



# Federal Point Historic Preservation Society

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## Newsletter

Volume 17 No. 2

February, 2010

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### February Meeting

**Monday, February 15 - 7:30 pm**

The Federal Point Historic Preservation Society will hold its monthly meeting on **Monday, February 15 at 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, William Jayne, will speak on the Wilmington National Cemetery with additional insights into the National Cemetery system throughout the United States. Bill Jayne is currently responsible for coordinating the development of new national cemeteries and expansion of VA's 130 existing national cemeteries around the country.

Bill began his civil service career in 1981 in Washington, DC, and joined VA in 1984. He held numerous positions at VA headquarters, including director of the State Cemetery Grants Program. He transferred to Wilmington in 2006. Bill also served on the Department's Advisory Committee on readjustment of Vietnam Veterans prior to joining VA. He was an early volunteer in the effort to build the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and a member of the Board of Advisors of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund from 1979 to 1984.

Mr. Jayne was a rifleman with the 26<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment in Vietnam and was honorably discharged in 1968. He received the Purple Heart and the Presidential Unit Citation. He is and his wife, Randy, live near the cemetery in the Carolina Place neighborhood. He is a native of Upstate New York and graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in 1973.

### Last Month's Meeting

We had a slight confusion on dates, and Rebecca Taylor and Gayle Keresey jumped in and presented their program on the Federal Point Lighthouse. Originally built in 1816, it stood guard over "New Inlet" for almost 80 years. The foundation recently found on Battle Acre at Fort Fisher matches the description of the second light built in 1837. That light was dismantled by Colonel Lamb and his soldiers during the Civil War to deprive the Union blockaders from such a handy target. The third light, which was a two story house with a light on top, was built in 1866 and served until "the Rocks" were completed, and New Inlet was closed. It burned in the early 1880's and remnants of it have not been discovered though they are thought to be somewhere on the Aquarium's property.



### Cape Fear History Bowl -- Thursday, February 11, 2010

The Lower Cape Fear Historical Society has organized the first ever Cape Fear History Bowl. It will take place on Thursday, February 11 at 7 pm in the Historic New Hanover County Courthouse (the red brick one with the clock tower.) Team members **Leslie Bright, Barry Nelder, Richard Lawrence, and Rebecca Taylor.** The members held a practice on January 26 and are busily reading various histories of North Carolina. *Please make plans now to attend the event to cheer on our team.*

### Fall of Fort Fisher Reenactment -- January 15-17, 2010

A huge thanks for all the people who helped with the sausage dog sale at this year's Fort Fisher Reenactment weekend. Saturday was beautiful, and we sold a large number of "dogs" to the general public. Sadly it rained hard in the night, and the Sunday activities were canceled. Working throughout the weekend were **Leslie and Darlene Bright**, who cooked the hot dogs and sausages and made sure everything was ready for the sale. **Sylvia Snook** did the peppers and onions this year as Cherri was "out of commission." Assisting were **Connie Burns, Sylvia and Don Snook, Ron Griffin, Virginia Frances, Paul Slebodnik, John Gordon, Jim Dugan, Rodney Jones, and Demetria and Phil Sapienza.**

## President's Message

I hope everyone made it through our very cold January. I am looking forward to a gradual warming this coming month. I hope to see some of you at the History Bowl on the 11th to support our team. Also, our monthly meeting comes early on the 15th. Come out and learn more about the Wilmington National Cemetery.

Ron Griffin

### Oral History Committee – Ann Hertzner, Jeannie Gordon From the interview with Isabell Foushe January 12, 2007

#### *Mackerel, Milk, and Mountains*



Ed and Gertie Lewis and their four children, Sis, James, Isabell (born 1930), and Judy, lived at the river next to the Fort Fisher base and had a shack down at the Ft. Fisher rocks. Ed made his living rowing fishing parties of three or four from the river near the ferry over to Zeeks Island in a boat about 18 feet long (no motor); out of Corncake Inlet; and trolled across High Rock usually fishing for mackerel.

The first time Isabelle went fishing in the ocean she was about five. They bottom fished, each with two hooks on their line. Before the hooks got to the bottom, fish were on each of them. Her Daddy kept busy taking fish off and baiting hooks. They brought home a big five gallon bucket of fish. Daddy cleaned them. Mother dipped fish in flour or cornmeal and cooked in a big old thick iron pan with three legs. She also cooked beans, collards, donuts, French fried potatoes, turnips, and rutabagas in the same iron pot.

The home had a wood stove, later a kerosene one, but no electricity until Isabell was nine years old (1939). They had candles and Aladdin Lamps with a little net that hung on to the wick. At night they'd catch lightning bugs, put them in a quart jar, set them on the table, and turn all the lamps out. They burned trash and had a well. They didn't get a phone until moving to Kure Beach.

