

Annie M. Driessen

Memorial

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Birth: Jan. 27, 1891
Death: Jun. 27, 1981

Burial:
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Beaufort County
South Carolina, USA

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Deacon Henry Driessen

Memorial

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Birth: Feb. 3, 1884
Death: Apr. 13, 1958

Burial:
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Leola Driessen

Memorial

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Birth: Aug. 7, 1910
Death: Apr. 27, 1941

Last name is spelled differently on the two different tombstones. On the old tombstone her last name is spelled Dreason. On the newer, granite memorial her last name is spelled Driessen which is the same spelling as others in the same cemetery.

Burial:
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Hilton Head Island
Beaufort County
South Carolina, USA

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[Home](#) > Closing of Driessen's a moment for reflection

Closing of Driessen's a moment for reflection

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Setting the Record Straight

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Change on Hilton Head Island is so rapid it is often a blur. But when Henry Driessen Jr. closed his gas station for the last time Saturday, it was a change that should have a clear focus. It offers a moment to reflect on where we have been as a community and where we

are going.'

Driessen's father opened the business in the Chaplin community in 1926. That was 30 years before the first bridge would link a sleepy island to the fast-paced world beyond. When the business closed Saturday, the world around the land that had been in the Driessen family for 96 years would have been unrecognizable to the elder Driessen.'

The closing is the latest in a flurry of native islander businesses that have closed. Abe's Shrimp House and Singleton's Amoco were, like Driessen's, pillars of the Chaplin community. The Gullah Flea Market was a high-profile business that closed in recent months.'

Arthur Frazier's recent passing brought attention to the change at his former business on U.S. 278 at Fairfield Square. John Patterson's Gulf station across the street has long since closed, as has Charlie Simmons Sr.'s store and gas station nearby. Gene Wiley's Golden Rose Park restaurant and bar closed after his death.'

These closings signify the changing of the guard. They reflect a generation that is retiring or passing away. They do not reflect the end of the native islander Gullah population, but they do show a need to document the immense contributions made by native islanders. The closings do not reflect an end to the entrepreneurial spirit, but rather new challenges a new generation faces in the marketplace.'

There is vastly more opportunity here than Henry Driessen Sr. experienced, but it also is much harder to open and sustain a small business in today's climate.'

Looking back, the Driessen store and others like it are symbols of the self-sufficiency, responsibility, hard work, sense of belonging, sense of self-worth, community faith and trust, and creativity that were needed for the very survival of the Gullah community. Today's challenge is to transfer those values to new generations and to record the story for all to appreciate in the future through the Coastal Discovery Museum and elsewhere.'

Looking ahead, there is a need for the native island community, and all islanders, to capitalize on the land of opportunity this community has become. The Native Island Business and Community Affairs Association, the Lowcountry Community Development Corp., the Hilton Head Island Foundation, the Beaufort County School District, the University of South Carolina Beaufort and the Technical College of the Lowcountry are among a long list of local organizations devoted to bringing the brighter tomorrows that Henry Driessen Sr. and his generation foresaw.'

Henry Driessen Sr.'s \$300 investment in 30 acres has turned into a tidy sum for his heirs, including Henry Driessen Jr., a civic leader who now is happy to retire. It is important that the native island population cash in on soaring land values and opportunities. In some ways, the closing of the businesses show that success. Many in the younger generations are working in schools, hospitals, county courthouses, investment firms and law offices. They are engineers, salesmen, musicians, coaches and veterans.'

Are we better off than the day Henry Driessen Sr. opened shop? When it comes to opportunity, the answer is yes.

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Wife of Henry
Driessen, Jr.

Lessons from one-room schoolhouses still ringing on Hilton Head Island

BY DAVID LAUDERDALE

dlauderdale@islandpacket.com January 25, 2014

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Phoebe Driessen is shown at the recent unveiling of historical marker at Cherry Hill School.

DAVID LAUDERDALE — The (Hilton Head) Island Packet.

