

# Tabby Tattler

Dataw Historic Foundation Newsletter

Volume III, Fall 2006

Featuring

"The Crypt Mystery Solved" and lots more. . .

## About the DHF. . .

2006 has been a busy year for the Dataw Historic Foundation as members continue to be involved with new historic discovery projects, preservation projects, maintenance projects, social events, archiving updates, historical research and special projects. Board meetings are always interesting and informative. They are held at 9 a.m. on the first Monday of the month at the Community Center.



## From the President. . .

When the Dataw Historic Foundation received the prestigious Danner Award for Lifetime Achievement in Historic Preservation from the Historic Beaufort Foundation this past spring, several DHF members mentioned that they would be interested in knowing more about the Foundation's history, its preservation efforts and how it funds such efforts. It is my pleasure to tell you a bit more about these three parts of the successful preservation program on Dataw Island.

DHF's preservation history began in the mid-1990's when a small group of residents, who were concerned about the deteriorating condition of our plantation ruins and the fact that many of the valuable artifacts were leaving Dataw for the Beaufort museum, pleaded with Alcoa to do something about preserving Dataw's important antebellum history. Alcoa appointed the group, then known as the Ruins Committee, to become the caretaker of the historic ruins as well as the custodian of all historic artifacts and records of Dataw's rich history. In 1997, the Committee became the Dataw Historic Foundation, a tax-exempt foundation and a committee of the DIOA, and began to tackle a number of key preservation projects as well as organize itself to begin raising funds to help cover the costs of ruins preservation. Today, DHF remains the caretaker of Dataw's history by overseeing the care and maintenance of all historic structures plus the preservation of all artifacts and historic files.

## 2007 Membership Campaign Begins January 1

DHF seeks support from all Island residents. Please respond to the Membership Information Packet, which will cap the 2006 activities and present the 2007 goals and budget. Look for it at the beginning of the new year.

## Save the Date!

March 12, 2007 Oyster Roast

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DHF has had an extensive, on-going ruins preservation program on Dataw. Most recent is the intriguing work on solving the mystery of the crypt pieces found during our cemetery wall project (see the feature article in this issue). In total, the DHF has completed over 30 preservation projects during the last eight years at a total cost of over \$100,000.

I am proud to say that the successful funding of \$100,000 worth of preservation projects has primarily been possible due to the enthusiastic and growing support from DHF members. Most of the early preservation project expenses were covered by the DIOA, but for the past several years all projects have been totally funded by DHF members through membership fees and support of special events and projects.

Our membership support has been growing at an impressive rate. We now have 337 members (up 6+% from last year and representing 44% of all Dataw homes).

As we near the end of this year, we realize that 2006 will turn out to be one of our best years ever, and we are already in the planning stages for some exciting preservation projects and events in 2007.

As always, we thank all of the hardworking DHF volunteers who have worked on our projects this year, and we thank our members who have provided record support of DHF's preservation efforts.

Jack Brown

# 2006 Fish Fry

4th Annual Fall Gathering  
Reunites Full-Time and Returning Residents

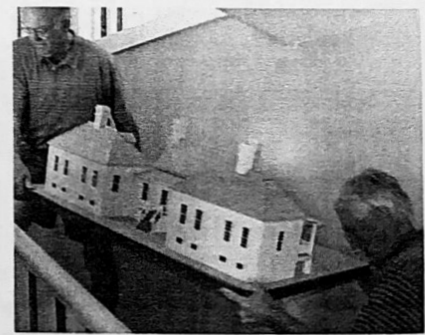
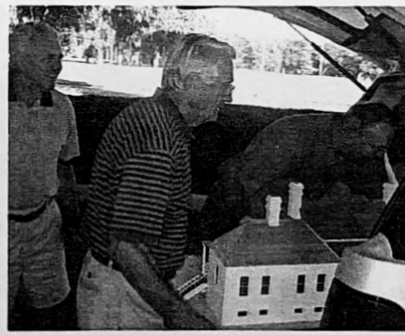
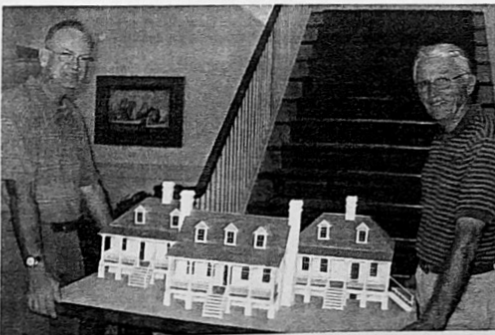
The DHF thanks chairs Kathee Schmit and Mariann Golobic for their fourth successful membership fall fundraiser. Their efficient planning has always assured a good time for all attending this fall get together.

