

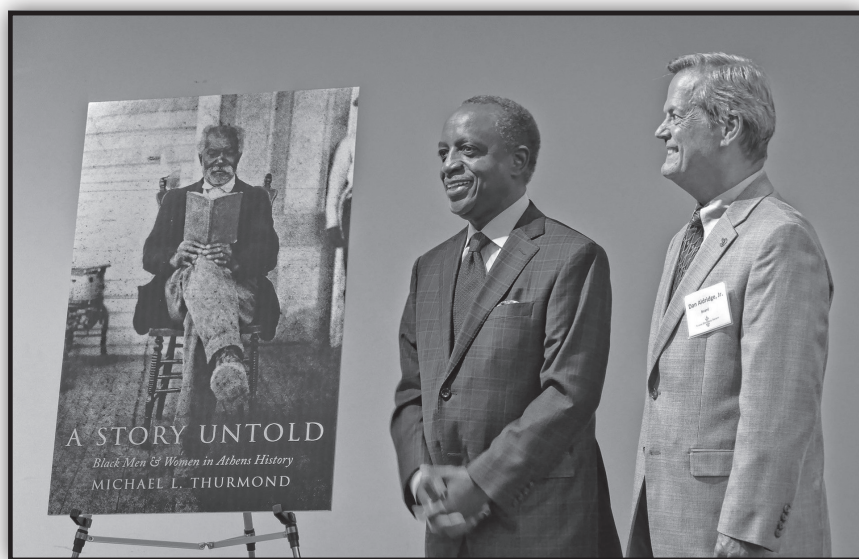


THE ATHENS STROLLER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
ATHENS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
SPRING 2019



MAY 2, 7:00 PM, CLASSIC CENTER
LAUNCH OF ANNIVERSARY EDITION OF MICHAEL THURMOND'S
A Story Untold



Unveiling of the cover of the new *A Story Untold*, with author Michael Thurmond (left) and AHS Board member Dan Aldridge, at the fall meeting of AHS (photo by Daniel Borremans)

AHS Officers and Committee Members Chosen

The following officers were elected at the Board's February meeting: President, Sam Thomas; Vice President, Larry Dendy; Treasurer, Harry Neely; Secretary, Ashley Shull; Historian, Steven Armour. Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs are as follows: Membership, Svea Bogue and Jordan Shoemaker; Inherit GA (see article in this newsletter), Jordan Shoemaker and Ashleigh

The Athens Historical Society is excited to announce that our spring program will be the official "launch" of the updated fortieth anniversary edition of Michael Thurmond's *A Story Untold: Black Men and Women in Athens History*, published by Deeds Publishing and sponsored by AHS. The event will take place on Thursday, May 2 at the Classic Center at 7:00 p.m. It is open to the public.

Speakers at the launch will include Dan Aldridge, who has been the AHS liason with Mr. Thurmond and Deeds Publishing; Fred Smith; and Michael Thurmond himself. Hardcover copies of the book, fresh off the press, will be available, the first 100 copies to be printed—signed and numbered—for \$45.00; the rest for \$24.99. A reception and book signing will follow the program. AHS will also have a membership table there, along with other merchandise available for sale. We hope you all can turn out for this exciting occasion.

Oatts; Merchandise, Dan Aldridge; Hospitality, Svea Bogue. Pat McAlexander will continue as *Stroller* editor and Larry Dendy as editor of the *Historian* (with Pat McAlexander and Theresa Flynn). Dan Aldridge will continue to work with the publication of Michael Thurmond's *A Story Untold*, and Randy Reid heads up the committee on the re-publication of Charlotte Marshall's Historic Houses of Athens. Donnie Sumnerlin continues to work on digitizing the Athens Historian.

Ashley Shull will handle responses to AHS email (athenshistorical@gmail.com), while Jordan Shoemaker will send out any official emails to membership. Jordan will also be in charge of invitations and Facebook posts. Larry Dendy will take care of press publicity (with a little help from friends). Officer and Committee terms run from March 2019 to March 2020.

