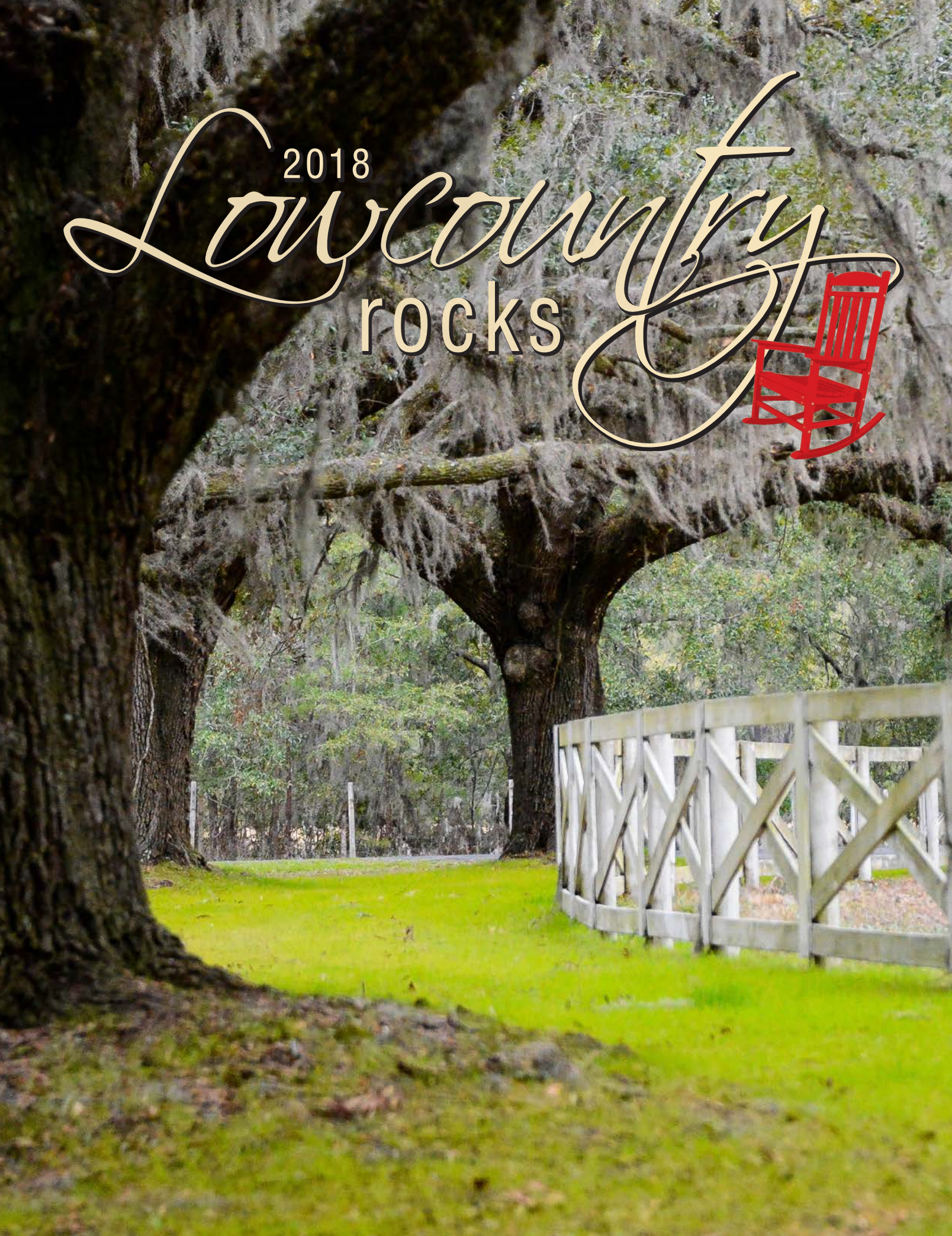


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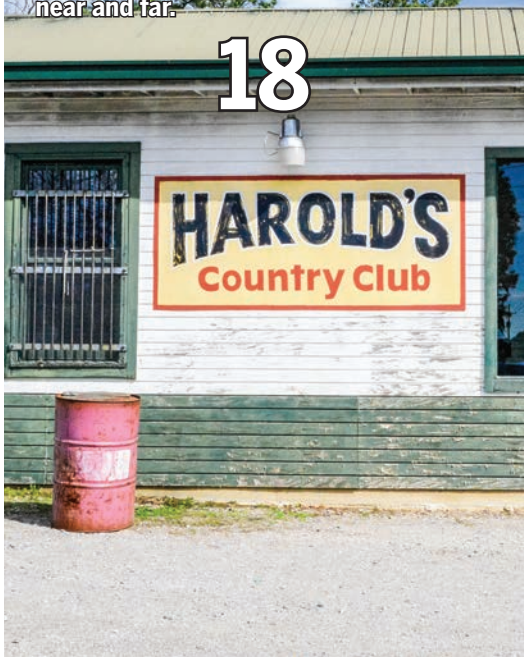
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Airy Hall

Enchantingly beautiful
and steeped in tradition

It was a crisp January morning on beautiful Airy Hall Plantation, located in the heart of the ACE Basin, as 80 riders dressed in formal hunt attire entered the pasture on their steeds and awaited the arrival of the huntsman and his hounds.

Nestled in a curve of the Ashepoo River, Airy Hall was set to come alive with the sound of the huntsman's copper horn signifying the start of an age-old tradition. The foxhunt, part of Lowcountry Hunt's Plantation Hunt Weekend, was set to begin.

Flasks and cups of bourbon and sherry were passed from the "tally-ho wagon" to riders donned in crisp red and black coats, tan and white riding breeches and tall boots. The horses, perfectly

groomed and dressed for the day of sport, seemed to sense the arrival of the hounds was imminent.

Huntsman Martyn Blackmore, along with his field master and whippers-in, made a grand entrance from behind the brick stable house with 50 hounds trailing on his heels. As the riders began falling in line behind the huntsman, the goal was clear — it was about the tradition of the long-standing hunt, not a kill.

As the hunt ended several hours later, riders gathered on the terrace and pool deck of the 20-bedroom brick Georgian manor house for a nip and a hearty southern meal. And, as the riders toasted the success of the day, surrounded by the beauty of Airy Hall, one could almost seem transported back in time.

Airy Hall, situated on 1,700 acres, is located off Bennetts Point Road. A long, meandering drive, lined with ancient moss-draped oaks, winds past the gate house to the manor house, stables and an array of outbuildings.

The history of the timelessly beautiful property, currently owned by Frankie and Buck Limehouse, is fascinating.

all ful tion

Story and Photos by Cindy Crosby



The driveway from Bennetts Point Road up to the main house at Airy Hall is lined with ancient live oaks.



Riders young and old on horses big and small follow the huntsman and his hounds over the fields of the plantation. The hunt is called a “drag hunt,” as the hounds are not actually hunting live prey. Bottom, a tally-ho wagon follows the group to offer a little refreshment.

