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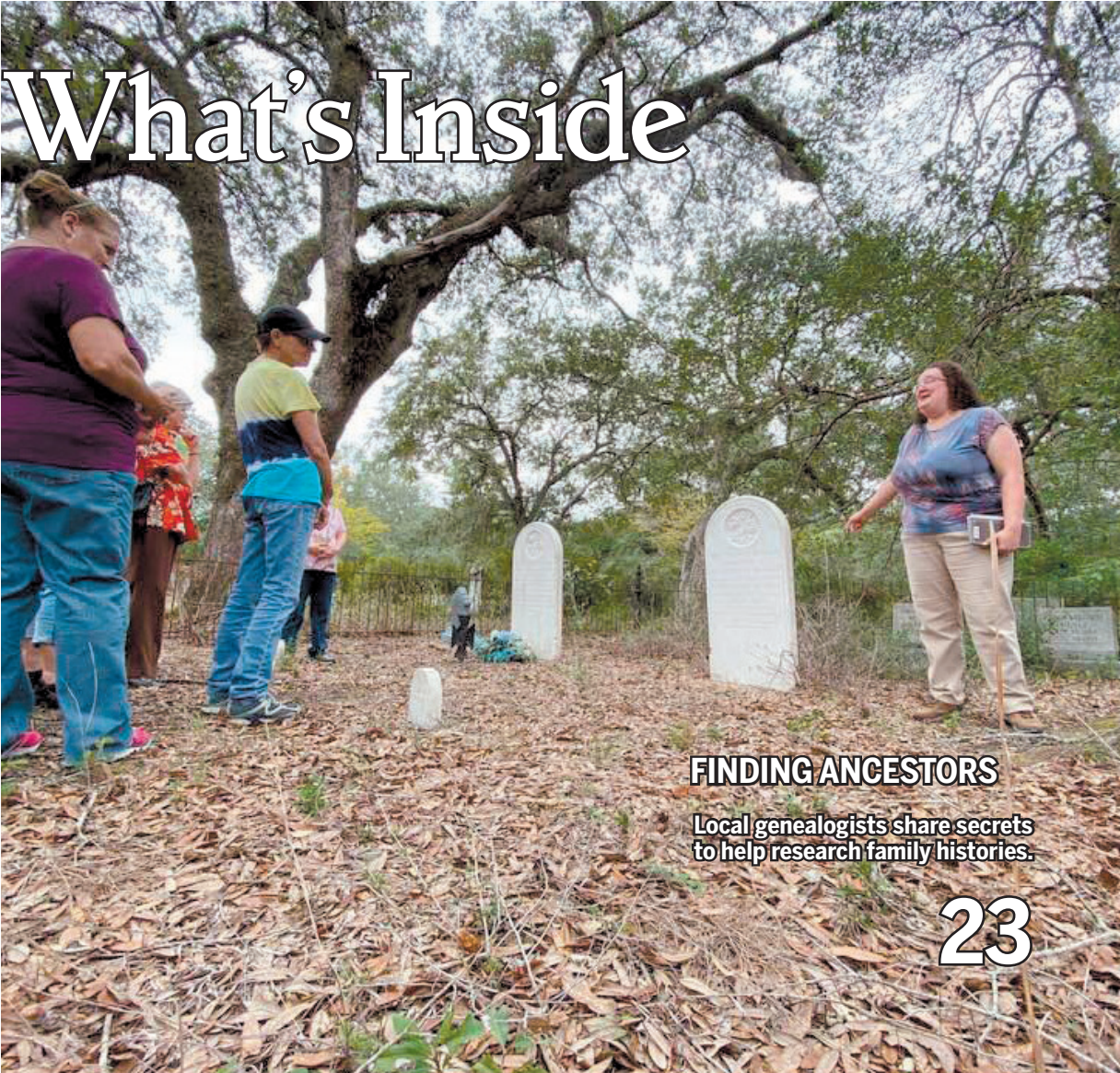
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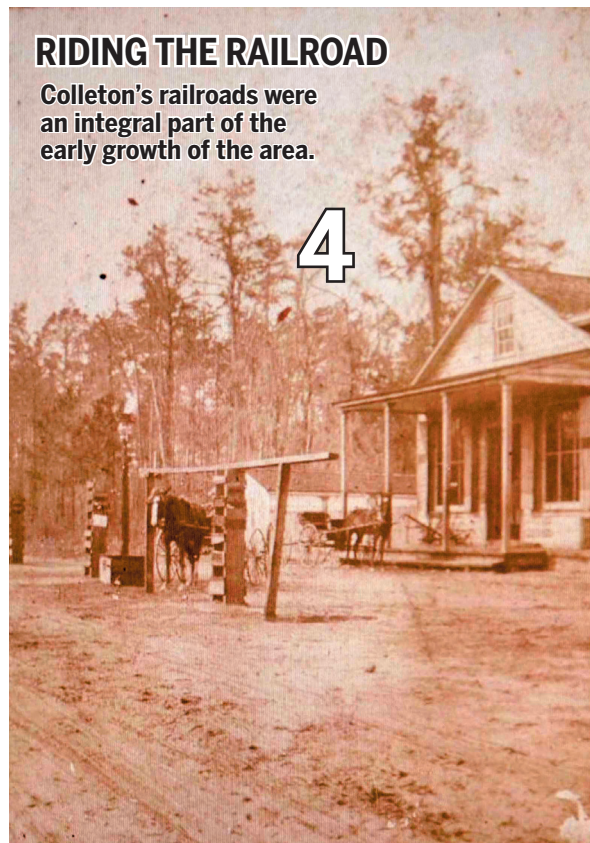
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Horse and buggy near Yemassee Junction about 1886.

# Riding the railroad

*Story by Vicki Brown*

**O**n Christmas Day in 1830, the “Best Friend of Charleston” passed through Colleton District.

A South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company (SCC&RR) steam passenger locomotive, the Best Friend was the first official railroad line in the South and the longest railroad line under single management in the world.

At the start of the U.S. Civil War in 1861, those tracks connected to Green Pond.

In the book “Autobiography of Arab,” written by Edward Prioleau Henderson whose family founded Hendersonville, Confederate Captain Henderson received his official notice to be at the Green Pond Depot on June 15, 1861, to begin service with his warhorse Arab.

After the war, Henderson was asked to once again travel to the Green

Pond Depot to meet General Wade Hampton and escort him to Walterboro for a speaking engagement. If only the little Green Pond Depot could talk, what tales would it share?

Connecticut entrepreneur Henry Plant later purchased the SCC&RR, renaming it the Charleston & Savannah Railway, but it was later sold and once again renamed the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad.

In the 1880s, Walterboro, a growing city, built its own railroad spur that connected Walterboro to the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad (ACL). That rail line officially connected Hampton, Branchville, Green Pond, Hendersonville, Lodge, Ruffin, Walterboro, White Hall, Wiggins, Williams and eventually Cottageville.

Walterboro merchants, cashing in on the huge volume of travelers through the city, developed train coupons for people who frequently came by rail to town for trade.

Trains were not only important for commerce and travel, they were also great sources of information and gossip.



Train coming into Yemassee Station in 1886.



Christopher Donner of Hall Island at the Yemassee train station between 1889-1916.

On March 24, 1915, passengers arriving at the Walterboro depot brought news that the Jacksonboro Lumber Company's Boarding House had been completely destroyed by flames.

The passenger lines closed in 1957, sending the local economy into decline and ending travel excursions, which included chef-prepared meals aboard the train. The world was changing.

Though most railroads are gone, surprisingly, they are making a comeback. Railroad lines abandoned in the 50s are being renovated by local communities and made operational once again.

### YEMASSEE DEPOT AND JUNCTION

Rich in history and culture, Yemassee is fertile ground for archeologists, genealogists, history enthusiasts and writers.

The heart of the Lowcountry region, the area takes its name from the Native American tribe Yamasee, the most important Indian allies of South Carolina until 1715.

Dotted with stately oaks in a picturesque town surrounded by both Revolutionary and Civil War fortifications, this is where General Sherman marched, destroying churches except for the Presbyterian Church where he created a hospital — visible blood stains still mark the floors. Nineteenth century William Gilmore Simms, poet laureate of South Carolina, found muse here for his novel "The Yemassee: A Romance of Carolina."

Yemassee is also where war would once again play a major part in the life of this town. A commemorative mural adorns the front and back of a 1912 merchandise store in Yemassee that tells the tale of the importance of this small hamlet.

The corner of Wall Street and Castle Hall Road was the original receiving station for the 500,000 Marine recruits who were transported by railroad from 1914 to 1965 to prepare for wars in Parris Island. The railroad was owned by the Atlantic Coast Line and leased by the United States Marine Corps.

When the first 50,000 recruits of World War I arrived at the Yemassee Depot in 1915 — the initial receiving point for the central and eastern recruiting stations — the town had a bank, a general store, a few houses and a hotel. Arriving on the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, recruits were greeted by YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) representatives, then received their first taste of Marine Corps life as instructors took over and put the recruits on the Charleston & Western Railroad, which ran to Port Royal. Once there, they were delivered to Parris Island by boat.



Yemassee Train Station in the 1950s.





Painting on old barracks

During the 1920s, the road between Beaufort and Yemassee was paved, but the recruits were still shipped on the railroad to the Yemassee Depot, the “bridge from civilian life to life in the Corps.” By 1926, and with trains running every hour, Yemassee was booming with the construction of a modern soda fountain and new brick buildings by builder H. McM. Williams.

The Great Depression had little effect on Yemassee. By 1931, over 500 people lived in the area with over 30 newly-constructed buildings. C.B. Leitner was the depot agent then and the railroad paid out almost \$85 a week to each employee, extremely high pay in that era. Some of the employees were R.S. Sloman, Mr. Leightner, J.C. Welch, W.H. Wise, R.J. Baker, J.B. Herndon, H.D. Mixson, J.W. Nix, M.B. Hall, W.E. Jolnes, W.F. Tate, Archie Cochrane, W.A. Gilmore, T.B. Arnold, H.C. Lovet, and C.B. Moody.

Marines established a building to use as a barracks for recruits who were waiting for the train to Port Royal. Even though there was a new causeway connecting Parris Island by 1928, there was no bridge over Battery Creek, so the recruits were placed on small motorboats that carried them to Parris Island.

