

TRAVELING THE ISLAND WITH WAHHI



WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Over 60 years promoting the natural and cultural beauty of the Island, encouraging projects that benefit the community and facilitating communication among women

Introduction

For over 60 years, the Women's Association of Hilton Head Island (WAHHI) has had a significant presence and impact in our community. Its mission has remained consistent as has the commitment of its members. *That mission is to promote the natural and cultural beauty of the Island, to encourage projects that benefit the community and to facilitate communication among women.*

Each year, WAHHI members contribute their time and money to support various projects that give back to the community. A special WAHHI Interest Group known as Difference Makers (DM) volunteers in short term social service projects with local nonprofit organizations. The goal of DM is to "make a difference in a day." WAHHI Youth Community Service Awards annually recognize local high school seniors for their outstanding volunteer work. The WAHHI Charitable Fund was established to award grants to local nonprofit organizations to help support programs designed to meet the needs of our community.

Background

The idea of documenting WAHHI's visible presence on Hilton Head Island was introduced in Garnished with Gold, a book compiled to mark WAHHI's 50th Anniversary in 2011. Primarily a cookbook containing members' favorite recipes, Garnished with Gold is also a 50-year history of WAHHI. In a small section of the book entitled "Traveling the Island," the authors mention several locations that provide visible evidence of WAHHI's presence in our community. *This brochure takes that concept to a new level, creating a self-guided tour of Hilton Head Island featuring each of those locations, plus several that have been added in recent years. Each location demonstrates how WAHHI has fulfilled its mission to enhance our community through its special gifts and longstanding collaborations with other organizations.*

WAHHI ON

HILTON HEAD ISLAND



1	Coligny Circle	Pope Avenue
2	Heritage Library	2 Corpus Christi Place
3	Arts Center of Coastal Carolina	14 Shelter Cove Lane
4	The Children's Center	8 Nature's Way
5	Hilton Head Public Library	11 Beach City Road
6	Coastal Discovery Museum	70 Honey Horn Drive
7	Public Pathways	Throughout the Island

Coligny Circle (1)

It is appropriate to begin the tour at Coligny Circle, as it symbolizes the beginnings of WAHHI. In 1961 a group of 23 Hilton Head women officially formed the Hilton Head Garden Club which changed its name to WAHHI in 1965. The very first project of the new Garden Club was the beautification of Coligny Circle.

The property, at that time, was overgrown and unkempt. It contained fallen trees and trash, brush, and vines. All Garden Club members were asked to participate in the cleanup of the Circle. This project took more than four years to accomplish!



Today (2022) WAHHI has over 900 members and a visit to Coligny Circle is a peaceful and pleasant experience. Take a chair and a book on a hot summer day to enjoy the shade provided by the beautiful canopy of trees.

The Heritage Library (2)

Leaving Coligny Circle, head north to 2 Corpus Christi Place to arrive at the Heritage Library. The library is a nonprofit organization with the mission of promoting and preserving local history and the study of genealogy. Beginnings of The Heritage Library, like those of WAHHI, date back to 1961. In that year, Reverend Robert Peebles founded the Hilton Head Historical Society.



Eleven years later, in 1972, the WAHHI interest group, “Finding your Family Tree” was founded. It later became the “Genealogy Seminar”. In 1983, that Group became an independent organization, and subsequently, in collaboration with the Hilton Head Historical Society, was instrumental in the formation of the Heritage Library.

WAHHI and the Heritage Library have had a long-standing association over the years as they have addressed their overlapping goal of preserving the culture of the Island. For example, in the early days of the Hilton Head Garden Club, as WAHHI members cleaned up Coligny Circle, they also joined efforts with the Hilton Head Historical Society in the beautification of the Zion Chapel of Ease Cemetery. The Zion Chapel was the first chapel on Hilton Head. More recently, the Heritage Library has been the recipient of one of WAHHI's Charitable Fund Grants to fund costumes for their Living History Presentations in the community.

Drop by, say hello, and perhaps take advantage of a free hour to consult with a genealogist or browse the library.