THE MICHAEL THURMOND BLACK HISTORY BOWL LECTURE, BLACK HISTORY BOWL COMPETITION



AHS Board members Larry Dendy and Randy Reid, spectators at the Black History Bowl, during a break in the competition.

The Athens Historical Society was a sponsor of the Michael Thurmond Black History Bowl Lecture and Celebration, held March 2 at 2:00 p.m. at the First AME Church. The speaker, Mr. Thurmond, discussed his soon-to-be released updated book *A Story Untold: Black Men and Women in Athens History*, sponsored by the Athens Historical Society and published by Deeds Press. The church was filled to capacity. Thurmond particularly addressed the younger African-American attendees, encouraging them to be historians themselves by talking with and recording their older family members in order to understand their lives. A reception followed the program.

AHS was a Gold Sponsor of the 2019 Athens Area Black History Bowl itself,

held on March 16 in the H.T. Edwards Building, 440 Dearing Extension. The quiz-show-like competition was between five teams of fifth to twelfth graders: Atlanta ASALH, Clarke Middle School; Clarke County Sheriff Office Posse; Mount Pleasant Baptist Church; and Youth Academy of In-Touch Management. A crowd of enthusiastic spectators watched from bleachers and chairs.

For three hours in a number of rounds, teams of four (some members alternated) answered questions on black history. The students had studied materials on the subject for several months—a 400-page study guide of facts plus the autobiography *Narrative of*

the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave. The questions and answers were educational for audience members too, from “According to Douglas, what did slave children on his plantation get fed?” (Answer: mush) to “Which amendment gave women the right to vote?” (Answer: The nineteenth—relevant because Douglass had said that he could not accept the right to vote as a black man if women could not also claim that right.) For each round, each individual on a team would answer a question for five points each; then the entire team would collaborate to answer bonus questions worth ten points.

The three teams with the highest scores won a cash prize, with a prize of \$1500 going to the top team—this year the Clarke County Sheriff Office Posse. The team’s prize money will help fund a trip to New York City for its team members and coaches. The Mount Pleasant team won second place, In-Touch Management third. Everyone there seemed to agree that the event was exciting, educational, and inspirational.



The first place team, the Clarke County Sheriff Office Posse; their tee-shirts read “Black History is American History.”



AHS Board member Fred Smith, who with his wife Lee Eunice Smith founded the Black History Bowl, listens as the winning teams are announced

(photos by Pat McAlexander)

HISTORY NOTES

REQUEST FOR PHOTOS, TALES OF THE EARLY YEARS OF AHS. This year is the 120th anniversary of the founding of the original AHS in 1899, and the 60th anniversary of the society's revival in 1959. The editorial committee of the Athens Historian plans to make these anniversaries the centerpiece of this year's issue. If any of you have memories about and/or photos of early programs and activities (examples: Christmas gatherings at Ken Coleman's house, the March 1963 tour of the Chicopee Manufacturing Company, aka the Cook and Brother Armory, April 1963 group trip to Stone Mountain in April 1967, the annual meeting at Emmanuel Episcopal in 1987) or anecdotes about some of the leaders who revived the society, please contact Theresa Flynn at th.flynn@gmail.com.



MELL PORTRAIT REPORT. Sheila Dunham, assistant principal of Clarke Central, and Athens historian Mary Bondurant Warren test a possible space (for now) for the restored portrait of “Mr. Ted” Mell, principal of the high school from 1909 to 1943. The restoration was paid for by donations collected by the Athens Historical Society. The portrait has been placed in this frame and covered with protective hard plastic. It will be hung in the Mell Auditorium after renovations to the auditorium have been completed.

INHERIT GA. On Mar. 22 from 5:30–7:30 p.m. at the T.R.R. Cobb House, the Athens-Clarke County Heritage Foundation and the Athens Historical Society hosted a kickoff party for the Athens chapter of Inherit Georgia, a partnership with the Georgia

Trust for Historic Preservation aimed at the under-40 crowd. Those who attended (see photo) learned about Greek Revival architecture in the Cobbham neighborhood through a scavenger hunt before enjoying the gardens at the T.R.R. Cobb House. Future events will take place on the fourth Friday of each month. April's event will include a visit to Beech Haven. For more information, visit the Inherit Georgia Athens Chapter Facebook page or [@inheritathens](#) on Instagram.