At the beginning of World War II, Yemassee thrived once again. The station was busier than ever with some train engines pulling 102 cars loaded with recruits, and 7,822 tons of coal, timber, fruits and vegetables daily sent from Florida to Charleston, and then further north.

By 1942, the Marine Corps had leased a building from the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad to house incoming recruits. Over 250,000 new soldiers, some as young as 17, passed through Yemassee. Young officers commented on the hotel’s beautiful ballroom, the warm hospitality of the townspeople, and the pretty Southern belles. The passenger cars, now relics from the past, were small and old with wooden seats, shades on the windows, and pot belly stoves to keep warm.

In the May 4, 1942, issue of *Life* magazine, photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt presented a photographic essay on the town entitled “Life Spends a Day at Yemassee Junction.” Eisenstaedt described the town as “a railroad junction not too big to be confusing, not too small to be trivial.”

His photographs brought more attention to the town.

After World War II, the Yemassee Marine receiving station was still staffed by the military, and during the Korean War, as many as 350 recruits passed through Yemassee each day.

By June 30, 1965, the Marine Corps terminated its lease with the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Company and returned the receiving center back to the railroad. Losing the receiving facility that had served the Marines for 23 years had a negative impact on the town’s business, employment and economy.

But for 500,000 recruits who passed through Yemassee on their way to Parris Island, the train station will never be forgotten. Many have strong memories of being at this depot, of the Yemassee Receiving Center being their first initiation into the Marine Corps, of being anxious about an uncertain future, of being forced to grow up too quickly.

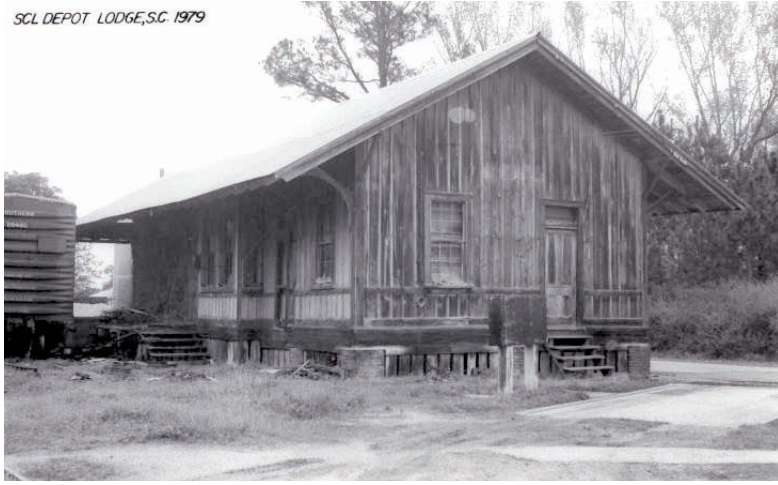
After 50 years of hard use, the Yemassee and Port Royal connection was abandoned by CSX in the 2000s. Trucks took the place of trains as the price of fuel increased. The old railroad tracks, empty cars and decaying engines became relics of the past.

Now, bordering Beaufort, Hampton, Jasper, and Colleton counties, over 1,000 people call Yemassee home. The townspeople formed the Yemassee Historical Association with the hope of restoring the train station, receiving center and barracks where Marines stayed and worked. The town of Yemassee purchased the old railroad depot in 2010 for \$1 with plans to renovate the building as part of a revitalization project. The depot was refurbished and now resembles the 1940s building. Marines, veterans and their families gather annually at the original depot for a reunion. There are also plans to create a historical museum and keep the history of Yemassee alive.

Home to an Amtrak station, the town is experiencing a surge in new house and business construction

The railroads’ glory days are gone. But they played an important role in history that can’t be forgotten. While the railroads may never be the marvels that they once were, perhaps they can be restored and appreciated enough to once again serve in the future.

SCL DEPOT LODGE, SC 1979



Ashepool station

ACL STA. GREEN POND, S.C. JULY 6, 1962



July 1962

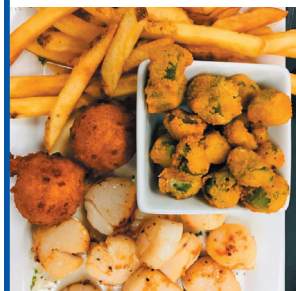
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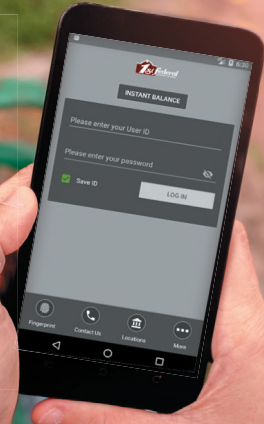
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## PINK VODKA LEMONADE

### INGREDIENTS

2 cups ice  
180 ml Malibu (3/4 cup)  
80 ml Lime juice (1/3 cup)  
80 ml Cranberry juice  
(1/3 cup)  
60 ml Malibu (1/4 cup)  
1.25 quart (litre)  
Lemonade (Sprite)

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Combine all of the  
ingredients in a large  
pitcher filled with ice,  
adding the soda last.  
Serve immediately.

## MARGARITAS BY THE PITCHER

### INGREDIENTS

10 oz Fresh lime juice  
14 oz Cointreau  
3 1/2 oz Agave syrup or  
simple syrup  
22 oz Tequila

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Muddle the sugar and  
limes in a pitcher that  
holds at least 8 cups (64  
ounces). Set aside 6 to  
8 small strawberries and  
make a small slice in their  
tips. Hull and slice the  
remaining strawberries and  
muddle the slices  
lightly with the sugar and  
lime juice.

Stir in the gin and club  
soda and pack the pitcher  
full of ice. Add mint  
sprigs to garnish. Pour  
into ice-filled glasses and  
garnish with a strawberry,  
slotted onto the edge of  
the glass.

## RED SNAPPER COCKTAIL

### INGREDIENTS:

2 pinches Celery salt  
2 pinches Freshly ground  
black pepper  
1 Lime wedge  
2 oz Gin  
4 oz Tomato juice  
1/2 oz Freshly squeezed  
lemon juice  
6 dashes Tabasco  
4 dashes Worcestershire  
sauce

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Use 2 appetizer plates,  
on one of the plates pour  
1 tbsp of simple syrup.  
On the other one add the  
pink sanding sugar.  
Dip the rim of your glass-  
es in the simple syrup and  
then in the pink sanding  
sugar and set to the side.  
In a bar shaker add the  
liquors and shake well!  
Fill your glass 3/4 of the  
way full. Pour in your  
liquor mix & Lightly stir



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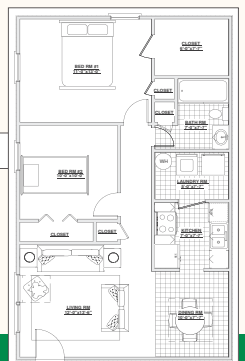
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Nervous recruits (front row) prepare to leave Yemassee Station.



ACL STA. YEMASSEE, S. C. JAN. 1965



Photos from the Yemassee trains



JAN 1965



At age 85, Mary Ann Cannady still gets up at 5:30 a.m. and goes to work all day at her insurance company, The Cannady Agency. She started selling insurance door-to-door in the 1960s. She's also still active in politics in the local and state Republican party.

# At 85, Cannady is still working & loving it

At 85, Mary Ann Cannady and her yellow legal pad still go to work every day. Although she wasn't born in Walterboro, she has been a fixture in the town's business, community and politics for nearly 60 years. And she built her insurance agency, The Cannady Agency, in the 1960s and 70s when most women were baking cookies.

She grew up all over the U.S., from Florida to Kansas, as her father

moved with his job. In 1956 she got the opportunity to come to Walterboro to be a supervisor with Standard Coffee Company. She spent two years here, making friends and a "few dollars," before moving back to Virginia to be with her family. Another job offer brought her back shortly after, and this time she decided to make Walterboro home and bought a house.

She got married in 1959 in Bethel U.M. Church. Her parents retired here the following year.

About 1963, she was running the office supply store and reading proofs at The Press and Standard when she got the chance to get into the insurance industry. Then publisher of The Press, Wightman Smoak, told her she'd "never make it in the insurance business," she laughed. "I think about that often. We had conversations about that and other things over the years, but we were always friends."

She said, "I did it for money. I was making \$45-\$60 a week, and this was going to pay me \$95 a week." By then, she was divorced with a



Being sworn in as a Walterboro City Council member. She served on city council for 24 years and still misses it.



young daughter, Deborah, so making money was a priority.

“I was selling insurance and collecting at the door. I had the little \$250 policies that paid weekly, some paid monthly, just depending on the situation. It was a great experience for me. Agents that come into the industry today don’t know what it is to go out and knock on doors and see people after they get home to collect that \$1.50 or \$3. But it made me get up in the morning. I still get up at 5:30 a.m. every morning right now. And it’s just go, go, go until I get it done.

“I’d get in bed at night and I’d have a little circle on my yellow pad. I always had my goals written out — my people that I needed to see that didn’t have insurance with me.”

But life was hard. She tried living in an apartment on her own, but finally moved back in with her parents. “I would never have been able to make it if it weren’t for my mother and father. My mother was Deborah’s mother, because I worked so late at night. Sometimes it was 9 or 10 o’clock before I got home. And it was usually a 30-45 minute drive from wherever I was working.”

Finally, though, people started coming to her and she got to stop knocking on doors. By the early 1970s, The Cannady Agency was born in the basement of the former First Federal building and she was no longer a one-person show. Then she and her staff moved to a Breland Street house converted into an office, where they stayed until 1983 when she bought the old post office building on Washington Street that’s been home ever since.

At one point, she had 12 people working for her. “Some of the folks that worked for me are on their own or have their own agencies. They’ve come a long way.”

But she still appreciates them. “The one thing that stands out in my mind as an accomplishment — and it wasn’t mine, it was a team effort — was from the little town of Walterboro, I took five people (including myself) to the \$1-million dollar round table. And that was a big statement.” She’s received too many awards to list, but one of the highest was the Order of the Silver Crescent, S.C.’s highest award for volunteer and community service. She was a member of the Women Leaders Round Table (now WIFS) and served as its president in 1976-77. This past year, she was recognized for attending her 50th convention of the National Association of Insurance Financial Advisors. She was a board member and trustee of NAIFA and served as state president for NAIFA in 1983-84 and again in 1988-89.