- **HONORING THE TEACHERS**

Teachers dating to the days before Hilton Head Island had a bridge who were honored Jan. 18 by the Gullah Museum of Hilton Head Island:

Melvin Albertgottie; Rosalie Badger; Hannah Barnwell; Rosalie Barnwell; Julia Brinson; Sarah Brown; Julia Campbell; Reginald Campbell; Sarah Campbell; Solomon Campbell; Phoebe Driessen ; Earlene Frazier; Mary Houston; The Rev. Charles Houston Sr.; Ruth Jones; Mrs. Lucas; Jannie White Mitchell; Johnnie Mitchell; Readell Myers; Dorothy Palmore

Also, Alexandria Patterson; Lucinda Patterson; Anna Riley; Rosa Simmons; Diogenese Singleton; Isaac Wilborn; Romona Wilborn; Cyrus G. Wiley; Annette Wright; Christine Wright; Olivia Wright; Dorothy Johnson Williams

Old-time teachers on an old-time Hilton Head Island finally got called to the head of the class last week. The names of 31 educators who worked from the early 1900s until the bridge was built in 1956 were recited at the Gullah Museum of Hilton Head Island's annual banquet.

Johnnie Patterson Mitchell called it the era "when the curtain shut."

It was after slavery and forced illiteracy were destroyed, after the Union soldiers left, after the missionary teachers went back up North. It was when the Gullah left behind were either going to sink or swim on their own wit and wisdom.

Mitchell, who made the presentations, said: "We latched onto the belief that if we had faith in God, gave our children a good education, and worked hard we would survive."

Cash-starved islanders found a way to supplement teacher pay, house teachers, build schools and add time to the school year. About half a dozen one- or two-room schools dotted the island, at first covering five grades and later seven.

Teachers were sometimes paid with sweet potatoes.

Some may have had only a little bit of high school education themselves. Others could act as lawyers and editors. Teachers, then as now, also served as quasi social services agents, filling a child's need for socks as well as long division.

And when a child came to the end of the island course, parents had to double down on their sacrifice if they wanted their child to continue in school. They had to scrape together money and put the child in a big bateau filled with suitcases for the choppy row across the water to the Mather School in Beaufort, the Penn School on St. Helena Island, the "Shanklin School" in Burton, or a school in Savannah.

As the roll was called at the banquet, one thing was clear. The teachers are still loved.

A HEAD START

Phoebe Driessen was singled out for a special honor. She was cited as a pioneering pre-school teacher in a program that predated by two years the national Head Start program.

"Head Start, as I see it, started right here on Hilton Head," said Thomas C. Barnwell Jr., who as a child left one of the small island schools to attend Penn School. "I am glad the community is saying 'thank you' to Mrs. Driessen for her pioneering effort that had something to do with a broader spectrum of life."

Driessen taught first-graders to read for more than 30 years on her native Hilton Head before retiring in 1984. She was born in the Mitchelville area into the Wiley family, which already included Cyrus G. Wiley, the second president of Savannah State University.

She graduated from Mather after attending the Cherry Hill School, built by islanders in 1937 at the urging of her father, Arthur "Conrad" Wiley. It is the island's only surviving neighborhood Gullah school. It is on the National Register of Historic Places, and now has a historical marker out front on Dillon Road.

After the island schools were consolidated into a red brick building in 1954, principal Isaac W. Wilborn told superintendent H.E. McCracken that he needed to get children into the school before the first grade.

McCracken and the school board agreed to let him try something. Naturally, Phoebe Driessen was the teacher. It was seen as a statewide model in the summer of 1963. People from Columbia came to study it, Wilborn said. He was asked to write a report on it, which he called "Bridging the Gap Between the Home and the School." In 1965, it was replaced by Head Start.

'INTO THE WORLD'

Wilborn said the little clapboard island schools benefited from their close ties to the people.

"They had a strong disciplinary system in the community," he said. "It's amazing, even to me, the accomplishments of some of those islanders."

Louise Cohen, founder of the Gullah Museum on Wild Horse Road, said what stands out to her is the sacrifice of the teachers and the appreciation of the teachers from the community.

Some families -- such as the Campbells, Wrights and Pattersons -- produced multiple generations of island teachers.

Johnnie Mitchell was taught by Phoebe Driessen in the Chaplin community school. Then she was the aide for Driessen in that first pre-school class in the summer before she went off to Spelman College in Atlanta.

