

The Altamaha Echoes

Lower Altamaha Historical Society Newsletter June 1999

LOWER ALTAMAHA HISTORICAL SOCIETY-1999-2000-OFFICERS, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

President Buddy Sullivan
Vice-President Ed Meyers
Secretary Ann Baggett
Treasurer Honey Fanning

Past-President Lloyd Flanders
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Barracks Dyson Flanders
Cemetery Mattie Gladstone
Field Trips Berkeley Minor
Membership Jeanne Klippel
Program Everett Moriarty
Publicity Myrtle Newberry

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 1998-2000

Berkeley Minor
Everett Moriarty
Myrtle Newberry
Kaye Traer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 1999-2001

Dyson Flanders
Constance Johnson
Jeanne Klippel
Don McClain

Director Emeritus William G. Haynes, Jr.

Your contribution to any of these committees is welcome. Please contact the committee chairman.

LAHS MEETING, JUNE 17, 1999, 7:00 P.M. - HAYNES AUDITORIUM

HOSPITALITY: Constance Johnson, Ellie Legg

DUTCH TREAT SUPPER, 5:45 P.M. AT ARCHIE'S

Brunswick the Ocean Port of Georgia by Bruce Fendig will be the program presented by the author, Bruce Fendig of Brunswick. Mr. Fendig is a Harbor Pilot for the Brunswick Ports, which are managed by the Georgia Ports Authority. Many in his family before him held this very responsible job of guiding the large ships both to and from docking at the Brunswick ports.

Bruce Fendig will have his recently published book *Brunswick the Ocean Port of Georgia*, available at the meeting. He will be happy to autograph your copy.

LAHS MEETING, JULY 15, 1999, 7:00 P.M.

SAPALO ISLAND VISITORS CENTER, MERIDIAN

POT LUCK PICNIC SUPPER, 6:00 P.M.

LAHS will furnish the paper products and drinks for this fellowship picnic, prior to the meeting.

Historic Preservation on Jekyll Island will be the program presented by Warren Murphy of Jekyll Island. The success of the preservation and restoration of the Millionaire Village on Jekyll Island is due primarily to the efforts and expertise of Warren Murphy. He was Superintendent of Historic Preservation on Jekyll Island for ten years. In 1996 he was named Senior Director of Operations Jekyll Island Authority. Murphy also is an Independent Consultant and has contributed to a number of preservation and restoration projects in the Georgia Coastal Area.

Warren Murphy is a native of Nashville, Tennessee, graduate of Transylvania University, Lexington, Ky., former Petty Officer in US Navy. He sits on several Boards and has memberships in numerous Professional organizations relating to Museums, Preservation Technology, History, and Business.

LAHS MEETING, AUGUST 19, 1999, 7:00 P.M. - HAYNES AUDITORIUM
HOSPITALITY: Donna Garner, Dee Ingram, Sissy Lingle, Kaye Traer
DUTCH TREAT SUPPER, 5:45 P.M. AT ARCHIE'S

Fort Morris at Sunbury, Georgia will be the program presented by Arthur Edgar, superintendent Fort Morris State Historic Site. When the Continental Congress convened in 1776, the delegates recognized the importance of a fort to protect Georgia's coast from the British Navy. Soon afterwards, a low bluff on the Medway River at the seaport of Sunbury was fortified and garrisoned by 200 patriots. The fort protected Georgia against the British in both the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. Fort Morris State Historic Site is operated by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Arthur Edgar, superintendent since 1998 was formerly the Assistant Superintendent at Fort King George.

LOWER ALTAMAHA HISTORICAL SOCIETY acknowledges special memberships, 1999-2000
CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP:

Greenwood Development Corporation - Greenwood, South Carolina

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP:

Darien Telephone Company, Inc. - Darien, Georgia

Malcolm & Muriel Bell - Hendersonville, North Carolina

Sapelo National Bank - Darien, Georgia

Living on the Georgia Tidewater—Ken Akins, Superintendent of Fort King George Historical Site and long time supporter and member of LAHS has issued the following News release.

Fort King George is proud to announce the funding of the reconstruction of the three remaining structures for the fort. Bids should be let this summer for the rebuilding of the Enlisted Men's Barracks, a 70' by 15' structure which will parallel the river just to the east of the blockhouse. The two other structures to be rebuilt will be the 20' by 40' Officer's Quarters and the 15' by 20' Hospital/Guardroom. All three buildings will have old English style chimneys and fireplaces made from hand-made brick. The structures will be built using the typical post-and-beam technique, the same as the blockhouse, with high-pitched roofs shingled with cypress shakes. Not only will the barracks be used to house reenactors during fort reenactments but will be used for various other functions such as colonial crafts, cooking and colonial dinners.

"Adding three new structures will have the same effect as when the blockhouse was reconstructed in 1988," said Site Superintendent Ken Akins. "In one year our attendance quadrupled. We are expecting an even bigger impact this time. The blockhouse virtually paid for itself in increased revenue in 10 years. The blockhouse project was co-sponsored by the Lower Altamaha Historical

Society and DNR with the society raising over \$50,000 which was matched by DNR. This effort put Fort King George on the map thanks to the hard work and dedication of the LAHS. \$136,000 has been appropriated by the Georgia legislature for the Barracks project thank to LAHS Barracks Committee, Chambers of Commerce in both McIntosh and Glynn County and other interested parties. \$111,000 was appropriated from the Senate (thanks to the hard work and tenacity of Senator Rene Kemp) and \$25,000 will come from a Department of Community Affairs grant through the efforts of Rep. E. C. Tillman. "We have no idea when the project will be started" added Akins, "but when it happens, just like the blockhouse, it will happen quickly. By this time next year we should see the entire fort reconstructed complete with all the fort's artillery, interior walls and fascines just like it would have appeared to a visitor in the 1720's. I can't wait!"

