

Tour **Old Ebenezer** with Norman Turner on Landing Day, March 14, 2026.



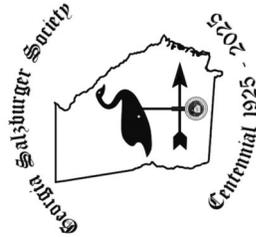
Caravan tour will start around 2:30 PM in front of the Jerusalem Evangelical Lutheran Church.

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Georgia Salzburger Society
2980 Ebenezer Road
Georgia Highway 275
Rincon, GA 31326



CENTENNIAL T-SHIRTS,
COINS, & MEDALLIONS
on Sale for \$10 In Museum





Founded in 1925

Georgia Salzburger Society

An Affiliate Chapter of the Georgia Historical Society

ADDRESS for:
Georgia Salzburger Society
2980 Ebenezer Road
Georgia Highway 275
Rincon, GA 31326

OFFICE HOURS
Tuesday and Friday
9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.
Phone: 912-754-7001
Email: gaslzbrgr@aol.com
Website: <http://govisiteebenezer.com>

OFFICERS
PRESIDENT: Noble Boykin
VICE PRESIDENT: Erika Bragg
SECRETARY: Gaye Royal
TREASURER: Jerry Groover
CURATOR: Patsy Zeigler
ASST CURATOR:
LOEST RESEARCH LIBRARIAN:
Tom Grovenstein
ASST LOEST RESEARCH LIBRARIAN:
Dylan Mulligan
REGISTRAR: Debra Herrin
ASST REGISTRAR: Sandra Wingate
PARLIAMENTARIAN: Charlie Arnsdorff
CHAPLAIN: Pastor Richard Johnson
PAST PRES: Claudia Christiansen
ADMIN ASST: Jennifer Nash

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

To March 2026

Linda Brannen Dot Cauley
Judy O'Neal Jean Thomas
Dan Wilson, III

To March 2027

Ronnie Allen Ella HeidtHarris
Diane Holder Sandra Wingate
Joshua Zeigler

To March 2028

Julie Hynes Allen Kieffer
Anne Miller Dylan Mulligan
Virginia Spano

Edited by
Published by Anne Miller

Newsletter
Published Quarterly
Send news and inquiries to the
GSS Office.



President's Message

This will be my last President's Report, as I will be leaving that office at the conclusion of my term following the March Landing Day Meeting. It has been my pleasure and honor to serve in that capacity. These past three years have been productive, and while I am sad to move on, I have previously served two terms and believe it is time for others—perhaps younger members—to take up the reins of the Society. Thank you all for your support and kind wishes.

My only regret is that I will not remain in office long enough to see the completion of the fundraiser for the new publication of the letters of Pastors Rabenhorst and Triebner, who served Jerusalem Church during the Revolutionary War. With this publication, the letters of all the pastors at Ebenezer through the colonial period and the Revolutionary War will have been completed. The letters of these two pastors reflect much of what was taking place among the general population at the time, with Rabenhorst generally viewed as pro-independence and Triebner as pro-British.

We are exploring additional fundraising options, along with the generous contributions given in memory and honor of past President and Pastor Donald Hanberry. I will continue to serve on the Board in a fundraising capacity, so I'm afraid you all will have to put up with me a bit longer. Thank you, and best wishes.

~ Noble Boykin



GSS MEMBERSHIPS APPROVED

February 7, 2026

Debra Stafford Herrin, GSS Registrar

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Alex Reiser Patton
Ryan Virgil Patton
Isabelle Fryman Patton
Eloise Noel Rausch
Walter Winston Skinner
Karen Ketchum Still
REGULAR MEMBERSHIP
Patricia Ann Cook
Andrea Stafford Deal
Nova McKenzie Deal
Carla Nicole Sherrouse Messer
Linda Joyce Miller
Linda Elyse Skinner West
Tracey Lynn Ratliff Worley

IMMIGRANT ANCESTOR

Bartholomäus Rieser
Bartholomäus Rieser
Bartholomäus Rieser
Andreas Lorenz Arnsdorff
John Michael Heinsmann
Bartholomäus Riese
IMMIGRANT ANCESTOR
Jacob Kübler
Peter Gruber
Peter Gruber
Johann Scheraus
Jacob Kübler
Jacob Kübler
Paulus Zieterauer