In 1786, Philip Smith received a grant of land from Charles II totaling 288 acres. Just off the Ashepoo River, this plot is where Airy Hall would later be erected, according to “Historical Atlas of the Rice Plantations of the ACE River Basin — 1860” by Suzanne Cameron Linder.

The land was passed to Smith’s son who died unmarried in 1810 and while records of his will no longer exist, it is probable that he deeded the land to his sister, Charlotte. Having married Thomas W. Price, Charlotte gave birth to a son named Philip Smith Price. This son became the owner of Airy Hall, which in 1849 totaled 3,221 acres, according to Linder’s book.

When Price died, the plantation was passed to his wife and child, Maria P. E. Price, who married Charles Baring Farmer. Because of failure to pay taxes, the property was sold through a sheriff’s auction. Maria eventually remarried, and under her new husband’s name, she sued to reclaim the property and was successful.

Airy Hall remained in Maria’s family until it was sold to the E.P. Burton Lumber Company in 1906. The property was combined with several other plantations and then resold to William Godfrey, John W. Maynard and James P. Maynard a year later. Exchanging hands five more times, the plantation eventually was purchased by a Georgian in 1928; however, from that point on Linder’s records trail runs cold.

According to current Airy Hall owner, Buck Limehouse, the Georgian was Col. Robert Elbert. Elbert had married one of the heirs to the Singer Sewing Machine Company fortune and used his ample funds to hire an architect and build the Airy Hall home, which stands today.

In 1941 Elbert’s widow, Marian, sold



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Airy Hall to Larry Barringer, owner of the Columbia Hotel. Barringer made a few significant changes to the plantation, including turning the chauffeur's quarters into a small sausage packing plant.

Furthering the meat fetish, Barringer raised show cattle — registered Black Angus.

After Barringer, Albert Love became the owner. Love sold Coosaw Plantation to purchase Airy Hall. During his stay at Airy Hall, Love began taking pictures of recruits at Parris Island and making yearbooks for parents to purchase.

Many of Love's photo-related products were still around the home in 1979 when Limehouse procured the deed from Love's widow.

These

days, Airy Hall serves as the Limehouses' primary residence, as well as a gathering spot for family and loved ones. It is still considered a working plantation used for cattle, hunting and horses, along with the occasional polo match or foxhunt.

Indeed, Airy Hall is a cherished Lowcountry treasure that will allow future generations to step backwards through time and capture a glimpse of history and eras past.



These days, Airy Hall serves as the Limehouses' primary residence, as well as a gathering spot for family and loved ones. It is still considered a working plantation used for cattle, hunting and horses, along with the occasional polo match or foxhunt.



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*Story by George Salsberry,
photos submitted*



From Walterboro to Nashville ... and back

Mamie Foreman's life started out living in a 1986 Oldsmobile, but she moved on to a successful songwriting career

Mamie Foreman's formative years in Colleton County were far from idyllic, but the constants were the love of family and music.

They remain the foundation of her life as a singer-songwriter as she prepares to return home in late April and take the stage with her husband, Ethan Gardiner.

While the couple is up on the stage performing as "The Gardiners" during the upcoming Rice Festival, Mamie's father, Lewis Foreman, "my number one fan from the start," will be in the audience.

"I would never have had the support or courage to step out and try this crazy songwriting thing if it weren't for my dad." Mamie adopted the nickname "Little Lew" to honor her father. "I did get married but never did change my name — a little too proud of my dad, I guess.

"My husband has taught me to be proud of myself and where I've come from. And he's encouraged me to tell my story. My yearbooks will show many things — prom princess, sports — but none of the dark parts. And I'm OK with those now."

"I mention this because I have an EP (extended play recording) coming out and two of the songs 'Love is Our Home' and 'What I Know,' focus heavily on the time spent in the back seat of an '86 Oldsmobile, while homeless, with my dad and little sister," she explained.

Mamie and her sisters "were only allowed to listen to Christian music in my childhood home but when I was ever in the car with just my father, we would listen to classic rock, and he would sing along," she said.

"I don't think he's ever in his life sung in front of a single soul, but he has the most beautiful voice. I remember being shocked by that. He is a shy, quiet, loving genius," Mamie said.



Victoria Camp of the "Sweet Tea Trio" and Mamie Foreman, right, pose outside the front door of Nashville's iconic The Bluebird Café while an unidentified café visitor peeks out the door and into the picture. The Bluebird Café has become a Nashville landmark as a showcase for up-and-coming and established songwriters. At left, Mamie poses with husband and partner Ethan.

"Even though we had nothing, he thought music was important. He bought both of us Carvin guitars. Beautiful. That got me started."

His support was constant for Mamie and

her younger sister. "He went to every soccer and play practice, he built sets, he photographed all of it. We had nothing, he gave everything. He was truly our hero."

After graduating high school, Mamie left



Mamie Lew Foreman gets a hug from her father, Lewis Foreman, after one of Mamie's first times on stage as a professional musician, a performance in Aiken.

for Aiken and nursing school. "I thought about being a drama major but came back to nursing," she said. And her dad was there with sage advice. Recognizing the difficult path music might offer, he wanted to make sure that she had something to fall back on.

"It actually worked out. After I had a few years experience in nursing, I was able to do travel nursing," Mamie explained.

She and Ethan, an Alabama singer-songwriter she met in South Carolina at a songwriters' conference, have been playing together since 2009 and relocated to Austin, Texas, and immersed themselves in the Austin music scene.

"We met some really great songwriters there," Mamie said. "It was fun, one of my favorite years."

"Austin was wonderful. It had so many opportunities for songwriters and musicians," she said. It seemed like each year, a new crop of performers and songwriters made their way to Austin to hone their craft. "We huddled together and became The Class of 2010-Austin.

"We did a lot of shows, When we were not working, we were out playing," Mamie said. The two got married in 2011.

They eventually became "A Rake and The Rosebud," a reflection of their own musical heritage. In Aiken, Mamie was with a bluegrass band, "Mamie Lew and the Rosebuds." Ethan was in "Ethan Gardiner and the Rakes" in Alabama.

They recently changed the name of the duo to "The Gardiners." "It seemed like a logical evolution. It captures the past, present and future of us."

Fast forward to this year and the Gardiner family has set down roots in the Nashville area. The couple now has two children: a son, 6, and a daughter, 3.

Mamie is coming up on nine years as an emergency room nurse.

With the addition of a family and work, the couple's time on the stage has dwindled. "Performing now is few and far between. We are focused more on our writing. I don't have to do the late nights in the bars like I used to," Mamie said.

They cut their teeth on songwriting together. "One of my favorite stories is when we were sitting in a bar in Birmingham, a wonderful place. Ethan would write something on a napkin and slide it to me. I would write something and slide it back.

"We have a song that is called 'We Go Together.' It started off very silly and I was, 'We are not writing this song. It is ridiculous.' He said 'No, I really like this idea'."

They kept going, and on the napkin Mamie wrote "We go together like jelly and butter" and flipped it over to Ethan.

