

## IN THE NEWS

**Beaufort Three-Century Project**

A new interactive Web site promotes efforts by the Beaufort Three-Century (B3C) Project and gives readers a chance to add their own pictures, stories, videos and other history-related material as the city prepares for its 300th birthday in 2011.

The site, [www.beaufortthreecentury.org](http://www.beaufortthreecentury.org), includes an interactive time line, links to articles about history, and places to see. It is designed to keep readers updated on the project's recent and upcoming activities, said B3C project coordinator Deborah Johnson.

"Beaufort has an incredible history, and the Web site provides a great way to connect all that together," Johnson said. "It's not a library resource; it's more of a people resource. I think that's what makes it unique."

The site is hosted and developed by The Beaufort Gazette.

Much of the content came from Beaufort Three-Century Project programs, such as its "300 Years, 300

Stories" oral history archive. About 40 people have sat down to record their stories so far, Johnson said, and the project hopes to have at least 300 stories by the fall. Anyone can participate, from those who have lived in the city all their lives to those just arrived, she said.

The photo below, by Jeff Kidd of the Old Sheldon Church ruins, is another image on the site.



**The Heritage Library Foundation**  
852 Wm. Hilton Parkway  
Hilton Head Island SC 29928



# The Heritage Observer

## News from The Heritage Library

*Bringing the Past to Life*

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**SO YOU THINK?****It Never Snows Here**

This photo was taken by Rena Riddle for the Beaufort Gazette; the scene is a snowstorm at the lighthouse on Hunting Island in 1986. See it and other photos from the history of Beaufort at <http://www.beaufortthreecentury.org/>

The project is an ongoing effort to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the town of Beaufort. See Page 8.

## FAMILY FUN AND LIBRARY SUPPORT

**Equestrian Exposition  
at Rose Hill March 21**

Gates open at 11:00 a.m. for an exciting day of equestrian events. The Heritage Library is one of the beneficiaries; we receive a portion of all ticket sales made by us.

Buying a package is an excellent way to entertain friends; with a package you get additional general admission tickets and reserved parking.

Events include jumping, dressage, barrel racing, and culminate with an exhibition polo match. Details and tickets are available from Iva Welton or Tom Senf. For more information, call Iva at 843 422 2414 or write [IvaSouth@aol.com](mailto:IvaSouth@aol.com) or [tomsenf@yahoo.com](mailto:tomsenf@yahoo.com).

## PLAN TO ATTEND

**Annual Meeting February 17**

We hope you'll plan to attend the annual meeting here at the Library at 10 a.m. Wednesday, February 17. The nominating committee, led by board member Harvey Varnet, has presented a slate of nominees for the Board. The Foundation's bylaws call for a board to be composed of not less than nine nor more than fifteen members. Directors' terms are staggered, and there are two vacancies in the class for the term of 2010-2013. Nominated to fill those seats are Nancy Burke and Barbara Muller.

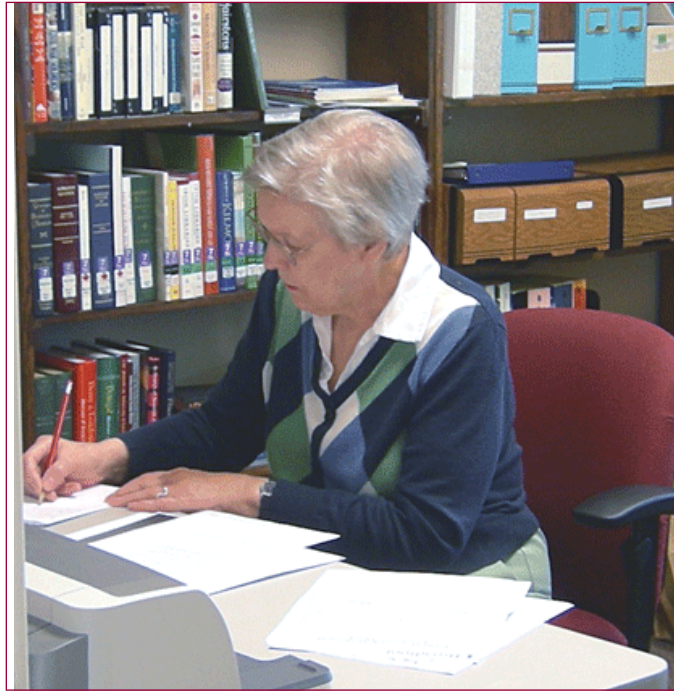
You should have received an email notifying you of the meeting with a link to a proxy form. If you can't attend, please download, print, sign, and mail your proxy to Nancy Burke.

