

NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL CONFERENCE – WE WERE THERE!

Jan Alpert | Linda Piekut | Barry Riordan

The National Genealogical Society Family History Conference took place in Richmond, Virginia May 31 – June 3rd. This was the first time that the conference was back to live and in person and more than 1,160 genealogists and family historians took advantage of the opportunity to network and learn. The conference also provided on-line programs and more than 200 took advantage of this means of participation. The Heritage Library had a booth at the conference and we were well represented by Linda Piekut and Barry and Betty Riordan. Our own Jan Alpert played a leadership role in the planning and execution of the conference.

The theme for this year's conference was "Deep Roots of a Nation" and that theme was evident in all that went on throughout the conference. The Virginia Genealogical Society was the local host for the event

and participants had many opportunities to learn about the state's history. Three of the Virginia featured tours in Richmond included:

- American Civil War Museum – The American Civil War Museum tells the story of the war through the experiences of diverse Americans. You can immerse yourself on the human level in the chaos and complexity of these war years and their aftermath. The Museum also features a quarter-mile walk along the James River where you can learn more about the story of Richmond women and children who worked on Brown's Island to produce ammunition and other military supplies.
- Virginia State Capitol - The Capitol building was designed by Thomas Jefferson and was first occupied in 1788. It is the second oldest working

statehouse in America.

- Virginia Museum of History and Culture – the Museum was formerly known as the Virginia Historical Society but it has been renovated, expanded and renamed. The VMHC collections include a wide range of objects – among them are genealogical materials, maps, glass plate negatives and photographs. In addition there are permanent and traveling exhibits.

There were keynote addresses, classes, events and an exhibit hall to fill the days and keep everyone busy and focused on family history. Linda, Barry, Betty and Jan made hundreds of connections that will help us increase and improve our network while also providing us with programming ideas for the future. A copy of the program is available at Heritage Library and online in case you are thinking about attending a future conference.



NGS welcomes everyone to Richmond.



Exhibitors from around the country participated.



The Richmond skyline was a sight to see.



Linda Piekut, Barry & Betty Riordan, Jan Alpert.



There were programs and speakers for everyone.

HERITAGE LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By *Barbara Catenaci* | Executive Director

This summer we are closing out the Library's 25th anniversary and gearing up for the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution.

The Library will be using a special logo designed for the celebration on our website, social media, newsletters, and in print and additional marketing materials.

The Observer will contain articles that focus on the role of South Carolina and the lowcountry in each edition going forward. We jumped the gun a little and started including these columns and stories in January and April so check our archives online if you missed them. We are starting to gather the resources found in the Library and organizing them so that they are readily available to teachers, students, residents and visitors. We will be acquiring additional resources so be sure to search the catalog on our website to see all that we have. Next year, we will publish a resource booklet that we can share across the community and add a page to the website connecting you to America's story and how Hilton Head Island played a role in our history. You will be able to attend classes on the subject of the American Revolution starting in the fall term and going forward. Zion Cemetery has a new sign on site that brings attention to Hilton Head Island's patriots – Isaac Baldwin, Charles Davant, James Davant and Capt. Jack Stoney. Make sure you stop by the cemetery or take a tour and learn more about these men.



**AMERICAN
REVOLUTIONARY**
1775 WAR 2025
HERITAGE LIBRARY

We are not the only folks gearing up for this important anniversary – events, celebrations, access to educational resources and so much more are all being planned and readied for execution across the country. From Congress and the National Parks Service to

state legislatures, commissions, agencies, county committees and libraries – everyone is hard at work to educate and celebrate. Here are some resources that will help you get ready:

<https://www.america250.org/>

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/american-revolution/about.htm>

<https://guides.loc.gov/american-revolution/digital-collections#:~:text=The%20digital%20collections%20of%20the,books%2C%20images%2C%20and%20maps>

<https://www.amrevmuseum.org/america-250-recognition>

<https://www.dar.org/national-society/america-250>

<https://www.aaslh.org/programs/250th/>

<https://www.sar.org/committees/250th-anniversary-of-the-american-revolutionary-war-committee/>

<https://www.southcarolina250.com/>

This will be an exciting time for The Heritage Library, the region, the state and the nation, and we look forward to sharing it with you.



