

Federal Point Historic Preservation Society

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

Newsletter

Volume 13 No. 7

July, 2006

Darlene Bright, editor

July Meeting

The Federal Point Historic Preservation Society will hold its regular monthly meeting on Monday, July 17, 2006, 7:30 PM, at the Federal Point History Center, 1121-A North Lake Park Blvd., adjacent to Carolina Beach Town Hall.

Jack Fryar will return to continue his vigilance to help save Fort Johnston at Southport, NC. We all have a responsibility to do what we can as a Society to help protect our valuable historic resources. Jack will tell us again how we can help. This is a very important issue. We need to act now if we are to succeed in preventing development of the property which will compromise the historic significance of Fort Johnston.

Members and the general public are invited to attend.

Last Month

Did we ever have a party? Food and fun as good as it gets!!! What else can we say?

Thanks to all who attended and brought dishes fit for publishing in "Southern Living" magazine, only tastier and smelling better. Over 50 members and guests participated.

Jack Fryar commented on efforts to help preserve historic Fort Johnston at the mouth of the Cape Fear River in danger of being developed for "other than historic purposes." He pointed out the need for all of the Society to do whatever we can to save the historic site. This is a most important effort.

Message From Your President

By Judy Rhudy Thompson

I hope everyone had a fun July 4th holiday! This month begins a new year for our Society – our 13th year to be exact! I would like to congratulate Officers and Board members who were elected at our last meeting: President – Judy Thompson; Vice-President – John Gordon; Secretary – Ann Hertzler; Treasurer – Jeannie Gordon; and five Board members, Mike Blasko, Jim Dugan, Donna Godkey, Richard Graham, and Sylvia Snook. Thanks to all who are willing to give of their time and we all look forward to working together and moving forward on the many ongoing projects.

I hope everyone will do whatever you can to help protect historic Fort Johnston. We are enclosing a call sheet in this newsletter. Please call and urge our representatives to make Fort Johnston a N.C. State Historic Site or Museum. Your calls can make the difference!

Have you noticed our new open sign? Thanks so much to Society member, Rob Knowles, and Ken Moore Signs for their donation.

Hope to see you at the next meeting!

Historic Fort Johnston

By Leslie Bright

Fort Johnston, in the Town of Southport, is without question one of the oldest and possibly earliest historic landmarks in North Carolina. Since 1766 when the British ship, *Diligence*, entered the Cape Fear River with stamps and stamped paper in dispute by the locals, the Fort under British control spiked their guns when on February 18th a meeting of “the principal gentlemen, freeholders, and inhabitants” of several counties of the Province elected leaders and signed an agreement that “We will at any risque...unite...in preventing entirely the operation of thee Stamp Act.” The next day several hundred armed patriots threatened Fort Johnston until Cornelius Harnett, courageous leader of the patriots and the “Pride of the Cape Fear River” standing face to face and eye to eye with the Governor forced the Comptroller Pennington to agree that he would not ever issue any stamps and paper in North Carolina again.

Insurgencies and hostilities continued between the British Crown and the colonies when in 1775 North Carolina’s governor Martin issued a proclamation against the “depredations” of the various safety committees that were resisting the economic and social pressures against the colonials by Great Britain. Under threat, General Martin spiked the protective cannons at Tryon Palace in New Bern and hid the ammunition and then fled to Fort Johnston on the Cape Fear River on June 2. Hearing that the Wilmington and New Hanover committees were planning to attack the Fort, he fled to safety on the British, *Cruizer*, lying offshore. On July 18 militia and minutemen of the region led by Robert Howe, John Ashe, and Cornelius Harnett, burned Fort Johnston to the ground. Eventually, colonials won independence from England.

Through the next century, Fort Johnston met the needs of the new United States of America and played its steadfast role in protecting the South in the great sectional controversy of 1861 – 1865.

In spite of North Carolina’s extreme effort to resist secession from the Union, Governor Ellis ordered the seizure of U. S. Forts Caswell and Johnston at the mouth of the Cape Fear River, the federal arsenal at Fayetteville, and the U. S. Branch Mint at Charlotte. On May 20, 1861, North Carolina seceded from the Union. Governor Zeb Vance later stated that “if war must come, I prefer to be with my own people. If we have to shed blood, I prefer to shed northern rather than southern blood. If we have to slay, I had rather slay strangers than my own kindred and neighbors.” Fort Johnston continued to protect North Carolina under new direction until the conflict ended.

From its beginning, Fort Johnston, strategically located at the mouth of the Cape Fear River has served whatever cause demanded of it by whatever governments in control, always serving the need at any moment in our history. Without Fort Johnston, our history could have taken many turns. We should be thankful it met our needs, whatever they were, to help bring us where we are now. Let us all try to save Fort Johnston, a valuable historic place.

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! Your support, through membership and participation, is the lifeblood of our organization!
- **History Center News!** The History Center is open every Friday and Saturday, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm, or other times by appointment. We had 37 visitors at the Center this past month along with approximately 50 members and guests attending June’s meeting. Thanks to our staff and volunteers: Darlene Bright-14 hours;

Leslie Bright-3 hours; Jeannie Gordon-22 hours; Jo Wainright-6 hours; DK Dempster-16 hours; and, Pat Bolander-12 hours. Volunteers are always needed! Please let us know if you can spare an hour or two. Recent demolition of several properties at Carolina Beach have spurred interest in the Boardwalk area. Also, there have been inquiries concerning Monkey Junction and Hanby Beach. If you have pictures and/or memorabilia that you would be willing to donate or let us copy, please call 458-0502 to set up an appointment.

Support our Business Members!

A & G Barbeque and Chicken
Austin & Son Garage, Inc.
BB&T
Bank of America
Britt's Donut Shop
Friends of Brunswick Town
Fort Fisher Restoration Committee
Got-Em-On-Live Bait Club
Hanover Iron Works, Inc.
Historical Society of Topsail Island
Laney Real Estate Company
Dr. Vincent Smith, DDS
Taylor's Heating & Air, Inc.
Tucker Bros. Realty Company

● **Pleasure Island Chamber of Commerce** is looking for volunteers for their weekly fireworks series. If you are interested in helping on Thursday's, please call Kelley A. Rodill at 458-8434.

● **Flovor of the Past**, a quintet of musical moods and flovorful foods will be Saturday, August 26, 2006, 9am until 4pm. Tickets are \$35 through August 11; \$50 beginning August 12 and include admission to four historic sites and a morning cruise on the *Henrietta III*, period music and living history experience at each site, historic-inspired food samplings at each site, and trolley shuttle among sites. For more info, call 798-4362.

We always welcome contributions and letters. We look forward to hearing from you!

Officers

President – Judy Thompson
Vice-President - John Gordon
Secretary – Ann Hertzler
Treasurer - Jeannie Gordon

Mike Blasko
Donna Godkey
Ron Griffin

Directors

James Dugan
John Gordon
Jay Hockenbury

Ray Flowers
Richard Graham
Sylvia Snook

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