The October 16 event was an early "sell out," and no one was disappointed with the great fish and hush puppies prepared on site by Steve Brown Catering. A variety of salads complemented the tasty fish. Nancy Brinkman coordinated a beautiful dessert table with delicious treats made by several attendees. Beer and wine were plentiful.

Net proceeds were over \$1,300 and will go toward future preservation projects.



## Sams Plantation Model Featured in HBF Tabby Exhibit



(1) John & Jerry get model down Dataw Clubhouse steps, (2) into the car to transport it to Beaufort and then (3) up the steps at the Arsenal.

On October 12, Jerry Hubbard, builder of the scale model of the Sams Plantation house, met with John Colgan, Herman Schmit and photographer Cathy Crocker on the second floor of the Dataw Clubhouse. They were met by Elizabeth Garrett, Director of Museums for the Historic Beaufort Foundation. Their mission was to move Jerry's model to the Arsenal in Beaufort in order for it to be featured in a special tabby exhibit. This was no small task as there were two large flights of steps to negotiate along with getting all parts of the display transported safely. John reported that there was "only" one "near miss" on one of the steps!

Don't miss the excellent exhibit at the Arsenal. Tabby bricks from Dataw and a photo by Dick Golobic are also a part of it.



Glass is replaced on the model in the exhibit floor at the Beaufort Arsenal.

### Tabby: The Architecture of the Lowcountry

October 19 - January 2  
at the Beaufort Arsenal  
713 Craven Street  
Beaufort

Monday - Saturday 10 - 4  
Admission \$4  
Children under 6 free  
For information call  
(843) 379-3331



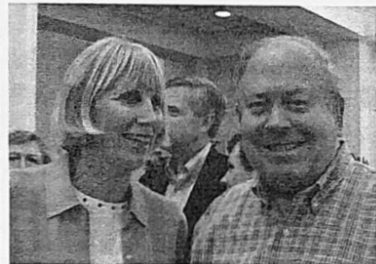
## Over 150 Enjoy Southern Style Dinner and Fireside Chat with Historian Dr. John McCardell



Dr. McCardell and Barbara Payne



Marilyn Peck chaired the enjoyable, informative evening.



Marilyn Peck and Woody Rutter, President of Historic Beaufort Foundation

May 17, 2006  
Carolina Room

Following a traditional Southern meal prepared by Chef David, Dr. John McCardell, President Emeritus of Middlebury College and noted lecturer, spoke to a packed house on the "Old South."



Dr. Larry Rowland and Dr. John McCardell



## DHF Contributes to Cake Auction Success

Sarah  
Fripp Sams  
1789-1825  
Wife of  
Lewis Reeve  
Sams

Sisters

Elizabeth Hann  
Fripp Sams  
1795-1831  
1st wife of  
B.B. Sams



Posing as the Fripp sisters, Jane Griffith and Barbara Clinkenbeard present the DHF cakes as auctioneer Herman Schmit looks on.

"The Competition Continues" was the theme of the DHF entry to the "Celebrity Cakes Auction," and it brought out the sibling rivalry that may have existed between the daughters of Thomas and Martha Hann Fripp. Sarah Fripp Sams (aka Jane Griffith) baked an apple rum pecan cake, which used ingredients that may have at one time been grown on the Sams plantation (recipe was from Dorothy Zinser). Elizabeth Hann Fripp Sams (aka Barbara Clinkenbeard) baked a fresh coconut cake from a recipe out of an 1880s "Hoppin John" cookbook. Sarah and Elizabeth's cakes brought in \$1,400 for the American Cancer Society. This fun event was sponsored by the Dataw Dames and Dandies.

### Dataw Ruins Featured on The HBF Fall Tour of Homes: Kitchens and Cuisine

Sunday, October 29, was a perfect day to stroll the ruins of the Sams Plantation, and over 140 visitors to the island did just that. Visitors were a part of the Historic Beaufort Foundation Kitchens and Cuisine tour (which featured three area chefs in the Gorgas, Lurtz and Wehrenberg homes). A bus and a trolley transported attendees between stops. Each group was given a map of the ruins and encouraged to read the informative signs as it strolled at its own pace. An added bonus was having Charlie Holbrook giving historical commentary around the Sams' house.

