



Federal Point Historic Preservation Society

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

Newsletter

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Darlene Bright, editor

November Meeting

The Federal Point Historic Preservation Society will hold its regular monthly meeting on **Monday, November 19, at 7:30 pm, at the Federal Point History Center**, 1121-A North Lake Park Blvd., adjacent to Carolina Beach Town Hall. Members and the general public are cordially invited. Refreshments will be served following the meeting.

Celebrated author, accomplished photographer, outstanding graphic design artist, esteemed college professor, avid nature lover, successful body builder, and all-around very nice guy, Danniell Norris, will introduce Volume II of his brand new book, "Carolina Beach, NC, Friends and Neighbors Remembered". Daniel will speak about the production of the book and will sign copies upon request. Plan to purchase your copy and copies for your friends, as they are hot off the press and Christmas is just around the corner.

Get ready for the big Christmas Party, December 17th, which is in lieu of our regular meeting. Bring your favorite covered dish, invite your friends (prospective members), and come prepared for a good time.

Last Month

Historian, Ann Hewlett Hutteman, presented a thorough update on research and preservation activities at the National Register site, Newton Cemetery, off Dow Road near Carolina Beach.

She spoke on many of the early inhabitants of Federal Point and their contributions to the area history who were buried in the Cemetery.

Linda Newton, Chairperson of the Newton Homesite and Cemetery Committee, asked for volunteers to participate in the Cemetery clean-up scheduled for Saturday, November 3rd.

Approximately 30 members and guests attended the meeting.

Barbecue Benefit

Last month on October 20, the Society held its "Delicious Down East Style Barbecue Benefit" to support the Society's many projects and programs.

We appreciate so much all the folks who came by and bought barbecue plates and homemade desserts. A huge thank-you to Bowman's Seafood, who donated the hushpuppies and slaw, and to the *Island Gazette* for their continued support. Also, thanks to our devoted volunteers, Leslie and Darlene Bright, Sylvia Snook, Jim Dugan, Paul Slebonik, Lois Taylor, Elaine Henson, John Nelms, Cheri McNeill, Rebecca Taylor, and especially, Gerald and Robert Bright, who helped with the pig, and to all the folks who donated the homemade desserts. (Hope we didn't miss anyone).

Plates sold for \$5.00, and we grossed \$1,309.00.

Operating Naval Cannon Aboard Ship

Extracted from "The Confederate Navy", by Philip Van Doren Stern, 1962.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, naval cannon were in common use aboard sailing warships. Strategically, these heavy, cumbersome ships would pull up along side and fire solid shot until close enough to board and finish the battle with small arms, mainly cutlasses.

Then, during the generation before the Civil War, both the ships and their guns improved with amazing speed. Steam, the screw propeller, and armor made men-of-war faster, more maneuverable, and far safer. Guns that could fire explosive shells to blast wooden ships apart made armor necessary. And rifled guns that could fire accurately for great distances made close-quarter fighting almost obsolete, although it still continued during the Civil War on the interior waters, where narrow channels limited the movement of vessels.

Although British gunmakers, especially Armstrong, were producing large breech-loading cannon at this time, they were not used on Civil War ships. The long-dependable muzzle-loader was still supreme.

To operate a muzzle-loader, the barrel had to be swabbed out with a damp sponge after each shot to prevent fouling and also to make sure no burning fragments were still inside to set off the next charge prematurely. (As an additional precaution, the gun captain placed his thumb over the vent to stop any air from entering the breech after the cartridge bag full of powder was rammed home because an overheated gun barrel could explode the powder if oxygen reached it.) After the cartridge bag came a wad; then the projectile, which could be a solid shot, a spherical shell, grape, canister, or case shot for a smooth bore or a conical projectile for a rifled gun. Round solid shot could be put into a gun two at a time for destructive action at close range, but two shells could not, for one might crack the other, ignite its charge, and blow up the gun.