"Against long odds, they prepared us, and sent us out into the world," Mitchell said.

She said it's a lesson students in today's fancy schools need to learn.

REMEMBERING
THE WAY IT WAS

AT
HILTON HEAD, BLUFFTON AND DAUFUSKIE

FRAN HEYWARD MARSCHER

Fran Marscher



History
PRESS LONDON
CHARLESTON



BUTTER-BEAN PICKER TURNED POLITICAL LEADER

Henry Driessen

Born in 1927

"I wouldn't live nowhere but on Hilton Head."

In his back yard in the Chaplin community just off Hilton Head Island's William Hilton Parkway, Henry Driessen pointed to an iron kettle, almost three feet from side to side, rusty with age and heavy with memories.

"That would catch the sweet juice," he said. "There would be a big wood fire under it to cook it—two or three hours, I think, depending. You got the syrup from feeding the stalks of sugar cane into the grinder, and you worked the grinder by having a horse pull the handle 'round and 'round.

"My grandfather had the cane mill right here, and people from all over the island brought their cane to make their syrup. They would use their own horses to do the pulling. As the juice poured into the pot and cooked, they had to keep skimming the foam off the top. My grandmother was the expert in deciding when the syrup had cooked enough."

Chewing on the stalks of cane that ripened in the fall was a treat, but that cane mill lengthened the joy from that natural sweetener. On a remote island where all granulated sugar had to be imported by boat, cane syrup to spread on biscuits and cornbread, cane syrup to flavor the coffee and cane syrup to disguise the taste of medicine such as castor oil was treasured. Actually, much that was produced on the Driessen farm met the needs and desires of coastal folk in those days—and was treasured. But none of the production came without hard work and know-how.

As a child growing up in the care of his grandparents, Henry and Annie Miller Driessen, and sharing the household with a first cousin, Henry

learned young how to take care of the crops and livestock that put food on the table.

Butter beans—flavored with a bit of ham or bacon and served on rice, or added to okra soup—would be called “soul food” today. In the early twentieth century, they were a staple for island families. As important as was their appearance on Lowcountry kitchen tables, Hilton Head Island’s butter beans also produced cash sales in the Savannah City Market in Georgia.

CRAWLING BETWEEN THE ROWS

First, though, the sandy bean field had to be plowed and planted in the spring. Then it had to be hoed to keep out the weeds. It was fertilized with manure from the livestock and sometimes creek mud and marsh. The beans had to be picked regularly throughout the steamy Lowcountry summer so the bushes would continue to produce. Henry, the chief bean picker in his family, said his grandfather planted what they called “high beans,” which climbed on a round vertical trellis, and “low beans,” which produced great fat, pods of beautiful beans just inches from the ground. You pick the “low beans” by squatting and waddling along between the rows or by crawling on your hands and knees in the black soil. Henry just got on his knees and crawled from bush to bush, filling his basket as he went along.

As an adult, comfortably situated after the sale of beachfront property he inherited, Henry could not recall feeling especially weary or painful after his childhood butter-bean picking—or the hoeing, which also was his job. “Once you get in the rhythm of it, hoeing comes naturally,” he said. “You had to do it, but it wasn’t a big deal. I was not good at plowing, but my cousin was good at that so we worked it out. You had to produce a lot of beans to make it all pay off.”

Like other island children in the 1930s and 1940s, Henry had other family assignments as well—one of the most important being cutting the wood that fueled the cook stove and the fireplace that warmed the house in the winter. Cows were let out of their pens to graze during the day and had to be penned back up before dark. They also had to be milked. Along with the adults in the family, farm children were farm workers.

Henry learned early to help take care of his grandfather’s small store on the same property. He sold gasoline, kerosene, grits, rice, flour, cornmeal and salt—and small quantities of meat from his farm and other nearby farmers. “Everybody kept hogs, and everybody would kill a hog some time, but they didn’t all do it at the same time, so sometimes my grandfather would have a

ham or sausage to sell." He could keep smoked meat easily. The fresh meat, when available, was kept in an icebox, the ice imported from Savannah via the steamer *Clivedon*.