Special thanks go to Charlie, John Colgan, Marilyn Peck, Cathy Crocker, Barbara Titus, Mariann Golobic, Denise Ogden and Ann Craigmile for greeting and guiding visitors.



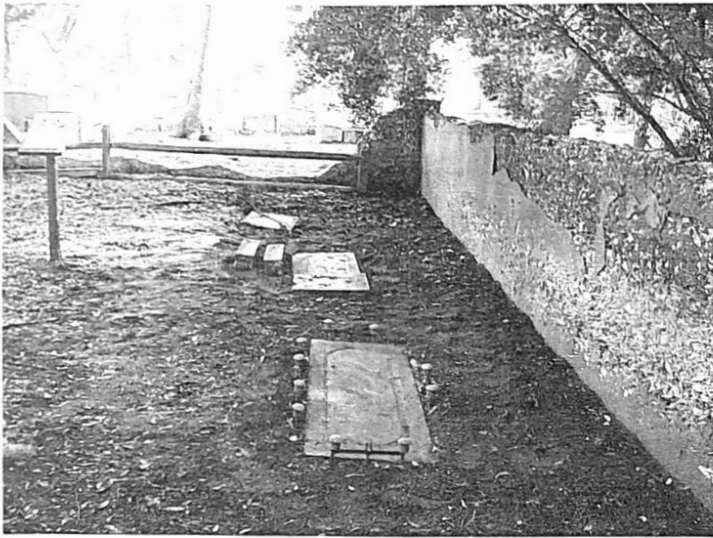


November 13  
Outside the  
Community Center

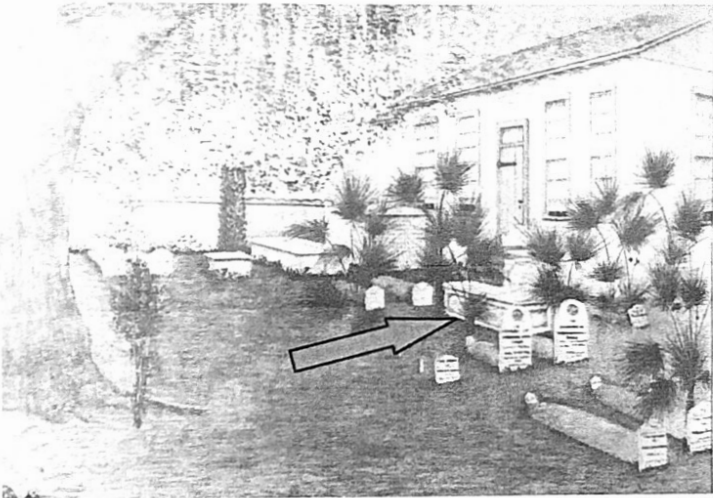


Membership Chair, Pat Bell set up a DHF table at this highly successful, new Dataw event, which showcased the creative talents of over 30 residents. She was assisted by Mariann Golobic, Jane Griffith, Barbara Titus and Jack Brown. "It was a great day—we talked to lots of friends and met many new people, who expressed an interest in DHF" related Pat.

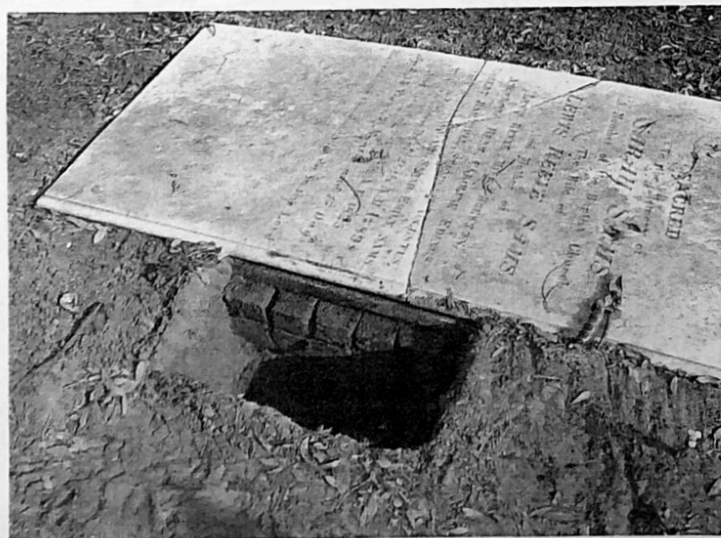
The event was sponsored by the Visual Arts Committee.