"It was a cliché, but I was getting this really good homemade jam my friend had made — it was truly inspiring," Mamie said.



Mamie Foreman, left, poses with Miranda Dawn of the duo Dawn and Hawks. Friends since their days in Austin, they teamed to pen "Hello Mary," a song that will appear on a upcoming Dawn and Hawks recording.

"This is What I Know" is one of two songs driven by her life in Colleton County that will be on an EP Mamie "Lew" Foreman will release soon. James Blankenship worked with Foreman on putting the finishing touches on "This is What I Know."

"Love is Our Home" is the other song on the EP.

"This is What I Know"

*I've lived in a trailer
I've lived in a mansion
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This is what I know*

*That 86 Oldsmobile
Me and my daddy
Playing house in the back seat
But lord we were happy
It was our home
Home sweet home*

*You can take the devil to heaven
You can drag your god down below
But there's got to be room in that middle
Or you'll wind up losing your soul
This is what I know*

*I once knew a man
And we lived in a castle
25 rooms but I might has well have been shackled
I was all alone*

*You can take the devil to heaven
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The song that came together had more serious parts, but the last line went back to the inspirational jam. “We go together like jelly and butter, Lord I know I will never love another. Never, never love another like you.”

The song wasn't the only thing inspired by the jam. It led Mamie to try her hand at a small business, running jam-making business that lies dormant during the winter.

That type of exchange continues. “In almost every conversation, maybe once a day, he will say something and I'll say, ‘That is a really good line.’ I'll say something and he will say, ‘You need to write that down.’”

Although the couple enjoys writing together, she said, “We write together least of all.” They encourage each other to write with other songwriters.

“It brings a different nuance to a song,” Mamie said.

“A lot of times when I first meet with a new person I am writing with, I won't even write the first day. I just try to get to know them. We will listen to each other's songs.”

“It is a very intimate process to write with a person, getting into emotion and stories. The biggest part is the story telling.”

Some people can just sit down with someone else and start writing. “For me personally, I have to get to know who I am writing with and where they are coming from.”

Returning to Colleton County for a Rice Festival concert, Mamie said, is exciting.

When she and Ethan first talked to Rice Festival Board member Jeff Musgrave about the appearance, they got another exciting surprise.

“Jeff said we would be opening for a band called the ‘Sweet Tea Trio.’ I said, ‘Are you kidding me?’”

“We have known them for almost five years,” she explained. “We were at this conference at the Blue Bird Café in Nashville and really hit it off. We have become very close to them.”

They get together at Ethan and Mamie's home outside Nashville. “It is right on the lake, it is a really creative space. Instruments are always lying out everywhere.”

Mamie has a song on the upcoming Sweet Tea Trio EP. Sweet Tea Trio, she said, is getting noticed. They opened for Kid Rock at nine arena shows last year and will open for Alabama this year.

Mamie said 2017 was a big year for her songwriting.

In addition to the song appearing on the next Sweet Tea Trio recording, she has a song slated to appear on a recording by .45 Surprise, a bluegrass group based in the Huntsville, Ala., area.

Another joint songwriting effort, “Hello Mary” is set to appear on an album being released by Dawn and Hawks this year. Miranda Dawn and Chris Hawks are alumni of the Class of 2010-Austin.

Mamie and Miranda penned “Hello Mary.” “It is a pretty neat story,” Mamie said.

Mamie, who still has a South Carolina



Mamie Foreman and Ethan Gardiner perform a duet during one of their performances in a career and marriage that has taken them to Austin, Birmingham and Nashville.

number for her cell phone, began receiving calls and voice mail messages from a South Carolina number she didn't recognize.

“I didn't know who she was, who she thought she was talking to. She sounded older and, from my nursing background, I realized that she had Alzheimer's,” Mamie said.

“I started talking to her — she thought I was family,” Mamie said. “We would just talk about nothing, about shoes.”

Eventually, Mamie saw the encounter as a song. Ethan said, “You should really write that.”

“I don't want to sound reluctant, but it was so personal,” Mamie said. “It almost hurts sometimes to write certain songs. You are laying it all out there — you are telling your deepest secrets.”

Mamie brought Miranda Dawn into the project, and the song means a lot to her as Miranda's grandmother had Alzheimer's. Miranda works on a music project for nursing homes, putting together a play list of generational music and distributing to the nursing home on portable electronic devices. “It is really a beautiful thing,” Mamie said.

“Then my husband comes in and says ‘Mamie, what are you going to do when she stops calling you?’ I said, ‘Oh my God, I didn't even think about that.’”



Mamie Foreman and Ethan Gardiner were partners in song well before becoming man and wife. The man from Tuscaloosa and the woman from Colleton County, performing now as “The Gardiners,” will sing at a Rice Festival concert in April.

That led to the last line in the song, “I know one day the phone's not going to ring. She will be better off and I will be wondering.”

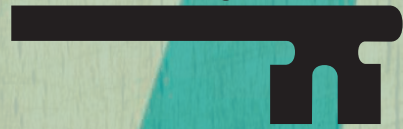
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Harold's Country C

Story and Photos

There are few places more authentic than Harold's Country Club — in the middle of nowhere, but close to everywhere.

Harold's, rich in local history and folklore, is located near I-95 and exit 38 on Highway 17A in Yemassee. It isn't hard to find — just look for the old gas station with the still-functioning gas pump out front. It is not fancy, but it is damn good.

Amidst a themed auto parts décor, guests dine in lunch-

room-style seating. You won't hear many (or any) complaints though, as the down-home Southern cooking is something to write home about. Featured in numerous publications such as *Southern Living*, *Esquire*, *Charleston* and *Coastal Living*, Harold's Country Club garners rave reviews from both locals and tourists.

Built in the 1930s as a Chevrolet dealership, the building was purchased by Harold Peeples in 1973 as an old-fashioned garage and gas station. In the late 70s, friends and neighbors began gathering for covered dish suppers on Thursday nights, sometimes held in the garage due to impending weather or mosquitos. As the event grew, Peeples began doing all the cook-



Club – Damn good!

by Cindy Crosby

ing and charging a small amount to cover expenses.

Back then, the cars would often have to be moved to set up tables and chairs. As the garage evolved into a bar and grill, the décor stuck around — with radiator hoses and fan belts hanging from the walls.

A major fire on May 9, 1999, changed things as the entire bar was destroyed. But Peeples was determined to rebuild. Friends contributed various items to help restore the unique décor and a room that had just been completed at the back of the garage became the bar, meaning Harold's was open for business within the week.

How did Harold's Country Club earn its name? Well, ac-

ording to his family, Harold was a huge supporter of baseball and softball. In fact, he played, coached and umpired. When the local school ballfield was no longer available for the local softball team, a group led by Harold formed the Yemassee Athletic Association, eventually purchasing the land beside his business and building a ballfield.

According to local lore, after the games, the announcer would say, "Now, let's all go over to Harold's Country Club for a cool one." Soon people started calling the business Harold's Country Club. In 2011, the ballfield was named "The Harold Peeples Athletic Park" in his honor.