Their Ft. Fisher home had a small farm with horses and cows. Daddy put a dozen or more **cows** on a barge (a scow) to take to a river island with good vegetation and trees for shelter. The old bull, Booie, was a pet, a big old sweet heart. Daddy cut his horns off and put a ring in his nose. Isabell's brother would sit on Booie's head and ride him around. They played with Booie until Daddy put him over on the island with the cows.

Isabell and her brother milked two or three cows, no milking machines then without electricity. The ice truck brought big chunks of ice for the ice box two or three times a week to keep the milk cold. They sold raw milk in quart or half gallon jars five days a week. Isabell's sister washed and sterilized the used bottles. Heavy paste board caps were pushed down on the top of the filled jars. They delivered milk on the horse with a big canvas saddle bag to nearby families at Ft. Fisher and at Kure Beach. The cream was 1/3 of the bottle. To make butter, cream was put in a half gallon jar and rocked across your leg about 15 or 20 minutes until the butter formed. Her Daddy and sister drank buttermilk. Margarine came along later in the war in a clear plastic bag with a little bubble. They'd almost fight over who popped the bubble to color the margarine yellow.

Daddy drove the kids over the hills and mountains [the mounds] of old Fort Fisher. That was before jeeps. And Walter Winner, Carl's brother, the fishing boat guy, had a place down at Ft. Fisher beach. He put his house on big old logs so he could roll his house back as the water kept eroding year after year. It would be in the water now.



In 1948 Isabell (4th from left) was Miss Carolina Beach

Ethyl Dow paid Daddy every two weeks. They went into Wilmington for groceries to a big A&P store on the corner of Front and Dock. Each kid got a quarter for an allowance, a dime for the Bijou Theater, a nickel for popcorn, and 10 cents for the dime store, Kresses, McClellands, or Woolworths. The movie usually would be cow boy pictures and serials, such as Flash Gordon.

When Isabell was young, really young, she went to old Federal Point Methodist Church. They had a really good youth Choir invited to sing places, Isabell, her brother, and kids around on the beach. Girls were not even considered being hired as a life guard. They had two or three well-known "jump joints" - little open air covered places with a jute box that all of the kids went to at Carolina Beach.

## Book Review by Rebecca Taylor

*On Hallowed Ground: The Story of Arlington National Cemetery* by Robert M. Poole. Walker and Co., 2009.

And: *Where Valor Rests: Arlington National Cemetery* ed. by Rick Atkinson. National Geographic, 2007.

I am so glad I found these two books at the same time. I originally heard Robert Poole speaking about his book, *On Hallowed Ground*, on Book TV. He gave a tour of the cemetery as he told stories from his book, and it was fascinating. Luckily you can watch it, too at <http://www.youtube.com/booktv#p/search/0/jzxbam2appY> which you will surely want to do after reading either of these books.. Note: a large number of Book-TV segments are now available on youtube!

*Where Valor Rests* is an example of what National Geographic does best. This “coffee table book” uses glorious color photographs and striking graphic design to tell the story of one of our country’s most hallowed places. Combining historical photographs with views of today’s cemetery, it manages to convey the immensity of this country’s loss with intimate looks at single moments and monuments.



I was especially fascinated by the chapter on individuals who work at Arlington from Kendell Thompson, the National Park Service manager for the Lee home, to Louis Pack, a gravedigger, to Jesus Vasquez Gonzalez, who maintains the trees and shrubs. Of course, there are musicians from all of the services with the solo buglers responsible for playing the ever present *Taps* perfectly at the end of each interment. There are also a wide range of active duty servicemen and women, including the elite unit known as the *Old Guard*, who escort each casket to its final resting place, and the members of the “firing party” who give the service member’s final salute. There are the pilots of the DC National Guard who fly the “missing man” formation over many services, and of course, there are the guards to the Tomb of the Unknown whose hourly shifts continue around the clock in all of the kinds of weather that Washington, DC can throw at them.

One group I didn’t know about was the “Arlington Ladies,” a group of about 50 volunteers who make sure that every service has someone in attendance. Begun over 30 years ago by the wives of the Military Chiefs of Staff, Arlington Ladies volunteer several days a month and attend as many as five funerals in a day. Says Alba Thompson, an Army Arlington Lady, “*As one of the representatives of the Chiefs of Staff, I bring condolences to the next of kin, present them with a hand written note, and console them. It’s a great honor. I tell them to remember that long after we’re gone, thousands will know that their loved one was an honorable man.*”

I, as most people, knew that Arlington was originally Robert E. Lee’s home and plantation. What I didn’t realize was that the property was actually part of the birthright of Lee’s wife, Mary Custis Lee, a descendant of George Washington Parke Custis, the stepson of Martha Washington, who was raised as the adopted son of George Washington. Mary was deeply attached to the land, and it broke her heart when after the war, the US Government refused to return the land to a “rebel and a traitor” as Robert E. Lee was considered by many bitter Unionists.

