



The Heritage Observer

News from The Heritage Library

Bringing the Past to Life

Vol. 6, No. 2

April 2014

Plans for the Zion Chapel of Ease Cemetery

Although the 1788 Zion Chapel of Ease has long disappeared from the foundation at the intersection of Mathews Drive and William Hilton Parkway, the chapel's cemetery remains. Located there is the William Baynard mausoleum, constructed in 1846, the oldest standing structure on Hilton Head Island.

There have been several fits and starts about rehabilitating this very special site where four Patriots of the American Revolution and Davant Kirk, Stoney and Baldwin family members, who played significant roles in the development of



By Dave Schofield

Hilton Head following the Revolution, are buried or memorialized. In all there are over forty grave sites marking the final resting place of early Hilton Head Island residents.

The Heritage Library Foundation is the legal owner of the cemetery and has taken initial steps to assure that this piece of historic property does not slip into irrelevance, beyond repair. Progress has been slow, not because of lack of interest and desire to move forward but because of lack of funds to do what needs to be accomplished. Thanks to Baynard family donations, Heritage Library Foundation members, and interested contributors a first big step has been taken to preserve the mausoleum and the cemetery grounds.

In spring 2013 the Library formed a collaborative agreement with the Savannah College of Art and Design, SCAD, to complete a survey of the mausoleum to determine what was needed to preserve the mausoleum structure from further damage from the elements. This work was accomplished by a lead professor of antiquity preservation, Dr. Thomas Taylor, and a team of five advanced-level students. They submitted the following:

- The roof structure is sliding off and one



- section has partially fallen in
- Vines and other vegetation are growing inside and on exterior walls and roof
- Water is hastening decay of the limestone roof and sandstone walls.
- Inadequate drainage around the structure is causing dampness to the interior and along the foundation
- Because of heavy tree foliage, sun cannot assist in the drying out process
- Iron anchors that should maintain the integrity of the walls and roof have corroded and no longer provide support
- There is need to design and construct a new interior support system for the roof and walls
- Other issues include eradicating the insect population within the building, preserving the exterior sandstone wall structure, and repairing existing floor tiles.

Given the enormity of the preservation needs

and the small funds available, priorities had to be established. Immediate needs include:

- Covering the roof with a tarp to mitigate water penetration through the roof structure
- Constructing an access door with venting penetrations to allow for air circulation within the structure
- Creating a drainage system along the exterior foundation to evacuate standing water
- Thin tree foliage over the mausoleum to permit increased sunlight to aid in the process of drying out the structure.

The above items have gone out for bids and, where needed,

permits have been requested. These measures are designed to maintain the status quo until sufficient funds are available to take on more significant preservation work. The next priority of work includes structural repairs to the roof and walls, interior reinforcements, and overall visual enhancements to both the mausoleum and the cemetery.

How You Can Help

We have received \$1,500 toward the Mathis' second matching donation of \$2,500. We need \$1,000 more. As you read SCAD's report on the condition of the Baynard mausoleum you will learn that the structure is in very poor condition and needs repairs before further decay occurs. Please help us save Hilton Head Island's oldest structure with a donation, large or small, specifying that it is to be used to repair the mausoleum.

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Editor's Note:

Those members who did not attend the Library's annual meeting on February 19 missed a wonderful opportunity to learn how great our Library is. We will try to cover the meeting highlights in this issue of the *Observer*. We strongly recommend that you plan to attend next year's annual meeting. P.S. The food was great too.

Letter from the President

During the Revolutionary War, Hilton Head Island volunteers formed a Patriot militia unit whose purpose was to protect the Island's residents and plantations from attacks by the British, who were based in Savannah, or by the Tories, who were based on Daufuskie Island. That volunteer spirit lives on today in our Heritage Library volunteers through their historical and genealogical research of the history of our Island and its residents. I am constantly amazed and pleased at the expertise, commitment, and dedication of our volunteers as they work to preserve and protect our Island's history and its historic sites.



*By Lou Benfante,
President*

As I begin my term as President of the Heritage Library Foundation, I want to thank all our volunteers for their time and for all their work and efforts. That work has made our non-profit, all volunteer library, the Hilton Head Island Organization of the Year. Those efforts also brought us world renown when USA Today named us as one of the top ten places in the world to conduct family history research.