Although Harold Peeples passed away in 2003, Harold's



Harold's is known for its unique decor, ranging from this collection of old bottles to various car parts adorning the walls.

Country Club continues to be a family-run business. "Over the years, not much has changed — just our hours," said Estelle Roseneau, a long-time employee, who is the general manager. "We see all different types of folks come in." According to Rosenau the most popular thing on the menu is the porkchops — and, oh yeah, their famous, mouth-

watering steak. Harold's Country Club is open Thursday through Saturday with additional times for private parties. And, if you'd like to do a little fishing on the way home, the store still sells fishing bait and tackle.

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Burnt & Salty

The Colleton Commercial Kitchen's first customer, still expanding its operation

Bob Cook and Cris Miller are slowly growing their business at the Colleton Commercial Kitchen.

The Mount Pleasant couple brought their fledging company, Burnt and Salty, to the kitchen facility late in 2015. "We filled our first bottle of Korean Mustard the day after Thanksgiving in 2015," Cris said.

"Basically, 2016 was when we had enough of our stuff together to open the on-line store and get some retail accounts," she explained. "Everything that we make and sell is prepared there (at the Colleton Commercial Kitchen.)"

Korean Mustard was Bob's recipe. A Charleston-based chef, Bob "was working in a restaurant and making his Korean mustard. He had so many rave reviews about it."

"Finally when the thousandth person said he should bottle this, Bob came home and said 'What do you think? Do you want to

start a condiment company?'," Cris said. "I said sure and that was the beginning."

"It was nice that the market research was already done," Cris said. "We knew that people liked the product, and we knew there was a market for it because it was truly unique. It is not like a barbecue sauce or hot sauce, which is a pretty saturated market in my opinion."

They had the product, she said, "we just had to figure out how to start a business, how to work with the Food and Drug Administration and the South Carolina Department of Agriculture in the testing and recipe expansion."

"The first six months was quite a learning experience — with our inspections done, we were good to go to officially make and bottle the sauce," she said.

Their next step was to find a place to manufacture it, and they discovered the Colleton Commercial Kitchen. Burnt and Salty was the first company to set up shop in the then-new commercial kitchen.

"We, along with Matt (Mardell), learned a lot together," Cris

Story by George Salsberry, photos submitted



Bob Cook samples the latest batch of Coconut Suka, a spice coconut vinegar that was the second Burnt and Salty creation produced at the Colleton Commercial Kitchen.

said. She remembers the three of them working their way through things like how the pneumatic filler and bottle labeler worked.

When they first came to the Colleton Commercial Kitchen, Mardell was the kitchen director; last year he was named executive director of the Colleton Museum and Farmers Market while continuing to oversee the operation of the commercial kitchen.

"Matt has done an incredible job, especially for someone who did not necessarily have a background in food. He has been helping all his clients learn the ropes and figure out how to do things legally," she said.

"He has been such a great resource. It is really great to have somebody who is there every day. He has been an incredible asset for us, the kitchen and the city of Walterboro."

Mondays are when you will find Bob and Cris at the commercial kitchen. "We take Mondays off from our other jobs — they are reserved for our cook days."

The couple has spent years in the restaurant industry. Bob is currently the executive chef of Edmund's Oast. "It keeps him busy," Cris said.

"I have also worked in the industry for decades, primarily front of the house," she adds. "I don't dare step foot in the kitchen, unless it is for our own brand." She's also in the U.S. Navy Reserves and "that takes up a good bit of time."

Cris said that 90 percent of the time, she and Bob cook together. "We have learned to work in a kitchen together, that was

new as well. A lot of this stuff comes very naturally to him, not so much to me. He is very patient.

"We have a pretty strong system when we get to the kitchen. We are pretty efficient," she added.

Efficiency is no small matter when they have blocked off six hours of kitchen time to prepare their signature Korean Mustard and the other three products now in their condiment line.

The couple followed Korean Mustard with Coconut Suka, a spicy Philipino-style vinegar. "We thought it would be a nice contrast to the Korean mustard."

Cris said she spurs on Bob's culinary creativity, "I'm always on Bob — what's next, what's next, what's next?"

What's next was Chili Glaze, a Thai-style garlic and herb glaze. "I really think we nailed the recipe to balance the spicy but sweet."

"The fourth was a no brainer," she said. "A lot of people think the Korean Mustard is going to be very spicy because it looks spicy and it says Korean. It's not. We had a lot of requests for a spicy Korean mustard."

The decision on their next product, Cris said, comes from "a lot of he and I talking, getting feedback from our customers. It is looking out into the market and seeing what is not completely saturated."

The goal is "to try to blend familiar flavors with some novel and unfamiliar ingredients. To try to stress uniqueness and versatility in the kitchen as well."

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Bob Cook and Cris Miller have taken their culinary experience to the marketplace, founding condiment maker Burnt and Salty. When forming the company, they chose the Colleton Commercial Kitchen to cook their signature sauce, Korean Mustard, becoming the first culinary entrepreneurs to locate in the Walterboro facility.

On cooking Mondays, the couple loads their motor vehicle with supplies, utensils and dry ingredients at home and then hits a store for fresh eggs and sugar before making their way to the kitchen.

After everything has been transferred from their vehicle to the kitchen, Bob starts cracking eggs. A batch of their Korean Mustard takes 320 eggs.

While Bob's cracking eggs, Cris is adding the dry ingredients to a 30-gallon steam jacketed kettle.

The cooking process involves constant record keeping and logging of temperatures and times to stay FDA compliant.

When the cooking's completed, the product gets bottled, most filling 12-ounce bottles, and some going into half-gallon containers headed to restaurant kitchens.

With one product in the bottle, they clean the kitchen before they can begin making another sauce in their product line.

The last step is to load their motor vehicle with the cases of still hot product to head home. "We usually label at home," Cris said. "After six hours in the kitchen, you want to sit on the couch with a glass of wine."

Cris said that Burnt and Salty is taking a different path. "About 95 percent of specialty foods are co-packed, meaning you give your recipe to a company and they make it for you."

Turning over production to someone else, however, "is kind of like turning over your children to a caretaker.

"It is your product: you know you are going to put the right ingredients in it, you are going make it correctly, you are going to make sure the label is on straight," Cris said. "Nobody cares about your stuff more than you.

"Another interesting facet is that we are a self-distributing company. We don't sell our product to a distributor. It is me and my hand-truck walking in the back door," Cris said. "A lot of businesses don't want that, but some see the value in what we do — that it is us who do everything."

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Bob Cook puts a discerning eye to the contents of one of the bottles of freshly-made Korean Mustard.

Cris handles the business side of Burnt and Salty, the marketing and distribution. You can find their products at specialty food stores and small butcher shops through North and South Carolina, up in New York City and Washington, D.C, or out west in Arizona.

“We count on our customers and fans to talk to their specialty stores or small butcher shops and request it,” Cris said. “The most flattering and the best day is when someone reaches out to you and says they want to carry your product.”

