

NCHC Report-March 23, 2022
Division of Archives and Records

On behalf of the Division of Archives and Records, I am pleased to submit some highlights of recent programming and activities from the last three months. I recognize and appreciate all the accomplishments of the staff in the face of staff shortages, facility challenges, and the evolving world of providing public services during a pandemic. They are to be commended for the work summarized in this report.

In the report for the December 2021 meeting, I noted that we had returned to full-time reference hours for our three search rooms. With the surge of COVID-19 infections in the new year, in-person public reference was suspended for the first two weeks of the year. We have returned to our normal search room schedule again, but still provide most of our reference services via email. Visitation is slowly increasing, and we are just starting to see some small tours scheduled. Prior to the pandemic tours of all three public facilities occurred regularly. We created virtual tour videos for our YouTube channel during the spring of 2020 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RlSaRI9Bbvg> , but in-person tours provide a way to customize outreach for groups interested in learning more about the Archives and our collections.

We continue to be challenged with a higher-than-normal vacancy rate. This is a particular challenge for our special collections group. The Organization Records Archivist retired at the end of December after over 25 years of service. The Private Collections Archivist will retire effective April 1 with over 30 years at the Archives. The Military Collection Archivist departed the state for a position in Texas in mid-February. With all these positions vacant at the same time, archivists in the Government Records Section will assist in covering donor relations and collection acquisition questions until we can fill these vacancies. In January we welcomed a new head of Collections Services, Mitzi Townes. She filled the position vacated when Debbi Blake retired in the fall of 2021. Mitzi has experience working for the State Library and Alabama State University. Her most recent position was with the Law Library at the NC Central School of Law.

The division continues to host regular outreach programs, and staff collaborate with a wide variety of partners on the production of additional workshops, programs, and digital resources. We host at least one virtual program monthly, often in conjunction with the State Library. December's program featured a discussion of historic recipes, food traditions, and cooking techniques. In January we hosted another NC Trivia night. February's program featured Dr. Waters in "Telling Lost and Unknown Stories." This was a popular event that maxed out our Zoom webinar license capacity. Staff have provided programs for the Museum of History's Lunch-and-Learn series (Pearl Harbor Day), family history workshops, and a statewide gathering of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The Outer Banks History Center provides a monthly program and lesson for the local PATH homeschool organization. Special Collections Chief Judy Allen Dodson was on the program for the annual African American Cultural Celebration at the Museum of History. Judy and her section are collaborating with the NC African American Heritage Commission on the [Black Carolinians Speak](#) initiative. The initiative seeks to gather first person testimonies, letters, music, images, art, and other documents that capture the experiences of African American in North Carolina during the global pandemic. Our division is also collaborating with some sites, including the State Capitol and the Charlotte

Hawkins Brown Museum and State Historic Site, to support digitization projects for each location.

For Women's History Month we are hosting "**Women's History Research Showcase**" Tuesday, March 22, 7-8 p.m. Curious about what other researchers are discovering in the search room? Learn about two current projects using State Archives' collections. Ph.D. candidates Madison Helman and Jewel Parker will share highlights of their research on murder ballad subjects and women healers. The panel will also point out digitized collections to explore for additional women's history topics. Registration:

https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_NxALcRHqT6KIvqg16Hz2JQ To celebrate National Poetry Month, we will host **History in Verse**, a virtual program on documentary poetry featuring N.C. Poet Laureate Jaki Shelton Green Thursday, April 7, at 7 p.m.

This online event will explore Green's work in documentary poetry—poetry that captures a historical moment by combining primary source materials with verse. Green will discuss the relationship between the art form and historical events and read some of her own works. In addition, this program will highlight poems hidden in the archive, written by ordinary and extraordinary North Carolinians across centuries. Archivists will provide further insight by sharing historical context and information on how these poems found their way to the State Archives of North Carolina

Registration: https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_F4dDOb9cRnaZeU_9eMQDeQ.

The Records Analysis Unit continues to reach state and local public records custodians with their online workshops. In the last three months they held sixteen workshops for 674 participants. Audiences reached included library employees, school board clerks, registers of deeds' offices, UNC School of Government, and members of a permitting association. They also assisted in providing training or programs in collaboration with the Society of American Archivists, National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators.

The second season of our podcast *Connecting the Docs* wrapped up at the end of January. Focusing on little-known stories from the Archives, the last four episodes featured content on highways and urban renewal, history of dams and the lakes created by them, the foreign records collection, the Barden photography collection, and a look at the America250 planning in the Archives along with some collections that fit the A250 themes. This season included the voices and research of several staff members, as well as some of our interns who worked with our oral historian in 2021. Link to the podcast episodes [here](#).

In 2021 we added 20,980 new pages of content to our digital collections. Recent additions include the completion of all dockets from the colonial District Superior Courts (176 volumes). The Aycock Brown collection from the Outer Banks History Center features the photographs of Aycock Brown. He spent most of his 79 years promoting the Outer Banks through his images. We continue to digitize this collection, and the Outer Banks History Center is using the images for #YearOfAycockBrown on their Facebook page. Digitization for the Revolutionary War era collection includes a mixture of materials from government offices, including court records, constitutional convention records and committees of safety, as well as private collections. The Imaging Unit staff are digitizing some recent newspaper additions, including the *Red Springs Citizen* and the *Sandhills Citizen*. For newspapers we create digital images which are used to create preservation master microfilm. The Archives works closely with the North Carolina Digital Heritage Center (DHC). We provide the digital images to the DHC for inclusion in their online collections. Their digital collection of newspapers is largely derived from our security microfilm collection. Providing DHC the digital images of newspapers

eliminates the labor of digitizing originals or film, and only metadata needs to be added to the images for online access.

