



REFLECTIONS

WAYNE COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWS
APRIL 2002

On The WCHA Calendar

Right Now

Pay your dues! Annual dues were due in January and are now delinquent.

April

9 Board of Directors Meeting, 5:30 p.m. at Wayne Co. Museum

May

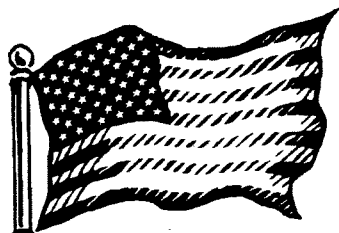
14 Executive Board Meeting, Noon at Museum

June

11 Board of Directors Meeting, at 5:30 at Museum

July

9 Executive Board Meeting, at noon at Museum



History can be
well written
only in a free
country.

Voltaire, 1773

Press from Preston ...

Association blooming and growing

Flowers are blooming all over Wayne County as a wonderful tribute to the unseasonably mild weather we have had this winter. Let's all hope that these flowers are not punished for their precociousness by a cold spell!

Our Historical Association seems to be blooming a little bit as well! The turnout from members at our last two Board of Directors' meetings was very good. It is exciting to see interested people and we welcome all association members to attend these meetings. We have adopted a slightly later starting time, beginning at 5:30 p.m. instead of 5:15 to accommodate those folks rushing from work. Our next general meeting is at the museum on April 9. Please join us.

We are also making headway on our museum projects. We have confirmed funding for the elevator project and have subsequently found additional funding for the addition of the handicapped accessible bathrooms. Bids are out now for the bathroom addition and the elevator project will go to bid the first week of April. We will likely be in construction at times April through August and will keep the press apprised of changing hours.

Additionally, we now have completed painting and concrete resurfacing in all three existing bathrooms. The Leadership Wayne County class has completed the painting of our ballroom. Everything looks fresh and clean. New wood blinds have been added to all bathrooms. They look classy and provide great privacy as is needed. Our out-of-pocket costs on all of these projects were

only \$3,330. We still have lots to do, so thrifty money management is required.

We are not doing so well in two areas, however. Dues are due and payable by the end of January each year, but we have done very poorly in making this happen. They seem to trickle in a little bit at a time.

Secondly, volunteers are still needed on a regular basis for any number of tasks, and we seldom have people stepping forward. On a positive note, Charles B. Ellis has raised his hand to become the chairman of Museum Displays, and Betty Ellis has agreed to take on some event planning. What a wonderful gift of their time and talents! Stay tuned for plans from them as soon as our construction ceases.

At this time I want to give a special thanks to Anne Angelo, our treasurer, who has worked hard to clean up our financial records. We even have a proposed budget and look forward to sharing it at our next meeting. Thanks for your hard work, Anne!

Finally, I will close by saying that we radically need to increase income into our historic association. Dues contribute only about 14 percent of our operating costs. We are actively pursuing gifts and grants. As we make changes to the museum and improve attendance and attractions, we will need to add staff and services. We are asking for your help. Please advise if you have ideas that can translate into \$\$ and that you would be willing to help implement.

God bless America.

—Preston Garris, WCHA President

Our E.A. Reports ...

Exhibits Planned, Volunteers Thanked

Our Black History and Culture display during February and part of March has been a big hit. Several groups including 105 eighth graders at Dillard Middle School, patients from Wayne Mental Health and Special Needs Association, Cherry Hospital and O'Berry Center have visited with us. Also, Foster Grandparents and two Cub Scout troops have toured.

As an added extra, Dr. Michael Brennan, a local endocrinologist and retired Army colonel, presented a very interesting program on Saturday, February 16, about black men in battles up to and including the Civil War. Approximately 20 people attended and very much enjoyed both Dr. Brennan and his talk.

Our future plans line up as follows:

April and May: Magic in the Air — Radio and TV in Wayne County led by Bobby Parker's collection of antique radios from his late father, Jerry Parker.

June and July: The Blushing Bride

— A lovely display of vintage brides dresses sponsored by Sallie's Bridal Shoppe. As many of you know, Sallie is going out of business and thinks it would be fun to do a showing of many of her old favorite gowns.

