

## Report for Meeting of the North Carolina Historical Commission, Fall 2022

Prepared by Angela M. Thorpe, Director, NC African American Heritage Commission

### ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATES

#### Commissioner appointments and re-appointments

- Hon. Pauline Hankins (Brunswick County)
- Elder Fondella A. Leigh (Perquimans County)
- Dr. Leslie McKesson reappointed (Burke County)

#### Staffing and colleague updates

- We are delighted to welcome Commissioners of the American Indian Heritage Commission, as well as AIHC staff: Director Kerry Bird and Associate Director Quinn Godwin.
- The NCAAHC is working towards filling vacancies for a program coordinator and education and interpretation Specialist. A new administrative associate recently joined the team, as well.

### TRAIL UPDATES

#### North Carolina Civil Rights Trail

In the spring of 2020, the AAHC received funding from the William G. Pomeroy Foundation to develop and launch the NC Civil Rights Trail in partnership with Visit NC and the NC Office of Archives & History. The project will identify and mark (digitally and physically) North Carolina sites key to the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, or critical to advancing civil rights in the state. This project has created one interactive, evergreen digital map of North Carolina civil rights sites, and will ultimately yield fifty physical, community-based markers by the end of.

To date, fourteen markers have been awarded:

1. New Ahoskie Baptist Church (Ahoskie)—Installed August 2021
2. 1951 Adkin High School Walkouts (Kinston)—Installed November 2021
3. Shelby Sit-Ins—Installed February 2022
4. Cameron Village Sit-Ins (Raleigh)
5. Joseph Holt, Sr. and Elwyna Holt—Holt Family (Raleigh)—Installed September 2022
6. Ocean City Beach (Topsail Island)—Installed July 2022
7. Elizabeth City Sit-Ins—will be installed October 2022.
8. Kinston Sit-Ins
9. Blair Park Municipal Golf Course (High Point)
10. Monroe, NC Wade-Ins
11. 1963 Brevard High School Football Team—will be installed October 2022
12. Greensboro 6—Gillespie Golf Course
13. Johnson v. Branch (Enfield)
14. Halifax County Voters Movement (Enfield)

A third round of applications concluded in August 2022. NCAAHC staff anticipate opening a fourth and final round of applications, during which the N.C. Civil Rights Trail Coordinator will execute in-person statewide outreach to garner more applicants and to reach applicants in spaces where there is low representation on the trail.

### Freedom Roads

NCAAHC Trails Coordinator, Ashley Adams, developed several new physical resources for Freedom Roads, including rack cards to be placed at a series of historic sites. Ashley's work has included developing historical tabletop waysides chronicling freedom seeking stories at the following sites:

- Stagville State Historic Site
- Brunswick Town/Ft. Anderson State Historic Site
- Somerset Place State Historic Site
- Great Dismal Swamp State Park
- Elizabeth City State University

Waysides were developed collaboratively with the North Carolina Division of State Historic Sites & Properties, North Carolina State Parks, and history professors at Elizabeth City State University. Waysides will be fabricated and installed at these sites in 2023.

### African American Music Trails of Eastern North Carolina

The African American Music Trails of Eastern North Carolina, which were developed in partnership with the NCAAHC and the N.C. Arts Council, have come under the stewardship of the NCAAHC. Currently, the NCAAHC is planning for trail reactivation. Early reactivation work will take the form of booking and installing trail-related traveling exhibits in early 2023, refreshing and developing new digital content, and community engagement around the future of the trail.

## PROJECT UPDATES

### An Eagle on His Button (NPS Network to Freedom Grant, 2021-2022)

This funding enabled [digital educational resources centered on the U.S. Colored Troops](#) to be developed in partnership with Tryon Palace and Carolina K-12. Educators from across the state will receive training on how to apply these resources to the classroom during an educator workshop in November of 2022. Currently this work is being led by NCAAHC Trails Coordinator (contract) Ashley Adams.

### "Africa to Carolina: Next Steps in the Journey" (Institute of Museum and Library Services Grant, Awarded July 2020)

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

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

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

Slightly variable versions of this exhibit will be installed at Bath State Historic Site, Brunswick Town/Ft. Anderson State Historic Site, Edenton State Historic Site, Somerset Place State Historic Site, Tryon Palace, Roanoke Island Festival Park, and the NC Maritime Museum at Beaufort in the Spring and Summer of 2022.

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

“Africa to Carolina” was selected as a semifinalist for the **Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation’s Inclusive Public Art Initiative**. If selected as a finalist in 2023, funding would enable the project to expand to place public art markers in coastal disembarkation communities.

#### **“A Tale of Two Ships: Part Deux” (Institute of Museum and Library Services Grant, Awarded June 2021)**

Funding will enable the AAHC to continue doing archival research on *La Concorde* overseas in France, Martinique, and Guadeloupe. This work will yield academic scholarship, digital content, and expansive interpretation in DNCR institutions.

Due to pandemic-imposed travel restrictions, the project team pushed overseas travel to early 2023. In the meantime, and in alignment with the grant award, the project team collaborated with the *Queen Anne’s Revenge* Conservation Lab to plan the third annual *LaC/QAR* research convening in February 2022.

NCAAHC associate director, Adrienne Nirdé, is working with the North Carolina Museum of History and the North Carolina Maritime Museum at Beaufort to install exhibit updates in these institutions that reflect the history of *La Concorde*.

#### **Green Books “Oasis Spaces” Project (African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund Grant, Awarded July 2021)**

The AAHC will lead the planning project to conceptualize development of a national marker and digital mapping program for existing Green Book sites. Working in conjunction with colleagues from the SC African American Heritage Commission, we will work to identify, develop, and build out infrastructure for the project. After piloting the project in North Carolina and South Carolina, the resulting framework for identification, research, online tool development, mapping, and marking sites could be scaled up for national implementation beyond the life of this planning project.

Stakeholder work sessions for this project took place in June, July, and August of 2022. Currently, the project consultant is working to develop stakeholder toolkits and a blueprint for a marker program based upon the work session feedback.

**NCAAHC Resource Library (North Carolina Humanities American Rescue Plan Grant, Awarded September 2021)**

This award funded “Growing Our Griots: Strengthening North Carolina’s Black Heritage-Keepers” in alignment with the NCAAHC Strategic Plan and as a follow up grant to an NC CARES: Humanities Relief Grant the NCAAHC received in 2020. “Growing Our Griots” provided a multi-part virtual professional development series to African American heritage practitioners in 2022. The series covered these topics:

- Fundraising 101 for African American Heritage Institutions
- Grant Writing Basics: Crafting and Completing Grant Applications, Letters of Intent, and Funding Proposals
- Marketing & Digital Engagement 101 for Small Institutions & Groups
- Beginner’s Guide to African American Cemetery Preservation
- Emergency Preparedness for African American Cultural Spaces
- Preserving Historic African American Properties in NC: Pt. 1—State Resources; Pt. 2—Local Resources
- NC Heritage Practitioner Roundtable

The project also created technical leaflets centered on common heritage-based technical assistance questions and concerns:

- How do I secure funding?
- How do I start a museum?
- How do I save my historic property?
- What do I do with this thing? Preserving artifacts and archival materials.
- How do I physically commemorate important history?
- How do I get started with preserving an African American cemetery?
- How do I find my family history?

