ANDERSON COUNTY CHAPTER OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

# THE ANDERSON RECORD

VOLUME 28, ISSUE 3

JUL./AUG./SEP. 2015

# John Wilson Meeks

By: Gary Farmer

Included in this edition of "The Record" are two articles, both dealing with the same subject, "Murder". Has this ever happen to you; you are researching your family tree and you decide that today you are going to research this line or that line and the branch you head down abruptly stops and you start heading down a new hopefully longer branch and it stops to or doesn't even let you get started down it, so you try another branch and after a couple of hours you find yourself coming across information about someone who is not blood connected but the story is so intriguing that you can't stop investigating. Well that happen to me as I am sure it has happen to all of

There are two articles, as men-

tioned previously, dealing with a murder that I believe once you read them will trigger thoughts and questions. I would like you to read each article and when you are done go to the continuation of this article for "The Rest of the Story" on page 13. The first article is called "Escape From The Gallows", found in "The Memphis Daily Appeal" on November 9, 1872, page 2 (The Anderson Record, p4). The second article is titled "The Brand of Flood", "A Miserable Ending of a Horrible Series of Tragedies." from the Anderson Intelligencer on October 18, 1888, (The Anderson Record, p7). The second article may be familiar to some if you were a member of the Anderson Chapter in 1996. The late Ron Kay came across this article and Sue Brewer, the Newsletter Editor at that time, divided and placed this story of suspense in three newsletters.

### Remembering Our Members

We have lost several of our members since the last quarterly publication of The Anderson Record.

On May 8, 2015 William Edward "Ed" Chamblee's life was cut short through a tragic accident at his home. Ed was born on February 1, 1929 in Anderson. He retired as Postmaster from the US Postal Service. The Chamblee family and Ed's line contributed to lands purchased by Anderson County, then District, in organizing and locating the spot for the County Court House. He was buried at Forest Lawn Memorial Park.

Also, Dr. Carl Grayson Ellison, 92, died Sunday, May 10, 2015. Dr. Ellison was born April 20, 1923 in the Cheddar Community of Anderson County. A long time contributor and supporter of the Genealogical Society. He was buried at Cedar Grove Baptist Church Cemetery, on SC Hwy 20.

Memorial Books will be placed in the Research Center in their memory.

A volunteer is requested to assist in informing the chapter of the death of current and former members of this society. If you would like to volunteer please contact Gary Farmer at the Research Center at 864-356-4023. Thank you.

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## Organization

ANDERSON COUNTY CHAPTER OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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VISIT US ON THE WEB

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FAMILY ROOTS
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TODAY

The Anderson Record is the official quarterly publication of the Anderson County Chapter of the South Carolina Genealogical Society. Contributions of historical articles, family histories, Bible records, notifications of reunions & queries are welcomed. The Editor reserves the right to edit articles prior to publication. Articles or e-mails should be clearly written (copy ready preferred) with name of contributor and source furnished. Permission to use material in this newsletter is granted if the source and author are noted. Submission of the article or e-mail authorizes the Anderson County Genealogical Society the right to publish said material.

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# Meeting Minutes

May 4th, 2015

The Anderson County Chapter met on Monday, May 4th, 2015, with 36 members and 4 visitors present. President Shelby Lollis called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. The invocation was given by Bob Carlisle. President Lollis welcomed everyone. The minutes from the April 2015 meeting were distributed to the members in attendance. Motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as presented. Motion passed. Unfinished Business: The chapter had planned a spaghetti fundraiser for May 2015; however, this fundraiser has been postponed until a later date as the chapter has not had time to properly plan this event. President Shelby Lollis and 4 visitors present. President Shelby Lollis called the members and 4 visitors present. President Shelby Lollis called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. The invocation was given by Bob Carlisle. President Lollis welcomed everyone. The

dent Lollis reminded members that Brain Scott's book was available for purchase at the Research Center. The chapter is making a \$10 profit on each book that we sell. Also, for sale are the Upcountry Reunion Calendars with Confederate Sketches for each month. The Cemetery Committee reported that it had finished reading Silver Brook Cemetery in Anderson (the new Silver Brook Cemetery). The committee is now in the process of putting the information together for the chapter's use and future publication. President Lollis commended Barbara Clarke and the cemetery committee for their hard work on this project. The next project is Marriage Licenses from Anderson County. Work is being done to record these records on flash drives to prepare a data sheet out of the information collected. Volunteers are needed to work on this project; to volunteer, please contact Shelby Lollis. The South Carolina Genealogical Workshop will be July 10th & 11th at the South Carolina State Archives in Columbia. The chapter protocol has been to set up a Chapter Publications Sale Table during the two day workshop. A volunteer(s) are needed to man this table. President Lollis recommended that the chapter pay for the volunteer's meal of \$12.50 for the event. An itinerary and registration form for the workshop was distributed to members. The chapter purchased a new scanner with grant funds from Anderson County Council. Projects are being discussed to work on that will make use of this scanner. Finance Committee Chair Paul Dowdy presented the budget for 2015. See attached copy for details. The budget for 2014 included a profit of \$141. The 2015 budget was approved as presented by the Finance Committee. Ann Hollingsworth and President Lollis have been posting on the ACGS Facebook page in an effort to further promote the chapter through social media. Program Chair Kay Burns introduced our speaker Jack Marlar. Mr. Marlar presented a program on Southern Ingenuty, which included a special focus on the engineering aspects of the World's First Successful

Financial Report:

Income

634.00

Expenses

1,507.63

Balance

s 21,767.50

June 1st, 2015 - Tour of the Tim Drake Home. No Minutes

Do you ever wonder what will happen to your genealogical research after you're no longer working on it? The following "Codicil", submitted by Old Pendleton District Secretary Brenda Meyer, may be helpful to you!

# GENEALOGICAL CODICIL TO MY LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

To my spouse, children, guardian, administrator and/or executor:

Upon my demise it is requested that you DO NOT dispose of any or all of my genealogical records, both those prepared personally by me and those records prepared by others which may be in my possession, including but not limited to books files, notebooks or computer programs for a period of two years.

During this two year time period, please attempt to identify one or more persons who would be willing to take custody of the said materials and the responsibility of maintaining and continuing the family histories. [If you know whom within your family or friends are likely candidates to accept these materials, please add the following at this point. "I suggest that the persons contacted regarding the assumption of the custody of these items include but not be limited to" and then list the names of those individuals at this point, with their addresses and telephone numbers if known.]

