

North Carolina Historical Commission Report
Division of Archives and Records
September 17, 2026

On behalf of the Division of Archives and Records, I am pleased to provide updates on recent division activities and programming for the Summer of 2026. America 250 NC dominated the summer, with lots of opportunities to showcase the Archives' collections. Internally, we've made strides toward improving our digital preservation program and collecting archival email at scale.

Key Highlights:

We presented an Expanded One Day Wonder at the Capitol 250: NC Freedom Fest in downtown Raleigh on July 4. We estimate that about 1,000 attendees stopped to see the exhibit, which featured the 1776 NC Constitution, the 1868 NC Constitution, and two rare federal documents: a 1777 broadside draft edition of the Articles of Confederation and North Carolina's 1789 printed copy of the US Constitution, sent for debate by a special convention. Other America 250 activities are described below.

In August, our Digital Services Government Records Sections finalized the workflow document and external forms necessary to begin our Capstone appraisal and collection of state government email of enduring value—a huge step toward establishing a comprehensive email archive for North Carolina state agencies.

And in September, the Archives has finalized a PO with Redstart Works (Jess Farrell) to produce a best-practices-focused assessment of our current digital preservation systems and workflows and to develop a selection rubric for purchasing a digital preservation software platform. Farrell's work will build on the DIT Business Analysis / Process Improvement group report produced over the summer.

Tours:

The Division offered more than 38 tours this quarter to a total of 535 participants. This included K-12 students, the members of the Council of State, America 250 NC Teacher Ambassadors, Governor's pages, Senate pages, DOJ interns, Court of Appeals interns, and other groups.

America 250 Programming:

In addition to our July 4 exhibit at the Historic State Capitol Building, we shared our One Day Wonder exhibits on June 29 at a commemoration of America 250 at the Executive Mansion; on July 12 at the Brunswick County Public Library in Shallotte, NC; on August 12 at Harnett County Main Library in Lillington, NC; and on September 17 at the Davidson County Historical Museum in Lexington, NC, reaching more than 225 attendees. Kelly and the Conservation Unit also provided access to several original documents for the Senate Ceremony at the State Capitol building on June 30; about 15 senators stopped to see the display.

Our outreach team continued their K-12 work, including a Youth250 Archives tour and blackout poetry activity using petitions on June 26 that brought in 106 attendees and a DocsBox Teacher Training at Tryon Palace, New Bern, on July 10 for 22 attendees.

On July 3, our Western Regional Archives staff had a booth at A250 Pioneer Day event at Mountain Gateway Museum; they interacted with about 250 attendees. We also ran a series of blog posts on Revolutionary War pensioners, and the Archives Podcast Committee published 3 A250 NC-themed podcast episodes in July.

Events:

- June 19, 11-1: Table at Executive Mansion Juneteenth event. Kelly and Judy.
- June 19: OBHC Table at the sixth's annual Juneteenth Celebration: The Sounds of Freedom at Manteo's Pea Island Cookhouse Museum. Katie and intern Zoe.
- June 19: OBHC Speaker Series at the College of the Albemarle (with Downtown Books), Andre Lawler on his book *A Perfect Frenzy*.
- June 23: "Documenting the World of Outlander" presentation, Carolina Gardens Community, Fuquay-Varina. 34 attendees.
- June 25, 11am: Keynote, Cooperating Raleigh Colleges Library Workshop. Kelly Policelli. 50 attendees.
- June 27: Table for Raleigh Pride at the City of Raleigh Museum. John Horan.
- June 27: WRA exhibit on WWI and Oteen VA Hospital at Thomas Wolfe State Historic Site 1918 Summer Social event.
- June 29, 1pm: Virtual presentation to Raleigh Tennis Association Summer Camp (8-10 year olds). Rebecca Stubbs, AV archivist, and John Horan, Oral Historian.
- June 30: "From Enslavement to Reconstruction: Lives of the Greene County USCT," with genealogist Trisha Blount. 71 attendees.
- June 30: WRA hosted the Carolina K-12 William Friday Teacher Retreat.
- July 7: Alice Shahan attended and presented at a Skills Share meeting of the Archivists Who Code group. 8 attendees.
- July 25: *Outlander* presentation at High Point Public Library. Josh & Alison presenting.
- July 30-31: "Looking Back to Look Forward: Updating Legacy Practices and Implementing New Systems in Modern Archives," SAA Annual Conference education panel session, Francesca Evans.
- July 31: North Carolina Community College Archivist Association. Keynote (Kelly P.), Oral History Workshop (John H.), and TAP presentation (Adrienne B.). ~40 attendees.
- August 5, noon-1pm: "Farewell to 'Documenting the World of Outlander'," webinar with Alison Thurman and Josh Hager. 84 attendees.
- August 31: CREST Convening, Falls Lake State Park, Rolling View Community Building. Adrienne Berney, Coordinator, handed over the reins to Kayla Leonard, Essential Records Analyst and long-time (Cultural Resources Emergency Support Team) CREST volunteer. 30 attendees.

- September 16, 1-2pm: “All Eyes on Charlotte: Perspectives on Busing.” Virtual program that’s part of our School Desegregation oral history project. Registration: <https://archives.ncdcr.gov/news/events/all-eyes-charlotte-perspectives-busing>
- September 17, 10am-3pm: One Day Wonder Constitution Exhibit, Davidson County Historical Museum, Lexington, NC 27292.

Workshops:

The Government Records Section Records Analysis Unit provided 6 Managing Public Records Workshops in July through September, including an MPR for Higher Ed, 44 attendees; and an MPR for SAA, 437 attendees. Their August presentations focused on Files and Filing, and in the fall, they’ll be presenting on managing digital public records.

Additional Outreach:

Leadership and staff conducted a site visit at St. Augustine’s University to assess the condition of transcript records on campus and assess the feasibility of a transfer of those records and the university’s electronic transcripts to the State Archives for either temporary or permanent storage and student services. We await word from the board of the university on next steps.

