



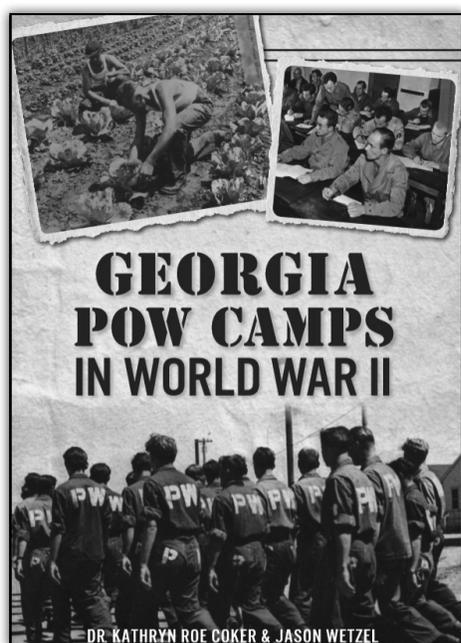
THE ATHENS STROLLER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
ATHENS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WINTER 2020



JANUARY 26, 2020

ANNUAL AHS MEETING AND PROGRAM ON GEORGIA POWS DURING WORLD WAR II



Our January meeting and program will be held on Sunday, January 26 at the Athens-Clarke County library at 3:00 p.m. Authors Kathryn Roe Coker and Jason Wetzel will discuss their recently released book, *Georgia POW Camps in World War II*. During that war, more than twelve thousand German and Italian prisoners captured in far-off battlefields were sent to POW camps in Georgia. With large base camps located from Camp Wheeler in Macon and Camp Stewart in Savannah to smaller camps throughout the state, prisoner re-education and work programs, particularly on Georgia farms, evoked different reactions. The presence of these POWs in America has not been well documented; many Americans do not know about this part of our history. Dr. Coker and Mr. Wetzel will describe the daily lives of these POWs in Georgia and

the lasting impact they had on the Peach State, including areas not far from Athens.

Before the program, there will be a brief business meeting at which AHS members will be asked to confirm the slate of five new Board members. (See the bios of three nominees in this newsletter; the other two nominees will be announced by email and/or at the meeting.) These nominees will take the place of the following Board members, who are stepping down at the end of their term: Steven Armour, Svea Bogue, James Lineberger, Jordan Shoemaker, and Donnie Summerlin. Returning to the Board for the second year of their term are Dan Aldridge, Larry Dendy, Bill Mann, Pat McAlexander, Harry Neely, Ashleigh Oates, Randy Reid, Ashley Shull, and Sam Thomas.



German POWs boarding a train that will take them to their POW camp. Note the armed guard standing on the roof of the car.

AHS BOARD NOMINEES (2020-2022)



Tom Gresham, was born and raised in Aiken, South Carolina, where he collected Indian artifacts with his parents. He followed this interest with a BA and MA from the University of Georgia in Anthropology, with an emphasis on Archaeology. He conducted his graduate research and follow-up projects in East Africa. In 1983 he co-founded the consulting firm Southeastern Archeological Services, where he now serves as President. He has served as an officer for two Georgia archaeological organizations, the Georgia Council on American Indian Concerns, the Athens Regional Library, and Historic Oglethorpe County (he's been its president for 23 years). He lives in Oglethorpe County with his wife Gisela.



Cindy Hahamovitch is the B. Phinizy Spalding Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Georgia. A historian of international and US labor migration, she is the author of *The Fruits of Their Labor: Atlantic Coast Farmworkers and the Making of Migrant Poverty, 1870-1945* (UNC Press, 1997) and the triple prize-winning, *No Man's Land: Jamaican Guestworkers in America and the Global History of Deportable Labor* (Princeton University Press). A former Fulbright Fellow, and the John E. Sawyer Fellow at the National Humanities Center, she is working on the history of human trafficking in labor over the past two centuries. She has served as the past president of the Southern Labor Studies Association and for twelve years as Reviews Editor for *Labor: Studies in the Working Class History*. Her students have been working on the history of industrial Athens.



Kristie Person is an architectural historian who works with New South Associates Inc., a Stone- Mountain-based cultural resource management firm which “integrate[s] studies of sites and structures of the past with planning and construction for the future.” She has had experience in architectural resource surveys, National Register of Historic Places evaluations and nominations, historical research, urban and rural preservation planning, historic site planning, and public history outreach. Kristie earned a BA in Art History and a Masters in Historic Preservation from the University of Georgia. She lives in an historic Athens house with her husband Erik and four-year-old daughter Dot.