In the event you do not find anyone to accept these materials, please contact the various genealogical organizations that I have been a member of and determine if they will accept some parts or all of my genealogical materials. [List of organizations, addresses and phone numbers at bottom; include local chapters, with their addresses, phone numbers and contact persons if available as well as state/national contact information and addresses.]

Please remember that my genealogical endeavors consumed a great deal of time, travel, and money. Therefore it is my desire that the products of these endeavors be allowed to continue in a manner that will make them available to others in the future.

Signature	Date
Witness	Date
Witness	Date

# ESCAPE FROM THE GALLOWS

An Old Man Pardoned - A Romantic Murder - A Bloody Deed - The History of the Meeks Murder in Anderson County.

"The Memphis Daily Appeal" of Memphis Tennessee

November 9, 1872, p2

Columbia (S.C.) Union, 30 ultimo

Governor Scott has pardoned Harvin Vandiver, of Anderson county, who was recently sentenced by Judge Orr to be hung in January next. For being with one Davenport, of the same county, engaged in the murder of a young man named Meeks, a resident of Anderson County. murder has hanging about it something hinging on the romantic, it having been committed in 1865, when affairs in the county named were in a very unsettled state, and not having been discovered until recently, when by almost an accident it was brought to light. From letters forwarded to the Governor, concerning the foul deed, written by the judge who heard the case, and others who watched the progress of it, we glean the following facts, viz: William M. Davenport and Harvin Vandiver were indicted at the last May term of the court in Anderson county, for the murder of a young man named (John Wilson) Meeks. All the parties were white. Meeks was murdered, or rather was missing in May or June, 1865, when society was in a bad state in the county named, (Anderson county), owing to the demoralization consequent upon the late war. The Grand Jury found true bilis against the parties named, and after following through a very closely knitted line of substantial and practical evidence, the jury found them guilty of the murder of Meeks, and Davenport and Vandiver were sentenced to be executed on the seventeenth of January. The counsel for the prisoners appealed to the Supreme Court, and the case is yet pending. At the same time

that Davenport and Vandiver were indicted, a true bill was also found against David B. Breazeale, for being connected with the same murder, but he had fled from the country, and to this day has not been arrested.

William Brock, a colored man, was the most material witness in the case when it came up for trail, and his testimony was of that nature that the corroborative circumstances left no chance for dougt of its truthfulness.

#### Executive Clemency.

Gov. Scott has pardoned Mr. Havin Vandiver, of this County, who was tried and convicted of murder at the May term, and sentenced by Judge Orr to be hung in January next. Our readers are sufficiently familiar with the circumstances of this peculiar case, without entering into the particulars at this time. Mr. Vandiver is upwards of seventy years old, and has been a Baptist minister. His father was a Revolutionary soldier, and he is respectably connected.

Wm. M. Davenport, who was also convicted and sentenced at the same time with Vandiver for being engaged in the murder of Meeks, is yet in jail. His case cannot be decided by the Supreme Court, to which an appeal has been made, until January. We are not advised that any effort is making to obtain Executive elemency in his behalf.

The Anderson Intelligencer. (Anderson Court House, S.C.) 1860-1914 November 07, 1872, Image 2

He was also an accomplice in the murder. From all that was adduced upon the trial, the facts appear to be a follows: "Meeks had married the daughter of Vandiver, before the war, and they lived together unhappily, and had separated; after the latter event, the wife returned to her father. Meeks desired an interview, and was seen going in the direction of Vandiver's house, where his wife was, on the afternoon of the day when he was mur-

dered. Vandiver was at his mill, but hearing of Meeks approach, stepped behind the same, and loaded his gun and placed it in a corner. It appears that Breazeale was in the mill at the time, and said to Vandiver, "I want you to send your son to Davenport; tell him to come quick and bring his arms," intimating at the same time that "some harm would be done."

"Very soon after this, it is testified, Davenport came, and a conversation was entered into regarding the deceased, during which Brock was told to go to Vandiver's well, the place where the deceased had desired to meet his wife. The well was situated about seventy vards from Vandiver's house. Brock was told to see if Meeks was at the well. He found him sitting there, and entered into conversation with him, the same lasting until nearly dusk, when Brock, the witness, started back to the mill, meeting on his way Vandiver, who said to him, "Where are you going, you rascal?" the questioner having in his hand at the time a stick. The witness answered, "It is me," and started back again in the direction of the well, and concealed himself near the same, and soon after saw two men coming down along the line of the fence toward the well, whom he recognized as Davenport and D. K. Breazeale. The two men approached the well from different

approached the well from different sides, and when Davenport got near to the deceased he fired upon him with a gun. Brock states he then ran, but was overtaken by Breazeale, who cought him by the arm, and said, "You must finish killing that man," at the same time handing the witness the gun, during which conversation they had got back to the well, where Meeks was lying face downward. The witness, Brock, testifies that he could not finish him, and begged that he should not be

(Continued from page 4)

required to finish the murder. Meeks then got up from the ground and scrambled over the fence, and while he was getting around a brier-patch, Breazeale ran around and met him, and knocked him down with a shot-gun, striking him a blow up and down the back and after this blow (John Wilson) Meeks never spoke or got up, but was dead. Breazeale then said something regarding Meeks trying to fight him. They then called for Vandiver, who was very slow in coming up. A conversation was then held between Davenport and Breazeale about how the murdered man should be buried, and it was said, the witness states, the Vandiver and his son (a youth twelve or thirteen years old) must help to bury him. Vandiver got a torchlight and Breazeale, Davenport, young Vandiver and the witness carried the body about two hundred yards to a woods, dug a hole about two feet deep, not long enough to straighten the body out in. placed his hat over his face and covered the body over with dirt; the witness being ordered to cover the fresh dirt over with leaves and trash. David Breazeale then said to the party, according to the testimony: "Do not be scared; I am used to such scenes in the army." Vandiver then went home, and the remainder of the party went back to the mill and took a dram (a small portion of something to drink).

