

Tabby Tattler

Winter 2010

Dataw Historic Foundation Newsletter

Featuring

Preserving Our Past: Restoring a Puzzling Crypt and Opening of Dataw History Display at Welcome Center



From the President. . .

Even though we all continue to live in economically challenging times, I am delighted to report that the Dataw Historic Foundation just completed another record year in its 15-year history.

Last year about this time, when I wrote my column for the winter newsletter, I thought 2009 could be a difficult year for the DHF and other non-for-profits, but I was hopeful that the Foundation would be able to maintain its current membership level as well as tackle some ambitious new projects in line with its long-standing role as steward and caretaker of Dataw's history.

Well, thanks to some terrific momentum leading into the year, plus what I sense is an increasing property owner interest in the plantation ruins as a major asset/amenity of Dataw life, DHF just finished 2009 with some impressive results:

- **membership** - record number of members--372, a gain of 20 over last year and representing 45% of Dataw homes.
- **event attendance** - sellouts of both fundraising events. Approximately 220 people in attendance at Welcome Center "Open House" for new Dataw history display.
- **new-resident interest** - "DHF" close to top of the list of new resident interests based on current Club survey.

In addition, thanks to strong membership support, DHF was able to complete several very important projects in 2009:

- Crypt restoration at Sams Cemetery
- New history display at Welcome Center
- New "Heritage Walk" in plantation ruins
- Preservation/conservation of structures in plantation ruins
- Inventory/storage of artifacts and historic archives at new Dataw History Center

So 2009 was truly a gratifying year for the Dataw Historic Foundation.

Now it is on to 2010. DHF's overall goal is to build on the success of recent years. The Board has a number of important projects it would like to accomplish, and the new membership drive starts with the distribution of this newsletter.

I would like to pass on a big "thank you" in advance to all of the 30-plus, hardworking Board members and volunteers who will be helping to make 2010 a success. Most important, I want to thank all of the current DHF members for their continuing support and financial help. And to those of you who are not yet members, I encourage you to join DHF in its ongoing efforts to ensure that Dataw's historic structures and its artifacts/archives continue to be unique legacies of our wonderful community.

Jack Brown

Save the Date

11th Annual

Oyster Roast March 15

5 -7:30 by the Ruins

Plenty of sweet oysters
and much more



2009 Fish Fry Fun despite the rain!

Chair Lynn Maher anxiously watched the clouds turn darker on October 12 as she coordinated the setup for the DHF annual fish fry at the Gazebo. She had all details carefully mapped out—welcome table, bar setup, serving line tent, dessert table, etc

At 4 pm, Lynn's plan B went into high gear as the skies opened up. Thanks to her careful contingency planning and John Colgan's and Peter Pearks' discovery that there were plastic curtains in the Gazebo, the sold-out event went on smoothly. All 122 attendees were seated comfortably inside the Gazebo and enjoyed a fun evening with friends and great food.

Chris Mixon of Smokey Chef Catering provided great flounder and hush puppies which were served along with cole slaw and mixed bean salad. Nancy Brinkman and Brucie Rice did a splendid job of assembling a beautiful assortment of member-made desserts.

Lynn thanks all those who baked desserts, set tables, greeted, tended bar, served food and cleaned up. She especially thanks her husband Tim along with Joel Holden, Terry Lurtz and Peter Pearks for hauling chairs and early setup.



Nancy Brinkman and Brucie Rice



Marilyn welcoming attendees & introducing Dr. Wise

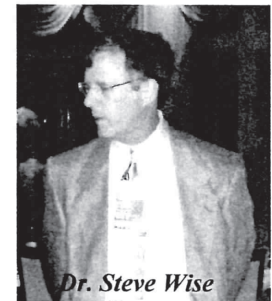
Fireside Chat with Dr. Steve Wise



The Battle of Port Royal

Dr. Steve Wise, a noted Civil War expert and curator for the Parris Island Museum, was featured at the Fireside Chat held on November 13. After a delicious dinner prepared by Chef Joe Kelly, 114 attendees learned about the November 7, 1861, *Battle of Port Royal* and the impact it had on the Beaufort area. Dr. Wise's excellent slide presentation helped listeners understand the strategies used by both sides in this remarkable battle.

Marilyn Peck coordinated the interesting evening.



