

**Report of the Division of Historical Resources
To the North Carolina Historical Commission
For its June 2025 meeting**

**Ramona M. Bartos, Division Director and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
May 30, 2025**

Division in general

Promotions. Following the retirement of two long-tenured colleagues in our division retired effective February 1, 2025 – Western Office Supervisor Jeff Futch and Restoration Services Supervisor Mitch Wild – we happily announce the promotion of two DNCR veterans:

- **New Western Office supervisor.** Cynthia "Cindy" Bradley started as our new Western Office Supervisor on April 22. A native of western North Carolina, Cindy has worked for the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources for nearly a decade, serving in management positions in both the Division of State Archives and Records and Division of State History Museums, most recently at the newly added Tobacco Life Museum. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in history from UNC-Asheville and a Master of Historic Preservation from the University of Georgia.

Beyond her state public service, Cindy also worked for Biltmore as part of their museum services team and as Collections Manager and Exhibit Coordinator for the High Desert Museum in Bend, Oregon. Through her career, she has gained an extensive background in collections management, exhibit development and public outreach and has considerable experience working with communities and historical collections across the state of North Carolina.

As many of you may know, the Western Office supervisor not only manages and stewards the historic building in which the office is located but also provides consultative services in archives and museum management to organizations and individuals throughout western North Carolina.

- **New Restoration Services Supervisor.** Brett Sturm started his new job as supervisor of this branch on April 1. Brett joined the State Historic Preservation Office in 2017 as Restoration Specialist serving the central and southern Piedmont, including his hometown of Charlotte. He holds a Bachelor's degree in History from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a Master of Science in Historic Preservation from the University of Pennsylvania, where his primary focus was the conservation of brick and terra cotta. Prior to his tenure with the State, he worked for a general contracting company specializing in historic home renovation in center city Philadelphia. In 2024 he was a recipient of Preservation North Carolina's Gertrude S. Carraway Award of Merit for achievement in the field of historic preservation in North Carolina.

Summer interns. OSA is hosting two university level interns this summer, and likewise HPO has an intern in the Survey / National Register branch.

State Historic Preservation Office (HPO)

Historic Preservation Fund funding.

FY 2026 federal Historic Preservation Fund funding. The President's FY2026 “skinny” budget calls for **zeroing out all** federal appropriations for the Historic Preservation Fund, which supplies needed funding for both (1) competitive bricks and mortar and planning grants for the public and (2) the **vital annual operational funds shared by the State Historic Preservation Office and Office of State Archaeology**. Both types of grants (competitive and operational) totaled \$158M for the *entire country last year*, a little under half of which is for **ALL** 59 SHPOs nationwide; North Carolina's apportionment for operational funding is \$1.3M and funds 14 FTEs (wholly or partially) plus travel and support monies (**this is 1/3 of our staff in the Division of Historical Resources**), and the Certified Local Government subgrant program. HPF funding is derived from offshore oil and gas lease dollars.

SHPO annual operational funds not yet available for FY 2025 despite being Congressionally appropriated. Federal funds for SHPOs (and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices) for Fiscal Year 2025 have not yet been made available by the Trump Administration, despite the fact those funds were passed by the Congress and signed into law in March of this year. Many, including the National Trust for Historic Preservation, have been urging Administration officials and Members of Congress in both chambers to make these funds available as quickly as possible. We understand that the proposed grant notice of funding for SHPO operational monies is under review by the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) (and has been since March 2025).

DOI Secretary Burgum questioned about this matter. On May 20th, during a hearing of the House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, Ranking Member Chellie Pingree (D-ME), pressed Interior Secretary Doug Burgum about this very subject. **Ranking Member Pingree reminded Secretary Burgum Congress appropriated these funds and the law explicitly requires the Department of the Interior (DOI) to make those funds available within 60 days of enactment - and that those 60 days have passed.**

SHPO staff in the States of Ohio and Maine have already laid off staff because of the lateness of these federal funds. We understand anecdotally that other states, including Arizona and New Hampshire, are close to doing so. We are discussing with DNCR management and OSBM contingency plans for our federally funded staff in case these dollars do not arrive soon.

Support for SHPOs? Secretary Burgum assured Ranking Member Pingree and the Subcommittee he was pushing the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to release those funds as quickly as possible, and as a former Governor of North Dakota he stated that

recognized the importance of THPOs and SHPOs having the funds they needed to do their jobs. **Secretary Burgum's statement seems to bely the policy approach found in the President's "skinny" budget.**

More information available at the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers [here](#).

Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund dollars. We are also in the midst of applying for emergency supplemental Historic Preservation Fund funding appropriated by Congress in December 2024 for SHPO capacity (personnel, survey, office efficiency measures) for Helene recovery as the need for our services will outstrip / is outstripping our capacity. For example, our Section 106 reviews usually increase by 40% after a hurricane, especially when recovery is underway over many years. We also are experiencing upticks in constituent outreach and technical assistance, including for historic tax credit projects in the Helene zone.

We are proposing additional term-limited personnel to meet this need, records digitization, and architectural and archaeological surveys to create a new baseline **post-Helene**.

Deadline for these funds is June 12; we were given less than 30 days to apply for these funds although had been told 60 days. The Notice of Funding Opportunity was only released in mid-May despite the funding having been appropriated in December 2024. Rep. Chuck Edwards' office has inquired about these funds through Governor's DC liaison Jim McCleskey several times; we flagged these funds availability to Mr. McCleskey earlier this month. (Notably we understand that *this* grant was approved after OMB review.)

Also available as of last week from NPS is a **constituent-focused bricks and mortar grant fund for damaged properties that are listed on or eligible for the National Register that were damaged as a result of a FEMA-declared disaster in 2023 or 2024 (anywhere in the US), and we have sent word out through our channels for eligible constituents to apply directly.** They have until July 15th to do so. Again, these dollars were appropriated by Congress in December, but the Notice of Funding (NoFo) was not released until this past week of May. *We understand anecdotally that both of these NoFos were ready in March but not released until last week.*

HR 3418. As a reminder, the Historic Preservation Fund is derived from off-shore oil and gas lease monies to turn a non-renewable resource into a renewable one (historic places). The authorization for this Fund has expired, and needs to be reauthorized. [HR 3418](#) was introduced by bipartisan sponsors on 5/14 to do so, including setting a new annual minimum of \$225M; the prior minimum of \$150M was last set over 4 decades ago and has not at all kept up with inflation.

Of those dollars, North Carolina has received +/- \$1.3M for our state's funding for SHPO operations annually in the last few years. Those dollars pay for the salary of the aforementioned 14 FTEs, travel statewide, and \$130,000 of grants for local governments.

National Register Advisory Committee (NRAC) meeting. The first of our 3 NRAC meetings in 2025 will be held on Thursday, June 12. The National Register agenda will be quite full and varied with 13 National Register nominations, again demonstrating the strong public demand for this program, along with a similar number of proposed Study List properties. The final materials will be available online in coming days.

FEMA / NCORR Helene Recovery Planning Workshop for Land of Sky Regional Council and Southwestern Commission. Representing the Division of Historical Resources, the HPO's Western regional Restoration Specialist Jennifer Cathey and OSA's Deputy State Archaeologist (Terrestrial) Dylan Clark attended the FEMA/NCORR workshop on Friday, March 28, reporting that it went well and perhaps, even more informational than the previous one that they did for Buncombe County, in that the local government and non-profit staff present were able to ask more questions and engage more. In their breakout session, their discussion focused primarily on debris clearing, wildfire prevention, and economic diversification.

Local Government Preservation Commission training. Local Government Coordinator Kristi Brantley and HPO colleagues have been conducting local government historic preservation commission training this spring, including Kernersville (March 7), Statesville (April 11), New Bern (April 24), and Chapel Hill (May 28).

National Trust for Historic Preservation – 11 Most Endangered List. In early May 2025, the National Trust released its annual list, including the **French Broad and Swannanoa River Corridors in Western North Carolina** as [one of the 11 most endangered historic areas in the country](#).

Office of State Archaeology (OSA)

OSARC demolition. The state budget provides funding for demolition of buildings on Caswell Square in Raleigh, returning the block to a park. One of those buildings is our Office of State Archaeology Research Center (OSARC), and as requested by Dr. Waters, our division is working on a proposal as to the needs for a successor facility (which is not to our knowledge funded). OSARC is the permanent curation facility for over 1 million archaeological artifacts and ancestors' remain (both those subject to and not subject to NAGPRA).

State Archaeologist Chris Southerly and OSARC Supervisor Emily McDowell took the lead in offering details regarding the needs of a new facility for OSARC.

Funds for a replacement building has not yet been addressed by the General Assembly.

The demolition is slated for 2027-2028.

Lake Waccamaw Canoe recovery. Another American Indian canoe is scheduled for recovery from Lake Waccamaw in early June, with hopes for Secretary Cashwell to be present on site.

Tuscarora Nation (NY) visit. A delegation of members of the federally recognized Tuscarora Nation from New York visited with OSA and agency representatives at OSARC in late April.

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

North Carolina Historical Commission Report-June 10, 2025
Division of Archives and Records

On behalf of the Division of Archives and Records, I am pleased to provide updates on recent division activities and programming.