Last year, when the terrible scene leaked out, Brock, the witness, pointed out the site of the grave to the Trail Justice, making the statement to him before the body was exhumed, that Meeks' hat would be found over his face. The body was almost entirely decomposed, but there was found in the pockets a key, a pocket book, and some plaited hair, which were all identified as the property of the deceased.

Upon the trial Judge Orr instructed the jury that (William "Bill") Brock, the material witness in the case, being an accomplice in the murder, should not be credited unless his testimony was corroborated by other witnesses, of facts.

It was proven on the trial that a pistol was found the next morning by the well, and that Davenport claimed the pistol, and the same was delivered to him. Augustus Breazeale, colored, testified that he heard Davenport say: "He (Davenport) and Davy Breazeale killed Meeks, and Bill Brock helped put him away." V. H. Breazeale, a brother of Davy, was at the mill

brother of Davy, was at the mill the next morning after the murder, and Vandiver said to him: "We have killed him and put him away." Witness said: "Who?" Vandiver replied: "Myself, Davy Breazeale, Bill Davenport, Bill Brock, and my son Bobby (Robert K. Vandiver)." Vandiver said, as witness was leaving the mill: "Understand me distinctly, your brother Dave and Bill Davenport killed him; and

myself, Bill Brock, and my son Bobby, helped to bury him." He said to Norris, another witness: "Davy Breazeale, Davenport and Bill Brock, killied Meeks at his well; when the gun fired he fell, and Breazeale struck him over the head and broke his gun, and that himself and son helped to bury him; he (Vandiver) held the light, but was not present at the killing."

When the Deputy-Sheriff of the county, McConnell, called upon Vandiver, the latter said, "What do they say of the proof against us?', The Deputy Sherriff replied: "Brock says Davenport shot him, Breazeale knocked him in the back of the head with a gun, and you helped to bury him." Vandiver then replied: "The negro has told the truth and Vineyard Breazeale had nothing to do with it. I did nothing but hold the light to bury him."

We have been particular in giving this brief summary of the evidence, as furnished the Executive Department by the most reliable authority in this remarkable case. Remarkable, not only from the motive of the murder, and the time that elapsed before suspicion fell upon the guilty parties, but from the fitting in, link by link, of the circumstance that led to their conviction, of the country as it then was. In defense the prisoners offer no testimony. The boy Robert was entirely exculpated from any blame in the matter. As before stated, Breazeale has left the country.

#### Executive Pardon.

Since our last issue, we have learned that Wm. M. Davenport has been pardoned by the Governor, upon the recommendation of many citizens of Anderson, and the affidavit of Havin Vandiver that Davenport was not present and knew nothing of the murder of Meeks. Davenport has been released from jail, and is now at liberty.

The Anderson Intelligencer. (Anderson Court House, S.C.) 1860-1914 November 14, 1872, Image 2

Vandiver, who is the subject of pardon, is upward of seventy years of age, respectably connected — his grandfather was a revolutionary soldier. The prisoner was a Baptist minister. Davenport was about forty years old, and a confirmed opium-eater. He has figured extensively in the United States Courts in revenue cases. In the community it is not believed that Harvin Vandiver planned the murder, or directly participated in it. (END)

him." Vandiver then replied: "The negro has told the truth and Vineyard Breazeale had nothing to do with it. I did nothing but hold the light to bury him."

Mr. Harvin Vandiver, who was convicted last summer of being accessory to the murder of his son-in-law, and was afterwards pardoned by the Governor, died on last Sunday, in the 70th year of his age. It is singular that his death occurred just five days prior to the time set for his execution, 17th of January.

The Anderson Intelligencer. (Anderson Court House, S.C.) 1860-1914 January 15th 1873

# Message from President Shelby Hart Lollis



Welcome to Summer!

Summer is here and so is the hot weather! Come to the Research Center and work on your research – it is cool in here!

Several events have happened, recently that are worth mentioning. The tour of Tim Drakes house was well attended and was truly amazing! We stepped back in time to another century! It could very well be considered a museum! The speakers at our monthly meetings have been most informative and interesting. I think we have some of the best programs and speakers at our meetings! Another interesting excursion, Gary Farmer and I attended an open house at Oak Grove Farm, the Toliver Bolt House. It was built in 1874. It is one of the oldest houses in still in existence in Anderson County.

We are preparing for the SCGS Summer Workshop on July 10-11. We will be setting up a our book tables. We could use your help with this. ALL members are encouraged to come to this workshop for some good presentations and seminars. Let's make sure our chapter is well represented.

We have started on our project of digitizing Anderson County Marriage License 1911-1951. We have completed only 2 complete reels and started 2 more! We have put in about 40 hrs. of time! It is a very slow process. Please help us!

Be looking for info on our Annual Brunch.

Check out our Facebook Page- https://www.facebook.com/ACCSCGS.

Keep researching!

Shelby



### South Carolina Genealogical Society, Annual Meeting

Saturday, October 17, 2015 Program starts at 10:00 A.M.

At the

N. Cleveland St. Kershaw, South Carolina

Open to all SCGS members. Registration is required to attend the morning program. Annual meeting begins at 1:00 P.M. See www.scgen.org for additional information. DOWDY'S TAX SERVICE 35 Year's Experience Paul L Dowdy Registered Tax Return Preparer

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### THE BRAND OF FLOOD.

### A MISERABLE ENDING OF A HORRIBLE SERIES OF TRAGEDIES.

### Anderson Intelligencer.

Thursday, Oct 18, 1888 Greenville News, 14th inst.

In a miserable wooden shanty off a short way from Buncombe street, near where it is joined by Rutherford, (in Greenville, South Carolina) a wretched man died yesterday.

Who was he?

To those who were accustomed to see his gaunt form and hollow, sunken eyes and sallow color cheeks, matted with tangled beard, incarnation of utter misery, he was simply "old man Davenport," or more often "Morphine Davenport," an outcast and a beggar. To others who knew his life history, he was an embodiment of human degradation, a man, in short, who had brought himself from a position of worldly wealth and respectability; had taken on the slavery of debasing habit; had for filthy money's hire killed a fellow man in cold blood; had escaped the just vengeance of the law and had come forth from a felon's cell to sink deeper and deeper in misery until death came to end the cursed drama of his life.

