



Federal Point Historic Preservation Society

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

Newsletter

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Darlene Bright, editor

July Meeting

The Federal Point Historic Preservation Society will hold its regular monthly meeting on **Monday, July 16, at 7:30 pm, at the Federal Point History Center**, 1121-A North Lake Park Blvd., adjacent to Carolina Beach Town Hall. Chris Southerly, with the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Underwater Archaeology Unit at Fort Fisher, will present an update on recent progress on the Blackbeard pirate shipwreck excavation project off Beaufort, NC.

Chris will reveal the latest work on the site and show slides of the Underwater Archaeology Unit's discoveries this spring and summer.

Annual Elections

Annual Elections were held at our June meeting. Congratulations and a big thank-you go out to our new Officers and Board Members of the 2007-2008 fiscal year: President – Judy Thompson; Vice-President – Cheri McNeill; Secretary – Lois Taylor; Treasurer – Jeannie Gordon. John Gordon, Jay Hockenbury, Ray Flowers, and Ron Griffin will be serving two-year terms on the Board of Directors, joining James Dugan, Richard Graham, Pat Bolander, Elaine Henson, and Sylvia Snook. All our committees are in need of volunteers to work on our many projects. If you have a special interest and would like to help, please contact Rebecca at the Center on Fridays, or leave a message – 458-0502.

Last Month

The Federal Point Historic Preservation Society held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, June 18th at the Federal Point History Center. It was our annual membership drive picnic and approximately 60 members and guests attended. Many new faces were treated to fantastic food and fraternal friendship.

Elaine Henson's book signing was a huge success as we sold every copy of her new book, **A Postcard History Series: Carolina Beach**. (We have restocked and again have copies for sale in the History Center Gift Shop.)

Message From Your President

Judy Rhudy Thompson

Our annual election this past month marks the beginning of a new year for our Society. Congratulations to the elected officers and board members. Let's all work hard to stay focused and work harder this year to meet our Society goals and achieve more. I encourage you, especially the newer members, to review and familiarize yourself with Society By-laws and Guidelines. Sometimes, Society sheels turn slow as most of us volunteers have other responsibilities that often take precedence. It helps to read your newsletter and review minutes of prior meetings by the Board and Officers in order to stay current.

Let's all have a great year!

Salt Struggle At Masonboro Sound

1861 – 1865

By Leslie S. Bright

Part 1 of 2

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

With the onset of the American Civil War and the Union blockade of Southern ports, North Carolina and Governor Zebulan Vance never dreamed the lowly commodity “salt” would come to play such a major role in defense and politics in North Carolina.

Salt is essential for preserving meat, seasoning food, agriculture and public health. Before the war, shiploads of salt entering southern ports supplied demands and kept prices low. Heretofore, it was literally taken for granted. A number of attempts were made to deliver needed salt through the Union blockade of Cape Fear river inlets, however, many ships were captured or run aground during 1862, and others held up by the yellow fever epidemic. In October 1862, it was reported to Governor Vance:

“Exclusive of what has arrived inport recently, there was a few weeks ago between fifty & sixty thousand bushels of imported salt in Wilmington and upon which no doubt the yellow fever has laid its embargo, so that the probabilities are that the full quantity mentioned above may be there still.... Efforts are being made to send the most of it to Augusta Ga, where prices are still higher than here, and where there is not so much of domestic Salt to compete in market with the imported, as at Wilmington.”

A new source of salt became paramount, according to Governor Vance, as Union forces invaded ports of North Carolina, shutting down salt works that were already operating. Foreign ships running the Union blockade through the Cape Fear inlets were occupied transporting other badly needed war materials. In an effort to check the shortage, Governor Vance proclaimed:

“It became apparent that the State salt works already begun near Wilmington would have to be vastly enlarged if the soldiers, their families, and the poor were to be supplied with salt and preserved food.”

In December, 1861, the State Convention elected Dr. John M. Worth, of Randolph, State Salt Commissioner to produce necessary salt and drive already escalating prices down. Money was provided and the State Salt Works were enlarged and producing salt along the mainland side of Myrtle Grove Sound in New Hanover County. Many of the workers were conscientious objectors, unwilling to fight, or others unfit for service. Many were Quakers with anti-war sentiments.

The otherwise desolated 15-mile stretch along Masonboro Sound made an ideal spot for defectors and deserters to be picked up by the Union just offshore. Thus the course was laid for yet another situation as Union shore parties from offshore blockading ships began raiding the Salt Works, taking prisoners and receiving intelligence.

Later in the War with the scarcity of troops to protect the area and the need for troops elsewhere, Major General William Henry Chase Whiting felt the salt works should be moved elsewhere eliminating the risk of intelligence loss and making the area more militarily secure. He wrote Governor Vance:

“The enemy are sounding every day and landing every night for information. I have no doubt of the disloyalty of many men employed at the State Salt Works.”

Needless to say, North Carolina and its Governor, Zebulon Vance, found themselves in a precarious position with a desperate need for salt; the Union, landing small raiding parties, attempting to destroy the works; and General Whiting insisting the works be dismantled since he could not spare troops to protect them. Tempers flared!

Old North State Fact Contest

Opps! Last month when we asked about North Carolina’s “*State Theater*” we didn’t have it quite right. Thalian was designated the official **Community Theater of North Carolina** by NC Senate Bill 872. (The Flat Rock Playhouse, founded in 1952, is the State Professional Theater Company) Thanks to Judge Burnett for

sending copies of all the documentation, including copies of the actual State Bill and Secretary of State Elaine Marshall's proclamation for our files.

