

North Carolina Historical Commission Report-March 20, 2024
Division of Archives and Records

On behalf of the staff of the Division of Archives and Records, it is my pleasure to provide updates on some ongoing projects and division outreach since your December 6 meeting. The year is off to a busy start with a variety of outreach and programs. In staffing updates Chris Denning retired March 1 after 34 years with our state records center. We also bid farewell to Stuart Parks of the Outer Banks History Center, Victoria Tuttle (Imaging Unit), and Caitlin Martell (Digital Services). Recent hires included Chandler Foster (Public Services), Dani Sharilla (Outreach), Boyana Babanovski (Conservation Lab), and Isabel Blessing (Public Services). Annabeth Poe began as a temporary archivist working with our oral history program.

While this may sound like a familiar phrase, we continue to welcome a variety of groups for tours. Since December we have hosted tours for an open house held in conjunction with the State Library, a Wofford College class (visiting the Western Regional Archives), the annual meeting of the NC chapters of the African American History and Genealogy Society, archivists and librarians from the NC Community College Archives Association, the NC constitutional law class from the UNC CH School of Law, and the Freedom Fellows. The Freedom Fellows are a special group of 17 teachers from across the state who are working with the agency on curriculum and educational resources related to the America 250 commemoration. <https://humanities.unc.edu/america250fellows/> The agency is partnering with Carolina K-12 and the Carolina Public Humanities to steer this energetic group of educators.



Freedom Fellows tour the search room and explore collections related to the Visions of Freedom theme (2/10/24)

Staff across the division continue to provide outstanding programs both hosted by the division and other groups. Selected recent programs include a presentation to a land surveyors association, participation in a virtual field trip for a high school history class, an *Outlander* series and historical records presentation, and Sarah Downing's talk at the NC Council for the Social Studies. She addressed the conference on "Discovering Island Life: The Early Photographs of D. Victor Meekins." The Outer Banks History Center continues regular lessons with the Outer Banks Homeschool History Club. The most recent program covered Frank Stick and his artistic career. The program included two stations for students to view his original oil and watercolors. The group returns this month to discuss his work as a developer and designer of the flat-top cottages of the region.



Outer Banks Homeschool History Club learns about the career and artwork of Frank Stick (2/19/24)

Division staff manned a table at the African American Cultural Celebration hosted by the NC Museum of History. Some recent division programs are now available online. The December 7 [program](#) "Remembering the War in the Pacific: An Internment Camp Experience," featured Nash County resident Chris Larsen, who survived a Japanese internment camp in the Philippines during his early childhood. Two recent Black History Month programs were well-received, and the recordings can be viewed on our YouTube channel. The "[RAIL](#) (Railroad and Incarcerated Laborer) Project: New Discoveries in the State Archives," included presentations on the project and discoveries made using recently opened records from the Archives. The RAIL project webpage can be found [here](#). Finally, we were pleased to partner with the staff of the State Capitol for the [program](#), "Researching the Enslaved Laborers at the State Capitol." This program featured their work on the efforts to research and document the lives of the enslaved laborers who built the State Capitol, as well as updates on the recent reprocessing efforts in the Treasurer's and Comptroller's Papers series that foreground the names of enslaved people found in the records. The State Capitol staff used these materials as the foundation for their project. The State Capitol's research is beautifully documented in their [webpage](#), "From Naming to Knowing."

In other outreach efforts, the full season of season 4 our [podcast](#) *Connecting the Docs*, is available for your listening pleasure. The final episodes of this season included two in the “uncovered stories” series, as well as episodes on “ask an archivist,” Year of the Trail, and the saga of Slowpoke the Possum. Planning for season 5 is underway. We also continue to work with the eighth-grade students from Exploris Middle School in Raleigh on their student service project involving transcription of Revolutionary War-era documents. In new exhibit outreach news, the Western Regional Archives installed an exhibit about the archives at the I-26 welcome center near the NC/TN border. That represents a new exhibit outlet for the division, as well as the agency.

The State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB) wrapped up their two-year grant from the National Historic Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) on a project to build capacity for America 250 collecting and programs across the state. Grant deliverables included workshops on local programming resources, including oral history programs and community scanning days. Those workshop [sessions](#) are available online now. The grant also included support for the development of a traveling exhibit using the “When Are We US?” America 250 thematic concept. In addition to a version that will travel, the [exhibit](#) is also available as a print-on-demand option on the America 250 NC website. The current SHRAB grant from NHPRC just started. It will include support for capacity building within local libraries so they can serve as resources on community history preservation. It also includes funding for the spring round of Traveling Archivist Program (TAP) consultations. Participants this round include the Fruit of Labor World Cultural Center, Camp Buter Museum, Lewisville Historical Society, Lee County Public Library, Central Carolina Community College, and the Forsyth Community College. The Fruit of Labor is Raleigh-based African American labor organization that collects labor history materials. The SHRAB grant also includes funding for a summer intern to do work with a few previous TAP recipients who need more in-depth assistance. Southwestern Community College and Moore County Public Library will be two institutions working with the summer intern.

The Federation of NC Historical Societies recently awarded mini grants to two projects. One grant will provide travel and honoraria for educators and performers at the Hickory Landmarks Society’s Heritage Days at Maple Grove School. The “Touch the Earth” program at Heritage Days at Maple Grove is a 2-day annual educational event offered to 4th grade classes in the Catawba County area. Traditional artisans and craftspeople, along with interpreters and reenactors, provide hands-on cultural heritage education in a historic setting. The “Touch the Earth” part of the event is presented by Cherokee Educators, Sandra Brown, and daughter Wahlahla, and features living history exhibits and authentic tribal regalia to celebrate Native American culture and heritage. The second grant awarded to the Person County Museum of History will support their work to design a permanent exhibit on African American history in the county. This project works toward a goal of showcasing often unheard stories of African American communities and honors the importance of struggles and triumphs of that local community.

Our annual inventory was held January 8-10. This event allowed staff to ensure collections are shelved as expected, as well as to perform focused work on projects such as barcoding the archival collections or detailed inventories of collections. This year our special collections team placed an emphasis on deep review of private collections that extended after inventory. This was the first full inventory in several years. Archivists in the section worked on resolving issues of unidentified or mis shelved boxes

and locating materials that had been pulled for projects. They will use the data gathered from the inventory for catalog checks and updates. They also are continuing to lead shifts of staff rehousing the earliest private collections into new boxes and folders. Replacing the old manuscript boxes with new archival ones also saves quite a bit of needed space on the shelves. 125 boxes have been replaced in the last three months, and rehousing collections were examined for conservation concerns. Records Description Unit staff focused their inventory time on barcoding archival county records. They have now completed this work for half of the counties, not a small feat since we have about 20,000 cubic feet of archival county records in the main stacks alone. Major collection processing projects include the completion of the Mary Duke Biddle Gallery series from the NC Museum of Art record group. This processing resulted in a detailed finding aid of this important series of records detailing the development of a gallery for those with visual impairments. The Treasurer's and Comptroller's Papers reprocessing project wrapped up resulting in major descriptive updates to the 1962 finding aid with much more detail on series that contained information about enslaved individuals. A look at this project was highlighted in a recent [blog post](#) and podcast episode. Work to process the large Six Associates Collection at the Western Regional Archives continues. This collection includes blueprints and architectural plans. Over 4,500 plans have been indexed representing about half of the collection.

