

December 8, 2025

Billie Burn

So who was Billie Burn?

Billie Kay Smith-Burn was born on January 27, 1916 in Joppa, Tennessee. Her family moved to Columbus, Georgia where she later met and married Lance Burn, the son of an assistant lighthouse keeper for the Bloody Point light station. Billie and Lance moved around to several different locations during their marriage that included Savannah, Georgia; Panama City, Florida; Daufuskie Island, South Carolina; Charleston, South Carolina; Pensacola, Florida; Ft. Lauderdale, Florida; and eventually settled back in Daufuskie Island, where they lived out their lives.

In 1963, Billie became postmaster on Daufuskie. About the same time, she started driving the school bus which she bought, and took about 23 kids to Mary Fields School. She was also Registrar for births and deaths. Lance was magistrate for 11 years. He also was the mail carrier bringing mail from Bluffton and later from Savannah. They retired in 1984.

In the mid 60's, Billie recognized that the way of life on Daufuskie was slowly dying, and she began informal interviews with residents of the island concerning themselves and their home. Collecting that material and supplementing it with her own research for almost 20 years, she began assembling her book, *An Island Named Daufuskie*. Her intent was to leave, in her words, "a permanent record of the history, stories and accounts that I have collected - mainly from Daufuskie people."

Billie Burn passed away on January 6, 2008, only 3 weeks from her 91st birthday. The Daufuskie Island History museum is named in her honor. Our retail corner features her book, *An Island Named Daufuskie*, which is a very personal collection of stories, anecdotes and personal recollections about Daufuskie Island. More than just a gift, this is a rare and unique book documenting a rare and unique island. We also have her cookbook, *Stirrin the Pots on Daufuskie*.