A sharp-pointed metal pick was then thrust down the vent to clear it and penetrate the cartridge bag to expose some loose powder for igniting. A percussion primer – or a friction primer – was inserted into the vent, and a lanyard (usually a 12-foot piece of cod line) was attached to it. The gun was run forward on its wheels, pointed to the right or left by moving it with handspikes, and given the proper elevation by placing wedge-shaped quoin under the breech or by turning an elevating screw. Sights were used to aim the gun; reasonably accurate ones had only recently been invented.

To fire the gun at its target was no problem in calm water, but when the ship was rolling or pitching, only an experienced gunner could determine the exact moment to discharge the piece. Since too low a shot would plunge into the water and be wasted, gunners were instructed to aim high, for it was better to hit the target ship's rigging than to lose the shot by having it sink without doing any damage.

When a gun on a rolling deck came to the precise point above the horizon which long practice had taught the gunner was the correct place to fire, he ordered the lanyard pulled. The primer detonated the charge instantaneously; it went off loudly, sending the projectile toward the enemy ship. The gun slammed back on its recoil run as smoke billowed out. If the piece was mounted on a truck carriage (with four wheels) or on a Marsilly carriage (with two wheels in front and skids in the rear), a breeching rope, strung through or twisted around the cascabel (a projection on the breech), and fastened forward to the bulwarks on either side of the port, limited the violent backward movement.

The recoil mechanism used on a pivot gun was a vast improvement over the primitive breeching rope which had been in use for centuries. The carriage for such a gun was mounted so it could be swung in a wide horizontal arc centering on a pivot. Wheels running on sections of circular tracks made it easy to move the gun sideways to fire out of any one of two or three ports when it was inside a casemate or to almost any desired position when it was mounted on an open deck. Recoil was limited by having the gun run back on metal slides on which compressor screws on either side of the carriage could be turned down to press steel-shod blocks tightly against the slides. Friction between blocks and slides then retarded the recoil action. After being discharged, the gun was reloaded and was run forward by jacking it up on its wheels. When it came to the firing position, the gun was dropped down, and the compressors were again screwed down. The gun was then ready to be fired.

Holiday Shopping? **By Rebecca Taylor**

Well it's that time of year again. If you're like me you have a sort of vague list in your head of people you need find something special for. My personal tradition (which began when my sister and twin nieces lived in California) is to get everything I've stashed away all year out on Veteran's Day and start a list of the people I still need to find something for. Those twin nieces are now 24 and even HARDER to buy for!

Start with a gift membership to FPHPS. Is there anyone in the family who lives far away and would like to keep up with what's happening on the beach? Or somebody who just appreciates history and preservation. Remember it's tax deductible for you and helps the Society continue its work. It's only \$15.00 for an individual and \$20.00 for a family membership and they'll get our newsletter for twelve months! If you're looking for something special there's always LIFETIME memberships which are \$150.00 for Individuals and \$200 for Families. Just make the check out to FPHPS and send it to FPHPS, P.O. Box 623, Carolina Beach, NC 28428. Be sure to send us the name of the person/persons you would like the a special "Welcome to our Membership" holiday letter to go along with their certificate of membership. We can either send it back to you so that you can present it to the person during the holidays or time the letter to reach them as close to Christmas as we can.

Or, if you're looking for something with enough heft to wrap, our gift shop is chock full of great things to share with family and friends. Did you know that we have a Christmas CD by John Golden? Titled *Tis the Season*, It includes old favorites like *Silent Night, I Wonder as I Wander and I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas* as well as more nautical tunes like *I Saw Three Ships and A'Shoalin.* At \$10.00 you can afford to buy 2, one for a gift and one for yourself. For the more historically inclined, John's other CD is titled *The Fall of Fort Fisher* and includes songs and letters from the Civil War and sells for \$16.00

Got somebody in the family that is interested in reality shows like Survivor or somewhat off-beat philosophy; we've got *My Life: The Story of Robert E. Harrill*, also known as the Fort Fisher Hermit. We even have it in two formats, a 45 minute audio CD or a CD Rom for your computer. Each version costs \$16.00.