Arts Center of Coastal Carolina (3)

Next stop is the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina at 14 Shelter Cove Lane. In 1984 WAHHI made the first \$1,000 donation to the Hilton Head Cultural Center that ultimately founded the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina. In 2000 WAHHI supported the Arts Center again, donating to a fundraiser that created a commemorative brick sidewalk. WAHHI sponsored two bricks that are displayed, side by side, in the perimeter walkway that extends from the Art League Gallery to the main entrances of the Center. The “WAHHI bricks” are located very close to the stairway of the first entrance you encounter. The first brick contains the message “Women's Association” and the second “of HHI, est. 1961”.



The Children's Center (4)

After leaving the Arts Center, continue north on 278 toward The Children's Center located at 8 Nature's Way, across from Jarvis Creek.

The Children's Center is a nonprofit organization that offers working families affordable early childcare and education. In the early 1960's, the community realized that young children of parents working on the island did not have safe and accessible childcare options. Hilton Head Island elementary school principal Isaac Wilborn reached out to Billie Hack, WAHHI President 1965-1966. He asked for WAHHI's help in establishing a childcare facility.



The Children's Center, then called the Child and Youth Development Center, opened in 1967 with WAHHI paying for the first month's rent. The Center has remained true to its goal of providing safe and accessible education/day care for young children, using a sliding fee scale. The Center is now in a new building--not the one WAHHI initially funded. It currently serves approximately 120 children from 3 months of age to 8 years old.

WAHHI has continued to maintain a relationship with the Center, which received a grant from the WAHHI Charitable Fund in 2022. WAHHI members frequently provide volunteers through Difference Makers and continue their annual tradition of donating holiday gifts for the children attending the Center.



Hilton Head Island Public Library (5)

Leaving the Children's Center, proceed south on 278, turning left (east) onto Beach City



Road. Then, take the first left turn into the Hilton Head Branch of the Beaufort County Library. In 1996 WAHHI donated \$5,000 to the library for a study carrel (now referred to as a study room) in the new building. The room is labeled as Study Room #1 and is designated as a gift from WAHHI. To access the room, please check with personnel at the reference desk.



As you enter the study room, there is a large, framed award on the left wall. The award was presented to WAHHI by the Bluffton/Hilton Head Island Chamber of Commerce declaring WAHHI to be "The 1998 Organization of the Year." The Chamber's Award was established in 1976 to "recognize a group which has exhibited continuous dedication and outstanding service to our community." Among other things, the Award describes WAHHI as "the oldest and largest non-profit organization on the Island (whose) history is truly interwoven with the history of Hilton Head Island. For their quiet work, civic affairs and preservation efforts, community spirit and love of our Island, it is indeed an honor to present the 1998 Outstanding Organization of the year award to the Women's Association of Hilton Head Island."

Before leaving the library, you may want to look at the Local History Collection which has considerable information on Hilton Head Island, including the previously mentioned Garnished with Gold.

Coastal Discovery Museum (6)

As you leave the library take a right on 278, heading north. Turn left onto Gumtree Road and then take the first right onto Honey Horn Drive. You have now arrived on the grounds of the Coastal Discovery Museum. The Museum is a 501(c)3 organization that leases the property from the town of Hilton Head. Admission to the Museum is free however there may be a fee for certain exhibits, classes, and programs. The Museum, which is an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution of Washington, DC, has beautiful grounds to explore and numerous exhibits that relate to the history and ecosystem of the Low Country and the Island. While there are many things to do at the Museum, we will only focus on those that relate to WAHHI: 1) the Pelican sculpture at the Armstrong-Hack House; 2) the Gabled Farm House Porch; 3) the Camelia Garden 4) the Hilton Head Hall of Fame; and 5) the Garden Labyrinth.

Begin your tour at the Discovery House Reception Desk where you may request a copy of the brochure: “Around the Horn: Self-Guided Tour of the Coastal Discovery Museum at



Honey Horn”. First stop on our tour is the **Armstrong-Hack House**. In front of the house, you will see a charming bronze sculpture of a pelican sitting on a bench reading a book titled “Tales of Hilton Head”. In commemoration of its 40th Anniversary in 2001, WAHHI commissioned local sculptor Walter Palmer, for \$5,000, to create this sculpture. It was donated to the Town of Hilton Head and originally placed at Shelter Cove

