

The Altamaha Echoes

Lower Altamaha Historical Society Newsletter January 1999

LAHS Board of Directors Meeting, January 21, 1999, 4:30 P.M.

LAHS MEETING, JANUARY 21, 1999, 7:00 P.M.—HAYNES AUDITORIUM

HOSPITALITY: Ann Baggett, Carol Nelson

DUTCH TREAT SUPPER, 6:00 P.M. AT ARCHIE'S

The program will be "H.M. Bark Endeavour" presented by Edward R. Meyer. The H.M. Bark Endeavour that visited our area in early 1998 is the exact replica of Capt. Cook's ship that took three years to sail around the world in the 18th century. Through slide presentation, Meyer will show the ship, what life aboard was like and the history surrounding this significant voyage and adventure.

Ed Meyer was born and raised in the Bronx, New York City. He moved to Cobb County, Georgia in 1978. After retiring from the IBM company he moved to Glynn County in 1996. Ed and his wife Joan are valued contributing citizens to the Coastal Georgia community.

LAHS MEETING, FEBRUARY 18, 1999, 7:00 P.M.-HAYNES AUDITORIUM

HOSPITALITY: Lou Nell Gibson, Lloyd Flanders

DUTCH TREAT SUPPER, 6:00 P.M. AT ARCHIE'S

LeConte-Woodmanston Rice Plantation and Botanical Gardens will be the program presented by Gail Whalen, site manager. This eighteenth century plantation in Liberty County is experiencing extensive restoration. Ms. Whalen will share the progress and plans of this current development. The restoration of LeConte-Woodmanston Rice Plantation and Botanical Gardens is a project of The Garden Club of Georgia, it is managed by a private trust.

Gail Whalen was raised in Savannah. She has a Bachelor degree in Colonial History from Valdosta State and a Masters degree in Public History from Armstrong Atlantic State University. She served nine years in the U.S. Air Force. She has worked professionally at the Telfair Museum, Irene Mound Oral History Project and Exhibit, Savannah Civil Rights Museum and Skidaway Marine Science Institute.

LAHS Board of Directors Meeting, March 18, 1999, 4:30 P.M.

LAHS MEETING, MARCH 18, 1999, 7:00 P.M.-HAYNES AUDITORIUM

HOSPITALITY: Leroy Netrick, Doris Rabb

DUTCH TREAT SUPPER, 6:00 P.M. AT ARCHIE'S

"In Search of the Savannah River Plantations" will be the program presented by Frank Wheeler, Assistant Director, Georgia Historical Society. You will explore the long-vanished plantations that once overlooked the Savannah River, experience the people and places which contributed to the prosperity of 18th century Savannah and low country Georgia, while learning about the rise and fall of the once vital rice growing industry in the region. Available at the meeting will be the book published in 1998, *The Savannah River Plantations* by Frank Wheeler.

Frank Wheeler earned his degree in history from the University of Georgia. He was Manuscripts Archivist for the Atlanta Historical Society in 1990-92, was University Archivist and Assistant Professor at the University of New Hampshire in 1992-94, Senior Archivist for the Georgia Historical Society, 1995-98. He is the Assistant Director, Georgia Historical Society in Savannah.

SAPELO ISLAND
National Estuarine Research Reserve

Sapelo Island enables visitors to see virtually every facet of a barrier island's natural community, from the diversified wildlife of the forested uplands, to the vast expanses of salt marsh and the complex beach and dunes systems. The Visitor Center, located near the mainland ferry dock brings to life both the natural and cultural history of Sapelo, while guided tours of the island enable visitors to experience the African-American community of Hog Hammock, the University of Georgia Marine Institute, the Reynolds Mansion and Sapelo Island's 1820 Lighthouse.

SAPELO ISLAND VISITORS CENTER 912 437 3224 in Meridian is open daily except Mondays. This interpretive center for Sapelo has much to offer. Reservations for the four hour regular tours of the Island on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays and the six hour extended tour on the last Tuesday of each month are made here. Sapelo Island Visitors Center also has the information on special group tours and School Field Trips and privately owned and operated opportunities and activities at Sapelo Island. A Gift Shop which includes Books, Art Objects, Pictures and Posters and wearing apparel is available at the Visitors Center.

**SAPELO ISLAND NATIONAL
ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE**
P.O. Box 15, Sapelo Island, Ga. 31327
Phone 912 485 2251, FAX: 485 2141

The SINERR is managed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division, and is administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

FORT KING GEORGE STATE HISTORICAL SITE
P.O. Box 711-Darien, Ga 31305-----912-437 4770

WWW.GAHSOCIETY.ORG

Special Events for March and April

March 20 Struggle for the Georgia Coast 10am-5pm

Throughout the early 1700's the area in which Fort King George stood was known as the "Disputed Territory." All three of Europe's mightiest powers, England, France, and Spain wanted control of this land. In this event we commemorate this historic struggle with a battle reenactment between the Spanish and the English. Additional features will include colonial crafts and domestic skills, artillery demonstrations, eighteenth century medicine, Scottish dancing, a Native American Presentation, and much more.