The Records Analysis Unit started work on a series of short records management videos. These brief [videos](#) are shorter versions of records management workshops designed for on-demand and quick access by public records custodians. The first videos cover an introduction to the public records law, retention schedules and the records analysis unit, and electronic records management. They anticipate adding to the playlist with additional topics.

Finally, in budget requests submitted for consideration this year, we prioritized one that requested the move of eight positions from our receipts fund (ARM Fund) to appropriations. The ARM Fund was established in 2009 and originally designed simply to support the expansion of our division's records management and preservation operations. It is funded by a flat fee on real estate transactions. Shortly after creation during a state budget downturn, the agency moved multiple positions and nearly all of our division operating expenses to the ARM Fund. With the stagnation of the real estate market, revenues have been steadily falling over the last three years. The fund no longer supports these positions and expenses. This request seeks to move some expenses from the fund to ensure its future solvency and the division's capacity to meet the growing expenses associated with electronic public records management and digital preservation.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah E. Koonts, State Archivist

Report of Division of Historical Resources To the North Carolina Historical Commission For its March 20, 2024 meeting

**Ramona M. Bartos, Division Director and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
March 1, 2024**

Division in general

Staff needs. In our last few reports, we have continued to flag the need for additional staff resources to maintain our service levels to constituents. The FY 2023-24 state budget did not ultimately fund our “ask” for 4 new full-time positions would be funded, including an Environmental Review Specialist for Section 106 cases, a National Register reviewer, a Cemetery Program assistant, and a full-time NAGPRA specialist.

We were very heartened by management’s and the Office of State Budget Management’s (OSBM) favorable view of our renewed request for 4 positions – again for an Environmental Review Specialist for Section 106 cases, a Cemetery Program assistant, and a full-time NAGPRA specialist, but shifting the specialist for the State Historic Preservation Office to one for the Restoration Services branch because of even more demand for services, especially consultations for high “return on investment” historic tax credit projects and overall constituent technical assistance. We have to date submitted an “ABC List” request, the first step, and then were subsequently invited to flesh out our request with evidentiary data through the “Worksheet II” process for this second year of the biennium.

As I reported in December 2023, but it is worth saying again, we look forward to working with our leadership to renew our request, especially given our heightened workloads, constituent demand for our services, and our contribution to economic development through historic preservation, fostering a holistic approach to public history, including an emphasis on recognizing and telling the stories of all North Carolinians, and practicing stewardship of the state’s irreplaceable historic places in collaboration with constituents. We believe that our contributions are both measurable – in terms of dollars invested in historic places and a greater knowledge of our history – and immeasurable – in terms of our commitment to protecting and preserving those places that define our continued identity and shared history as North Carolinians and Americans.

Staff changes. I am pleased to announce the promotion of **Reid Thomas**, veteran Restoration Specialist for northeastern North Carolina, to the Regional Supervisor position for our Greenville-based eastern office of the State Historic Preservation Office. This vacancy was created by the retirement of his colleague John Wood, who has since started to work in a supervisory role with the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office. Reid’s promotion now creates a vacancy within the Restoration Services branch, and we are working to get his position advertised this month.

Likewise, we also welcomed **Amanda Langlois** as our new architectural history file room assistant, and **James Stephens**, a trained librarian / archivist, as our environmental review technician.

Following the retirement of the HPO's **Preservation Architect Tim Simmons** in 2023 with 33 years of state service, we are holding interviews for candidates for this position in early March. This key position coordinates our federal historic tax credit program, which from FY2019 to FY2023 helped facilitate over \$900 million in private investment for 227 individual income-producing historic tax credit projects statewide.

National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers. Our State Historic Preservation Officer, Deputy Secretary Dr. Darin Waters, and I will travel to Washington, DC, the first week of March for the annual meeting of our professional organization. While there, we will visit with our peers from throughout the nation, meet with the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (which coordinates much of the federal agencies' historic preservation compliance) as well as the National Park Service, and visit members of our Congressional delegation to brief them on our division's work.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Ramona Bartos is the current board president of this professional peer organization with her second two-year term underway (through March 2025).

Learning Happens Here. For Secretary Wilson's [Learning Happens Here](#) initiative, we provided the following resources for inclusion in these online offerings:

- **NC Mosaic** (Colonial Records, Governors' Papers, and special online exhibits) <https://mosaicnc.org/>
- **NC Highway Historic Markers:** <https://ncmarkers.com/search.aspx>
- **Archaeology Education / Outreach** (especially for kids) <https://archaeology.ncdcr.gov/programs/education-outreach>
- **NC HPO Story**
Maps: <https://nc.maps.arcgis.com/home/group.html?id=d56ec9c8aa77423b931f4d359f103ae6&view=list&categories=%5B%22%2FCategories%2FNCHPO+Story+Maps%22%5D#content>
- **NC HPO GIS maps / other maps:** <https://www.hpo.nc.gov/survey-and-national-register/gis-maps-and-data>

State Historic Preservation Office (HPO)

Statewide Preservation Plan. Following our successful launch at the October Preservation North Carolina annual state preservation conference of the first of our listening sessions for our next 10-year statewide preservation plan planning cycle, Local Government Coordinator Kristi Brantley and DSHPO Ramona Bartos have continued to hold those listening sessions. By the time of the March 20th NCHC meeting, we will have held 5 regional listening sessions (1 for the West, 2 each for the Piedmont and East) as well

as one with the Historic Resiliency Project team from the UNC School of Government and NC State University. We also are holding internal listening sessions with each branch of the State Historic Preservation Office, and with the Office of State Archaeology. We look forward to continuing these listening sessions through the spring, and getting feedback from other agency colleagues.

During this meeting, I will give a short presentation to the Commission, and invite your feedback as well.

As a reminder, we will be submitting a draft plan to the Commission for its approval before the end of 2024, and then will transmit to the National Park Service for their approval, as mandated by the National Historic Preservation Act, and by state law.

National Register Advisory Committee (NRAC) meeting. The first of 3 NRAC meetings was held on February 8, and 4 National Register nominations (a house in Hendersonville, the Clinchfield Mill No. 2 in Marion, the modernist One Plaza Center in High Point, and an update to the Warrenton National Register Historic District, including more African American resources), and 9 Study List applications (first step towards National Register eligibility), including the Broadell Community neighborhood in Fayetteville, which was surveyed using our office's Certified Local Government matching grants.

Grant support to State Historic Sites. The HPO is assisting the Division of State Historic Sites with preparing a National Park Service planning grant for restoration of the Bentonville Battlefield. We appreciate the collegiality of our counterparts at the Division of State Historic Sites, particularly Deputy Director Chuck LeCount and Site Superintendent Colby Stevens, and that of our in-house agency grant writer Kimberly Kandros.

