



COASTAL GEORGIA
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

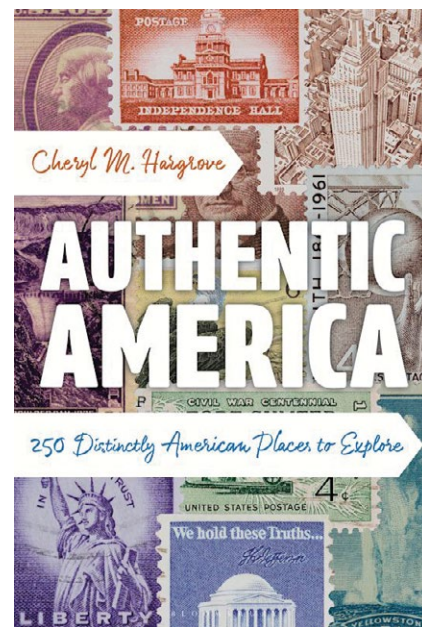
The mission of the Society is to connect people to Coastal Georgia's dynamic history through the stories we share and the collections we preserve.

Fall Program—Defining the American Spirit: 250 Years of Inspiration and Innovation

How does one define the American spirit? What makes our nation unique among all others? As the United States commemorates 250 years of independence and the building of a republic, heritage tourism expert **Cheryl Hargrove** shares the stories of people who help define our nation through revolutionary ideals, transformational inventions, and innovative contributions to architecture, entertainment, and industry.

Drawing on research from her new book, *Authentic America*:

250 Distinctly American Places to Explore, Hargrove's program will journey across the country to investigate places where history happened, showcase icons of art, music, and design, and celebrate conservation and preservation efforts that offer a lasting impact to our country and world. These place-based experiences tell stories of perseverance, of conviction, and of idealists seeking "a more perfect union." In conversation with CGHS's Executive Director, Dr. Whitney



Bloomsbury Publishing Inc.



Cheryl Hargrove

Nell Stewart, Hargrove will illustrate how ordinary, often imperfect people inspired movements and galvanized action over the last 250 years. From our founding fathers to current-day activists, this program will highlight how everyday citizens define the American spirit and reveal Coastal Georgia's contributions to shaping our country and our world.

The Fall Program will be held at
6 p.m. on Tuesday, October 20,

2026 at the A.W. Jones Heritage Center. Tickets are free of charge for members and \$15 for non-members. To register, please visit coastalgeorgiahistory.org.



Coastal Coverage and Design at work repainting the World War II Home Front Museum

World War II Home Front Museum Preservation

The buildings of the St. Simons Coast Guard Station at East Beach, which house the World War II Home Front Museum and welcome thousands of visitors each year, are cared for and preserved as part of CGHS's historic collections. Work completed onsite during the summer of 2026 will safeguard these buildings and their contents for generations to come.

In early June, Savannah Metalworks replaced missing shingles on both the Main Station and the Boathouse and cleaned and repaired gutters around the site. Simultaneously, Austin Historical repaired and replaced rotted or broken wood elements around each building's windows and doors.

Beginning on June 16, Coastal Coverage Painting and Design

completely repainted each of the Museum's buildings. After a soft power-wash, Coastal Coverage cared for broken exterior shingles and primed and painted all structures with 100% acrylic paint, kindly donated by Sherwin-Williams. The buildings were last painted in 2016. Coastal conditions had eroded the historic exteriors, leading to mold growth, rust, and paint issues. This work by Coastal Coverage, Austin Historical, and Savannah Metalworks will protect the buildings for the new paint's entire fifteen-year lifespan.

History Traveling Trunks

The CGHS History Traveling Trunks, developed by our Education and Programs Coordinator Caitlyn Price and funded by a grant from the Terry Thomas Foundation, were created with 5th-grade World War II state standards in mind. The trunks are interactive mobile history exhibits for hands-on learning to supplement teachers' lessons with additional information and lesson plans about

WWII and, more specifically, the Home Front. The trunks include various lesson plans, 3D-printed replica objects created by the College of Coastal Georgia's Technical & Electronic Services Librarian Safraz Sattaur, propaganda posters, games, and more. From communication to women on the home front, from the life of a Coastie to wartime propaganda, these trunks will bring history to life for young students.



