

**NCHC Report-March 22, 2023**  
**Division of Archives and Records**

On behalf of the staff of the Division of Archives and Records, I am pleased to submit this report highlighting several division activities and projects from December 2022-March 2023. The report includes division-wide initiatives, as well as summaries of major projects from different sections. With excitement we report the return of our annual in-person collections inventory after a two-year hiatus during the pandemic. We also hosted our first in-person staff retreat for the entire division. Both are good activities to undertake during winter months when patron visitation tends to be somewhat slower. As always, we are pleased to provide additional details on any division programs and operations.

For many decades division staff gathered for three days in January to work collaboratively on an annual collections inventory. Teams worked together to fan out across our stacks and check the physical records against our catalog and finding aid data, identify mis-shelved boxes, as well conduct space audits while noting other collection issues. Digital assets were audited for integrity. Special projects that benefitted from multiple hands working together, such as records shifts or evaluation of preservation concerns in particular collections, were designed to be conducted during annual inventory as well. After a hiatus during the pandemic, annual inventory returned January 9-11, 2023. This year's special projects included starting a major project to rehouse our oldest private collections, continued barcoding of our archival county records collection, conducting an inventory of security vault space, and cleaning of stack spaces. Digital Services staff conducted an inventory of our social media products and assets, including videos, blogs, and other resources, to identify ones that are "evergreen" or suitable for re-sharing, usually in conjunction with a particular date or theme. Section staff also spent time on activities to support the transition from one digital collections platform to the new system. Additional details on some of these larger projects will be included later in this report.

With division staff working in Raleigh, Manteo, Asheville, and now New Bern, in-person division meetings have not been conducted. While we can gather virtually, the benefits of meeting as a team led to the planning and execution of the first division-wide staff retreat. Planning was made easier by modeling our agenda on a similar meeting of Ramona Bartos' division, as well as Dr. Waters' support of the time and expense of this gathering. January 30-31 division staff gathered at the N.C. Museum of Art for two days of team building activities, as well as focused discussion on the draft goals from the recent strategic planning efforts. The retreat proved to be a good mix of casual conversation and fun along with very productive small and larger group discussion of our key division priorities for the coming years.

In addition to efforts undertaken during the annual inventory, staff have been working on major rehousing projects for some large collections. These collections were processed many decades ago and housed in older manuscript boxes. These boxes present a myriad of conservation challenges beyond normal wear and tear. One key conservation challenge arises from the tendency of the aging boxes to support mold

growth on the box exteriors, particularly in fluctuating environmental conditions. Unfortunately, as noted in previous reports, the hvac systems of the State Archives and State Records Center buildings experience too many swings in temperature and humidity. Surface mold was starting to bloom on these aged manuscript boxes. The first collection rehoused was the Treasurer's and Controller's Papers, a group of financial records spanning the 1750s through to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century but focused primarily in the Revolutionary and early statehood years. Led by the Records Analysis Unit of the Government Records Section, staff completed the rehousing of this collection in February 2023, eliminating 508 old style manuscript boxes and replacing them with acid-free, archival fibredex boxes. Unit staff have turned their attention to additional processing efforts on the Treasurer's and Comptroller's Papers as they work to modernize description and increase points of access to these critical records through expanded collection metadata. As part of this work, staff are working to document the occasions where enslaved persons appear in these records, such as highlighting their involuntary labor to construct the State Capitol Building, as well as when confiscation of property from Loyalists during and after the Revolutionary War included those individuals. The collection also included other important materials that can be used for America250NC programming and resource development. Modern processing efforts will provide researchers with added information about the contents of this collection, increasing searchability online and visibility.

During inventory the rehousing of our oldest private collections also started. Teams of two worked under the direction of the Organizational Records Archivist, Elizabeth Bates, to rehouse the collections in new archival folders and boxes. In addition to providing better housing, these reboxing efforts also save quite a bit of stack space as the archival fibredex boxes store more materials in less space than the older manuscript boxes. Rehousing efforts and replacement of problematic older boxes will now continue on two fronts. The Government Records Section will work on rehousing records from our basement-level shelving area, starting with early 20<sup>th</sup> century governors' papers from Governor Aycock to Governor Hoey, the earliest records of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the State Adjutant General record group. Special Collections Section staff will continue work on the rehousing of the oldest private collections.

Another large group project that restarted was the creation and application of barcodes for our archival county records. This project started in 2019, but since it required teams working together in the aisles of the stacks, it was paused for a few years. Data on the county records is verified in our online catalog and the system creates barcodes that can be physically applied to boxes and volumes. As of March 2023, barcodes and updated collection data from approximately half of the counties have been completed. During the annual inventory, 2,354 additional barcodes were added. Staff aims to complete this project soon, allowing for easier tracking of usage statistics beyond our paper call slips.

As noted in previous reports, the North Carolina Digital Collections (NCDC), a shared resource of the State Archives and State Library, is moving out of the old platform (Contentdm) and into new software (Quartex). The Archives is migrating

images and descriptions of over 40 collections with over 625,000 files including photographs and modern and historical documents. We are also transferring thousands of pages of transcriptions to Quartex. The new system will allow for records to be listed in more than one collection, which will aid in discoverability. It also has automated optical character recognition for records that are type written and an enhanced side-by-side view for transcriptions and corresponding documents. The new system allows for more freedom in adding context to collections, as well as a feature for creating digital exhibits. Overall, the new system will provide better control over our collections, give us the ability to develop more nuanced collections, and allow for increased discoverability of our materials. The schedule for accelerated transition takes place February through June, and the new platform is scheduled to go live to the public in June.

In December the division was pleased to collaborate with the N.C. Museum of History to display the Bill of Rights December 6-8, 2022, as part of a special exhibit that included a loaned copy of the first printing of the U.S. Constitution. Due to the fragility of the Bill of Rights, only limited public displays are permitted, and we continue to welcome the assistance of and collaboration with the Museum in providing those opportunities. Approximately 1,700 visitors were able to see the Bill of Rights during that brief period.

On January 1, and in recognition of the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, the video [Celebrations of Freedom: Emancipation Day in North Carolina](#), was posted to our YouTube channel. This video highlights the history of Emancipation Day celebrations in North Carolina and will be used in upcoming America250NC programming. The division's YouTube page is a great place to find on-demand videos like this, as well as recordings of programs, such as the November 6 [Friends of the Archives'](#) annual meeting program featuring the "People Not Property" project from UNC Greensboro.

On January 19 staff assisted the Society of North Carolina Archivists in hosting an online program featuring Museum of History curator, Earl Ijames, in "A Great Time Was Had by All: From the First Grand Fair of the North Carolina Industrial Association to the Atlantic District Fair." Staff hosted an informational booth at the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual African American Cultural Celebration at the Museum of History on January 28. The booth featured images and copies of a wide variety of collections related to the celebration theme of "Pathways to Freedom: To Learn, To Vote, To Build". The booth display and sample collection copies were available for public viewing during February in the lobby of the Archives' building. Highlights of some recent staff presentations and outreach include John Horan's program on oral histories to the River Jordan Council in Cumberland County, as well as Tama Creef's programs on Frank Stick for the Tidewater Arts and Antiques Society and the *Estelle Randell* steamboat for the Tyrrell County Historical Society. The Records Analysis Unit staff, despite operating with several vacancies, conducted 9 workshops for state and local officials in December 2022 and February 2023. These workshops reached 1,250 state and local employees. Unit staff are currently planning the annual meeting of agency chief records officers planned for April 26.

