

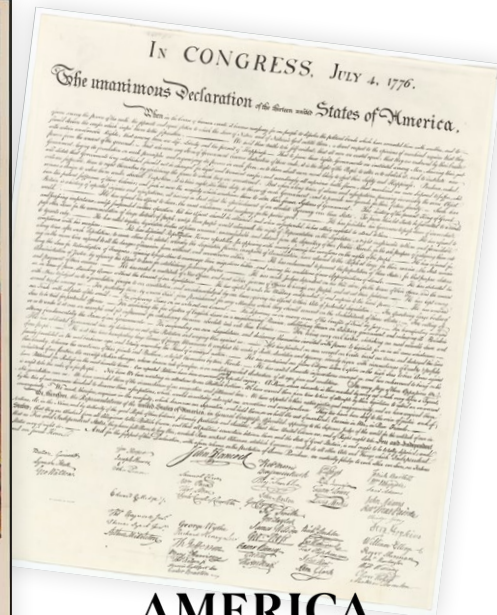
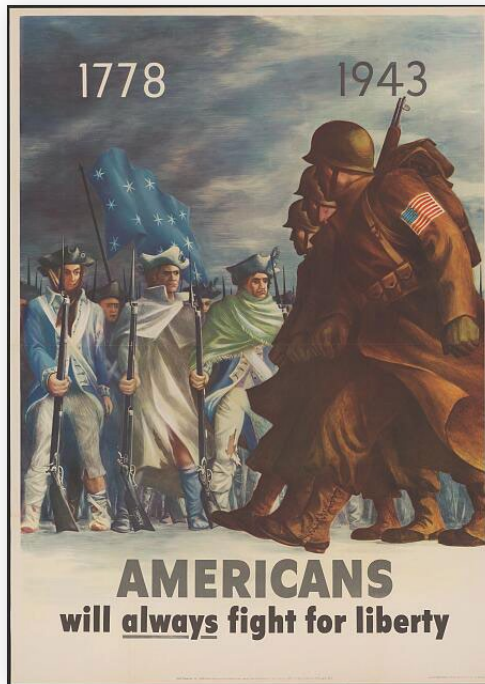


COASTAL GEORGIA  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

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.

# CHAUTAUQUA LECTURE SERIES



Library of Congress (1), National Archives (2)

## *Beyond 1776: The Aftermath and Enduring Legacies of the American Revolution*

Many of us can picture the end of the American Revolution: French Naval vessels off the coast, the white flag waving over Yorktown, and the signatures of British representatives and new Americans on the Treaty of Paris. But could a conflict so philosophical and essential to who we are—as people and as a nation—really end with the surrender of Cornwallis? The root causes of the war with Britain and the ideas that drove the Patriot cause remain with us still, even as we celebrate their 250th anniversary.

This year's Chautauqua Lecture Series will explore the continuing legacy of the Revolution through the eyes of experts in four different fields. Join the Coastal Georgia Historical Society for in-depth explorations of the Revolution's lasting power and its ideas' ongoing role in civics education, world history, women's rights, and the study of the war itself.



Dr. Richard Bell

Continued on Next Page

On **Thursday, September 3, 2026**, Dr. Richard Bell will begin this year's Chautauqua series with a lecture titled "The American Revolution and the Fate of the World." Dr. Bell, a Professor of History at the University of Maryland, has received the University System of Maryland Board of Regents Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching, the highest honor for teaching faculty in the Maryland state system. His recent books include *Stolen: Five Free Boys Kidnapped Into Slavery and Their Astonishing Odyssey Home* and 2025's *The American Revolution and the Fate of the World*, which provides the title in this initial lecture to the Chautauqua series.



