



# Guale News

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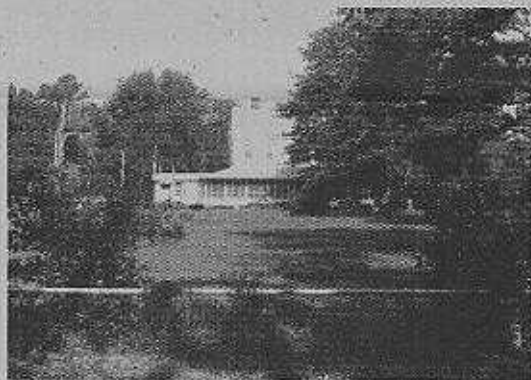
## LET'S LUNCH AT LINDA!

Saturday, March 7- come visit the plantation Linda in Brantley County. Lunch will be served at 12:00, \$6 per person. Reservation **MUST** be made by Sunday, March 1. This is a rare opportunity arranged by Program Chairman Rodney Sheffield. The plantation house and site is owned by the Satilla Hunting Club and invitations are rare.

**SCHEDULE:** Saturday, March 7, 9:00 meet at Bryan-Lang Library in Woodbine. Then ramble a bit in north Camden before venturing over to Linda. After lunch, the group will visit the grounds and Sheffield grave sites. Don't forget to make reservations for you and guests by March 1. Call Rodney at 729-5245 or Eloise at 882-4587.

## WHAT IS LINDA?

Just inside the Brantley County line, on the road between Tarboro and Atkinson, a straight-as-an-arrow lane shaded by moss covered oaks leads to a large white frame house. It is said that this lane once extended to another home four miles away still straight enough that a spy glass



*Linda Plantation House*

could watch over arriving and departing guests until they had reached the safety of either house.

Screened porches provide rocking space and a view of the spacious grounds with their surrounding ancient trees. The house now standing is said to have been built just before the Civil War, replacing a brick one that burned.

Behind the house runs the fresh, tannic-rich Satilla River outlined by sandbars with coarse white sand as white as that of any coastal beach.

Although this Linda Plantation site was bought by the Satilla Hunting Club from the King family in 1922, and now may be visited only by members and their guests, it has been the home of several Camden County connected families.

Revolutionary Soldier West Sheffield (1747-1830), grandfather to many present day Camden County residents, was the first known to occupy this property.

Sheffield was a native of North Carolina, but also resided in South Carolina at one time. He is shown in Camden County records as early as 1794. He was granted Wayne County riverfront property (in the section now Brantley), probably the same site now known as Linda.

Although the King family is the one most closely associated with Linda Plantation, it was actually their ancestor James Fort who made the first purchase of land in this vicinity, about two miles north of the Sheffield property

about 1800. He later added to his holdings when he bought the Sheffield Plantation.

Mr. Fort became a prosperous planter and was active in Wayne County politics, serving as justice of the inferior court, state senator, a commissioner of Wayne County Academy, and county surveyor.

In 1823, James and Martha Gibson Fort's only child Mary Eleanor Gibson Fort married her tutor Stephen Clay King. Mr. Fort built the brick home, that later burned, for them. He then moved to the Sheffield house, which was inherited by his grandson James Fort King. Mr. King managed the Fort plantations well and increased their value several fold.

Other Fort/King family plantations are still familiar names in Camden County: Maryfield, located farther down the Satilla; Vernon, on the Satilla between Maryfield and Duncan Clinch's Refuge; College; Tabor. Rice was their principal crop.

A description of the present Linda house printed in a 1938 Brantley Enterprise says it was built of "the finest timber. The stairway railing is said to be finest mahogany and hand-carved ornaments adorn the ceilings in some of the rooms".

Tradition says that the plantation name came when Mrs. S.C. King visited New York just before the Civil War and attended the opera LINDA, and thought it was a suitable name for their beautiful setting on the Satilla.

An 1887 writer found at Linda "... culture of a rare order, an air of refinement pervades the entire place." At that time James Fort King was living there.

The 1938 Brantley news article ends with this "The people who built the Linda place were aristocrats of their day. They seemed to have built regally and to have lived the same style .... The proud people of Linda Plantation have long since passed on, and as the lonely tombs signify, another day with its different people and activities has come to the old place. Linda Plantation - music of operas, memory of a bygone civilization; But always a beautiful spot on the bright Satilla."

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## WHO ARE THE PEOPLE OF LINDA PLANTATION?

Much of the following information may be found in several volumes of PIONEERS OF WIREGRASS GEORGIA

### WEST SHEFFIELD

Mr. Sheffield was born December 13, 1747 in Duplin County, North Carolina. By 1794, he was living in Camden County. He first married Susannah Sherrod (1754-1802) in 1775. Their children were:

Aaron Tison, married Susannah \_\_\_\_\_, moved to Mississippi.