The following members were approved at the November Board Meeting but their names were not published in the newsletter because they were given as Christmas gifts. We did not want to spoil the surprise.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Robert Gregory Jerald
Jonathan Bradley Jerald
Carter Clarkson Rausch
Noah James Rausch
Elsie Hartman Wheat
REGULAR MEMBERSHIP
Catherine Elizabeth Collins
Spikes

IMMIGRANT ANCESTOR

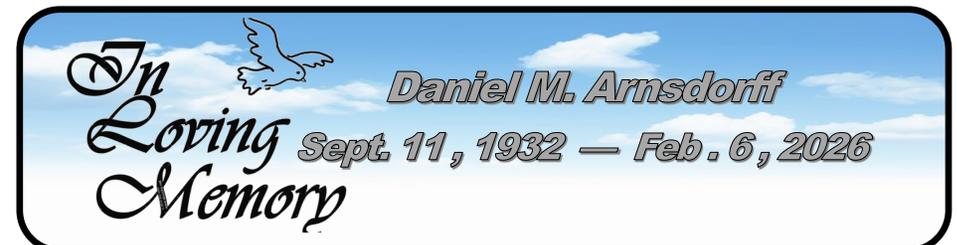
John Casper Waldhauer
John Casper Waldhauer
Andreas Lorenz Arnsdorff
Andreas Lorenz Arnsdorff
Peter Zipperer
IMMIGRANT ANCESTOR
Peter Gruber

FRIENDS

Charity Miles
Cullen Miles

FRIENDS

Declan Miles
Thomas Miles



Nominating Committee Recommendation – 2026

2026 GSS OFFICERS

*President	Joshua Zeigler
*Vice President	Erika Bragg
Treasurer	Jerry Groover
Secretary	Gaye Royal
Museum Curator	Patsy Zeigler
Assistant Curator	Claudia Christiansen
Loest Research Librarian	Tom Grovenstein
Assistant Librarian	Dylan Mulligan
Registrar	Debra Herrin
Assistant Registrar	Sandra Wingate
Parliamentarian	Charlie Arnsdorff
Chaplain	Pastor Rick Johnson
Past President	Noble Boykin

DIRECTORS TO MARCH 2029 NOMINATING COMMITTEE 2026

Dot Cauley	Ronnie Allen
Tonya Donaldson	Ella HeidtHarris
Judy O’Neal	Diane Holder
Jean Thomas	Sandra Wingate
Dan Wilson	Joshua Zeigler

*Board Meeting – February 7, 2026

The Nominating Committee presented its recommendations to the GSS Board, naming Joshua Zeigler for President and Erika Bragg for Vice President.

During the meeting, Dot Cauley nominated Erika Bragg for President. Following extensive debate, the Board voted on the position of President between Joshua Zeigler and Erika Bragg. The vote resulted in a 10–9 decision in favor of Erika Bragg. Subsequently, Joshua Zeigler accepted the position of Vice President.

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Funeral Customs in the Days of Old Ebenezer Settlement

When we visit Old Ebenezer, each of us gathers impressions and memories to cherish and to share. Everyone who enters the land can sense the peaceful surroundings and imagine how the days of our ancestors were filled when they came to settle there. The most important tasks included clearing the land and building shelters for living. Oglethorpe had provided them with a few staple supplies of food and clothing, but they had to learn to deal with March weather, much the same as we do today—days of raw wind and cold, followed by heat and humidity. All are described in Volume I of *The Detailed Reports*.



They encountered much danger and difficulty clearing the river of logs and the creeks of fallen trees, then trying to live with the swampy land they were given. While learning to navigate the new territory and unfamiliar climate, the health of the settlers was always a focus and concern. While facing these many challenges, many of the group became ill and died. Illness and dying became a part of daily living, especially because they lacked proper medicine.

Worthy of note are the descriptions of preparations for funerals and burials at Old Ebenezer. Because of the circumstances of weather and hot days, burial could not be delayed. Traditions of the time did not require a coffin. Custom was to bury no one in a coffin except “lying-in” women. The deceased was bathed, dressed in his or her own clothes, and placed upon a board when ready for the procession to the burial grounds.

After the procession to the burial site, the body was wrapped in a cloth and lowered into the grave. They sang a customary funeral hymn, “As Nothing Is Commoner Than Death,” said a prayer, and spoke of God’s promises of rest and blessing. A scripture of choice was read, such as Hebrews 6:9–11, and a time of condolences and consolation was shared. Then, before they departed the burial grounds, they sang another traditional hymn such as “Now Let Us Bury the Body.”



As we walk through the land our ancestors called home, may we renew our appreciation and give thanks for their lives of toil and undaunted faith.

