

North Carolina Historical Commission Report-March 18, 2025
Division of Archives and Records

On behalf of the Division of Archives and Records, I am pleased to provide updates on recent division activities and programming. With the holidays in December and annual inventory in early January, this quarter typically has some reduced tour and outreach opportunities compared to other quarters. However, several great tours and programs have filled our calendars. A variety of visitors have visited recently for tours and research. Selections include the editors of *Our State* magazine, Elon University students, City of Raleigh Museum staff, DNCR teacher ambassador cohort, staff of the General Assembly's Fiscal Research team, students from the NC School of Science and Math, third graders from Exploris Middle School, members of the Wake Forest Chamber of Commerce, and the Wake County Genealogical Society. Since the General Assembly is back in session, we expect an uptick in tour requests for members and constituent groups. We also are working with staff at the General Assembly to plan a special exhibit of the Carolina Charter of 1663 in their building during a Wednesday in March.

Division staff presented a number of popular virtual and in-person programs over the last three months. Several virtual ones are scheduled for March. The Book Club in Fayetteville hosted archivist Elizabeth Bates speaking on their organizational records housed in our collections. Tammy Woodward presented the work of the OBHC to the Bias Foundation's speaker series called "Unlocking the Past." The program was held in coordination with the Town of Duck. Sarah Koonts provided a talk at Tryon Palace as part of Craven Community College's continuing education series. The talk was "Lasting Legacies" and covered how to care for family documentary heritage. Division staff worked a table at the annual NC African American Heritage Celebration on January 25. They had interactions with 193 attendees. Multiple division staff spoke at the "[New Year, New Collections](#)" virtual workshop on January 28. Adrienne presented on the State Historical Records Advisory Board grant project to the NC American Indian Heritage Commission on January 29. John Horan participated in a virtual training on oral history for the NC Community College Archives Association and spoke to students at Elon University libraries on beginning an oral history project. Sarah Downing of the Western Regional Archives spoke on "Archives ABC's" to fourth grade students at Fernleaf Charter School. She also presented a program on the Garding Family Papers with an emphasis on the love letters between Rev. D.J. Hunt and Geneva Gardin from the early 1910's. Sarah Koonts addressed the annual meeting of the NC Preservation Consortium and the Raleigh Kiwanis. The division hosted a virtual program on [Lafayette](#) and his visit to NC as part of his national tour 200 years ago. Alison Thurman spoke as part of that program, highlighting resources in the Archives detailing preparations for the visit. In February OBHC co-hosted a book talk for local author Angel Khoury's re-release of her book *Manteo: A Roanoke Island Town*. Virtual programs planned for March include "Roots to Resilience: Remembering Black Raleigh." Yale student and State Archives' researcher Jenesis Nwainokpor will present the program, "Where Did All the Midwives Go? Statistical Authority in the Regulation of Midwifery in North Carolina, 1900-1940." Finally, later in the month the division is partnering with the Deep River

Historical Society for the program “North Carolina’s Forgotten Industry: Coal Mining in Central N.C. and the Coal Glen Coal Mining Disaster” in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of that disaster.

Our social media accounts, particularly those from the audio-visual unit, remain popular. In December alone 6 posts from the unit reached nearly 150,000 people. The division’s podcast *Connecting the Docs* continues in its fifth season. This season focuses on stories related to the America 250 NC thematic frameworks Revolutionary NC and When Are We US?

Staff in the Records Analysis Unit reached a remarkable number of stakeholders through virtual and in-person records management training this quarter. They conducted 10 workshops and reached 1,417 public records custodians. Virtual records management workshops remain a popular option after the pandemic with over 1,000 participants in February alone. In addition to their typical workshop slate, unit staff spent the last quarter focused on issues related to the transfer of state government records after the post-election transition. This included major efforts to work with the Governor’s and Lt. Governor’s offices on the identification and transfer of physical and electronic records of permanent value. Records analysts also worked with state offices experiencing a transition in leadership, particularly in the Council of State agencies. Partnering with our digital services section staff, issues surrounding digital records transfers were addressed. This included the final crawls of Governor Cooper’s website for preservation and work with NC Department of Information Technology on eDiscovery access for the pending transfer for archival email.

The division worked on some upcoming document loan and exhibit details. The City of Fayetteville Museum borrowed some key Lafayette related documents for a special exhibit during the commemoration of Lafayette’s visit to the city in March 1825. These included a letter from Lafayette to John McCrae, a speech from his visit, our recorded copy of the Liberty Point Resolves, and the General Assembly bill for changing the name of Campbellton to Fayetteville in 1783. Becky McGee-Lankford continued to lead the planning efforts for our special “One Day Wonder” exhibits around the America 250 NC commemoration. The exhibit on the state constitutions exhibit is being scheduled for events starting in April with the Revolutionary War Days event in Hillsborough. She also directed the final planning for another exhibit on the soldiers’ experiences during the Revolutionary War. The conservation lab under conservator Lucy Dunphy Barsness prepared the items for the exhibit, as well as the traveling cases for the original documents. She and Becky travel to each proposed exhibit location to ensure all necessary preservation and security needs are met for the event.

The division outreach team has been hard at work finalizing the two primary sourced-based DocsBoxes (state constitutions and the Revolutionary War). They led meetings with the teacher advisory board on the review of the draft lesson plan kits and prepared updates based on feedback. In addition to the lesson plan revisions underway, the outreach staff

prepared to speak to larger groups of educators about these draft resources. Teacher training on the kits is planned for the summer and fall with release for use in the new school year. The outreach group also oversees the Federation of NC Historical Societies. The Federation recently awarded two mini grants. One went to the Heart of Deep River Historical Society to support the printing and mounting and upcoming exhibition commemorating North Carolina coal mining and accidents. The second went to the Lower Cape Fear Historical Society to develop and implement a resource library database to create a stronger digital presence for accessibility and preservation. The project will transform the Society's website into a user-friendly platform for visitors to explore and engage with primary source materials and other historical resources.

The SHRAB board met in February to discuss an upcoming grant application to support its programming. They also will be reviewing the next round of Traveling Archivist Program applications which came in at a record 15 applications for about 6 participants. As part of the board's current work to support local libraries in the preservation of community records, a webinar on digitization stations was presented this quarter.