HISTORY IS HAPPENING



Dr. Stewart's July/August article in *Golden Isles Magazine*

Dr. Stewart has been elected as a 2026 US delegate to the British-American Project, a transatlantic fellowship of over 1,400 leaders, rising stars, and opinion formers from a broad spectrum of occupations and backgrounds. She has also been elected to serve on the Advisory Council of the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic (SHEAR). In July, Dr. Stewart chaired a roundtable at the SHEAR conference in Philadelphia and published essays about the Semiquincentennial in the *Brunswick News* and *Golden Isles Magazine*.

In late May and early June, Dr. Aaron Ellrich, the Society's Archaeologist, returned to Cumberland Island for more

than two weeks of collaborative archaeological investigations focused on the Spanish mission San Pedro de Mocama. Working with the National Park Service, Dr. Lindsey Cochran of East Tennessee State University, and undergraduate field school students, this phase of research produced important new insights into the site while providing students with hands-on experience in archaeological field methods. As shoreline erosion continues to threaten portions of Cumberland Island's archaeological record, this ongoing partnership is helping document and better understand one of Coastal Georgia's earliest Spanish colonial landscapes.

Thanks to a successful application by Director of Collections and Education Shelby Smith, CGHS has been selected to take part of the Conservation Center of Art and Historic Artifact's (CCAHA) National Collections Care Capacity Building Program. This program, funded through a National Endowment of the Humanities grant, provides free preservation planning and consulting services to small and mid-sized cultural heritage organizations across the United States. CCAHA will be working with our Director of Collections and Education and Archaeologist to develop a comprehensive space assessment and storage plan for CGHS's collections facilities. Stay tuned for future details about this exciting program!

Upcoming Book Talk and Signing with Dr. Whitney Nell Stewart

On **Tuesday, September 29 at 5:30 p.m.**, Righton Books and the St. Simons African American Heritage Coalition will co-host an author talk and book signing at the Historic Harrington School featuring the Society's Executive Director. Dr. Stewart will discuss her book *This Is Our Home: Slavery and Struggle on Southern Plantations*. This prize-winning work illuminates how enslaved people struggled to make home amid innumerable constraints and obstacles and demonstrates how homemaking was a crucial part of the battle over slavery and freedom.

The event is free and open to the public. Books will be available for purchase on site. The Historic Harrington School is located at **291 South Harrington Road, St. Simons Island**. Space inside the School is limited. Register to attend and find more information at rightonbooks.com/events.

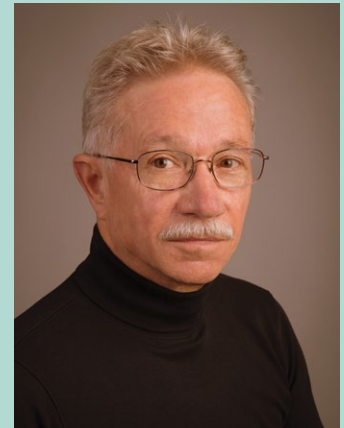


Journeys 2026

The 4,000-Year-Old History of Cannon's Point

This year's Journeys program begins on **Tuesday, November 17**, with a lecture by renowned archaeologist **Dr. Jerald T. Milanich**, Curator Emeritus at the Florida Museum of Natural History. At St. Simons Presbyterian Church, he will present his program "The 4,000-Year-Old History of Cannon's Point," exploring one of the most significant archaeological investigations ever undertaken on St. Simons Island.

During the 1970s, archaeologists from the University of Florida spent over two years excavating Cannon's Point, uncovering evidence of thousands of years of Native American occupation alongside the remains of the island's plantation-era landscape. Their work transformed our understanding of Georgia's coast, creating a remarkable archaeological record that will continue to serve as an invaluable resource for future research. In his lecture, Dr. Milanich will reflect on the original excavations, the lasting significance of the project, and the recent return of Cannon's Point archaeological collections to the Coastal Georgia Historical Society, fulfilling a vision first established more than fifty years ago.



Dr. Jerald T. Milanich

The **Journeys field trip on Wednesday, November 18**, will bring the lecture to life with guided tours of Cannon's Point Preserve led by Dr. Milanich. Participants will have the unique opportunity to visit several of the archaeological sites discussed during the previous evening's lecture, hearing firsthand from one of the archaeologists who helped lead the landmark excavations that deepened our understanding of Cannon's Point. Guests may choose between two identical tour offerings: a morning tour beginning at 9 a.m., or an afternoon tour beginning at 1:30 p.m. Each tour will last approximately three hours.



