

# Tabby Tattler

Dataw Historic Foundation Newsletter

Volume II, Spring 2004

## Upcoming Events

Monday, April 26

Dedication of New Signs in Ruins  
with complimentary wine & cheese

Monday, June 7

"Behind-the-Scenes" tour of Drayton Hall  
bus trip with box lunch

## From the President. . .

2004 has begun with a flurry of activity, and it promises to be an exciting year. As you read through this edition of the newsletter, you will see that there are several new activities taking place.

I have had a chance to see some of the new signs that are being placed in the ruins, and they are interesting, informative, attractive and sturdy. Be sure to attend the "unveiling" on April 26.

The bus trip to Drayton Hall is new venture for the DHF. Your participation will ensure that we continue to expand opportunities such as this for members.

Our Oyster Roast in March and our Fish Fry in October are turning out to be "sell out" events, so make your reservations early.

All of these activities are possible because of the dedication and spirit of DHF Board members and volunteers. Several other ongoing activities are not as visible, but just as important such as maintaining the archives, keeping the ruins clean and various membership responsibilities. Most of all we need to thank

you, our members, for your support and your continuing membership. Membership income is our primary source of revenue used to accomplish our mission.



## Oyster Roast a Success!

Oyster roasts date back to the Yemessees, the Kiawahs and other Indian tribes that once roamed our forests in the Low Country. Today we traditionally gather in the "winter" months with friends and neighbors to dine on steamed oysters that have been harvested from beds at low tide in our local creeks and streams. We enjoy the evening conversing with friendly folks, drinking and eating, and we leave with good memories.

This year's event included all of the above. Along with oysters, hot dogs, chicken/sausage gumbo, cornbread and a variety of desserts were served. Once again, the talented Jonmark Stone entertained on his guitar.

The lucky winners of this year's raffle were:

Lois Smithson	Tabby planter
June & Ron Converse	Birdhouse
Jane Charbonnier	Pair tabby planters
Mary Beth Day	Hand-knit scarf
Ardith Holzmacher	Daffodils



The fundraising committee thanks all the wonderful volunteers who made this a most memorable evening. See ya' next year!

Kathee Schmit, Chair

Cathy Crocker

## 10 New Signs in the Ruins to be Unveiled

The DHF signage program, mentioned in the last issue, continues to make progress. To date ten of the anticipated total of twenty signs have been completed and are going to be unveiled on *Monday, April 26, at 4 p.m.* in the ruins. Plan to attend this celebration.

Considerable time and talent has gone into the design and construction of these new signs. The major objective of the committee has been to include concise history and clear interpretation of plantation life so that visitors to the ruins can better reflect on what early life was like on Dataw.

Nan Bopp has done an outstanding job of creating the great deal of artwork involved, and Dick Golobic has provided his expertise in preparing the layout and graphic design of each sign. Many others have assisted with studying the archives, consulting with archeologist and historical experts, preparing the script and constructing the frames.

Special guests will include Herb and Beryl Arnold. Herb was instrumental in placing the original signs and authored the story of Dataw, "Wilderness to Paradise," which is available on CD.

*Warren Dickson, Sign Restoration Chair*



### Preserving "Bill Cochrane's Folly"

Thanks to John Rotelli the old Piedmont farm wagon has become a more permanent fixture under the lean to by the shed. John made repairs to the wagon, shortened the tongue so the entire wagon would be sheltered, and placed the wood, metal-rimmed wheels on concrete pads.

If only these wheels could talk! The wagon has a story that perhaps many newer residents haven't heard. Bill Cochrane purchased the wagon in the late 1980s with the idea that he would hitch it to a team of mules and use it to show prospective buyers around the island. He thought it would also be a good way to feature Dataw in Beaufort parades. The mules were to be kept at the shed. Economics won over Bill's dream when he realized that two mules would cost \$1,000 each (plus considerable outlay in maintenance). It is also said that he could not find anyone willing to care for the mules. Archived reports state that Bill came within an "eyelash" of purchasing the animals.

## See Drayton Hall

One of America's great landmarks

Kathee Schmit has arranged a special "Behind-the-Scenes" two-hour tour of this remarkable historic home and its lovely grounds. This is the first time the DHF has planned an historical travel/tour activity, and it promises to be an interesting as well as enjoyable day.

The air-conditioned bus will depart the Club parking lot at 8:15 a.m. on *Monday, June 7* and return at approximately 4 p.m. A box lunch will be served on tables on the grounds.

Cost is \$50 per person (all inclusive). Checks payable to the DHF must be delivered to Kathee at 169 Dataw Drive by **April 25**.

The trip is open to all Dataw residents and their guests. Space is limited so get your check in right away.

## October 18, 2004 Fall Fish Fry Save the Date!

### Ruins' Preservation Update

The process has begun to stabilize the the tabby walls in the cemetery. There is considerable concern because there is a major crack in one wall and another is bowed.

