

Fall Program

Votes for Women: A Portrait of Persistence



Library of Congress

On Thursday, November 14, 2024, Kate Clarke Lemay, Ph.D., will present a lecture based on her exhibit “Votes for Women: A Portrait of Persistence.” Displayed at the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery in 2019, this exhibition celebrated the then-upcoming centennial anniversary of women’s suffrage in the United States. The 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, granting women the right to vote, was ratified in August 1920. Many remembrances of its hundredth anniversary, including the Society’s, were impacted by COVID-19. We welcome the opportunity to further observe this important occasion.

Dr. Lemay will speak about the process behind curating “Votes for Women,” for which she also published the accompanying catalogue. She will also speak about the larger context of the women’s suffrage movement across the country, including several connections and important individuals in Coastal Georgia.



Kate Clarke Lemay, Ph.D.

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.

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Dr. Lemay holds a dual Ph.D. in American art history and American studies from Indiana University Bloomington, where she also completed her M.A. in art history. She joined the National Portrait Gallery as a historian in 2015. During her tenure, she has served as the founding director of PORTAL, the National Portrait Gallery's Scholarly Center, and as the founding coordinating curator for the Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative.

Dr. Lemay's catalogue for "Votes for Women" won the 2021 Smithsonian Secretary's Prize for Excellence in Research. During her time at the National Portrait Gallery, Dr. Lemay has curated numerous other exhibitions, including 2017's "Marlene Dietrich: Dressed for the Image" and 2023's "1898: U.S. Imperial Visions and Revisions."

The Fall Program will be held at 6 p.m. at the A. W. Jones Heritage Center and will also be available via livestream. Members attend the lecture free of charge, and the cost for non-members is \$10. Registration for the program is required by visiting coastalgeorgiahistory.org.

Preservation Fund Receives Major Gift

The Society recently received a generous donation of \$10,000 to the Preservation Fund from Debbie S. Mollycheck in memory of her father, Franto Mollycheck III, and grandfather, Franto Mollycheck II. Franto II served as assistant keeper of the St. Simons Lighthouse from 1928 until 1934 when Carl Olaf Svendsen was keeper.

Along with the gift, Ms. Mollycheck included a letter with her family history, beginning with her grandfather's career in the United States Light House Service in 1923 as a seaman aboard the Tender *Palmetto*. Three years later, Franto II was a quartermaster on the Tender *Mangrove*. He married Debbie's grandmother, Lilla, in June 1926, and applied to be a lighthouse keeper soon afterward. His decision was steered by his new wife's desire to keep the Mollycheck family together.

The family saw major changes while serving at the Lighthouse and living in the Keeper's Dwelling. Debbie's father, Franto Mollycheck III, was born on the second floor of the Dwelling on August 8, 1929. Keeper Svendsen recorded Franto III's birth in his *Journal of Light Station at St. Simons*, writing "Mrs. Mollycheck gave birth to a 8 ½ lb. son 4:30 p.m. Keeper taken all night watch."

Franto Mollycheck II served under Svendsen as assistant keeper from April 7, 1928, until January 1934, when the St. Simons Lighthouse was electrified. Mollycheck was the longest serving assistant under Svendsen, and his departure was also included in Svendsen's writings. On January 24, 1934, Svendsen recorded that Mollycheck moved his possessions onto the Tender *Mangrove*, a vessel Mollycheck had served aboard nearly a decade earlier. On the same day as Mollycheck's departure, Svendsen wrote that United States Light House Service personnel came to St. Simons "to install electric light in tower. The light was turned on in tower 5:58 p.m." Keeper Mollycheck retired on disability from the U.S. Lighthouse Service in 1951. For more information on his service, see <http://www.mollycheck.com>.

We are grateful to Ms. Mollycheck for her generous gift and for sharing her family's fascinating story. In her letter, Ms. Mollycheck wrote, "It brings me great pleasure to share the stories with others – the best part." Her gift, along with all major gifts to the Preservation Fund, is permanently recognized on the Society's website.



Franto Mollycheck II,
U.S. Lighthouse Society

Brunswick Lecture Series



The Brunswick Lecture Series will return in October, featuring four speakers who will cover a new range of Brunswick-centered historical topics. The series will be held at the College of Coastal Georgia on **Tuesdays, October 1, 8, 15, and 22 from 4-5:30 p.m.**

The first lecture, on October 1, will feature the Society's Senior Historian Buddy Sullivan. Sullivan will cover the history of Brunswick from the colonial settlement of Georgia to the 20th century, concentrating on the city's development as a commercial center and seaport. Brunswick's home

front contributions during World War II will be discussed, as well as the commercial seafood industry that developed after the war. Dozens of historical images will celebrate the city's rich history.