Repair and Renovation (R&R) project at Humber House. Designs are near to be completing for a \$300,000+ state-funded R&R project for needed repairs and painting at the historic Humber House, the HPO's eastern office in Greenville. We extend our thanks to our agency colleague Erin Lawrence and the DNCR Capital Projects team.

Resilience Work with NPS. Restoration Specialist Reid Thomas and DSHPO Ramona Bartos traveled to Ocracoke Island on December 7th at the invitation of the National Park Service to participate in the groundbreaking ceremony for the \$3.6 million NPS project to elevate and make repairs to the Double Lighthouse Keepers' Quarters and other structures, damaged by Hurricane Dorian. This event capped the year-long celebration of the Ocracoke Light Station's 200th anniversary. During the project, contractors will raise the residence more than 4 feet to protect against storm surge, and the Store House, Carpenter's Shop, Generator House and Privy 2 feet on concrete masonry piers with concrete footers. Repair and ADA improvements will also be undertaken.

Southern Campaigns of the Revolutionary War heritage corridor. State Archivist Sarah Koonts and DSHPO Ramona Bartos met on February 9th with Dr. Lacy Ford from the University of South Carolina about progress to stand up the newly approved federal

Southern Campaigns of the Revolution War Heritage Corridor. We were subsequently contacted by a Charleston newspaper to discuss North Carolina's America 250 efforts and our involvement with this federal corridor together with South Carolina.

Historical Research Office

Children's Books / Update projects. We reported at your last meeting of several children's book projects currently underway: four titles for America 250, focusing on the **Edenton Tea Party, Harlow Patriots, Overmountain Men**, and the **red wolf** (and other extinct animals from the colonial period), as well as an illustrated biography geared towards Grades 3 to 5 about **environmental activist Carolista Baum**, recognized by many as the savior of Jockey's Ridge dune system in northeastern North Carolina (now a state park).

The **Carolista Baum** book has gone to the printers and is about to be available for pre-sale. Others are far along with illustrations and being "set up" in book format.

We also are endeavoring to develop teachers' guides for each of our titles.

Highway Historical Marker news. Secretary Wilson recently approved multiple marker proposals from our December 2023 meeting. A list will be forthcoming. The next Highway Historical Marker advisory committee meeting will be in May in Raleigh.

Social Studies Conference. Historical Research Office Supervisor Ansley Wegner recently attended the state Social Studies Conference in Greensboro, highlighting our children's books, and had copies for teachers. Our book sales this past week reflect an increase in interest.

Office of State Archaeology (OSA)

Staff changes.

- **State Archaeologist.** Following the retirement of **John Mintz** as State Archaeologist, Deputy State Archaeologist (Underwater) **Chris Southerly** is serving as Acting State Archaeologist until a permanent successor is hired. We have advertised the position, and are awaiting candidates to be identified by HR for interview.
- **Assistant State Archaeologist.** Archaeological technician **Mandy Posgai** was promoted to one of vacant assistant state archaeologist roles.

Hardaway Site. Acting State Archaeologist Chris Southerly reported on creation of an advisory committee regarding the National Historic Landmark [Hardaway Site](#), now state owned, and stewarded by State Parks; the Office of State Archaeology looks forward to participating in this committee.

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

North Carolina Historical Commission Report March 2024

North Carolina Museum of History

Visitation: December through February we welcomed 57,915 members of the public.

New Exhibit: North Carolina Moonshine & Motorsports Trail. The N.C. Museum of History is highlighting the state's unique, intertwined history of bootleg whisky and stock car racing with a new lobby display featuring the state's Moonshine and Motorsports Trail. The display, created by the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, opened Dec. 7 in the museum lobby. Distilling grew out of the state's agriculture history—a rich, complicated distilling history that stretches back centuries. Auto racing in North Carolina has grown from occasional competitions among speed-hungry moonshiners during the 1930s to a multibillion-dollar industry that attracts legions of devoted followers across the world. The Moonshine and Motorsports Trail was designated in the 2021 state budget and created by the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. It was created to instill a sense of pride and ownership and drive economic development, particularly in rural communities, and to be a resource for cultural and tourism institutions across the state.

Winter Public Program Highlights

African American Cultural Celebration Virtual Education Day. The museum presented virtual, free interactive presentations and LIVE! streaming of African American storytelling, plus, videos and educational resources that reached over 14,472 students and teachers. What a success!

African American Cultural Celebration. Theme: “Our North Carolina Expressed through the Arts” commemorated African American history through music, art, dance, and food. The event served as the statewide kickoff to Black History Month in North Carolina. For over 20 years, this celebration has brought together African American community members, organizations, authors, artists, musicians, filmmakers, scholars, and more, around a central theme to highlight the contributions that African Americans, past and present, have made to North Carolina's history and culture. The museum welcomed 4,041 visitors to the museum for the event. Combined with AACC Education Day, our total members of the public served: 18,513.

History at High Noon Series programs: The Intersection of History and Medicine (Hybrid)

Speaker: Michael Soboeiro, MD, Associate Program Director, WakeMed Internal Medicine Program took participants on a case-based journey, looking at the medical care of three US presidents.

Women's History Month programs: Across the Field: Inspirational Images from of Warren County Grove

Missionary Baptist Church (Hybrid). Speakers: Susan Birckhead, author; Patricia F. White, lifelong member of Warren Grove Missionary Baptist Church; and Sam Harding, photography, editing, and tech support, came together to bring a photographic diary of dramatic and inspirational images that will visually speak to guests in a personal, spiritual, or soulful way through Warren Grove Missionary Baptist Church. **Listen to How She Changed the World (Hybrid).** Speaker: John Horan, Oral Historian, State Archives of North Carolina explored the She Changed the World Oral History Project. Listen in as the women interviewed share their memories of how they broke ground in the courtroom, classroom, and playing field. Through these interviews, find out how women have changed our world here in North Carolina.

History + Highballs: The History of the Ice in your Drink (Virtual). Speaker: Robert Allison, PhD, Professor, History, Language, and Global Culture, Suffolk University to us back in time to the 19th century to meet Frederic Tudor, Boston's ice king, as well as Dr. John Gorrie from Florida, who is considered the father of the southern ice industry and one of the inventors of air conditioning.

Family Programs

Artists at Work: Warrenton Heritage Quilters. Visitors watched artists' hands fly as they worked to create beautiful quilts. The Heritage Quilters is a group of award-winning artisans whose stitched works have been displayed around the country. **Girl Scout Juniors and Cadets: North Carolina Folks Arts Patch.** Scouts earned a Folk Arts patch while talking with a local craftsperson, make crafts from North Carolina's past, and time travel through the museum collection.

Lectures

American Revolution Lecture Series: Revolutionary Brothers: Thomas Jefferson, the Marquis de Lafayette, and the Friendship that Helped Forge Two Nations. Tom Chaffin, Award-Winning Author, and Historian presented by the North Carolina Society of the Cincinnati. *Author Talk: The Tory's Wife-A Woman and Her Family in Revolutionary North Carolina.* Speaker: Dr. Cynthia Kierner, Professor of History, George Mason University shared her newest book, *The Tory's Wife: A Woman and Her Family in Revolutionary North Carolina*.