She’s had the opportunity to travel all over the world, taking Deborah and later her granddaughters with her.

Today, Cannady still gets up at 5:30 and goes to work every day. “I tell people, I don’t like to cook. I don’t like to clean house. I don’t like to work in the yard. So, I enjoy what I do and, I guess, that’s why at 85 I can still work.

“I’m slower. I get aggravated when I work with the computer. I hate it. I like a good old yellow legal pad like when I started out. I think when you pull out something that’s preprinted to show somebody — compared to taking out my legal pad where I’ve written down what you wanted and needed — people pay more attention to that legal pad



# Campaign '72 needs you



Cannady's first community activity was in 1972 with the American Heart Association campaign.

because they know you're doing something. You're not just pressing a button. It's a psychological thing, I think."

Even though she built her career in a time-frame where women didn't have careers, she never had a problem with people taking her seriously "or I'd never have sold any insurance. I really think I have a story to tell to the people I work with today. I've seen what happens to people. They think they have all this group insurance and don't need anything. But then they get 70, 75, and the insurance is gone because it's term insurance. I have people come in all the time that are about to retire and they just wake up to the fact that they're in their 60s and they need insurance. People need to buy whole life insurance when they're in their 20s and 30s."

Her life has not been all just work. Politics was one thing that always interested Cannady. She served on Walterboro City Council for 24 years. Although Democrat for nearly 40 years, she became a Republican because of the difference in national politics. Today, she serves as Colleton County chairman for U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham. Over the years, she served on the boards at the Lowcountry Regional Airport, the Downtown Walterboro Advisory Committee, the Walterboro Economic Development Committee, the board of Colleton Medical Center, Lowcountry Council of Governments, S.C. Municipal Association and on committees of the National League of Cities.

For fun, she had a house where she lived at Edisto Beach and used to enjoy deep-sea fishing, but sold the house last year. She liked to play golf and ride horses throughout her life, but only owned one horse when she was just 18. She saw the horse while on her route at work. She paid for it and had it delivered to her family's garage — until her father tried to park his car. After what she described as a "tongue-lashing," the horse went back.

For the past 10 years, she's lived with Deborah and her granddaughter, Neeley. (They previously lived next to each other, but found

combining households just made good financial sense.) Neeley has two horses, along with three dogs, and Cannady enjoys going to Neeley's barrel-racing competitions around the area.

The animals "rule the roost," she said. "No one can go anywhere because somebody's got to be there at 5 o'clock to feed them."

Throughout life, she's also enjoyed her friends, especially Legare Smith and his wife, Ray — a friendship that continued throughout their lives.

"If I couldn't reminisce, I'd be dead. It's great to think about the things you did and say 'Oh, my God.' I think about what might go on at my house with an 18-year-old and I think, I've been there — I've done those things."

But today is a different time. "Things have changed so much, politically, compared to what it was 50-60 years ago. It's not the same. I just can't see people getting upset because you want to believe the way you want to believe. If we can't be civil to one another, there's something wrong. Somebody's wrong — maybe both are wrong.

"Then you get into religion. I'm entitled to believe what I want to believe and you're entitled to believe what you want to believe. Nobody should be interfering with what you want to do or with what I want to do. I think that's our choice, our privilege, and I've always been able to do that.

"As an outsider looking in, that is our greatest problem. Our younger generation doesn't go to church. They don't know what to believe, how to believe. When they took away the Pledge of Allegiance and prayer in schools, that's when it all started going downhill. It's awful in the schools." The bottom line: "There's no respect. That's the word, respect — not in politics, schools, religion or everyday living."

For now, Cannady just plans to keep on working. "It puts pressure on me, but at the same time, it gives me a goal. And I have fun doing it.

"I'm going to keep working until the good Lord says I can't do it anymore."

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Jimmy Fitts, left, has been sought for his catering services for nearly 25 years. After retiring as a mail carrier in 1995, Fitts found a new job in creating a variety of culinary items that have delighted many Colleton residents.

# Jimmy Fitts delights with his catering

**F**or most of Colleton County, the name “Fitts” is almost a household word.

Anyone who has attended weddings, graduations, parties or holiday occasions in the area has probably sampled Jimmy Fitts’ cuisine. Most county-wide events will find the Fitts family and friends there, catering.

After Fitts’ cooking for 25 years locally, people have come to know and appreciate Jimmy Fitts’ food.

In 1995 Jimmy heard about some land for sale in the area. As a rural mail carrier in Yemassee, Colleton and Hampton counties for 35 years, he was looking forward to a peaceful place to settle down. He purchased the property and continued delivering mail.

Finding pleasure in cooking for friends, Jimmy enjoyed his hobby, never dreaming it would go beyond that.

“One day a friend suggested that I start a catering business, and that got me thinking. So word spread around, and 25 years later, here I am,” said Fitts.

With the help of members of his family and close friends, Fitts cater-

ing has come a long way. Some weeks he can’t make enough of everyone’s favorites: pulled pork and fried chicken ... just about the best you can eat anywhere.

But catering isn’t as easy as it sounds and has its own issues. “Working most weekends can really be hard,” said Fitts, then he laughed. “But it’s worse when it’s raining! It’s also a trial trying to keep food hot when it’s cold outside, and being on time when traffic is bad.”

He has had several mishaps during his catering career, but his favorite anecdote is when his helpers prepared three fuel tanks that were placed in a circle. Unaware that the tanks were lit, Jimmy was standing in the center of the tanks when for some reason, the tanks shot out huge flames. “Everyone took off running and shouting ... leaving me standing in the middle of the flames!” he chuckled.

Even with all of these issues, Jimmy loves catering. “Working together with my wife, family, and friends is rewarding. It gives us a chance to do things together; it has brought us closer,” said Fitts.

He has no plans to stop anytime soon. “I plan on catering for a couple more years,” he said. “I really enjoy meeting new people, and nothing is any better than when people tell me that my food is great!”





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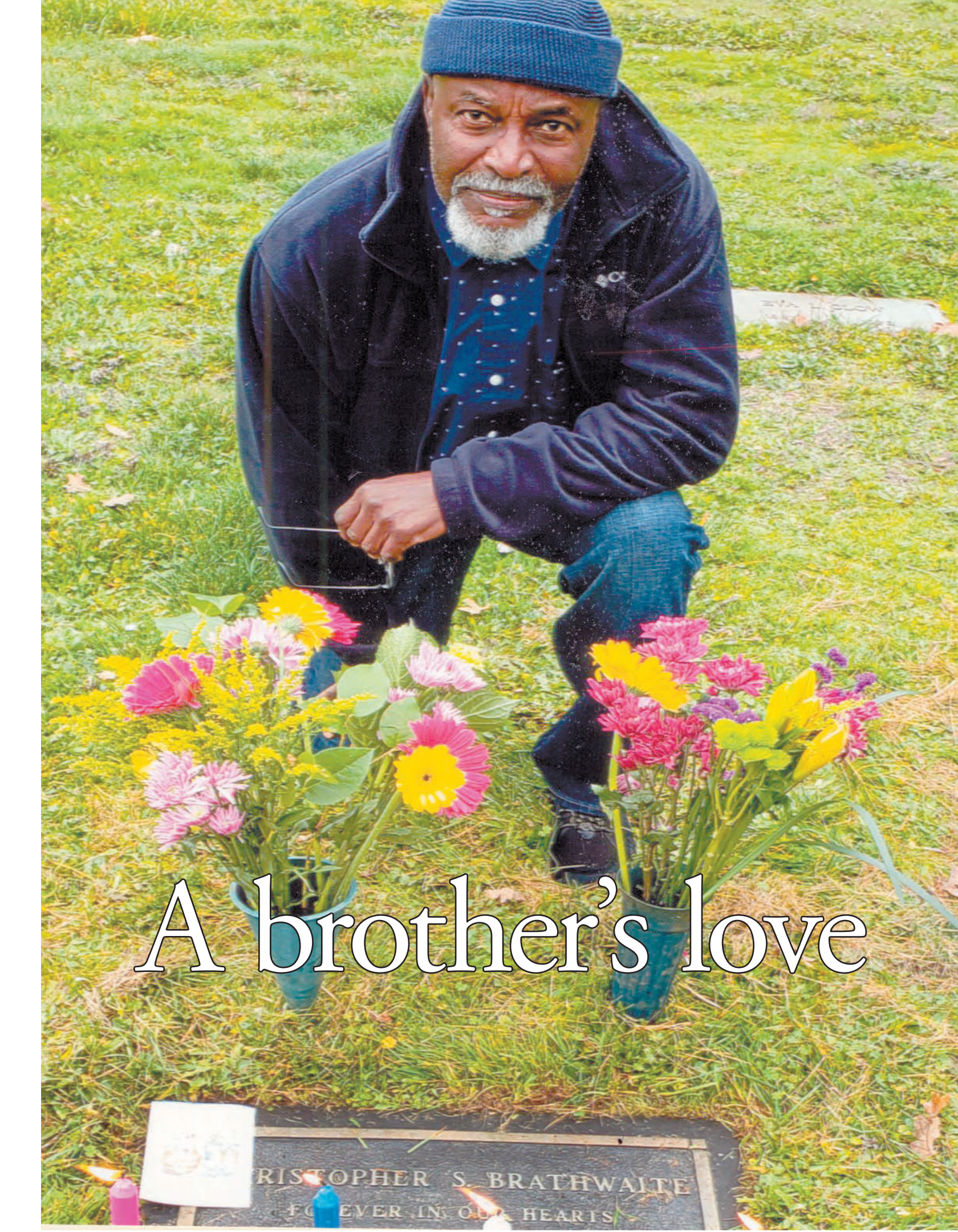
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# A brother's love

CHRISTOPHER S. BRATHWALTE  
FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS



The Brathwaite siblings. Christopher, third from left on back row; Renrick, second from left on front row.

*Story by Vicki Brown*

**R**enrick Brathwaite is a long way from home. Born in Trinidad, his life took a series of unusual turns before he ended up in Colleton County.

“First, I fell in love with a lady from Walterboro, and then I fell in love with Walterboro,” said Brathwaite.

Brathwaite’s story goes back to the 1950s in Trinidad where he and his five brothers lived in poverty. Their day typically began with getting up at 5 a.m. and feeding the animals on the tiny farm. There were goats, pigs, ducks and chickens that needed to be watered, so the trek was made to the water hole to fill the barrels for the animals and for washing and cooking.

