

Federal Point Historic Preservation Society

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Newsletter

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History Center Hours: Tues, Fri, Sat 10-4

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www.FederalPointHistory.org

March Meeting

Monday, March 21, 2011

7:30 pm

The Federal Point Historic Preservation Society will hold its monthly meeting on **Monday, March 21 at 7:30 pm at the Federal Point History Center**, 1121-A North Lake Park Blvd., adjacent to Carolina Beach Town Hall.

This month our speaker will be Jay Barnes who is Director of Development for the North Carolina Aquarium Society. He has worked with the Aquariums since 1980, and was Director of the Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores for more than twenty years. He is a graduate of N.C. State University's College of Design, and holds a master's degree in advertising from Syracuse University.

Mr. Barnes is author of several books and articles on hurricanes, including *North Carolina's Hurricane History*, now in its third edition, *Florida's Hurricane History*, now in its second edition, and *Faces From the Flood: Hurricane Floyd Remembered*, co-authored by State Treasurer Richard Moore (all from UNC Press). His latest work is *Hurricane Hazel in the Carolinas* (Arcadia Publishing). As a hurricane historian, he lectures widely on U.S. hurricanes, and has appeared in various productions for *The Weather Channel*, *The Discovery Channel*, *The Learning Channel*, *The History Channel*, *MSNBC*, *The NBC Nightly News*, *National Public Radio*, and others. Barnes lives in Pine Knoll Shores, N.C.

Last Month's Meeting

Our speaker, Connie Mason, told us all about women pirates from ancient times to the 1700's. Her research was impeccable, her stories fascinating, and her songs rollicking. If you want to learn more about Anne Boney, Mary Read and their sisters in "crime" check out these books: *Bold in her Breeches: Women Pirates Across the Ages* edited by Jo Stanley and *Seafaring Women* by Linda De Pauw. Or check out these web sites: <http://www.bonney-readkrewe.com/legend.html>, and <http://www.elizabethan-era.org.uk/famous-women-pirates.htm>. Wikipedia has a great long article too.

President's Message

This will be a big month for all you basketball fans but I hope you will be able to devote some time to FPHPS events as well. Remember our happenings on Saturday the 19th and our monthly meeting on Monday the 21st. The program will be about Hurricane Hazel (1954). I know some of you had a first-hand experience with that storm. Personally, I was able to ride it out in West Germany while on active duty with the USAF.

A Happy St. Patrick's Day to all whether Irish or not.

Ron

Sugar Loaf Artillery Day

Saturday March 19

**Federal Point History Center
1121-A N. Lake Park Blvd
Carolina Beach, NC**

10:00, 11:00, 12:00, 1:00, 2:00

Adams Battery re-enactors will fire their artillery on the hour

11:15

Talk by Jack Travis, author of the new book *Rebel Gunner: General E. Porter Alexander*

11:00-2:00

Civil War authors Jack Travis and Richard Triebe, with books to sell and autograph

11:00-2:00

Barbeque Sandwiches, drinks, and desserts available for purchase

2:30-4:30

**Annual walk to Sugar Loaf lead by Chris Fonvielle and
Ray Flowers (pre-registration required)**

**For more information and to sign up
for the Sugar Loaf walk call 910-458-0502**

Oral History by Ann Hertzler Ray Rothrock Part 3 -- Fort Fisher

The buildings at Ft. Fisher Army Base were not originally for families. It was an Army Base with barracks, a few office buildings and a very large Mess Hall. The buildings were pre-fabricated somewhere else, the 8 by 8 foot sections brought in by trucks and put together. Even the roof was in sections; they just had to put the tar paper and shingles on to complete the installation. After the War, the base closed. Families bought the buildings and housing and had them moved all over the beaches, mostly on Kure Beach, then Hanby and Wilmington Beach. From 3 blocks south of the traffic light in Kure Beach, today you can see the buildings still standing that were moved from the Ft. Fisher Army Base. Some were primary homes and many were utilized as second homes or beach homes. They were inexpensive to buy and did not cost very much to move.

The airstrip is the section right past the Civil War Museum where it parallels the highway. Just before you turn into the Ft. Fisher Aquarium, you can see where the airstrip was. Ray remembers the Army being there but does not recall seeing any military airplanes. After the base closed, Punky Kure and others would use the short airstrip for their airplanes to spot Menhaden fish for the boats netting them along the coast.

The Ft. Fisher Army Base began where the concrete columns are today and went to the end of U. S. 421, just past where the Ft. Fisher/Southport Ferry is today. His Dad and fishing partner, D. P. Lilly eventually built the boat ramp and docks at the end of the road. Going down U. S. 421, on the left side or ocean side were several bunkers where the Army stored their ammunition. One of the bunkers was where the Hermit claimed his home to be. Ray went into the Navy in 1955 which was before the Hermit came to KB.

There were a large number of soldiers at Ft. Fisher during WW II. It was like an advanced training base for the Army officers and enlisted men. They would bring companies, brigades and large groups of Army personnel along with all their tanks, trucks and other equipment out of Ft. Bragg and Ft. Benning for additional training before sending them overseas.

Ray went into the U. S. Navy on August 12, 1955, just days before Hurricanes Connie and Diane hit the area. He served 22 and a half years, retired, worked in Norfolk for another 8 years for the Department of the Navy before deciding to come home, buy half his Dad's Charter Fishing Business, and enjoy the ocean even more than he had when he grew up at Kure Beach.

