

REFLECTIONS

Newsletter of the Wayne County Historical Association
....bringing our past to the present.....
www.waynecountyhistoricalnc.org



Museum Events 2012

Exhibits

7 February—12 April
"African-American Craftsmen and Artisans"

28 April—20 July
Journalism

April 28
Journalism Exhibit Opening
Guest Speaker:
Carl Kasell
Radio Newscaster of
National Public Radio Fame
Reception to follow
1:00 PM

May 1
Dr Frank Fee
Professor, School of Journalism, UNC
"Journalism during the Civil War"
7:00 PM

May 6
Willow Dale Cemetery Tour
2:00 PM

May 12
Gene Roberts
Pulitzer Prize winning
Newspaperman
1:00 PM

General Membership Meeting
May—date and time
To be determined

New Members

Carol Hinson
Jill Abrahamson

Welcome Aboard!

From the President

As my first year as president of the Wayne County Historical Association nears its end, I have been reflecting on all the activities at the Wayne County Museum and all I can say is WOW what an incredible year it's been! Thanks to the wonderful efforts of our staff and board members, the museum has hosted many outstanding programs and projects throughout the year. In November, the museum featured Native American speakers as well as craftspeople and participated in the Goldsboro Lights Up program; there was the holiday tour in December; not to mention all the guest speakers, the publication of Emily Weil & Charles Ellis' book and a bus tour of plantations in northern Wayne County. The next year promises to be just as busy and exciting - a journalism exhibit will open on April 28 with guest speaker Carl Kasell and, in early fall, there will be a bus tour of plantations in southern Wayne County – just to name a couple of things.

One person who will not be with us as we continue these exciting programs in WCHA board member Maegan Wilson. Maegan worked for the Wayne County Library and has recently transferred to another position. She served as WCHA secretary and helped with programs at the museum. We will miss her, but we wish her the best of luck in her new endeavors!

I would like to end by saying thank you to the WCHA Executive Board. You all make being president an enjoyable and easy task!



Quilts on display in conjunction with Wayne County Reads — "The Pleasure Was Mine"

What's been happening down at the Museum

Good day all,

What a great, warm winter we have had. At the museum, we have had a pretty productive winter with three exhibits. Our major exhibit for Black History Month and running until April 12th, "African American Craftsmen and Artisans" was a success, with a nice selection of Thomas Day furniture on display. Along with the exhibit, we had a remarkable list of speakers, two you see pictured here.

The quilt show in conjunction with Wayne County Reads, "The Pleasure Was Mine" was a lovely addition to the 2nd floor and small exhibit space, to the right rear of the first floor. With over 25 quilts on display, it was one of our most visited, exhibits

The Girl Scout exhibit, in honor of 100 years of scouting brought back some wonderful memories. On March 17, the museum was full of over 150 Girl Scouts, both young and old, who celebrated the anniversary with a Tea and the opening of a time capsule.

The Plantation Bus Tour was an overwhelming success, with great weather and a great turnout. Many kudos to the board members who set up the tour, and to Kirk Keller who lent his amazing enthusiasm to the narration. —If you missed the Northern Route, the Southern Route Tour is in the planning stages for this fall.

We are very excited about our upcoming journalism exhibit and have lined up some wonderful speakers in conjunction with the exhibit. Opening the event is **Carl Kasell**, of NPR fame, as guest speaker. His talk will be followed by a reception. Two weeks later, **Gene Roberts**, Pulitzer prize winning newspaperman, is scheduled for a talk. We are hoping for a big turnout for these events, and though free and open to the public we ask that you **call and reserve a seat** as space is limited.

In June we lay out our exhibition plans for the upcoming year. If you have any topic you would like to see please contact a member of staff. Additionally, if you have an idea for improving the museum or how we might better get the word out on our programs, please give us a call.