**Even if you do plan to attend, it's a good idea to send your proxy anyway. That will help insure a quorum. (Of course, once you do attend, the proxy is no longer operative.)**



*Equestrian events begin at 12:30; exhibition polo match at 2:30.  
Photo by Erik Olsen.*





### Isobel Bitner

Born of Scottish parents, and raised in Rugby, England, Isobel was graduated with an M.A. in History from Edinburgh University, one of the United Kingdom's top rated research universities. She did post graduate training in Library Science while working in the public library at Manchester.

She came to the United States on a one-year internship at the public library in Toledo, Ohio, a job which evolved into positions in corporate and later university libraries. She spent twenty years in New York, where she married and raised her twin children, a girl and a boy.

Isobel retired to Hilton Head in 1989. After attending an Open House at the Heritage Library, she decided to organize and expand the genealogy material she fell heir to from a cousin on her side, and from her husband's grandfather.

She became hooked, and started volunteering at the Library in 2000. She has also served on the Board, her current term expiring this year. Says Isobel, "It is a great way to combine a hobby and career experience".

## Town of Hilton Head Island Will Study Zion Chapel Site

On January 5, President Robert Smith appeared before the Public Facilities Committee of the Hilton Head Island Town Council with an extensive presentation discussing the possible enhancement of the Zion Chapel of Ease cemetery site to make it more accessible, and the possibility of making it a facility to evoke the central role that the area played when it was the societal center of the Island up until the Civil War.

The structure of the Zion Chapel of Ease disappeared shortly after the Civil War, but its graveyard is still there, including the Baynard Mausoleum, the oldest surviving intact structure on the island. At least four Revolutionary War veterans are buried there. Both the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution have taken an interest in the preservation of this historic site.

During the hearing, a great deal of discussion was devoted to the problems of parking, and of access to the site which is now quite difficult. The only way to enter presently is off of the acceleration lane as traffic from Mathews Drive is fed into William Hilton Parkway. One of the town's engineers presented possible solutions, involving adjusting the location of the acceleration lane to provide a new turning lane for access. There is already some adjoining land owned by the Town.

The committee, consisting of Drew Laughlin, John D. Safay, and George W. Williams, Jr., voted to recommend to the Town Council that additional staff time be devoted to studying the possibilities. As one committee member commented, "it is a historical site, and we should try to provide access."



## Gullah Celebration February 2010

According to the Reverend Joseph P. Bryant, a native of the Sea Islands, *Gullah* comes from a west African language and means "a people blessed by God."

The Marsh Tacky Run on February 28 will cap a month of special activities celebrating the Gullah culture. Other events during the month:

- Feb. 1: Monthly-long exhibit at Walter Greer Gallery: *De Arts ob We People XIII*
- Feb. 6: Gullah Breakfast observing National Freedom Day, St. James Baptist Church
- Feb. 6: Gullah Concert at the 18th Hole, Harbour Town Golf Links, Sea Pines Resort
- Feb. 10: John Griffin on Gullah Genealogy. See Page 3.
- Feb. 12: Gospel Praise & Shout: Central Oak Grove Baptist Church
- Feb. 13-14: Arts, Crafts & Food Expo, Coastal Museum
- Feb. 15: Gullah Film Series, *Congressman Robert Small, a Patriot's Journey from Slavery to Capitol Hill*. Hosted by Dr. Emory Campbell. Coligny Theater, 6:30 p.m.
- Feb. 20: Taste of Gullah, Arts Center. 12:00 noon to 4 p.m. Entertainment at noon
- Feb. 20: 17<sup>th</sup> Annual I.W. Wilborn Jr. Golf Classic, Old South Golf Links, Bluffton. Contact Willie Young 384-0779 or Alex Brown, 290-5943
- Feb. 21: De Gullah Youth Musical, Mitchelville, a play depicting the lifestyle of the Gullah people around the turn of the 20th century. Visual and Performing Arts Center
- Feb. 22: Gullah Film Series, *Bin Yah: There's No Place Like Home*. Hosted by Dr. Emory Campbell. Coligny Theater, 6:30 p.m.
- Feb. 26: Gospel Extravaganza. Lee Williams and the Spiritual QCs present popular and traditional gospel music. Visual and Performing Arts Center, 7:00 p.m.
- Feb. 27: Animals of the Low Country. Indigenous animals of Lowcountry. Coastal Discovery Museum, 10 a.m. to 2.
- Feb. 27: Gullah Celebration in Harbour Town. Variety show, Gullah Culture. Traditional Gullah food and artwork for sale. Sea Pines Resort, Plantation Club, 5-7 p.m.
- Feb. 28: Marsh Tacky Run. Showcases the Lowcountry horse. Mitchelville Park/Beach, 120 Michelville Road. 11-3.