Almost everybody knew William Davenport, but few ever thought his life's history concealed the story of a dramatic tragedy. He came to Greenville twelve or thirteen years ago. He then bore some pretentions to respectability, but the morphine habit was his curse and it gradually brought him down until he earned a scant living by cutting wood and doing chores and managed in that way and by begging to keep himself supplied with the drug which was to him life and the all. His method of using the opiate was by injection, and at his death scarcely a spot remained on his body where the delicate point of the morphine syringe had not penetrated.

He gave-way under the long ravages of the habit last week and gradually became weaker until he died at 4 o'clock yesterday morning. He had been supplied with food and medicines by charity in his last sickness, and his death was far less full of misery than his life

This Article was first published in the "Anderson Record" Volume 9, Issues 1,2 & 3

Newsletter Editor:
Sue Brewer
Recovered by Ronald Kay

had been.

The story of the crime that stained his hands is a story of the "bushwhacking" time in the years immediately following the war. In June, 1865, the year of the surrender, John Wilson Meeks was murdered at Breazeale's mill in Anderson County about midway between Anderson Court House and Belton. Meeks had volunteered at the outbreak of the war and had fought through it until the surrender, when he took up the long tramp for his home and the wife and children he had left there. He had married a daughter of Harvey Vandiver, a Baptist preacher who lived at Breazeale's Mill, and they had lived happily together until the war and separation came. When he returned he found all changed. His wife had gone to live with her father at the mill and there were rumors that she had lived on terms of too much intimacy

with Dave Breazeale, the son of the widow Breazeale, who owned the mill.

The husband's return was followed by a quarrel with his father-in-law and he was forbidden to enter the house where his wife was. One interview he secured with her. He told her then that he was trying to get a house that he could carry her and the children to and that he would meet her at the well in the yard about eight o'clock that night to tell her of the arrangements he had made. He then went away and during the day that followed secured a home where he expected to carry his wife and children.

A dark plot was forming meanwhile. The unfaithful wife told her father and Dave Breazeale of the appointment her husband had made. The night came, and with it the hour appointed for the rendezvous at the well. Suspecting nothing, Meeks approached the spot where he imagined he would find his wife waiting for him, and wishing, maybe, for the time when he should not be forced to meet her thus clandestinely.

But the wife did not keep the anpointment. She remained in the house and in her stead three men sought the well and in the darkness lay in wait for Meeks. As he approached William Davenport, who was one of the three and was waiting, armed with an army gun, shot him in the breast. The wound was not fatal and the would be murderer. joined with his victim, in a scuffle, which was terminated by one of the other men, who seized the gun and reversing it, crushed in the skull of the victim with a heavy blow with its stock. The third man stood looking on but took no active part in the struggle. The only other eye witness was a negro named Bill Brock who had been impressed to help in the bloody work, but that the deed was known to others was shown when a wild shriek followed the discharge of the gun, issuing from the interior of the house. It was the cry of the

### THE BRAND OF FLOOD

wife at the death knell of the husband she had betrayed.

The murder was accomplished; what should be done with the body was the question. The three accomplices aided by the negro hurriedly carried the body off into the woods four or five hundred yards. Tools hastily picked up were plied with feverish impatience and a hole, shallow and without semblance of a grave, was excavated in the depth of the wood. The corpse was thrown in and the dirt piled over it, the dead man's hat having been first placed over his face. One murderer stood on the grave as his fellow ghouls threw on the dirt and packed it down.

Six or seven years passed, in all of which time the sudden disappearance of John Wilson Meeks was put down as one of the unsolved mysteries of the troublous and disordered times just following the war. There was much bushwhacking then, and it was supposed that he was another victim of the bushwhackers, and no investigation was made. Very soon after Meeks disappearance, young Dave Breazeale left the country, it was supposed to go to Texas. William Davenport, who was a large farmer in the neighborhood, and who was comparatively a rich man, having in before the war days owned a number of slaves, lived quietly and as usual on his farm, enjoying the respect of his neighbors and making a good citizen as things went. The disappearance of John Wilson Meeks had long since ceased to be interesting gossip, and as the suspicion had never hunted out the real murderers, it looked as if vengeance had passed them in its terrible sway over the ranks of the guilty.

The dream of peace and safety was rudely broken. One day about seven years after the murder, a message came from Bill Brock, the negro who had been the one disinterested witness of the killing to a brother of the murdered man. The negro was visited and revealed the whole story of the murder, detail by de-

tail, declaring that it had haunted his mind until he could get no rest. He told of the shooting at the well and of the burial of the body in the blackness and ghostly silence of the forest, describing the exact location of the grave and telling the position of the body. Warrants were quickly sworn out for Harvey (Harbin) Vandiver, the preacher, and William Davenport, the ones still in the country implicated by the negro's story. Harvey Vandiver got wind of the discovery and fled but was captured somewhere near the Georgia line. William Davenport was the first captured, and when the officers approached the house he set a violent bull dog on them, which nearly killed one of the men.

The pair was finally lodged in jail at Anderson. The trial came on before Judge Orr. The principal witness was the negro Brock, who had turned State's evidence and escaped punishment thereby. The trial resulted in the conviction of both Davenport and Vandiver, and they were sentenced to be hanged. In neither case was the sentence executed. The aged ex-preacher died in jail before the day of execution and the easy justice of Governor Moses released Davenport by an executive pardon, bought, at the expense of all his possessions, it was said. William Davenport went back to his home near Belton and lived there for a number of years until he came here (Greenville). He had acquired the morphine habit, it was said, before his imprisonment and trial and at the jail when visitors came in he would beg for money to buy the drug. After his release the deadly opiate drew him more and more into its slavery, and the soul of the murderer became the soul of the morally deprayed opiate victim, dead and callous to every moral sense. His property drifted away, health and character were lost and misery accumulated on him.

This does not finish the tale of horrors. One day after the murder of John Wilson Meeks, his little daughter said in the presence of her grandfather the elder

Vandiver: "I would have a father now if it hadn't been for grandpa." The guilty man heard with dismay the accusation from the lips of the child. The next day the child was dead, and it was whispered and believed that she was poisoned by her grandfather because she knew of the murder that had been done. The chronicle of blood was written again, when on the arrest of Harvey Vandiver, his wife, driven to desperation by her knowledge of the double murder of her son-in-law and grandchild, committed suicide by tying a hank of yarn about her neck, attaching the other end to the bed post, and rolling off on the floor.

