

Historically speaking



Quarterly Newsletter
january
february
march

2024

Fullfilling our wonderful mission - with YOU - into 2024!

celebrate



educate



preserve





Update from Mickey Miller, Executive Director

Celebrate. Educate. Preserve.

Our cover says it all. We're passionate about our mission and our upcoming programming reflects it. Check out the variety - from the Revolutionary War to a daring Coast Guard rescue, from the green gold rush to poignant Civil War stories - there's something for everyone! As I like to say, whether you're a native, a newcomer, or somewhere in between, there's always so much fascinating local history to learn and share.

Watch your mailboxes next month for an exciting and unique edition of the annual Historical Journal. Celebrating our century of service, this over-sized, bound edition filled with color photos will be a collector's item for anyone interested in New Bern's history. Thanks to Editor **Jay DeLoach** and his talented committee who worked extraordinarily hard to bring this volume to you: **Susan Cook, Margo Fesperman, Bernard George, Jim Hodges, Claudia Houston, Chris Kelso, John Klecker,** and **Steve Shaffer**.

As I write this, we are in the midst of taking down our Centennial exhibit at the NC History Center. This is a

bittersweet moment. While we hate to see it go, we were honored to have shared some of New Bern's little known and important stories as our birthday gift to the public. We are grateful to our friends at **Tryon Palace** for generously hosting the exhibit, to the donors who made it possible, and to the professionals from **Design Dimension** who breathed color, life, and vibrancy to our ideas.

*thank
you*

For your Annual Fund Contributions!

Heartfelt thanks to those who have contributed to the **Annual Fund!** With the rising costs of food, venues, building supplies, and other expenses, the Annual Fund is critical to help us to cover operating costs. **There's still time to donate!** Any gift of any size truly makes a difference. We'll be highlighting contributors in the spring newsletter – we'd love to see your name there.

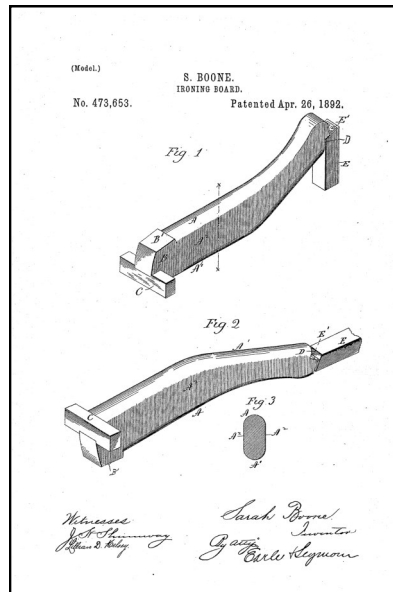


The Extraordinary Sarah Marshall Boone by Claudia Houston, Historian

I hope you all got the chance to visit our 100th Anniversary exhibit. One of my favorite stories from at the exhibit was the tale of Sarah Marshall Boone.

Ainissa Ramirez, scientist, professor, and author was visiting the New Haven, Connecticut Library to conduct research. A yellowed piece of paper fell out of a folder she was holding, and when Ms. Ramirez read it, it told the story of a local Black woman, Sarah Marshall Boone, who received a patent for an invention in the late 1800's. Sarah was born in Craven County and Ms. Ramirez contacted us to determine background information about the Marshall family. We initially had no information whatsoever but once we began researching, an interesting story took shape. Sarah Marshall, born in 1832, was enslaved along with her parents on the Marshall plantation near Havelock. James Marshall was Sarah's biological father. At the age of fourteen, Sarah married James Boone, a brick mason and free Black. Sarah and James along with their children and her mother, left Craven County prior to the Civil War. They

were assisted in moving to New Haven by an organization connected to the Underground Railroad.



Sarah Boone's prototype for a new ironing board

Sarah was illiterate, as it was forbidden to teach slaves to read. She was, however, a skilled dressmaker. The fashion of the day included dresses with well-fitted sleeves and bodices. Sarah found that using an ironing board, which at that time consisted of a plank of wood sitting on top of two chairs, was not conducive to ironing those garments, so she set about inventing a better one. Now a grandmother, Sarah began to learn to read, with the aid of her local church. On April 26, 1892, US patent No. 473.653 was granted to Sarah Boone, age 62, for her new ironing board design. She became one of the first Blacks in the nation to file a patent. Although she received no financial benefit from her patent, her invention impacted the larger social community.

