



Federal Point Historic Preservation Society

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

Newsletter

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Darlene Bright, editor

August Meeting

The Federal Point Historic Preservation Society will hold its regular monthly meeting on **Monday, August 20, at 7:30 pm, at the Federal Point History Center**, 1121-A North Lake Park Blvd., adjacent to Carolina Beach Town Hall.

Barbara Brannon, Author of *The Ferries of North Carolina: Traveling the State's Nautical Highways*, will join us to talk about the history of the ferries in our state with special emphasis on the various ferries that have operated along the Cape Fear. We may even play a bit of Ferry trivia: "Which ferry still operating today carries just two cars at a time across the Cape Fear River?" Barbara will also have books with her and will be signing after her presentation. Cost of the book is \$16.95, after August 20th we hope to have them available in our gift shop as well.

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

Last Month

Underwater Archaeologist, Chris Southerly, with the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, at Fort Fisher, presented a thorough update on archaeological research being conducted on the pirate ship, *Queen Anne's Revenge*. Chris related that the work has progressed primarily to study the shipwreck remains with an eye for positive identification. Chris says thusfar, all the research and recovered materials point to at least a 99.4% accuracy. All of North Carolina and many folks in other parts are keenly awaiting the display of the thousands of artifacts currently receiving preservation process. He showed a great collection of pictures of the many things recovered and talked about the Unit's future diving plans. One interesting question was, "Who do the artifacts belong to and where will they go once the diving is completed." Chris' answer was that the items belong to the State of North Carolina, and no one knows yet which museum will house them.

We thank Chris and all of the Archaeology Department for all they do to preserve North Carolina history.

Message From Your President

Judy Rhudy Thompson

Over the next few months, I am going to focus more on our Committees. Committees that are currently active are: Fundraising (Cheri McNeill); Genealogy (Ron Griffin); History Center (Darlene Bright); Historic Plaques (Pat Bolander); Membership (Debbie Price); Newton Cemetery (Linda Newton); Oral History (Ann Hertzner); Newsletters/Publicity (Rebecca Taylor); Social (Jo Wainright). All of these committees are badly in need of volunteers. If you are interested in serving on any of them, please call the Chairperson listed, or call Rebecca at the History Center – 458-0502 (leave message).

See you Monday night!

Salt Struggle At Masonboro Sound

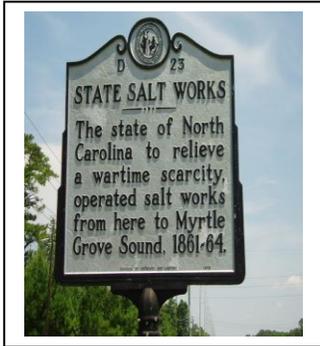
1861 – 1865

By Leslie S. Bright

Part 2 of 2

(Extractions from “Salt” by Isabel M. Williams and Leora H. McEachern, Wilmington, 1973, with loan from and discussions with Debbie Price).

North Carolina Governor Zebulon Vance and General Whiting were both busy men during the Civil War years relying on all their resources to try to keep the coastal regions safe and provide enough salt for the State.



As General Whiting’s confidence in security of the State salt works along Masonboro Sound lessened, he insisted that the works be halted or moved elsewhere. Governor Vance felt the production of salt was essential, and thus, the two went head to head.

Complicating the issue was the fact that General Whiting was unable to make regular correspondence directly with Governor Vance, who was located in the central part of the state and often busy in the western part. General Whiting was making directives to Salt Commissioner Worth and others locally who were relaying messages to the Governor, often with prejudice.

As tempers flared Governor Vance wrote General Whiting to set the record straight.

On September 28, 1864 Governor Vance wrote to General Whiting:

“I judge from the tenor of your private letter received yesterday that you infer that I did you injustice in expressing a want of confidence in your command of Wilmington, &c. I desire to say for myself fully and frankly all that I have felt or expressed on that subject. You are universally (so far as I have learned) regarded as an officer of a high order of talent in your profession. In the fall of 1862 I solicited the President to send you to Wilmington, and my own judgment (freely admitted to be worth little) of the works erected for the defense of the place concurs with that of better judges that they are well and judiciously built. Only one thing has ever occurred to impair the universal confidence which you inspire by your diligence in fortifying the town, and that was a very general impression that you drank too much; ... I don’t think I have done you injustice, and I know I have no unfriendly feeling, though, to confess the truth, general, you have tried me sorely on more than one occasion. Citizens have been shot down wantonly in the streets by your patrols; my trains have been frequently seized; my boats seized; and salt-works stopped... You have no idea of the complaints made to me...with which I have declined to interfere. I believe you to be the man for the defense of Wilmington, and have endeavored earnestly to get along harmoniously with that great end in view. I have even swallowed in silence some very rough and discourteous remarks of a personal character, more than once reported as having fallen from you, conscious of my own infirmity in this respect in moments of irritation. But I can assure you in all truth and sincerity that none of these things moved me to express a want of confidence in you.”

On October 4, 1864 General Whiting to Governor Vance –

“...With regard to the salt-works, we are at issue, but only as to the mode and place of supply. Both my correspondence and action were endorsed by my commanding generals, and still your salt-works are permitted to go on, though I am well satisfied of their prejudicial effect now as ever, of the disloyalty of the operatives, of their constant communication with the enemy, who land nightly and prowl even to the vicinity of the city. Put yourself in my situation, held responsible not only by generous people but the whole country, and satisfied that near your capital there was a dangerous and disloyal organization carried out, I really don’t think you would hesitate long in your line of action. Your boats have been prohibited in the sound, because all boats are dangerous there. I would not trouble the salt-works if I had any troops at all, and I never did while the War

Department kept a proper force here. Since Martin's and Clingman's brigades have been away, the enemy are constantly coming in and constantly receiving information. The newspapers which reach them they get every other day and, only one day old....

