

Altamaha Echoes

Lower Altamaha Historical Society



“The mission of L.A.H.S. is to Preserve and Disseminate the History of McIntosh County.”

A Word from Paul

Hello, LAHS members!

Our fourth quarter field trip to Little St. Simons Island was a great time. We were treated to a pontoon boat ride, toured the historic lodge, and spent time at the beautiful beach. Scott Coleman did an excellent job filling us in on the role of the Center for Coastal Conservation.

We welcome a new year, new members and renewed memberships! We started the year off with Author John B. Edwards and his presentation, “The Past is Never Dead”. It was standing room only and well received.

Our trip to tour St. Marys City is back on! Saturday, March 22 and there is still room for more. Sign up on our website.

This May we will have a few slots open on our Board of Directors. If anyone has a little extra time and would like to contribute to the success of our society, let us know! It’s a great way to meet others and contribute to our future.

The Board of Directors is excited to share our new membership program rolling out in 2025. Several significant changes include new membership levels, dues, and benefits. Please bear with us as we make these changes.

We need volunteers! Please join us as we promote LAHS at the Blessing of the Fleet on Saturday, April 12 from 9-5. One or two hour time slots would really be appreciated. Sign-up sheets will be at the February and March presentations.

Lastly, the LAHS community has lost a very special lady, Mrs. Marian Hodge Stevens. Marian was a supporter of LAHS for many years, coming up to the Fort from Brunswick for the monthly meetings. When I saw her coming into the room, she always met me with an eager smile, that seemed to glow like that of an excited child. She will indeed be missed by all who knew her. Her husband Steve Stevens was a BOD member. We are fortunate to have acquired some of her history books for our archives. See our Memorial on page 3.

I’m looking forward to all the exciting, new things happening this year.

Best regards,

Paul

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2023-24: Martha Martin, Nathan Johns
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Upcoming Meetings

- Feb. 20: Jim Page from Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division, will talk about invasive aquatic species in the coastal wetland. Jim Page is the Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinator
- March 20: Matt Rowe from Georgia DNR, Wildlife Conservation Division, will talk about research in freshwater mussel conservation, ecology, biology, and genetics.
- April 17: TO BE ANNOUNCED (See our website or check your email)

Please note: There is now a \$5 admission fee for non-members to all monthly programs

Upcoming Field Trip

March 22: Tour historic St. Marys with Molly's Old South Tours, and visit the John Houston McIntosh Sugarhouse, 6 miles North of town. Meet at the Osborne Street Waterfront Pavilion at 9:45am. Cost \$25 for members only. For more info and to *sign up now* at www.loweraltamahahistoricalsociety.org



Coming Events

Valentine's Tea: Sat. Feb. 15, 2-4pm. Fort King George Historic Site, Darien. Celebrate Valentine's Weekend in the Officer's Barracks! Tea service and small snacks provided. Perfect for couples, friends, and history lovers! Space is limited, reserve today by calling 912-437-4770. Cost: \$15 per person.



Present & Fire! Sat. Feb. 22, 1-4pm. Fort King George Historic Site, Darien. Like a good boom? A Redcoat soldier will be stationed in the fort's barracks to discuss arms, ammunition, and drilling in the 18th century. \$4.75-\$8.25.

Scottish Heritage Days: Fri. & Sat. March 7 & 8: 10am-4pm. Fort King George Historic Site, Darien. The fort's annual event! Witness a variety of Scottish history demonstrations: musket & cannon firings, blacksmithing, carpentry, medicine, cooking, music, and more. \$4.75-\$8.25 <https://gastateparks.org/FortKingGeorge>

Coastal WildScapes Spring Native Plant Sale: Sat. April 5: 9am - 1pm. Ashantilly Center, 15591 GA-99, Darien.

Purchase your favorite native plants for your gardens.

<https://www.coastalwildscapes.org/event-5974666>



57th Annual Blessing of the Fleet-Darien's most cherished annual tradition! This three-day festival Honors the hardworking shrimping community with a vibrant blend of family fun, cultural heritage and Southern hospitality.

LAHS will be there! Stop by Saturday the 12th and say "HI" or better yet: volunteer for an hour or two. See old friends and meet new ones.





In Memoriam

Marian Stevens



Marian Hodge Stevens, 98, died Saturday, Dec. 14, 2025, after a prolonged illness.

Marian was born in 1926, in Brunswick. She graduated from Summerville High School, N.C. in 1943. Marian attended Winthrop College in Rock Hill, S.C., where she graduated in three years with a bachelor's degree in business.

After college, she returned to Brunswick where she worked for 14 years at the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Co.

Marian Hodge married Norman Wilcox "Steve" Stevens in 1958 and was married to him until his death in 2014. After her time at Southern Bell, Mrs. Stevens obtained a master's degree in library science from the University of Alabama. She worked as school librarian at Brunswick High School, where she shared her love of reading with the students of Brunswick for 28 years.