The strange fatality attending the actors in the tragedy was exampled again when after William Davenport had moved to Greenville, one of his daughters, at the time an operative in the Camperdown mills, fell from one of the buildings on the brink of the bluff to the rocks below and was killed. The death of the chief actor yesterday does not end the list, the third man, Dave Breazeale, at whose instance it is said Meeks was killed, having fled to the West. It is reported that he is living as the sheriff of a county in Texas, but there is no verification for the statement.

James Meeks, the janitor of Furman University, is a brother of John W. Meeks who was killed, and the story of the affair given above is substantially as he told it to a *News* reporter yesterday. Many of the statements are verified by men who remember the sensational trial of the case at Anderson. The family of the unfortunate Davenport consists of his wife, three daughters and a son, who is in Texas. Two of his daughters are in Atlanta and one is here, a victim like her wretched father to the morphine curse, and beggar on the streets. End.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 6, 2015 - Anderson County Chapter of the SCGS Regular Monthly Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Senior Solutions. Dr. Julia Barnes will demonstrate how to navigate the most popular and sometimes cumbersome military veteran database in existence. "How to Navigate Fold3".

July 10 - 11, 2015 - SCGS State Workshop in Columbia at the SC Archives.

July 19, 2015 - Bolt Reunion in Hickory Tavern, South Carolina. Bring a cover dish and join the Bolt family at the Rabun Creek Baptist Church, at 1:00pm on SC Hwy 101 in Hickory Tavern, South Carolina.

August 3, 2015 - Field Trip - "Whitefield Baptist Church: Celebrating their 175th Anniversary!" More information to follow. Plans are to have a Cover Dish Supper and Rick Bell, Church Historian will be our guest speaker. This will take place in lieu of the regular monthly meeting at Senior Solutions.

October 17, 2015 - SCGS Annual Meeting - Kershaw Train Depot, N. Cleveland St., Kershaw, South Carolina. Open to all SCGS members. Registration is required to attend the morning program. Annual meeting begins at 1:00 P.M. See www.scgen.org for additional information.

2015-2016

### Reunion of Upcountry Families Calendar

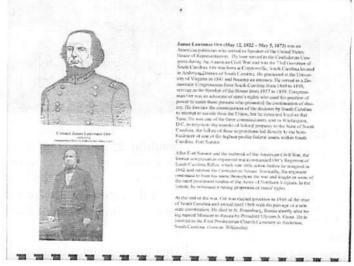
Includes:

A collection of Civil War soldiers sketched by Dr. Charles Busha. These sketches were recently donated to the Faith Clayton Room, Rickman Library, Southern Wesleyan University. Dr. Busha current resides in Greenville, South Carolina.

The calendar runs from July 2015 to December 2016 Cost: \$10.00

Available at the Anderson County Chapter of the South Carolina Genealogical Society Research Center, 110 Federal Street, Anderson, SC or by mail at P.O. Box 74, Anderson, SC 29622-0074





# WHY CEMETERIES ARE IMPORTANT! BY LINNEA CROWTHER

# HAVE YOU BEEN TO A CEMETERY LATELY?

More and more people are visiting these fascinating places, and not just to visit their lost loved ones' graves. Cemeteries are becoming destinations for photographers, for walkers and runners, for genealogists and historians ... even for music and movie buffs who attend film screenings and concerts at places such as Hollywood Forever Cemetery in Los Angeles.

We talked to Minda Powers-Douglas, owner of TheCemeteryClub.com and author of books including Cemetery Walk: A Journey in to the Art, History and Society of the Cemetery and Beyond, about the burgeoning popularity of cemeteries – and why they are so important.

families' roots, the cemetery revival is in full swing. Today, if you tell someone you're interested in cemeteries, they're less likely to say "ew!" and more likely to tell you about their aunt, best friend or boss who loves cemeteries, too. It helps that, as Powers-Douglas notes, "People are into some weird stuff right now. It's just another thing."

# LOOKING INTO THE LOCAL PAST

If you're new to taphophilia – that's a fancy word for a love of cemeteries – you might be wondering what to expect and what to look for when you visit a local cemetery. The short answer: history. "Cemeteries are fascinating places," Powers-Douglas says. "They're full of history, they're full of

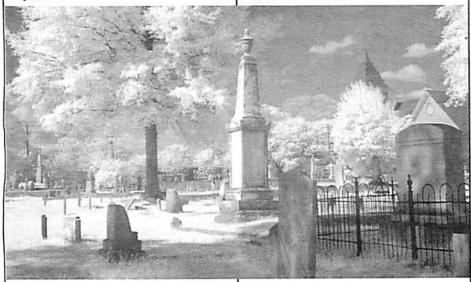
-Douglas' hometown of the Quad Cities of Illinois and Iowa, she discovered tales of the Underground Railroad in Oakdale Memorial Gardens, where a number of graves commemorate the lives of people who were involved in transporting escaped slaves.

"It was really fascinating to know that there was such an interesting part of history right here, not only in the Quad Cities, but (also) to have so many people who went through that experience in one cemetery. There were two families that had to leave somebody behind, and in both instances, that missing person found their way up to Davenport, to the family. And I'm sure they used the same types of connections to figure out how to get there. There's so much you can learn."

### "I WONDER WHO THIS PERSON WAS."

Powers-Douglas loves the idea that every gravestone at a cemetery has a story to tell. And she thinks it's important for people to look at those stones and appreciate those stories.

"One day, you're going to be gone, and maybe there's nobody left to remember," she says, "but if I walk by and it catches my eye, I might say, 'Well, I wonder who this person was. I wonder what they were about. I see that she was a mother, and a daughter and an aunt.' You know, that's a little bit of memory. In Mexican culture, their idea of the afterlife is (that) there's the beautiful, wonderful, full-of-color place for the people who are remembered, and there's the dark gray nothingness of the afterworld for the people who are forgotten. It's very sad. Just the idea of all these people - there are thousands of people in one cemetery, and they're not visited all the time. And people mourn and they



### "THEY TRULY ARE OUT-DOOR MUSEUMS."

There's a long-standing assumption, especially in the U.S., that cemeteries are creepy and depressing (and that anyone who enjoys visiting them is morbid). But Powers-Douglas says this attitude is changing. Driven by a flood of amateur genealogists seeking their

beautiful artwork ... they truly are outdoor museums. You can learn so much about your community by learning about the cemetery. You're going to have the iconic people of that area buried there."