T-Shirts and Sweat Shirts! We've got plenty of the new green and blue T's in both Ocean Plaza and FPHPS styles. Regular sizes are \$12.00, 2X \$13.00 and 3X \$14.00. For something people can wear right away we've also got the gorgeous sweatshirts in both white and gray for \$18.00 (2X 20.00)

Have you seen the Ginny Wagner note cards of local scenes? The hand painted cards at \$8.00 a pack are another great gift for Beach-ers who now live far away. Among the scenes we have in stock are The Ferry, a tugboat, Civil War re-enactors, and The History Center itself!

If you have a cook in your life we've got two great cookbooks. The FPHPS Cookbook was compiled by Darlene and Leslie Bright, Cheri McNeill and Sandy Jackson back in 1994 (Wow, it's almost "historical" itself.) Many of the recipes are from Society members and its great fun to see who contributed what. The book also has great b&w photos of historical interest. It's a real bargain at \$8.50. And don't forget *Modern Recipes from Historic Wilmington* edited by Society member Ann Hertzler and chock full of great local dishes accompanying photos of houses in the Wilmington historic district. Ann's book is \$18.00 and well worth it.

And then there are the BOOKS! We've got a wide variety of titles, and books are easy to wrap and inexpensive to mail. (Just ask for "Media Mail" when you ship them and you get a rate much lower than first class.) Every Beach household should have a copy of Elaine Henson's CAROLINA BEACH IN POSTCARDS (\$19.99.) which came out this past summer. Got a movie buff in the family? Jean Nance's CINEMATIC WILMINGTON is great fun for fans and is just \$6.00. My favorite guidebooks of the area are Jack Fryer's HISTORY LOVERS GUIDE TO WILMINGTON AND THE LOWER CAPE FEAR (\$17.99) and Barbara Brannon's FERRIES OF NORTH CAROLINA (\$16.95) And Daniel Norris promises that the brand new CAROLINA BEACH Vol. II will be in our hands by the November 19th meeting!

We don't take credit cards but we love checks and cash. We'll be open the Friday and Saturday before Christmas (Dec. 22 & 23) for those of you who need a last minute gift.

Society Notes

Support our Business Members!

BB&T
Bank of America
Britt's Donut Shop
Coastal K-9 Bakery, Inc.
Fort Fisher Restoration Committee
Frank's Pizza
Friends of Brunswick Town
Got-Em-On-Live Bait Club
Hanover Iron Works, Inc.
Historical Society of Topsail Island
Island Florals by Roxanne
Island Gazette
Island True Value Tackle and Hardware
Laney Real Estate Company
B. Parker Protective & Lock
Pleasure Island Chamber of Commerce
Pleasure Island Fresh Market
Dr. Vincent Smith, DDS
Snow's Cut Monthly Magazine
Taylor's Heating & Air, Inc.
Tucker Bros. Realty Company
Zorba's Steak & Seafood

● **Membership Information:** Debbie Price, Chairperson. This month we added one new LIFETIME member: Thomas Gray of Winston-Salem. Donna Carr of Skaneateles NY and Susie Burnett Jones of Raleigh are new Individual members. *Our current count is 211 personal members, and 23 business members.*

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

● **History Center News!** In October, our volunteers at the History Center included; **Dick Graham, Elaine Henson, Sylvia Snook and Ron Griffin** they helped a total of 27 visitors to the Center. We still have some of the **Attractions Coupon Books** left to sell, they too, make nice Christmas gifts!

● You are invited to attend the **Annual Holiday Walk**, Sunday, November 11th, 1-4pm

● **Winter Jazz at Cape Fear Museum.** Live music every month, 6 until 8pm! December 7-Jack Krupicka & Julie Rehder; January 4-Sea Pans; February 8-Grenaldo Frazier; March 7-L. J. Johnson Quartet; April 4-The Riverside 8 with Laura McFayden. Free for Museum members; \$5/person for nonmembers. Bring friends and food for an evening of jazz!

Officers

President – Vacant
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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