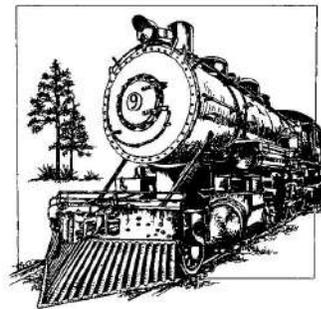


OKEFENOKEE HERITAGE CENTER NEWSLETTER



April
May
June
2023

Jewish American History in Waycross, GA

Despite the extreme level of population turnover, the Jewish community of Waycross began to organize in the 1920s. In 1920, Jews in the area first gathered to pray together. Four years later, 13 men officially organized a congregation, with Alex Gilmore as its first president. All but one of these founders were immigrants from Russia or Poland. Half of them owned dry goods stores, though their numbers also included peddlers, store clerks, and a lawyer. A number of them were relatively recent arrivals in town; two had come to Waycross from Savannah and one from Brunswick.

In 1924, Waycross Jews traveled to Valdosta or Brunswick for the High Holidays; the local newspaper noted that the Jewish merchants in town closed their stores for the occasion. In the congregation's early years, they met at the local Moose Hall; between 1926 and 1953, they rented space in the Knights of Pythias Hall on Plant Avenue. Alex Gilmore bought a Torah for the group in the 1920s; the Gilmore family donated a second Torah to the congregation in 1935 after Alex's death. Morris Jacobson replaced Alex Gilmore as leader of the congregation, serving as president from 1934 to 1954.

By 1937, 47 Jews lived in Waycross, and they began to discuss the possibility of building a synagogue. Due to the effects of the Great Depression, the congregation had to postpone their plans for a permanent home. Finally, on May 22, 1952, the congregation broke ground on the Waycross Hebrew Center on Screven Avenue. Morris Jacobson was the head of the fundraising committee. They were able to raise money from local Jews, family members who lived in other cities, Jewish-owned wholesale firms in other cities that did business with the area's Jewish merchants, and local Gentiles. When the synagogue was dedicated in the summer of 1953, the congregation held an open house in which their non-Jewish neighbors were invited to tour the synagogue and learn about Judaism. The members of the Waycross Hebrew Center welcomed the larger community "to express publicly our appreciation for the wonderful cooperation shown in our building program." Local Christian ministers announced the open house from their pulpits and encouraged their members to attend. Rabbi Abraham Rosenberg of Savannah was the keynote speaker at the dedication, which drew a large crowd. The synagogue was dedicated in honor of Alex Gilmore, who had been the leader of the local Jewish community until his death in 1934.

Waycross Hebrew Center



OHC Calendar

April Photography Guild - Art Gallery

1- Swamp Fest	9AM
9- Easter Sunday	
13- Gala- Chamber Pierce County	
18- Photography Guild	6PM
19- Jewish History Exhibit Open	
20- Pottery 101 w/Carol Hodges	6PM
22- Okefenokee Color Run	8AM
23- Photography Guild Art Reception	3-5PM
25- Art Guild	5:30PM
25- Budgeting 101 w/TrisTara Diaz	6PM
26- Executive Board Meeting	5PM
27- Tourism	10AM
28- History Guild	12PM

May GAWD ~ Art Gallery

1- Jewish History Month Reception	6PM
3- Board Meeting	12PM
6- Local Fair Market Opening Day	10AM
14- Mother's Day	
16- Photography Guild	6PM
23- Art Guild	5:30 PM
24- Executive Board Meeting	5PM
25- Tourism	10AM
26- History Guild	12PM
27- OHC Birthday Bash	11AM-3PM
29- Memorial Day Celebration	

June Preston King ~ Art Gallery

4- Preston King Art Reception	3-5PM
3- Local Fare Market	10AM
7- Board Meeting	12PM
18- Father's Day	2PM
19- Juneteenth	
20- Photography Guild	10AM
22- Tourism	10AM
23- History Guild	12PM
27- Art Guild	5:30PM
28- Executive Board Meeting	5PM

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR:

What a busy first quarter we've had here at the Okefenokee Heritage Center! If you haven't had a chance to come out lately, you will see that our historic locomotive "Old 9" has been given a fresh coat of paint, thanks to volunteer, Zane Williams. Also our caboose is a BRIGHT red once again thanks to the donation from GATX and many of our volunteers and board members, such as Danny Barnes and Steve Strickland! All that is left is the letters and numbers to be replaced. NOW, we are considering the other train cars as well. Stay tuned.