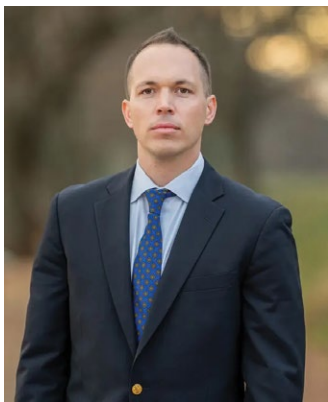
Dr. Emma Humphries

Dr. Emma Humphries will deliver a program on **Thursday, September 10**, on the topic "Legacies of the Revolution through Civics Education." She has served as the Chief Education Officer of iCivics, the country's largest civics education organization, since 2016. She previously served as the Civic Engagement Coordinator at the Bob Graham Center for Public Service. During her tenure, she created and taught an award-winning online citizenship course, titled "Rethinking Citizenship: Identity, Collaboration, and Action."

Dr. Charlene Boyer Lewis will present "Beyond Remember the Ladies: The Impact of the Revolution on Women" on **Thursday, September 17**. Dr. Boyer Lewis is the Director of American Studies and of Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Kalamazoo College. She is the author of both *Ladies and Gentlemen on Display: Planter Society at the Virginia Springs, 1790-1860* and *Elizabeth Patterson Bonaparte: An American Aristocrat in the Early Republic*. Her next book, *Traitor, Wife: Peggy Shippen Arnold and Revolutionary America*, is forthcoming in early 2027.



Dr. Charlene Boyer Lewis



Dr. Andrew Davenport

Our series will conclude with Dr. Andrew Davenport's Black history-focused lecture, "Echoes of the Revolutionary Era," on **Thursday, September 24**. Dr. Davenport is the Vice President for Research and Saunders Director of the Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies at the Thomas Jefferson Foundation. His work has been published in *Lapham's Quarterly*, *Literary Matters*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and *Smithsonian Magazine*. Dr. Davenport currently serves as a member of the inaugural cohort of the White House Historical Association Next-Gen Leadership Ambassadors.

This year's programs will take place on Thursdays, September 3, 10, 17, and 24, at 6 p.m. St. Simons Presbyterian Church. All lectures except the last will be recorded and available for viewing after the program. The cost for the series is \$50 for members and \$95 for non-members. Individual lecture tickets are available for \$30 each. To register, please visit [coastalgeorgiahistory.org](http://coastalgeorgiahistory.org).

**Thank you to our generous 2026 Chautauqua series sponsors:**

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— LOKEY —  
ASSET MANAGEMENT OF  
**RAYMOND JAMES**

## Welcome Shelby Smith!

Coastal Georgia Historical Society welcomes Shelby Smith, our new Ellen H. “Mimi” Rogers Director of Collections and Education! Shelby is originally from Tifton, Georgia, and received a B.A. in Cultural Anthropology from Mercer University and a M.A. in History with an emphasis in Public History from Florida State University. She is also a Certified Archivist through the Academy of Certified Archivists. Before coming to CGHS, her most recent position was Staff Curator with the Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, located in Atlanta, Georgia. Prior to working for the NPS, she was the Collections Manager for the Florida Historic Capitol Museum located in Tallahassee, Florida. Shelby now lives in Brunswick with her husband Jon and her elderly cat, Sebastian. Her interests include checking out too many books from the public library and telling the local live oaks how much she has missed seeing them while living in Atlanta! Be on the lookout for a new “Collections Highlight” section from Shelby in upcoming newsletters, and contact her for more information about the Society’s collections at [ssmith@coastalgeorgiahistory.org](mailto:ssmith@coastalgeorgiahistory.org).



The Ellen H. “Mimi” Rogers Director of Collections and Education is made possible thanks to donors who generously supported the “Mimi Fund.” The Society is grateful for the support of these donors and of the fund’s namesake, Mimi Rogers, who says about Shelby: “The development of the Society’s collection is an important part of the current strategic plan and will greatly enhance the organization’s ability to serve the public. Shelby’s experience and skills in this area make her the perfect fit for moving the Society forward as a significant and trusted research facility.”

If you are interested in donating to this endowment, please contact Sheila VanderWood, [svanderwood@coastalgeorgiahistory.org](mailto:svanderwood@coastalgeorgiahistory.org), 912-634-7096.