In January 2022, the Archives of North Carolina and State Library began jointly testing potential replacements for our current digital asset management system, CONTENTdm. In the previous months, staff of both divisions created a series of questions to test systems against; the questions covered functions like ingest of metadata and digital media, editing and management of metadata, transcription tools, usability for both staff and researchers, security of the systems, technical support, and many other topics. The joint Library and Archives committee began testing with their current system, CONTENTdm, followed by tools from both TIND and Quartex. The committee hoped to test Islandora from Lyrasis as well, but a test environment in Islandora was not available until late in 2022, long after all the other testing would be completed. As of March, committee members are wrapping up their documentation of the tests and results are expected later in the month.

The [TranscribeNC](#) crowd-sourced transcription site continues to prove popular. We recently added a collection of historic recipes and are working to identify collections that can be added now that the software supports transcription of ledger type materials. This will allow the transcription of forms and ledgers, commonly used in government offices. In 2021 12,978 hours of volunteer time were contributed and 12,115 pages were transcribed. Currently we have over 1,030 registered users on the platform, although only a portion of those users are actively transcribing each month. We hope to utilize the platform to provide another A250 programming avenue to encourage patrons to participate in increasing access to our Revolutionary War materials.

The oral history collections continue to grow. The two most active collecting initiatives are the COVID-19 Government Employee Oral History Project and the School Integration Oral History Project. The COVID-19 collection now includes 43 interviews from 12 state agencies, 1 university, and 2 local government offices. This pool includes interviews with Mike Sprayberry, recently retired head of NC Emergency Management and former Secretary Mandy Cohen of DHHS, as well as current Secretary Kody Kinsley. As requests for consultations on oral history projects expands, we continue to host multiple interns, and will add a part time temporary employee to the unit soon.

In February the State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB) completed work on a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). Grant deliverables included the development of some [videos](#) on the basics of archives. Grant funding also supported the 2021 round of the Traveling Archivist Program (TAP) consultations. The consultations were conducted virtually as well as in-person during this cycle. As the grant was wrapping up, two additional virtual workshops were developed to meet needs identified in the TAP consultations. They included one on how to select materials for digitization and one utilizing some TAP participants explaining how they use their collections to create programs. A new NHPRC grant was awarded to the SHRAB, but it will officially begin once the federal budget is finalized, hopefully in the next couple of weeks. The new grant will support the development of training to spur local A250 programming. The training will cover the basics of oral history projects, community scanning projects, and digital exhibits. The grant also will support a new round of TAP consultations, as well as some funding for people working with local cultural heritage organizations to attend professional development. Staff from the Walter Clinton Jackson Library at UNC Greensboro will assist with the development and presentation of this training.

In facilities news, the Western Office experienced extensive water damage overnight on January 29. Because the water damage came from an hvac unit in the attic above the Western Regional Archives (WRA), the incident impacted the WRA physical spaces and some collections. The wet collections were salvaged, and the impacted spaces dried with the assistance of a disaster recovery vendor. The WRA remained closed to the public for a couple weeks as recovery efforts proceeded. We are thankful for all the Western Office staff who responded so quickly and worked as a team to recover from the building-wide emergency. Heather South led some volunteers and staff in the wet records recovery, an extra challenging project with the building elevator out of commission immediately after the water damage.

Finally, in administrative updates, staff development remains a priority of the division management team. Some division staff had the opportunity recently to attend the phase II workshops offered by the Racial Equity Institute of Greensboro. These workshops were funded by the State Library. They graciously offered a few seats in this course to for some division supervisors. In addition, two division staff recently completed the Cultural Diversity Competency training offered by the Society of American Archivists. As division leadership builds capacity in these areas, our division-wide community outreach committee and management teams are discussing potential cultural diversity competency training that could be offered to the entire division. The management team also anticipates undertaking a strategic planning effort in early 2023. We expect to use the consultant who worked with the SHRAB on their recent strategic planning process.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah E. Koonts
State Archivist

**Report of Division of Historical Resources
To the North Carolina Historical Commission
March 23, 2022**

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

Coming back

During the earlier pre-vaccine phases of the pandemic, and again most recently during early 2022 during the high transmission phase of the Omicron variant, our Division proceeded with its work under maximum teleworking. In 2021, we adopted a **teleworking protocol that allows most job classifications the ability to telework at least part of the week.**

Site visits in the field are resuming, but virtual meetings continue to allow us to connect well and efficiently with one another and with our many constituents and partners statewide and even nationally, certainly what will be frequently a new way of doing business from now on.

Since our September meeting, we have filled several vacancies:

- **Restoration / Preservation Specialist John Wood was promoted to Eastern Office Regional Supervisor** after Scott Power retired in August 2021 with 30 years of state service. John will continue to offer restoration services for his original service territory, and we are reworking his old position to be a Survey / National Register specialist only for an expanded eastern North Carolina territory.
- **Preservation Specialist Hannah Beckman-Black was transferred from her Raleigh-based southeastern region service territory to our Asheville office** to fill our Western Office position vacated by Annie McDonald in mid-2021.
- **Architectural Survey Coordinator Beth King has likewise transferred to our Western Office**, taking up a newly crafted constituent service territory of the western foothills, filling a heightened constituent need in this area of the state. She continues to oversee the statewide architectural survey program. We are likewise reclassifying a Restoration position to be Beth's counterpart for this region, again, acknowledging the higher workload and constituent demand for services these counties are posing to us, and hope to have it filled in short order.