SAVE THE DATES

360/40 CELEBRATION – THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND:

2 weeks of special events from **August 26 – September 16.**

CRESCENDO: October 10 – November 18, 2023. This celebration kicks off with a party at Shelter Cove Community Park on October 10th from 4:00-6:00pm and closes with the Hilton Head Island Lantern Parade at Coligny Beach on November 18th. Don't forget that this month-long event includes the **LIBRARY'S GHOSTS & MYTHS AT ZION CEMETERY October 18-21, 2023.**

HISTORIC HOLIDAYS: AUTHORS, ARTISTS & AFTERNOON TEA: Saturday, November 25

1:00-4:00pm USCB Hilton Head Island. Watch for details in the October *Observer*.

NEW ANCESTRY & HISTORY CLASSES:

Watch the website www.heritagelib.org.

A HIDDEN TREASURE

In the bookcases by the exit door behind the receptionist's desk, there are several notebooks that are sometimes under-utilized. The notebooks are filled with interesting articles and other information that was gathered and organized by Diana Luellen, a former volunteer, and myself over the course of about five years. I

left the Library in 2021 when I moved to Greenwood, SC but the notebooks are still on the shelf waiting to help you with your research.

The notebooks hold a treasure trove of information and how-to directions. There are articles on various topics of research procedure, as well as information on all the states and how to acquire documentation from those states. Most of the information contained in these notebooks



BY SUNNI BOND
Library Volunteer

are articles taken from various genealogical magazines such as Internet Genealogy and similar magazines to which people might subscribe. There are multiple notebooks, alphabetically arranged, and there are indexes or indices as they are sometimes called, in each notebook. Someone new to genealogical research could benefit greatly

from perusing these notebooks before beginning their research. Experienced genealogical researchers could benefit by updating their knowledge. It's never too late to add a new technique or method or source to one's repertoire!

When you visit the Library, take a moment and look over this sometimes overlooked resource – it is one more way that Heritage Library can help you continue to learn.

HILTON HEAD CHURCHES SEA ISLAND CHAPEL

In this issue of The Heritage Observer, we relate the history of Sea Island Chapel.

Sea Island Chapel began in 2003 as a small fellowship of Christians who desired to study and worship together. They sought out Dr. Robert Cuttino, a retired Baptist minister, to be their mentor and secured a place to meet at Indigo Pines, a senior living facility on Gardner Drive.

The small group grew and decided to formally organize as a non-denominational church open to all who are followers of Jesus Christ. Regular Sunday morning worship services and a mid-week Bible study were held, and a choir was organized. When the facility reached



BY RICHARD CHALK
Library Volunteer

capacity, the decision was made to accept an offer from Island Funeral Home to have weekly worship services there while continuing to have a service for the residents at Indigo Pines.

A search for a permanent location took several years and was finally realized with the purchase of property on

Marshland Road that was originally Ballard Fish House and later was home to the Elks Lodge. Renovations were completed and the church began meeting in their facility on July 1, 2012.

The two Sunday services continue to be held. Indigo Pines Chapel at 9:15 AM and Sea Island Chapel at 10:30 AM.

The Library continues to grow with more than 900 members and 75 volunteers supporting our work. We can't do it without you - THANK YOU.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE LIBRARY



BY JANE THEISSEN
Library Chair

The beginning of the year was full of activity in the Library. We received two boxes of new books, around fifty in all. It took a bit of time to get them added to the catalog, labeled, and shelved. But they are now waiting for you to come in and enjoy them!

