

North Carolina Historical Commission Report-December 6, 2023
Division of Archives and Records

On behalf of the staff of the Division of Archives and Records, it is my pleasure to provide updates on some ongoing projects and division outreach since the September 19 meeting. For the first time in over a year the Records Analysis Unit is fully staffed after Corinne Foster recently joined the unit. We also welcomed Eric Bergeron to the position of division accounting technician. Unfortunately, we recently bid farewell to two veteran division employees. Ruth Cody resigned her position as manager of the Digital Access Branch, and Vann Evans left his position as head of the audio-visual program in the Special Collections Section.

This fall selected staff participated in the annual Southeastern Archives and Records Conference hosted by the Alabama Department of Archives and History. This annual gathering of staff from the southeastern state archival programs provides an excellent opportunity to discuss issues of importance to our programs. This conference has been held for many decades, which also provides the opportunity to learn more about the state archival programs in our region. This year division staff participated in the round table sessions on reference and access, education and outreach, electronic records, and program management. The conference also offered the opportunity to take some behind-the-scenes tours of the department, as well as to tour a new sculpture installation detailing Alabama history. The installation was created during the state's recent bicentennial celebration.

As noted in the September report, Digital Services staff have been working on two important projects involving our digital assets. The migration of the digital collections to the new platform was completed over the summer. Now that the move to Quartex is complete, the Digital Access Branch is partnering with the staff of the State Library to improve the existing collections while adding new materials. They are using the free auto-transcription option that came with the first year of the Quartex contract to add more information for keyword searching. By doing metadata clean-up, they are both standardizing language across collections to improve searchability and adding useful context to materials. They are also reviewing and editing landing page content, as well as creating new landing pages when needed. In time, they hope to utilize the system's exhibit feature to curate thematic tools for outreach and educational purposes.

The planned migration of our digital assets, both digitized collection images and born digital collection material, took on new importance as the server storing these files failed at the end of October. Agency IT staff were able to get it restarted and continue to focus with the NC Department of Technology on the migration of our over 104 TB of data from this server to secure cloud storage.

Following the inaugural teacher workshop for the America250NC commemoration, the division started a new partnership with a local middle school. Under the leadership of 8th-grade history instructor, Cori Greer-Banks, 15 students have embarked on a year-long service-learning project to transcribe General Assembly Session records from the 1780s. After a tour of the State Archives and another visit for a lesson on transcription tips and a look at the original

documents, the students worked to transcribe 17 pages of the Ned Griffin emancipation/enfranchisement case on the Transcribe NC platform. This first batch of records include Griffin's petition and supporting testimony from the colonel he fought under in the Continental Line, his former enslaver, and additional associates. The class will spend a session learning more about Ned Griffin and then begin work on up to 50 additional GASR documents relating to emancipation. This focus will eventually tie into another part of their service-learning project to create a video relating to the new Freedom Park.

At the end of November, the Outer Banks History Center presented one of their more unique regular adult educational programs. As part of an officer training program, fifty Marines from the US Marine Corps Expeditionary Training Unit from Cherry Point visited the OBHC for a tour and program on the archival materials related to the Battle of Roanoke Island. The Marines in the program study the Civil War battle as part of an officer training program that includes a tour of the battle sites in the Outer Banks.

