

# Historically speaking



Quarterly Newsletter

july  
august  
september

The countdown continues...

*10 months, 25 days*

The strength of any non-profit organization comes from the time and commitment of its volunteers. This year we welcomed back our Annual Meeting & Membership Banquet where we were able to honor your volunteer colleagues for their wonderful contributions. Congratulations to these terrific volunteers — the heartbeat of our great team!



The **President's Award** is awarded to **Helen Parker** for her 300+ hours of hard work behind the scenes, transcribing all the oral histories for the development of Battlefield Park. Thanks to Helen, we now have an invaluable written record of this important restoration effort.

The **Ambassadorship Award** is presented to **Carrie Gallagher**, the Society's liaison with the Chamber of Commerce and the Executive Director of the African American Heritage and Cultural Center. Carrie has also provided us expert advice borne of her decades of strong nonprofit leadership.

The recipient for this year's **Battlefield Park Award** is **Mark Trail**. Mark is one of our newest and hardest working battlefield guides. The Commander of the 7th NC Reenactors, he expertly leads living history events at Battlefield Park and is key to the success of Battlefield Adventure Day.

This year's **Education Award** goes to **Mark Sandvigen**. Mark has an insatiable appetite for history and hard work. He recently coordinated the Greenwood Cemetery veteran recognition effort, served on the History Quest committee, and has done extensive work on our WWI history.

## Celebrate!

### Our 2022 Volunteer Award Winners



**Joe Sullivan** is awarded this year's **Extended Service Award** for his tireless work behind the scenes on so many events for nearly 15 years. In particular, he has been a stalwart member of the ABC Sale team and cheerfully chaired Ghostwalk logistics for many years.



**Susan Moffat-Thomas** is presented the **Lifetime of Service Award** for her strong and trusted leadership as a member of the Historical Society board for 37 years! She has seen this organization through many changes, both good and challenging times, and has for decades been at the forefront of New Bern's preservation efforts.

The **Director's Award** is given to **Terri Hickman**. One of our most competent and trusted volunteers, Terri works in the office weekly and has been on the planning committee of just about every event. Terri has jumped in to help with little or no notice when we had unexpected staffing needs.

**Laurie Ingram** is presented the **Newcomer's Award**. Laurie has only one speed, and that's sprinting! An organizational and technology whiz, she has taken every volunteer task to a whole new level of efficiency.



L to R: Carrie Gallagher, Mark Trail, Mark Sandvigen, Terri Hickman and Laurie Ingram

## Historical Society President's Message

by Joe Hunt, President

As I look out of our bay window onto the grounds of the Historical Society, work is underway for a special event held by our neighbors **John and Beth Blackwelder**.

Over the past several years, work to restore the Attmore-Oliver campus has continued, supported by the Investment in History Campaign and



your generous donations. John and Beth highlighted the beauty of the campus with their lovely reception layout.

This work was largely due to the efforts of our volunteer **Earth Angels**, the **Grounds Work Team**, **Rodman Williams** restoration contractor, **Bengel Roofing**, and **Trader Construction Company**. These work teams have put countless hours into the gardens, replacing rails and pickets on the Attmore-Oliver house back porch, siding on the Ward House, replacing decayed wood on the garden shed, repairing lamp posts and trimming bushes and shrubs countless times.

Trader Construction has done an amazing job keeping the campus driveway in good shape.



Rodman Williams, who just passed away, was the premier old home restoration contractor in the New Bern area and had worked on over 100 homes. He did major work for the New Bern Historical Society on the front fence on Broad Street, the AO House front entrance, the Smokehouse, the

Roberts house, and the Judge Gaston law office for the New Bern Garden Club. Rodman was always available for advice on historically accurate repairs. I heard him say that two of his most memorable projects were the front fence of the Historical Society on Broad Street and the AO House front entrance. We owe a debt of gratitude to all of these people, mostly volunteers, who have worked to restore the campus. We are especially grateful to our friend Rodman who has left an incredible legacy here for future generations.

## Update from the Executive Director

by Mickey Miller

As I write this, I'm abjectly aware that today is the last day for our office manager, **Karen Bixler**. Karen is relocating from New Bern after having been here four years, first as a volunteer, then on staff. She has



become the cool head and steady hand in this hectic office, bringing her job to a new level of professionalism. While we'll miss her

terribly, we're happy for her as she starts the next chapter of her life.