Division of Archives and Records American 250 Commemoration

- April 5: The *History of the State Constitution* “One Day Wonder” was on display at Revolutionary War Days (sponsored by the Hillsborough Alliance) in Hillsborough, NC with approximately 190 people visiting the exhibit.
- Early May, staff retrieves the documents on loan to the Fayetteville History Museum. The museum reported that attendance was great, and people were still visiting the exhibit the day the documents were removed.
- May 15: the Archives displayed original Revolutionary War documents during the Ken Burns event sponsored by DNCR and PBS NC.
- To commemorate the 250th founding of the armed forces staff contributed three blog posts to “History for All the People.” Two blog posts discussed the life and adventures of Rose O’Neal Greenhow, and one provided a pictorial history of North Carolinians in the Spanish-American War.
- Cherie Miller, Western Regional Archives, contributed a blog post on the “Wilmington Tea Protest” which occurred in the spring of 1775.

Tours:

- During this quarter, Archives and Records staff provided 24 tours with 210 participants.
- The Head of Government Records, Rebecca McGee-Lankford provided a tour for the attendees of the Annual Chief Records Officer meeting on April 30 with 20 participants.
- The Acting State Archivist, Rebecca McGee-Lankford provided a tour to the members of the Executive Board for Community Colleges on May 15 with 15 participants.

Outreach and Presentations

- On March 15: Alison Thurman, chief correspondence archivist, moderated a lunch and learn on the Coal Glen mining disaster.
- On March 25: Katie Crickmore, public services archivist, gave a presentation to a class visiting NC Wesleyan University, there were 6 attendees.
- The **Traveling Archivist Program** will serve 10 organizations in 2025. Archives staff will offer consultations to 7 organizations: Granville County Public Library & Museum, Harnett County Public Library, Moore County Historical Association, Beaufort County Historical Association, Springfield Memorial Association, Spring Hope Museum, and the Weymouth Center. The TAP summer intern is a graduate of

a master's program in library science. He will focus on arrangement and description at the Granville County Public Library, Pine Knoll Shores town history committee, the Museum & Archives of Rockingham County, and Southwestern Community College.

- The Outreach Unit attended the **NC Council of the Social Studies** conference in April. In addition to hosting an information table to promote the DocsBox program, staff presented a session on America 250 NC classroom resources.
- Progress continues on the DocsBox program. A draft of the State Constitution is complete, and staff are now working with a graphic designer. We expect 8 Revolutionary NC lessons and activity drafts to be completed by mid-June and with production in time for August distribution to teachers.
- Staff hosted or presented **two preservation webinars** in late April: "Preserving At-Risk Media," with State Archives' photographer and digital archivist as instructors; and "Disaster Recovery Triage," hosted by Texas Collections Emergency Resource Alliance, with NC's CREST coordinator, Adrienne Berney, as instructor.
- **Collaboration with DNCR museums** included Danielle Shirilla's article on research at the State Archives for *Tar Heel Junior Historian* and coordination of an intern-staff tour of the Museum of Natural Sciences' collection storage.

Blog Posts

In addition to the 4 blog posts commemorating the America 250th, staff also contributed nine posts focusing on collections and activities of the State Archives. Here are the highlights:

- In April and May, Lucy Dunphy Barsness and Boyana Babonski wrote five Facebook posts and a blog post for their 2025 Preservation Week contributions, brainstorming and selecting the theme: conservation tools of the trade.
- In April, Tammy Woodward, the Director of the Outerbanks History Center, wrote and post entitled "The Elizabeth City Cotton Mill Records, A Century of Mill Wokers."

Government Records Section (GRS)

- The Annual Chief Records Officer meeting was held on April 30, 2025.
- The records analysis unit provided 5 records management workshops with 459 attendees to state and local officials during this quarter.
- In March, staff from the GRS visited the Hyde County Historic Courthouse to assist the local a nonprofit historical organization to assess the county court records still stored in the historical courthouse attic. A plan was developed to continue to work with the organization and county government officials to transfer records of archival value to State Archives. This will be an ongoing project until completed.

- In April, the records description unit visited Cleveland County to conduct a large-scale court records pickup. In total, staff transferred 126 cubic feet of records. Staff will return in June to transfer additional court records. Quantity to be determined.

Special Collections Section (SCS)

Below is a summary of the key activities of the SCS this quarter.