Fort King George has experienced a marked increase in attendance this year thanks to more school groups visiting the site as well as a healthy economy.

Living on the Georgia Tidewater—The following are excerpts from a book: *McIntosh County Academy, McIntosh County, Georgia Minutes of the Commissioners 1820-1875—Account Book of Students 1821-1834*. Edited by Virginia Steele Wood, 1973

People generally assume that public schools, providing free education for everyone, have always existed. During the greater part of the 19th century, education in Georgia was very much a local affair, with its quality dependent on the initiative and enthusiasm of local support. McIntosh County Academy was typical of the locally sponsored efforts during this period.

On 1 July 1783, the general assembly of Georgia enacted legislation to promote county academies. In 1784 commissioners of academies were empowered to sell confiscated property. An academy was managed by a board of commissioners or trustees who obtained a charter, corporate power and who promoted interest in education in their community. Buildings varied in design. Children usually boarded with some family in the town or in a school boarding house. Many of the teachers were from New England. The most frequently taught subjects included Latin, English grammar, arithmetic, Greek, writing, geography, reading and French. In addition to these traditional subjects, higher mathematics, surveying, rhetoric and social sciences were gradually added to the curriculum. Chemistry, natural philosophy, astronomy and other science courses were offered in the 1830's.

McIntosh County Academy was chartered in 1794, one year after creation of the county itself. Apparently the academy at Baisdens Bluff was established prior to 1815, for in 1825 it was recorded that, "the academy of this county has been established at Baisdens Bluff more than ten years, and during that period the best exertions of the commissioners have failed to keep it in operation more than half of that time." On 2 July 1830, all Academy records were lost in a fire at the store of their secretary, and that fall the commissioners were hard pressed to ascertain the balance due the Academy for sale and interest of land lots. Nevertheless in December certain alterations were planned for the Academy at Baisdens Bluff. In addition the ambitious undertaking of establishing four branches of the Academy in various parts of the county for poor children was resolved by the Commissioners, with the Darien branch located at the Masonic Hall. These free schools were suspended in January 1832. At the end of January 1831 the Commissioners announced that two children attached to the Female Asylum (Presbyterian) in Darien could receive instruction in the Academy free of charge.

Under Matthew Lindon, principal, the Academy at Baisdens Bluff appears to have prospered during the period 1822-1827. The building, a two-story structure, measured thirty by sixty feet. A large classroom on the

first floor, with twelve foot ceilings, also served as a place of worship on Sunday. The second floor, with nine foot ceilings, had eleven "lodging rooms." A chimney with four fire places on the south side had been added in 1820-21, along with a school room for boys.

Disaster struck in July 1823, when heavy rains undermined the bluff on which the Academy was situated. Nearly one third of the lot was washed away and the building itself fell into a ravine. Matthew Lindon died as the result of exposure while trying to save the school. School was resumed in January 1824 and on September 14-15, coastal Georgians experienced a disastrous hurricane. The "tabby" building at Baisdens Bluff, which had been used for a school was abandoned as unfit and unsafe. A new site was chosen two miles from Darien, and the commissioners were again faced with collecting all money due and paying all demands against the Academy.

The next decade was one of upheaval for the Commissioners. In January 1831 a proposal was made and accepted to build a boarding house, complete with kitchen, for the Academy. That same month, the Commissioners were faced with misconduct of their principal. Censured for visiting billiard tables, his action was considered "entirely incompatible with the character and conduct which ought to distinguish an Instructor of Youth." Although reprimanded and fined for intoxication, the principal was evidently considered valuable for his connection with the institution was not severed until three years later.

In November 1836, Commissioners reported that "in consequence of the damaged state of the Academy funds" school would be suspended on the first of February. By December the picture had changed, and a new principal was engaged on condition that he accept all tuition money as payment. His resignation before the end of term in 1838 was viewed by the board as a violation of their agreement and they considered it "inexpedient" to purchase his chemical apparatus. In August the Commissioners with drew their charge against their former principal and set about finding a new headmaster. At this same time they were faced with the possible prosecution of a teacher who had married with out obtaining a proper license. Although the Board of Commissioners was legally entitled to a five hundred dollar fine, they dropped their case. The ceremony had been performed by the Presbyterian minister in Darien, a former Commissioner of the Academy.

The last meeting of the Commissioners, prior to the Civil War, was recorded in January 1861.

SAPPELO 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.

SAPPELO 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.

**SAPPELO ISLAND NATIONAL
ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE**
P.O. Box 15, Sapelo Island, Ga. 31327
Phone 912 485 2271, 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

ALTAMAHA RIVER CANOE EXCURSIONS
June 12-Honeygall Creek (Intermediate)

Honeygall Creek-Enjoy a beautiful 8 mile trip through hardwood swamps and old rice fields of Altama Plantation and Carr's Island.

CANNONS ACROSS THE MARSH
Saturday July 3, 1999-10 A.M.-4 P.M.

Celebrate America's birthday at the fort. Artillery drills will be given all day on the hour with musket drills being demonstrated every half hour. Learn what it took to be a revolutionary soldier from Georgia in one of our nation's most pivotal eras. Cool down with a piece of complimentary watermelon after each demonstration.

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.

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



Darien, Georgia 31305
P.O. Box 1405

Lower Altamaha Historical Society, Inc.