## Memorial Day at the World War II Home Front Museum

On Monday, May 25, 2026, the Coastal Georgia Historical Society hosted an observation of Memorial Day on the grounds of the World War II Home Front Museum. This day-long commemoration also invited visitors and the public to the Museum and the nearby, newly completed East Beach parking lot, accomplished through months of hard work by Glynn County. Throughout the day, veterans and active-duty members of the military were provided complimentary admission to the Museum. The

Coastal Georgia Historical Society also hosted a Field of Flags in the courtyard of the Historic St. Simons Coast Guard Station, honoring Glynn County service members who have lost their lives in American wars since World War I, as well as the Merchant Marines killed in the U-boat attacks of April 8, 1942. All visitors to the World War II Home Front Museum on May 25 were also invited to complete and take home a craft representing a poppy, a Memorial Day symbol more than a century old.

## Welcome New Board Members!

The Coastal Georgia Historical Society is thrilled to welcome six new members of our Board of Directors. Patty Thompson Barnes, Ben Easterlin, Alfred William “Bill” Jones III, Susan Imhoff, Deb Luginbuhl, and Tanya McDowell bring decades of experience in the business and nonprofit sectors, as well as unique experiences in and viewpoints on the Golden Isles. Together, they’ve previously served community organizations including Glynn Visual Arts, the St. Simons African American Heritage Coalition, the State Bar of Georgia, the Georgia Research Alliance, the Georgia Cancer Coalition, the St. Simons Land Trust Board, and the College of Coastal Georgia Foundation. The Society is delighted to welcome these impressive community advocates and to work together to achieve the goals of our Strategic Plan.



Patty Barnes



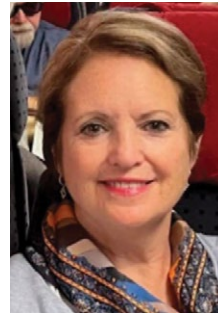
Ben Easterlin



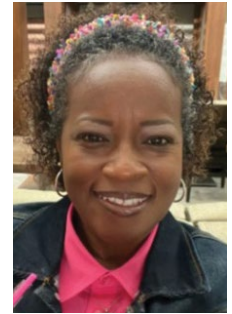
Bill Jones III



Susan Imhoff



Deb Luginbuhl



Tanya McDowell

## Terry Thomas Foundation Grant

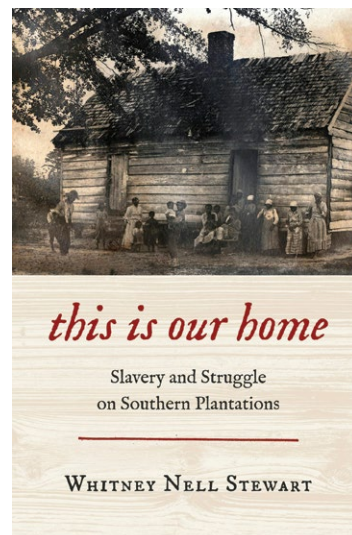
On March 18, 2026, CGHS received a grant of \$10,000 from the Terry Thomas Foundation for the creation of a History Traveling Trunk program. These trunks, created by Education and Programs Coordinator Caitlyn Price, will be interactive mobile history exhibits for hands-on learning. Each will be filled with replica documents and other accurate memorabilia to bring the past to life for young students.



From left, Sheila VanderWood, CGHS Director of Development; Susan Goodhue, Terry Thomas Foundation Executive Director; and Dr. Whitney Nell Stewart, CGHS Executive Director.

## Book Prize for Dr. Whitney Nell Stewart

Dr. Stewart has been awarded the Deep South Book Prize from the University of Alabama’s Summersell Center for the Study of the South for her monograph *This Is Our Home: Slavery and Struggle on Southern Plantations*. She will travel to Tuscaloosa in the fall to give a talk on the importance of historic sites to her research process.