- Ian Dunn, AV assistant archivist, assisted the City of Raleigh mayor's office by compiling over 100 historic photographs for Mayor's State of the City presentation. He also assisted City of Raleigh staff in compiling a large amount of research and photographs for its LGBTQIA+ Historic Context Report.
- Ashley Latta Post, the military archivist, was featured in a Spectrum News report where she discussed the youngest Vietnam War casualty (Dan Bullock), and the impact of the conflict 50 years later.
- In partnership with the American Indian Heritage Commission, oral historian and assistant oral historian, John Horan and Annabeth Poe, presented at the American Indian Unity Conference and the Spring Equinox Ceremony.
- The Outer Banks History Center received a donation from the United States Lifesaving Service on Ocracoke Island (aka Hatteras Inlet Station or Cedar Hammocks Station). The donation included one bound ledger of original shipwreck reports and correspondence, compiled by Keeper James W. Howard. 1883-1903.
- Elizabeth Bates, the organizations records archivist, consulted with staff at St. Andrews University, which closed permanently in May, regarding the transfer of student transcripts, as well as student financial aid and veterans affairs student records to the State Archives. She is also working to secure the transfer of University Archives materials to the State Archives. In June, staff will pick up both the student records and the University Archives records.
- Private Collections received the diaries of Dr. Frank Livingston Whelpley (1871-1947), who was superintendent of the State Hospital at Goldsboro, renamed in 1959 to Cherry Hospital, and still operating today. Opened in 1880, this institution served as the dedicated mental hospital for African American's in North Carolina until desegregation in 1965.
- The Western Regional Archives accepted a donation from the son of Hyalie Yamins (Greene). She graduated from Black Mountain College in 1941 and wrote weekly letters home the entire four years she attended. It's another glimpse into the daily life of a BMC student.

Staff Development

- Lucy Dunphy Barsness and Boyana Babonski attended the 2025 SERCA (Southeast Regional Conservation Association) Annual Meeting: “Bridging the Gaps,” hosted at Spelman College, participating in multiple workshops and lectures and liaising with Southeastern Conservation professionals. Lucy was nominated and accepted the position of Secretary on SERCA’s Board.
- The Community Building Committee newsletter was distributed to staff.
- Staff attended and presented at the Annual meeting of the Society of North Carolina Archivists.

Staffing Updates

March

- Anna Peizman started as the new Digital Access Manager (Digital Services Section)
- Nathanael “Lev” Rosenberger started as the new Digitization Archivist (Digital Services Section)

April

- Jillian MacKinnon began as the Digitization and Description Archivist (Digital Services Section)
- Alexandra Dowry resigned as the State Agency Archivist with the Records Description Unit (Government Records Section)
- Sarah Koonts retired as State Archivist.

May

- Jocelyn Wright started as the Administrative Specialist II/ Budget Officer (Government Records Section)
- Isabelle Banner started as an Archivist in the Imaging Unit (Collections Management Branch)

June

- Camille Hunt will be starting as the Collection Management Branch Head/Preservation Office.

News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: June 2025

Michelle Lanier, Director

Overview

- North Carolina Historic Sites reported total onsite visitation of 1,327,670 for FY 2024-2025 to date (July 2024 through April 2025).
- During FY2024-2025 506,090 school aged children (a 21 percent increase from the same period in FY23-24) participated in tours, events, and programs at our Historic Sites.
- Historic Sites had 421,672 website visitors in FY 2024-25 to date and has a total of 431,267 followers on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Personnel

Bonnie Showfety has joined the staff of the **Thomas Wolfe Memorial** as the Historic Interpreter II.

Shaun Veltri has joined the **Craft Services** team as a Carpenter II.

Jay Mahala has joined the staff of the **NC Transportation Museum** as Maintenance Tech II.

Gail Bruce has joined the staff of the **NC Transportation Museum** as Maintenance Tech I.

Madison Gibbs joined the staff of the **Thomas Day State Historic Site** as Interpreter I.

Anna Freeman joined the staff of the **NC State Capitol** as Museum Curator.

Lucy Dahlstrom joined the staff of **Historic Edenton** as Interpreter I.

Madeline Flagler joined the staff of **Historic Bath** as Historic Site Manager II.

America 250 NC

As the America 250 commemoration gathers momentum, many historic sites held programs to celebrate the event. Historic Halifax, Bennett Place, the NC Transportation Museum, Roanoke Island Festival Park, House in the Horseshoe, and the NC State Capitol, participated in **Two Lights for Tomorrow**. This nationwide initiative honors the legendary moment when Paul Revere signaled the approach of British troops with lanterns in Boston's Old North Church.

Staff from House in the Horseshoe, Fort Dobbs, Alamance Battlefield, and Historic Halifax joined over 130 students for an event with **Ken Burns and co-**



News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: June 2025

Michelle Lanier, Director

director David Schmidt. Our interpreters educated the students about daily life, clothing, and culture in the 1700s.

Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson – held a special event “America 250th: Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Sailors and Tar Workers in the 18th Century.” Staff from Historic Halifax and Tryon Palace were on hand to share their knowledge.

Historic Halifax – On April 12, Halifax celebrated the 249th anniversary of the signing of the Halifax Resolves. The day featured a ceremony by the Haliwa-Saponi Indian tribe, lectures by scholars, tours of the historic buildings, and demonstrations by interpreters.

Historic Bath – installed a wayside featuring William Palmer namesake of the Palmer-Marsh House.

Fort Fisher - Education and Outreach Coordinator Cameron Kinard promoted Fort Fisher at the America 250 Fair held by the Burgwin Wright House and Museum in Wilmington on March 22nd.



Division Director Michelle Lanier reads her book *My N.C. from A-Z* to Weldon Elementary Global Academy students as part of the commemoration activities for the 249th anniversary of the signing of the Halifax Resolves.

Curatorial Services

This spring the Curatorial Services staff devoted a large amount of time to new visitor center and permanent exhibit projects involving **Historic Stagville, Historic Halifax, House in the Horseshoe, Town Creek Indian Mound, Thomas Day, and Fort Dobbs.**

Colby Lipscomb started as Registrar.

The Education Branch was active supporting several sites with events and programming. Most notably was their involvement at **Bentonville Battlefield's** 160th battle commemoration. Andrew and his team of Certified Safety Officers inspected reenactor weapons. Meanwhile, Robert Bemis coordinated the trades program. Rather than present civilian trades, Robert gathered a group of veteran interpreters from various sites to portray Federal Pioneers as they would have appeared at the battle.

The Design Branch completed the installation of a new temporary exhibit at **Fort Fisher** highlighting 100 years of bathing suits in Carolina Beach.

News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: June 2025

Michelle Lanier, Director

PUSH Projects

Work continues on Priority Updates to State History (PUSH) initiatives. The Division's audiovisual partner, Horizon Productions, continued to film interviews with a broad array of historians at locations around North Carolina.

Additionally, the Horizon team produced speculative visuals and production teasers for new orientation videos and "Historian on Demand" vignettes, with the goal of adding depth and variety to sites' digital offerings. Sound installations and "magic windows" will provide additional dimension to interpretation at sites including the **Aycock Birthplace**, **Bennett Place**, and **Bentonville Battlefield**. Completion of Phase 1 video and other multimedia content for sites is slated for 2025.



Phase II of the project started for **Town Creek Indian Mound** and **Historic Edenton** this spring. Both sites will receive new orientation videos as well as other digital offerings to facilitate telling new stories.

West Region

Fort Dobbs

On May 2nd The Friends of Fort Dobbs hosted a ceremony celebrating the start of visitor center construction.

Dignitaries, including State Senator Vickie Sawyer, State Representative Jeff McNeely, Deputy Secretary for DNCR Dr. Darin Waters, Historic Sites Director Michelle Lanier, and Iredell County Commission Chairman Bert Connolly, gave remarks.



Also speaking were Site Manager Scott Douglas, Friends President Ken Robertson, and GL Wilson Building Company representatives Robert Palmes and Trey Pages. Years of hard work have brought the project to this moment and we are thrilled to have the historic site

News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: June 2025

Michelle Lanier, Director

take another step forward. The new visitor center will be about five times larger than our 1941 log cabin, allowing for expanded exhibits, a spacious gift shop, and offices for staff.

Thomas Wolfe Memorial

Unveiled a new mural on the exterior of the Visitor Center. The mural is a reminder to all those who visit of Thomas Wolfe's words and the indelible mark he left on American literature. The mural was created by Katie Kasben.



Piedmont Region

Bennett Place

Bennett Place held an event to commemorate the 160th anniversary of the surrender of Joseph E. Johnston to William T. Sherman. The event featured a reenactment of the surrender in the Bennett's House as well as lectures and living history demonstrations.



Historic Stagville

Together with the Collections Branch, Historic Stagville invited the descendant community to touch, hold, and explore artifacts recovered from Stagville. Their powerful insights will shape future exhibits at the site.

Thomas Day Historic Site

May saw a huge milestone for the Thomas Day site as they are now open to the public for walk-in tours! Staff is leading guided tours of the Tavern at 10am, 11am, 12pm, 2pm, and 3pm.



Michael and Stagville descendant Zenzele Barnes examine an artifact at Historic Stagville.