In December 2021, we said **goodbye to our National Register Coordinator Jenn Brosz**, whose husband took a new position in Nebraska. We are in the process of advertising for that position now. Internal promotions and transfers also created vacancies, which we are likewise working to file (Preservation Specialist positions for southeastern NC and eastern NC). As context, the Survey / National Register branch is at 50% full-strength, and staff is stretched thin, but still managing a high level of responsiveness and constituent service.

Increased COLA for the Raleigh and Asheville metro areas are of concern to us as state salaries are unfortunately not keeping pace with the employment market and what private consultancies are able to offer professionals in our field. The median home value in Raleigh and Asheville now exceeds \$400,000, and state employees are increasingly living farther and farther away from work stations, making teleworking even more of a human resources tool for public service employment.

Western Office

- **“Water where it didn’t belong.”** We often talk about situations threatening cultural resources when water finds itself in places where it doesn’t belong. Sadly we found ourselves in that position with a freak incident at the Western Office. In the early morning of Sunday January 30, 2022, when outside temperatures were well below freezing, **a water line located in an attic air handler unit broke, causing water damage on all five levels of the building**, including space used by the Western Regional Archives of the State Archives of North Carolina. We experienced damage to ceilings, light fixtures, a few pieces of furniture, and the elevator equipment main circuit board, rendering the building’s one elevator inoperative for two weeks. While repairs are still underway, total projected recovery costs are between \$20,000 and \$25,000. Thankfully, water damage to collection items stored on the third floor in the Western Regional Archives were minimal, and all items were dried and recovered. Great kudos to Western Regional Supervisor Jeff Futch and all of our Asheville-based colleagues and thanks to DNCR Management and Budget Office and the NC Departments of Administration and Insurance for all of their assistance in making a bad situation much much better.
- **Exhibit opening.** The exhibit entitled, **“Freedom! A Promise Disrupted: North Carolina, 1862 – 1901”** opened in mid-February and will close on March 31st. This exhibit was on display at the NC Museum of History in 2019. In addition to the exhibit the office has hosted / is hosting five virtual webinars:
 - February 10th – Dr. Steve Nash, Associate Professor of History at ETSU, will discuss how the process of reconstruction unfolded in western North Carolina, a region with a smaller Black population, fraught wartime loyalties among whites, and a developing economy.
 - February 22nd – Dr. Joseph Fox will discuss the [Buncombe County Remembrance Project](#) and efforts to acknowledge, honor, and remember those individuals lynched in Buncombe County. This project is part of the [Equal Justice Initiative’s National Memorial for Peace and Justice](#).
 - March 10th – Dr. Steve Nash, Associate Professor of History at ETSU, will discuss the formation of the Ku Klux Klan during Reconstruction and its terroristic campaign against the biracial Republican political coalition that emerged in the late 1860s.
 - March 17th – Earl Ijames, Curator of African American History at the North Carolina Museum of History will discuss Black Republicans and the North Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1868 to 1901.

- March 31st – Dr. Dan Pierce, Professor of History at UNC-Asheville and Ashley Whittle from UNC-Asheville Special Collections will discuss the [“Railroad and Incarcerated Laborer Memorial Project” \(RAIL\)](#) and efforts to remember, document and memorialize African American incarcerated laborers who died during the construction of the railroad from Old Fort to Asheville.
- **Western Regional History Day.** The **2022 Western Regional History Day Contest is currently underway** and project judging is scheduled to be completed on March 22nd. The contest is being held virtually for the second year in a row, but plans are being made to return to an in-person contest in 2023 on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Asheville.

Office of State Archaeology (OSA)

Submerged North Carolina. The OSA is continuing its partnership with NOAA on presenting its **Submerged NC educational outreach program** on the state’s maritime heritage. The most recent webinar consisted of a total of 514 registered for the webinar with 339 people attending, including from the United Kingdom, Romania, Germany, U.S. Minor Outlying Islands, Mexico, Venezuela, and Canada! **Overall since the program's inception in 2021, 3,830 people have attended Submerged NC webinars!**

Underwater Archaeology Laboratory. The Underwater Archaeology Laboratory in partnership with the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission recently hosted a webinar entitled, *Shaping an Inclusive Interpretative Vision for the Queen Anne’s Shipwreck/La Concorde Shipwreck*, and we are very proud to continue our close partnership with the NCAAHC to explore the role of this ship in the historic Trans-Atlantic human trafficking trade.

Other news. The OSA is continuing to participate in the Governors Page Program.

Lower Cape Fear study. The Underwater Archaeology Branch continues partnering with Northwestern University and the ECU Maritime History Program investigating the lower Cape Fear River and its tributaries with Maritime Geophysics and Target Diving. **Several subsurface anomalies have been identified including several associated with historic rice cultivation.**

State Historic Preservation Office (HPO)

Restoration Services Branch.

- **State historic tax credit renewal.** We are delighted to report a **legislative extension of the state historic tax credits from 2024 to 2030 for both income-producing and residential properties**, and with it, the unexpected **resurrection of the lapsed “Article 3H” mill credits, which allow for a 30% to 40% state historic tax credit** for rehabilitation of industrial, utility, and agricultural buildings, perhaps among the most generous in the nation.