These new monographs can be found in a variety of locations in the library:

African American	Maryland
Arkansas	Michigan
Civil War	Missouri
Florida	Nebraska
Genealogy [General]	North Carolina
Georgia	Pennsylvania
Germany	Scotland
Indiana	South Carolina
Ireland	Tennessee
Kentucky	Virginia

Some areas have one book, some have several, but they all have the potential to move your genealogical research and historical knowledge forward. Here are just a few:

- *Tips and Tricks of Deciphering German Handwriting* by Katherine Schober
- *Searching for your Ancestors in Historic Newspapers* by Claudia C. Breland
- *Baseball in Blue and Gray [Civil War]* by George B. Kirsch
- *The Irish Roots Guide* by Tony McCarthy
- *Bridging the Sea Islands, Past and Present* by Lawrence S. Rowland and Stephen R. Wise
- *South Carolina and Barbados Connection*, Selections from the South Carolina Historical Magazine

If you are looking to learn something new or just looking for some respite from the heat and humidity, stop by and spend some time checking out what's new (and what's not-so-new – they're all good!). I am sure you will find it time well spent.

SEA TURTLE PROTECTION: NESTLED IN HILTON HEAD ISLAND'S TOWN HISTORY

It's summer, and you know what that means – Hilton Head Island's favorite beach visitors – sea turtles - are here again! That's right; it is turtle season. Every year between May and October, sea turtle moms come on shore to dig holes and deposit their eggs. A couple of months later, the tiny hatchlings return to the ocean. Protection of these vulnerable creatures has become a way of life on Hilton Head Island, with a dedicated network of volunteers and funding working to ensure their safe passage. When the Town was formed 40 years ago, that network and the laws protecting sea turtles did not exist as they do now. Today we will channel our inner sea turtle and dig into the Town's records to see how the Town has handled the issue of sea turtle protection.

In 1981 (before the Town's incorporation), a small group of volunteers ventured out to track turtle movements and plot nests on a map by hand. By 1984, this effort had been transferred to the Museum of Hilton Head (now known as the Coastal Discovery Museum) under a program called Project Turtle Watch, which received annual funding from the Town beginning in 1989. The program continues today with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources permit held by Sea Turtle Patrol Hilton Head Island. Each morning during "turtle season," volunteers patrol our beaches, searching for turtle nests, which are then marked and monitored



BY NATALIE HARVEY & LINDSEY RAMBOW

until they are inventoried after hatching. Patrol members are assisted by volunteers from the Turtle Trackers, who help keep our beaches flat and clean while also providing important educational information about sea turtle conservation to our island residents and visitors.

The first Town law protecting sea turtles on Hilton Head Island was adopted in 1987 as part of the beach ordinance and stated simply: *[N]o person shall physically harm, harass, or otherwise disturb any sea turtle, its eggs or hatchlings, any sea bird, its eggs or young, or any other beach fauna.* In 1988, the State of South Carolina passed the Beachfront Management Act, requiring local communities to develop beach management plans that included a lighting provision. In response, the Town adopted a beach lighting ordinance in 1990 to safeguard turtle hatchlings from disorientation due to light pollution. This ordinance controlled all artificial light visible from the beach, including provisions on balcony lights, window treatments, and street lighting.

The Town's lighting ordinance included penalties for non-compliance, but Town officials focused on education over enforcement. Newspaper articles in the Town's scrapbook from the 2000s show the difficulty of enforcing the ordinance and the constant efforts to educate the public about the light requirements. The Town stepped up enforcement over the years by adding nighttime patrols and increasing outreach to property owners and renters. A 2006 *Island Packet* article shows Town officials utilizing new GPS equipment with lasers to detect violators and issue warnings.



In 2019, the Town passed an ordinance prohibiting large shovels on the beach and requiring beach visitors to fill in any holes they dig in the sand. This law also prohibits visitors from leaving personal property on the beach overnight. In 2021, the Town passed a new comprehensive Sea Turtle Protection Act to strengthen and enhance the lighting and window treatment requirements for new and existing development. These laws seek to make our beaches more welcoming for nesting female turtles and give hatchlings a flat and dark beach to help them on their journey to the ocean.

The Town of Hilton Head Island is proud to welcome these sea turtle visitors yearly. To keep up to date on turtle nesting, hatching, and conservation, visit the [Sea Turtle Patrol HHI](#) or [Turtle Trackers](#) websites. Remember to keep our beaches dark, flat, and clear of litter. We can all do our part to help our special visitors.



