



Federal Point Historic Preservation Society

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

Newsletter

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Darlene Bright, editor

September Meeting

The Federal Point Historic Preservation Society will hold its regular monthly meeting on **Monday, September 17, 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.

Chris Fonvielle will be talking on his new book, *Historic Wilmington and the Lower Cape Fear*, and will be available to sign books after the meeting. The price of the book will be \$39.95.

Chris is professor of history at UNC-W, teaching primarily the Civil War, history of the Lower Cape Fear, and history of the Antebellum South. Born and raised in Wilmington, he received his B.A. in Anthropology at UNC-W and served as the last curator of the Blockade Runners of the Confederacy Museum here at Carolina Beach. Chris received his M.A. in history at East Carolina University and his Ph.D. from the University of South Carolina. Chris speaks on Fort Fisher and Lower Cape Fear history to community groups and continuing education classes. He is involved in the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table having served as its president from 2000-2006.

Membership Picnic and Social

Debbie Price, Chairperson

It's that time again! The Society will be holding a potluck picnic from 4:30 pm to 7:00 pm, on Saturday, September 22. The social will be held at the beautiful waterfront home of Ryder Lewis, 1314 St. Joseph Street. Look for the Lewis name on the mailbox. Members and the general public are invited to attend and learn more about the Society. Bring a covered dish, a lawn chair, a new member, and prepare to have a good time! Paper products and drinks will be furnished by the Society.

Last Month

Barbara Brannon, Author of *The Ferries of North Carolina: Traveling the State's Nautical Highways*, presented a fascinating program based on her new book. Her slides were wonderful and added a lot to everyone's knowledge and interest in our local and statewide ferries. Several people vowed to take a trip up the Cape Fear River to the Elwell Ferry. Barbara's book is now for sale in our gift shop for \$16.95. Treat yourself to some wonderful travel ideas.

Message From Your President

Judy Rhudy Thompson

To all the members of FPHPS, you have watched me and probably snickered a little as I began two years ago as President in an area I've never ventured before! And so, I suppose I can say I've "grown" in that I am a little more comfortable being in front of ya'll! But now, my life is going through another change. We do that, you know. I have moved to Oriental, NC, to take care of my Mother and Dad. It's my turn to give back and take care of them and I thank God everyday that he's put me at a place in my life where I can. So, to make my story shorter, I am resigning as President of our Society. Thank you for putting up with me and my very best to all of you. Please volunteer your time for the continuing betterment of the Society.

Continuing with our focus on Committees, our October 15th program will be presented by Ann Hewlett Hutteman and Linda Newton representing the Newton Cemetery Committee. They will give an overview of the activities which have taken place at the Cemetery since the Agreement in 1998 between MOTSU and the Historic Society to maintain the Cemetery. Ann and Linda will give a brief history of the Cemetery and its significance as a National Register site. Also, there will be a clean-up at the Newton Cemetery, located off Dow Road, Carolina Beach, on November 3rd, beginning at 9:00 am (Rain date is November 10th). Volunteers are needed and you may sign-up at the next meeting.

Historic Plaque Presentaton

At our October meeting (Oct. 15, 7:30pm) we will be presenting two historic plaques. One goes to **815 Carolina Beach Ave. N., (CB) currently owned by Elaine and Skip Henson**. Built in 1940 by Vista and Harry McCabe who lived in Wilmington and operated a grocery store on Carolina Beach Rd. It later passed through the hands of several owners before being bought by Luke and Jessie Lancaster in 1955. The Lancaster's spotted the house while cleaning up debris after Hurricane Hazel and initially had to shovel sand two feet deep from the first floor. The following spring they returned from Raleigh to live on the second floor of the house, the first floor being rented out. In 1956 Mr. Lancaster decided to leave his welding career and move full time to the beach. Mr. and Mrs Lancaster lived in the house until their deaths in 1991 and 1992. For the next ten years the house was rented out now and then and survived hurricanes Fran, Bertha, and Floyd. In January of 2003 the property was purchased from the Lancaster heirs by the Henson's who have remodeled it and now use it as both a summer rental and a getaway for themselves.

Our second plaque goes to **208 South 4th St. (CB) currently owned by Pat and Richard Lyerly**. Built in 1945 by Cliff and Nellie Lewis the unique art-deco style stucco cottage has changed hands regularly throughout the years before being aquired by the Lyerly's in 1986. The Lyerlys have made significant renovations to the cottage but have worked hard to maintain its original style and are rightfully proud of its eye catching curb appeal.

Tobacco Stabilization

By Leslie S. Bright

The growing of tobacco on small farms in eastern North Carolina changed very little until after World War II. Even though tobacco was considered the cash crop for North Carolina farmers over corn and soybeans, growing of tobacco remained extremely labor intensive and the market unstable.