*Pieces of the crypt found along the cemetery wall.*



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



*View of brick foundation beneath top inscribed slab and concrete slab it is resting on.*

# "The Crypt Mystery Solved"

by Cathy Crocker  
Ruins Committee Chair

For as long as I can remember, several fragments of marble have been resting along the southern wall of the Sams Family Cemetery. During the course of stabilizing the cemetery wall last fall, several additional pieces were found, which were similar. Where did these pieces come from?

One possible thought came about from the list of people buried in the B.B. Sams Cemetery, which was copied by Horden Hanahan on April 4, 1932, and printed in the South Carolina Magazine. That list referenced William Washington Sams (died 1817, at 3 months); and he, in fact, is buried in the cemetery. Other records indicated that William Sams, Jr., who also died in 1817 at age 51, is buried in the cemetery, but there is no grave site for him in existence today. Could this be his crypt?

Another line of thought arose when an 1833 sketch of the cemetery showed a crypt in the approximate location of the burial of Sarah Fripp Sams, the wife of Lewis Reeves Sams. Currently a large engraved marble slab covers this grave.

On June 21, 2006, Eric Poplin of Brockington Associates did a limited archeological investigation and determined that the fragments are pieces of a crypt that once stood above the grave of Sarah Sams. The dimensions of the slabs, the square posts, the mortices in the posts and the mortices in the marble slab that lie beneath the engraved marker, all suggest that these pieces represent fragments of the same structure.

There are two side walls, one end wall and two corner posts. The engraved top marker and the bottom slab remain at rest atop the brick foundation



*The Crypt Mystery Solved* continued

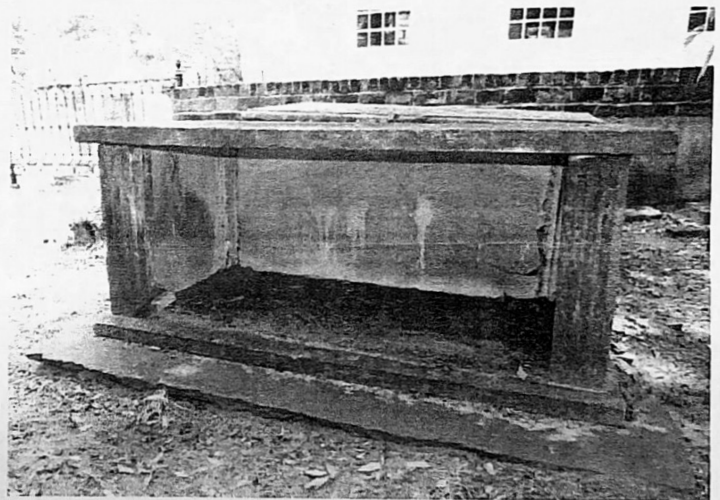
that once supported the entire structure. One of the side walls is broken near the same point where it is also broken on the north edge of the engraved marker. This may indicate an event that resulted in damage to the crypt. Possibly the walls and corners were removed after this damage and the engraved slab was then placed directly atop the base slab. Given the similarity of the elements of this crypt to one similar in the St. Helena Church Yard, it is unlikely that the remains of Sarah Sams were actually placed with the crypt. Most likely, she was buried in a grave atop which the marble crypt was then erected.

Now that the mystery has been solved, we may wish to reconstruct the crypt--either atop the grave of Sarah Sams or at another location within the cemetery. Reconstruction atop the grave will require the acquisition of one end wall and two corner posts identical to those that are present and the repair of the broken side panel and engraved top panel. Reconstruction at another locale with an interpretive panel could include reconstructed elements as well.

Obviously, there are varying costs involved with each of these approaches. If any reconstruction is considered, plans would first have to be approved by the Sams family.