Upon retirement, Mrs. Stevens expressed her deep love for Brunswick and the Golden Isles by volunteering with the St. Simons Island Lighthouse Museum, the Lower Altamaha Historical Society, Coastal Georgia Historical Society, Friends of the Brunswick-Glynn County Library, Friends of Sapelo, Alpha Delta Kappa and the Shoreline Dance Club.

When Marian was 94, her youngest grandchildren interviewed her and learned that her favorite childhood activities were climbing trees, bicycling, and of course, reading. Her joy in reading never faded but expanded to include "telling other people what to read." Her curiosity about people and places endured throughout her life, and, as she put it, she never met a stranger.

Mrs. Stevens is survived by her two daughters, a son and five grandchildren. A memorial service was held on Saturday, Dec. 21 at First Presbyterian Church of Brunswick, in Brunswick.

From some of the people who knew her:

- "I loved Marian. Her smile brightened many lives, including mine. My prayers are with her children who loved her beyond measure." Karen D.
- "Mrs. Stevens was a great and very helpful librarian at Brunswick High School when I graduated in 1973. Many years later, I enjoyed talking with Marian and Steve when we took ballroom dancing lessons at the original Cloister on Sea Island. They looked great together on the dance floor!" Sam S.
- "Mrs. Stevens was always a beacon of light in the library at Brunswick High School; always friendly and displaying a smile. I recall how helpful she was, and she touched so many young lives during her tenure at BHS. Godspeed Mrs. Stevens." David G.
- "I met Marian when she and "Steve" came to my Silver Sneakers classes at the YMCA. They were always such a gracious couple. They would invite me to go to lunch with them on Fridays and would entertain me with stories from their past. When I learned of their love of ballroom dancing, I nicknamed Marian "Tiny Dancer" because she was so graceful and light on her feet. I got to know Marian even better after Steve passed because Susan asked if I could come to her house and do "Silver Sneakers" exercises with her. She amazed me that she was so coordinated and strong even into her 90s. We would chair dance and have such fun! I will always remember this remarkable lady for her kindness, sense of fun and adventuresome spirit. She gave me a wisteria clipping years ago and I always think of her when it blooms in the Spring." Suzanne T.


SPOTLIGHT
Coastal Georgia Historical Society

For over five decades, the Coastal Georgia Historical Society has meticulously safeguarded historic collections and structures like the Lighthouse, Keeper's Dwelling and the Historic Coast Guard Station at East Beach. Initially opening the Keeper's Dwelling as a coastal history museum in 1975, the Society later managed public access to the Lighthouse tower. Acquiring the Lighthouse through the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act in 2004, the Society undertook significant restoration efforts completed in 2010 and 2014. They also converted the Coast Guard Station into the Home Front Museum, celebrating Glynn County's wartime contributions. A recent capital campaign marking the Lighthouse's 150th birthday raised over \$1 million for preservation. Now that the Preservation Fund has \$2 million, the Historical Society can plan for proactive maintenance. With 65,000 annual museum visitors and several hundred thousand visiting the grounds and Lighthouse, this work ensures these iconic landmarks will receive the specialized care that they need and remain available to the public well into the future.



Keeper's Dwelling and St. Simons Lighthouse,
St. Simons Island, GA.

Photo courtesy Coastal Georgia Historical Society.org



Excellence in Stewardship

Awards recognizes those who ensure the preservation of historic properties through long-term care and maintenance, stabilization, protection or continuous family ownership.

Congratulations CGHS!

NEW!
Membership info

2025 Lower Altamaha Historical Society Membership Program

The purpose of the Lower Altamaha Historical Society (LAHS) membership program is to support advocacy and education to preserve and interpret the Lower Altamaha River corridor's valuable cultural, environmental, and historical assets. LAHS hosts monthly educational programming and special events to deepen knowledge and connection to the area's unique character and history to foster stewardship and appreciation.

Individual membership: \$50

Individual membership benefits include free access to all monthly programs, a quarterly e-newsletter, discounted and early access invitations to special field trips, and an invitation for you and one guest to the holiday dinner and summer picnic. You will also receive a welcome gift for joining LAHS.

Family Membership: \$75 (2 adults and up to 4 children)

All of the above benefits extended to up to two household adults and up to four household children. You can add family members for \$5 per person annually.

Members are encouraged to introduce friends and neighbors to LAHS programming through complimentary admission for up to four guests annually.

Memberships cont.'

