

Federal Point Historic Preservation Society

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

Newsletter

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Darlene Bright, editor

March Meeting

The Federal Point Historic Preservation Society will meet Monday, March 20, 2006, 7:30 PM, at the Federal Point History Center, 1121-A North Lake Park Blvd., adjacent to Carolina Beach Town Hall.

Well known journalist and world traveler, Ms. Jean Nance, will present "Cinematic Wilmington, Making Movies on the Cape Fear Coast." Ms. Nance will speak on the history, personalities, processes, and successes of the film industry in Wilmington, NC.

Ms. Nance's accomplishments include 10 years as a newspaper reporter and copy editor; free lance writer for city magazines, national trade weeklies, and regional health magazines; and 16 years in public and media relations, advertising, and marketing. While living in Wilmington and Pleasure Island the past dozen years, her talent as a writer and love for the movies prompted her to write her book "Cinematic Wilmington, Making Movies on the Cape Fear Coast". Here's a chance to get your copy signed.

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

Last Month

Ms. Mildred Deaton Burnett Jones presented a fascinating recall of her early summers growing up at Carolina Beach before and during World War II. Twenty-seven members and guests listened to Ms. Jones tell stories of her days living and playing on the beach with her family and friends. Many participated in the discussion with their own personal recollections. Ms. Jones introduced her book "When The Moon Stood Still."

The Burnett family's beach cottage on Carolina Beach Avenue, North, was destroyed by Hurricane Hazel in 1954. Much of the old cottage was salvaged and used to rebuild on the same footprint.

Message From Your President

By Judy Rhudy Thompson

Happy Spring Everyone! I imagine the nasty weather kept a lot of you home last month, but we had a really nice program with Susie Burnett Jones talking about her childhood at Carolina Beach. We do have her book for sale in the History Center Gift Shop. She also shared a few old photos with us. Of course, our hospitality ladies provided us with wonderful desserts afterwards; and by the way, they could really use some help in serving us refreshments, so please pick a month and sign-up to help.

I did not get much response from our committees last meeting. We are into a new year now, so please meet with your committee members and decide on a plan to carryout this year. If you need some help, please let me know.

A big thank-you to all of our members for all you do to keep our Society alive and busy for our beautiful Island. See ya soon!

The Kure Beach Dance Floor

By Molly Pond

(This article was published in the Island Gazette, December 4, 1996).

It's amazing how some unpretentious thing can make such an indelible impression on you, isn't it? And if you allow me to reminisce, I'm sorry that the young folks today don't have this peculiar, wholesome memory to index with all of the others that they're making.

Nestled on the narrow strip of pavement (now a parking area) between then-owner Bill Robertson's fishing pier and the Ocean View Restaurant, lay the Kure Beach Dance Floor. A far cry from today's standards for dance arenas, the floor wasn't lit electronically to exotic musical beat patterns, or highly polished inlaid tiles. Hardly so. Simply constructed of rough cut planks that were nailed together to form a scant 16' by 20' dance area.

When all of the hooves were stomping to the beat of "Searchin," "Rockin' Pneumonia," and Maurice Williams and the Zodiac's "Stay," these floor rafters had a ring like nothing else. With no walls to obstruct the views and virgin blue skies overhead, the South breeze blowing straight in your face, this simple pleasure made Kure Beach "the place to be." The music originated off of 45s that were housed in an old jukebox that sat inside a small wooden shelter. To my connoisseured ear, this cubby hole offered a sweet resonance to the finest rock and roll music that the late 50s had to offer. One day, I personally fed \$3 in dimes into this chrome-laden, neon-lit altar just to hear "Will You Love Me Tomorrow?" 30 times after Richard and I had had one of our teenage squabbles.

The locals would make their evening processional to the night spot to check out the wave of new beach bunnies who may have driven in with their families during the day. These were the cute guys: there were the brothers Butch and Chuck, who, upon occasion, I always was in love with; Jimmy, who later would be called Jim and would be a painter – not of houses but of portraits; the two Tommys and the other Butch (not related) and Shorty, whose real name was John, and was anything but short; not to forget that guy they called The Sphinz, because he didn't smile a lot, and a fellow called "Kissy" who married one of the Pats. He was older and more or less "off limits" to us girls, according to Pat. And kids today think that they have a corner on the nicknames! These were the young kids – 15 to 18 years old. There were more young people, but my mind kaleidoscopes from time to time and a few names fall out. I dare to defy the old principle of not saying the "thank you's" in church to the individual committee members because you always forget someone.

There wasn't a dance step that they didn't know, these cavaliers of cuteness. Had to impress all of those bunnies, you see. Some of the bunnies were the two Pats and Reny (who lived in China Grove during the winter), Dot and a few others, and I brazenly throw myself into the group – even though I didn't consider myself very "bunnyish." And as mentioned an article ago, Tarzan was always there too, along with the unnumbered Radar O'Reilly's from the then-functioning Fort Fisher Air Force Base.