That often includes local celebrities, but the history found in cemeteries goes much deeper than that. In Powers

### WHY CEMETERIES ARE IMPORTANT!

(Continued from page 10)

move on. But people like me and the rest of the taphophiles, they go in there and pay attention to these graves, and it makes me think maybe there's a little flicker for them. 'Hey! Thanks for stopping by!"

But she also believes that cemeteries are for the living – and that creating a monument to loved ones who are dead is crucial to those who mourn them. Whether a loved one wants to be buried, cremated or shot into space when he or she dies, we can still place a physical remembrance of them in a cemetery and visit it.

"I've heard stories of people, like a little girl who says, 'My friend goes to see her grandma in the cemetery, but we don't ever see Grandpa.' Well, we scattered him. And he's out in Tucson or whatever. But they can have a plot in their local cemetery to have a place to go, and I think that's good. I think we all deserve to be remembered. Every one of us."

# "CEMETERIES WERE THE FIRST PARKS."

For the people who first conceived the idea of the modern cemetery, there was much more to it than a place to put loved ones' remains. Cemeteries provided the public with beautiful outdoor gathering spaces during a time when parks were still on the horizon of city planning. Prior to the early 19th

century, there were certainly burial grounds where bodies were interred, often attached to churches or on a family homestead. But what arose starting with Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambut taphophiles know that perception couldn't be further from the truth. At Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia, you can attend a yoga class. Michigan Memorial Cemetery in Flat Rock,



bridge, Massachusetts, built in 1831, was a planned, managed space.

"This was the first cemetery that was actually landscaped," Powers-Douglas says. "They brought in horticulturalists to say, 'We've got this climate, and these trees could live here even though they don't,' so they'd bring them in and plant them to beautify the area instead of it just being functional. They'd create winding paths and work with nature instead of against it, so if there was a pond, they'd build around the pond."

Out of the movement to beautify

cemeteries arose a custom of gathering in these new public spaces. Families picnicked near gravesites, and children played there. Somewhere along the way, this practice fell by the wayside and cemeteries became known as spooky, creepy places, Michigan, holds fishing derbies at their pond. And Los Angeles' Hollywood Forever Cemetery is one of a growing number of cemeteries hosting movie nights and concerts: Lana Del Rey performed there last fall, and a number of programs are planned for this spring and summer.

If you attend an event like this, you're likely to learn the truth that a growing number of people are discovering: Cemeteries are some of the coolest outdoor spaces we have. Like any other park, they're full of beauty and tranquility, but they also contain hidden gems of history. From your city's most famous residents to everyday folks with extraordinary lives, your local cemetery has stories to tell.

"THE STORY GETS ME MORE THAN ANYTHING."



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"Whether your family has been here for two years or ten generations, you are a part of Simpsonville's heritage."

The Simpsonville Genealogical Research Room is now open in the Simpsonville Senior and Activity Center! Located at 310 West Curtis Street in downtown Simpsonville, our current hours of operations are: Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 10:00 am until 2:00 pm (other hours by ap-

For more information, find us on Facebook, or email us at simpsonvillegenealogy@gmail.com.

pointment).

## Now: The Rest of the Story -John Wilson Meeks

Did your heart drop a couple of times as you read each story? Did all kinds of questions cross your mind? Me too. Who was the young Meeks girl in the 2<sup>nd</sup> article? Where was she buried? Was there evidence to her death and did her grandpa, Harvin Vandiver, go to trial for her suspicious death? Did they assume the body and re-interred it someplace else? Did Martha Jane Vandiver Meeks marry Davy Breazeale? So many questions.

Let me tell you how they connect to my family. Martha J. Vandiver is the wife of John Wilson Meeks, they had at least three children and possibly The oldest child is Mary a fourth. Elizabeth Meeks, who was born in 1858 and seemed to vanish around 1865. I believe this is the young Meeks girl who confronted her grandpa, Harvin Vandiver, by saying "I would have a father now if it hadn't been for grandpa." They also had William Meeks, b. 1860 and d. before 1915, believed he never married, Georgia Ann Meeks, b. 1863 d. ?, who married John Augustus Williams and had two children, and James Mathew "Mack" Meeks, b. 12 Mar 1866 and d. 29 June 1938, who married Inda Anna Davis and had 4 children. Now you are probably thinking the same thing I am. Was James Mathew Meeks the son of John Wilson Meeks, which is possible if Martha was actually excited that he had returned from the "War Between the States" and yet still wanted to remain involved with Davy Breazeale or is this the child with Breazeale DNA.

Now Martha Jane Meeks was a Vandiver, the daughter of Harvin and Mary Elizabeth Jones Vandiver. Harvin and Mary Elizabeth had nine children of which Martha was the 7th child. Martha Jane Vandiver had a older sister named Margaret Vandiver, b. abt 1832. About 1850 Margaret Vandiver married Charles Swanglin Davis Jr., who is my Great Great Grandfather. Here's the catch, remember the branches? Charles Swanglin Davis Jr. is my blood but Margaret Vandiver Davis is not my kin. Their children are my Great Uncles but my Great Grandfather, William Ellison Davis, came from Charles Swanglin Davis Ir's second wife, Elizabeth McCarley. Though I feel connected to the Vandiver line, I am not. Havin Vandiver was the father in law of my Great Great Grandfather, one of three father in laws he would have.

Martha Jane Vandiver Meeks, according to the 1890 census, moved to Hall Township in Anderson County. She is listed as a farmer. It is obvious that she and David Breazeale never married. I believe Martha attended First Creek Baptist Church, out on the Abbeville Highway and was acquainted with the John and Elizabeth "Betsy" Bannister Elgin family who attended the same church. When Betsy Elgin died in 1894, John married Martha that same year and moved to Martin Township in Anderson County. John A. Elgin and 1st wife, Elizabeth "Betsy" Bannister and 2<sup>nd</sup> wife, Martha Jane Vandiver Meeks Elgin are all buried in the First Creek Baptist Church Ceme-

tery.