April 9 Colonial Dinner at the Fort 7pm-10pm

Enjoy the ultimate dining experience as you step back in time to a colonial feast. This elegant supper will include some of the most scrumptious recipes of the seventeenth century and will be served up in the quaint atmosphere of the fort's blockhouse where colonial musicians will add merriment and entertainment to your dining experience. The colonel's table is limited in seating so place your reservations early.

**FORT KING GEORGE STATE HISTORIC SITE'S
ALTAMAHA RIVER CANOE EXCURSIONS-1999**

In the Spring and Fall of 1999, Canoe Excursions on the Altamaha will be offered for beginner, intermediate and advanced Canoeist. These sportsmen will paddle through hardwood swamps and observe huge cypress trees and wildlife. They will see the old rice fields of Altama Plantation and Carr's Island and Buffalo Swamp in McIntosh County. Some will sleep under the stars on Lewis Island after they explore the mighty Altamaha.

There is a reasonable fee and pre-registration is required for all Canoe Trips. The DNR will furnish all canoes and equipment. Fort King George will publish the 1999 schedule soon.

LOWER ALTAMAHA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 1405
Darien, Georgia 31305

Meetings are held at the Ida Hilton Public Library, Haynes Auditorium, on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 P.M. The Society extends a hearty welcome to all.

Lower Altamaha Historical Society is an affiliate member of Georgia Historical Society

<u>Officers</u>	<u>Board of</u>	
<u>Directors</u>		
President	Buddy Sullivan	Dyson Flanders
Secretary	Mattie Gladstone	Ellie Legg
Treasurer	Honey Fanning	Berkeley Minor
Past-President	Lloyd Flanders	Everett Moriarty
Director Emeritus	W. G. Haynes, Jr.	Myrtle Newberry
		Patty Skipper
		Kaye Traer

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP PLANS: Individual-\$10.00, Student-\$5.00, Family-\$15.00, Corporate-\$100.00, Individual Lifetime-\$250.00

William Britton Dean
1907 - 1998

Will Dean's family were living and contributing to McIntosh county in the early nineteenth century. His love and contributions to his home County will be missed, especially by the membership of Lower Altamaha Historical Society. A charter member of LAHS, Will Dean served twice as president when LAHS was being developed. His contributions to the growth and effectiveness of this organization are too numerous to list. The members of LAHS extends sympathy to the family and friends.

Living on the Georgia Tidewater—Dr. Samuel Pollman Boyer was a 23-year old Pennsylvanian who joined the U.S. Navy in 1862 after his graduation from medical school. He was stationed aboard the U.S. barque *Fernandina* assigned to blockade duty in company with the gunboat *Wamsutta* in Doboy Sound starting in February 1863. The following excerpts are from Dr. Boyer's personal diary kept while he was living on the Georgia Tidewater during the "War Between The States".

Feb'y. 19, 1863—The islands forming this sound [Doboy] are Doboy, on which is a beacon light, Sapelo, on which is a lighthouse—and a beautiful one at that, and Wolf Island.

Feb'y. 20, 1863—Took a tramp on Sapelo Island. While there, I mounted the lighthouse, ascending the steps, each one 12 inches high, and ere I reached the cupola I had to ascend a ladder 12 feet high. The cupola is about 14 feet high. 156 panes of glass form the lights of the said cupola, outside of which is an iron railing. The tower is built of brick. In short, it is a splendid affair. The carpenter killed a snake in the vicinity of the tower. Some call it a 'calico snake,' for it looks very much like a fancy calico pattern. I preserved said snake in alcohol and intend to take it North with me. 5 p.m., the *Wamsutta* arrived in port, having been to Sapelo Sound.

Feb'y 21, 1863—Took a tramp in the interior of Sapelo Island. After traveling six miles through swamps, briars, etc. we arrived at an old hut inhabited by 7 superannuated contrabands [former slaves] and one cripple—all as poor as Job's turkey. From them I learned that a man by the name of Randolph Spalding used to live on this island and occupied the large mansion, which is built in the Corinthian style. He was in possession of 300 darkies ere the war, but they have been removed to the mainland.

Feb'y 27, 1863—Two contrabands all the way from Darien, Ga. Made their appearance today on board, having cut the Southern Confederacy.

March 8, 1863—Sand flies are as plenty as politicians up North; whether they are as dangerous or no I cannot tell.

March 9, 1863—My steward, R.D. Adams, is taking a stroll on Sapelo Island. The captain at my request granted him leave to do so. Adams is some what indisposed—cause, homesick. Poor d—h—he is tired of the service and wants to go home. The *Wamsutta* arrived this morning at 11 o'clock. At 2 p.m. all hands to quarters for

the purpose of target practice with our heavy guns. Some fine shots were fired. All passed along merrily.

