



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



Leslie Dunlap, Ph.D.

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.



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.

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, 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 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.



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. Contribute your own stories by email to 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



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*

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

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.



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

Our Staff

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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.

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Call (912) 634-7090, follow us online,
or visit coastalgeorgiahistory.org



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Alliance of
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