News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: June 2025

Michelle Lanier, Director

North Carolina State Capitol

On May 19, conservation work began on the 1857 statue of George Washington on the grounds of the State Capitol. Last conserved in the early 1980s, the bronze statue will get a full restoration and a coating of new lacquer to help protect it from the elements. The figure of the first president is the earliest monument on Union Square and will be an important ceremonial touchpoint as the state commemorates the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding.



East Region

Bentonville Battlefield

On March 15th, Bentonville hosted the 160th anniversary reenactment "A Terrible Storm". The program was supported by 100 DNCR staff members and 170 volunteers. Approximately 28,000 people attended on March 15th and the event hosted just over 1,400 reenactors. March 16th, the second day of the event, was canceled due to severe weather.



Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson

The site hosted the 2025 NC Rice Festival on March 8th. The program had a record attendance of 5064 visitors. This event was sponsored by NCDNCR, Gullah-Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, The Town of Leland, and Brunswick County and NC Arts Councils.

CSS Neuse/Richard Caswell Memorial

The site hosted its ten-year anniversary event "Cheers to Ten Years: Anniversary and Living History" on March 8th. This event celebrated 10 years since the opening of the museum and was held in conjunction with the Wyse Fort Battlefield and the Lenoir County TDA. Activities included battlefield tours, living history demonstrations at the museum, and talks and presentations.

News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: June 2025

Michelle Lanier, Director

Fort Fisher

Opened their first temp exhibit “100 Summers of Style: A Century of Swimwear at Carolina Beach” and welcomed the Blakley cannon on loan from Naval History & Heritage Command. The Blakley and the Whitworth cannons are exhibited side-by-side in the lobby.

The site also received the Historic Wilmington Foundation’s 2025 Preservation Award for outstanding achievement in historic preservation through the construction of the new visitor center.



NC Historical Commission Report: March 18-June 3, 2025
Division of History Museums
3 June 2025

NC Museum of History: On the Move!

The NC Museum of History has been busy at work clearing out the museum in preparation for our exciting renovation and exhibit redesign. Staff from our Collections and Design departments have worked diligently and with great effort to safely move all our historical treasures to the two off-site storage areas during the museum renovation. We are projected to finish moving the artifacts from the museum by mid-summer 2025. During this busy time, we managed to loan one of the Thomas Day pieces to the Metropolitan Museum of Art for their exhibit, *Superfine: Tailoring Black Style* in May.

Likewise, we have also been moving the office furniture and our operation to our new Smoketree offices. Most of our team plan to work there, which includes Curatorial, Education, Communications & Marketing, and Administration.



Due to this busy time in our organization, our programming and exhibits have slowed down. But we look forward to ramping up as soon as we are settled, so we can connect with and serve our valuable audience: the people of North Carolina.

Personnel:

Hiring and Promotions:

CJ Roberts joined the NC Museum of North Carolina as Director on April 26. A museum professional for more than 30 years, Roberts previously directed four history museums. He led two of those museums through their planning, construction, and grand openings, including the Tampa Bay History Center, where he served as president and CEO for 20 years. In the three

years leading up to the history center's opening, Roberts worked closely with various community groups to ensure their voices and stories were accurately represented in the new museum.

Roberts serves on several boards and committees. In 2018, he was appointed to a six-year term on the American Alliance of Museums Accreditation Commission, which oversees the accreditation process.

He earned both an undergraduate degree in history and folklore and a master's degree in library and information science from Indiana University. Roberts also earned the Certified Fund Raising Executive designation from CFRE International and graduated from the Seminar for Historical Administration and the Getty Museum Management Institute.

Maria Vann was promoted to the Director of Regional Museums, which includes Museum of the Albemarle, Maritime Museum at Beaufort, Museum of the Cape Fear, Graveyard of the Atlantic, Mountain Gateway Museum, Maritime Museum at Southport, and Tobacco Farm Life Museum. Maria was previously working as the Deputy Director of NCMOH.

Erin Duprey has joined the MOH staff as our Administrative Specialist. We are super happy to have her on board and look forward to her contributions to the MOH. She comes to us from NC Division of Parks and Recreation where she was an Accounting Technician for the division and an Administrative Specialist at Falls Lake State Recreation

Isabelle Merrifield has been hired to fill the vacant Artifact Preparator position in the Collections Management Section. Isabelle has been a temporary Conservation Assistant with the museum for the past year and an intern with us the year before that. She has a lot of experience packing and assessing artifacts, which will come in quite handy during the move. Isabelle is a graduate of Wake Forest University with a major in Anthropology and minors in Psychology, Art History and Culture Heritage & Preservation Studies.

Retirements and Resignations:

Brad Wilson served as the interim director from early 2024 to April 2025. He provided the museum invaluable by organizing the move and making sure that we would be on track to reach our deadlines. He also helped reorganize the regional museums to better be incorporated into the division.