In Memoriam: Lothar Tresp

Born in East Prussia on March 4, 1927, Dr. Tresp was UGA professor emeritus of modern German and European history, director emeritus of the UGA Honors Program, and, along with his wife Lucy Nickerson Tresp, a charter member AHS. Dr. Tresp died on January 22 at age 91.

JANURY 27, 2019: GARY DOSTER RECEIVES THE AHS AUGUSTUS LONGSTREET HULL AWARD

EXCERPTS FROM THE TRIBUTES TO GARY

THERESA FLYNN (due to Theresa's illness, this tribute was read by Beth Whitlock)

[Gary Doster] is a man whose expertise spans a wide range of subjects, from wildlife parasites to early American currency to quite honestly, how to make the best pickled okra in the south. He has an abiding and broad interest in life, and is one of the most knowledgeable people you will ever meet. Gary is, and may be one of the last, true Renaissance men in our midst. And that is why he is such a wonderful historian, whether or not he is able yet to admit he is one.

Gary has a gift for taking a subject some may find too dry to be of interest and showing how it is still relevant to how our world is today. ... For the local historical community, Gary's genuine kindness, generosity, and good humor make working with him a joy. He is the most reliable of sounding boards, and the most helpful when stymied. He loves to help you solve a mystery of the past, and takes on your pursuit of the facts as his own. He is direct, but gentle, when you get something wrong and will ensure you correct it. He does so with a caring that makes obvious his concern for not just the fact on the page, but the community of researchers. He is never discouraging.

Whether Gary is walking with Charlotte Marshall through Oconee Hill Cemetery on a 90-degree day, a golf club at the ready to protect from snakes and clippers at the ready to clear overgrown



AHS President Sam Thomas presents the Crystal Book, symbol of the Hull Award, to Gary Duster

tombstones; or he is changing his day's plans to stop at the courthouse to find an elusive deed or will or guardian papers for a fellow researcher; or he is researching and sharing his writing about a women's softball phenom in 1940s East Athens with new authors; or he is answering yet another question from me about Confederate organization during the war, Gary happily makes the time to help fellow researchers find the answers they need for their own projects because getting the history right is always his first priority.



Speakers Charlotte Marshall, Beth Whitlock (speaking for Theresa Flynn), and Hubert McAlexander with Gary Doster, holding the Crystal Book.

(photos by Pat McAlexander)



Gary Doster and his wife Fay listen to the speakers at the Hull Award program in his honor.

CHARLOTTE THOMAS MARSHALL

There just no end to what Gary knows – be it about wildlife diseases where he spent his professional career; Athens and Georgia history where he has collected vigorously and impressively be it postcards, vintage letters, documents and rare maps; music – popular and classical; interesting landmarks, many of which he’s shared with me. And there’s no end to what he can find with his trusty metal detector.

He gives generously of his knowledge and time. Just one illustration. A number of years ago I introduced him to an energetic researcher of her Georgia roots. . . . She emailed Gary about graves she wanted to find but didn’t know where to start. Gary researched the deeds and located the land. He discovered that it was owned by absentee landowners who had posted it. He got their names from the tax office and wrote them a letter on her behalf asking for permission to go on the land to find and photograph the graves. The reply was a “No.” Georgia law permits family access to graves on land owned by others. He asked his own sheriff for advice. His sheriff communicated with the other sheriff who gave instructions for us to call his office when we got to the barrier and inform him that we were going on the land. We walked about a mile on a logging road before Gary spied tall boxwoods and then box tombstones way off in the distance. Exactly how many friends do we have who would go to these lengths to further our research?

When he sets out to research a topic, Gary is indefatigable. His compendium of Moved Houses for *The Tangible Past* is a goldmine of gathered information. Recently he has compiled a marvelous document about place names in Athens. When Gary is researching such a topic, we all learn because he is in touch, telling us what he’s discovered and asking about what he is still pursuing.