Sherod, married Elizabeth Kemp

Bryant, married Elizabeth Ogden, developed White Springs Resort in Florida

Pliny, married Mary Mitchell, moved to Thomasville

Flora, married William Atkins, moved to Florida

Catherine, married Ignatius Grantham; Wm. Seaman

In 1797 West Sheffield married Elizabeth Randall (1770-1808). Their children were:

Randall, unmarried

John, ancestor of Camden County descendants.

Born 1804, died 1883. Married Sarah Cook (1806-1895). Both are buried in Zion Cemetery.

West Sheffield married third Martha \_\_\_\_\_. No children. He died September 22, 1830. He and his second wife are buried at Linda Plantation. Graves marked

#### **JAMES FORT**

James Fort was born in 1765 in North Carolina, the son of Joseph Fort. He married in 1796 Martha, the daughter of Stephen Gibson. He moved from North Carolina to Georgetown, South Carolina, then to Glynn County, later buying the lands of West Sheffield. He lived here until his death March 22, 1848.

Mary Fort, born in 1808, was the only child. Mrs. Fort died 1857/58. She and her husband with Mr. and Mrs. Gibson are buried in unmarked graves at Linda.

#### **STEPHEN CLAY KING**

Mary Fort married her tutor Stephen Clay King, who was a New England native and brother to the prominent Thomas Butler King of Glynn County.

S.C. King was born April 27, 1786 and moved to Georgia in 1822.

He and Mary Fort married January 1, 1823. Their children were:

James Fort, born 1824, married Louisa Clark, daughter of Archibald

Martha Gibson, born 1826, married John Hull

Henry Clay, born 1830, married Jean Parland

All the other children: Stephen, Daniel, Hannah, Mary Ann, William, Cornelia, all died single. One writing suggests that they all died of tuberculosis.

James Fort gave his homelace to his daughter and moved into the Sheffield log cabin. After Mr. Fort's death, his grandson James Fort King managed the plantations.

The grandson's obituary in 1902 tells that he was "...highly respected and honored by all who knew him and dearly loved by a host of friends who were intimately associated with him. He was born in 1824 near the very spot where he was buried, he grew up to have that love of nature which was one of the distinguishing traits of this character."

James Fort King, his wife and several bodies of the King children whose graves were marked, were all moved from Linda to Homeward Cemetery.

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#### **BUSINESS OF THE SOCIETY**

A report from the February meeting of Gule Historical Society shows this activity: James Stacy was officially elected as a director. This is a three year term. Roy and Iris Norton were appointed nominating co-chairman.

A committee headed by Rodney Sheffield was named to locate "missing" cemeteries in Camden County. Other committee members are Charles Thompson, Bill Joyner, Helen Lang, and Joyce O'Quinn. If you know of any isolated cemeteries please let one of these members know.

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#### **OTHER SOCIETIES**

Georgia Historical Society has announced its continuing lecture series with Frank Wheeler, assistant director, to speak on March 12, 7:00 at Hodgson Hall. His subject "In Search of Savannah River Plantations".

Huxford Genealogical Society has begun an expansion program for its library and is seeking contributions. This private, nonprofit organization receives no government funds. If you would like to make a tax deductible contribution, send to the Society, P.O. Box 595, Homerville, GA 31634.

**THE STORY OF SAMUEL HARVILLE** traces the history of a prominent Georgia family back into the 1700s. This hardbacked book includes pictures and official documents. It may be ordered postpaid for \$48 from Alma Hopper, 204 Wellington Circle, Statesboro, GA 30458

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#### **MEMBERSHIPS**

New and renewed between Jan. 13 and Feb. 10: Midge Mathews, Raleigh; Robert Patterson Family, Winter Springs, FL; Jim Shirley Family; James Stacy Family; Ardis Bennett Family; Howard Davis Family; Shirley Thompson; Henry Williams Sr. Family; Edith Willingham; Douglas Nelson Family; Pat Talley; Carol Ruckdeschel; Helen Lang (new); Cornelia McClurd (new); Juanita Brooks; John Christian Family; Frank Sheffield Family; Rodney Sheffield Family; Robert White Family (new), Fernandina; Hazel Marr.

If you have not renewed your membership, please do so - send to Treasurer Mildred Walko, 800 Margaret Street, St. Marys, GA 31558.

FAMILY \$15      INDIVIDUAL \$8      STUDENT \$2

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#### **REMINDER:**

RESERVATIONS FOR THE MARCH 7TH RAMBLE AND LUNCH AT LINDA MUST BE MADE BY MARCH 1. CALL RODNEY 729-5245 OR ELOISE 882-4587.