The leaflets and webinars from the 2020 CARES webinar series and the 2022 ARP webinar series will be made available to the public in an online resource library at the end of September 2022.

## **NCHC Report-September 21, 2022**

### **Division of Archives and Records**

On behalf of the Division of Archives and Records, I am pleased to submit some brief highlights of recent collection development, programming, and other activities from the last three months. The report features some information on recent programming, outreach activities, and collection development. It represents a small slice of the many projects division staff undertake each month, and we are always happy to provide additional information as requested.

As with other parts of the division, department and other state agencies, staff turnover challenged the division in many ways over the last year. Four career employees retired since the end of 2021, including our archivists for organizational records, private collections, the Governor's Office records, and a digitization specialist in the Collections Management Branch. Some staff, including the head of the Outer Banks History Center, the division director's administrative assistant, and the division accounting technician, departed for higher paying positions in other agencies. Other key positions, including the electronic records archivist, archivist managing our online systems and catalog, head of government records description, and our conservation lab manager left for positions in other states, the private sector, or independent contracting. The loss of these key positions, as well as the time it takes to fill positions and train new employees impacted the work of several units. Managers across the division collaborated and shared work on critical projects while postponing some activities until new employees are on board.

Spring and summer proved to be a very popular time for tours of the Archives. We continue to get regular requests for tours with a variety of groups. Since March staff welcomed over 330 visitors on 29 tours of the Search Room, stacks, and security vault. As the demand for tours grows, so does the variety of groups who request them. It isn't uncommon to have groups request repeat visits. Recent tours have been held for the state agency summer legal interns, students from a UNC Greensboro class, Mayflower Society, Exploris (middle school) students, NC Questors, Caswell/Nash DAR chapter, John Hope Franklin Junior Scholar participants, National History Day students, agency summer interns, new library system directors, residents of Galloway Ridge (retirement community), Governor's Office pages, as well as tours at the request of various members of the General Assembly. We also welcomed the staff of Speaker Moore's office for a tour recently. Later in September we will welcome some members of the friends group from the Transportation Museum and students from Cary Academy. Tours provide an informal way to share our collections and division work to audiences who may not necessarily visit for an immediate research need.

Staff continued to conduct outreach programming, with much of it being held in other locations. The division manned an informational table at recent DNCR Days events at the NC Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores and the State Capitol. Weather cancelled the planned event at the Mountain Gateway Museum. Outreach coordinator, Adrienne Berney, provided an onsite consultation with the Transylvania County Historical Society on behalf of the Federation of NC Historical Societies. She also presented a program on the preservation of family heirlooms for the Wake County Genealogical Society. She and OBHC head staffed an informational table at the annual Somerset Days Gone By event at Somerset State Historic Site. Among his many recent collaborations and consultations, oral historian John Horan gave a presentation to a community meeting at Benebow Park in Greensboro. Heather South provided a program, *Reconciliation & Reunion: Finding Common Ground After the Civil War*, to a local UDC

Chapter this summer. Ashley Yandle served on a panel for a program held by the Council of State Archivists. She highlighted the development and work of the division's Conscious Description Team and their efforts to create more inclusive descriptive information for collection catalogs and finding aids. Finally, quarterly NC Trivia events return this fall for a specially requested, in-person event as part of the Wide Open Bluegrass Festival in Raleigh at the end of September.

As mentioned in recent reports, the State Historical Records Advisory Board's 2022-23 grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission is underway, including a new round of Traveling Archivist Program consultations and visits. Participants in this round of the program include Brevard College Library, Dare County Public Library, Durham Tech Library, the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, the NC Black Repertory Theater Company, and the Winston-Salem African American Archive. In addition to the virtual consultations with each participant, onsite visits have been completed for the Dare County Public Library, Museum of the Cherokee Indian, Brevard College Library, and the Winston-Salem African American Archive. Scheduling for the remaining visits is underway.

A second aspect of the current SHRAB grant includes workshops to motivate and equip cultural heritage groups to begin planning activities and collecting for the upcoming America250 commemoration. The grant supports a series of workshops to be held across the state. The inaugural Community Collecting and Storytelling workshop will be in Asheville on September 23. A second one is planned for Winston-Salem in October. The 2023 calendar tentatively includes workshops in Edenton, Pembroke, and Raleigh. The agenda for the workshops includes sessions on the coordination of community scan days, how to conduct oral histories, and how to utilize digital storytelling platforms. The workshops will also include some discussion of program possibilities, as well as image-text storytelling practices.

Work on the third season of the division's podcast, *Connecting the Docs: True Stories from the Old North State*, wrapped up in September. Episode releases are planned for the second and fourth Wednesdays. Led by our oral historian, John Horan, and Brooke Csuka, archivist for outreach programming, the podcast team drew on the expertise of several division staff members, as well as division interns, to produce this season's episodes. Season 3 features an eclectic range of topics from insights on how archivists do their work to connections between popular culture and state history. Episodes include:

1. Journey of an Archival Record, Appraisal
2. Journey of an Archival Record, Description
3. Journey of an Archival Record, Access
4. Insight into North Carolina Murder Ballads (Halloween Special)
5. Where the Crawdads Sing, Maroon Communities
6. Where the Crawdads Sing, School Truancy
7. Where the Crawdads Sing, Oyster Wars and Foodways in the Outer Banks
8. OBHC Intern Highlight, the Wilson Papers
9. Summer HBCU Intern Highlight, Abraham Galloway and Dr. David Cecelski Interview
10. View to the West, Mountain Speak (Spring 2022 Intern Highlight)
11. View to the West, Mountain Music (Spring 2022 Intern Highlight)

Episodes can be found [here](#), or wherever you access podcasts.

The Cultural Resources Emergency Support Team (CREST) is a program administered by the division. It is an affiliation of cultural heritage professionals from across the state, many of whom work for the department, who may respond to collections emergencies as able. In

recent years a groups of CREST members have responded to emergencies such as the flooding that impacted the city museum in Canton flooded after Tropical Storm Fred in 2021. Each year the CREST team holds a summit for members to share updates and undertake some additional training on disaster response for cultural collections. For the 2022 summit, CREST received grant funds from the Foundation for the Advancement in Conservation to provide a hands-on disaster recovery workshop for members and new recruits. The summit was held on August 29 at Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum. This was the first time in three years the team could gather in person, and the first time in five years that the group offered hands-on training with a wet-recovery scenario. Twenty-eight members participated, including both experienced members and eight new members. Grant funds covered travel costs for four members from the Asheville area and four coastal members to attend the event, as well as providing for additional “expendifacts” and recovery supplies. The opportunity allowed members to build team relationships while learning recovery techniques for a range of specific materials, including textiles, artifacts, and archival collections.

