



COASTAL GEORGIA  
**HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

NEWSLETTER

The mission of the Society is to connect people to Coastal Georgia's dynamic history through the stories we share and the collections we preserve.

## Spring Program

### “Daughters of Men: Vara Majette’s Vision of Indigenous History”

**On Thursday, March 21, at 6 p.m., Leslie Dunlap, Ph.D., will present the Society’s spring program, “*Daughters of Men: Vara Majette’s Vision of Indigenous History*.”** When social

worker, lawyer, and novelist Vara Majette retired to St. Simons Island in the 1930s, she began exploring Coastal Georgia’s Native history through historical research. As a result, Majette painted several watercolors depicting Native life and produced a 416-page

romance novel, *Daughters of Men*, which was never published. In her program, Dr. Dunlap will examine both the artwork and the manuscript, which describes Native Americans’ early encounters with European explorers as told from the imagined perspective of three generations of Indigenous women. She will also discuss Majette’s historical fiction in the broader context of twentieth-century women’s history and romance writing.



Leslie Dunlap, Ph.D.



Arrival of Spanish by Vara Majette

Leslie K. Dunlap is a professor of history and chair of the Women’s and Gender Studies program at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. She teaches and writes about gender and social

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movements, family history, and history through biography. Her profile of Vara Majette appears in *Georgia Women: Their Lives and Times, Volume 2* (University of Georgia Press, 2014).

The lecture will be held at the **A.W. Jones Heritage Center** at 6 p.m. and will also be available via livestream. The lecture is free for Society members and \$10 for non-members. To register, visit [coastalgeorgiahistory.org](http://coastalgeorgiahistory.org).

## Michigan State University Research Project on the Historical Slave Trade

**On Thursday, May 9, at 6 p.m., Walter Hawthorne, Ph.D., will present “Enslaved: Peoples of the Historical Slave Trade.”**

This lecture will explore a major online database project that Dr. Hawthorne has undertaken in conjunction with Matrix, the digital humanities center at Michigan State University. The website, [Enslaved.org](http://Enslaved.org), is a repository of richly detailed stories of the lives of enslaved people, which assists researchers in linking these stories and visualizing larger historical narratives. The project, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities, aims to connect individual stories and provide a deeper understanding of U.S. history, as well as offer educational materials for classrooms.

Walter Hawthorne is a professor of African, Atlantic, and Digital History at Michigan State University. He is also the director of [Enslaved.org](http://Enslaved.org) and an editor of the *Journal of Slavery and Data Preservation*. Dr. Hawthorne received his Ph.D. in African History from Stanford University. His research focuses on the history of the Atlantic Slave Trade, and he has written on African agricultural practices, religious beliefs, and family structures in the Old and New Worlds. His most recent books include *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves: Transformation along the Guinea-Bissau Coast, 1400-1900* and *From Africa to Brazil: Culture, Identity, and an Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1830*.

The lecture will be held at the **A.W. Jones Heritage Center** at 6 p.m. The lecture is free and open to the public; **registration is required** by visiting [coastalgeorgiahistory.org](http://coastalgeorgiahistory.org).



Walter Hawthorne, Ph.D.

## Harrington School Anniversary

During 2024, the Historic Harrington School and St. Simons African American Heritage Coalition are planning a diverse slate of programming in celebration of the school's 100th anniversary. Allison Dupuis, the Society's Director of Public Programming, is assisting in these efforts by helping to write 52 weekly features on local African American history. To learn more about anniversary programming and read the weekly features, visit [ssiheritagecoalition.org](https://ssiheritagecoalition.org). Contribute your own stories by email to [harringtonschool@ssiheritagecoalition.org](mailto:harringtonschool@ssiheritagecoalition.org).

Built in the 1920s, the Harrington School educated African American children from grades one through

seven on St. Simons Island until the mid-twentieth century. The building also functioned as a community center and gathering place, where celebrations like the plaiting of the Maypole and annual Halloween and Christmas parties were held. Following Glynn County school consolidation, the Harrington School housed a daycare center for several years and later sat empty. It was restored and reopened as a museum in 2017.