The Community Building Committee started a working group developing an LGBTQ+ Research Guide and content for tabling at relevant community events; the group met in July, divided research topics between volunteers, and committed to meeting monthly. This follows the recent creation of an LGBTQ+ oral history project.

Facilities:

The construction schedule for the HVAC replacement in the State Records Center building has been updated to reflect a change in the timeline that will require that all staff at the SRC vacate the office spaces from November 6 through the end of February 2027. We have started work to coordinate the relocation of staff and the move of furniture and materials out of the office spaces. Although access to the materials in the SRC may be occasionally disrupted, we expect to maintain the ability to pull records throughout the project.

Collections:

There was a total of 247 accessions this quarter, including 519.84 cu. ft. of physical material, 713 reels of microfilm, and 210.76 GB of born-digital records. Accession highlights include:

- Halifax County Estates Records, 1781-1968, 28.4 cu. ft.
- St. Andrews University Archives Collection, ca. 1896-2025, 216 cu. ft.
- Business Papers of I. N. Davis and Roy L. Davis, 1920 TO 1939
- R. S. Spencer Jr. Papers, 1880 TO 1990, 8 cubic feet
- State Board of Elections: Campaign Reports-North Carolina Candidates File, 1989-2016 - SR.16.23 (SCHEDS-35814), 1989-2016, 63 cubic feet

The Digital Access Branch completed scanning, metadata, and upload of the following curated digital collections, now available in the North Carolina Digital Collections online:

- Records concerning American Indians [series], Treasurers and Comptrollers Papers
- Revolutionary War Accounts [series], Treasurers and Comptrollers Papers
- Mary Duke Biddle Gallery [subseries], Museum of Art [series], DNCR Record Group
- School Busing, Governor's Papers Record Group

Technical Services:

In addition to their work to finalize the workflows and documentation for large-scale email collection, the Government Records and Digital Services Sections held the second Email Advocacy for Higher Education group meeting; they had 11 attendees. This group is designed to aid higher education agencies in NC in fulfilling their responsibilities vis-à-vis email as a public record.

Digital Description Archivist Jackie Rubashkin continued work on the email processing and access project; she created code that would allow for recursive automated processing of entire transfers of email; worked on accessing the Rich Text Files of older PST transfers in the DPI test set; and deriving guidelines for culling email after it is transferred via eDiscovery.

Staff:

- Essential Records Analyst Kayla Leonard has taken over the role of coordinator for the Cultural Resources Emergency Support Team (CREST) from Outreach Coordinator Adrienne Berney.
- Katie Daugherty was named Lead Archivist at the Outer Banks History Center as of August 3; she was previously an archivist I at OBHC and comes in with several years of experience at the site. A search is ongoing for her replacement.
- Alan Perry has been promoted to Supervisor of the Records Center staff in the Government Records Section. A search is ongoing for his replacement.
- The Archives welcomed new staff member Amanda Nuckles to the Conservation Unit on August 24. Amanda will be working with Lucy Dunphy Barsness on document conservation and exhibit prep.
- Records Management Analyst Evanna Derkach has resigned effective September 3. The position has not yet been posted.

**Report of the Division of Historical Resources
To the North Carolina Historical Commission
For its September 2026 meeting**

**Ramona M. Bartos, Division Director and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
September 2, 2026**

Division in general

Section 106 proposal. On July 17, the Acting Chair of the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the federal coordinating agency for federal historic preservation matters, released a council-approved broad, sweeping rewrite to existing federal regulations for a fundamental program area for State Historic Preservation Offices arising from the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act. The Section 106 process requires federal agencies to consider whether or not their permitted, approved, or funded undertakings will have an adverse effect on historic places listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and to consult with State Historic Preservation Offices, federally recognized Tribes, local governments, and the general public, including preservation organizations. Appropriately, a booklet for the public about the current Section 106 process is entitled a [Citizens' Guide to Section 106](#).

These changes would be among the most substantive changes to these rules in a generation; major takeaways include public input as optional at the agency's discretion; tribal sacred places will likely no longer be subject to Section 106; and a federal "106 report" will replace the consultative process in place since the late 1960s.

At this stage, there is a public listening stage through the White House [Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs \(OIRA\)](#), to be followed by a public comment period if the proposal is published in the Federal Register.

There is continued media attention and advocacy by many preservation organizations about these proposed changes to Section 106. **These developments have been covered by multiple news outlets, including [The Atlantic](#), [Washington Post](#), [New Republic](#), [CBS News](#), [CNN](#), [PBS](#), and [NPR](#).** The National Trust for Historic Preservation has set up a [Section 106 page](#) for its efforts to influence this situation.

We are closely monitoring the efforts of the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, our professional organization, which likewise has [an update page with much information](#). We understand that there is a parallel effort by various Congressional legislators to update Section 106 through amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act; some would enhance it, others would limit it. The National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers was [recently asked for their assistance by Congressional committees to inform conscientious Congressional reform efforts](#), and this recent letter provides [more information](#).

Federal grant changes. We also learned this summer of a new set of proposed federal rules to govern federal grant assistance. Here is an [explanation of the proposed rules in the Federal Register](#) plus [text of proposed rules](#); these rules apparently apply throughout the Federal family of agencies to varying degrees.

New Helene grant aka Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund funding. As reported previously, we are working to implement our spring 2026 awarded SHPO capacity grant for Hurricane Helene recovery (\$6.71 million) and our conditions assessment report for the DNCR Western Office (\$180,000) that includes plans for waterproofing, construction management, and repairs for this building that has suffered multiple episodes of basement flooding because of heavy, prolonged rains, including from Helene.

Our Helene grants specialist Madeline “Punk” Spencer, who was the long-time office manager for the Underwater Branch of the Office of State Archaeology, is working hard on a recruitment campaign for additional grant-funded staffers for our division. As a reminder, those new positions will serve the 40 or so “Helene” counties per FEMA designation, mainly west of I-77, and will include a Restoration Specialist, Environmental Review Specialist, a National Register reviewer, two Architectural Survey Specialists (to conduct surveys in Avery, Madison, and Mitchell Counties), and an Archaeologist (now hired).

