



Federal Point Historic Preservation Society

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Newsletter

Volume 15 No. 9

September, 2008

Darlene Bright, editor

September Meeting

Monday September 15, 2008

The Federal Point Historic Preservation Society will hold its regular monthly meeting on Monday, September 15th, 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.

Harry Warren, Director of the NC Museum of Forestry will speak on the intriguing topic “**Why We’re Called Tar Heels**” including a history of the Naval Stores industry so important to the Lower Cape Fear area’s history. Did you know that they “tapped” pine trees just like New Englanders tapped maple trees for their sap. The NC Museum of Forestry is housed in a 17,226 square foot former bank building on 1.9 acres of land in downtown Whiteville beside City Hall. The museum provides an overview of forestry in North Carolina through long-term and temporary exhibits and serves as a gateway to other Environmental Education Centers across the state. The NC Museum of Forestry is the only facility of its kind to exclusively interpret the forest and woodland of North Carolina. Other features include a collection of North Carolina wood specimens collected in the 1920s, forest-related tools, and giant prehistoric ground sloth bones collected in Columbus County. A North Carolina Tree Trail is being developed on the property.

Harry Warren, a native of Wilmington, North Carolina, earned his BA in history at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and his MA in history and museology at East Carolina University. A museum professional for over 25 years, he has worked at the North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher and the Smithsonian Institution and Cape Fear Museum. Since 2000 he has directed the NC Museum of Forestry which is a satellite museum of the NC Museum of Natural Sciences located in Whiteville.

Membership Picnic and Social

Debbie Price, Chairperson

It’s that time again! The Society will be holding its annual potluck picnic **from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm, on Saturday, September 27**. 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.

Current Membership

224 personal members 23 business members

August Meeting

Dr. David LaVer – North Carolina Indians Before the English Came.

The speaker for our August meeting was **David LaVere, PhD**, who is a professor of history at UNCW. The program examined NC native societies and cultures, particularly those living in the eastern part of North Carolina before the English arrived at Roanoke.

We had a great turnout, with 35 members present. One striking part of his talk pointed out how the population density and strength of economy pushed the Indians from hunter-gatherer to farmer to living in villages and eventually confederacies.

This program was made possible through a grant from the North Carolina Humanities Council's Road Scholars Speakers Bureau. The North Carolina Humanities Council is a nonprofit and state affiliate of the National Endowment for Humanities.

Historic Feature – Oral History – Clara Lamb Conducted and summarized by Robin Robertson

Clara Lamb has called Carolina Beach home since 1945. As well as teaching at Carolina Beach School, she and her husband owned Lamb's Corner and concessions on the boardwalk for ten years.

When the Lambs first moved here, they found a little four room house to rent for thirty-five dollars a month. That's where all four of their children grew up. While it was a small town, it wasn't always quiet. In fact, it was so crowded at times that accommodations were hard to find. People would sleep on the grass or anywhere they could find. Since the Lambs had a screened porch, people would knock on the door and ask if they could sleep there.

Living and working in a resort town made life a little different from other towns. Many of the businesses were seasonal, relying on the tourist trade in the summer. Clara recalled the reaction of Mr. Tuttle, the principal that took over after her husband. He was astounded and claimed it was a queer town because the men stopped working in September and started again in April. The women started working when the men quit. Someone had to provide for the families, so many of the women took jobs at the Block shirt factory uptown, bringing home money while the men sat out in front of Jones' grocery during off season.

The Lambs' businesses on the boardwalk helped supplement their income from education. Clara explained, "Well, it was more of a necessity because they only paid us nine months of the year." They started with popcorn machines which they bought secondhand. Then they added snowballs, opening a little place for that on the oceanfront. They put the popcorn machines up there and sold candy apples and then put a restaurant on the other side and had hotdogs, and hamburgers, and French fries. Mr. Lamb believed in taking advantage of modern conveniences, using electric peelers and cutters for potatoes. Even so, it was difficult to keep up with the demand when people were lined up out front.

The boardwalk was full of entertainment at that time with something for the whole family. The merry-go-round, the Ferris wheel, and the children's rides were all right there oceanfront. They were owned by Mr. Mansfield, who according to Clara, was very fashionable, dressing to the hilt all the time in Hickey Freeman suits. Later, Mrs. Kaus opened Blue Waters Court where the Marriott now stands. As well as rides, Blue Waters Court also included a motel complete with palm trees. Naturally there was bingo. It was at places like Uncle Jim's Bingo or Carolina Bingo, which was run by the Walton family for over five generations, that crowds gathered, waiting for the numbers to be called as the balls were plucked from the machine. According to Clara, that was the main source of entertainment for women while the children rode the rides and played the games. Another source of entertainment was fisherman's pier, which at one point included a chair lift called the Skyliner. "It was down at the end, the very end of the boardwalk, and it had a ride on it that you could get on and it took you out on a seat and it went around and then back again and it was a good ride. You could see the water. But hurricanes messed it up and they never built it back. And then the pier shortened with the storms until it was taken up," explained Clara.