Highlights of recent non-governmental collections acquisitions include the Goldsboro *News Argus* photograph collection from the Wayne County Public Library. The Military Archivist transferred 130 veterans' oral history interviews from UNC Chapel Hill. These interviews fill gaps in our collection and were no longer within the collecting scope at UNC CH. The oral history team started a new collaboration with FEMA and the State Historic Preservation Office on collecting oral histories related to Hurricane Helene recovery. They continue to collaborate on other collecting projects that deposit interviews with the division. This includes the Greensboro Historic Preservation's collecting effort around the South Benbow Road Historic District. We received an addition of 9.5 cubic feet to the League of Women Voters of North Carolina State Headquarters collection (ORG.110). The addition included administrative records, documents related to legal cases regarding voting rights in the state, as well as records collected by some local leagues that have since closed. The North Carolina Museums Council (ORG.119) also sent a substantial addition to their organizational records. The Western Regional Archives acquired correspondence from Gisela Kronenberg (Herwitz) from her time when she was a student at Black Mountain College (1940-1943).

The Records Description Unit worked on a number of large arrangement and access needs for government records. A recent reference request by a graduate student covers a large amount of more modern social services records that will require detailed review and potential redaction prior to the patron receiving access. Unit staff developed workflows and made assignments to tackle this project. They also have undertaken a major effort in collaboration with the Administrative Office of the Courts to survey and transfer historical court records (up to 1968) that remain in county courthouses. This quarter archivists in the unit visited the Cleveland and Mecklenburg county courthouses to survey holdings and begin bringing back material. Just from Mecklenburg County alone we anticipate this transfer will be over 210 cubic feet of loose records and 200 volumes. After these two

counties, Duplin and Lenoir counties are next on the list for visits to inventory records for potential transfers.

Annual inventory was conducted January 6-8. In addition to the typical collections inventories, inventory is an opportunity to perform some stack cleaning and other preservation or access projects. This year the Imaging Unit completed a major inventorying of all state agency microfilm in the upper security vault and the Records Description staff added another 4,132 bar codes to archival county records. This provides additional details in our online catalog about those holdings. Unfortunately, during inventory mold was discovered in a few spots in the stacks. Likely from the sustained high humidity issues in the building last summer, the conservation lab began a review of potentially impacted records and mold remediation. They are planning a more detailed survey of records in the area where mold was identified. Additionally, they used datalogger data to map where the outbreaks occurred and shared this data with facilities and project engineers on a building capitol project that will eventually replace the chiller. Other recent facilities issues included a pipe leak in the State Records Center that necessitated a lot of records shifting so the Facilities Management Division can repair the pipe without damaging records. The Outer Banks History Center has been closed to the public for a few months as the Center has its Halon fire suppression system replaced and the reading room undergoes some much-needed upgrades.

Since our last division report to the Commission, a number of staffing changes have impacted our essential operations. We welcomed Michelle Witt from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties to our digital services leadership team, but that section still has several vacancies we are trying to fill. We also lost our archivist for digital outreach and education when she resigned at the end of February. Our head of Collections Management Branch, Cindy Bradley, departed the division for a position with the Division of State History Museums. The division also lost its main budget administrative support and our human resources liaison. Sarah Downing of the Western Regional Archives retired effective March 1. Because the lead archivist at the WRA remains on medical leave, the agency allowed the division to hire a temporary archivist to maintain services after Sarah's retirement. Two other pending division retirements include private collections archivist, Colin Reeve, as well as mine. Both retire effective May 1. With all of these vacancies in key division operations, management staff have strategized on which essential projects will continue, which will be paused, and which staff can cover critical operations until positions can be filled. They hope to reopen by the end of the month.

With my final report to the Commission, I end with a note of thanks for all that you do for the State Archives, as well as the entire Office of Archives and History and NC DNCR. It has been my distinct honor to partner with you in the preservation of and access to the rich resources documenting our state's history. For over 32 years I have been fortunate to work with and promote our collections and serve North Carolinians in the larger effort to ensure that we are indeed preserving history for all the people.

**Report of the Division of Historical Resources
To the North Carolina Historical Commission
For its March 18, 2024, meeting**

**Ramona M. Bartos, Division Director and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
March 7, 2024**

Division in general

Retirements. Two long-tenured colleagues in our division retired effective February 1, 2025:

- **Jeff Futch** is a 32-year veteran and served as our Western Office supervisor, working closely with public history institutions throughout western North Carolina, serving as a CREST team lead for cultural resource disaster outreach, and as the daily steward of the Western Office, which now houses multiple divisions of our agency serving the western region.
- **Mitch Wilds** began his career as a regional staffer to the Restoration Services branch of the State Historic Preservation Office in 1983, to retiring as the branch's supervisor. During his career, his deep expertise in North Carolina's historic building stock and preservation skills is exceeded only by his dedication to public service and ease of communication to provide stewardship advice ranging from the most humble historic buildings in rural counties to the Executive Mansion and State Capitol and to a wide variety of constituents from local developers to the highest elected officials in North Carolina. Mitch led this branch to be a Preservation Extension Service (think of the Agricultural Extension), offering North Carolinians the technical advice they need to succeed in their preservation goals.

I have attached our nominations for the Order of the Longleaf Pine for each to demonstrate their contributions and service to North Carolina for a combined total of nearly 75 years.

We have completed interviews for each vacant position and have submitted hiring packages to HR for our preferred candidates. I am hopeful that we will soon have an announcement as to their successors.

We were pleased to welcome **Chris Stone** – most recently with the Missouri SHPO – to fill our vacant **Restoration Specialist position** for an eastern region, last held by Reid Thomas before he was promoted to Eastern Office Supervisor; Chris started on February 17.

Since our last meeting, we promoted **Stephen Atkinson** to the **Deputy State Archaeologist (Underwater) position** last held by Chris Southerly before his promotion to State Archaeologist. Stephen's promotion means that we now have a vacancy to fill for his old position.

We said a bittersweet goodbye at the end of February to **Assistant State Archaeologist Rosemarie Blewitt**, who, after recently completing a Master's in Public Administration, has been hired by the State Auditor's Office. We are now working to advertise her job as well to recruit her successor.

Hurricane Helene recovery package for preservation. I reported in December that multiple national preservation organizations sent a letter of support to Congress, asking for an emergency supplemental Historic Preservation Fund appropriation for Hurricanes Helene and Milton relief. In late December, Congress did indeed include a new such appropriation, but rather than make it disaster-specific, it was a general appropriation for any eligible properties. We await a "spend" plan before the National Park Service can initiate the grant application process. Given the broad applicability and eligibility of this appropriation, we cannot predict what amount of assistance may be available to North Carolina's Helene needs.