We will also conduct outreach and training events for local government, and to that end, are finalizing a scope of work with the UNC School of Government to assist us with these tasks over the grant’s three-year term (through March 2029). We hope to get an intra-state contract prepared with them soon, to be followed by legal review.

The grant will also pay for a long-desired digital scanning and digitization effort for our legacy architectural files, developed since the earliest days of our office in the late 1960s and early 1970s forward, to be integrated in digital format into our HPOWEB statewide mapping enterprise. Our Survey / National Register branch supervisor Sarah Woodard has been working diligently with our agency IT lead Joey Ennis and Department of Information Technology project managers to advance this part of our project.

Our plans to survey the newly acquired Pisgah View State Park for archaeological and architectural resources is likely underway, with the scope of work being readied for release as a RFP soon. Cherokee tribal representatives have been in contact with us about Pisgah View to learn more, and to provide input.

Personnel matters.

Resignations/ hiring. Our vacant National Register Assistant position was recently reallocated up a grade, and we await candidates from HR after its recent advertisement.

Recruitment considerations. As I have shared before, recruitment and retention issues continue with our division’s positions.

Some positions we must advertise multiple times for lack of qualified candidates.

It is not unusual for candidates to decline to participate further in recruitment, citing low salaries or lack of affordable housing in the Raleigh or Asheville areas, some of the fastest growing areas of our country.

And it is not unusual for members of team to seek other roles elsewhere, because of extended low salaries without COLA adjustments, commute lengths, or better opportunities in less expensive areas.

We are working with HR to revisit state classifications for our subject-matter experts that we all believe are influencing these matters, and appreciate their collegiality and efforts on our behalf.

State Historic Preservation Office (HPO)

National Register Advisory Committee (NRAC) meeting. The third of our 3 NRAC meetings in 2026 will be held on October 8, with an expected jam-packed agenda, and with a second meeting on October 22 for presentation of Study List candidates from our now completed Vance County survey.

National Register coordinator Jeff Smith and our entire NR team are to be greatly credited for maintaining a steady momentum with review and moving constituents' projects forward.

Local Government Preservation Commission activities / training. Local Government Coordinator Kristi Brantley and HPO colleagues has successfully conducted a full statewide slate of regional local government historic preservation commission training in the field this spring, including:

- Elizabeth City on April 24 (northeastern)
- Hickory on May 1 (western Piedmont)
- Durham on May 15 (central Piedmont)
- Waxhaw on June 5 (Charlotte area)
- Wilmington on July 31 (southeastern)
- Waynesville on August 7 (western).

We finished with a big turnout on August 7 with eight local governments represented (Brevard, Waynesville, Alexander County, Morganton, Black Mountain, Lincoln County, Jackson County, Transylvania County represented) and on-site consultations with Jackson County and Transylvania County the day before.

We will host our annual local preservation planner workshop on November 20 at DNCR headquarters in Raleigh.

Environmental Review numbers.

Our Environmental Review branch handles review of federally- and state-aided infrastructure and development projects under [Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act](#) for their effect (if any) on historic places, both above ground and below (archaeological). The consequence of our reviews is to influence meaningful consideration of historic resources to be impacted by a proposed project in a “measure twice, cut once” approach for project planning and delivery.

For the last fiscal year (July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026), we saw **6,533** projects, or 544 projects on average a month, **43% of which were Helene recovery related (2,837).**
Overall, this is a 75% increase in total projects reviewed from the previous fiscal year.

In a typical “non-hurricane” year, we are running 3500 to 4500 projects annually.

Therefore, the Helene capacity grant is very appreciated, and will give us an additional environmental review specialist and archaeologist for review purposes for our western “Helene” counties.

One of our most publicly involved reviews and consultations recently is the proposed further deepening of the Cape Fear River at Wilmington, a consequential matter of great importance to both the public and to our agency alike. DNCR stewards no less than three historic sites that would see impacts – Fort Fisher, Brunswick Town / Fort Anderson, and the USS NORTH CAROLINA – with Fort Fisher and the battleship both National Historic Landmarks.

Examples of recent HPO outreach efforts.

- **Monroe.** On June 4th, Restoration Branch Supervisor Brett Sturm held a historic tax credit workshop with the local government.
- **Smithfield on June 16.** Local Government Coordinator Kristi Brantley presented to the local historic preservation commission.
- **Rich Square.** Eastern Office Supervisor Reid Thomas and National Register / Survey Specialist Lauren Poole met with local constituents on Monday evening, July 20 in rural Rich Square, Northampton County, reporting that it was a “successful meeting with 17 participants including town board members, staff, and a town consultant in Rich Square, Northampton Co. Monday evening. We spent over an hour discussing and fielding questions on the National Register and historic tax credits. The mayor and council members indicated their interest in moving forward with a National Register historic district.”
- **National Alliance of Preservation Commissions Forum conference.** DSHPO Ramona Bartos and Local Government Coordinator Kristi Brantley attended the biannual National Alliance of Preservation Commissions’ conference in Minneapolis in late July,

making a joint presentation about our statewide historic resilience project to a national audience; Bartos also participated in a session for a SHPO Open Mic with audience Q&A.

- **Asian and Pacific Islanders in Historic Preservation nonprofit** (<https://apiahip.org/>) (Huy Pham from Seattle, and Calvin Nguyen from Boston). Members of the HPO, including Survey/National Register supervisor Sarah Woodard met with these constituents re: interest in a project to survey properties relevant to the Hmong community that has settled in North Carolina after the end of the Vietnam War (post-1975). This inquiry came about as the result of an open National Park Service grant for Underrepresented Communities, which requires a finalized National Register nomination. We discussed scoping this project in collaboration with the North Carolina Hmong community as a needed first step, and thinking about a letter of support for a grant application for next year's cycle, if the Hmong community is open; in the meantime, we also put them in touch with the State Archives' oral historian John Horan to see if there has been any oral history outreach with this community.