THE RETURN OF ATHENS CHAUTAUQUA

The “Chautauqua Movement” of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had its origins in 1874 with the Chautauqua (New York) Lake Sunday School Assembly. An educational experiment in out-of-school, vacation learning, the assembly was so popular that it eventually involved talent agencies that provided speakers and entertainers for shows which traveled to small towns across the United States and Canada. These were known as the “circuit chautauquas” or “tent chautauquas.”

The first Athens Chautauqua was held in April, 1914. The *Banner Herald* (April 28) urged people to attend the weeklong series of events: “Athens is the educational center of the state, and yet there has been no successful effort hitherto to establish here a splendid Chautauqua. It was a happy idea this arranging for a week of Chautauqua attractions this year. . . . The best way to make this an annual affair is to patronize the Chautauqua this week.” The appeal must have been successful, for the Athens Chautauqua continued for five more years—until 1919. Then, retired Athens educator Art Crawley speculates, the Spanish flu may have helped bring about its demise.

Fast forward to 2020. Dr. Crawley and Dr. Peter Balsamo, also a retired educator, are spearheading a plan for the return of a Chautauqua to Athens. In cooperation with the highly successful “History Comes Alive” program in Greenville, SC, the projected Athens Chautauqua one-day program is scheduled for Sunday, June 14. Historical interpreters Larry Bounds and Becky Stone will portray Ben Franklin and Rosa Parks at the historic Morton Theater at 3:30 and 7:00 shows. The performances will be interactive: members of the audience can ask questions and speak one on one with the characters. Athens is the only Georgia venue selected for such a program.

Sponsors and donors are still being sought to support this Athens Chautauqua. Donations are tax deductible. For more information, go online to <http://historycomesalive.org/performances/athens/> and click on Donate to Athens Chautauqua. Or contact Peter Balsamo (pb9665@gmail.com, 803-728-7056) or Art Crawley (artcraw623@gmail.com, 706-353-3012).



Banner Herald, April 28, 1914, article about the first Athens Chautauqua

PAST AHS EVENTS OCTOBER 14—WINTERVILLE PROGRAM

Mayor Dodd Ferrelle began the program by telling the history of Winterville auditorium, where we were meeting. He described how it burned to ground on opening night 1950 in an electrical fire. Luckily no one in the building. Three years later it was rebuilt from old bricks that little boys dug out from rubble and cleaned. The building is currently in phase two of the restoration, and phrase three,



Winterville Mayor Dodd Ferrelle speaking at the program

funded in part by grants, is coming up. When that phase is completed, the auditorium will be able to host events from rock concerts to opera.

Jonathan Scott, historian and museum curator, then gave a talk on Winterville's architecture. He illustrated the talk with slides showing various town buildings—1920s and 30s churches, the railroad depot, the doctor's museum, and 1950s ranch houses on Winter Hill. After the program, attendees enjoyed delicious refreshments provided by Winterville's Little City Diner.



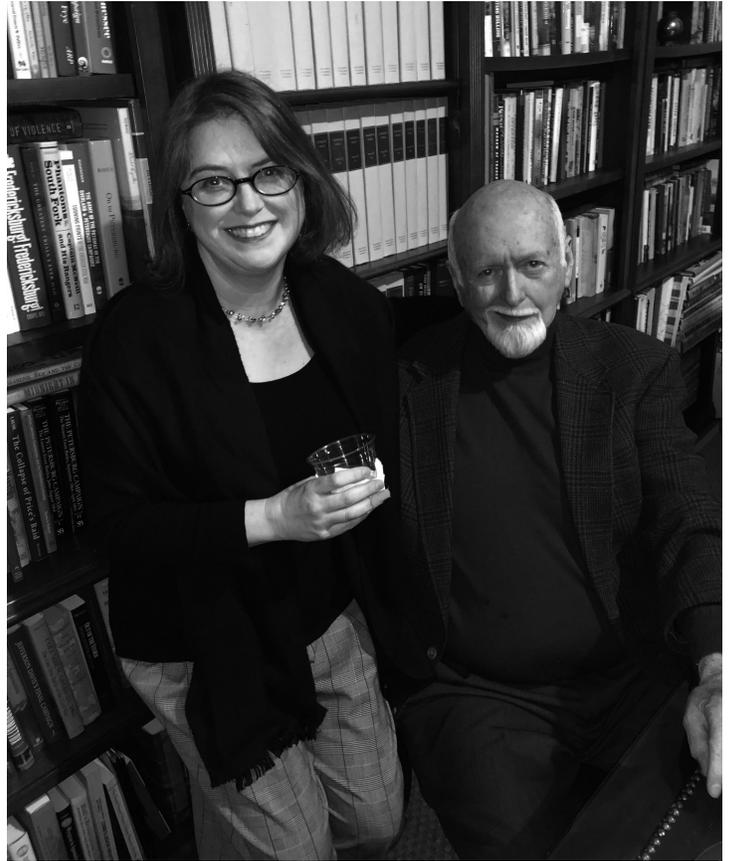
Presenter Jonathan Scott stopping by for refreshments after the program