Publications

The museum produced, edited, designed, and went to print in the spring 2024 issue of *Tar Heel Junior Historian* magazine. This issue, titled ***It's Revolutionary! Choices in Conflict*** explores the diverse experiences of individuals and communities throughout North Carolina during the American Revolution.

Along with the fall 2023 issue, the spring 2024 issue is fully grant funded and aligns with the forthcoming America250 commemoration. We will be reprinting several thousand copies of both editions in the *It's Revolutionary!* series at the request of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. The department wishes to incorporate the magazines into their America250 initiatives and programs around the state.

The museum also released the fall/winter 2024 edition of *Circa*, the museum's membership magazine. It is produced twice a year through the support of the North Carolina Museum of History Foundation.

North Carolina REGIONAL HISTORY MUSEUMS

Museum of the Albemarle

Celebrate Jazz Master Max Roach. The museum celebrated the 100th birthday of Pasquotank County native Max Roach, the master percussionist whose rhythmic innovations defined bebop jazz. Douglas Jackson, professor of music at Elizabeth City State University, made remarks on the life and accomplishments of Max Roach and visitors enjoyed an evening of jazz and celebrate Max Roach with Pasquotank County native, Thomas Taylor, North Carolina Central University assistant professor of percussion, and accompanying musicians provided live music honoring Max Roach. The City of Elizabeth City and Pasquotank County Commission issued an official proclamation designating January 10th as Max Roach Day in Elizabeth City and Pasquotank County.

School Day, Frederick Douglass Living History. School groups celebrated Black History Month with our Frederick Douglass Living History program. Students interacted with Frederick Douglass, portrayed by Nathan M. Richardson, who spoke about his life as an enslaved person, his escape to freedom, and rise as a great writer, orator, and abolitionist. Douglass strongly emphasized reading and writing, as well as developing a sense of civic responsibility and understanding of the US Constitution. He also spoke on how poets, writers, and speakers of the 19th century used their writing skills to effect change and make the country a more perfect union. This program was free and designed for grades 4 through 12.

North Carolina Maritime Museum, Southport

DEEP DIVE INTO HISTORY: The United States Army Nurse Corps and Nursing During the American Civil War. Curator Shannon Walker shared history about the role of women in nursing during the American Civil War, including Mary Phinney Von Olmhausen, who was stationed in Smithville in 1865. The program gives visitors a deeper understanding of our shared past through costumed interpreters and artifacts.

Skipper's Crew: Haulin' Hearts and **Skipper's Crew: Funny Bunny.** Programs designed for all ages, but specifically geared toward younger patrons, Skipper's Crew featured hands-on activities and crafts focusing on combining arts and history. Lights were dimmed, and interactives muted during the first two hours to provide a calmer environment for those with sensory sensitivities.

Scurvy: Scourge of the Sailor. The program was part of the museum's Third Tuesday lecture series. Maritime Museum Manager John Moseley for the presentation, presented this lecture for ages participants 16 years and older.

Museum of the Cape Fear Historical Complex

New traveling exhibit opening: **Seventeen Men: Portraits of African American Civil War Soldiers.** This exhibit consists of seventeen portraits of United States Colored Troops (USCT) soldiers. Artist Shayne Davidson based her portraits on an album of photographs of soldiers in the 25th Infantry Regiment, USCT, Co. G. The album was in the possession of their Captain, William A. Pickett. Passed down through the Pickett family, the album has been donated to the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History. **Seventeen Men** will be on display at the MCFHC through June 2, 2024. The museum is currently planning programs and supplemental information on USCT soldiers from North Carolina.

Maritime Museum at Beaufort

Programs for young children: **Merry-time for Tots.** Preschoolers (ages 2-5) and their caregivers participated in a maritime themed hands-on experience, craft, and activity. Topics rotate between pirates, sharks, whales, and fish with a focus on both experience and exposure. **Ocean Infants.** The program, designed for infants (0-2 years) and their caregivers, involves maritime items such as whale bones, shark teeth, and pirate hats. This program, offered every second Thursday, is designed to give the caregiver and infant the chance to bond, learn, and socialize.

Maritime Matinee: "Wright Brothers Flying Machine: Rebuilding One of the First Powered Airplanes". This film examines the remarkable inventions of Orville and Wilbur Wright, focusing on their flying machine, its wings, steering devices, and engine. A modern team of pilots, builders, aviation experts, and

historians works to retrace, rebuild, and re-fly planes that were designed and built by the Wright Brothers, who changed the world that December day in Kitty Hawk on the Outer Banks. The 45-minute film was screened in the museum's auditorium.

History of Santa Clause, Patron Saint of Sailors.

What did Santa wear before his now iconic red suit? What is Mrs. Claus's first name? We may not have all the answers regarding the mysterious and jolly figure, but during this family friendly presentation Associate Education Curator Christine Brin shared answers to some of these questions without taking away any of the magic.

North Carolina Whales. North Carolina has many species of whales that travel near our shores and sometimes strand on our beaches. This makes it ideal for biologists like our Natural Science Curator Keith Rittmaster and his colleagues to study and promote the conservation and understanding of these protected marine mammals. Participants learned about the whales most spotted off the coast of North Carolina and shared some of the related display items. The program is part of our Maritime Heritage Series, informal lectures held in the museum auditorium and focused on North Carolina's rich maritime history, coastal environment, and culture.

As Cold as the Night *Crissie Wright* Came Ashore. The people of Carteret County may have heard the tale of *Crissie Wright*, and how cold it was the night the ship foundered off Shackleford Banks, Jan. 8, 1886, but what was the real story? Education Curator Benjamin Wunderly presented the facts of the incident, including the weather, the wreck, and the fate of the crew.

The Management of Free and Enslaved Laborers in North Carolina's Antebellum Shad and Herring Fisheries. Plantations that bordered coastal North Carolina's creeks, rivers, and sounds often possessed fisheries that were operated by both free and enslaved peoples. While a few studies have provided some insights into the functioning of these fisheries, no one has analyzed labor management at them. Drawing on a wealth of sources, this presentation sought to describe and contextualize the labor management system at North Carolina's antebellum shad and herring fisheries.

Maritime Heritage Series: Crusty Clusters, Hidden Treasures- Concretions in Archaeological Conservation. Is it a seahorse? A plumbing fixture? What about a really big nail? Sometimes artifacts that are buried in the ocean form special crusts called 'concretion' that change their appearance and hide their identity. In this lecture, museum conservator Michelle Crepeau discussed what a concretion is, how it forms, and how conservators break them down to uncover the buried archaeological treasure within.

Division wide digital program participants December and January: 35,211

News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2024

Michelle Lanier, Director

Overview

- North Carolina State Historic Sites reported total onsite visitation of 1,028,090 for FY 2023-24 to date (July 2023 through February 2024).
- State Historic Sites has had 394,601 website visitors in FY 2023-24 to date, and a total of 351,796 followers on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Personnel

Nathan Schultz was named Site Manager of Alamance Battleground in January. He joins State Historic Sites from Fort Ticonderoga in New York, where he worked as School and Youth Programs Interpreter. He has an extensive background in living history and military interpretation.