The Children's Dog Show, organized by Andrea Deloach and Nickie Carter, was a huge success! And congratulations to Andrea for becoming the Mom Prom Queen 2023! Also, we had a number of new artists for our annual Black History Art Show.

And we had over 450 entries in our annual Steve Bean Youth Art Show! A special thanks to the art teachers, and congratulations to the Middle and High School winners.

We had a wonderful turn out for our "Swampers: An Oral History of the People of Okefenokee" presentation by historian, Chris "Turtleman" Adams. Stay tuned for future presentations.

This year the 8th Annual Okefenokee Color Run will be honoring avid runner and community supporter, Ron Crosby. Please keep him in your prayers as he fights his battle with cancer.

May 6th is the Opening Season for the Local Fare Market and May 27th will be our OHC Birthday Bash! July 10-14 and 17-21 will be our, much anticipated, OHC Summer Art Camp! A lot is going on here at OHC.

Our guilds are going strong. We invite you to check our calendar and attend our guild meetings. Also, check out our Facebook page for other updated events and activities. Thank you!

The Okefenokee Heritage Center, we're on the right track!

Carla Garrett Cornett, Executive Director



Classes Offered:

**Mind over Mat(ter)
with Linsey Sauls
Tuesdays at 6pm
912-548-3932**

**Pop Fusion Dance
with April Sheruing Lee
Thursdays at 6pm
912-281-2976**

CHECK OUT WHATS HAPPENING!



OKEFENOKEE HERITAGE CENTER PRESENTS
OKEFENOKEE COLOR RUN FOR RON!
SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 2023
5K RUN AT 8 AM 1 MILE RUN & WALK AT 9 A.M.
Contact okeheritage@gmail.com for registration or
Sponsorship information (912) 285-4260

Special Thanks to:



BUDGETING 101
YOUR MONEY 6.30 PM
&
7.30 PM YOUR TIME
MAY 25 2023
At 6.30pm budgeting your money
At 7.30pm budgeting your time
Either workshop for \$20 or
Attend both for just \$30
TRISTARA DIAZ
TRANSFORMATION COACH

WHATS HAPPENING! – CONT.

(continued from page 1)



APRIL EVENTS

ONLINE MARKET PICKUPS
APRIL 13, 20 & 27
PICK UP IN WAYCROSS, ALMA & BLACKSHEAR
For more info email: waygreeninc@gmail.com

ONLINE MARKET DELIVERIES
FRIDAYS APRIL 14, 21 & 28
ST. SIMONS ISLAND

FAMILY FARM SHARE DISTRIBUTION
APRIL 13, 20 & 27

EATING WELL
6:00 PM
WAYCROSS LIBRARY APRIL 6 & 20
BLACKSHEAR LIBRARY APRIL 11
ALMA LIBRARY APRIL 17

UNPACK THE SACK
1ST & 3RD THURSDAYS AT THE WAYCROSS LIBRARY JOIN CHEF ANDY AS HE UNPACKS THE FFS SACK AND DEMONSTRATES A COUPLE OF SIMPLE RECIPES FROM THE CONTENTS. THERE WILL BE 1 FFS BAG GIVEN AS A DOOR PRIZE. THIS IS A PART OF THE EATING WELL PROGRAM.