Other Hurricane Helene news.

- **FEMA / HUD / NPS meeting (requested by State Historic Preservation Office).** On Monday, February 10th, representatives of the State Historic Preservation Office met with FEMA, HUD, and NPS officials, including the FEMA's and HUD's agency-wide Federal Preservation Officers based in DC, to discuss how best we all can help constituents successfully navigate multiple overlapping federal regulatory schemes and standards for historic buildings affected by Hurricane Helene. Those standards include:
 - (1) the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation (historic tax credit projects and Section 106 compliance under the National Historic Preservation Act);
 - (2) exemptions for historic buildings under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP);
 - (3) the relatively new (as of mid-2024) [FEMA Flood Risk Management Standard](#), which has exemptions for certain historic buildings but not others, and which is designed to foster greater resilience measures for recovery / rebuilding / repairs that use FEMA (and possibly HUD) funding. (We learned that a recent presidential Executive Order is being assessed for how this Standard will be deployed. FEMA advised they should have additional information on that point soon.) Florida and North Carolina with Milton and Helene recovery are likely the first states to have to deal with these new standards, and are "first out of the gate" so to speak.

This conversation followed an earlier discussion in December 2024 with members of the Codes and Engineering section of the NC Department of Insurance to talk about historic buildings' treatment under the Existing Building Code and other state building codes in the Helene recovery context.

We expect to have a follow up meeting to our February 10 meeting, and all agreed that targeted training covering this niche topic for those involved in rebuilding and repair of historic properties would be helpful. I will provide a further update after our next meeting.

- **Streamlining measures sought.** As part of our effort to identify additional streamlining avenues for Section 106 regulatory compliance under the National Historic Preservation Act, we have spoken to HUD's Federal Preservation Officer Brian Lusher in DC along with Stephanie McGarrah at NC Commerce's new Division of Community Revitalization. We are working with them plus FEMA to develop a "HUD addendum" to our existing FEMA programmatic agreement, which will allow HUD monies to follow the same review process and solutions outlined in that FEMA document. In this way, we would not have to do redundant reviews and could then follow the same protocols for Helene projects whether FEMA or HUD funded, and expedite Section 106 reviews of CDBG-DR projects.

We also worked with FEMA to establish under our existing FEMA / State Historic Preservation Office programmatic agreement a **programmatic consultation process** for both (1) Public and Private Debris Removal and (2) projects that would involve acquisition / demolition / mitigation reconstruction (including elevation) of structures in the areas affected by Hurricane Helene. This process is a **further streamlining measure** for compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. It is limited only to those properties either listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. We understand it is **modeled after a similar approach in the mid-Atlantic following Hurricane Sandy**. While FEMA acknowledges that building treatments may have adverse effects on historic properties, those **adverse effects can be otherwise sufficiently addressed through a suite of pre-identified treatment measures** (oral histories, photo documentation of the building, historical interpretation projects). Most importantly, we all see this holistic approach as **helping North Carolinians return home to safe / livable buildings as soon as possible**. In the meantime, we continue to work closely with federal, state, and tribal partners to expedite and prioritize compliance reviews in WNC post-Helene.

- **Local government interaction.** Representatives of the State Historic Preservation Office and Office of State Archaeology participated in a FEMA / NCORR recovery outreach event in Asheville on January 17 for 40 of Western North Carolina's local governments with the purpose of outlining our Division's role in Helene recovery.
- **Upcoming collaboration with NC Department of Commerce.** Liz Parham, director of the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center, at Commerce, invited the State Historic Preservation Office's Restoration Services Branch staff to join in a February 27 consultation day in Spruce Pine to assist with local Helene recovery initiatives, including building rehabilitation, and to meet with their property and business owners. We at Liz's request reached out or suggested architects to gauge whether any are able or willing to offer pro bono services; many constituents are reportedly "running into some code issues" due to the need for "sealed" plans as a next step. Spruce Pine has a [National](#)

[Register-listed downtown](#), and rehab projects for recovery may be able to access the federal and state historic tax credit programs.

- **House Bill 47.** We understand that the state legislature’s pending (as of 3/7/2025) Disaster Recovery Act of 2025, Part I, includes an exemption for reconstruction or repair of a nonconforming residential structure from local historic preservation regulations (e.g. preservation commission ordinances) for Helene recovery; this section will sunset in June 2030 for the disaster declaration-defined “[affected area](#)”. In the affected area, we have preservation and/or landmark commissions in Asheville / Buncombe County, Black Mountain, Waynesville, Clyde, Tryon, Transylvania County, Jackson County, Hendersonville, Henderson County, Flat Rock, Boone, Valle Crucis, Morganton, Hickory, Mount Airy, Rutherfordton, Forest City, Lenoir, Wilkesboro, Taylorsville, Lincoln County, Gastonia, Statesville, Mecklenburg County, Charlotte, Waxhaw, Salisbury, Spencer, Rowan County, Concord, Albemarle, Monroe, and Union County.

	General Assembly Of North Carolina	Session 2025
1	RECONSTRUCTION OF NONCONFORMING RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES	
2	SECTION 5.7.(a) Notwithstanding any local government development regulation to	
3	the contrary, and to the extent allowed by federal law, reconstruction or repair of a	
4	nonconforming residential structure in the affected area shall be allowed when all of the	
5	following criteria are met:	
6	(1)	The structure shall not be enlarged beyond its original footprint.
7	(2)	The structure shall serve the same or similar residential use.
8	(3)	There are no alternatives for replacing the structure to provide the same or
9		similar benefits to the structure owner in compliance with current law.
10	(4)	The structure will be reconstructed so as to comply with a local government's
11		current development regulations to the maximum extent possible.
12	(5)	If located in an area regulated by a unit of local government pursuant to a
13		floodplain or flood damage prevention regulation, the structure will be
14		compliant with the regulation.
15	(6)	Reconstruction shall comply with any federal law requiring local government
16		implementation and enforcement.
17	SECTION 5.7.(b) For purposes of this section, "development regulation" means a	
18	unified development ordinance, zoning regulation, subdivision regulation, historic preservation	
19	or landmark regulation, or any other regulation adopted pursuant to Chapter 160D of the General	
20	Statutes or a local act or charter that regulates land use or development. The term shall not include	
21	(i) a floodplain or flood damage prevention regulation, (ii) local regulations adopted pursuant to	
22	G.S. 143-138(e) or adopted pursuant to the North Carolina State Building Code, (iii) erosion and	
23	sedimentation or stormwater control regulations adopted to comply with requirements of federal	
24	law, or (iv) any other regulations adopted to comply with requirements of federal law.	
25	SECTION 5.7.(c) This section is effective when it becomes law and expires June	
26	30, 2030.	
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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.