Fort Fisher Education and Outreach Coordinator Kaitlin O'Connor was named Bennett Place Site Manager. As she began onboard training at Bennett Place in late January, she continued to coordinate Fort Fisher exhibit revisions with exhibition partner Riggs Ward.

Michelle Witt was named Research Curator of State Historic Sites in January. She is a historian, archivist, and communications professional with deep experience in historic interpretation and exhibit development.

Elizabeth Reighn was named Director of Curatorial Services in late 2023. She joined State Historic Sites in 2006 and served as Chief Curator from 2021 to 2023.

Business and Finance

Historic Sites received fee change approval for workshops, special events, and rentals, to be implemented March 1.

Women's History Month

North Carolina's Historic Sites are honoring women's history with a variety of events in March, including:

- *The Tavern Keeper's Wife* at Historic Bath
- *The Women of Somerset Place* tour
- *Canary Tour: A 45-minute tour of Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown's home, Canary Cottage*
- *Born at Duke Homestead: A Look at Victorian Motherhood*
- *A Sojourn for Harriet Jacobs* exhibit at Historic Edenton

When Are We US? and America 250

The *When Are We US?* Subcommittee of State Historic Sites meets monthly and is finalizing the traveling exhibit *Making Our Voices Heard*, which will begin its journey across Historic Sites statewide in April, to coincide with the launch of the America 250 celebration. *When Are We*

News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2024

Michelle Lanier, Director

US? invites diverse communities to engage in a dialogue about democracy and freedom as America's 250th approaches.

True Inclusion

Ongoing work related to the True Inclusion initiative includes the pursuit of assistive technology to better serve people with disabilities; 360-degree immersive tour production; translation of marketing literature; and continuing engagement with Black and indigenous communities. See True Inclusion Report 2023 (appended) for further detail.

Curatorial Services

Director of Curatorial Services Elizabeth Reighn worked with Division Director Michelle Lanier, Deputy Director Chuck LeCount, and Business and Finance Director Bridget Jordan to prepare justification to expand Curatorial Services with five new full-time positions, an increase in recurring funds for exhibit projects, and non-recurring funding for a new exhibit workshop space in Durham adjacent to the Bennett Place historic site.

Education and Interpretation Supervisor Andrew Duppstadt delivered two presentations: *Finding Hidden Treasures at N.C. Historic Sites* at the annual North Carolina Council for the Social Studies Conference on February 22 in Greensboro, and *North Carolina's Two Naval Heroes of the War of 1812: Johnston Blakeley and Otway Burns* for the Wilmington chapter of the Daughters of the War of 1812.

Education Specialist Robert Bemis presented a series of classes to expand site staff's knowledge of historic trades and assisted with costuming for upcoming America 250 events.

The Curatorial Services team hosted *Ethical Stewardship and the National Collections*, a Collections Care and Management workshop, with the Smithsonian Institution's Allaire Stritzinger on January 18. Participants included staff from the Charles B. Aycock Birthplace, Historic Bath, Bentonville Battlefield, Historic Edenton, Alamance Battleground, the Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum, the House in the Horseshoe, Fort Dobbs, and Horne Creek Living History Farm.

Additionally, the team participated in a planning retreat in February to brainstorm ways it can better serve the Division and uphold its record of excellence. With the guidance of facilitators Katheryn Northington & Associates, this work will be ongoing.

News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2024

Michelle Lanier, Director

Thomas Day

On February 29, State Historic Sites hosted a ceremony and reception in Milton, N.C., to celebrate North Carolina's newest historic site. The Thomas Day State Historic Site, which encompasses Union Tavern and the Milton State Bank, holds significant historical value. Thomas Day's legacy as a free Black cabinetmaker in the antebellum South is deeply embedded



Thomas Day site dedication, February 29

in these structures, and we are excited for the site's future development. Work is under way to furnish the Tavern to reflect Day's era and transform the Milton State Bank into a visitor center, complete with a museum and gift shop.

More than 45 staff members across multiple Historic Sites, led by Region Supervisor Jennifer Farley, came together to organize the event, which drew more than 200 attendees. In addition to preparing the site for the event, several staff performed mold remediation on historic Thomas Day

furniture pieces. Distinguished guests included three generations of Thomas Day descendants; First Lady Kristin Cooper; DNCR Secretary Reid Wilson; Office of Archives and History Deputy Secretary Dr. Darin Waters; State Historic Sites Director Michelle Lanier; Milton Mayer Angela Daniel-Upchurch; Thomas Day House Association President Vanessa "Twinkle" Graves; and Larry Jeffress of the Historic Milton Presbyterian Church.

Brunswick Town-Fort Anderson and the NC Rice Festival



Photo by Southport Magazine via Facebook

The annual N.C. Rice Festival took place February 28-March 2 at sites around Brunswick County, including Brunswick Town-Fort Anderson. The event, which celebrates Brunswick County's rice-farming history and highlights Gullah Geechee culture in coastal North Carolina, included documentary screenings, an ancestry reveal, a gala dinner, tours and talks, and performing arts.

Organizers reported record attendance of more than 4,000 people despite inclement weather. The event also honored founding chairman George Beatty Jr., who passed away December 28, 2023. The themes of Historic Sites' *When Are We US?* initiative were woven throughout the festival.

News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2024

Michelle Lanier, Director

Charlotte Hawkins Brown

The Greensboro Transit Authority has selected Charlotte Hawkins Brown for its Black History Month 2024 spotlight. One side of the bus features an image of Dr. Brown, and the other



Charlotte Hawkins Brown bus wrap

features inventor Garrett Morgan. On February 2, the bus made a special stop at the Charlotte Hawkins Brown site for a ceremony, with U.S. Rep. Kathy Manning, State Sen. Gladys Robinson, Assistant Town Manager Nathaniel “Trey” Davis, and Transit Director Reginald Mason in attendance. The site also held Black History Month tours throughout the month of February.

The Visitor Center exhibit was reinstalled in anticipation of the completion of grant work. Site Manager Tanesha Anthony and Assistant Site Manager Liz Torres Melendez participated in the African American Cultural Celebration at the Museum of History in Raleigh.

Fort Fisher



Fort Fisher tour, February 15

The new visitor center at Fort Fisher is scheduled for completion by May 1. The site hosted a hard-hat tour of the visitor center and the new Underwater Archaeology Lab on February 15. Guests included State Historic Sites staff, Friends of Fort Fisher, DNCR Secretary Reid Wilson, and State Rep. Ted Davis. Exhibit development is nearing completion, and the exhibits will be open to the public in the fall. Funding is in place to build a replica of the Civil War-era earthworks, with construction to begin in May and finish by

fall. Planning continues on the development of a multi-use trail through the Town of Kure Beach and Fort Fisher to the Southport/Fort Fisher Ferry terminal.

