Research on Joy Lee Apartments to be Discussed

At the November meeting of the Federal Point Historic Preservation Society, Beth Keane, a local researcher and society member, will discuss her research and nomination of the Joy Lee Apartments, located in Carolina Beach, for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The Joy Lee Apartments, built around 1945, are of a distinct "Moderne" design, uncommon for the general construction style of the area. Ms. Keane's nomination of the building is part of the efforts of the preservation society to document historic structures in the Federal Point vicinity. For the past two years Ms. Keane has operated her own business, Retrospective, where she has done architectural studies, historic plaque research, and nominations to the National Register. In addition to her discussion and slide presentation on the Joy Lee Apartments, Ms. Keane will share with us her knowledge on conducting historic research. The meeting will be held on November 18, at 7:30 p.m. in the Fort Fisher Civil War Museum auditorium.

Trees And Shrubs Of The Maritime Forest
by Susi Clontz

The vegetation along the lower Cape Fear coastline has always been a part of its beauty, but it has also played a major role in the livelihood and survival of the coastal people. Behind the dunes we find a unique habitat called maritime forest. Maritime means "near water." This forest is unlike any other because the trees and shrubs that grow there must be tolerant of the sandy, dry soil plus the wind and salt spray from the ocean. Some of the trees and shrubs found in the maritime forest are Live Oak, Wax Myrtle, Red Cedar, Sable Palmetto, Sassafras, and Loblolly Pine. Wedged together and pruned by the wind and salt, these trees take on a sheered look slanting away from the ocean. This unusual formation is a protective barrier for the salt-sensitive trees growing behind the maritime forest. For a period between the Revolutionary War and the War Between the States, Live Oak (Quercus virginiana) came into great demand for ship building. Its dense hardwood proved ideal for the hulls and frames of wooden ships. In colonial times the leaves from the Yaupon Holly (Ilex opaca Ait.) were toasted and brewed into a pleasing tea. Yaupon was also shipped north to supply American colonist defying the British tea tax. During the War Between the States, the United States naval blockade of southern ports forced the Confederates to turn once again to the brew used by the colonist and Indians of the southern Atlantic states. Yaupon was the most commonly used tea substitute during the war. Oddly enough, the leaves were also used as a coffee substitute. Candles were scarce in the Confederacy during the war. To make do, the southern people followed a practice used by the early colonist. The berries and leaves from the Wax Myrtle (Myrica cerifera) were boiled in water. A translucent and very aromatic floating wax would then be skimmed from the top and used to make candles. This process required a great deal of work considering it took several pounds of berries to make one pound of wax. Sassafras (Sassafras albidum) was used by the Indians for a variety of cures and as a medicinal tea by the early settlers. The roots of the Sassafras became the first cash crop exported back to Great Britain from the new colonies. It later became the main ingredient in the beverage we call root beer. Sassafras was believed to be a cure all by the colonists and early explorers. In 1963 the North Carolina General Assembly named the pine as the official state tree. The Loblolly (Pinus strobus) is one of three species of pine found in our
coastal area. Starting in colonial times and continuing for almost two hundred years, the residents of the lower Cape Fear processed and exported naval stores. The resin from the pine trees was refined to make tar, pitch, turpentine, or resin. These products were used in the building and maintaining of the ships by caulking seams and waterproofing wood giving it the name naval store.

Sources

Nature Guide to the Carolina Coast - Peter Meyer

Civil War Plants & Herbs - Patricia B. Mitchell

"Making Do" During the Civil War - Virginia Mescher

Living Off the Land - Dr. Thomas K. Squier, M.D., M.H.