*For more information on any of these programs, call Tracy Brown at 843-689-9314*



*The climax of the Gullah Celebration will be the Marsh Tacky Run. Above, Ashley Lowther riding Strawberry at the 2009 Marsh Tacky Run. Photo by Jackie McFadden, Carolina Marsh Tacky Association.*

## Heritage Library Volunteers to Assist at NEHGS Event

The prestigious New England Historic Genealogical Society will hold a two-day seminar here March 20-21. Volunteers from our library will help with registration.

Details of the program, registration, cost and content are to follow. Details will be posted to our new Web site when they are received from NEHGS.

## Fort Johnson Through the Years

Veteran archaeologist Carl Steen will discuss his work at Fort Johnson, Charleston Harbor, South Carolina at the February meeting of the Hilton Head Chapter of the South Carolina Archaeological Association.

Fort Johnson was initially built in colonial times to protect Charleston against the Spanish, was rebuilt during the French and Indian War, and served through the Civil War, firing the signal to begin shelling Fort Sumpter.

The meeting is at the Coastal Discovery Museum February 16 at 7:00 p.m. Visitors are welcome.



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## IN THE NEWS:

**A Knockout Punch?**

The Island Packet ran an editorial on January 8 suggesting that efforts to tell the world about Hilton Head's and Beaufort County's history could create a "knockout punch" that will "bowl the world over." We quote:

Across a busy highway from a miniature golf course stands a serene Revolutionary War-era cemetery. Its tombstones, mausoleum and historical markers whisper stories that have captivated Hilton Head Island forever, or so it seems.

Somehow, the stories that entwine these silent remnants of a different era should speak louder than a whisper.

...The Heritage Library Foundation thinks the stories of the Zion Chapel of Ease cemetery would interest more people if only they knew about it, and had more there to explain and interpret its significance.

Careful consideration should be given to anything this foundation suggests as it involves the Town of Hilton Head Island in exploring ideas and costs.

But we see this plea as part of a bigger picture. It is a picture that stamps Beaufort County as different from all others.

... [O]ur community's history is beyond remarkable, with its front-row participation in centuries of seminal world and national events. This history should be preserved, documented, shared and sold as a whole. The world should know with the click of a button that we stand apart. The world should know:

- Our mysterious shell rings left by natives long predate the arrival of Europeans.
- The first settlement of Europeans here in 1562 came before... St. Augustine, Fla., and Jamestown, Va. But who knows that our Charlesfort on Parris Island predates the hallowed Plymouth Rock by a full century?
- The secession movement was rooted here.
- We were first in freedom. That alone should be a mantra the world associates with Beaufort County. The first unshackling of slavery happened right here in November 1861. The first public reading of the Emancipation Proclamation took place in Port Royal on New Years Day 1863.
- Reconstruction began here, with the stories of Robert Smalls of Beaufort, the Penn School of St. Helena Island and the Mitchelville planned village for freedmen on

Hilton Head Island representing major American milestones.

- It was in Beaufort that American heroine Clara Barton led the first national response to a disastrous hurricane.
  - Civil rights giant Martin Luther King Jr. planned and rehearsed a movement that we now see as a high water mark of world history right here on St. Helena Island.
  - Both the historic preservation movement of Beaufort and the bold development plans of Hilton Head remain national leaders.
- ...[T]ogether, we must do better. Let's make sure we have a cohesive message—a knockout punch—that bowls the world over with the powerful, historic story of Beaufort County.

**SECOND GRADERS TO VISIT FEBRUARY 3****Education in Hilton Head  
About Hilton Head**

Second graders from the Hilton Head Preparatory School will visit the Heritage Library to learn about doing historic (and genealogical) research as part of a curriculum developed by the Coast Discovery Museum and the school. Class members will be asked to bring in information about their parents, grandparents and, if possible, great-grandparents. Our librarians and Coastal Discovery staff will help them begin their exploration into their family histories. Students will be learning about primary and secondary sources—and learn specifically about census records, which is specially important now as 2010 is a census year.

The program is designed to immerse the lower school in study about the local history, culture and environment of the Lowcountry. Each grade is participating in a variety of science-based and social-studies-based programs with the Museum.