Dr. Steve Wise



"A Portrait of Dataw Island"

History Display at Welcome Center Opens

with wine and cheese reception on September 23, 2009



*Jack Brown
President of DHF*



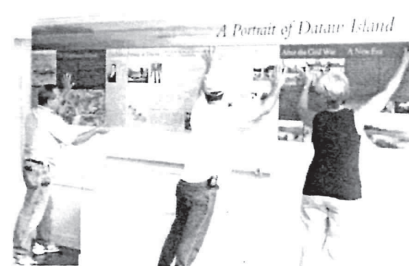
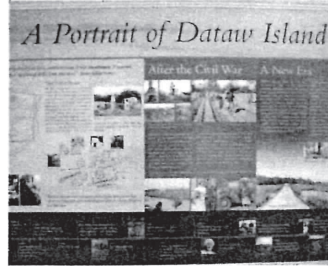
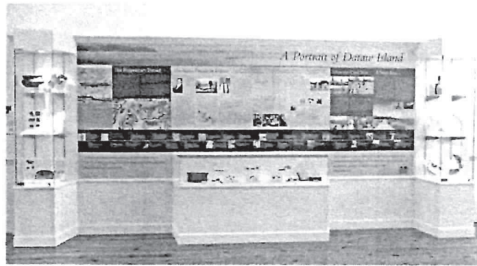
*Tim McGrath
President of DIC*



*John Colgan
President of DIOA*



*Carol Poplin
Project Manager*



Rick (does Dataw's tabby work) & Mary Wightman

Dataw residents, members of the Sams family and several local dignitaries were among the 220 attending the "Open House" to celebrate the official "unveiling" of the *Portrait of Dataw Island* history display. The exhibit documents Dataw's heritage dating back to prehistoric times with interpretive panels, a multifaceted timeline and artifacts recovered from archaeological investigations on the Island. The project required considerable time and talents of many individuals over an 18-month time span.



*Evan Thompson
Historic Beaufort Foundation*



Jeanne (Sams) Aimar

The DHF, DIOA and DIC jointly contracted with The History Workshop out of Mt. Pleasant to design and build the display. Carol Poplin was the Project Manager from the Workshop. Jane Griffith and Joel Holden initiated the DHF endeavor with Jane carefully coordinating the planning, production and installation through completion.



Ann Brown

If you have not already done so, plan to take time to visit the Welcome Center and enjoy this fine showcase of Dataw's rich history. Bring your family and friends.



*Billy Keyserling & Larry Rowland
with Jack Brown*



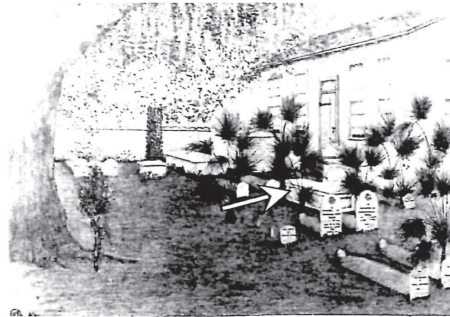
Jack with Reeve & Betty Sams



*Cathy Crocker with
Jane & Colin Brooker*



Mystery pieces found along cemetery wall.



Sketch of chapel and cemetery showing the crypt (done by Eugenia Sams ca 1833).



In June, 2006, Eric Poplin determined pieces to be part of a crypt.

Preserving Our Past: Restoring a Puzzling Crypt

by Barbara Payne

Restoring a historic crypt is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle: You have many different pieces to fit together; you must be a sleuth, have infinite patience and excel at your craft. Such is the case with the restoration of the crypt of Sarah Fripp Sams in the Sams family cemetery here on Dataw Island.

Sarah Fripp Sams died in 1825 when she was 35 years old and was buried in the Sams family cemetery near the plantation. She was the first wife of Lewis Reeves Sams. Some of her children are also buried in the Sams family cemetery.

In 1983 when Alcoa purchased what is now Dataw Island, the remains of the historic B. B. Sams Plantation complex including the family cemetery resembled a jungle, with crumbling tabby walls covered with vines and the entire area overgrown with trees. Alcoa conducted a number of archaeological investigations and then cleared the area of harmful vegetation.

Multiple restoration projects then began and are ongoing. But the Dataw Historic Foundation's latest project, the restoration of Sarah Fripp Sam's crypt,



*Sarah Fripp Sams
1789 - 1825*

involved a lot of detective work.

