

# OKEFENOKEE HERITAGE CENTER NEWSLETTER



October  
November  
December  
**2024**

*Waycross Sesquicentennial & Ware County Bicentennial*

## Happy 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday Ware County!!

History of Ware County, by Robert L. Hurst, 2004 (*italics added*)

Ware County, in extreme southeast Georgia, was formed when Appling County was divided by the state legislature on **December 15, 1824**. It was named for a man who never visited the area, Nicholas Ware, an active politician known for his flamboyant lifestyle. The lower portion of the county forms a major part of the Okefenokee Swamp. Waycross, the county seat, is about 100 miles northwest of Jacksonville, Florida.

One of Ware County's borders is the Satilla River, which in the mid- to late 1800s became a busy locale for rafting yellow longleaf pine to sawmills on the coast. The Okefenokee Swamp offered cypress trees, and the famed Hebardville Cypress Mill, considered the largest such operation in the world at its peak period, also underscored this area as a timber cutter's paradise. Unique here at the turn of the century was the narrow-gauge railroad that snaked its way from Ware County's Hebardville to Billys Island in the Okefenokee, transporting cut cypress to the mill.

Ware County was known as a place where trails and roads met, the reason for Waycross's name. The Indian paths along which many early roads were cut headed toward Trader's Hill, Coleraine, and Camp Pinckney on the St. Marys River, or to Burnt Fort on the Satilla. Later, the stagecoach would find one of its major relay stations at Peter Bedford's Tavern in the county seat of Waresboro. The county's position as a transportation hub continued to strengthen with the coming of the railroad and the 1874 formation of Waycross, which became the new county seat.

Contributing to the county's educational growth are Waycross College, now *South Georgia State College* and Okefenokee Technical College now *Costal Pines Technical College*, which offer, besides their regular curricula, various programs beneficial to everyone in the community. Southern Forest World, the Okefenokee Heritage Center, the Okefenokee Swamp Park, and Obediah's Okefenok also offer both educational programs and entertainment for the public and tourists.

Ware County is known as southeast Georgia's regional retail center, and many buyers come daily from the surrounding counties to make purchases. With this growth in both the city and county, new buildings and plants are on the drawing boards for expansion in what is still called "This Magic Wilderness."

Ware County has had a number of famous residents known for achievement in the arts: Caroline Miller, who won the Pulitzer Prize for her novel *Lamb in His Bosom*; actors Pernell Roberts and Ossie Davis; and musician Gram Parsons. (*and many more*)



### OHC Calendar

OCT	Judge Ben Smith Art	Gallery
2 -	OHC Board Meeting	12PM
3 -	OHC Learning Series	6PM
5 -	Local Fare Market	10AM
8 -	Rise & Shine @ OHC	7:45AM
8 -	Pickin' in the Pines	6PM
8 -	OHC Photography Guild	6:30PM
11 -	"A Night at the Depot"	7PM
19 -	"I Never Saw Another Butterfly"	6:00PM
22 -	OHC Art Guild	5:30PM
24 -	"Create a Cute Cow"	6PM
25 -	OHC History Guild	6PM
NOV	Veterans Day Art	Gallery
2 -	Local Fare Market	10AM
5 -	Pickin' in the Pines	6PM
6 -	OHC Board Meeting	12PM
11 -	OHC Veterans Day Celebration	11AM
16 -	Red, White & Blue 5K	8AM
19 -	OHC Photography Guild	6:30PM
19 -	OHC Black Heritage Com.	6PM
22 -	OHC History Guild	6PM
DEC	OHC Bicentennial Art	Gallery
Up & Coming Art Exhibit		Com. Rm
4 -	OHC Board Meeting	12PM
7 -	Christmas in the 'Cross	9AM
13 -	Bicentennial Parade & Event at Okefenokee Fair Grounds	
14 -	Bicentennial Events All Day	9AM
15 -	Bicentennial Finale	TBD
24 -	Christmas Eve	
25 -	Christmas Day	

**NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR:**

Hello, Friends! The 3rd quarter at OHC was busy as ever! OHC Summer Art Camp was a ton of fun!! And our guilds were going strong. Judge Ben Smith juried art competition was a huge success with over 70 entries. Congrats to the winners!! We are looking forward to many events in the 4th quarter of 2024! WOW! This year has flown by! Our annual Veterans Day Celebration will be very special with WWII Veteran, Howard Connolly as our keynote speaker. What a treat! We are excited to, once again, partner with the Waycross-Ware County Airport for our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Veterans Day Red, White & Blue Color Run!! ALL Veterans can run for FREE!! And, of course the much anticipated Christmas in the 'Cross Arts and Craft Fair, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>. The GRAND Finale of our year-long Bicentennial Celebration will be held Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> at the Okefenokee Fair Grounds. We hope you all will join us in this once-in-a-lifetime celebration! As always, I must thank YOU for your continued support of our events and activities. The Okefenokee Heritage Center, we're on the right track!