The division is continuously adding materials to our collections. Recent addition highlights include 147 cubic feet of records from the Cumberland County Clerk of Superior Court, and 4.65 gb of recent web archiving crawls for state agency websites. The Western Regional Archives added an addition to the Camp Sequoyah Collection the Fontana Dam Photograph Collection, and the Jay Wyatt Music Manuscripts. The Outer Banks History Center received donations such as The Albert Quentin Bell Papers, Michael Daniels oral history, Dare County Arts Council guide, and Robert Baxter’s research on the Wash Woods community. Recent Raleigh donations include the Mildred Reynolds Zimmerman Collection of photos and papers (PhC.298), a unique addition to the holdings of the Archives. It is especially rich with its portrayal of nineteenth century portraiture showing identified Reynolds family members of Stokes and Forsyth County. It also includes a folder of antebellum, Civil War, and Reconstruction letters documenting the antebellum and wartime and postbellum experience of the family and copies of family Bible records. The photos are unique among our collections in that they represent a white family that had seen its wealth by the outbreak of the Civil War due to debts and the early death of the male head. Thus, it was by the time of the war a family of yeoman farmers, five brothers sympathetic to the Confederacy but also fairly typical of western piedmont families, a less-documented aspect of our holdings. Additions to the Alonzo T. Mail Collection (PC 132) included original 18th-19th century deeds and land grant papers and letters. The most significant addition are a few original bills of sale for enslaved individuals recorded in Wake County deed books that no longer survive due to loss of the recorded copies. A separate Mial-Williamson Photo Collection was accessioned. The previous donations consisted entirely of paper. The Mial-Williamson Photo Collection will primarily include photos of the Mial and Williamson families, owners of Walnut Hill plantation in eastern Wake County, the grounds and home, plus some 20th century papers of Bailey and Charles Williamson. The interrelated Williamson family were Raleigh and Wake County Democratic office holders. Among the most significant letters to them are several from Franklin D. Roosevelt written during his 1932 presidential campaign and a discussion of the appointment of African American workers to positions in the Raleigh branch of the US Post Office. Lamar Ironhorse donated a collection that includes a combination of oral history audio cassette, copied research materials on Tuscarora Indian nation, and photos.

Archivists across the division continue their work on processing projects, including arrangement and description, as well as and indexing additions to the online catalog. Ongoing

state agency arrangement and description projects include work on the Prisons Record Group, the Dorthea Dix Record Group, the African American Social Work Collection, and the Treasurer's and Comptroller's Papers. The latter is a reprocessing of a collection that often goes overlooked by researchers due to a sparse and dated finding aid. This reprocessing project will provide for more descriptive online information about the collection, particularly relevant as the collection includes some important colonial and Revolutionary War-era records that can be used for America250NC resources and programming. As noted in previous reports, staff across the division continues to work on revisions to our online catalog data. When the AXAEM system began it united several stand-alone collections databases. Bibliographic and holdings data from these legacy databases required restructuring and editing in the new system. While this work does not get the attention of public outreach programming or other activities, it is equally important as it provides for more robust online access to our collections. Archivists continue to revise and add to the structure of the bibliographic records for our county holdings, as well as to refine the state agency bibliographic records to reflect the origin and growth of state agencies over time. This allows patrons to search on both the historical and modern names of state agencies. In addition, staff have been busy adding a wealth of information about holdings, such as our search room microfilm, that previously had not been available for online searches.

Each year the division staff recommend digitization projects based on researcher interest, division and departmental programming themes, and other factors. Digital services and collections management staff then review proposed projects to look at conservation concerns, arrangement needs, and rights management prior to forwarding them to division management for final review. Current digitization projects include Aycock Brown Photo Collection from the Outer Banks History Center and the county voter registration books more commonly referred to as the "Grandfather Clause" books. These arose after the 1900 state constitution amendments designed to restrict the pool of eligible voters in the state by requiring male voters to register based on their ancestor who voted prior to 1867. Eventually the digital images of these books will be available on TranscribeNC and ready for crowd-sourced transcription to increase access. Materials from the Governor Craig papers, as well as items related to the America250NC programming, are also being digitized. In collaborative digitization projects, the division teamed up with the State Library and State Historic Sites to support the digitization of archival materials at Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum. That work includes some outsourced digitization of audio and collections. The division has also started work on the digitization of county cohabitation records, including developing a workflow to borrow originals from the counties that retain these records. These records relate to the registration of pre-1865 marriages of enslaved people before the state passed a comprehensive marriage license law in 1868. We aim to create a digital collection of these documents both from our holdings and those held by the registers of deeds.

The division is excited to be a part of a departmental contract to review the comprehensive visitator experience at selected locations. This work is being led by the Lord Cultural Resources company headquartered in New York. As part of this contract, we provided input on visitation strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. The Lord Cultural Resources Team will visit the search room in Raleigh and interview staff and stakeholders. With changes in how users interact with our reference staff and online information, this is a timely review that we hope will provide some feedback on ways we can update in-person reference procedures to meet the needs of communities who may not use our collections on a regular basis. Another important contractual project is the consultation of the Image Permanence Institute staff



at the Rochester Institute of Technology around the hvac needs of the Archives' Raleigh location. The contract included some onsite visits and review of the current hvac capacity to develop recommendations on what is needed to create a dedicated audio-visual storage space to better protect these fragile collections.

Finally, with the return of in-person meetings and conferences, staff will be attending the upcoming Best Practices Exchange and annual meeting of the Council of State Archivists to be held in Nashville, TN at the end of September. The Best Practices Exchange features sessions on the preservation and management of electronic records. Following that the annual Southeaster Archives and Records Conference (SARC) will be held at the Florida State Archives in October. SARC is a meeting for state archives' staff in the southeastern states and represents one of the best opportunities for information sharing around our common challenges and environments. It also provides an opportunity for staff to explore programmatic collaborations with our colleagues in the region.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah E. Koonts  
State Archivist

**Report of Division of Historical Resources  
To the North Carolina Historical Commission  
For its September 21, 2022 meeting**

**Ramona M. Bartos, Division Director and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
September 12, 2022**

**Division in general**

**Vacancies.** The old maxim – you need people to help people – is proving itself very true in our division, which is suffering from a number of vacancies in key positions.

We have worked diligently since our last report in June to fill multiple vacancies, including three key positions in our Survey / National Register branch of the State Historic Preservation Office, including our National Register coordinator, and Preservation Specialist positions for southeastern NC and eastern NC. (As context, the Survey / National Register branch was at 50% full-strength throughout 2022, and staff is stretched thin, but still managing a high level of responsiveness and constituent service.) **We promoted Survey Specialist Jeff Smith into our vital National Register Coordinator role;** he previously served in that position for the State of West Virginia, and the **National Register Assistant Julie Smith into a Preservation Specialist position to handle southeastern counties.** We are awaiting arrival of an out-of-state hire for our Eastern Office National Register position.