Cross-divisional / cross-agency activities

- **Standing meetings re: State Capitol.** Restoration Services Branch Supervisor Brett Sturm continues to represent the HPO at a meeting regarding planned work at State Capitol, including lighting work (proposed to be underway imminently) and sidewalk repair (currently underway). Assistant State Archaeologist Dr. David Cranford has been providing technical consultations and archaeological monitoring. Standing meetings have been established between the Division of State Historic Sites, Department of Administration, and HPO.
- **The HPO and OSA held a Section 106 training for professional development for State Historic Sites site managers on June 8.** Much appreciation to Michelle Lanier and her team for the robust question & answer afterwards.
- **Western Office supervisor Cindy Bradley** will be training with the **National Heritage Responders through the American Institute for Conservation in November 2026**, as one of three DNCR employees involved with CREST to participate in this training.

Office of State Archaeology (OSA)

Good Neighbor Agreement with US Forest Service. Our Legal Office has approved and Dr. Waters has executed a Good Neighbor agreement from the US Forest Service to provide five years of salaries and benefits for term-limited archaeologists and an environmental review specialist to work on US Forest 106 compliance here in NC, related to Helene recovery. This collaboration was under discussion for last few years, but the proposed funding source was changed to be handled through Helene recovery. We are now working with HR on recruitment.

Resilience Subcommittee of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Western North Carolina Recovery. Deputy State Archaeologist (Terrestrial) Dylan Clark participated in this event on July 16 in Boone with discussions about stream restoration permitting and our division's role in reviewing recovery projects.

Cemetery disturbances. We have been learning of, and aiding as we can, incidents of cemetery disturbance related to new development or resource extraction in various parts of the state. The most recent case of such cemetery disturbance was in regards to a new residential development was in late August in Pender County, which has issued a stop work order. We do not know of any Section 106 involvement to our knowledge at this time; OSA will be offering technical assistance at county's request. <https://www.wect.com/2026/08/21/there-was-cemetery-there-burgaw-housing-development-halted-after-gravestones-found-rubble/>.

New state funding. We learned this summer that our requested annual operational funding for the OSA Conservation Lab was included in the State budget as a recurring item; it has previously been covered largely by agency lapsed salary funds.

Western Office. Our Western Office is hosting the State Archives One-Day Wonder, "To Preserve the Blessings of Liberty" on October 9; details are being finalized this month. Western Office Supervisor Cindy Bradley will also help to lead the fall meeting of the Museums in Partnership group consisting of western NC cultural heritage institutions to be held at the Cradle of Forestry on October 19, featuring a presentation on the management of the Cradle of Forestry and a tour of the museum and historic buildings on the site.

We likewise received through the new state budget a requested increase for operations of Western Office due to increases in vendor costs for landscaping and building maintenance.

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

Division of Research and Publications

September 2026 Report

Submitted by Ansley Herring Wegner

Print Publications



Blue's March, An Overmountain Men Tale, by Katelynn Hatton, our office's Colonial Records Editor and supervisor of Mosaic NC, is one of the America 250 NC children's picture books that was published by our office last year. It was chosen to be the Library of Congress Center for the Book 2026 young reader

selection for North Carolina's Great Reads from Great Places. Hatton represented North Carolina at the National Book Festival in Washington, DC, in August. An estimated 45,000 people visited the North Carolina table that day.

America 250 NC purchased a half page advertisement in the August issue of *Our State* magazine. The ad featured Mike Coffey's *A Chronology of the American Revolution in North Carolina, A List of Dates in a National and International Context*, which is selling briskly.

The new edition of *The History of African Americans in North Carolina*, revised by Warren Milteer and Crystal Sanders, is nearing completion. We anticipate sending it to the printer in October. It will be available shortly thereafter, most likely as a print on demand title.

Digital Publications

The Digital Publications section of the Research and Publications Office houses several projects including the North Carolina Colonial Records, the Governors' Papers, and Civil War Records, all of which are made available online at *MosaicNC.org*. Mosaic also hosts exhibits related to other topics not covered by the three ongoing projects.

The whole digital publications team is working together to produce a pop-up panel exhibit for the Executive Mansion. David Robinson expects to leave the exhibit up for tours and events much of the time, but the six-panel exhibit can be taken down when the space is required and individual panels can be deployed at times based on topical interest of guests. Panels include the history of the mansion, residents, staff, and even household pets.



Digital Exhibits:

In late July, Rachael Davis published the first Civil War digital exhibit. The [USS Underwriter Raid exhibit](#) is about the Confederate States Navy's midnight raid on the USS *Underwriter* in New Bern on the morning of February 2, 1864, the new exhibit features 64 newly transcribed documents, a timeline of events, and comprehensive lists of the Confederate and United States sailors involved in the raid.

Work is also underway to create an exhibit of Governor William Kitchin's papers and one featuring colonial records related to the Stamp Act Crisis.

The Digital Publications team is again hosting two interns from Meredith College during the fall semester. The two interns that we hosted in the spring are returning to create new exhibits using the skills in archival research, transcription, and exhibit writing that they honed during their previous work in the office.

North Carolina Historical Review

In August 2026 the following modest subscription price increases, recommended by our distributor UNC Press, went into effect:

Individual will go from \$40 to \$43

Student will go from \$20 to \$21

Institution will go from \$80 to \$87

Research and Publications has also requested that the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association increase their reimbursements for subscriptions by \$5 per member to \$25. Their subscriptions, which have long been a perk for membership in the organization, have not increased since 2008. Lit and Hist will discuss the new rate at their fall meeting in October.

The October issue of the *North Carolina Historical Review* is at the printer. There are two regular articles: Faith, Rape, and Charity: Rachel Wright, Hermon Husband, and the Division at Cane Creek, Part 1, by Mark Chilton, and “We were never slaves:”

Jamestown, North Carolina’s Freedom Pioneers and the Underground Railroad by Kersten Priest and LaTanya Bowman. There is also an article by an eighth-grade History Day participant, Madelyn Manchester, entitled Knowledge as Resistance: John Chavis’s Battle Against Racial Stratification in the Premature Republic. Madelyn’s paper was awarded the North Carolina Outstanding Entry in



the Junior Division at National History Day in Maryland in June. In an initiative that we began last year, we will work with Karen Ipock, director of History Day, each year to select an article about a North Carolina centered topic to publish in the *Review*.