The Federation of North Carolina Historical Societies, administered by the Adrienne Berney in the division, recently presented two Newsome Awards at the December 2, 2022, meeting of the N.C. Literary and Historical Association's annual meeting. The Newsome Award recognizes excellence in local history for Federation member projects. The first award was presented to the Friends of the Page-Walker Hotel in Cary. They partnered with the First Christian Church to research and produce a cemetery walking tour with the goal of educating the community about Cary's African American history. Twenty-seven volunteers from both organizations conducted impressive research. They scoured all pages of Cary's census records from the mid-19th through the mid-20th centuries to note people of color. They then cross-referenced names with death certificates to identify those who may have been buried in 160 unmarked graves found by a previous archaeological survey. Ultimately, the group was able to compile profiles of 102 individuals buried in 262 graves. The final product, a professionally printed brochure, includes photographs and biographical highlights for 23 of those people. The Wendell Historical Society received the second award. This organization achieved a long-standing goal by opening the Wendell Museum in June 2022. A nine-member museum committee of the all-volunteer historical society raised money through a capital campaign, conducted research, and collected documents and artifacts. Given the tight space considerations in the city-owned building, the exhibits are primarily wall panels showcasing document and image facsimiles. The society contracted with Design Source for graphics and additional professionals for panel construction. Three display areas highlight a town timeline, prominent residents, and churches. In addition to this work, the Federation continues their support of the National History Day program in the state. The Federation raises funds for the department through a grant from the North Caroliniana Society and special prize sponsorships from 18 donors, both individuals and non-profits.

The State Historical Records Advisory Board met on February 14 to hear progress on the current grant, as well as to plan for a new grant application to the National Historical Publications and Records commission. A piece of the current grant includes support for training and resource development to spur local programming for the coming America250 commemoration. Two workshops addressing this goal were conducted last year. Additional workshops were held February 27 in Wilmington and March 20 in Edenton. The last one will be March 8 in [Raleigh](#). The grant continues to support professional development scholarships to assist stewards in attending conferences and trainings to further their work with archival materials. The board will announce the 2023 participants in the Traveling Archivist Program soon. Applications closed in February and a very large number of applications were received this cycle demonstrating the continued demand for this work.

As the federal budget for fy2023 was finalized in the closing days of 2022, the division learned that the community program funding support request shepherded by Representative Price's office was included in the final budget. The funding will be administered by the National Archives through the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. \$142,000 in federal funding will be available over three years (2024-2026) to support the development of a primary source educational resource

program or “docs box” in the division. The federal funding will allow us to pilot this program development, as well as to train educators on lesson plans using our primary sources. During the program, federal funds will also support the distribution of the kits to schools at no cost. The kits will focus on primary sources and lesson plans related to the themes of the America250NC commemoration.

With staff vacancy rates in the division and department remaining higher than pre-pandemic levels, our managers spent quite a bit of time on hiring actions. Slowly we are filling vacancies, and we welcomed Tammy Woodward as the new head of the Outer Banks History Center in January, as well as Ashley Latta as the Military Collections Archivist in February. The new position of a records analyst in the eastern portion of the state was filled in December with Kayla Leonard transferring from Tryon Palace to the State Archives. Kayla will be based in New Bern and will focus on the records management needs of the counties and municipalities in the eastern portion of the state most impacted by hurricanes in the last several years.

Finally, please watch for registration for the upcoming America250 workshop sponsored by the department, North Carolina Genealogical Society, and the Friends of the Archives on May 19-20. Called “The People of North Carolina in the American Revolution,” the program will feature speakers who will explore the experiences of a variety of North Carolinians from the period.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah E. Koonts  
State Archivist

**Report of Division of Historical Resources  
To the North Carolina Historical Commission  
For its March 22, 2023 meeting**

**Ramona M. Bartos, Division Director and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
March 14, 2023**

**Division in general**

**Division Retreat held.** In early December, the Division held its first ever facilitated division retreat, designed to foster greater teamwork and mission focus, and to provide an opportunity to conduct an internal Strengths / Weaknesses / Opportunities / Threat (SWOT) analysis. Dr. Waters and Ramona Bartos followed up with individual sections of the Division to discuss further. We greatly appreciate management's support of this initiative.

For the Commission's reference among our largest "takeaways" included the following:

- Among **our greatest strengths** is our well-developed sense of teamwork and collegiality combined with a passion for our work as public service. We are resourceful, intellectually curious, resilient, and expert.
- We are **challenged** by staff capacity limitations and heavy workloads, and human resource challenges, including few paths for advancement and cost of living versus salary provided.
- **Opportunities** include leveraging technology for workflow management and greater public access to our records, and improving our websites for better external communication.
- **Threats** range from loss of institutional knowledge from imminent retirements and potential resignations, staff burnout related to staff capacity issues, outdated technology, public misperceptions about our mission, and a shortage of professionals in our field.

**As we begin work on the next 10-year statewide preservation plan in 2024 and 2025 – for which this Commission is both stakeholder and approver,** we will work to address these issues holistically, and we look forward to working with senior management to this same end.

**New Hire.** The Historical Research Office recently welcomed new hire Carly Beehler as Civil War Roster Editor. A recent Master of Arts graduate in History from Villanova University and native Pennsylvanian, Carly is working on our new series to catalogue and contextualize the largely untold story of North Carolinians who joined Union forces. Work is underway on the first of this series with the first volume focusing on the US Navy and its sailors, representing both white and African American recruits serving in an integrated force, and much of this work is indeed groundbreaking.

**Departures.** Deputy State Archaeologist Lindsay Ferrante departed in late January 2023 to take a regulatory archaeologist position at the Wilmington District of the US Army Corps of Engineers. Lindsay's resignation follows on the heels of Western Office-based Assistant State Archaeologist Casey Kirby's last day in early December 2022; Casey left to take an archaeologist position with the US Forest Service. Earlier in 2022, Assistant State Archaeologist Dr. Mary Beth Fitts resigned for a position at UNC-Chapel Hill. **We are currently down 3 archaeologists, or a 30% vacancy in the Office of State Archaeology among reviewers.**

#### **Recruitment.**

- Following the promotion of Research Historian **Ansley Wegner**, who served long-term as the statewide Highway Historical Marker program coordinator, to **Supervisor of the Historical Research Office**, we are working to recruit her successor in the Marker role.
- We are finalizing recruitment for a new **National Register assistant**, brought on by the promotion of Julie Smith to a preservation specialist position.
- We are also recruiting for a **transportation-project Environmental Review Specialist for our Environmental Review branch**, and continue our efforts to secure a **Restoration Specialist for a newly constituted western Piedmont /foothills service territory**.
- The resignation of Dr. Mary Beth Fitts as one of our **archaeologists** created a vacancy, then filled by lateral move by Dr. David Cranford, already on staff; we are now recruiting for his position, and will likewise do so for the vacancies arising from Casey Kirby's and Lindsay Ferrante's departures.

**Staff needs.** Through the budget preparation process, we have made a pitch for state funding for **4 new full-time positions** in various sections of our division, acknowledging high constituent demand and need for additional professional and support staff. We await word as to whether those "asks" were incorporated into the Governor's Budget.

Vacancies combined with a tight job market and non-competitive state salaries in booming high cost-of-living metro areas are stretching staff thin, and we continue to advocate for attention to these issues and the factors that give rise to these situations.

As in December 2022 for my last report, I would like to acknowledge for special recognition and sincere thanks the hard work of multiple staff members who have straddled multiple positions because of promotions and vacancies and done excellent work under demanding circumstances – their dedication to public service is bar none.