We have also made **three efforts to recruit for a Restoration Specialist for a newly constituted western Piedmont /foothills service territory** in response to high constituent demand there. A concerning social media thread in a preservation professionals' group discussed this position in particular, citing high expectations given the perceived low salary, especially in a high COLA area. In our latest recruitment round, we received only 2 candidates from HR, and one of those candidates was being hired for another position in the office. We will therefore try once again to fill this very needed constituent-oriented position, but it **does highlight the need to match salaries to cost of living considerations as well as education and experience to compete successfully with the private, nonprofit, and other government sectors so we can continue to offer the high level of service expected by North Carolinians.**

We are also in the process of filling vacancies created by retirements, including **the Eastern Office's administrative assistant** (held by Stan Little, who served in this capacity for nearly 3 decades) and the **Historical Research Office's Historical Publications Editor for the *North Carolina Historical Review*** (held by Anne Miller after a quarter century of conscientious service as Historical Publications Editor, responsible for preparation of over 90 editions of the *North Carolina Historical Review* during her tenure). **We hope to have announcements regarding these positions later this year.**

Since we last met, we sadly said farewell to **two valued colleagues, who have moved on to other positions in their careers, including Assistant State Archaeologist Dr. MaryBeth Fitts, and Historic Research Office Supervisor Dr. Joe Beatty.** Dr. Fitts is now head of the Archaeological Research Laboratories at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, and Dr. Beatty now serves as Director of Digital Experience for the Classical American Homes Preservation Trust, managing their digital footprint online. We are at this time working to identify their successors.

**Statewide compensation plan.** We eagerly await responses regarding our requests for reconsideration for several job classifications under the updated statewide compensation plan, particularly to reinstate the former Specialist I and Specialist II classifications for the Historic Preservation Office as well as to establish organizational chart equilibrium for supervisors and rank-and-file staff across the division, rather than the unevenness the plan set in place. We have also shared salary studies with our human resource staff as evidence that public history salaries are not reflective of what is paid in the open market; it is imperative that our staff have competitive salaries for cost-of-living increases in the Raleigh and Asheville metro areas for both recruitment and retention purposes.

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

**National Register of Historic Places.** The state can boast **3** National Register listings as of early September from our June National Register Advisory Committee (NRAC) meeting, which both recognize important places in North Carolina history and, in the case of privately owned property, provide economic development opportunities:

- **Pilot Life Insurance Company Home Office, Greensboro**
- **Kimberlee Apartments, Charlotte**
- **Lynncote Historic District, Tryon vicinity**

In addition, the **Zebulon National Register Historic District** in Wake County was listed following updates requested by the National Park Service. Likewise, the nominated **Eunice Waymon (aka Nina Simone) Birthplace** in Tryon is undergoing some requested NPS revisions to reflect more of the story of her early life and its influence on her life as an entertainer and activist.

Dr. Waters opted not to nominate -- on advice of the NRAC -- the Mutschler House in Wake Forest as it had not yet attained its 50-year mark, and City Motor Company in Salisbury because of integrity issues. We have not yet heard of NPS' decision regarding the nomination for Westside High School in Chadbourn, which was nominated by Dr. Waters.

Our thanks to our NC Historical Commission members who do double-duty as serving members of the NRAC.

**Restoration Services Branch; building showcase planning.** A Building Showcase in **Ahoskie** is now scheduled for September 30, following local staff departures and health

challenges. Following earlier successful programs in Elizabeth City and Tarboro, the day will highlight historic buildings available and eligible for rehabilitation with state and federal tax credits. Please consider joining us.

### **Certified Local Government (CLG) grants.**

Our latest round of CLG grants has been made. We typically award approximately \$120,000 in local preservation “seed” project grants for projects ranging from new National Register nominations, architectural / archaeological surveys, bricks and mortar needs, and educational / outreach projects. HPO Grant Coordinator Michele McCabe led staff review in early June of approximately a dozen proposed projects, from which Dr. Waters as State Historic Preservation Officer selected the following, representing **\$119,725 in grant assistance for federal FY2022**:

- 1. Asheville Commission Assistance Mentoring Program training;**
- 2. Historic Building Study of the Sloan House in Davidson;**
- 3. National Register nomination of Oakwood and related cemeteries in Durham;**
- 4. Architectural Survey of the Broadell Community in Fayetteville;**
- 5. Unmarked Cemetery Initiative in Forsyth County;**
- 6. Ground Penetrating Radar Survey of the African American section of City Cemetery in Lexington;**
- 7. Architectural Survey update in Salisbury; and**
- 8. Preservation Plan for Commercial Districts in Waynesville.**

### **Local Government Program.**

**Virtual and in-person training.** Our in-person regional training for local preservation commissions has resumed, and we have had **two successful events since our last report** -- Piedmont region in Alamance County, and Western region in Hendersonville. Our Eastern training is scheduled for the end of this month in Swansboro. **We are likewise planning for a November consultants' workshop for National Register and survey consultants**, and will host as a speaker Jim Gabbert, our National Park Service reviewer of National Register nominations, who will include a **local government component to explore the role of local preservation commissions in National Register nominations**.

These trainings follow on our June sessions of a special disaster resiliency training for local historic preservation commissions affected by Hurricane Florence and Hurricane Michael with the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC). Local government coordinator Kristi Brantley reported nearly 100 constituents have signed up for this free educational opportunity, designed to bolster our state’s preparedness for natural disasters.

**CLG interest.** We are entertaining interest from the municipalities of Albemarle, Waxhaw, and Boone in Certified Local Government (CLG) status, which will qualify them for our modest statewide CLG grant program.

## **Environmental Review.**

Aside from its regular heavy menu of infrastructure projects and review responsibilities, we are scheduled to meet with our **FEMA Region 4 counterparts on September 13 to strengthen our ties in service of constituent responsiveness for the next inevitable natural disaster.**

## **Western Office**

With the **departure of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area staff** for smaller commercial quarters, the **Western Office is now able to host more DNCR personnel in Asheville** to serve the people of western North Carolina, and our division alone is now represented by four Historic Preservation Office staffers (Restoration Specialist Jennifer Cathey; Architectural Survey Coordinator Elizabeth King, Preservation Specialist Hannah Beckman-Black, and Survey Specialist Audrey Thomas) and two Office of State Archaeology archaeologists (Dr. Dylan Clark and Casey Kirby).

With the hopeful passage of the COVID pandemic, we are looking forward to **resuming more in-person outreach events at the Western Office.**

## **Historical Research Office**

- **Highway Historical Marker program.** The program held its first marker committee meeting in May after a several-year hiatus due to lack of funding; this work was followed **by two committee member orientations in August organized by program coordinator Ansley Wegner**, which featured presentations by our Legal staff on our state's sunshine laws. We look forward to resuming marker dedications in person, on-site, which are often an opportunity for community reflection on its role in state history.
- **Flyleaf.** In light of Dr. Beatty's resignation in July, the **office has temporarily suspended our increasingly popular monthly interview outreach series "Flyleaf"** to highlight recent scholarship on North Carolina history.

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

The Office of State Archaeology will present as a spotlight program area in our division at this meeting.

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

## **NC Historical Commission Meeting – September 21, 2022**

### **Division of State History Museums State Historical Commission Highlights Report**

The museums have been very active since the last Historical Commission meeting. Highlights of the activities from each museum during the period since the last Historical Commission meeting are listed below. Visitation continues to pick up at all the museums. From January 1, 2022, through August 31, 2022 visitation at each museum was as follows:

NC Museum of History – 175,491  
Maritime Museum in Beaufort – 93,853  
Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum – 80,737  
Museum of the Albemarle – 39,302  
Museum of the Cape Fear – 24,274  
Maritime Museum in Southport – 21,790  
Mountain Gateway Museum – 9,080

As you will see in the notes that follow, the Museums have been experiencing staff turnover recently due to retirements and staff accepting better paying positions. The low salaries being paid by the state are making it increasingly hard to fill these vacant positions. Several positions have been posted multiple times before an acceptable candidate has been found.