Division staff continue to present programs and workshops to a wide variety of audiences. Selected highlights of recent presentations include Heather South's September 22 program for a group of archivists from the NC Community College Archives Association. Josh Hager and Alison Thurman attended the "Documenting the World of Outlander at Fraser's Ridge Homecoming" event on October 12 and presented a program on the documents behind stories told in the book and television series. In-person NC Trivia returned to the Raleigh Times on October 26 to great success. As part of the Society of NC Archivists' Archives Month programs, Ian Dunn presented a virtual program called "Misdeeds and Depravity in the AV Collection" on October 26. The program featured images and stories found in our audio-visual collections. November 8 the Friends of the Archives hosted their annual meeting and program. The program speaker was Dr. Charles Johnson of NCCU talking about his recent book on the historic football rivalry between NCCU and NC A&T. The program, "More Than Just a Game," is now available [online](#). Division staff also manned a table at the recent NC American Indian Heritage Celebration held at the NC Museum of History. Staff shared information about the Archives and our collections. The OBHC continues to collaborate with local libraries through exhibits. OBHC staff created an exhibit for Veteran's Day to commemorate the Vietnam War on the Outer Banks in conjunction with the visiting traveling exhibit, "The Wall the Heals." The Western Regional Archives participated in the annual Black Mountain College Museum and Arts Center Conference October 13-15. The museum's exhibit on weaving at BMC includes Don Page weaving class samples. These fragile and rare samples are on exhibit for the first time thanks to a collaboration between the conservation programs at the Museum of History and Archives.

This fall the Federation of N.C. Historical Societies hosted two online programs for members in a "Current Controversies" series. The sessions were open to member organizations and DNCR staff and not recorded, so that speakers could feel freer to share sensitive information about recent disruptions at local history institutions. More than twenty members attended each. The first (Sept.14), titled "Front Page Panic," allowed former director of the Gaston County Museum, Jason Luker, to tell his story about a controversial photograph—part of a photography exhibit—and the reaction in the press and on social media when the museum removed the photo at the

county administration's request. The second program explored the evolution of Latta Place. Liz Morrell of Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation and Kendall Kendrick, former Vice Chair of Latta Place, Inc. and site descendant, discussed the closure of Latta Place after a controversial 2021 Juneteenth event was advertised and then canceled following public backlash. Mecklenburg County then decided not to renew its contract with the 501(c)3 that had operated the site since the 1970s and instead began redeveloping and reinterpreting the site with county staff.

On December 8, the Federation will award the Historic Port of Washington Project with the 2023 Newsome Award at the N.C. Literary & Historical Association's awards ceremony. For the past two years, the Historic Port of Washington Project (HPOW) has worked to restore faded advertising signs and to create new murals showcasing local history in downtown Washington. The ongoing "Historic Ghost Sign & Mural Project" raises awareness of Washington's past and engages the public with local history. The organization will receive a framed certificate and \$250 cash prize.

Every October 10 archivists around the country focus on the unique preservation and access issues surrounding electronic records. The day was picked to evoke bits and bytes that create electronic records (10/10 or 1010). Each Electronic Records Day our staff create resources to highlight important steps required to preserve these fragile records. This year they focused on the challenges of [removable storage media](#). In addition to educational resources, such as blog posts and programs, the staff created a fun video called "Phantom Media." A link to the video is embedded in the blog post linked above.

In collections news, two new organizational records were donated recently. Records of Wake County REACT Team 2451 (North Carolina) Inc. 1974-1989 (ORG 227) is a small but unique collection. It features records of the Wake County chapter of the Radio Emergency Associated Communications Teams, a nationwide organization made up of local chapters for the purpose of monitoring CB (Citizens Band) radio emergency channels and providing communications services during emergencies. CB radio was popular in the 1970's, and the chapter had over a hundred members by 1975. The Records of the Triangle Hunt, Inc. (ORG 226) consist of 8.8 cubic feet from the 1960s-2005. The club organized regular fox hunts and steeplechases and cared for many hunting dogs. The records include newsletters, meeting minutes, event records, and membership information. At the WRA staff are in negotiations with the Toe River Arts Council for a donation of their records. They also working on a donation from the first female architect in Asheville. Both would represent significant additions to the WRA collections. In the private collections area of Special Collections, the Miriam Dorsey Collection (PC.2228) is now fully processed. A Raleigh native, Ms. Dorsey was involved in social and political activities, particularly the Women's Movement of the 1970's/1980's, and this collection of her personal records includes materials from the Women's Political Caucus at local, state, and national levels, as well as records from groups working to get the Equal Rights Amendment passed. The oral history unit continues to collaborate with several groups on the collection of oral histories. Their work with the NC American Indian Cultural Heritage Commission was featured in the recent blog post "[Resource Spotlight: American Indian Oral Histories in the State Archives.](#)"