There are still missing pieces to Sarah's story, which will hopefully be revealed in time. My hope for 2024 is that we will continue to discover and share other stories from New Bern, like Sarah's, which focus on ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

Watch our website (www.NewBernHistorical.org) for further details on the upcoming 2024 programs!

Wednesday, January 17: Lunch & Learn - So You Say You Want a Revolution? with Susan Lucas, DAR & Gary Gillette, SAR / 11:30am / Carolina Colours Pavilion ***EVENT IS SOLD OUT***

Sunday, January 21: Stony the Road We Trod: From Bondage to Freedom in James City presented by William Hollowell & Craig Allen, James City Historical Society / 2-3:30pm / Orringer Auditorium, Craven Community College

Wednesday, February 7: Lunch & Learn - Timber, Land & Railroads: A History of the John L. Roper Lumber Company by author Bill Barber / 11:30am / Carolina Colours Pavilion

Sunday, February 18: Into the Burning Sea—The Greatest Coast Guard Rescue in American History presented by author & historian Kevin Duffus / 2pm / Orringer Auditorium, Craven Community College

Wednesday, March 6: Lunch & Learn - 51 at 250: The Bold & Brassy Women of Northeastern NC presented by Bonnie Pierce, Edenton Historical Commission / 11:30am / Carolina Colours Pavilion **On sale February 5th**

Saturday, March 16: Battlefield Adventure Day / 1-4pm / New Bern Battlefield Park **On sale February 5th**

Thursday-Saturday, March 21-23: Hallowed Ground Lantern Tour: Stories of Courage & Conviction / 6-9:00pm / New Bern Battlefield Park **On sale February 5th**

Friday-Saturday, May 3-4: Heritage Homes Tour / 10am-4pm / Historic Downtown & Ghent Neighborhoods



2023: A Remarkable Year... by Jim Hodges, NBHS Curator

2023 was a significant and productive year for the New Bern Historical Society. The celebration of the Society's 100th anniversary was paramount and punctuated with the impressive "Through the Looking

Glass" exhibit in the NC History Center.

In addition, throughout the year the Historical Society was gifted a variety of artifacts that are specific for New Bern and Craven County. Although all the donations are certainly worthy of detailed discussion, I have selected a unique example to share.

In the late 18th and first half of the 19th centuries, New Bern enjoyed great prosperity in maritime commerce. Even though several businessmen accumulated vast wealth, the "trickle-down effect" positively impacted many other locals as well. Consequently, the emergence of specialized craftsmen appeared on the streets and in the shops of New Bern. The demand for quality teapots, tankards, knives, forks, and spoons was satisfied by local silver and gold smiths. William Tisdale, Freeman Woods, John Gill, David Murdock, and others were recognized for the exceptional silver products they designed and cast.

This past summer, a gentleman from the Raleigh area along with the endorsement of his two sisters presented three silver spoons to the New Bern Historical Society. Their late mother, a New Bern native and member of the Dunn Family, inherited the spoons that had most likely

been in her family since the 19th century. Two of the coin-silver (90% silver, 10% copper) pieces are serving spoons and attributed to the craftsmanship of David Murdock. He was born in New Bern circa 1791 and apprenticed in 1805 to Freeman Woods, a highly regarded local silversmith. He established his own shop in 1812 and later apprenticed John Gill and Samuel Fisher in 1814. In 1819 David Murdock sold his business to John Gill.

The two serving spoons are identical and are both cleanly marked "Murdock" on the underside of the



Continued on p. 4



Hallowed Ground Lantern Tour

March 21 - 23, 2024

6:00 - 9:00 pm

New Bern Battlefield Park
300 Battlefield Trail

Tickets on sale February 5
Online Reservations Required
www.newbernhistorical.org



Take an evening, lantern-lit walk through the Hallowed Ground of Battlefield Park. Hear moving stories of courage & conviction from the past.

The Historical Society's newest storytelling event, the Hallowed Ground Lantern Tour, returns for its third year! Take a 60-minute guided walk through the wooded battlefield trails, where costumed reenactors will share their inspiring stories about life in New Bern's Civil War past. You'll hear from an early Black enlistee, a heart-broken family missing their father, a couple crafty wartime profiteers, and a man seeking justice for his great-grandfather. In the tent afterward, you'll visit a riveting Civil War field hospital reenactment.

Not a battlefield tour or a program about the war, these are poignant human stories of civilians, soldiers, and the formerly-enslaved. These gripping narratives are largely based on letters, diaries, and contemporaneous accounts.