I am proud to be a volunteer at the Heritage Library and I am honored to be able to work with the fine group of people who also serve as our volunteers. I know that together we can build on the success that we have already achieved to become a well-known source of genealogical assistance and a premier source of Hilton Head Island history.

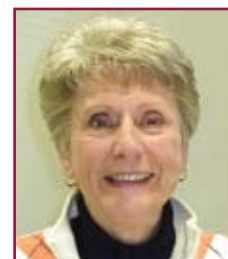
Who Are We?

We know who we are. We are a premier genealogy library with many experienced genealogists ready to share their knowledge with our patrons. We are the repository for the history of Hilton Head Island, constantly documenting and preserving the Island's history and delivering this information through presentations and tours. We own two important local historical properties; Ft. Mitchel and Zion Chapel of Ease Cemetery. (see article on Page 1)

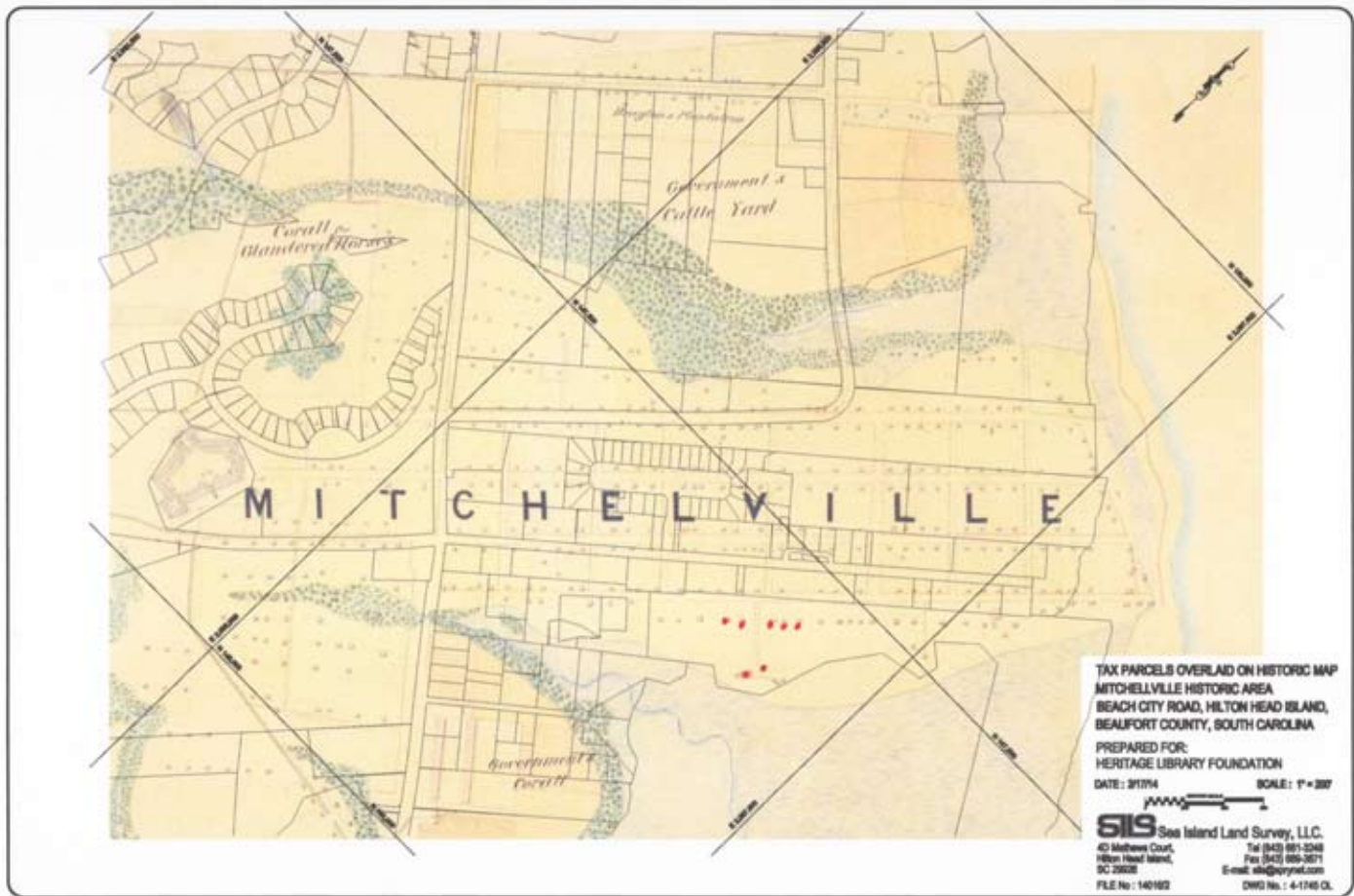
Where Are We Going?