**Thank you, Karen!**

Sadly, that's not the only loss on the Historical Society team. **Susan Moffat-Thomas** is stepping down after 37 years on the Board of Directors. Among her many accomplishments, Susan served as the first Director of the New Bern Preservation Foundation, was instrumental in the preservation of Battlefield Park, and was the Director of Swiss Bear for over 30 years. Susan will remain available as a valued mentor and sounding board as we move forward into our next century of service.

*We bring history to life!*

It's not all bad news! We're thrilled that **Mike Williams**, newly retired Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Craven County, is joining the Historical Society Board of Directors. A Florida native with twelve years of service to Habitat, Mike and his wife Liz moved to New Bern about five years ago. Mike is



passionate about everything he does, and plans to channel his substantial energy and love of New Bern into working with us, the African American Heritage & Culture Center, New Bern Breakfast Rotary, and Faith Connection. **Welcome aboard, Mike!**

Since our last newsletter we've wrapped up an intense programming period. The Heritage Homes Tour, Volunteer Appreciation Social, History Quest, Annual Banquet, two speaker programs, and the Golf Tournament in three months — our heads are still spinning! All of these events were hugely successful due to the efforts of committee chairs **Cathy O'Brien**, **Karen Whitmore**, **Claudia Houston**, **Kathy Morrison**, and **Walt Teasdale**, along with new Programs Director **Marissa Moore**, our small but mighty staff, and **YOU**, our wonderful volunteers.

We jokingly refer to this season as our "summer down time." With humor, because there's never been a bit of slack time. If we're not racing to the next event or presentation, we're into deep planning for a larger program the following year. Right now, the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in April 2023 looms large on the horizon. The Anniversary Committee, led by **Kathy Morrison** and **Jim Hodges**, has just finished an intense first round of preparation for the wonderful exhibit at the NC History Center which will open next spring. You're going to love it!





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. Please recognize and support our business partners and individuals who generously contribute to the New Bern Historical Society.

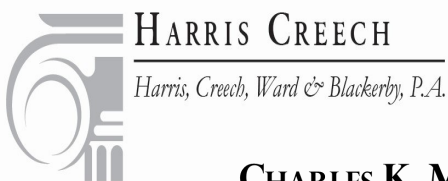
We look forward to partnering with new community leaders in the future!

Neuse River Region Association of REALTORS® 

Century 21 Zaytoun-Raines  
Coldwell Banker Sea Coast Advantage  
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Neuse Realty  
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JIM & KATHY  
MORRISON



**CHARLES K. McCOTTER, JR.**  
ATTORNEY AT LAW



JIM HODGES, CURATOR  
NEW BERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## Upcoming Programs & Events



### Auditions

**Attmore Oliver House**  
**511 Broad Street**  
**August 6 - 1pm**

Bring your spookiest persona to the audition! You might get a chance to portray one of New Bern's famous firsts, whether that be the first black Pepsi model or a family with their first radio. It'll be a spirited time for all! Call the office at 252.638.8558 with any questions.



**The Mystery of Sarah Slater**  
by Betty Vaughn

Carolina Colours Pavilion  
**September 14 - 11:30am to 1pm**

Interested in hearing about what might have happened to that missing Confederate gold? Or who else could have been involved in the assassination of President Lincoln? Then come and enjoy a wonderful Chelsea lunch and hear from author Betty Vaughn about the fascinating Sarah Slater. *Reservations required.* Call the office at 252.638.8558 or register online at [newbernhistorical.org](http://newbernhistorical.org).

**New Member Welcome**  
Attmore-Oliver House  
511 Broad Street  
**September TBA - 7 to 8pm**

If you joined the Historical Society since May of this year, we hope you'll join us to meet your fellow newcomers and enjoy hearing about our operations and programs. Watch your inbox for an invitation soon! RSVP required.



Thank you to our local business sponsors for their continued support!

100 YEARS



HOWARD, STALLINGS,  
FROM, ATKINS,  
ANGELL & DAVIS, P.A.  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW



Meet a new neighbor or someone who just moved here? Well, send them our way! We love adding new members to our Historical Society family. *We take our history seriously but don't take ourselves too seriously.*

## Watch for these exciting programs coming this fall!



Join our friendly but ghostly Mortician for the

### 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Ghostwalk

October 20 - 22

Featuring spirited stories about New Bern's famous firsts with special homage to the Great Fire of 1922!

