



WAYNE ECHOES

The Newsletter of the Wayne County Museum

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CHARLES BRANTLEY ELLIS, HEAD HISTORY HONCHO, FINALLY GETS HIS OWN ROOM AT THE TOP By Jean Powell

Charles Brantley Ellis' theory of relativity is that he's kin to just about everybody in Eastern North Carolina. And if there's not a blood tie, you can bet that one of his eleven brothers and one sister have made it possible to claim kin by marriage.

Ellis is the current president of the Wayne County Historical Association, the Museum's parent organization. Charles, "whose love of history has evolved through the years," has been a member of the Association since it was chartered in 1955. His membership had been on an absentee basis most of that time until his 1987 retirement.

But back to relatives and relativity and the reasons that folks come home. Charles has a wife who's from Washington State, but has deep ancestral ties to Philadelphia. They decided to retire to the East Coast. And

now you'd think Elizabeth Ellis had always lived in the county. She's a member of St. Joseph's United Methodist Church and heads its United Methodist Women, a member of the David Williams Chapter of the D.A.R. and is president of the Old Dobbs County Genealogical Society (Ellis is chaplain).

Asked for his resume, Charles handed over a list of accomplishments that makes you tired just to read it. So the conversation was abruptly steered back to family and houses and where his mother, Virginia, is living (Goldsboro) and about what a fine gentleman his late father, John, was and how Charles finally has his own room.

This room is a special place in their Pikeville home (at the top of the stairs) where he keeps a standing metal file cabinet full of research papers, the slides he uses in

lectures, photographs of old houses and public buildings that have been razed and innumerable artifacts he's collected over the years.

Growing up in Goldsboro, Charles always shared a bedroom with his brothers in the house that seemed to miraculously expand to accommodate one more baby. Later he was in the U.S. Navy where private rooms were reserved for the admiralty. Then came marriage to Elizabeth Ann Gordon and the birth of their two children, Charles B. Jr., Laurel, Md., and Dorothy Elizabeth, a pre-pharmacy student at Vincennes University in Indiana.

Since retirement began, Ellis has pursued one of his first loves and that is genealogy. He is researching about thirty families in his family tree and finds that he is related to "just about everybody". He is named for his great-grandmother

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INTERIOR RENOVATION IN FINAL PHASE

Echoes and memories of many happy past events are paramount as the restoration of the Wayne County Museum to its former elegance nears completion.

Final phase of the interior renovation began February 5 under the direction of June Y. Wharton, Chairman Building Committee. Christian Cobb, Trustee Chairman, and Trustees voted on January 18, 1990, to complete the project which was first undertaken in November 1988. The first floor interior renovation was completed in 1988 in time for the inaugural opening and the Museum's first exhibit "A Victorian Christmas."

Total renovation of the second floor and kitchen will be completed prior to the ribbon-cutting March 24 at 2 pm for the Museum's fifth exhibit "The War Between the States." The auditorium, stage, ladies' lounge and adjacent rooms have been completely renovated. The walls have been painted a soft yellow color which provides a warm glow even on cloudy days. All woodwork has been painted a clear white; the wrought iron balconies have been refreshed with

sparkling black oil-based enamel.

The lamp post in the front yard and iron mail box have also been painted the same black. A new door has been installed on the fire escape.

Lockable kitchen storage cabinets and flooring will be installed shortly. Funds for all of these renovations were made available through the Hillsdale Foundation, the late Mr. Charles S. Norwood, Sr., Mrs. Charles S. Norwood, Sr., Mrs. Edwin B. Borden, Mrs. James N. Smith, the Colonial Dames and monies from special events. A mercury vapor dusk-to-dawn light has been installed in the parking lot. This will serve to make the lot safer for night meetings, programs and fund-raisers as well as inhibit possible illegal entry.

The building committee is deeply grateful to the Trustees for their support in the lengthy project and especially to Christian for her unflagging enthusiasm, support, constructive ideas and visions of the future for the Wayne County Museum.

The Museum auditorium will need stage curtains, appropriate furnishings dressing table, wicker

furniture, mirror and lamps for the ladies' lounge and adjacent bathroom. There are approximately 95 original folding chairs which will be adequate for the auditorium uses. It is sincerely hoped that monetary donations for these items will be made to the Museum.

Richard F. Griswold, Jr. was the contractor, Jack Crain, paint contractor; they have our sincere gratitude for their professional expertise and outstanding work on the Museum.

June Y. Wharton, Ch.
Building Committee

SPECIAL THANKS TO EXHIBIT CONTRIBUTORS

More than 1,800 area people toured the Museum's "Black Heritage/Black Culture" Exhibit which closed March 4.

Dorothy Whitted Hardy was Exhibit chairman; Denise Fields, Black Historian, was coordinator of artifacts.

Exhibitors included Elizabeth Arrington, Gloria Burney, Millie and Milford Coor, Lawrence Durham, Virginia Green, Dr. Thomasine Hardy, Eunice Hudson, Holland Hudson, Dorothy Lewis, Rachelle Richardson, Jonathan Rogers, Mary Rogers, Janie Rouse, Gwen Shipman, Dr. Rick Stovall, Major Roy C. White (Ret.), Helen Wiley and Ernestine Wooten.