#### **State Historic Preservation Office (HPO)**

**Biennium National Register statistics.** In drafting our contributions to the 2020-2022 biennial report, we share the following interesting statistics:

"Participation in the National Register of Historic Places program remained active, as indicated by **65 new listings**, including additional documentation and boundary increase

nominations, an increase of 40 percent over the previous biennium with review of several community-level districts requiring additional staff time and attention and **despite the Survey and National Register Branch being at 50% strength staff-wise from late 2021 to the end of the biennium**. This healthy number of new listings exceeds some sister states and continues to demonstrate strong interest in the historic rehabilitation tax credit program and the official recognition of historic significance and value conveyed by the National Register.

"Nominations were notably concentrated in the Piedmont with 37 nominations from 16 counties, 15 nominations from 11 western counties, and 13 nominations from 9 counties. Surry, particularly, was particularly well represented with 9 listings, or nearly 15% of the state's entire listings this biennium.

"The **21 new National Register historic districts** and historic district boundary increases are nearly quadruple the number from last biennium (6) and include **districts in downtown Asheboro, Black Mountain, downtown Dallas, downtown Elizabeth City, Enfield, downtown Kinston, Mount Airy (commercial and residential), Oxford, downtown Pilot Mountain, downtown Robbinsville, downtown Sanford, downtown Sparta and Winton**, many arising from our survey work done in-house or through CLG grants and in cooperation with local governments and residents."

**February 2023 National Register Advisory Committee meeting.** The first of 2023's three National Register Advisory Committee meetings occurred on Thursday, February 9. Eight nomination proposals were heard along with 5 Study List proposals. This meeting was the second we have held in person since 2020, and all were glad to gather in person once again.

Nominations included **two houses** (Alexander and Mary Hanes House in Winston-Salem, and the William and Barbara Mutschler House in Wake Forest); a **textile mill** (Flint Mill No. 2 in Gastonia); a **water treatment plant** ( Mooresville); an expansion of and update to the **Downtown Greensboro Historic District**; a **school linked to desegregation efforts in Hyde County** (Davis School in Englehard); **Craggy Historic District** in Woodfin in Buncombe County; and the mid-century **Blue Ridge Tourist Court** in Boone.

**New Certified Local Government.** The **Town of Waxhaw** was recently certified by the National Park Service as a Certified Local Government (CLG), signifying its commitment to a local historic preservation program and making it eligible for our modest federal preservation "seed" grant program. It is highly unusual to have more than one local government certified within a year and this is our third since last March. **In fact, only five other NC local governments have been certified within the last ten years.** The Heritage & Historic Preservation – National Park Service Facebook page shared a post welcoming Waxhaw. The link is <https://www.facebook.com/HHPreservItNPS/posts/pfbid0kQWChd1XqHK48f4hq5DEnrhqi35Pq5ahzhAmPzsG3EUNjp8JQU56CfZmVhf8E3PBI>.



**Upcoming State Historic Preservation Office training (details to come):**

- Individual Preservation Commission Training, Taylorsville and Boone, April 11 and 12;
- Commission Assistance Mentoring Program (CAMP) (conducted by trainers from the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions), Asheville, April 21;
- Historic Windows Workshop, Swansboro, April 22; and
- Historic Cemetery Workshop, Beaufort, May 11.

**AIA Taliesin Colloquium 2023:** DSHPO Ramona Bartos and Senior Preservation Architect Tim Simmons of the State Historic Preservation Office attended the American Institute of Architects' Taliesin Colloquium 2023: *The Evolution of Preservation Standards and Guidelines* in Scottsdale, Arizona in February. **North Carolina was one of only five State Historic Preservation Offices represented** (in addition to **Arizona, Colorado, New York, and Washington**); DSHPO Bartos is also currently serving as the National Board president for the national professional organization the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers. More information about the colloquium below.

***Taliesin Colloquium 2023: The Evolution of Preservation Standards and Guidelines***

*We must ask if the current policies and standards governing historic preservation continue to be viable as the world is far different than it was when the standards were written. The current climate crisis has changed codes and regulations and goals toward sustainable building practices. Equally our understanding of the need for historic preservation to take on a more holistic view of sustainability including social, cultural and economic equity has intensified and calls for us to look closely as to whether current standards are inclusive or exclusive. Are the current policies and practices of historic preservation still valid or must they mature to meet the current challenges? How can we respond to these challenges and prepare for the future? Do policies and practices need to be open to change? Some say that current Standards provide the required flexibility and that that it is the interpretation that has become too rigid. Others believe that we need additional standards to address issues of social and economic equity. This Colloquium will take a deep dive into the global issues that preservationists face today and the Standards and Guidelines that have been the backbone of our practice.*

**Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.** DSHPO and Division Director Ramona Bartos attended the spring business meeting of the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in Washington, DC, the first week of March; she is a voting member by virtue of her role as current board president of the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers. She also attended the swearing in of the recently confirmed, presidentially nominated chair Professor Sara Bronin at the US Supreme Court, where Justice Sonia Sotomayor administered the oath to Chair Bronin.

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation is the federal coordinating agency for all historic preservation activity within the federal government and sets various policies and regulations for Section 106 environmental review practice for infrastructure and other federally permitted, approved, or funded projects. The State Historic Preservation Office together with the Office of State Archaeology review between 3500 to 4000 projects annually statewide under these laws.

**Congressional Briefings; National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers' Annual Meeting.** State Historic Preservation Officer Dr. Darin Waters and DSHPO Ramona Bartos traveled to Washington, DC, the first full week of March to provide congressional briefings to our state delegation on the state of historic preservation in North Carolina and to attend the annual meeting of the national peer professional organization National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (NCSHPO).

Ramona Bartos was elected to a second two-year term as President of NCSHPO, and will serve through spring 2025.

## **Historical Research Office**

**Highway Historical Marker Advisory Committee meeting.** The committee's first meeting of this fiscal year took place on December 13<sup>th</sup> in person at 109 E. Jones Street. The agenda was the longest in living memory, with nearly 3 dozen proposals considered as to their statewide significance. Among those proposals that were approved by both the Committee and Secretary Reid Wilson:

- **Wallace Brothers Herbarium (Statesville):** *World renowned supplier of medicinal herbs, barks, berries & roots. Est. by Jewish immigrants, 1871. One block NW until 1942.*
- **Chief Justice Susie Sharp (Reidsville).** *1907-1996. Was first female chief justice of N.C. Supreme Court, elected in 1974. First female superior court judge & associate justice. Lived 3 blks. W.*
- **Human Computers (Raleigh).** *Women mathematicians, many from N.C., executed complex calculations for U.S. military and NASA, 1941-1975, during WWII and the Space Race.*
- **Robert F. Williams (Monroe).** *1925-1996. Black civil rights leader. Advocate for armed self-defense. He broadcast "Radio Free Dixie," 1961-1965, from exile in Cuba. Birthplace was ½ mile S.*
- **"Moms" Mabley (Brevard).** *1894-1975. Pioneer Black comedian, social and civil rights activist, 1920's-1974. Born Loretta Aiken, she grew up 1/5 mi. W.*
- **Carolista Baum (Nags Head).** *1940-1991. Environmental activist. Stopped destruction of Jockey's Ridge sand dune in 1973. Fundraised and lobbied to preserve as a N.C. State Park, 1975.*
- **Pre-Flight School (Chapel Hill).** *Operated 1942-1945 to provide rigorous training to about 20,000 U.S. Navy cadets. Elevated national profile of the university. It was XX yards west.*
- **Old Salem Historic District (Winston-Salem).** *Est. 1948 here as first local historic district in N.C. Prototype for state's local historic preservation laws.*
- **Robert F. Sink (Lexington).** *U.S. Army officer. Commanded 506<sup>th</sup> Regiment, 101st Airborne Division during World War II & Fort Bragg in the late 1950s. He lived nearby.*

- **Allen School (Asheville).** *Established in 1887 to educate African Americans in western N.C. Emerged as residential preparatory school for Black women. Was ½ mi. X until 1974.*
- **Equal Rights League (rural Edgecombe County).** *Newly freed people, 1866, rallied at Hammond's Hill, here, for voting rights, fair wages, self-defense. Became early grassroots civil rights organization.*

We cordially invite you to attend any of these marker dedication ceremonies as they are planned; Ansley Wegner will have details in coming months following the foundry's fabrication of the markers.