# Little Light Music Concert Series

The Coastal Georgia Historical Society's beloved annual concert series returns for the summer of 2026. This year, we're excited to feature a mix of longtime favorites and crowd-pleasing newcomers. Each concert will begin at 7 p.m. on the oceanfront lawn beneath the lighthouse. Bring your own seating, a picnic dinner, and your family and friends for a night of fun and music! Tickets are \$20 for adults; children under 12 and Keepers of the Light are admitted free of charge. Season passes are available for \$60. Purchase tickets in advance at the Lighthouse Museum Store or at [coastalgeorgiahistory.org](http://coastalgeorgiahistory.org). News and weather updates will be posted in the top banner of the website and on our Coastal Georgia Historical Society Facebook page.

**JUNE 28**  
**Little Hopes**

**JULY 19**  
**Her Majesty's Request**

**SEPTEMBER 6**  
**Sounds of Motown**

**The Society is grateful for the support of our 2026 concert sponsors:**



## History is Happening

Over the past several months, Executive Director Dr. Whitney Nell Stewart enjoyed speaking with community members and history lovers at the Friends of Coastal Georgia History Annual Meeting, the Brunswick Rotary, and the Georgia International Trade Conference. She also had the pleasure of participating as a judge for the Rotary Club of St. Simons Island's Annual High School Speech Contest.

In March, Dr. Aaron Ellrich, the Society's Archaeologist, spent several days conducting systematic metal detector coverage as part of an ongoing effort to reassess the location and condition of the Spanish mission San Pedro de Mocama on Cumberland Island. This collaborative fieldwork served

as a preliminary step to evaluate the feasibility of broader survey efforts on the site, which is increasingly threatened by shoreline erosion. Dr. Ellrich worked closely with National Park Service seasonal archaeological technicians, with additional support from archaeologist Marie Meranda and CGHS laboratory volunteer Maria Hane. Looking ahead, Dr. Ellrich will return to Cumberland Island to continue this work, including additional collaborative investigations on the island's north end with Dr. Lindsey Cochran.



From left, Desiree Wagner (NPS Seasonal Archaeology Technician), Grace Evans (NPS Seasonal Archaeology Technician), and Maria Hane (CGHS volunteer).

## CGHS Volunteers to Aid Brantley County Fire Victims

In late April and early May, smoke from the Brantley County fires reached the shores of St. Simons and could be seen from the St. Simons Lighthouse. CGHS staff wanted to help those in need however possible. On the afternoon of Friday, May 1, members of the staff spent the afternoon volunteering at the Brunswick Exchange Club, which partnered with Adventist Disaster Services as a drop-off point. Events Manager Emily Thompson also volunteered with the American Red Cross in Brantley County, serving in a longtime role where she says she is proud to “take care of our neighbors and each other.” Volunteers unloaded trucks, sorted donations, and prepared them for shipping to points of distribution to aid victims of the fires. CGHS is grateful for this opportunity to serve our community!

## Revolution on the Coast Reflection

I have had the honor of working for Coastal Georgia Historical Society for five years as of January 2026. A lot has changed in those five years. As many of you know, my husband and I welcomed our twin girls in November of 2021. I've been a presence behind the scenes of most of the major activities of the Society while balancing the demands of being a new (twin!) parent. I've had a front row seat to great changes and triumphs, big and small, from potty training to completing the \$1.25 million Preservation Campaign in 2023.

This past March, our tiny but mighty team created the event of a lifetime, **Revolution on the Coast: A 250th Celebration**. We welcomed thousands of people of all ages to an ambitious week of programming culminating in the First Oval Office Project at Gascoigne Bluff Park. Our goal was to bring history to life to all participants through learning, engaging, and exploring. The potential value of the experience was enormous, as was the importance to our mission. All of this was true in every meeting, email, and spreadsheet that made the dream a reality. But none of it mattered as much as this moment. —————>

This is my daughter looking at Joel Anderson from the Museum of the American Revolution like he hung the moon. It's him engaging her at her level. This image perfectly encapsulated why this event was all worth it. This moment made RC250 a core memory and will continue to spark curiosity in her for years to come. (To be fair, she stuck her tongue out first, but he used the opportunity well.)



