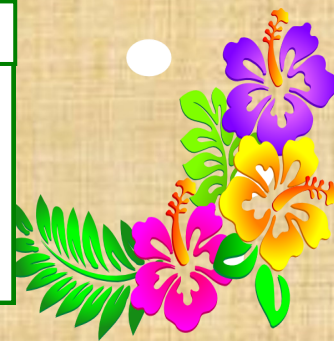


Preserving & Interpreting Savannah River Site History

## ***SRS Heritage Foundation Newsletter***

July-August, 2019



### **Special Tour of “6,000 Voices” Exhibit Planned for Foundation Members**

Members of the SRS Heritage Foundation will be invited to a special grand opening of the “6,000 Voices” exhibit. A date for the event will be set as construction nears completion in the next few weeks. Watch for the invitation in the near future.

### ***Reception Welcomes New Museum Director and unveiling of ACS plaque***

A special reception was held at the SRS Museum on June 12 to welcome Lauren Miller, the new Director of the Museum and to thank Mike Budney, DOE-SR Manager, for providing financial support for Lauren’s salary. Many of the people who will be interacting with Lauren as she assumes her new role were invited to the reception to get acquainted. After the introductions, Dr. Elise Fox of SRNL unveiled the plaque presented to the Site by the American Chemical Society; the plaque designates SRS as a National Historic Chemical Landmark in recognition of SRS production of plutonium-238 for the space program.

Photos of the special reception for Lauren Miller, new Director of the SRS Museum and unveiling of American Chemical Society plaque



Photos continue on page 2 and page 6...





## Report from the Director

By Lauren Miller



As I come upon three months as Director of the Savannah River Site Museum and reflect on the experience thus far, I'm struck by how welcoming, supportive, and passionate a people you are. The Museum has been a labor of love with incredible support spanning multiple groups with various skillsets, and it shows in the work that has been completed thus far and in the name the Museum has in the community.

Over the next few months we're focusing on events, collections, and volunteers. We're working with the Aiken County Historical Museum to preserve our existing collection according to museum best practices, we're seeking additional volunteers to support the Museum's being open five days a week on a consistent schedule, and we'll host a grand re-opening in conjunction with the beloved community event,

Atoms in the Alley. In looking ahead, I'm excited to see where we will take the Museum, from the stories we'll tell, the people we'll meet, and the community relationships we'll build, to how we'll grow together – the future is bright, and we're grateful for your continued support!





## Inaugural Tour of Ellenton Heritage Trail     By Carl Fields

**The** Heritage Foundation has, in the past, sponsored walking tours of the site of the former community of Ellenton, on what is now Savannah River Site (SRS). These tours resumed on June 25, 2019, after approximately a 2-year hiatus. Planning is underway to continue these tours on a more-regular basis.

Ellenton was the largest of several small communities that existed on what is now SRS in late 1950, when the US government announced that about 300 square miles of land in South Carolina would be purchased to develop facilities to manufacture nuclear materials needed for national defense. The population of Ellenton at the time of the 1950 census was approximately 640 people. In all, about 6000 people who lived in the communities, and in the surrounding rural area, were displaced from the land purchased by the government. The government also moved over 5000 graves. Approximately 700 graves (about 270 of them with engraved stone markers), in 35 cemeteries, remain on SRS.

The June 25<sup>th</sup> tour started at the SRS badge office, where the visitors passed identification checks, were issued SRS visitor badges, and received security and safety briefings. Despite media “scare stories” about radiation, the *actual* primary safety concerns in the open areas of SRS include tripping hazards (such as uneven ground and partially hidden tree roots), mosquitos, ticks, venomous reptiles, fire ants, sunburn, and – on extremely hot days – the potential for dehydration and heat exhaustion. The group was then taken in a small bus to the center of the former downtown of Ellenton: the intersection of Main Street and Railroad Avenue.

George (Buddy) Wingard led the group tour. George is the Program Coordinator for the Savannah River Archeological Research Program (SRARP). SRARP is a unit of the University of South Carolina, a subcontractor supporting the Department of Energy at SRS. He was assisted by Melissa Hansen, Curator of the Cold War Historic Preservation Program at SRS, and Lauren Miller, Director of the SRS Museum. Visitors on the tour also had the benefit of the memories and observations of two former residents of displaced communities; George Heath from Hawthorne and Billy Givens from Leigh. The tour guides provided narration and told stories on the bus rides to and from Ellenton as well as during the walk through the former town.