Historical Marker Program

At the spring meeting of the North Carolina Highway Historical Marker Program Advisory committee, 10 new markers were approved, as follows:

Black Abolitionists

Eugene Ashley Jr.

Franklin D. Miller

Elreta Melton Alexander

A.R. Ammons

Thomas E. Browne

Dale Earnhardt

Helen G. Edmonds

Franklin Paul Rogers

Tar, Pitch, & Turpentine

In July RAP staff attended a dedication for the Ham the Astrochimp historical marker at the North Carolina Zoo. Zoo staff executed a memorable dedication that included stories from people who knew Ham in his retirement in North Carolina.



America 250 NC

The America 250 team has continued to represent the agency across the state, most notably at the 4th of July celebration at the Capitol and at the N.C. Transportation Museum's America 250 Locomotive festival in August. Both events brought thousands of visitors to our tents to talk with us about America 250 NC.



In May we launched the tour of the North Carolina Brigade Sketch, on loan from the Museum of the America Revolution. At the end of July it moved to Tryon Palace, where it is displayed in their theater alongside a few other contemporary artifacts. Palace staff reports

that the brigade sketch is a popular attraction. In early October the Museum of Art fine arts handlers will take it to Halifax State Historic Site. It will return to the Museum of the American Revolution on November 6.

America 250 NC will once again have a prime location in Dorton Arena for the State Fair, October 15-25.

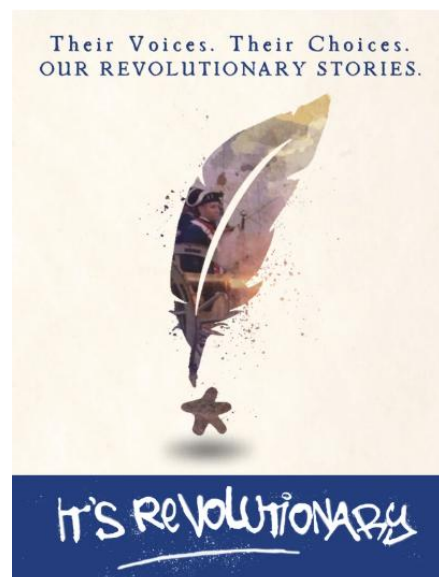
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Division of State History Museums
19 September 2026

Celebrating the Semiquincentennial on Capitol Grounds

Capitol 250: NC Freedom Event

Hosted by the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR), the event commemorated the signing of the Declaration of Independence by highlighting North Carolina's distinct history, arts, nature, and culture. This included living history demonstrations like period clothing demonstrations from NCMOH's textile conservator, Paige Myers. There was also family-friendly programming, like crafting with our Education Department. The replica liberty bell was on display, freshly restored by the Collections section. Also, the NC Museum of History Foundation staff was there to sell locally made objects and other items from the Gift Shop. The Regional Museums also participated in this event.

It's Revolutionary!



The 20-part series for teachers and the general public was produced by our Education team and premiered on July 3. The *It's Revolutionary!* initiative reveals how North Carolinians experienced the American Revolution through their choices and the opportunities and hardships they faced. Our nation's founding ideals have been lived out, challenged, and reimagined, all while asking the profound question: "*When are we US?*"

There is an Educator's Night scheduled for October for additional instruction and collaboration with teachers.

[It's Revolutionary! | NC Museum of History](#)

Witnesses to the Revolution:



Figure 1: Witness to a Revolution at UNC Wilson Library

In partnering with the UNC–Chapel Hill's Wilson Library, the NCMOH invites the public to explore *Witnesses to the Revolution: North Carolina and the War for Independence*. This special exhibition marks the 250th anniversary of the signing of the

Declaration of Independence and the beginning of the Revolutionary War.

Witness how North Carolinians shaped the Revolutionary era through intriguing artifacts from the museum's collection and archival treasures from the library. Explore how North Carolina helped shape the nation's story. *Witnesses to the Revolution* invites visitors to explore the people, ideas, and defining moments that emerged right here in North Carolina.

[Witnesses to the Revolution Exhibit | NC Museum of History](#)

Museum Construction:

The NCMOH has ended the demolition phase in August 2026. It is beginning the construction phase. The renovation project is on time and on budget.

Exterior and interior renderings were presented to the public at the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitor Bureau.

Exhibit Renovation:

The NCMOH continues to work with the design firm GSM on the second-floor exhibits including Chronos and Community. The 100% Design Review for Community is scheduled for mid-September, and the 100% Design Review for Chronos is scheduled for mid-October.

Work with the design firm, Roto, is scheduled to begin again in October 2026. They are helping NCMOH design the fourth-floor exhibits including Sports Hall of Fame, Military, Arts, Wright Brothers, and Children's Discovery Gallery,

Regional History Updates:

New Regional Museums:

The Division of North Carolina History Museum plans to add two new museums including the Roanoke Island Festival Park and the Transportation Museum. These two organizations were previously under State Historic Sites.

Collections:

The NCMOH hosted regional museum staff, including the Collections Manager from the NC Maritime Museum at Beaufort, to discuss opportunities for collaboration on collections management. Several members of the Collections Section visited Beaufort, as well, in the following weeks to tour its renovated collections storage facility. Tobacco Farm Life staff met with NCMOH staff to plan the move of the Tobacco Farm Life Museum's collections to an off-site facility that will better protect objects and make space for future building improvements.

Ongoing Construction

- At Mountain Gateway Museum, the electric panels at the amphitheater passed State Construction inspection, and Duke Energy restored power on Tuesday, June 30.
- The Museum of the Albemarle had to temporarily close until new water pumps were ordered and installed.
- At Cape Fear, there are repairs to address water damage in several interior office spaces.