There are three capital projects underway in the division this year. Work continues on the design of the renovation and expansion of the NC Museum of History. This summer the staff has been working with two exhibit design firms, Roto and Luci Creative to design all new exhibits for the museum.

The replacement museum for the Museum of the Cape Fear, originally named the NC Civil War and Reconstruction History Center, has received \$60M from the legislature for the project. The Foundation funding the project is in talks with the City of Fayetteville and Cumberland County for additional funding needed for the project. Construction costs have escalated greatly since the project began. Phase I of the project, the History Village and Distance Learning Center, has been completed.

The Legislature granted \$3M to the Beaufort Maritime Heritage Foundation for site planning for a new Education Center and Maritime Museum on the Gallants Channel property owned by the state. The firm of ClarkNexen was hired to complete the plan. Planning meetings with community leaders and museum staff have been going on for the last several months. A completed plan is expected by this fall.

## **Division Highlights for June – August 2022**

### **June 2022 Highlights:**

#### **North Carolina Museum of History:**

Saturday, June 4, 2022, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

#### **Military Appreciation Day: North Carolinians at Home and Abroad, at the museum**

Over 1800 attended the Military Appreciation Day – a joint effort with The North Carolina



Museum of History, The North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and The Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

The event began with the induction of the inaugural class of the North Carolina Military Hall of Firsts, including welcome remarks from Director Ken Howard, and remarks from Governor Roy Cooper, Secretary D. Reid Wilson, DNCR, Secretary Lieutenant

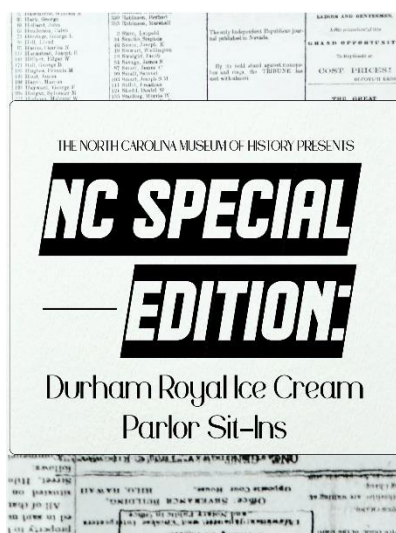
General Walter Gaskin, DMVA, and emcee Bill Young, CBS 17 Anchor. Rear Admiral Laura M. Dickey, U.S. Coast Guard, presented the keynote address.

Following the ceremony, a large crowd attended the ribbon cutting. The display recognizes the first 8 individuals to receive this honor.

Local Media, [CBS 17](#) and [Spectrum](#) did interviews to highlighted the inductees and the event. The event was also covered by the [News and Observer](#), among others.

On the same day [DNCR Day](#) was also enjoyed outside on the Bicentennial Plaza, with offerings from across the department, including opportunities to learn more about our zoo and aquariums; museums of art, history, and science; state parks; state historic sites and more.

## Juneteenth events.



In collaboration with the Smithsonian for the inaugural [Civic Season](#), Juneteenth events were widely celebrated at the museum.

Over 600 participated in either virtual or live events, including:  
 June 14th: Community Class: [NC Revolutionaries and Freedom Seekers](#)  
 June 17th: [Celebrate Juneteenth at the Museum](#)  
 + [Searching for Freedom: PBSNC George White](#) film screening.

June 23rd: [Special Edition: Royal Ice Cream Sit In](#) with Mrs. Mary Clyburn Hooks and Ms. Virginia Williams, two of the protestors who shared their memories of that historic day.

## Summer Passport Program!



The NC Museum of Art, the NC Museum of History, and the NC Museum of Natural Sciences launched the [Summer Passport Program](#).

Take a trip with your North Carolina museums to the collaborative Summer Passport Program. To start, get a Passport at the North Carolina Museum of

History, the North Carolina Museum of Art, or the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences. Then complete the scavenger hunts and get your passport stamped at all three museums to earn a free NC Traveler patch. The hunts are great for elementary-age kids with attached grown-ups, but others can participate too.

The brainchild of North Carolina Museum of History Educator, Nancy Pennington, the Summer Passport Program was well received. It was featured on [CBS17](#) and the [News and Record](#), among [others](#).



## North Carolina Regional Museums:

### Mountain Gateway Museum in Old Fort:



A green ogre and a cast of fairy tale characters took over the stage in Mountain Gateway Museum's amphitheater for two weeks in June as part of the McDowell Arts Council Association's Summer Youth Theater production of "Shrek." Nearly 1,000 people, including 33 budding actors, attended the six performances and two rehearsals of the play. During the month, MGM's staff also manned a booth at the City of Marion's

14<sup>th</sup> Annual Livermush Festival and participated in a two-day "Revolutionary War Homefront" event at Lake James State Park.

### Museum of the Albemarle (MOA):



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

- Two Hybrid (both in-person and virtual) History for Lunches: "Hospital of the Albemarle: Past, Present & Future" and "Debunking Common Recycling Myths While Also Learning Where "Away" Actually is When Throwing Something Away."
- Night at the Nags Head Casino Dance Party Fundraiser for Friends of the Museum of the Albemarle
- Outreach Through Social and Traditional Media with weekly article submitted to *The Daily Advance* for publication each Sunday.



### Museum of the Cape Fear Historical Complex

- The groundbreaking for the final phase of the North Carolina Civil War and Reconstruction History Center occurred June 2. Dr. Spencer Crew, Emeritus Director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, was the featured speaker.
- The Museum of the Cape Fear staff represented the museum at the NCDNCR 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary event in Raleigh on June 4.

- The museum opened a new temporary exhibit, "Let's Play: A Time Warp to Toys of the Past." This exhibit will remain on display until September.
- Museum staff set up a booth at the City of Fayetteville's Juneteenth Jubilee celebration on June 18.
- The museum's first week of summer camp for 2022 was held June 27 – July 1. The theme this year is "Victorian Carolina." The second week of camp will be the last week of July. The camp is funded by a grant from the Cumberland Community Foundation.



We hosted a successful opening of our newest exhibit, "Operation Drumbeat." The exhibit explores the World War II German U-boat activity that turned the east coast of the United States into the world's most dangerous area for merchant shipping.

Our director, Joseph K. Schwarzer II, worked with NOAA to design new exterior signage on the Battle of the Atlantic. The new station will be installed on the museum porch.

The matching \$500,000 from the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau and Dare County Commissioners for the museum exhibitions project has been secured. The Museum staff is working with Erin Lawrence and Steven Miller of the DNCR Capital Projects section to have Office of State Construction award the contract for building the new permanent exhibit.



The Museum received excellent coverage in Our State's Annual Coastal Issue in the Beaufort section with images from the Watercraft Center, a brief paragraph on the Wooden Boat Show (pages 102-103) and an additional paragraph on the Museum and the boats / boat models collection (page 127).