~ Claudia Christiansen

Swabian Roots

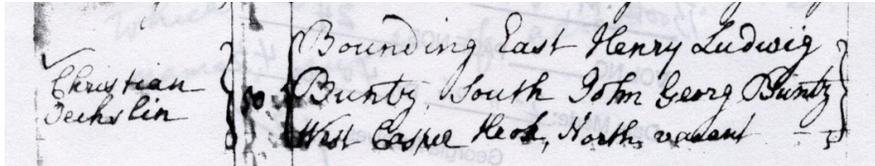
Celebrating the Swabian Settlers of Ebenezer, Georgia, 1734 – 1753

No. 2

December 5, 2025

Old Swabian Surname Spellings

An Exley immigrant in early Ebenezer rendered his name “Christian Oechslin.” This surname spelling appears in the 1755 “Entry of Claims” in Georgia (left):



Also, a claim was entered by “John Hinlin [Heinlin] for fifty acres at Black Creek” (see *Entry of Claims for Georgia Landholders, 1733 – 1755*, published 1975, p. 142). Another Exley name appears in the Jerusalem Church records in 1769 as “Johannes Oexlin” (*Ebenezer Record Book*, 1991, p. 48).

Exley genealogical researchers in the last decades of the twentieth century were baffled by the -in endings of the family name, especially in land records of colonial Georgia. Why was the name Oechsle in the *Ebenezer Record Book* and Oechslin in land records? Then in 2006 an explanation was provided by Friedrich Wollmershäuser of Oberdisingen, Germany, an accomplished and distinguished genealogist, who wrote: “In the late Middle Ages, here in southern Germany many names ended on -in.” He continued and provided more detailed information:

Eventually, the -in turned into -e (such as: Schaublin to Schauble, or Merklin to Markle) . . . When vital registration offices (*Standesämter*) were introduced in Germany in 1876, names were frozen and could not be altered . . . The -in ending, in the German language, also denotes the female form (Lehrer = male teacher, Lehrerin = female teacher).

In the olden times, female forms of surnames were used [in Swabia], as is still the case in Czechia, Slovakia, Russia, and other countries. The female form of Oechsle was Oechslin.

So Oechslin was the old Swabian spelling, and the first Exleys in Georgia were still using the old form of the name, which changed to Oechsle, then to Exley.

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Landing Day, 2026

The annual Landing Day celebration will be held on Saturday, March 14, 2026 on the grounds of historic Ebenezer. This event commemorates the arrival of the first transport of Salzburgers on March 12, 1734.



Schedule for the Landing Day:

- ◆ **9:30 AM** – All GSS buildings and Jerusalem Lutheran Church will be open for visitors. The museum, old house, and parsonage will close at 11:30 AM to allow time for volunteers to eat lunch.
- ◆ **11 AM– 12:30 PM** – The traditional lunch of good rice soup will be served in the church social hall. The Salzburgers were treated to a breakfast of good rice soup on March 13, 1734, upon their safe arrival in Savannah.
Lunch costs \$10 and will include soup, bread or crackers, a dessert, and a drink. All proceeds from the sale of lunches will benefit the GSS general operating fund.
- ◆ **12:30 PM** – A presentation about Old Ebenezer will take place in the social hall.
- ◆ **1 PM** – The Memorial and Thanksgiving service will begin in the church sanctuary. During the service, the names of the recently deceased GSS members will be read aloud, and the bells of Jerusalem Church will be tolled in their memory.

The annual business meeting will immediately follow the worship service. The new slate of officers and directors will be elected and installed at this time.

At the conclusion of the worship service and business meeting, there will be a guided tour of Old Ebenezer. The caravan will leave the church around 2:30 p.m. and travel to Old Ebenezer. All visitors are advised to wear sturdy shoes suitable for walking on uneven ground and to bring bug spray in case of warm weather. ~ Erika Bragg



MUSEUM AND SHOP: Landing Day Hours: 9:30-11:30

SPECIAL SALE > Centennial Coins & Medallions – \$10

> Centennial T-Shirts – \$10

> Old Ebenezer Booklets – \$ 3

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FROM THE DESK OF THOMAS GROVENSTEIN

Loest Research Librarian



Greetings, Cousin. As I write this, we have just gone through both an ice storm and two inches of snow. Hopefully, spring is just around the corner, and the groundhog was wrong! From the Loest Research Library, we have some exciting news to share.