*Corner posts and wall held in position by Eric Poplin.*



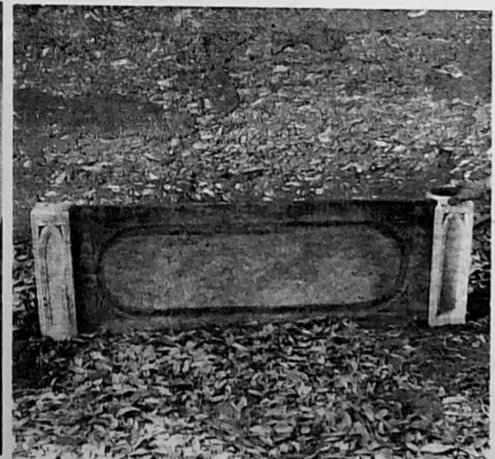
*Similar crypt at St. Helena Church Cemetery.*



*Mortise under northwest corner of inscribed stone.*



*Tenon on base of corner post.*



*Long wall of Sarah Sams crypt assembled and being held up.*

## Board Notes

DHF was sorry to lose long-term member and Co-membership Chair, Marj Dehls. Marj has moved to Massachussetts.

Cathy Crocker is working with Colin Brooker to get well recap and stress fractures in the dairy house repairs completed. She is hoping that Colin may attend the December DHF meeting.

DHF has secured additional wall space in the copy room of the Clubhouse for file cabinets. Jane Griffith, Barbara Clinkenbeard and Denise Ogden have cleaned up the archive files--relabeling and reorganizing where necessary. A long-term goal of DHF is to secure space where artifacts and archived files will be accessible to all Dataw residents.

The Public Relations Committee is securing speakers for two Fireside Chats in 2007. They are also working at updating the DHF logo, the DHF brochure and the DHF section of the Dataw Website.

President Jack Brown and the Board are updating the DHF long-term goals and compiling specific 2007 goals.

Membership Chair Pat Bell is gearing up for a successful 2007 membership campaign.

Fundraising Chair Kathee Schmit is stepping down after four successful years of coordinating several profitable events. DHF is seeking someone (or co chairs) to share energies and ideas on this vital committee

Corresponding Secretary Cece Megrue and her husband John have returned from a memorable trip--living aboard their boat and cruising the "Great Circle." Their boat is currently in Mobile, AL. They will complete the trip back to Beaufort in 2007.

## Tattler Tidbits

### The Sams on Wadmalaw Island

Bonham Sams II, the progenitor of the Sams family of South Carolina was baptised in 1663 in St. Mary's Parish Church, County of Somerset, England. He was the third generation of his family known to have worshipped here in the faith of the Established Church of England. In the St. Mary's ancient church yard are buried his parents and his grandparents. He was the only one of his father's six sons to leave for the new world.

Bonum Sams II (as the spelling has been adopted in South Carolina) was married to Enstis in 1681. He and his new wife arrived with 21 other aboard a ship commanded by Captain Benjamin Blake in 1681. Blake established his settlement at "New Cut at the junction of the Stono and Wadmalaw Rivers." Bonum later received 100 acres of land on the banks of the Wadmalaw River and southeast of a bluff that later became distinguished as "Sames Bluff."

Robert Sams was the son of Bonum and his last wife Elizabeth Brewton Sams. Robert was a planter on Wadmalaw Island. He acquired 500 acres on Hilton Head by reason of his marriage to his wife Bridget, daughter of John Barnwell and his wife Elizabeth Ann Berners. This 500 acres was the first land grant issued for acreage on Hilton Head Island.

William Sams born in 1741 was the fourth child of Robert Sams and Bridget Barnwell. He married Elizabeth Hext in 1761. Records show that he owned 490 acres on Wadmalaw. In 1783, he purchased from his cousins, Robert and Sarah (Reeve) Gibbes, the 1,200 acre Island of "Datha" in old Granville County, where he became a wealthy planter. Both William and Elizabeth are buried in the Sams private cemetery on "Datha."

Source: The South Carolina Historical Magazine, Vol. 64, No. 1, January 1963. South Carolina Historical Society.

Visitors are now welcome on Wadmalaw Island at the Charleston Tea Plantation. More than 150 years ago, tea growers from China and India brought their finest tea bushes here and planted them in the rich Wadmalaw soil. R. C. Bigelow, Inc., has purchased 127 acres on the island and rejuvenated the production of tea under the brand name "American Classic Tea." This is the only commercial tea plantation in North America, and it specializes in a renown black tea that was produced there over 100 years ago.