## Little Light Music Concert Series

Since 1998, residents and visitors have gathered on the oceanfront lawn beneath the Lighthouse for the Society's summer concert series. Bring your family, friends, a picnic supper, and lawn chairs for this special community tradition! The concerts are from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Tickets are \$20 for adults; children under 12 and Keepers of the Light are admitted free of charge. No cash. We encourage you to purchase tickets in advance in the Museum Store or on the Society's website. For news and weather updates during the concert season, please visit our website or Facebook page.

**The Society is grateful for the support of our 2024 concert sponsors:**

**MAY 19**  
**The Tams**

**JUNE 23**  
**Squirt Gun**

**JULY 21**  
**Pinebox Dwellers**

**SEPT 1**  
**Sounds of Motown**



**Morgan Stanley**  
**BROWN-ROSE WEALTH MANAGEMENT**  
**AT MORGAN STANLEY**





## Winter Program Review

On Sunday, January 14, Douglas Brinkley, Ph.D., presented the Winter Program, “Silent Spring Revolution and Its Connection to Coastal Georgia” at the St. Simons Presbyterian Church. The noted historian presented a timeline of the American environmental movement, beginning with Teddy Roosevelt and ending with the presidencies of John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Richard Nixon. Dr. Brinkley connected these stories to important people and places in Coastal Georgia history, from the work of ecologist Eugene Odum to the creation of Cumberland Island National Seashore. The Society’s annual volunteer awards were presented. Following the lecture, a reception honoring Keepers of the Light was held at The Lodge at Sea Island.

## Volunteer Awards

Volunteers play an important role in realizing the mission of Coastal Georgia Historical Society by working on the front lines in the museums, behind the scenes in administrative and curatorial activities, and in other capacities such as ticket sales at Little Light Music. During 2023, volunteers contributed over 6,000 hours to support our mission. We truly appreciate their time, enthusiasm, and support in all that we do to serve the community and region.

Each year since 1978, the **Cunningham Bowl** has been awarded to a volunteer who has performed exemplary service to the Society during the previous year. The 2023 recipient was **Patrick Kelley**.



*Dr. Brinkley and Patrick Kelley*

Last year, Patrick contributed over 300 hours as a volunteer. He is a docent at both the Home Front Museum and the Lighthouse Museum and regularly assists with programs and events. During his weekly docent shifts he provides our visitors with a friendly welcome and an engaging history of our area.

**The Rodriguez Service Award** was established in 2010, and each year honors exemplary acts of stewardship and service performed by a staff member, board member, or individual serving in an official capacity to the Society. The 2023 award was given to **Buddy Sullivan**.

Having written more than 30 books and monographs, Buddy is one of the most prolific writers about Georgia history, particularly the Coastal region. A resident of Darien, he has partnered with us for over 30 years to present his well-known winter lecture series on the history of the Golden Isles.



*Sherri Jones and Buddy Sullivan*

Through his extensive research and writing, Buddy has helped the Society fulfill its mission to share the stories of Georgia's coastal area. As the organization's senior historian since 2015 – a role he performs on a voluntary basis – he has been extremely generous with his time. He was critical to the development of the World War II Home Front Museum and is featured in the film that welcomes and orients Museum visitors. Three years ago, he helped launch our Brunswick lecture series, an important new initiative for the Society.

## Society Welcomes New Board Members

The Society's Board of Directors plays a vital role in governing and providing oversight to the organization. We are truly grateful to Craig Donohue, Ed Hawie, Mike Hodges, Jan Payne, and Bill Stembler who completed their Board service in December. Joining the Board this year are Brad Danowski, Shannon Gilreath, John Hunter, Steven Kerr, and Susan Lawhorne. They will ensure that the Society's pursuit of excellence, in all areas, remains at the forefront.



*Brad  
Danowski*



*Shannon  
Gilreath*



*John  
Hunter*



*Steven  
Kerr*



*Susan  
Lawhorne*



## New School Tour Offered at Home Front Museum

Fifth graders from Golden Isles Elementary School recently enjoyed Education Director Annie Martin's newly developed tour of the World War II Home Front Museum. Students explored both buildings at the Historic Coast Guard Station, where they learned about life on the Glynn County home front.