PAST AHS EVENTS DECEMBER 11—AHS HOLIDAY PARTY

A good crowd attended our annual holiday party held at the TRR Cobb House. Below are some of the attendees.



Novelist Jon Jefferson (left) with maps purchased from Dan Aldridge at the AHS merchandise table



Theresa Flynn and Hubert McAlexander



Katie and David Rush



Carol Reap and Doug Hellman

HISTORY NOTES

This year the Economic Justice Coalition presented its Ray MacNair Lifetime Achievement Award to AHS Board Member Fred O. and his wife Lee E. Smith for their community service and education activism. The Smiths founded the Black History Bowl, and Mr. Smith has been deeply involved with issues of slavery at UGA, the Baldwin site burials, and the Athens public school system. Congratulations to the Smiths for receiving this award.

Ray McNair was given the first of these awards in February, 2012. With his wife Nancy, McNair served as a teacher in India; supported the black power and civil rights movements in the '60s and '70s; helped to build a social work department at Tuskegee; co-founded organizations like the Economic Justice Coalition, and after moving to Athens in 1975, supported nearly every one of its social justice initiatives. He died of ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) in May 2012.

The Winter 2019 issue of *Georgia Back Roads* magazine includes Dan Aldridge's article "Partner in Flight" on page 14.

The University of Georgia Press has reissued Professor John Linley's 1972 photographic study, *Architecture of Middle Georgia: the Oconee Region*. Retired UGA librarian and former AHS Board member Steven Brown notes, "It took me 20 years to find a used copy of this book I could afford. Don't miss your chance to own a new copy and hit the road on the historic building tour of a lifetime with John Linley's expert voice guiding you." John Linley (1916-1996) was a professor of landscape architecture at the University of Georgia from 1963 to 1986. See www.ugapress.org.

The 2019 *Athens Historian* is in the final stages. The editors hope to mail it out this month.

HISTORICAL LOST AND FOUND

LAKE DIXIE FOUND. In our last issue we ran Bill Mann's item about "lost" Lake Dixie, a popular Athens recreation spot in the 1920s, and asked if any readers knew more about this lake and its location. Bill heard from AHS Board member Tom Gresham, who suggested that it was located in the middle of "The Park at Athens," a student apartment community off Riverbend Road near the University Golf Course. The above picture shows the lake and the surrounding apartment complex. Bill was able to plot out and map the property boundaries from the deed on file in the Clarke County Courthouse (Clarke County Book 1116, page 208, July 15, 1991), grantee Capstone Development Corporation, grantor John R. Green, 47.595 acres -- Tract I & Tract II, Riverbend Road, Athens 30606). He hopes to trace the ownership of this land back to the 1920s when Lake Dixie was first opened.



Lake Dixie today (photo by Bill Mann)

In Memoriam

Marie Koenig,
first editor of the *Athens Historian*

ATHENS HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP LIST

Additional Members and Renewals Since Last Issue
(For complete list of AHS members, see Spring and Fall 2019 *Strollers*)

Mr. and Mrs. James Barrow

William L Foster

Mark Reinberger

Gene Weeks

Alexis Winger

Donation: Alexander and Janet Patterson: \$100 in honor of Marie Koenig

Send corrections to Pat McAlexander at patmcalex@gmail.com. To join or renew, send your check made out to the Athens Historical Society to AHS, PO Box 7745, Athens GA 30604-7745. Include your phone number, mailing address, and email address. Memberships go from March 1 to March 1.

ATHS 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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