Historic Halifax

Planning continues for the upcoming Halifax Resolves Day and Prelude to Revolution event April 12-14, which will serve as the North Carolina kickoff to America 250 programming. Planning for this event involves stakeholders from DNCR, the Division of State Historic Sites, Tryon Palace, the Town and County of Halifax, the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe, the Historical Halifax Restoration Association, and the Friends of Historic Halifax.

News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2024

Michelle Lanier, Director

Planning for the Halifax Visitor Center renovation and new permanent exhibits is proceeding on schedule.

Historic Edenton

Michael Moore of Curatorial Services coordinated the sale and delivery of a pay phone from a vendor in Texas that will be used in interpretation of Freedom House, one of the newest additions to Historic Edenton. Freedom House was the family home of civil rights activist Golden Frinks and his wife, Ruth, who installed a pay phone in the home to keep the family phone bill down while serving the constant flow of visitors during the 1950s and '60s.

Horne Creek Living Historical Farm

Students in a Surry Community College horticulture class visited Horne Creek to learn more about apple varieties, pest management, orchard operations, and production yields. Veterinarian Kim Gemeinhardt performed checkups for all the site's animals.

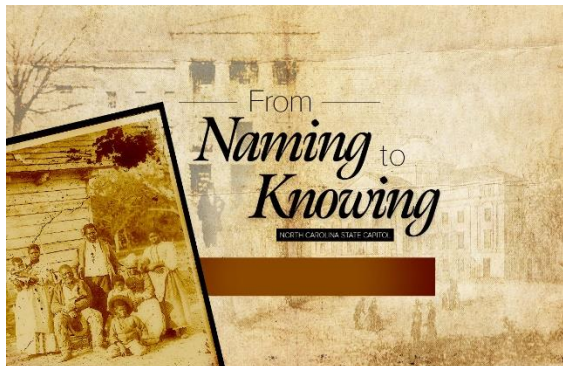
James K. Polk Historic Site

The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution submitted a proposal for two markers at the site's cemetery: one for Ezra Alexander, whose grave is at the site, and one for Charles Alexander. These men were believed to have signed the disputed document that is referred to informally as the Meck Dec. The request will be presented to the N.C. Historical Commission for consideration.

Historic Stagville

Site Manager Vera Cecelski met with the Indigo Yard Gals, a Durham-based arts organization, to explore an event partnership, in addition to meeting with Jennifer Zazo-Brown of the Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture to discuss collaboration with that institution's Ethical Interpretation training team.

State Capitol



The State Capitol launched a new website on February 19, titled [*From Naming to Knowing: Uncovering Slavery at the North Carolina State Capitol*](#). This website is the culmination of years of research, revision, and reflection, and while the unveiling of the website is a significant milestone, it will continue to be a work in progress as we learn more about the enslaved men who built and maintained the Capitol between 1833 and 1865.

Staff members held a lunch-and-learn with the State Archives on February 21 titled *Researching the Lives of Enslaved Laborers at the State Capitol*.

News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2024

Michelle Lanier, Director

The Capitol is closed to visitors due to renovations; nonetheless, about 1,395 people visited the Capitol grounds. Demolition and construction of the HVAC system in the south attic began, prompting temporary relocation of two staff members. Work was completed on the fan coil units in first-floor offices, which were cleared for occupancy. The State Capitol Foundation has commissioned a short video from Triad Studios to document the restoration process and provide footage for later use.

Town Creek Indian Mound

Site Manager Rich Thompson is working with partner Howard + Revis on design and production of a new exhibit kiosk, with installation projected to take place in April. The goal for this installation is to create a new way to share artifacts and stories that invites greater American Indian participation in interpretation while presenting information in a more interactive and accessible format.

Staff members installed a new roof on the East Lodge, one of three structures that make up the reconstructed Town Creek village, in January. The site held *Town Creek Under the Stars: Return of Wintermaker* on January 13 and *Town Creek Under the Stars: The Slim One* on February 17.

Thomas Wolfe Memorial



The Thomas Wolfe Memorial partnered with the Vance Birthplace Historic Site and Buncombe County Special Collections on *Exile From Altamont? Race and Belonging in Thomas Wolfe's Asheville*, a mini-symposium that took place mid-February in Asheville. Speakers included Dr. Darin Waters, Deputy Secretary of Archives and History.

The Wolfe site also partnered with the Wilma Dykeman Legacy to host a hybrid event titled *The Winter of Our Discontent* as part of its annual Thomas Wolfe Short Story Discussion Series. In mid-February, site staff debuted a pop-up exhibit on Julia Wolfe and her Florida real estate transactions. Curatorial Services Registrar Catherine Harper provided counsel on an incoming acquisition of Julia Wolfe's clothing from the Museum of History.

News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2024

Michelle Lanier, Director

Love Letters From Our Visitors

"I always enjoy bringing my house guests out to visit Horne Creek and I always learn something new with each visit."

Horne Creek Farm visitor

"Loved the nature trail; very well maintained!"

Town Creek Indian Mound
visitor Joshua Mauldin

"This is truly a treasure in downtown Asheville. The tour operator was extremely knowledgeable and you could tell she has read many of his books."

Thomas Wolfe Memorial
5-star Yelp review

"Everyone we met was fabulous. They took special time with my son and gave him goodies. Ray [Flowers] wanted to motivate my son into learning more about history and gave him a figurine."

Fort Fisher
Google Business review

"Thank you for your efforts to tell a diverse history!"

President James K. Polk Site
visitors Katie Larsen and
Ryan Murry

"[Interpreter Drew Neill] seemed to really care about the information he was providing and very knowledgeable."

Alamance Battleground
Google Review

"Amazing museum, great artifacts and excellent staff. History at its best!"

CSS Neuse/Caswell
Memorial
Google review

**State Historic Sites
True Inclusion Initiatives and Work
2023**

Curatorial Services

1. Accessioned three (3) Thomas Day pieces into the permanent collection.
2. Commissioned two (2) sweetgrass baskets from Gullah-Geechee artist Andrea Cayetano-Jefferson of Charleston, S.C. for Fort Fisher and Brunswick Town / Fort Anderson.
3. Shared four (4) chapters of the Guide and Glossary of Inclusive Terminology with external reviewers.
4. Coordinated an exhibit of Gullah Geechee paintings with the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor.

Business and Finance

Used HUB vendors when possible. Placed more focus on accessibility purchases for sites.

Design Branch

1. Work on video project for elementary school students on the topic of the African American experience at plantation sites in our state. Joint project with Vance, Stagville, and Somerset.
2. Collaborate with DHHS on making exhibits inclusive for people with varying levels of disabilities. Attended DHHS assistive technology expo in October 2023.
3. Work on DIT grant to make 360 immersive tours to increase access to sites. Tours will be made available online and promoted at juvenile detention centers, senior living centers, and other sites with limited mobility. Tours will also be used to increase accessibility for on-site users via tablet computers with or without internet connection.
4. Summer of 2023 - Hired first ever HBCU intern for Curatorial Services. Fall 2023- Received approval to hire another HBCU intern for Summer 2024.
5. Recruited intern to Temp Position, but she was not able to accept because she received a job offer with benefits.
6. Completed in-person EEO/DF training.
7. Work with HUB vendors on a regular basis.