When that was finished, they had to travel three miles to the St. Patrick’s Roman Catholic School. “We were always late,” laughed Brathwaite. “So, we had to run/walk, run/walk the whole way. With the tropical climate, we always arrived at school sweaty!”

He remembers his mama routinely going by bus to the market.

When she would arrive back at the bus stop, the boys would be waiting to tote the bags back home. They knew that if they ran, they could get home faster, put the bags away and get to the soccer field to play. It was even more fun to turn all that running into competitions.

“Sometimes Mama would give us a penny to buy an orange or snow cone. We would race each other to get there first,” Brathwaite said.

He was closest to his brother, Christopher, whom they called Chris. “We did everything together. We even sold TV magazines and split the money,” he said grinning.

As they grew up, they became natural athletes because of all the running they did as children. Renrick joined the Army, running for the Trinidad army in competitions. But Chris’ talent and speed caught the attention of Trinidad and Tobago officials who considered him for the Olympics. Renrick provided funds from his Army pay to send his brother to the United States for training.

Eventually, Renwick left the Army and immigrated to America. “I lived in New York because there was a large Trinidad community there in the Bronx, Queens and Brooklyn. I felt more comfortable around my people,” he said. He took training as a banker and became an international banking customer representative for Chase Manhattan Bank. Eventually, he became the father of three children, who grew up

to become very successful adults.

“I instilled in them the attitude that they must become educated and exposed to a variety of cultures through reading and travel so that they could understand and appreciate people of every race, religion and economic background,” said Renrick. “I told them that if they wanted something, they would have to work very hard for it,” he said in his lilting Caribbean accent.

His brother, Chris, visited him many times in New York, and they enjoyed each other’s company as if they had never been separated. One day Chris let Renrick know that he was getting married. He wed Sharon, an English professor at a community college in New Mexico, on July 3, 1975. Soon after, Chris and his wife moved to Eugene, Oregon, Sharon’s hometown and the track capital of the world.

Chris represented Trinidad and Tobago in Track and Field in the 1976 Olympics in Montreal and again in Russia in 1980. He was planning to compete for the last time in the 1984 Olympics when tragedy struck.

Because of Chris’ abilities, he was touted by UCLA and Louisiana. He turned them down to run for the University of Oregon and be with Sharon. Chris worked at the Skipworth Juvenile Detention Center which houses 18-30 young people who have had brushes with the law or are accused of crimes. Just eight years before, he received his bachelor’s degree in sociology and a master’s degree in corrections at the Eugene university.

Chris often trained for his next Olympic meet in the stadium where the football players practiced. By then Chris and his wife, Sharon, had been married for six years and had a five-year-old son named Sean.

On November 12, 1984, an angry and disturbed 19-year-old young man armed with a scoped rifle stood at the top of University of Oregon’s Autzen Stadium and began firing at football players on the field. They scattered, running for their lives. Forty-year-old Chris was training for the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, South Korea, outside of the stadium, when he heard the shots and immediately dropped to the ground. The sniper, assuming Chris was a football player running from him, took aim in his scope, shot Chris through the heart and then killed himself.

Renrick performed the eulogy at the funeral, one of the hardest things he had ever done. A few months after Chris died, their mother passed away. It was a very difficult year.

Years passed; Renrick had his own family and responsibilities. Suddenly, at retirement age, he realized that something was missing from his life. With the help of a friend, and through connections of distant family members, he was able to find out where Sean, Chris’ son, worked and lived. And to Renrick’s joy, Sean agreed to meet with him. They had not seen each other in 35 years.

On November 12, 2019, the anniversary of Chris’ death, Renrick flew to Oregon and see his nephew. Ironically, Sean remembers his father taking him to the former Skipworth Juvenile Detention Center — across the street from Autzen Stadium where his father was killed and where Chris served as a social worker.

He remembers his father setting up a mock Olympic Games for at-risk youth. He remembers playing catch with his dad, but not much else. Sean, now married with children of his own, was finally able to ask questions about his father and have them answered by the person who knew him best at one time ... his uncle.

The two men placed flowers on Chris’ grave together, and after spending time with Sean and Sharon, Renrick left feeling rejuvenated.

“I should have done this sooner,” said Renrick. “We all got out of touch over the years, but we loved the same man, Chris.”

Sharon never remarried and still lives in the home she shared with Chris. She couldn’t bear to leave it or take her focus off her son.

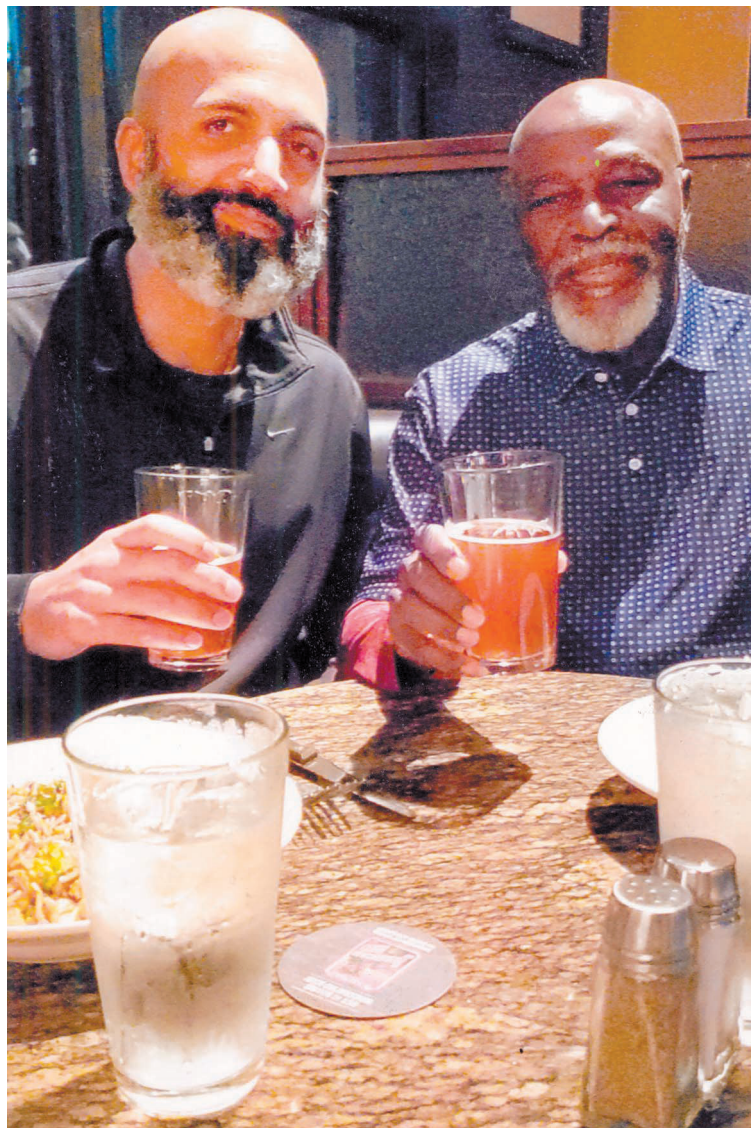
The Oregon Track Club established the Chris Brathwaite Award which honors excellent track runners at the university.

Through remembering the death of an Olympic hero, a family found each other again. They are making a solid connection, because by staying in touch, they are keeping Chris’ memory alive.

*Lowcountry Rocks 2020*



Chris Brathwaite (left) staying with his brother Renrick Brathwaite (right) in the Bronx in the 70s. Chris was in the prime of his running career.



Renrick and Sean enjoying each other’s company again after 35 years.



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Amateur genealogists look for family history at Live Oak Cemetery in Walterboro. Local cemeteries often contain a wealth of information about a family's heritage—if the headstones can be found.

# A passion for the past

*Story by Vicki Brown*

**T**he older we get, the more interested we are in the past. At least that's true for most people.

With an increasing aging population, and an influx of genealogical resources, researching family history is a growing trend. It can be fun ... and frustrating.

Elizabeth Laney has been researching genealogy for more than 25 years. It began in middle school with an assignment to research her own family history, but soon she branched out to help other families find their roots.

"Whether it is my own family or someone else's, I love uncovering family mysteries, resurrecting names lost to time," said Laney.

Being involved in genealogy, Laney learned much through trial and error. She now has enough knowledge to pass on to others to help them in their research.

1. Start by writing down everything you know about your family, by searching through old papers, photos, heirlooms, and by asking for stories from elderly family members.
2. Go online and study FamilySearch.org and Family Search Wiki ([https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main\\_Page](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page)) for research tips.
3. Use genealogy how-to books, Ancestry.com, and Heritage Quest Online at or through your local library. You can also purchase a DNA test kit for information on your family's genes and heritage.
4. Join a local genealogy society and meet individuals who can help you.
5. Some researchers come to a "dead end" and can't find any more information. If this happens, Laney's advice is to take a break.



Former Walterboro resident Elizabeth Laney found a passion for researching family histories while working at the Colleton Museum. She especially enjoys researching black family histories, which are often challenging because so little information was written down.

“Come back to the problem in a week, a month or even a year later,” said Laney. “Your mind will be clearer and FamilySearch.org and Ancestry.com continuously add records. The chances are, when you come back to your problem, you might find some new records.”

In researching her own family, Laney was able to find two inoculation records for her grandmother.

“The records gave me a clue to where my grandmother’s family was living, gave me the name of the doctor,” Laney said. This also gave her some idea of early 20th century medical history.

She also discovered that an aunt had several family records. “I was able to see my maternal great-grandparents’ marriage license, my grandmother’s birth and death certificate, her inoculation records and my maternal grandfather’s college report cards, another great treasure,” Laney said.

Laney’s most exciting find was the gravestone of Corporal Daniel Sanderson of the 35th U.S. Colored Troops. His grave was in the Live Oak African American Cemetery in Walterboro.

“Finding the tombstone of a long-forgotten veteran, who was also one of Walterboro’s most prominent African-American citizens in the late 19th century, has led to a decade of research into Colleton County’s African-American community,” said Laney, “and that is frustrating” because documentation is limited.

Lillie Fowler Singleton understands all too well about the difficulties in finding African American facts in genealogical research.

Years ago, Singleton, a retired teacher of African American descent, began researching her family roots. It was a lot more rigorous than she

thought it would be.