COMING IN MAY...
May 5 - Waygreen Gathering at OHC, 6:00 PM
May 6 - First Local Fare Market 2023, 10:00 - 1:00 at OHC

MONTHLY MEETING
April 25 - Waygreen Members
Monthly Meeting 6:00 PM

APRIL 12 - SENIOR HUNGER (ONLINE)
APRIL 17 - GEORGIA ORGANICS FIELD TRAINING IN GLENVILLE, GA

WayGreen Acres Food Park
Corner of Riverside and East Blackshear Avenues
TUESDAYS 3:00
JOIN US AS WE WORK TO GET THE GARDEN PREPARED FOR GROWING
APRIL 4, 11 & 18

APRIL 22 EARTH DAY PLANT OUT
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

CERTIFIED ORGANIC
GEORGIA ORGANICS

Jewish Women in Waycross

In 1928, four years after the congregation was founded, 20 Jewish women in Waycross established a Sisterhood, which they called “Daughters of Abraham.” Although the congregation was unaffiliated and Conservative in orientation, the Daughters of Abraham joined the Reform National Association of Temple Sisterhoods, although they dropped their membership in 1950 as they felt they weren’t getting enough benefits from the dues they had to pay. The Sisterhood focused primarily on charity work. During World War II, the group sent food and clothing to those suffering in Europe. In 1948, the Sisterhood received a special citation for collecting over 2,300 lbs of relief supplies for war refugees in Europe. In addition to helping others, the Sisterhood also raised money through garage sales and dinners to help improve the Waycross synagogue. The group also oversaw the congregation’s religious school until Rabbi Zakuto started coming up from Valdosta.



FREE tours of OHC

FREE ENTRY

FREE Kids Games

Join Us For

OHC Member Appreciation Day

LIVE MUSIC !!!

Saturday, May 27th, 11am - 3pm

Sponsored by:
The Billy Bowlegs Society

FREE Hospitality House for Billy Bowlegs Members

Food Vendors on hand for food purchase

Okefenokee Heritage Center ~ 1460 N. Augusta Ave.

Jewish American History Month Exhibit and Reception

Monday, May 1, 2023, 6pm
Okefenokee Heritage Center




Pottery 101
with Carol Hodges

THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2023 ~ 6 PM

Okefenokee Heritage Center

Okefenokee Heritage Center

1460 N. Augusta Avenue
Waycross, GA 31503
912-285-4260

www.okefenokeeheritagecenter.com

OHC Mission Statement:

The Okefenokee Heritage Center is a cultural art center and local history museum for all people, which seeks to promote an appreciation of the arts and an increased understanding of history and development of the Okefenokee region through its cultural and educational programs, collections, and exhibitions.

Proudly serving Atkinson, Bacon, Brantley, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Pierce & Ware.



OHC Board of Trustees 22/23

Alan Jones, Chairman

Danny Barnes, Vice Chair

Stephen Winge, Vice Chair

Judy Kurrasch, Treasurer

Clint Bowman, Past Chair

*Mrs. Sue Clark, 2nd V. Chair

Mr. Joseph Johnson, Jr., Legal Counsel

**Nancy King

** Dave Callaway

Dale Wiley

Vicki Kuhbander

Jeri Pearson

Jorah Mitchell

Leslie Ranew

Rosa Douglas

John Jordan

Yolanda Stephenson

Robin Barnes

Isaac King

Kristy Foreman

**Dr. S. William Clark

* Denotes Life Member—** Denotes Honorary Member

Ex Officio Members:

Dr. Brandon Carter, RESA

Angela Carstens, Waycross Service League

Greg Smith, City of Waycross

Staff:

Carla Garrett Cornett, Executive Director

Sherian Barnes, Office Manager

Garrett Wilson, Intern SGSC

A special thanks to ALL of our
OHC Members!!
Thanks to YOU....
“We’re on the right track”!

Invite a friend to join the Okefenokee Heritage Center

Individual	\$36
Family	\$60
Heritage Club	\$100
Billy Bowlegs Society	\$200
Small Business	\$150
Business Sponsor	\$500
Corporate Sponsor	\$1,000
Corporate Partners	\$5,000

* Join one of our many Guilds

All donations are tax deductible

RENT OUR SPACE

You can rent the facilities at the
Okefenokee Heritage Center
for parties, reunions, etc.

Community Room	\$200
Community/Kitchen	\$250
Depot	\$300
The Venue	\$250
Depot	\$300
Warehouse/ Depot	\$400
Grounds	\$200

For more information call:
912-285-4260

Visit us on Facebook



And on YouTube



okeheritage@gmail.com