As the evening cloaked the sun-splashed day, the best thing to do after sunning and hanging out at Smitty's for a soda, was to go to the dance floor and see what was happening. Parents (yes, parents) as well as children and teens gathered around to see the gyrations set to music. All of that pent-up energy was spent after hours of dance fever.

So much fun; no guns or knives – just couples dancing and having a good time. I feel sorry that today's kids can't experience it's simplistic beauty. Lordy, if I could just have bottled this stuff and sold it, I'd be a millionaire. I never knew who was responsible for this tiny, magical fragment of my growing up, but I'll always be grateful. Yet as with the drive-in theaters and car-hops on skates, the Kure Beach dance floor went the way of all refugees and dinosaurs. Why? I couldn't venture a guess on that one. The location was moved for a short while to where Big Daddy's is now, but the transport lost some of its luster, and death came in the early 60s. I remember today the terrible loss I felt that August Sunday when, after we had unpacked the car with our week's worth of stuff, I ran down to the end of the street, only to find the flooring gone and the jukebox removed. My aunt snapped a photo of me while I was in mourning for the loss of such a love.

I still have that picture today.

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!

The Membership Committee is looking for a volunteer to help with greeting members and guests at our regular monthly meetings. If you attend our meetings on a semi-regular basis and would be willing to step in for Jeannie when she is not present, please give her a call, 458-7880, or leave a message on the History Center phone, 458-0502.

We are most please to welcome new members **Richard Triebe** of Wilmington (and author of “On A Rising Tide”, for sale in our gift shop), **Robert and Sharon Knowles** of Carolina Beach, and new business member **Austin & Son Garage, Inc.** New memberships are substantially higher this year! If you know of a person or business that might wish to learn more about Society membership, contact Jeannie or any member of the Board of Directors. We have initiated a plaque-recognition program for all of our business members, as well as developing a membership-solicitation packet. Your support, through your membership and participation, is the lifeblood of our organization!

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

● **“Be A Tourist in Your Own Hometown” Appreciation Day** was held on Sunday, March 5, 2006. The History Center was on the list of participants, and we had 15 very interested people to visit us that day.

● **History Center News!** The History Center is open every Friday and Saturday, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm, or other times by appointment. In addition to approximately 27 members and guests who were here for our February meeting, we had 60 visitors to our Center this past month, which includes the “Be A Tourist...” visitors. Thanks to our volunteers: Jeannie Gordon-6 hours; Henriette Weigle-4 hours; Darlene Bright-22 hours; Leslie Bright-13 hours. And also, our faithful workers: DK Dempster, Cindy Clark, and Pat Bolander. Thanks to Christin Deener of Carolina Beach for her donation of four (4) bathing suits, possibly from the 1930s, which she found while re-modeling a house she recently purchased on Carolina Beach Avenue, North. We always need helping hands to work in doing inventory and indexing files,

photos, and other materials. Please let us know if you can spare an hour or two.

● **Cheap Stuff!** Thanks to donations and electronic equipment upgrades that have been made at the Center over the last half year, we find that we are carrying an inventory of extra office equipment that is no longer being used. If you would like any of our out-dated electronics (for parts or otherwise), stop by the History Center on Friday or Saturday, or call Darlene at 458-8684: a Minolta copier (floor model), 286 computer, keyboard, mouse, speakers, and monitor, a Lexmark printer, Brother personal fax machine, Sharp fax machine and an Ethernet router. There is no way to price this equipment; a tax-deductible donation would be appreciated.

● **From DK Dempster, Social Chairperson.** It's hard to follow sometime with the expertise (and great baking skills) of Cheri McNeill, but I'm giving it a try! Just wanted to let all the members know that a sign-up sheet will be on the desk the nights of the meetings. We have (9) months to go, and I would really appreciate your help. Just knowing in advance we will have great desserts, or whatever you would wish to bring, cheese and crackers, fruits, snacks, will really relieve my mind. Thank you.

● **The Historic Wilmington Foundation** will have Open House at St. Andrew's Church Manse, 516 North Fourth Street, Wilmington, Thursday, March 23, 2006, 4 – 6 pm. Refreshments. Call 762-2511.

● **The Historic Wilmington Foundation** is also sponsoring the fifth annual **Building Community** lecture series. On Tuesday, March 21, 7 – 9 pm, Michael B. Alford will be presenting an overview of the use of small craft once common in and around Wilmington, at the Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market Street; and, on Tuesday, March 28, 7 – 9 pm, Connie Mason will be exploring maritime culture and folklore of the Lower Cape Fear through music and stories, at St. James Parish Great Hall, 25 S. Third Street. To reserve a space and cost, call 762-2511.

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