For Pearl Harbor Day our military archivist organized a virtual lunch & learn program, "[Remembering War in the Pacific: An Internment Camp Experience](#)." Focusing on the Pacific front in WWII from Pearl Harbor onward, the program includes Nash County resident, Chris Larsen. He will recount his experience of living in a Japanese internment camp in the Philippines during his childhood. Archivist Ashley Latta and curator Charlie Knight of the Museum of History will provide an overview of the war in the Pacific using documents, photographs, and artifact collections.

As we turn our attention to 2024, we will focus work on the development of exhibits for America 250 NC. These exhibits will include ones for special events, such as an April 27, 2024, program at Alamance Battleground which will feature some original materials related to the Regulators. We also hope to have some original materials on display at Tryon Palace at the end of August for the 250th anniversary of the First Provincial Congress. We also will continue work on our One Day Wonder exhibit about the constitutions of North Carolina and the exhibit about NC soldiers in the Revolutionary War.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah E. Koonts, State Archivist

Report of Division of Historical Resources To the North Carolina Historical Commission For its December 6, 2023 meeting

Ramona M. Bartos, Division Director and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
November 27, 2023

Division in general

Staff needs. In our August 2023 report, we gave the report below (*in italics*); the observations made then still hold, and need for additional staff resources to maintain our service levels to constituents remain. At the time our August report was prepared, we did not yet have a FY 2023-24 state budget and eagerly awaited it, especially word of whether our “ask” for 4 new full-time positions would be funded, including an Environmental Review Specialist for Section 106 cases, a National Register reviewer, a Cemetery Program assistant, and a full-time NAGPRA specialist.

To our disappointment, this sincere and needed ask was not included in the final state budget. At a time when around 1000 individuals move to North Carolina *daily*¹, we recognize the need to keep pace with constituent demand and the widespread development that our state is experiencing.

We look forward to working with our leadership to renew our request, especially given our heightened workloads, constituent demand for our services, and our contribution to economic development through historic preservation, fostering a holistic approach to public history, including an emphasis on recognizing and telling the stories of all North Carolinians, and practicing stewardship of the state’s irreplaceable historic places in collaboration with constituents. We believe that our contributions are both measurable – in terms of dollars invested in historic places and a greater knowledge of our history – and immeasurable – in terms of our commitment to protecting and preserving those places that define our continued identity and shared history as North Carolinians and Americans.

National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers. North Carolina hosted a very successful **fall board meeting** of our professional peer organization in the **Winston-Salem area** in late October, including our counterparts from 11 other states, ranging from Wisconsin, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Virginia, Delaware, Alabama, and Michigan. We met at the Cardinal Kimpton Hotel, transformed through the historic tax credit program from its origins as the former RJ Reynolds headquarters building. We then followed with a day of site visits in the Winston-Salem and Mount Airy areas, which included a variety of preservation projects, including Old Salem, the historic tax credit-fueled Innovation Quarter (former RJ Reynolds

¹ “Nearly 366,000 individuals moved to North Carolina in 2021, according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS).” Source: *Carolina Demography* (<https://carolinademography.cpc.unc.edu/2023/02/08/where-are-north-carolinas-newest-residents-moving-from-2/>)

Factory complex), old Union Station in Winston-Salem, the African American Odd Fellows Cemetery, the Moravian village of Bethania, and downtown Mount Airy (one of the largest per capita users of the historic tax credit). This is the first time in recent memory that North Carolina has hosted this meeting.

We are deeply appreciative of the warm in-person welcomes extended by NC Historical Commission member Noah Reynolds, Mayor Allen Joines of Winston-Salem, and local Winston-Salem / Forsyth County preservation planner Michelle McCullough to the individual state delegations as well as to representatives of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Ramona Bartos is the current board president of this professional peer organization with her second two-year term underway (through March 2025).

