

TABBY TIMES

Victoria Smalls

TO KICK-OFF DHF *25th* ANNIVERSARY

Victoria A. Smalls, a Gullah native of St. Helena Island, will lead the first of a series of special events recognizing the 25th anniversary of the Dataw Historic Foundation on *Thursday, January 11, 2024. (Cocktails at 5 pm, dinner at 5:45 pm, the charge for the Fireside Chat Dinner is \$43 inclusive per person.)*

As a Gullah Geechee scholar, preservationist, artist, and collector, Ms. Smalls promotes and uplifts her culture in a four-state area. She was a 2022 recipient of the President's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Smalls serves as the Executive Director of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor National Heritage Area, where she collaborates with community partners and international, federal, state and local governments to protect, preserve, and interpret the history, traditional cultural practices, traditional cultural practices, heritage sites, and natural resources associated with the ever-evolving Gullah Geechee people across the 12,000 square-mile National Heritage area in North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

Formerly, she served as a commissioner on the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission and the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission, as well as a ranger for the National Park Service Reconstruction Era National Historic Park, Penn School National Historical Landmark District, and the International African American Museum in Charleston.

She is a Leo Twiggs Arts Diversity Leadership Scholar and Riley Fellow in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Leadership with the Riley Institute at Furman University.



162

years ago

this month,

war came

to the

Lowcountry

THE FIRST U.S. COLORED TROOP

War and Reconstruction Come to the Lowcountry

In April 1861, led by South Carolina, the Southern states separated from the Union. Succession escalated to war when the Rebels fired on Ft. Sumter in Charleston harbor.

When the decision was made to blockade the Southern harbors and cut off all trade with

Europe, the U.S. Navy needed a strategically-located harbor for its Southern Command. The nearest such harbor was in Key West, so an alternative had to be found. That alternative was determined to be Port Royal Sound—the deepest natural harbor south of New York City.

On November 7, 1861, the Federal flotilla, led by the U.S.S. Wabash, sailed into the sound and quickly eliminated the two Rebel forts. When word got out, the white population on the Sea Islands virtually disappeared in the “Great Skedaddle,” leaving property, both real and human behind.

Within days, the Union army occupied Beaufort, having burned Bluffton that had no strategic value. The John Mark Verdier house on Bay Street became the army’s headquarters and the town’s churches were converted to hospitals, making Beaufort the Union’s medical center in the Deep South.

Two historically significant events subsequently occurred in Beaufort: Reconstruction and founding of the first unit of the U.S. Colored Troops. With some 30,000 formerly enslaved men, women, and children now wards of the Federal government, a plan was developed to care for an impoverished uneducated population. Penn Center on Saint Helena Island was developed and staffed by female educators from Pennsylvania. That story is fairly well known.

Not so well known is the established of the first unit in what would become the U.S. Colored Troops—The First South Carolina Volunteer Infantry. Quietly authorized by President Abraham Lincoln, the unit

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was formed in August 1862. By November the unit reached its full complement of 1,000 able bodied men. This was almost two months before the Emancipation Proclamation—and well before the storied 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment known for “Glory” fame.

While the First South Carolina was not involved in major battles, they were victorious against the Rebel cavalry at the “Battle of the Thousand Pines” north of Beaufort, twice occupied Jacksonville, and participated in the “Battle of Honey Hill” and taking the Rebel fort at James Island.

The unit, now the 33rd USCT Regiment, was mustered out on February 8, 1866, at Fort Wagner, South Carolina (yes, that Fort Wagner; see “Glory”).



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Lifetime Member (\$5,000 +)
 Those who have shown a long-term commitment to DHF and whose contribution to DHF is \$5,000 or more; recognized and approved by DHF Board of Directors.

Honorary
 Limited to those with an ancestral connection to Dataw Island—includes Sams Family descendants and family descendants of other prior owners of Dataw Island.

Friends of DHF
 Those who have made a significant contribution to or have a special connection to DHF.

