

# Federal Point Historic Preservation Society

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

## *Newsletter*

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Darlene Bright, editor

### **May Meeting**

The Federal Point Historic Preservation Society will hold its regular monthly meeting on Monday, May 15, 2006, 7:30 PM, at the Federal Point History Center, 1121-A North Lake Park Blvd., adjacent to Carolina Beach Town Hall.

Mr. Richard Triebe will speak on research for writing his book, "On a Rising Tide," a fictional work based on the Civil War history of blockade running and the battles for Fort Fisher.

Mr. Triebe, a freelance writer, now living in Wilmington, is a member of our Society and did much of his research in Wilmington and at the Underwater Archaeology Lab at Fort Fisher. His book, set in the final days of the Civil War, includes adventures and perils of running the Union blockade, murders, romance, espionage, and the lighter and darker elements in Wilmington wartime society.

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

### **Last Month**

The Federal Point Historic Preservation Society met last month to pay tribute to the past "crown jewel" of Carolina Beach, the Ocean Plaza Building. Eli Courie, Ted Prevatte, Leslie Bright, and others described the origin and construction of the building in 1946, and related stories and experiences while having happy times in the building built for beach entertainment. Performances by musical and dance talents such as Bo Diddley, Fats Domino, Chubby Checker, Jerry Lee Lewis, Buddy Skipper and the Jetty Jumpers, the Embers, Chicken Hicks, and many others were mentioned. George Edwards of Historic Wilmington Foundation spoke on the historic significance of the building and the disappearance of these type structures, which are unique along the coast. Many attempts have been made to study the significance of the Ocean Plaza and find means for its preservation. While the new owner might have been willing, current CAMA setbacks and height limits precluded any means for preserving the building in whole or in part and still allow development of the site as apparently intended.

To offset the obvious sadness of the eminent loss of the Ocean Plaza by razing, a shag dance demonstration was scheduled to cheer up the audience of over 50 members and guests. As the Ocean Plaza was known by many as the "birthplace of the Shag," and shag Hall of Famer, Chicken Hicks, now deceased, could not appear, Harry Oakes agreed to fill his shoes. Whether cold feet, a cute angina, a hitch-in-his-git-a-long, or something more terrible happened to Harry after 2:30 Monday afternoon, five hours before the meeting – we haven't heard yet. Harry, we missed you, man!

Since our meeting, the Ocean Plaza was destroyed by heavy equipment, its memory will be every lasting.

### **Message From Your President**

**By Judy Rhudy Thompson**

It's always good to see so many of you present for our monthly meetings. Your interest and support are essential in helping to preserve the history and heritage of Federal Point.

It is truly sad to see one of Carolina Beach's landmarks destroyed to make way for a large, more modern building. For the last 60 years, the Ocean Plaza stood while the Carolina Beach resort community has undergone many changes. Through storms like Hurricanes Hazel, Diane, Fran, Floyd, and others of lesser

severity, the Ocean Plaza prevailed. Shamefully, CAMA regulations to protect us from these storms, played a part in making its preservation impractical.

On a happier note, I am grandma! My 7 lb. 9 oz. granddaughter, Haley Denise Sears, was born May 5<sup>th</sup> and I am at her side. I will probably miss seeing you for a while. Life is good!

## **Mama Stayed Home, But Was A Working Woman**

**By Susie Carson**

*(May 14<sup>th</sup> is Mother's Day and I thought it fitting to use this article that Susie sent me a few years back. Susie is a lifelong resident of Southport and author of the town's history, Joshua's Dream: A Town With Two Names. She is a member of the Brunswick County Historical Society, the Southport Historical Society, and the Federal Point Historic Preservation Society.)*

Last night I had a dream about my mother. I can't recall much of the dream itself, because dreams are so fleeting, but I awoke this morning with a strong nostalgic feeling. When I went into the kitchen to prepare my breakfast, that feeling persisted, so I decided to cook a breakfast like she often cooked for her little family there on Dry Street. From the time I can remember, I was always in the kitchen with her, no matter what she was doing. It must have been annoying at times to have a little kid with her every minute, but she never fussed about it. So this morning, I knew just what to do in my breakfast preparation.

First, I boiled a pot of water and salt. Then I stirred in some grits to cook slowly while I fried out some bulk sausage, poured off the accumulated fat, and stirred in an egg and scrambled it with the sausage bits. Next I got out some homemade jelly (made by my daughter, but Mama made her own), and I was ready to eat my 1920s style breakfast. I'll have to admit, though, that the only thing missing was some of Mama's hot and delicious biscuits. I had to content myself, this time, with toast. She always made biscuits, and I do at times.

While I did not begin my breakfast preparations until a little after 7 a.m., Mama would have been up cooking long before that. Daddy had to leave early for his sawmill that was usually at least 10 miles out of Southport. Quite often, several of his work crew met him at our house, ate breakfast with us and rode to work on the truck with Daddy. Years later, some of them were still bragging about what a good cook Mama was.