Staff Highlights:

Hiring and Promotions:

- **Abbey Coakley** was hired as Visitor Services and Volunteer Coordinator at the NC Maritime Museum at Southport.
- **Elayne Hinsch** was hired as Collections Curator for the NC Maritime Museum at Southport
- **Matt Provancha** was hired as the Site Manager at Mountain Gateway Museum.

Retirements and Resignations:

- **Cathy East** retired as the Tar Heel Junior Historian Magazine Editor at NCMOH.
- **Dan Spock** retired as the Design Section Lead at NCMOH.
- **RoAnn Bishop** retired as Site Manager at Mountain Gateway Museum.
- **Toni Foster** resigned as Visitor Services and Volunteer Coordinator at NC Maritime Museum at Southport.
- **Brandon Yowell** resigned as Web Designer at NCMOH

Public Programming & Exhibit Highlights:

NC Museum of History:

Programs:

- Saturday, July 4, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. – Capitol 250: NC Freedom Fest, State Capitol, Raleigh
- Thursday, July 9, 2 p.m. – AIHC Planning Committee meeting, virtual
- Monday, July 13, noon – Docent Appreciation Luncheon, Café Luna
- Saturday, July 18, 2:30–4:30 p.m. – Paint, Sip, and Ponder: Quilts, Wine & Design, Raleigh.
- Thursday, August 20, 5:30–8:30 p.m. – Crafting at the Cinema: *Night at the Museum*, Garner.
- Wednesday, August 26, noon–1 p.m. – History at High Noon: Operation Bumblebee, Virtual.
- Tuesday, September 15, 6–8:30 p.m.–Educators’ Night Out, Union Hall, Free.
- Thursday, September 17, 6:30–8 p.m.–Stitched in Tradition, The North Carolina Museum of Art, Free.

Exhibits:

- *Witnesses to the Revolution*, (see above).

Regional History Museums

Museum of the Albemarle



Programs:

- Wednesday, July 1, 12–1 p.m. – History for Lunch: *Caring for Family Heirlooms, Part 1*, museum auditorium.
- Tuesday, July 6, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. – *At the Movies: Secretariat*, museum auditorium.
- Wednesday, July 15, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. – Summer Fun Day: Maritime Heritage Day, museum grounds.
- Wednesday, July 15, noon – History for Lunch: *A Highly Planned and Cooperative Form of Theft – NC's Naval Raiders, 1700–1865*, museum auditorium.
- Monday through Friday, July 27–31 – Young Authors Club Summer Camp.
- Tuesday, Aug. 4, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. – At the Movies: “Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey,” museum auditorium.
- Wednesday, Aug. 5, noon to 1 p.m. – History for Lunch: “Searching for Shell Castle: Exploring Submerged Histories on the North Carolina Coast,” museum auditorium.
- Wednesday, Aug. 19, noon – History for Lunch: *Caring for Your Family Heirlooms, Pt. 2*, museum auditorium.
- Wednesday, Sept. 2, noon–History for Lunch: “Remembering September 11, 2001,” museum auditorium.

Graveyard of the Atlantic:



Programs:

- Tuesday, June 30, 11 a.m. – Salty Dawg Speaker Series: *Hope on Hatteras*, presented by Gray Parsons, museum education space.
- Wednesday, July 1, 11 a.m.–3 p.m. – *From Ironclad to Marine Sanctuary: The Legacy of the USS Monitor* event.
- Friday, July 3, 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m. – Maritime Crafts for Kids.
- Friday, July 3, 2 p.m. – *The Revolutionary War on the Outer Banks*, presented by Education Curator Molly Trivelpiece.
- Tuesday, July 7, 11 a.m. – Salty Dawg Speaker Series: *My Daily Bounded Realm: A Journal of Daily Life in the Outer Banks in 1900*, presented by Robin Daniels Holt, museum education space.
- Thursday, July 9, 10:30 a.m. to noon – Make and Take Crafts: Sailor's Valentines, museum education space.
- Tuesday, July 14, 11 a.m. – Salty Dawg Speaker Series: *Little Bannister Midgett*, presented by Mel Poole, museum education space.

- Wednesday, July 15, 10:30 a.m. to noon – Make and Take Crafts: Morse Code Bracelets, museum education space.
- Tuesday, July 28, 11 a.m. – Salty Dawg Speaker Series: *Hidden in Plain Sight: 500 Years of Roanoke Island History in Cartography*, presented by Mel Covey and Dr. Leigh Broadhurst, museum education space
- Tuesday, Aug. 18, 11 a.m. – Salty Dawg Speaker Series: *My Daily Bounded Realm* book talk by Robin Daniels Holt, museum education space.
- Wednesday, Aug. 19, 10:30 a.m.–noon – Make and Take Crafts: Morse Code Bracelets.

NC Maritime Museum at Southport



Programs:

- Saturday, June 20, 10 a.m.–3 p.m. – Skippers Crew: *A Reel Fine Dad*, museum gallery.
- Tuesday, June 24, 11 a.m.–2 p.m. – Anchors Aweigh: *Seal the Deal*, museum gallery.
- Saturday, July 4, 10:30 a.m. – Southport's NC Fourth of July Festival Flag Raising Ceremony with staff from Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Historic Site, downtown Southport.
- Saturday, July 25, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. – Deep Dive into History: *The Root of the Problem (18th Century Dentistry)*, museum exhibit hall.
- Saturday, Aug. 1, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. – Skippers Crew: Coral Crafts, museum gallery.

NC Maritime Museum at Beaufort

Programs:

- Saturday, June 27, 9 a.m. – Family Model Boat Class, Harvey W. Smith Watercraft Center.
- Tuesday, June 30–Thursday, July 2, 9 a.m.–12 p.m. – Model Boats Summer Day Camp, Harvey W. Smith Watercraft Center.
- Tuesday, June 30, 4 p.m. – Movies Before the Mast, museum auditorium.