In January, the group visited the Coastal Discovery Museum and learned how places change over time by visiting the Discovery House and touring the grounds at Honey Horn.

## THE LIBRARIAN'S CORNER\*

**Gullah Culture Sources at the Library**

The distinctive practices of the Gullahs evolved from their customs in their home in the western areas of Africa. Here are some examples from our holdings in the African-American section.

**Sea Island Roots.** Edited by Twining & Baird, 1991 (975.799TWI): A collection of scholarly articles.

**The Gullah people and their African Heritage.** W. Pollitzer, 1999. (975.799POL). This book covers history, language, culture and biological and health factors.

**The Water Brought Us.** Muriel M. Branch, 1993. (975.79BRA) A portrait of the descendants of the African slaves, and their lives today.

**Reminiscences of Sea Island Heritage.** Ronald Daise, 1986. (975.799DAI) The customs, superstitions and folklore of St. Helena Island (Beaufort County), with illustrations from the late 18th and early 19th centuries, as told by descendants of the freed slaves.

**Blue Roots: African-American Magic of the Gullah People.** Roger Pinckney, 1998. (398.09757PIN) Born and raised in Beaufort County, the author relates stories of "root doctors" and tales of other hexes and beliefs on St. Helena Island.

**When Roots Die: Endangered Traditions on the Sea Islands.** P. Jones-Jackson, 1987. (306.3JON) Sketches of Gullah-speaking inhabitants, illustrating traditions, folklore and religious beliefs.

**Gullah Culture in America.** Wilbur Cross, 2007. (301.2CRO) With a forward by Emory Campbell, this is a comprehensive history by a Hilton Head resident.

**Gullah Cultural Legacies.** Emory Campbell, 2005. (301.2CAM) A summary of traditions, beliefs, art, and speech on Hilton Head, by the former head of Penn Center.

**Gullah Animal Tales from Daufuskie Island, SC.** Told by Albert H. Stoddard, 1995. (398.09757STO) Folktales told in both English and Gullah.

We also have a copy of "De Nyew Testament", translated into Gullah, with the St James version in the margins.

## FROM THE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR



Happy New Year! If we thought the weather last month was a bit nippy I think you'll agree this month has broken all records! Scraping ice off the windshield of my car is not one of my favorite things to do, but the sun has not let us down and that is definitely a plus.

We welcome eleven new members to The Heritage Library Foundation. Ken and Linda Dawson, George and Pamela Dials, Bill and Amanda Dials, Suzanne Huey, Anna Marie Meyerink, Bonnie Jo Nolte, Mary Frances Stahler and Charles and Jeannette Young are all researchers who are supporting the Library.

We have high hopes that our new internet connection will be up and running very soon. Our members will be notified as soon as everything is in place. It will be an exciting time for all of us.

As usual I want to thank our members who have renewed and remind you that each month we send out notices, generally a month in advance, so you will know it is that time. Your continued support is essential to keeping our facility at its best.

GWEN ALTSTAETTER

*Editor's Note: During the interim, as the new Web site is being developed, you can search our records at the Library. A number of computers are available, and all will still have information available.*

**John Griffin on Gullah Genealogy**

As most of you know by now, John Griffin has done extensive work on tracing the descendants of slaves back to their Island roots. He will present an overview and discussion of on-going African-American research at the Library on February 10 at 1 p.m.

The talk, part of the 14th Annual Gullah Celebration, is expected to be popular. If you plan to attend, please call 843-686-6560 to make reservations.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

**Ending One Year, Beginning Another**

This past year was an eventful one; and there is much to look forward to in 2010.

Early in 2009, it became apparent that the Foundation could not survive financially on its efforts in genealogy alone. We also realized that we had another asset to attract members – the Foundation's ties with history. These came from material we had developed doing family research and the valuable files, books, and historical sites we acquired when the Hilton Head Historical Society merged into the Foundation. Since it had been determined (years ago) that the local public library was not interested in actively searching out and acquiring local history information for our Island's residents, we saw that we would be filling a real need.

Financial considerations also dictated that we find new and less expensive quarters. The result was a happy one: everyone appreciates the new location and the pleasant atmosphere in our new quarters.

Our place in the firmament of genealogical libraries is emerging as bright and shining. As this is being written, reports have come in of acclaim in national forums; this spring we will be participating in important genealogical meetings, one on the Island and another nearby in Georgia.