- **Federal historic tax credit program.** In addition, North Carolina's use of the federal historic tax credit program remains strong; **North Carolina ranked 8th in the nation in completed projects** and 6th in proposed projects in FY 2021.
- **Building showcase planning.** Planning is underway for the next Building Showcase scheduled for **Ahoskie** in June. Following earlier successful programs in Elizabeth City and Tarboro, the day will highlight historic buildings available and eligible for rehabilitation with state and federal tax credits.

Certified Local Government (CLG) grants. CLG grants applications are due **April 22**; we typically award \$120,000 in local preservation "seed" project grants for projects ranging from new National Register nominations, architectural / archaeological surveys, bricks and mortar needs, and educational / outreach projects. HPO Grant Coordinator Michele McCabe reports that **we continue to be asked daily for funds that are not available, including for private individuals, churches, and cemeteries**, underscoring a need for more grant dollars and more sources of funding for historic preservation in North Carolina.

Local Government Work.

- **CLG growth.** With over 100 historic preservation commissions in North Carolina, as of February 2022, 51 were Certified Local Governments (CLGs), a federal designation providing them eligibility for our grants program. **Alexander County is our latest local government to seek CLG status**, and we await approval from the National Park Service, and anticipate another application, likely from a local government in our western region, soon.
- **Disaster resiliency training.** Our office is working with **the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) to provide disaster resiliency training to local historic preservation commissions affected by Hurricane Florence and Hurricane Michael**. Through support and in partnership with the National Park Service, the NAPC developed a curriculum for resilience and disaster planning for states affected by Hurricanes Florence, Yutu, Michael, Harvey, Irma, and Maria. Our training is scheduled for June 2022, and we'd be glad to include any members of the North Carolina Historical Commission with an open invitation to you all.

KHAW – Keeping History Above Water presentation. The HPO will join colleagues from both OSA and the Division of State Historic Sites to make a **presentation** at the biennial national conference **Keeping History Above Water in Norfolk, Virginia, in May, regarding the successful implementation of wave attenuator technology at Brunswick Town / Fort Anderson State Historic Site**. We believe this technology – which combines both natural and cultural resource protection – is a model for other historic places in America, threatened by "water where it doesn't belong". This site is particularly significant as a place known to indigenous people, where enslaved and free persons alike arrived in North Carolina, where North Carolina helped to launch the American Revolution, and as the site of some of the best-preserved colonial wharves and Civil War earthworks exist anywhere in America.

Survey / National Register Branch. Countywide architectural surveys are underway in seven counties (Cumberland, Hoke, McDowell, Montgomery, Person, Polk, and Vance), funded by our special congressional Historic Preservation Fund appropriation for Hurricanes Florence and Michael recovery. Retirements and resignations and filling of branch vacancies are presenting opportunities for **teambuilding** and the introduction of fresh perspectives, including a **recent data-driven reassignment of country service territories to improve service to citizens**. The Branch is currently updating operations plans for both primary program areas (NR and Survey) to increase efficiency and decrease our reliance on institutional memory.

Hurricane Grant Program. All but three of the 32 projects (10 state-owned and 22 subgrants) have finally received their environmental (NEPA) and historic (Section 106) clearance from the National Park Service (NPS). We are still working through three subgrants that have more complex considerations. Subgrant agreements are being processed, with nine of 22 have been signed and are able to begin procurement of services. Seven county-wide architectural surveys are underway. **The program end date has been extended for a year by the NPS to December 31, 2024, at HPO's request to aid with COVID-related schedules.** Of particular interest, is that funded repairs to the Battleship's superstructure are underway.

Environmental Review. "Team ER" has busy since the NCHC meeting with projects from the mountains to the sea and points in between, experiencing in the last 5 years, **a 40% increase in project submissions needing review**, representing in part hurricane recovery projects but also large scale infrastructure investments and increased development statewide. Leading projects include a new road connection to I-26 adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway, offshore wind farms, and increasing numbers of historic farms being transformed into new residential subdivisions. Since December 1, 2021 through the end of February 2022, the branch **received nearly 1200 projects for review and comment under federal and state law, or nearly 100 a week with expected 30-day turnaround.**

Historical Research Office

- **Publications news.** The Office has released **several new titles** – both through traditional **printed** means as well as **digitally** (and free to the public):
 - *Sallie Stockard and the Adversities of an Educated Woman of the New South*, by Carole W. Troxler. This is the first biographical study of UNC's first female graduate student.
 - The papers of Governor Thomas Bickett and Royal Governor Arthur Dobbs on mosaicnc.org.
 - Volume XXI of *North Carolina Troops: A Roster*. At the printer right now; release is forthcoming.
- **Highway Historical Marker program.** The office continues its **update of Highway Historical Marker essays** to reflect the most current scholarship. We also received our first funding in several years from the Department of Transportation; **FY 2021-2022 funding is \$100,000**, and will allow us to catch up on several years of maintenance needs. Additionally, our

partner **NCDOT will be required to provide us with this amount annually from now on**, rather than “may” do so, thanks to a legislative update in our governing statute.

- **Flyleaf.** The office continues our increasingly **popular monthly interview outreach series** “Flyleaf” to highlight recent scholarship on North Carolina history. Recent topics since our last report to the North Carolina Historical Commission include the Wilmington Ten (October 2021); the politics of Lumbee recognition (November 2021); architectural surveys (December 2021); student activism at Elizabeth City State University (1948-1968) (February 2022); and a welcome conversation with our own Dr. Darin Waters about North Carolina history (January 2022).

Personal Historical Note.

On this day in 2011, I came for my interview for my first position with the department, and still celebrate it as a red letter day in my personal history.

