



Federal Point Historic Preservation Society

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

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Newsletter

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July, 2008

Darlene Bright, editor

July Meeting

Monday July 21, 2008

The Federal Point Historic Preservation Society will hold its regular monthly meeting on Monday, July 21st, 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.

The speaker for our July meeting will be Brad Holland of the Ft. Fisher North Carolina Military History Museum located at the National Guard Training Center, Kure Beach, NC. Affiliated with the NC Military History Society, our local museum contributes to the Society's mission to promote the study and preservation of this state's military history and to tell the stories of the brave men and women who created the proud heritage and traditions we honor.

Please join us in welcoming Brad to our program and learning more about the other "sometimes overlooked" history museum at Federal Point.

Annual June Picnic A Culinary Success

Forty members and their guests dined on a wonderful buffet of goodies including turkey and ham baked by Darlene and Leslie. Members contributed everything from fried chicken to signature casseroles and salads. Fran Doetsch's Onion Casserole was the most unusual and everyone clamored for a copy of the recipe. Wine and lots of sweets rounded out the fare. NOBODY was on a diet that night!

Fran Doetsch's Onion Casserole

4 large onions sliced

8 oz of shredded cheese

2 tablespoons butter

1 can Cream of Mushroom soup

½ cup milk

1 ½ cups butter crackers

2 eggs

Cook onions in butter. Mix eggs and milk and set aside. Line 9 X 14 pan with 1 cup crackers.

Layer ½ onions, can of soup and ½ of cheese. Layer ½ onions and top with egg and milk mixture. Mix remaining crumbs and cheese and sprinkle on top. Bake at 350 for 20 – 25 minutes.

The evening was also our annual meeting when new officers were elected and the Nominating Committee, comprised of Pat Bolander, Ron Griffin, and Debbie Price, presented a slate of nominees that passed unanimously.

Our New Officers are:

President: Don Snook

Vice President: Hazel Logue

Treasurer: Jeannie Gordon

Secretary: Lois Taylor

Our Directors are:

Pat Bolander

Elaine Henson

Jim Dugan

Sylvia Snook

Cheri McNeill

John Gordon

Ron Griffin

Jay Hockenbury

Ray Flowers

WE NEED YOU! Our many committees are in the process of reforming for the new year. If you would like to pitch in, please call the Center (458-0502) and talk to Rebecca or leave a message and **WE WILL PUT YOU TO WORK!**

**Message from Don Snook to the Members
of the Federal Point Historic Preservation Society (FPHPS)**

July 2, 2008

I have been asked to tell the members a bit about myself as I take on the presidency of this great organization.

Sylvia and I moved to Kure Beach in 2001, when I took a position as Instructor in English at Cape Fear Community College. On August 1, 2008, I will officially retire from that position. While I will miss the daily contact with young people, I hope to bring my experience with them to bear on the need to interest young people in the work of organizations like ours. Sylvia and I have been active in the Pleasure Island Turtle Project since 2001 and have been members of FPHPS since moving here.

Prior to working at CFCC, I worked for the Xerox Corporation in Rochester, New York, and in San Antonio, Texas, for twenty-one years. I had several jobs with Xerox, including Customer Service Manager, Marketing Analyst, Financial Control Manager, and Audit Manager. I joined Xerox in 1979 after a fifteen year career in teaching at Auburn (M.A.), Wright State University, UNC-CH (where I did my Ph.D. in Nineteenth Century American Literature), The University of Alabama, Gadsden State Community College (where I chaired the English Department). While with Xerox in San Antonio, I taught American Literature on Saturday mornings for seven years.

Sylvia and I have two daughters. Kaari is a veterinarian practicing in Wilmington. Kirsten is an Associate Entomologist with the Hawaii Research Center, which is associated with the University of Hawaii. She lives in Hilo on the Big Island of Hawaii.

I thank the members of the Society for their confidence in me and look forward to working with the Society as it continues to advance our knowledge of the culture and history of this fascinating part of North Carolina, and to preserve its history and values for future generations.

Old Joe Baldwin and the Maco Light

From The Coastal Chronicles, Volume I

By Jack E. Fryar, Jr.

In 1868, just three years after the end of the Civil War, Wilmington was a major stop on the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad. One stretch of that rail line ran from Eagle's Island (where the Battleship North Carolina now sits) to Florence, S.C. One evening while making the regular run, as the train neared Farmer's Turnout in Brunswick County (modern day Maco), a chain holding the cars of the train together came undone.