Community Park. In 2013 it was moved to the Coastal Discovery Museum. Notice the plaque that recognizes WAHHI. The Hack

component of the Armstrong-Hack House refers to Billie and Fred Hack who settled on Hilton Head in 1950. Fred was involved in the lumber industry. The Hacks first rented this home, but later purchased the Honey Horn property. It was in the Hack family until around 2007 when the Town of Hilton Head Island purchased it for \$9.75 million. At that time the Museum was relocated to the property. The building currently houses administrative offices of the Museum and is not open to the public. Around 2011 the town began renovations of buildings at Honey Horn. On its 50th anniversary in 2010-2011, WAHHI published “**Garnished with Gold.**” Funds from this endeavor enabled WAHHI to donate



\$15,000 toward the renovation of the **Gabled Farm House**, an original building of the Honey Horn Plantation. Today the Farm House contains the Museum’s catering kitchen, bridal room, public restrooms, and education/collections storage. A large sign posted on the Farm states:

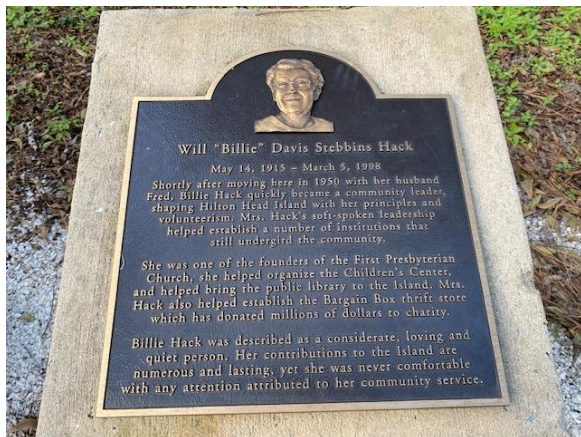
THE GABLED FARM HOUSE PORCH
THE WOMEN’S ASSOCIATION OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Another highlight of the Coastal Discovery Museum is the beautiful **Camellia Garden**. Although not a gift of WAHHI, there are WAHHI connections. Donna Manske, President of WAHHI 2013-2014 and her husband Fred, designed and donated this lovely garden to the



Museum. The Garden is recognized for its collection of 131 historic and exotic camellia plants located along a pathway under some magnificent oak trees. The bloom period starts in November and runs through mid-March. The Garden is on the American Camellia Society's American Camellia Garden Trail. Over the years, WAHHI has supported the Camellia Garden through the efforts of Difference Makers. In December they spruce up the

gardens in anticipation of the height of blooming season when many visitors come. Today, you will still find a WAHHI member or two working along with Museum horticulturist Wendy Dickes to maintain this treasure.



Another site to visit on the Museum grounds is **The Hall of Fame** overlooking Jarvis Creek. This memorial was initiated by the Rotary Club of Hilton Head in 2012 to pay homage to past and present residents who have made lasting and extraordinary contributions to enrich the lives of many who live on the island. The Hall of Fame honors inductees with bronze plaques mounted on stone markers. For her many contributions to the Island Billie Hack was posthumously inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2013.

In 2021, WAHHI's 60th Anniversary, special fundraising enabled a WAHHI gift of \$20,000, the largest ever made, to be used for the development of a **Garden Labyrinth** on Museum grounds. Plans to construct it are currently underway. A photo of the plan is shown to the right.



Around the Island: Public Pathways (7)

Though not indicated by number on the map, WAHHI has also had an impact on improving the public pathways that traverse the island. In 2012 WAHHI donated \$10,000 to the Town of Hilton Head's Public Pathways and Nature Trails Project that constructed 28 Pathways Maps and Kiosks located on the 64 miles of Hilton Head's hiking, biking, and nature trails. A map is available at: <https://www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov/maps/PublicPathways.pdf>. A hard copy can be obtained at the Hilton Head Island Town Hall.



The informational kiosks have two sides. One side has an Island-wide detailed map, and the other side exhibits a map of the location surrounding the kiosk. Look at the lower left-hand corner of the Pathways Map and see our logo, along with recognition that WAHHI and the Rotary Club sponsored the kiosks.

Now that we have finished our tour...

We hope you have enjoyed your “travels” and have come to know more about our island and its culture. For the past 60+ years, WAHHI has taken special pride in improving the life of Hilton Head Island residents and visitors. Our members look forward to continuing those efforts into the future of our association.

Acknowledgements

Marie Danforth, WAHHI Historian, for the concept, writing and photographs

Lorraine Fink, WAHHI, for writing, editing, organization, and layout

Published 3/22/22