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

NC Historical Commission Meeting – March 23, 2022

State Division of History Museums Highlights Report

The museums have been very active since the last Historical Commission meeting. Highlights of the activities from each museum during the period since the last Historical Commission meeting are listed below. Visitation continues to pick up at all the museums. For the calendar year 2021 annual visitation at each museum was as follows:

NC Museum of History – 170,605

Maritime Museum in Beaufort – 119,086

Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum – 116,600

Museum of the Albemarle – 45,533

Museum of the Cape Fear – 39,279

Maritime Museum in Southport – 33,477

Mountain Gateway Museum – 8,200

North Carolina Museum of History

- The Museum staff has begun work on a strategic plan to take the museum through the next three years, while the museum is under construction. Preliminary meetings are being held in March to kick off the exhibit design process with the two firms selected to develop the all new exhibits for the museum's expansion and renovation project.
- **The *Dressing the Abbey* exhibition**, featuring the Iconic Wardrobe of Downton Abbey, closed on January 17th with visitation ahead of projections. The exhibition, featuring the iconic wardrobe of the beloved Downton Abbey series, showcased the turbulence and changes in the late Edwardian era through the 1920s through the fashions of the period while evoking fans' favorite moments. The 35 costumes in the exhibition ranged from country tweeds and riding outfits; to servants' uniforms; to lavish evening attire crafted from sumptuous fabrics and decorated with intricate embroidery, lace, and beading. *Dressing the Abbey* was on display at the North Carolina Museum of History from October 23, 2021, to January 17, 2022.

We are delighted to report 13,400 guests visited the exhibition during its run, 3,400 over our projected goal. Total ticket sales were \$161,000. We are grateful to DNCR for their exhibition and promotional support, including the Secretary's appearance on the PBS NC. PBS NC was the exhibition's media sponsor.

- **The 21st annual African American Cultural Celebration** was a huge success! Overall, 20,694 registered participants joined on both Friday and Saturday. On Friday, January 28 we premiered the first AACC Education Day! The NC Association of Black

Storytellers held forth on the stage from 9:30 am to 2:30 pm and had over 15,000 viewers from 75 counties in NC and 7 other states. With four interactive virtual presentations, we reached classrooms in 40 different counties and had incredible feedback from educators and students.

Saturday, four classrooms became virtual studios where sixteen different presentations were live streamed between noon and 5 pm and reached viewers in 44 counties in NC and 15 other states. There were 90 performers and speakers in the auditorium on Saturday, including our amazing emcee Sandra Dubose and dynamic ASL interpreters Valeria McMillan and Latoya Jordan. The opening ceremony featured the Platinum Sound Pep Band from Shaw University and Jared Payton & the Voices performing *Lift Every Voice and Sing*. Performances continued throughout the day until 5:30 pm with Sandra leading some AACC Advisory Board members in the electric slide! Both the opening ceremony and the Music, Movement, and Drama performances were live-streamed from NC-AACC.com.

The event engaged with the public and the statewide, even national, press. Media interviews included:

- News and Observer – First AACC Education Day with Chrystal and Keung Hui, Education Reporter. [2021 NC African American Cultural Celebration: environment | Raleigh News & Observer \(newsobserver.com\)](https://www.newsobserver.com/story/news/education/2021/01/28/2021-nc-african-american-cultural-celebration-environment-raleigh-news-observer/7411112002/). Picked up by the AP. The story ran in 35+ papers nationally, including Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Houston.
- CBS17, My Carolina with Angela Thorpe and Joanna Heims. Aired Friday, January 28th. <https://www.cbs17.com/my-carolina/kick-off-black-history-month-this-weekend-with-virtual-event/>
- WBTV Charlotte, QC@3: Angela Thorpe. Live interview. [N.C. Museum of History's 21st Annual African American Cultural Celebration focuses on environmental justice – QC Life \(wbtv.com\)](https://www.wbtv.com/story/news/2021/01/28/nc-museum-history-21st-annual-african-american-cultural-celebration-focuses-on-environmental-justice-qc-life/7411112002/)
- WUNC Public News interview with Chrystal: Aired 1/28 on 91.5, 91.9, or 90.9.
- Triad's CW22 Live Vibe interview: Angela Thorpe. 9:30 AM. Aired live. <http://www.wxii12.com/article/black-history-month-nc-museum-history-african-american-heritage-virtual/38924367>
- WRAL Out and About listed the AACC as the [weekend headline event](#)

We are grateful to Angela Thorpe and Adrienne Nirde of the North Carolina African American Commission for their assistance with the AACC.

- The Museum has been selected to receive a 2021 Award of Excellence from the North Carolina Museums Council (NCMC) for our work sharing online the museum's "Story of North Carolina" exhibit for students during the pandemic. NCMC said "The virtual tour of the impactful exhibit is a wonderful example for other museums considering similar projects. Professionalism like that which you routinely present is the future of 21st century museums and solidifies your place in both the community and the museum framework for the diverse universe of learners of all ages. "

- Museum Senior Registrar, Camille Hunt, attended and presented a Handling Hard History [presentation](#) at the [MuseumNext: Museums, Health & Wellbeing Summit](#). It was an international, virtual conference with over 2500 registrants. Presenters represented The Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, the Historic Royal Palaces in London, the ArtScience Museum in Singapore, the Met, the Smithsonian, and more!
- To coincide with Black History Month programming, the [North Carolina Museum of History](#) opened a new temporary display on Feb. 1 - Feb. 28, **"We Wanted to Fight: Black North Carolinians in World War II,"** to commemorate the history of African American military service in North Carolina. The temporary display was a collaboration between the NCDMVA, NC Museum of History, Elizabeth City State University School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and State Archives of NC to collect, preserve, and display NC's Black veterans' stories for future generations.