Our focus this year is to streamline our operations and create a new look and feel for the Library. We are digitizing many of our files to make them available to our patrons on desktops and on our website. We are culling our books to free up much-needed space. (look for a book sale coming soon). We are presenting A Special Speaker Series, "Hilton Head in the Modern Era," at the Coligny Theater. Speakers are scheduled throughout the current year. Check our website or call the Library for the schedule.

We are asking, "Do our name and logo still reflect who we are and what we're doing?" We have struggled for many years with the confusion the "Heritage" in our name has caused, both on the Island and off. Thanks to a generous grant from the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry we have hired a consultant to help us investigate our possible changes. Our hope is that a new name and look will more accurately reflect the energy and excitement that pervade the Library today. The sky's the limit.



*By Linda Piekut,
Executive Director*



Where on Hilton Head was Mitchelville Located?

Members of the Mitchelville committee were frequently asked this question but they didn't know the entire answer. Ezra "Cal" Callahan, committee chairman, had an 1864 Mitchelville map and he was determined to find the exact location of this historical town.



By Ezra "Cal" Callahan
Chairman of the Mitchelville Project

With a grant from the Bargain Box, Sea Island Land Survey was hired to work with Cal and Robert Richardson of the Mitchelville Preservation Project. Sea Island identified 20 features including road intersections, Fort Howell, and some tabby ruins at Barkers Field and surveyed these features with GPS equipment. The surveyed points were overlaid on the 1864 map, adjustments were made, and Mitchelville's location was established along with the locations of seven buildings in Fish Haul Park. Adjacent to the kiosk that tells the story of Mitchelville, a house was located and its outlines have been staked. Now the committee hopes to discover additional, identifiable ruins or remains to provide more Mitchelville information.



Committee members have been able to find more than 550 names of people who lived in Mitchelville between 1862 and 1868. The committee's next project is to locate Native Islanders who can trace their ancestry back to Mitchelville. The committee has already been able to do this for several current Island residents and has prepared genealogical information for them. The committee and the local black churches are working to locate more people who are Mitchelville descendants.

An Unexpected Find



Carole Rossi, Adelpha and Erina Fortuna, Ron Rossi

For many years I have done extensive research on the Italian side of our family, using films from Family Search and web sites. The most rewarding find came by accident — I googled Atina, the village of my husband's (Ron) family. Up came "Villa Fortuna" (surname maternal side). The village is small; this had to be something to check. A couple of emails to the hotel led me to believe there was a connection but it was unclear.

Last fall, while touring Italy we hired a driver, GianLuca, in Sorrento to take us to Atina. We had little hope of seeing more than the village, church and cemetery. Our driver was wonderful and sought out Villa Fortuna which was closed for the season. GianLuca was determined and knocked on doors until a woman answered.

I explained who we were and found she



Villa Fortuna, Atina, Italy

was a cousin. More family members were summoned and questions flew right and left. We learned that the hotel was the original home of Ron's great-grandfather now renovated to a hotel. This experience was exciting and heartwarming.

We were sent home with names, addresses, kisses, hugs and a bottle of homemade wine.

Library Wish List

A one-year library subscription to **Origins.net**;
Cost: \$800

Origins.net is a database of British and Irish records. It contains:

- Unusual, hard-to-find, older records to take the family tree back further.
- Over 500 years of Wills indexes to locate a will no matter where proved
- Original probate documents available to purchase and view online
- Key Irish records for overcoming obstacles in Irish research
- Specialist British and London records

Thank You

The following people responded to our January Observer Wish List:

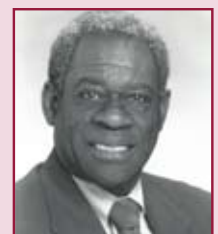
Paul Anthony for a desktop printer

Sunni Winkler for the money to be able to provide Wi-Fi service at the library

Save the Date!

