



# Guale News

MARCH/APRIL 1993

VOLUME 13, NO. 2

## OFF TO SUNBURY SATURDAY, MARCH 13

Details: Members and visitors meet 8:30 at Bryan-Lang Historical Library in Woodbine for coffee and doughnuts. Depart 9:00 SHARP to arrive at Sunbury in Liberty County 10:30. Small Admission Fee.

After tour of museum and fort grounds, Dutch Treat lunch at Cherokee Restaurant at Midway. A head count is necessary for lunch. Call Program Chairman Henry Williams 576-5421 or Eloise Bailey 882-4587.

After lunch, on your own, to tour Midway Cemetery and museum.

## WHY SUNBURY?

Sunbury, one of Georgia's Colonial dead towns, is located ten miles east of Midway via State Road 38, a portion of the ancient Sunbury Road. This site on Midway River overlooks the marshes and waterways leading to St. Catherine's Island, one of Georgia's famous barrier islands.

Before the Revolution, Sunbury was one of Georgia's busiest towns and Savannah's rival in commercial importance. It was also home to outstanding political and social figures including signers of the Declaration of Independence, four Georgia governors, three U.S. Senators, and the first U.S. Minister to China and Japan.

Guides will offer an introduction to the town's history in the state operated museum, then a stroll among the ruins of Fort Morris/Fort Defiance will take you back to days before the Revolution when this earthwork fort defended Georgia's coast.

Legendary Col. John McIntosh's (uncle to Camden's John H.) reply to the British when they demanded the fort's surrender "Come and Take It" was later engraved on a sword presented him by grateful Liberty County residents. Larger British forces eventually captured the fort, which led to the downfall of Sunbury and Liberty County.

Fort Defiance was built within the walls of Fort Morris ruins during the War of 1812, but a shot was never fired. This site became overgrown through the years, and was finally bought by the State of Georgia in 1968. In 1971 the fort lands were named to the National Register of Historic Places.

For further reading about Sunbury: Paul McIlvaine's "The Dead Town of Sunbury"; C.C. Jones' "The Dead Towns of Georgia"; or Robert Groover's "Sweet Land of Liberty".

## FROM OTHER AREAS

Annual Genealogical Seminar featuring Fran Carter will be held March 20 at the Florida State Archives. This will be of special interest to those of you involved in Florida material. Luncheon and expenses \$20.00. Registration by March 14. Send check to Tallahassee Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 4371, Tallahassee, FL 32315.

The Georgia Historical Society in announcing the publication of "The Minis Family of Georgia" 1733-1992 by Kaye Kole state that this important story of one of the first families in Savannah began with the arrival of Abraham and Abigail Minis only five months after Georgia was founded. The family became leaders in business, cultural affairs and municipal positions. Order from the Society, 501 Whitaker St., Savannah, GA 31499. \$25.00 plus 2.50 postage and 6% sales tax.

## LANG REUNION

Guale member Hubert Lang has asked that this announcement be printed:

The annual family reunion of Lang descendants will be held at Crooked River State Park on Sunday, June 13 at 12 noon. Please bring your family, a covered dish lunch and old pictures of your family line.

## INTRODUCING

Moving away from our introductions of out-of-town members, this month we will introduce Isaac Lang, subject of the above announcement. You may discover that you, too, are a descendant and want to attend the reunion to meet your cousins.

Brothers Isaac and Richard Lang were among the Loyalists moving to East Florida during or after the Revolution. By 1794 Isaac had moved to Georgia, probably Camden County, for here he was naturalized on March 7, 1799 stating that he had been living in the United State at least five years.

He soon received land grants in Camden near the town of Jefferson and served as Justice of Peace in the 31st Militia District. He also served as a lieutenant of the militia 1808-1812. Isaac Lang died in Bulloch County in 1815. His burial site is unknown.

While a Florida resident he married Catherine, the daughter of Nathaniel Wildes. After his death she remained in Jefferson, where she operated a tavern according to county documents. She died October 9, 1849 and is buried in the secluded cemetery there.

Their children were: William (Nancy Atkinson); Sarah (John May); Nathaniel (Eleanor McCall); Willis (Adeline Bessant); Richard (Mrs. Mary Atkinson); Isaac (Caroline Atkinson); John (Margaret King); Robert (Margaret Atkinson); George (Mary Thomas); Susan (George Thomas); Priscilla (Stephen McCall); Elizabeth (Jackson Mizell); David (Elizabeth Brown).

## A 1902 VIEW OF CAMDEN COUNTY

Early writings offer a picture of this area that can be found no other place. Among sources of coastal information may be found "The Darien Gazette," which covered much more than the Darien surroundings. Robert Patterson of Winter Springs, Florida has been researching his Mickler/Hebbard/Patterson lines using these writings and has graciously supplied the column "Camden County Reaches Far Back in History" written in 1902 by J.H. Estill, candidate for governor. Portions of it are quoted below.

"...It was in the waters of Camden County and the rivers nearby that those ocean rovers ventured forth to rob the passing Spaniard as he sailed between the Bahamas and the Florida coast, and it is not a hundred years since a United States brig of war was lost while scouring the coast for a daring pirate. Whether she was captured by pirates and her crew put to death and the vessel destroyed, or whether she went down amid the fury of the equinoxial storm, will never be known until the sea gives up its dead.

"...The novelist, whether of the 'Capt. Kidd' or 'Janice Meredith' school, could find in Camden County and the waters thereunto belonging material for a hundred books.

"Dear old St. Marys, that still lovely town, with its moss-covered live oaks, its palmettos and its pines, where men whose names afterwards became famous in army and navy annals loved and married her fair daughters; where men stood ready to wrest from Spain her last possession on the North American continent, should diplomacy fail to secure the coveted peninsula.

"...In the evening I attended a lecture delivered in the courthouse by Rev. Mr. Bourne, rector of St. Marys Episcopal Church, on the 'Resources of Camden County'. It was interesting and instructive. He showed that in agricultural resources the county was unsurpassed by any in the state; that its products were rice, sea island cotton, sugar cane, corn, oats, potatoes, cassava, all of which were crops that paid well; that oranges and other fruit did well, and though the orange trees had been destroyed once there was no reason why they should not be planted again; the rivers of the county were the best in

the state; that vessels drawing 16 feet of water could go for miles and miles up the St. Marys and Satilla rivers; the rivers and sounds were teeming with fish, oysters and other water food; fine cattle, horses and hogs had been raised in the county and could be again.

"While a great deal of timber had been cut off the lands there were still millions of feet of it left. Mr. Bourne called attention to the want of transportation facilities and the inducements offered by St. Marys to build a railroad. He said it was only twelve miles to the Seaboard Air Line Railway, and there was a roadbed graded two-thirds of the way; that the city of St. Marys had offered to donate 1,000 acres of city property, 1,000 feet of wharf frontage, and give every facility to the building of a railroad.

"The reverend gentleman pointed to Camden County's and St. Marys' advantages in a very earnest and impressive manner. If he will continue talking on that line of his lecture there is no question as to his doing a great deal of good. Every word he uttered was true, and the day will come when Camden County will blossom like a rose and St. Marys will again be a prosperous commercial city..."

## **REMINDER: SUNBURY, MARCH 13.**

If you haven't paid your dues for 1993 send to Mildred Walko, 800 Margaret Street, St. Marys, GA 31558

Family \$15

Individual \$8

Student \$2