

COPY

REV. DR. ROBERT EPTING HOWARD PEEPLES

CANDIDATE FOR DAR HISTORY AWARD MEDAL

***SPONSORED BY:
CAPTAIN WILLIAM HILTON CHAPTER
NSDAR
HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Rev. Dr. Robert Epting Howard Peeples was born in Estill, South Carolina in 1918. He received his bachelor's degree in Economics from the College of Charleston in 1938. After working in a banking career, Dr. Peeples was drafted into the Army in service of his country during World War II and served as a Sergeant in such exotic locations as India, Pakistan and Australia. He married Miss Cora McKenzie in 1948 and graduated from Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, VA. Rev. Peeples was ordained an Episcopal Priest in Augusta, Georgia on Palm Sunday of 1949.

Following his ordination he served congregations as Priest at Christ Church in Cordele, GA, St. Paul's Church in Jesup, GA and Trinity Church in Statesboro, GA and at Christ Church in St. Mary's, GA. Twenty years ago he was a charter member of the Anglican Church of the Redeemer, Hilton Head Island and has served as its Assistant Pastor. He was elected Rector of this church in the year 2000.

In 1953 he and Mrs. Peeples came to Hilton Head Island where they purchased the 10th house built on the Island. They became permanent residents in 1963 and became involved in gathering and preserving local history. To celebrate the centennial of the taking of Hilton Head Island in 1861, the Hilton Head Island Historical Society was founded in 1961. Dr. Peeples has served as its President since 1970. In January 1983, he was a founding member of the Hilton Head Island Genealogical Society and served many times as guest lecturer and has conducted

many genealogical workshops. As a member of the Board of Directors Dr. Peeples assisted the Island's Coastal Discovery Museum from 1985—1992 and served a term as Secretary of that Board. His historical research provides local tour guides and museum docents with folklore of historical families and plantations in the area. He has worked with several archeologists on local excavations.

Dr. Peeples was the founding and organizing member of the Dr. George Mosse Chapter Sons of the American Revolution, named for his ancestor buried in the Zion Chapel of Ease Cemetery on Hilton Head Island. He was instrumental in the 1997 creation of the Heritage Library Foundation, Inc. a not-for-profit historical and genealogical library dedicated to the study of history and genealogy. The Heritage Library is now the foremost of its kind in the southeastern United States and Dr. Peeples has served as a Board Director since its inception.

Miles family descendants use his excellent guide "*A Miles Genealogy—A Family of South Carolina Planters*," published in the South Carolina Historical Magazine as a well-sourced and well-documented reference work to this family's genealogy. Copies of his book Tales of Antebellum Hilton Head Island Families consistently sell out at Visitor's stops on Hilton Head.

His doctoral thesis, Names and Places of Hilton Head Island, won the History Award in 1972 for original research from the University of South Carolina in Columbia. This scholarly publication has provided modern developers with historical knowledge of the plantation lands at one time owned by one or two families and now inhabited by 200-500 families. In addition, he has written articles published in local newspapers tracing the genealogy of the historical properties now undergoing contemporary development.

His many memberships include the Sons of the American Revolution where he served 11 years as State Chaplain; Chatham County, Georgia Artillery Chaplain for 40 years; member Sons of the Revolution; Sons of American Colonists; Descendants of Colonial Clergy; Bluffton Historical Society; Descendants of Colonial Governors; Magna Carta Barons. In addition, Dr. Peeples served as President of the First Families of South Carolina from 1987-1991.

His scholarly works have been published in the SC Historical Society Magazine, South Carolina French Huguenot Society Quarterly *Transactions*. Articles about Hilton Head Island and early families have appeared in *The Island Packet* Newspaper and *Islander Magazine* and many others.

He has addressed the following societies numerous times with his wit and wisdom, oftentimes purely from memory and acquired knowledge.

- ★ Colonial Dames of American—Savannah, GA Chapter, 1982, 1987, 1990
- ★ Colonial Dames of 17th Century—Beaufort, SC District, 1980, 1989
- ★ Effingham County, SC Historical Society, 1976, 1979, 1983, 1989, 1995
- ★ Beaufort Historical Society, Beaufort, SC, 1985, 1989, 1993, 1997
- ★ Bluffton Historical Society, Bluffton, SC (*too numerous to list*)
- ★ Hampton County, SC Historical Society, 1983, 1987, 1994, 1999, 2000
- ★ Edisto Island Historical Society, Edisto Island, SC (*too numerous to list*)
- ★ Dr. George Mosse SAR Hilton Head Island, SC (*too numerous to list*)
- ★ Captain William Hilton NSDAR Hilton Head Island, SC (*too numerous to list*)
- ★ Thomas Heyward, Jr. Chapter, NSDAR, Beaufort, SC (*too numerous to list*)
- ★ Hilton Head Island CAR (*too numerous to list*)
- ★ SC State Society CAR 2000 Workshop—Story of Thomas Heyward, Jr.
- ★ Orangeburg, SC Chapter SAR, 1984, 1989, 1998
- ★ South Carolina State Genealogical Fall Workshop—1999
- ★ Coast Guard Auxillary, 1987, 1990, 1997
- ★ Coastal Discovery Museum Docents (*too numerous to list*)
- ★ Island Tour Guide Association (*too numerous to list*)

Dr. Peeples regularly conducts workshops for our local, area and state genealogical societies. For the South Carolina Genealogical Society annual meeting in the Fall of 2000 Dr. Peeples spoke on the subject of *Prominent Families of the Lowcountry*. For two years Dr. Peeples served as guest lecturer on the *History of Hilton Head Island* to the Columbia College Department of History, Columbia, South Carolina. In 1998, he was called upon as guest Lecturer for the European Elderhostel sponsored by Technical College of the Lowcountry and spoke to the group on the *History of Hilton Head Island and Lowcountry Plantations*. In the fall of 1999 he presented *Genealogy as Handmaiden of History* at the Annual Meeting of the Heritage Library Foundation. He related the story of our local hero, Thomas Heyward, Jr. to the South Carolina Children of the American Revolution Summer 2000 Workshop held on Hilton Head Island. In January 2001, he has presented a Roundtable Workshop to the members of the Heritage Library Foundation on the topic of *Sharing Knowledge of Genealogical Information*.

For the last 50 years Dr. and Mrs. Peeples have personally maintained and helped to preserve the Zion Chapel of Ease Cemetery — a pre-Revolutionary War cemetery on Hilton Head Island where four Revolutionary soldiers and their families

are buried. They have promoted and followed through on marking all historical, Revolutionary or Civil War-related sites in the area. Each year on the Fourth of July, Dr. Peebles leads a group of local historical, genealogical, and heritary society members in the area on a Pilgrimage to the Tomb of Thomas Heyward, Jr., who was a local planter and signer of the Declaration of Independence.

At the age of 82 he is still sought after as a speaker and presenter at local historical society meetings, area genealogical society meetings, and DAR and SAR meetings. He is happy to help assist any researcher or other local history buff in their quest for local history and knowledge.