**Enhanced Emphasis on History**

A major focus of our emphasis on history in 2010 will be developing our Zion Chapel of Ease cemetery site as a park for the benefit of residents and visitors to Hilton Head alike; these efforts were described in the November issue of the Heritage Observer. We are examining other history initiatives and hope with all of this to draw support from members, new patrons and the Town.

Your ideas will be most welcome as this discussion goes on. The decade of it has taken us to develop our genealogical capabilities indicates that developing our history potential is likely to take some time.

**The Web Site**

It became clear in October that we must make major web revisions; we knew at the time that minor and temporary dislocations in our web service were likely. We planned to build the new pages off-line and switch all at once. What we did not count on was that our Information Technology Consultant would resign suddenly with six weeks remaining on the contract. We hired a new consultant and are recovering as quickly

as we can. We apologize for the inconvenience and ask your indulgence.

A philosophical professor I knew was fond of saying about difficulties, "Life is hard -- but it is fair." He was wrong about the fairness, but otherwise his advice rings true.

Best wishes for the New Year from the Foundation Staff.

BOB SMITH

**DNA TESTING UNRESOLVED****Final Details on Southeast Family Exposition**

The coordinating committee has issued its final brochure for the Southeast Family History Expo to be held Saturday, February 20, 2010 from 8:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. at the Armstrong Center, 13040 Abercorn Street, in Savannah.

The Expo's theme is "Learn to search for your missing ancestors." The Heritage Library is one of the sponsors, and Bill Altstaetter will be one of the lecturers, speaking about using census data in your heritage quest. The Expo is free and open to the public.

One change from previously announced details: the status of the DNA testing booth is unresolved: there may be a charge. If you want to try to have your DNA tested, you should bring a four-generation pedigree chart. Copies of the brochure will be available at the front desk of the Library.

**Upcoming Classes at the Heritage Library****Beginning Family Research**

**Instructor: Nancy Burke**

**Skill Level: Beginner**

**Dates: Wed., Jan. 20: 1:30-3:30 Session One**

**Wed., Jan. 27: 1:30-3:30 - Session Two**

This two-part workshop, designed for the first-time family researcher, may also be useful to researchers with limited experience or those who wish to refresh their skills. Participants will be introduced to the fascinating field of genealogy, its unique nomenclature and suggested research techniques, including use of the computer and Internet.

Fee: \$40 for current members of the Heritage Library Foundation and \$45.00 for non-members. Includes the textbook "Unpuzzling Your Past," hand-outs to help guide you in your search and, for those not current members, use of the library for the two weeks of the workshop.

**Genealogy Online**

**Instructor: Linda Piekut**

**Skill Level: Intermediate**

**Date: Wednesday February 24: 1:30 to 3:30**

An overview of genealogical research sites available through the World Wide Web. This lecture is designed for the intermediate genealogist: that is, participants should understand and have experience using search engines and Web browsers. They should also have a general familiarity with techniques for family research. Fee: \$20 for members of the Heritage Library Foundation and \$25 for non-members.

**Get with the Program**

**(Using Family Tree Maker 2009 and 2010)**

**Instructor: Carol Clemens**

**Skill Level: All**

**Date: Wednesday March 24, 1:30 – 3:30**

For new users of Family Tree Maker or those with earlier versions. An introduction to FTM 2010 covers

the basics of entering data. The updated FTM 2010 has a very different "work space." Easily prepare and print numerous charts and reports; instantly add on-line information and sources to your tree without having to hand enter the data. View timelines of the events in an individual's life as related to others in the same family and even as related to world events. Use maps to quickly plot the moves made by an individual. If you think your current program is "good enough," this class just might change your mind. Participants must have basic computer skills including Internet use.

Fee: \$25 for non-Foundation members; \$20 for members.

**Heritage Farm Animals at Coastal Discovery February 27**

The Coastal Discovery Museum will host breeders of heritage breed farm animals that were historically used in the Lowcountry.

Presented in partnership with the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (ALBC), the animals will include: Marsh Tacky horses, a Mammoth Jackstock mule, Guinea hogs, Pineywoods cattle, and Leghorn chickens. The ALBC will present at 11 a.m. "Breeds of the Southeast" and at 1 p.m. a "Marsh Tacky Talk." Programs will be in the Mary Ann Peebles Pavilion. No charge, but donations are welcomed.

*"Woody," a Mammoth Jack mule owned by Lee McKenzie, will be visiting the Coastal Discovery Museum on February 27. Woody's sire was a Mammoth Jack, his dam a Tennessee Walking Horse. Such mules were historically prized work animals in the Lowcountry. Photo by Jeannette Beranger/American Livestock Breeds Conservancy.*