On October 8, CGHS Director of Public Programming Allison Dupuis will speak about the Huston House, which was destroyed by fire in July 2024, and its builder, T. L. Huston. In 1927, Colonel Tillinghast L'hommedieu Huston, a former co-owner of the New York Yankees, constructed a home on Butler Island, where he had converted the former rice plantation into a lettuce and dairy farm. Huston soon established himself as part of the local community not only as a home and business owner but as a public figure, eventually serving as president of the Brunswick Board of Trade. His connection to Coastal Georgia was strong enough that, when he died in 1938, his funeral and burial took place in Glynn County. Dupuis's lecture will draw on the history of Butler Island, the Huston House, and T. L. Huston himself, shedding light on a local landmark that was so recently and tragically lost.

Hector Montford, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of History at the College of Coastal Georgia, will present "God Willing, I'm Going to Brazil: Paul Redfern and the 1927 Brunswick-to-Brazil Flight" on October 15.

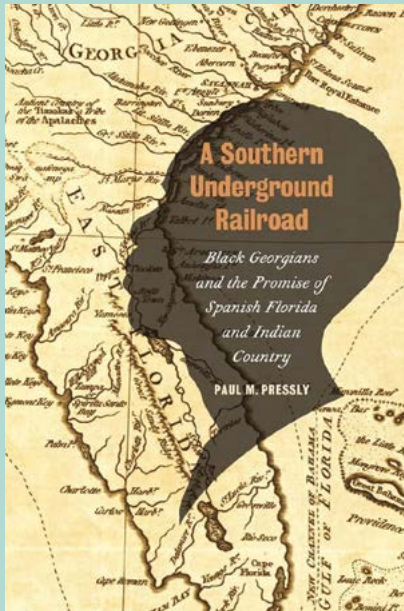
In August 1927, Redfern took off in his monoplane *Port of Brunswick* from Sea Island beach, hoping to fly non-stop to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This solo flight would have taken fifty hours and broken Charles Lindbergh's recent distance record for a non-stop flight by 1,000 miles. Redfern did not complete the journey, and he and his plane were never found. Dr. Montford's lecture will tie Redfern's aviation career and his Brunswick connection to larger themes of the national fascination with record-breaking flights during the 1920s and how local city boosters hoped to use the flight publicity to promote their towns.



Paul Varner and Paul Redfern by Redfern's plane, *Port of Brunswick*

The conclusion of the series on October 22 will feature **Mason Stewart, a local author and historian, who will present “Temple Beth Tefilloh: A Historic Synagogue in the Middle of the Bible Belt.”** As one of the oldest synagogue structures in America that has been in continuous use since its construction in 1890, Brunswick’s Temple Beth Tefilloh stands as a rare architectural jewel of American Jewish history. The temple’s story will be used as a backdrop to highlight the acculturation of the small group of Jewish immigrants who not only built the historic structure, but also played a significant role in the rebirth of downtown Brunswick following the Civil War.

The cost for the series is \$50, and registration is required. **The lectures will be held at the Southeast Georgia Conference Center, located on the campus of the College of Coastal Georgia.** To register, visit coastalgeorgiahistory.org.



Paul Pressly Book Talk and Signing

On December 4, 2024, Paul M. Pressly will speak about and sign his latest book, *A Southern Underground Railroad: Black Georgians and the Promise of Spanish Florida and Indian Country*. Pressly, the director of the Ossabaw Island Education Alliance, has previously edited or contributed to several books about Coastal Georgia, including *Coastal Nature*, *Coastal Culture: Environmental Histories of the Georgia Coast* and *African American Life in the Georgia Lowcountry: The Atlantic World and the Gullah Geechee*. He will speak about his latest work, *A Southern Underground Railroad*, which spans the period from the beginning of the Revolutionary War to 1817, showing how a steady stream of enslaved people found freedom outside the boundaries of the new United States.

This program will be held at 6 p.m. at the **A. W. Jones Heritage Center**. Pressly’s newest book, *A Southern Underground Railroad*, will be available for purchase and signing onsite following the program. Admission for the program is free of charge, and registration is required by visiting coastalgeorgiahistory.org.

Holiday Open House

The Lighthouse Museum Store will be holding our annual Holiday Open House on **Saturday, November 23**, from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Enjoy 20% off your entire purchase (some exclusions apply) as you browse our unique, locally made, or custom items that are exclusively available here. We’re certain that you’ll find that perfect gift for your loved ones! As a perk for all Society Members, we welcome you to shop on **Friday, November 22** from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. during our **Member’s Preview**.

Make a Lasting Impact: *Launch of a Planned Giving Program*

Coastal Georgia Historical Society is excited to announce the launch of a Planned Giving Program. Bequests can continue your loyal support into the future and help us to achieve challenging goals!

We learned of a bequest by Stephen and Miranda (“Randy”) Hires in December 2022, shortly after the St. Simons Lighthouse’s 150th birthday and the launch of the Preservation Campaign to permanently protect the historic buildings. The Board put the allocation of the bequest on hold as we pursued our \$1.25 million fundraising goal. Not surprisingly, a dedicated fund for preservation turned out to be more challenging to raise than, for example, funds for an exciting new project. Fortunately, the Hires’ gift was available to complete the campaign on schedule in September 2023.