2018 will see Burnt and Salty seeking to expand its national exposure. Bob and Cris plan to enter Korean Mustard in the national mustard competition at the National Mustard Museum in Wisconsin. It will be vying for supremacy in the exotic category.

They will also enter their Korean Mustard and Coconut Suka in the SOFI awards sponsored by the National Specialty Foods Association. “It is like the Oscars of the specialty food world,” she said.

When they talk to others in the area food industry, Cris said, “They wonder why we go to Walterboro.”

“A huge selling point for a company just starting is the rental by the hour,” Cris said. Other commercial kitchens in the region charge a monthly lease. The difference between Colleton Commercial Kitchen and the other facilities in the area, she said, saves them thousands of dollars.

“It allows us to reach our equilibrium point where sales equal expenses a lot quicker, and it allows us to keep our expenses a lot lower,” Cris said.

“They just have all the equipment we need. A lot of kitchens don’t have a steam jacketed kettle,” she added, something required by the FDA regulations.

While the couple builds Burnt and Salty, she said, “I keep my eye open for something that is closer, but you just can’t beat the equipment that is available and the customer service that Matt provides us.

“The Colleton Commercial Kitchen is a very good medium to long term solution for us,” she said.



A large kettle of Korean Mustard simmers at the Colleton Commercial Kitchen, its preparation one of Burnt and Salty's marathon six-hour cooking sessions at the commercial kitchen. Below are some of the ingredients.



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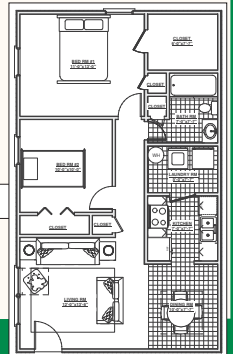
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The last one



Ruffin's BZS Community Center is one of the last Rosenwald schools left in the country and an integral part of Colleton's black history



*Stories and photos by Katrena McCall
Old photos courtesy the S.C. Archives/CTS Alumni*

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This is one of the original wood stoves that provided heat for the school before central heat and air was ever a thought in someone's mind. Students' first mission on winter school mornings was to build a fire to warm up the building.

The little white clapboard building with its red shutters that is now the BZS Community Center may not look impressive. In fact, it's one of those places many would drive past without noticing. But the tiny building has a long and important history in Colleton County.

Built in 1928-29, the building served as Ruffin's only school for black children, one of the almost 500 Rosenwald schools built in S.C. through matching grants from the Rosenwald Fund, established by Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears and Roebuck, in 1915 to build better quality black schools in the South. (See sidebar.) The Ruffin school was one of six Rosenwald schools in Colleton County and the only one of the six surviving and still in use.

The original Ruffin Rosenwald school, a three-teacher plan built in 1921-22, burned and was rebuilt as a four-teacher school in 1928-29, costing a total of \$5,260 (\$300/Rosenwald, \$800/white, \$400/Negro and \$3,760/public money collected from the fire insurance.)

At one point there were two buildings on the four-acre

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The two front rooms that are now used for meetings and other community functions once held two classes in each room for Ruffin's black children. Two more former classrooms are located on the right side of the building, one dedicated to the late Katie Washington who was BZS' director for many years.

property: one housed the elementary school and another, the high school. The elementary school became the BZS Community Center. The high school building was moved a mile or so down Smyly Road to become a private home, which is still occupied today.

The school closed after the last class graduated in 1953 and sat empty until 1964, when the BZS Community Center was organized. The "patrons of the area constituting the former Ruffin

School District" met on Jan. 20, 1964 at Ruffin High School and voted to convey ownership of the property to Dan Ray Hutson, Willie Stephens and Jervey Byrd, who were "elected trustees of Ruffin BZS Community Center, to hold, manage and direct the use of the abandoned school building formerly known as the Ruffin Colored Elementary School ... as a community center for the use and benefit of the residents of the community or area."

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The 1964 deed gave the trustees the authority to remodel, repair, change the partition walls in the building and make any other changes they wanted, as long as the community paid for it. If the building ceased to be used as a community center, or if the school district needed it back for "school purposes," ownership would revert to the school district.

Since that day in 1964, the BZS Committee has done much to preserve and protect the building, while retaining as much of the original building as possible.

The old doors and windows sit in a back room filled with school desks that once saw use in the classrooms. Two pot-bellied wood stoves that once heated the building still sit in a corner, and the original huge blackboard hangs on the bead-board wall. What was the principal's office has been converted into a kitchen, where many fundraising dinners are prepared. The building now has central heat and air, as well as a gas heater, and wrought-iron bars were installed over the new windows after a series of break-ins. The original hardwood floors have been covered with vinyl flooring.

But the building still serves its community. Regular events — many held in conjunction with Hand-In-Hand Community Outreach — include everything from summer programs for children to chess lessons, providing meeting space to exercise classes held in a room dedicated to one of the center's first directors, the late Katie Washington, who graduated from the school about 1941. She was active in the center's activities until her health failed.

Today's committee members include Sirena Memminger, Alice Jackson, Gloria Brown, Daisy Lee Jenkins, Lille Mae Bryant, Vivian McFadden, Essie Bowles, O. Harriett S. Rivers and Pernice Jones, all of Ruffin, as well as Sonya Stephens of Walterboro and Queenie Crawford of Cottageville.



The doors and windows have been replaced, but the originals are still stacked in this storeroom, along with old school desks.

One of the dreams of the committee is to have the BZS Center and its history listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Last January, Albert Wiggins of the Arnold Fields Community Endowment came down and talked to the group about his work to get the Gifford Ros-enwald School in Hampton County on the list.

But the leg-work — and the funding — to get that accomplished are both considerable,

said Sirena Memminger, BZS chairman. Right now, the target for their funds is having repairs made from recent water damage to the building. And the historic register's application alone requires a mound of paperwork and \$1,800 just to apply.

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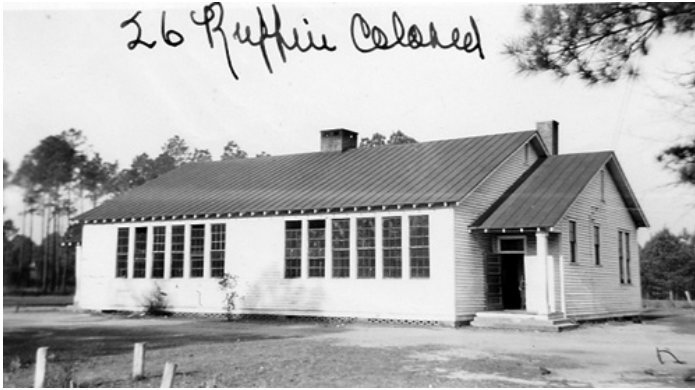


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The BZS Center when it was new about 1925.

Remembering the 'good old days'

The small white building sits quietly on Smyly Road in Ruffin, a reminder of a time when life was slower and people, not technology, were the focus.