Curator, cont. from p. 3

handle. Both spoons are in pristine condition and have a patterned design on the topside of the handle. They are inscribed with the monogram "JEO" on the handle that is suggestive by the family to be John and Elizabeth Oliver who resided in New Bern in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.



The third silver spoon is smaller and more likely a tablespoon. The maker's mark on the underside of the handle indicates "Holland".

Although investigation reveals that a silversmith by that name does not appear to be specific for New Bern, there are two silversmiths on record by the name of John Holland during the first half of the 19th century in eastern North Carolina, one in Washington and the other in Tarboro. Regardless, at some point in this spoon's journey, it found its way to New Bern,

The New Bern Historical Society is greatly appreciative of the Dunn-Tillman Family's generosity and their desire to see that these superior examples of 19th century craftsmanship have returned to their home in New Bern.

Harriett Marks Scholarship and the John R. & Alice Land Taylor Scholarship



The Marks Scholarship was established in a trust for the estate of Miss Harriett Marks as a memorial to the O. Marks family. The Taylor Scholarship complements and supplements the Marks Scholarship. It was created in 2015 by J. M. Hodges, Jr. to honor the memory of his grandparents. These scholarships are awarded annually based on both scholarship and financial need.

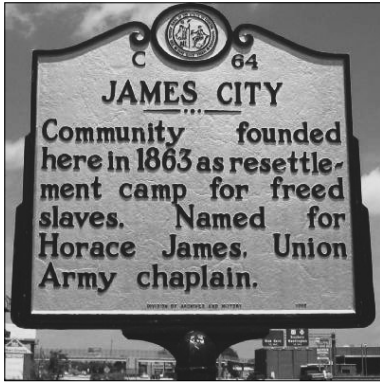
Both scholarships are awarded to a senior graduating from New Bern High School and contribute to the tuition, board or lodging at an accredited college, university, or other institution of higher learning. They are renewable for three succeeding years if academic standards are maintained. We are very proud of the academic records of our scholarship recipients over the years, and we look forward to contributing to more students who will maintain this tradition.

Scholarship applications are available on the New Bern Historical Society website:

www.newbernhistorical.org/scholarships

and on the New Bern High School website.

The 2024 scholarship application deadline is Friday, March 22, 2024.



Stony the Road We Trod: From Bondage to Freedom in James City

Sunday, January 21 • 2 - 3:30 pm
Orringer Auditorium, Craven Community College
Cost is \$10 • Reservations Recommended

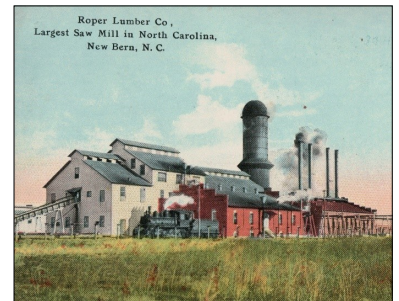
William Hollowell and Craig Allen of the James City Historical Society will share the turbulent early history of James City, the town's fierce fight for self-determination, and the contributions of its residents over the years.

A History of the Roper Lumber Company

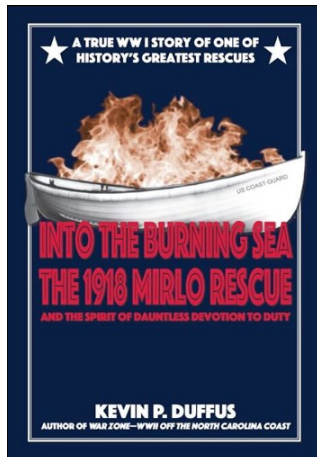


Wednesday, February 7
11:30 am • Carolina Colours Pavilion
Members \$24 / Non Members \$27

Forestry professional and author Bill Barber will provide an account of the timber boom that swept across coastal North Carolina following the Civil War. While New Bern boasted the largest sawmill, Roper's vast timber empire spread from Norfolk, VA to Jacksonville, NC, employing thousands and creating boom towns during the "green gold rush."



Into the Burning Sea - The Greatest Coast Guard Rescue in American History



by Author & Historian Kevin Duffus
Sunday, February 18 • 2 - 3:30 pm
Orringer Auditorium, Craven Community College
Cost is \$10 • Reservations Recommended

It was a day when American lifesaving history was made. The British tanker, Mirlo, loaded with nearly 300,000 gallons of aviation fuel was off the coast of Hatteras Island on August 16, 1918, when it was torpedoed by the Germans. Duffus describes the unimaginable ordeal of six courageous Coast Guardsmen in a small motor lifeboat as they imperiled their own lives in the rescue effort.