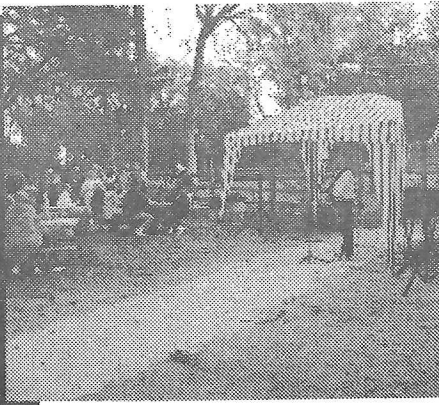
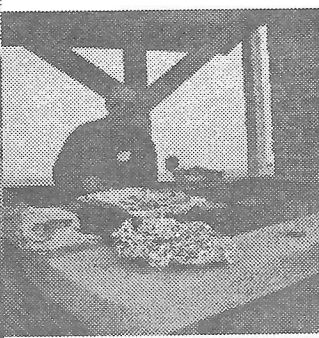
Historical archeologist, Colin Brooker, consultant for the DHF on several restoration projects, presented the problem of how to effectively stabilize the walls to structural engineer Eric Mortenson. At the March meeting, Colin presented the DHF Board with three possible solutions proposed by Mr. Mortenson. After much discussion on process, durability, intrusiveness and aesthetics, the Board asked Colin to get some estimates on costs for two of the three proposals. Once a final decision on procedure is made, the project will get proper approvals and go out for bids. The Board is hopeful that work can begin within the year.

The plan for a "dig" at the site of the old well has been postponed until fall. This procedure done by volunteers involves doing grids and is conducted under the direction of an archeologist.

*Brenda Norris, Ruins Committee Chair*



**Oyster Roast**  
March 8, 2004



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## An Interview with Colin Brooker--Part 2

*Colin Brooker is an architect who serves as a consultant to the Dataw Historic Foundation on the preservations of the Sams Plantation ruins. I had the good fortune to interview him in early November. We talked for nearly an hour and rather than cut it down, I chose to divide it in half. The first portion appeared in the Fall Newsletter. This is the conclusion of the interview. Cathy Crocker*

*CC: Would it be worthwhile doing another archeological dig? Where?*

CB: Yes, anywhere within the yard area, the area which is defined by the low wall. Of all the plantation sites in Beaufort County, one probably knows more about Dataw than any other. When you look at the records, there isn't much, and the reason is that so many of these plantations were totally abandoned after the Civil War. The nice thing about Dataw is that there was a preliminary investigation done by Alcoa. Prior to that point there had been no investigation, so I believe that a great deal of information remains to be found around the structures. What is not a unique feature, but a very unusual feature at Dataw, is the fact that you actually have a defined yard in front of the building. One reads accounts about plantation life in the yard--but here you actually have a yard. Thanks to the tabby foundation you can tell where it is. There are a number of odd things about that. If you look at the Sams' house, it is symmetrical, but the yard is not centered on that. I would like to know why it isn't centered. If you come up with a completely symmetrical plan, you would expect the yard to be centered on the main house, but it is off to one side. What is the meaning of that? I think there are a couple of meanings. A primary one deals with superimposition of a late 18th century building that was built over and redeveloped in the early 19th century, so the yard is probably taking into account things which have nothing to do with the enlarged house but with portions of a building which preexisted and may have gone away.

*CC: So there was another building there?*

CB: I think there could have been another set of buildings, but we don't know anything about them. All I know is that I am working on something now, and if you look at the charts of other plantation sites, you see that they change fairly rapidly. Houses come and go and out buildings are very impermanent. All of that should leave a record in the ground.

*CC: So, if we did another dig, we might find that there was another house there in the 1700s?*

CB: I think you might find that there were other outbuildings in the 1700s. If you move outside the yard, the dairy is something of a mystery. There is so much evidence of rebuilding I think it changed its functions at least one and maybe twice. That's rather intriguing to me. There is also evidence of more outbuilding in the vicinity of the main house beyond the yard. What we have now is some of what is mentioned in the Julius Sams' diary, but they are not all a good match. Some things do match, but other things are not clear at all, which means we are missing something. Those are the two places that I would look. My thoughts at the moment are that this entire complex was surrounded by what I would call a picturesque garden. It wasn't a formalized garden like you might see at Middleton or other plantations, but may have consisted of clumps of trees, a little lake and other fences all adding up to a picturesque well-thought-out garden. I think that is beyond recovery at this point. The tennis courts have obliterated the relationship between the house and the river. That must have been the real reason the house was built there, and it is no longer obvious. Whether anything exists around the tennis courts, I don't know.

*CC: Was there ever any discussion about building the tennis courts elsewhere?*

CB: As I recall, yes, but there were other market forces that pushed the tennis courts in that location. There was a presentation made at one point to Alcoa that another site would be a good idea. Alcoa was very accommodating at a lot of levels,

## Colin Brooker cont.

but there comes a point--and I think there were a good many trade offs worked out between Alcoa and the State. The State got certain things, and in return Alcoa was given certain things. Probably Alcoa feels that it was not given enough, but the State makes those determinations.

*CC: So this preservation work is a negotiation?*

CB: Yes, the reason is that in an ideal world, the plantation site should be off limits until it is fully investigated, but the sites which merit investigation are so large. Are you really going to hold them in perpetuity until enough money is found to do it entirely properly? Archeology is a very expensive business, so what the State does is determine where the most information can be collected and works through the developer to get that information. It then closes the book.