This 2019 tour covered a slightly different route than was used in the past. The new route, along three still-paved streets, includes stops at four new interpretive signs installed earlier this year. The route covers perhaps 1/3-mile over several blocks along the three streets. Future tours will use a similar route.

The interpretive signs describe:

- (1) Ellenton’s town center (near the site of the railroad station);
- (2) the “entertainment district” (an area that included the town’s movie theater and a nearby store that sold “adult beverages”);
- (3) the town’s churches; and
- (4) schools within the area that is now SRS.

The interpretive signs contain photos of many Ellenton buildings in existence in 1950 and other information about the town and its residents. In addition, new street signs have been installed at many intersections on the Ellenton town site. All of these new signs were made possible by a grant from the Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management. The signs were designed by New South Associates. SRARP by provided information for the signs and helped with the installation of the signs.

These new signs help visitors visualize and understand the former town. The few structures that remain from 1950 include: the top of an artesian well (near the town center); some paved streets (and a few concrete curbs alongside them); and portions of the foundation of the high school building (including the front entry steps). Most of the

residential areas of the town (including former yards, unpaved driveways, and home sites themselves) are now thickly overgrown with vegetation. While many portions of SRS have been intentionally planted with pine trees, in Ellenton, the vegetation has spread via natural propagation of shade trees and other plants originally in the yards of residences. Some very large trees now exist in locations that were obviously in driveways or within the foundations of buildings in 1950.

As indicated above, future walking tours of Ellenton are planned. The SRS Museum will have a role in these upcoming tours, which will require advance reservations. Information about future Ellenton walking tours will be available during autumn 2019. The information will be broadly available in the SRS Museum, the Museum's web site ([www.srsheritagemuseum.org](http://www.srsheritagemuseum.org)), and the Museum's Facebook page.



Tour attendees get a closer look at one of the new interpretive panels about Ellenton.

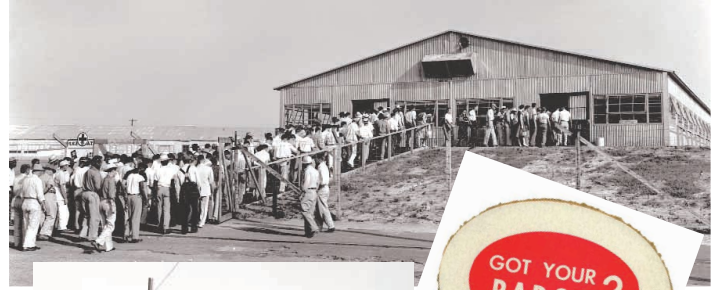


George Wingard (left) leads attendees around the area where Ellenton previously resided.



As we approach November 2020 we have updated the title of this column to “SRS at Seventy”. We will soon be celebrating the Savannah River Site’s seventieth anniversary. It is a good time to reflect and recall the incredible accomplishments the people at SRS achieved. I call this: The SRS Story. Some major elements of the story are itemized below. Please read the list and pause to consider each one of these.

- Major defining action was taken by the nation on November 28, 1950 at the outset of the “Cold War”. It was clear we needed large amounts of nuclear materials if we were to prevail in the rapidly worsening Cold War with USSR.
- National civil defense actions, the Korean conflict and a real fear of Soviet attack drew the country together as ONE in considering the urgency and seriousness of our situation.
- E.I. DuPont de Nemours was selected to pick the location and to design, build and operate the SRS. DuPont viewed this as an urgent, patriotic national service and would accept no profit for the work: when DuPont left in 1987 they were paid one dollar for the 37 year contract.
- The acquisition and evacuation of 300 square miles in the CSRA, displaced several small towns and businesses and forced relocation of 6,000 people.
- The AEC, U.S. Congress and DuPont ensured that all of the property would be characterized to provide a detailed environmental baseline. This led to the ground-breaking work of doctors Eugene Odum and Ruth Patrick. Today, SRS is recognized as the home of modern ecology and Dr. Odum is called the father of modern ecology. Dr. Ruth Patrick wrote the book for environmental definition and study of waterways; she is honored and recognized today with the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center at USCA. These efforts continue today in the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory. The Site was designated the first National Environmental Research Park in the mid 70’s.
- World records for construction safety were set during building of the plant, establishing the safety philosophy which remains in force today.
- The new Site employed as many as 38,500 construction employees to build a complete nuclear materials



production operation, involving many new technologies.