Archaeologists at work at Cannon's Point, 1970s

The November 17 lecture will be held at 6:00 p.m. at St. Simons Presbyterian Church. The lecture is free for members and \$15 for non-members. To register, visit coastalgeorgiahistory.org. **The November 18 field trip is \$100 per person**, which includes transportation from Taylor Fish Camp and three hours of guided experiences at Cannon's Point Preserve. Thank you to Sea Island for arranging transportation during the Journeys field trip. Two sessions will be held, one at 9:00 a.m. and one at 1:30 p.m., each limited to thirty attendees. **Registration for the field trip will open at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 1 and will close when full.**

Participants will meet at Taylor Fish Camp, where parking will be available. Transportation will be provided via golf cart from the fish camp to the archaeological sites located within Cannon's Point Preserve. Space is limited to thirty participants per tour, and advance registration is required. Lunch is not provided. Field trip participation requires walking and standing for extended periods on both even and uneven terrain.

Sea Island®

Collections Highlight: Symons and Dart Family Donation

In March, Horace Thom contacted CGHS staff about an intriguing donation. Items included a family bible, wedding portrait and invitation, and marriage license for Mr. Thom's great-grandparents, Wilfred Francis Symons and Eliza Rebecca Dart, married in 1875. Family bibles are always exciting because of the rich generational information they contain, and this one was no exception.

Wilfred Francis Symons, Sr., born November 28, 1849, served as a private in Shellman's Battery, Local Battalion, Ga., Military Artillery during the Civil War. He remained with the unit until it was disbanded after the Siege of Savannah in December 1864. Eliza Rebecca Dart, born March 5, 1856 in Brunswick, was the daughter of Major Urbanus Dart, one of Brunswick's earliest and most influential citizens. Among his many contributions to the Coastal Georgia region, he served as Brunswick's third mayor from 1841 to 1843 and represented the region in the Georgia Legislature from 1838 to 1840 and again in 1865.



Symons-Dart Family Bible

Eliza, the second youngest of eight children, married W.F. Symons in 1875 at just nineteen years old. Together, they raised five children. The couple remained married until his death in 1928 at age 78. Eliza died in 1947, at the remarkable age of 91. Both are buried in Brunswick's Palmetto Cemetery. The Symons and Dart families have deep roots in Coastal Georgia, and we are honored to preserve their history through this generous donation.

If you are interested in learning more about this donation or any other items in our archival collection, please contact our Director of Collections and Education, Shelby Smith, at ssmith@coastalgeorgiahistory.org.

Sherri Jones Distinguished Research Fellowship

In honor of long-time Coastal Georgia Historical Society Executive Director Sherri Jones, who helped establish the Society as a premier local history institution, we are delighted to announce the Sherri Jones Distinguished Research Fellowship. Sherri served for 15 years as CGHS Executive Director, and during her tenure accomplished a truly remarkable range of projects, including renovations to the historic St. Simons Lighthouse Keeper's Dwelling, the creation of the popular WWII Home Front Museum, and the establishment of a Historic Preservation Fund. In so doing, she ensured that the foundation of the Society

is strong and paved the way for a new era of increased access, visibility, and relevance. This fellowship will call attention to CGHS's significant and expanding collections and support new scholarship on the history of Coastal Georgia, ensuring that the rich and dynamic stories of our region reach even wider audiences. As Sherri noted several times during her tenure, CGHS strives to realize the dream of our founders: to match the best historical societies in existence. The Sherri Jones Distinguished Research Fellowship will get us one step closer to this goal.

[Continued on next page](#)

This fellowship will support scholars engaged in graduate-level, post-doctoral, and independent research, and will assist with offsetting expenses while the fellow conducts research at CGHS and other local history institutions. Jones Fellows will have access to the CGHS Archival & Archaeology Collections, including manuscripts, photographs, rare and non-rare books, maps, portraits, and artifacts. Jones Fellows will present their research findings at a member event and will write an article for the CGHS newsletter about their experience.

We are grateful to the handful of CGHS friends whose contributions made this fellowship possible. For more information, including how you can give in honor of Sherri, please contact Sheila Vanderwood at svanderwood@coastalgeorgiahistory.org or 912-634-7096.



