



# Federal Point Historic Preservation Society

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

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## Newsletter

Volume 21, No. 10

October, 2014

Darlene Bright, editor

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

Rebecca Taylor, production

**New Web Site!** [Federal-Point-History.org](http://Federal-Point-History.org)



### We're Going Cruising Again!

Sunday October 19

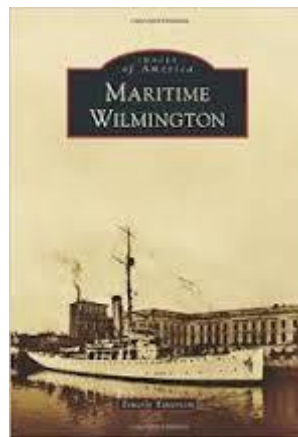
4:00-6:00 from downtown Wilmington

\$35.00 per person

(Limited to 40 people so book early!)

To reserve tickets call *FPHPS* at 910-458-0502

Join us aboard Wilmington Water Tours flagship *The Wilmington*. Our local ecological and maritime history will be narrated by Captain Doug Springer and Beverley Tetterton, who will be available to sign her new book *Maritime Wilmington*.



## October Meeting Monday, October 20, 2014 7:30 PM

The Federal Point Historic Preservation Society will hold its monthly meeting on **Monday, October 20, 7:30 pm at the Federal Point History Center, 1121-A North Lake Park Blvd., adjacent to Carolina Beach Town Hall.**



This month's speaker will be our very own President, Elaine Henson. Elaine will present a history of our local beaches through pictures from her personal collection. Elaine always has plenty of "inside stories" about our area's development so don't miss this fascinating program.

### President's Letter October, 2014

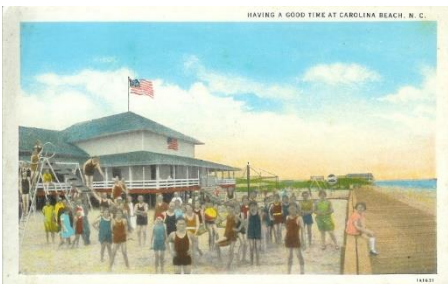
In 1887 the pavilion in this postcard opened to excursionists at Carolina Beach. It was located near the end of Harper Avenue on the ocean. That street was named for Captain John Harper, a steamboat captain and one of the partners of the New Hanover Transit Company that operated the new resort.

Captain Harper brought the beach visitors from Wilmington down the Cape Fear River by steamer to a wharf first at Sugar Loaf and later Doctor's Point. At the wharf they boarded the Shoo Fly train for the rest of the trip to the sea beach with the train taking them right to the back door of the pavilion.

Henry Bonitz, who designed the famous Lumina at Wrightsville Beach, also designed the 1887 pavilion at Carolina Beach. It burned in 1910 and was replaced in the same location with a new pavilion also designed by Bonitz that opened in 1911. This post card shows the 1911 building with swings, slides and other playground equipment for the kiddies.



Excursion Train at Carolina Beach, Near Wilmington, N.C.



The pavilion was the center of activity at the beach during the season with a bath house where you could rent bathing suits and get a shower after a dip in the ocean. Evenings and weekend afternoons, orchestras played for dancing and concerts. Holiday activities and celebrations were also held there, even boxing exhibitions. On September 19, 1940 a fire began in the pavilion that destroyed it and over two blocks of the boardwalk including the Bame Hotel. Amazingly the boardwalk businesses rebuilt in time for the opening of the 1941 season earning the nickname "The South's Miracle Beach".

Interestingly, the arcade that burned September 25, 2014 was in the same location as the pavilions and was one of those buildings reconstructed in 1941. Both fires were in September and 73 years apart, thankfully our recent one was way less serious.

### Oral History

#### "Fort Fisher Watermelon Patch" by Howard Hewitt

[This is an excerpt of a much longer and more detailed article available on our web site: [federal-point-history.org](http://federal-point-history.org)]

Our daughter Georgianne called today on the way home for our 4th of July celebration to ask what method is the best to determine watermelon ripeness. She was stopping in Hempstead, TX (Texas Watermelon Capital) to pick up a melon for our 2009 celebration. Her dilemma was which ripeness checking method should be employed. She asked if she should use the Thump Method or the Broom Straw Method. Now, I am not quite sure what the Broom Straw method is, so I directed her to use the "Thump It Method".



This discussion brought back a flood of memories of Dad's watermelon patch over on our river farm at Federal Point. In North Carolina, cool spring weather delays the planting of watermelons so it was usually the first of July before our watermelons were ready for the harvest. Dad called his watermelons Georgia Rattlesnakes.

In doing a little research, I found that there was a type of watermelon grown in Eastern United States starting around 1870 that was named Georgia Rattlesnake. I would not be surprised if some of Dad's seeds were passed along through the hands of the Hewett-Lewis family using the same method that Dad used.