SAILBOATS, ROWBOATS AND STEAMERS

"You have to understand," Henry said, "about the transportation system in those days. It was all based on the water. The steamer *Clivedon* made a roundtrip from Savannah to Daufuskie, Hilton Head, Parris Island and Beaufort [on] Tuesday, Friday and Sunday. Charlie Simmons was the only one of us with a motorized boat. He made a round trip Tuesday and then went to Savannah [on] Friday and came back Saturday. So people could take their produce and do their shopping that way.

"But my grandfather and a few others also had sailboats. I'm not talking about a recreational sailboat like you see here today. I mean a working sailboat. And that's how they took their butter beans and watermelons and poultry and other products to the market."

Going to Savannah was an exciting trip for island children, Henry said, because of the "bright lights" in the Savannah street scenes—so different from the black darkness at night on Hilton Head. Except for a gasoline-powered generator at Honey Horn, electricity didn't come to the island until the 1940s. In Henry's childhood, there was nothing but the moon and the stars to light the outdoors at night, and nothing but lanterns in homes, churches and praise houses. The lanterns burned kerosene, a scarce fuel that had to be imported.

"There was no amusement here to speak of," Henry recalled. "We horsed around with one another at school, but we all had certain chores after school. And when night came, you'd better be in."

And yet, islanders had a lively social network. They treated the normal exchanges between one another—whether about crops, fish, transportation, hogs or chickens—as recreation. And they had their churches, where they gathered for Sunday services, and their praise houses, where they gathered Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday nights. "There were praise houses scattered all over the island," Henry said. "The Methodists and Baptists—they were the only two religions here then—used one another's praise houses. When we'd go to the praise house, somebody would raise up a spiritual, and everybody would join in. Then that's where everybody would learn to harmonize and get the rhythm right. We'd also use the Baptist hymnbook. And we had serious prayer there. The praise house was an important part of every neighborhood."

In addition to the purposes of spiritual growth and social life, the churches functioned as the moral authority in the community. The magistrate often

sent disputes or crimes that reached court back to the deacons to sort out and rectify. "That deacon board ruled with an iron hand," Henry said. "The people who had to go to court would say to the magistrate, "You take care of it, sir. Don't send me to the deacons!"

And yes, indeed, the children were a part of the praise house and church services. And they caught on young to the meaning of authority. "If an adult told you to do something, that was it. You didn't challenge them or you would get a beating. They would bring you into compliance. It's just not that way now. The parents have let that authority go by the way. It's a mess now, I'm telling you," Henry said.

EDUCATION AS THE KEY

Henry had the good fortune of growing up in a family that pushed education as the hope of the future. He walked to the Chaplin neighborhood school for grades one through six, went to school on Honey Horn Plantation for grades seven and eight, and then spent four years boarding at Penn School on St. Helena Island. From Penn, he went to West Virginia State College, where he stayed only one night, before taking off for New York in the hopes of attending City College. To meet the entrance requirements there, he had to get a credit in foreign language. So soon after leaving the remote islands of South Carolina for higher education, he found himself in Spanish lessons in metropolitan New York City. He then attended St. Augustine College in Raleigh, North Carolina; served time in the U.S. Army; and graduated from Savannah State College (now Atlantic University) with a degree in industrial education.

After one year of teaching school, Henry returned to Chaplin to help his grandfather run the store and the farm, and he's been there ever since. His wife, Phoebe Wiley Driessen, taught school on Hilton Head for five years before commuting to Savannah State College, as a young woman with children, to earn a bachelor's degree. Phoebe taught school altogether for thirty years, most of those years in the first-grade classroom. After retiring, she began volunteering as a tutor. Henry and Phoebe spent their life together on the same spot his grandfather lived and farmed in the 1920s, next to the BP station on U.S. Route 278, which stands where his grandfather's store stood.

Out of his grandfather's thirty-five acres there, Henry inherited fourteen or fifteen acres, of which he sold about ten acres to the Town of Hilton Head Island for the Driessen Beachfront Park. By the end of the twentieth century, Henry found himself wealthy. He never dreamed, when as a child he crawled in the bean field to help his grandfather make a living, he'd have so much money.