Camille Hunt left the Museum after 22 years and has accepted a position with the State Archives of NC as their new Collections Management Branch Head. She has been a fierce voice for Collections, an enthusiastic exhibit team member/project manager, and a defender of sound artifact management principles.

Nancy Pennington has been the creative mind behind more than 20 years of hands-on activities and phenomenal programming, it's hard for us to imagine our upcoming festivals, events, and exhibits without her!

John Cope's retirement from the North Carolina Museum of History is well deserved after a total of 27.5 years of service at DNCR. John was involved in dozens of exhibition projects. John also made important contributions in the curation of the Carbine Williams collection, an area where his special knowledge and expertise was invaluable. Thank him personally for his wisdom, candor, hard work, and deep institutional knowledge.

Public Programming:

Preparations for *It's Revolutionary!* filming are moving forward, including completion of budget documentation and placement of costume orders. The museum worked closely with contractors and landlords at the Smoketree office to ensure the studio space is ready for upfitting, with filming beginning May 5 and scheduled to be finished in June.

The North Carolina Museum of History will participate in the nationwide “Two Lights for Tomorrow” initiative, recognizing the 250th anniversary of Paul Revere’s famous ride. Two lights will shine in the museum’s shop window throughout the night of April 18.



Hands-on History: Propagate a Fig Tree (April 26).

Join us for a special drop-in event where you can take home a fig tree cutting from the museum’s landscape. Learn about plant propagation, get expert care tips, and decorate your pot to make it uniquely yours.

This family-friendly activity is perfect for gardeners, history lovers, and anyone looking to celebrate Earth Day and Arbor Day meaningfully. Each participant will receive a fig cutting from the North Carolina Museum of History’s garden—a lasting memory to grow at home!

History at High Noon: Farming While Black Farming

While Black (April 30) examines the historical plight of

Black farmers in the United States. It looks at the current generation reclaiming its land and reconnecting with its ancestral roots. Director Mark Decena will discuss the film’s impact goals. Those include bringing the movie to Black farmers, community gardeners, land stewards, and allies. Decena hopes they will reconnect to their Afro-Indigenous roots related to sustainable farming to heal and find strength and inspiration in the land. The goal is to change the food system to be more just, healthy, and climate resilient.

History at High Noon: Learning about History from Our Historic Places (May 14). All too often, when a historical building is torn down, its history goes away with the demolition. The tangible connection is broken. Historical buildings convey the history that we already know (or think we know!) and invite us to learn more. Myrick Howard will talk about some of the history that’s

been uncovered about the buildings that Preservation NC was instrumental in preserving during his 45-year career there.

Regional History Museums

Museum of the Albemarle

North Carolina Council of the Holocaust Teacher Workshop (March 18). All English and social studies teachers in middle and high schools in NC are eligible to attend the Gizella Abramson Teaching the Holocaust Spring Conference. Space is limited, so signing up early is important. Substitutes will be paid for all NC public school teachers. Participants will hear from experts in the field of Holocaust education; walk away with hands-on, ready-to-go lessons for their classrooms; explore resources for teaching the Holocaust and implementing the Gizella Abramson Holocaust Education Act; and hear from a Holocaust survivor or a second-generation survivor.

History for Lunch: Harriet Jacobs: A Woman of Conscience (March 19). Amanda Irvin, program coordinator at Historic Edenton State Historic Site, will tell the tragic and inspiring tale of Harriet Jacobs, a woman forced to work in the household of an abusive enslaver. After years of threats to herself and her children, Jacobs self-emancipated and hid in the roof space of her grandmother's house for nearly seven years before her chance to escape via the Maritime Underground Railroad. Discover the story of a woman determined to fight for herself, her children, and later, for others.

History for Lunch: Bringing a Plank House Back to Life! (April 16). Sandy Stevenson, president of the Perquimans County Restoration Association (PCRA), will discuss the rebuilding of an early 1700s plank house on the campus of the Newbold-White House. The plank house started life in Elizabeth City, moved several times, and ended up in a barn in Bethania. PCRA bought the house and organized a crew of volunteers to move it to Hertford and restore it. The completed plank house will provide an opportunity to showcase colonial cooking and crafts.

Celebrate National Kite Month through Flight (April 17). Discover how kites and flight have shaped the history of the Albemarle region and continue to have a major impact on the area. Students will discover how the Wright Brothers made history in Dare County, interact with representatives of the aviation field, and participate in hands-on activities.

History in Your Pocket (April 26). Celebrate National Coin Week as we explore the world of coins and their history. Learn about the change in your pocket, discover coins from around the globe, and uncover the wonders of coin collecting with this free hands-on workshop for families. The workshop includes coins and collecting resources for children to take with them.