Popular YouTubers from Project Atticus filmed at the Museum and Bonehenge

Whale Center. The video, which posted last Saturday, has already had more than 100,000 views.

Maritime Museum System Public Information Officer, Cyndi Brown, successfully applied for a marketing grant from the Carteret County Tourism Development Association. The TDA awarded the Beaufort site \$20,000, the maximum amount available to an individual entity.



Curator of Education, Katy Menne, collaborated with educators from the Museum of Natural Sciences to conduct an outreach program that reached 600 elementary students from East Robeson Primary School. This is the first time the Maritime Museum and the Natural Science Museum have worked together.

On June 26, Site Manager Lori Sanderlin spoke with the Oak Island Parks and Recreation "Social Butterfly" program to share offerings from the museum as visitors and program participants. She packed up Sensory Backpacks, Salty Dog Cooking supplies, scavenger hunts, tactile maps, and camp crafts to take on the road.

The Museum will be hosting temporary exhibits in the exhibit hall until our Commercial Fishing exhibit is complete and installed. The first exhibit is the African American Music exhibit from DNCR, which is scheduled for 6 months. After the music exhibit, museum staff is working with the Gullah Geechee community to install an exhibit on sweetgrass baskets. Grown in coastal communities, these grasses are dwindling, and it has a huge impact on the culture and livelihood of people in our region.

### July 2022 Highlights

#### North Carolina Museum of History:

### **Summer Virtual Programs continue to be a hit, including a guest appearance from First Lady Cooper!**



History and Highballs: French Heritage of North Carolina. Over 216 virtual visitors learned about the arrival of the "French Gratitude Train" in downtown Raleigh in 1949. Dr. Dudley M. Marchi, Professor of Humanities, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, North Carolina State University gave a brief overview of French heritage in North Carolina to set the stage for the arrival of the "French Gratitude Train" in downtown Raleigh February 8, 1949. It was an exciting event. France sent boxcars laden with gifts to all 49 US states in appreciation for securing the

Allied victory over Germany. The American nickname for this magnificent gift was the "Merci Train." Archival photographs document the event and the collection of gifts.

**We all enjoyed a surprise visit from First Lady Cooper as she virtually welcomed us to the Governor's Mansion and showed us an artifact, currently residing in the Mansion, from the French Gratitude Train.**



Over 215 guests joined us for History at High Noon with a special presentation by Revolutionary War historians Rob Orrison and Mark Maloy. Orrison kicked off the program talking about the Emerging Revolutionary War project that he and his colleagues have founded. Maloy wrapped up the presentation by sharing how in the worst winter of the Revolutionary War, George Washington dispatched General James Hogun and his brigade of North Carolina Continental soldiers to march almost 800 miles from Washington's

army outside New York City to reinforce the Continentals making a stand in Charleston, South Carolina. The North Carolinians marched overland for months through their home state and into the defenses of Charleston, only to surrender to the British a month later. We learned about these intrepid Continentals and their sacrifice for the cause of American independence

## North Carolina Regional Museums

### Mountain Gateway Museum in Old Fort:



Mountain Gateway Museum in Old Fort kicked off July with the opening of *Rivercane Renaissance*, a traveling exhibit designed by Western Carolina University's Mountain Heritage Center. The exhibit examines the historic uses of rivercane, especially by the Cherokee Indians, and current efforts to restore the native plant in the Southeast.

On July 4<sup>th</sup>, free ice cream scoops, watermelon slices, and bluegrass music were the highlights of MGM's annual Ice Cream Social. The museum also was the site of the Old Fort Community

Forum's Summer Street Dance on July 16 and the headquarters for Blue Ridge Adventures' two big, annual mountain bike races—the Off-Road Assault on Mount Mitchell (ORAMM) and the Mt. Jerdon Challenge—on July 23-24.





### Museum of the Albemarle:

- Two Hybrid (both in-person and virtual) History for Lunches: “Time, Typology & Point Traditions in NENC” and “Maritime Elizabeth City.”
- Summer Fun Day: North Carolina Lighthouses
- Day at the Movies – For Kids: Encanto
- Outreach Through Social and Traditional Media with weekly article submitted to *The Daily Advance* for publication each Sunday.



- We held our second summer camp for the year. The theme was Victorian North Carolina. Our camps are funded by Cumberland Community Foundation and the Museum of the Cape Fear Historical Complex Foundation.
- Tour groups are picking up. We hosted several summer camps and tour bus groups. These included camps and classes from Fort Bragg, Robeson County Parks and Recreation, NC A&T Early College, and Fayetteville Tech Community College.
- We hosted a visit from Reid Wilson and Darin Waters.
- The July theme for our History to Go was pirates. More than 100 boxes were picked up by kids and their families to have fun at home. To go along with the pirate theme, visitors during the month of July could also participate in a treasure hunt through the museum for a prize.



On June 29<sup>th</sup>, the Museum opened the new exhibit *Operation Drumbeat* Battle of the Atlantic off the Outer Banks. Over eighty guests attended the opening including Dare County Commissioners, the Board of the Outer Banks Visitor's Bureau, representatives of the U.S. Coast Guard, and community leaders. The

Exhibit has received excellent press coverage and has attracted the attention of *WWII Magazine* and the *Voice of America*.

The Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum and NC Maritime Museum of Southport are collaborating to create a semi-guided overview tour of The Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum utilizing American Sign Language. Ms. Menne filmed the interpreter this week. Public Information Officer, Cyndi Brown, filmed video footage of the exhibits and audio recordings of the intern.



Education Intern, Passion See, who is working toward an Associate degree in Arts and another in Science from Carteret Community College is assisting with Summer Science School camps and will also be working at the volunteer desk, on the discovery carts, and more.

Benjamin J. Wunderly accepted the position as head of Education on July 5<sup>th</sup>.

Representatives from the Queen Anne's Revenge conservation lab, including lead investigator Kim Kenyon and interns Kendell Burger (DOA/State of NC Intern) and Michael Elwell (HBCU Intern), came to the NCMC-Beaufort to conduct an annual inspection of the five cast iron cannons currently on display at the museum. Museum Conservator Michelle Crepeau, Collections Registrar Tessa Johnstone, Conservation Intern Kyler Copeland, and Collections Intern Sophie Griffin assisted. The cannons were examined for signs of renewed deterioration, and old desiccants were replaced. Overall, results were positive.

Popular YouTubers from Project Atticus filmed at the Museum and Bonehenge Whale Center. The video, which posted last Saturday, has already had more than 100,000 views



Eight people (staff, volunteers, and board members) attended Safe Zone Training with LGBTQ Center of the Cape Fear Coast. Training provided a deeper understanding of how we can assist diverse audiences.

Summer Intern Iain completed his 8-week, 141-hour internship this week. His work and time with our crew have been life-saving in a time of change. His selected project was adding a written interpretation to part of an exhibit.

Museum Manager Lori Sanderlin officially moved to the DOT Ferry Division. Her last day was Friday June 24 after 11 years at the Museum. The Friends of Museum agreed to hire a part-time temporary employee to assist in coverage this summer. Nick has accepted and starts on Wednesday the 13th. Nick is a prior education intern and is currently enrolled in the maritime studies master's program at ECU.