His major shortcoming is his inability to believe how rapt his listeners are when he is giving a presentation. He honestly believes no audience wants to hear more than 20 minutes of a presentation or see more than 20 of his fascinating images. Gary will end his speech while his entire audience is still hanging onto his every word.

Gary is certainly my most modest friend. He’s inwardly shrinking from all this attention. He claims not to be a historian, but the body of Athens’ history is much richer, much more accurate because of this native Athenian.



Before the program, Beth Whitlock holds the flask for Hubert, though she did not know what he was going to use it for.

HUBERT MCALEXANDER

Editor’s Note: Hubert did not have a transcript of his speech, but after the program people commented on his observation that, although a person’s gifts can be nurtured, people are just born the way they are, with certain gifts—and this is the main explanation for Gary’s talents. At the end of his talk, Hubert pulled from his pocket a flask and invited the audience to stand and toast Gary Doster with him—which everyone enthusiastically did (though they had to wait for their beverage until the reception, held in the hall.)

MARIAN G. TALMAGE by Martha de Beaugrine and John Nicholson



Marian Talmage (from the 1924 Pandora)

Martha de Beaugrine has written a number of essays on Athens history for local publications. She died on March 8, 2019, at Talmage Terrace. A version of this essay was distributed to the residents shortly before Martha died. John Nicholson, a classics professor at UGA who is currently writing a book on Ross Crane houses in Athens, contributed research to this essay. Martha expressed a wish that John be listed with her as co-author of this article, and so we have done that here.—Ed.

As Talmage Terrace, home for so many of Athens' senior citizens, marks its twentieth anniversary (1999-2019), residents of Athens as well of Talmage Terrace may be interested to learn a little about the family who provided an endowment for its construction and after whom it is named.

Marian Grace Talmage was born in Athens, Georgia on November 1, 1902, the fifth of the six children of Allen Hill Talmage and Maude O. Fullilove Talmage. Her siblings were Zena, Frances, Allen Hill Jr., Chase, and Maude.

Marian's grandfather, William Price Talmage, born in Morris County, New Jersey in 1813, migrated to Georgia in 1835. He traveled on horseback over Georgia and into Alabama making iron implements until he settled down in Athens, where he first worked in the blacksmith shop of his brother John Talmadge, who had come to Athens some years before. (Note that John spelled his name with a "d," and descendants of the two brothers continue today to spell their names to match their respective forebears.) William subsequently helped to found both the Pioneer Paper Mill and the Athens Steam Company (an iron foundry), and was an original stockholder of the National Bank of Athens. Despite his rising prosperity, he is listed in the 1850, 1860, and 1870 Census in Athens simply as a blacksmith. In 1842 he married Elizabeth Ann Royal who bore seven children, the last being Allen Hill Talmage in 1860. When war came the following year, despite his age and Yankee origins, William enlisted in the Confederate army (State Guards).

His son Allen worked in the foundry as a young man, and then operated a hardware store on E. Clayton Street; later he opened a store on N. Lumpkin Street selling carriages, buggies, and harnesses. When he married in 1894, he built himself a home at 229 Henderson Avenue, which at the time was called States Rights Street. He continued to build and sell houses on Henderson Avenue and elsewhere while also shrewdly buying up real estate, both farmland and commercial property downtown. In 1900 he bought and moved into the large ten-room house just around the corner which had been built in 1857 by Robert L. Bloomfield, another native of New Jersey who had settled in Athens and fought in the Confederate army. The house was surrounded by five acres with large magnolia and oak trees as well as a big garden and various out-buildings. (See directions below to view the house.) The house was built near Church Street but facing Waddell Street far in front; accordingly the address at that time was 495 Waddell Street.

By the time that Allen died in 1914 at age fifty-four he had accumulated a large and valuable estate. An article printed in the Athens Banner on June 19, 1914 notes that Allen left "everything to his wife, and at her death to their six children. The estate is one of the largest in recent years, embracing several large and several small farms and some sixteen or seventeen pieces of city property — store buildings on prominent streets and other realty."

Allen's widow, Maude, finished raising the children alone and assumed control of the estate which she left intact. She put her daughter Frances in charge of managing the various properties, even telling her that the responsibilities were so great that she should not marry. For many years Frances kept an office on East Clayton Street downtown from which she ran the estate.