Following a positive review by the Office of State Budget and Management since our last meeting, we await news as to whether our three-time renewed request for 4 positions for the new biennium FY 2025-2027 will be included in Governor Stein’s budget. That request as a reminder is 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 believe that our contributions to our state and constituents 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.

State Historic Preservation Office (HPO)

Statewide Preservation Plan. The plan was preliminary approved by the National Park Service on January 10, 2025, conditional on us drafting an executive summary, more detailed table of contents, and bibliography. We have done so, and we will be beginning our public distribution and outreach this spring. We will likewise be working with our Public Information Officer to put out a press release.

Historic Resilience Project. DSHPO Ramona Bartos and Local Government Preservation Commission Coordinator Kristi Brantley discussed the [Historic Resilience Project](#) — funded by our Hurricanes Florence and Michael grant from NPS — with the state's Chief Resilience Officer Amanda Martin and her team as to ways we might continue our outreach post-Helene. This project was developed in collaboration with the UNC School of Government and NC State, launched in late 2023 with outreach and public workshops into 2024. Our hope is to have more communities consider adopting some of its deliverables, including [resiliency-oriented community planning](#) and [design guidelines for local historic preservation commissions](#). [Online training modules](#) are currently under development as the final stage of the project's delivery.

National Register Advisory Committee (NRAC) meeting. The first of our 3 NRAC meetings in 2025 was held on Thursday, February 13. The National Register agenda was quite full and varied with 8 National Register nominations, again demonstrating the strong public demand for this program, along with the Study List properties from an architectural survey of Clay County that was conducted by our in-house survey staff. The final materials are available [here](#).

Focus on [F.D. and Annie Wharton House nomination](#). We would like to share some constituent feedback about one of the February nominations, specifically the F.D. and Annie Wharton House in Tarboro. This historic house was identified during a recent architectural survey update of Tarboro that concentrated on the African American neighborhoods of the community, and put on the State Study List for the National Register as likely eligible for listing. An individual National Register nomination was then prepared, which was viewed favorably by our citizen National Register Advisory Committee (NRAC), encouraging nomination by Dr. Waters as SHPO.

The Wharton house was the home of F.D. Wharton, one of the North Carolina's first "Negro Agricultural Extension Agents", serving in Edgecombe County, and his home is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion B at the local level of significance in the areas of Agriculture, Government, and Social History for its association with Fletcher Decatur (F.D.) Wharton. Wharton built a wide-ranging career as an African American Agricultural Extension Agent in Edgecombe County from 1935 to 1951. He worked diligently to improve conditions for Black sharecroppers and tenant farmers at a time when they supplied much of the farm labor in Edgecombe County and their opportunities were limited by prejudice and Jim Crow laws. The period of significance extends from 1954-1975, reflecting Wharton's period of occupation. Although Wharton's professional accomplishments were completed before the house was constructed in 1954, it is the only remaining building associated with his cumulative contributions. Other known dwellings he and his family previously occupied in North Carolina and the building where his office was located have been demolished.

We learned after the meeting from constituent Betsy Baten that the Whartons' granddaughter Juanita Wharton Taylor – 100 years young – watched the NRAC's Zoom presentation via YouTube of the presentation and discussion for [her grandparents' home](#). Ms. Baten shared: "Mindful of the many difficulties Wharton overcame during the 1930s and 40s when he was Edgecombe County's 'Negro' Agricultural Extension Agent, it was a very special moment for her and for me! Thank you both for your help in making it happen!!" Below is a photo shared with us of Ms. Taylor at her laptop on February 13th.



Updated Historic Tax Credit Investment numbers. We can share that in calendar year 2024, the State benefitted from an **additional \$251 million in private investment in historic tax credit projects** with 83 more completed projects, bringing out totals since the dawn of the program in 1976 to **4391 projects** statewide and a total private investment in qualified rehabilitation expenses of **\$3.849 billion with projects** in 91 of 100 North Carolina counties.

A few examples of completed projects (with before / afters):

Mount Holly Cotton Mill

Mount Holly, Gaston County

BEFORE



AFTER



Built in 1875 with a 1919 addition, the Mount Holly Cotton Mill is the oldest surviving textile mill in Gaston County, which in turn had more textile mills at its height than any other county in America.


The mill closed in the 1960s and has been used for various purposes since. The 2022-24 rehabilitation repurposed the mill into a rum distillery with event space.

The project was spurred using the federal and state historic income-producing tax credits with a private investment rehabilitation cost of \$2.15 million.

