



GUALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO MEET Tuesday, March 14, Guale Room St. Marys City Library 7:00, Executive Session 6:30 CEMETERY RESEARCHER TARA FIELDS TO SPEAK

Tara Fields has become a one-woman team scrambling through briars and over fallen trees to preserve the information documented on tombstones and in various documents. Her work complements that done by Historical Society President Rodney Sheffield and other volunteers in cataloging this information. She has offered to share her work with the Society as it begins the gigantic task of consolidating all previous works into one volume.

Tara was born in the Midwest and lived for many years in California, but says the "sands of Camden are in my shoes" and "I have come home to stay." She and her husband James have one son, Robin.

Tara's interests in Camden's history are varied - its general history, the genealogy of the residents, and stories of its people. Her cemetery research provides many stories. She will be co-chair with Rodney in documenting the cemetery information, which will eventually be published as a project of the Historical Society.

In the meantime, Tara is putting her work on the Internet, making it available to family researcher. She has a web-site with other county information and makes her site available to others wanting to publish their family records. She will be explaining this at the March 14 meeting.

Earlier listings of outlying cemeteries were done in the '50s by Miss Bebe Lang and Mary Givens Bryan, which gives much information now lost. The St. Marys Woman's Club undertook the task of listing all graves in St. Marys in 1953. It was updated in 1982 by historical society members under the leadership of President Robert Bennett. Bob also catalogued other county cemeteries.

Partial listings of Camden's cemeteries were included in the 1976 edition of the county history CAMDEN'S CHALLENGE. Some small cemeteries have also had listings done, such as Oak Grove in the north end of the county by Shirley Thompson and published in her oak Grove Church history. In 1996, Larry Durbin combined many of these earlier listings while adding others he had located. He also included unmarked burials he discovered during his research in genealogical magazines.

All these works need compiling along with undated findings.



Oakwell Cemetery on the St. Marys River at Clarke's Bluff. Grave of George Peeples.

CEMETERY CLEANUP

The March program is timely, for it coincides with the clean-up of scattered cemeteries by the Sheriff's Department with Society member Jasper Lang working closely with the department.

Throughout Camden County, old family cemeteries have been abandoned as homesites gave way to timberland. Though some are still in use, the majority became lost as older family members died and the younger ones moved away.

At a well-attended meeting on January 26, Sheriff Smith gave the details of the work program - stating that it would probably take at least two to three years to cover the entire county. The work began with the Holzendorf Cemetery, just north of Kingsland, and Clinch Cemetery near Tarboro. When the work on those are completed, then the work crews will be moving on to other neglected gravesites. Sheriff Bill Smith and Jasper Lang are to be commended for undertaking this mammoth project.

GRAVES AT BAILEY'S MILL

Guale Historical Society has long been interested in the preservation of gravesites. In 1984, after repeated complaints by visitors to the Bailey's Mill site on the Satilla River about the extensive vandalism of the two graves there, the Historical Society moved the graves to the Burnt Fort Cemetery.

After requesting and obtaining a court order for the move, Society members provided the grave digging labor and Funeral Director Mackie Dekle provided an employee to work with them. After a full day's work, the resting places of James Stacy Bailey (1833-1890) and his grandson, James Bailey Acosta (1895-1899), were moved to the more protected site.

WANTED - LOCATIONS OF WHITE BRONZE MARKERS

Midge Weldon of Isleboro, Maine is collecting pictures of these metal markers. Although called white bronze, they are actually made of zinc and as they age, turn a soft blue-gray. At least two are known - Jane S. Bedell, who died in 1855 and is buried in Zion Cemetery, and another in Oak Grove Cemetery in St. Marys. If you know of others, please contact Eloise Thompson at 882-4587.

CEMETERY STORIES

Family information and anecdotes will be added to the cemetery book before it is published. If you have any unusual stories to tell, please contact Rodney Sheffield at 729-5245 or Tara Fields at 882-8640. This is an example of such a story.

In most old cemeteries, familiar family names are prominent, but occasionally a lone grave excites the imagination. One such grave is that of Benjamin Bunker buried in Zion Cemetery. His marker says "Born in West Trenton, Maine. Died July 20, 1863, age 37 years. 'He sleeps in the grave. He will come not again to the home that he gladdened so often before.'"

According to the late John Cole of Woodbine, his mother Irene King Cole told him that Mr. Bunker had come from New England as a liveoaker. He became sick at the liveoak camp on the St. Marys River and was brought to John Madison King's home. Mrs. Cole's father and his family cared for Mr. Bunker until he died, then buried him among King family members at Zion.

Do you know any more such tales?

GENEALOGY CORNER - REDDICK (READDICK)

Ceylon Cemetery is located behind a locked gate on Sea Island Company land near the old settlement of Ceylon. This once flourishing community was fed by the Hilton-Dodge sawmill there. Many families lived throughout this Floyd's Neck area, not all sawmillers, but farmers. Those buried in the Ceylon Cemetery reflect the families once inhabiting these woodlands, among them the Reddick family.

From CAMDEN'S CHALLENGE we learn that Peter Readdick came to Camden County and settled on a farm on the north side of the Satilla River. Both spellings of Readdick are used by Camden County families. Peter married Allie Agnes Wright and had children Jack, John, Clabe, Willie, Pete, George, Frank, Tom, Sarah, and Lizzie. Peter and Allie were buried at the old homesite. Their dates are not available, but they both were

living at the time of the 1850 census. She is not in 1860. He is not shown in the 1870.