## Georgia History Day

On February 9, Society staff members participated in the annual History Day at Oglethorpe Point Elementary School. Annie Martin presented a program to fifth graders about the lighthouse keeper's critical job of monitoring the light throughout the night before electricity. She also explained how the Fresnel lens creates a beam that can be seen far out at sea. Students used flashlights and page magnifiers to see for themselves how the lens prisms concentrate the light. Allison Dupuis spoke to the fifth graders about the Coast Guard's role in Coastal Georgia during WWII and demonstrated how messages were sent using signal flags and codes.



## Black History Month School Visit

On February 23, Dr. Bernard Powers, professor emeritus at the College of Charleston, visited Glynn Academy and spoke to 93 students in AP U.S. and World History courses. Students were introduced to exhibits and experiences featured at Charleston's International African American Museum. His lecture explored African American connections to world history through the stories of Black loyalists during the American Revolution and the Haitian Revolution's connection to the Louisiana Purchase. He was accompanied by the Society's Director of Public Programming, Allison Dupuis and Education Director, Annie Martin. Dr. Powers presented a program for Historical Society members on February 22.

## Glenn Grant Provides Museum Experiences for Children

On March 4, the Society offered local children and their families free admission to our museums. Thanks to the generosity of the Jack and Anne Glenn Charitable Foundation, 500 people visited our museums free of charge while schools were closed for a teacher planning day.



*Visitors enjoy the Home Front Museum*



*Family member Lewis Glenn welcomes children*

## Sherri Jones Serves as AAM Peer Reviewer

March 4-6, Sherri Jones traveled to Providence, Rhode Island to serve on the American Alliance of Museums Peer Review Visiting Committee for the reaccreditation of the **Rhode Island Historical Society**, <https://www.rihs.org/>. She was joined by Daniel Hammer, President and CEO of The Historic New Orleans Collection in New Orleans, LA. The site visit included interviews with the Executive Director, staff, Board of Trustees, and community partners along with tours of John Brown House Museum, Museum of Work & Culture, and the Robinson Research Center. The main objective was to appraise the operations of the museum, particularly its adherence to the Core Standards for U.S. Museums issued by the AAM, which ensure that all museums are assessed using the same criteria. The peer review experience provides valuable background in preparation for our organization's reaccreditation in 2026.



*Daniel Hammer and C. Morgan Greffe,  
Executive Director of the Rhode Island Historical Society*





## Field Trip to Hampton Plantation and Darien

The Journeys field trip on March 5 explored the lives and legacies of enslaved people and their descendants in Coastal Georgia. The group visited the ruins of Hampton Point Plantation on the northern end of St. Simons. Guest speaker and researcher Terri Ward, who specializes in African American genealogy in Coastal Georgia, described daily life for the people who lived there. Myrna Crook, the manager of the Society's archaeology laboratory, provided archaeological information about the existing ruins of plantation structures, including a tabby dwelling and an overseer's house located nearby.

The group then traveled to Darien. During a luncheon at Oaks on the River, Terri Ward delivered a lecture on the legacies of people enslaved by the Butler family and the impact their descendants had on Darien. The group then proceeded to the early 19th century Adam Strain Building, where they learned about the restoration and revitalization of the structure from owner Marion Savic and preservationist Fred Ecker.

The final stop was the site of Butler Island Plantation to view the ruins of this former rice plantation. Terri and Myrna spoke about the site's connection to the Weeping Time and about the impact of rice cultivation, both on the surrounding land and on the enslaved people who performed the daily tasks of the rice plantation. Information about archaeological findings at the site was provided by Myrna.