*Carla Garrett Cornett, Executive Director*



**CHECK OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING!**

OHC Learning Series  
Thursday, Oct 3rd, 6PM  
Okefenokee Heritage Center

**Indigenous Peoples of the Okefenokee Region**  
With Chris "Turtleman" Adams

**"Create a Cute Cow" Paint Party**  
With Harley Herrin

Thurs. Oct. 24 ~ 6PM ~ Okefenokee Heritage Center

**NOW SHOWING**

The Sue Clark Society Presents  
**"A Night at the Depot"**  
Broadway Music by "The Creatives"  
The OHC Performing Arts Guild  
~ FREE Bicentennial Event ~  
Friday, October 11th ~ 7PM

NOV. 11  
**VETERANS DAY**  
HONORING ALL WHO SERVED  
2024

Saturday Nov. 16th  
**Red, White, & Blue!**  
Color Run 5K  
Waycross-Ware County Airport  
Veterans Day 2024

**OCTOBER RISE AND SHINE**

October 8, 2024 | 7:45AM  
1460 N Augusta Avenue | Waycross, GA 31503

HOSTED BY:

**IF YOU ARE GOING TO RISE, YOU MIGHT AS WELL SHINE!**

**CHRISTMAS IN THE 'CROSS**  
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2024  
~~ 9AM - 2PM ~~  
**OKEFENOKEE HERITAGE CENTER**  
14 60 N. AUGUSTA AVE.

For more information call: 912-285-4260 email: okeheritage@gmail.com

**Special Events:**



**OHC Summer Art Camp Week 1 with Jorah Mitchell**



**OHC Summer Art Camp Week 2 with Bob & Diane Brown**






**Congratulations to the Judge Ben Smith 2024 Winners!!**



**Ware County Bicentennial Committee ~ GALA 2024**


  
[www.waygreeninc.org](http://www.waygreeninc.org)
  
**Vendors Apply Now**
  

  
**WAYGREEN'S LOCAL FARE MARKET**
  
 First market is May 4th
   
 Okefenokee Heritage Center
   
 1460 N Augusta Ave
   
 Waycross, GA

**Special Thanks to:**
  

  

  

  
**ART WORKS.**
  
 arts.gov

**Brief Ware County Bicentennial Timeline:**

1824: The Georgia General Assembly votes to divide then Appling County to create Ware County, named after Nicholas Ware, former Mayor of Augusta, Georgia and Georgia senate representative.

1850: The Satilla River becomes a major trading hub, allowing the Hebardville Cypress Mill to ship lumber, building the foundations of Ware County's transportation significance.

1857: Phillip Coleman Pendelton moves his family to a lot of land on the Savannah to Thomasville railroad, naming the area Tebeauville after his father-in-law. Tebeauville would later merge into present-day Waycross.

1874: Waycross is officially founded and named for its status as a bastion for transportation, being home of both vast personal transportation infrastructure as well as our distinguished freight railway system. .

1924: Ware County Celebrates it's Centennial with County-wide celebrations.

1937: President Franklin D. Roosevelt provides protection from logging and other development by establishing the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge.

1938: Bill Darden opens the Green Frog, his first restaurant. Darden would go on to found Olive Garden and Red Lobster.

1941: Laura S. Walker state park is officially deeded to the state of Georgia, recognizing the conservatory work that Laura Singleton Walker dedicated her life towards.

1948: The Waycross B-29 crash occurs, leading to the infamous United States v. Reynolds case.

1998: The historic passenger rail depot is restored, serving as a museum of local history and a reminder of the once-bustling passenger train traffic Waycross received during the mid-century.

2008: The C.C. McCray City Auditorium -named for our first African-American mayor is restored

2024: Ware County celebrates 200 years of existence, along with Waycross celebrating 150 years of being the county seat!



# Okefenokee Heritage Center

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

[www.okefenokeeheritagecenter.com](http://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 2024/25**

Stephen Winge, Chairman  
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LaFerrell Barnes, Treasurer  
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Mr. Joseph Johnson, Jr., Legal Counsel

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*Dave Callaway	Vicki Kuhbander
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\* Denotes Life Member

### Ex Officio Members:

Dr. Brandon Carter, RESA  
Greg Smith, City of Waycross  
Christy Hattaway, Waycross Service League

### Honorary Member:

Zane Williams

### Staff:

Carla Garrett Cornett, Executive Director  
Sherian Barnes, Office Manager

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
Sue Clark 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
Warehouse/ Depot	\$400
Grounds	\$200

(Tables & Chairs available for rent)  
For more information call:  
912-285-4260

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For Updates on Events



**And on YouTube**  
For video interviews  
[okeheritage@gmail.com](mailto:okeheritage@gmail.com)