It was a time when children walked to school and brought their lunch from home, studied from books and learned from information written on a blackboard. They began their school days by lighting the wood-burning stoves which provided heat for the building, respected their teachers, played basketball at recess. The day often ended with a trip with friends to then-thriving downtown Ruffin to buy a nickel's worth of candy from the general store.

The Ruffin Colored School was a place where black children learned their ABC's, addition and subtraction and other basic subjects. For 32 years, 1921-1953, the school served as a center of learning for the black population of Ruffin.

Ruffin resident Vivian McFadden, who completed 1st-12th grades at the school (graduating with the class of 1952), remembers a very different Ruffin from the handful of homes that exists today.

"Ruffin was a booming little place at that time. There was a mill that people could work at, stores, a cotton gin, a depot where the train would come through," she said. "But then everything disappeared."

McFadden grew up on a small farm just across the road from the school. "I lived right across the road, but some of them lived way down the Ruffin road and had to walk a long ways to get to school," she said.

As the petite 82-year-old stood in one of the former classrooms, she noted that the third and fourth grades were taught in that room — one grade on each side. The same teacher taught both classes. The fifth and sixth grades were in a second room, and the seventh grade in another.

The fourth room was the home economics room. The high school classes were located in a second building next to the elementary school — that building was later moved down Smyly Road to become a private home.

School started after Labor Day and got out in the spring, McFadden remembered. But since all the families were farmers, "we



Vivian McFadden remembers sitting in these chairs, which were pulled up to the desk at left.

had to get out of school and pick cotton."

During a typical day, students "just did regular things. We just didn't have all the electronic things like they do today," she said. "We had a lunchroom that served hot lunch and a little canteen." There was also a basketball court out back, next to the outdoor bathrooms.

"And there was a cannery back there where people could bring their vegetables out and can them in cans or jars. You'd bring some already prepared and while those were being processed, you'd prepare the others," she said.

Her graduating class in 1952 had 75 students, the largest class ever. They held commencement ceremonies across the road in Buckhead U.M. Church because there were too many to fit in the four-room schoolhouse. McFadden's class was the next to last class to graduate before the school closed in 1953.

Pernice Jones also grew up just across the road from the school, on a farm her grandfather later sold to be the site of "the new" Ruffin High School. She also attended all 12 grades at the little Ruffin school, graduating in 1948 also in Buckhead U.M.C., a few years ahead of McFadden. But the two knew each other.

Jones grew up living with her two aunts and uncles, since her mother died when she was too young to remember her. "They took me in and were very good to me," she said. "I went from one aunt



Pernice Jones stands in front of the school's original blackboard which still hangs on the beadboard wall.



The original Ruffin Colored School was built about 1920, but burned and was replaced by the building that is now the BZS Community Center.

to the other, and that's how I finished here (at Ruffin school.) They were my daddy's sisters. He didn't give me away, and I was glad of that. He could have given me to anybody he wanted to. But he didn't."

Those were the good old days, she said. "I enjoyed it (going to school.) You could get away from home."

Her spicy personality sometimes interfered with those good times, however. "I remember my teacher Odessa Stephens. She didn't play. I showed up there one morning and I was just running my mouth. So she said, I could stand up and tell the class what the subject for the day was. I got up there, looking around, and I couldn't tell them nothing — and that was something for me."

She also remembers another teacher, Mr. Summers. "If we did good, sometimes he'd sing a song for us. If we did bad, he'd make us hold out our hand and he'd take his belt

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from around his waist and he'd chop you in the hand. I didn't like that. You could feel it — you really could feel it."

Some of her favorite school memories were watching basketball games (which she never played, but loved watching) and visits to the canteen. "If I had a dime or a nickel, I'd buy squirrel nuts. The pack had five or 10 in it, and you'd distribute them one each," she said. "If one had lunch and other didn't, you'd halve you lunch with them."

She chuckled as she remembered trips to downtown Ruffin. Her uncle would write down what he wanted from the store on a little tablet, then she and her cousins would walk to town to get it. "If we could get something else besides what he sent us for, we'd do that. Then we'd try to eat it all before we got home. We couldn't get much — a nickel's worth of this or maybe a dime's worth — a little sucker or something. But the man in the store would write down what you got. I didn't get no beating, but I'd get a good scolding."

She also remembers picking cotton. "There was this field of cotton, all grown up with grass, right over there," she said, pointing across the road. "I wanted \$2, but I couldn't keep up. But all them old people would come back and reach it, so I could get my \$2 that day. I think I used it to buy me some clothes that you wear underneath your other clothes."

That's what people did back then — helped each other. "That was the good old days."

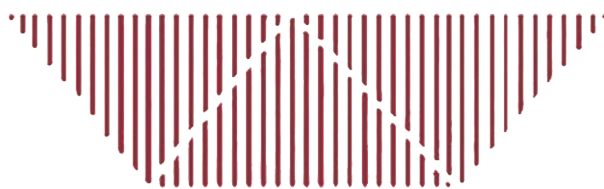


There were six Ros-enwald schools in Colleton County, according to the S.C. Archives: two at Ruffin (the first burned), Ritter, Rum Gully (at left), Oak Hill, Walterboro. The Ruffin building is thought to be the only one that still exists.

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What were Rosenwald schools?

In 1915, Sears and Roebuck President Julius Rosenwald established a matching grant fund in his name to construct better quality black schools throughout the South, according to the S.C. Dept. of Archives and History. He provided the funding, and Booker T. Washington, head of the Tuskegee Institute, had the vision and the contacts.

Together the two came up with a new concept: the matching grant. If a rural black community could come up with a contribution (monetary or labor) and convince the county's white school board to agree to help with funding, Rosenwald would contribute cash, usually about 1/5 of the total cost.

Between 1917 and 1932, the Rosenwald Fund assisted in the construction of over 5,000 school buildings, forever changing the rural Southern landscape. Nearly 500 buildings were constructed in South Carolina, including six in Colleton County: two at Ruffin (one burned and was replaced by the building that now houses the BZS Community Center), Oak Hill, Ritter, Rum Gully and Walterboro.

At a time when state support for educating African American children was woefully inadequate, Rosenwald Schools played a critical role in educating South Carolina's children. Building plans ranged from one-teacher schools to seven-teacher buildings, based on standard plans drawn up initially by two black architecture professors at Tuskegee (Robert R. Taylor and W.A. Hazel) and later by Rosenwald official Samuel L. Smith.

Though over one-third of black children in the South in the



JULIUS ROSENWALD

first half of the 20th century passed through the doors of a Rosenwald school, most of these schools have now disappeared from the landscape. In South Carolina, many became victims of neglect and abandonment as a result of the School Equalization Program (or 3% sales tax program), started in 1951 under Gov. James Byrnes, which consolidated rural black schools by building state-of-the-art new black schools in an effort to thwart integration. Other Rosenwald schools have been severely altered or simply stand empty, awaiting a new life.