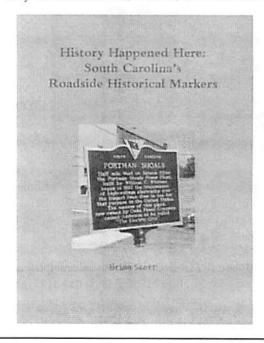
### **New Book**

By Brian Scott

Brian Scott has published his first book and it looks to be a good one. He has put together over 600 pages on "History Happened Here: South Carolina's Roadside Historical Markers". It comes completely indexed and covers the entire state by counties. Included is a CD that is completely searchable.

Cost: \$30.00

Available at the Anderson County Chapter of the South Carolina Genealogical Society Research Center, 110 Federal Street, Anderson, SC or by mail at P.O. Box 74, Anderson, SC 29622-0074



And by the way, Martha had a child in 1867 and on that child's death certificate, her father was John Meeks.

Now how could that be possible? So as you can see, this is the rest of the story, but not the end of the story.

Our family trees are filled with stories and some of these stories come from other trees whose branches are intertwined with your tree. It is the makings of the Tapestry of our lives.



### WOODSON FAMILY REUNION

A Family Reunion of the descendants of Dr. John Woodson and Sara Winston Woodson, Who Arrived in this country in 1619 and settled at Flowerdew Hundred Plantation, near Jamestown, Virginia, will hold an annual reunion starting at 11 a.m. on Saturday, July 25, 2015 at the K&S Family Restaurant located at 3107 White Horse Road, Greenville, South Carolina. Lunch, which will be ordered from the menu, will be at noon.

If possible, let us know if you plan to attend. Contact Sharon Miller at miller 2 @earthlink.net or 864-654-1151 or by mail at 612 Downs Loop, Clemson, South Carolina, 29631.

### Woodson Family Reunion

In the early 1800's a descendent named Tucker Woodson moved his family to South Carolina and settled near what is now on Beech Springs Road in Pelzer, South Carolina. The Woodson's have been in this country for almost 400 years. Please bring old family pictures, scrapbooks, books and letters to show. We have a wonderful heritage.

We are excited to tell you that a Recipe Book, compiled from some Woodson's and extended family members, has been published and is avail-

Amazon.com: (1) "Hand-Written Recipes and Memories from America's First Families" 172 pages - full color interior, (2) "Hand-Written Recipes and Memories from America's First Families" 172 pages - black and white interior and (3) "Hand-Written Recipes and Memories from America's First Families" 100 pages - full color of just the recipe section. A limited number will be available for purchase at the Reunion.

able in three different selections on Directions: From I-85 North or South, take exit 44 onto White Horse Road/ US25 North towards Travelers Rest. Go approximately 2.2 miles and just after crossing the intersection of White Horse Road/US25 North and Old Anderson Highway/SC81, K&S Family Restaurant will be on your left in a small strip plaza. Wendy's is across the street. Extra parking is at the rear of the restaurant.



### 1st Brigade Youth Day September 19th, 2015 9:00am to 3:00pm

The 1st Brigade, South Carolina Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans invites you, your children and/or grandchildren to YOUTH DAY 2015 on September 19th, 2015 at 3824 Dobbins Bridge Road, Anderson, South Carolina.

#### FREE ADMISSION

Come for an Educational Day of the True Facts of the War Between the States. Educational Stations to include: Artil-

lery, Cavalry, Infantry - Camp Life, with camp period music - Medical/Surgical Displays used during this period, - Ladies Dress/Ladies' Roles in the War Between the States - And More.

For more information contact: Paul Dowdy, 1st Brigade Commander at (864) 224-2642 or paul.dowdy@att.net, Henry Richardson at (864) 888-7730 or rosewooddev@yahoo.com, Ron Masters, (864) 640-5125 or at ronmasters1@hughes.net or Allen Ashley at (864) 934-4075. We would appreciate pre-registration to this event for food preparation purposes, but no one will be turned away.

Bring your youth far a day of living history which includes facts, food and fun......

### HOW TO SECURE A PARDON.

Ransom Simmons, of Richland County, was convicted at the October term of an assault with a deadly weapon, and sentenced to the Penitentiary. Gov. Moses last week granted him a pardon, coupled with the condition that Ransom should depart the State, and which was to be void and of no effect, if he ever returned. In a day or two, the Governor received a letter from the ingenious Ransom, in which he declined the pardon upon the stipulated terms, saying that he would rather live in South Carolina under the administration of Governor Moses, even though his time was entirely occupied under the roof of the Penitentiary, than to migrate to a strange country. He preferred to bear present ills than to fly to others where he was unacquainted, and particularly as Franklin J. held the reins of government over him. Moved by compassion, doubtless, the Governor straightway sought an interview with his ardent admirer, who again declared his purposes and declined the conditional pardon, expressing the hope that the Governor would order an unconditional release. The prepossessing appearance and conversation of Simmons made a deep impression upon the Governor, who finally relented, and ordered a pardon to be made out, without affixing any such disagreeable condition as forcing this loyal citizen and enthusiastic follower to make himself scarce in these parts. He is again at liberty and has the satisfaction of free and uninterrupted enjoyment of the benign blessings of our State government, including the privilege of paying taxes without the penalty, unless otherwise ordered. (The Anderson Intelligencer. January 16, 1873. Page 2.)

## Gifts by Will:

shall, in its sole discretion, determine,"

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The Anderson County Chapter of the South Carolina Genealogical Soci-

ety encourages donors to contact their estate attorney for professional

### Gifts of Stock

Stock that has appreciated in value is one of the most popular assets used to make charitable gifts, once it has been held for a minimum of a year. Making a gift of stock gives you the chance to realize tax benefits while helping bolster our mission to help people across our country find their ancestors.

Please notify the Board of Directors of your intended transfer to ensure your gift acknowledgement. We are unable to acknowledge gifts of stock received without your information. The Board of Directors can be reached at acgsresearch@gmail.com.