As a young girl, Marian (who nearly fell victim to diphtheria) had gone to Baxter Street Elementary School, a two-story brick building at the corner of Pope and Baxter Streets. Then, like her sisters, she attended the Lucy Cobb Institute (class of 1922) where she led a happy social life. The University of Georgia had not yet admitted women, so the college boys looked to Athens girls for their dates. Marian and her sister Maude therefore had their share of invitations to fraternity dances. To attend a dance, a girl would arrive at the fraternity without an escort; she would go to the designated place to leave her wrap, and introduce herself to the chaperones. Afterwards, she could dance to her heart's content.

When the University began to admit female students as degree candidates in 1918, Marian was able to attend classes and get the degree she wanted. In 1926 she earned a B.S. in Home Economics from UGA where she was a member of Phi Mu Sorority. She worked for a while as a supply teacher, organized the first troop of Girl Scouts in Athens, and then she returned to UGA to earn an M.A. in Liberal Arts in 1933; she also did some further graduate work at Columbia University

and traveled in Europe. Back in her freshman year, Marian had met and fallen in love with a fellow UGA student named Ransom H. Skeen who was preparing to go on to Harvard Business School. He wanted to marry her before he left Athens, but Marian said they should wait until he had his degree and was ready to go to work. But when Ransom went to Harvard he met another girl there and married her instead. We know of no other man important in Marian's life.

In addition to her substitute teaching in Athens, Marian also taught school in Brunswick, Georgia for one year, and at the Country Day School in Jackson Heights, New York. Returning to Athens she lived in the family house, first with her sister Frances and their widowed mother, but after her mother's death in 1941 Frances moved out, and Marian lived there alone for many years. Beginning in the 1960s she began to rent out part of the main house as well as the cottage located in the rear. She joined the D.A.R. and became a member of Emmanuel Episcopal Church.

Following Marian's death on June 5, 1986 at age eight-three, the Talmage house (now 130 years old) was sold and the property was developed into a condominium complex called "Talmage Close." The house itself was divided into three separate units, and the area in front was paved to provide parking for a pair of new two-story condominium buildings constructed immediately north and east of the house. Then a separate pair of condominium buildings were constructed a bit farther from the house close to Waddell Street. At this time the address of the house was changed to 365 S. Church Street. (To view the old Talmage home at that address, take Baxter Street east towards the UGA Campus; after crossing Milledge Avenue turn left at the first traffic light onto Church Street. The Talmage house is the sixth house on the right; it sits sideways to the street behind an unpainted picket fence.)

In her will Marian created a trust fund which set aside assets amounting to \$1,342,621 to be used toward the construction of a retirement home. Accordingly, Talmage Terrace was built. It opened in April 1999 to the great benefit of elderly citizens of Athens.

SOURCES: In addition to material gleaned from Ancestry.com and GAHistoricNewspapers, a major source of information for this article was the book written in 1977 by Marian's younger sister, Maude T. Wood titled *Once Apunce a Time*, available at the Athens Public Library.

ANCESTRY.COM: DANGER PROCEED WITH CAUTION

by Hubert McAlexander



Here are some errors to watch for when using Ancestry.com:

1. Any information advanced without proof is speculation. Some speculation is woefully ignorant.
2. Some people like to give far off ancestors the middle names of their descendants.
3. Some insist on middle names, although there is no proof of them, and middle names were seldom used before 1800.
4. Some give wives' names without proof. In one of my lines, the Immigrant's wife, of whom there exists no record of name, is given the name of the wife of the Immigrant's son's wife, to which are added the names Mary and Sarah!
5. Confusion as to the true place of residence is rife. For the dumpster collector, similarity of names is enough, no matter the location where the family was actually then living. Thus they mix people living in various states and counties.
6. Get ready to see your careful research used by someone else (with no attribution) and scrambled

NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS 2019-2020

These are the names we have as of April 1. The + sign by a name means that an extra donation was given. To those who have joined or renewed, THANK YOU! Some of you need to update your mailing address and/or email address with us. Some newsletters have been returned, some emails have bounced. Please send these corrections and any corrections to the list below to patmcalex@gmail.com.