North Carolina Maritime Museum, Southport

Skipper's Crew: Here Comes the Sun (March 1). Designed for all ages, but specifically geared toward younger patrons, Skipper's Crew features hands-on activities and take-home crafts

focusing on combining arts and history. Lights will be dimmed and interactives muted during the first two hours to provide a calmer environment for those with sensory sensitivities.

Deep Dive into History: *Revolutionary Everyman* (April 19). Join us as we delve into the life of an 18th century North Carolina militiaman and learn how they played a key role in the events that would occur in July of 1775 on Cape Fear. The drop-in program is designed to give visitors a deeper understanding of our shared past through costumed interpretation.

Skipper's Crew: Remembering Our Heroes (April 25). Designed for all ages, but specifically geared toward younger patrons, Skipper's Crew is a free program that features hands-on activities and take-home crafts focusing on combining arts and history. Join us to make poppies, the recognized symbol of remembrance of service members, during the May program. Lights will be dimmed and interactives muted during the first two hours to provide a calmer environment for those with sensory sensitivities.

Maritime Museum at Beaufort

Construction closure. The museum remains closed to the public for planned HVAC construction. A re-opening date has not yet been set.

Whales off North Carolina (March 6). North Carolina has many species of whales that travel near our shores and sometimes strand on our beaches. This makes it ideal for scientists to study and promote the conservation and understanding of these endangered marine mammals. Join Natural Science Curator Keith Rittmaster to learn about the whales most commonly spotted off the coast of North Carolina and to handle some related items.

Whales and Whaling Symposium (March 21). The annual symposium focuses on the history, biology, conservation, and pedagogy of whales and whaling. The free symposium provides an opportunity to learn which species of whales can be found in the state's coastal waters and further offshore, how and where some of these species were/are hunted regionally, and the contributions aerial surveys, stranding response, and prepared skeletal specimens make to research, conservation and education.

A General History of Mermaids (April 10). The oceans truly connect us all, from pole to pole and around the equator. The legend of the mermaid is a great representation of that connection, one that binds seafarers the world over. A half-human, half-fish creature has appeared in many cultures throughout time and geography. Associate Education Curator Christine Brin will share some of the iconic tales of mermaids, how they have appeared in other regions of our planet, and the evolution the mysterious creature has undergone through the years.

Kayak the Salt Marsh (April 16). Learn about salt marshes and wildlife while on the water during this educator-led tour. Basic kayak instruction and safety lessons on shore are followed by a 1.5-mile paddle through the salt marsh in our sit-in cockpit touring kayaks.

The Stamp Act Crisis in North Carolina (April 24). Join David Bennett, curator of maritime history, to learn about the protests of North Carolinians in 1765 and 1766 against a tax levied by Parliament on public papers (legal and commercial documents, newspapers, licenses, etc.). The political crisis resulted in the temporary closure of North Carolina's ports, which crippled shipping in the colony.

49th Annual Wooden Boat Show (May 3). Enjoy a variety of small wooden boats, historic vessels, nautical crafts, educational activities, boat models, traditional skills demonstrations and displays at the longest-running wooden boat show in the Southeast.

A Curiosity Grows in Carolina (May 29). On April 2, 1759, a letter was penned that would rock the botanical world: the first documented description of the Venus flytrap. Tales of this tiny green predator from the pine savannahs of Southeastern North Carolina would sweep throughout Europe, and this little plant sparked a craze that would involve a royal governor, the who's who of 18th century scientists, and a high seas adventure. Join Shannon Walker, education curator at the North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport, to learn the history of the Venus flytrap.

Mountain Gateway Museum

The Mountain Gateway team is working to document firsthand accounts of Hurricane Helene. Through recorded interviews, the team is capturing personal narratives from community members who experienced the storm

Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum

Kids Crafts (June 2) Join staff and volunteers for free crafts on Mondays through Aug. 25. The crafts will be offered in the museum library/education space located off the lobby. The program is free and open to the public. Advance registration is not required.

Museum of the Cape Fear

The Museum of the Cape Fear Historical Complex is preparing for the return of **Sweet Tea Shakespeare**. They will be performing "Pan" in the backyard of the 1897 Poe House April 10–13.

The Department of Defense will conduct a VIP training session for their officers at the museum complex April 10, 2025.

The Museum of the Cape Fear will participate in the "Two Lights" Paul Revere commemoration as part of America 250. From April 17- 20, 2025 the 1897 E.A. Poe House will have two candles in the parlor and the exterior of the house will be bathed in red and blue lights.

