

To Be Continued...

A PUBLICATION OF THE DORCHESTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mission Statement: To Research, Record and Preserve Dorchester County's History

101 Ridge Street, St. George, SC 29477

November 2021

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Membership/Awards Meeting

Thursday 18 Nov. 2021

7 PM At Koger House

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings

Our upcoming meeting on Thursday, November 18th, will be the last membership meeting of 2021. Time is moving too fast!

Also, this is our Awards Night where we recognize anyone that has helped fulfill our mission throughout the year. If you know of anyone that needs to receive a certificate, please let me know.

Our 4th Annual Living History & Education Days was on November 6-7th. Even though the weather was cold and rainy on Saturday, a good many people came out. Thank you to Brett & Theresa Strickland for preparing all the food. They cooked 29 butts Friday night to prepare for the BBQ dinners. Thank you to C. J. Clark, Brittany Bouknight, and Kodie Carmack for helping to serve and to our very own Chuck Spell for giving tours of the house. Also, members of the Ivy Garden Club from Dorchester for beautifully decorating the house. Sunday was cold, but again, the crowd was good.

In preparation for our event, the little store out front was cleaned, painted, a shed roof built on the front, a new breaker panel installed and power was run from the house and plywood put down on the floor. This project was headed up by Bill, Frank, Brett and Chuck. Wall prep and painting were done by Theresa, Bobbie, Taylor, my granddaughter and myself. Brett pulled the cooker under the shed Saturday and most of us hung out in the little store and talked. A good time was had by all.

Our speaker for our upcoming membership meeting is Shane Moody, IP Builders, Restoring Upper Dorchester County. Please come out and bring a friend. See you on the 18th at the Koger House.

Phyllis

Get Well

Linda Baker

Margaret Spell

Mr. Bill Herman

Bill Herman of Haleyville had moved into an assisted living facility in Walterboro in August. He recently moved back home and will be having surgery, so please keep him in your prayers.

Membership Dues

Payable by March 1, 2022

Annual dues: \$25.00

Lifetime Membership: \$250.00

Make Checks Payable To DCHS

Ms. Bobbie McKinnon

c/o DCHS

101 Ridge St.

St. George, SC 29477

(Please include current home and email address.)

NOTE

**As of March 31, 2022 all annual (yearly) members
who are not current with their dues will have their
names removed from the Membership Rolls.**

DCHS 2021 Calendar of Events:

**Membership/Awards
Meeting**

Thursday, Nov 18

7 pm

Koger House

Please check our website for updates at www.scdchs.com

MEMBERSHIP/AWARDS MEETING
THURSDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2021
7:00 PM
AT KOGER HOUSE
Guest Speaker: Shane Moody

THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS

We would like to thank all members who made additional contributions to the Historical Society in 2021.

Additional funds are still needed to repair the windows throughout this historic house and to oil/stain all of the exterior of the house. If you are able to make a contribution toward this restoration, please send or drop off your contribution to the office at 101 Ridge Street. Claire Mizell is the Director of the Heritage Museum there, but she is also a Dorchester County Historical Society Board Member and receives our mail at the museum office. Thank you so much for being involved and supporting the Dorchester County Historical Society and all of our local preservation efforts. We will continue to work together to make sure our history will be preserved and remembered by future generations!

Come Discover with Us

By Phyllis Hughes, Dorchester Heritage Center

On July 21, 2020, the Dorchester Heritage Center purchased an 81 acre tract of land with frontage on Highway 78 in the Ridgeville area. The DHC purchased the property in an effort to preserve the rich cultural history of the inland low country for future generations, as well as to protect the 81 acres of natural growth forest, pasture and wetland from development, creating a cultural park and nature preserve.

Located on the property is an abandoned Riggs Cemetery. The oldest tombstone found is that of Elizabeth Owens Riggs (1758-1822). Her tombstone reads: *Relict (wife) of William Riggs, Sr. A tender mother unfortunate wife.* Note: William Riggs, Sr. died in 1818, about 4 years before Elizabeth.

William Riggs, Sr. & Elizabeth Riggs had a son William Riggs, Jr. (1778-1845) and this is where the story begins.

Before the DHC purchased the property, the owner of the property, Mrs. Mary Cummings, was asked what she knew about the cemetery. She knew very little but said that a woman by the name of Gail McNaughton from Summerville had come by several years before looking for the cemetery in search of her family genealogy but was unable to get to the cemetery because the road leading in was impassable.

I reached out to Gail in an effort to record the Riggs family history. I met her about a year ago. She invited me to her home to look over a notebook that she had worked on for years, researching, recording and preserving her family's genealogy. She allowed me to bring the notebook home to copy. At the time of our visit, Gail was blind in one eye and the sight in her other eye was going bad. I told her that if, and when, the DHC was able to purchase the property and repair the road to the cemetery, that she would be my first call.

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The week of October 25th, Jimmy Austin, Austin Sand, donated his time and equipment to repair the cemetery road. I called Gail to let her know that finally, after all her years of trying, she could now visit the cemetery that she had longed to see since the 1970s. The only problem now is that she is legally blind, however, she still wanted to come and stand among the stones.

On Saturday, October 30th, the DHC had a workday on the property and invited her to come so that we could help her get back to the cemetery. She did come, escorted by her son Richard and his wife Wanda. Edsel Taylor, DHC board member, and I, joined them as they drove up to the old cemetery blanketed by the limbs of majestic oaks. Arm in arm, we walked up to the few stones that are still standing. As she approached the headstone of Justine Martha Turner Riggs (1786-1829), first wife of William Riggs, Jr. (1778-1845), she asked if she could play a recorded poem for the occasion. She, not being able to see, felt her way to the play button and the recording began to play:

Dear Ancestor

*Your tombstone stands among the rest, Neglected and alone.
The name and date are chiseled out, On polished, marbled stone.
It reaches out to all who care, It is too late to mourn.
You did not know that I exist, You died and I was born.
Yet each of us are cells of you, In flesh, in blood, in bone.
Our blood contracts and beats a pulse, Entirely not our own.
Dear Ancestor, the place you filled One hundred years ago,
Spreads out among the ones you left, Who would have loved you so.
I wonder if you lived and loved, I wonder if you knew.
That someday I would find this spot, And come to visit you.*

(Author Unknown)

Watching Gail standing over the grave, with her hand placed on the top of the headstone, and listening to the recording brought tears to my eyes. I asked her later, what did it mean, to finally step foot in this family cemetery, she replied, "It meant the world to me," and she was especially glad that her son Richard was there to share this experience with her.

William Riggs, Jr's first wife, Justine, died giving birth to their 10th child in 1829. William, now in his 50s, would marry Rachel Bailey, (1814-1880), 20 yrs old in 1834 and together they would have 9 children. It is from this union that Gail descended.

William, Jr. died in September 1845, leaving Rachel with 4 young children, William age 7, Isaac age 6, Thomas age 3 and Langton age 1. After his death, Rachel could not care for her children and in March 1846, she and her children went to live at the Poor Home in Charleston. Sadly, the children could not stay at the Poor Home so she admitted them to the Charleston Orphan Home.

After years of research, Gail feels certain that both William, Jr. and Rachel are buried in the Riggs family cemetery but, due to their financial status, no tombstone was erected.

I sincerely want to thank Jimmy Austin who helped make Mrs. McNaughton's dream a reality. I encourage all to remember those that have come before and remember, "*You did not know that I exist, You died and I was born.*"

There is a much bigger story to tell. If you would like to learn more about the Dorchester Heritage Center, visit our website: <http://www.dhc-sc.com> or call 843-931-1021 to visit our museum and archives.