Oglethorpe Society: \$500

The Oglethorpe Society is an annual membership that directly supports the higher education of McIntosh County high school students who show exemplary academic and community service and a special interest in the history and environment of their hometown through the Buddy Sullivan Scholarship Program. Benefits include those included in Individual and Family memberships and an exclusive invitation to an annual event to honor major donors and scholarship recipients. LAHS will recognize Oglethorpe Society members in the LAHS newsletter and annual meeting.



Noteworthy

www.theforgottensouth.com

Photography & Stories of Forgotten Places

“My name is Kelly Gomez. I am the Photographer, Researcher, and Cemetery Advocate behind The Forgotten South. The Forgotten South began in 2010 as the hobby photography project of a history nerd. Since then, I have traveled countless miles of rural roads, looking for the places time forgot. Then I dig in to research their stories to share with y’all. I collect data to unearth as much history as possible about each property that I find, through property records, census data, birth & death certificates, obituaries, old newspapers, and other resources. I am typically drawn to the more-forgotten places with stories we haven’t heard before. The sites I focus on are often abandoned, while others are just less known. Most of these places represent the hard-working families who left their farms to crumble for one reason or another. These places don't have plaques, memorials, or even records that they ever stood. I aim to fix that.

I wish I could save all these places, but since I can't, at the least, I can preserve them through stories and photographs that I get to share with you. Whenever possible, I do what I can to advocate on the behalf of places that have a chance to be saved.

I am enthusiastic about documenting and sharing the stories from every corner of the Old South and I’m happy to have you along for the journey. I hope you will follow along as I add more stories of old places to the blog!”

Kelly’s website is fascinating! She has photographed 1,521 historic sites across 12 states. Check it out at

www.theforgottensouth.com



Parker Farm Turpentine
Cabins
Long County, GA.,
c. early 1900’s

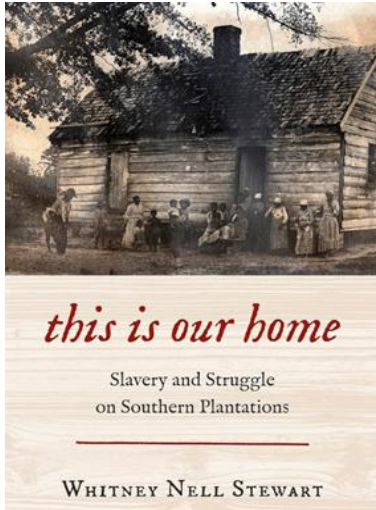


This collection of buildings was once at the center of a bustling community that depended upon the vast pine forests in South Georgia. A community that was created upon the turpentine industry, which thrived here until the 1960’s. Jimmy Parker III restored the cabin where he was born and the commissary building in the early 2000’s. Now, nothing more than a quiet crossroads along a rural highway, it was known as Rye Patch and later as Wefamie. *Photos & text courtesy of Kelly Gomez*

Book of Interest

This Is Our Home: Slavery and Struggle on Southern Plantations by Whitney Nell Stewart, Paperback, Nov. 14, 2023

The cultural memory of plantations in the Old South has long been clouded by myth. A recent reckoning with the centrality of slavery to the US national story, however, has shifted the meaning of these sites. Plantations are no longer simply seen as places of beauty and grandiose hospitality; their reality as spaces of enslavement, exploitation, and violence is increasingly at the forefront of our scholarly and public narratives. Yet even this reckoning obscures what these sites meant to so many forced to live and labor on them: plantations were Black homes as much as white.

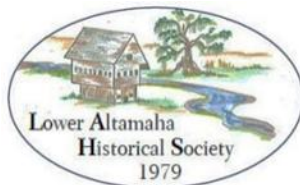


Insightfully reading the built environment of plantations, considering artifact fragments found in excavations of slave dwellings, and drawing on legal records and plantation owners' papers, Whitney Nell Stewart illuminates how enslaved people struggled to make home amid innumerable constraints and obstacles imposed by white southerners. By exploring the material remnants of the past, Stewart demonstrates how homemaking was a crucial part of the battle over slavery and freedom, a fight that continues today in consequential confrontations over who has the right to call this nation home.

We have a facebook page!

Please like and follow us at Lower Altamaha Historical Society

We have 276 followers!



www.loweraltamahahistoricalsociety.org

MEMBERSHIP DUES RENEWEL

If you haven't already, please remit your dues today.

Join with others interested in learning more about this amazing place we get to call *home*.

Memberships

Annual: Family - \$75 Individual - \$50 Oglethorpe Society- \$500

Pay w/credit card or PayPal on the LAHS website at www.loweraltamahahistoricalsociety.org

Or Make your check payable to LAHS and bring to the meeting.

Or Mail to LAHS, P.O. Box 1405, Darien, GA. 31305

Welcome New Members!

Helen Fore Bennett, Joesph & Ellen Castongia, Aaron Ellrich, Bill & Julie Fisher,
Timothy Spaulding, Michele White, Anna Williams