The panel display honors the legacy of brave African American service members across North Carolina. The temporary display is part of a joint grant project of the NC recognition of the [African American Military and Veterans Lineage Project](#).

- The North Carolina Museum of History in-person visitation is picking up pace. Although the numbers are not pre-Covid, they are steady, despite the rise of the Delta variant.

December 2021 – 20,350 visitors

January 2022 – 14,732 visitors (closed 3 days for snow)

February, 2022 – 18,199 visitors

- Currently over 5400 school children are scheduled to visit from March 9 through April 8. Of these 2nd and 4th graders account for most of the total amount scheduled.

Our virtual programs continue unabated. Samples include:

- [History at High Noon: Seabreeze](#)
Speaker: Rebecca Taylor, Manager, Federal Point History Center, Carolina Beach. Ms. Taylor discussed the history of Seabreeze Resort.
- [Community Class Series: HBCUs and Black Leadership](#).
Presenter: Dr. Jelani M. Favors, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
- [History and Highballs: Ebony Wine and Spirits](#)
Speaker: Camillya Masunda, founder and owner of Ebony Wine and Spirits, Charlotte's first Black-owned winery! Ebony Wine was created to celebrate Black culture and unity across the globe.
- [Coffee with a Curator: "We Wanted to Fight"](#) with Curator Charles Knight. Charles discusses the exhibit **"We Wanted to Fight: Black North Carolinians in World War II,"** to commemorate the history of African American military service in North Carolina.

- [American Revolution Lecture Series](#), sponsored by the North Carolina Society of the Cincinnati.

Speaker: Dr. H. W. Brands, Award-Winning Author, and History Professor, the University of Texas at Austin

The total attendance for digital programming from July 2021 until now is **235, 146**.

North Carolina Regional Museums:

Mountain Gateway Museum in Old Fort:

At Mountain Gateway Museum, January 2022 brought a significant snowfall along with a flurry of plans for the new year. To celebrate the department's 50th anniversary, MGM's staff will be working with the DNCR marketing office to plan a "DNCR Day" at the museum in September. In addition, MGM hopes to be part of a new "Moonshine & Motorsports State Trail," now in development. Also, after a two-year hiatus due to COVID, plans for MGM's annual Pioneer Day are back on track for April 2022.

Mountain Gateway Museum opened a new exhibit, *African American Musicians in North Carolina*, on February 1, just in time to celebrate African American History Month. Created by the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, the traveling exhibit will run through May 1 in Old Fort. And the museum entered into an agreement with the McDowell County Arts Council to be the site of two productions by the council's annual children's summer theater program during June.

Museum of the Albemarle:

MOA Continues to Work on Virtual and In-Person Exhibits and Educational Programming, including but not limited to:

- Two Hybrid (both in-person and virtual) History for Lunches: "Resisting Inevitability: The Desegregation of Schools In Pasquotank County 1964-1969, Part 2" and "Arlington to Appomattox: Robert E. Lee's Civil War: Day By Day, 1861-1865".
- Two exhibit openings: "River Cube Project and "Guardians of the Land: Discovering Indigenous Americans".
- Outreach Through Social and Traditional Media with a weekly article submitted to The Daily Advance for publication each Sunday.
- Exhibit openings: "When the Computer Wore A Skirt: NASA's Human Computers".
- Special programming for Black History Month: "FREEDMEN, SURFMEN, HEROES"! A live program that taught the unique and remarkable story of Keeper Richard Etheridge and the Pea Island Lifesavers. Descendants of the Pea Island Lifesavers told the incredible and inspiring story of the nation's first black Keeper and the story of station Pea Island,

the only station in the history of the United States Life-Saving Service manned by an all-black crew. This popular creative program used vivid imagery, sound effects, and historical interpretation of events to bring to life the amazing story Keeper Etheridge and the lifesaving station he commanded, a station that earned the reputation of being one of, if not the best on the coast.

Museum of the Cape Fear Historical Complex

Winter weather closed the museum to the public for a couple of weekends. January was mostly a month of planning and preparation work.

- Museum staff participated in a community planning meeting for the 200th anniversary of Lafayette's tour of the U.S. in 1825. Staff also participated in an NCDNCR regional museums planning meeting for America 250.
- Museum lobby television used to display a digital exhibit created in-house featuring notable African Americans of the Cape Fear region and their contributions to the state.
- February's "History To-Go" box featured The Underground Railroad. Each box contains a hands-on craft, fun history facts, activities and writing prompts. Next month's theme is the American Revolution. Boxes are funded by the Museum of the Cape Fear Historical Complex Foundation.
- *North Carolina Women Making History* traveling exhibit was installed, including artifacts from the museum's collection. The exhibit and artifacts work together to tell the importance of women in North Carolina's history. Supplemental panels were added to update the information to reflect present-day successes.
- Staff members from the Local and State History Room of the Fayetteville/Cumberland County Public Library worked with 1897 Poe House docents to film educational videos in the Poe House centering around changing technology at the turn of the 19th/20th centuries. These videos will be edited and posted by the library. Dates to be announced.
- In the Arsenal House, staff recorded the lecture "Red, White, Blue and Black: African Americans in the Civil War," by Charles Anderson, the instructor at Fayetteville State University. This will be edited and uploaded to the museum's YouTube page. The lecture was attended in person by members of the Fayetteville State University History Club.
- A grant application was written and submitted to request funding from Cumberland County Community Foundation for the museum's Summer History Camp.
- New Administrative Assistant, Sarah Stubbs, began work on February 1.