*CC: Can we talk about you a little bit: Tell us how you came to be here.*

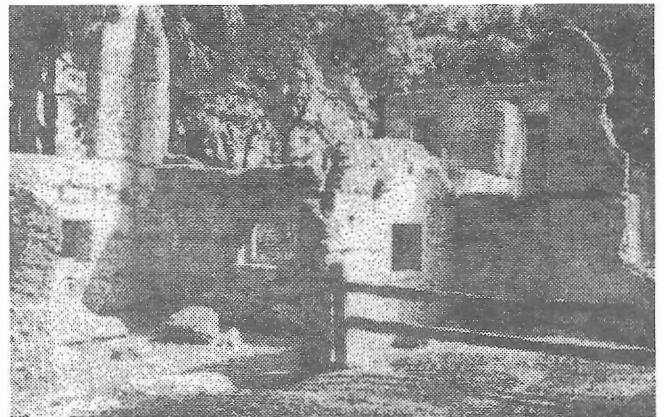
CB: Oh, that's a long story. I trained as an architect in England, and I went into practice in London and worked on university buildings. One day I went to a lecture at the Royal Institute of British Architects given by Louis Kahn. He gave a dazzling presentation of his work, and I was enthralled. I went home and said I had to get to know this man! I started fishing around and got a scholarship to go to the University of Pennsylvania to attend his masters class. That was most exciting. I lived in Philadelphia through that period of riots, which was quite an experience--welcome to America and the curfew! That was in the late 60s! I had another great professor in Oriental studies who was magical. She would come to each class with five inspiring slides. I was brought up in the International style, which I was keen on--and still am. I love the austerity, cleanliness and the newness of it. Kahn did too, but he looked at historical buildings as a resource--the summation of the human experience. You don't have to go and reinvent the wheel each time if you examine historic buildings with a certain openness. They will start telling you things about place, about life. The genius of Kahn was that he didn't come up with a recall building; he came up with a fresh one. It might have had historical overtones, but it wasn't a reproduction of an historical building. I think that's where many of my colleagues in the era go, because they are forced into it by their clients. They do recall buildings which really don't tell you anything and don't work very well. You have lost what architecture can give you,

which should be a gift of understanding of place. Recall buildings are counterfeits and not good ones. Kahn was one of the few people who was able to bring the 20th century into context with what had gone before.

*CC: Do you practice architecture?*

CB: I do a house every now and again. I haven't done one this year. I did two last year; I don't do many,

I am absorbed mostly in documentation work at this point. When I first came to Beaufort County in the late sixties, one of my classmates had an architecture practice in Beaufort, and I came down in the summers. I first came in 1969, and the place seemed magical. The point still had shell roads, Some of the houses were apartments but most were untouched, unrestored and worth documenting. When I came to live here, I spent my time documenting. I'm glad that I did because now so much of it has gone away.



### DHF Seeking to Expand Committee Memberships

There's lots happening on the DHF Committee. If you are interested in our Dataw history and are willing to share a bit of your time and talents, you will enjoy working with this active group.

Special events such as the Oyster Roast and Fish Fry, new projects such as the signs as well as standing committees such as membership, public relations and long-range planning all succeed because of caring volunteers.

If you would like to know more, please call Cathy Crocker at 838-0987.

## The Story Behind the Name--Kate Gleason (1865 - 1933)

With an impressive list of professional and philanthropic credits belonging to Miss Kate Gleason, it is fitting that Geason's Landing Drive and Court memorialize her name. Her story is especially interesting because of her success in fields which during that era were dominated by men (that period when America was facing the challenges of change from an agricultural to industrial society).

The list of her "firsts" is well documented in Herb Arnold's story on Dataw, *Wilderness to Paradise, Significant Events in the Evolution of Datha to Dataw* (available on a CD). She was born in Rochester, NY, where her father founded Gleason Gear Works. At age 11 she began to work in the business; by 14 she became the bookkeeper; by age 20 she was on the road selling machines. She was the first woman to enter Cornell's school of engineering and went on to become the first woman named in "Who's Who in Mechanical Engineering." Some of her other "firsts" were in the fields of banking and home construction, (She built a 100-home model community in Sausalito, CA)

Libby Sanders Rowland, Kate's one-time secretary and long-time friend, introduced her to the Beaufort area where she created part of her legacy in the purchase of Dataw in 1928 from the Samuel Stoney heirs for \$15,000. It is believed that the first bridge to the island was constructed under the direction of her overseer to the property, Horace Sams. She made many donations of land for area parks and of the land on which Beaufort Memorial Hospital now stands. Upon her death in 1933, according to an Associated Press article, she left "property known as "Dawtaw" Island, SC, together with approaches and adjoining real estate" to Libby.

Another 1933 Associated Press article noting the passing of Kate Gleason, Prominent Industrialist, states, "She had a large estate in Beaufort, SC, where she owned a large turkey farm and from which she took American turkeys to France (where she had a summer home) in an effort to improve the strain of the French birds." This article does not specifically reference Dataw as the farm.

