

Historical Society

# Journal

May 2014

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**Dear Aiken County Historical Society Member:**

Thanks very much to Dr. Jim Farmer for his presentation on William Gregg and his Aiken home, Kalmia. I appreciate all of the work and research that he put into the presentation. I also want to thank Jim for the research that he did for the Kalmia historical marker that was unveiled after his talk. All information on any historical marker has to be documented. Without his efforts the Kalmia historical marker would not have been a reality. You can see the Kalmia historical marker at the corner of Richland and Gregg Avenues.

Thanks to all for your 2014 membership dues. We depend on your support to keep the Society in business and also to help us erect more historical markers in the future. Our September meeting will have the unveiling of our 21st historical marker. It will be for the Pine Lawn Cemetery, also known as the Aiken Colored Cemetery.

I have not mentioned the Gaston Livery Stable project lately. Things are coming along well. Just like any other project in Aiken, your support- financial and volunteering at work days- is needed. Contact Coleen Reed at 648-4123 for any questions. They are still trying to pay off their debt to the bank for the property and building. Once that is done, the next phase of the project can begin. That would be to repair and restore the building to its former glory. Thanks to a host of volunteers some of that work has already been done, but more will need to be done.

Please make your plans to join us on Sunday, May 4th, 3 pm at the Aiken County Historical Museum to hear David Tavernier discuss his current book, "Stories of the Rich and Famous: Aiken's Winter Colony in the Gilded Age." A book signing and reception will follow.

Allen Riddick  
*President*  
Aiken County Historical Society

# Aiken County Historical Society 2014 Winter Meeting



Dr. Jim Farmer was the guest speaker for the afternoon.



Ninety-two year old Helga Hulse entertained the meeting audience prior to the start of the meeting.



Ms. Pat Pennington, whose current house is on the property where William Gregg's house was located, and ACHS President Allen Riddick unveil the official State of South Carolina historical marker for Kalmia.



ACHS Board Member Michael Norton inspects the Kalmia historical marker after it was put in place at the corner of Gregg and Richland Avenues shortly after the general meeting.

**AIKEN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
SPRING GENERAL MEETING  
SUNDAY, MAY 4, 2013  
3:00 PM  
AIKEN COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM**



David Tavernier will discuss his current book entitled “Stories of the Rich and Famous: Aiken’s Winter Colony in the Gilded Age.” It brings to life a select group chosen from the many multi-millionaires who came to Aiken each winter to play. Each story spotlights an aspect of a Winter Colonist’s life, or a significant incident that occurred while passing the winter in Aiken.

“Stories of the Rich and Famous: Aiken’s Winter Colony in the Gilded Age” is David Tavernier’s first book. It was selected as the Featured Book for “In Author’s Words” on July 6, 2013. In October and November 2012 it was recognized as “Top Ten in Sales” for Outskirts Press publications.

The title is available at local bookstores in Aiken, S.C.; online at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com), and [www.outskirtspress.com/bookstore](http://www.outskirtspress.com/bookstore)

A book signing and reception will follow.

## 2014 ACHS MEMBERSHIP FORM

DUES ARE NOW BEING ACCEPTED.

Anyone wishing to join the Aiken County Historical Society is cordially invited to do so. Please complete the application below and mail it with your dues to:

**Aiken County Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 1775**  
**Aiken, SC 29802**

Patron:	\$25	Benefactor:	\$500
Corporate:	\$50	Life:	\$1000
Donor:	\$100		

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

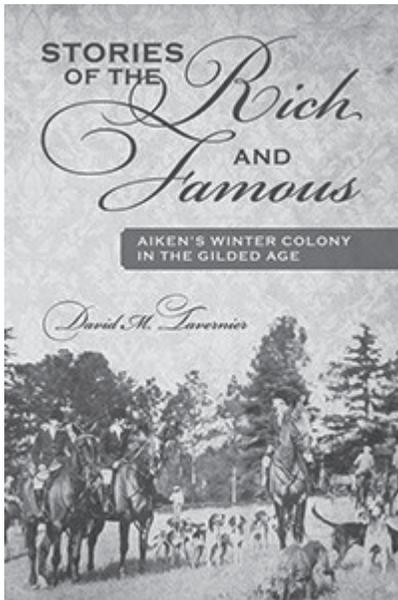
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*One Time Donation:* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

The one time donation is for those members who have already paid their dues, but would like to contribute directly toward our Historical Marker Fund. We also encourage others who may not want to become an ACHS member, but would like to make a contribution to our organization.