State Historic Preservation Office (HPO)

Statewide Historic Resilience Project. This fall, the North Carolina School of Government (SOG) together with North Carolina State University launched the well-anticipated Historic Resilience Project, a slate of four inter-related resources: the Historic Resilience Primer, a general introduction for North Carolina communities; the Community Planning Handbook, a guide for community conversations and prioritization; the Resilience Design Standards, model design standards for historic resilience; and Historic Resilience Modules, training for hazard mitigation and recovery in a historic setting.

To launch these resources and equip communities to use them, SOG is hosting low-cost, one-day workshops—Historic Resilience Workshops—in regions across the state (listed below) through mid-December. These regional workshops will introduce communities to the resources and spark conversations and collaboration among key stakeholders. We encourage communities to register a team of diverse stakeholders, including decision-makers, community members and property owners, preservation advocates and design professionals, hazard mitigation and emergency management officials, and planning and preservation officials.

--November 8 in Biltmore Village in Asheville

--November 14 at Revolution Mill in Greensboro

--November 30 at Rocky Mount Mills in Rocky Mount

--December 7 in Downtown New Bern

--December 14 Online

This project designed to foster better preparedness for historic places throughout North Carolina communities was funded by the State Historic Preservation Office through our special federal Congressional appropriation for hurricane recovery from Hurricanes Florence and Michael.

More information, including downloadable project deliverables and links to the online course registration for December 14, can be found here: <https://hrp.sog.unc.edu/>.

National Register Advisory Committee (NRAC) meeting. The NRAC met over 2 days in October – one for a full slate of National Register nominations (10) and 12 Study List presentations, and another for Study List (preliminary to determine National Register eligibility) properties from multiple county-wide surveys. These two robust agendas demonstrate the strong public interest in our programs. Nominated properties include among others the St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church in Oxford, a cotton gin in Princeton, Woodlawn Mill in Mount Holly, the early-to-desegregate Winston Lake Golf Course in Winston-Salem, and the African-American West Southern Pines Elementary School. Our thanks again to members who do double duty as NRAC members as well.

Statewide Preservation Plan. Together with Secretary Wilson and Dr. Waters, members of the State Historic Preservation Office and Office of State Archaeology attended the statewide Preservation Conference in Durham this past week. We gave our standard Year in Review of our division's activities in historic preservation, including National Register nominations, architectural survey projects, grant projects, and historic tax credit work. We also launched our statewide listening sessions for our next 10-year statewide preservation plan planning cycle, which was well attended with great feedback.

Novogradac National Historic Tax Credit Conference. DSHPO Ramona Bartos spoke as part of a four-party panel discussion at this national conference in October in Charlotte, providing the perspective of state historic preservation offices for facilitating and shepherding federal historic tax credit projects to success. She was joined by Brian Goeken, lead administrator of the National Park Service's Technical Preservation Services branch (final decisionmaker for federal historic tax credit projects) as well as Renee Kuhlman with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Philadelphia-based consultant Nick Kraus of Heritage Consulting Group.

Historical Research Office

100th Anniversary of the North Carolina Historical Review. We held a 100th Anniversary celebration of the North Carolina Historical Review at the Executive Mansion the afternoon of September 20th. We were pleased to have a wonderful turnout, including from former employees and colleagues, and a welcome from First Lady Kristin Cooper.

Children's Books / Update projects. We reported at your last meeting of several children's book projects currently underway: four titles for America 250, focusing on the **Edenton Tea Party**, **Harlow Patriots**, **Overmountain Men**, and the **red wolf** (and other extinct animals from the colonial period), as well as an illustrated biography geared towards Grades 3 to 5 about **environmental activist Carolista Baum**, recognized by many as the savior of Jockey's Ridge dune system in northeastern North Carolina (now a state park).