Education Curator, Katy Menne, was one of the USA ambassadors for Museum Week, a global initiative between galleries, libraries, artists, and museums, which occurred June 13-19. She worked with a team of 23 professionals around the globe to facilitate the week.

## August 2022 Highlights

### North Carolina Museum of History:



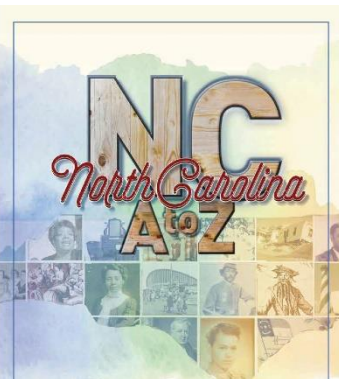
### History-In-a-Box

North Carolina Museum of History

The North Carolina Museum of History's K–12 Outreach branch, Beyond The Exhibits, announces the release of its latest History-In-a-Box kit, *Tumultuous Times: Antebellum to Reconstruction in North Carolina*. The History-In-a-Box (HIBK) program provides

educators with a fresh and engaging approach to teaching topics in North Carolina history. Multidisciplinary teaching tools based on primary sources, HIBKs include background materials, reproduction artifacts, lessons, and activities that connect North Carolina history with social studies, language arts, science, math, and visual arts. The kits are available in both physical and digital formats.

The *Tumultuous Times* HIBK was made possible by funding from the North Carolina Humanities Council, a statewide nonprofit and affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The kit was created in collaboration with the museum's African American and American Indian advisory boards. [CBS 17](#) ran a story on the kit's release and the Beyond the Exhibits program.



### **Tuesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>**

#### **Coffee with a Curator: North Carolina A to Z**

Over 69 guests attended the virtual lecture with curators Diana Bell-Kite, Katie Edwards, and RaeLana Poteat.

North Carolina is a diverse state with a long history of interesting people, places, events, and artifacts. If you had to choose, what—or who—would be in your North Carolina alphabet? The curators who worked on our new exhibit, *North Carolina A to Z*,

discussed some of their favorites out of the many objects and stories featured.



### **Thursday, August 11<sup>th</sup>.**

#### **History and Highballs: East Fork Pottery.**

**Speaker:** Alexander "Alex" Matisse, Artist, Potter, and Founder of East Fork Pottery.

Over 60 guests attended the virtual event celebrating North Carolina artists by welcoming Alex Matisse. Matisse dived into the evolution of East Fork Pottery and how it became what it is today.

Alexander "Alex" Matisse was raised in a small New England town in a family of artists, anthropologists, and inventors. In 2004 he moved to North

Carolina, where he attended Guilford College before dropping out to begin three years of apprenticeship with potters Matt Jones and, later, Mark Hewitt.



Newman Foundation

## MUSEUM STAFF EXPANDS!

Join us as we welcome two new staff members:

**Marina Kastan, Textile Conservator.** Marina comes to us from the Denver Art Museum, where she was the Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in Textile Conservation. Before that, she worked at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the Costume Institute. In addition to her skills in conservation, Marina was previously an archivist at the Barnett

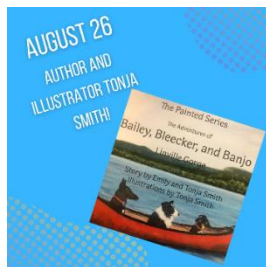
**Madison Martini, Marketing Writer.** Madison graduated from Villanova University with a Communications Degree. After graduation, she rose quickly through the digital marketing ranks at [Gartner Corporation](#), a national management consulting firm. As much success as she enjoyed there, her heart was always in the museum and cultural arts space. We are delighted Madison has found the position to match her passion and that she chose the museum as her new career focus.



## FALL INTERNS

The museum is delighted to welcome three interns this fall, focusing on Special Events Marketing, Adult Programs, and Curation. The interns are from Meredith College, UNC-CH, and UNC-G.

## North Carolina Regional Museums



**Mountain Gateway Museum** continued its Fourth Friday” program series in August with mother-daughter co-authors Emily and Tonja Smith doing a book-signing and reading of their new children’s book, *The Adventures of Bailey, Bleecker, and Banjo: Linville Gorge*. MGM’s long-anticipated new website launched on August 29, and the museum’s staff prepared to host the third and final “DNCR Day” event on Sept. 10, to celebrate the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources’ 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.





### Museum of the Albemarle:

- Two-Hybrid (both in-person and virtual) History for Lunches: “A Tribute to Stephen Foster” and “A Chowanoke History From 1584 to Now.”
- Outreach Through Social and Traditional Media with a weekly article submitted to *The Daily Advance* for publication each Sunday.



### MUSEUM OF THE *Cape Fear* HISTORICAL COMPLEX

- **Let's Play! Saturdays at the 1897 Poe House.** Toys and games were available in the backyard of the Poe House every Saturday in August to coincide with the current exhibit in the museum: *Let's Play! A Time-warp to Toys of the Past.*

- The August **History to Go** box theme was “Toys and Games.” This program offers

different themes each month for take-home activity boxes for children. This is funded by the Museum of the Cape Fear Historical Complex Foundation and the Arts Council of Fayetteville/Cumberland County.

- The museum held a volunteer open house on August 23. This is a new quarterly program to recruit new volunteers. 5 people signed up at this event, and several others expressed interest.
- The museum launched its new website.
- Group tour visitation picked up with homeschool and summer camp tours.



Education Curator Mary Ellen Riddle created additional online maritime history and culture educational material for grade school students that align with NC Essential Standards for Learning. Ms. Riddle announced her decision to retire. Her last day of work will be November 23, 2022.



Dylan Fulford started the position as Maintenance Tech at the Museum on Sept. 1. He joins us from the Division of Marine Fisheries. Many thanks to the museum staff who stepped to fill the hole in Saturday's schedule in the interim.

The hiring process for the Collections Manager position has been completed, with the interview committee's unanimous selection, and former Collections Registrar Tessa Johnstone, officially taking over the role.

Exhibits designer Jamee Rose has submitted her resignation after accepting a teaching job in Pamlico County. We wish her well in the new position.



Education Curator Katy Menne gave a presentation to sixty people at LEAD - hosted in Raleigh this year. The department panel discussed projects across the state.

Museum conducted interviews for the Museum Curator II, Site Manager, position.

The interview Committee reached a unanimous decision, and the preferred choice has been submitted to HR for approval.

Education Curator Katy Menne submitted her resignation on August 18. She is going to Astoria, Oregon, where she will be the Director of Education for the Columbia River Maritime Museum. Her last day with NCMM Southport is Saturday, September 17. She has done a great job and we wish her every success.