“Some challenges that we face are that very little documentation exists prior to 1870,” said Singleton. “As an enslaved population, our ancestors were considered cargo or property. There was no concern for their names,” she said.

Only a few records concerning names, dates, births and family connections were kept by slave owners. Slave marriages were not legal nor were they documented.

Names and locations were changed as slaves were sold. Some took on the last name of their owners, but most did not. Also making the issue more convoluted was that mixed breed children of slaves and whites often passed themselves off as white, thereby denying their black heritage.

“Another serious issue,” said Singleton, “is that the past was so painful that the elderly former slaves refused to talk about it.”

Singleton’s advice is to start with yourself and with all you can remember. Then work backward in time.

Talk to as many relatives as you can, asking what they remember. Search your home and theirs, looking for dates, locations, villages, towns, etc.

Be aware that some of the county or country names may have changed over the centuries.

“When interviewing elderly people, don’t interrupt them and try to force them to remember. This can frighten them.

Open the dialog with a story you heard about a relative or show pictures, letters, props or anything else historical, and stay quiet while they talk,” Singleton advised.





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Willie Singleton's family (above) has been a project of hers for years. (Singleton is at top right.) She has found information on her relatives by checking for names in funeral homes, nursing homes, senior center, The Federal Census of 1870, slave owner accounts, church records, cemeteries, state vital records, the Social Security death index, National Archives and Records Administration, Family Health Heritage, city and county censuses, [www.Afrigenaeas.com](http://www.Afrigenaeas.com) and other typical genealogical sites.



Singleton suggests that you take a digital scanner and voice recorder with you when researching or interviewing. Some people do not want to part with their pictures, so you can scan them and keep them.

She also encourages researchers to label every item and place them in large envelopes.

She also encourages genealogists to check for names in funeral homes, nursing homes, senior centers, Federal Census of 1870, slave owner accounts,

church records, cemeteries, state vital records, Social Security Administration's death index, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Family Health Heritage, city and county censuses, [www.Afrigenaeas.com](http://www.Afrigenaeas.com), as well as the typical genealogical sites.

"The best source, and a lot of fun, is to plan a family reunion and ask everyone to bring as much family history as they can," said Singleton.

"What a great way to share stories, information, and learn about yourself!"

Maney's most exciting find was the gravestone of Corporal Daniel Sanderson of the 35th U.S. Colored Troops. His grave was in the Live Oak African American Cemetery in Walterboro.



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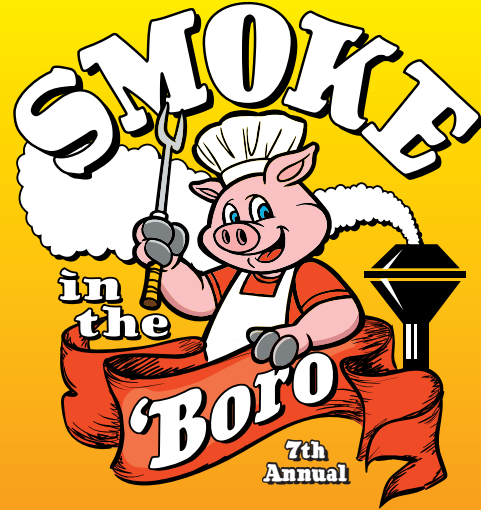


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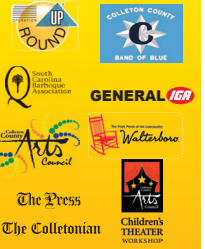


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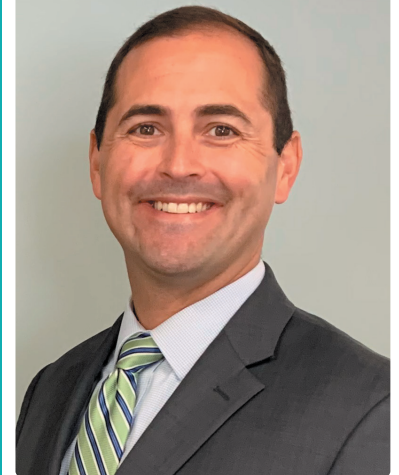
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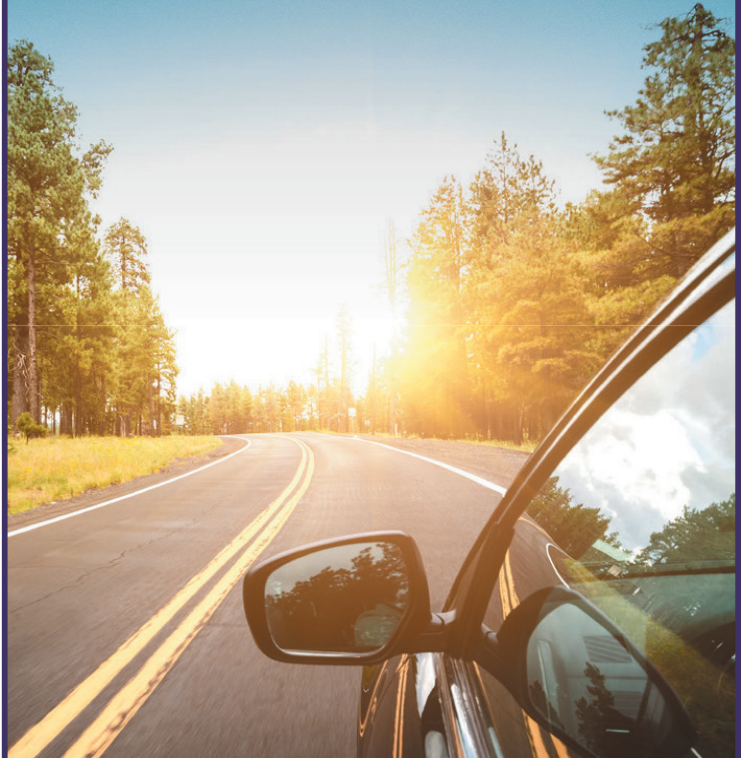
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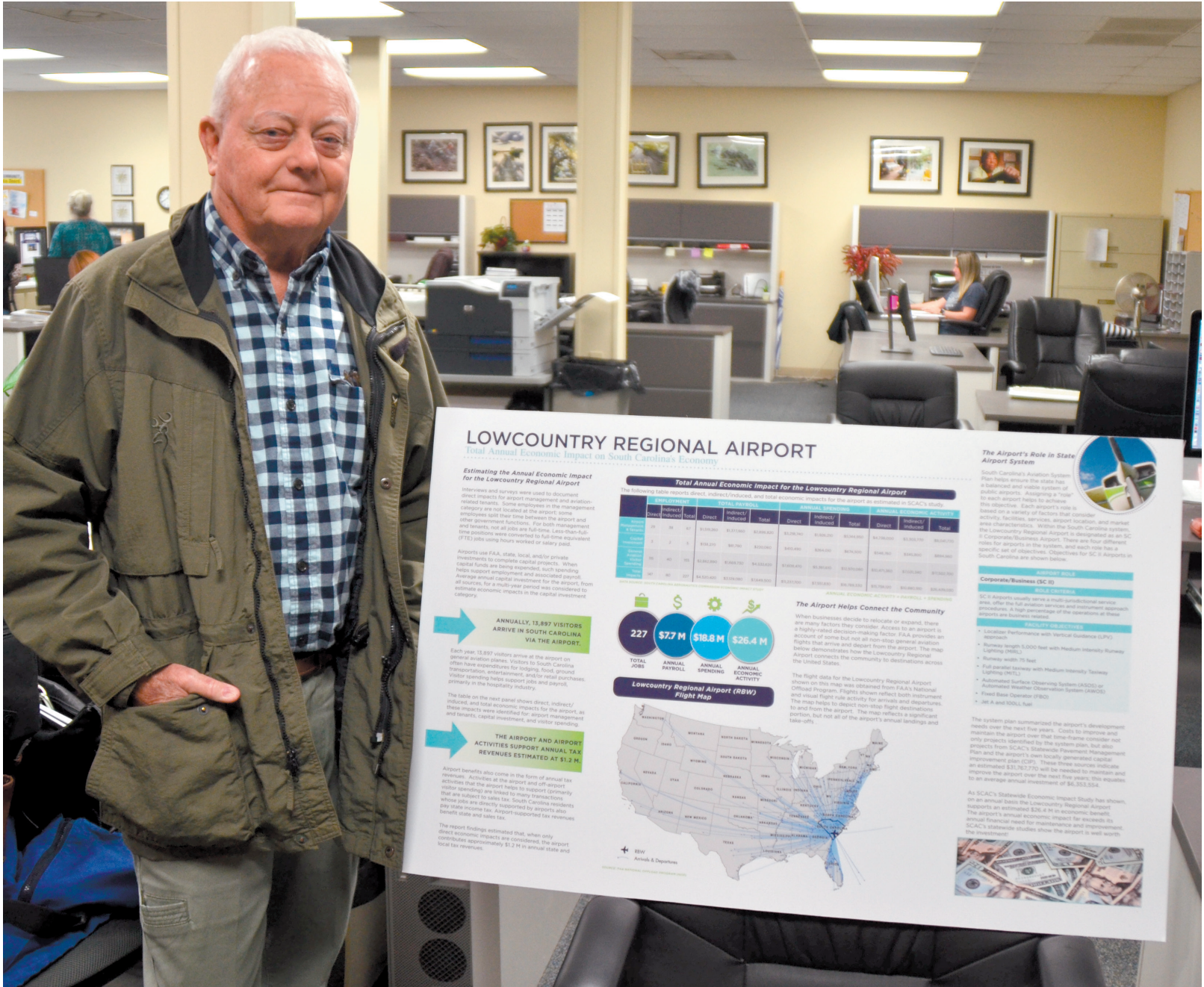
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## LOWCOUNTRY REGIONAL AIRPORT

Total Annual Economic Impact on South Carolina's Economy

### Estimating the Annual Economic Impact for the Lowcountry Regional Airport

Interviews and surveys were used to document direct impacts for airport management and aviation-related services. Some employees in the management category are not located at the airport, some employees split their time between the airport and other government functions. For both management and services, we all take pay full-time. Less-than-full-time positions were converted to full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs using hours worked or salary paid.

