



Guale News

FEBRUARY 1999

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LET'S MEET

FIRST MEETING OF 1999

NATIONAL PARK HISTORIAN

JOHN MITCHELL TO SPEAK

Tuesday, February 9, 7:00 p.m.

Guale Room, St. Marys Public Library

Executive Session 6:30 p.m.

You will want to hear John speak. He will be talking about the new Cumberland Island Museum which will be opening in St. Marys. Along with his discussion, there will be a display of some of the artifacts that will be exhibited in the museum. Now's your chance to get a sneak preview.

He will also discuss some of the historical buildings preservation projects that are either ongoing or scheduled on the island.

Don't miss the opportunity to hear a firsthand report of Cumberland Island activities.

THE LATEST ON GROVER ISLAND

Letters and memos went to local members in December asking them to attend a public hearing about the proposed development on Grover Island and a bridge spanning Grover Creek by owners Sea Island Company. A follow-up memo was sent asking that recipients write the company voicing their opinions.

The island is located on the north side of Crooked River across from Harriets Bluff to the west and Crooked River State Park to the east.

For the benefit of you who live out of town, a summary of the meeting: A standing-room-only crowd attended to voice opinions, most of them negative because of the impact on the Harriets Bluff Road, the impact on the nearby waterways with run-off from the proposed golf course and houses, the blocking of Grover Creek to boat traffic, and the adverse affect on the environmentally sensitive island itself.

An archaeological study done in 1972 indicates that the island has a wealth of middens plus at least two mounds that need further study. In fact, the arrangement of the 150-plus middens gives rise to the theory that a Timucuan village sat there in pre-historic times.

The island has been well preserved throughout historic times, since it was a U.S. Navy preserve for live oaks from the 1790s to the 1920s when purchased by Howard Coffin as part of his Sea Island lands in Camden County. Even after the lands were sold to Brunswick Pulp and Paper, the trees remained and the island was never logged. The island went back to Sea Island Company several years ago.

The Coast Guard has yet to grant a permit for the bridge - and the state preservation office has not granted its permission for development.

A request has gone to Sea Island Company asking that a conservation easement be placed on the island or that it be sold to an environmental organization in order the preserve the island.



View of Dungeness Grounds looking west from water tank. Playhouse, now in ruins, in foreground.

The directors of Guale Historical Society meeting in January voted unanimously to oppose construction of the bridge and development of the island.

MORE ON CUMBERLAND

Carol Ruckdeschel and Bob Shoop, curators of the Cumberland Island Museum and editors of the museum newsletter, had this Christmas message, which should be shared. "Where, as we did today, can you walk and ponder on a foggy, misty beach for miles and see no track, hear no vehicle, meet no one save the birds? Where can you watch an eagle finish a breakfast of fresh coot, then disappear in powerful flight through the fog? We who know Cumberland can answer those questions and appreciate how lucky we are to have this place and how important it is for many reasons. There aren't many such places left anymore, so we must work hard to assure their continued existence. Cumberland is the best gift of all. Nothing that Santa can bring tonight will match it. Happy Holidays."

If you would like to receive the museum newsletter and help support the museum, send \$15 for annual dues to Cumberland Island Museum, P.O. Box 796, St. Marys, GA 31558.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Program chairman Rodney Sheffield has planned a busy year for Guale Historical Society members.

Among programs to look forward to in 1999 will be a ramble to Sapelo (if you want to do this one, be sure your membership is up to date) - the annual walking tour of St. Marys in the spring, a possible trip to Darien and Hofwyl Plantation.

Frank Ward, Enigma Society member and a research associate studying "strange events, apparitions and hauntings," will make a return visit in, appropriately enough, the Halloween month - October.

Your Guale News will give all details as the time for rambles and meetings draws near.

Meetings or rambles are scheduled for February, March, April - September, October and November. Rodney will appreciate your suggestions for other rambles or meetings. Give him a call at 729-5245.

CEMETERY LISTINGS

The cemetery project is still ongoing with the listings of every marked grave in Camden County. If you know of any cemetery that might have been overlooked or if you have information about unmarked graves in any cemetery, please contact project chairman Rodney Sheffield, 729-5245.

Does anyone have information about the burial of Admiral Cockburn's men who were killed while headquartered on Cumberland during the War of 1812? What about the burials in The Chimneys area? Many more lived on the island than are accounted for in the few documented cemeteries there.

Plans also call for adding genealogical information to the listed graves before publication, so watch the local papers and the next Guale news to see how you can provide the needed material.

OFFICERS FOR 1999

President - John Christian
Vice President - Eloise Thompson
Recording Secretary - Susan Lee
Corresponding Secretary - Virginia Christian
Treasurer - Mildred Walko
Directors - James Stacy, Charles Thompson,
Bebe Williams
Program Chairman - Rodney Sheffield

Publicity - Bill Blankenship
Cemetery Chairman - Stanley Walko
Archivist - John Christian
Nominating Committee - Roy and Iris Norton
Newsletter Editor - Eloise Thompson
Mailings Chairman - Minnie Johnson
Thanks to all officers who have agreed to serve again in
1999.