The third speaker in the Hilton Head in the Modern Era series, Tom Barnwell, Jr., will talk about "Hilton Head Fishing Coop and the BASF Conflict" on May 20 at Coligny Theater. Wine Reception 5:30; Presentation 6:00. Optional dinner at Bomboras Grille after the presentation.

To make your reservation for the presentation: phone 843-686-6560 or 843-689-6767; online www.coastaldiscovery.org. To make your reservations for the dinner, call 843-689-2662.



Tom Barnwell

Clemson and Heritage Library Collaboration

By Linda Piekut

Because of our People of Mitchelville project, funded by grants from the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry and the Bargain Box, the Heritage Library has had the privilege of working with the Clemson University Pan-African Studies Department over the past three semesters. The students were enrolled in a creative inquiry class, "Reconstructing Historic Mitchelville: Using the Basic Tools of Sociology and Genealogy to Gain a Better Knowledge of Life in a Historic Black Community."

Their first visit in the spring of 2013 was to learn some basic genealogy methods and then use them to trace the family histories of some of our native island community members. The students were also able to tour Fish Haul Park, site of Mitchelville.

Before their second visit, the Library was able to complete the students' family history work and had the family trees engraved on plaques ready for the students to present to the families at a program, "Native Islander Roots" at Cherry Hill School in October, 2013.

This second visit was also the students' chance to see the Mitchelville exhibit at the High School as well as the excavation site at the end of the Hilton Head Airport runway.

The third and last session was held March 17-21, 2014. The students again came to the Library for a course in recording oral histories before meeting with community members, at the historic churches, to record their personal stories. The collaboration was celebrated at a program at Fish Haul Park on Wednesday, March 19, when the Library unveiled a display board showing the 1864 map of Mitchelville with an overlay of the streets of today. (see Article on Page 3).

The Library and Clemson University have already started making plans for the next course that will begin in the fall of this year.



HISTORY DEPARTMENT

By Lou Benfante, History Chair

We have started off 2014 with a bang. Three more volunteers have joined the History Department; Don Peterson, Jonathan Maynard, and Bernard Flanagan. The Historic Sites lectures which are held every Tuesday at 10:30 AM at the Library continue to draw interest from Island visitors and the community. In 2013, our in-house attendance at these talks totaled 195. Through mid-March of this year our in-house attendance has already reached 137.

Our feedback from the Historic Sites lectures has shown that there is interest in a presentation on the History of the Island from 1950, when the lumbermen arrived, until the present. Don Peterson and Dee Phillips are working on this presentation and we will probably alternate it with the Historic Sites lectures on Tuesday mornings at the Library.

We have resumed our Fort Mitchel tours on Thursdays at 10 AM in conjunction with the Coastal Discovery Museum. Jonathan Maynard and Bernard Flanagan are being trained to conduct our Fort Mitchel tours. The Beaufort County Historical Society is going to purchase a Historical Marker for Fort Mitchel. Iva Welton and Lou Benfante have prepared the text for the marker.

In March Lou Benfante held two classes at USCB's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute -- a standing room crowd of 73 attended the Historic Sites talk and 14 students braved the cold weather to attend a lecture and tour of the Zion Cemetery. Lou will be teaching three classes at USCB in the fall semester.

We have two volunteers who are working on applications to have our historic sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places -- Iva Welton is working on the application for the Zion Cemetery and Barry Riordan is preparing the application for Fort Mitchel.

Sondra Hardy created a presentation on the Role of Women in the History of Hilton Head Island and Dee Phillips and Lou Benfante will be presenting it on May 7 at the Library. Georgia West and Sondra Hardy are researching for a presentation on the Early Settlers of Hilton Head Island.

Lou Benfante will be the dinner speaker at the Spanish Wells Club on April 2, talking about Mitchelville.