Airports use FAA, state, local, and/or private impact funds to complete capital projects. When funds are not available, airports expand, such as expanding support equipment and associated ground services, for a multi-year period was considered in all cases. For a multi-year period was considered in all cases. For a multi-year period was considered in all cases.

Each year 15,897 visitors arrive at the airport on general aviation planes. Visitors to South Carolina often have expenditures for lodging, food, ground transportation, entertainment, and/or retail purchases. Visitor spending helps support jobs and payroll, primarily in the hospitality industry.

The table on the next page shows direct, indirect, and total economic impacts for the airport. These impacts were identified for airport management and services, capital investment, and visitor spending.

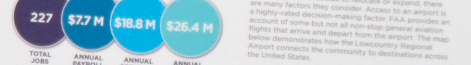
Airport benefits also come in the form of annual tax revenue. Activities at the airport and all airport visitor spending are subject to property taxes. The airport also pays state income tax. Airport-supported tax revenues also benefit state and local tax.

The report findings estimated that, when only direct economic impacts are considered, the airport contributes approximately \$1.2 M in annual state and local tax revenues.

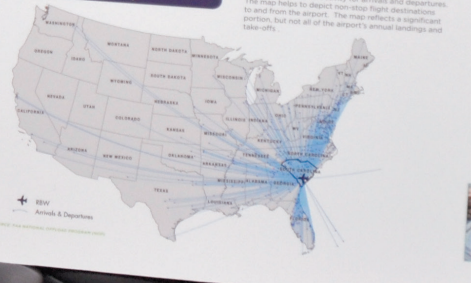
### Total Annual Economic Impact for the Lowcountry Regional Airport

Category	Employment			Annual Salaries			Annual Economic Activity		
	Direct	Indirect	Total	Direct	Indirect	Total	Direct	Indirect	Total
Management	12	0	12	\$1,200,000	\$0	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	\$0	\$1,200,000
Services	10	0	10	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$1,000,000
Capital Investment	0	0	0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Visitor Spending	0	0	0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>\$2,200,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$2,200,000</b>	<b>\$2,200,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$2,200,000</b>

### ANNUAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY - VISITORS & SPENDING



### Lowcountry Regional Airport (RWB) Flight Map



### The Airport's Role in State Airport System

South Carolina's Aviation System Plan helps ensure that state has a balanced and viable system of public airports. Assigning a "role" to each airport helps in achieving the objectives. Each airport's role is based on a variety of factors that consider area characteristics, including airport location, and market the Lowcountry Regional Airport is designated as an SC Corporate/Business Airport. There are four different roles for airports in the system, and each role has a specific set of objectives. Objectives for SC Airports in South Carolina are shown below.

### Corporate/Business (SC B)

- SC B Airports provide a high level of service to corporate and business travelers.
- Business length 3,000 feet with Medium Intensity Runway (MIR) (3,000').
- Runway width 75 feet.
- Full parallel taxiway with Medium Intensity Taxiway Lighting (MITL).
- Automated Surface Observation System (ASOS) or Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS).
- Fuel Base Capacity (FBC) 100,000.
- JET A and 100LL fuel.

The system plan summarized the airport's development needs over the next five years. Goals to improve and only projects identified over that time-frame consider not projects that the airport has already completed. The plan and the airport's own locally generated capital program are subject to state and federal funding. These three sources include approximately \$3,762,775 will be needed to maintain and improve the airport over the next five years. This equates to an average annual investment of \$4,553,554.

As SCAC's Statewide Economic Impact Study has shown, airports are an important part of the state's economy. The airport's annual economic impact far exceeds its annual financial need for maintenance and improvement. SCAC's statewide studies show the airport is well worth the investment!



Thomas Rowe, manager of Lowcountry Regional Airport, said the fuel sales in 2019 alone were \$250,000. Plans to purchase more fuel trucks to meet the increasing demand are in the works, as well as building new hangars.

# More than just an airport

Walterboro is home to the largest regional airport in the state. Not only is the Lowcountry Regional Airport (LRA) the largest, but it is perfectly situated five miles east of I-95, and approximately an hour to an hour-and-a-half drive to Columbia, Charleston, Savannah, Hilton Head and Beaufort.

LRA is jointly owned and operated by the City of Walterboro and the county. A local gas tax several years ago paid for the much-needed

upgrades to the airport, which is busier than most people realize. Thomas Rowe, airport manager, works hard to keep up with airport business. The 2019 fuel sales were over \$250,000, and plans are in the works to purchase another fuel truck to meet the demand. New hangars, at the cost of \$3,000,000, have been approved by County Council and will house the numerous planes and helicopters in need of shelter. "We are building a set of 10 t-hangars along with one corporate hangar (60'x60')," said Becky Hill, chairman of the WCC Airport Commission. "The t-hangars will house the small personal airplanes and the corporate hangar will accommodate a small jet." The facilities inside the headquarters are luxurious and comfortable for corporate clients and pilots to relax, socialize or conduct business. The building contains a large conference room with an automatic screen and sound system. There is a small kitchen, a spacious lounge near the entrance, a smaller lounge that contains a television with couches, a



The new conference room at the airport is used by local officials for meetings and seminars, but is also open to the public.

testing area with computers, and a small pilot's lounge next to a large restroom with a shower.

Doug St. Pierre, president of the local Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Chapter 477, has a plane in rental space in one of the airport hangars. "Everything inside the main building is wonderful," said St. Pierre. He pays \$300 a month to store his plane and is really proud of the beautiful facilities. With a "satisfactory" rating on all points throughout the entire airport in the Safety Guide, he has every reason to be.

Another amazing feature is Todd Givens, who runs award winning Ace Basin Aviation, and is known worldwide. The flight school is constantly full.

Billy Carter is also in high demand, as he heads Skydive Walterboro. He teaches parachute preparation and skydiving three days a week all year, depending on weather.

Hunters, golfers, fishermen, vacationers and some who traveling to Cherokee Plantation,



The entire airport terminal building got a face-lift, inside and out, completed in summer 2019. In addition to the conference room above, there is a small kitchen, a smaller lounge, a pilot's lounge and a large restroom with a shower.



Doug St. Pierre, president of the local pilots association, stands in the new lobby of the airport. Bottom left is the lounge, and below is a private plane in a hangar and some of the larger jets that frequently fly in.

Edisto Beach or second homes in the area come from all over the United States. They can rent a car on site with Hertz or Enterprise.

But how important is the airport to the average Colleton County resident?

The South Carolina Aeronautics Commission studied LRA's economic contribution to Walterboro. The study revealed that any time visitors fly into the airport, they are contributing to the economy. Pilots fly in to stay the night. They rent a car and hotel rooms in town and eat at the local restaurants. Travelers shop in town and eat locally. Annually, almost 14,000 visitors come through LRA, which supports annual tax revenues at approximately \$1.2 million dollars and generates an annual economic

activity of \$26.4 million. From local restaurants, hotels, catering, stores and more, Walterboro reaps the benefits.

Another major benefit applies to the safety of the entire nation — the operations conducted by the armed forces. From its rich history as a strategic military location in the past to its usefulness in the present, LRA is equipped to host military helicopters and planes that fly in and out during practice for maneuvers used in times of war.

The South Carolina Aeronautics Commission's Statewide Economic Impact Study proves that the Lowcountry Regional Airport is well worth the investment.





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Dedicated as an airfield in 1933, Lowcountry Regional Airport has a military history. During World War II, the airfield was turned over to the United States Army Air Force for training. Some of the most notable pilots were Tuskegee Airmen, who completed their final combat training onsite and who are honored with a memorial at the airport's Army Airfield Park.

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Dr. John Creel doesn't have a lot of free time in his schedule. In addition to being a full-time physician, he operates the Four Holes Indian Free Clinic, is pastor of Little Rock Holiness Church and is chief of the Edisto-Natchez-Kusso Indian tribe.

# Doctor, preacher, indian chief

*Story and Photos by Vicki Brown*

**T**he Rev. Dr. John “Glenn” Creel is a sixth-generation Native American of the Natchez tribe. The Edisto Natchez-Kusso Indians have lived in the Colleton County area as early as 1577.

Now, Creel, a physician in Walterboro and pastor of Little Rock Holiness Church, was recently chosen chief of the Edisto-Natchez-Kusso Indians.

Creel is a busy man. His primary job is serving as a physician at Walterboro Adult & Pediatric Medicine located at 447 Spruce Street in Walterboro.

If that isn't enough, Creel operates the award-winning Four Holes Edisto-Natchez-Kusso Indian Free Clinic, which started in the early 1990s serving only tribal members, but now serves anyone who needs medical assistance in the area. The clinic on Ridge Road in Ridgeville serves those who can't afford to pay for medical care, and is operated under the Four Holes Tribal Council.

“Many Native Americans live in poor areas of Colleton and Dorchester counties and receive less-than-adequate health care,” Creel said.

“There is no charge to go to the clinic. It is free. Hollings Cancer Center performs free pap smears, a dentist donates free time for extractions, and Dr. Snider donates time for free colonoscopies.”

But the most important aspect of the clinic is its ability to use preventative medicine. “If we can treat hypertension and other minor ailments before they develop into serious health issues that need hospitalization or emergency room care, then we actually save millions of taxpayer dollars,” said Creel. He estimates that the clinic possibly has saved over \$5 million in the last few years.

And all of this is supported by grants and donated time. Creel has an agreement with different health companies and state non-profits to help uninsured and underserved people with essential health services and prescriptions.

He has other physicians who have generously volunteered their time to help as well, including gastroenterologists and dentists.

On a more personal level, in 1995 Creel accepted the chance to fill in as pastor for Little Rock Holiness Church. He still serves there now with his wife, Charlene, and three grown children, one of whom is disabled. Even as a senior pastor, his Sundays are full, but he feels that he was



Creel and his wife, Charlene, have three children, one of whom is disabled.

called to preach the word of God. His ministry is of utmost importance in his life, but he depends on the other co-pastors who help take charge of the church.

He not only touches the lives of his parishioners, but his love has spread to the Lakota Youth Camp of South Dakota, a partner of his church.

This youth organization operates on donations as well, and his church spends much of the year raising funds to help make the trip, run the camp and spread the word of God to the children in South Dakota.

Eight years ago, he became director of the camp and his church assists in providing funds to help pastors there with winter fuel and Christmas gifts for kids.