### South Carolina Genealogical Society, Inc. 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Summer Workshop – July 10 & 11, 2015 SC Archives and History Center, Columbia, South Carolina

### Schedule of Events

#### Friday, July 10, 2015

Time	Location	Speaker	Topic
8:45am - Until	Registration		Registration
10:00 - 11:00	Search Room		Hands-On Tour #1 with Steve Tuttle. Meet in the Archive Search Room
11:15 - 12:30			Lunch on your own.
12:30 - 12:45	Auditorium	Guerry Felder	Welcome: Guerry Felder, 1st Vice-President of SCGS
12:45 - 2:00pm	Auditorium	Debbie Hacker	Tombstone Symbolism (Chicora Foundation)
2:15 - 3:15	Auditorium	Dr. Eric Foley	Reconstruction in South Carolina
	Wachovia 1	Alexia Jones Helsley	African American Genealogical Research in SC
	Wachovia 2	Herbert Chambers	And Were the Glory of Their Times - the Men Who Died for South Carolina in the War for Southern Independence
	Wachovia 3	Renee Brown Bryant	Genealogy and Historic Preservation
3:30 - 4:30	Auditorium	Dr. Hyman Rubin, III	Finding Your Scalawag Ancestor
	Wachovia 1	Brent Holcomb	Introduction to South Carolina Genealogical Research
	Wachovia 2	John Smith	The Louise Pettus Archives, Winthrop University
	Wachovia 3	Ann Sheriff	Pickens County Confederate Project
4:30 - 7:00			Dinner on your own.
7:00 - 8:00			Speaker's Reception at the Marriot Courtyard - (Light Refreshments)
		Saturday, July 11, 2015	
8:30 - 9:30	Registration		Registration, Coffee & Doughnuts - Displays Open
9:30 - 9:45	Auditorium		Welcome and Announcements - Mike Becknell, President of SCGS, Guerry Felder, 1st Vice-President of SCGS, Dr. W. Eric Emerson, Director, SCDAH
9:45 - 11:00	Auditorium	Dr. W. Eric Emerson, Director, SCDAH	William Porcher Dubose
11:15 - 12:15	Auditorium	Dan Olds	DNA for Genealogists
	Wachovia 1	Brent Holcomb	Searching for your South Carolina Confederate Ancestors
	Search Room		Hands-On Tour #2 with Steve Tuttle. Meets in the Archives Search Room
12:15 - 1:30	Catered Lunch		Catered Lunch, Displays Open, SCGS Board Meeting During Lunch (Please allow board members to proceed to the beginning of the lunch line)
1:45 - 3:00	Auditorium	Dr. Charles H. Lesser	SC Proprietary Records
	Wachovia 1	Dr. Patricia McNeely	Sherman's Flame and Blame Campaign
	Wachovia 2	Robin Foster	FamilySearch.org, FamilySearch Wiki & What's New on FamilySearch?
	Wachovia 3	John Smith	Robeson County, NC: Lessons from the Records of Slaves & Free Persons of Color
3:15 - 4:15	Auditorium	Wade Fairey	Roots and Recall.com
	Wachovia I	Nikki Williams	Case Study: Hark West, Sr.: A Famous Enslaved Race Horse Trainer
	Wachovia 2	SCDAH Staff	Understanding the Online Index at the South Carolina Archives
	Wachovia 3	Guerry Felder	Early Migration Trails and Routes from Virginia and Early Trail and Routes in South Carolina

### Registration Form SC Summer Genealogical Workshop July 10- July 11, 2015

Pre-registration Fees:	Regi	istr	ation after June	15, 2015
( ) SCGS Member-\$	35.00 (	)	SCGS Member-	\$ 40.00
( ) Non- Member-\$	40.00 (	)	Non-Member-	\$ 45.00
( ) Catered Lunch - \$	12.50 (	)	Catered Lunch-	\$ 13.50
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I will be attending the Speaker's				
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Remit to:	SGCS 2015 Summer World	ksh	op	
	c/o Lynn Lee			
	P. O. Box 10			

Conference Hotel is Marriott Courtyard, Columbia, NE, 111 Gateway Corporate Blvd., Columbia, S.C. Phone (803) 736-3600. (Near I-77 and Farrow Road)

Lydia, S.C. 29079

Marriott Courtyard has blocked out rooms for SCGS at a price of \$99.00 per night, which includes a free breakfast. This price good till June 30, 2015.

NOTE: YOU MUST MENTION SC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY TO GET THIS PRICE. RESERVATIONS MADE AFTER THIS WILL BE ON SPACE AVAIBLE AND AT THEIR CURRENT RATE.

Other Hotels in the area are: The Hilton Garden Inn- 8910 Farrow Road, Columbia, SC (803) 807-9000,
Hampton Inn- 1551 Barbara Drive, Columbia, SC (803) 865-8000
Camping can be had at Sesquicentennial State Park, <a href="mailto:sesquicentennial@scprt.com">sesquicentennial@scprt.com</a>

9564 Two Notch Road, Columbia, SC 29223 (803) 788-2706

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\*\*\*\* Newspaper Extracts reflect anyone's name that was mentioned during these years....births, deaths, marriages, newsworthy articles, etc.

Anderson County Chapter
Of The
South Carolina Genealogical Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 74
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\*\*\*CURRENT RESIDENT\*\*\*
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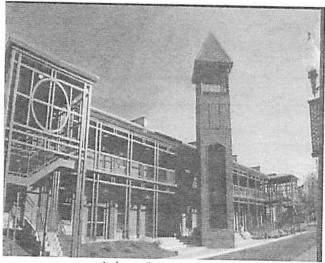
### NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

Please emails you contributions to acgsresearch@gmail.com, Subject Line: Newsletter or by postal mail to P.O. Box 74, Anderson, SC 29622-0074. Copy ready [Microsoft Word] contributions preferred.

### RESEARCH CENTER HOURS

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday - 10am to 5pm Saturday - 10 am to 2 pm

Located 110 Federal St. at The Arts Center, beside the Farmers' Market Enter the doors for Visit Anderson



Anderson County Art Center

Home of the Anderson County Genealogical Society Research Center

South Carolina Genealogical Society, Inc. P. O. Box 24526 Columbia, SC 29224-4526 http://www.scgen.org

## Meetings

Monthly meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 7pm, at Senior Solutions, 420 Clemson Blvd, Anderson, South Carolina.

Each month a program is presented that is of interest to genealogy researchers. Come early and discuss your family with our members.

Refreshments are provided Free following the program and all Regular Meetings are Open to the Public.

Anderson County Chapter
P. O. Box 74
Anderson, SC 29622-0074
Phone: 864-209-8794
<a href="http://www.andersoncounty.scgen.org">http://www.andersoncounty.scgen.org</a>
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