As part of the People of Mitchelville Project, we have begun work on a course about Mitchelville and the Gullah culture which we hope will be added to the curriculum in South Carolina schools. We will pilot this in May in Mary Ann Cyr's class at Hilton Head Prep. Also, we are supporting the Gullah-Geechee Consortium whose goal is to make Hilton Head Island the central focal point of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor which stretches from Jacksonville, Florida to Wilmington, North Carolina.

As always, we appreciate the assistance and continued support of all the Heritage Library Foundation volunteers.

The Bluffton DAR Connection

The Emily Geiger Chapter of the DAR has put its commitment to family history to work for the Heritage Library. Ten members of the Bluffton Chapter are volunteers at the Library including Head Librarian, Nancy Burke; Sunni Winkler, Monday Librarian; Diana Luellen, Tuesday Librarian; and volunteers Jan Alpert, Marty Anthony, Glenda Blakeney, Marilyn Hayes, Veda Keeling, Jane Michel, Regent of the Emily Geiger Chapter, and Pre Moore. Two members' husbands, Paul Anthony and Ken Michel, and a son, Greg Mullins, also volunteer at the Library.



By *Nancy Burke,*
Head Librarian

of being a past president of the National Genealogical Society. All the Geiger volunteers are involved in special research projects: abstracting the pension records of Civil War Colored Troops, or collecting

Sunni and Diana are the resident experts on the requirements of lineage societies and assist patrons wishing to join various societies. Jan has the distinction

information on those who died on Hilton Head Island during the Civil War, or transcribing material from National Archives microfilm.

The hat is passed at Geiger meetings and funds have recently been raised to purchase seven new genealogy books for the Library's collection. The Chapter has made cash donations as well. Also, it has provided the Library with copies of its cemetery transcription work in Beaufort and Jasper counties and digital copies of two major Revolutionary War source books.

Our thanks to the Emily Geiger Chapter for its great support.

GENEALOGY TIP

There are many good blogs, newsletters, and genealogy tips available, free, online. One I enjoy is by Michael John Neill of Galesburg, Illinois. By subscribing to this free blog, you receive a daily email with a genealogy tip. Each tip is short and easy to follow. I find them very helpful and you may too.



By *Carol Clemens*

Often Mr. Neill simply poses a question to help you think a bit differently, such as "Are the step-brothers and half-brothers mixed up?" Or "Do you know the definition?" which encourages you to look up unusual terms. Sometimes it is a simple reminder that people "may have told the census taker anything." Mr. Neil reminds us that when a person moves to a new place where few people know him, he might "adjust" his age, birth place — whatever information he might want to hide or alter.

Go to: <http://genealogytipoftheday.blogspot.com/> and fill in your email address under the word subscribe in the right column. Once you sign up, you will get a daily email — just be sure to check your spam in case it goes there the first time. You can easily unsubscribe at any time from this free blog.

More Info

Have a genealogy question? Contact Carol at cclemens318@roadrunner.com. You may find your question answered in a future issue of the Observer.

Annual Fund Drive

If you have already donated, many thanks. If you haven't, please send us a check today. The money we receive makes it possible for us to continue our services, classes, presentations and tours. Over the past year we have been very successful in raising our visibility and we have offered first-class programs to our members and the public. If you enjoy the services and programs we provide, please consider giving a little more than you had planned. We rely on donations to keep us afloat.

Book Sale

Join us on Saturday, May 3, from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM for a huge book and merchandise sale. The Heritage Library will be selling books that we removed from our shelves to create some badly needed shelf space. History books, genealogy books, t-shirts, sweatshirts, and miscellaneous merchandise will be sold at rock-bottom prices. You can also support the Heritage Library by donating your books for this sale. Please be sure they are in good condition — would you buy that book? Bring them to the library anytime Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, or Friday from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Heritage Library Membership

2014 began on a positive note adding 27 new members and 26 renewals to our Heritage Library family.

