

# Federal Point Historic Preservation Society

P.O. Box 623, Carolina Beach, North Carolina 28428

## *Newsletter*

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Darlene Bright, editor

### **February Meeting**

The Federal Point Historic Preservation Society will hold its regular monthly meeting, Monday, February 21, 2005, 7:30 PM, at the Federal Point History Center, 1121-A North Lake Park Blvd., adjacent to the Carolina Beach Town Hall.

Dr. Chris Fonvielle, Jr., and Mr. Jimmy Bartley will address the effects of the fall of Fort Fisher on the Cape Fear Defense System, and the efforts by the Confederates to resist the advancement on Wilmington at Fort Anderson, the last remaining major fortification along the Cape Fear River. Dr. Fonvielle and Mr. Bartley will also share some interesting history of the Fort Anderson Garrison Flag and their current efforts to retrieve it for permanent display at Brunswick Town – Fort Anderson State Historic Site.

Members and the public are cordially invited to attend. Refreshments will be served following the meeting.

### **Last Month**

Mr. Bennett Langley of Cape Fear Civil War Shop presented a very enlightening comparison of ordnance and strategies used by both sides in the two Union naval assaults on Fort Fisher December, 1864 and January, 1865. Mr. Langley, who has a passion for Civil War history, objects, and memorabilia, shared many points not commonly known. His extensive research became obvious judging by the detail in his presentation. His ordnance collection and knowledge have been cited in several publications on Civil War ordnance.

We are grateful to Mr. Langley for sharing his knowledge with us.

### **Message From Your President**

**Patricia Gray Bolander**

Many, many THANKS to each of you who served at Fort Fisher during the 140<sup>th</sup>. The sausage dog sale was a huge success, and we were able to donate the proceeds to Fort Fisher.

I have been asked why we have had so many programs on the 1861-65 Conflict, but as this is the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ending of the War Between the States, it is a momentous one. We are residing in a very historic, geographic area, and when a battle or battles are fought in your “own back yard,” so to speak, the preservation of those events is even more important. But rest assured, we have not forgotten our Colonial forefathers, and future programs will be forthcoming on that era.

It is with much regret to see buildings being torn down and demolished daily. Without our pictures and further building plaques, the Towns of Carolina and Kure Beaches will only live in our memories. Not all is progress.

This is another reason to support our neighboring historic sites and museums. Collectively, we can extend the PRESERVATION of our history. Your support is greatly needed and appreciated.

## **Fort Anderson Flag to Return Home**

### **By Dr. Chris Fonvielle, Jr. and Jimmy Bartley**

Historians and enthusiasts have embarked on an ambitious campaign to bring home the Confederate Garrison flag which flew over one of the main forts of the Cape Fear Defense System, Fort Anderson, on the western bank of the Cape Fear River. The Brunswick Town-Fort Anderson State Historic Site is attempting to raise \$40,000.00 to purchase a remarkably well preserved second national standard, 6' high x 12' wide from the Horse Soldier of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, a broker of fine Civil War artifacts who primarily sells to major Civil War museums of the National Park Service and various State museums. Just as remarkable as the flag's condition, however, is its history.

Fort Anderson was second in strength only to Fort Fisher among the forts that defended Wilmington, the Confederacy's principal blockade running seaport. Its immense earthen batteries, bristling with heavy seacoast cannons, were built atop of the abandoned ruins of Brunswick, a once prominent colonial town of the Cape Fear area. Today the dual historic site is managed and maintained by the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources and is open to the public.

After the fall of Fort Fisher, at the mouth of the Cape Fear River, in mid-January 1865, Fort Anderson was the largest obstacle to Union efforts to capture Wilmington. Federal forces attacked Fort Anderson for more than two days, February 16-18, 1865, providing both a naval bombardment from the river, and a ground assault by land.

Greatly outnumbered and outgunned, the beleaguered Confederate garrison abandoned the fort before dawn on February 19 to retreat to Wilmington, fifteen miles upriver. Union soldiers quickly took possession of the fortification.