CGHS Intern, Teya Schneider

Local History Initiative: Rich's SeaPak

We have officially launched the Local History Initiative (LHI), which embodies CGHS's commitment to Coastal Georgia. By combining historical expertise with community service, LHI helps local businesses and organizations research, preserve, and share their unique stories. Our team of trained historians, including museum professionals, an archivist, and an archaeologist, develops projects ranging from corporate archives to public exhibits, ensuring that the people, institutions, and enterprises that shape our region are remembered for generations to come.

Inaugural LHI intern Teya Schneider worked for eight weeks processing organizational records from Rich's SeaPak, a company headquartered on St. Simons Island and founded in the Golden Isles in 1948. See below for her insight into the project!

Rich's SeaPak's collection consisted of newspaper clippings, advertisements, recipes, VHS tapes, cassettes, CDs, hundreds of photographs, and more, dating all the way back to the 1950s. However, the biggest part of this collection was the photographs. Countless images, from the 1940s through the 2000s showcased Rich's robust history, solidifying their place in St. Simons Island history. Working on this project has taught me so much about the company and how they operate. Their obvious care for their employees has been shown time and time again through their numerous events and parties dedicated to workplace achievements and celebrations. They are also an extremely diverse company with people from all backgrounds and ideas coming together to help make a company prosper. Working on this project and combing through their collection, it's easy to see how fun and community-oriented Rich's has been through the decades and continues to be!

Membership Highlights

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

Keepers of the Light

Sue Cansler – Sustainer
Patty and Todd Deveau – Sustainer
Carolyn and Ken Hall – Sustainer
Marsha and David Stewart – Sustainer
Dan Kelly and Annette Wheeler – Benefactor

General

Michael Huggins – Family

Welcome New Members!

General

Rachel Belliveau – Individual
Jeff Roberts – Family
Tanya McDowell – Assistant Keeper
Paul Wetherington – Family

Tribute Gifts

In Memory of

Jonathan Raclin
By Marietta Cole, John Dunham and Jane Beadles,
Anne and Bill Stembler



SAVE THE DATE Brunswick Lecture Series

Beginning in 2027, the annual Brunswick Lecture Series will move to the spring. There will be **no Brunswick Series this fall**, and the new schedule will begin in **April 2027**. This year's lectures are scheduled for Tuesdays, April 6, 13, 20, and 27. All will take place at **5 p.m.** at the **College of Coastal Georgia's Southeast Georgia Conference Center**. Please note the changes in **date, time, and venue**, and look for more information in CGHS's Winter newsletter.

Calendar of Events

Book Talk and Signing with Dr. Whitney Nell Stewart

Tuesday, September 29

This Is Our Home: Slavery and Struggle on Southern Plantations

Co-hosted by Righton Books and St. Simons African American Heritage Coalition

5:30 p.m.

Historic Harrington School, 291 South Harrington Road

Free tickets; register at rightonbooks.com/events

Fall Program

Tuesday, October 20

"Defining the American Spirit: 250 Years of Inspiration and Innovation"

Cheryl Hargrove

6 p.m.

A.W. Jones Heritage Center

CGHS members free;
\$15 non-members

Journeys

Tuesday, November 17

Lecture: "The 4,000-Year-Old History of Cannon's Point"

Dr. Jerald T. Milanich

6 p.m.

St. Simons Presbyterian Church

CGHS members free;
\$15 non-members

Wednesday, November 18

Field trip: Cannon's Point Preserve

Two sessions: 9:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Three hours each
\$100 per person

Field trip registration opens at 8 a.m. on Thursday, October 1



COASTAL GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

FIRST CLASS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Brunswick, GA
31520
Permit No. 369

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

Consulting Historian

Buddy Sullivan

Consulting Archaeologist

Dr. Lindsey Cochran

Consulting Historic Preservationist

Lauren Seaman

2026 Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Steve Kerr

President

Mary Schellhorn

Immediate Past President

Greer Brown

Vice President

Dr. Johnny Evans, Jr.

Treasurer

Brad Danowski

Secretary

Dr. Whitney Nell Stewart

Executive Director

Patty Barnes

Jack Crews

Ben Easterlin

Chris Ernst

Shannon Gilreath

Cheryl Hargrove

John Hunter

Susan Imhoff

John Jaje

Bill Jones III

Susan Lawhorne

Deb Luginbuhl

Tanya McDowell

Jeffrey Molitor

Honorary Trustees

Mary Burdell · Albert Fendig

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



American
Alliance of
Museums