As long as most long-time residents can remember, Sarah Fripp Sams grave was marked with an engraved marble slab, marred by three substantial cracks right through it. The slab appeared to be a regular grave marker flat on the ground. Several fragments of unidentified marble rested a small ways away along the southern wall of the cemetery.

When the DHF was having the cemetery wall stabilized in 2005, two more large pieces of marble were found. It appeared that these various pieces were the remains of a crypt in the cemetery. But whose? Several graves were studied to see if they might have been marked with crypts at one time, but these graves were eventually ruled out. An 1833 sketch of the cemetery showed a crypt in the approximate location of the grave of Sarah Fripp Sams. So in June 2006, DHF had a limited archaeological investigation done by Dr. Eric Poplin of Brockington Associates to determine if the fragments were pieces of a crypt that once stood above the grave of Sarah Sams. All the evidence in the pieces found, along with the marble slab beneath the engraved marker of her grave, led to the conclusion that these were all pieces of the same structure.

You may remember that Cathy Crocker, past DHF president, wrote in a 2008 *Tabby Tattler* of this find, which included two side walls, one end wall and two corner posts. This newsletter reached Arthur Sams, the patriarch of the Sams family, in Charlotte, NC. He called Jack Brown, current president of DHF, to say that he had the two missing corner posts from 1950 until recently when he gave them to his daughter.

Continued on next page

Restoration of crypt continued

The family graciously gifted the posts to DHF, and that left only one end piece of the long damaged and scattered crypt to be replaced.

So in 2009, through the professional services of Ms. Lynette Strangstad, owner of *Stone Faces* and probably the best-known historic burial ground preservation and conservation specialist in the country, we arranged to have the missing end wall duplicated and the crypt restored.

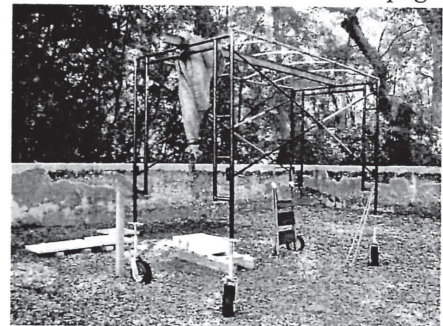
David Via is the conservation technician who has been performing this challenging restoration work. His professional background includes museum-quality conservation of antique furniture and a wide variety of preservation stonework, including masonry, restoration of monuments and cemetery restoration.

His work on the Sarah Fripp Sams crypt began with exploration around the grave, where David found one of the original cramps (nearly 185 years old!) that would have been used to attach the corner post to a side piece. (A cramp is like a huge iron staple.) Then all the pieces were carefully washed, and the box of the monument was assembled in its place and held together with a strap. The plan is for most pieces to come out individually for repairs and be put back in their place. The fractured south side will be repaired in place, needing the support of the posts on both ends and the base below it. The large marble top will be lifted into place by David's portable hoisting mechanism and repaired in place, as it too will need the support of the marble pieces under it.

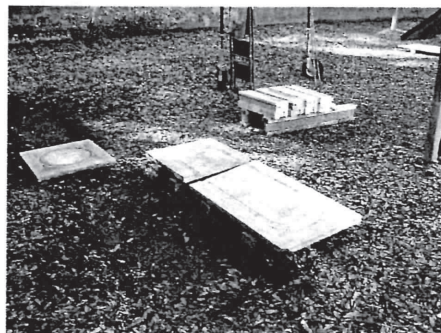
David estimates that this is the most challenging restoration project he has done. First of all the base stone is no longer on one plane, but now on three planes. He needs to assemble the box that comprises the sides, ends and corner posts on one plane to seat the marble top. To complicate this feat, the top slab itself has bowed slightly over time.

Second, each piece depends on another, so the sequencing of the work is critical. And the number of pieces has tripled, with a new marble end piece and what started out as four pieces of metal (cramps) becoming 18 new pieces of metal with additional cramps and new pins. Finally, the projected work calling for eight separate repairs to the marble is an extraordinary number for one monument. The repairs are being done with both nylon and stainless steel pins, stainless steel and lead cramps, and threaded and unthreaded pins.