Maintaining our momentum is dependent on people who understand that preserving our history is a cause that has no end. Please consider joining the Hires by including the Society in your estate planning. More information on how to participate will be coming this fall!

History Happens Here

In June, the Society welcomed Glynn County teachers to our museums for the third year in a row as part of their “History Happens Here” Workshop. K-12 teachers toured both sites with the Society’s Education Director. The teachers toured the galleries and discussed ways to incorporate artifacts, interactives, and local stories into their lesson plans. We look forward to working with Glynn County teachers and students this coming school year both in their classrooms and on field trips.



Thank You to Our Sponsors

Little Light Music Concert Series

Another fun-filled Little Light Music Concert Series comes to an end. We would like to thank our wonderful sponsors for a great 2024 season.



Chautauqua Lecture Series

The Society would like to thank our generous 2024 Chautauqua Lecture Series sponsors. Thank you for making this year's series a success.



Upcoming Programs

Buddy Sullivan Local History Course

Buddy Sullivan will present his four-week lecture series, "History of the Golden Isles – and Slightly Beyond," on Tuesday afternoons, January 21 and 28 and February 4 and 11, 2025, from 4 – 5:30 p.m. The winter series will feature St. Simons, Sea Island, Jekyll, Sapelo, Brunswick, and Darien. The cost is \$50 for CGHS members and \$95 for non-members.

Winter Program

National Book Award winner and Pulitzer Prize finalist Nathaniel Philbrick will present the Society's Winter Program on Sunday, January 26, 2025. Philbrick is the author of more than a dozen books, with recent work focused on Revolutionary War history and George Washington in particular. He will discuss his book *In The Hurricane's Eye: The Genius of George Washington and the Victory at Yorktown* and will highlight Nathanael Greene, the Continental Army officer who owned an interest in Cumberland Island and spent his later life at Mulberry Grove Plantation in Chatham County. The program will take place at St. Simons Presbyterian Church at 4 p.m. Registration details to be announced.

Membership Highlights

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

Keepers of the Light

Doug and Cece Bowen – Benefactor
Alice Glenn – Luminary
Peggy Hatcher – Patron
Jon Judge and Patti Billard – Patron
Brenda and Mac Nease – Benefactor
Eileen and Clay Scofield – Sustainer
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Welcome New Members!

Keepers of the Light

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General

Meg Barton – Family

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Lisa Burks – Family
Robey Fraschè – Family
Richard Hathaway – Individual
Brenda & Tom Neal – Family
Marion Nelson – Individual
Shelley and Michael Obenshain – Family
Bob and Cathy Pelletier – Family
Daren B. Pietsch – Individual
Melanie Staab – Individual
Kristel Tyre – Individual
James Walker – Individual

Memorial and Tribute Gifts

In Memory of Dr. Marsha Certain
By Betsy Hamilton

In Memory of Edward Hoek
By Myrna Crook, Janis and Cesar Rodriguez, Mimi and John Rogers

In Memory of Franto Mollycheck II and Franto Mollycheck III
By Debbie Mollycheck

In Memory of Elizabeth Varn
By Duane and Carol Harris

In Memory of Woody Woodside
By Duane and Carol Harris

Strategic Planning Update

Thank you for participating in surveys and focus groups over the summer! In addition to your thoughts and ideas, we have also surveyed museum visitors and a host of community leaders and partners. Next steps include a review of peer organizations in the region and along the East Coast for new ideas that may apply here. The board has also attended two educational sessions, one on Collections Development and the other on Archaeology, both focus areas for strategic planning.

Next, our consultant and facilitator, Ande Noktes (Executive Director of the Art & Lindee Lucas Center for Entrepreneurship at the College of Coastal Georgia) will provide reports to the Board of key findings. In late September, she will facilitate a two-day board retreat to synthesize these findings and board priorities into a draft strategic plan. Board leadership will review, edit, and finalize the draft ahead of the December board meeting when the report will be adopted by the organization. We are looking forward to sharing the new plan with you in early 2025!

Calendar of Events

An Overview of Historic Brunswick: Our City by the Sea

October 1

Buddy Sullivan

October 8

Allison Dupuis

October 15

Hector Montford, Ph.D.

October 22

Mason Stewart

4–5:30 p.m.

College of Coastal Georgia

\$50 per person for the series

Fall Program

November 14

Votes for Women:

A Portrait of Persistence

Kate Clarke Lemay, Ph.D.

6 p.m.

A.W. Jones Heritage Center

CGHS members free;

\$10 non-members

Holiday Open House

Member Preview

November 22

10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Open House

November 23

10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Lighthouse Museum Store

Paul Pressly Book Talk and Signing

December 4

6 p.m.

A.W. Jones Heritage Center



COASTAL GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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