THE “DIT” IN FRENCH CANADIAN SURNAMES

Within the past year I've been asked to help search for a common ancestor for two couples. In the first case, both women shared the surname of Vachon. As I dug into their French Canadian roots I found that both shared the surname, Vachon dit Pomerleau. In the second case, two men whose families came from the same town in Massachusetts and whose Irish second great grandfathers fought in the same Massachusetts regiment during the Civil War thought they might have a common Irish ancestor. I wasn't able to make that connection but found that each had a mother or grandmother from Canada. Indeed, they are related and share the surname Boucher dit Desrosier.

The “dit” word translates in English to either “called” or “to say”. My research suggests that the French took this second surname to distinguish themselves from other branches of their family. It might have been the name of a beloved town in their homeland, an occupation or simply a nickname. Wikipedia suggests that the French military once used this system to name their soldiers.

As Canadians migrated to the United States they would often drop one of the surnames which can make finding the connections more challenging. However, that “dit” and second surname becomes a



BY KIRSTIN CLARKE

very important clue in genealogical research.

Here are a few resources which may help you as you search for your French Canadian roots.

<https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-a-dit-name-3972358>

<https://www.genealogiequebec.com/blog/en/2019/06/05/french-canadian-dit-names-and-nicknames/>

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/French-Canadian_Names_and_Family_Associations_-_International_Institute

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/French-Canadian_Names_and_Family_Associations_-_International_Institute

Don't forget to come into the Library and check out what might be helpful in the stacks.

FAMILY TREE MAKER TIP

Recently, I have been asked the same question by two people. Here is one version of the question:

I have been trying to edit a birthdate in Family Tree Maker. The date appears as Feb 24 1738/39 and should be Feb 24 1739. I have followed the editing instructions and still cannot get it correct. Can you help?



BY CAROL CLEMENS
Library Volunteer
Instructor

the February date falls into that fuzzy period. Using the Julian (old) calendar in effect at the time, the date would have been Feb 24, 1738, but with the switch to the Gregorian calendar in 1752, the date would fall in 1739 using this modern calendar.

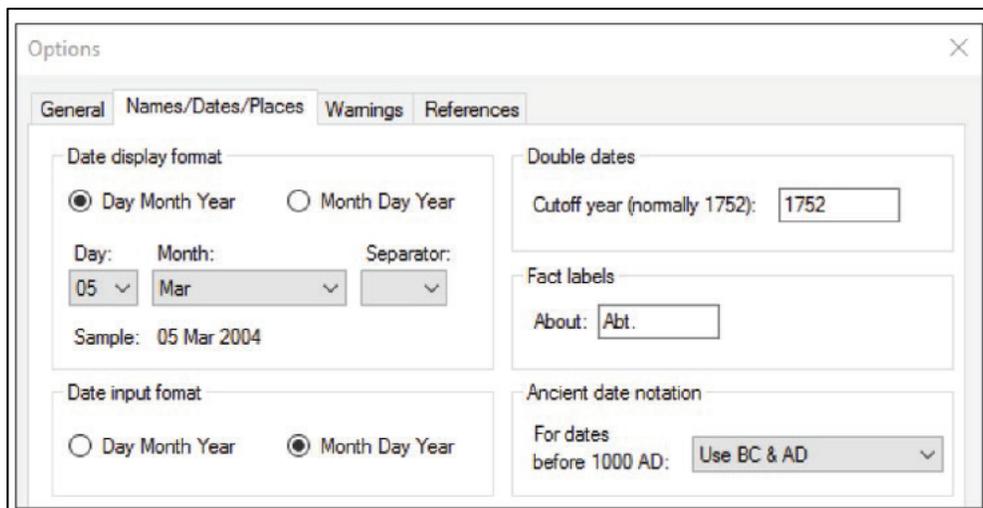
How does Family Tree Maker handle the issue? The program accepts the traditional cutoff of 1752 so that dates in the January 1 – March 24 period prior to

1752 are indicated with double dates.

However, if you do NOT want the program to indicate double dates, you can make a change in the program options. To do this click on TOOLS-OPTIONS-NAME/DATES/PLACES. In the second column, you will find double dates with the cutoff year as 1752. If you do NOT want double dates to show, change the year in the box to a 0. My suggestion is to leave it at 1752, though, which is the accepted way of dealing with this calendar issue.

