

# The Altamaha Echoes

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The Lower Altamaha Historical Society

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Since 1980 The Altamaha Echoes has been the primary publication of the Lower Altamaha Historical Society. During these organizational and productive years of LAHS, The Echoes was edited first by Jeannine Cook and printed by William G. Haynes at the Ashantilly Press where the type was hand set by Haynes. Jeannine Cook soon gave up the editorship of the Altamaha Echoes which was edited and printed thereafter by Haynes. This will be the first issue of Altamaha Echoes not published by that historical press, however Bill Haynes continues to work closely with the committee to make this a quality and informative publication.

William G. Haynes, and Norman Edwards, at the urging of Hans Newhauser organized The Lower Altamaha Historical Society in 1979. One of the aims of the organization was the protection of the Altamaha River. In this issue of the Echoes, the hope is that you will enjoy the contrast of the year 1993 with the year 1874 on the Altamaha River.

## THE ALTAMAHA RIVER BIORESERVE INVENTORY THE NATURE CONSERVANCY OF GEORGIA

*by Christi Lambert*

Over the last 25 years, The Nature Conservancy has protected almost 13,000 acres along the Altamaha River in Georgia, including important tracts such as Wolf and Egg Islands, "the Narrows", Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation, Lewis Island and Big Hammock, a sandhill that supports the largest population of the rare Georgia Plume. However, instead of only protecting fragments of the landscape, the Nature Conservancy is now working on a plan to protect the entire river ecosystem as a "bioreserve". A bioreserve is a landscape, usually large in size with naturally functioning ecological processes, and containing outstanding examples of ecosystems, natural communities, and species which are endangered or inadequately protected. Representing a new philosophy for integrated protection, bioreserves will focus on the conservation and maintenance of entire ecosystems.

There are four evolutionary stages in the development of a



bioreserve project --- nomination, selection, threshold planning and strategic planning. The Altamaha River has been nominated within The Nature Conservancy as a bioreserve. To meet selection criteria, complete and accurate information on the ecological elements is required. An inventory of the Altamaha River will support this requirement by determining the ecological significance and by providing information for protection prioritization and conservation management.

An ecological inventory of the Altamaha River basin, from the confluence of the Oconee and Ocmulgee Rivers to the Atlantic Ocean, is being conducted by the Nature Conservancy of Georgia. The study area encompasses over 970,000 acres. Inventory intensity will vary throughout the basin based upon priority areas. A geographic information system (GIS) and satellite imagery are being used to organize and analyze biological and socioeconomic data. Supported by field inventory, digital analysis will be used to identify and classify natural communities and to determine protection priorities. This project will play an important role in the development of Nature Conservancy standards for inventory and analysis of large landscapes. The utility of satellite imagery to guide fieldwork and identify natural plant communities will be evaluated through comparison of Landsat Thematic Mapper and SPOT satellite imagery.

The purpose of this project is to develop a strategic plan for the protection of the Altamaha based on scientific information and cooperative partnerships and to evaluate the potential utility of GIS and satellite imagery in developing this plan. Final products of this project will include a landcover classification, a project report and a plan for the protection of the Altamaha River Basin.

The on-site staff of the Altamaha River Bioreserve includes the following people: Christi Lambert, Director; Carl Nordman, Botanist; Malcolm Hodges, Zoologist; Lloyd Gamble, Inventory Assistant and Elaine Levine, Administrative Assistant. Additional staff are located at the National and Regional Offices of The Nature Conservancy. Robb Wright, GIS Specialist is in Arlington, Virginia and John Prince, Spatial Information Data Specialist is in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Colin Brooks, Intern is working on the project as a portion of his graduate program. Volunteers and Interns will continue to assist throughout the project. Current needs include assistance with the compilation and preparation of reports documenting the socioeconomic, cultural and historical aspects of the Altamaha River and assistance with conducting botanical and zoological surveys.

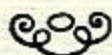
Partnerships are essential to bioreserve protection. During the inventory phase partnerships are being initiated and developed. Plant and



animal surveys are being coordinated through cooperative projects with state and federal agencies and universities. Local conservation organizations and volunteers are assisting with a survey of neotropical migratory birds. Support of private landowners along the river is critical to the protection of the Altamaha River. Partnerships with local governments, timber industries and other landowners are being developed and will continue to be important throughout all stages of bioserve planning and conservation.

The Altamaha River Bioserve Inventory represents a significant undertaking, being the first of its kind in Georgia to use both remote sensing technologies and detailed plant and animal inventory. The ecological inventory and landcover classification will provide information for protection planning. Our understanding of the diversity and value of the Altamaha River has increased through initial research, and will be a priority for the Nature Conservancy of Georgia over the next several decades.

The following are excerpts from the columns written by Bessie Lewis, and published in The Darien Gazette combined with McIntosh County News in 1943 & 1944. The Darien Timber Gazette published in the nineteenth century was the primary resource for Miss. Bessie.



**“SO SINGS THE MIGHTY RIVER”**  
by BESSIE LEWIS

**Chapter I**

The scene is Darien, the time a moonlit night in spring of the year 1874. Eight vessels are in port, loading with lumber from the mills and logs from the rafts in the river.

Negroes are loading the vessels, strong arms lifting, backs bending and rising to the rhythm of a river chantey.



Good Lord, haul 'em down!  
Great big n\_\_\_\_\_ from Yamasee  
Good Lord, haul 'em down!  
Suit some people, but don't suit me,  
Good Lord, haul 'em down.

Great big n\_\_\_\_\_ from We-bo-wack,  
Good Lord, haul 'em down!  
Butt that engine off the track,  
Good Lord, haul 'em down.  
Farewell forever-  
Good Lord, haul 'em down.

[NOTE: The words of the above river chantey were given to me by Andrew Buckley, who over a period of many years has often sung the song, and others of its kind, while helping to load vessels in port.-THE AUTHOR.]

Above the bluff and through the town, and out over the marshes the deep haunting tones of the melody filled the night, while the rhythm lifted the great timbers and lumber into vessels destined for northern and foreign ports.

Eight vessels in port-three barks, the Margareta, the Saga, the Tegner; three schooners, the Stephen Burnett, the Wm. G. Mosely, and the Helen A. Bowen; one brig, the Der Prommer, and a ship, the Melicite.

Those vessels meant a great deal more to Darien and other places in the basin of the Altamaha than the business involved-the checking and loading, the sale of the timber and lumber and the supplies to the ships and all the other financial transactions which revolved about them-they were a symbol of the courage and ingenuity of men, with the resources of the Altamaha.

LAHS Publication Committee: Myrtle Newberry, Chairman, Helen Buck, William G Haynes, Everett Moriarty, Marion F. Ricker, Buddy Sullivan, Mattie Gladstone, President LAHS.