Burial had begun on the Arlington grounds near Mary’s garden very specifically because the US Quartermaster Montgomery C. Meigs, who had known Lee at West Point, was determined that the land never be allowed to be returned to the Lees. Also established on the Lee property was Freedman’s Village, a camp for the many ex-slaves arriving in the Capitol in droves, seeking an escape from their masters and a new life in the North. After the war, General Lee, and after his death, Mary Custis Lee, and after her death, their oldest son, George Washington Custis Lee, pushed their claims to the land all the way to the US Supreme Court. It took until 1883 to settle the issue once and for all. The family was finally paid one hundred and fifty thousand dollars to give up all claims to the property. The first person buried at Arlington was Pvt. William Christman, a twenty-one year old from the 67<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry who was buried on May 13, 1864. Author Poole details a number of later internees from Fighting Joe Wheeler, a Confederate



General who at age 61 led US troops, including Teddy Roosevelt’s Rough Riders up San Juan Hill during the Spanish-American War, to Pierre L’Enfant, the designer of the very Capital his grave high on a hill in Arlington overlooks. I knew that Pershing was called “Black Jack” Pershing, but I never knew that his nickname came from the fact that he commanded the *Buffalo Soldiers* in the Indian Wars.

Thorough out the second half of the book, much is written on the “unknown” soldiers from WWI to WWII to Korea to Vietnam and the assertion that with today’s modern DNA testing, we will never have another “unknown soldier.” One chapter tells the story of the Vietnam War’s “unknown soldier” and how he came to be identified and returned to his family almost 25 years after he died. The chapter on the ceremony and burial of President Kennedy was fascinating to me, who as a child visited the grave, before the “eternal flame” was eternal.

I also had never realized that Arlington was quite as close to the Pentagon as it is. On September 11, 2001, the workers were stunned to have the plane that hit the Pentagon come in so low that some literally ran, believing it was crashing into the cemetery. I also did not realize that shards of glass and plastic were recovered from Arlington's grass, and that the FBI asked workers if they could see into the cockpit of the plane as it went over. Today 64 graves, representing the 189 who died that day, lie in Section 64 overlooking the building where they gave their lives

Both books make compelling reading, and complement each other quite well. Both are available at the New Hanover County Public Library, and along with the BookTV video interview will give you greater insight into the history and future of our country's premier military cemetery. I know that the next time I visit Washington DC, I will certainly make time for a visit across the Memorial Bridge to this "hallowed ground."

### Society Notes

- **Membership Information:** **Annette Winner**, Chairperson. A big welcome to new members **Elaine and Alan Porter** of Kure Beach. Also joining in January was **Eric Vann** of Kure Beach.
- **History Center News:** **Darlene Bright, Director**. Volunteers who helped keep the History Center open in December were **Lois Taylor, Demetria Sapienza, Juanita Winner, Jeannie Gordon, Pat Bolander and Sylvia Snook**. In addition to 40 members and guests at our January meeting, we had 44 visitors at the History Center. Gift Shop Sales totaled \$65.71. Got'em-on-Live and the UDC also held their montly meetings at the center.

BB&T  
 Bame Ace Hardware  
 Bert Croom Investigations  
 Britt's Donut Shop  
 Coastal K-9 Bakery, Inc.  
 Courtyard by Marriott  
 Fort Fisher Restoration Committee  
 Frank's Pizza  
 Friends of Brunswick Town  
 Got-Em-On-Live Bait Club  
 Hanover Iron Works, Inc.  
 Harbor Masters Restaurant  
 Historical Society of Topsail Island  
*Island Gazette*  
 Le SoLeil, Botique & Gallery  
 Musclexorx Fitness Systems  
 B. Parker Protective & Lock  
 Pleasure Island Chamber of Commerce  
 Russo's Motel  
 The Shoppes at Squigley's  
 Dr. Vincent Smith, DDS  
*Snow's Cut Monthly Magazine*  
 Taylor's Heating & Air, Inc.  
 Tucker Bros. Realty Company

**Please take time to let our Business  
 Members know how you appreciate their  
 support.**

### Officers

President – Ron Griffin  
 Vice-President – Annette Winner  
 Secretary – Lois Taylor  
 Treasurer - Jeannie Gordon

### Directors

Leslie Bright, Chair	James Dugan	Ray Flowers
Elaine Henson	Daniel Norris	Cheri McNeill
Jack Travis	Pat Bolander	Sylvia Snook

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