At the time of planting, a mound (hill) was created to plant the seeds. A typical planting was three seeds per hill along with a little fertilizer. As the plants grew, only the healthy plants were allowed to remain in the hill. Planting was spread out over several weeks so all the watermelons would not ripen at the same time.

As the watermelons developed, Dad started taking notes on the growth of some of the melons in the patch. The largest and best shaped melons were singled out by Dad placing an "X" on the topside with his fingernail. As these melons continue to develop, he would place a second "X" and so on. A three "X" watermelon was a very special watermelon. By selection, the seeds from the three "X" watermelons were used for the next season's planting.



Normally, XXX melons were not sold, but served to family and friends. The rule when eating a XXX melon was no seeds went on the ground. Dad collected all the mature seeds. They would be washed and dried on a screen. The seeds would end up in a Mason jar and stored for the next year's planting.



It is interesting that not all one X melons made it to two Xs or two Xs to three Xs. Dad's marks were based on potential. During the growing season some would not meet his expectations and would be sold for a lesser value.

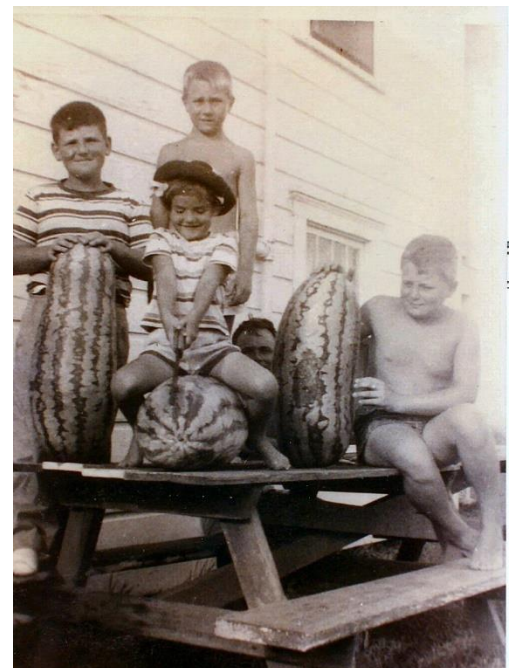
The size of the patch was around four to five acres. It is probably evident to the reader that the size of our watermelon patch produced a lot of melons and there were always enough melons for the family, along with some to be sold commercially.

We sold some in front of our home in a stand. My brother Thomas and I would alternate watching the stand while one of us would put one watermelon in a wagon and haul it up to the beach and sell door-to-door. We worked the beach from the Fort Fisher gates to the light at Kure Beach.

We actually had regular customers who would purchase one melon a week but sometimes more while they were available. Dad's watermelons had dark and light green alternating stripes. Maybe that is how they got their name. Most of the larger melons weighed 35-45 pounds. The large two "X" ones sold for \$5.00.

We would make a sale and go back a get another one. My brother and I would make five to six trips a day until we had cleared all the melons out. When our inventory became low, we would pick again. A lull between picking allowed a little break for us to swim and fish.

Now anyone who has operated a watermelon patch or had firsthand knowledge what an enticement a watermelon patch can have on a bunch of young boys with a lot of time on their hands. On occasion, we had visitors at night. In most cases, their little foray into the night failed. All roads leading in or out of the river farm were inhabited by our relatives, the Lewises and the Davises. So the whole family was a large security force for the patch. During watermelon season, the Kure Beach police would come to the rescue when called. Once the intruders were sent on their way, Dad would reward the police with a large watermelon the next day.



## Featured Business of the Month Big Daddy's Restaurant By Tony (Lem) Phillips

The Federal Point Historic Preservation Society is very proud to welcome Big Daddy's Restaurant of Kure Beach, NC as a new **Business Member**. *Gerald Huffman*, manager of Big Daddy's, sent the application in August of 2014. (FYI: Big Daddy's also supports Ft. Anderson in Brunswick County) Big Daddy's is located on the corner of Ft. Fisher Blvd and K Ave in Kure beach. They have been serving "Seafood at its Best" since 1965.



The Kure Beach location boasts a colorful and assorted history. The Eakes Family who owns the restaurant tried many ideas to serve the public in the early years. Big Daddy's property has been home to a miniature golf course, dune buggy rental and, "open-air" dance hall. They tried an ice cream parlor, breakfast house and, steak house. Now, the restaurant serves us the finest steak and seafood around. They are open every day from 12PM until... Months are from spring's opening day until the last week in September.



The History Society is very impressed with the history of Big Daddy's and the stories it tells us of our youth and days well spent having fun in Kure Beach, NC. They continue to be a part of our history as well and an enduring part of our future. Welcome Big Daddy's to the Federal Point Historic Preservation Society.

### Larry Cecil Bame b. June 8, 1939 - d. September 10, 2014

Son of the late James Cecil "Mike" Bame and Alice Bame who survives.

FPHPS and Carolina Beach have lost a native son in the death of Larry Bame. He was the grandson of James Rowan and Amanda "Mandy" Ludwig Bame who came to Carolina Beach in the mid-1920s from Barber, NC eventually opening a café. This marked the beginning of the Bame family's relationship with Carolina Beach. It would grow to include several beach businesses, hotels, piers, restaurants, two Carolina Beach mayors, a fire chief and span four generations.