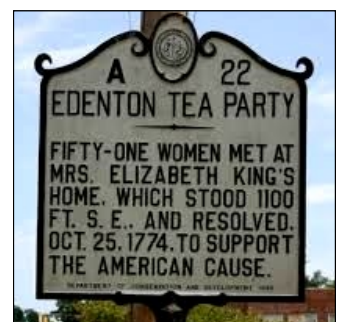
51 at 250: The Bold & Brassy Women of Northeastern NC

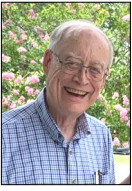


Wednesday, March 6
11:30 am • Carolina Colours Pavilion
Members \$24 / Non Members \$27

In Edenton, North Carolina, 250 years ago, 51 women put their protest in writing, signed it and sent it directly to the British Crown. This unprecedented act became known as the Edenton Resolves or the Edenton Tea Party. Join us to learn more from Edenton Historical Commission's Bonnie Pierce.

Tickets on sale February 5th

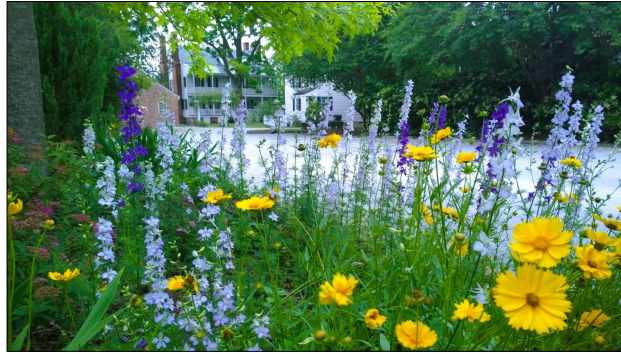




Historical Society President's Message...by Joe Hunt

As we wind up our centennial year, I think back on how far the Society has come since a small group first met in Minette Chapman Duffy's living room in 1923. In the

1950's the Society purchased the Attmore-Oliver House which is now the Historical Society office. The Attmore-Oliver Campus now includes the AO House, the Manly-Ward House, and the Roberts House. In addition, the New Bern Preservation Foundation has its office in the Haslen House and the New Bern Garden Club has the Judge Gaston Office, both on our campus. The campus also includes numerous gardens that run the entire length of the property. In the 1990's the Historical Society acquired the 35 acre Battlefield Park near Taberna, and has added to



it since. The park has been developed to include a pavilion, miles of groomed trails, a huge battle map, informational panels about the battle, a self-guided tour, and an audio tour app.

The Society has grown to almost 1,300 members and boasts popular events including Ghostwalk, Heritage Homes Tour, Lantern Tour, Golf Tournament, Lunch & Learns, lecture series, Battlefield Adventure Day, and an annual Historical Journal. We also administer two scholarships and preserve over 7000 photos, documents and artifacts.

All this was done through the hard work of our directors, a very small staff, and thousands of dedicated volunteers. With your continued support, the Historical Society will continue into its second century of service bringing history to life. Thank you!

New Bern Historical Society Board of Directors

2024 Officers & Appointed Positions

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

2024 Directors

Joe Anderson	Nelson McDaniel
Carol Becton	Cathy O'Brien
Clayton Cheek	Mary Parrish
George Evans	Chris Richey
Lynne Harakal	Walt Teasdale
Terri Hickman	Karen Whitmore
Ken McCotter	Mike Williams

Staff

Mickey Miller—Executive Director
Marissa Moore—Programs Director
Anthony Giardino—Operations Manager
Sue Dunn—Administrative Assistant

The Historical Society is truly blessed with committed volunteers who do much of the heavy lifting for this great organization. This quarter we're turning a big bright spotlight on **George Evans**.



Who gets his hands dirty digging in the dirt with the grounds crew every cold, rainy, or sweltering Monday morning? George Evans. Who do you call when you need logistical details managed without a hitch? That would be George. Who's the first to volunteer for any task, however thankless? Yep, Geo... you get the picture.



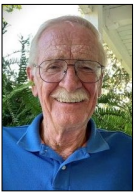
George and his wife Christian joined the Historical Society in 2017 after he retired from his legal career in Winston-Salem. Since then, he has quietly stepped up to help with nearly every program, including logistics chair for multiple events and clue writing for the History Quest. He also will be joining the Historical Journal Editorial Committee in the near future.

