



Guale News

OCTOBER 1998

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HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR BUDDY SULLIVAN GUEST SPEAKER

**RICE CULTURE ON THE GEORGIA COAST
PLAN TO MEET, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13
ST. MARYS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
7:00, Executive Session 6:30**

Buddy Sullivan, manager of the National Estuarine Sanctuary on Sapelo Island, has been researching and writing about coastal Georgia since 1985. Since that time he has published seven books including *EARLY DAYS ON THE GEORGIA TIDEWATER*, a history of McIntosh County. *THE DARIEN JOURNAL OF JOHN GIRARDEAU LEGARE*. *RICEGROWER* is his most recent publication.

His many activities include acting as regional vice president of the Georgia Historical Society, president of the Lower Altamaha Historical Society, and a regular lecturer in the Coastal Historical Society's series of events presenting *An Overview of the Georgia Coast*.

Mr. Sullivan has recently received a Certificate of Commendation from the American Association for State and Local History for his writings on coastal Georgia history. He will be among the speakers at the Georgia Historical Society's fall meeting in Thomasville speaking on *Rice Cultivation on the Georgia Tidewater: Links with the Red Hills of South Georgia*.

It has been the pleasure and privilege of Guale Society members to have had Buddy Sullivan as guest speaker before. If you were fortunate enough to have heard him, then you will need no urging to return for one of his exciting programs. But if you haven't been so fortunate, then this is your opportunity.

Copies of his latest book will be available at the end of the meeting.

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF MEETING PLACE: St. Marys United Methodist Church, Wesley Classroom (off breezeway by sanctuary - signs in front of building will direct you). The church is located on East Conyers Street behind the police station.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Co-chairmen Roy and Iris Norton have prepared a slate of officers for 1999. They will be voted on at the October meeting, and go into office in January.

Present officers are:	President	John Christian
	Vice Pres.	Eloise Thompson
	Rec. Sec.	Susan Lee
	Corr. Sec.	Virginia Christian
	Treas.	Mildred Walko

Directors elected in 1997 serve three year terms: James Stacy, Charles Thompson, Bebe Williams.

NOVEMBER MEETING — A RAMBLE

Details will appear in November newsletter, but be prepared for a visit to the west side of Camden and on to Charlton County seeing Colerain, the Mills family cemetery, old Sardis Church and Traders Hill. Watch for the next newsletter.

WHAT IS THE GUALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY?

Organizing meetings were held in 1978 with Mac Burdette of the CAPDC (now Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center) and officers of Coastal Georgia Historical society) as consultants. Interested potential members met numerous times at Dot Barker's home to assemble mailing lists and invitations were sent.

The first full scale meeting was held at the St. Marys Methodist Chapel and a call was made for a name for the infant society. John Bally submitted the name Guale Historical Society, since the term

Guale (pronounced walley) indicated the entire coastal region, and not merely Camden County. Coastal Georgia Historical Society offered a savings bond for the name selected. John then served as the first president of Guale Historical Society.

A committee was formed to draw up bylaws, and the Historical society was off and running. Through the years two major projects of the Society have been the cataloging of Oak Grove Cemetery and support of Bryan-Lang Historical Library. Rambles have extended for St. Augustine and Ft. George Island on the south, to Sapelo Island on the north and points in between. Speakers from throughout the region have presented outstanding programs and membership has grown: from a handful to 57 family members and 71 individuals.

Guale Historical society is well on its way to another successful twenty years!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A MEMBER OF GUALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY?

- to discover Camden County, established in 1777
- to learn the background of this historical and unique region
- to be a member of an organization dedicated to the preservation of the past, while moving to the future
- to attend exciting programs bringing the past to life
- to travel throughout this region on rambles visiting historical sites
- to receive newsletters bringing updates on historical events

RICE CULTURE IN CAMDEN COUNTY

Rice growing was one of Camden's leading industries in the last century with at least eight major plantations along the streams of the county. Small farmers often grew an upland variety of this popular staple for their families' use.

Rice was a peculiar crop - it was not just planted and plowed, but had to be periodically flooded in its various stages so that its growth depended on the ebb and flow of the tide. But it could be grown only far enough upstream in the section of the rivers where the water was not too salty to harm the rice, a narrow stretch of only about ten miles.

Rice growing was so labor intensive with clearing of swampland building of dikes and digging of canals to flood the fields that after the Civil War ended, it began to decline. Only two major plantations continued with commercial rice growing in this century, Owen's Ferry and J.K. Bedell's Woodbine Plantation. Today Maryfield Plantation's owner has revived the art of rice growing and is producing "Aromatic Rice", available locally at Rawl's in Woodbine.

Larger rice plantations found along the Satilla were Cohen Hill, Gatehouse, Hazlehurst, Ivanhoe (Owen's Ferry), Maryfield, Pine Dale, Refuge, Woodbine. Tree covered dikes can still be seen in the old fields now overgrown with marshgrass. At low tides the trunks (gates to let water in and out) may be seen along the Satilla.

State owned Hofwyl Plantation on U.S. 17 north of Brunswick offers a look at rice growing with walks along the surviving dikes and its museum stocked with scale models trunks and rice implements.