## **News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: September 2022**

Michelle Lanier

- **Despite high temperatures and high gas prices, visitation numbers throughout the summer were very good.** Many sites have been meeting or exceeding pre-pandemic visitation rates throughout the year. Twelve sites did so in both June and July: Alamance Battleground, Bentonville Battlefield, Historic Edenton, Fort Dobbs, Fort Fisher, Historic Halifax, House in the Horseshoe, Polk Memorial, Roanoke Island Festival Park, Historic Stagville, Town Creek Indian Mound, and Vance Birthplace. Overall division visitation was at 193,723 in June and 207,005 in July, exceeding 2019 visitation by 5,380 and 8,123 visitors respectively (increases of 3% and 4%).
- **Visitors praised site staff's welcoming spirit and ability to interpret history with clarity, interest, and respect.** To give two examples of many rave reviews: the Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum was honored to receive a \$500 donation in recognition of interpreter **Kelly Scott's** "excellent informative tour," and a visitor from Baltimore reached out to division leadership to praise the quality of his experience at the CSS Neuse Interpretive Center, noting that he had traveled more than 500 miles specifically to visit the site after discovering YouTube videos made by site staff in collaboration with the American Battlefield Trust. He also set up a recurring donation for the site, which is matched by his employer.
- **Town Creek Indian Mound was selected for a highly competitive federal award from the Institute of Museum and Library Services Museums for America (IMLS).** The \$147,000 award will support the "Artifact Exploration" multimedia exhibit, featuring new footage of modern-day American Indian tribal representatives discussing Mississippian artifacts and their relevance to modern American Indian cultures. The Historic Sites team is particularly excited to work with both the Commission of Indian Affairs and the newly formed American Indian Heritage Commission on this and other significant projects.
- **Historic Stagville State Historic Site was selected to participate in an IMLS-funded project with the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC).** Staff will participate in a training cohort with nine other US sites to grow best practices for inclusive community engagement. Other participating sites include the Chinese Historical Society of America (San Francisco, CA), Hermann-Grima and Gallier Historic Houses (New Orleans, LA), New York State Museum (Albany, NY), and Sheldon-Jackson Museum (Sitka, AK).
- **Several coastal sites were excited to begin displaying the "Africa to Carolina" exhibit.** Developed by the NC African American Heritage Commission with input from Historic Sites staff, this exhibit explores the important and previously neglected history of Edenton, Bath, and Brunswick Town as ports of entry for enslaved Africans.

## **News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: September 2022**

Michelle Lanier

- As well as being the peak season for tourism, the summer brings two major historical commemorations, **Juneteenth** and **Independence Day**. Sites across the state organized or took part in events for both holidays. For example:
  - For Juneteenth, the State Capitol debuted a new special focus tour and exhibit, “Stories of Freedom”; Vance Birthplace partnered with the American Myth Center and the Mountain History and Culture Group to launch a new performance and discussion, “Leah and the Rabbit: A Conversation Around Resiliency and Reclaiming Narratives”; and Historic Stagville overcame a multi-day power outage to host two events, an open house program with guided tours about emancipation and a private evening program for descendant families.
  - For Independence Day, Historic Edenton hosted the Daughters of the American Revolution’s “Reading on the Green”; Historic Halifax organized its annual Commemoration with living history activities, a reading of the Declaration of Independence, and musket firing demonstrations; and the State Capitol was pleased to bring back its July 4th celebration, while looking forward to the naturalization ceremony returning next year as COVID safety protocols allow.
- **One of the division’s priorities is improving accessibility at its sites and across the division as a whole, working towards true inclusion for disabled visitors and staff.**
  - Two major site projects, the installation of a **new wheelchair lift at House in the Horseshoe** and the installation of a **rubberized trail surface at Duke Homestead**, contributed to increasing physical accessibility.
  - **The staff at CSS Neuse Interpretive Center have proactively pursued many accessibility opportunities, providing a model of best practices for the entire division.** They offer a wide range of assistive equipment to meet visitors’ diverse needs, including mobility aids; assistive listening devices; devices for magnification, lighting, and electronic reading; fidget and sensory items; and noise-cancelling headphones. They offer American Sign Language interpretation for all programming upon request. They are also pursuing video transcripts and closed captions, as well as collaborating with Lions Industries for the Blind to print their tour script in Braille and to create three tactile tours.
  - On August 5, Division Director **Michelle Lanier** represented the Division along with peers from across DNCR at the **Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability**

## News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: September 2022

Michelle Lanier

- conference in Raleigh. Curatorial Services team members **Matt Provancha** and **Dusty Westcott** also attended. The conference was an excellent opportunity to learn from national leaders addressing accessibility in the arts and humanities.
- **Staff are actively pursuing opportunities to translate their interpretive and printed materials into Spanish and other languages**, and have been particularly excited about the translation initiative spearheaded by DNCR Education and Outreach. **Reed Gold Mine recently shared that their tour materials are available in Spanish, German, Mandarin and Russian**; they are also planning to translate further materials.
  - **Many sites welcomed summer interns**, including Vance Birthplace, CSS Neuse, the State Capitol, and Historic Stagville. These interns participated in the day-to-day operations of the sites and contributed important work in education and research.
  - **Site across the division organized popular events this summer**. Some examples include the NC Transportations Museum's **Fire Truck Festival and car shows of vehicles from pop culture and from the 1980s-1990s** (yes, those are historic now!), **Bath's 18<sup>th</sup>-century Midsummer Country Ball**, and **Town Creek Indian Mound's ArchaeOlympic Games**, a hands-on event that allows visitors to try their hand at Atlatl spear throwing, the ancient game of Chunky, and the skill of cordage or cord making. **Several sites also hosted family visits and reunions**. These activities are especially significant at sites of enslavement like Somerset Place, where descendants gather to reconnect with loved ones and honor their ancestors.
  - Sites welcomed many school groups, camps, library events, and scout troops throughout the summer. **Reed Gold Mine has built a reputation as a major scouting destination as a result of its Boy Scout Mining in Society Merit Badge workshop**.
  - On top of their many day-to-day duties, **staff showed their enthusiasm for their sites and the division by taking part in many outreach opportunities**, from speaking at public events to operating the concessions stand for the local baseball team.
  - **Three staff members represented the Division at the annual Association of African American Museums conference**. Division director **Michelle Lanier** spoke alongside staff of the NC African American Heritage Commission regarding Civil Rights interpretation, particularly of the Golden and Ruth Frinks Freedom House. **Liz Torres Melendez** represented the Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum. **Frank McMahon** (Historic Halifax) was

## **News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: September 2022**

Michelle Lanier

a conference exhibitor, discussing recent research findings about African American participation in the Revolutionary War.

- **Jim McKee** (Brunswick Town / Fort Anderson) attended the North American Society for Oceanic History conference in Wilmington, NC. **Liz Torres Melendez** and **Kelly Scott** (Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum) attended the National Council on Public History virtual conference. **Jason Bowen** (Horne Creek) presented the session “Heirloom Apples in the Southeast” at the 2022 Southeastern Apple Growers Conference.
- **State Capitol staff oversaw a major project in June, refreshing the Governor’s Office with new carpet and paint.**
- **Caring for historic buildings and landscapes is complex, varied work, and the division’s staff always rises to the occasion,** whether they’re making essential repairs to buildings and trails, clearing trees damaged by summer storms, working through long heatwaves to mow grass and tend gardens, spending a day on a lift replacing lightbulbs, or patiently attempting to trap a groundhog that just did not want to leave its new home under a historic building. (They were eventually successful, and the groundhog was released in a better environment!)