The answer is that the correct version of the date IS Feb 24 1738/39. Let's look at why.

January 1st has not always been designated as the start of the new year. Under the Julian calendar, the new year began on March 25th. Various European nations switched to the Gregorian calendar, with January 1 as the first date of the new year, as early as the 1500's. However, England and her colonies didn't switch until 1752. The issue is that dates between January 1 and March 24 prior to 1752 fall into the period where the date is one year in the old calendar and a different year in the modern calendar. In the above example,



Educate & Celebrate

SOUTH CAROLINA IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION - BEAUFORT DISTRICT



On the evening of April 21, 1775, just two days after gunfire filled the air in Lexington and Concord, the Charlestown Secret Committee broke into the magazines at Hobcaw and at Robert Cochran's on Charlestown Neck, as well as into the Armory in the upper part of the State House and seized arms and ammunition.¹ Eight hundred stands of small arms, two hundred cutlasses, and all the cartridge boxes were seized. The next day, the powder stores in Hobcaw Magazine were seized, 170 pounds were taken. Another 600 pounds were taken from the shipyard there. Lt. Governor William Bull offered a reward of £100 for apprehending the offenders, but they were never caught. This act catapulted South Carolina into the war.

It didn't take long for the war to reach Beaufort District. In the early summer of 1775, the South Carolina Council of Safety received intelligence that a shipment of gunpowder was on the way to Savannah to supply the Indians. Two barges were sent from Beaufort to Bloody Point on the southern tip of Daufuskie Island to intercept the shipment. Captain John Joiner and Captain John Barnwell of the Beaufort District Regiment of Militia commanded the barges. They were joined there by the Georgia schooner *Liberty*, Captained by Oliver Bowen. When the British armed schooner, the HMS *Phillippa* entered Tybee Point with the supply vessel she was ordered to anchor at Cockspur Island. On the island was the encampment of approximately three hundred South Carolina Provincials. Ultimately, the Patriots were able to take off 16,000 pounds of powder and "seven hundred-weight of leaden

bullets." They also "took away all the bar-lead, sheet-lead, Indian trading arms, and shot that were on board." The Carolinians and the Georgians divided the cargo between them. The South Carolinian's powder was taken to Tucker's Island where 4,000 pounds were put on board a schooner and delivered to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia.

Although Beaufort District militia fought in other areas of the state, it was relatively quiet in the District until March 2, 1776. That's when the Patriot Militia battled the British Navy at Yamacraw Bluff in the Savannah River on the border between Georgia and South Carolina.

Further north on the Savannah River, a group of Patriot merchant ships carrying rice was attacked by British warships and their cargoes of rice seized.