Son John fought in the Indian wars and returned with a fever. His mother and brothers Clabe and Willie all contracted the fever and died. During the Civil War, John served as captain of Company D in Clinch's 4th Georgia Cavalry. Brothers Jack and Frank also served in that unit. Pete and George served in other regiments. Pete was killed in battle. George was made prisoner and died at Ft. Delaware.

JACK (A.J.) was born April 11, 1828 and married 1. Georgia Brown. 2. Caroline Drury. He died May 7, 1900. He and wife Caroline are buried at their old homesite at Black Point. His children were Pete, Georgia, Jack, Charlie, Spencer, Reid, Horace, and Leighton.

JOHN was born March 13, 1833 and married Madison Amanda Gowen, the daughter of William and Rebecca Greene Gowen. He died February 19, 1909. His wife died August 22, 1909 and both are buried in the Ceylon Cemetery. Their children were John, Estelle, Allie, Lizzie, Walter, Paul, Coral, Fannie Lou, Cleveland, Pete, Howell, and Dole.

FRANK (Francis on tombstone) was born August 7, 1842 and died August 3, 1908. He married Eliza Gowen, sister to Amanda, born March 22, 1844 and died January 2, 1921. They are buried in Ceylon Cemetery. Their children were Willie, Sorena, Frazier, Sarah, James W., Georgia, George, Edward, and Hardee.

SARAH, January 20, 1845 - June 24, 1903, married Barney James Gowen, brother to Amanda and Eliza, December 4, 1840 - August 26, 1919. Both are buried at Ceylon. Their children were George, Glenn, Annie, Durwood, and Pearl.

ELIZABETH (Lizzie) was born April 2, 1847 and died June 26, 1918 and is buried in Ceylon Cemetery. She never married.

THOMAS T. 1851-1928, is buried in Ceylon. He never married.

Other Readdick connections buried at Ceylon are Nena Gowen 1877-1918; Glenn Green Gowen 1866-1898; Infant of Barney and Sarah Gowen, no dates; C.W. Readdick 1871-1931. Some of the above material came from cemetery records, family notes and census records.

LOCAL HISTORY CONFERENCE

Guale Historical Society was represented at the Local History Conference on Jekyll Island February 4 & 5 by members Shirley Thompson, James and Ann Stacy, Susan Lee and Eloise Thompson. Among the workshops were Fundraising, Enlisting Volunteers, Genealogy, Publicity and Designing Displays. Representatives from throughout Georgia attended.

BURNT FORT SCHOOL

Work continues on the abandoned one-room school at Burnt Fort. This only surviving one-room school was built about 1900 by the men of the Midriver Community across Gelzer Branch. In 1918 it was moved to its present site by ox-team, a four-day trip. Twenty students were attending in 1918 in grades 1-8. When Camden County schools consolidated in 1922, it was abandoned as a school, but was used as a residence for a time.

Among its teachers were Mary Schmidt (Mrs. James Vocelle), Agnes Liles, Edna Mooda, and Mary Lee Clark. Miss

Clark was later Superintendent of Schools in Camden County.

Donations are being accepted for this work. Make checks payable to Burnt Fort School Restoration and mail to Shirley Thompson, Rt. 1, Box 157-B, Waynesville, GA 31566. If you have questions, you may call Shirley at 576-5084.

GEORGE BANCROFT

The sail has been erected on the decommissioned GEORGE BANCROFT, and the surrounding area is taking shape. Plans have been made for its dedication.

April 7 3:00 p.m. Dedication and Centennial Kick-off Ceremony, Speakers Sen. Max Cleland & VADM Giambastiani

4:30 p.m. Short social following dedication

6-11 p.m. Centennial carnival events, open to public

April 8 10-11 p.m. Carnival events, open to public

6-12 p.m. Subase Birthday Ball, at Jekyll, reservations required.

LATE BREAKING NEWS

Society member Thomas Nesbitt of Jacksonville has purchased the Clark-Bessent-MacDonell house on Osborne Street, the oldest documented house in St. Marys. Mr. Nesbitt is a descendant of Archibald Clark. Welcome to St. Marys!!

UPCOMING FOR GUALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Saturday, April 8 - St. Marys Ramble, details next newsletter

Tuesday, May 9 - Linda Angell of Waycross, organizer of Angell's Unlimited Research Library and publisher of Hoot Owl Express Newsletter.

June-August - Down Time.

NOTES FROM MEMBERS

It is good to know out-of-town members' connections with Camden County.

DAVE RICHARDSON of Ocala - "I was born in September 1914 in Coconut Grove, Florida. My mother was Katherine Russell, daughter of Clement Russell of Camden County. She married my father, George Richardson, in St. Marys in 1909."

JAMES LUCAS of Jacksonville - "Thank you for putting me in touch with Midge Mathews. She sent me a copy of her Brown Family Book and now I have all my Brown ancestors and Hopkins cousins added to my family files. Midge and I correspond frequently on the Internet, and she has been a great help in my research. Turns out she and I are 3rd cousins, once removed. If any other cousins would like to share information I can be reached at: jim_lucas45@hotmail.com

"I am now researching the Holland line, Hettie's ancestors. I would like to hear from anyone who might put me on the right track."

Jim's mailing address is 356 East 47th Street, Jacksonville, FL 32208-5484.

HAVE YOU RENEWED?

Send dues to Treasurer Mildred Walko, 800 Margaret Street, St. Marys, GA 31558.

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