George, we salute you for your wry wit, thoughtful insights, and your willingness to cheerfully make a difference without any fanfare.

Costumes Needed

We are looking to expand our costume collection to support our various storytelling events such as Ghostwalk and Lantern Tour. If you have any gently used, *vintage* items that you are interested in donating, please contact our office at programs@newbernhistorical.org or call 252-638-8558. Due to limited space, we are highly selective as to what we will accept. Do not drop any items off at the office. **Please contact us first!**





Battlefield Park News...by Gene Lock, Battlefield Adjutant

During the last quarter the park volunteers continued to maintain the park in its beautiful condition. Trail timbers have been replaced, leaves have been cleared, and marl and wood chips have been spread on trails. The volunteers constructed a crib to hold our next delivery of marl stone. Kids (and, yes - adults, too) have a great time searching the pile for sharks teeth and this tends to spread the marl out further. The crib will better contain the marl.



Battlefield volunteers Rod Rhodes, Clare Gramley, Scott Herman & Gene Lock

In the fall the battlefield hosted a campout for local cub scout packs, with 100+ scouts and parents involved in the campout. The weather was good and the kids seemed to have a good time. The scout leaders did a great job of organizing their event and keeping the young

scouts involved and supervised. When the event was finished, we were amazed at how clean they left the area. The scout leaders were very appreciative of being able to use the battlefield, to avoid traveling to out-of-the-way campgrounds. A great new partnership is born.

Three tours were given during this quarter. The first was a Marine Corps Food Services Unit. They were especially interested in how Civil War soldiers were supplied with food. They were surprised that field units on both sides supplied the food but the soldiers themselves did the cooking. The second unit was from communications and was also approximately 25 Marines. They were impressed with how strong the positions of the redans were, and the difficult time the Union troops had in crossing Bullen's

Branch.

The third tour was given to four members of The Society of the Cincinnati. This is a patriotic organization founded to

perpetuate the memory of the Revolutionary War and what it achieved. Membership is limited to descendants of officers who served in the American Revolution. These



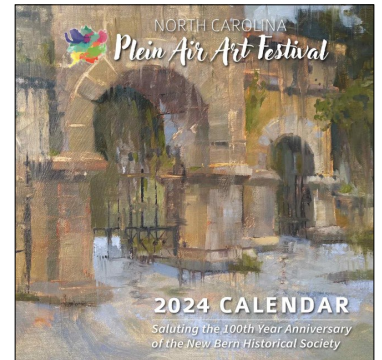
gentlemen were extremely interested in the Battle of New Bern and in our battlefield. At the conclusion they made a very generous contribution, and gave several period prints to the battlefield, which were most appreciated.

2024 Plein Air Festival Calendars On Sale Now!

Visit our website or contact our office to purchase your beautiful 2024 Plein Air Calendar

Cost \$30 (plus tax)

Proceeds go to Historical Society educational programs and property preservation.



Annual Harry Goodman Battlefield Adventure Day

Saturday, March 16 • 1-4pm
New Bern Battlefield Park



RESERVATIONS REQUIRED
Tickets on sale February 5th

Enjoy this annual springtime event for the entire family at the New Bern Battlefield Park. A day with the Civil War reenactors full of learning activities, period games and living history. The event is open to guests of all ages, with special activities for children 6-12 years old.



Leave Your
Legacy...
and let us say
Thank You
today!

As we look to the New Year, many of us think about causes we care about and how we can support them. The New Bern Historical Society Founders Circle recognizes those who have made a provision in their estate plan to ensure we can have another century to tell the stories of New Bern's history. In late September we hosted a reception at our 100th Anniversary Exhibit for our Founders Circle members and those with questions about legacy gifts. We were very pleased with the interest shown and by the loyalty of our current Founders Circle members. All those who attended were treated to special exhibit tours by the Society anniversary committee.

If you have questions about legacy giving, or if you have already included the Society in your plans, please contact Mickey Miller, director@newbernhistorical.org, phone 638-8558.



511 Broad Street
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252.638.8558
www.newbernhistorical.org

Mickey Miller / director@newbernhistorical.org
Marissa Moore / programs@newbernhistorical.org
Sue Dunn & Anthony Giardino / adminoffice@newbernhistorical.org

Office Hours: Monday - Friday 10am - 4pm

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

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