But there's a new benefactor on the scene trying to preserve the remaining schools in S.C. — Sen. Tim Scott. Al Jenkins, small business outreach coordinator with Scott's office, is helping the schools' owners find funding to restore the

school buildings and put them back into condition to once again serve their communities.

"The initiative is to save them and get them in viable and restorable condition, and then turn them into community centers," Jenkins said. He came to Walterboro in June and met with local officials to familiarize them with available funding. All of the funds he works with are grants, which means the money does not have to be repaid. He recently helped residents of Gifford in Hampton County get \$150,000 to restore their Rosenwald school.

"The effort here is grand because of the significance. It's a dire effort to preserve whatever can be saved. The second effort is to make sure the community will use the facility," he said. "We want to make sure these buildings are safe."

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Colleton Training School is believed to have originated as a Rosenwald school. The above picture is 1925-1960. Below are the buildings that replaced it.

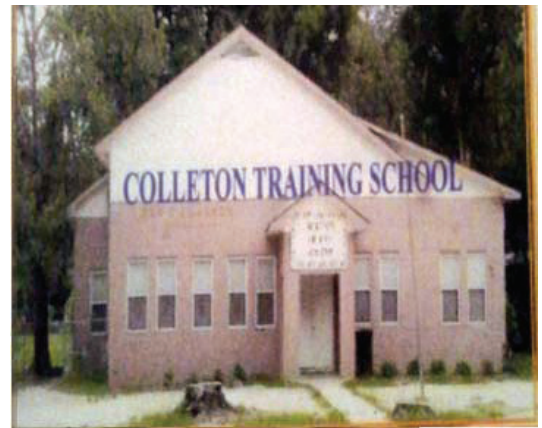
COLLETON TRAINING SCHOOL

March 11, 1931

The Press and Standard

It is gratifying to note the increase in the enrollment of the color schools for the past few years. The Colleton Training School is one of two schools whose work is of sufficient standing to warrant Mr. Rosenwald aiding the school twice in building. Just now has been completed an excellent building on the grounds which will house the high school grades. The colored plant is conservatively estimated as being worth at least \$12,000. In these buildings are housed 345 children from various parts of the district and county. They are being taught, in addition to the regular subjects, home economics and agriculture.

The school system now has grown with a total of 748 whites and 345 negroes of a total of nearly 1,100.



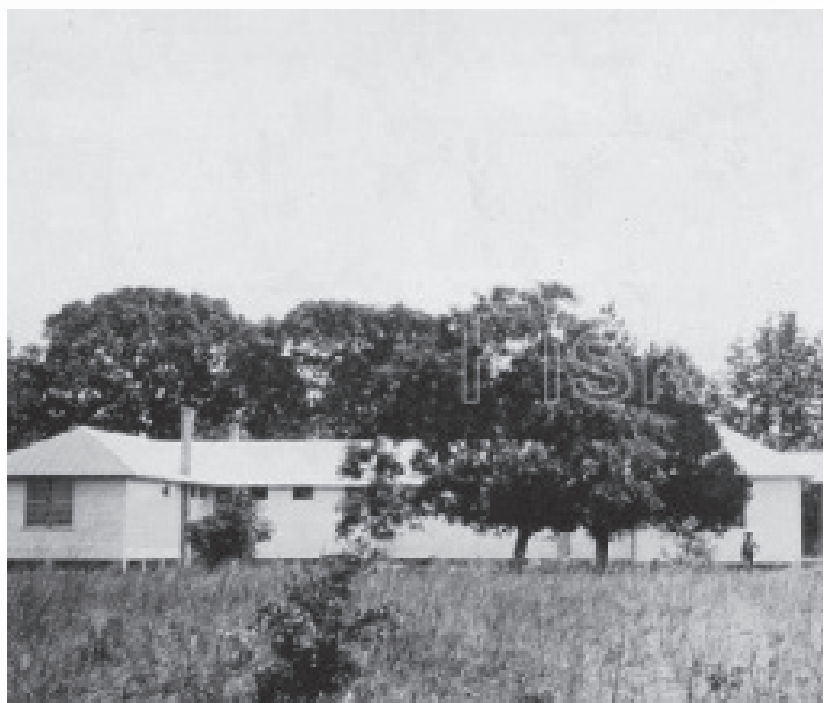
OAK HILL SCHOOL

Oct. 14, 1925

The Press and Standard

Oak Hill school, colored, opened Monday with an enrollment of 142 pupils. Interesting exercises marked the opening. Superintendent W.H. Ward of the Walterboro schools made an address to parents, teachers and students. Superintendent of Education H.S. Strickland was present for a short while but could not stay for an address. Rev. Williams of the colored M.E. Church also gave a talk.

The teachers and students of this school are anticipating a successful term and are beginning the session under most favorable circumstances in a new building and with a good faculty. P.J. Hammitt is principal with D.R. McTeer as assistant. Other teachers are Lucile Williams of Thomasville, Ga.; Sarah Smith of Orangeburg; Lillie Gadson of Orangeburg is in charge of home economics. All of the teachers, with the exception of McTeer, received their education at the State College in Orangeburg. McTeer is an honor graduate of the Claffin University of the class of 1902 and has taught at Oak Hill school for 10 years.





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Story and Photos by Cindy Crosby

Caw Caw Interpretive Center

Imagine a peaceful stroll across six miles of trails and boardwalks carrying you through strikingly different Lowcountry habitats. Along the way, you are not only captivated by the serene beauty of your surroundings, but garner a glimpse into the abundant wildlife found in the Lowcountry.

This place exists and is just a stone's throw away from our Lowcountry front porch.

Caw Caw Interpretive Center, located at 5200 Savannah Highway, 17 South, in Ravenel, is a short 30-minute drive that you will not regret making. Rich in natural, cultural and historical resources, Caw Caw will take visitors





on a journey through time.

Built on former 18th and 19th century rice plantations, the area is known for being one of the important sites of the Stono Rebellion. It is now managed as a low-impact wildlife preserve where visitors can experience the unique ecosystem of the Lowcountry. Surrounded by tidal marshes and swamps, the area is noted for birding and is a favored habitat for alligators, otter, deer, bald eagles, songbirds and numerous waterfowl.

Don't put off visiting Caw Caw because six miles of trails sounds daunting — choices abound when it comes to choosing the trails you wish to explore. The Habitat Loop (3.6 miles) loops around the outside of Caw Caw, an easy flat trail that winds through several different habitats. The self-guided inside trails include the Bottomland Hardwood Forest Trail (1.4 miles), the Rice Fields Trail (1 mile), the Maritime Forest Trail (.4 mile) and the Georgia Pacific Swamp Boardwalk (.74 mile).

A few “don't misses” include the elevated boardwalk through the wetlands, the swamp boardwalk and the observation deck (complete with rocking chairs) in the heart of the rice field.