And yet, on into the twenty-first century, Henry continued to live where he had lived before, continued to run his gas station, continued to serve as a deacon for the First African Baptist Church, continued service on the Palmetto Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors. Earlier, he served ten years on the Hilton Head Island Town Council. "They wanted a black to help in decision-making for the town," Henry said. "I was merchant and an automobile mechanic. I didn't know nothin' about politics. But I learned, and I enjoyed it. Sometimes I was a loner, and sometimes other council members were loners, but our disagreements weren't racial, usually. I never walked out of a meeting, I tell you that." He also spent time on the Hilton Head Island No. 1 Public Service District Commission as well as on the boards of the Hilton Head Hospital and the Hilton Head Island Foundation.

"I wouldn't live nowhere but on Hilton Head. It's as different now from when I grew up as cheese is from chalk, but I still like it. No, not for the beach. I never "catered to' the beach. For us, it was just there, all that sand and that water, but we didn't go out there. What for?" he said, laughing.

In the tradition of the Driessen family, Henry and Phoebe in 2002 were raising a granddaughter, a young woman they called a "grand." They were doing the best they could, they said, also maintaining their independent traditions—Henry as a deacon in the First African Baptist Church, where he grew up, and Phoebe active in the St. James Baptist Church, where she grew up. They liked sharing a story or two with familiar friends and family. They especially liked living where everybody knew their names

"The business directly benefited the community. ... They were dependable people."

— Emory Campbell, historian



Henry Driessen Sr.



Annie Driessen

Good thing ends

Driessens close family business

BY MARTY TOOHEY
THE ISLAND PACKET

Ears welled in Joyce Heileman's eyes. Henry Driessen Jr. bowed his head, and Heileman kissed him goodbye softly on the cheek. "You folks have been so great," she said. "Well, it's nice of you to say so," Driessen lied. "But all good things must come to an end."

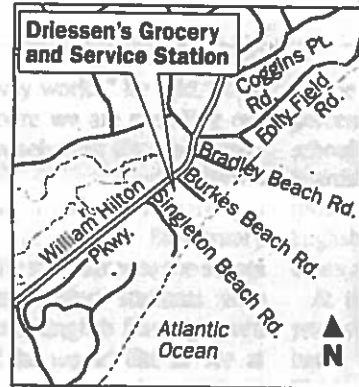
For customers, friends and neighbors, it's the end of an era, an end many wish the Driessens family had delayed just a little longer. On Saturday, 76-year-old Henry and 51-year-old Leon locked the doors to Driessen's Grocery and Service Station and the neighborhood liquor store for the last time.

They closed a place that was much more than a service station to its customers. It was a place to stop and chat, a landmark family business in the midisland Chaplin community. When the sun rose this morning over the 1-acre property, it was the first time in 96 years someone other than a Driessen owned it. Henry Driessen has spent most of his life there.

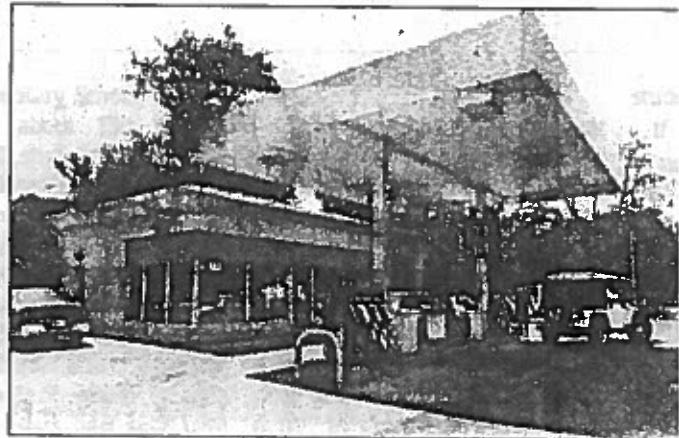


Photos by Jay Karr/The Island Packet

Islander Betty Bush gives her best wishes to Henry Driessen Jr., who closed his gas station Saturday. Driessen's BP station, at midisland on William Hilton Parkway, is one of the island's oldest continuous operating businesses. Driessen, a former town councilman, says he is planning to retire.