In collaboration with her family, we are now also working on an illustrated manuscript for a children's book about the life and contributions of **Civil Rights activist and Women's Army Corps PFC Sarah Keys Evans**, whose brave activism in 1952 for desegregation of public transportation (in this case, interstate buses) was a precursor to the more famed efforts of Rosa

Parks. The events surrounding Evans' culminated in a federal lawsuit, *Keys v. Carolina Coach Company*, which was an important legal precedent, and the subject of a North Carolina Highway Historical Marker in Halifax: <https://ncmarkers.com/Markers.aspx?MarkerId=E-127>. Sadly, Ms. Evans passed away recently on November 16, 2023, at the age of 94.

Highway Historical Marker news. We are back in the field with marker dedications:

- **Seaboard native Rev. Nicholas Franklin Roberts, president of Shaw University:** https://www.rrdailyherald.com/news/local/marker-dedicated-to-seaboard-native-nicholas-franklin-roberts/article_5ec56e5c-00c1-56b2-97d3-58c20c9b98c0.html
- **Human "Computers" to Honor the Pioneering African-American Female Mathematicians for the US Space Program:** <https://abc11.com/human-computers-nc-women-honored-hidden-figures-historical-marker/13815962/>. This marker was placed outside the NC Museum of Natural Science in Raleigh.
- **Lt. Gen. Robert Sink of Lexington**, a noted WWII paratrooper commander made famous once again by the *Band of Brothers* book and mini-series: <https://www.thesnaponline.com/2023/11/02/regional-lt-gen-robert-sink-to-be-featured-on-highway-historical-marker/>
- **Slain soldier PFC Booker Spicely**, whose 1944 killing after objecting to segregated seating on a Durham city bus, galvanized and strengthened the state NAACP, and whose protest against Jim Crow laws was part of a larger, national civil rights struggle: <https://www.dncr.nc.gov/news/press-releases/2023/11/21/slain-african-american-soldier-be-featured-highway-historical-marker>.

The next Highway Historical Marker advisory committee meeting will be on December 14 in Raleigh.

Office of State Archaeology (OSA)

Retirement of State Archaeologist John Mintz. With heavy hearts for our division's collegial loss of his unmarked contribution but deep appreciation for his exemplary leadership and expertise, we announce that John Mintz will retire as State Archaeologist as of November 30, 2023. Following time with the public archaeology service of Arkansas as well as time in the private sector, John joined state service in early 1994 with the NC DOT archaeology group, and then transitioned to assistant state archaeologist with OSA, earning progressive promotions into his current position.

Deputy State Archaeologist (Underwater) Chris Southerly will serve as Acting State Archaeologist until a permanent successor is hired.

Our deep thanks to the Commission for its support of and engagement with our Division.

North Carolina Historical Commission Report November 2023

North Carolina Museum of History

Visitation: In November we welcomed our 300,000th on site visitors to the museum in 2023!

Exhibits:

September OPENING of *Furniture: Crafting a North Carolina Legacy*. Come experience the story of a central part of North Carolina's legacy: the home furniture industry. For hundreds of years, North Carolinians have contributed to the NC economy through furniture production. Families, communities, and entire towns consider the furniture industry to be an integral part of who they are and where they come from. Crafting furniture in our state evolved from small backyard shops to modern mechanized furniture factories. This shift from "farm" to factory created a major economic impact on NC's economy and propelled our state to become an international leader in home furnishings. From filling our living rooms to earning a living, for North Carolinians furniture has always been a part of how we "make ourselves at home." Each of the pieces in this exhibit is the product of a unique history, a part of the story of furniture manufacturing in North Carolina. Look at the evolution of style from colonial to modern, see how furniture is made, try your own hand at "loading furniture," and discover a new part of North Carolina's identity.

Fall Public Programs Highlights:

In September: *Donna Washington*, master storyteller, shared an array of entertaining stories drawn from her repertoire of traditional African American folktales, classic fables, and humorous Jack tales. Washington is an internationally known, multi-award-winning storyteller, spoken-word recording artist, and author. A highly animated performer, she has been entertaining, educating, and inspiring audiences for over 30 years with her vocal pyrotechnics, elastic face, and deep characterizations that bring folklore, literary tales, and personal narratives to life. Following the storytelling session, Washington signed copies of her children's books, including her newest release *Prak Fills the House*, a retelling of the classic "Three Little Pigs" story. Complimentary copies of *Prak Fills the House* were given away to ten families in attendance at the program. This program was made possible with support from the Raleigh Fine Arts Society.