North Carolina Maritime Museums:

Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum – Hatteras

- The design of exhibitions at the Museum is approved and ready for bid. \$ 4.2 million is in the budget and Dare County is providing a \$500,000 match. The revisions to the

design contract have been approved and were posted for bid this week. Contractors will have until March 31 at 2 p.m. to submit a bid.

- Administrative Specialist, I Josh Nonnenmocher, has resigned. Josh has done an excellent job, and we will miss him. The job posting closed on Jan. 24, and we hope to have someone in the role soon. In the interim, Education Curator Mary Ellen Riddle is taking on the additional duties.

Beaufort Maritime Museum

- After being closed since the end of May 2021 for renovations, the museum restrooms are once again open to the public. The updated facilities are a stunning improvement.
- A GoodMaps representative came through the museum recently wearing a LiDAR backpack being used to take 360-degree images, laser measurements, and video. That footage will be used to create a digital map of the museum to assist visually impaired visitors in navigating the facility. It is an accessibility companion piece to the NaviLens project we're piloting for blind and low-vision visitors.
- The Beaufort Lions Club has agreed to cover the full cost of expanding the NaviLens codes to the rest of the museum. The technology uses unique colored blocks that are picked up through a related app on a mobile phone. Using information from those tags, the app can then help users navigate through the space and provide a narrated overview of the exhibit, description of specific artifacts on exhibit plus a related historic anecdote.
- The last two Menhaden Chanteymen, Ernest Davis, 83, and Leroy Cox, 90, who were part of a group that performed at Carnegie Hall in the 90s, will be taking part in the Museum's March 5 symposium on the menhaden traditions: "The Smell of Money: Legacy of the Menhaden Fishery." The event includes roundtable presentations by current and past members of the industry, author and historian David Cecelski, and the presentation on chanteys, which closes the symposium.
- The expansion of the Conservation Lab is almost complete. This doubles the size of the previous workspace and allows the treatment of larger and more complex archeological artifacts in-house. Funded by an IMLS grant and matching funds from the Museum's Friends group, new equipment, includes a micro-air abrasive blasting unit, a combined workstation and dust collector, a portable downdraft workbench, and a high-grade air compressor for operating pneumatic tools. Like the current lab, the expansion is behind a glass wall that allows visitors to see her work, expanding treatment, outreach, and educational capabilities.

Southport Maritime Museum

- Administrative Specialist, Kristan Phillips resigned from her position at the museum after five years of service on Dec. 31. The museum manager has taken over stats, gift shop, and volunteers in the interim.

- The new tactile maps are out in the exhibit hall. They are mounted on Gatorfoam and have a new rack at wheelchair height. The welcome area now offers scavenger hunts, sensory backpacks, tactile maps, and iPad registration for accessibility and for an enhanced visitor experience.
- Education curator Katy Menne was accepted to be a part of the NC Museums Council revamped Leadership Forum at their annual conference. This year it is the DEAI Leadership Showcase and will discuss initiatives across the state in their work with DEAI topics.
- Katy has worked with maritime museums around the world to create a digital campaign to safely travel and experience maritime communities. The passport series will run on Instagram, and so far, visits are scheduled to Norway, Canada, Spain, Taiwan, and Australia.
- The new Civil War exhibit was recently installed and focuses on the maritime experience in Lower Cape Fear. It has received rave reviews.
- The installation of an exhibit on the torpedoing of SS *John D. Gill* is underway. As it is the 80th anniversary of the sinking, articles, lectures, and programming are ongoing in conjunction with the 1942 event.
- The museum is the recipient of the 2022 Maggie Award for Best Family Fun. It will be announced in Southport Magazine this month. The magazine does not make a list of the candidate and solicit votes; instead, the public submits the site they think is the best representative of the award, and whoever has the most submissions wins.

News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2022

Michelle Lanier

- The passing of the state budget in December 2021 brought the Division into a new and exciting era, providing \$47 million in expansion funding over the two-year budget (2021-2022/2022-2023.) We appreciate the legislature and Governor Cooper prioritizing this funding that will help with much-needed improvements, renovations, and expansions for historic sites across our state. With this funding, we anticipate undertaking a range of new capital projects, including adding and developing three major new sites (Hayes Farm, Thomas Day House and Shop, and Shallowford), adding land and historic buildings at other sites, and building or renovating visitor centers and other structures. We will also be able to add several much-needed staff members, including a Piedmont regional manager. Additionally, the significant commitment of a \$1 million recurring fund for maintenance will improve visitor experience, safety, and property preservation across the state.
- Through winter 2021-22, Division staff have continued to be flexible and adaptable in the face of rapidly changing COVID levels, extreme weather, infrastructure problems, and other challenges. As well as working to ensure visitor safety and performing their regular responsibilities of preserving and educating about our state history, staff are committed to continually improving their visitor offerings and outreach. Sites introduced new educational programs, collaborated with local libraries and preschools to bring young children on site for story times and exploration, and hosted homeschool days, scout merit badge programs, and university class visits. Staff also contributed to online programming with North Carolina public schools, community colleges, and museums.
- In calendar year 2021, State Historic Sites counted 1,650,198 visitors at our sites and reached at least 73,500 more members of the public through outreach events. Our sites also actively engage with the public across the state, nation, and world through social media and digital programming. In December, most sites saw large increases in visitation compared to December 2020. Visitation tapered off in January in the face of Omicron and the winter storms across the state, but increased again in February. Visitation levels are approaching those seen before the pandemic: statewide visitation in December 2021 was

News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2022

Michelle Lanier

4% more than December 2019 (the last holiday season before the pandemic), and February 2022 was only 5% less than February 2020. Some sites have seen marked increases in visitation since 2019, reflecting an increased interest in programming offered at the sites as well as in opportunities for outdoor recreation.