Chris Nye/The Island Packet



Driessen's BP station, one of the island's oldest continuous operating businesses, ceased operations at the close of business Saturday.

Please see **DRIESSENS**, Page 13-A

ISLAND PACKET 5/FEB/04

continued from Page 1-A

"Any second thoughts?" Betty Ush, a longtime customer, asked him Thursday morning. "No, not really," Driessen replied. "We had an offer that wasn't what we wanted, but it was too good to turn down. As they say, you've got to know when to hold and when to fold. And at my age, I don't know what I have any to hold."

As Saturday turned to today the land officially became the property of MTSC, a Marriott subsidiary. About 3.8 acres of it will be mapped for land owned by the town that's closer to Burkes Beach. The town-owned land will be cleared and left as open space, while the Marriott subsidiary will build a 195-unit time-share complex, combining the Driessen parcel with other land the company owns.

The company has most of the permits it needs to start construction of the first 139 units, and the town is reviewing the 56-unit second phase, which will use the land exchanged for Driessen's.

Word of the closing has gotten out. All week customers came by for a last fill-up, telling the Driessens how they'll miss the place.

Heileman remembers an afternoon when it took several minutes to turn left across the heavy traffic along William Hilton Parkway. When Driessen walked out into the parking lot after seeing her stuck in traffic and waited, just to say hello she pulled in and to ask if she

needed anything.

"They have just bent over backwards" for people, she said. "When people have been so kind to you, they deserve praise."

These kinds of stories, from customers who never compared prices, floated around the store last week, with handshakes and hugs and even flowers for the still-trim man with the gray-white whiskers tracing the line of his jaw.

His chats usually ended with the same refrain: "Well, you know what they say. All things must come to an end."

It's the end of a business that is among the oldest on the island, said Emory Campbell, former director of the Penn Center and a chronicler of Hilton Head Island history.

"The business directly benefited the community," Campbell said. "These were sincere servants. They were dependable people, and people depended on them."

When Henry Driessen Sr. purchased about 30 acres near the ocean for \$300 in 1908, Hilton Head was an isolated community populated mostly by native islanders, the descendants of slaves freed by Union troops at the start of the Civil War. There was no bridge, and folks farmed or fished, relying on the few businesses on the island to provide them with many of the goods that are now a short drive away.

Driessen Sr. started as a farmer growing butter beans, corn and okra. He opened a small convenience store in 1916, moving it to

several buildings around the property before settling on the current location.

He died in 1958, at age 74, and Henry Driessen Jr., the grandson he raised, took over the business. In 1966, "Itsy," as some of his friends called him, combined the full-service gas station and convenience store, 10 years after the first bridge to the island opened. A couple of years later he opened Henry Driessen's Bottle Shop in front of his house.

The land evolved in much the same way as the island. Pieces of the original 30 acres were sold off by descendants of Driessen Sr. and his wife, Annie, including the land that's now the Bradley Circle neighborhood. In 1992, when residents began asking Hilton Head Island officials to expand services and add parks, Driessen Jr. sold 12 acres to the town. It became Driessen Beach Park.

Now, 96 years after Henry Driessen Sr. bought the property and started farming it, an acre that Marriott is keeping will help grow a new crop: time shares.

It's a situation that several prominent native islanders greeted with mixed emotions.

"You have had a number of native islander businesses closing recently," including the Gullah Flea Market this year and Abe's Shrimp House in late 2002, said Bill Ferguson, who represents the political ward that encompasses most of the traditionally native-islander community. "It's a sad day for

Henry, but I hope we're not seeing too much of a trend developing."

"It's almost the epitome of how the island is evolving," Campbell said. "It saddens me because this family has been such a long-serving one, a model family business. But he's getting up in years, and I certainly respect his decision."

For son Leon, the sale means retirement and a sweet freedom he's never had. For 30 years, since graduating from college, he has worked seven days a week at the station, missing only Christmas.

"That's a pretty good clip," Leon Driessen said. He has considered several options — graduate school, permanent retirement — but isn't sure how he'll spend his days from now on. "But I do know this: For the first time in my life, I'm going to take a summer vacation."