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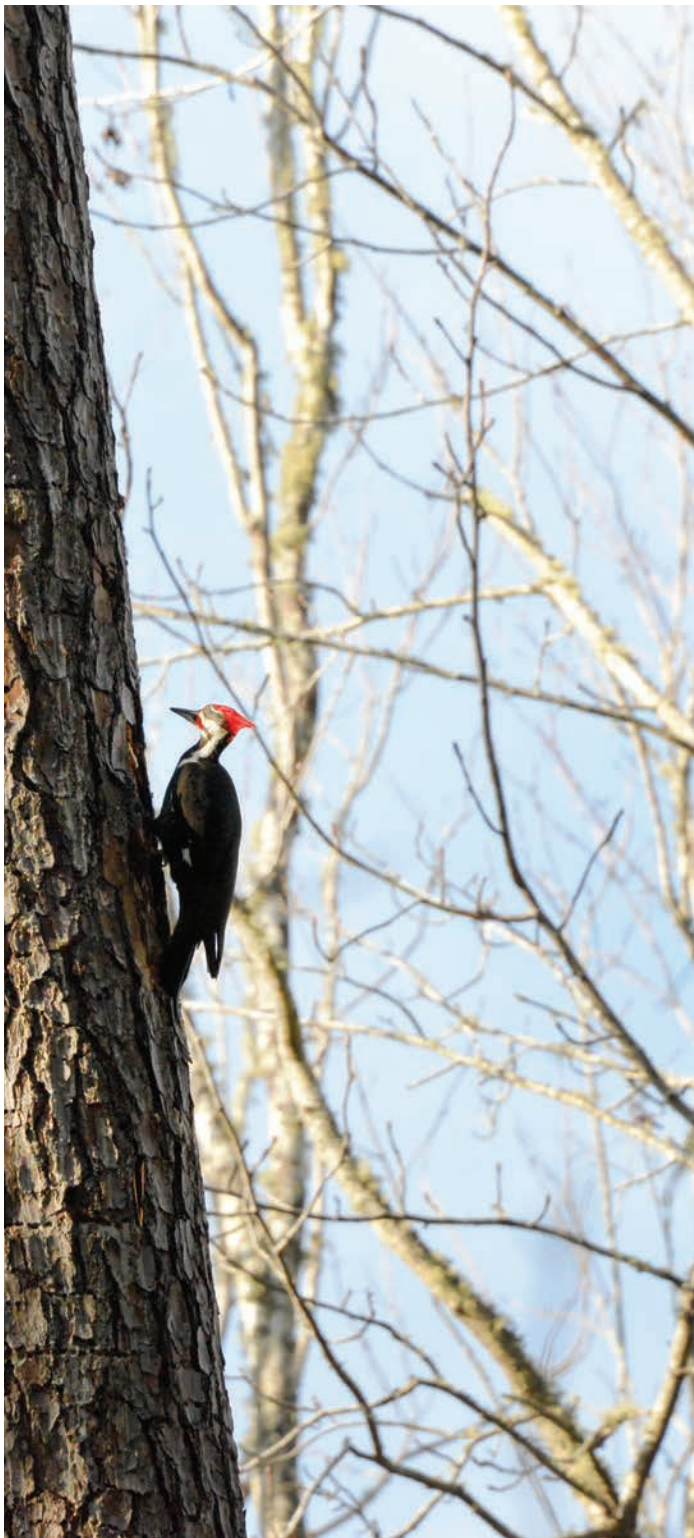


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As you journey through Caw Caw, stop and take advantage of the raised platforms where you can climb up and “sit a spell.” Not only is it a different vantage point for your viewing pleasure, but you may also find a new outlook surrounded by the scenic beauty and salt air — just be sure to mind the alligators and take your camera.

Caw Caw Interpretive Center offers environmental educator or interpreter-led educational group rates and self-led educational group rates for education programs from preschool through college.

For more information, call 843-762-8015.





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Edisto Beach Campground Back and better than ever

Despite being ravaged by two recent hurricanes, Edisto Beach Campground, operated by the South Carolina State Parks, is back and better than ever. As one of the last places in the State of South Carolina where you can camp within feet of the beach, Edisto Beach Campground is special — and very popular.

The campground features 116 campsites with water and 50-amp electrical service, along with five rustic campsites, which typically rent for \$20-\$55 per night.

Seven cabins are also available for rent. All are completely

furnished, heated, air-conditioned and supplied with bath and bed linens, basic cooking and eating utensils, coffee maker, microwave, a television and a screened-in porch. Seasonal nightly rates vary.

“Both campgrounds here at the park are very busy,” said Jon Greider, park manager for Edisto Beach State Park.

“Reservations are necessary for the months of March through October in the beachfront campground and can be made 13 months in advance. Many of our guests camp year after year to enjoy the quiet family atmosphere.” Reservations can be made online at southcarolinaparks.reserveamerica.com or by calling 803-734-0156.

South Carolina State Parks offer more than 80,000 acres of protected lands stretching from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the sand dunes of the Atlantic Ocean. S.C. state parks protect some of the most inviting natural, cultural and recreational destinations in the country where you can discover stunning forested mountains and towering waterfalls, blackwater rivers and scenic inland lakes, white sand beaches and priceless cultural treasures.



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Story and Photos by Cindy Crosby

Hands-on learning

That's the ticket at the Edisto Beach Environmental Learning Center

What makes Edisto Island and the ACE Basin so special?

The answer to that question and many more can be found by visiting Edisto Beach Environmental Learning Center on Oyster Row Lane, Edisto Island. The \$3.3 million-dollar project was funded by a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA).

The Learning Center is part of the Edisto Beach State Park and a gateway to the ACE Basin reserve, situated just a short walk from the main building. There you will find a lengthy pier that allows visitors to enjoy the smell of the sea and take in the unmatched view of Bay Creek.



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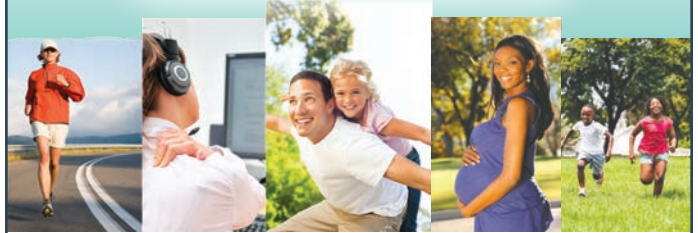
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This hidden gem features many hands-on interactive exhibits, a touch tank, a movie theater and offers many youth and adult programs. Park trails begin at the center and allow visitors to bask in the natural beauty of Edisto Island. Wildlife viewing abounds along the trails and birding is a must while visiting.

While there, be sure to visit Bache Monument, a 4,000-year-old shell midden (known to locals as The Shell Mound) which is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Used throughout the year for field trips and classes about the history and environmental changes on Edisto Island and the ACE Basin, the center's main building itself boasts platinum LEED certification (green building).

A trip to the Edisto Beach Environmental Learning Center provides visitors with both recreational and educational opportunities which emphasize the conservation, protection and interpretation of the state's natural and cultural resources.

Park admission: \$5/adult; \$3.25 S.C. seniors; \$3/child age 6-15; free for children 5 and younger. To learn more, contact the Learning Center at (843) 869-4430.

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