Rice Boat at Owen's Ferry. Rough rice was shipped from Camden County to Savannah for processing.

GENEALOGY CORNER -- TIMOTHY HOPKINS

This information comes from CHARLTON COUNTY GEORGIA HISTORICAL NOTES 1972.

Rice grower and owner of Pine Dale Plantation Timothy Hopkins was born in 1777 in South Carolina. He was the son of John Hopkins of England, who came to the United States by way of Charleston. The elder Hopkins began as a cabin boy and soon became captain of his own vessel, carrying passengers and freight from St. Marys to Charleston. Timothy's mother was Sarah Thomas, the daughter of John Thomas of South Carolina.

Timothy married on March 21, 1796, Sarah Lofton of St. Marys, the daughter of John Lofton of East Florida. He first acquired property with his father in 1789 at Indian Springs on Cumberland Island. He would later acquire other large tracts which became Pine Dale and Cedar Hill plantations.

He was a shoemaker and merchant in Jeffersonton, as well as planter. Timothy Hopkins died December 11, 1832 and is buried at Cedar Hill, along with two of his grandchildren.

Timothy and Sarah Hopkins had one son, William Timothy, born in Camden County. William married first Elizabeth Chevalier and they had three children. He next married Elizabeth Ripley and they had four children, among them Francis Joseph, who remained on the plantation and continued to grow rice. He and his wife Fannie Dean Brown had ten children, who were reared on Pine Dale Plantation. This plantation remains in the Hopkins family today.

FROM THE CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Rodney Sheffield, cemetery committee head, has announced that well over 100 cemeteries, previously unknown, have been identified in Camden County. As the weather cools and mosquitoes disappear, work will resume on cataloging them. If you can help, please contact him at 729-5245.

OTHER NEWS

The HIBBARD FAMILY REUNION will meet in St. Marys the weekend of October 23 with headquarters at the Riverview Hotel. These descendants of early St. Marys resident John Hibbard coming from throughout Georgia and Florida will gather at the Riverview on Friday at 6:00. The luncheon meeting on Saturday 12:30 at the Riverview will feature speaker the Reverend Harold Lawrence, pastor of the First United Methodist Church in Milledgeville and Methodist Conference historian. Luncheon costs \$10.

The group will attend church at the St. Marys United Methodist Church on Sunday morning.

If you are interested, please contact Sandra Brown at 404-636-5002 and leave message before October 16.

Savannah's HOLIDAY TOUR OF HOMES in the historic district will be held Saturday and Sunday, December 12 and 13. Tickets are \$22 each, group rate for 15 or more is \$17 per person. Ticket applications will be available at the Guale Historical Society meeting.

COASTAL GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY announces Hurricanes as its topic for its fall meeting. Meteorologist Al Sandrik, who recently spoke at the St. Mary City Library, will be the speaker. This will be on Sunday, October 18, 1998 at 3:00 at Fort Frederica National Monument on St. Simons. This meeting is free and open

to the public.

It also announces a six weeks course entitled An Overview of the Georgia Coast to be held on consecutive Wednesdays beginning September 30 at Oglethorpe Point Elementary School on St. Simons. The classes will be from 6:30 to 8:30 and will run until November 4. Buddy Sullivan will focus on the major islands along the coast and cover historical events in the coastal towns. The cost is \$45 and registration can be made by contacting the CGHS at 912-638-4666.

SAPELO: The newly restored Sapelo Island lighthouse was dedicated and re-lit on September 6. A seven month \$500,000 restoration project placed this 1820 lighthouse in working order again. It had not been in use since 1905. The oil house and range beacon on the site were also restored. The lighthouse has now become part of the historical interpretative tours of the island.

GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S FALL LECTURE SERIES continues on October 22 with Dr. John Vlach's "Back of the Big House: the Architecture of Plantation Slavery." This will be at Hodgson Hall in Savannah, 7:00.

THANK YOU TO ...

Mary Bullard, who sent flowers honoring charter members of Guale Historical Society for 20 years of activity.

Shirley Thompson, Bebe Williams and Neil McClurd for great refreshments for the 20th year party.

Bill Blankenship and library staff for hosting a standing room only crowd at the last meeting.

Bob Hurst for an outstanding program.

CAMDEN PRINTING COMPANY sends its apologies for the mixup on last month's meeting piece. In all fairness - in the eighteen years they have printed GUALE NEWS, this is the only time such a blip has happened. So thank you for many years of a great relationship.

NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS since 9/98: Bill Blankenship Family (also '99); Harry Mills Family, Fernandina (new); Kenneth Mills Family, Fernandina (new); W.C. Kirby Family; Agnes McArthur (also '99); Carol Rowland (also '99); Carol Jones, Tallahassee (also '99)

**MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES ARE FAMILY, \$15
INDIVIDUAL \$8 STUDENT \$2**

Memberships are due on January 1 of each year. (Some members will find a red star on mailing labels indicating 1998 dues have not been paid.) Any new member that pays in October or later is considered paid for 1999. SEND PAYMENTS TO - Mildred Walko, 800 Margaret Street, St. Marys, GA 31558.

IN MEMORIAM

AUDREY CREWS BRUCE