308 & 308 1/2 Queen Street

Edenton, Chowan County

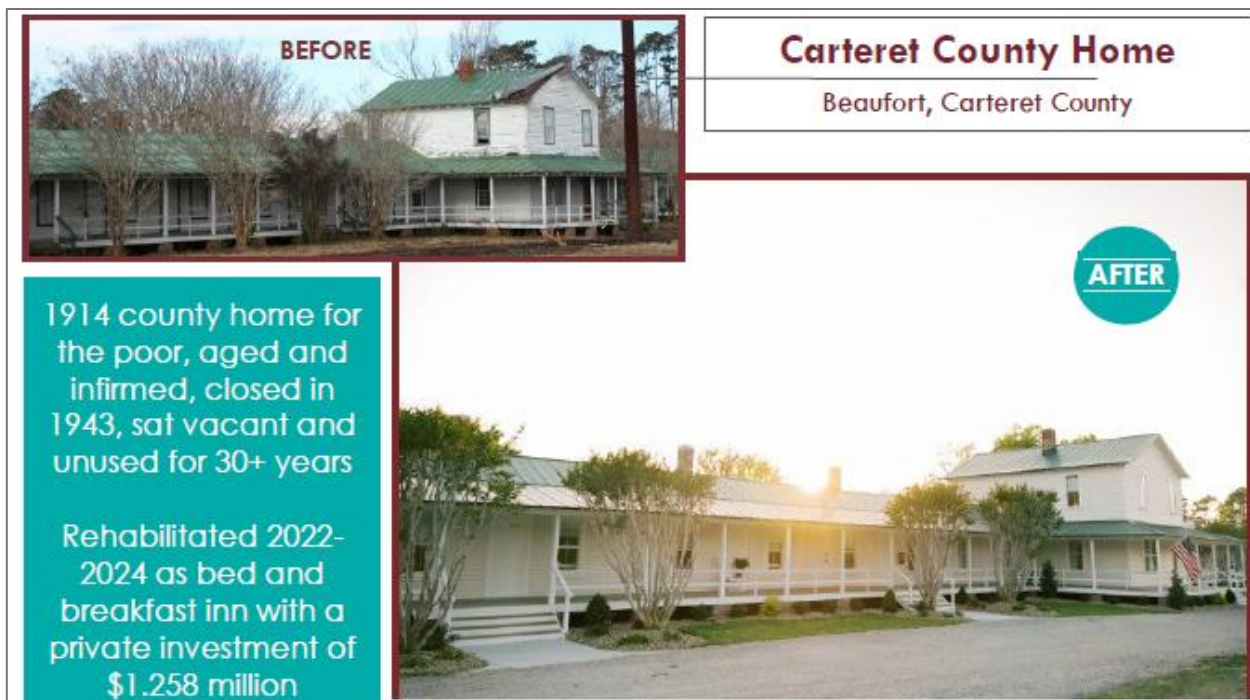
Before





A vacant 1905 house and 1930 rear cottage are new local residential rental options in this coastal county seat, employing local tradespeople

Rehabilitated 2023-24 with a private investment rehabilitation cost of \$299,000



Western Office in Asheville

We continue to work on moving forward needed repairs to the basement following Helene water infiltration damage. Jason Woolf – a records analyst with the Division of State Archives – is kindly serving as interim western office supervisor at this time following Jeff Futch’s retirement.

Historical Research Office

Highway Historical Marker program. The Historical Marker Advisory Committee approved an unusually high number of marker applications in December, 15 in all (final approved inscriptions below). The markers will be ordered in March and should take about eight months to be manufactured and returned to the various DOT offices for installation and dedication. Additionally, as part of the agency’s continued A250 activities, the marker program is looking at old markers related to the American Revolution that might need refurbishing or replacement in the next couple of years.

Colonial Records program. The Colonial Records Project's newest exhibit, entitled *Stand Against Slavery: Self-Emancipation and Resistance in Colonial North Carolina* will soon be available; it can be accessed here: <https://mosaicnc.org/enslaved-resistance>.

North Carolina Historical Review. We have also changed printers for the *North Carolina Historical Review*, moving to having UNC Press, who also handles fulfillment for our other printed offerings, manage the printing at a roughly 50% savings over the last few years.

Office of State Archaeology (OSA)

Endor Iron Furnace. OSA is actively working with Lee County together with our agency's Division of Historic Sites and Properties and Natural Heritage Program on making the Endor Iron Furnace Nature Preserve, dedicated in 2014, more accessible to the public with the overarching joint goals to preserve, maintain, and protect both the cultural and natural features present. The property contains nearly 1.3 miles of frontage on the Deep River and incorporates a special management area encompassing roughly 9 acres surrounding the National Register-listed Iron Furnace site and nearby archaeological and historical features. Lee County and DNCR have been collaborating to plan improvements that would enhance preservation and interpretation of the Endor Iron Furnace property while expanding recreation and leisure activities, including proposed hiking trails, interpretive trail, mountain bike trail, disc golf course, and canoe/kayak access.

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). OSA continues to provide technical assistance regarding NAGPRA compliance to multiple universities, museums, federal agencies, federally recognized tribes, and fellow DNCR offices. We have experienced a significant increase in these interactions since changes to federal rules changes in January 2024. Most recently, formal NAGPRA consultations are underway in conjunction with the UNC Research Laboratories of Archaeology for ancestors related to Town Creek Indian Mound site, and a formal response to an inquiry from the US Senate Committee on Indian Affairs as to our agency's efforts at repatriation. As a reminder, a full-time NAGPRA position is one of our division's requests for a new position; to date, our OSA Research Center supervisor Emily McDowell has taken the lead for our NAGPRA repatriation efforts, which include ancestors from western, Piedmont, and eastern counties.

Cemetery program. In partnership with the African American Heritage Commission and State Archives, OSA continues to make meaningful progress on our legacy cemetery survey digitization project to better understand and map the types of historic cemeteries present in North Carolina and their communities. All 100 counties have been scanned, and currently 60 of the 100 counties have been entered into OSA's site form database. Post-Helene, data entry priority has been placed on western counties.

American Indian canoes. Conservation and stabilization of the 28-foot pre-contact American Indian canoe recovered from Lake Waccamaw in April 2023 is progressing well. OSA's Underwater branch staff are currently collaborating with the Coharie Tribe and Waccamaw-Siouan Tribe regarding reports of additional canoes in South River and Lake Waccamaw.

Records/Sites Management. OSA is collaborating with NC Department of Information Technology on an assessment project or needed updates to outdated MS Access databases used at or research/curation center and conservation lab. They have already transitioned archaeological site files from the soon-to-be obsolete MS Access platform to a

more capable Laserfiche system. (This work to improve database technology is likewise underway with various branches of the Historic Preservation Office for architectural survey and historic tax credit databases.)

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

RALPH JEFFERSON “JEFF” FUTCH, JR.

A proud native of Black Mountain, North Carolina, Jeff Futch retired in January 2025 after a long and distinguished state service career of 32 years, serving the people of North Carolina through the Office of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

After graduating from North Carolina State University with a master’s degree in public history, Jeff began his career as a government records analyst for the State Archives, serving the needs of multiple local governments in western North Carolina to maintain their official records, buttressing public access to and transparency in government. He was promoted in 2010 as the supervisor of the agency’s Western Regional Office in Asheville. In addition to his technical knowledge of archival records management, Jeff became an expert in facilities maintenance as steward of the National Register-listed building, once a 1930s nurse’s dormitory for Oteen Veterans Hospital, now a node office for the entire agency in service to Western North Carolinians. Beyond Jeff’s expertise, however, our State reaped abundant rewards through his ability to work with all kinds of people and his selfless willingness to fill any need necessary in order to assist constituents, enhancing the credit to which his service has brought our State and the government of its people.