Mama never did have a job outside the home after she was married, but she would certainly qualify as a "working woman." Every Monday, rain or shine, was washday. With a hardworking husband and three messy little kids and no washing machine, washday was a day of chores. We did have running water in Southport and I am sure she was grateful for that convenience. If it was raining, the clothes were hung on the back porch and on racks near the stove and heater if it was cool enough for a fire. On Tuesdays, ironing took up most of the day. Of course permanent press material had not yet been invented, so there was a lot of ironing to be done. We had electricity in Southport, but Mama did not have an electric iron, if such had been invented by then. Instead she used flatirons heated on the wood cookstove. As she pressed and folded the items she told us stories, or talked with neighbors or cousins who sometimes dropped by. Then came Wednesday, and with the two biggest chores of the week out of the way, Mama could concentrate the rest of the time on cooking the delicious meals she was famous for. It's still amazing to me how so many people seemed to know when it was mealtime at our house and often dropped in for a visit. They were always welcomed and fed. There was a lot of scrubbing, mopping and sweeping that had to be done, and the yard had to be raked and the garden tended. Mama's hobby was growing flowers in the yard and also all kinds of potted plants. That took time, too, but somehow she managed to find time to sit on the porch in her favorite rocker and visit with neighbors. With all this going on, she was still available to help out whenever there was a special need in the neighborhood, such as caring for a sick person.

Yes, she was a homebound, hard-working woman, but she lived a long full life doing the things she loved best for the people she loved. She was indeed "a working woman," in the truest sense of the word.

## 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!

### 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

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 welcome new member **Van Paxton** of Carolina Beach.

- **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 30 visitors at the Center this past month along with approximately 50 members and guests attending April's meeting. Staff and volunteers were busy answering the many inquiries concerning the Boardwalk and the Ocean Plaza. We provided pictures and text for the Island Gazette's article on the Ocean Plaza. Leslie Melton, a UNC-W student, working on a

school project on shag dancing on the Boardwalk at Carolina Beach, was given access to library files and she interviewed Leslie Bright on camera regarding changes there during the last forty years. Thanks to our staff and volunteers: Darlene Bright-18 hours; Leslie Bright-12 hours; DK Dempster-18 hours; Pat Bolander-12 hours; and, Cindy Clark-6 hours. Volunteers are always needed! Please let us know if you can spare an hour or two.

- **Historic Walking Tour and Picnic.** A walking tour discussion of Civil War entrenchments in Carolina Beach will begin at the Federal Point History Center, Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00 am – 12:00 noon, followed by a potluck picnic lunch on the grounds at the Center. Ray Flowers and Leslie Bright will lead the event, a part of May "National Historic Preservation Month" activities.

- **Historic Wilmington Foundation.** Other events include: **Sunday, May 14<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm, Janet Seapker** will narrate a downtown trolley tour of the buildings of local architects and builders, James F. Post and Robert and John Wood. Tour meets at 514 Market Street. \$10 members/\$15 non-members. RSVP; **Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 am – 2:30 pm, Bald Head Island and Old Baldy Lighthouse Tour.** Ticket is \$40 and includes a roundtrip ferry, tour of Smith Island Museum, Old Baldy Lighthouse Tour, transported tour of the island and \$8 coupon for lunch. Reservations required; **Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 am – 1:30 pm, In the Shadow of William Benjamin Gould,** Master plastering demonstration at Bellamy Mansion. Reservation required; **Thursday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm, HWF Preservation Awards Ceremony,** New Hanover County Courthouse. For more information on all the events, call 762-2511.

● **We Got Letters! Hi Darlene,** Was sorry to read about the OP and the Pavillion at Myrtle. Looks like all of the developers will not be happy until they destroy everything that stands in their way of making a dollar no matter how many of us are opposed to it. The Preservation Society should just stand in front of their bulldozers. Know it wouldn't do any good, but would publicly show opposition to destroying all of the memories of so many. If you do let me know – I'll join you! **Sincerely, Pam Thornton, Oxford, NC.**

**Dear Mrs. Bright,** I would like to express to you my appreciation for your mentorship during my Senior Project. Your expertise and guidance has enabled me to attain a greater understanding of what is entailed in the area of preserving history. I really enjoyed myself while we talked about your job and when you showed me how to preserve some of my old family photographs. During this project I realized that it is important to keep up with your photographs. I really appreciate you helping me and letting me use some of your spare time. After presenting my paper during midterms, a lot of people were interested in how to preserve a photo. Without you I would not know much about the preservation of pictures or how to do it. I also appreciate the time you spent with me and answering all my questions for my interview. You have influenced me to further my knowledge in this field. I would love to pursue picture preservation as a career. Also I have learned that it is important to keep up with your photographs and keep track of when they were taken. Again, your time and effort as my mentor has been priceless. Thank you very much. **Sincerely, Shannon Andrews, Wilmington, NC.**

*(Shannon is a Senior at Hoggard High School and chose to do a pictorial history of the maternal side of her family. Her finished book was excellent and will certainly be an inspiration to all who see it. She hopes to continue with a pictorial history of the paternal side of her family.)*

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