ann Howard                   |
| Field Trips        | Harriet Roberson             |
| Altamaha "Echoes"  | Carole Williams              |
| Publications/Books | Chuck Bryans                 |
| Historian          | Buddy Sullivan               |
| Hospitality        | Everett Moriarty             |
| Webmaster          | Jim Bruce                    |
| Archives           | Casey McMillan/Martha Carney |

Life Memberships

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|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Muriel Bell               | Bill Jones III          |
| Marsha Certain            | David Miller            |
| Coastal GA Historical Soc | Chris & Ward Milner     |
| Darien Telephone Co.      | Bill & Sherry Minnich   |
| Mrs. Caroline B. Davis    | Barbara Poetzman        |
| John & Mary Dean          | Frances Pollard         |
| Enterprise Rent-A-Car     | John Reehling           |
| Lloyd Y. Flanders         | Sapelo National Bank    |
| Read Gignilliat           | Jeff & Kelly Spratt     |
| Gus & Marg Hallum         | Eloise Thompson         |
| Cecil & Sandra Hudson     | Jesse & Glenda Varnedoe |

Honorary Life Memberships

|                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Ralph Gill Jr.   | Myrtle Newberry      |
| Mattie Gladstone | Lillian Schaitberger |
| Everett Moriarty | Buddy Sullivan       |

**FORT KING GEORGE STATE HISTORIC SITE**  
P.O. Box 711 – Darien, GA 31305 ---- 912-437-4770  
[www.gastateparks.org/fortkinggeorge](http://www.gastateparks.org/fortkinggeorge)

*The oldest English fort remaining on Georgia's coast.*

**GARRISON DINNER**

Saturday, October 16, 2010  
7 pm – 8:30 pm

*Our British Officers dispute with a group of Spanish Emissaries sent to protest the presence of Fort King George on the Altamaha River. Reservations required. \$30.00.*

**OUR ARCHIVES/LIBRARY BUILDING,  
ON THE GROUNDS OF  
FORT KING GEORGE HISTORIC SITE,  
IS OPEN EVERY THURSDAY  
FROM 11:00 A.M. TO 3:00 P.M.**



*Have you forgotten? Dues for LAHS were due in January. Paid membership guarantees your subscription to our Altamaha Echoes and admission to the Christmas party. PLEASE RENEW TODAY! You may contact Carol Churi, Membership Chairman, at [cchuri@dariantel.net](mailto:cchuri@dariantel.net) or 912-437-4477. Thanks for your support!*



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