**Children's Books.** In collaboration with our America 250 plans as well as our regular manuscript development efforts, we have several children's book projects underway, including a book about Carolista Baum, the savior of Jockey's Ridge; the Edenton Tea Party; and the Harlow Patriots, an African American group of Revolutionary War soldiers from the now Onslow County area.

## **Office of State Archaeology (OSA)**

**Section 106 work.** State Archaeologist John Mintz reports overly robust submissions of increasingly complex and large-scale infrastructure and development projects requiring OSA's and HPO's review, including solar fields, industrial developments, residential subdivisions, and several highway projects, including the A-9 corridor in the far west that is deep within the Cherokee homeland, and the Kinston Bypass, which impacts the National Register-listed Civil War Wyse Fork Battlefield. We continue in our mission to work conscientiously to protect or minimize effects on a wide variety of historic places that represent 15,000 years of human history while North Carolina continues to develop modern energy infrastructure, industrial investment, homes, and transportation improvements.

**New OSA webinar "Wrecked on Chicamacomico: A Look at the Shipwrecks of Wimble Shoals, NC" (in collaboration with NOAA).** On March 7, 2023, OSA offered its latest webinar in collaboration with NOAA with Allyson Ropp, Maritime Archaeologist with the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology, who made a presentation about the wide variety of ships that wrecked along the northern portion of Hatteras Island. Like many places on the North Carolina coast, there lies a set of submerged shoals, Wimble Shoals. These shoals have been agents of destruction in the area for centuries, playing a role in the wrecking of ships sailing the Atlantic shipping lanes. Many of the wrecking events led to harrowing rescues by passing ships or by the U.S. Life Saving Service units stationed along the island. This presentation explored the histories of some of the vessels lost along Wimble Shoals and northern Hatteras Island. It further examined the overall near shore and offshore wrecking trends of the area to understand various dynamics to the loss of vessels. **More information here:** [https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/teachers/webinar-series.html?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=GovDelivery](https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/teachers/webinar-series.html?utm_medium=email&utm_source=GovDelivery)

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

## North Carolina Historical Commission – March 2023 report

### NC Division of State History Museums

The Museums have been very busy for the last three months. School visitation has picked up significantly at the Museum of History with general visitation at the other museums picking up as well. We finished calendar year 2022 with much improved visitation numbers over 2021. The total visits per museum for calendar year 2022 are as follows:

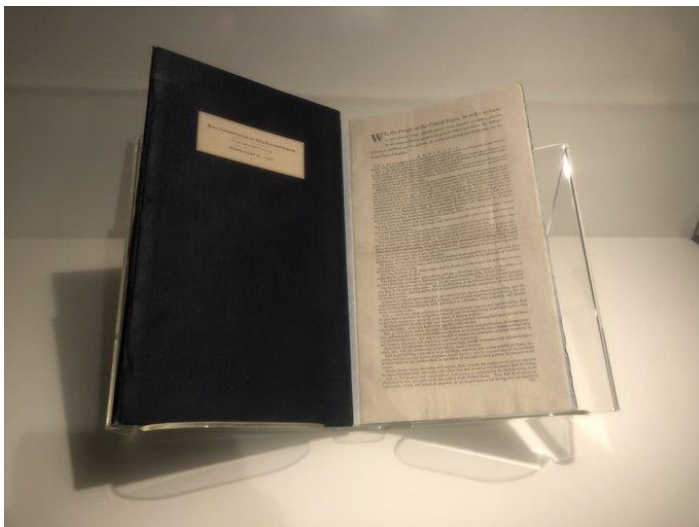
- North Carolina Museum of History – 274,775
- Beaufort Maritime Museum– 140,673
- Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum – 103,631
- Museum of the Albemarle – 78,163
- Museum of the Cape Fear – 37,882
- Southport Maritime Museum – 33,662
- Mountain Gateway Museum – 12,824

The following details the activities for each museum since December 1, 2022 and ending February 28, 2023.

### December 2022 Division Highlights Report

#### North Carolina Museum of History:

The North Carolina Museum of History hosted



a special one-day public exhibition of a rare

first printing of the U.S. Constitution, Wednesday, Dec. 7.

The document is one of just 14 known copies of the official printing of the Constitution produced for the delegates to the Constitutional Convention and for the Continental Congress. It is one of only two copies of the first printing of the Constitution that remain in private hands.

The document was exhibited along with North Carolina’s original copy of the Bill of Rights, currently held in the permanent collection of the State Archives of North Carolina, providing a unique opportunity to view original copies of the two documents side by side.

- 1775 visitors viewed the exhibition in the span of 24 hours.
- Visiting dignitaries included Governor Roy Cooper, Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court, Paul Newby, Secretary of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Reid Wilson, The State Treasurer Dale Folwell, North Carolina State Auditor Beth Wood, Executive Director of PBS-NC David Crabtree,

The event was covered nationally by AP (3M) and statewide including [The Charlotte Observer](#), [The News and Observer](#), [Greensboro News and Record](#), [WFMY-Greensboro](#), [CBS-17](#), and [WNCT](#).



December third: The North Carolina Museum of History celebrated its 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary! This special day featured all-day free admission to the museum’s

ticketed exhibit [The Power of Women in Country Music](#), live on-site broadcasting from the Triangle's country music station and exhibition sponsor WQDR, along with specially themed treats, a birthday promotion in the [Museum Shop](#), and more!

*Jackson first recorded in 1956.... This night was of a different stripe, obviously, but was no less magical.*



**December tenth: The Second of the Southern Songbird Series opened to a sold-out, enthusiastic auditorium as Tift Merritt sang hits and celebrated the history of the works from the Women of Country Music.**

Secretary Reid Wilson, QDR talent Amanda Daughtry and North Carolina legend Jim Lauderdale kicked off the evening.

From the ***Old Grey Cat Review***:

*Accompanied by a band that featured pedal steel guitarist Eric Heywood, as well as three backup singers, Tift opened the 100-minute (give or take) show with one of her favorite songs from one of her all-time favorite albums, "Two More Bottles of Wine" from Emmylou Harris' classic Quarter Moon in a Ten Cent Town. She followed it with two from Bobbie Gentry, "Mississippi Delta" and "Fancy," and then the much-covered "Silver Threads and Golden Needles," which Wanda*



## Mountain Gateway Museum



The Mountain Gateway Museum in Old Fort, NC, welcomed the holidays with a host of yuletide festivities. The museum and the Old Fort Community Forum partnered on a “Community Christmas Kickoff” on Saturday, December 3, that featured food, hot chocolate, and children’s crafts. Members of MGM’s Friends groups then rode on a horse-drawn wagon in the Old Fort Christmas Parade, after which they and the museum’s staff hosted MGM’s annual Christmas Open House and Luminaries Lighting. During December, about 160 kindergarten, first-, and second-grade students enjoyed MGM’s annual Children’s Christmas Program. And the museum’s staff and volunteers held a community food drive to benefit the Foothills Food Hub in Marion, NC.