Upon entering Fort Anderson, the Federals also took possession of the Confederates' garrison flag, which had fallen off a supply wagon during the hasty withdrawal. A soldier of the 140<sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry discovered the flag, and turned it over to his commanding officer, Colonel Thomas J. Brady.

Four weeks later, on March 17, Colonel Brady presented the captured banner to Indiana's governor, Oliver P. Morton, at a ceremony in front of the National Hotel in downtown Washington, D.C. To show his appreciation for Morton's loyal support of his Republican administration, President Abraham Lincoln also appeared at the gathering rather than attend a staged theatre performance at the Campbell Hospital for sick and wounded Union soldiers as he had planned. President Lincoln took the time to review the Indiana troops returning from the battlefield and to make a few remarks to the excited crowd of people who had come to witness the presentation of the "captured flag of Fort Anderson."

Ironically, Lincoln's attendance at the Fort Anderson flag ceremony may ultimately have cost him his life. March 17 was the same day that a deranged young actor named John Wilkes Booth had planned to kidnap the president as he traveled from the White House to the Campbell Hospital. With the abduction scheme foiled by Lincoln's change of schedule, Booth, too, altered his plans for Lincoln's fate. Thus resulting in what would be his assassination.

The flag ultimately remained in custody of the Indiana State Museum until 1962, at which time it was de-accessioned and sold publicly. Since that time a few private individuals would own the flag until being placed back up for sale. Today the flag which is approximately 10' x 5', is professionally framed and has been authenticated by Howard Maddus, a leading flag conservator with the Milwaukee Public Museum. Plans for this flag are to include it in the current exhibit gallery at Brunswick Town – Fort Anderson State Historic Site and to provide for the right type of lighting and humidity controls to protect this important artifact for generations to come. A complimentary exhibit will appear with this flag once it is brought home. This is quite a unique opportunity as currently the site only features a few original artifacts from Fort Anderson, as most of our artifacts are items of loan from a variety of agencies, including Fort Fisher.

## **Carolina Beach Inlet**

### **By Leslie S. Bright**

A public hearing was held in January, 1952, to discuss the idea of opening an inlet to the Atlantic Ocean from the Intracoastal Waterway at a thin place along Masonboro Sound, 12 miles south of Masonboro Inlet, 9

miles north of Corn Cake Inlet, and approximately 1½ miles north of Carolina Beach. Many in Carolina and Kure Beaches felt the inlet would eliminate the 12-mile trip to Masonboro Inlet and make way for an expanded sports fishing industry with great economic benefit.

Representatives with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers stressed that opening an inlet would adversely affect the natural dynamics of sand movement along the beach and create extensive erosion of the shoreline. The Corps felt “that the expected accumulation of littoral material in the vicinity of the proposed inlet would reduce the supply of material available to nourish the downdrift shore.”

In September, 1952, the Carolina Beach Inlet Development Corporation was formed. Contending that the economic benefits to the towns would offset any threat from erosion, they blew the inlet open with dynamite the same month.

Sure enough, a rapid rate of erosion occurred south of the inlet during the next five years as it retreated southerly 410 feet. The tannic and sometimes muddy water from the Cape Fear River, blown by southerly winds, began to have a dramatic affect on the clarity of the ocean water along the emerald coast of Carolina and Kure Beaches. The inlet remained notoriously treacherous with many near misses and incidents resulting in loss of property and life. Only the very skillful and fortunate escaped in and out the inlet, especially during inclement weather.

In November, 1968, the Senate Public Works Committee, at the request of the Town of Carolina Beach, authorized a study of Carolina Beach Inlet. An approved plan to dredge a channel 150 feet wide and 8 feet deep was completed in December 1982. Adverse incidents were reduced remarkably. With proper caution, one could navigate the inlet fairly easily with the aid of adequate buoys. Since, periodic supplemental dredging by the Corps has continued.

Recently, the Federal Government has indicated that funding for maintaining Carolina Beach Inlet will be discontinued. Unless a new source for funding is available, the Corps plans to remove the buoys. If this happens, take my advice; if you go there, you will be in harm’s way.