Continued on next page



*Jack Brown & John Huntley
returning the cornerstones.*



*Top - view of marble marker foundation
Lower - start of project*



*Top - portable hoist
Lower - marker removed from foundation*

Restoration of crypt continued



David Via at work.

When completed, please come and admire Sarah Fripp Sams' restored crypt. And while you are there, reflect on the efforts that were needed to put together this advanced jigsaw puzzle. At the same time be thankful for our rich history and the fact that this restored crypt is one more way we can showcase Dataw Island's past.



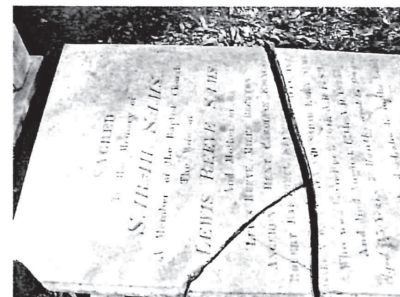
The cramps securing the corners to the sides and end of the crypt.



The now-together sides and corners are held with a strap until set.



Straps removed and corner foundation repaired, the crypt is free standing.



The marble slab will be repaired and placed in its original place on top of the crypt.



Phase I Completed

Check out the beautiful completed brick "Heritage Walk" by the ruins. 156 bricks were sold and placed in the walk during this phase. The entire walkway has been expertly completed by Dataw's own brick master, John Rotelli. The tabby work at each end of the walk was done by Rick Wightman. A small sign will soon be erected by the walk.

The walk was planned to take 5 - 10 years to fill all spots. Thirty percent of the available spots were filled in this six-month phase. As additional bricks are sold, blank ones will be replaced.

"Dataw Heritage Walk" Phase II Underway

Celebrate your Dataw Heritage by purchasing a brick in the "Heritage Walk." All current or former residents and long-term employees are eligible to have his/her/their "footprint" or brick for posterity. DHF hopes to locate and notify past Dataw residents about the "Walk."

If you are interested in subscribing for a brick, forms can be found near the entrance to the Clubhouse or you can go to the DHF section of the Dataw (dataw.org) website and download the form.



DHF Board Updates

Membership. Chairs Patty Gesell and Leslie Holbrook report that in 2009 DHF set a new membership record—372, which is up 20 from last year and 7 more than the 2009 goal. Thank you Dataaw for your wonderful support.

DHF expresses sympathy to John Cartwright and his family on the death of Gloria. Gloria was a strong supporter and assisted the DHF on many projects. We will miss her.

DHF 2010 Board Changes. A warm welcome is extended to new Board member Paula Campbell as she joins Lynn Maher as co-chair of the Fundraising Committee. Appreciation is expressed for those assuming new roles: Patty Gesell and Leslie Holbrook as co-chairs of the Membership Committee; John Huntley as he joins Cathy Crocker as co-chair of the Preservation Committee; Terry Lurtz as he joins Peter Pearks as co-chair of the Grounds Committee; Barbara Payne as she joins Marilyn Peck in co-chairing the Public Relations Committee. At-Large Directors, Liz Blair and Anne Williams are appreciated for their flexibility and assistance on several committees. Thanks go to Ann Craigmile as she retires after eight years as co-chair of the Public Relations Committee.

The new *Did You Know?* e-mail series is sparking additional interest in Dataaw historical facts and has received many favorable comments. Thanks go to Liz Blair and Joel Holden for putting the segments together.

DHF Membership Info

DHF seeks support from all Island residents. Please read the information in the Membership letter enclosed with this Tattler then complete the form on the envelope, insert your check made out to the DHF and place it in Patty Gesell's message box at 1722 Longfield

A nice half-page photo of the Dataaw plantation ruins taken by John Wollwerth, La Bella Vita Photography, was featured in the Beaufort Lifestyles, October/November magazine.

Historic Committee chair Jane Griffith has begun an initiative aligned with Dataaw's 25th anniversary activities. She has formed a team to arrange interviews with long-term employees in order to capture the stories of Alcoa's early development of Dataaw. This project complements a notebook of interviews on "The Early Years of Alcoa Development" coordinated by Cathy Crocker in 2003.

A new scanner (capable of scanning up to 30 sheets at a time) has been purchased for scanning archived records. This has facilitated the tedious input process. Joel Holden explained one of the advantages of digitizing all archived materials is to be able to readily conduct searches. Once all documents, books, records, etc. are scanned and stored electronically, all one has to do to find all references to a particular person or subject is to type in a query. Joel just completed scanning Rev. James Julius Sams memoirs. The committee is also tackling the task of efficient physical storage of all records and artifacts. A big job!