Now he finds himself assuming a new role as chief of over 1,100 Edisto Natchez-Kusso Indians, following in his father's footsteps. "I am excited about this position," said Creel. "I have worked for the organization since 1995, so I feel ready to continue doing what I can to help the tribe."

Creel has great plans for the tribe. "I want to follow up on what has been started. We have secured some funding and have hired a grant writer to help us rebuild the Richard Davidson building where we have the free clinic. Andy Spell, the tribe's former chief, found the Natchez tribe's original language on some CDs from a university a couple years ago. The language is now being taught to interested persons via webcasts. Not only is the ancient language being resurrected, but the crafts indigenous to Creel Town are also being brought back. Elders are teaching American Indian traditions, such as making crafts, learning about their dances and learning the exact way they made canoe paddles and baskets. Since the name "Creel" means "fish basket," it is important to learn this valuable tradition," said Creel.

Creel hopes to have the Natchez-Kusso federally recognized, just as they are statewide. This would allow for more federal funding and grants to become available to the tribe and help reduce poverty, encourage education and assist with medical expenses.

"I would like to have some type of housing program to encourage Natchez-Kusso people to move back to the area, and maybe reinstall a senior feeding program," he said. He is also pleased that more and more Creel Town young adults are receiving assistance to find funding to go to college.

Life is slowly improving for the Edisto Natchez-Kusso. With Creel's passion for his people, things will only get better in Creel Town and surrounding areas.

*Lowcountry Rocks 2020*



Dr. John Creel was inaugurated and officially accepted duties as Chief of the Edisto Natchez-Kusso Native American tribe on January 11.



On top of the filing cabinet in Creel's office at Walterboro Adult and Pediatric, are a picture of his father on left, and other memorabilia given to him by patients and friends.

"We can't lose our history," said Creel. "It's important that we remember where we came from and keep our traditions alive."

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Armadillos have invaded almost all lawns, whether in the city or rural areas. While they do eat insects, larvae, earthworms, scorpions, spiders and other invertebrates, they dig holes all over a lawn and can tunnel under homes and other structures.

# Lowcountry invaders

**N**otice lots of little hand-sized holes in your yard? Been blaming the dog? Well, the dog might not be at fault.

Armadillos have invaded the Lowcountry. And the pesky creatures can turn a manicured lawn into a putting green overnight.

So what do you do? Read on to find out more.

Armadillos can damage turf as they forage for insects and other invertebrates in the soil.

In South Carolina, there is no closed season on armadillos on private lands statewide with a valid hunting license. Night hunting is permitted from the last day of February to July 1 as long as the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) is notified. Contact the SCDNR for further restrictions.

Armadillos belong to a small group of mammals distantly related to anteaters and sloths. The word “armadillo” is Spanish for “little armored one.”

The nine-banded armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) has a protective armor of “horny” material on its head, body, and tail. The armor has nine movable rings between the shoulder and hip shield. The head is small with a long, narrow, pig-like snout. Canine and incisor teeth are

absent. An armadillo has 7-9 peg-like teeth along the cheek on each side of the upper and lower jaw. The long, tapering tail is encased in 12 bony rings. Armadillos weigh 8 to 17 pounds.

Armadillos range from Texas to southeast New Mexico, through Oklahoma, southeast Kansas, southwest Missouri, Arkansas, and southwest Mississippi. Their range includes central Alabama, Georgia, and Florida, and has extended northward in recent times.

Armadillos can be infected with *Mycobacterium leprae*, the causative agent of leprosy. Armadillos can carry *Trypanosoma cruzi*, the parasite responsible for Chagas disease. Avoid touching armadillos with bare hands, and avoid contact with their blood and fluids.

## About armadillo life

Females produce one litter per year during March or April after 150 days of gestation.

Armadillos usually dig burrows that are 7-8 inches in diameter and up to 15 feet in length.

Armadillos often have several burrows in one area.

Armadillos primarily are active from twilight through early morning in the summer. They avoid activity during extreme temperatures. Male armadillos may be more active during mating season.

Armadillos prefer dense, shady cover, such as brush, woodlands, forests and areas adjacent to creeks and rivers.

More than 90% of their diet consists of insects, especially larvae. They also feed on earthworms, scorpions, spiders, and other invertebrates, including maggots and pupae in carrion. Armadillos eat fruits and vegetables, such as berries and roots. They will eat lizards, small frogs, snakes, and the eggs of upland birds.

Armadillos make low grunting sounds when feeding or when mothers call their young.

Armadillos uproot flowers and other ornamental plants. Damage to turf can be extensive and can be difficult to distinguish from damage by raccoons.

Armadillos are not considered a threat to crops or livestock, but do burrow under foundations, concrete slabs, driveways, pools and other structures.

### Damage Prevention and Control Methods

Armadillos prefer to dig burrows in areas with cover. Remove brush to discourage armadillos from becoming established.

Fences or barriers may exclude armadillos under certain conditions. Bury the fence 12-18 inches (deeper for sandy soil) and extend it at least three feet high.

There are no effective frightening devices, repellents or toxicants for armadillos.

There is no closed season on armadillos with a valid hunting license on private lands.

Armadillos that cause damage may be shot where it is legal to discharge a firearm. Recommended firearms are a shotgun with No. 4 to BB-sized shot or a .22-caliber rifle.

In South Carolina, the armadillo can be trapped and dispatched on site. It is illegal to transport and release to a new location.

SCDNR recommends the use of live traps and suggest checking the legality of moving the animal to another location. Armadillos can be captured in single-door cage or box traps (10x12x32 inches) and 2-door cage or box traps (10x12x48 inches). Only use traps that are professionally



To successfully trap an armadillo, first find its burrow entrance. Then place the trap flanked with boards to funnel the animal into the trap. There are no baits, poisons or repellents known to be effective.

manufactured when trapping armadillos as armadillos can destroy traps that are poorly constructed.

Set traps along pathways to burrows and along fences or other barriers where armadillos may travel. Increase effectiveness of traps by using "wings" of 1x4-inch or 1x6-inch boards six feet long, which help funnel the animal into the trap. Traps do not need baiting. If bait is desired, use spoiled fruit, rotten meat or mealworms. The use of bait provides no added advantage over using traps with wings in blind sets.

Those who want a professional trapper to remove armadillos can get more information on local trappers at <http://www.dnr.sc.gov>, wildlife control operators list.



These are the types of destruction armadillos can do to a lawn.

# Our Family, Our Monuments

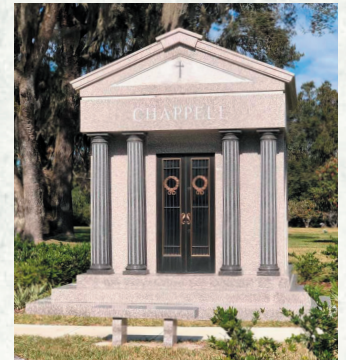
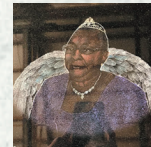
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# Unique gifts for all

When shopping for gifts or décor, Walterboro residents should remember the S.C. Artisans Center at 318 Wichman St. There is more to that special place than people can imagine.

The center has handmade jewelry, pottery, wooden bowls, woven baskets, hand crafted lotions, paintings and more.

Birthdays? For the sportsman, paintings of horses, coon hounds and mallards abound. There is iron work that would impress any man, but the best gift might be handmade knives, beautifully made with handles made from a variety of materials.

Is someone having a baby? Check out the adorable one-of-a-kind handmade stuffed bears and dolls —making sure the baby has a unique gift. Those looking for unique Christmas ornaments, stained glass Santas, ceramic angels or handmade Santas will find the Artisans Center has all they are looking for.

With glasswork, pottery, woodwork, bead work, fabrics, artwork and so much more, the Artisans Center is the place to buy gifts locally that are unusual and unique.

The primary mission of the South Carolina Artisans Center is to showcase and market the handcrafted work of the state's leading artists, while ensuring that art inspired by tradition is protected and nurtured. The non-profit center utilizes a retail outlet, interpretive displays of Southern folk-life, live demonstrations, and educational and informational programs as venues to communicate South Carolina's culture to the public. By promoting the indigenous fine crafts produced exclusively by South Carolina artists, the center creates a better understanding of



S.C.'s rich and diverse cultural heritage.

But here's the best part. People frequently complain that there isn't anything to do in Walterboro. Well, spend an afternoon at the Artisans Center and just look around — and leave with an appreciation of South Carolina artists, some local, and the amazing skills and gifts they have to offer.

For information, call 843-549-0011 or visit <http://scartisanscenter.com>.



Some of the variety of items available at the S.C. Artisans Center.



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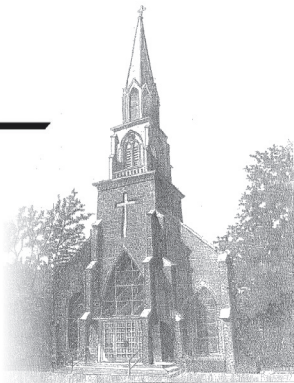