He said the business' closing probably won't hit him for a few weeks. Brother Bernard, who lives in Savannah and sometimes helps at the store, said the situation probably won't hit his father "until the bulldozers show up.

"It's been part of the family," said Bernard Driessen, whose son Lorenzo also occasionally works there, along with Ann, the third of Henry Driessen Jr.'s children. "I don't think it's hit any of us yet."

More than the business must move. The Driessen family must go as well. Henry lives behind the liquor store, Leon behind the service station. The Driessens and the town are negotiating how long the

The town won't begin clearing the land until they move.

Leon Driessen said he isn't sure where he'll move. Henry Driessen and Phoebe, his wife of 53 years, are deciding between two pieces of property, one on Marshland Road and another on Wiley Lane, as the site of their new home.

On Thursday, Tom Upshaw came to visit not only as a friend but as an employee. Upshaw is the general manager of Palmetto Electric Cooperative, and Driessen serves on Palmetto Electric's board of directors, as he has served on many other public bodies, including Town Council. He promised Upshaw and others that retiring from business will not mean disappearing from civic life.

Upshaw and others gave Driessen good-natured invitations to second-guess his retirement. He would not. He said retirement means the chance to travel, fish and "do the things that I love to do.

"I'm gonna miss the people, serving and chitchattin'," Driessen said. "But as they say, all good things must come to an end."

He then pointed to the floor. "You have to enjoy some of the results of the labor you put in before you end up down there. I never knew anyone who came back up to enjoy it."

Contact Marty Toohey at 706-8145

Driessen, Capt Abraham P.   b. Feb. 5, 1912 d. Feb. 24, 1981	Stoney Cemetery Hilton Head Island Beaufort County South Carolina, USA
Driessen, Benjamin  b. Apr. 8, 1920 d. Dec. 17, 2003	Stoney Cemetery Hilton Head Island Beaufort County South Carolina, USA
Driessen, Bernice D.  b. Sep. 4, 1931 d. Dec. 27, 1993	Stoney Cemetery Hilton Head Island Beaufort County South Carolina, USA
Driessen, Carrie Bell  b. Apr. 17, 1921 d. Jul. 9, 2008	Stoney Cemetery Hilton Head Island Beaufort County South Carolina, USA
Driessen, Flossie  b. Feb. 12, 1916 d. Jan. 31, 1978	Stoney Cemetery Hilton Head Island Beaufort County South Carolina, USA
Driessen, Frances D.  b. Nov. 11, 1924 d. Nov. 5, 1991	Stoney Cemetery Hilton Head Island Beaufort County South Carolina, USA
Driessen, Gabriel  b. 1979 d. 1996	Stoney Cemetery Hilton Head Island Beaufort County South Carolina, USA
Driessen, Henry  b. Apr. 17, 1918 d. Apr. 2, 1956	Stoney Cemetery Hilton Head Island Beaufort County South Carolina, USA
Driessen, Hoover  b. Dec. 25, 1932 d. May 5, 1950	Stoney Cemetery Hilton Head Island Beaufort County South Carolina, USA
Driessen, Maggie  b. Jan. 15, 1893 d. Jul. 3, 1961	Stoney Cemetery Hilton Head Island Beaufort County South Carolina, USA
Driessen, Robert Kenneth  b. Jan. 15, 1963 d. Nov. 7, 2002	Stoney Cemetery Hilton Head Island Beaufort County South Carolina, USA
Driessen, Willie  b. Jun. 20, 1889 d. Apr. 15, 1971	

Stoney Cemetery

[Archiver](#) > [NETHERLANDS](#) > [2000-10](#) > 0970797955

From: leon driessen <gullah@juno.com>

Subject: [NLD] driessen

Date: Thu, 5 Oct 2000 19:05:55 -0700

Posted on: Province of Gelderland, Netherlands Query Forum

Reply

Here: <http://genconnect.rootsweb.com/genbbs.cgi/Netherlands/Gelderland/889>

Surname: driessen

i am a member of the driessen family at Hilton Head island S.C.USA my great-
great
grandfather was henry driessen who came to the usa from demerara,guyana
before 1870,i am try to find info on him

Editorials

Closing of Driessen's a moment for reflection

Is community better off than the day it opened in 1926?