FROM BRYAN-LANG HISTORICAL LIBRARY

New and old books are arriving all the time as gifts and purchases. One five-volume set that is particularly of interest to researchers is the REFERENCE LIBRARY OF BLACK AMERICA. Family researchers might also want to see this one: PAULK/HENDRY OF CLAN MACNACHTAN.

Bryan-Lang also offers a number of books of local interest for sale including CAMDEN'S CHALLENGE, A HISTORY OF CAMDEN COUNTY, \$30 plus \$4 shipping.

Vocelle's A HISTORY OF CAMDEN COUNTY, \$11 plus \$1.50 shipping.

Camden County Census Index, 1820, 1830, 1840 \$5; 1850 \$8; 1860 \$10; 1870, 1880 \$15; (There is no 1890 census); 1900, 1910, 1920 \$20. Shipping for each census is \$2.

MEMBERSHIPS

Dues run from January 1 - December 31, unless you are a new member, joining as late as October, which means that you are paid for all of 1999. Be sure you are up-to-date by the time of the Sapelo trip.

Send to Mildred Walko, 800 Margaret St., St. Marys, GA 31558. (DO NOT SEND TO GUALE NEWS ADDRESS.)

Family \$15 Individual \$8 Student \$2

1999 MEMBERS

(If your name does not appear and you have paid your 1999 dues, please let Mildred know. 882-5294)

Charles Smith, Jr. Family; Bill & Claudia Blankenship; Fred Mercier Family (New); Derek & Charlene McAleer; Alan & Diann Bailey, Savannah; Charles and Eloise Thompson; John and Dawn Bowen (New); Charles Curry Family (New); Lanny Morton Family (New); Jack Seals Family, Bellevue, WA; George Sweat Family, Jacksonville; William Stoddard Family; John Love Family; Robert Patterson Family, Winter Springs; Flem Hall Family; Sam Lee Family.

Agnes McArthur; Carol Rowland, St. Augustine; Carol Jones, Tallahassee; Mary Cassels (New), Jacksonville; David Baldwin (New); L.T. Hogan, Jacksonville; Jean Mizell, Callahan; Debra Vasquez; Dot Holstun, Decatur; James Lucas, Jacksonville; Irvin Bailey, Elizabeth, NJ; Patricia Barefoot, Brunswick; Tara Fields (New); Pat Talley; Mayebelle Gilfillen, Monte Vista, CO.

FROM OTHER AREAS

ANNUAL OLUSTEE BATTLE

RE-ENACTMENT OF BATTLE OF 1864

February 12, 13, 14 at Olustee Battlefield Historic Site, fifteen miles east of Lake City. The actual re-enactment will be

on Sunday, with a brief skirmish on Saturday and open campground on Friday. Last year about 8,000 participated in the battle. (According to FOOTPRINTS OF A REGIMENT, 4,500 Confederates and 13,000 Federals participated in the actual battle.)

Shuttle service will be provided from the Baker County prison and from the Lake City airport. For more details, call 904-397-4331.

LETTERS, WE GET LETTERS

From 3-year member JAMES LUCAS of Jacksonville: "...I always enjoy the newsletter and look forward to its monthly arrival with great anticipation. As a descendant of Georgia and Florida pioneers, there is seldom an issue that doesn't include a surprise bit of information that provides an addition to my family files.

"The October 1998 issue was really a surprise. Although I knew that Fannie Dean Brown was my great-grandmother's sister, I had no other information about her. I made a trip to the Bryan-Lang Library hoping to add her children's names to my files, but Dr. Christian could not provide that information.

"My great-grandmother was Marietta Virginia Brown (daughter of William Dean Brown and Henrietta Holland) born 6 December 1854 in Camden County, died 5 April in Graham, Bradford Co., FL. She was the wife of Robert Wiley Surrency. She is buried in Mt. Sinai Cemetery near the town of Graham. He died 6 January 1935 and was buried beside her. Their funerals were the first I ever attended. I was 4 years and 10 months old when she died, but I still remember the men holding the ropes and lowering the casket into the grave, and wondering how she was going to get out when Jesus came.

"Well, that's enough nostalgia for now. I will sign off and get this out for the postman."

MIDGE, Can you help? Mr. Lucas' address is 356 E. 47th St., Jacksonville 32208-5484. Ph. (904) 353-0779.

From new member MARY CASSELS of Jacksonville: "I was raised in Camden County and am very interested in its history. I am looking forward to attending the meetings!"

From long-standing member MRS. GEORGE SWEAT, also of Jacksonville: "We enjoy reading the Guale News and learning the history of that area."

We always welcome letters and queries. So if you have questions or comments, send them to the Guale News address - P.O. Box 398, St. Marys, GA 31558.

IN MEMORIAM

Catherine MacDonnel, Hubert Lang, Peggy Clements

CONGRATULATIONS to members Bill and Theresa Kirby on their 50th Anniversary!

The March Guale News will include the regular family history feature and What's Going On Elsewhere - remember to get dues in!