

# Historically Speaking

Quarterly Newsletter 2020

april • may • june



"First Lady" Annette Hunt

## The Historical Society's "Earth Angels" ... by Annette Hunt

*Let us be grateful to people who make us happy, they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom. ~ Marcel Proust*

Looking for a serene place to enjoy the beauty of spring? Come and visit us here at the New Bern Historical Society's heritage



garden, one of the many jewels New Bern has to offer, tucked away in the heart of the historic district.

Since 2007, this very special garden has reflected the era of the Attmore-Oliver House. Generous donations have made this a reality. A real blessing was locating the 1885 plant list from the garden of Lavinia Cole Roberts, sister-in-law of Captain Roberts who brought the first spider lilies to New Bern. Some of her plants were located on this very site.

It has been my privilege over the last 14 years to volunteer my time and energies. My greatest joy has been the time spent with so many of the other garden volunteers or *Earth Angels* as we call each other. The friendships that develop along with the shared pass-a-long plants and garden knowledge are all great ways to learn how to garden in Zone 8 here in coastal North Carolina.

Green thumb or not, if you would like to volunteer just call the office at 252-638-8558 or stop by any Monday morning and meet the *Earth Angels*.



Carol Jacunski, Marge Foskit & Dottie Webb

Marge Foskit



Marilyn Staley

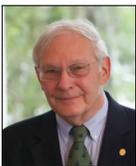


Annette Hunt, Master Gardeners\* Donna Kotheimer & Mary Daugherty



Annette Hunt, Pat Shankle & Marge Foskit

\* Note, Master Gardeners can now earn volunteer hours for their work in the Historical Society gardens.



## Curator's Corner...by Jim Hodges

### *Camellia Japonica* 'Johanna Taylor'

Even during the winter months, Annette Hunt and her *Earth Angels* normally convene on Monday mornings in the garden to snip, dig, rake, and chat. Recently Annette was visited by two representatives from the local Twin Rivers Camellia Club who presented the Historical Society with a gift. Befittingly, this gift was a unique camellia with a special story.

Donald Ransom Taylor was the Executive Director of Tryon Palace in the early eighties and later Resident Director of Gunston Hall near Mason Neck, Virginia. Upon retirement, he returned to New Bern with his wife Johanna. Not one to sit idly around, he became a New Bern Historical Society

board member from 1992 to 2004 of which eleven of those years serving as curator of collections. In addition, Donald Taylor was an accomplished gardener and a founding member of the Twin Rivers Camellia Club. Over time he developed a new "camellia cultivar" that was named for his wife and identified as *Camellia Japonica* 'Johanna Taylor'.



The flower is a semi-double bloom with an occasional pink stripe which was certified by the American Camellia Society Registration in 2010.

Donald Taylor sadly passed away in June 2011. Due to the generosity of the Twin Rivers Camellia Club his legacy survives with this beautiful camellia adorning the Historical Society's garden.



## Historical Society President's Message

This year so far, the Society has been involved in two very different events that highlight how closely our community works together—*Honour, The Musical* and our yearly ABC Yard Sale.

We were privileged to be a part of *Honour, The Musical*, an exciting play about the Stanly-Spaight duel written and directed by Bill Hand with music by Simon Spalding. The play was a major collaboration between the Historical Society and many businesses and community supporters. This successful show highlighted our mission of “Bringing History to Life!” We are proud that we could be a part of a historical event about New Bern, by New Bern and for New Bern.

For the past thirty years, the ABC Indoor Yard Sale has been a “fun” but an extremely busy year-round event. It has brought together many enthusiastic and hard-working volunteers, including Marines and junior ROTC cadets, as well

as people who have donated items and the public who continue to support this major Historical Society fundraiser. This year’s very successful sale reflects the dedication of the nearly 100 volunteers it takes to pull it together. Very early on a cold Saturday morning, over 1000 shoppers showed up, some standing in line for hours to find their treasures, mostly donated by you, our great members.



Cindy Teasdale, ABC Volunteer

Now, in this challenging time more than ever, we are truly blessed to live in a community that supports its many non-profits and the volunteers that make them possible.



## Message from Mickey Miller, Executive Director

Spring is normally our busiest event season, but there’s certainly nothing normal about this spring. As good as we are at planning, it’s even more important now to be flexible and patient.

We were disappointed to have to postpone some great programs but we’re optimistic about rescheduling them for the fall. Fortunately our major annual fundraisers are behind us, and – thanks to our members, volunteers, and sponsors – they were financially successful enough to carry us through this time of uncertainty.

Meanwhile, we’ve been busy at the office, on the Attmore-Oliver campus, and at Battlefield Park, mostly with the never-ending maintenance projects that accompany historical properties. The Manly-Ward House located behind the A-O House will soon get a new roof, and we’ll be doing substantial siding and window repairs to the Roberts House, leased by the Aerie B&B.

As a membership-based and event-driven nonprofit, our challenge during this time of social distancing is how to stay in touch with you and the public, and share our abundance of information about New Bern’s intriguing history, all while planning for an unknown future. Stay tuned – we’re working on it.

Finally, here’s a healthy and safe alternative to hiding out in your house watching coronavirus news – get out and enjoy a quiet nature walk at Battlefield Park. Bring your neighbor, bring the dog - you don’t have to be a Civil War buff to enjoy this shaded oasis. The carefully tended wooded paths contain 36 interpretive panels sharing inspiring stories and military actions. Support a local restaurant by grabbing a takeout meal and a book to enjoy under the covered pavilion or on a bench overlooking the marshes teeming with wildlife. All the while, feel great knowing that your membership support and donations make this New Bern treasure possible.