PATRON (\$150)

Svea and Ron Bogue
Larry and Gail Dendy
Wilucia Green
Douglas Hellmann and Theresa Flynn
Carlton N. Mell, Jr.
Lucy Nicholson Tresp
W. Thomas Wilfong
Tom and Ann Wilkins +

SUPPORTING (\$75)

Rufus Adair
Lucy and Buddy Allen
Black History Committee
Tom and Gisela Gresham
Pat and Hubert McAlexander
Don and Phyllis Nelson
Janet and Alec Patterson
David Sweat
Francis T. and Emory M. Thomas +
Grady Thrasher and Kathy Prescott
Sam Thomas
Hubert H. Whitlow
Ludwig and Ursula Uhlig
Dr. and Mrs. N. Arvid Vasenden

FAMILY (\$50)

Dan and Judy Aldridge
Steven Armour
Allen and LaVerne Barber
John J. Barrow
Robert and Marilyn Bowden
Steven Brown and Beth Whitlock
Mark and Helen Constantino
Ruth and Lee Curtis
Cindy and Billy Galt
Kathleen and John Gratzek
Virginia and Tom Green
Gary and Faye Doster
Gilbert and Margaret Dowdle Head
Dawn and Matt Heric
Conoly and Al Hester
Paul Hodgson, Jr.
Thomas and Jane Keene
Tom and Caroline Kethley
Fran and Richard Lane
Barbara and Bill Mann
Kip and Jane Mann
William and Barbara Mann
Carol McKay and Ian Harding
Harry and Celeste Neely
Bob Ostrom
Carol and James Reap

Dr. Albert H and Mary Santora
Captain and Mrs. Sopera
George and Nancy Smith
Sandra and Jim Smith
J. Bryon Tanner
John and Patricia Whitehead
George Wright and Maureen O'Brien

INDIVIDUAL

Allen County Public Library.
Mary Hoit Abbe
Peggy C. Allen
Amy Andrews
Sallyanne C. Barrow
Suzanne Bennett
Leona Benowski
Laura Carter
Heidi Davison
Janine Duncan
Anna Dyer
Maxine Eason
Lee Epting
Peggy Gates
Max Gilstrap
Kelly Girtz
Cheryl S. Granrose
Kevin Guthas

Dorothy Harnish
Linda Helmly
Kathy Hoard
Mary Hutcherson
Tom Jackson
Claire James
Lawrence Jones
Ted Lamontagne
Barbara Laughlin
Nan Leathers
Mack Marlin
Jane Marston
Judy Masters
Elaine Collier Neal
John Nicholson
Susan Noble
Elizabeth Pape
Bill Paul
Karen Welch Redwin
Randy Reid
Susan Garrison Rogers
Marsha Richman Rosenthal
Lee Shearer
Jordan Shoemaker
Ashley Shull
Fred O. Smith, Sr.
Janet Smith
Vicki Starnes

Peggy Hoard Suddreth
Donnie Summerlin
Todd Stephenson
Joel Stowers
J.B. Tanner
W. Rhett Tanner
Sam Thomas
Colonel Frank Thornburg
Captain Robert Thornton
D. Davant Turner
Frank Uhler
Reggie Viperman
George D. Walker
Mary Bondurant Warren
Gene Weeks
Carol Williams
Francis Williams

AHS MEMBERSHIP FORM

PLEASE HELP US EXPAND AND SHARE KNOWLEDGE OF ATHENS HISTORY!

Our membership year is from March 1 to March 1. If you have not already joined or renewed for March 2019 to March 2020, fill out the form below and mail it with your check payable to The Athens Historical Society, P.O. Box 7745, Athens, GA 30604-7745.

Membership level: (*circle one*) Student \$20, Individual \$35, Family \$50, Supporting \$75, Patron \$150

Name(s): _____

Mailing Address: _____

New or Renewing member (*Please circle one*) DATE _____

Telephone: _____ Email(s): _____

(*Your email address is requested for online mailings & updates.*)

I would like to make an additional donation of _____.

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