Jeff’s devotion to assisting smaller local history organizations and nurturing collaborations across professional public history networks raised awareness of state services and broadened understanding and support for the state’s statutory mandate to promote the preservation and interpretation of historic materials. With colleagues from both the public and nonprofit sector, Jeff led the Museums in Partnership consortium, providing small museums in the 25 counties of the western region service by coordinating workshops, transporting traveling exhibits, and connecting resources to meet needs. In addition, he served on several nonprofit boards to strengthen cultural heritage networks statewide, including the NC Preservation Consortium and the NC Museums Council.

Early in his career Jeff’s readiness to be of service led him to the collections recovery team to salvage materials from the devastating fire at the Thomas Wolfe State Historic Site aka Wolfe’s childhood home, “The Old Kentucky Home” boarding house, so closely associated with Wolfe’s novels. The successful collaboration between staff at state and private organizations and the rapport the group developed – frankly attributable, in no small measure, to Jeff’s collegiality – led to the formation of a regional collections recovery network. Eventually, Jeff took the reins of the group and merged it with a state organization, based on this regional model he had helped found.

As a founding member of the agency’s Cultural Resources Emergency Support Team (CREST), in the past decade, he helped multiple organizations recover collections from water damage, including Yanceyville Public Library and the Canton Museum, as well as the Western Regional Archives. These skills were particularly needed in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, when not only neighboring local history museums suffered damage but also the Western Office itself.

He also served as coordinator of Western History Day, a statewide and national history competition for high school students; participating students from the West regularly commanded high finishes at the state level of competition, often in a ratio far beyond their head count number.

Jeff's infallible cheerfulness helped colleagues feel comfortable and promoted camaraderie – again, all in admirable service to the State and fellow North Carolinians. As a supervisor, Jeff was known as a peacemaker and mediator, serving as a therapeutic sounding board, and instilling feelings of value and mutual support.

In short, Jeff Futch's career is a sterling example of how one may contribute mightily to a noble mission of state service – empowering citizens to preserve and tell the important stories of North Carolina and aiding his fellow citizens to recall and reflect on the proud and complicated history of our state to understand today better and to prepare for the future.

FRANK MITCHENER “MITCH” WILDS

A proud resident of Louisburg, North Carolina, Mitch Wilds retired in January 2025 after a long and distinguished career of 41 years serving the people of North Carolina through the State Historic Preservation Office, North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

A 1977 graduate of Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, Mitch completed coursework for the nascent Historic Preservation Program at Columbia University in New York in 1983. At the time, historic preservation as a professional discipline was in its infancy, inspiring Mitch a mere decade after the 1966 passage of the landmark National Historic Preservation Act to seek a career in this field of public service.

After hands-on work for several years as a freelance carpenter in historic Aiken, South Carolina, restoring a wide variety of historic buildings, he next worked as a restoration carpenter for the Center for Building Conservation in New York City as a restoration carpenter and job foreman. These field experiences working directly with historic buildings and building science proved a firm foundation for entering state service with the State of North Carolina in the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office’s Restoration and Preservation Services Branch in 1983. He first served as a regional specialist initially responsible for a 27-county area of the state, involved with architects, contracts, and private owners in all phases of planning and construction to insure that historic buildings underdoing restoration or renovation with state or federal assistance were sympathetically treated; this work later expanded into helping constituents navigate the federal and state historic tax credit incentive programs, which the State expanded in the late 1990s. In 2005, he was promoted to head the Restoration Services Branch as its supervisor.

As branch supervisor, he oversaw the successful completion of over 2500 historic tax credit projects statewide, representing over \$3 *billion* in private investment in North Carolina’s communities, often of landmark, iconic buildings, like America Tobacco Warehouses in downtown Durham, the RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company complex (now Innovation Quarter) Winston-Salem, and many historic downtown commercial buildings statewide, contributing mightily to the economic development and growth of the state through historic preservation. He also nurtured the “Preservation Extension Service” consultation program for the Branch, offering technical assistance to thousands of North Carolina, stewarding both public and private historic buildings. His expertise was counted upon as lead advisor to the State Construction Office and multiple administrations for the stewardship of the Executive Mansion and State Capitol and other historic state buildings and sites. His counsel to public and private alike was valued; the amount of institutional and expert knowledge that he offered will be extraordinarily difficult to duplicate, much less encounter.

Mitch’s pragmatism, diplomacy, and ease of explanation all served the office’s mission of helping North Carolinians preserve the irreplaceable historic buildings that define the cities, towns, and countryside of North Carolina, all of which contribute to a fundamental “sense

of place” locally and statewide, and indeed which form our very identity as North Carolinians. His passion for the work and for helping others is bar none.

In short, Mitch Wild’s career is a sterling example of how one may contribute mightily to a noble mission of state service – empowering fellow citizens to preserve the historic built environment that inform who we are as North Carolinians, and then aiding them to steward for the long term those irreplaceable places that represent the proud and complicated history of our state to understand today better and to prepare for the future.

Approved Highway Historical Markers, December 2024

<p>MILTON D. QUIGLESS 1904-1997 African American doctor, established hospital in 1946 during segregation. He mentored & recruited Black doctors to serve in N.C. His clinic was here. <i>Location: Tarboro, Edgecombe Co.</i></p>	<p>LT. BELVIN MAYNARD 1892-1922 "The Flying Parson." Won first Transcontinental Air Race, 1919. Was WWI test pilot and daredevil. Buried 2 miles west. <i>Location: Harrells, Sampson Co.</i></p>
<p>ZACHARIAH JACOBS Private in N.C. Militia, and Continental Line. One of over 460 N.C. men of color to serve Patriot cause. Born in Vicinity. Wounded, 1781. <i>Location: Wilmington, New Hanover Co.</i></p>	<p>RUFUS GEDDIE HERRING 1921-1996 Naval Reserve Officer. Received Medal of Honor in 1945 for gallantry at Iwo Jima. Businessman and mayor. Lived nearby. <i>Location: Roseboro, Sampson Co.</i></p>
<p>HANNAH CRAFTS ca. 1830 - ca.1905 Born enslaved, escaped Ca. 1857. Author of <i>The Bondswoman's Narrative</i>, based on her life, penned between 1853 and 1861. Lived two blocks north. <i>Location: Murfreesboro, Hertford Co.</i></p>	<p>MEBANE H. BURGWYN 1914-1992 Children's book author, advocate for civil rights & higher education. Wrote <i>Crackajack Pony</i> in 1969. From Occoneechee Neck. <i>Location: Jackson, Northampton Co.</i></p>
<p>MOSES GRANDY ca. 1786 - ca. 1843 Abolitionist & maritime captain. Emancipated self and family. He published autobiography ca. 1843. Labored & lived nearby. <i>Location: Camden, Camden Co.</i></p>	<p>GERTRUDE CARAWAY 1896 - 1993 Journalist, historian, & preservationist. She was instrumental in Tryon Palace reconstruction and served as first director, 1945-1971. Lived here. <i>Location: New Bern, Craven Co.</i></p>