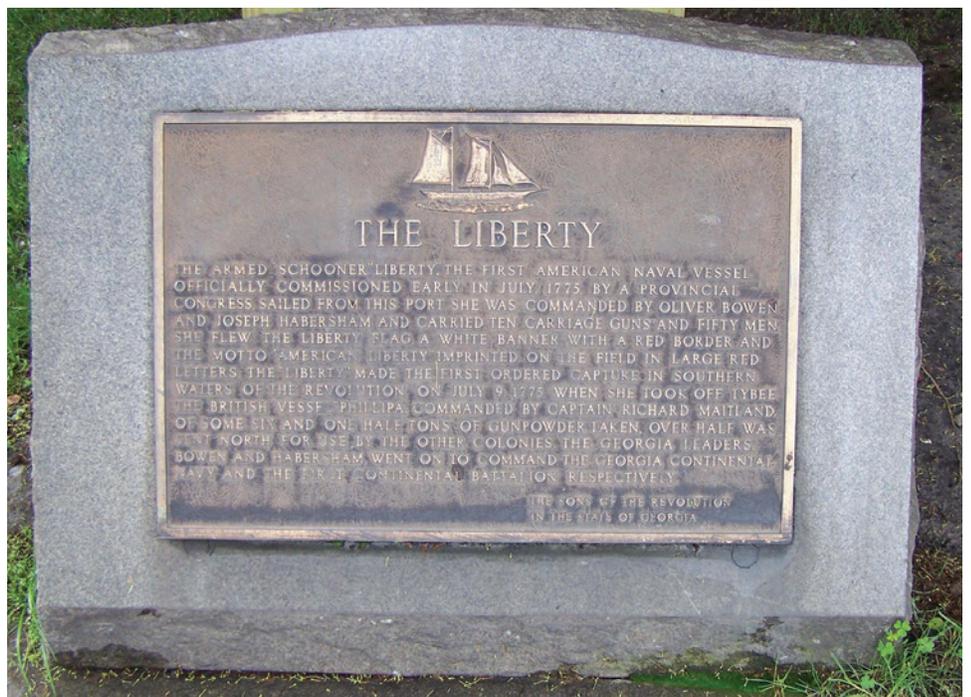
BY JIM CLOSSON
SAR Registrar

About 600 Georgian Militia joined approximately 500 Patriots from South Carolina set the ship *Inverness* ablaze and cut it loose. The fire ship, a weapon consisting of a ship carrying explosives that was set adrift to destroy enemy ships, drifted into the British brig, HMS *Nelly*. These two ships drifted downstream, setting three more ships

on fire. The British squadron was forced to retire. Twelve of the rice boats were able to run the gauntlet along the Savannah side of the river only to be captured and to have the rice confiscated by the Royal Navy to provision British troops in Boston.

In the coming months and years, the Beaufort militia would be engaged in twenty-eight significant battles in the District with the British and loyalist before the wars end.

¹ John Drayton, "Memoirs of the American Revolution," (2 Vols. Charleston SC, 1821), pages 222-224



HISTORY DEPARTMENT

WHO WAS BRIGADIER GENERAL ORMSBY MITCHEL?

Brigadier General Ormsby Mitchel. (1805-1862) was born in Kentucky but raised in Lebanon, Ohio. He entered West Point in 1825 and was a classmate of Robert E. Lee.

After graduation in 1829 Mitchel stayed on as an assistant professor of mathematics. A polymath, he was an attorney, surveyor, publisher and astronomer. Mitchel's devotion to astronomy led to his publishing the first magazine for the Union Army titled "Old Stars". Upon hearing the news of the battle of Fort Sumter Mitchel enlisted and was given the rank of General. Mitchel is best known for ordering a raid whereby Union soldiers infiltrated Confederate lines, stole a train with a plan to sabotage the rail tracks and telegraph lines from Chattanooga to Atlanta. The raid became known as "The Great Locomotive Chase". The raid failed and all were captured and prosecuted. A few with death.

On September 22, 1862, Mitchel assumed command of the Department of the



BY TOM MARTIN

South at Hilton Head Island, SC but died after a bout with yellow fever on October 31, 1862. During this short period Mitchel commanded the lunette-shaped coastal battery on the banks of Skull Creek. This battery was the first of several to be built to guard against inland waterway raids by the Confederates. Also,

during this time the Union Army was well aware that Hilton Head was being overrun with "contrabands of war" (freedmen) and that living conditions which co-mingled the soldiers and freedmen wasn't working. During the days he commanded the coastal battery, Mitchel created a vision and the plans for the first separate settlement of freedmen. The settlement was developed as a regular town with roads, one quarter acre lots, elected officials, a church, and various laws addressing such issues as behavior, sanitation, and mandatory education for children between the ages of six and fifteen. During the daytime the freedmen mostly worked for the Army under the task system. Once they



completed the daily task they worked their own property. Eventually the town grew to about 1500. And as a way of honoring General Mitchel the town was named "Mitchelville."

SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS BOARD OF ADVISORS

As the President of the Board of Directors for The Heritage Library, I have come to rely on the wisdom of those that came before me. They may have served on the Library Board, volunteered with the Library or previously offered their expertise to our organization in many other ways – they have corporate and community knowledge that runs deep and we need that corporate knowledge to grow and move forward. Who are some of these folks? They are our Board of Advisors and they are important to our organization.