March 16, 1863 Took a stroll on Sapelo Island. The doctor and paymaster were on shore on a rabbit hunt and returned at 3 p.m. with 27 rabbit—rather a good day's hunt.

March 17, 1863. At 2 a.m. Captain Moses and myself, proceeded on board of the steamer *Wamsutta*...and started up the River Darien. 5:30 a.m. we arrived opposite the deserted town of Darien (save for a few contrabands). Ere any of us landed, we first trained our port battery on said place, after which Executive Officer Bryant of the *Wamsutta* and Mr. Gibson of the *Fernandina* with 20 armed men landed and entered said town of Darien and found one man skedaddling like thunder. Six superannuated darkies, hogs chickens, cattle, and sheep, beside plenty of fine buildings, which were locked, was all that remained in the once-flourishing and striving town of Darien. We ascertained from some of the contrabands that a squad of men, Rebel pickets, were camped at the Ridge...and that some of them had been in town early in the morning but took to their heels upon the approach of our gunboats. The darkies appeared to have an unholy horror of us Yankees, supposing us to be vandals. Etc. I suppose the Rebs poisoned their minds against us. Not finding anything of any account, nor being bent on a plundering expedition, we left Darien as we found it, at 7 a.m. I counted as many as 15 warehouses or stores on the river bank, all large buildings painted with a solution of lime, which we Yankees at home call whitewashing. Upon one is the name "Mitchell and Smith" painted in large black letters. 4 or 5 large sawmills were on the river bank. The houses comprising the town were principally built of lumber, all painted white, and green shutters. Upon the door of the residence of the former consul of Mecklenburg,

Carl Epping, was posted a notice, signed by said Carl Epping, consul, "warning all civil and military authorities from molesting said building, the wharves on the river of the Darien side," etc. as they belonged to and were under his control. From the tenor of said notice I suppose that the said Carl Epping must have been a man of some "pumpkins" in Darien. In short, I think that in times of peace Darien must have been a beautiful, flourishing, and thriving town.

"*March 24, 1863.* The Wamsutta went up the Ridge River for some lumber. Arrived at the Ridge. Subsequently, the party was attacked by Confederate cavalry and it retreated back to the Wamsutta. The gunboat then stopped at the Palmetto Mills on Hird's Island for lumber. The proprietor of said mill was Isaac M. Aiken—at least he was on January 1st, 1860 as shown by Rules and Regulations found posted up in what used to be his office. We obtained plenty of lumber, several grindstones, chains, etc. Arrived on board the Fernandina at 12 a.m., tired and weary.

"*March 26, 1863.* Steward took a run on shore. The lighthouse lookout signalized a schooner in the offing sailing northward. He supposes it to have been the Hope returning from St. Simons Sound. Took a run on shore.

"*June 10, 1863.* Large fire seen on the mainland. The Rebels are burning cotton, etc., for I have no doubt but what they have an idea of an expedition, etc.

"*June 11, 1863.* The Army boats Harriet A. Weed, Sentinel, and John Adams arrived in Doboy Sound this morning. The U.S. steamer Paul Jones arrived at 9 a.m. The Army steamers then left for Darien, after which the Paul Jones brought up the rear. The Army boats shelled the various mills, etc. as they passed along. We remained

at quarters until 5:15 p.m. At 3 p.m. the Army troops—i.e., Colonel Montgomery's regiment of contrabands, set fire to Darien, and in a short time the whole place was one mass of flame. The sight was beautiful. Whether it was proper and pat to burn the place I know not, but I do know that the place was reduced to ashes. "The Harriet A. Weed managed to capture a schooner loaded with cotton which intended to run the blockade tonight. Thus the rose was nipped in the bud. We are only sorry that an Army instead of a Navy vessel captured the prize. She is valued at \$25,000. Colonel Montgomery landed his troops at Darien and captured about 20 contrabands, after which the place, as stated above, was set on fire. We did not ascend the river all the way to Darien on account of our vessel, the Paul Jones, being too large a craft. Consequently, we have nothing to do with the burning of Darien, being merely spectators. "At 9 p.m. we made tracks for Doboy Sound again. The Army boats returned at 10 and 11 p.m. They succeeded in obtaining contrabands, furniture, cotton, etc., etc. Darien, Georgia is amongst the things that was. These beautiful mills, houses and stores are no more. All that remains of a once beautiful town is one mass of smouldering ruins—one of the effects of civil war.

Reference:

Early Days on the Georgia Tidewater [pg. 310]
by Buddy Sullivan

NAVAL SURGEON—Blockading the South—1862-1866
THE DIARY OF DR. SAMUEL PELLMAN BOYER
Edited by Elinor Barnes and James A. Barnes



Lower Altamaha Historical Society, Inc.
P. O. Box 1405
Darien, Georgia 31305