Lantern in hand, conductor Joe Baldwin dismounted the train and went to investigate. As Baldwin bent down to get a look at the coupling, the train's engineer thought he saw a signal from Baldwin and reversed the engine. The cars slammed together and, to the horror of the train crew, decapitated the hapless Joe Baldwin. It wasn't long after the accident that locals began seeing a mysterious light move along the tracks at the spot where Baldwin died, giving rise to one of the Cape Fear region's most celebrated ghost stories.

The light, said to be about the size of an engineer's lantern, was described as moving along the railroad tracks, swinging slowly from side to side, only on moonless nights when the area was surrounded in pitch black. Soon people began to say it was old Joe, looking for his lost head.

Experts who have explored the phenomenon have explained it away as being St. Elmo's Fire, similar to the electrical discharges that occasionally occur in ship's rigging. Others have said that it is foxfire, the phosphorescent lights common to swampy areas where gases discharge in illuminative displays. But locals counter that if that were true, then why does the light only appear on moonless nights and only follow the course of the railroad tracks, instead of being more widespread in the land to either side?

In his book *Land of the Golden River*, local historian Lewis Phillip Hall quotes the experience of Wilmington resident Louise Umstead, who saw the Maco Light for herself:

“On a summer night, during World War II, I was telling a good friend of mine, Patsy Wicker Page of Marietta, N.C., about the legend of the Maco Light. When I finished the story she and several other people in the group suggested that we ride over to Maco and take a look, which we did. As we stood there on the train tracks peering in the direction of Wilmington, a very tiny light, about the size of a lighted cigarette, suddenly came out of the woods on the north side of the tracks, and moved slowly towards us. As it came nearer it became larger and larger until it seems it was the size of a saucer.

“It then backed up, or retreated, stopped for a moment, then came forward again. This happened several times, then it started again in our direction and became larger and larger and brighter. It finally became so bright that I could read the headlines of a newspaper that I had in my hand. The light then was about the size of the headlight on a locomotive, but it never did completely reach the place where we were standing. Suddenly it turned north into the woods and we saw it no more.”

Books added to the Library

-- *Pirates of Colonial North Carolina* by Hugh Rankin. NC Office of Archives and History, 2008 ed. of 1960 original edition.

-- *The Old North State Fact Book*, NC Office of Archives and History, 2008 new and revised edition.

-- *Guide to North Carolina Highway Historical Markers*, NC Office of Archives and History, 10th edition 2008.

-- *North Carolina as a Cive War Battleground, 1881-1865* by John Gilchrist Barrett. NC Office of Archives and History, 2003.

Available for research in the Library, but also for sale in the Gift Shop are :

-- *A Sketch of the Life of Brig. Gen. Francis Marion* by William Dobein James. Dram Tree Books, 2008.

-- *Surfing on the Cape Fear Coast* by Joseph “Skipper” Funderburg. Slapdash Publishing 2008.

Support our Business Members!

BB&T

Bame Ace Hardware

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

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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

Current Membership

222 personal members

23 business members

Society Notes

● **Membership Information:** Debbie Price, Chairperson. We welcome four new members this month, **Anne Terry** of Carolina Beach, **Ray and Pam Bramhall** of Kure Beach and **Albert Shaw** of Clarkton, NC.

● **History Center News:** Darlene Bright, Director. Our volunteers who helped keep the History Center open in June included Pat Bolander, Ron Griffin, Juanita Winner, and Richard Graham. In addition to approximately 40 members and guests at our June meeting, we had 41 visitors at the History Center in the month of June. Three meetings were held by other organizations.

Don’t forget THE HISTORY CENTER IS NOW OPEN on Tuesdays 12-4 as well as Fridays and Saturdays from 10-4.

● **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.

● Don't miss this month's **SNOW'S CUT MONTHLY!** The July cover story is by our own Elaine Henson and tells about the “life lines” used by beach bathers from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Remember in those days women wore knee length dresses with high woolen stocking and lace up shoes, and even sometimes put weights in their hems to keep their dresses from floating up. Shades of Rose O'Neil Greenhow! Men didn't get off much easier; in 1935 the Carolina Beach Board of Alderman passed an ordinance that all males 12 and up had to wear “uppers” with their wool knit shorts.

If you don't manage to pick up an issue around town, we've got a box of them at the History Center and you can ask Elaine to autograph one for you at the July meeting.



Picture from SNOW'S CUT MONTHLY, July 2008

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