### Fall ABC Sale

New Bern Battlefield Park

November 5 - 9am to 2pm

### Donations Now Being Accepted

Donations of gently-used, higher-end furniture, antiques, collectibles, artwork, lamps, estate jewelry, tools, and outdoor furniture and items are accepted year-round. Please call 252.638.8558 or drop off your items at the Historical Society during office hours.

### Living History Day at

New Bern Battlefield Park

October 8

Bring your family to watch history come to life with reenactments of what life was like for not just Confederate and Union soldiers, but also the women and children they left behind during the Civil War. Watch our website for details.

### Lore Lecture

Speaker TBA

Orringer Auditorium

November 13 - 2 to 3:30pm

## Partner Organization Events

- Fridays thru Sundays, 12:30 - 4:30pm - *Face to Face: Civil War Sketches and Stories*, an exhibit at the New Bern Academy Museum owned by Tryon Palace.
- Cedar Grove Cemetery Tours upon request, given by our partners the *Earl of Craven Questers*, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the restoration and preservation of Cedar Grove Cemetery. Please call 252.649.7349 for details.

## Curator's Corner

by Jim Hodges, NBHS Curator

### Full Circle

One of the most rewarding life chapters as a youth in New Bern was the loving bond that I enjoyed with my maternal grandparents, John and Alice Taylor. Their Broad Street home was filled with many things that captured the fascination of a young boy. My grandparents were especially proud of a mahogany slant top desk that was located in their library. As the years slipped by, I developed an appreciation for this beautiful example of workmanship. The joinery as well as the inlay work and marquetry are exceptional. On several occasions in the late 1950s and 1960s, Granddaddy had told me that a local man by the name of Clyde Long Chesson was the crafts-man.

Mr. Chesson, who lived with his wife, Effie, and son, Andrew, on National Avenue in the



Riverside area of New Bern was a saw filer by trade. Along North Craven Street that earlier had been called Griffith Street, there were several large lumber mills that relied on the skills of saw filers to keep their saw blades sharp and operating efficiently. It is my impression that Mr. Chesson had a work shop behind his home where he would fabricate cabinets and furniture in his spare time. Most likely, the desk was acquired by my grandparents in the late 1930s or early 1940s.

My Granddaddy passed away in 1974 at the age of 85 and my Grandmother, who her grandchildren affectionately called Mammy, passed away in 1985 at the age of 92. Their estate was distributed to their three children and their children, the grandchildren. The

Chesson desk went to a cousin who moved several times over the years. She eventually left coastal North Carolina and relocated to Kansas. Not



having a need for the Chesson desk, she gifted it to another cousin who had a summer home in Beaufort where it sat in his garage for a period of time. Now, follow carefully, this cousin really didn't need the desk either because he didn't spend much time there anyhow, so his brother, my other cousin, who has a residence in Morehead City, contacted me to see if the New Bern Historical Society had an interest in giving the old desk a forever home. Cousin Johnny delivered the desk back to New Bern in November 2021. After several months of cleaning, repairing, and refurbishing, the old Clyde Chesson desk that belonged to my grandparents has truly come full circle and is proudly displayed in the New Bern Historical Society's Attmore-Oliver House. I am confident that my Mammy & Granddaddy would be pleased.

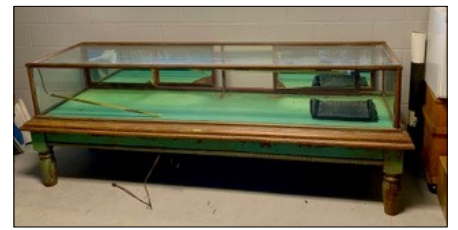
## Battlefield Park News

by Jon Miller, Battlefield Adjutant

A few years ago the Battlefield Park was gifted a handsome display case made in High Point, NC and we quickly filled it with artifacts from the 1862 battle. Imagine our surprise when new Society members **Dan Turbitt** and **Chris Bare** recently donated this 8-foot long display case for our use at the Visitor Center. We are consulting with NBHS Curator **Jim Hodges** to identify additional objects to place there. When

*We bring history to life!*

filled, we will have three display cases in our office at the Park, the third having been donated by the **New Bern Firemen's Museum** some time ago.