August and September: A Headline Event —

Did you know that Wayne County has had a multitude of newspapers? Come visit with us to see them for yourself.



As Preston mentioned, Charles B. Ellis has volunteered to take over display planning after the September time-frame. I am thrilled to have him as he has great ideas and real love for our local history. Many of us can and will

support him when it comes time to do the actual display set-ups, so THANK YOU, CHARLES!!!

Other Thank Yous:

- Leadership Wayne County Class of 2002 for painting the ballroom as a donation!!!
- Seymour Johnson Leadership Class of 2002 for emptying out our back storeroom so we can begin the addition of the handicapped accessible bathrooms.
- A contingent from Wayne Community College including Janice Fields, Norma Dawson and Shelboni Daye-Ramey, and Dr. Michael Brennan and all other contributors to our Black History and Culture display.
- Richard Slozak and Linda Bullock from the City of Goldsboro for their help in leading us through this funding process for the elevator and bathrooms.

Old Dobbs Genealogical Society

History Center Presentation Set

Spring is around the corner and will provide more opportunities to get out and work on the cemetery project. Both Elliott Futrell and I have been unable to devote as much time to the project during the past year because of other pressing commitments.

Cathy Blow and others have stepped forward and have taken up some of the slack. We are very appreciative of that. Anyone who is interested in helping with the cemetery survey please contact Cathy or Elliott.

The Old Dobbs membership would like to offer special condolences to the family of Ima E. Mewborn. She died February 5 following a period of ill health. Miss Mewborn was a longtime

member of the Old Dobbs County Genealogical Society.

The next meeting of the Old Dobbs Genealogical Society will be held on Saturday, April 27, at 11:30 a.m. at the Western Sizzlin' on the corner of Berkeley Boulevard and East Ash Street in Goldsboro. Please make plans to attend this important meeting. The revised constitution and bylaws will be voted on at this meeting.

Jerome Tew, the director of the Family History Center in Goldsboro, will give a presentation on the Family History Center and what it can do to help you with your genealogical research.

—Billy Herring, President

Longstreet Program To Be April 9 at Library

The Wayne County Public Library will present "Scalawag or Scapegoat" about the life of Confederate Army General James Longstreet on April 9 at 7 p.m. in the Gertrude Weil Auditorium. Although his record as a commander was stellar, Longstreet became one of the most vilified figures of the post-bellum South. Dr. John R. Peacock, III, a history professor at Nash Community College, is the speaker.

Gov. Charles B. Aycock Birthplace State Historic Site

Events Highlight Farm Life; Hours Cut

Special events fill the calendar in 2002 at Aycock Birthplace. On February 16, "Going Courting: A Victorian Valentine Celebration" featured music by Centennial, a presentation on the language of love through flowers and fans, a bride's cake prepared in a Dutch oven and parlor games. While only 70 attended, it was a fun and educational afternoon.

On February 18, the staffs of Aycock Birthplace and the C.S.S. Neuse State Historic Site held a regional History Bowl at Lenoir Community College. Eighth grade students competed in their knowledge of North Carolina history. The winner, West Craven Middle School, will proceed in May to the State History Bowl Championship held in Raleigh.

On March 22, the site hosted an Open House in conjunction with the Fremont Daffodil Festival. Wagon rides, a pet-

ting zoo, and living history demonstrations delighted first graders from Fremont STARS, Northeast, and Northwest Elementary Schools. Students received coloring books that would remind them of their visit.

Upcoming events will highlight 19th century farm life. Living History Days held on Wednesdays in the spring will feature the following demonstrations: April 3 – spinning and weaving; April 10 – Open Hearth Cooking, Butter Making and Gardening; April 24 – School Marm, Writing, and School Yard Games; May 1 – Lye Soap Making, Candle Making and Toys & Games; May 8 – Gardening, Natural Dyeing and Games; May 15 – Crosscut Sawing, Lye Soap Making, and Toys and Games; and May 22 – Corn Shelling and Grinding, Spinning and Weaving. These will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Fourth graders from Wayne County are our special guests for Farm Heritage Days. On April 15, 16, 18 and 19, approximately 17 classes each day will observe demonstrations such as plowing, open-hearth cooking and quilting. Students will write with a quill pen, play town ball, use a crosscut saw and more.