*Terri Ward and Myrna Crook discuss the history of Butler Island*



## Membership Highlights

**Thank you to those who have generously upgraded their membership or increased their level of annual giving.**

### Keepers of the Light

Cassina Garden Club—Sustainer  
John Dunham and Jane Beadles—Benefactor  
Lucy and Dick Glasebrook—Patron  
Diana and Bruce Jacobs—Sustainer  
Tammy and Andy Jetter—Sustainer  
Debbie and Steve Kerr—Benefactor  
Janice Lamattina—Sustainer  
Betty and Jack Moore—Luminary  
Katherine and Bob Penn—Patron  
Cindy and Gene Rackley—Sustainer  
Judy and Craig Sellner—Sustainer  
Ron and Forrest Wilson—Sustainer  
Lois and Danny Yates—Sustainer

### General

Carole Barton—Family  
Sally Chao—Curator  
Cleveland Cook—Family  
Barbara and Roger Cook—Family  
Catherine and Victor Jost—Lamplighter  
Carol and Stiles Kellett—Assistant Keeper  
Gretchen and Michael Negles—Assistant Keeper  
Ginny Rosner—Lamplighter  
Beth and Doug Thornton—Assistant Keeper

## Welcome New Members!

### Keepers of the Light

Tommye and Ben Easterlin—Sustainer  
Frank and Sarah Hamlin—Sustainer  
Melissa and Chris Lowe—Sustainer

### General

Dianne Anderson—Family  
Sharon Anderson—Individual  
Wayne and Diane Andreae—Family  
Richard Burgner—Individual  
John and Lynda Byrne—Family  
Alison Cain—Individual  
Harold Daniel—Individual  
Cantey Deeter—Family  
Susan and George Dieckmann—Family  
Gay Diz—Family  
Lorraine Duvall—Individual  
Susan Geeslin—Individual  
Frederick Green—Individual  
Danforth Hagler—Family  
Julia Hale—Individual  
Anita and Robert Hand—Family  
Debbie Harrison—Individual  
Carol Jones—Individual  
James Klippel—Individual  
Kelly Layton—Family  
Gary Matthews—Family  
Natalie Murrah—Individual  
Lauralyn Mustaki—Individual  
Diane O'Hagan—Curator\*  
Hugo and Catherine Perez—Family  
Diane Pollack—Individual  
Gigi Taylor—Individual  
Michael Truckey—Individual  
Elizabeth Tufts—Individual  
Kim Watson—Individual  
Nicole Williams—Family

## Memorial and Tribute Gifts

In Memory of Albert Shelander  
By Bruce Flexer, Mimi and John Rogers, Janet Brown

In Memory of BB Shelander  
By Bruce Flexer, Mimi and John Rogers, Dorris and Tom Burton

In Memory of Patty Cole  
By Rick Haws

## Calendar of Events

March 21

### *“Daughters of Men: Vara Majette’s Vision of Indigenous History”*

Leslie Dunlap, Ph.D.

6 p.m.

A.W. Jones Heritage Center  
CGHS members free;  
\$10 non-members

May 9

### *“Enslaved: Peoples of the Historical Slave Trade”*

Walter Hawthorne, Ph.D.

6 p.m.

A.W. Jones Heritage Center  
Free of Charge

## Little Light Music Concert Series

7-9 p.m.

Lighthouse grounds

\$20 per person

Free: Children under 12  
and Keepers of the Light

May 19 – The Tams

June 23 – Squirt Gun

July 21 – Pinebox Dwellers

Sept 1 – Sounds of Motown

\*Level no longer available as of 1.1.24



# COASTAL GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 21136  
St. Simons Island  
Georgia 31522

FIRST CLASS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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## Our Staff

### Executive Director

Sherri Jones

### Curator

Mimi Rogers

### Education Director

Annie Martin

### Director of Public Programming

Allison Dupuis

### Director of Development

Sheila VanderWood

### Public Relations Director

Leigh Ann Stroud

### Office Manager

Heather Cason

### Director of Retail Operations

Eric Oberg

### Events Coordinator

Jessica Aldridge

### Senior Historian

Buddy Sullivan

### Consulting Archaeologist

Lindsey Cochran, Ph.D.

## 2024 Board of Directors

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Jeffrey Molitor

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Sherri Jones

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or visit [coastalgeorgiahistory.org](https://coastalgeorgiahistory.org)



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