When Ray went into the Navy, there had been very little of the Army Base sold. The Army may have turned all of it back over to the owner, the Orr Brothers. A portion of the base became Ft. Fisher Air Force Base in the mid 50's. The Air Force built a long range radar site, Air Force GCI (Ground Controlled Intercept) Base to deal with the Russian long range aircraft flying in and out of Cuba prior to the Cuba Missile Crisis in 1962.

Ray recalls, close to where they first lived in Kure Beach in 1943 and 44, a German man and his wife were arrested for going on the beach at night, sending signals to the German Submarines when they surfaced close to the shore. During the day, when people were swimming and on the beach, the Army would come up the beach strand and run everyone out of the water and off the beach when they sighted German Submarines. They never found any weapons on the beach. They would have "blackouts" and everyone would have to turn all lights off and pull the dark colored shades down when the sirens sounded the alarm.

There is a U. S. ship off of Carolina/Kure Beach, about 23 miles that was sunk March 13, 1942 by torpedoes from a German Submarine. It was the SS John D. Gill, a tanker traveling from Atreco, TX to Philadelphia after a stop in Charleston because a German Submarine was spotted following them. Once they thought it was safe, the Gill left Charleston and continued on to Philadelphia only to be sunk off our coast. It was said you could see it burning from Kure Beach for a couple of days before it went down. Twenty three of the 49 crewmembers

survived the sinking. The Coast Guard has put a buoy on the site and today it is a very popular diving and fishing site.

Wanna be our Postcard Sugar Daddy?

Our postcard collection continues to grow s-l-o-w-l-y. We have had great founding donations by Elaine Henson and Thomas Gray but there are many more postcards available on e-bay we'd like to acquire. We'd also like to purchase cards currently on sale in the area – which will be of significant value as part of our archives over time.

So...we're hoping to establish a small fund (a couple of hundred dollars or so) to purchase cards when we find them. Generally historic postcards sell for \$5-\$10 depending on how rare they are.

*If you'd like to help by
making a donation earmarked
for items this important
material to our archives
please call:*

*Rebecca at 458-0502, or
send donations to:
P.O. Box 623
Carolina Beach,
NC 28428.*

Live out of town? Can't make our meetings or help out with our fundraisers? This would be a great chance to contribute – and we'll be sure you get a donation letter so you can take it off your taxes!

Society Notes

- ❖ **Donations!** Ked Cottrell brought in a wonderful box chock full of photos and other items relating to Gene Risley and his family. We can't wait to dig in and process all the documents and scan the pictures.

Thomas Gray brought us a spectacular print of the map titled ***A Plan of the Cape Fear River from the Bar to Brunswick***. Published by the London chart makers R. Sayer and J. Bennett in July, 1776 it is accompanied by a nicely done narrative on some of the locations identified. This is the only pre-Revolutionary War map that I've seen that shows the "Ferry House" maintained on the eastern side of the Cape Fear, near Sugar Loaf. And I certainly didn't know that the ferryman of that early service was Cornelius Harnet who was the father of Revolutionary hero of the same name.

A huge thanks to **John Childers of the Brew Thru** who brought us two practically new desks and a desk chair for the Library. We have been able to totally rearrange the space, it looks great and is much more functional. Take a peek at this month's meeting! Now if somebody would gift us with some

adjustable steel shelving for storing files and artifacts we would be a real professional archive. **Leslie and Darlene** made sure the furniture go moved to our library and cleared the back room for its arrival.

- ❖ This month we recorded 52 members and visitors at our monthly meeting. It was a very full house! In February we had 36 visitors to the History Center and took in \$66.99 in the gift shop.
- ❖ Thanks to our History Center Volunteers; **Lois Taylor**, for helping with the Newsletter mailing and **Demetria Sapienza** who comes every Tuesday to scan photos for the DIP. (Digital Image Project). **Darlene and Leslie Bright** continue to spend time on all kinds of projects around the History Center.
- ❖ Another big thanks to Darlene and Leslie Bright, Ron Griffin, and Debbie Price who helped out with the annual *Be a Tourist in Your Own Home Town* open house on March 6. We had 12 people visit the History Center during the afternoon.
- ❖ New Members: Two new members this month: **Faye Payne** of Carolina Beach and Chazz Pulliam's **Hoplite Pub & Beer Garden**. Welcome new members!
- ❖ **Treasurer's Report** by Demetria Sapienza. Sales were up a bit in February and we are definitely beginning to see an increase in visitors as the weather improves. Hopefully more visitors and our 20% off sale will improve sales in March. Renewal memberships continue to arrive in a timely manner.

Federal Point Historic Preservation Society ***Upcoming Events***

Monday, March 21, 2011: Membership Meeting. 7:30-9:00 pm Jay Barnes, author of the new book *Hurricane Hazel*, will talk and share pictures of one of the most memorable events of the twentieth century, at least here in Southeastern North Carolina.

Monday April 18, 2011: Membership Meeting. 7:30-9:00 pm. The Winner Family of Carolina Beach. Join us as we hear from several famly historians about the history and lives of one of the founding families of our area.

Monday, May 16, 2011: Membership Meeting. 7:30-900 pm. Chris Fonvielle will talk about his new book, *Fort Fisher 1865* which features the 1865 photographs of Fort Fisher by T.H. O'Sullivan.

Officers

President – Ron Griffin
Vice-President – Annette Winner

Leslie Bright
Elaine Henson

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Ray Flowers
Cheri McNeill
Jean Stewart
John Gordon

Secretary – Lois Taylor
Treasurer – Demetria Sapienza

Jack Travis

Pat Bolander

Skippy Winner

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