



Benjamin Galland

# Diane Jackson

## The Woman With the Answers

**Story by  
Kathi Williams**

**Question #1:** Who was the rector at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Richmond, Virginia, at the end of the Civil War?

**Question #2:** How would you answer Question #1 if you couldn't Google it

That was the challenge that started Diane Jackson along the path to her career as a reference librarian at the Brunswick-Glynn County Library. The question was posed 1989, long days before the Internet and search engines. St. Paul's Episcopal had no ties to Brunswick, Glynn County or even Georgia, so the answer wasn't going to be right at Jackson's fingertips. The library staff conferred.

"What was important about St. Paul's?" they asked themselves.

"Wasn't Jeff Davis in church when he found out about a Confederate defeat? That must have been St. Paul's Church."

Sure enough, in stepped Marcy

Hodges, a reference librarian with 30 years of experience, who located a book about the Civil War that held the answer.

The Rev. Dr. Charles Minnigerode was delivering a sermon as the rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church on the first Sunday of April in 1865 when parishioner Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy, received a telegram from Robert E. Lee announcing the fall of Petersburg, the partial destruction of his army and the immediate necessity for flight.

Jackson was struck by the way that the group was able to use reason to analyze the question and determine where to locate the answer.

"It was that first question that set the tone," she says. "I learned to logically think through a question to get to an answer. Now, I learn something new every day."

In these days of the World Wide

Web and information that is accessible at lightning speed, Jackson doesn't get as many meaty questions. The typical day's questions are people asking for directions to the library, whether a book is available and how to renew materials.

Common research questions are requests for phone numbers and general reference information.

More's the pity, since Jackson literally has history at her fingertips in the library's Special Collection room. Books, documents, maps and other archival information – including genealogical records – in the collection have provided invaluable to authors, students and genealogists over the years. To understand how valuable Jackson is as a resource, just take a look at the acknowledgments in the books of various local authors including Patricia Barefoot, June Hall McCash and even Eugenia Price.