None of the people in the district which I command have suffered by the war the hundredth part of what a very large portion of the community has had to endure, and they have no right to complain. I have been compelled to adopt many measures which are harsh and hard...It has been done without favor and with the constant endeavor to press as little as possible upon the people. Those who are unwilling to make any sacrifice, and who expect to live just as in peace times, and who in this city are devoted to extortion and speculation, are the only persons who would have so unjustly and so shamefully attempted to abuse Your Excellency's mind in regard to my course here. It is natural, and nothing else is expected of such."

The New York World

The *Norfolk Regime* today contains the following correspondence from Fort Fisher dated the 28th inst. [December]. The North Carolina Salt Works, at Masonborough, were destroyed by fire last Saturday. [December 24th, the Naval bombardment before the first battle of Fort Fisher]

A review: *The Ferries of North Carolina* by Barbara Brannon

By Rebecca Taylor

I have always been a ferry nut; from the big railroad car ferries on the Great Lakes of my childhood to the floating casino ferries of the Canadian Maritimes, I always get a thrill when discovering some new land at the other end of a ferry ride. Having to get there by ferry somehow makes it seem that much more remote and exotic.

So, in the 30 years I've lived in North Carolina, I've driven many an extra mile just to include a new ferry in my trip. But Barbara Brannon has certainly driven many more miles than I have! In her new book *The Ferries of North Carolina* she covers every ferry in the North Carolina Ferry System (run by and funded by the State of North Carolina), as well as many private ones serving the sounds and rivers of eastern North Carolina.

Everyone living on or near Fort Fisher is surely aware of the Southport-Fort Fisher ferry, having ridden it any number of times with out-of-town visitors who've dropped in for a bit of our "beach." The two ships that cross the river daily are named the *M/V Fort Fisher* and the *M/V Southport*, but did you know that the *Fort Fisher* is painted with UNC-W's green and gold school colors and that the *Southport* is painted with Duke's royal blue? Or that all state ferries are painted with the colors of one of NC's universities? One thing I didn't know before I read this book was that one of our Captains is Marybeth Ray and that she and her crew cross the Cape Fear 16 times during each 12 hour day on duty!

Barbara has documented Cape Fear ferry history back to the Moseley map of 1733, which shows the Blossom's ferry crossing the Cape Fear just north of the town that would be called Wilmington. We also have some records here at FPHC that indicate there was a fairly dependable ferry crossing between Brunswick Town on the western side of the river and Sugar Loaf on the eastern, in the early 1700's as well.

Speaking of private ferries; don't forget that the *Captain J. N. Maffitt* is just the last in a long line of ferries carrying passengers, wagons, buggies, and even livestock between downtown Wilmington and Brunswick County's Eagle's Island. These days the Maffitt is used mostly by tourists visiting *The Battleship North Carolina*, but from colonial days on this route was vital to the growth of the City.

Another "local" ferry; or at least one within reach of a day-trip is the one that carries passengers and freight from Southport to Bald Head Island several times a day. Their fleet of boats making this run include the *Patriot*, the *Adventure*, the *Ranger*, the *Revenge*, and the *Sans Souci*. A round trip ticket only costs \$15.00 for adults and \$8.00 for children. Don't forget there are no automobiles on Bald Head, but you can rent bikes or a golf cart that can take you anywhere on the island you want to visit.

And then there's the Elwell Ferry...but I think I'll leave that one for Barbara to talk about along with the eight other state ferries as well as the private ones that operate within the Cape Lookout National Seashore.

After all, this is also a great travel guide with plenty of information on how to find each ferry and where to eat, stay, and visit along the way.

Society Notes

Support our Business Members!

Austin & Son Garage, Inc.
BB&T
Bank of America
Britt's Donut Shop
Coastal K-9 Bakery, Inc.
Fort Fisher Restoration Committee
Friends of Brunswick Town
Got-Em-On-Live Bait Club
Hanover Iron Works, Inc.
Historical Society of Topsail Island
Laney Real Estate Company
B. Parker Protective & Lock
Pleasure Island Chamber of Commerce
Dr. Vincent Smith, DDS
Snow's Cut Monthly Magazine
Taylor's Heating & Air, Inc.
Tucker Bros. Realty Company

● **Membership Information:** Debbie Price, Chairperson. Debbie continues to work on expanding our membership base by visiting several of our business members. "I need your help to not only maintain current membership numbers, but to add new members." We are pleased to welcome our new member, **Peter Harrington**, of Wilmington, NC, to the organization. Our current count is 197 personal members, and 17 business members.

● **FundRaising: Attractions Dining and Value Guide** coupon books are here again! So stop by the History Center for your copy and pick up a few to sell to family and neighbors. Cost is \$25.00.

● **Newsletters:** If you wish to **receive** your FPHPS newsletter electronically, please send an email request to fphps@yahoo.com. To ensure that your message is not overlooked, please put the word "**NEWSLETTER**" in the subject line.

● **History Center News!** In July our volunteers at the History Center included; Juanita Winner, Ron Griffin, Lois Taylor, Richard and Nancy Graham and Sylvia Snook. They helped a total of 39 visitors. THANKS so much! This month our briefest visit was from a schoolteacher from Asheville who "popped by" while he was waiting for his carryout pizza from Franks next door.

Volunteers are still needed for the month of August, and to enter the Bill Reeves files into WORD.

Officers

President – Judy Thompson
Vice-President – Cheri McNeill
Secretary – Lois Taylor
Treasurer - Jeannie Gordon

Pat Bolander
Elaine Henson
Ron Griffin

Directors

James Dugan
John Gordon
Jay Hockenbury

Ray Flowers
Richard Graham
Sylvia Snook

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