## Museum of the Albemarle



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

- Through December 2022 over 1,500 individuals and children have been served through scheduled programming. The Museum has hosted 2 Gingerbread Workshops in addition to scheduled school programming. School programming included visiting the

Albemarle Express HO train, reading of circa 1970s Little Golden book “Jingle Bell”, STEM activity of watching carbon dioxide in action, singing of the 1970s era Alvin & The Chipmunks “The Chipmunk’s Song (Don’t Be Late)”, hands-on activity making a 1970s Pet Rock, photo, paper chain, and worksheet of adjectives to describe the 1970s.

- Held our Annual Holiday Open House on December 3<sup>rd</sup> .
- Outreach Through Social and Traditional Media

## Museum of the Cape Fear



1. *Carolina Holiday* exhibit was up in the museum's changing exhibit gallery. This exhibit featured artifacts from the North Carolina Museum of History, the Museum of the Cape Fear, and loaned items to show celebrations by different cultural and religious groups in the Cape Fear Region.

2. The annual **Christmas at the 1897 Poe House** was

held December 4, with carolers, Mr. and Mrs Claus, open house and a scrap ornament making workshop. Around 500 visitors attended. The museum continued scrap ornament workshops every weekend in December.



The deinstallation of the exhibits in the gallery was completed on December 3rd. The third construction meeting was held on December 8th, construction may proceed as much as six weeks ahead of schedule.

While the museum store and lobby had originally remained open to visitors, the full museum closed to the public on Dec. 10 and won't reopen until construction is completed.

Maritime Historian David Bennett was the keynote speaker for the Division of Marine Fisheries' 250th celebration. More than 200 attended and heard him speak about the history of Fisheries management in the state. They've also asked him to be part of the planning committee for a public event next year and to present at their brown bag lunches in 2023.

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Producers for the German version of PBS were in Beaufort recently to film a segment on Bonehenge Whale Center, which Natural Science Curator Keith Rittmaster operates under a MOA between NCDNCR & the nonprofit Carolina Cay Foundation. The production team joined Keith on marine mammal ID trips, toured the facility & accompanied the delivery of a dolphin skeleton prepared at Bonehenge to its new home at the NC Aquarium at Pine Knoll

Shores.



New Education Curator Shannon Walker started on Dec. 17. She has more than a decade of local and maritime history background and had previously been education director and assistant manager at Brunswick Town State Historic Site.

Our State Magazine interviewed Administrative Assistant Kyra McCormack about the museum being a Certified Autism Center. The museum will be featured in an article about accessible sites.



## January 2023 Division Highlights Report

### North Carolina Museum of History:



- The North Carolina Museum of History hosted its 22nd Annual African American Cultural Celebration Saturday, January 28th, 2023. It was the first time we had gathered as a community to celebrate the event in three years.
- Over **5,345** attended the celebration, the annual kick-off to Black History Month.
- Over **22,604** students and participants tuned in from **62** NC counties, **6** states, and the UK for the AACC Virtual Education Day on Thursday.
- **Over 600 people actively participated** as staff, volunteers, presenters, sponsors, planners, board members, organization representatives...the excitement was palpable!

**Dignitaries for the Saturday celebration included: Secretary Reid Wilson, Adrienne Nirde, Associate Director, North Carolina African American Heritage Commission, Tracey Burns, Deputy Secretary for Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion and Dr. Valerie Johnson, Dean - Arts, Sciences, and Humanities at Shaw University.**

The event was covered nationally by [Yahoo \(2 articles\)](#), statewide by [The News](#) and Observer, ( 2 stories), Charlotte Post, [Spectrum](#), [The Robesonian](#) and locally by [ABC-11](#), [WRAL Out and About](#), and CBS-17 ( 3 stories, including [AACC Virtual Education Day](#) and the [AACC African American Cultural Celebration.](#)) Student videographers and writers from Wake Tech and Goldsboro High School also attended to cover AACC.



**January 21, 2023:** The third of the Southern Songbird Series opened to a sold-out, enthusiastic auditorium as North Carolina legend Rissi Palmer sang with her legendary style. We are extending the series through April 1, 2023.

Secretary Reid Wilson, QDR talent Amanda Daughtry and North Carolina legend Jim Lauderdale kicked off the evening.

## Mountain Gateway Museum



January 2023 was Mountain Gateway Museum's month for C.O.P.S.: Cleaning, Organizing, and Planning Something! After packing away the holiday décor, MGM's staff focused on cleaning and better organizing an artifact storage area, making minor repairs to its buildings, and planning participation in several events, including the West Regional History Day and a three-day R.A.I.L. symposium, both to be held in March at UNC-Asheville. The museum also plans to open a new in-house photography exhibit in February to celebrate the Town of Old Fort's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## 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: “Archaeological Discoveries at Somerset Place, 1952-2001” and “Designing and Engineering Boats”.
- Exhibit openings: Smithsonian traveling exhibit “Crossroads: Change in Rural America”, together with digital media component on Bicentennial and

Century Farms of the Albemarle region, as well as a student art contest on the importance of country stores in the Albemarle region.

- Outreach Through Social and Traditional Media with weekly article submitted to *The Daily Advance* for publication each Sunday.

## Museum of The Cape Fear



playhouse has a new shingle roof and contractors are working on the Poe House porches. Work will include the Complex's parking lot, painting the house, Poe House brick walks and backyard restrooms, and some work to the museum building. Contractors have 5 months to do the work. The Complex will keep the house open for tours as much as possible.

### **1. North Carolina History Center on the Civil War, Emancipation & Reconstruction:**

The Center's exhibit designers, Eisterhold and Associates, were in Fayetteville January 23 -28. The exhibit team and historians made presentations and gave the public the opportunity to make comments on the updated content.

### **2. Repair and Renovation**

**Project:** Work began January 23. The 1897 Poe House



The museum remains closed to the public until construction and installation of the new permanent exhibit has been completed. Friends and staff are working with the National Park Service to move the 1854 Fresnel lens into the galleries by the end of March.

Administrative Specialist I Molly L. Trivelpiece was promoted to Curator of Education. While the museum is closed, she will continue to fulfil the administrative specialist duties as well.





The Friends of the Museum have established a \$20,000 general purpose fund to cover unexpected costs (equipment, acquisitions, exhibits, etc.) for the museum. An annual donation will continue to build the fund.

Brad Talley of Jacksonville, Fla won the 2022

Friends' raffle boat - two wooden kayaks that were built at the Watercraft Center. He bought the tickets during a visit to the Crystal Coast. More than 2,600 tickets were sold. The 2023 raffle boat -- an electric-powered dinghy -- is now in place in the museum lobby.

Brad Talley of Jacksonville, Fla won the 2022 Friends' raffle boat - two wooden kayaks that were built at the Watercraft Center. He bought the tickets during a visit to the Crystal Coast. More than 2,600 tickets were sold. The 2023 raffle boat -- an electric-powered dinghy -- is now in place in the museum lobby.



New Education Curator Shannon Walker has started. She has more than a decade of local and maritime history background and comes to us from Brunswick Town State Historic Site where she had been education director and assistant manager.

The new Deep Dives into History program continues to be popular. The January hands-on program, which focused on navigation and life of a sailor, reached 713 visitors throughout the 4-hour program.