Museum Staff



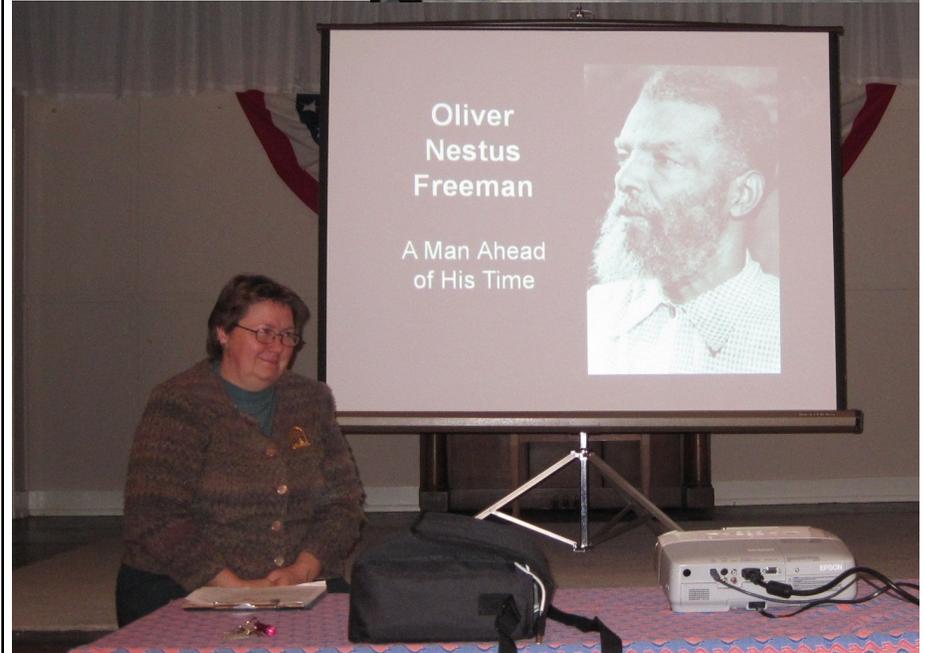
Above: Laurel Sneed and Joe Graves (not pictured) kick off our exhibit "African American Craftsmen and Artisans." **Left** —One of the many sites on the recent Northern Wayne County Plantation Bus Tour, the Barnes House.



Right: Our weary travelers return from the Bus Tour — a sell out, so make sure you reserve your tickets early next time!



Below: LuAnn Monson talks about the architect, Oliver Nestus Freeman.



Thomas Day “Master of Mahogany”



Thomas Day (c.1801—c.1861) was a free Black American furniture designer, cabinet maker, and technical innovator in Caswell County, North Carolina. A very complex man, Day’s furniture-making business was one of the largest of its kind in the state, employing as many as twelve workers, including journeymen, laborers, cabinetmakers, black slaves and white apprentices.

The distinctive furniture that Day crafted consisted of bedsteads, benches, French Sofas, chairs, chests, and tables. He also built coffins, stairways and the interior trim of room—truly a cradle to grave operation. The chief materials used were mahogany, walnut, oak, all available in North Carolina woods.

His business distributed furniture to wealthy customers, for example political leaders, the state government and the leadership of the University of North Carolina.

Day was a successful businessman from the 1820’s on, filling a need in the marketplace. He eventually became a stockholder in the State Bank of North Carolina and owning quite a bit of real estate. Much of his furniture-making machinery was powered by steam, which greatly enhanced production volume and efficiency. His business suffered from the national economic panic of 1857, but was one of the few to survive. Although there is no official record of his death, he died sometime around 1861.

Day developed his aesthetic vision over time, creating furniture designs that reflected the multiple cultures in which he moved. Very early in his career, Day achieved mastery in the Anglo design he had learned as an apprentice in his father’s shop. In some respects, Day’s day-to-day life in a rural, mixed-race community provided him with an exposure to countless ideas.

Day’s unique designs were thoughtfully planned and usually focused on symmetry. The majority of them evince a balance of opposites, even if the design looks asymmetrical. Another component is the variety of curvilinear devices employed. Horizontally and vertically positioned sinuous curves frequently appear in the same piece, giving a sense of motion held in harness by symmetry and balance. He excelled at using elaborate openwork, which shows openings through its substance. It is work that is perforated or pierced, highlighting the negative space of a piece. This can be readily seen in the Sofa Bed pictured below with the open back and arms. His furniture is still seen as some of the finest antebellum, native furniture in North Carolina.

Taken in part from — *Thomas Day: Master Craftsman and Free Man of Color*



Thomas Day Crib (pictured top left), Children’s Settee (above) and Day Bed (right) courtesy of private collectors. On exhibit until April 12.

Publications for Sale

<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Title and Price</u>
_____	People and Plantations: Wayne County, NC: 1701-1860 — by Emily Weil and Charles Ellis-\$20.00
_____	Cornwallis' Campaign: Wilmington to Yorktown —by Emily Weil-\$25.00
_____	After Sherman's March: Goldsboro at the End of the Civil War —by Emily Weil—\$25.00
_____	Glimpses of Wayne County, North Carolina: An Architectural History —edited by J. Pezzoni—\$20.00
_____	The Heritage of Wayne County —compiled by Mary Johnstone—\$50.00
_____	History of Wayne County —edited by Bob Johnson and Charles Norwood—\$35.00
_____	Wayne County Cemeteries Volume III — Old Dobbs Genealogical Society—\$45.00
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_____	- Subtotal
_____	- 6.75% Tax (NC residents)
_____	- Shipping — \$5.00 per book
_____	- Total

Make checks payable to: WCHA, PO Box 665, Goldsboro, NC 27533-0665.

To purchase Wayne County Cemeteries Volume II, please make checks payable to Old Dobbs Genealogical Society.

President Leigh Strickland~ Vice President Elliott Futrell~ Second Vice President Nancy Delia and Emily Weil
~Third Vice President Steve Bryan~ Secretary Maegen Wilson~ Treasurer Arnold Flowers

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