Yankee Veteran Tells of Fall of Fort Fisher

(Editor's Note: In last month's issue of the Newsletter we presented a Confederate veteran's account of the fall of Fort Fisher. This month, in fairness, we present a Yankee's account of the Fort Fisher battles and aftermath. The following article by Lewis H. Noe, of Sayville, Long Island, New York, was printed on November 17, 1924, in the Wilmington News-Dispatch, and comes from the William M. Reaves Collection.) "The writer was 14 years old when the Civil war broke out, and was one of the northern Yankee boys, who were anxious to join the Union forces and help to put the 'Rebels' out of commission in 30 days. The 'Rebels' were described as a 'bunch of southern outlaws with horns.' My crying about the New York city recruiting offices, with my plea for accepting my enlistment, for a boy of 14 years, was unavailing, as it was figured out the north had sufficient number of big, grown-up fellows to silence the trouble down south without the aid of boys. So I went home to my parents at Sayville, L. L., where I was born and reared, and where I hoed corn for another year. At the expiration of that time Uncle Sam decided he could use 15-year-old boys, thinking this might strike terror among the 'Rebels,' the showing up of numbers, at least. Soon I was one of 29 boys who joined the crew of 500—all told—of the frigate Minnesota, and I became special messenger for Commodore Joseph Lanman. In the winter of 1864 our ship was one of the fleet of 53 vessels assigned to the task of bombarding Fort Fisher, under command of Admiral Porter. Our fleet formed a crescent shaped position an half mile out from the fort, an earthworks covering several acres at the mouth of Cape Fear river. Our ship was the most easterly one, the new ironclads and two 'cheese-box' monitors lay just inside our ship, over which we shot the most of our shells."

"Our ship's battery consisted of 30 nine-inch Dahlgren (smooth-bore) guns, with [a] 200-pound smooth-bore gun on stern. My position during the three days' bombardment was on the bridge with the commodore, and I was able to see the shells as they left our guns and watch their course and note their hits in and about the fort. During the time of rapid firing it was estimated we threw a thousand shells a minute into the fort. It was noticeable from shipboard that the fort's guns were dismantled by our fire, but were often replaced in position by the daring 'Rebels,' and the same occurred when the fort's flagstaff was time and again shot down—it was seen to be replaced with the southern flag still intact. Our fire set in blazes all of the wooden barracks of the fort, and it appeared to be a warm place for the fort's garrison, any place outside of their bomb-proof retreats. A 32-pound rifle shell from the fort dropped in one of our ships' launches on the spar deck, and broke through the boat's bottom and fell in a coil of rope."

"The spar-deck gunners nearest that spot sprang to one side, expecting the shell to explode, when, in my ignorance of danger, I ran and secured the shell and brought it to the commodore on the bridge. The commodore motioned me to throw the shell from the bridge. Having noticed that the shell had its fuse blown out, or probably
had been fired as solid shot, I was confident there was no danger from explosion. The commodore took courage (possibly from my own coolness), and then made love to the 'Rebel' shell, which he kept as a relic of the fight, and the shell has since been engraved on its side, the date of the Fort Fisher battle and fall and that it came from the 'Rebel' works as a 'Christmas Gift.' On the second day of the battle General Butler landed 6,000 troops under fire of the fleet, but after reconnoitering the 'Rebel' works, the federal troops re-embarked. General Butler reported to Admiral Porter that 'Fort Fisher is impregnable.' On the third day General Terry, with about 10,000 troops, made the landing and assault on Fort Fisher and this engagement included a hand-to-hand fight from early in the evening until 9 o'clock that night, when the land signals to the fleet announced the surrender of the garrison.

"Next morning at sunrise the magazine of the fort blew up, burying alive many of the garrison and Yankee troops, alike, who were at that time enjoying their morning coffee together in the 'spirit of brotherly reunion.' At the moment General Terry's troops made a dash upon the fort, which was faced by a heavy stockade of pine logs, with an inner trench, which had to be passed by means of portable bridges; the crews of the northern fleet manned the rigging and watched the land assault. Admiral George Dewey, 'the hero of Manila bay,' was a lieutenant on board one of the ships in the Yankee fleet. Henry M. Stanley was at the time ship's clerk on our own ship, the Minnesota. Stanley afterwards became the African explorer, and the writer was a traveling companion of his in foreign lands in 1868 and 1869. The fall of Wilmington was deeply felt throughout the Confederacy, and by no portion more than by Lee's army, which for some weeks had to rely upon the pork brought in through Wilmington to ration his rapidly diminishing troops. The writer would be pleased to hear direct or otherwise from any of the Confederate garrison of Fort Fisher. (signed) Lewis H. Noe. Aged 76 years in February." Mr. Noe yesterday telegraphed the following to The News-Dispatch: "Add to my report of the 'Battle of Fort Fisher:' One-half of the crews of the Yankee fleet was assigned to making a pretense at storming the face of Fort Fisher, to draw the 'Rebel' fire, while General Terry's troops made the assault from the rear of the fort. The attacking sailors could do no more than lie flat on their stomachs in front of the palisade."