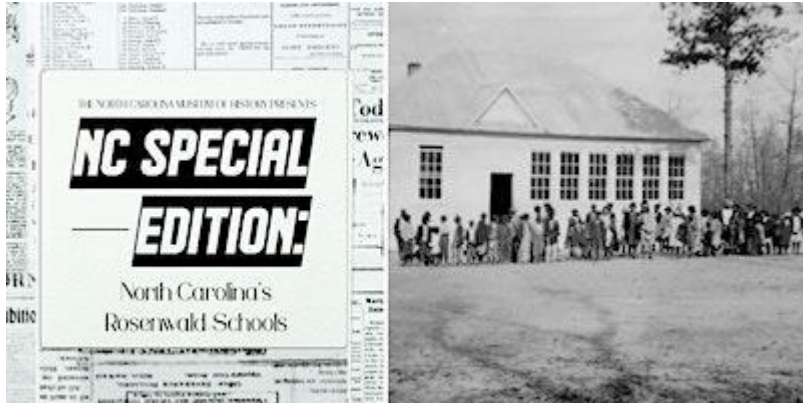
Staff are working on two temporary exhibits: *Women in World War II: Military and Civilian Women in Southeastern North Carolina* and *Navy Patrol Shrimp Boats: Protecting the 6<sup>th</sup> Naval District Cape Fear Area*, which focuses on locals who joined the Navy to look for U-boats.

## February 2023 Division Highlights Report

### North Carolina Museum of History:

February was an exciting month of museum programs and events, including but not limited to:

February 16<sup>th</sup>: NC Special Edition: North Carolina's [Rosenwald Schools +](#)



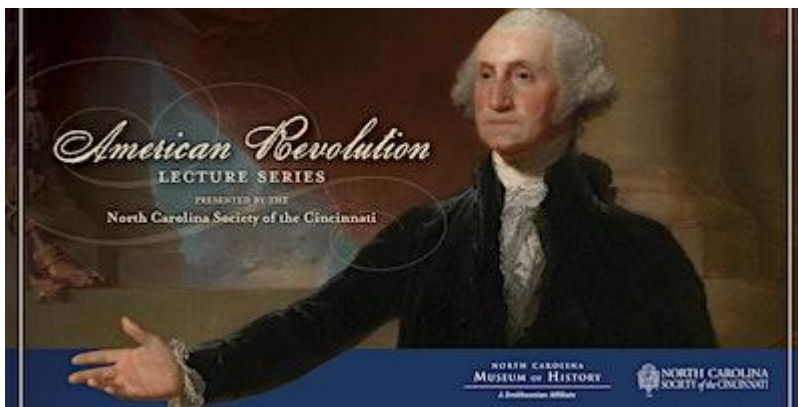
-an enthusiastic viewing of the new documentary *Unlocking the Doors of Opportunity: The Rosenwald Schools of North Carolina*, was held on February 16<sup>th</sup>. Around 180 attended the event. The documentary tells the story of North Carolina's Rosenwald schools and why the Jim Crow era made them necessary.

From the 1910s into the early 1930s, more than 5,300 school buildings were

constructed in African American communities throughout 15 southern states. Seed money came from Chicago philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, CEO of Sears, Roebuck, and Company. Black communities put up cash, and local school boards agreed to operate the facilities. North Carolina was home to over 800 Rosenwald schools, more than any other state. A discussion with the film's producers, Rosenwald school alumnus and local scholars followed the screening.

Chrystal Regan was interviewed by Ken Smith, WRAL, on Tuesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, about the screening.

February 23, 2023:



Society of the Cincinnati presented: [American Revolution Lecture Series – To The End of the World.](#)

**Speaker:** [Andrew Waters, Author, and Historian](#)

Waters discussed his latest work, [To the End of the World: Nathanael Greene, Charles Cornwallis, and the Race to the Dan.](#) He shared the dramatic story of

the Southern Campaign's "Great Escape" while providing insights into the psychological and intellectual distinctions between its two great generals, Greene and Cornwallis. A book signing followed the presentation.

Friday, February 17, 2023 - Museum lit up for the Southern Songbirds concert



[Southern Songbird Series](#): Ask Me Anything: Love + Life

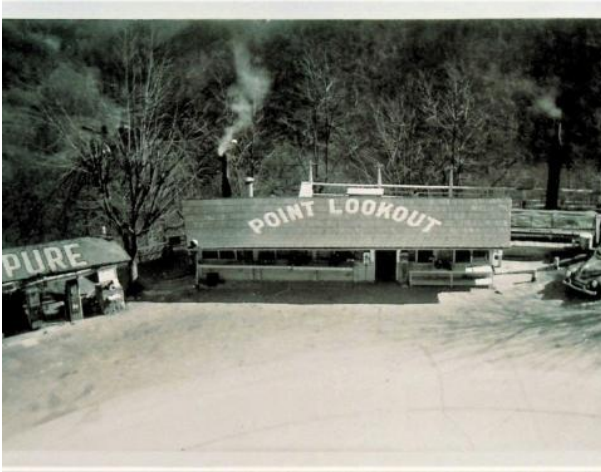
[North State Journal Article](#) highlighted the exhibition and Southern Songbirds Series

We celebrated the month of love with this special edition of Southern Songbirds. **The evening began with extended hours for [The Power of Women in Country Music](#) exhibition from 5–7 p.m. The Poetry Fox was a special treat with poems to the visiting valentines.**

At 7 p.m., Rodenbough, Rhudy, and Gudasz shared an evening "in the round" of songs and advice on any questions about matters of the heart. The songwriters then take turns answering and singing their original songs. Jim Lauderdale emceed.

**[The Power of Women in Country Music](#) exhibition will remain open until Sunday, April 2, 2023. The Museum Shop reported this was our largest month of ticket sales ever, with over 2500 in ticket sales!**





## **Mountain Gateway Museum**

In celebration of the Town of Old Fort's sesquicentennial, the Mountain Gateway Museum in Old Fort, NC, opened a new photography exhibit in February that features the mountain town's people, places, institutions, and events during the past century and a half. "A Peek Into the Past: Old Fort at 150" will remain open through Dec. 31. However, because of the number of historically significant photographs available, the 72 images now on display will be replaced by another round of photographs in July.

## **Museum of the Albemarle**



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

- Three Hybrid (both in-person and virtual) History for Lunches: "Families of the United States Colored Troops", "Sea Level Rise Along the Coast of NC & Inland Communities" and "Progress & Growth: P.W. Moore High School, 1934-1954".

and book signing "Dismal Freedom: A History of the Maroons of the Great Dismal Swamp".

- Outreach Through Social and Traditional Media with a weekly article submitted to *The Daily Advance* for publication each Sunday.



## Museum of The Cape Fear



1. The Repair and Renovation project of the Complex continues. Current work involves repair to 1897 Poe House porches (repair or replacement of spindles and rails and repair of ceilings and floors). Workers have primed the house in preparation for painting. Still to come is repainting of the house, and repairs to the parking lot and brick walks. The project is anticipated to proceed through May 2023.

2. Surveyors worked all over the Complex during February mapping the location of current utilities. This is all in preparation for construction of the main building of the North Carolina History Center on the Civil War, Emancipation and Reconstruction.

3. The museum has hired a new Exhibit and Facility Technician, who started March 1, 2023.



The Museum closed to the public on December 12, 2022, for construction of a new permanent exhibit on the history of the Graveyard of the Atlantic.

Working with the Friends, the Cape Hatteras Electrical Co-op, The Outer Banks Lighthouse Society, and the National Park Service the Museum has raised the \$80,000 needed to move the 1854 Fresnel lens into the galleries by the end of March.



## NORTH CAROLINA MARITIME MUSEUMS BEAUFORT

Rebecca Edwards is the new MCI Exhibits Design Curator. The North Carolina has a B.A. in Graphic Communication from the University of Maryland's Global Campus and studied Fine Arts at the University of North Carolina in Asheville and Media Arts and Animation at the Art

Institute.