## **Society Notes**

● **Membership Information:** Renewal notices are being sent on the anniversary of your joining the Society. If you have been receiving a Newsletter, and we have not heard from you within 90 days of the billing date, your name will be placed in the inactive file and no Newsletter will be sent. Thanks to all who have responded promptly! Our renewals are up! Your support of our local preservation efforts with your membership is very important as it is the lifeblood of our organization.

Our prayers and deepest sympathy to the family and friends of **Ann Bass Worrell**, who passed away recently. Ann has been a Society member in good standing for several years.

● **History Center News!** The History Center is open every Friday and Saturday, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm, or other times by appointment. If you wish to volunteer, please sign-up at the Monday meeting, or call me at 458-8684. We really need your help. Thanks to our volunteers: Pat Bolander - 5 hours; Lynn Benson – 2 hours; Jeannie Gordon - 18 hours; Leslie Bright - 14 hours; and Darlene Bright - 32 hours. In addition to 36 members and guests attending our January meeting, we had 18 visitors to our Center.

The Society’s publication, “Fort Fisher Fortress and Battles, As Recalled by Colonel William Lamb,” is now available in our Gift Shop and is only \$3.00!

● **February 19 – 20, 2005** –A reenactment of the final fight at Fort Anderson will be held at the site on Saturday, February 19 and Sunday, February 20. A Saturday afternoon battle is planned. Guest speakers include Dr. Max Williams, Professor Emeritus from Western Carolina University, and Dr. Chris Fonvielle, Professor of History, UNC-Wilmington. A Sunday church service and memorial will be held at St. Philips Church. For more information, call the Site @ 371-6613.

● **Fort Fisher News!**

**From Now Until September, 2005** - Captain Thomas J. Purdie's Uniform, a special exhibit featuring an artillery uniform worn by Confederate Col. Thomas J. Purdie, stationed at Fort Fisher early in the war. Purdie Battery, thought to be named in his honor, was the location of the famous Armstrong Cannon. The uniform, along with his saber, valise and canteen will be on loan from the Avera'sboro Battlefield Commission. This is an opportunity to see a very rare item!

**140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Capture of Fort Fisher** was a huge success. Our Society participated by giving the proceeds from our sausage dog fundraiser toward supporting the Armstrong Gun Exhibit, and also, feeding the troops a barbeque dinner on Saturday. Thanks to all our volunteers – Pat Bolander, John Nelms, Richard & Nancy Graham, Cheri McNeill, Jo Wainright, Ron & Debbie Price, Ken & Paula Withrow, Paul Slebodnik, Mike & Pat Blasko, Jay & Deborah Hockenbury, John & Jeannie Gordon, Barry Nelder, Emily Barber, Lois Taylor, Jim Dugan, Lynn Benson, Luanna McGurren, DK Dempster, Kevin & Rose Collins, Leslie & Darlene Bright, Gerald Bright, Robert Bright, and John Jackson.

For the latest info about programs at Fort Fisher call (910) 458-5538, or email at [fisher@ncmail.net](mailto:fisher@ncmail.net).

● **10<sup>th</sup> Annual “Be A Tourist in Your Own Hometown Residents’ Appreciation Day,”** will be held on Sunday, March 6, 2005. Participating area attractions (including our own History Center) will open their doors to New Hanover County residents FREE of charge, so save the date and become “tourists in your own hometown.” Last year 28 attractions participated and reported combined attendance of nearly 16,421 residents.

● We still have a few **2005 Carolina Coast Dining & Value Guides!** Treat yourself and your friends! Get your copy while they last.

**Officers**

President - Pat Bolander  
Vice-President - John Gordon  
Secretary - Darlene Bright  
Treasurer - Jeannie Gordon

James Bartley  
Leslie Bright  
Barbara Hoppe

**Directors**

Lynn Benson  
James Dugan  
Beth Keane

Mike Blasko  
John Gordon  
A. E. "Punky" Kure

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