Sponsor (\$500)
Benefactor (\$250)
Patron (\$100)
Supporter (\$60)
Member (\$40)

Your DHF membership assures the preservation of our historic tabby structures, plantation site, artifacts found, and all related archives—100% of our funding is dependent on membership.

We are grateful to all who have generously supported DHF in the past, and hope you will continue. Thank you!

Visit DatawHistory.org

On the Street Where You Live

Malilly Run Road takes its name from a real person; one Lillian Robinson, known as “Ma” Lilly.

{ Malilly
some pronounced it “may-lilly” }

Born in 1795 and most likely enslaved, Ma Lilly was entrusted to care for the young children while their parents worked the fields.

Her small house stood at the corner of North and South Boone roads next to a small stream, or “run”, that Alcoa later dammed to create the scenic Malilly Pond at the corner of Island Circle West and Malilly Run Road.

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TABBY TIMES

Tabby Times is a publication of the Dataw Historic Foundation, Dataw Island, SC
Editor: *Jamie Millard*
Layout/Design: *Lisa Costigan*
Photography: *Bill Riski, Rosemary Patterson*



PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Marilyn Peck

Fall has arrived! Welcome back to Dataw, everyone, from your summer adventures.

In 1997, a group of Dataw residence started the Ruins Committee, and two years later The Dataw Historic Foundation was founded as a 501(C)(3). So, in 2024 we will be celebrating our 25th year. We as an organization are very proud of all our accomplishments, and I want to thank all of the past presidents starting in 1998 with Brenda Norris, Martha Hamilton, Nancy Paul, Carol Cavanaugh, Cathy Crocker, Jack Brown, Joel Holden, and John Colgan for all of their dedication and leadership through these 25 years.

In July The American College of the Building Arts awarded The DHF Scholarship in Memory of Joanne Moses to Joy Watson, who is a plastering student. Joy and the plastering professor, with other students, will be coming to Dataw in November to tour our ruins and learn more about building with tabby.

Some of the wonderful programs we will be doing in 2024, starting in January the Fireside Chat dinner with Victoria Smalls. The 40th Anniversary of Dataw celebration will be starting on March 13, and DHF will be presenting Tides of Time: Navigating 40 Years on Dataw Island that afternoon. Other dates include March 18th with our annual Oyster Roast, and on April 24th we will be hosting author Cassandra King with a book luncheon.

Our goal continues to be to have every resident as a member since the ruins and history of the island are such a vital part of Dataw Island, Beaufort County, and the State of South Carolina. I want to thank all of our DHF members for their ongoing financial and volunteer support. For those of you who are not yet members, I encourage you to join us in our ongoing effort to ensure Dataw’s historic structures and its artifacts are always preserved. Dataw Island remains a unique and beautiful place to live, and I feel very lucky to be a part of it.

SAVE THE DATE

LUMINARY NIGHT

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11

from 5:30 to 8:00 PM

An island-wide celebration of a 30 year Dataw tradition with beautiful sights to see on every street around the island! Come and celebrate the season!

The historic ruins of the Sams plantation house and outbuildings will be illuminated by hundreds of luminaries.

A Spectacular Display

ADD YOUR PERSONAL BRICK TO THE

Dataw Heritage Walk

This holiday season would be the perfect time to join the island's rich history by adding your name to the Heritage Walk!

Purchase a brick now and become a part of the Dataw Heritage Walk—a living legacy to those who have made Dataw the very special place it is today. The engraved bricks represent residents who came to Dataw Island 30 years ago, and up to and including our most recent residents.

To purchase a brick, please use the form below. Forms are also available in the History and Learning Center or on our website at www.DatawHistory.org.



ORDER FORM

Brick Cost \$150 | Please use one order form per brick

FILL IN THE SQUARES WITH A LETTER OR A SPACE

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Line 1 and Line 2: Limit of 15 characters per line, including spaces
Line 3: Year of property acquisition or move to Dataw or employment

— EXAMPLES —

John & Jane
Williams
2001

The Williams
Family
2001

John Williams
Family
2001

John
Williams
2001

Ordered by:

Name _____ Date ____/____/____

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Please make check payable to Dataw Historic Foundation

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