- Monday and Tuesday, July 6–7, 9 a.m. to noon – Summer Science School: *Seashore Life I* (grades 1–2), museum.



- Wednesday–Friday, July 8–10, 9 a.m. to noon – Summer Science School: *Seashore Life II* (grades 5–6), museum.
- Wednesday, July 8, 9 to 11 a.m. – Kids' Cove: Sharks, museum auditorium.
- Thursday, July 9, noon – Maritime Heritage Lecture Series: *The Importance of Maintaining a Stable Environment for Collections*, museum auditorium.
- Saturday, July 11, and Sunday, July 12, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. – Introduction to Woodworking, Harvey W. Smith Watercraft Center.
- Monday, July 13, to Friday, July 17, 9 a.m. to noon – Summer Science School: Blue Compass II, museum and various community sites.
- Thursday, July 16, noon – *Sensational Sharks: History and Conservation of Sharks in North Carolina*, museum auditorium.
- Saturday, July 25, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. – Family Model Boat Class, Harvey W. Smith Watercraft Center.
- Monday through Friday, July 27–31 – Summer Science School: Blue Compass I (grades 1–2), museum and Watercraft Center.
- Thursday, July 30, noon – Maritime Heritage Lecture: *Battle of Beaufort, American Revolution*, museum auditorium.

- Saturday, August 1, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. – Build a Boat in a Day, Harvey W. Smith Watercraft Center.
- Wednesday, Aug. 5, to Friday, Aug. 7, 9 a.m. to noon – Summer Science School: Seashore Life II (grades 5 and 6), museum and local site.
- Thursday, Aug. 6, noon – Maritime Heritage Lecture Series: “By Hook or by Crook,” museum auditorium.
- Wednesday, Aug. 12, 9 to 11 a.m.—Kids’ Cove: Whales, museum auditorium.
- Thursday, Aug. 13, 9 a.m. to noon—Kayak the Salt Marsh, Gallants Channel.
- Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 15–16, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. – Introduction to Wooden Boatbuilding, Harvey W. Smith Watercraft Center.
- Wednesday, Aug. 19, 8:30 a.m. to noon – Hiking and History on Shackleford Banks, Cape Lookout National Seashore.
- Thursday and Friday, Aug. 20–21, 9 a.m. to noon – Summer Science School: Seashore Life I (grades 1 and 2), museum and surrounding sites.
- Friday, Aug. 21, 2 p.m. – Bonehenge Family Friendly Tour, Bonehenge Whale Center.

Mountain Gateway Museum

Programs:

- The Pioneer Day festival returns to the museum grounds on Friday, July 3, for the first time since Hurricane Helene damaged the region. The 39th annual event features live music, food trucks, craft demonstrations, antique cars, children's games, and more.
 - An estimated 1,150 visitors braved temperatures near 100 degrees to attend the museum's 39th annual Pioneer Day Festival, which returned for the first time since Hurricane Helene.
- Monday, July 27, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. – Teacher Cultivation Event, in partnership with DNCR Education and Outreach. Eighteen middle school teachers from seven counties will visit the museum to preview onsite activities and classroom outreach programs.



Museum of the Cape Fear Historical Complex

Programs:

- Friday, Aug. 28—"Making Our Voices Heard: North Carolinians Fighting for Civil Rights" A250 Traveling Exhibit closes..

Exhibits:

- Friday, Aug. 28—"Making Our Voices Heard: North Carolinians Fighting for Civil Rights" A250 Traveling Exhibit closed



Tobacco Farm Life Museum:

Programs:

- Saturday, July 11, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. – July *Curiosity Cured: Science in the Summer.*
- Saturday, August 1, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. – Science in the Summer, featuring historic trades staff from the Division of Historic Sites, museum grounds.



Michelle Lanier, Director

Overview

- State Historic Sites recorded 214,867 visitors in June (a 16% increase year-over-year) and a record-setting fiscal year with 1,992,715 total visitors (a 2% increase over FY24–25), alongside a 7% growth in annual youth visitors.
- Fiscal year-to-date visitation for FY26–27 (starting in July) reached 168,211, representing a 13% decrease compared to the same period in FY25–26; this drop was driven by extreme weather conditions, temporary site closures, scheduled construction projects, and reduced event attendance.
 - Site Closures and Event Cancellations
 - ◆ Construction/ Exhibit Redesign Closures: House in the Horseshoe, Town Creek Indian Mound, Somerset Place.
 - ◆ Weather-related Closures: Bennett Place (extreme heat), Fort Dobbs (extreme heat), Historic Bath (The *Patriots at Sea* event was canceled due to heavy rain).
 - ◆ Infrastructure Issues: Thomas Day (lightning strike at the water treatment facility).
- Social media following reached 369,958, reflecting no change from the baseline, alongside strong engagement, with 2,956,170 social media impressions (a 23% increase).

Personnel

- Kevin Melvin was named site manager of **Town Creek Indian Mound**. Kevin previously served as the site manager at **House in the Horseshoe** and brings extensive experience as a Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina.
- Jordan Jenkins was promoted to site manager at **Vance Birthplace**. Jordan served as the assistant site manager at Vance Birthplace for two years and has eight years of experience in historic interpretation and education.
- Amy Klasen has been named the new executive director of **Roanoke Island Festival Park**. She brings nearly 20 years of experience in museums and cultural organizations to State Historic Sites.

Michelle Lanier, Director

America 250 NC

- **Executive Mansion Celebration** (June 29, 2026): Seven costumed interpreters from **Historic Halifax, Alamance Battleground, Duke Homestead, and Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson** represented Historic Sites at the Executive Mansion's America 250 celebration. Jim McKee (**Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson**) read an excerpt of the Declaration of Independence.
- **July 4th Programming:** Historic Sites heavily supported statewide July 4th events, including significant participation in the **State Capitol** event. Estimated attendance this year was 6,506 visitors.
- **Locomotive Celebration (August 28–30, 2026):** The N.C. DOT unveiled its America



250 locomotive to power Amtrak/NCDOT Piedmont Corridor trains. It is slated to headline the America 250 Locomotive Celebration at the **North Carolina Transportation Museum** alongside more than 30 other specially painted locomotives.