We recently had a couple of days of exceptional rainfall, and we noticed an area on a trail near the monument that had been scoured by water pouring



across it. Not one to pass up another construction opportunity, our volunteers (L-R in photo) **John Wright, Rod Rhodes, Mark Trail, Clare Gramley** and **Gene Lock** made quick work of building a drainage channel that will prevent the loss of trail material being washed away. Gene, a former insurance executive, also ensured we minimized any tripping hazard by limiting the channel width!

A good friend of the battlefield and part-time volunteer, **Captain Chris Burkard, USMC**, was recently selected by Headquarters, Marine Corps, for the



Congressional Fellowship Program and Masters program at George Mason University. He and his family will soon be moving to the Washington DC area. His unit

at Cherry Point was instrumental in the drainage project for the Park's entrance road. We wish him all the best.





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### Winner of the 2022 Harriett Marks Scholarship & John R. and Alice Land Taylor Scholarship



Mary Parrish, Scholarship Committee Member  
& Lauren Heath

The New Bern Historical Society is pleased to announce that New Bern High School senior **Lauren Heath** has been awarded the Harriet Marks Scholarship and the John R. and Alice Land Taylor Scholarship for 2022.

Lauren demonstrated academic excellence and received honors in several classes. She has been involved in a number of school and community activities such as NBHS Marching Band, Indoor Percussion, Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, and was a Junior Civitan Member for three years. Lauren will be attending Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, NC this fall. She plans on studying to become an Equine Vet.

The John R. and Alice Land Taylor Scholarship Endowment, recently established by **Curator Jim Hodges**, is designed to complement and supplement the Harriett Marks Scholarship. Both scholarships are awarded annually based on both academics and financial need.

### New Bern Historical Society Board of Directors

#### 2022-23 Officers & Appointed Positions

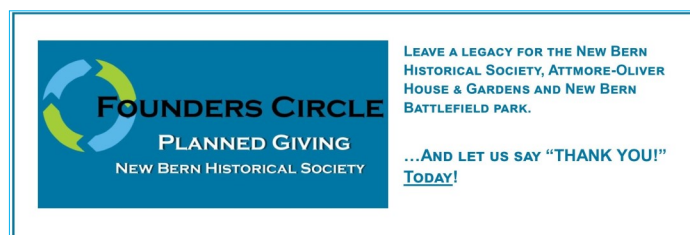
Joe Hunt, President  
Kathy Morrison, First Vice-President  
Egon Lippert, Second Vice-President  
Chris Kelso, Secretary  
Jim Morrison, Treasurer  
Jon Miller, Battlefield Adjutant  
Claudia Houston, Historian  
Jim Hodges, Curator

Joe Anderson	Nelson McDaniel
Carol Becton	Cathy O'Brien
Clayton Cheek	Gerri Olvaney
George Evans	Mary Parrish
Breck Gibbs	Walt Teasdale
Lynne Harakal	Karen Whitmore
Cheryl Lawrence	Mike Williams
Ken McCotter	

#### Staff

Mickey Miller—Executive Director  
Marissa Moore—Programs Director  
Karen Bixler—Assistant to Director  
Sue Dunn—Admin. Assistant

### Planned Giving Reception—Watch for More!



Do you want to leave a lasting legacy in New Bern? Have you thought about a planned gift or bequest for the Historical Society from your estate?

A planned gift is one way to play a role in preserving the past for the future. You can make sure our archived collection, our Battlefield Park preservation work, and our education programs continue to inspire all ages for many more for years to come. Consider joining other donors who have provided for the future of the Historical Society by establishing a

planned gift and becoming a member of **The Founders' Circle**. We have established specific endowment funds for our operating expenses, Battlefield

Park, and one for unrestricted use. To inform us of a planned gift or to learn more about options, please call Mickey Miller, 252.638.8558. Through your bequest or other planned gift, you can ensure that the historic treasures and stories of New Bern will be there to inspire future generations.

We are planning a special reception in the upcoming months to thank those who have joined or expressed interest in becoming part of **The Founders Circle**. We'd love to have you join us so we can thank you in advance!