Artist at Work: Timothy Mills, a member of the Haliwa-Saponi tribe, as he sews and weaves beautiful, beaded patterns.

Tar Heel Troubadours concert series with Dawn Landes; the second concert of our newest music series, a celebration of Americana, roots, bluegrass, and traditional music performed by artists from or living and working in North Carolina.

History @ High Noon: Montford: Boom to Bust and Back. Speaker: Sharon Fahrer, historian, author, and cofounder of History@Hand "Montford: Boom to Bust and Back" examines the life cycle of a historic neighborhood. Montford, near downtown Asheville, was designed to be the premier subdivision; it later became a blighted area full of drugs, crime, and brave new pioneers.

North Carolina Military Hall of Firsts Induction Ceremony honored our state's rich military history and our brave veterans of the 2023 class of the North Carolina Military Hall of Firsts (NCMHOF). As part of

the event, one inductee also received the Congressional Medal of Honor, the US Armed Forces' highest military decoration. This special event was presented by the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs in partnership with the North Carolina Museum of History.

American Indian Heritage Celebration Virtual Education Day. Students and teachers in grades K–12 joined us for a virtual Education Day that celebrates the richness and diversity of North Carolina's American Indian community. Enjoy a variety of free presentations, including a LIVE! dancing and drumming demonstration. Students learned about North Carolina's eight state-recognized tribes and discover how the American Indian community has shaped and continues to shape the state's history and culture. The virtual Education Day had over 25,912 viewers from 71 counties here in North Carolina and we also had viewers from 20 other states across the country.

American Indian Heritage Celebration. The annual American Indian Heritage Celebration—with support from the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs and the North Carolina American Indian Heritage Commission has been the culminating event in honor of American Indian Heritage Month in North Carolina for more than 25 years. Demonstrations, presentations, and performances highlight the traditional and contemporary artistic, historic, and cultural contributions of American Indians in the state for more than 14,000 years. Our celebration on Saturday welcomed over 4,787 people through the museum doors and countless other on Bicentennial Plaza.

History + Highballs: Decorating the Executive Mansion (Virtual) First Lady Kristin Cooper and designer Christie Cook DeFrancesco will give us a behind-the-scenes tour of what it takes to decorate the governor's Executive Mansion for the holiday season. Learn the meaning behind some of the mansion's most recognizable decorations and get a sneak peek of what the Holiday Open House will look like! This year's open house hours at the Executive Mansion in Raleigh will be Thursday, December 7, from 6 to 9 p.m.; Friday, December 8, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Saturday, December 9, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Holiday hours for the governor's Western Residence in Asheville are forthcoming.

Publications:

The museum produced, edited, designed, and went to print on *Tar Heel Junior Historian* magazine themed *It's Revolutionary!* Prelude to War and covers Revolutionary history from the mid-1760s to 1776. These issues are fully grant funded and align with the forthcoming America250 commemoration.

North Carolina REGIONAL HISTORY MUSEUMS

North Carolina Maritime Museum, Southport

In September, *DEEP DIVE INTO HISTORY: World War 1 and the Hello Girls.* The telephone opened a new world of communication during the First World War. Attendees learned about the "Hello Girls," a unique group of women who played their part in the war effort by making sure the message got through.

In November, *DEEP DIVE INTO HISTORY: NC Naval Reserves in the Spanish American War.* Explored the role of North Carolina's Naval Reserves during the very short, but deadly, Spanish American War.