<p>HURRICANE FLOYD Storm made landfall in N.C. on Sept. 16, 1999. Brought historic flooding to region. Led to state & U.S. evacuation reform.</p> <p><i>Location: Princeville, Edgecombe Co.</i></p>	<p>SAM RAGAN 1915-1996 Journalist and author. First Secretary, Dept. of Cultural Resources, 1972. Was N.C. Poet Laureate, 1982-1996. Born ½ m. N.</p> <p><i>Location: Beres, Granville Co.</i></p>
<p>MOSES ROPER ca. 1815 – 1891 Author and orator. Born enslaved, he escaped & wrote autobiography in 1837. Toured Britain as abolitionist. Born nearby.</p> <p><i>Location: Semora, Caswell Co.</i></p>	<p>ANDRE THE GIANT 1946-1993 Actor and professional wrestler. Was born Andre Roussimoff. Known for role in The Princess Bride in 1987. Lived nearby.</p> <p><i>Location: Ellerbe, Richmond Co.</i></p>
<p>MARY SANDS 1872-1949 In 1916, sang & recorded 25 Southern Appalachian ballads for preservation. Songs were foundational for regional culture & music. She lived nearby.</p> <p><i>Location: Marshall, Madison Co.</i></p>	<p>DREXEL FURNITURE COMPANY Originated here in 1903. Global leader among N.C. furniture makers. It was a model for marketing and local production.</p> <p><i>Location: Drexel, Burke Co.</i></p>

Committee voted to reject:

Octagon House

Committee voted to defer:

First Black Quadruplets

Bazemore v. Bertie County Board of Elections

Piedmont Credit Union

Mary Louise Stepp Burnette Hayden

News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2025

Michelle Lanier, Director

Overview

- North Carolina Historic Sites reported total onsite visitation of 1,135,819 for FY 2024-2025 to date (July 2024 through February 2025), despite extreme winter weather, Historic Sites experienced a 10 percent increase from the same period in fiscal year 2023-2024.
- During FY2024-2025 368,385 school aged children (a 20 percent increase from the same period in FY23-24) have participated in tours, events, and programs at our Historic Sites.
- Historic Sites has had 373,414 website visitors in FY 2024-25 to date and has a total of 354,866 followers on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Personnel

Corey Blevins joined the staff of the **North Carolina Transportation Museum** as Maintenance Tech.

Kara Deadmon has been named Site Administrator of the **NC State Capitol**. Kara holds a BA in history from Pfeiffer University and an MA in public history from the University of North Carolina. Since 2015, Kara has served as the Museum Curator at the Capitol. In her new role, Kara is excited to shape the direction of the state's active Capitol.

Marquise Drayton joined the staff at **Historic Stagville** as an Historic Interpreter.

Nelson Edmondson has been named Site Manager at the **Governor Charles B. Aycock Birthplace**. Nelson joined Historic Sites in 2014. Nelson is dedicated to incorporating more S.T.E.M. based programming and events into the site's educational programs.

Colby Lipscomb has been named Registrar of the Division's **Collections Branch**. Colby holds a BA in History from Western Carolina University and an MA in Public History from North Carolina State University. Since 2019, Colby has served as the Program Coordinator of Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site.

Todd McKenna has joined the **Historic Edenton** staff as Maintenance Technician I. Todd has a background in horticulture, hotel hospitality, and maintenance.

Laura Rogers has been named Site Manager at **Historic Edenton**. Laura has recently served as Site Manager of Historic Bath.

Amelia Zytka joined the staff at the **President James K. Polk State Historic Site** as Assistant Site manager.

News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2025

Michelle Lanier, Director

When Are We *US*? and America 250

As the America 250 commemoration gathers momentum, Historic Sites staff participated in planning for A250 education packets and engaged with A250 leadership across the DNCR as event planning, community outreach, and social media marketing increase leading into 2025.

Staff at **Alamance Battleground**, **Bennett Place**, **Bentonville Battlefield**, and **Halifax Historic** were featured in the PBS travel series “Travels with Darley,” which aired in February. In the episode, “Revolutionary Road Trip North Carolina” our staff showcased their sites and the rich history of North Carolina with professionalism and good humor.

Historic Halifax – On February 28, Halifax celebrated the 200th anniversary of Marquis de Lafayette’s farewell tour of the United States. Site Manager Carl Burke welcomed General Lafayette in a portrayal of Major Allen Jones Davie, son of William R. Davie. Upon meeting Davie, Lafayette stated, “Sir: It has long been my desire to visit the citizens of Halifax, where the constitution of the state was framed and the principles of liberty declared. The regard and respect evinced towards me by its citizens are highly gratifying to my feelings, and they are rendered more so by being tendered to me by the son of an old and esteemed friend.”



Curatorial Services

During the winter, Curatorial Services staff contributed to a variety of projects across the Division. Director of Curatorial Elizabeth Reign contributed to discussions involving the new visitor centers and permanent exhibit projects at **Historic Stagville**, **Historic Halifax**, **House in the Horseshoe**, **Town Creek Indian Mound**, **Thomas Day**, and **Fort Dobbs**. Elizabeth Reign was also chosen by the National Endowment for the Humanities to serve as a reviewer for their Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections initiative. This grant program supports libraries, archives, museums, and historical organizations as they face the challenge of preserving humanities collections for future generations, through environmentally sustainable and preventive care strategies. The ultimate goal is to reduce energy consumption and costs as well as strengthen institutional resiliency in the face of a changing climate.

