

# Altamaha Echoes

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Lower Altamaha Historical Society Newsletter

June 2007

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## PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2006-2007

We enjoyed another year of interesting and informative programs: Kelly Spratt told us about the work of preserving historic Darien while planning for future changes; Christy Crisp of GHS gave us off-beat info on James Oglethorpe; we heard about the Jekyll Island Club's women members from June Hall McCash; Pamela Bauer Mueller reviewed her book *MARY MUSGROVE, QUEEN OF THE CREEKS*; James Jordan recounted his story of the illegal slave trade in America through *THE SAGA OF THE SLAVE SHIP WANDERER*; Mary Evelyn Hoffhaus told us of her family's long history in McIntosh County; Laura and Meredith Devendorf of Melon Bluff recounted the role of the live oak in Georgia and the world; and Robert Weber of GHS taught us about the common soldier of the American Revolution.

The summer picnic at the Fort, our "Show and Tell" night, and the Christmas party at Belvedere with Everett's eggnog were the social highlights of our year. But undoubtedly the program "highlight" was Buddy's presentation, "Early Spanish Settlement on the Georgia Coast, 1525-1721," to a standing-room-only crowd of more than 80 people. In November and December we sponsored Buddy's six-lecture series on "The History of Darien and McIntosh County" which was held at the Fort and enjoyed by many McIntosh and Glynn County participants.

"Altamaha Echoes" saw a "changing-of-the-guard (i.e., editor)" this year, as Myrtle Newberry left us -- and McIntosh -- to move to a Stone Mountain retirement community, turning over this job which she had held for 15 years to Carole Williams. David Miller agreed to be responsible for Myrtle's other job - taking care of Publications and Books.

We had two great field trips arranged by Jean Hawkins -- McIntosh Seed's bus tour of the Harris Neck area and a walking tour of Civil War sites in Savannah.

We continued our membership in the Chamber of Commerce, gave \$100 in support of the Blessing of the Fleet, installed a plaque and planted an oak tree at Fort King George in memory of long-time member Dyson Flanders, contributed \$1,000 to the McIntosh Art Association, and persevered for months until the light in the Fort King George parking lot was finally installed. We sent a letter in support of Darien's grant application for funds to help set up a Darien historic sites walking trail, had input into the DOT's assessment of the historic value of various areas in the county that would be affected by highway projects (VP Jack Godfrey took on this job for us), and our Scholarship Committee chaired by Ann Howard presented the Buddy Sullivan annual scholarship award to Mallory Jarriel, one of MCA's top graduating seniors.

Jim Bruce continues to do a wonderful job as our webmaster, keeping everything up to date and adding archives when material is available. Howard and Jeanne Klippel are integral to the life of LAHS, taking care of programs and membership. The Clarks are masters of hospitality, and we now have an LAHS historian - Buddy Sullivan. All our committee chairs are much appreciated and needed and deserve a "round of applause" for their hard work; likewise, your secretary, Betty Ewing, and treasurer, Kaye Traer.

We continue to enjoy our relationship with Fort King George through the generosity of Steven Smith, Superintendent. As far as I can see, LAHS is thriving because of everyone's participation and interest, and I have enjoyed serving you as president during this first year of my two-year term.

Harriet Roberson, President



**LAHS MEETING, Thursday, June 21, 2007, 5:30 p.m.**

POT LUCK PICNIC SUPPER, Fort King George Historic Site

Picnic Supper for LAHS members and guests. Please plan to attend and bring a dish to share. LAHS will furnish drinks and the meat.

Come and enjoy great fellowship!

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**LAHS MEETING, Thursday, July 19, 2007, 7:00 p.m.**

Fort King George Historic Site  
Dutch treat supper, 5:45 p.m. at B&J Pizza

Curt Steger will be presenting a program on the "Wit and Wisdom of Robert E. Lee." Mr. Steger is a Civil War historian and author of the book entitled "*The Character and Faith of Robert E. Lee.*" He graduated from Eastern Kentucky University, taught history and coached basketball at the high school level for 8 years before entering the banking profession. He has served as President, Chief Executive Officer and Board Member of Commonwealth Bank in Mt. Sterling, KY for over 20 years. He uses the life of Robert E. Lee in motivational speaking engagements to various groups on the topic of "Leadership with Character and Faith." He recently completed a book on Stonewall Jackson and is publishing a "Character Calendar" on Robert E. Lee.

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**LAHS Board of Directors Meeting, Thursday, August 16, 2007, 4:00 p.m.**

Fort King George Historic Site  
LAHS members are always welcome

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**LAHS MEETING, Thursday, August 16, 2007, 7:00 p.m.**

Fort King George Historic Site  
Dutch treat supper, 5:45 p.m. at B&J Pizza

**PROGRAM WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT A LATER DATE.**



(Georgia Historical Marker located at City Hall, one block from U.S. 17) – **"The Burning of Darien."** *On June 11, 1863 the seaport of Darien was vandalized and burned by Federal forces stationed on nearby St. Simons Island. The town was largely deserted, most of its 500 residents having sought refuge inland. Lost were public buildings, churches, businesses and most private residences. Conducting the raid were units comprised of among the first African-American troops to serve the Union cause, the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteers under Col. Robert G. Shaw, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> South Carolina Volunteers under Col. James Montgomery. The burning of Darien, undefended and of little strategic importance, was one of the most controversial events of the Civil War.*

**Living on the Georgia Tidewater** - Excerpts from *Early Days on the Georgia Tidewater* by Buddy Sullivan: Darien.....was largely a deserted town by the spring of 1862 because of a prevalent Union naval threat from the blockading ships offshore. Darien's value as a commercial port of export had steadily declined since the 1840s with the loss of most of its cotton trade to Savannah. Except for an occasional blockade runner dashing out of Darien under the cover of darkness with baled cotton rafted down the Altamaha from the Georgia interior (Savannah was under heavy blockade), little cotton, or anything else, was being shipped from Darien after early 1862.