Larry had deep roots as a Carolina Beach boy and grew up working summers at the Bame Hotel and other family businesses where he met his wife, Doris. She was from Rowan County and also had a summer job working in the hotel dining room.

He was a quiet, unassuming and introspective man who could be overlooked, yet those who made the effort to know him found that he had much wisdom to share on meaningful aspects of life. Larry had a small and successful tool and die shop here on the island and was a faithful and loving husband to Doris, father to Melissa and Jeffrey and grandfather to his three grandsons. He saw a lot of progress and changes to our beach community in his 75 years and could tell wonderful stories about growing up and living here. He was quite a guy in his own way and will be sorely missed by all who knew and loved him.

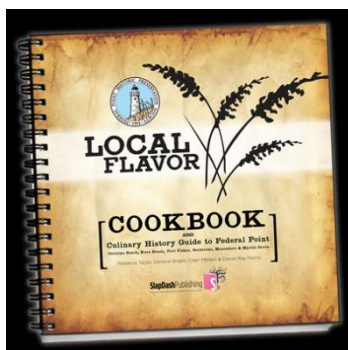


**Society Notes**  
**Darlene Bright, History Center Director**

- ❖ Thanks to everybody who helped with our booth at Island Day on September 28. **Leslie and Darlene Bright, Tony Phillips, Jean Stewart and Barry Nelder** helped get our message out to the entire local community.
- ❖ The History Center recorded 65 visitors in September. We had 40 in attendance at the September meeting. The gift shop took \$136.85. The cookbooks are selling at a steady pace. The History Center was also used by Got-‘em-on Live Bait Fishing Club and the UDC-Fort Fisher Chapter. **PLEASE NOTE: We have a couple of long sleeve T-shirts and some FPHPS sweatshirts on sale. T-Shirts - \$5.00. Sweatshirts - \$12.00. Great for yard work or other grungy projects.**
- ❖ Please welcome new lifetime members **Michael and Linda Smith** of Kure Beach, and **Sarah Efind** of Carolina Beach. A heartfelt “Welcome back” to **Jimmy Bartley,**” one of our earliest Presidents.
- ❖ Thanks to **Demetria Sapienza,** and **Darlene Bright** for helping get the Newsletter in the mail this month. Also thanks to **Demetria Sapienza, Jeannie Gordon, Ron Griffin, Pat Bolander** and **Elaine Henson** for keeping the History Center open while Rebecca was away. [One more weekend in October and I’m staying put for the winter!]
- ❖ Thanks AGAIN to **Andre’ Blouin** for all the time he’s put into the new website. The website is up and it’s chock full of all kinds of great information. Please take time to visit: [www.federal-point-history.org](http://www.federal-point-history.org). **Tony Phillips** is keeping things growing on our Facebook page. If you are on Facebook please take time to “like” us and share our posts.
- ❖ **And don’t forget!** If you take a trip with **Wilmington Water Tours** please tell them you are a member of FPHPS! If you do we get a portion of your ticket price. Call us 458-0502, or them 338-3134. [www.wilmingtonwatertours.net](http://www.wilmingtonwatertours.net)

**GET YOUR RAFFLE TICKETS NOW!**

We have had two wonderful prints of Carolina Beach scenes donated by **Ronald Williams** via **Norm Melton**. Tickets are \$1.00 apiece, 12 for \$10.00, or 25 for \$20.00. We’ll hold the drawing at the Christmas Party. You don’t have to be present to win.



**Christmas is coming!**  
**Have you bought**  
**your cookbooks yet?**  
**\$21.95**



**Officers**

President – Elaine Henson  
Vice-President – Tony Phillips  
Secretary – Juanita Winner  
Treasurer – Demetria Sapienza

**Directors**

John Gordon	Jean Stewart	John Moseley
Andre Blouin	Leslie Bright	Byron Moore
Skippy Winner	Jim Dugan	Barry Nelder

**Federal Point Historic Preservation Society****P. O. Box 623****Carolina Beach, NC 28428**

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***Please Support Our Business Members!***

**Atlantic Towers****Ned Barnes, Attorney****Big Daddy's****Britt's Donut Shop****Carolina Marine Terminal****Charles Henson Painting****Coastal K-9 Bakery, Inc.****First Bank****Frank's Pizza****Got-Em-On-Live Bait Club****Hanover Iron Works****Historical Society of Topsail Island*****Island Gazette*****Island Tackle and Hardware****Kure Beach Fishing Pier****Bob McKoy- Network Real Estate****Olde Salty's****Pleasure Island Chamber of Commerce****Pleasure Island Foundation for a Sustainable  
Community****Primrose Cottage****SlapDash Publishing****Tom Sayre Construction****Tucker Bros. Realty Company****Wilmington Water Tours****Winner Marine Construction****Winner RV Park**