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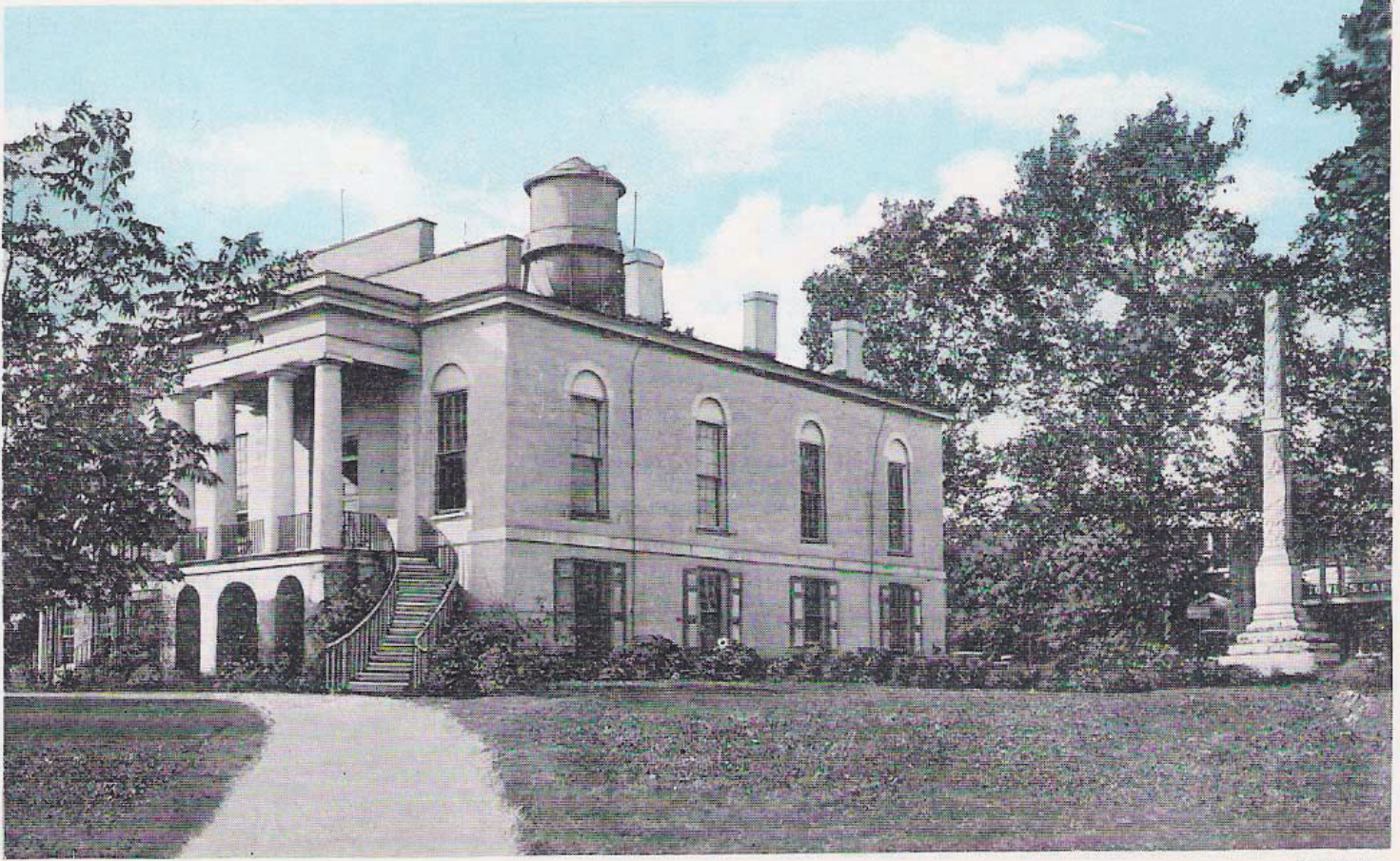
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# The Water Tower





OA 3898

Walterboro's original water tower was on top of the courthouse. However, as the town grew, the need for more water required a new structure. The tower that stands at the end of Washington Street was built in 1915. It served until 1979, when the tower was retired. The bottom of the tower also once used at the city's jail.

**S**ince 1915, the water tower has stood watch over downtown Walterboro — a reign of 104 years — and a testimony to the craftsmanship of its builders.

Serving as part of the town's water system until 2009, the tower is one of only three such water towers in S.C., the other two in Allendale and Belton.

Construction was started on the tower in July 1915 and was completed in just three months. Dysard Construction Company of Atlanta was hired to install Walterboro's first sewerage and waterworks system, and they opened an office on "main street" here. The company had just completed work on the tower in Allendale, and the labor force used there came to Walterboro, supplemented by local labor.

The actual tower construction was contracted to R.T. Aderholt of College Park, Ga., in 1915. The 133-foot-tall concrete tower holds a 100,000-gallon water tank that "will give a magnificent water pressure for every point in the city. The artesian well being bored will furnish the purest water for the town," according to the July 15, 1914 edition of *The Press and Standard*. Hughes Well Boring Company of Charleston had the contract for digging the well. By October 1915, the tower was completed.

"The suggestion has been made that a circle of electric lights be placed around the top of the water tank when it is completed. This show of lights 132 feet above the ground will attract attention and prevent those persons who are hunters from getting lost, as was the case some time ago when all of Walterboro was called upon to help locate some squirrel hunters who had strayed from the well-known and beaten paths of their childhood," said the Oct. 17, 1915 edition of *The Press*. In fact, the tower was topped with lights during World War II to keep planes

from running into it, but the lights were removed after the war.

By December 1915, the youth of town had discovered the tower: Dec. 15, 1915: "Quite a bit of excitement was caused Tuesday afternoon among the small boys of the town when news was flashed around over the wireless that a number of them had been arrested for climbing the new water tank, which is about 135 feet tall. The youthful offenders were cited to appear before Mayor Ackerman Friday afternoon for trial. The boys claim they did not know there was an ordinance against their climbing the tank."

The tradition of climbing the tower continued into the 1970s, when the external ladder was removed.

The tower had another interesting impact on early Walterboro. In July 1930, the town jail was built in the bottom of the tower.

"The jail is in the bottom of the town concrete water tank and has three cells, one large one and two small ones. It is furnished with running water, lights and sewerage. John Graham was the contractor constructing the jail, which is of brick and cement construction. The jail is really a jail within a jail, as the windows and door of the water tank have had iron bars and an iron door placed in them. Regardless of the noise a prisoner may make, it will not be possible to hear him on the outside of the tank, a feature that means much," *The Press* story in 1930 said.

"It was a little damp in there, but it was a pretty good jail. You could get up in there and do some tall yellin' and no one could hear you," said the late Albert Lucas, who served as the tower's caretaker for 40 years, in a 1979 article.

The city's decision to retire the tower came in May 2009, as the work to keep it in service was determined to be cost-prohibitive, although engineers pronounced its structure sound. A proposal was submitted in September 2009 to turn the tower into a man-made climbing tower for rock climbing enthusiasts, but the idea was never approved by city council.

So today the concrete giant still stands watch over the town, as it has

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*From The Press and Standard, April 29, 1937*

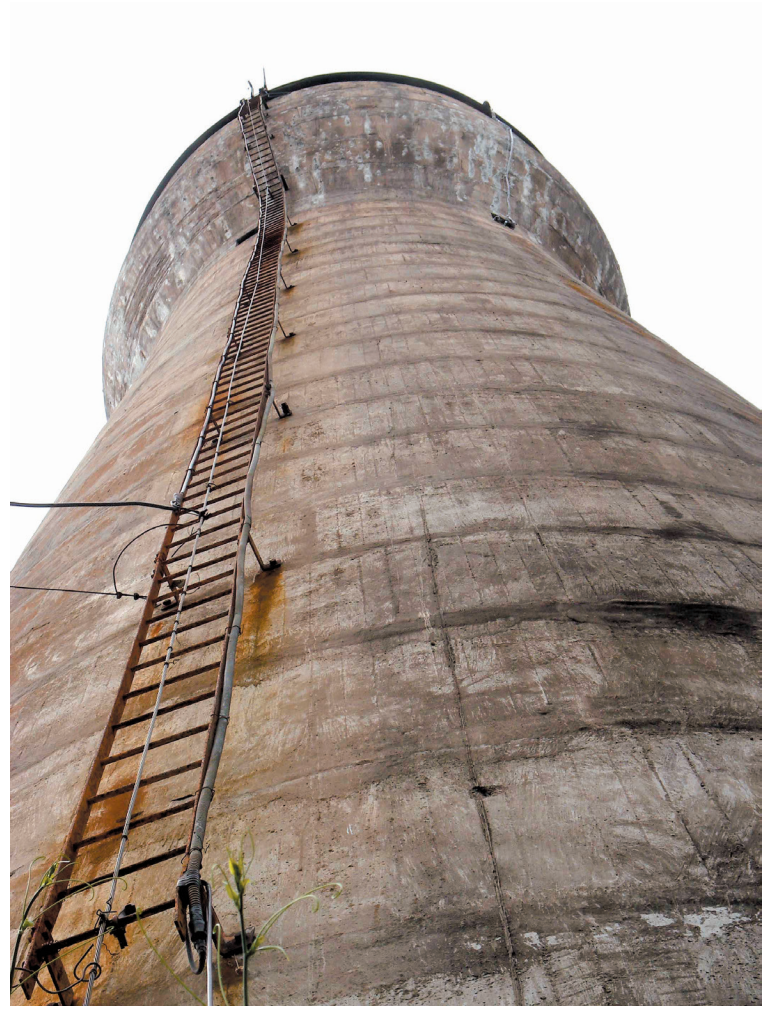
## **OLD WATER TANK BEING TORN DOWN**

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at Chamblee, Ga., at Camp Gordon

Workmen are engaged this week in taking down the old steel water tank which has stood on the court house square for nearly thirty years. It will be shipped to Camp Gordon, Chamblee, Ga., to be erected there on a camp site for J.A. McCrary of the McCrary Construction Company. It is interesting to watch the process of taking this heavy sheet metal apart and lowering it to the ground. An electric torch is used to cut off the heads of the rivets. J.T. Burdett is in charge of the crew of five men.

The tank was erected about 30 years ago, according to records in the office of D.B. Black, town treasurer, and was used by the town of Walterboro for many years. Finally it became too small and for a number of years it has just stood, having been disconnected from the water mains since the erection of the huge concrete tank. It has a capacity of 25,000 gallons.

The ladder that once climbed the side of the water tower had to be removed because area teenagers thought climbing up to the top was great fun. Below, antennas for various communication services were installed on the top of the tower a couple of decades ago.



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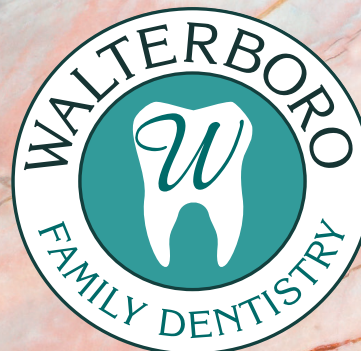


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### COLLETON KEYS

The mission of Colleton KEYS is to develop a Community That Supports Local Youth in Making Better Choices.



#### Join our Cause!

We invite the community, including youth, to become a member of our coalition. Having a diverse representation in the coalition helps ensure that our message is reaching each sector of our community.



**Drug-Free Kids**

This ad was funded by the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant of the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

### REHABILITATION

#### Lowcountry Crossroads

is a reputable and accredited addiction treatment facility in Walterboro, South Carolina.

**The goal of Lowcountry Crossroads is to change the life of an addict for the better by giving the proper guidance and treatment methods required for a successful recovery.**

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