Michelle Lanier, Director



Curatorial Services

- A Cannon Foundation grant awarded to DNCR provided \$15,000 for fabric and materials for the historic clothing program benefiting multiple sites, and \$20,000 to the North Carolina Transportation Museum for the restoration of the Doris Duke rail car.
- Curatorial is preparing for the **Duke Homestead** exhibit overhaul. The site received a \$2.5 million grant from the Duke Endowment in 2024, and progress is now underway to update the site exhibit space. The site hosts project update meetings twice annually for Division and DNCR staff, Duke Endowment trustees, Duke Homestead support group members, and site stakeholders. Two such meetings have been conducted so far with the next planned for January 2027.

Michelle Lanier, Director



- NC Historic Sites stewards a rich collection of artifacts, and our curatorial team is creating 3D renderings to share these pieces with the public in a new way. You can now examine [22 unique](https://sketchfab.com/NCHS) (<https://sketchfab.com/NCHS>) objects from 7 different sites, with more to come!

DIT/ODEL Grant

The DIT/ODEL Grant supports efforts to improve accessibility at North Carolina's historic sites through immersive 360-degree virtual tours. The project continues to progress as tours are approved. To date, two tours are available for the public, including Alamance and Fort Dobbs, with several more in the last stages of development. Curatorial staff are also visiting different communities, such as retirement homes, to showcase the 3D tours.



Michelle Lanier, Director

East Region



- **Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson:** Staff, leadership, and regional partners celebrated the dedication ceremony for the Africa to Carolina public art initiative in July. This installation, years in the making, stands as the first public artwork in our state to specifically commemorate the disembarkation of enslaved Africans in North Carolina.
- **Historic Edenton:** Hosted the traveling exhibit "Women Breaking Barriers in Northeastern North Carolina," featuring stories of regional historical figures like Penelope Barker, Harriet Jacobs, and Josephine Leary.
- **Roanoke Island Festival Park:** Launched its summer "Live from OBX!" concert series and received three nominations in the Coastland Gold People's Choice Awards (Live Music Venue, Museum, and Wedding Venue).

Michelle Lanier, Director

Piedmont Region

- **State Capitol:** Hosted major regional events, including welcoming an estimated 19,000 fans viewing the Carolina Hurricanes Stanley Cup Parade from its grounds on June 20, alongside hosting a special N.C. House of Representatives ceremony in August.
- **Bennett Place:** Welcomed Secretary Cashwell for a site tour on July 15, reviewing the visitor center, historic farmhouse, maintenance shop, and collections storage. PUSH (Priority update to State History) also continues at the site, with staff putting the final touches on the audio for the new interactive kiosk.
- **House in the Horseshoe:** Construction on the new visitor center progresses toward a mid-January 2027 completion timeline, while the Office of State Archaeology (OSA) plans ground-penetrating radar (GPR) surveys and test excavations for the fall.



Michelle Lanier, Director

West Region

- Development at **Shallow Ford** has continued steadily, featuring the installation of new restroom facilities and parking lot paving.

The site recently garnered positive public attention through a feature article in the



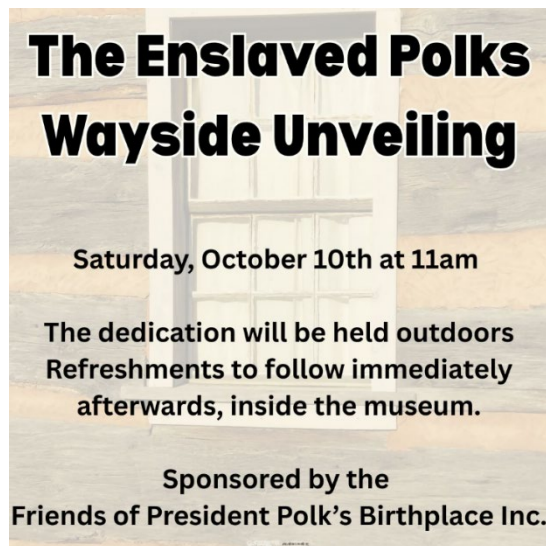
[*Greensboro News & Record*](#)

highlighting its crucial role in settling western North Carolina and its transition into an official historic site.

- **Town Creek Indian Mound:**

Closed its visitor center and gift shop on July 28 to prepare for upcoming construction and exhibit improvements, keeping grounds and outdoor interpretive areas open to

the public. Project bidding was finalized in August after an initial rebid.



- The **President James K. Polk** State Historic Site prepares to host a special wayside dedication scheduled for October 10. The new interpretive signage is designed to expand public education by specifically detailing the lives of the individuals who were enslaved by the Polk family.

Michelle Lanier, Director

Cross-Division Collaboration & Special Programs

- **Sunday Hours Pilot Program:** This summer, thirteen (13) Historic Sites tested Sunday hours as part of a time-limited pilot program to expand access to our sites. During the 8-week pilot program, guests could visit these sites from 1-5 p.m. on Sundays from June 14-August 2. Leadership is evaluating the results of the program.
 - The following sites participated in the program: Aycock Birthplace, Historic Bath, Bentonville Battlefield, Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson, Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum, Historic Edenton, Fort Fisher, Historic Halifax, Reed Gold Mine, Roanoke Island Festival Park, Somerset Place, North Carolina State Capitol and Thomas Day Historic Site.



- **Awards & Leadership Recognition** Division Director Michelle Lanier delivered the keynote address for the State Employees Combined Campaign (SECC) kickoff and was honored nationally with the 2026 Association of African American Museums (AAAM) Museum Leadership Award during the organization's conference in Philadelphia.

Michelle Lanier, Director

- **Division Branding:**
Leadership reviewed initial concepts for a new Division logo, with plans for final departmental review in the fall.
- In May 2026, **Thomas Day Historic Site** was announced as an Affiliate member of the Historic Artists' Homes and Studios (HAHS) program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