“America 250 NC: It’s Not 1976 Again!” From the burning of Fort Johnston in 1775 to the Sack of Beaufort in 1782 and beyond, North Carolina has been pivotal in United States’ history. Join LeRae Umfleet of the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources for a preview of what the state of North Carolina is planning for the upcoming semi quincentennial, along with an overview of the role of North Carolinians in creating “a more perfect Union.” The program was part of the museum’s Third Tuesday lecture series.

Museum of the Cape Fear Historical Complex

In October: *Halloween Revels: Moonlight Mischief* at the 1897 Poe House spotlighted live theater with a historical Halloween twist. Hosted in partnership with the Gilbert Theater. This is a unique opportunity to experience historical theater that was held in an actual historical home.

Trick or Treat at the 1897 Poe House. The event featured Halloween fun for kids twelve and under. Children attending the event explore Victorian Halloween in the Poe House, play vintage carnival games, enjoy a Halloween dance party with a local DJ and witness balloon twisting and magic tricks with Joy the clown. Hayrides in Arsenal Park rounded off the fun.

Maritime Museum at Beaufort

Officially debut of *NaviLens* within our gallery. The technology is designed to assist visitors with no and low vision in navigating the museum autonomously. We are especially excited to be the first museum in the United States to adapt this technology for use by its visitor. More than thirty members of the community were in attendance and had media coverage from TV station WITN and the local newspaper.

In October: *Maritime Heritage Series: ‘North Carolina’s Blue Crab Fishery.’* Maritime History Curator David Bennett traced the development of North Carolina’s crab fishery over the years. From being one of the state’s least profitable fisheries to one of its leading, blue crabs have played a big role in seafood harvests of North Carolina.

In November: *Whales off North Carolina.* North Carolina has many species of whales that travel near our shores and sometimes strand on our beaches. This makes it ideal for scientists like Keith Rittmaster and his colleagues to study and promote the conservation and understanding of these endangered marine mammals. Keith shared about the whales most spotted off the coast of North Carolina and to handle some of the related display items he will present.

Introduction to Wooden Boat Building. Participants explored the art of boat building from start to finish during a two-day, hands-on course at the North Carolina Maritime Museum’s Harvey W. Smith Watercraft Center. The course began with the design and lofting of boats and moved on to the setup, steam bending and different methods of creating the backbone of small boats. Additional topics included how to make planking systems, both carvel and lap strake, and all the appropriate fastening systems. By the end of the course, students gained the knowledge and skill to choose a design and style of boat to build on their own and the confidence to take on the job.

Maritime Matinee: Ribbon of Sand: Cape Lookout National Seashore, explored the wild seascape of Cape Lookout, one of the world’s last natural barrier islands and a little-known, remote section of the famed Outer Banks of North Carolina. Now a National Seashore, Cape Lookout, and neighboring islands North Core Banks and Shackleford Banks are home to sand dunes covered in sea oats, wild horses, historic life-saving stations and forgotten villages. The 27-minute film was screened in the museum auditorium.

Historic Sites Visitation for Fiscal Year 2024 and Calendar Year 2023, is respectively 625,765 and 1,416,931.

- On September 15th, Bentonville hosted - In conjunction with the Friends of the North Carolina Mountains-to-Sea Trail - a grand opening ceremony for the Bull Pen Trail, a 1.5-mile extension of the MST on Bentonville Battlefield property. The ceremony was attended by Secretary Wilson, Division Director Michelle Lanier, and Johnston County Senator Benton Sawrey. Additional representatives from DNCR included Sarah Koonts, Adrienne Nirdé, Kerry Bird, and Deans Eatman. The opening was well attended by representatives from the MST, Friends of Bentonville Battlefield, and the general public.
- The annual Day Out With Thomas™ event returned to NCTM Friday, September 22 through Sunday, September 24 and Friday, September 29 through Sunday, October 1. Visitation was well over 17,000 and was the best attendance for this event in several years.
- Crews are making significant progress on the Capitol roof project. To date, 50% of the old copper has been removed from the roof and dome. The re-coppering of the dome is 95% complete, with the final work taking place to replace the glass in the skylight above the rotunda. Later this month, the State Capitol Foundation will meet to begin making plans for how the old copper can be recycled into jewelry or other commemorative items that will be sold to support future restoration projects or programmatic needs at the Capitol.
- The State Fair Military Appreciation Day program was a success once again. We have done this program every year since 2014, except for 2020 and 2021. We had 50+ staff and volunteers participate this year and had perfect weather! Thanks to Jason Diem, Sonya Laney Davis, and Michaela Howell from the DNCR Education and Outreach Office