Tours of Ruins and History Display to Local History-Minded Groups



Photo by Jonathan Dyer, Beaufort Gazette

Marilyn Peck talks about the Sams plantation house to the Dr. Henry Woodward Chapter, National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century. A group of 22 members were here for a tour and luncheon on October 15. Dataaw's Shirley Dillon is president of the chapter. Other members attending the event were Sams' descendants Jeanne Sams Aimar and Marnie Sams Fuller Fyfe.



Twenty members of The Questers from Hilton Head enjoyed touring the ruins and seeing the exhibits in the Clubhouse and Welcome Center on November 17.

The Questers is an international organization founded in 1944 to educate through the research and study of antiques. Funding preservation and restoration projects is one of their goals.

DHF Board Updates *Continued*

Fundraising Committee co-chairs Lynn Maher and Paula Campbell are busy preparing for the **March 15** Oyster Roast and raffle. The date was changed in order to take advantage of daylight savings time. Anyone interested in assisting with the event should contact one of them.

Public Relations Committee co-chairs, Marilyn Peck and Barbara Payne are in the preliminary stages of planning an event to commemorate the "Heritage Walk" and the completion of the crypt project some time this spring. Work has just begun on one "big" project this year--creating a new DHF website. They also hope to have DHF involved in the Dataw 25th Anniversary Activities. Marilyn has coordinated DHF articles that have appeared in *Dateline* and other publications

Grounds Committee co-chairs Peter Pearks and Terry Lurtz are looking into some additional signage in special areas. They help to oversee the maintenance of the Sams cemetery and oak tree with the DIOA. They will also be working with Christy Henry to enhance the Antebellum Garden with some additional plantings.

Preservation Committee chairs Cathy Crocker and John Huntley contracted with Rick Wightman to do some minor stucco feathering and tabby repairs that were noted in the biennial walk through with Colin Brooker last year. The ruins appear to be in "good condition." Lately they have been busy overseeing the crypt restoration work with David Via, which has turned out to be a bigger job than anticipated. The cold January temps have not helped.

The entire Board is grateful that Jack Brown has taken on the challenges of the DHF presidency for another year. Much credit also goes to the other 2010 Board officers: Treasurer Doug Campbell's expertise and efficiency in managing the DHF treasury has been invaluable. Completing the 2010 budget involved a great deal of input. Barbara Titus is appreciated for her accurate reporting of all DHF meetings, and Cece Megrue does a thorough job of getting communications out beyond the Island including to all Lifetime, Honorary and Friends of DHF.

Breaking News. Recently, two interesting historical questions have prompted Board action:

The first was sparked by a response to the *Did You Know?* e-mail series. In the first issue, it was reported that in 1755 Dataw comprised 1170 acres; whereas, today there are only 866 acres. A reader asked where the loss of these 300 plus acres occurred on the Island. The loss has been always primarily been attributed to the devastating 1893 hurricane. Records show that the Lewis Reeve Sams plantation house was 200 feet inland from the shore of the Morgan River. The foundation ruins of his house are on the shore of the Morgan River by the fairway of the 14th hole on the MR golf course. While it is evident that a great deal of land was lost along the Morgan River, the DHF is searching for detailed survey maps both prior and after the 1893 hurricane in an attempt to discover other areas on Dataw where land may have washed away.

Second, last summer, a former employee at the Dataw Marina started finding numerous artifacts along the Morgan River shore by the marina. His collection included arrowheads, bottles, shards of glass, buttons, etc. John Huntley talked with him about his finds, and it appeared that they resembled artifacts that have been recovered on other excavated sites around Dataw. In fact, some shards of pottery match other pottery shards in the artifact collection. Others have also found some washed-up artifacts, even bricks, along that same shore between the marina and the foundation ruins of L. R. Sams' house. We do not know what has caused these artifacts to "suddenly" appear, but it seems reasonable to speculate that they are from the Lewis Reeve Sams house. This new historical development puts new impetus on what the DHF is all about.

STAY TUNED! And don't forget to become a 2010 member of **DATAW HISTORIC FOUNDATION.**