BT/FA

Hosted North Carolina Rice Festival, March 4, 2023

CHB

1. Hosted "History of Black Education" Black History Month Specialized Tours –
2. Partnered with Yalik's African American Art and Cultural Movement to host Black History Month Open Mic and Silent Auction, which featured local visual and performing artists –
3. Hosted "Telling Herstory" Women's History Month Specialized Tours –
4. Hosted Black Women in History Virtual Lecture Series, which highlighted Dr. Ashley Robertson Preston and Dr. Faye Spencer Maor –
5. Partnered with the Greensboro Opera to host Black Heritage Day, which included small, black-owned business vendors and African American visual and performing artists, and highlighted renowned African American Opera singer, Chrystal E. Williams –
6. Hosted School Supply Drive for Title 1 School, Sedalia Elementary –
7. Partnered with the Town of Sedalia to host Christmas in Sedalia, which included small, local business vendors and local school performance groups –
8. Carrie Stone Cottage/Visitor Center NPS Grant - accessible restrooms added –
9. Tea House NPS Grant – accessible ramp added - Provided community service and volunteer hours to local university students –
10. Site staff attended NC Main Street Conference, American Association for State and Local History Conference, Woodland Cemetery Historic Preservation Conference, and the National Trust Past Forward Conference –
11. Utilized HUB vendors Summers Lawncare and Virginia Dare Cleaning Services for annual contracts –
12. Partnered with YMCA Youth Achievers to host a Tower Garden on site

Fort Dobbs

Contracted with Native American historic interpreters to participate in two special events

Capitol/Executive Mansion

1. Debuted new civil rights/protest walking tour
2. Facilitated Spanish language tour of the Executive Mansion
3. Provided the Governor's Office with genealogical research to support an initiative to learn more about the Strauss/Horowitz family, who donated the Mansion's dining room chandelier in the 1960s. Mrs. Horowitz survived the Holocaust while her parents Gustav and Selma Strauss did not. Docents have been trained on the new information about the Strauss/Horowitz family and now share their story with those taking tours of the Mansion.
4. Initiated request that the State Library of NC become an access site for the Yale University Fortunoff Archive for Holocaust Testimonies. This archive now available to anyone in NC with a State Library card
5. Hired a Black-owned firm to design *Naming to Knowing* website

Historic Bath

1. Translation of exhibit text into Spanish and German
2. Inclusion of Africa to Carolina exhibit in multiple events throughout the year
3. Development of STEAM Saturdays programs for hands-on learning addressing multiple learning styles while combining history and science
4. Opening of the new permanent exhibit in December of 2022 with diverse and inclusive storylines, as well as accessible content for visitors that are not able to use steps in the historic houses
5. Successful utilization of a HUB vendor for our termite inspection and treatments
6. Various social media posts featuring diverse narratives
7. Staff participation in the Collaboration Between Museums and Indigenous Partners webinar offered by the Texas Historical Commission
8. Summer intern Beth Gallucci researched the enslaved presence in the Bonner household
9. Staff participation in the Accessibility for All - AT for Inclusion at Work

Alamance

Alamance Battleground partnered with a local chapter NC Society Daughters of the American Revolution to unveil a new wayside interpretive marker to celebrate the achievements of a North Carolina backcountry woman, Rachel Stout Allen, and her impact on our local history.

Horne Creek

1. Invited Nikawasi Director, Elaine Eisenbraun, to participate in the 30th Annual Cornshucking Frolic and to discuss important facets of Cherokee cultural, with particular emphasis on southern apple varieties developed by the Cherokee. –
2. Reached out to schools with information on Horne Creek's "Apples for Schools" Program. - Worked with Guildford College Professor, Tony Van Sice, to aid him in choosing varieties of apples and peaches which would be okay to plant in what was formerly the New Garden area of the state (Greensboro). His sustainability class is planting heirloom varieties at the campus.
3. Provided every school in Surry County with a copy of Bountiful Red Acres, which tells the story of the two families which owned the land that now makes up Horne Creek Living Historical Farm State Historic Site. The Hausers were a white family and the Sawyers were a free family of color, having Black, White, and Native American ancestors. Black/White relationships at the turn of the 20th century and economic inequalities are explored in the book.
4. Invited the African-American Historical & Genealogical Society of Surry County to set up a booth at the 30th Annual Cornshucking Frolic.
5. Assistant Site Manager Mark Farnsworth virtually attended the Colonial Williamsburg conference, "I Made This...", exploring the lives and work of Black artists and artisans from the 18th to 20th centuries.
6. Reinstated our relationship with Stokes Friends of Youth, which had been sidelined since Covid hit.

7. Mark Farnsworth took part in the presentation by the NC State Library on African-American family research entitled, " Untangling Our Roots: Experiences with African American Genealogy."
8. Mark Farnsworth attended the annual Colonial Williamsburg Antiques Forum. One of the more interesting presentations was a discussion of the planning process for an upcoming exhibit at the DAR Museum entitled "Fighting For Freedom: Black Craftspeople and the Pursuit of Independence."

Fort Fisher

1. Translation of brochures into Spanish
2. Emailed job posting to faculty at HBCUs & MIHEs for summer internships
3. Prepared new, permanent exhibits that highlight perspectives & experiences of a diverse set of people across racial, gender, and age lines
4. Interpreter II Kaitlin O'Connor presented on Fort Fisher veterans & the 1898 Massacre
5. Interpreter III Becky Sawyer continued research on Civil War sailors from around the world
6. Interpreter II Kaitlin O'Connor forged a new working partnership with the historical committee of St. Luke AME Zion, a church founded in part by Fort Fisher veterans & likely attended by Black WWII soldiers who trained at Fort Fisher.

NCTM

Deb Aronin, a Graduate student at UNC Greensboro, is using her senior capstone project to expand the BIPOC stories told at the North Carolina Transportation Museum. She has spent time researching and developing labels to tell the story of the Safe Bus Company of Winston-Salem and Wheeler Airlines two Black owned transportation companies from North Carolina, and the story of Sarah Keys, a Black woman who refused to give up her seat on a bus in North Carolina and won her court case, to be displayed throughout the Museum upon their completion in 2024.

Reed Gold Mine

1. Translated rack cards into Spanish
2. Began work with Capital Projects to replace wheelchair lift/elevator in Stamp Mill Building (to be completed in 2024)
3. Reorganized the gift shop so that it was more accessible, ensuring stanchions and tables are ADA compliant in width and displays are reachable
4. Added gravel to the path from the Visitor Center to the Underground Mine, making it more accessible for visitors that experience difficulty walking
5. For winter panning, we are using our mobile panning troughs which are ADA-compliant, making the activity accessible to even more of our visitors. Although the troughs in our current panning area are not ADA compliant because they are over 36" high, when the new indoor panning area is constructed with the assigned legislative funds, the staff plans for all troughs to be ADA compliant year-round.