## The Pursuit of Excellence

Upon publication of his fifth annual *Journal of the New Bern Historical Society*, Editor in Chief **Woolie McEnally** has passed the torch. Woolie resurrected the *Journal* in 2015 after it had been dormant for seven years, investing his considerable talents, time, and financial resources to underwrite the expenses. He and his dedicated *Journal* Committee have raised the publication to a new level of excellence, providing you with a balanced variety of well-written and carefully curated articles about local history. We are indebted to Woolie for his very generous commitment over the years.



Joe Hunt, Woolie McEnally and Mickey Miller

Command Director. Jay is blessed to inherit a highly talented Editorial and Production Committee consisting of **Carol Becton, Bernard George, Jim Hodges, Claudia Houston, Chris Kelso, John Klecker, and Jon Miller.**

Would you like to be on the team? We’re seeking a volunteer with editorial experience to serve as Technical Editor. Experience with proofreading, revising, rewriting and editing is required. Familiarity with proper grammar, usage of tenses and punctuation, and citing of source material are highly desired. A working knowledge of the *Chicago Manual of Style* is a plus. The *Journal* contains 6-8 thoroughly-researched articles written by local authors and committee members. The articles average 2700 words in length and contain cited references.



Coming aboard as Editor in Chief is **Jay DeLoach**, retired Navy Rear Admiral and former Naval History & Heritage

For more information or to apply, call the office at 252.638.8558.



## Battlefield Park News...by Jon Miller, Battlefield Adjutant

It's hard to believe that a battlefield could be a busy place. I mean, it just sits there and people visit it, right? Guess again...besides the day-to-day maintenance and upkeep, we have a number of projects in the works right now that keep our volunteers busy.

We spent the winter preparing for the annual Harry Goodman Battlefield Adventure Day, with the volunteers handmaking 100 wooden rifles to be distributed to the children. We hope to announce a new fall date for this great family event.

Second, we were thrilled to be approached by NBHS member **Jon Segal** who offered funding to develop an audio tour for the battlefield. We are working with a local developer who has already developed a test model. Essentially, anyone will be able to download a free app for their smart phone that will enable them to listen to audio files that tell all the stories on our interpretive panels. The app will also have maps and images, multiple voices and even background music, to bring to life what happened at the park some 150 years ago. Thank you, Jon!

Member and architect **Pat Hart** is busy developing more interpretive panels for the Visitor Center and the newly acquired property by Redan 1. We now have the new self-guided park tour brochure ready for distribution. With updated maps and details, it will be a big help to our steady stream of visitors.

Shown in the photo are volunteers **Bill Long, Frank Bartholomew** and **Don Ingraham**, who, along with **John Wright, Gene Lock** and **Rod Rhodes**, are working on a new permanent display. When complete, we will have an 1800s example of a dirt-covered structure that settlers and soldiers would have used if they had no other means of shelter. It is an A-Frame style wooden post structure, covered with pine needles and dirt for insulation and provides shelter for two adults.

Finally, Eagle Scout candidate **Jonathan Swimmer** is seeking his council's approval to move forward on a footbridge in front of Redan 1. He expects construction to begin next month.



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Jim Morrison, Treasurer  
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Claudia Houston, Historian  
Jim Hodges, Curator

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Karen Bixler—Assistant to Director  
Sue Dunn—Admin. Assistant



## Did you know?...by Claudia Houston, Historian

One of my jobs as Historian is to write stories and share information about New Bern's history. That includes posting on Facebook. I am delighted to report that we have reached several milestones this year. We now have 5,213 followers on our

Facebook page and have over 5,000 page "likes". That is a significant number of people who are interested in New Bern history and our events. Kathy Morrison, 1<sup>st</sup> VP and Publicity Committee Chair, posts upcoming events and I post stories and photos. Our most popular weekly article is Wednesday's "What's in the Attic with Jim?" Jim Hodges, our wonderful Curator, shares lots of interesting things from the collections that have been painstakingly curated and preserved.

Our Facebook posts have resulted in some wonderful and heart-warming connections. In September, we posted about the American Legion Anniversary and the addition of

soldiers' names to the WWI Memorial. Through our post about Thomas Coley, a Craven County soldier who was killed in action, we were able to connect a Coley descendent with family members he didn't even know about, and they were able to share family photos and stories that neither knew even existed.

We would love your help in keeping our Facebook page prominent for even more people to discover. You see, Facebook constantly changes their algorithms for deciding what posts viewers will see. When we first started our page, "likes" were very important - if you liked our page you would continue to receive information in your newsfeed. Facebook now only shares content that is meaningful to someone. The more you **share our posts or comment** on them, the more our information will be seen by others in their newsfeeds. So, if you go on our Facebook page and like a photo or story, please also share with someone else or make a comment. What a great way to learn and to stay connected in this time of social distancing. You'll help us share New Bern's history with even more people, which increases event attendance and also helps grow our membership.



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The Historical Society is proud of the relationships we have developed over the years with the local business community and thank them for their continued sponsorship of our events. We ask you to support our business partners who generously contribute to the New Bern Historical Society.

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To show you the power and reach of Facebook, I thought I would share a few statistics. Our March 14 post about the anniversary of the Battle of New Bern with photos of Battlefield Park reached 2700 people. Old photos are extremely popular—the circa 1900 photo of snow on Pollock Street from the Albert D. Brooks collection reached nearly 4000 viewers. Kathy's posts on our events last year were viewed by nearly 100 thousand visitors! That's wonderful visibility for New Bern, our fascinating heritage, and the Historical Society.

So please, check us out at [www.Facebook.com/NewBernHistoricalSociety](http://www.Facebook.com/NewBernHistoricalSociety) and **comment, like and share.** Thank you!

Newsletter photo credits: Norm McCullough, Annette Hunt, Kathy Morrison & Jon Miller