Thus, it is exceedingly difficult to find a satisfactory explanation for the orders, and subsequent behavior, of the Union force from St. Simons which looted, vandalized, then burned the town of Darien on June 11, 1863. The Yankee force, comprised mostly of Negro troops officered by whites, leveled a town that had absolutely no strategic value whatever, either militarily or economically. The Federals knew and fully understood the insignificance of Darien, but they nonetheless proceeded to destroy Darien . . . .

In *History of the Massachusetts Fifty-Fourth*, a letter Shaw wrote to his mother is quoted: *"After the town was pretty thoroughly disemboweled, (Shaw wrote), he (Montgomery) said to me that he would burn the town. He speaks in a very low tone, and has quite a sweet smile when addressing you. I told him I did not want the responsibility of it, and he was only too happy to take it all on his shoulders ... The reasons he gave me for destroying Darien were that the Southerners must be made to feel that this was a real war, and that they were to be swept away by the hand of God like the Jews of old. In theory, it may seem all right to some; but when it comes to being made the instrument of the Lord's vengeance, I myself don't like it. Then he says, 'We are outlawed, and therefore not bound by the rules of regular warfare.' But that makes it none the less revolting to wreak out vengeance on the innocent and defenceless."*

According to (Captain Luis) Emilio's history, Montgomery *"applied the torch to the last buildings with his own hand. Fanned by a high wind, the flames eventually destroyed everything but part of a church, a few houses, and some lumber works owned in the North."*

A final word or two serves to sum up this unpleasant affair from the standpoint of those most affected by it, the townspeople of Darien themselves: *"The value in money I would not have thought so much of, as I am getting used to it,"* a citizen wrote. *"But there is something in the word home that puts money out of the question."*

Darien was well on the way toward recovery by the spring of 1869 when the beloved Southern general, Robert E. Lee, paid a short visit to the town, a year before his death. Tired and worn out at the age of 63 from his campaigns, Lee was on his way to visit his father's grave on Cumberland Island, taking passage in the steamer *Lizzie Baker* which ran the inland route between Savannah and Florida. When the boat stopped at Darien, Lee agreed to a short reception on board and enthusiastic citizens, in the process of rebuilding Darien into a busy timber port, stopped and crowded the waterfront, "bringing flowers and expressions of esteem to the revered leader of the Lost Cause."



## LOWER ALTAMAHA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 1405 - Darien, GA 31305

[www.loweraltamahistoricalociety.org](http://www.loweraltamahahistoricalociety.org)

### LAHS Officers 2006-2008

President	Harriet Roberson	912-265-6729
Vice-President	Jack Godfrey	912-832-5622
Secretary	Elizabeth A. Ewing	912-832-5089
Treasurer	Kaye Traer	912-832-5150

### 2006-2008

Harry Clark  
Howard Klippel  
Myrtle Newberry  
Lamar Williamson

### 2007-2009

Jim Bruce  
Mary Evelyn Hoffhaus  
Dave Miller  
Chris Milner

Past-President	Peyton Lingle
Director Emeritus	Buddy Sullivan

### Committee Chairpersons

Ft. King George	Steven Smith
Membership	Jeanne Klippel
Programs	Howard Klippel
Scholarship	Ann Howard
Field Trips	Jean Hawkins
Altamaha "Echoes"	Carole Williams
Publications/Books	David Miller
Historian	Buddy Sullivan
Hospitality	Harry & Mary Virginia Clark

### Life Memberships:

Muriel Bell	David Miller
Laura Berolzheimer	Chris & Ward Milner
Darien Telephone Co.	Bill & Sherry Minnich
Mrs. Caroline B. Davis	Everett Moriarty
John & Mary Dean	Myrtle Newberry
Enterprise Rent-A-Car	Frances Pollard
Lloyd Flanders	John Reehling
Gus & Marg Hallam	Jeff & Kelly Spratt
Bill Jones III	

### Corporate Memberships:

Sapelo National Bank, William Parker, President  
The Book Shop, Inc., Harold & Virginia Hicks  
Coastal Georgia Historical Society  
"The Lodge," Little St. Simons Island

## FORT KING GEORGE STATE HISTORICAL SITE

P.O. Box 711 - Darien, GA 31305 --- 912-437-4770

[www.gastateparks.org/fortkinggeorge](http://www.gastateparks.org/fortkinggeorge)

**Living History Programs** for students and guests are a daily activity at the Fort. Reenactors allow an eighteenth century experience for the observer.

### Garrison Weekend

Saturday, June 16, 2007, 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Join the Garrison for a day of artillery drills, musket firings, and soldiers' life activities.

### Cannons Across The Marsh

Wednesday, July 4, 2007, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Celebrate America's birthday at the Garrison with a day of artillery drills, cannon and musket firings, and soldiers' life activities. Free watermelon and refreshments will be served.



### AMERICA'S WATERWAY WATCH NATIONAL RESPONSE CENTER HOTLINE

1-800-424-8802

*Call to report any kind of suspicious activity  
you might see in or around our waterways.  
This is an anti-terrorism measure.*

Jim & Barbara Bruce  
P.O. Box 20652  
St. Simons, Ga. 31522



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