On June 29, visitors will have an opportunity to view domestic skills and farm chores of the period during our annual Farmer's Day. A special treat will be a medicine man show complete with magic tricks.

Due to budget cuts, the site is closed on Sundays until further notice. Operating hours are Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.. For more information concerning our special events, call 919-242-5581.

—Charlotte Brow, Site Manager

Old Waynesborough Commission

Big Events Planned for Spring

On April 20, Waynesborough Historical Village will host the Standard Flower Show and expects about 100 people to attend. This event will start about 8 a.m. and continue until 5 p.m. Judging will begin around 9:30 a.m. The public is invited from noon through 4 p.m., during which time a

plant sale will be held. The show is titled "Land of the Free" and will have a patriotic theme. The event is sponsored by the Goldsboro Council of Garden Clubs.

The annual May Festival is set for May 3-5. Between 500 and 1,000 people are expected. There will be

many activities to excite and entertain the young and old alike. During the weekend the most popular entertainment will be the Civil War re-enactors with living history, battles and skirmishes. If you are in the right place at the right time, you might see a duel or watch the cannon being fired.

WCHA's Wish List

The Wayne County Historical Association always welcomes donations of time, talent and money.

Elaine Van Hoy, the association's volunteer leader/coordinator, has started a recruiting program. If you can help, please call her at 734-5023.

Two volunteers are needed for Friday afternoons from 11 a.m. or noon to 4

p.m. to work with Betty Duncan. We also need flower-bed weeders and cleaning and janitorial support.

The Museum needs:

- A new round toilet seat for the men's bathroom,
- Plants for the concrete pots on the front porch, and
- A few small but lovely paintings or

prints for decorating our newly painted bathrooms.

Another item on the wish list is for all members who haven't paid their 2002 dues to do so. Those dues are: \$35, individual; \$50, family; and \$100, patron. Send checks to WCHA, 116 N. William St., Goldsboro, NC 27530-3702.

Honoring Gertrude Weil

The following was a toast presented recently at the Ma'yan Seder in New York and is provided to WCHA by Emily Weil. Thank you, Emily, for providing us a reason to remember this great woman.

First Cup: Gertrude Weil (1879-1971)

"With this cup we honor Gertrude Weil, suffragist and dedicated civil rights activist. Gertrude Weil grew up in Goldsboro, N.C., as part of a prominent Jewish family committed to civil service. She attended Smith College (in Northampton, Mass.), where she received an education in leadership and social justice that would guide the rest of her life. She returned to her hometown and devoted her intellect and passion to gaining the right to vote for women, believing that women had the responsibility to be part of the political process. She established and became

president of the Goldsboro Equal Suffrage League, then became the president of the N.C. Equal Suffrage League. Weil also fought for child labor legislation, voter education, election reform, and civil rights for African-Americans, serving on the N.C. Commission on Interracial Cooperation and the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching. Weil remained a committed and active Jew throughout her life, believing the Judaism was 'not a mere high-flown ideal but a practical program of behavior, specific in enumeration of duties – in business dealings, in relation to slaves, the widow, the orphan, the stranger among them ...' Weil networked with like-minded progressive activists and brought outstanding thinkers to Goldsboro, holding weekly lunches with men and women who were shaping the political and cultural landscape of their time. In 1964, she

received the first Smith College Medal 'for a lifetime of service to the cultural, charitable, religious, and political welfare of her state.' She died in 1971 at the age of 91, in the same house in which she was born. Gertrude Weil worked constantly to free the oppressed – whether they were disenfranchised women, child laborers, or victims of racial discrimination. Her vision and dedication led her to become an extraordinary force for freedom for all people. We raise this cup to honor Gertrude Weil, persistent and devoted advocate for women's rights and human rights, who helped to make far-reaching, beneficial change in her society."

Sources: "Women of Valor 2002," www.jwa.org

Nancy Schwartz Sternoff, "Visit with the Weils: A Personal Journey," *Journey*, Winter 2002