News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2025

Michelle Lanier, Director

Chief Curator Michael Moore led a committee to interview candidates for the vacant Registrar position. In addition, Michael collaborated closely with **Fort Fisher** staff on a new temporary exhibit highlighting 100 years of bathing suits in Carolina Beach and facilitated a **Collections Care and Management (CCAM) workshop** on our deaccessioning policy. Curator Catherine Harper completed the annual renewal of the **Fine Arts Insurance Policy** for the Division and completed detailed cataloging at **Thomas Day Historic Site**. Overall, the branch made significant strides in both collections management and exhibit development during the quarter.

During the winter months, the Education Branch was highly active. A notable highlight was a presentation given by Education and Interpretation Supervisor Andrew Dupstadt to the Cape Fear Civil War Roundtable in Wilmington, which attracted an engaged audience of 40 people. Additionally, the branch assisted in the successful 160th anniversary program at **Fort Fisher** on January 17-18 and provided training on historic weapons to the staff at **Tryon Palace**. Heritage Trade Specialist Robert Bemis focused on ongoing projects, including large-scale initiatives at **Reed Gold Mine**, **Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson**, and **Historic Bath**, while also planning new classes and trade demonstrations.

Staff participation at the DNCR Educators Conference (held at the **NC Transportation Museum**) in February was strong. Out of over 80 registered, Historic Sites accounted for nearly 25% of attendees. Seven division staff presented sessions or played leadership roles on the conference planning committee.

PUSH Projects

Work continues on Priority Updates to State History (PUSH) initiatives. The Division's audiovisual partner, Horizon Productions, continued to film interviews with a broad array of historians at locations around North Carolina.

Additionally, the Horizon team produced speculative visuals and production teasers for new orientation videos and "Historian on Demand" vignettes, with the goal of adding depth and variety to sites' digital offerings. Sound installations and "magic windows" will provide additional dimension to interpretation at sites including the **Aycock Birthplace**, **Bennett Place**, and **Bentonville Battlefield**. Completion of Phase 1 video and other multimedia content for sites is slated for 2025.



News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2025

Michelle Lanier, Director

West Region

Fort Dobbs

Construction of the new visitor center is imminent. We are working to finalize the last details before we break ground. A temporary parking lot has been created on the west end of the site to ensure that visitors are able to safely access the site during construction. In addition, staff has installed signage to orient visitors.

Horne Creek

The site received a Museum Award of Excellence from the North Carolina Society of Historians. The society also honored the book *Bountiful Red Acres* with an award.

The Surry County Commissioners voted at their January meeting to award the Farm Committee at **Horne Creek Living Historical Farm** \$100,000 for the Orchard Building Project. This significant investment from the county will greatly aid the successful completion of the building. Construction of the orchard building is underway. In January, site staff joined representatives from the Farm Committee, architect Tony Chilton, and State Construction Office Engineer Jeff Hinkle to meet with representatives of Surry-Yadkin Electric, Triad Builders and Morton Builders for the first monthly construction meeting since breaking ground on the new orchard building.

Thomas Wolfe

Since its reopening in mid-December after Hurricane Helene, the Thomas Wolfe Memorial has seen steady attendance. In February, the site screened David Weintraub's documentary "Come Hell or High Water: Remembering the Great Flood of 1916." The program was sold out days before the event took place.

Vance Birthplace

In January, Vance Birthplace hosted DNCR Secretary Cashwell and Deputy Secretary Waters. The site also held an event in conjunction with Valentine's Day in February titled "Handwriting of the Heart." The event explored the love letters written by Zebulon Vance to his first wife Harriet "Hattie" Newell Espy. Staff continue to seek a tree removal service to remove downed trees from Hurricane Helene. Local tree services in the area are overextended.



News from the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties: March 2025

Michelle Lanier, Director

Piedmont Region

Historic Stagville

The art exhibition *Maya Freelon: Whippersnappers* closed January 25. The exhibit was well attended and attracted national attention. Site staff continue to move through the process of designing a new visitor center with architects Perkins and Will. On February 22, staff hosted a community engagement workshop with Local Projects, the exhibit design firm contracted to produce the new permanent exhibit.



NC State Capitol and Governor's Mansion

The Capitol hosted the Annual Governor's Tree Lighting on December 12th and Annual Holiday Open House from December 12-14th. The Governor's Mansion also hosted holiday events. On December 17th, the Capitol hosted the Electoral College in the House Chamber which it does every four years per state general statute.



Thomas Day

Site staff continue to build relationships across the Milton community. On January 17, site staff toured the home of a local resident who resides in a house with Thomas Day millwork. The tour was facilitated by Jerome Bias and filmed by DNCR. Staff is also beginning to offer group tours of the site. Public response has been very positive.

This year, the nationally-significant Furniture Society is highlighting the work of Thomas Day State Historic Site historians as a key feature of their annual conference. The Furniture Society--which announced that their annual show, "FS25," will take place in Syracuse, New York in June--hosts conference gatherings and workshops throughout the year, offering attendees the chance to explore the furniture industry through inspirational talks and presentations from multidisciplinary practitioners, demonstrations, and professional development opportunities.

Michelle Lanier, Director

East Region

CSS Neuse Civil War Museum

Every fourth grader enrolled in Lenoir County Public Schools visited the CSS Neuse Museum in February. Sponsored by Smithfield Chicken and Barbecue, 640 fourth-grade students came to the museum over several days to experience a scavenger hunt and hands-on lessons about naval stores, 19th-century toys and games, and sailor life.

Fort Fisher

In January, the site was able to install the second reproduction 32-pounder cannon in its gun position between the newly reconstructed seventh and eight traverses. This installation brought the capital construction of the Earthworks Reconstruction Project to an official end. In the coming months, we will continue to add interpretive panels around the site and inside the newly constructed tunnel system.



Bordeaux Construction Company received the Carolinas Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) Eagle Award in the Historical Division for the **Fort Fisher State Historic Site** Visitor Center. Additionally, later this month, Bordeaux will receive the ABC White Eagle Award, a national award for the best Historical Project in 2024. The ABC Carolinas Chapter Excellence in Construction (EIC) Awards is a yearly competition in which general contractors and specialty contractors submit their projects for recognition. The EIC program is the premier competition within the Carolinas construction community that recognizes outstanding projects ABC members have built.

Historic Halifax

The remodel of the visitor center is well underway with the contractor projecting a completion date of June 2026. Over the winter months, the building was gutted and reframed. The open courtyard at the front of the building has been enclosed to serve as the new lobby.