New Members

Hilton Head Island

Peter Cooper
Rickard Culbreth Sr.
Rick Culbreth Jr.
Kathleen Doran
Carol Dunn
Christine Ficurilli
Bernard Flanagan
Patricia Gentile
Nancy Keese
Joanne Revie
The Tim Scanlin Family
Sherry and George Westerfield
Ben Williams

Bluffton

Deirdre and Kathern Dunlap
Patricia and David Lash
Nancy MacKenzie
Edward Raney
Lynda and Robert Rankin
Ingrid Valentin

Okatie

Paul O'Sullivan

Out of State

Paul Albert Brandt, Chagkin OH
Grace Day, Bourne MA
Sondra Hardy, Traverse City MI
James Kauppi, Allegan MI
Robert Mann, Cambridge MA
William Sherman, Shapleigh ME
Michelle Weidner, Coylestown OH

Renewal Members

Hilton Head Island

Jan Alpert
Peg and Jack Breslin
Fred Caswell
Todd Clist
Gail and Anthony Drabnis
Michelle Erbeck
Leveda and Bailey Keeling
Norman Levy
Howard Mithal
Barbara Muller
William Nicol
Doreen and Fred Prince
Linda Russell
Madeline Thiessen
Lyman Wooster

Bluffton

Anita Bagley
Gary Moore
Patricia Smith
Judith Tyler
Alexander Whan

Okatie

Rose Russo-Aten

Out of State

Bruce Arnold, West Chester PA
Lynda Deluryea, Newton CT
Mary Hess, Glen Ellyn IL
Robert Malphrus, Troy NY
Constance and Robert Prescott, Camp Hill PA



*Laurette
Doscher-Benfante*

*Thank you for your
continued support,
Laurette Doscher-Benfante
Membership Chair*

Tree Planting Ceremony

Thank you to The Avid Gardeners of Hilton Head Plantation for their donation of a live oak tree for our Ft. Mitchell property. This donation was a result of the "Historic Trees for Historic Places" program of the Garden Club of South Carolina. Pat Rapp, member of the Avid Gardeners, contacted the Library in February and then worked with Ron Boyd and Bill Altstaetter and Ricky Smith from Palmetto Coastal to determine the best location for a new tree. We also decided that a live oak would be the most appropriate type of tree for the fort since many of the trees already there are live oaks.

Palmetto Coastal dug the hole, and we had a formal tree planting ceremony on March 20. The Avid Gardeners will maintain the tree over the next year which is no small feat. Since the site has no water, they must bring water in containers to ensure that the tree is established and can survive on its own. Their generosity and commitment are so appreciated.



A Century-old Letter on Blotting Paper

Sometime in early 1914 a government employee in Goulburn, New South Wales, Australia, slit open a bale of blotting paper. Now it is not surprising that, in those days, the government of Goulburn would be buying blotting paper by the bale. Think of all the records that were kept in ink, some written with fountain pens or, more likely, plain nibs dipped in inkwells. Ink is slow to dry, and record keepers would have a lot of blotting to do to avoid smearing their records.

But this bale was different. It had come from a paper mill in Lee, Massachusetts, and when it was opened out tumbled a letter written on a piece of the blotting paper.

The letter read:

The writer of this made the blotting paper, and would be glad to communicate with the finder if he is like minded. By birth I am a Scot, being a native of Deeside, Aberdeenshire, I would dearly love to find out if relatives of mine by same name are still alive in your far off Australia. It's years since I've heard of them; they were in Seymour; Victoria, and owned the Guild Hotel there and also a large sheep ranch. Others by name of Robb were at Flemington, and I think used to carry on a tannery there; last I heard from her was over 23 years ago, when a cousin, by name of Eliza Robb, wrote me her mother was dead. She was a sister of my father's. Thanking the finder of this



**By Barbara
Guild Muller**

in anticipation, as a correspondence may lead to both our advantages.

I am, yours, etc.,
JAMES S. GUILD,

P.O. Box 81 Lee Mass. U.S.A:

Somehow this letter was passed on to the local police, who turned it over to one Thomas Guild, who turned out to be the uncle of James Guild. Apparently connections were reestablished. Both men had emigrated from Scotland,

James Guild as a paper mill engineer to the United States. Thomas Guild, several brothers, two sisters, and his own father gradually emigrated to Australia. The Robb family mentioned was established when Elspet Guild married Alexander Robb.

From Lee, James Stratton Guild moved, in his words, to be a “gentleman farmer” in Virginia, where he had heard the climate was good and land was cheap. That was in 1912, so the letter must have reposed in the bale for a couple of years before it was opened. That “gentleman farmer” was my grandfather. One of my cousins in Australia sent me the newspaper story about the letter.