Ms. Allison Kohne is the new Collections Registrar. Ms. Kohne joined the staff on February 15. She graduated from Baylor University with a master's in museum studies. Her undergraduate degree is in history from UNC Greensboro.

The Museum is partnering with the state's Division of Marine Fisheries to help support its bicentennial celebration. Maritime History Curator David Bennett will be presenting four special programs at the museum (and live-streamed) in the lead-up to DMF's public jamboree marking the milestone. The museum will also have a presence at that June celebration.

The Museum again participated in the Swansboro Business Expo where our booth was voted Most Informative for the second time out of our three years at the show (we were clearly robbed last year!)



## NORTH CAROLINA MARITIME MUSEUMS SOUTHPORT

The staff has been adding new programs, including a "Seashells" and a "Sharks" Discovery Cart. This month's programs and outreach include: North Carolina Rice Festival - March 4; History in Miniature - March 11; National History Day Competition - March 14 & 15; Brunswick Community Day at the

Museum of the Coastal Carolina - March 18; and Deep Dives: Women Airforce Service Pilots - March 18

Education Curator Shannon Walker participated in/completed the Project WET workshop. The goal of Project WET is to facilitate and promote awareness, appreciation, knowledge, and stewardship of North Carolina's water resources. The program was presented by DEQ in conjunction with Cape Fear River Watch and counts towards her NC Environmental Educators Certificate. Site Manager John Moseley presented a program on the 54th Coast Artillery

Regiment at the Brunswick County Black History Symposium. The Regiment served in the Cape Fear area and was the only African American CA Regiment raised in WWII. Ms. Walker assisted at Fort Anderson with visitor services, program logistics, and historic weapons safety.

## News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2023

Michelle Lanier

Historic Sites continues to experience growth and expansion, particularly in the realm of new initiatives, updates, and acquisitions.

With the addition of **Shallow Ford State Historic Site** and the permanent exhibit at **Historic Bath**, both dedicated in December, staff have been moving forward, this past winter with development, restoration, and/or visitor center redesigns at properties such **Historic Halifax, Edenton, the Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum, and Fort Fisher**. This physical growth has been matched by the energy of new programs and partnerships such as with the **NC American Indian Commission and the NC Rice Festival**.

What follows are recent, site-based and administrative highlights for the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties.

**The North Carolina Transportation Museum's** \$10 million restoration project is underway for the Powerhouse and Car Repair Shed. When complete, the Powerhouse will provide space for rentals and traveling exhibits. The Car Repair Shed will provide storage and repair space for rail equipment. The project is currently in the design phase.

The museum continues its work to restore a Jim Crow era rail car, the Southern 1211, using a \$287K grant from the National Park Service. The car was built by The Pullman Company and later partitioned to operate as a segregated passenger car. The current phase of the restoration will include adding electrical systems and repairing and painting the exterior of the car.

The museum hosted the annual conference of the Railroad Passenger Car Alliance in January of 2023. The conference drew 250 attendees from the United States and Canada and was the largest in the organizations 40-year history.

THE POLAR EXPRESS Train Ride™ ridership for 2022 was 68,000 people. An increase of 12.2% over 2021. This was the largest attendance for the event since it began in 2014.

**Hallowed Ground** magazine, the publication of the American Battlefield Trust, heavily featured North Carolina and it's last edition of 2022. Not only were several historic sites featured, several staff authored articles as well. This publication is one of national

## News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2023

Michelle Lanier

significance and we're beyond proud. You can find and enjoy these well-researched articles here: <https://www.battlefields.org/give/membership/magazine>.

On Monday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties supported the NC Museum of History for a livestreamed educational program about North Carolina's Civil War histories, from the **State Capitol** to the battlefield. This program reached 7,610 participants from 55 counties and included the participation of Terra Schramm of the State Capitol, Randy Reed of **Bennett Place**, Vera Cecelski of Historic **Stagville**, Matt Young of the **CSS Neuse**, Colby Lipscomb of **Bentonville Battlefield**, and Kaitlin O'Connor of **Fort Fisher**. This program, entitled "(Un)Civil War in North Carolina LIVE!," was designed by Sally Bloom of the NC Museum of History.

Beginning mid-May 2023, a research team of Duke University students will provide approximately 500 hours of historical research and writing about **Bennett Place** and life in North Carolina's Piedmont region during the nineteenth century. This project, supported by Duke's Information Science + Studies Program, the Duke Library, and the Provost's Office, continues work from the 2022-2023 school year, as Duke faculty, staff, and students have been exploring ways to work with Bennett Place to help the site become more inclusive and accessible. Along with the 1865 surrender, scholars have been thinking about Bennett Place as a place with many stories to tell, from the time of the first native American inhabitants to the present. This summer, we'll be using site artifacts, census records, maps, and other documents to reconstruct the life of small farmers, women, and enslaved people in the neighborhood of the Bennett farm. In addition, we'll be investigating ecological history and the effects of agriculture on the land. Along with historical research, we plan to evaluate the best options to house our findings and make them available to broader audiences.

The **Chief Curator of Collections** for the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties (Elizabeth Reign) has been chosen to join the American Association for State and Local History's 2023 History Leadership Institute Seminar. The Seminar is aimed at mid- and advanced-career professionals at history organizations. Elizabeth is one of only twenty professionals, across the nation, chosen to participate. Through workshops, discussions, activities, and field studies facilitated by dozens of nationally-recognized experts working on the field's leading edge, participants tackle the most pressing challenges confronting history institutions and develop strategies for addressing them. The Seminar challenges history professionals to stop asking "Are we doing things right?" and to start asking "Are we doing the right things?"

## News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2023

Michelle Lanier

On March 16-18, stakeholders of **Somerset Place State Historic Site and Historic Stagville State Historic Site** have been invited to participate in an inaugural gathering entitled "Descendant Communities Social Innovation Lab."

The Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) and the National Trust for Historic Preservation will convene descendants of slavery who are stakeholders of various types of culturally significant historic sites and cemeteries for 3 days of empowerment, education, and organizing.

Related to this invitation, Historic Stagville Site Manager Vera Cecelski was recently invited to join the Advisory Council of the Smithsonian's Smith Center Interns and Fellows Program, through which Stagville was an inaugural participant.\*\*

The Innovation Lab will bring together the leaders of families, preservation activists, cultural heritage practitioners and artists, all of whom are descendants of slavery who are leading efforts to preserve, protect, interpret and advocate for historic sites that are important to Black communities.

**Division Director** Michelle Lanier has been invited to join thought leaders as a panelist in the opening plenary of this national convening.

Organizers describe a descendant community as a group of people whose enslaved ancestors were connected to a particular historic place or space like a historic site, battleground or burial ground. A descendant community includes both those who know their specific familial genealogical connection and those without definite ties to a single site, but to a surrounding region, reflecting the fact that family ties often crossed property lines and physical boundaries set to demarcate sites of enslavement. The system of enslavement and its aftermath may have obscured heritage ties or scattered or erased written records but descendants have found alternative means of assuming the responsibilities and benefits of family and restored heritage through our own institutions. Descendant community members are additionally defined as those who demonstrate they care for or are socially or emotionally connected to the ancestors they claim.

Earlier this month, **Deputy Director** Charles LeCount accompanied Sarah Koonts, LeRae Umfleet to represent the NC DNCR at the first America250 planning meeting

## News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2023

Michelle Lanier

in Williamsburg, VA, where North Carolina was recognized for strong and inclusive preparations for the multi-year commemoration.