**Federal Point Historic Preservation Society Notes**

- The Society bids farewell this month to Martin Peebles who has accepted a position working for an arts and graphic publisher in St. Petersburg, Florida. Martin, who designed the Federal Point Historic Preservation Society logo, has been a valued member of the society since its beginning. Good luck at your new job.

- Martin Peebles has recently released his first in a series of limited edition prints on the Confederate Ironclad Raleigh, which sank in the Cape Fear River, just below Fort Fisher. Based on his oil painting, "Wreck of the Raleigh," these fine color reproductions depict the sunken ironclad as it appeared in 1994, the last time Mr. Peebles was able to examine the wreck with the support of the North Carolina Underwater Archaeology Unit. Only 750 of these 16x20-inch prints are available, so don't miss the boat. Prints cost $35.00, and are available at the Fort Fisher Museum gift shop, the Southport Maritime Museum, the Cape Fear Museum, or by mail order from Gulf Coast Graphics in St. Petersburg, Florida (813) 321-5951. Also, watch for the Raleigh again when Capt. Pembroke Jones disperses those pesky blockaders as seen in Martin's newest painting, "Attack at New Inlet." This event depicts Wilmington's shining moment of naval glory during the Civil War, albeit a brief one. Mr. Peebles plans to release this print in the next year.

- A "Toy Show" will be held at Fort Fisher on November 23, 1996, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. History and military-related toys will be on exhibit and sale. Refreshments and music will be on hand. Santa Claus can also be expected to make an appearance. Visitors will be admitted free. Advance registration and a fee will be required for dealers. For more information call Leland Smith at (910) 458-5538.
• The annual re-enactment of the fall of Fort Fisher will occur on January 11, 12, 1997, at the historic site. This popular event will also include War of 1812, Civil War, and World War II costumed soldiers, weapons and vehicles on display. Artillery demonstrations and tours will be conducted each day. A special dramatic night program featuring wartime scenes of Fort Fisher and artillery firing will highlight the weekend program. A small fee for the event will be charged.

• The Federal Point Historic Preservation Society has tee-shirts, sweatshirts, hats and tote bags available for sale. The bags are tan with a large copy of the Society logo on the side. Cost of the tote bags is $10. A large assortment of tee-shirts, sweatshirts, and hats are available. Sweatshirts with the Society logo on the front are available in either white or gray. On tee-shirts the Society name is shown on the front and our multi-colored logo of the Federal Point lighthouse is beautifully displayed on the back. The logo is shown in black on hats. Tee-shirts and hats are available in a variety of different colors. Sweatshirts can be purchased for $15, tee-shirts for $10, and hats for $7. XXL sizes are slightly more. If interested, contact Darlene at 458-8684, or purchase one at our next meeting. All funds raised by the sale of the merchandise go to help support the efforts of the Society.

• Back issues of the monthly Newsletter can be purchased from the Society. Copies of all issues since 1994 are available. Articles and information on Society projects, events, and speakers, along with brief histories on: Cape Fear Prehistory, Early Exploration, Federal Point lighthouses, Haulover and Brunswick Ferry, The Fort Fisher Hermit, Shipbuilding on the Cape Fear, CSS Raleigh and CSS North Carolina, Fort Fisher, Quarantine Stations, The Rocks, Sedgeley Abbey, Doctor's Point, Gander Hall and others are included. If you are interested in a set of back issues please send a check or money order in the amount of $6.00 to: Editor, FPHPS Newsletter, P.O. Box 623, Kure Beach, NC 28449.

Anyone interested in membership in the Federal Point Historic Preservation Society can write to FPHPS, P.O. Box 623, Carolina Beach, NC 28428. Yearly dues are $15.00 Individual; $20.00 Husband & Wife; and $25.00 Business. Help support our local preservation efforts with your membership.