This year we are adding a great group to our list of advisors and we are grateful that they are willing to continue to share

their time and talent with us in this new role. They are strong leaders and they join a list of current advisors that includes: Bill Altstaetter, Dr. Emory Campbell, Norman Harberger, Natalie Harvey, Dr. J. Brent Morris and Dr. Larry Rowland. I offer my sincere thanks to Sunni Bond, Dodi Eschenbach, Harry Eschenbach, Gen. (Ret.) Claudia Kennedy, Dee Phillips, Linda Piekut, Dr. Barrett Riordan and Iva Welton for accepting our invitation to join our Board of Advisors. I have no doubt that they will work with the current advisors and provide knowledge,



BY EZRA CALLAHAN
President

understanding and sage advice as the Library continues on its mission. We will continue to add to our Board of Advisors, Board of Directors and volunteer base so that we can continue to draw from all corners of the community and continue to work to meet our mission.

We say this over and over – we can't do what we do without you. You make a difference in the way we make a difference. Thank you for continuing to work with us and supporting the hard work done by all our volunteers in all the different roles they play in the Library.

HERITAGE LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to 14 New and 80 Renewing Members who have joined our Heritage Library Family.



BY LAURETTE
DOSCHER-BENFANTE
Membership Chair

NEW MEMBERS

South Carolina

Bluffton

Elizabeth Fenlon

Hilton Head Island

Nancy Condon
William Knight
Melissa Krauss
Scott Michaels
Diane Mills
Ivy Rowland
Dorothy Sherling

Out of State

Alice DeForest,
Savannah GA

Richard Egan,
Hingham MA

Ellis Johnson,
Townsend GA

Cynthia Lawson,
Fort Worth TX

Carolyn & Rodney Tiffany,
Maricopoa AZ

Cheryl Williamson,
Inglewood CA

RENEWING MEMBERS

South Carolina

Beaufort

Ronald Grindle
Josie Olsvig

Bluffton

Alfred Beam
Jim Closson
Patricia Graner
Glendon & Palmer Jones
Julie & Richard Orr
Craig Pelley
Franklin Roach
Kathy and Jim Smith

Dataw Island

Joel Holden
Diane & Joseph Roney

Hilton Head Island

Martha & Paul Anthony
Lynne & Richard Armfield
Nancy & David Borghesi
Anna & Ron Bradley
Sheila Broadbent
Julie Brumbelow
Nancy & Joseph Burke
Patricia Burke
Morris Campbell
Richard Chalk
Carol & Robert Clemens
Louise Cohen
Beverly & Thomas Conner
Pam & Peter Cooper
Marie Danforth & Stephen Appell
Christine deVries

Susan & Ed Dobbs
Jan Ferrari
Stephen Gallagher
Mary Agnes Garman
Janis Gatschet
John Geisler
Lesley Green
Ann & Tim Hays
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TOURS

Registration required - HeritageLib.org/Tours

ZION CEMETERY & BAYNARD MAUSOLEUM COSTUMED CEMETERY TOUR

TUESDAYS | 10:30AM



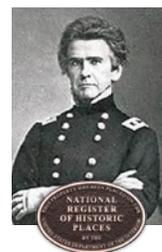
Visit the gravesites of four Revolutionary War heroes and find out about the bloody skirmish that was fought just steps away. Site on the SC Liberty Trail.

Corner of Hwy. 278 & Mathews Dr.

\$10/ADULT • \$8/CHILD

HISTORIC FT. MITCHEL TOUR

THURSDAYS | 10:30AM



Fort Mitchel contains the remains of a coastal defense battery erected in 1862 to protect the Port Royal Sound by way of Skull Creek from incursions by Confederate gunboats.

Corner of Hwy. 278 & Mathews Dr.

\$10/ADULT • \$8/CHILD

HERITAGE BOOK CLUB

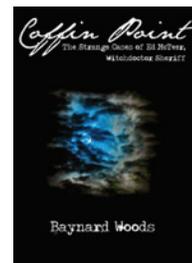
JULY 12 | 11AM

Coffin Point: The Strange Cases of Ed McTeer, Witchdoctor Sheriff

by Baynard Woods

Book Club Discussion
July 12 | 11:00am
Hilton Head Public Library
11 Beach City Road
Hilton Head Island

Registration requested -
HeritageLib.org/BookClub



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