NC Historical Commission Meeting

for their support. The following sites were represented: Edenton, Bath, Somerset, Halifax, Aycock Birthplace, CSS Neuse, Fort Fisher, House in the Horseshoe, Duke Homestead, Alamance, Fort Dobbs, and Curatorial Services. Tryon Palace also sent several people and JR brought a WWII vehicle from NCTM. We also had one from NC Museum of History, two from NC Maritime Museum in Southport, and 6-8 volunteers.

- The life and times of Gov. Richard Caswell was celebrated Saturday, Nov. 18 at the Gov. Richard Caswell Memorial in Kinston, N.C. To highlight Caswell's long service as a political and military leader of both the British colony and the fledgling state of North Carolina, a living history event took place from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Members of the Dobbs County Militia and the 3rd North Carolina Continental Line reenactment groups portrayed camp life and presented musket and cannon firing demonstrations of the Revolutionary War period.
- Duke Homestead State Historic Site hosted "one last day of baseball" this past season at the Durham Athletic Park. Two vintage baseball games were played on Nov. 11. The iconic Durham Athletic Park has hosted baseball games since 1926 and was even featured in an iconic baseball film, but Durham's baseball roots are even deeper. The first century of baseball was marked by racial segregation and separate leagues for black and white athletes at the DAP until the 1950s; however, Duke Homestead welcomed all people to participate and honor the struggles and achievements of the many players over the past century who brought us the Durham baseball culture we know today. The Duke Homestead team played a vintage baseball team, the Wytheville Statesmen, from Virginia. Players wore historic 1860s uniforms, followed historic 1860s gameplay, and used historic equipment. Staff emphasized that retro, vintage, and historic attire were encouraged with "we believe in vintage style, not vintage values."
- Fort Dobbs State Historic Site honored North Carolina's military history with a "Military Timeline," on Saturday, Nov. 11. Visitors learned about the experiences of soldiers and

NC Historical Commission Meeting

support personnel from the past 450 years. Re-enactors dressed as soldiers and support personnel from the Civil War, World Wars, American Revolution, and many other time periods presented scheduled historic weapons firing demonstrations, along with ongoing displays of camp life, equipment, and cooking.

- The Governor Caswell Memorial is dedicated to North Carolina's first governor. The memorial includes Revolutionary War era artifacts, Caswell family heirlooms, and exhibits about Caswell's life. It is located on property once owned by the Caswell family.
- On November 29, Vance Birthplace State Historic Site in Weaverville officially opened the Reems Creek Cemetery Trail on the site. The trail was built in collaboration with the non-profit Mountain History & Culture Group, who provided service hours in the clearing of the trail. The Reems Creek Cemetery Trail weaves through a portion of the site to access the Vance family cemetery, and includes an interpretive wayside.
- The Passing of a Legend...

On Monday, October 9th renowned public historian, Dorothy 'Dot' Spruill Redford, was memorialized at Somerset Place, where she served as the first African American manager of this antebellum-era state historic site. Ms. Redford passed away on September 30th and her surviving family felt Somerset was the ideal backdrop for her celebration of life. Dot Redford is internationally recognized as being a pioneer in the sharing of inclusive history by leading the remarkable efforts of reuniting families across race, time, and distance to contend with the painful wounds of slavery, while amplifying the power and resilience of kinship and cultural knowledge. Her book, *Somerset Homecoming*, continues to inspire students of history, genealogy, and museum studies across the globe. Memorial attendees traveled from across the country to pay their respects.