Many factors dictated whether a farmer took a loss or made a profit. Over production brought the price of tobacco down. Bad weather brought production down. Small farmers were reluctant to invest in modern equipment and stand the risk of losing the farm in such an unstable environment. Thus, the old labor intensive methods persisted until the U. S. Government stepped in to stabilize and regulate the growing of tobacco.

During the late 1940's, with farmers' approval, the U. S. Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service began allotting tobacco acreage to each tobacco farm based on an average of production over the past three years. Eventually, the allotment of poundage per allotted acre was implemented to further control productivity. The addition of government graders to identify and determine tobacco quality helped to set prices for each grade which were guaranteed by the government. Tobacco companies bought tobacco over the government set prices in an auction competing with each other. Unsold tobacco was bought by the government at the set price and offered at a later date to tobacco companies. If profits were made during the second auction, the farmer received them after expenses.

The Agriculture Department regulated the acreage and poundage from time to time to meet demands of the tobacco companies. The demand increased abroad and held steady in the United States for many years until the late seventies when consumers became aware of health risks associated with tobacco.

With tobacco stabilization came improvement. Tobacco farmers now had confidence to purchase new technology that was exploding for growing and curing tobacco, reducing the heavy labor needs. Profits became higher and tobacco farming became nearly totally mechanical.

This same expensive advancing technology, requiring larger acreage to be profitable, eventually eliminated the small tobacco farmers, giving way for fewer large farmers to lease their small allotments.

Stabilization and the system of allotments were discontinued in recent years, after 2000, due to health litigation concerning tobacco related illnesses. This litigation resulted in a government regulated tobacco allotment buy-out, ending stabilization. Tobacco farming continues today as fewer farmers enter individual purchase contracts directly with tobacco companies.

BOOKS BY CHRIS FONVIELLE

by Rebecca Taylor

Old friend of the Society, Chris Fonville, will be returning to talk about his newest book, *Historic Wilmington and the Lower Cape Fear*, at our September meeting (Sept. 17th 7:30 pm). It was commissioned by the Lower Cape Fear Historical Society as an update to Diane Cashman's *Cape Fear Adventure*, which was published in 1982 and is now long out of print. And a great addition to our local history it is.

Beginning with the Native Americans who lived in the area for about 10,000 years but had no written language and created no recognizable monuments, the book is generously illustrated with well reproduced black and white and color prints. Did you know that the first attempt at settlement of the Lower Cape Fear was in 1526 by a group of 500 Spaniards from Hispaniola? By choice, Fonvielle presents the colonial history of the area thoroughly and spends a significant amount of time on the Revolutionary period, because other earlier titles have covered the 19th and 20th centuries more thoroughly.

I found the long chapter on "The African-American Experience" insightful, and he covers the riots of 1898 with an even hand. There is also a good deal of information on the important role that Wilmington and the whole area played during WWII. An extensive bibliography will be helpful to anyone who wants to explore various periods of history or topics in more depth. The final section "Sharing the Heritage" presents short articles on various businesses, organizations, and families that have made significant contributions to the development of the Cape Fear area. My favorites are the article on "Wilmington Health" (known to some of us as "World Health") and the one on "The Wilmington Development Co. Inc." otherwise known as Whitey's, a company that goes back to 1954, today employees 80 people, and encompasses the restaurant, several Market St. motels, and a large shopping center.

If you are new to the area, you may not know about Chris's earlier works. They are all readable by both serious students of the Civil War and by amateur historians. All are currently available in local bookstores and also available at all locations of the New Hanover County Public Library.

The Wilmington Campaign: Last Rays of Departing Hope (Stackpole Books, 1997.) Chris's major work, it encompasses the story of Wilmington and Fort Fisher from secession to capture by Union troops.

Fort Anderson: Battle for Wilmington (Savas Pub., 1999) Adds to the story with a detailed look at what was happening on the Brunswick side of the river.

Last Stand at Wilmington: the Battle of Forks Road (Renova, 2007) The story of a forgotten battle that played a small but significant role in the fall of Wilmington in February 1865.

Society Notes

● **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, **Anthony LoRe and his wife Elizabeth Montgomery** of Chapel Hill to the organization. Our current count is 199 personal members, and 18 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. The list price is \$25.00 and the organization makes \$10.00 on each copy sold. .

Support our Business Members!

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
Island Gazette
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

● **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 August our volunteers at the History Center included; **Pat Bolander, Jeannie Gordon, Elaine Henson, Ron Griffin, Lois Taylor, Richard and Nancy Graham and Sylvia Snook**, They helped a total of 45 visitors. THANKS so much! Volunteers are needed for the month of October, and to enter the Bill Reeves files into WORD. We have received a new shipment of Ocean Plaza and FPHPS T-shirts. Plan now while we have a wide variety of colors and sizes. Regular T's are \$12.00 (2X are 13.00, 3X are 14.00) and sweats are \$18.00 (2X are 20.00, 3X are 21.00)

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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