

Grant helps preserve Daufuskie heritage

By JOSH McCANN

jmccann@islandpacket.com

843-706-8145

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The Community Foundation of the Lowcountry's Hilton Head Island Foundation Endowment Fund has provided more than \$35 million in grants since 1994, including \$210,000 it recently distributed to local nonprofit organizations: Bluffton Self Help, the Daufuskie Island Conservancy, Hilton Head Regional Habitat for Humanity, Hope Haven of the Lowcountry, Public Library Foundation of Beaufort County and the PILAU program at the Technical College of the Lowcountry.

Details: www.cf-lowcountry.org

Billie Burn spent years filling box after box with documents, photos and more while on a personal crusade to record the history of Daufuskie Island.

Those materials, which sat in a trailer after she died in 2008 until her family donated them to the Daufuskie Island Historical Foundation last year, are being preserved with the help of a recent grant from the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry.

The \$5,000 will allow the historical foundation to buy a computer, software and fireproof file cabinets. The group can also hire an archivist to advise how to properly care for the collection, said Nancy Ludtke, a friend of Burn's who wrote the grant application.

Burn would be pleased to know her work will be protected, Ludtke said.

"It was a dream of hers that the history and culture be preserved forever," she said.

Burn, who moved to Daufuskie in 1959, became fascinated with the people of the isolated barrier island while working as its school bus driver and postmistress, Ludtke said.

Burn accumulated her collection while researching the book "An Island Named Daufuskie," which she published in 1990.

The collection includes pottery shards and other Native American artifacts, wartime letters from Daufuskie residents, and birth and death certificates, according to the foundation. It is being stored in an old schoolhouse on Daufuskie, an island off the southern tip of Hilton Head Island accessible only by boat.

Lancy Burn continues to comb through his mother's collection and take materials to the foundation.

The task is bittersweet, he said, but it feels good knowing the foundation is striving to maintain the materials, which his mother spent hours on the phone culling from local, state and federal sources.

"There's a niche in history here that's hard to dig up and hard to get a hold of," he said. "I'm very proud they're doing this and preserving the enormous effort she put into it."

The Daufuskie Historical Foundation also wants to archive the rest of its collection, which is displayed in two other buildings on the island. That process began about a year ago with a \$2,000 grant from Hargray's Caring Coins Foundation, Ludtke said.

Archiving both the Foundation's existing materials as well as those it received from Burn will cost about \$12,000, Ludtke estimated.