Over the last few weeks, we have been working with the History Department at Georgia Southern University (GSU) to improve the overall visitor experience at Jerusalem Cemetery. Dr. Julie de Chantel, Public History Coordinator and head of the History Department; Dr. Bob Batchelor; two undergraduate students; and a professor from GSU's Armstrong Campus, Dr. Kirk Knoerl—who is providing drone and GPS data—have hit the ground running to provide both historical and general mapping data.

The GSU team met with our president, Noble Boykin; vice president, Erica Bragg; museum director, Patsy Ziegler; members of the Jerusalem Church Board; and myself prior to beginning this project. The current status is as follows: On Friday, January 23, and Friday, January 30, the team met at Jerusalem Cemetery to take photographs, lay out GPS coordinates, and set up a grid for future mapping and the production of a legend. As of this writing, Dr. de Chantel and her team have documented 693 grave sites in the historical section of the cemetery and are now compiling the data and putting it into a legible format.

Over the next few weeks, the Society hopes to have a full layout of the data and determine how it will be presented. Maps, family lists, and genealogical connections will be made available through multiple venues. This will allow visitors to Ebenezer to obtain maps and genealogical data on-site, while those off-site will be able to access the same information through online resources. This is just the beginning of what we hope will be a very valuable and information-rich partnership with the GSU History Department. We will keep you informed of our progress and hope you will plan to visit and use this new information to deepen your family's knowledge of the past.

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Swabian Roots

December 5, 2025

Swabia

During the first years of the Middle Ages, after the Fall of Rome, historian Will Durant wrote: "There was no Germany, only German tribes." The tribe known as the Swabians occupied the region of today's southwest Germany—the area "along and between the upper Rhine and upper Danube, and along the eastern Jura and the northern Alps" (see Durant's history of the Middle Ages, *The Age of Faith*, 1950, p. 510). By the year 1000 the Duchy of Swabia was a large powerful jurisdiction covering an area from the city of Augsburg to and including today's eastern provinces of France, Alsace and Lorraine. Swabia also encompassed an area of northern Switzerland. Around 1300, the Duchy fragmented into smaller entities, the largest being Württemberg. One of the smaller states was the Territory of the Imperial City of Ulm.

Swabians

One of the oldest and least recognized German tribes by Americans is the Swabian tribe. Be that as it may, Swabians are survivors—they were in existence during Roman times when they were identified as the Suevi or Suebi. Today, the native people of southwest and southcentral Germany are still known as Swabians. They are reputed to be very thrifty—jokes abound among other Germans about their tightness with money. Swabians are said to be shrewd and tough negotiators: there is a statue in Ulm of a butcher and a farmer bargaining over the price of a hog. They are traditionally puritanical, known for subtle humor, and by nature, tend to be more reserved. In small towns and villages of southwest Germany, older people still speak a German dialect known as *Schwäbisch*.

A German, Fritz Rahn, made these comments about the Swabian:

It has been evident for a long time that, of all members of all the Germanic tribes, the Swabian is the most difficult to understand and the most mysterious. In him the most intense contradictions are found. Often, in one individual, meet both extreme boldness and amazing timidity, rebelliousness and philistinism, winning kindness and resentful standoffishness, skillfulness and awkwardness, firmness and instability, mistrust and friendliness, soaring idealism and grounded realism.

(An Internet post, 2001, translated by Matt Carver)

~ **Vince Exley, Editor**



Museum Spotlight

Curator: Patsy Zeigler

Christmas Tea

Becky Zeigler Keister attended the Christmas Tea in December. The parsonage, once owned by her grandfather, John David Zeigler, Sr., was later donated to the GSS by her mother, Evelyn Zeigler. Evelyn was the wife of John David Zeigler, Jr., who also lived in the parsonage. During the tea, Becky shared fond memories of her visits to the home.



Sandy Gibson, Patsy Zeigler, Kathleen Wendelken, and Lisa Waldhour, members of Jerusalem Lutheran Church, prepared trays of food for the Christmas Tea. Members of JLC hosted the Christmas Tea in the parsonage.



Super Museum Sunday

We had a good time at Super Museum Sunday. There were about 25 visitors and they found their visit very interesting!



Visitors to the Museum

Bobby & Ann Jones donated cowhide chair made around 1850. Chair was owned by his mother, Nellie Blanton Zipperer.



Lynn and Winston Skinner and their guest, Heiko of Langenwosdorff, Germany, visited the church and museum.

Thank you to Rae HeidtHarris for painting of the "fire scene" for Christmas decoration in the parsonage.



Visitors from Nova Scotia, Tracey and Hugh Morrison.