Are you smarter than a 5th grade history student? Since we keep forgetting to test your knowledge we'll give you the answers this month. Watch for more questions in the future.

Question 1: What are North Carolina's two official state colors? Answer: RED AND BLUE

Question 2: What is the newly named COMMUNITY Theater of North Carolina? THALIAN HALL

More About Blackbeard

By Rebecca Taylor

Want to know more about Blackbeard and his pirate cronies? Try **The History of the Pirates** by **Angus Konstam**. With pictures and maps on every page, the author presents the history of piracy from as early as the ancient Greeks to Asian and even modern day pirates. But his longest and most complete section is on what he calls "The Golden Age of Piracy." Beginning with the origin of the Jolly Roger – the skull and cross-bones flag we all associate with pirate ships -- the author also covers the lives of Edward Teach, also known as Blackbeard, and Calico Jack Rackam. My favorites, Anne Bonny and Mary Reade, one of whom plead "her belly" (pregnancy) to escape hanging, get a page of their own. Local favorite, the Cape Fear's own Stede Bonnet, known as the "gentleman pirate" gets detailed coverage as well. This is also a great book for those tweens and teens who have caught the "Pirates of the Caribbean" fever this summer.

Konstam's new book (2006) **Blackbeard: America's Most Notorious Pirate** is significantly more detailed as he is focusing just on Edward Teach. Not the first biography of word's most notorious scoundrel, this one uses modern historical research methods to form a more complete and detailed history than earlier books based more upon the legends that have grown up around Teach's scandalous career in the last 300 years. This book is so up to date that it ends with a close look at the discovery of the **Queen Anne's Revenge** and what the chances are that this is truly Blackbeard's flagship. Both books are available at the Carolina Beach Library or for purchase new or used from amazon.com and other online booksellers.

Society Notes

- **Membership Information:** Debbie Price has already begun work expanding our membership base by visiting several of our business members. Says Debbie, "I need your help to not only maintain current membership numbers, but to add new members. As you know, additional members bring helping hands and new ideas. Invite someone to each month's meeting. We also depend on our business community for their support to our Society. Please encourage any of your business contacts to join us. If you will provide business and contact names, I will contact them personally." The committee is also working on a new membership form and new membership packets to use when recruiting new business members. Next month: a total of exactly how many members we have.

We are pleased to welcome NINE new members this month, **Glenn Holt** of Carolina Beach, **Mary Ann and Teddy Targonski** of Kure Beach, **Ron and Lore Eccleston** of Kure Beach, **Sara and Charles Greene** of Wilmington, and **Lorn and Anita Fjelstad** of Avon Lake, Ohio. **Parker Protective** owned by Bill Parker is a new Business Member. Renewal **Notices** are sent on the anniversary of your joining the Society. We appreciate your prompt payment, saving the Society the expense of additional postage to send out a reminder. As dues invoices are mailed, we will be requesting an update on your personal information (address, phone, email address, etc). When you

Support our Business Members!

Austin & Son Garage, Inc.
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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
Pleasure Island Chamber of Commerce
Dr. Vincent Smith, DDS
Snow's Cut Monthly Magazine
Taylor's Heating & Air, Inc.
Tucker Bros. Realty Company

receive your next invoice, please take the time to verify your data and return the information form with your check.

● **Plan now for our August 20th meeting.** UNC-W writing professor **Barbara Brannon** will discuss her new book *Ferries of North Carolina: Travelling the State's Nautical Highways*. She has a great slide show and some wonderful anecdotes about the Southport-Fort Fisher Ferry. She will have copies of her book for sale and autographing.

● **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. Our email list just passed the 30 mark – that’s a savings to the Society of over \$12 each month and an added convenience to our members.

● **History Center News!** In June volunteers at the History Center include new volunteer, Juanita Winner, and our wonderful regulars, including Ron Griffin, Lois Taylor, Jeannie Gordon, Sylvia Snook, and Jo Wainwright. They helped a total of 59 visitors. THANKS so much! There has been a shift of visitors from Saturdays to Fridays since the tourist season started. Many are in the last day of their “week” and come by to check us out before they leave for home and have lots of questions about things they’ve seen while here. This month we helped visitors from Ohio, Kansas and Alabama. We’ve got the July schedule set so please take a look at your AUGUST Fridays and Saturdays. Rebecca will be on vacation the last two weekends of August so we’re going to need volunteers on Fridays as well as Saturdays.

Among the questions asked at the History Center this month were: “Which pier had the chair lift? Does that pier still exist?” Also “Where did the Hermit live and how can you get to his bunker?” Our visitor from Ohio (and new member **Lorn Fjelstad**) wanted copies of some of the pictures in the Beaugard exhibit gazibo to have in his condo so visitors will know what they’re looking at.

We still need volunteers to enter the Bill Reeves files into WORD. Both Juanita Winner and Lois Taylor worked on this project in June but we’ve still got a long way to go to get this spectacular resource into a computer searchable format. If you are interested in helping with this important project call Rebecca (on Fridays) or leave a message on the History Center phone, 458-0502.

Officers

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

Pat Bolander
Elaine Henson
Ron Griffin

Directors

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Jay Hockenbury

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