- As Omicron variant levels rose in late 2021, staff worked quickly to adjust programming so visitors could safely discover the history and joy of the festive season across the state. Events included Historic Halifax's new Yuletide by Lanternlight event; Historic Stagville's Jonkonnu, a nineteenth-century African American masquerade celebration; and Vance Birthplace's *Appalachian Christmas Carol*, a collaboration with the American Myth Center in Asheville that tells the story of Venus, a woman enslaved by the Vances, through the traditional storyline of *A Christmas Carol*. After a hiatus in 2020, the North Carolina Transportation Museum's popular Polar Express event returned, hosting over 60,000 riders in November and December. The State Capitol hosted the State Tree Lighting Ceremony and also partnered with the Downtown Raleigh Alliance and artist Robin Vuchnich for the December Illuminate Art Walk, garnering positive feedback both in person and on social media.
- At the end of calendar year 2021, Fort Fisher State Historic Site achieved its goal of more than one million visitors annually, a first for Fort Fisher or any historic site within the NC Division of State Historic Sites. When the turnstiles stopped at year's end, total onsite visitation for calendar year 2021 reached 1,052,270.
- The Division's Craft Services department and outside contractors brought their maintenance skills to sites across the state, doing everything from installing new fire protection systems to improving chicken roosts.
- Historic Edenton was featured in the February 2021 edition of *National Geographic* as part of the article "Hidden No More," in which National Geographic Explorer Tara Roberts explores her work with Diving with a Purpose – a Black-led, worldwide underwater

News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2022

Michelle Lanier

archaeology initiative finding and recording the wrecks of slave ships. Roberts's work led her to explore her own ancestry, and that exploration led her to Edenton, where she enjoyed Juneteenth celebrations, learned about the story of Harriet Jacobs, and interviewed historical interpreter Charles Boyette.

- Black History Month brought a wealth of attention and visitors to our sites. The Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum was featured in *Our State*, on a bookmark distributed by Biscuitville, and in local media. Historic Halifax's Underground Railroad Trail was featured in regional news coverage, resulting in increased visitation and group tours. Somerset Place hosted an online event - the site's first - with Kiana Fekette, who wrote her MA thesis about adornment and identity in the site's nineteenth-century enslaved community. Sites are now premiering Women's History Month content, including social media posts and special site tours, and the Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum is prominently featured on the North Carolina Museum of History's Women's History Month website.
- In February, Bentonville Battlefield made a Black History Month social media post about the Black and Indigenous music legends Thelonious Monk, Nat King Cole, Natalie Cole, and Pura Fé, all of whom trace their ancestry to families enslaved at the Cole Plantation. The Facebook post generated a lot of interest, reaching almost 11,000 readers. Site staff were thrilled when Pura Fé herself commented on the post. She was full of excitement about the new information about the Coles, and she added many details about her family tree, her relation to Thelonious Monk, and their shared Black and Tuscarora heritage.
- Fort Dobbs hosted its annual "Defense of Fort Dobbs" living history event on February 26, commemorating the 262nd anniversary of the Battle of Fort Dobbs. Groups represented soldiers, women, and American Indians of the period. Kody Grant (Pueblo of Isleta, of Cherokee descent) also generously recorded a new Virtual Field Trip segment about trade and commerce in the 18th century and how it shaped the relationships between Europeans and American Indians.

News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2022

Michelle Lanier

- The Historic Sites True Inclusion Committee is preparing for their next, deeper phase of work that will reach all corners of the Division. A small True Inclusion leadership team has been convening regularly with staff from Biwa|Emergent Equity to plan for several orientation sessions that will be offered to division staff and departmental leadership. These orientation sessions will lay the groundwork for promoting equitable culture change through exploring behaviors and their impacts. Beyond the committee's work, individual sites continue to find new ways to connect with and serve diverse audiences. Staff at Somerset Place are working to make the text of tour scripts available to visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing to access on tablet. Several sites, including Bentonville and Stagville, are making concerted efforts to cultivate and maintain strong, mutually beneficial relationships with descendant groups with ties to these properties. We also maintain our strong, fruitful collaboration with the African American Heritage Commission, partnering on many projects including the upcoming *Africa to Carolina* exhibition.
- On March 12th, the CSS Neuse Civil War Interpretive Center held its long-awaited grand opening, the result of a years-long effort from staff on site and across the Division. Division staff are now working on several other large-scale long-term projects, including the new permanent exhibition at Bath and a revamping of the permanent exhibition and waysides at the Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum.
- In December, Alamance Battleground Site Manager Jeremiah DeGennaro hosted a lunch and learn about student loan forgiveness for government employees; originally intended as a DNCR program, there was so much demand that it grew to be inter-departmental, with staff attending from across the state government.
- In February, Division and Department staff attended gatherings with local stakeholders in Milton, NC (future site of the Thomas Day House and Shop historic site) and at the Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum. A number of sites across the state were also excited to host visits from Secretary Wilson and Secretary Waters during the winter months. We are proud to see to the appreciation for the Division's projects and the skills and knowledge of our staff.