Not all the entertainment on the boardwalk was as well-known or as legal. Rumor has it that some people enjoyed gambling, but that is only hearsay. What information Clara had was second hand. "I have been told that there was a lot of gambling up on the top floor of one of the big hotels that was here, but I don't know anything about it. They said when the business was over for the night the, people would go up there and enjoy the roulette wheel and stuff like that, but I don't know anything about it."

While there have been many changes in Carolina Beach over the years, one of the biggest instigators of change was Hurricane Hazel in October 1954. Clara shared her memories of that time. "Well, a lot of it was redesigned with Hazel. Hazel really was a hurricane. We stayed here through it. Everybody stayed...they had not had a hurricane here they say in twenty years and people didn't know what the hurricane was. And we were standing on the oceanfront looking at the waves and 'Wheeee! Look how pretty they are.' But my husband went up to boardwalk the day after Hazel and I said, 'Well, did the shutters that we put up, did they hold? And he said, 'Oh yes, they held.' He said, 'They held so well they went out with everything else.' But we had a Dairy Queen machine up there and it was cemented into the floor. That big, big thing. It was heavy, so many tons, and we never found a piece of it. No, it was gone. The rest of these storms have been minor compared to Hazel cause we got out the morning after Hazel and there was nothing of the ocean front. There was just a few little old scraggly homes hanging, with a bathroom wiggling back and forth and it was terrible. It was something. Oh, it took a long time to build up again. Everybody that could rebuild. But for a long time it was empty. I remember a lot of empty places because people couldn't afford to put back what the government, what they would give them, you know, from the insurance, and a lot of them didn't have insurance. We didn't. Mr. Mansfield owned all that land and he told Bob after Hurricane Hazel that Bob still had two years to go on his contract with him, and Bob said 'Well, I'm not going to pay you because there's no building to rent.' There was nothing. And he was still under the opinion that Bob owed him for the land and that, and that Bob could put a restaurant back there. So they went to court over it and the court really threw it out. They said that you can't charge rent on something that isn't there."

Clara has seen many changes in Carolina Beach since she came here in 1945. She witnessed the opening of the Carolina Beach inlet in 1952, and she has seen many of the older structures demolished to make room for newer ones. She is afraid that the changing landscape is a threat to the natural beauty of the island, especially the loss of trees.

But she admits that not all of the changes have been negative; progress has also brought convenience and local stores and businesses mean fewer trips to Wilmington. There is still a hint of wistfulness in her voice, however, as she fondly remembers earlier days at Carolina Beach.

Added to the Library – Rebecca Taylor

This month we only added one book to the library but it is an important one. *Between the Creeks, Revised: Masonboro Sound, 1735-1985* by **Crockette Hewlett and Mona Smalley** has long been out of print and too pricey to afford on the Library's budget. This month, due to the kindness of an anonymous doner we now have a copy in our collection.

Focusing on the area between Whiskey Creek (historically known as Purviance Creek) and Hewletts's Creek this book is a treasure trove of commuity history. The book begins with the earliest days, when Masonboro Sound was called Cabbage Inlet Sound. The authors describe the earliest land holdings of Richard Mullington, Caleb Granger, an early Sheriff of New Hanover County, and William Hooper, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence along with thier important local settlers. After the Revolution a number of prominent Wilmington families established summer cottages (think SE NC without A/C) on the Sound now known as "Masonboro" after the Pre-Revolutionary Masonic lodge that was built on the land grant made to John Cox in 1736.

This work covers the political, religious, economic and cultural lives of the families with names still common in the Federal Point Area. Anyone doing family or genealogical research will find a wealth of information on such notable families as Cassidey, Fales, Farrow, Grainger, Herring, Hewlett, Kirkum, Lillington, McEachern, Teachey, Parsley, Risley, Sprunt, and Walton to name just a few. For those looking for more contemporary history there is careful coverage of the era of WWII though the 60's and 70's. Again, much thanks to our donor. This unique book adds a significant amount of local history and genealogy to our collecton.

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Society Notes

● **Membership Information:** Debbie Price, Chairperson. No new members this month but we'll hopefully add several after the Membership Picnic on September 27! Start inviting friends and family now!

● **History Center News:** Darlene Bright, Director. Our volunteers who helped keep the History Center open in August were Juanita Winner, Elaine Henson, Pat Bolander, Ron Griffith and Sylvia Snook. Lois Taylor helped again this month with the newsletter mailing. In addition to approximately 35 members and guests at our August meeting, we had 53 visitors at the History Center in the month of August.

Mark your calendars now for Saturday December 6th. Darlene and Rebecca are planning a Gift Shop Winterfair with local authors selling and signing their books, new items available in the gift shop and a special table for our business members to promote their services. A list of authors will follow as soon as they are all confirmed. All craft-ee members. We will also be making Christmas ornaments to sell so gather your glitter, ribbon and glue gun and get ready to craft.