Change on Hilton Head Island is so rapid it is often a blur. But when Henry Driessen Jr. closed his gas station for the last time Saturday, it was a change that should have a clear focus. It offers a moment to reflect on where we have been as a community and where we are going.

Driessen's father opened the business in the Chaplin community in 1926. That was 30 years before the first bridge would link a sleepy island to the fast-paced world beyond. When the business closed Saturday, the world around the land that had been in the Driessen family for 96 years would have been unrecognizable to the elder Driessen.

The closing is the latest in a flurry of native islander businesses that have closed. Abe's Shrimp House and Singleton's Amoco were, like Driessen's, pillars of the Chaplin community. The Gullah Flea Market was a high-profile business that closed in recent months.

Arthur Frazier's recent passing brought attention to the change at his former business on U.S. 278 at Fairfield Square. John Patterson's Gulf station across the street has long since closed, as has Charlie Simmons Sr.'s store and gas station nearby. Gene Wiley's Golden Rose Park restaurant and bar closed after his death.

These closings signify the changing of the guard. They reflect a generation that is retiring or passing away. They do not reflect the end of the native islander Gullah population, but they do show a need to document the immense contributions made by native islanders. The closings do not reflect an end to the entrepreneurial spirit, but rather new challenges a new generation faces in the marketplace.

There is vastly more opportunity here than Henry Driessen Sr. experienced, but it also is

much harder to open and sustain a small business in today's climate.

Looking back, the Driessen store and others like it are symbols of the self-sufficiency, responsibility, hard work, sense of belonging, sense of self-worth, community faith and trust, and creativity that were needed for the very survival of the Gullah community. Today's challenge is to transfer those values to new generations and to record the story for all to appreciate in the future through the Coastal Discovery Museum and elsewhere.

Looking ahead, there is a need for the native island community, and all islanders, to capitalize on the land of opportunity this community has become. The Native Island Business and Community Affairs Association, the Lowcountry Community Development Corp., the Hilton Head Island Foundation, the Beaufort County School District, the University of South Carolina Beaufort and the Technical College of the Lowcountry are among a long list of local organizations devoted to bringing the brighter tomorrows that Henry Driessen Sr. and his generation foresaw.

Henry Driessen Sr.'s \$300 investment in 30 acres has turned into a tidy sum for his heirs, including Henry Driessen Jr., a civic leader who now is happy to retire. It is important that the native island population cash in on soaring land values and opportunities. In some ways, the closing of the businesses show that success. Many in the younger generations are working in schools, hospitals, county courthouses, investment firms and law offices. They are engineers, salesmen, musicians, coaches and veterans.

Are we better off than the day Henry Driessen Sr. opened shop? When it comes to opportunity, the answer is yes.

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...remained without power
...ay night. Nearly 2 million
...omers lost power during the
...orms, the companies said.

The U.S. Coast Guard called off
searches for a 4-year-old boy who
lived near Eureka and a 26-year-
old man walking a beach near
Santa Cruz who were swept out to
sea by giant waves.

The storms dumped up to 8 inch-
es of rain in mountains south of San
Francisco and created blizzard con-
ditions in parts of Colorado.

Obituaries

Robert Dreissen

SAVANNAH — Robert Dreissen,
39, of Savannah, formerly of Hilton
Head Island, died Thursday, Nov. 7,
at St. Joseph's/Candler Health
System.

He was born Jan. 15, 1963, in
Savannah, the son of Deacon
Albert Dreissen and Bernice
Drayton Dreissen.

Survivors include his father;
two sons, Michael Lampkin of
Charleston and Kashif Bazemore of
Savannah; two daughters, Melissa
Wilson of Charleston and Precious
Dreissen of Savannah; a brother,
Anthony Dreissen of Savannah;
and two sisters, Carolyn Dreissen
and Ann Langley, both of
Savannah.

Funeral services will be held at
11 a.m. Tuesday at First Mount
Bethel Baptist Church in Savannah.
Burial will follow in Amelia
Cemetery on Hilton Head.

Marshall's Wright-Donaldson
Home For Funerals of Beaufort is in
charge of the arrangements.

Kelley M. ... Jr.

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