**Town Creek State Historic Site** continued to build upon an initiative started a year ago, with youth involved in the Waccamaw-Siouan S.T.E.M. Students were challenged to create wigwam models using traditional knowledge and native materials. Later, the completed wigwams were assembled at the Tribal office and displayed as a model village. After communication with S.T.E.M. Program Director Ashley Lomboy and Assistant Chief Pamela Young-Jacobs, **Town Creek Indian Mound State Historic Site** was granted permission to display the village in the visitor center museum at the Historic Site. The exhibit went on display in November of 2022 as part of American Indian Heritage Month, and was not only an opportunity to share the skill and success of the S.T.E.M. program, but also to expose visitors to a lesser-known NC State recognized tribe. The exhibit remained on display through the end of January 2023.

Site manager Rich Thompson invited the S.T.E.M. studio students and their families to visit Town Creek to see the exhibit on display and to tour the Historic Site. Town Creek's support group, The Friends of Town Creek Indian Mound Inc., provided funding to subsidize the trip, covering a portion of the fuel expense and lunches. Response was overwhelming, with more than seventy participants signing up to attend the January 21st field trip. The gathering also became the kickoff of the next S.T.E.M. project where participants will construct either a model Ouke (town house), or corn crib. So, visiting the village provided a full-scale view of how one of these structures could be built. These model structures will be used to round out the Waccamaw-Siouan village display at the tribal offices.

After lunch and a tour of the museum, including viewing the Wigwam Exhibit, the group was provided a guided tour of the village by staff, along with guest interpreter MSAI Director Nancy Strickland-Fields. For many in the group, it was their first visit to Town Creek. Many positive comments were heard about the beauty and peacefulness of the site, as well as feelings of connection and "homecoming." Also, students in the program sang their tribal canoe song on the grounds, a beautiful tune a tribute that will be shared with everyone once they are ready to do so publicly. Finally, the visit was capped with a hunting demonstration displaying 12,000 years of hunting tool evolution where participants were allowed the opportunity to try their hand and throwing Atlatl spears, and then testing their skill at playing the ancient game of Chunky. The children were thrilled at the chance, and adults seemed to enjoy it as well! After only four short hours,

## News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2023

Michelle Lanier

including lunch, the group had to depart for the return trip to Bolton, a 3+hr drive from Town Creek.

The new children's book, *Bountiful Red Acres: Two Farms, Two Families, and a Year on the Land*, a partnership between **Horne Creek State Historic Site**, the NC African American Heritage Commission, and Historical Publications is set to ship from the printer for delivery to UNC Press/Longleaf Services on March 3rd.

Using a blend of storytelling, facts and infographics, Eileen Heyes creates a snapshot of farm life in the Piedmont region of North Carolina during the late 1800s. The lives of neighboring families—one Black and one White—moves from season to season through the course of a year, in sometimes surprising ways. *Bountiful Red Acres* also cites the inequalities built into American life and shows how African Americans, who worked just as long and hard, received less compensation for the same amount of effort. Heyes and artist Dare Coulter offer a vibrant look at neighbors caring for each other and working together to force a living out of the red clay soil that is currently Horne Creek Farm State Historic Site.



## Report for Meeting of the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission, Spring 2023

Prepared by Adriene Nirdé, Associate Director, NC African American Heritage Commission

### COMMISSIONER RE-APPOINTMENT

- Juanita Moore (Wilson County)

### ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATES

- Currently vacant staff positions:
  - Director - Angela Thorpe completed her final day with NCAAHC on February 24, 2023.
- Newly filled NCAAHC staff positions:
  - Rodney Dawson, Education and Interpretation Specialist
  - Mikayla Medley, Administrative Associate
  - Vincentt Sutton, Program Coordinator

### 2023 NCAAHC STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

- NCAAHC Strategic Plan Goals, FY 2022-2023:
  - Continue to expand grassroots technical assistance support to statewide cultural groups.
  - Convene grassroots groups around statewide African American heritage needs and professional development opportunities, prioritizing local African American heritage commissions.
  - Share news, funding resources, and professional development opportunities with stakeholders, prioritizing artists and creatives.
  - Establish and nurture relationships with university and college programs and departments with disciplines that align with AAHC work.
  - Develop strategy for connecting AAHC to K-12 public schools.
  - Expand portfolio of public engagement resources, including trails, exhibits, educational resources, and physical resources.
  - Collaborate with internal and external partners to develop statewide African American Heritage Tourism Study and Implementation Plan.

### MAJOR PROJECT UPDATE

#### **“Africa to Carolina: Next Steps in the Journey” (Institute of Museum and Library Services Grant, July 2020-December 2022; Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation Planning Grant, July 2022-January 2023)**

Following a thorough national search, Amber Pelham, a graduate of the Public History graduate program at New York University and a Hampton University alum, was selected as the two-year Research Fellow for the AAHC’s “Africa to Carolina: Next Steps in the Journey” project. Amber began her role at the end of January 2021.

Amber performed additional research on the slave trade in the colony of North Carolina and has developed robust drafts of an introductory exhibit centering on the relationship between the Transatlantic Slave Trade and North Carolina. The

The North Carolina

African American

Heritage

Commission

exhibit underwent a thorough, stakeholder-centered review process in the Summer and Fall of 2021, as well as a thorough review by the North Carolina Historic Sites Exhibit Coordinating Committee in early 2022.

Slightly variable versions of this exhibit were installed at Bath State Historic Site, Brunswick Town/Ft. Anderson State Historic Site, Edenton State Historic Site, Somerset Place State Historic Site, Tryon Palace, Roanoke Island Festival Park, and the NC Maritime Museum at Beaufort in the Spring and Summer of 2022. The project team used excess grant funding to purchase additional copies of the exhibit, which have been added to the NCAAHC traveling exhibit program.

The project will also fund the development of an “Africa to Carolina” web portal. This website was designed to showcase information and resources that we know and have currently, with the intention of building upon it after the conclusion of the project in alignment with the larger goals of the Africa to Carolina initiative. A seasoned web contractor, Phil Bicking, joined the project team to build the web portal in July 2021. The web went live in December of 2022.

The [Africa to Carolina web portal](#) followed a flow that was similar to the exhibit, while also directing visitors back to where the exhibits are installed so that they may experience them in person. The portal serves as a collection of resources discussing the Transatlantic slave trade as a whole as well as its connections to North Carolina.

#### Web Portal Goals & Themes

- Embarking on a New Journey: Discusses the primary locations of embarkation of the eleven identified voyages that made their way to North Carolina.
- Voyages and Vessels: Identified sites of disembarkation in North Carolina
- New Spaces and Places: Describing the experiences of enslaved Africans upon their arrival to North Carolina

Research Fellow Amber Pelham had her last day with the Commission on December 20, 2022.

“Africa to Carolina” was selected as a semifinalist for the **Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation’s Inclusive Public Art Initiative**. A call for artists, launched this summer, led to the selection of artist team Stephen Hayes and David Wilson to design the project public art piece. Through the fall and winter of 2022, the NCAAHC collaborated with Facilitate Movement, LLC., to design and implement community engagement sessions in Wilmington, Navassa, New Bern, and Plymouth to share project updates, and to gather public art design concepts from statewide stakeholders. These concepts will shape the semi-final renderings the artist team will submit for grant consideration.

The NCAAHC submitted a final application package to the ZSR IPA Initiative in late January 2023. If selected as a finalist in 2023, funding would enable the project to expand to place public art markers in coastal disembarkation communities. Decisions regarding funding are due to be shared in March 2023.