**Mark Your Calendar NOW
for our October Meeting!**

Bathing Beauties in Vintage Postcards

**Elaine Henson, presenter
Monday October 20, 7:30 pm**

**Federal Point History Center
Guests and the General Public welcome**

**Special Display at the Federal Point History Center
Local DAR Chapter Celebrates Constitution Week**

The Wilmington Ladies Tea Walk Chapter, NSDAR is named after a women's political protest in which the Patriot women of Wilmington burned their tea to protest the British tea tax. It is believed that this protest took place between March 23, 1775 and April 5, 1775. Janet Schaw, an unmarried lady from a modestly prominent Scottish family, who was visiting her brother, a merchant-planter with a plantation on the Cape Fear River, witnessed this event and recorded it in a packet of letters sent home to a friend. Miss Schaw's interesting and informative letters were copied and passed among her friends. In the early twentieth century, one of the three known copies of this diary was discovered in the British Museum by American researchers. The North Carolina Society of Colonial Dames financed the first publishing of Miss Schaw's diary under the title "Journal of a Lady of Quality, Being the Narrative of a Journey from Scotland to the West Indies, North Carolina and Portugal, in the years 1774 to 1776". This book is considered one of the most significant eyewitness accounts of the early days of the American Revolution and is widely available in its totality on various websites.

The objective of National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution include the protection of historical spots and the erection of monuments; the encouragement and support of historical research and educational endeavors; the preservation of historical documents and relics, and the promotion of the United States Constitution and of all patriotic celebrations.

September 17 - 23 is Constitution Week. The Chapter will be holding several events through out this week handing out Constitution Booklets and going into the schools to talk about the Constitution and honoring the brave men and women who fought for our freedoms during the American Revolution. We urge the public to come by the History Center to pick up a Constitution Booklet and see our display of Teapots and Teacups (American and English). There is a beautiful china bowl on display with some of the *Signers of the Constitution* on it. We will be changing the Teapots and Teacups out during the month, so look for change on the table. Ladies wishing more information on chapter activities in the community or membership may contact Sandra McKeithan, Regent at 910-200-2270 or Lynn Benson, Registrar at 910-458-3952 or Jo Campbell, Treasurer at 910-269-3923.

**Colonel Black Jack Travis – Civil War Reenactor, Author to Speak
Saturday September 20, 6:30-8:30 pm
At the Federal Point History Center**

Colonel Black Jack Travis author of the new book *Men and Gods Angels of Death: a Hisotry of ehe Rowan Artillery*, will be visiting our area in September. This program is sponsored by the Fort Fisher #2325 Chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy. Col. Travis will have copies to sell and to autograph from 6:30 – 8:30pm on Saturday September 20, here at the Federal Point History Center.

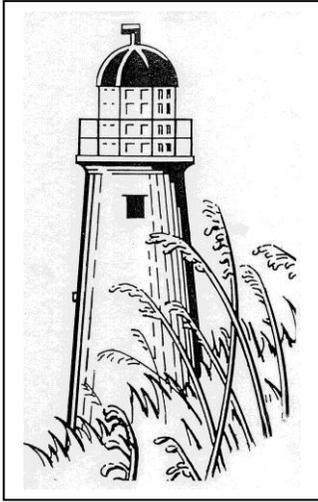
While researching his family's Civil War history, Col. Travis began taking part in reenactments as a member of an artillery crew, which led to a friendship with two other Confederate reenactors and eventually the formation of the Rowan Artillery, and Reilly's Battery/Ramsay's Battery, a unit known for its outstanding performance with the Army of Northern Virginia.

Col. Travis brings his unique perspective as a reenactor to this story of a historic alliance between Major James Reilly and Captain John A. Ramsey and their service in the Confederate Artillery.

Outer Banks Lighthouse Society to Visit the History Center

The Outer Banks Lighthouse Society's annual Keeper's weekend will be October 9 & 11. This year they are meeting in Southport to visit the Oak Island, Bald Head and Price's Creek lights. On Friday afternoon they will take the Ferry to Fort Fisher and take a tour of the locations of the three Federal Point lights. At the Federal Point History Center, they will view our exhibits and attend a program on the "Lost Lights of the Lower Cape Fear" presented by our member and local lighthouse expert Gayle Kersey.

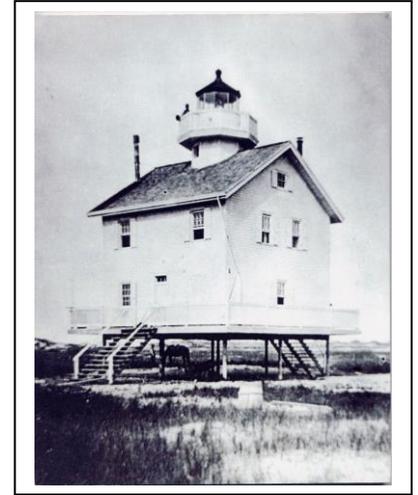
FPHPS members are welcome to visit the center on Friday afternoon to help us show off the Center and to view the "Lost Lights" program. Anyone interested in spending a weekend with a hoard of "lighthouse nuts" should check out the organization and program itinerary on the organization's website: <http://www.outerbankslighthousesociety.org/> For more information feel free to contact Rebecca or Gayle Kersey at 763-7149



Federal Point Lighthouse # 1



Federal Point Lighthouse # 2



Federal Point Lighthouse # 3

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