Our organization is very proud of this event and the countless lives we touched. We are proud of the dozens of sponsors and community partners that made it possible. We are proud of our members and the community for embracing the complicated nature of the Revolution. And I'm proud, as Director of Development AND a mom, to know that my story is one of so many that week of opening young minds and hearts to the exciting world of history.

—Sheila VanderWood

# Membership Highlights

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

## **Keepers of the Light**

Greer and Laura Brown  
– Benefactor  
John Dunham and Jane Beadles  
– Luminary  
Sue Cansler – Sustainer  
Sharon and Rick Fownes  
– Sustainer  
Bruce and Diana Jacobs  
– Patron  
Sally and Bill Jones III – Patron

## **General**

Diane Barnsley – Lamplighter  
Frank & Brenda Gayle Baker  
– Family  
Nancy and Doug Gadd  
– Assistant Keeper  
Leslie and Mack Mattingly  
– Assistant Keeper  
Gretchen and Michael Negles  
– Assistant Keeper  
Bette and Victor Peirce – Family

## **Tribute Gifts**

### **In Honor of**

Jane Beadles and Betty Snellings  
By Francie Mulloy

## **Welcome New Members!**

### **Keepers of the Light**

Steven Spandle – Sustainer  
Peter Veru – Sustainer

### **General**

Beverly Bescher and  
Gary Decker – Family  
Ron Braund – Family  
Scotti Douglas – Family  
F. Ani Campos-Duncan – Family  
Cheryl Hilderbrand – Individual  
Elaine Marr – Individual  
Roland McCormick – Individual  
Vicki Nichols – Individual  
Jenifer and Terry Readdick  
– Family  
Jay Reinfeld – Individual  
Peggy Smelt-Day – Family  
David Sweat – Individual  
Olivia Wood – Individual

# JOIN US AS A DOCENT!

Do you love Coastal Georgia history, sharing stories with the public, or educating young audiences? Contact Caitlyn Price, the Education and Programs Coordinator, to join the CGHS Volunteer Program as a docent for the St. Simons Island Lighthouse, the World War II Home Front Museum, or as a school tour docent! For more information, reach out to Caitlyn at [cprice@coastalgeorgiahistory.org](mailto:cprice@coastalgeorgiahistory.org)

As the Spring school semester is drawing to a close, CGHS thanks all of our incredible school tour docents for their continuous help and dedication to teaching future generations our coastal history.

# Calendar of Events

## Little Light Music

7-9 p.m.  
Lighthouse grounds  
\$20 per person  
Free: Children under 12  
and Keepers of the Light

June 28- Little Hopes  
July 19 - Her Majesty's Request  
September 6 - Sounds of Motown

## Chautauqua Lecture Series

6 p.m.  
St. Simons Presbyterian Church  
\$50 members; \$95 non-members  
Individual program tickets  
available for \$30 each

September 3  
“The American Revolution  
and the Fate of the World”  
Dr. Richard Bell

September 10  
“Legacies of the Revolution  
through Civics Education”  
Dr. Emma Humphries

September 17  
“Women in the Revolution  
and the Fate of Women's Rights”  
Dr. Charlene Boyer Lewis

September 24  
“Echoes of the Revolutionary Era”  
Dr. Andrew Davenport



# COASTAL GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Georgia 31522

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## Our Staff

**Executive Director**  
Dr. Whitney Nell Stewart

**Ellen H. "Mimi" Rogers Director of Collections and Education**  
Shelby Smith

**Director of Development**  
Sheila VanderWood

**Director of Museum Operations**  
Eric Oberg

**Historian**  
Allison Dupuis

**Archaeologist**  
Dr. Aaron Ellrich

**Education and Programs Coordinator**  
Caitlyn Price

**Office Operations Manager**  
Trish Scott

**Events Manager**  
Emmy Thompson

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**Consulting Historian**  
Buddy Sullivan

**Consulting Archaeologist**  
Dr. Lindsey Cochran

**Consulting Historic Preservationist**  
Lauren Seaman

## 2026 Board of Directors

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Greer Brown  
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Dr. Johnny Evans, Jr.  
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