# Stories of the Rich and Famous: Aiken's Winter Colony in the Gilded Age

by David M. Tavernier



Aiken was a small, relatively common southern town until the arrival of an aristocratic New Orleans family with strong societal ties. Consequently, it did not take long before there was a seasonal flood of winter visitors - with names like Hitchcock, Vanderbilt, and Whitney. This South Carolina town was drawing the country's wealthiest and most powerful families, beginning in the 19th century and continuing on past World War II. Every fall they came by private railcar to play polo and golf, race thoroughbreds, and hunt fox. They held high tea, musicales, balls, and dinners, and every spring the "Winter Colony" migrated north again, leaving behind mansions and traditions that still resonate in Aiken 100 years later.

Author David M. Tavernier has woven a fascinating collection of stories around the people and places of this era. Based on fact, fiction, and years of historical research, the stories of "the Newport of the South" are masterfully and vividly brought to life.

Each story offers a fascinating glimpse into the lives of the rich and famous who wintered in Aiken.

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## About the Author, David M. Tavernier

Born and raised in Rhode Island, David M. Tavernier spent most of his adult life in Florida. His career has been in banking, but history has been his avocation since he was a student at Florida Atlantic University. He resides in Aiken and is married to the former Patrice Durban, a third generation Aikenite.

Released on September 26, 2012, *Stories of the Rich and Famous: Aiken's Winter Colony in the Gilded Age* is his first book. It was selected as the Featured Book for "In Author's Words" on July 6, 2013. In October and November 2012 it was recognized as "Top Ten in Sales" for Outskirts Press publications.

The title is available at local bookstores in Aiken, S.C.; online at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com), and [www.outskirtspress.com/bookstore](http://www.outskirtspress.com/bookstore)



***Stories of the Rich and Famous: Aiken's Winter Colony in the Gilded Age*** brings to life a select group chosen from the many multi-millionaires who came to Aiken each winter to play. Each story spotlights an aspect of a Winter Colonist's life, or a significant incident that occurred while passing the winter in Aiken.



*"Drag hunts" were weekly events held at the preserve and were often led by Thomas & Louise Hitchcock*



In 1914 William Kissam Vanderbilt purchased his Aiken home from a member of his second wife's family, the wealthy Harrimans of New York. Anne Harriman Sands Rutherford married Vanderbilt in 1903 several years after the death of her second husband, Lewis M. Rutherford. The home, which was located on the corner of Union St. and Colleton Avenue was once known as the Gregg Mansion, having been built in the mid nineteenth century by William Gregg, the founder of the Graniteville Company.



William Collins Whitney's first wife, Flora Payne Whitney, whose family became very wealthy from the railroad and oil industries, never set foot in Aiken. It was only after marriage to the widowed he purchased Joye Cottage, equine sports. The marriage the Whitney family that in 1904. Edith was to suffer preserve (Hitchcock Woods) be the cause of her death.



*Edith Randolph Whitney*

her death in 1893 and his Edith Randolph in 1896 that as they both shared a love of was to cause a schism in continued until William's death a serious riding accident in the in 1898 which would ultimately



*Flora Whitney*



Evalyn Walsh, whose father struck it rich by exploring gold mines in Colorado, married the wealthy newspaper dynasty heir (Washington Post & Cleveland Examiner), Edward "Ned" McLean. She gained national publicity through her ownership of the Hope Diamond and would store the gem in her gramophone while passing winters at Dinsmoore Cottage in Aiken. In 1932 she became involved in a scheme to recover the kidnapped child of Colonel Charles Lindbergh. In connection with that scheme (during which she was swindled out of \$100,000), Dinsmoore Cottage became the scene of a sinister meeting in her futile attempt to recover the child.



**“Winter Colonist” Louise Blagden with her “kill” in Hitchcock Woods in 1935**



**Founder of Aiken's "Winter Colony," along with her husband Thomas, Louise Hitchcock takes a jump in Hitchcock Woods. Notice she is riding sidesaddle.**



**"Winter Colonists" Mr. and Mrs. James B. Johnson riding on the dirt roads of Aiken**

*Handwritten signature or mark.*

Aiken County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 1775  
Aiken, South Carolina 29802-1775

Visit <http://www.aikencountyhistoricalsociety.org>

## DON'T MISS THE NEXT MEETING!

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