Vance

1. Vance Birthplace staff partnered with the American Myth Center for a second year to host performances of *Leah & the Rabbit: A Juneteenth Play* on June 17. This program celebrates freedom, resilience, and the reclaiming of narratives. The play was written, directed, and performed by local BIPOC artist Mikayla Wilson, and the story was inspired by the life of Leah Erwin and her experiences of slavery and emancipation. Performances of the play concluded with a moderated conversation with performers, site staff, and the audience that focused on the creation of the play and how it can serve as a conduit for healing dialogue.
2. Vance Staff began working on an exhibit about slavery in WNC, which is scheduled to be installed in the slave dwelling in 2025. This exhibit will explore how the landscape, tourism, and family shaped experiences of slavery in the region and will highlight the stories of individuals who were enslaved by the Vances in the Reems Creek Valley.
3. Vance Staff worked on a collaborative video program in conjunction with staff at Stagville and Somerset that explores the varied experiences of slavery for individuals across North Carolina. These videos will be virtual educational resources for K-12 teachers to introduce and expand upon lessons about slavery.
4. We hosted Mars Hill University's Teaching with Primary Sources program to share with Madison County teachers how our staff utilizes primary sources—including structures and artifacts—to share the stories of people enslaved by the Vances in the Reems Creek Valley.
5. For the seventh year, site staff and the Mountain History & Culture Group partnered with the American Myth Center for An Appalachian Christmas Carol, held on December 7 and 9. The program consists of theatrical tours that take visitors through the site to learn about Venus, a woman enslaved by the Vances. The show encourages visitors to think about empathy and how the past affects our present.

Halifax

1. Historic Halifax's new *Seeking Liberty in Halifax* traveling exhibit was displayed at the African American Cultural Celebration at the Museum of History in Raleigh, in January 2023. The exhibit juxtaposes the story of the Halifax Resolves and the American Revolution with Halifax's African American community's search and struggle for freedom through the Underground Railroad, armed rebellion, and military service.
2. Historic Halifax Assistant Site Manager, Frank McMahon authored and presented a new talk entitled, *The Black Patriots of Halifax* in February 2023 as part of a Friends of Historic Halifax, Bites of History lecture series. The talk highlighted various African American soldiers who served in the American Revolution with ties to Halifax, NC.
3. Historic Halifax continues to work to build on existing relationships with the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe and is planning to include a recognition of the land by Haliwa-Saponi Tribe Chief, Dr. Ogletree Richardson during the 2024 Halifax Resolves commemorations in April of 2024.. Members of the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe continue to serve on the board of the Friends of Historic Halifax.

Stagville

1. Completed a new Strategic Plan with a process that included diverse stakeholders, and adopted a new site mission statement that reflected descendant and stakeholder feedback.
2. Established a recurring professional development fund in the support group budget, to support meaningful training experiences for site staff and interpreters

Polk

1. For Black History Month (Feb. 2023), the site, in conjunction with the Mecklenburg County Library, held a screening of the documentary, "Lawrence Orr; Chronicle of a Life Fulfilled". This documentary was produced by Polk Board Member, Fredrick Murphy. -Hosted noted food and cultural historian, Dontavius Williams (The Chronicles of Adam) as he led a program on African American foodways and how the influences of Africa shaped our cuisine today. The site hosted him twice, once in March and once in October. 2
2. Hosted tribal representatives from the Catawba Nation as they presented a lecture and dance (Catawba 101) for the visiting public.
3. Hosted Leesa Jones, Executive Director of the Washington Waterfront Underground Railroad Museum. Ms. Jones presented both an interactive and static display of the Underground Railroad movement in North Carolina.
4. Hosted Dr. Brooke Bauer, Assistant professor of History at the University of Tennessee and a member of the Catawba Nation, as she presented on her new book, "Becoming Catawba".
5. Researched continued on the Enslaved Polks wayside
6. A new outdoor interpretive kiosk on the Catawba Nation and the history of their connection to the land was produced and will be installed in early 2024
7. Self guided history guides are now published in five different languages, English, French, Spanish, German and Cantonese
8. Captioning was added to the Polk Visitor Center film
9. Two HUB businesses were hired to perform maintenance projects at the Polk site

Somerset Place

1. Hosted Africa to Carolina traveling exhibit- Feb. & June 2023
2. Women of Somerset Tour - March 2023;
3. Highlight the former American Indian community's ways of life on Lake Scuppernong during American Indian Heritage Month with exhibits and demonstrations at our Somerset Harvest Time on the Shoreline event (Saturday, November 4, 2023).

Duke Homestead

1. Translated self-guided brochure into Spanish, French, and Mandarin
2. Installed a PA announcement system with Spanish language option
3. Added closed captioning to the site's orientation video
4. Hosted a Hindu Holi color festival
5. Represented Duke Homestead and Kavala, Greece, at the Durham Sister Cities International Festival

6. Presented new perspectives of Victorian women's lives in the Born at Duke Homestead motherhood event.
7. Emailed volunteer and job opportunities to local HBCUs
8. Distributed tobacco to local and national American Indian tribes for ceremonial use
9. Continued utilization of the new accessible rubber trail
10. Implemented new interpretation in education programs that highlight diverse perspectives of tobacco history
11. Created content for a PBS 360 initiative for online accessibility
12. Fostered a safe and welcoming space for LGBTQIA+ volunteers
13. Hosted Pauli Murray Center Director Angela Thorpe for a lecture on Pauli Murray and the center's work at the site's support group's annual meeting
14. Continued to host the *NC Women Breaking Barriers She Changed The World* exhibit.
15. Created new tours during Black History Month, "Field & Factory: A Look at Tobacco's Laborers" which highlighted diverse perspectives of historical tobacco sharecroppers and factory workers.

RIFP

1. Met with NC American Indian Commission for a tour of RIFP's American Indian Exhibit and discussed opportunities to work together.
2. Hosted an exhibit from the NC African American Commission exhibit *Africa to Carolina*
3. Hosted an exhibit of Women Breaking Barriers in NE NC.
4. OBX Pride hosted its annual pride event on the Pavilion grounds.

Town Creek Indian Mound

1. Town Creek hosted an exhibit created by the Waccamaw-Siouan STEM Studio that culminated in a site visit by students in that program, many of whom had never been to the Site. The students created model wigwams, using organic, locally sourced materials. The models were then grouped into a virtual miniature Waccamaw village. The Site support group, The Friends of Town Creek Indian Mound Inc., helped fund the day-long excursion in January of 2023 where participants toured the village and engaged in a variety of hands-on activities.
2. The Site hosted the NC American Indian Heritage Commission for the first annual equinox ceremony. Leaders from the State's eight recognized tribes were present to acknowledge accomplishments from the previous year and share plans for progress in the new year. This marked the first time an event like this has been hosted at the Site.
3. Finally, during the summer, the self-guided tour pamphlet was translated into German. The script was translated into Spanish the previous year

Horseshoe

1. Included touch items into each room of the historic house
2. Expanded child-centric programming with Summer Reading Book Club
3. Met with John Cope from the NC Museum of History to discuss content warnings for history that can be triggering to visitors
4. Implemented a pop-up exhibit on enslavement at House in the Horseshoe
5. Incorporated research into daily interpretation on the disabled militiamen & their lives after the skirmish