- The Site completed the urgent national defense mission and the Cold War ended when the Soviet Union was unable to match US capabilities.
- In addition to the defense role, the Site produced beneficial materials like plutonium-238 to power deep space probes and facilitated significant advances in science.
- SRS had major positive economic and cultural impacts for the population of the CSRA.
- The Site continues to meet and exceed today’s necessary national defense goals to maintain our national nuclear capabilities.
- SRS has Achieved National and world leadership in nuclear waste management, including the immobilization storage of the majority of the radionuclides in these wastes.
- The Savannah River National Laboratory is recognized worldwide in numerous safety and environmental fronts.

This long list of topics and subjects shows the depth and significance of the SRS Story. The SRS story continues with new chapters being written daily. The SRS Heritage Foundation looks forward to our future and your support for the SRS Story. Good things continue to take place at the SRS and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.



## American Chemical Society plaque designates SRS as a National Historic Chemical Landmark



## Refurbished Door Welcomes Visitors

Staci Richey of Vintage Window Repair recently refurbished the front door of the Museum. Extensive sanding revealed that the door had been painted white originally and was later repainted twice; first green, then black, as it was when the Foundation took occupancy in 2014. The door has been restored to its original gleaming white and now welcome Museum visitors





**It's a great time to join the  
SRS Heritage Foundation, there are lots of new  
displays and events coming very soon.  
JOIN NOW!!! (application on Pg 8 or visit our website)**

**THANKS TO OUR  
SRS HERITAGE  
FOUNDATION SPONSORS  
2019**

**We are pleased to recognize our  
sponsors who have made sub-  
stantial contributions to  
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**New South Associates**

*A special thank you to the  
individual members for their  
continued support of the  
Foundation*

## **Museum Seeks Volunteers**

The SRS Museum has opportunities for several additional docents to assist visitors interested in learning about the Site. Open Tuesday through Saturday from 10am – 4pm, with volunteers working in pairs on three hour shifts from either 10am – 1pm or 1pm – 4pm. Opportunities also exist on a more flexible basis for private tour docents, event assistants, and collections. I hope the SRS Museum will be a place for all who want to be involved, regardless of background, experience, or ties to SRS. We welcome everyone! Docents report enjoying meeting interesting people, learning about activities at SRS, and contributing to the Museum and their community.

SRS experience is desirable but not required. On-the job training will be provided and a Docent Manual is available to explain the Museum and specific exhibits. If you would like to join the Museum team and contribute a few hours of your time to this worthwhile effort, please contact:

Lauren Miller at [lmiller@newsouthassoc.com](mailto:lmiller@newsouthassoc.com) or Walt Joseph at [qualityprt@aol.com](mailto:qualityprt@aol.com) or call the Museum at 648-1437



**Like us on  
Facebook**

We will be posting news and tidbits during these exciting times of Foundation progress. The SRS Heritage Facebook page is open for business.

Please join us at <http://www.facebook.com/srs.heritage>.

And don't forget the news and archives at the web-site, [www.srsheritagemuseum.org/](http://www.srsheritagemuseum.org/) or check out the [srsmuseum@aikencountysc.gov](mailto:srsmuseum@aikencountysc.gov)



# SRS HERITAGE FOUNDATION

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

2019/2020

*I would like to become a member of the SRS Heritage Foundation at the following level.  
(Please Check One)*

**BENEFACTOR**      \$120.00    \_\_\_\_\_  
**PATRON**            \$ 60.00    \_\_\_\_\_  
**SUSTAINING**      \$ 35.00    \_\_\_\_\_

*Our Business/Corporation would like to support the SRS Heritage Foundation at the following level.  
(Please Check One)*

**SMALL BUSINESS**      \$250.00    \_\_\_\_\_  
**CORPORATE MEMBER**   \$1,000.    \_\_\_\_\_  
**CORPORATE SPONSOR**   \$5,000.    \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME:**

**ADDRESS:**

**CITY/ZIP CODE**

**PHONE:**

**CELL PHONE:**

**EMAIL (S):**

**FAX #:**



**Please make out checks to SRS Heritage Foundation**

**Mail to: SRS Heritage Foundation, Inc.,**

**P.O. Box 2226, Aiken, SC 29802**

*I would be willing to help with:*

**Docent Duties**            \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Drive**      \_\_\_\_\_

**Fundraising**             \_\_\_\_\_

**Publicity**                \_\_\_\_\_

**Publications**            \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Duties**            \_\_\_\_\_

*You're welcome to check one or more*

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

**Phone: 803-648-1437**

**Email: [srsmuseum@aikencountysc.gov](mailto:srsmuseum@aikencountysc.gov)**

**Website: [srsheritagefoundation.com](http://srsheritagefoundation.com)**

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**Please contact us if you have any questions regarding personal memberships, small business, corporate sponsorship or visiting opportunities.**